

**DYNAMICS OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION FROM  
THE GHANAIAN PERSPECTIVE: A STUDY OF THE  
CHRISTIAN EDUCATION MINISTRY OF SOME SELECTED  
CHURCHES IN THE KUMASI METROPOLIS**

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By

REV. MARY FOSU (MRS.)

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## DECLARATION

This work has been done on a personal research under the supervision of the Rev. Samuel Asiedu Amoako at Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology, Kumasi. The work has not been presented either in whole or in part for any academic degree in any institution.

Rev. Mary Fosu (Mrs.)

Student Name

Signature

Date

20068802

Student Number

PG3499609

Examination Number

Certified by

Rev. Asiedu Amoako

Date

(Supervisor)

Signature

Certified by

Rev. J.E.T Kuwornu-Adjaottor  
(Head of Department)

Signature

Date

## ABSTRACT

The gap between Christian profession and Christian practice among many African Christians is probably because Christian education lags much behind Christian theology in Africa. Much work has been done by some practical Christian theologians to look at the subject of Christian education, especially in the European and American contexts, but relatively little work has been done on Christian education in Ghana. There is therefore little theoretical framework for Christian Education in Africa. As a result, much of the Christian educational formulations in relation to the local church in Ghana are not being effectively communicated to the church's educational facilitators.

This study is an attempt to describe and evaluate the Christian educational ministries of the local churches in the Ghanaian ecclesiastical context for effective communication of the Christian faith for relevant educational impacts. Dynamics of effective teaching and learning are described in terms agreeable to the abundant literature on Christian education. At the end, some recommendations are made for a possible formulation of a contextualized theology of Christian education suitable for the Africa context.

## DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my dear husband, Rev. John Kwasi Fosu and our children, Nyameama and Nyameye.



## AKNOWLEDGEMENT

My heart goes out with the song writer for his beautiful words, “Were the whole realm of nature mine, that were an offering far too small, love so amazing, so divine demands my life, my soul, my all. I thank God for seeing me through this programme. I owe it all to Him.

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## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Background Information

Anthony (1992: 37, 44) has insightfully pointed out that the history of Christian education is the history of humankind in that, in the beginning God created the heavens and earth (Gen. 1:1). A significant part of that act was the creation of man and woman – the beginning of the human race. And the first direct interaction between God and man in Genesis 2 was an educational event. Thus from the very beginning, the existence of the race depended upon a philosophy of education that required man and woman to listen, to learn and to act upon knowledge acquired by revelation from God. Further, in the early years of the church, the aim of Christian Education was to provide doctrinal instruction and to provide training in godly behaviour after the model of Jesus Christ.

It is against this background that the significance of Christian education in the life of the Christian and the church as co-operate body cannot be overemphasised. To some extent, the phrase ‘Christian education’ may appear to be a redundancy. This is because no education is really possible apart from the truth of biblical Christianity. We therefore define Christian education as the process by which an individual, a group of people or an institution propagates (passes along) the knowledge, interpretation and application of truth to people based on the Word of God.



Nonetheless it stands out that, humankind, as created beings are totally dependent on their creator – God, if they are to learn anything. In this light, Howard Hendricks in an article in (Clarke et al, 1991:11) rightly remarked that:

Christian education is not an option, it is an order; it is not a luxury, it is a life, it is not something nice to have, it is something necessary to have. It is not a part of the work of the church, it is the work of the church, it is not extraneous, it is essential. It is our obligation, not merely an option.

Thus, the term “Christian education” is a useful one. In Christian education, the truth of God is brought to bear upon every aspect of daily living. This most probably accounts for the crucial reason why each local church should be vitally concerned with the teaching and learning process. Furthermore, the phrase, ‘don’t just keep the faith – give it away’ probably captures the essence of what Christians are commissioned to do by the Lord Jesus in the Church as a loving community (Clarke, et al. 11). In this case, in the process of becoming Christ’s true disciples, we are to teach the revealed truth of God’s written and living word to persons of all ages and stages of life.

It is significant to point out that every local Church has its own unique style of conducting their educational ministries and so bringing to light how each local church conduct theirs is vital for improvement. For instance, the church in Antioch was significantly different from the church in Jerusalem. Their ministry reflected its cultural and geographical context. These Antioch believers had a different concept of ministry due to their diverse heritage. Their ministry reflected their social, geographical and cultural backgrounds. It is against this background that the

researcher seeks to research into various ways Christian Education is done in some Kumasi Churches given our context.

## 1.2 Statement of the Problem

There is the proliferation of new churches every day in the Kumasi Metropolitan area. Churches have sprung in every corner and the Christian gospel is preached on all radio stations and on television sets all over. According to the KMA 2006 statistics of the city, 78.8% of the inhabitants of the city are Christians. Yet there seem to be a big gap between Christian profession and practical Christian living. This is because the daily lives of the people in the city do not seem to reflect their Christian profession. There are vices everywhere – robbery, careless and abusive driving, killing of spouse, divorce on the increase, extra marital affairs, self exposing kind of dressing (*am aware*) on the street, etc. There seem to be nominal Christians all over because one witnesses little transformation in the lives of these 78.8% Christians in the city.

This work therefore seeks to answer the following questions

- Are the churches really doing Christian education and how?
- Considering the African context, what should form part of an effective Christian education programme of the church?
- What should be the motivating factor for planning and organizing any programme in the church?
- Is evaluation and impact assessment of the churches programmes necessary?

Further, it seems that in some contemporary Ghanaian churches, the educational programmes do not go beyond the Sunday school ministry of the church. Irrespective of how important and effective this Sunday school ministry becomes, it is unable to accomplish everything in the limited time that it meets. The quest therefore for conscious Christian education to be active in many other areas as well: youth fellowship, vacation Bible school, camping experiences, family life, the church library, training classes, missions, Bible studies, catechism cannot go without answer.

### **1.3 Purpose and the specific objectives of the study**

The main purpose of this study is to describe the dynamics of Christian education in the Ghanaian context. The Specific Objectives are the following:

- a) Explain the Dynamics of Christian Education.
- b) Describe and examine how the selected churches in the Kumasi Metropolitan area conduct their educational programmes.
- c) Evaluate the impact of the educational ministries of the above selected churches in the Kumasi metropolis.
- d) Give appropriate recommendations for the improvements of the Christian educational ministries in the church context.

### **1.4 Scope and Limitation of the Study**

In the attempt to discuss Christian education in the local church context, the city of Kumasi, Ghana was selected as the geographical scope. The historical development

and discussions centred on the Christian education departments of the selected churches. However, for the purpose of discussion, references were also made to other ministries of the church that were relevant to the study.

## 1.5 Methodology of the Study

The research used the qualitative approach. It basically employed a case study (of some selected churches in Kumasi) research design and it was also descriptive in that the design helped to provide answers to the questions of who, what, when, where, and how was Christian education conducted in the selected churches under study. The selected churches are Grace Baptist Church, Amakom; Calvary Methodist Church, Amakom; Ramseyer Presbyterian Church; Adum; Harvest Chapel International, Asafo; Frontiers Chapel, Kwadaso and Calvary Charismatic Centre (C. C. C.), Ayigya who are of the evangelical and Neo-Pentecostal/Charismatic tradition.

In carrying out this study, a number of methods for data collection were employed, notably through primary and secondary sources:

- *Primary Documentation*

Some materials required for the work were gathered through interview of selected individuals in positions of authority as far as the selected churches were concerned. Various categories of church leaders and members were selected for this purpose. Information was also sought through administering 100 pieces of questionnaires to

members of the selected churches. Personal observation is a credible source of information for a research of this nature. For this purpose the researcher sought information at a number of worship centres as participant observer.

- *Secondary Documentation*

Because of the focus and scope of this study, different secondary sources (encompassing books, journals, Theological Dictionaries and Bible Commentaries) were consulted. These are public materials of expert opinions covering the meaning and dynamics of Christian education. It is significant to point out that, secondary documentation is not always as dependable as primary documentation. This is precisely so because secondary documentation represents either an interpretation or translation of original ideas and may not necessarily reflect original ideas or represent the views of the original author. The need for drawing from these in a critical way was therefore, not glossed over in this work.

#### **1.6. Significance of the Study**

The significance of this study cannot be overemphasized. In the first place, the study answered the quest for relevant Christian education in the Ghanaian ecclesiastical context. The document identifies what the local churches are doing in the area of Christian education both within and without. Thus, the general needs of the congregations under study when it comes to Christian education have been brought to light. This could help their national denominational Christian



educational departments to restructure their educational programmes and make them relevant to their people.

In a similar way, the document will serve as a resource material for training Christian education instructors especially in the church context. In this case the study will serve as a guiding document for pastors, Christian educators, church leaders and all Christians who are involved in the teaching and learning ministry of the church.

Moreover, since it is obvious that almost all the churches in the Kumasi Metropolis in one way or the other have Christian education related programmes; this study will serve as a guiding and evaluative document for all the churches. In this case, the document will serve as an evaluative document on the dynamics of Christian education that will take into consideration the African context irrespective of the varying backgrounds of churches in the Kumasi Metropolitan Area.

Further, the study was relevant in that it would add to the existing body of knowledge thereby contributing to the issue of addressing matters relating to Christian education and Christian theology. It will also serve as a guiding document to other students who would like to go into similar research in future.

## **1.7 Organization of the Study**

The study has been divided into six chapters. Chapter one gives the general introduction to the study. Chapter two enables the reader to understand the dynamics of Christian education. Here, explanation has been given to what Christian Education is; establishing Biblical and Theological foundations thereby looking at Jesus the master teacher and the role of the Holy Spirit in Christian Education; the role of prayer in Christian Education; the goal and content of Christian Education; the basic teaching methods; teaching/ learning materials; the role of the Christian educator; the task of Christian education in the local church context and the cross-cultural perspective in Christian Education.

The third chapter examines some Ghanaian traditional patterns of learning. The fourth chapter describes Christian Education in the Ghanaian ecclesiastical context. Here the historical development and description of Christian education ministries in the selected churches in Kumasi have been discussed. The next chapter then analysis the data received with reference to the impacts of the Christian educational efforts of the churches surveyed. The last chapter then gives some recommendations and conclusion to the study.

## **1.8 Literature Review**

For the purpose of this study relevant materials relating to the topic have been reviewed. To begin with, Zuck (1988:38) presents Christian education as a unique and essential discipline. He writes, “Christian Education is unique because of its

subject matter – the Bible, God’s written revelation; because of its goal – spiritual transformation of lives; and because of its spiritual dynamics – the work of the Holy Spirit. Zuck’s point of view about the uniqueness of Christian education is what this work has sought to project with recommendations for its improvement.

In establishing a biblical foundation of Christian education, many writers agree that the basis for a Christian education programme is given by Jesus in Matthew 28:19-20 as making disciples, baptizing them and “teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.” Malcor (1978:245) observes that:

A noteworthy feature of the great commission is that it bids the apostles and the church of all ages to teach. In fact, teaching is spoken of as their chief missionary task. They are to go in order to teach. Going is but a means to the end of teaching. And they are to baptize those who accept their teaching. But they must teach, whether or not men give heed. And, significantly, they are told not once, but twice, to teach.

In Malcor’s work on *Christian Education in the Local Church*, he discusses the goal of a Christian education programme as the growth of the whole church into the image of Christ. As each member develops his own particular gifts and abilities, the whole community of believers grow. The church is people; people changed by the grace of God from darkness into light, but people who still need to be changed throughout their Christian pilgrimage (2 Cor. 3:18; 2 Pet. 3:18). Malcor further explains that the teacher equips his students by helping them through this growing process. To a large extent, this means helping them teach themselves. This researcher agrees with the writer’s submission on the issue in that what the learner contributes to the learning process is just as important as what the teacher contributes (Psalm 119: 99). However, the question that comes to mind is that with

all probability, churches have had lots of “teaching” going on, but how much “training” has been provided to the people to help them live out what has been taught? Next, Malcor’s presentation on the goal of Christian education as the growth of the whole church into the image of Christ appears to be too simple. For since man’s principal goal is to bring glory to God, then the goal of Christian education ministry must glorify God by being relevant, transforming, flexible, varied and designed to change behaviour.

In an attempt to establish a theology of education, Fuller (1957:255) cites an article written by Stephen Bayne, entitled, *God is the Teacher and* explains that:

The fundamental thoughts underlying nearly everything that we will want to say about the Christian idea of education is that God is the teacher. It is He who establishes all truth; it is He who wills that men shall know the truth; He gives us curious and reflective minds to seek the truth and grasp it and use it; He even gives us the supreme privilege of helping Him in partnership both to teach and to learn.

In a similar fashion, Zuck (34) points out that Christian education is a cooperative process, a venture involving both the human and the divine. Human teachers communicate and exemplify truth: The Holy Spirit seeks to provide guidance, power, illumination, and insights to the teachers.

It can however be said that, inasmuch as Zuck identifies the truth that Christian education is a cooperative venture involving human and divine, his submission on the role of the Holy Spirit excluded that of the Spirits role in the lives of the learners.

On presenting Jesus as the Master Teacher, Friedman (1990:15) also has this to say:

Perhaps the most powerful evidence for Jesus, as educator is the entourage of disciples that accompanied Him. The disciples - literally 'Learners' – were a community of interested persons who saw in Jesus not only a speaker of memorable ability but also a model of righteous living. As a mentor Jesus opened up to these people not only his words but by his entire life.

With regard to levels of learning that are helpful to the Bible teacher. Lawrence Richards (1970:75) identifies five levels of learning. These are rote, recognition, restatement, relation and realization. Richards explains that the Bible can be learnt at all five levels, but at the levels of rote and recognition, the facts are stressed with little meaning. The teacher's role at those levels is to disseminate information. At the level of restatement, relation and realization, learning becomes increasingly meaningful and the teacher's role changes from that of a guard who involves students. What Richards presents here sounds convincing. This is because the goal of Christian education is to move learning to the level of realization where change in the learners' behaviour is more likely to occur.

Harris (1989: 38) says education is live long for the church but it seems that there is some misunderstanding with the way education is perceived. For her, there are some people who think education in the church is for children so much that any attempt to talk about education that is for the grown up must be prefix with "adult" before people can identify that it is adult education. This is very true even with some churches. It seems most people in such churches look at the Christian education board as the facilitators of children Sunday school.



Harris (43, 44) further says that the church's educational ministry has been embodied and lived in five ecclesiastical forms, namely didache, koinonia, kerygma, diakonia and leiturgia. Should any of these be left out as full partners in the educational work of ministry or be downplayed or better still exalted above the others there would not be a balanced education. Harris argument is very reasonable because these are basically the pillars of the Christian faith so to downplay any of these is an attempt to alter the faith.

Graham (2003::xiii) contributes thought-provoking comparisons of two general philosophies of education. Graham's philosophy that "Christian teachers are called to teach redemptively" highlights areas of traditional educational philosophy that call for passive learning, and cognitive development that may or may not result in heart transformation. The purpose of the book is to "encourage and challenge Christian teachers . . . to teach redemptively" reaching the heart as well as the mind, by exploring the meaning of redemption in the light of the classic biblical themes (the creation, the fall, anthropology, and Christology). The weakness of this work stems from the fact that the philosophy explained is new or uncommon in educational circles. Those attempting to apply Graham's principles of "grace teaching and learning" in classrooms of any kind face an arduous task of implementing practical steps. The strength of this work is the exercise of critical thinking stimulated in those uncomfortable with present philosophies of education.

With regard to instructional content, quite often Christian education is understood as a set of imparting biblical content, stories and creeds. It is used as a process of conditioning the mind, body and spirit of learners according to the popularly accepted norms and beliefs of the Church and society. But, Christian education is much more and very different from the above mentioned proposition. Hoeffler (1979, 448) succinctly remarks that the aim of Christian education is much more radical and dynamic. The emphasis is not knowing but becoming. Christian education is the process of relating God's people to the challenges and opportunities of their lives in His service. What this means is that Christian education is a process in which the learner is facilitated to look at his or her faith in relation to Scripture, traditions of the Church as well as to the Ghanaian context and to the life situations.

Little (1966, 45) posits that though the Bible occupies an important place in the practice of Christian education, it cannot be taken as the sole content to be dealt with. Explaining further she writes that “Content is not to be understood as subject matter, the living power of truth which imposes itself as such upon the subject matter and forms of Christian education by virtue of its intrinsic authority.”

Apart from the scriptures the content of Christian education must include a study of the environment, various religions in our area and the various burning issues of the times with which we are struggling. If we are really committed about a Christian education for Ghanaian churches, we cannot ignore the contextual issues like widespread poverty, the impact of the national economics policy, globalization,

media explosion, plurality of religions, cultures, festivals, deepening fundamentalism, increasing tendency to violence and widening social imbalances. Therefore, the content of Christian education cannot be limited to the Judeo-Christian heritage contained in the Bible and Christian tradition. We need to take the cultural heritage and socio-economic realities which are contained in Ghanaian oral literature, newspapers and also in the day to day life experiences of the learners.

With reference to methods of education in a multicultural context, Freire's (1986, 66) pedagogical method of "dialogue" is worth looking at. Freire writes of two concepts of education namely: The banking concept of education and the problem solving concept.

In the first concept it is the teacher who is said to have a deposit of knowledge which he/she must impart to the ignorant student. The banking concept of education does not give any opportunity to the learner for dialogue. This appears very much against the gospel values of freedom and human dignity. The second model which Freire suggests is that of problem solving education where the critical reflection of both the learner and the teacher bring the fruits of learning. It is mutual. Freire's new educational theory has been called "problem posing education" which responds to the essence of consciousness-intentionality. In this model, the teacher and learner relationship is based on mutuality, free from fear and domination. Learning is non-repressive but actualizing.

On this issue of dialogue as a teaching method, Thomas Groome (1980: 184) supports Paulo Freire's praxis approach by observing that the role of the pedagogue is to be "with" rather than "over" people, enabling them to name their world and through dialogue come to act creatively on their historical reality.

In the opinion of the writer, this strategy of dialogue is not different from Jesus' strategy of teaching. Jesus in his teaching used the method of dialogue (John 3:1-20, 4:1-26). Jesus helped the learners to come to find the truth from the known to the unknown. Jesus was very positive about the method of dialogue and the importance of listening to others. Thus the teaching ministry of the church should be ready to enter into intercultural dialogue with eagerness to develop common grounds of understanding and cooperation. Today instead of seeing cultural diversity as a cause of division in society, the teaching ministry of the church should attempt to explore it as a source of mutual enrichment and mutual transformation.

Writing about the need to integrate Christian educational approach to that of traditional patterns of learning it is interesting to look at Palmer's (1991:54) observation that "the Western Church has been firmly shaped by an anti-pluralist mentality, which it has passed on to those around it." The strength of this observation lies in the fact that with regard to Christian education and traditional culture, one of the problems with the educational ministry of the Church is that of

the cultural identity of the Ghanaian church is missing. On the one hand, it is the earlier missionary policy which forced the converts to give up all that belonged to the former faith and culture which has resulted in the cultural, religious and spiritual impoverishment of the Christians. Moreover, the Church in Ghana adopted the *modus operandi* of its mission and teaching ministry from the Western pattern.

According to Samartha (1998), Culture refers to the whole complex of distinctive, spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features that characterize a society or a social group. It includes not only arts and letters, but also modes of life, the fundamental rights of human beings, value systems, traditions and beliefs. One cannot, therefore, overlook the tension between the Christian culture which has been promoted by the Jewish Christian tradition, and Christian community against the Ghanaian culture, which is of the learner's context. More often the theological and pedagogical pattern for Christian education fosters a spirit of alienation from our cultural kinship in Ghana.

It can be argued that our failure to employ the indigenous methods in Christian education, worship, singing and life style, are a few evidences of our rigidity in blindly following the Judeo-Christian tradition and culture. Further, the influence of the media, has already created a transition of the Ghanaian culture to the Western culture and world value system which has raised the question whether the Church needs to stick to one culture or not. This explains the strength of Wiser's



(1986:4) statement that, “Cultural identity seems to be on the defensive all over the world as most people live in more than one culture”

It is against this background of uncertainties that Christian education in Ghana needs to grapple with the following questions in this thesis: To what extent can we rely solely on the inherited cultural heritage of the Judeo-Christian? What is the place of Ghanaian traditional educational patterns in our Christian education ministry of the Ghanaian Church? These questions challenge the Ghanaian church to re-examine the contemporary Judeo-Christian educational approaches so as to find an appropriate Ghanaian cultural sensitive approach. The rationale behind this effort is to find ways of taking back what we have been deprived of because of the wrong missionary approach. Here the Christian education programme of the different churches to be surveyed is one of the important instruments for re-education about our fuller African traditional educational heritage.

Osmer (1990) writes that the vital teaching office by which the foundations of the Bible and Christian doctrine are taught to the members of most congregations is missing. According to him, this has resulted in individuals sorting out their own understanding of God and the moral life or at best they turn to groups that offer absolutes to fill the void they are experiencing. He talks about the decline of the American Protestant churches. He brought out the fact that the youth and young adults can no more be found in the church and linked it to the lack of teaching.

We think that this work opens an issue that is worthy of serious reflections and discussion. It will do the church a lot of good if the issues concerning the rehabilitation of a stronger teaching office are considered. There is the need to teach the basics of the Christian faith in order to provide a strong sense of Christian identity.

In his book, “Teaching for Faith: A Guide for the Teachers of Adult Classes” (1990) Osmer writes about the importance of preparing teachers in the church whose purpose is to awaken, support, and challenge faith. He offers practical suggestions for preparing good lectures and leading lively discussions. He explores four important dimensions of faith – faith as a belief, as a commitment, as a relationship and as a mystery and describes different teaching approaches to address each of these dimensions. We think that Osmer’s work is appropriate as we seek to look at the crucial role of the teacher in the teaching process. However, Osmer refused to bring out the important role of the learner.

## CHAPTER TWO

### DYNAMICS OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

#### 2.1 Introduction

The previous chapter sought to give a general introduction to the study. This chapter seeks to examine the dynamics of Christian education thereby serving as a framework for understanding Christian education in an African and for that matter the Ghanaian context. To do this, attempt is made to establish the meaning of Christian education in the context of the church. Some brief historical and theological foundation of Christian education, its goal and content, methods, tasks and cross-cultural perspectives on Christian education will also be highlighted.

#### 2.2 The Meaning of Education

The word “education” is initially derived from the Latin *educare*, meaning “to educate” or “to train”. This Latin word in its turn is probably still more remotely derived from two other Latin words, *e* and *duco*. Taken together, these words mean: “I lead out of.” “Education”, therefore, means a “leading out” - leading something out of a person. It is, for this reason, the process of encouraging the development of God-given inherent gifts and the knowledge -- which the Lord has given to each person, and especially to each child of God. However, the word “education” is also often used today with an expanded meaning to cover the opposite process as well. For today, by “education” we not only mean what we draw out of someone. We also mean what we put into someone -- which latter process should really be called “inducation” or induction, or indoctrination (Tailor,

1966: 32). Nevertheless in this thesis we will use the word education in the broad sense to cover both that which we take out of someone which God had previously put into them -- as well as that which we implant from God's world into someone (something which was not in them before). So the word education, when taken thus, covers "induction" as well – namely that teaching process of encouraging the development of knowledge and virtues in a human being, by incorporating them into his personality from the outside-inwards. This has to do with nurturing.

### **2.3 Christian Education and Church Schools**

The Church in Africa over the years has been very much concerned about the religious education of school children. Many if not all of the church schools emphasised on religious instructions because the schools belonged to the Churches. Attending a mission school therefore meant attending the mission's church. For instance, a pupil of a Methodist School was expected to attend the Methodist Church Sunday school on the Sunday and give a brief overview of what took place on the Sunday especially with regards to Bible quotations and recitals. Failure to attend church service on Sunday attracted a punishment of some lashes the next day at school. The school and the church became intertwined.

According to Megill (1976: 186), the schools introduce children to the Bible and gave them religious knowledge. Sometime later the quality of Christian education in the schools began to decrease. It tended up to be religious knowledge giving by academically qualified teachers, which did not fulfil the purpose of Christian

education. One other important thing, which put restriction on the teaching of religion in the schools, was when the government took responsibility for the support and control of all mission schools. As the changes happened, the church began to re-examine her approach in education so it can accomplish its task of helping its members (both young and old) discover who they are in Christ and what their lives ought to be.

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## **2.4 Understanding Christian education in the context of the Church**

It is essential to point out that Christian education goes beyond teaching Christians. It is not just limited to one kind of organization or ministry in that it is found outside the church in many different venues. This is to say that Christian education takes place outside the walls of the church through Christian schools, Bible studies, camps, Para-church organizations and other kinds of varied ministries. In view of this background and writing from the African perspective, Megill (1976:3), among other definitions points out that Christian education is a process of holistic growth with others and with Christ involving leadership development and theological education at each and all levels of life which takes ones culture and context seriously. However, in this chapter, the context is the local church from an African perspective. This is against the background that, as pointed out by Williams (2006: 642), the primary setting for Christian education is the church.

In the context of the church, Christian education is designed to bring people to faith, to develop people in their faith and to lead people to serve through the



ministry of the church. According to Williams (2006:641), with which we agree, “Christian education includes pre-conversion, conversion and post-conversion learning experiences.” People come to faith in Christ through the faithful teaching of God’s Word and the convicting power of the Holy Spirit. After conversion the learner moves into a discipleship stage and is to develop and grow as a believer. In our opinion, we believe Christian education is not onetime learning experience but a lifetime dedicated to learning more about God and his Word. It includes the application of God’s truth in the life of the learner so that it can be passed on to others in service and ministry.

The ministries in the church can become confusing schedule of unrelated activities as they are put to use in many local churches. Some churches however, have learned to coordinate their educational programmes through a Christian education board. This is because the educational ministry of the church calls for organisation, administration and clear statement policy. Creating and maintaining a board of Christian education is a practical way to accomplish these tasks and that failure to adequately provide for coordination can weaken the entire church ministry. The general purpose of the board should be to establish and clarify educational goals, to unify the educational programme, to evaluate and improve educational outcomes and to extend the church’s educational ministry so that it will vitalise its spiritual impact.

## **2.5 Christian education and Church growth**

A church that seriously considers the importance of its educational ministry is a growing church. In the first place, Christian education in its entirety encompasses message of the gospel which brings to bear a 'Christian' faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. The reason being that salvation message constitutes the core of Christian education. This is underpinned by the biblical expectation that Christ must be taught and preached (Acts 5:42). Thus Christ is the centrality of the salvation message in Christian education in the Church. In addition, Christian education helps the church members to grow spiritually. This is due to the fact that the central concern of Christian education is the spiritual growth of the believer: whether child, youth or adult.

Christian education also serves as an essential tool for leadership development in the local church. Similarly Christian education imbues in the membership of a Church a desire to preserve and conserve the rich heritage of God at work in the lives of men and women. Another essential role of church education is that it equips the Christian with the requisite reasons for the church's beliefs and to always explain and defend the principle behind their faith as believers.

## **2.6 Biblical foundation of Christian Education**

This section of the study highlights how Christian education takes its roots in the Bible.

### **2.6.1 *Christian Education in the Old Testament***

The Bible serves as the foundation of Christian education. Understanding the origins of Christian education requires an examination of Jewish education because Christian education is, in many ways, an extension of Jewish education. The history of the Jews is a record of their relationship with God as expressed in covenant. Their educational system arose as an instrument to pass on that relationship to subsequent generations. It also was an act of obedience to God's command within the covenant. According to Reed, et al (1993:45) the Jews believed that as God had chosen them, God was concerned with the means by which they should educate and be educated.

There are many historical events that shaped the covenant people. The Babylonian exile modified and shifted expressions of the covenant relationship between God and His people. The covenant people were generally called "Hebrews" before the exile, but they were known as "Jews" after the exile. Thus, we shall briefly consider Hebrew Education and Jewish Education.

The root of Christian education runs deep into Judaism. According to Barclay (1957:11-40), it should not seem strange that the church claims a Judaic heritage – the New Testament church was founded by Jews, the New Testament was written by Jews (with the exception of Luke) and the Bible of the early church was the Hebrew Scriptures of the Old Testament.

In Genesis, God is quoted in reference to his covenant with Abraham: “For I have chosen him, so that he will direct his children and his household after him to keep the way of the Lord by doing what is right and just, so that the Lord will bring about for Abraham what he has promised him” (Genesis 18:19). Abraham and the other Hebrew patriarchs were nomadic. Their life-style precluded the founding of permanent schools. Education was natural and informal, including all aspects of life. The children were taught by example. They also learned vocational skills by watching and following the parents as they saw to their duties. Children learned about their particular cultic and covenant responsibilities to God as the parents built altars and led in rituals such as sacrifices and circumcision.

After the patriarchal era, the Hebrews received, in the Mosaic law, not only a system of laws by which to conduct their individual and corporate lives, but also a plan by which to teach the laws and their way of life. The family was the primary educational institution of the Hebrews. The Shema, (hearing) which was foundational to all Hebrews is found in Deuteronomy and speaks not only to the nature of God but to the importance and place of education:

Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. Tie them as symbols on your hand and bind them on your foreheads. Write them on the door frames of your houses and on your gates (Deut. 6:4-9).

It was the pivot around which every Israelite was to be instructed in the Law of God. These commandments were to be taught and impressed upon their children.

The mother was to teach the children while performing her household duties. Hebrew fathers had a task: to teach their children and they executed this task with all diligence. Much attention was given to memorizing the Mosaic Law and oral traditions of the people. Knowledge of these matters was the ability to repeat them unerringly. Hebrew family education also placed demands upon the children to hearken unto what they are taught.

The priestly tribe of Levi also shared in the responsibility of educating the people; because of their priestly status they were the nation's educators. Barclay (1957:21) points out that the educational role of the priests was expressed in two ways. First, they were to train the people how to follow in the ritual observance as stipulated by the law. Second, they were to train the people in the law, especially concerning worship, sacrifices, festivals and other religious duties. They also had to teach the people communal life. They gave advice and interpreted God's will for the people in practical terms, particularly concerning ethical and civil duties. Hebrew educational methods were primarily memorization and repetition.

Reed, ET al (1993:46) write that the Babylonian exile followed the collapse of the Southern Hebrew Kingdom of Judah around 586 B.C. During this period most Jews remained in Judah, though some migrated to Egypt and others were taken to Babylon. This was an era of rapid change. Judaism, which evolved from the Hebrew religion, took shape during these years. New liturgical forms were introduced, new traditions began, the synagogue developed and education took on a



different meaning and purpose. Through the bitter years of Exile, Judaism survived because of an ingrained respect for education. The Jews placed emphasis on religious education. They developed a system of schools led by teachers of the Law. This new development gave Judaism a strong organizational and institutional basis. The impetus for these meeting places appears to have been Jeremiah's urging the captives to pray for the city of their captivity (Jer. 29:7).

The primary purpose of the synagogue was instructional and studies of the law. Barclay (1974:46) says the synagogue did not operate in competition with the Jewish temple. Jewish education retained many of the components of pre-exilic education.

### **2.6.2 *Christian Education in the New Testament***

In the New Testament, Christianity takes its educational cue from a cluster of sources. The example and teaching of Jesus, the apostolic preaching and writings, and the embryonic style revealed in the biblical record of early Christian worship and fellowship primarily form the base of New Testament education. According to Hayes (1991: 35), Christian teaching finds its impetus in the etymological context of Greek words loaded with meaning (such as *didasko*, *Oikodomeo*) that articulate the teaching function. In several dominant words that recur frequently, we are able to infer content, a style and a context in which education is to take place.

Furthermore, the nature of the church, in terms of its mission and ministry in the world as revealed in the Scriptures provides a framework for educational action. In this case the church is a teaching agency. From its beginning, the New Testament communicated knowledge of the God of the Bible and the principles God gave mankind to follow. Jesus told his disciples to ‘teach all nations,’ a pattern to be continued until he returned. The early churches prepared people for faithful discipleship as they meet the needs of others and also await the imminent coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. One other means of nurturing was through the house fellowship or community worship. Through the house fellowship they engaged in koinonia – fellowship, diakonia – service, leiturgia – worship, kerygma – preaching and didache – teaching (Acts 2:42-47). The educational facilitators were the apostles and other church leaders. Over the past two thousand years, education has played a significant role in the ministry of the church.

## **2.7 Theological foundation of Christian Education**

Anthony (1992:24) has observed that contemporary thoughts on Christian education, like its secular education counterpart is often expressed in behavioural science terms with reference to the cognitive, affective and psychomotor domains. Philosophical categories like epistemology, metaphysics and axiology are the basis for presentations of educational theory. Such constitutes the language of education.

In view of these differences in terminology, theological concepts are not easy to fit into educational discussions. In this case, it appears that there is not much of

relationship between theology and behavioural objectives. As a result, in Christian Education, theology is usually related only to the content of instruction. It is occasionally employed as a guide for Christian Education theory and practice. In the opinion of the researcher, this should not be so because theology is significantly related to what Christian Education has been, is, and should be.

It can therefore be said that theology that is based upon accurate interpretation of the scripture is a valuable aid to Christian thought and is the content of much instruction in Christian education. However, theology is not ultimate in that the interaction with behavioural science research and theory is necessary. Epistemology, metaphysics, and axiology govern educational theory and practice. In Christian education, this significant knowledge, perspective and overt behaviour constructs must be guided by an active allegiance to an accurate interpretation of scriptures. This commitment must be to the truth that produces faith, hope and love in the development of a biblical foundation for Christian education. This provides valuable insight and creative thinking. For Anthony (1992:33) one needs to develop theology that is built upon extensive knowledge of the truth of God's word.

### ***2.7.1 Jesus the Master Teacher***

Jesus Christ remains one person who all Christians and even all teachers are to emulate. Hayes (1964: 36) has observed that Christian education had its beginning with Jesus. This is not to ignore the past but Jesus brought unique freshness to the teaching task. He came from God, and brought unique freshness to the teaching

task. Perhaps Eavey (1964: 78) states it better by noting that to Jesus “Teaching was His Chief business. He was often a healer, sometimes a worker of miracles, frequently a preacher, but always a teacher.”

What this suggests is that Christians are to module their ministries after Him. Jesus is the standard of reflective evaluation. His teaching ministry cannot be separated from the larger context of His life. He always builds into people’s lives principles that will endure and transcends the existential moments. Those who walk with Him become a community of learners. He is the teacher whose teaching principle would never be outdated. Some teaching principles that can be deduced from the life of Jesus as the Master teacher are:

- Jesus knew how to adapt to the level of understanding of his learners.
- He used the familiar to explain the profound.
- He modelled the truth in an ultimate sense.
- Jesus never lost touch with those He was teaching despite the loftiness of His content or the holiness of His character.
- He used His teaching/learning strategy within the existing social, economic, political and educational and religiously combined context.

The principle #5 stated above can be described as the principle of contextualization in Christian education. According to Pazmino (1992:131), “Contextualization”, as a popular term in current theological discussions, refers to the application and adaptation of truth to specific contexts or situations and the emergence of truth

from specific contexts. Jesus' teaching was adapted to his audience and often emerged from questions posed by his audience. He personalised his teaching by establishing points of contact with various persons and groups and by gaining their involvement. Jesus placed himself at the point of his hearers and started from there. He was sensitive to what they were able to receive. What this means is that Jesus sought to be understood and communicated effectively by contextualizing his teaching. An example in this regard is Jesus' teaching of the Samaritan woman at the well (John 4). Jesus' point of contact is the water available at the well and the experience of thirst. Jesus progressively responds to the woman and reveals her spiritual needs. The concluding truth he offers is his very person as Messiah. Jesus tailored his teaching to address this woman's needs in those areas where she needed instruction and, ultimately transformation.

The implication is that Christian teachers (especially those in the African context) must contextualize their teaching to address the needs and understandings of those with whom they seek to communicate. This presents the challenge of getting to know their context by addressing the issues and problems with which the students are grappling with for effective teaching.

### **2.7.2 *The unique role of the Holy Spirit in Christian Education***

Dickason (1991:121) in his submission on the Holy Spirit in education points out that the often neglected person in the teaching/learning process is actually the most important. The Holy Spirit is the sovereign, most wise and ultimate teacher of



spiritual truth. He makes God's truth relevant to the persons involved and enables application that causes life and growth. Thus, teaching and learning efforts are in vain unless there is a corporation with the Spirit.

Zuck (1972:81) identifies one Scriptural principle by which the Spirit operates in the teaching role. This is the principle of personal cooperation whereby the Holy Spirit seeks to teach through Christian teachers. Christian teachers are therefore called upon to be under the full employment of the Spirit as clean and capable instruments. What this means is that it is not they who teach but the Spirit. As instruments of the divine teacher, they teach what the Spirit of God has revealed in His Word. The Holy Spirit is a person who enables the person of the learner and the person of the teacher to interact for corporate growth.

Similarly, Williams (2006:641) identifies the role of the Holy Spirit as a major factor in determining the difference between Christian education and secular education. Through the Spirit's illumination, believers are shown the truth of God's Word, and this is not present in secular education. Secular and Christian educators may use similar methodologies, but this does not make them the same. In this regard, one cannot agree more with Williams that "Christian education is Christian when teachers and learners are dependent on the work of the Holy Spirit in the learning environment."

## 2.8 Sociological Foundation of Christian education

Man is a social being therefore to understand one's behaviour, one must consider the individual living in one's societal environment. In the view of Sanner and Harper (1978:148) Christian education cannot escape the influence of these forces in human development because Christian education is both a product of change and an agent for change in any human institution. Some of the institutions which provide social base for Christian education are the family, the church and Christian public schools or theological seminaries. From the Scriptures, the family is the first and basic religious educational agent. This is very evident in (Deut. 6:6-9). The family has the first and most influential contact with the child. The family provides the care, security and nurture for the child all the years of their childhood.

Dobson (1974:47) says that not only does the family provide for the physical well-being of the child, but it also fashion their concepts. However, the church as another sociological entity for Christian education also extends the Christian teaching of the family by providing small, special interest groups according to age or life function. Within these groups there are opportunities for the learning norms, morals and values for social behaviour that cannot be found in non-Christian social groups. The church helps the family in its Christian education task by providing for the nurture of parents especially. Sermons on family life help the home to function well so that the children would have a good example to emulate.

## 2.9 Philosophical Foundation of Christian education

The word philosophy literally means the love of wisdom. It has been described as an unusual persistent effort to think clearly. In the opinion of Brightman, philosophy may be defined as the attempt to make human experience intelligible (1940:4). Therefore any person who attempts to know the truth is being philosophical. To be able to examine life or existence from all perspective, one cannot do away with philosophy. The good Christian educator therefore uses every school of philosophy to arrive at the truth of God's Word. According to Sanner (1978:90), the philosophical aspects of education are seen in naturalism, idealism, pragmatism and existentialism.

- *Naturalism*

For Sanner, naturalism is metaphysics. It accepts the viewpoint that the world of physical nature is all there is to reality. The ancient Greek Philosophers sought for the ultimate substance of the universe in earth, air, fire and water. Today, naturalists find the ultimate source of life and the final meaning of human existence in physical world with its laws of action and reaction. This points one to God, and also provides curriculum for Christian education. This system is of the view that everything outside of the natural does not exist. It is only what is real, thus that which one can see, feel and touch exists and to rely on truth, it must be verifiable.

- *Idealism*

This is the exact opposite of naturalism because whilst naturalism finds its ultimate explanations of reality of knowledge, and of value in the natural world, Idealism finds these explanations in the mind or ideas that is the reason why it is termed idealism. The mind is what makes man a higher being than the animals. For man, improving his ideas is basic to making him a better person. Sanner (91) posits that by committing one's life to Christ means committing yourself to the shaping of your ideas through the Word of God. This point to the fact that it is only through Christ that one can become a better refined person.

- *Pragmatism*

Sanner writes that pragmatism is the way to test the truth of ideas to see how they work out in practical experience; what works out is true and what fails to work is false. As a way of testing procedures in Christian education, pragmatism is very important because the Christian educator needs to evaluate the contents of the materials and the methods employed. The whole issue of educational testing is a pragmatic approach that seeks to find out if the educational effort is bringing results. It helps in the evaluating of the methods and materials to measure the results.

- *Existentialism*

Existentialism is a mood than a system of philosophy. Sanner (93) writes that it places emphasis on the importance of the present, the existential movement. The Christian faith does not deny the importance of our present in the light of God's

care in past experiences and view of his promises for the future. It helps to provide curriculum, methodology and also to find teachers. It can therefore be deduced that existentialism form the basis for Christian education.

## **2.10 The Goal and Content of Christian education**

According to Williams (2006:642), Christian education aims at “helping believers to think ‘Christianly’ about all areas of life so that they can impact society with the message of the gospel.” The import of this is that Christian education purposes in the development of Christian worldview. It can be said therefore that the purpose, goals, and values of Christian education are derived from a biblically based theological foundation. In this regard Christian educational goals are drawn from the key functions of the church, which are worship, evangelism, discipleship, fellowship and service. Effective Christian education can therefore be measured based upon the accomplishment of these important functions.

In bringing the discussion to the African context McGill (1976:3) writes that “The aim of Christian education is to nurture the total family of the church in the Christian faith, taking into consideration the needs of the whole person, his or her unique situation, and his or her total environment and family.” The above quotation brings out certain key words like nurture, family, Christian faith, whole person, situation and environment that any serious Christian education endeavour has to consider. In our opinion, the purpose of Christian education is to bring people to a saving faith in Jesus Christ, to train them in life of discipleship, and to equip them



for Christian service in the world today. It is to develop in believers a biblical worldview that will assist them in making significant decisions from a Christian perspective.

Decisions with regard to educational content in Christian education must therefore, involve a conscious effort to connect the tasks of the church, namely, proclamation, community, service, advocacy and worship. Such a linking effort is understood in Pazmino's (1992:91-92) definition of Christian education as "the process of sharing content with persons in the contexts of their community and society." From this definition, educational content can be referred to as that which is shared with participants in teaching. Perhaps Cremin (1979:134) explained it better when he suggested that the content includes "knowledge, attitudes, values, skills, or sensibilities as well as any outcomes of that effort" Thus in the writer's opinion, the content does not only include cognitive, affective, behavioural or lifestyle materials as some educators see it, but also spiritual growth materials. This is because the content goes beyond what the teacher intends to include what the participants actually receive as a result of the teaching (which may be quite different from the teacher's intention). Moreover, in Christian education, it is worth recognizing that the ultimate teacher is God and that all of life makes up the content and not just the material identified as appropriate content for consideration. Notwithstanding, the teacher must assume responsibility for content and experience in the planning, practice, and evaluation of teaching.

## 2.11 The role of Christian educators/facilitators

There are many key players in the Christian educational ministry of every church. First to consider is the Pastor. He or she is the key to effective Christian education in the church. The Pastor's support of and involvement in Christian education set the tone for its success or failure. The second key player is the Director of Christian education (or Minister in charge of Christian education) Bechtle (1992: 238). This person has the responsibility of taking the mission of the church and translating it into structure through people, programmes and resources. This position is highly people oriented because there should be a coordination and involvement of many people, training of teachers, and workers, administering programmes and playing a supervisory role as well. The Director/Minister is supposed to also work closely with the youth pastor or director, the children's pastor or director, the leaders of the adult groups in the church and the leaders of the family ministry.

It is also worthy of note, that Christian educators/facilitators must first of all be Christian. This is because a person's relationship with Jesus Christ plays a pivotal role in how he/she approaches ministry. The Scriptures makes a clear distinction between the flesh and the spirit. The person must also be a maturing Christian. In this context, the emphasis is not on age but how the person is progressing in his/her walk with the Lord. Any person involved in educational ministry of the church must be submissive and teachable. The person must also be people oriented. This is because ministry is about people, for whose sake Christ came to die. Bechtle posits

that Christ did not die for programmes but for people. The concerns of people must move him to want to help. The educator/facilitator must be a team player. Cooperation is crucial if any success is to be anticipated. Above all, the educator must be continually dependent on God and in step with the Holy Spirit.

## **2.12 Basic Teaching Methods**

The role of teaching methods in ensuring effective teaching and learning cannot be down played. According to Miller (1956:159), method is the way in which the learner is led to see the relevance of subject matter to the problems of his own life. Dewey (1916:194) also sees methods of teaching as the arrangements of subject matter, which makes it most effective in use.

The teacher is not only to know the teaching material or subject matter for teaching; he or she is also to know the best way to use the materials. Many a time, some teachers spend several hours studying materials, which are related to the lesson. They also discover meaningful ideas that seem relevant to the objectives of the lesson and thus master the content and organize the materials for teaching. However, they fail to realize that the choice of a teaching strategy is involved in the teacher's preparation. To this we agree with Miller (1956:54) that, since the purpose of Christian education is to lead people (learners) into decision to live as Christian and be disciples, the teacher is to be concerned with how to teach so that effective learning can take place.

According to Choun Jr. (1991:195), method is a way of doing, a tool, a catalyst and a means of access. A method is not time filler, an end in itself and a purposeless activity. Like the architect, the teacher needs a clear understanding of the aim of the lesson before selecting the method. He further points out that good teaching methods are to be used and developed. Jesus utilized different but appropriate methods for teaching situations which he saw as learning opportunities.

### 2.12.1 Types of teaching Methods

One of the signs of good teaching is the use of suitable and effective methods of teaching. There are many types of teaching methods. However, for the purpose of this study, we have outline five of the basic methods of teaching to be considered. These are lecture, discussion, storytelling, demonstration and question and answer methods of teaching.

#### 1. *Lecture Method*

Lecture method appears to be the most popular of all educational methods. This is the method of teaching whereby the teacher presents information to the students by means of providing facts. Miller (1956:194-195) calls this method direct instruction. Some advantages of this method are that it is a fast method of presenting facts thereby saving time and it can be used to teach large classes effectively. On the other hand, in lecture method of teaching, learners' contributions are minimal.

## 2. *Discussion Method*

Miller (1956:213-216) explains that discussion has to do with talking about issue, a topic, somebody or something. As a method of teaching, discussion can be used to teach an entire class or a group. A discussion is a method, which can be used to review information, to clarify ideas and to solve problems. It is conducted as a period of oral comments, questions and answers led by the teacher or the leader, which the class members of the group actively participate.

For a discussion to be successful, the teacher should allow for the participation of all the learners in the discussions. During discussions, debate and arguments should be avoided. One important thing that makes the discussion method of teaching advantageous is that learners become active rather than passive learners thereby enhancing cooperation with fellow learners. However, discussion could be time consuming. Hence, it is suitable mainly for mature learners and not children.

## 3. *Story Telling*

A story is a real or imagined narrative account of people and events, which arouses interest, and progresses to climax or conclusion. A story is generally designed to convey a single truth or principle or to illustrate or prove a point. Story telling is most effective with children but can be used quite well with adults also. Some purposes in using the story are: to secure attention and interest; to illustrate a point; to teach a central truth in a memorable way and to summarize how truth is applied.



#### 4. *Demonstration*

Demonstration is a teaching technique, which shows truth visually through the use of physical materials and equipment or by acting out the truth. Some examples of physical equipment and materials would be: pictures, photographs, diagrams, maps, models, movies and slides. Miller (1956:197–209) succinctly points out that the rationale behind demonstration or showing is that “concrete leads to abstract.” Practicing class assignment can also be designed to require them to “act out” or demonstrate the truth being taught. One benefit of demonstration is that it visually shows students how truth works and thus associates truth with real life situations. The other side of demonstration is that it takes a lot of time and space.

#### 5. *Questions and Answers*

Questions are one of the most useful teaching tools. This is because; questions require answers and thus demands thinking and response. According to Miller (1956:217-220), it is a way of understanding attitude, and evaluations of experience. With little work, anyone can ask good questions. Effective questions work well with adults and children.

In relating questions and answers to teaching the Bible, questions and answers are at the very heart of all effective teaching and learning. Inquiry opens the door of the mind for learning to take place. Good Bible study centres on asking certain questions about the text: what does it say? (Observation); what does it mean? (Interpretation); what shall I do? (Application). Thus, “who” “Where” “How” and

“Why?” are all questions, which lead to learning. In this case, in preparing Bible study passages, the teacher is to learn to ask questions such as: what is the main idea of the passage?

### **2.12.2 Some factors to consider in selecting a method(s) of teaching**

It is noteworthy to say that method and lesson content must work in harmony. Ed Stewart et al (1982:5) observe that methods should involve the learners because studies show that learners remember only 10% of what they hear after three days, but 90% of what they do, see and hear. The best way to learn is through involvement in the learning process. Involvement and participation in the lesson helps learners to own a new concept and apply it to life. Further, the teacher is to consider age group characteristics and needs. It is appropriate for the teacher to ask who his/her learners are, and determine lesson aims and choose the appropriate methods. The teacher should not lose sight of goals, and he/she is to know what resources are available for teaching learning to take place. Moreover, classroom conditions must be considered to determine the learning process. Learning starts where the students are and there is the need for teachers to remember that children, youth and adults process information in different ways and use different kinds of experiences to evaluate new concepts. The best way to find out is through personal relationship and not in the large room. Contents communicated through skilfully used teaching methods will make a lasting impact on the learners and will result on the life changes.

## 2.13 Teaching/Learning Materials: The use of Media

It is worth noting that everything we know comes to us directly or indirectly through media. In this context, media can be described as the variety of resources available that inform and enhance the teaching and learning process.

Mee (1991:203-208) explains that media is a tool of communication that enhances the dynamics and dimensions of teaching and learning processes. Media is a plural form of medium. Medium in teaching and learning refers to that which contains or is used to communicate information. Thus the term 'teaching learning material or media' has to do with the devices, which contain and or transmit information. Some examples of media are: television, videos, cassettes, discs, films, pictures, books, objects, drama, chalkboard/mark board, arts and crafts, computers and film trips. These can be broadly categorized into print media and electronic media.

### 2.13.1 The Significance of Media in teaching and learning

Instructional media play significant role in Christian education. In the first place, media serves as an aid to interpreting thoughts and experiences. Next, they help in storing and preserving knowledge and research so that people will not lose them but rather improve or build on them. Also, media enables us to store information in ways that facilitate easiness in retrieving it later. In other words the media enables us to access the world rapidly and thereby expand our stock of knowledge. Moreover in teaching and learning, distance and time are not barriers to learning

due to the role of media. For instance, computers and televisions enable us to observe happenings and events from all parts of the world.

In these contemporary information and communication technology times, there are some particular values with special reference to audio-visuals that need to be looked at further:

- They help secure attention. This significance has it that the first task of the teacher is to gain and hold attention of the learner.
- Audio visuals also help a teacher to be faster in teaching.
- Audio visuals make learning uniform because of different backgrounds of learners.
- Audio-visuals also pace the presentation.
- They bridge the time gap. For example, the past can be bridged by films. The future can also be visualized.
- They also bridge the distance gap.
- Audio-visuals facilitate memory and multiply participation. The reason being that what people say and do in a learning atmosphere, they remember easily.
- Audio-visuals deepen understanding and make learning enjoyable.
- It gives more information to the audience within a limited time.

In critically looking at the above it can be said that teaching/learning materials are of immense relevance to both the teacher and the learner in Christian education. This is because it helps before, during and after the teaching and learning process. Before the

teaching and learning process, teaching materials help the teacher in lesson preparation and thus gathering of information. Also, materials such as charts, real objects help both the teacher and the learner for a deeper, enhanced understanding during lesson presentation. Further, teaching materials helps learners to source out information for further studies.

### *2.13.2 Some brief guidelines in selecting media*

In selecting a particular media suitable for teaching in the church context there is the need to consider certain guidelines. The first has to do with scriptural or doctrinal accuracy. The next has to do with the needs of the congregation. The third factor takes into consideration the finances available. These factors relates to the quality of the material as to whether they can stand the test of time.

## **2.14 Cross-Cultural Perspectives in Christian Education**

The purpose of this section is to call the attention of Christian educators to the challenges and opportunities for cross cultural teaching. It shows what cross-cultural teaching should be, in order to provide helpful insights into what must be learned to become an effective cross-cultural educator. Thus cross-cultural education seeks to teach persons of unfamiliar cultural situations of a local church in an urban context. Cross-culture has to do with the encountering of people of unfamiliar cultural situations. Current increase in rural urban migration and influx of people of different backgrounds in search of employment in the metropolis



require the local church to become sensitive to the relevant issues involved in communicating with members of other cultures.

Brooks (1992:104) notes that, Culture comprises the very fabric of our lives. No aspect of life is untouched or unaltered by culture. Social outlook, how we express ourselves, and the ways we show emotion are all cultural. All we talk about or do not talk about, how we say it, what language and vocabulary we use to do it, and to whom we tell it will in some way be determined by the cultural patterns we practice. This is why it is necessary for teachers to learn some of the patterns of culture familiar to their students. Christian educators may offend the sensitivity of the very people they are trying to help unless they become sensitive to the cultural patterns of their students.

According to Breckenridge (2006:667), multiculturalism is the term often used when cross-cultural perspectives are applied to education. Breckenridge goes on to give a working definition by writing that,

Multicultural Christian education has its goal the embodiment of a system of beliefs, attitudes, and behaviours that recognizes and respects the presence of individuals from diverse groups, acknowledges and values their differences, and provides an inclusive context that empowers all members of the church family so that they are encouraged and enabled to make a personal contribution to Christ's ministry.

When Christian education programme in the local church is truly cross-cultural in its approach, it will be viewed as a process that affects the structural organization of the church, directs instructional strategies, and changes personal values of members of the congregation. The purpose of such a programme goes beyond the boundaries of a local church. Marty (1993: 22) points out that the purpose of

multicultural Christian education is “to provide the widest scope and fairest representation of the surrounding world.”

#### **2.14.1 *Effective cross-cultural Educational Elements: African Perspective***

This part examines certain values and worldviews for meaningful Christian education in a cross-cultural context.

##### ▪ *Values*

Beginning with values, age is honoured among Africans. In this case, the more matured the teacher, the more effective the ministry is likely to be. Thus the idea of a young person leading or teaching mature people is culturally out of place in most African communities. And this must be taken into account by Christian educators seeking to work cross-culturally. Another value has to do with communalism instead of individualism. Brooks (1992:110) is therefore right in pointing out that whereas independence and privacy are hallmarks of Western cultures, communalism is esteemed in the African context. The African expects most decisions to be made by a group. One must therefore submit most proposals to social units such as clan, extended family, or parents, for discussions and consensus build-up.

With regard to time, the African culture sees time as event oriented rather than time-oriented. They want events such as teaching to happen when they are ready. Thus some churches start services or classes only after all the people have come.

Westerners, on the other hand are likely to start “on time” whether everyone has come or not.

- *Worldview*

A culture’s view of God or gods, the concept of being, origins, the universe, man, sin, nature, and other philosophical issues are part of one’s worldview. Worldviews permeate all facets of culture for they are part of our authority system/belief system. For Christian educators, one’s worldview answers the most important questions of culture and thus must be addressed in our cross-cultural platforms. The importance of this issue of worldview has to do with the fact that just because a person may hold to a differing world view does not mean that such a worldview is biblically incorrect. In the view of Brooks (1992:112), of which the researcher agrees, “What is needed is the ability to distinguish between biblical absolutes (e.g., personal purity, honesty, justice) and cultural standards or societal norms (e.g., dress codes, authority systems).”

#### **2.14.2 *The Teacher’s Goal in a Cross-Cultural Context***

Christian educators should strive to communicate a biblical worldview to their students. What this means is that what teachers are to teach should not necessarily be what is wrapped in the values and views of their culture. For instance to forbid dancing to learners whose culture is expressed by dance is an imposition not from scriptures but from the teacher’s personal worldview. It is worth noting that the

objective of Christian educators is to inspire students from other societies to learn the Scriptures. It is against this background that teachers need to learn to relate to their students in a cross-cultural setting.

## **2.15 The Task of Christian Education: Christian education across the lifespan**

Church education is essential to the effectiveness of the local church. New and challenging educational ministries, as well as established programmes, lead the church toward enlarged gospel witness. In this day of increased secular influence, economic fluctuations, and technological advancement, teaching God's truth should be a high priority in every church.

In small and large churches, in cities and rural churches, in well established and new churches, in churches everywhere, the challenge is the same, to present the gospel of Jesus Christ in ways that are compelling and memorable so that persons of all ages and circumstances will be nurtured in the Christian faith in order to be empowered to live faithfully as disciples of Jesus Christ. According to Griggs, et al, (1988:12) even though we live and serve in an age of supersonic transportation and instantaneous worldwide communication, some of the essential needs of people are the same as they always have been. Each person need to discover what it means to be created in the image of God and named a child of God, to develop relationships of love that are mutually fulfilling, to know who God is and what God intends for one's future and to work for peace and justice in the world.

According to Evangelical Training Association (ETA) (1976:32), Christian education is a process by which persons are confronted with and controlled by the Christian gospel. The central concern of church education is the spiritual growth of the believer through character formation – whether child, youth, or adult. A biblical church education ministry offers opportunities for growth through varied means, all focusing on explaining and applying God’s Word. In the view of Clark (1991:219) any serious approach to Christian education must think of people as the primary focus. But it is unfortunate that most churches think of Christian education in terms of programmes, ministries, activities and organizations.

#### ***2.15.1 The Christian education of children***

“Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these” (Matt. 19:14). With those words and His subsequent actions, the Lord Jesus elevated early childhood to a position of respect and importance. Those who are concerned about the educational ministry of the church must not develop the attitude that the ministry is for adult alone. Clark (1991:233) says that a church that wants to be New Testament in every sense of the word must care about and provide for even the youngest individual who comes through its door. Clarence Benson, a noted Christian educator is quoted by Clark (1991:240) as saying about children’s ministry “Begin earlier!” We think that he is right because the church cannot begin too soon to mould and guide children. Spiritual nourishment must be provided for them during these formative years so



that they would enter the adolescence, and subsequently adulthood with a solid biblical foundation.

Designing a ministry to meet the needs of children in the local church brings to mind pictures of crayons, clay and visualised Bible stories. Sunday school has been the church's traditional vehicle for training children in biblical truth. However, new and emerging children's ministry programmes are gradually replacing the traditional Sunday school.

According to Cunningham (2004:137) Sunday school was created in the late 1700s as an attempt to meet the basic educational needs of poor and illiterate city children. During the 1800s it grew more evangelistic in its emphasis and extended beyond the poor to include children from the middle and upper class strata. It became tied to the established church and a regular part of its programme. While continuing to espouse evangelistic goals, its primary purpose increasingly focused on the nurture and training of the children of church members.

The shifting needs of children are becoming the focus of both the secular and Christian press in contemporary times. Books and articles are reflecting a society increasingly concerned for its children and their future. According to Cunningham (1992:137) in October 1990, the United Nations called political leaders together for the first World Summit for Children. Even as world leaders have met, the church too is responding. Sunday school is undergoing examination and redesign to more

adequately meet the needs of today's children. Children's ministry is expanding to offer innovative programme approaches, which take, into consideration current trends without sacrificing unchanging biblical truth. The church needs to plan its curriculum for children, bearing in mind their developmental characteristics, consistent with their unique needs, interests and modes of thinking.

Children's church offers opportunity for children to participate in worship on their level. It is the primary component in the church's educational ministry for instructing children in worship. Educationally sound and spiritually profitable children's church not only teaches children Bible content; but also provides a practical foundation for future church relationships. According to ETA (1976:33), churches with sufficient children have found separate children's choirs to be an attractive feature of the children's church programme. These choirs may periodically minister in songs to the adult church congregation, thus sharing the children's church ministry with the entire church. We believe that no investment a church makes has a great dividend as that which is invested in the lives of young children.

#### ***2.15.2 The Christian Education of Teens and Youth***

According to Garland (2004:160) historical perspective makes it clear that the focus of youth/teens' ministry in the early 1950s was an entertainment as a means of retaining the young people in the church. For some decades now, the local

church's approach to teens' ministry has been greatly affected by the sociological and cultural times. Ministry to youth/teens' is no less challenging.

No population group has been more influenced by the pleasure motif than teenagers. The effects of decades of eroding sexual standards, growing drug dependence, and epidemic violence which is now commonplace on our streets have each contributed toward an adolescent culture which is harder to understand and more difficult to unravel. Perhaps one of the most disturbing aspects of this sociological commentary is the way in which teenagers have sought to get their needs met. The results of this urgency to get needs met are the increasing number of teenage pregnancy, teenage abortion, contraction of sexually transmitted diseases, rampant use of drugs by teens', teenage alcoholics. Due to these, not only are their own lives so void of meaning that some no longer can cope, but the lives of those closest to them are also falling apart.

Megill (1976:104) posits that we live in a world where the youth/teens' are in the majority and this world is also a changing world, a world of rapid social change, of political and social upheaval. These youth are caught in the change from the traditional African society and often do not know how they should relate to either the traditional or modern society. The African youth/teen of today is seeking an identity.

The youth/teens' programme is one of the church's key educational challenges, for it provides Christian guidance for young people during some of their most crucial decision-making years. Reaching and holding young people with an effective youth ministry requires thorough planning and dedicated effort. In the opinion of ETA, (1976:57), facilitators of youth/teens' ministries in the church need to remember that these young people want action and many feel the church ministry for young people is inadequate in this area. The action, however, must be part of a balanced programme and carefully related to the church's Christian education objectives designed to provide leadership development, Christian fellowship, and service opportunities.

#### ***2.15.3 The Christian Education of Adults***

According to Megill (1976:139), it is easy to see when a child passes from being a baby to a child; puberty also marks a definite point in a child's maturing to be a youth; but when is a person an adult? An "adult" is more difficult to define and an understanding of when one becomes an adult varies in different cultures. She further points out that an individual may be a child intellectually, and adult physically, and socially and emotionally be an unstable adolescent. However, in any society, adults are usually identified by responsibilities and relationships. An adult in that case then is one who has accepted responsibilities of economic independence or marriage or better still, living away from home and pursuing his/her own concerns.

The adult life span offers the church a major challenge for ministry. Persons who are 20 years of age and over, in most countries comprise more than two-thirds of the total population. If adulthood begins at 20 years of age, then simple arithmetic reveals that the church has to direct its educational planning to the changing patterns and needs of more than forty years of an adult's life.

Adult education is formal or informal activity, which gives adults opportunities to learn, grow or develop in their Christian lives. Because the adult life span comprises a long period of time, it is necessary for churches to consider the characteristics of each adult and plan educational programmes accordingly. In order to do this, it will be appropriate for churches to provide for adults in three major groups in the adult life span. Older adults who are 60 years and over, middle adult, approximately 40 years to 60 years, and lastly young adults who are 20 to 40 years.

Most people think that after a person become an adult there are no more stages of development, but more recent studies of adult development by some scholars have shown that adulthood is shaped by some clear developmental patterns. Stubblefield (1984:257) has therefore noted:

Researchers now know that adulthood, including the late years, offers potential for growth and development. It is marked by stages, crisis, challenges, disasters, and triumphs. The crisis faced and the solutions discovered in adulthood often produce progress as dramatic and far reaching as some of the advances made in the youngest years.

Churches that are aware of the needs and potential of the older adult recognise that the issue facing the church is not how to care for the older adults but rather how to return a sense of purpose to their lives. The middle adult years are years of dreaded



time and a time of potential. Many are aware that life is changing; but it is not clear why? These should be years of consolidation, evaluation, and inner renewal. Few adults, however, take the time to reflect on the changes taking place in their lives.

Churches should recognise that adults need to understand and relate to the transitions of this period. Adults, especially middle adults begin to feel the passage of time. Life is now structured in terms of life left to live. They question the meaning of life and are concerned that their lives may not have taken the right direction. The young adults today are literally a new generation. Emerging trends in this age group therefore need to be observed by the church when dealing with them.

#### ***2.15.4 Christian Education Ministry to Families in the Local Church***

The church as a family of God comprises many family units. The church will only be as strong as its individual families. If strong families are built then there would be strong churches as well. Building Christian families in today's world is a difficult task. God's word gives the blue print for successful families, but satanic influences and low societal standards and values hinder families from God's intended plan. Biblically, the church's responsibility is to equip parents to live out Christ love in their family relationship. It must not be thought of as something, which happens automatically because of the teaching programme of the church. Clark et al (1991:581) are of the opinion that every church needs a family life education ministry and ought to set specific goals in its ministry to families. Answers must be sought for questions like how can the churches strengthen

marriages? What can be done to help parents become godly parents? What can be done to help those reared in dysfunctional families to recover and find God's fullness?

As these questions are asked, the church can develop ministries to meet these needs. One of the greatest tasks needed in today's world will be for the churches to strengthen marriages and families. Megill (1976:164) says, "Christian education would indeed be incomplete if it did not have a place for family life education."

## **2.16 Concluding Remarks**

This chapter has sought to explore the dynamics of Christian education and to provide some useful information to guide Christian educators in their ministries. The study has established that the Bible and Christian theology constitute a firm foundation for Christian Education. It has also been established that the content, persons, instructional materials, methods and context need to be balanced throughout the educational process for maximum effectiveness. It is needless to point out that Christian educators can draw norms and implications from the model of Jesus' teaching and also become receptive to the continuing work of the Holy Spirit against their own socio-cultural church context. It has been pointed out that the church constitutes the primary context of Christian education. For this reason the next chapter seeks to look at the Christian educational ministries of some selected churches in the Kumasi metropolis.

## CHAPTER THREE

### EXAMINING SOME GHANAIAAN TRADITIONAL VALUES AND PATTERNS OF LEARNING

#### 3.1 Introduction

This chapter looks at the African indigenous education with particular reference to the Ghanaian context. The chapter thus looks at the way Ghanaians used to transmit cultural and life values, skills and knowledge before the encounter with western methods of teaching and learning referred to as formal education. This is against the background that in Africa, Christianity was mainly introduced by voluntary groups from Western Europe. They came from Portugal, Spain, France, Britain, Germany, Italy and other states at different times before, during and after the colonization of Africa. For example, there were groups such as the Church Missionary Society (CMS). Wherever it spread, Christianity in many areas became closely associated with the promotion of formal education.

#### 3.2 Some Ghanaian Traditional Patterns of Learning and Nurturing

Traditional *education* combines the two words. Simply put, it refers to traditional indigenous education. It can also be defined as a process by which an existing society transmitted learnt culture, knowledge, skills and values from one individual to another. Amankwaa (1980:65) says culture is a defining characteristic of society and for country. Culture comprises of all kinds of learned behaviour of a people. It is important to point out here that this culturally our people had means of educating their generations before the introduction of formal education. This can be

substantiated by what one learns from parents, relatives and peers before going to school. The teaching and learning process in the traditional sense was informal. It did not involve elaborate preparations similar to that of the formal system of education (formal education is a structured, systematic and organized system of teaching and learning). In the modern context, formal education is offered mainly in specific places (schools, colleges, universities, church, etc) under specialized instructors.

Formation and nurturing of indigenes in traditional values of Akan community life are considered important. Rattray (1929:11) saw and therefore described the whole of the Asante life as educational. He says on critical observation, one cannot really find any systematic training process. There was no formal education but every minute was an educational moment because educational instructions were given to the younger generation by the elderly.

Akan indigenous formation sought to nurture the young people for proper community participation. Children for instance were trained to know the acceptable social norms. Rattray observed that the Akan children were trained to avoid those pitfalls which could cause them troubles in their adult life. Virtues like keeping oneself from fornication, respect for others and knowledge of all the taboos of the society were instilled in them. The young were taught to work with their hand to make a living as adults. Whereas the formation of boys was the prerogative of fathers, the formation of girls was also done by mothers.

Traditional leadership formation was done by parents, family members, traditional leaders and the larger community. Rites of passages like naming ceremony, puberty rites, marriage and death were the main formation moments. Festivals, storytelling, proverbs, symbols and music provided Akan formation values. Rattray (1923:242) says even drum language was a means of communicating traditional values and messages.

Young people were taught to acquire a profession. According to Rattray some of the men were wood carvers, some fashion umbrella frames for the great state umbrellas, some were drum makers, others were weavers. Traditional cloths were artistically designed to communicate Akan values. For Rattray, not only were Akan textiles artistically designed but they were beautifully put together, and of standard. The patterns had its name and in many cases also represent the clan, social status, or even gender of the wearer or to some proverbial saying.

Although the traditional patterns of learning were informal, yet it had and continues to have some aims and objectives. Some of the aims and objectives of the Ghanaian indigenous patterns of learning are:

- to produce an informed and knowledgeable persons.
- to impart skills for productive purposes in society.
- to integrate the person into the society in order to preserve its identity.



- to preserve the cultural heritage of the group.
- to foster unity of the group.

### **3.3 Organization of Traditional Patterns of Learning**

This is about looking at the people who conducted the traditional patterns of learning as well as where it was conducted. It could be discovered that it was carried out in the homestead or wherever activities occurred. For example teaching took place in the garden, grazing grounds, in the communal places sometimes far away from home. In the old days, the fire place was specially used in Africa to pass on knowledge, skills and values.

According to Ssekamwa (1997), there were teachers who gave basic knowledge and skills and those who were more specialized and resourceful. The parents played a major role in teaching their children. They were supplemented by elders, peers and those who were considered resourceful.

### **3.4 Contents of Delivery in Indigenous Education**

The content here refers to the values that were learnt. It is worth pointing out that in the traditional society, what was learnt depended on what was available and desirable and the learning situation was never the same (Ocitti, 1993). Though the societies varied in their social, economic and political settings, they shared the following:

- The culture of the group (such as the family, clan and tribe);

- Environmental education covering the physical features of the area;
- Names of plants and animals and their functions;
- Skills especially of a manual nature that enabled the learners to perform certain tasks for their own good and that of the community in which they lived;
- Social values such as respect, love, unity and cooperation;
- Gentility and humility which required exhibiting manners of a civilized conduct and behaviour;
- Leadership skills that shaped a person's role in society, based on sex, age or status ;
- Religion also featured on the curriculum and was vital for the spiritual and moral fibre of the learner and the whole community; and
- History of the group where the learner was expected to know and appreciate the ancestry of the group, the past fortunes or misfortunes among others.

### 3.5 Methods of Delivery in Indigenous education

This is a common knowledge that the methods of delivery in indigenous education were largely informal. In a nutshell, these were outstanding:

#### *Oral forms*

The use of oral forms of literature such as storytelling, proverbs, riddles, poems, songs, and so on. On the whole, oral literature gave the learner not only the desired message, but also equipped the individual with communication skills, among other values.

### *The mini lecture*

The mini lecture was used where short messages were verbally given to the learner who was expected to listen, observe and later do as instructed. The process was repeated whenever need arose.

### *Observation and imitation*

Observation and imitation were commonly used. The young for instance learnt a lot by copying from the adults, peers, and so on.

### *Cultural functions*

Cultural functions were also used. They included ceremonies of happiness and sorrow. They exposed to the learner hidden traditional practices and beliefs.

### *Games and plays*

Games and Plays were also important. While they were more popular for the young, the adults also participated in them. They helped in shaping desirable social values and enhancing the physical fitness of the individual.

### *Active participation*

Active participation was crucial in one's life. This was the case especially in the transmission of skills. The learner engaged actively in communal work or family tasks, and in the process, learnt by doing.

### *Apprenticeship*

Apprenticeship, which was more elaborate, was also used to expose the learner to specialized knowledge, skills and values. The instructor trained the person for a relatively lengthy period. Such instructors had special skills e.g. in Crafts, Arts, Medicine, etc.

### *Rewards and Punishments*

Rewards and Punishments were used as mechanisms to enforce discipline.

## **3.6 Some Ghanaian Traditional Educational Moments**

Because Africans have educational values, they obviously have educational moments. This is because if there are values to impact then they must be moment of transmitting those values. All the rites of passage such as naming ceremonies, puberty, marriage and death provide educational moments in Ghanaian Traditional education (Opuni-Frimpong, 2012: 93-117).

A “rite” is a public ritual, not to be confused with "right" or "write." Passage, here, means recognition that a person has passed from one social status to another. Our whole life, from start to finish, we do feel very different from day to day. Biologically, also we are about the same from one day to the next.

Yet we know that we all differ through life, infant, toddler, child, teenager, young

adult, and mature adult, senior. There is nothing biological or in our experience which provides boundaries between these stages of our lives, except birth, first menses and death.

A rite of passage is a social event which fills this gap. The important element to us in sociology is that it is something which provides social recognition, or acknowledgement from the members of our community, that we have changed in social status.

In life, the first rite would be recognition that a new person has entered society. In Akan society, this is the out-dooring ceremony, which must first wait to see if all seven of the day spirits allow the child to live, after which the father has the right to name the baby.

Historically, when it was very important to have babies and perpetuate the community, the rite of passage that changed a person from child to adult, was very important. More importantly was that rite which recognised the change from girl to woman, and therefore of age to marry and give birth. In the European middle ages, this declined as an overt rite, and was absorbed into the ritual of first communion. Today, with the decline in importance of organised Christianity, this has now been replaced with the high school graduation ceremony.



Death is an important biological transition. Rites of passage to recognise that it happened differ from society to society. In Akan societies, those remaining alive dress in red (danger) or black (destiny) but not white (joy) while the corpse is usually dressed in white. The funeral is a rite of passage that marks the transition of elder to ancestor, who will be considered to maintain involvement in the family, lineage and community after death. In original Christian theology, the deceased will remain in stasis until the apocalypse when the Messiah will return to raise all from the dead and send them each to heaven or hell. In secular society, there is no overt theology, but a vague celebration of saying good bye to the deceased.

According to Sarpong (1977:10) marked differences exist between the upbringing of boys and girls. Girls have a biological marker, their first menstrual period, for which there is no direct equivalent for boys. In some societies, boys to men rites are more elaborate so as to counteract this difference. In other societies, the girls to women rites are more elaborate, because female fertility is more important than male fertility, as in matrilineal Akan communities.

After the child naming ceremony, puberty rites are the next set of rituals of social status transformation which children undergo in Ghanaian culture. The most well preserved puberty rites are the Dipo of the Krobo ethnic group and the Bragoro of the Ashanti's. These ceremonies mark the entry of young women into adulthood. In Ghana only a small section of ethnic groups usually found in the northern parts of

the country have initiation rites for men and where they occur they are done in secret and not given as much prominence as that for young women.

### **3.7 Some Distinctive Values of Traditional Education: An examination of Indigenous Education**

It can be pointed out that indigenous education play important roles (and still plays) in society. This is due to its strong attributes, namely:

- It was relevant to the peoples' needs
- Functional and practical in terms of training
- Democratic, that is, education for every body
- Affordable in terms of cost
- Integrative as it prepared the individual to fit into society
- Productive as learners produced in the process of training
- Conducive to the learner who were mainly taught by close persons around them
- Life-long and thus rewarding
- It had no drop outs, etc.

It should be noted, however, that indigenous education, in all societies, had its short comings. To begin, it could be pointed out that the knowledge; skills and values were so localized and could not be applied or appreciated outside a given community. In other words it was so rigid or conservative and consequently, resistant to change. Consequently, new ideas innovations were not readily embraced. This stunted creativity and intellectual development. Though it was

education for all, it had elements of gender bias. In Africa for instance, most communities had assigned roles for the male and female and discouraged members of one sex against doing what was regarded as prerogatives of the opposite sex.

Other criticisms include the informal nature of indigenous education. It was not programmed or structured. Thus, uniformity in terms of content delivery and learning varied so much among the members of a given group.

### **3.8. Concluding Remarks**

This chapter has sought to establish the fact that there are some Ghanaian traditional patterns of learning. It is interesting to point out that before the inception of Christianity and encounter with Western traders and volunteers with their inherent formal education, Ghanaians had their own traditional educational patterns such as apprenticeship, rites of celebration and cultural functions. The subsequent chapters will describe the Christian educational ministries of some selected churches in Kumasi and to examine whether the Church in Ghana incorporate some of these traditional patterns of learning into their educational efforts or not.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENTS OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION MINISTRIES OF SOME LOCAL CHURCHES: KUMASI PERSPECTIVE

#### 4.1 Introduction

This chapter purposes to present the historical development of Christian education in some selected churches in the Kumasi Metropolis. It thus seeks to present some related issues of Christian education in the Kumasi ecclesiastical context, which in part forms the basis for this thesis. The observations and conclusion that are catalogued in this chapter are a result of analysis of the responses from a set of questionnaires and interviews that were administered particularly to the ministers in charge of Christian education departments of the selected churches.

After looking at the historical development of each selected church, their understanding of Christian education is presented. Issues of patterns of learning or how these churches conduct their Christian education are presented. Issues of facilitators, nominalism, teaching materials and methods and how each church's corresponding impact assessments are also presented in this chapter. As a way of providing a clearer picture of the background in which the churches are situated for effective analysis, brief background information on the city of Kumasi has been presented.

## 4.2 Some Brief Background information on the City of Kumasi

This section attempts to paint the picture of the strategic geographical location, socio-economic background and religio- cultural pluralism of the city of Kumasi in which this study is located. Kumasi is the capital city of the Ashanti region, a very important and historical centre for Ghana. Tradition is held very high in Kumasi and blends very well with modernity that gives it a wide range of attraction. Geographically, Kumasi is a city in southern central Ghana. It is located near Lake Bosomtwe, in the Rain Forest Region and is about 250 km (by road) northwest of Accra. Kumasi is approximately 300 miles north of the Equator and 100 miles north of the Gulf of Guinea. It is popularly known as "The Garden City" of Ghana because of its many beautiful species of flowers and plants. [www.ghanaweb.com/GhanaHomePage/geography/kumasi.php](http://www.ghanaweb.com/GhanaHomePage/geography/kumasi.php) (January 21, 2012)

Demographically, with an estimated population of 2,500,000, and covering an area size of about 299 km<sup>2</sup> (115.4 sq mi), Kumasi is the second-largest city in Ghana. The largest ethnic group is the Ashanti, but other ethnic groups are growing in size. Approximately 70% of the population is Christian and 10% Muslim, with a smaller number of adherents to traditional beliefs (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kumasi> - January 20, 2011).

Historically, King Osei Tutu founded Kumasi in the early 17th century. The king named the city after the KUM tree, which he planted as a symbol of the Ashanti Empire's victory over the British. The city rose to prominence in 1695 when it became



capital of the Ashanti Confederacy due to the activities of its ruler Osei Tutu. With their 1701 victory over Denkyira the Asante confederacy became the primary state among the Twi speaking Akan peoples. Parts of the city, including the Royal Palace, were destroyed by British troops in the Fourth Anglo-Ashanti War of 1874. It remains a royal city, although since all of Ghana was declared independent in 1957, the role of king has been mainly symbolic. The city holds an important place in the history of the Ashanti people, as legend claims that it was in Kumasi that Okomfo Anokye received the Golden stool, an embodiment of the soul of the Ashanti nation (McCaskie: 2007, 1).

In looking at the socioeconomic background of Kumasi, trade, commerce, farming and mining are the leading industries. Wealth is derived from substantial gold deposits and agricultural products. Cocoa and high-quality hard wood are other major exports. The Kente Cloth is a traditional form of clothing in Ghana, and several people weave this cloth and are worn on special occasions such as weddings and ceremonies. Due to large gold deposits that have been mined in the area, Kumasi has been among the wealthier cities in Ghana.

The city's major exports are hardwood and cocoa. Kumasi has 50 per cent of the timber industry in Ghana, with more than 4,000 employed in the business. The Guinness Ghana Breweries is based in Kumasi and is listed on the Ghana Stock Exchange. Kumasi is served by Kumasi Airport and railway lines to Accra and Takoradi. Because of the barrier mountain range just to the north, the rail system does not yet go further to

the north (<http://www.ghanaweb.com/GhanaHomePage/geography/kumasi.php> January 18, 2012).

In the sense of cultural pluralism, the city's major attraction is the National Cultural Centre, a 10-minute walk west of the Kumasi central market. The extensive complex encompasses a fascinating museum of Ashanti history, a popular library, an excellent crafts shop and an exhibition hall. Classes in traditional dance and drumming are available. Kumasi as an urban centre is mostly ethnically mixed because of migration to towns and cities by those in search of employment. Evidence of this fluidity lies in the heterogeneous nature of all administrative regions, in rural-urban migration that results in interethnic mixing, in the shared concerns of professionals and trade unionists.

#### **4.3 A Concise Overview of Christianity in Kumasi**

As stated earlier, Christianity is the predominant religion in Kumasi although there are other religions such as African Traditional Religion and Islam. As the second largest city in Ghana, Kumasi has all types of Christians and thus Christian churches relating to the various types of the Churches in Ghana. In regard to this, the church situation in Kumasi comprises the historic Churches, other mission related churches, the Pentecostal churches, the independent "Charismatic" churches and the independent "spiritual" churches (Foli: 2006). The historic churches are variously referred to as mainline, mission, orthodox or established churches. It is important to point out that the majority of these churches have operated in the city

for over a century. Some of the historic churches in Kumasi include the Presbyterian Church of Ghana, The Methodist Church Ghana, the Evangelical Presbyterian Church and the Roman Catholic Church.

There are also a number of churches in Kumasi that have resulted from the second wave of overseas missionary involvement commencing in the early 1940s, mostly among some people groups. Notable among some of these churches emerging from these latter missions in Kumasi are Evangelical Churches, Churches of Christ and Churches of Christ Missions as well as the Pentecostal Churches, which comprise the Assemblies of God, the Apostolic Church, Christ Apostolic Church and the Church of Pentecost.

The Independent “Charismatic” Churches or Ministries, include the Christian Action Faith Ministry and the International Central Gospel Church. These churches prefer to be called Charismatic Churches (Dovlo: 1992, 62). Independent “Spiritual Churches are also found in Kumasi. These are churches that are founded as, a result of the indigenous renewal of the Christian faith in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Some of these Churches are the Twelve Apostle Church, the Musama Disco Christo Church and the Apostles Revelation Society.

In the discussions that follows, we shall attempt to examine the Christian education ministry of the Grace Baptist Church (GBC), Calvary Charismatic Centre (C.C.C.), Calvary Methodist Church (C.M.C), Harvest Chapel International (H.C.I.),

Frontiers Chapel (F.C.) and the Ramseyer Presbyterian Church (R.P.C) all within the Kumasi Metropolis.

#### **4.4 The Christian Educational approach of the Grace Baptist Church, Amakom**

##### ***4.4.1 Brief History of Grace Baptist Church.***

Grace Baptist church is a member of the Ghana Baptist Convention. This church started as an English speaking fellowship in the Baptist Reading Room, Kumasi on the 9<sup>th</sup> of July 1964 at the invitation of two Baptist missionaries namely Rev. Maurice Smith and Miss Evelyn Stone who also led the fellowship up to June 1965. After the exit of Rev. Maurice, the fellowship was organized into a church under the leadership of Mr. Emmanuel Ephraim in 1968 with 68 members.

In 1969, the Aliens Compliance Order by the then Busia government to flush out all illegal immigrants from the country led to the exit of virtually all the Yorubas who constituted the membership of the Ebenezer Baptist Church whose auditorium was nearing completion. The then year old Grace Baptist Church assumed responsibility for the completion of the constructional work on the building and their furnishing and moved into it in February 1970. During this time, it was strictly an English speaking church. But four years down the lane, they started introducing Twi language in the church. Many ministers have led the church, but the one under whose leadership the church witness a holistic transformation and development is Rev. Dr. Kojo Osei-Wusuh. Currently, the church has a membership of 4,000 adult, 450 teenagers and 1,200 children (40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Brochure, 2008).

#### **4.4.2 *Understanding Christian Education***

According to Oppong, Christian education is the whole ministry of the church. And for him as the minister in charge of Christian education, every programme of the church must be towards making the members disciples of Jesus Christ, united in close fellowship and ministering to the spiritual, emotional and physical needs of persons who comes across the gates of the church.

#### **4.4.3 *Patterns of Education***

Oppong, who is the Minister in charge of Christian education at the Grace Baptist Church said Christian education is the aim of every activity that goes on in the church, therefore in the Baptist Church, there is Christian Education Board at the National level and at the local levels as well and they facilitates the educational programmes of the entire church as well as the other auxiliaries of the church. For them Christian education starts the very moment one enters the church as a new member. Such a person is taking to the enquiries class where he/she is taught how to be a Christian, how to forge a lasting relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ and also what to do to be part of the Baptist family. If the person is so willing and accepts the Lord Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour, he/she is promoted to the Baptismal class where a three-month lesson about understanding the basic tenets of the Christian faith is taught.



On completion of the lessons, an interview is organised and only those who pass are baptised and added to the membership of the church. After baptism, the person is promoted to the Maturity where they spend three months, learning about the church as a family, church covenant and how to grow in the Lord. After this stage the person is given a permanent Sunday school class to belong to depending on his or her age. The Sunday school class is been arranged according to ages so that the sense of belonging among people of the same age will be strong. He said Christian education also takes places in the auxiliary groups like the Men's Ministry, Women Missionary Union (WMU), Youth Fellowship, Young Adult, Adult and Young Ladies fellowships respectively. There is the family enrichment Board comprising of married couples, singles, and widows who meet separately. The programmes of each of these groups are geared towards a holistic development of the person.

The church also has a very vibrant Teens Ministry for all young people in their teenage years, through which they are led to know Christ, nurtured to live in Him and taught how to develop themselves holistically. According to him, one major annual programme these young people go through is Vacation Bible School. The church also has a children ministry for children aged One to twelve. He mentioned a worship service as a means not only to worship God but also to teach the people how to worship God. According to him, the Midweek service is also aimed at teaching the Word of God. He mentioned the Teens Service and the Children services as well. Oppong believes Christian education is incomplete without the Sunday school. It is a moment where an in-depth study of the Word of God is done

and people have the opportunity to express themselves. He said because of the importance they attach to the Sunday school they are often referred to as “*People of the Book*”.

#### **4.4.4 Impact Assessment**

Nyanor said he was happy that the educational programmes are impacting the people and leading to the transformation of lives. This he said is seen in their lifestyles, family life and career development. Oppong’s response was that Christian education is supposed to transform lives but it seems the transformation in the lives of people are not being felt given the spate of vices going on all around us. For him, people must be engaged one on one because that can yield good results.

#### **3.4.5 Nominalism**

Nyanor said, “Nominalism is within the church.” He explained that this is because about 40 per cent of the members shun the study of the Word of God and this affects their foundation and so they profess the faith all right but they are not able to live the good Christian life.

#### **4.4.6 Educational Materials**

Oppong explained that in the Baptist Churches of the Ghana Baptist Convention, they have a uniformed material for Sunday school, which is prepared by the Christian Education Board. Their materials come twice in the year – first half and

second half of the year respectively. But sometimes where there are specific issues of importance that needs to be handled with urgency, the mainstream material is suspended for it to be addressed. Asumadu also collaborated Nyanor's response by affirming that the main teaching material comes from the National headquarters but the local church can deal with some specific topics and issues as well.

#### **4.4.7 Educators/Facilitators**

According to Oppong, the church trains all facilitators of the educational ministry. This is done twice in the year. As to whether their educators are up to the task, Oppong observed that some people do not have teachable spirit and would not learn from others or allow themselves to be trained. Others too have the zeal to work but "because the pew is getting stronger by the day"; the teacher must be well informed and adequately prepared. Nyanor added that the task requires commitment and preparedness. He said their church usually motivate teachers through awards and other incentives to boost their moral. Through participant observation, this writer observed that the educators are predominantly male, with women.

#### **4.5 The Christian educational approach of the Calvary Charismatic Centre (CCC) Ayigya**

##### **4.5.1 A Brief History of Calvary Charismatic Centre**

Calvary Charismatic Centre was founded by Pastor Ransford Obeng single-handedly in 1985 at the Ministries Canteen, Adum, when he was a pastor at the Light House Assembly of God church at Akwatialine, Kumasi. They later moved to Guinness wholesale, Adum, then to the Airport Roundabout and finally to their

Ayigya location. C C C. later broke affiliation with Assemblies of God Church in 1992 with One thousand membership and since then has been an independent Charismatic church with branches all over Ghana and beyond in accordance with the great commission mandate. The central branch at Ayigya which is the focus of the researcher's work has three thousand members, eight full time Pastors and twelve par-time pastors.

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#### **4.5.2 *Understanding of Christian education***

According to the Pastor in charge of Christian education, Sarpong, Christian education entails teaching people to know and understand what they believe, especially, the basic tenets of the Christian faith and doctrine. Aduamah, a pastor of the C C C. also defined Christian education as the process of training the believer to understand the basic doctrines and bringing the person to a point where he/she knows and appreciates what practical Christianity is about.

#### **4.5.3 *Pattern of Education***

Sarpong said at Calvary Charismatic Centre, they have two programmes called “discipleship” programme and the “School for Christian development”. This he explained that the former is basically for new converts and they are given the foundations for Christian living based on topics such as sin and its effects, repentance, quiet time, salvation, Holy Spirit, stewardship and many others. The founder and Leader of the church, Obeng underscored what Sarpong said by pointing out that a new person in the church is considered like a person who is sick

and has come to the hospital for cure. The person must therefore pass through the process to get well. This process takes six months, after which they go through another four weeks of teaching with the Senior Pastor, Obeng. These four weeks of teaching is dubbed, “Who we are and why we do the things that we do. This course explains the vision, reasons why things are done the way they are done in the church. After this, the person goes through an interview and finally meets the Senior Pastor for a special induction service into the membership of the church.

The School for Christian development is also carried out for members who have gone through the first stage (discipleship programme). The people are divided into different classes permanently to study the Word of God every Sunday in the course of the service. These divisions are done based on ages for different application. According to Obeng, the church records ninety five percent enrolments in the Sunday Bible Study Classes. When asked how they could achieve such higher percentage of membership attending Bible Study classes, he said, they have strategically scheduled it within the Sunday Service not before or after but within. The other medium through which the people are educated is the Sunday Worship Service and the Wednesday evening service. He mentioned one other programme as School for Christian Ministry Bible Course taught for one year. This is specially designed to develop those who have the desire to be in part- time Christian ministry.



Sarpong explained further that in his church, Christian education also takes place through the ministries and departments which are namely children's, youth, young adults, women's and men's departments. There are other ministries which are made up of the ushering/greeters, traffic wardens, security, temple service, information, young people volunteers, family life, mother to be, drama/choreography, father to be, parent/child forum, single parents, divorce care, house helps, single life and young at heart and many other ministries. He said, "We nurture the soul, the body and the Spirit. We bring medical doctors, psychologists, bankers, and farmers to talk to the people." Stunned by the house helps ministry, the researcher asked more questions and it was revealed that the church seems to be full of people from the high class society and professionals who have these helping hands at home.

#### **4.5.4 Impact Assessment**

For Sarpong, there is no yardstick by which transformation can be measured but at C C C. they measure the impact by the response they get. He mentioned that there are many testimonies to that effect. Aduamah believes that the Christian life is best seen by example and therefore the leaders of the church exemplify what they teach for members to emulate. Obeng the founder and leader also believes that as people go through the discipleship process and the Sunday Bible Study Classes they come to understand what it means to be in the church and how to live a fruitful life. He said he de-emphasise coming to the Pastor for blessings and rather emphasises on personal relationship with the Lord.

#### **4.5.5 Nominalism**

On nominalism, Sarpong had this to say, “My sister, nominalism is everywhere including this church. It is something we cannot do much about.” Aduamah says some people may come to church everyday but have serious questionable characters. This is because their understanding of the Christian life is shallow. Every Christian who gets the knowledge but cannot apply it to the day-to-day happenings and does his/her own thing outside the Word of God is a nominal Christian. Such people have not had a real encounter with the Lord.

#### **4.5.6 Educational Materials**

According to Sarpong, the church has a central educational policy for all their churches in Ghana and elsewhere. This central policy is limited to only the discipleship programme. With this programme, the whole churches use one material for uniformity in the basic doctrines of the faith. But with the Sunday Bible Study, Obeng says it is not uniform, but at the Headquarters at Ayigya, he, as the Senior Pastor recommends books that are educative and doctrinally sound for use as study materials.

#### **4.5.7 Educators/facilitators**

According to Aduamah, people who are actually trained in Christian ministry at various levels are the educational facilitators of the church. He added that children ministry teachers are matured Christians who go through training to equip them for the ministry. Sarpong thinks that even though they have facilitators, but not all of

them are well equipped for the ministry. This is because some just love to be among them but lack the discipline to prepare well. For him, it is not all about teaching; it is being interested in every aspect of the lives of the people entrusted under one's care. Obeng reiterated on Sarpong's words by pointing out that their biggest challenge is to get enough good teachers and workers for the various ministries. He continued, "You may have a good idea but it must be passed on through good educators/facilitators otherwise your purpose becomes defeated, and this is our challenge my sister." Here, again, it was reported that the educators are predominantly male with few women.

#### **4.6 Christian Education Approach of Calvary Methodist Church, Amakom**

##### ***4.6.1 A Brief History of Calvary Methodist Church.***

The Amakom Calvary Methodist Church was founded on the 13<sup>th</sup> of February 1949 by three dynamic people, namely Mrs. Mary Frans, Sister Jane Neizer and Jemima Jonah. These amazing women were ardent worshippers of the Wesley Methodist Society Adum. In their bid to bring regular worshipping closer to their area of residence and win more souls within their environment they started the church at Mrs Mary Frans home and not long their membership rose to twenty and they were recognised as a society of the then Kumasi Circuit. They moved to a shed at Old Amakom and then later to the City Council School at New Amakom. By 1961, the membership had risen to five hundred. The need for a permanent church building dawned on them. They bought a piece of land from the then Amakom, Nana Kwaku Attah. By 1976, the society became a section under the Asawase circuit and later received a Connexional approval at the 25<sup>th</sup> Annual Methodist Conference

held at Sekondi in 1986, (Sefah, 2005). The Church under the leadership of able leaders has continued to thrive as one of the most vibrant Methodist Churches in the Kumasi Metropolis.

#### **4.6.2 *Understanding of Christian Education***

According to Impraim, Christian education involves the whole church and its activities from the cradle to the grave. This he explained that education in the church start from the very day a person enters into the church and continues through till death as long as the person is in the church.

#### **4.6.3 *Patterns of education***

Regarding the pattern of education in the church Impraim said in the Methodist Church Christian education starts immediately one enters or enrol in the church. He mentioned that the new converts are called Catchumen and they are taken through the basic teachings of the Christian faith. After they accept baptism and confirmation they become full members and this stage too has a different set of teachings and education they go through. Oteng Sefah observed that Christian education also takes place through the various organizations such as Men's fellowship, Women's Fellowship, Suzanna Wesley, Christ Little Band, Youth Fellowship, Choir, Singing Band and Guild. He added that Methodist Church Ghana has five boards, one of which is the Education and Youth Board, which is also replicated at the Diocesan level as well as the circuit and societal levels. This Board in the society is called the Education and Youth Committee, they concentrate

on youth matters and as well as the literature for Bible Studies. The Committee on Ministries also have a responsibility to see to it that the organizations in the church draw their programmes in conformity to the national programmes and implement them. They collect quarterly report and also report at the quarterly meetings of the society leaders meetings. Through the reports they are able to evaluate and measure the impact of the programmes.

Agyemang also mentioned the Bible Class system in the Methodist Church. This he explained that in the Methodist Church the Bible Class system is one of the pillars through which the members are made to study the Scriptures and so every member of the church has a Bible class he/she belongs to. And in the Calvary Methodist Church, Kumasi every class has twenty-five members. There is also the Education and Youth Committee which takes care of the literature for Bible Studies. Agyemang further mentioned the committee on ministries who are solely responsible for organisation of the church's evangelistic programmes such as revivals, promote sale of Christian materials.

Asked about children's ministry, Agyemang said one vital ministry in the Calvary Methodist church of Amakom, Kumasi is the Children's service, which is popularly called Sunday school. This he said comprises of children of one year old to seventeen years. They meet and worship together and afterwards break into different groups according to their ages for Bible studies.



#### **4.6.4 Impact Assessment**

Impraim said, the impact depends on the people and is yes and no. Yes, because some of the people are very serious in the Lord while others are just “followers” who would not allow themselves to be educated or transformed. Oteng Sefah on the other hand blamed the non-transformation of lives on the leaders or facilitators of the educational programmes by saying that some leaders can twist the materials to lose its meaning and intent.

Agyemang said that transformation takes place in the lives of those who are serious minded Christians. Sometimes, too, people go through baptism and confirmation when they have not really given their lives to Christ. There cannot be any meaningful transformation in the life of such people. They only become churchgoers.

#### **4.6.5 Nominalism in the church**

Agyemang was of the view that the root cause of nominalism in the churches is due to the fact that people pride themselves in being born into the church rather than being genuine Christians. Other people may also find their way into big positions in the church and society where their decisions carry weight but they may not really be born again Christians and so though they hold positions and are ‘powerful’ they do not manifest good Christian character.

#### **4.6.6 Educational materials**

According to Impraim, in the Methodist Church Ghana, their educational materials are brought from the National headquarters to the Dioceses, Circuits and Societies. Each organization has their material and it is uniform everywhere. The materials are adapted to meet the needs of the societies. There is also the Weekly Bible study material, which comes twice in the year; the children service material, and the materials for various organizations. Agyemang collaborated this by saying that what applies to one Methodist Church applies to every church just that its richness depends on the resources and facilities available in a particular society.

#### **4.6.7 Educators/facilitators**

On the part of the Calvary Methodist church and for that matter the Methodist Church Ghana, Impraim said, the Weekly Bible classes are led by church leaders who are matured Christians and most of whom have gone through training for the task. Before they lead, they are led in preparation by the Minister. There are also the Bible Class leaders and all other leaders orientation courses organized every year. According to Oteng Sefah the children Sunday school teachers undergo yearly training. All those who teach and hold other leadership positions go through training at the circuit, to the diocese and as well as at the connectional level. When asked about the involvement of women in the ministry, it was realized that there were women all right but it was obvious that the men were in the leading.

#### **4.7 The Christian Educational approach of the Harvest Chapel International, Asafo**

##### ***4.7.1 Brief History of Harvest Chapel***

Harvest Chapel started as a fellowship with the name Calvary Road Incorporated. It was basically a music ministry like Agape Incorporated. It was started by one Rev. Spencer Duncan on the campus of University of Ghana, Legon. It spread to other schools. The Kumasi branch of this fellowship was inaugurated in 1992. The fellowship changed its name from Calvary Road Incorporated to Harvest International Ministries. Between 1993 and 1994, they started churches in the Country, beginning from Accra, Takoradi and then Cape Coast. The Kumasi branch was started in 1997. The churches were named Harvest Chapel International. The researcher's work took her to this church to investigate into their educational ministry and the following are the outcome.

##### ***4.7.2 Understanding of Christian Education***

Owusu Ansah pointed out that Christian education is the whole ministry of the church. Thus it involves every aspect of the church's ministry. It includes the offertory and dancing that takes place in the church. It involves the little baby in the church to the gray haired man or woman. He said, through the liturgy, people are taught how to worship the Lord as well as how to give to God and fellow man. Sermons are crafted with the purpose of developing and building up the people of God. Everything that goes on within the church is all aimed at growing and developing the members not only spiritually but holistically. Christian education is therefore the whole life and duty of the church.

#### ***4.7.3 Pattern of education***

Owusu Ansah explains that Christian education in Harvest Chapel education is done in various ways. The structured ones include Bible Studies organized according to classes on Wednesdays and Sunday morning worship service for adults as well as children. There is also the Friday prayer meeting where every member is taught how to pray by praying. In this sense, every moment is educational moment in the church because the best way to be taught how to pray is to pray. Also sermons are crafted with the purpose of developing and building up the people of God for practical living. Other ministries include the youth ministry called the People of Tomorrow, Men's and Women's ministries called Men of Vision in evangelism and daughters of Zion respectively. Other departments include harvest football team, married couples and singles fellowships. He also mentioned some structured educational programmes as visitation and evangelism but was quick to add that sometimes what happens during visitations is unstructured and is done when and as the Lord leads. He said all these and other programmes of the church are drawn to meet the holistic needs of the members and so become relevant to the total person.

#### ***4.7.4 Impact Assessment***

On the part of Owusu Ansah, the impacts of their programmes can be seen in the lives of the members through their involvement and participation in the church's programmes. People who otherwise were ignorant are able to read the Bible by and

for themselves, pray, sing, conform to the tenets of the Christian faith, able to forgive, and invest because the church has educated them to do so. Through the education, talents and spiritual gifts become manifest and people use it for the glory of God. He said some people are investing because they have been taught how to save for the future. Many of them through the church's education are now understanding cleanliness of the environment as well as and prevention of diseases. Many have been motivated to pursue higher educational standards and some have found themselves in gainful employment. Also there are Christian footballers whose talents were unearthed through the Church's football team and one of the members is now in Mauritius playing professional football. Owusu Ansah concludes that, "Spiritually, I think our members are doing well however perfection will be attained at the coming of Christ."

#### **4.7.5 Nominalism**

Owusu Ansah explained that the difficulty with the issue of nominalism is that there are levels of understanding. In many cases people who have reached higher levels of education easily understand what is being communicated but most semi-illiterate and illiterate members do not grasp things and concepts and therefore have a very low level of understanding. Biblical truths are communicated through concepts before they can be understood, it is therefore easier for most of the educated people to understand and comprehend things, but whether they practice or not is another thing altogether.



#### **4.7.6 Educational Materials**

Ansah said they have educational materials for Sunday Bible Studies of which content is holistic. It touches all areas of life. For him, life is supposed to be holistic and the church ministry must be holistic in nature, so that it will not only prepare the members for heaven but to be able to fit into the society and live a fulfilled life.

#### **4.7.7 Educators/Facilitators**

On the issue of educators/facilitators for the church's educational ministry Owusu Ansah said they train educational facilitators who have the gift and passion for the work of ministry. However, the Pastors are also very much involved in the teaching both at the congregational level and the Sunday school level.

### **4.8 The Christian educational approach of the Frontiers Chapel, Kwadaso**

#### **4.8.1 Brief History of Frontiers Chapel**

Frontiers Chapel is a Penteco-Charismatic Church, which started in January 2010 at the Prempeh College Preparatory School by Rev. Degraft Kwame Adjei. It is a church aimed at reaching the middle class society. Its membership is about 30 adults and 21 children.

#### **4.8.2 Understanding Christian Education**

Adjei said Christian education involves the administration and coordination of programmes or strategies to facilitate the spiritual growth or discipleship of believers into the likeness of Christ. He gave the biblical basis for Christian education by quoting Matthew 28:19-20: making disciples, baptizing them, and

“teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you”. He said a noteworthy feature of the great commission is that it mandates the apostles and the church of all ages to teach. In fact, teaching is spoken of as their chief missionary task. They are to go in order to teach. Going is but a means to the end – teaching. He further pointed out that Christian education is not just a recital of Bible books, catechisms, and creeds, nor careful adherence to neither a curriculum, nor a bag of tricks to keep children entertained. It develops the person into a disciple, into the likeness of Christ.

#### ***4.8.3 Pattern of Education***

According to Adjei, the pattern in Frontiers Chapel include Adult education, mentoring, Bible Study discussion Groups, childhood education, Family Ministry, Sunday school, Vacation Bible School, recreation as well as leadership development conference. He explained that new members are taken through a series of Bible Lessons to understand the basic tenets of the Christian faith and life. Afterwards, the person is encouraged to join any of the various ministries of the church especially where he/she feels called to serve and to be an active participant in the activities and programmes of the church, since every moment in the church is educational moment. When asked about the traditional groupings as pertained in every church like the Men’s’ fellowship, women fellowship and youth, he responded, it is a process, now our focus is to build structures so that when we start the groupings, they can stand because they have capable leadership.

#### **4.8.4 Impact Assessment**

The word of God must be made real in the life of an individual. What the church teaches and preaches must reflect in the day-to-day living of the members. Christianity is a way of life, morning, afternoon and evening; it must be lived in its totality. It must manifest in our marriage, work, and all of life's endeavours. The impact of the educational programmes must be the total transformation of the person spiritually, physically, socially, economically, emotionally and psychologically.

#### **4.8.5 Nominalism**

On nominalism, Adjei said, "My sister, this is a big issue. It is a big issue because there are people in the church who are just Sunday Christians, nothing else nothing more. They are mouth-confessing Christians, not practicing ones. There are some in my church, some in your church and everywhere. No church is without nominal members".

#### **4.8.6 Educational Materials**

The founder of Frontiers chapel's response with regard to educational materials was that they use Christian materials that have good and sound content regarding the Christian faith. Some he said are local as well as foreign materials. He said the new converts materials is basically about understanding the basic doctrines of the Christian faith so that knowing what one believe and why he/she believes in that is a very good foundation for any Christian. He further added that they have not

developed any Sunday Bible Study material of their own because the church is an emerging one and that they hope to develop their own educational materials in the near future.

#### **4.8.7 Educators/Facilitators**

Adjei once again said they are now taking people through training to equip them to teach and to be educational facilitators who will help in the various ministry areas of the church. But in the interim, everything revolves round the Pastor who is the main educational facilitator.

#### **4.9 The Christian educational approach of the Ramseyer Presbyterian Church, Adum**

##### **4.9.1 Brief History of Ramseyer Presbyterian Church, Adum**

According to Mr. Samuel Kwasi Boateng, Catechist of the church, the church was established in 1896 by the Rev. Fritz Ramseyer. It was named Presbyterian Church of Ghana, Ebenezer Congregation. It is the first Presbyterian Church to be planted in the Ashanti Region. After the death of Ramseyer, the leadership of the church taught it wise to immortalize him so they named the church after him, Ramseyer Congregation. Their auditorium was dedicated in 1906. Over the years, the Congregation has been led by many Ministers of the gospel with the current Minister as Rev. R. K. Asamoah Prah who is the head of the Kumasi district of the Presbyterian Church. The Congregation has a population of two thousand members.

#### ***4.9.2 Understanding of Christian Education***

According to Attafuah, church education ministry has many forms of expression. It also reaches into every aspect of church life and contribute to the cause of Christ and the spiritual growth of individuals. Through Christian education, believers are prepared for ministry.

For her, Christian education is a means of honouring Christ's command, a way of conserving the Church's heritage of God's work in the lives of men and women, a way of establishing the church's beliefs and practices. People need to understand the significance of the church's activities and practices. Why is an offering taken? What do the bread and cup mean in the communion service? Why do we sing hymns and what do they mean? For her, explaining some of these important aspects of meaningful church participation represent a challenge for the teaching ministry.

#### ***4.9.3 Patterns of Education***

According to Attafuah, there is no clear cut way of handling new converts in the Presbyterian Church of Ghana. Each congregation plans and prepares its discipleship programme for new converts. Some churches take them through three months of teaching whilst another can take them through six months of teaching before baptizing them. The point is that they are taken through the basic tenets of the Christian faith so that they understand clearly what it means to be a Christian.



According to Antwi, in the Presbyterian Church of Ghana, education has been patterned along age groups. There are the children from age 1-12, the Junior Youth from 13-18, Young Peoples Guild from 18-30, Young Adults 30-40 and Adult 40 and beyond. There is also a ministry for the aged, which has no clear-cut age, but for the old people. Antwi said there is annual graduation where people are graduated from one level to another.

He said as part of the education and the church's bid to make people Christian, children are baptised, and the parents are charged to bring the children up in the fear of the Lord. He stated that of course the church is not left out, it is the cooperate responsibility of the church and parents but the latter is more and directly responsible for the good upbringing of the child. The researcher was also told that confirmation of baptism is done for people who are fifteen years and above. It is after this that one is allowed to take the Eucharist and also introduce to tithe paying.

Attafuah explained that the Ramseyer congregation has all the above generational groupings in place where people are nurtured in the Christian faith and can also share their experiences together as an identifiable group. One thing that interests the writer was the revelation that only women who are forty years and above could join the Women's fellowship or the Men's fellowship in the Presbyterian Church.

Asamoah-Prah, the District Minister in charge of the Ramseyer Congregation explained that in the Presbyterian Church, there are Seven Directorates, namely Education, Church Life and Nurture, Missions and Evangelism, Department of Administration and Human Resource, Ecumenical and Social Relationship, Finance Department and Development and Social Services. He said these seven directorates are at the national level and replicated in the Presbytery, Districts and Local levels of the Church. Therefore in Ramseyer Presbyterian Church, all the seven directorates are in operation seeing to the general spiritual and physical growth of the congregation.

Of the work of the directorate in the Ramseyer Congregation, Attafuah explained that the Education directorate is in charge of the general education for the church's schools and other institutions if any. Church Life and Nurture directorate deals with congregational life. It sees to the nurturing of the individual members of the generational groups into maturity in the Christian faith. It therefore works with the various grouping from the children Sunday school to the aged in the church. It sees to it that programmes of the groups are good and life changing programmes that can result in the transformation of lives into Christ likeness. They are also in charge of the singing groups and even special persons like widows, etc. They are in charge of the Bible Studies of the congregation. According to Attafuah, the Missions and Evangelism directorates is self-explanatory. They are in charge of the church's mission work in whatever form. The Administration and Human Resource department are basically responsible for building human capacity of the

congregation. They give out training to build up their human resource capital ranging from all church leaders to the ministers. Ecumenical and social relationship sees to the church's relationship with the society, other churches and the outside world. Of course the finance department is responsible for efficient handling of the church's finances. And last but not the least is the Development and social services, which handles the health, agriculture, vocational, etc. aspect of the church's ministry.

#### **4.9.4 *Impact Assessment***

Attafuah said, the impact can be assessed looking at the transformation that has been happening in people's lives. Some come to church knowing nothing about Jesus and how he can change lives but through teachings, they come to appreciate the power of God to change them and many a time we witness lives changed to the glory of God. Apart from the change in the spiritual lives, we also see people develop themselves to fit into the society. The point is that the church's mandate is a holistic one; therefore we work on the heart as well as the hand. People are taught and encouraged, and challenged to cast vision for their lives and work towards its attainment, be it academic, career development or family life. In fact we see improvement and development in the lives of the membership day by day.

#### **4.9.5 *Nominalism***

According to Attafuah, no minister can deny the presence of nominal members in his/her congregation. In every society, there are people who are serious and people who are not and the church is no exception.

#### ***4.9.6 Educational materials***

According to Asamoah-Prah, the Presbyterian Church's material for Bible Studies is prepared from the national office of the church by the Church Life and Nurture Directorate. It is used nationwide. Apart from this, each generational group receives programme outline or material from their national office, which is a guide to what they ought to do within each particular time of meeting. Notwithstanding, there is room for innovations and each congregation is free to address a local issue when it becomes necessary. He reported that the materials for Bible Studies are prepared by a team of competent theologians.

#### ***4.9.6 Educators/Facilitators.***

The Leaders or facilitators of the various programmes of the church are trained at the local level, district, presbytery and national levels by the Administration and Human Resource directorate of the church. This training takes place annually and there are refresher courses in between to boost the competence of the leaders/teachers that work at all levels of the church's ministry.

#### ***4.9.7 General Responses to Questionnaires***

So far out of the expected respondent figure of 100, 74 were received with the following results. Five people did not understand what Christian education is basically about. Ten people understood Christian education to be the impartation of Christian values and norms. Fifteen people saw the approaches to Christian

education as mainly through the organizations/groups/auxiliaries. Twenty-one people attested to the fact that their lives have been transformed through the educational ministry of their churches. Ten people considered nominalism to be as a result of people's unwillingness to give up the pleasures of the world in order to do the biddings of God. Three people saw the churches educational ministry as a holistic ministry whilst ten people were not sure whether the educators/facilitators in the churches have the expertise to do so.

#### **4.9.8 Some of the educational Programmes of the churches understudy**

Samples of the educational activities that go on in the churches understudy for all the various groupings in the churches. The researcher through participant observation realised that almost all the churches have similar programmes. The table below are some of the activities this researcher took notice of across the churches.

Group	Activity
Youth/Teens	Bible studies, testimonies, Picnics, Love Matters, the Youth and Valentine, Pre-Altar Conference, Legal implication of "I DO", Breakfast meetings, General cleaning, the Youth/teen God uses, Retreats, Excursions, Health talk, recreations, Versus recitals, Sharing, Pick & Act, gifts day, visitors day, career guidance conference, Music & choreography night, vacation Bible school, hymns unlimited, touching lives and evaluations.
Children	Reading of scriptures, recitals of versus, Bible quizzes, talk on children's personal hygiene, learning of songs, learning through visuals, children's day.
Women	Talk, food craft, Bible studies, managing in-laws, knowing your legal rights, testimonies and praises, prayer & fasting, etc.
Men	Testimonies, Bible studies, talk, business ethics, prayer & fasting, Being a responsible husband and parent, visitations,



	etc.
Adult	The role of adults in the home & church, Bible studies, managing the adult's health, sharing experiences with the youth, the Christian adult as a role model for the young generation.
Couples	Strengthening the family altar, renewal of marriage vows, communication in marriage, outings and picnics, etc.
Singles	Talk on Building sustainable career, knowing Mr./Ms right, before you say I do and socialization
Young people/young adults	Bible Studies, debates, Family meetings, games, prayers, socializations, sharing, excursions, etc.

#### 4.10 Concluding Remarks

In this chapter, research findings for each of the questions have been presented. It is obvious that all the churches studied in one way or the other has a form of Christian education ministry. Thus, all the selected churches recognize Christian education as an integral part of the ministry work. Although the work is not a comparative study of the churches studied, it can be said that the data presented in this chapter point out a certain degree of uniqueness of every church that was covered.

The critical assessment of the impacts of the Christian educational ministries of the studied churches by respondents' revealed that the churches are making steady impacts. The strengths and weaknesses of the educational ministries of the churches surveyed could further be identified in details for relevant improvement as the data is further analysed and synthesised from the perspective of the African Christian theology of education. This constitutes the task of the next chapter.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### ANALYSIS OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION MINISTRIES IN KUMASI: DISCUSSION OF RESEARCH FINDINGS

#### 5.1 Introduction

Based on the findings obtained from the data presented under the previous chapter, this section is an attempt to give brief assessment of Christian education ministries of the selected churches in Kumasi. This is an attempt made by the researcher to interact with the issues raised by the respondents in their answers to the questionnaires and interviews that were administered and conducted respectfully to them. In the attempt to discuss the respondents' views about how Christian education is conducted in their respective churches references will be made from the subjects of the dynamic of Christian education discussed under chapter two of this study.

#### 5.2 Understanding Christian education

To begin with the responses to the question asked about the meaning of Christian education that respondents gave as they see in their local churches, it can be said that most of the definition given relate to the individual members.

Thus from the various respondents' views that the understanding of Christian education focuses on the growth needs of the members of their local congregations. It appears that their definitions do not take into consideration both the outreach needs of its community as well as the growth needs of its local congregation. They only emphasize that of the growth needs of which in most cases they stress on the needs of

the members. It can be argued that for holistic understanding of Christian education, the various church programmes of music, missions, evangelism, discipleship, Bible study, prayer force, welfare system and various forms of the church's ministry must all be taken into consideration.

The church must be both culturally relevant and socially sensitive. It should base its ministries on evident needs and find a balance between both evangelism and education. Thus, social, geographical and cultural issues must be taken into consideration if contemporary church ministries in Kumasi are going to be relevant and meaningful.

It appears that most of the answers given by the respondents on the issue of the meaning of Christian education do not take into consideration their African, and for that matter their Ghanaian existential context. To Gangel (1991, 14) Christian education is “an education distinctly based upon theological propositions derived from the text of scripture.” It means that an African theology of Christian education must be founded on Bible-based theological propositions in African perspective. Therefore, it is the Christian education ministries of the local churches in Africa that would be the means of communicating such a theology or biblical truths.

It is when teaching and learning take place that people can be said to have understood truth. In Ghana, this requires that the Ghanaian worldview, rooted in African culture, be taken into consideration in communicating teaching and learning process. It can be

pointed out that Christianity, by its unique and universal message, stands the best chance of fulfilling that, which is implied, in the Ghanaian concepts of God. What this means is that there is a good reason for Africans to have, a unique and different understanding of the biblical message because of “their cultural, geographical, spiritual, social and temperamental background. We are inclined to argue that because theology is expression of experience of the Divinity at work, difference in environment means different experiences of God at work.

### 5.3 The Educational facilitators

I agree with H. W. Byrne (1973: 230) that regardless of the type of curriculum adopted, one thing to remember is that ninety percent of curriculum is the teacher. Regardless of the excellence of the curriculum, a poor teacher will turn out a poor product in a poorly educated student. And conversely a good teacher can be successful with a poor curriculum, however, a good teacher can be better, and a staff of good teachers can be excellent, if they are united by a good curriculum. It can be said from Byrne’s submission that although curriculum is essential yet for a successful Christian education, the teacher’s role is supreme.

With reference to the facilitators/educators, many of the churches studied reported that they have in a way been training their educators. The emphases is however placed on training the teachers which find strength in the sense that Christian education involve setting goals, identifying needs, planning programmes, teaching persons, developing skills, and evaluating accomplishments. It could be said, however, that inasmuch as the

educational facilitators need to be trained, of which almost all the churches surveyed train their members in one way or the other, there is the need to equip these facilitators. The point here has to do with equipping the educators rather than training them because persons need more than training when they are faced with doing a job. In the words of Grigs, et al, (1988: 76) “they need nurture and support that come from sources other than training strategies. One of the best ways to equip persons to accomplish their tasks is to provide a class or a workshop. Such workshops would not only equip persons with skills and information but also provide a significant measure of nurture and support.

#### **5.4 Impact assessment**

Communication of biblical content is an indispensable goal of Christian education. If in the wisdom of God, He has provided us with an inerrant Scripture, then it seems logical that one of our responsibilities is to convey knowledge of His Word and an understanding of His plan to others. But God’s word was never intended only for the sake of knowledge or understanding. As Paul writes, “Knowledge makes arrogant” (1 Cor 8:1). Rather, God gave Scripture for a purpose that encompasses far more than information. It was intended to change lives. Paul reminds Timothy of this purpose when he says that all Scripture is “Profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness” (2 Timothy 3:16). From this it can be argued that there is a dynamic quality to God’s word that does not settle for simple knowledge. Scripture consistently points us toward personal growth. From the respondents’ assessment of the impacts of their Christian education, it appears that most of their responses take Christ outside the change life and maturity they expect to see. However, the New Testament



has it that one of the metaphors of growth has to do with leading to maturity by becoming “complete in Christ” (Col 1:28). It involves a fundamental reorientation of people that produces changes in ways of looking at life.

Thus the following educational strategies (among others) encourage moral development:

- Involving students in-group decision-making about issues that actually arise in the group.
- Interactive teaching styles, which promote active student involvement in the lesson.
- Intergenerational education, which provides exposure to higher stages and to models of biblical lifestyle.
- Encouragement of taking the perspective of others (role-taking).

The Christian faith has made giant strides in Ghana, especially in Kumasi, with numerous churches on the increase virtually on a daily basis. However, concerns are frequently being expressed that the explosive growth of the Christian churches does not seem to be having the kind of effect Jesus envisioned for the Church when he gave the Great Commission (Matt. 28:18-20). For example, while Oppong pointed out that he does not see how some of the members’ lifestyle reconciles with what they are taught in the church. Oteng Sefah observes that the educational ministries seem to have minimal effect on entire Church members and for that matter their societies. It is obvious that in many cases the Gospel of Jesus Christ is not being effectively communicated in the local Churches. This is, at least in part, a failure of successful Christian education ministry. To the researcher the failure to make relevant impact is

due to the fact that significant engagement of the scriptural truth that are taught in the Churches has not been made with the religio-cultural background of the church members in the areas of their worldviews about the Supreme Being. This aspect of African belief is an important factor in effectively teaching about God in Africa, and provides a further argument for a theology of Christian education in Africa.

Another factor that can negatively or positively affect the impacts or the effectiveness of the Christian educational ministry has to do with the teaching process. It can be said that there is the need to make Christian theology and for that matter biblical truth accessible and understandable to Africans through the medium of effective teaching. A case in point is that, theories may be developed about God by the theologian or Bible scholar; however, it is left to the teacher to apply theology effectively in the lives of learners. It is in this light that De Jong declares (2003, 148) “Developing Christians through the medium of, or by means of, culture is the task of the teacher. Subjects are windows through which God’s revelation may shine so that faith is expanded and strengthened.” Thus for relevant impart, perhaps the example of Jesus will go a long way of helping the Christian educator. Jesus’ way of teaching was such that, He started where the learners were and allowed their responses and readiness guide the process. Thus for relevant impact of the church’s educational ministry, account must be taken of how Jesus taught.

## 5.5 Teaching Methods and Techniques

Most of the Churches studied pointed out that their major technique used in teaching is that of the discussion method. In further looking for teaching methods that is at home with the African context, none of the six churches studied could point one method, which is of African orient. It could be argued that methods of teaching, which are African when adopted, could yield relevant result. This is not to suggest that indigenous non-biblical material should be appropriated as resources for biblical studies in Ghanaian Churches. For this cannot be both theologically legitimate and contextually relevant. Rather, there could be “folklorizing” which means a retrieval of indigenous African narratives, folktales and poetry for reconstructing biblical theology in the context of the learners’ own cultures while eliminating the dehumanizing elements in that same culture.

Mbiti (1969, 237) has argued that though missionary Christianity called Africans “out of their traditional environment, it did not redeem them within it.” To the researcher, this has presumably led to a poor impact of Christianity in Africa in that although there are many religious activities, there is little concomitant character transformation. Could this be the reason why many Ghanaian Christians merely imitate Americans in preaching, dressing and general lifestyle?

## 5.6 The Instructional content and Curriculum

With reference to the curriculum of the Christian educational ministry, that is to say the content and material that form what the teacher teaches, it was realized that most of the

materials are not prepared by the local churches themselves but from their national headquarters. A case in point is that of the Ramseyer' Presbyterian Church and Grace Baptist Church. Wyckoff (1961) sees curriculum as "a carefully devised means of communication used by the church in its teaching ministry in order that the Christian faith and life may be known, accepted, and lived." This definition does not automatically presume that we use printed materials, classes, teachers, or any of the other things usually associated with curriculum.

A critical examination of each word and phrase as used by Wyckoff in his definition will help us to appreciate much more the importance of this view of curriculum. *Carefully devised* suggests that someone has spent time and energy thinking, designing and planning whatever the curriculum will become. *Means of communication* states that the intent of curriculum is to engage persons in dialogue with one another, not exclusively in structured, formal classrooms. *Used by the church* refers to the whole church, all of its members, the church corporate as the living body of Christ.

The phrase *in its teaching ministry* includes all of those activities and programmes that feature instruction and nurture as important elements for equipping persons to be servants of God, disciples of Jesus Christ. *In order that the faith and life may be known, accepted, and lived* describes the content and the purpose of the church's teaching ministry. It is not just a matter of learning some information about the Bible or Jesus, nor just a matter of stating what one believes. Rather, it is essentially putting into practice and living one's life as an expression of what one knows and believes.

This view of curriculum is equally appropriate for churches of all sizes. Thus the problem that can be identified concerns the question as to whether the materials and content prepared by and received from the National headquarters are relevant to the particular local church that uses the materials prepared. Can one be legitimate in arguing that a Christian education director responsible for a particular local church who prepares a material will have a more effective, useful and relevant material than the one who has no contact with the receptive learners but yet prepares the material for them? It can be pointed out that the one who has contact with his or her own members will have a better material in view of the fact that the latter takes into consideration the needs and maturity level of the church members.

In looking at how the materials are to be relevant to the Ghanaian context, it could be said that Christian educators (both those who prepare the curriculum/instructional materials - exegetes and those who teach - facilitators) need to make their theology understandable to the receptors. As Kato (1985, 12) succinctly puts it, "Africans need to formulate theological concepts in the language of Africa. But theology itself in its essence must be left alone."

We are inclined, therefore, to argue that the burden of the people who prepare the instructional material would be to examine the word of God and apply its message to the realities of the here and now." The aim is not to change the essence of theology, but to contextualize it to benefit Africans. This means that the Ghanaian educator needs to



understand the African context. Arguing in a similar line, Abogunrin (2003, 17) posits that African biblical scholars need to decolonize biblical interpretation by responding to their religiously and culturally pluralistic context.

In another work, the same author argues (2004, 9) that process is helped by the fact that “the Bible is more real to the peoples of Africa (than Western peoples), not because they cannot reason scientifically, but because most of the things described in the Bible still happen around us daily.” Thus, for Abogunrin: “The task before biblical scholars in Africa is for biblical truths that is authentically African, but which is at the same time orthodox and from which Christians from other continents can draw lessons, inspiration and encouragement.” All this is possible because African culture is so similar to Jewish culture, making it possible for Africans to understand biblical realities.

Again, Ilori (2005, 144–146) has insightfully observed that Education is said to be Christian when it “is an outgrowth of God’s revelation...(and) an outgrowth of the Christian worldview.” It is also Christian when the concepts are, “derived directly from sources provided by Christian theology, the Bible and Christian philosophy.”

The curriculum should integrate the Bible in theory and practice, with the Bible being a vital part of the content and integrated with all subject matter. Apart from being Bible-based, it must be life-related. In the words of Semenye (2006, 1480) “Relevant, theologically sound materials that address real-life issues need to be used. Our local

churches should not continue to be a dumping ground for irrelevant materials from elsewhere.” Only when Christian education addresses real-life issues in Africa in a practical way will it become “a means of improving, developing and nurturing the church in its authentic walk with Christ so that the applied word of God will have a positive impact on our societies.” Teaching is the main means of addressing the issues in question.

Agreeing, Adamo (2005, 24–25) proposes that “using the Words of the Bible as power is in accordance with African religion and tradition,” and differs from the tendency of Eurocentric biblical scholars to “treat the Bible more as a book of the past than as a book that speaks to the present.” The treatment of the Bible as a book of the present can be seen in some Akan Gospel songs, where Jesus Christ is not just a spiritual or philosophical entity, but also a dynamic personal reality in all life situations. In view of this, it could be suggested that the thoughts and aspirations of the people in the local Church who do not have access to advanced level theological education should be taken seriously...in our theological formulations and discourses. In an attempt to formulate African theology, however, care must be taken not to go into syncretism.

### 5.7 Special education

It is obvious that most of the respondents interviewed could not point out any special educational ministry. Participant observation as a researcher also revealed that even the teaching learning facilities and atmosphere is not physically challenged friendly. A case in point is that of Grace Baptist Church where most of the Sunday school classes for the

children, teenagers and adults are held upstairs. Could it be argued that this neglect of special education ministries in the local churches contribute to the reason why many physically and mentally challenged persons in our societies are found on the streets begging? If that is a legitimate reason, then churches should have programmes for special members, especially for those who are physically challenged.

In providing a programme for exceptional persons we also create an opportunity for ministry to the families of those individuals. Often families are excluded from the worship and fellowship because churches are not actually prepared to meet the spiritual, educational, physical and emotional needs of challenged persons. In view of that they may experience feelings of isolation and loneliness. Churches that provide for the needs of the disabled open the door for the entire family to participate in the life of the body of Christ.

## **5.8 Patterns of Learning**

### *Sunday school*

In looking at the patterns of Christian education, some of the churches, such as Presbyterian, Methodist and Baptist made mention of Sunday school, but from a different perspective. For the Presbyterians and the Methodist, Sunday school is for the children and not adults. The Presbyterians call the adults Sunday teaching as Bible Studies whilst the Methodist calls it Bible class. But for the Baptist Sunday school is for both adult and children. The question that comes to mind concerns with the issue as to whether it can be found in the Bible. Contrary to popular belief, Sunday school is

not mentioned in the Bible. It began in 18th century England when Robert Raikes taught children to read on Sunday, the only day they were not working to teach them literacy. The Bible was their primary text, and biblical teaching was part of the process (Freese & Brubaker: 406-407).

Making mention of Sunday school in this context of our discussions presupposes that the institution of Sunday school still exists, but the purposes have changed. Most Sunday schools mentioned from the respondents do not exist to teach literacy. Rather, the traditional focus is Bible knowledge in a classroom environment. My interactions with many respondents reveal that Sunday school is usually the first thing people think of when they hear the term “Christian Education.” This crosses denominational lines and has generally been taught by non-professional Christian educators.

Sunday School has been an evangelistic tool for many contemporary evangelical and charismatic Churches throughout Ghana. It appears today that Sunday school is the most common Christian education agency in the context of the church and claims both evangelism and edification as some of the key accomplishments. The Sunday school offers the opportunity for relationships to occur in distinct ways. People who are unimpressed or affected in worship service sometimes make a commitment to Christ after seeing Him in the lives of the friends they have made at Sunday school setting.

It can however be said that Sunday school as a driving force of Christian education has some loopholes. It appears to be the only agency that traditionally fulfils the purpose of

Christian education in the Kumasi church context. In contemporary times, as culture has been changing and many churches are adapting new strategies, many churches have used variations of Sunday School to meet specific needs – moving it to a different day of the week for adults, offering elective topics, or meeting in different locations. In our opinion the issue at stake here is to assess its impacts to see if it is fulfilling its objectives. If it is, then we are to keep it. If not, we are to revise it or replace it. The point is that we must be willing to leave the familiar methods without disturbing the essential message if our Christian educational ministry is to be fulfilling. An example in the need to modify the strategy has to do with Calvary Charismatic Centre (CCC) who in addition to the Sunday service the other medium through which the people are educated is the Wednesday evening service and the programme pointed out as School for Christian Ministry Bible Course taught for one year which is specially designed to develop those who have the desire to be in part- time Christian ministry.

#### *Age Group programmes*

Almost all of the churches studied in one way or the other has some sort of age group programme: Children's ministry, teen's ministry, youth, young adults and adults. The strengths in these agencies of Christian education are both biblical and sociological. First, biblically, God designed people primarily to need each other. This is the whole concept of body ministry found in the New Testament. Second, sociologically, people who meet with others who have similar characteristics or interests can effectively learn from each other in a group setting.



With reference to the children's ministry, it is worthy of note that many adults determine their choice of a church by the type of treatment their children receive there. This usually takes place in Sunday school setting or children's church service.

The teens and Youths have special needs and need a programme that allows them some solid interaction with other teens in an attempt to find relevant application of biblical truth. The challenge of this youth and teens ministry is to find relevant connections between the things they are learning in the context of ministry and their day-to-day existence at school, work, and social situations.

Adults begin at college age or tertiary education age and include young adults, middle adults and senior adults. The focus of Scripture is that the "older should teach the younger" (Titus 2), so adult ministry should encourage adults to become more involved in serving those who are younger than themselves. Whereas some churches in their programmes put more emphasis on some aspects of the age group more than the other, there should be a balance when approaching different age groups.

All the churches studied have children's worship service. 'Children's church' is usually held during the time of the regular morning service. The purpose is to provide a worship service that is similar to the adult service, but geared to their age level. It is a means of presenting biblical truth to them at a young age. It also serves

as a training ground to help them know what to expect when they are old enough to attend the adult service. Usually, children services are a blend of songs, Bible reading, prayer, storytelling, crafts, and other age –appropriate activities.

Grace Baptist Church happens to be the only Church that organises Vacation Bible School for its teens during the August -September school recess. This serves as an agency to study the Bible in a different environment. The strength of this programme lies in its informal environment, providing a concentrated time for Bible learning, activities fellowship.

In an age where many parents do not know how to provide an environment of God's consciousness, perhaps this motivates some Churches such as Grace Baptist to embark on a Family Ministry. This is found in the Old Testament (Deuteronomy 6) in its indication that the primary training ground for Christian Education should be the home. This teaches that the family structure should surround a child with an environment of God-consciousness from infancy. Thus the church's role is to be one of support and education-providing tools and training to make the home the centre of Christian education.

The reference to the various patterns of learning of the churches surveyed can be tabulated below in the table below:

Table 5.1: A Summary of the patterns of learning of some selected Churches in Kumasi

		NAME OF CHURCH					
		Calvary Methodist Church	Grace Baptist Church	Ramseyer Presbyterian church	CCC	Harvest chapel Internat.	Frontiers Chapel
PATTERNS OF LEARNING	Sunday School	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Adult Class	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Teens and Youth	✓	✓	✓	✓		
	Children's service	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
	Vacation Bible School		✓				
	Family Ministry	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
	Special education Ministry						
	House Help education Ministry				✓		
	Traditional pattern of Learning		✓				

### 5.9. Traditional Patterns of Learning

Again it was identified that only Grace Baptist Church had a form of traditional pattern of learning. This is the organisation of 'White Bible' ceremony for young ladies who are entering into marriage. It serves as a kind of initiation rite similar to the Akan concept of 'Bragoro' puberty rite. At this ceremony the lady is counselled about some realities of married life, crowned for staying pure, and given a sceptre

as a queen in Christ. Those who are unmarried witnesses are also given the encouragement to stay pure and truthful to God in their singleness states.

Christianity today seems to be using only foreign patterns of learning to teach Christian values. These patterns are missionary patterns of learning, which therefore make us unable to make any significant contributions. One of the many questions that arises then is, can we not make Christianity our own by picking our values through our indigenous pre-missionary patterns of learning? Many of our indigenous patterns of learning shares affinities with the Christian patterns of learning.

It appears that some Africans have neglected our pre-missionary patterns of learning because religion and everything that African people identify with as their own have been described by earlier 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century western missionaries and anthropologists as primitive, paganism, animism, heathen, superstitious, fetish, salvage and barbaric. These concepts were used by Europeans who were encountering different cultures in their attempt to describe religious phenomenon, which was so different and uncommon to their religious experiences. Africans have rejected such derogatory concepts in the efforts to describe Africans and their belief systems. In the effort to respond to this ridiculous western concept of Africans pre-missionary belief systems, some have come to be very hostile to western missionaries and their ideas about Africans. But the question that stands unanswered is can what Africans feel about western missionaries' description of

them solve the problem? In my candid opinion, the answer is a big no. Rather Africans must understand that the Europeans who came here had their cultural influences. They may have even been influenced by the assertion that all other people are inferior to White people and that God has made it so, so that the blacks will serve the whites (Roy P. Basler, Volume III, pp. 145-146). For such people with such capricious ideologies, everything about the African is inferior, from their religion to their educational patterns.

There is an urgent need to re-design an approach to the study of African cultural categories and indigenous knowledge systems for the up and coming generation to know the rich cultural heritage of our land. According to Gyekye (1996:) even though African Traditional religion has no sacred writings like Christianity and Islam, they philosophise. Nana Addo Dankwa (2004:) says, the African people have their own ways of recording events through stools, skins, arts and crafts, rites of passages and festivals. He emphasises that oral source has always been authentic source for the African. One can therefore search for values in all the systems of the Traditional Akan people.

Through the traditional patterns of learning, knowledge and desirable values are passed on to generations. A critical look at Akan concepts, proverbs and stories demonstrate the knowledge of the society. At any point in the life of the Akan, values are transmitted through their educational pattern. When one exhibits acceptable indigenous values, the person is looked upon with respect and honour.



Akans use traditional values in the formation process on an individual as well as the community. The whole process is meant to prepare one for life and it is noteworthy of mentioning that the traditional people do not take chances, they teach everything.

#### **5.10 On the issue of Nominalism**

Most of the people interviewed pointed out the presence of nominalism in their churches with special references to the lifestyle of their church members. Could this be a genuine test of nominalism? What happens to a church member who has a learned confession without an experienced conversion substituting good deeds for conversion? What about people who are often socialized into the Christian faith without having had a spiritual transformation? When that happens, particularly in newly evangelized places, people may have practices, which are Christian in form but opposite in meaning.

The answer to such issues about nominalism should then be for effective contextualized teaching. For biblical teaching must be at the centre of any attempt to cure nominalism. As important as Gospel proclamation is, it is not complete unless and until it includes teaching. The Great Commission of Matthew 28:18-20 does, of course, mention teaching in conjunction with preaching the good news. Teaching and discipline are to be considered important cures to nominalism. Thus in the context of the local Church in Ghana, teaching should be about right beliefs

as well as right actions. David J. Bosch notes that ideally every church member should be a true disciple (1991:82).

### **5.11 The role of cultural sensitivity and worldview in Christian education**

On the issue of culture and worldview, it was revealed that, most of the illustrations in the teaching – learning process appear to be limited to that of the Kumasi, Akan context when it is apparent that most of the churches have members coming from different cultural background. Could this be an obstacle to effective teaching and learning? One out of the six churches surveyed, Calvary Charismatic Centre uses only the English language as the only medium of communication in worship service including all their educational programmes. The implication of this is that learners use a language, which does not reflect their own culture and mother tongue.

We agree with Plueddemann (1991: 353) that “the more we can learn about the influences of culture on thinking and learning, the more likely it is that the gospel will be understood by all nations” The strength in this statement is that if nations are understood to be people groups, then cultural sensitivity in teaching and learning play a paramount role. Thus the task of Christian education will be enhanced if basic principles of cross-cultural teaching could be employed.

Could this neglect of cross- cultural sensitivity contribute to the increasing rate of nominalism among the churches surveyed? To the researcher, one of the most

urgent needs of the rapidly growing churches around the world is for culturally sensitive Bible teaching. Kato (1985: 11) warned about the dangerous lack of effective Bible teaching in Africa by saying that:

“Biblical Christianity in Africa is being threatened by syncretism, universalism and Christo-paganism. The spiritual battle for Africa during this decade will be fought, therefore, largely on theological grounds. But the church is generally unprepared for the challenge because of its theological and biblical ignorance. The church in Africa is suffering from theological anaemia...”.

Kato’s dilemma could be addressed when the Christian educational ministry of the Church take into consideration relevant contextualization of the teaching and learning process. When Paul was in Athens, he endeavoured to lead the Athenians from worshipping the God they did know to worshipping the God they did not know (Acts 17:22-31). This accords with the inductive method of teaching that Gnanakan (2007, 16) says “learning is most successful when we go from the known to the unknown. A child will learn from what is already familiar to him or her then grow to absorb additional information.”

An African theology of Christian education must describe how the God Africans worship through all sorts of intermediaries may be made known through the one Intermediary, Jesus Christ. Such a theology would affirm that the Almighty God known to the African is the One who revealed himself to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and commanded Moses to teach the descendants of Abraham his laws. He is the One who was incarnated as the Son of God, and died for the salvation of mankind.

The early church lived in a community that resembled the communal system common in African traditional societies. It was in such communities that “They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching” (Acts 2:42), where “All the believers were one in heart and mind. No one claimed that any of his possessions was his own, but they shared everything they had” (Acts 4:32). As “All the believers were together and had everything in common” (Acts 2:44), the result was that “the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved” (Acts 2:47). To this we agree with Ango (2006, 7) that,

African communalism, respect for elders and concern for the plight of others are nearer biblical value systems than western existentialist individualism. This does not mean that Christian educators must go back to advocating African Traditional Religion with non-Christian practices, but...western approaches that agree with biblical concepts and practices...should be integrated with African concepts and practices that do not contradict the Bible.

Moreover, a contextualized Christian education ministry would describe how biblical *koinonia* (κοινωνία) may be interpreted in terms familiar to Ghanaians in their communal relationships and care giving, thus presenting to Africans the God of fellowship who enjoins and enjoys fellowship with those he has redeemed (Heb.10: 25; 12:22-24).

An authentic Christian education ministry must therefore be a contextualised theology that correctly interprets the Bible but applies it in a language understandable to the people among whom it is being interpreted, and in a way, that meets the real needs of the people, the learners. Such contextualization is best done by the people themselves. However, the culture of the people must be modified in those areas

where it goes contrary to the teachings of the Bible. This necessitates a theological formulation that emphasizes what specific modifications are needed, and how such modification must be done.

An educational ministry that seeks the transformation of a people's culture to conform to biblical precepts is in complete agreement with the way Jesus conducted his teaching ministry. Christ sought to change the way his audience thought. So he developed an intimate relationship with them, used figures of speech and narrative techniques to illustrate his teaching. He involved his audience physically, mentally and emotionally in his teaching, such as in the parable of the Good Samaritan, where he dialogued with the lawyer, invited the lawyer's comments, and instructed the lawyer to go and do what he had understood (Lk 10:25-37). There is a close relationship between Christ's approach to teaching and the way African traditional teaching encourages audience participation.

It could be said therefore that it is contextual educational ministry that should describe an intention to transform thinking (Rom12: 2) that constitute a close relationship between discipler and disciple (Jn 15:9-17).

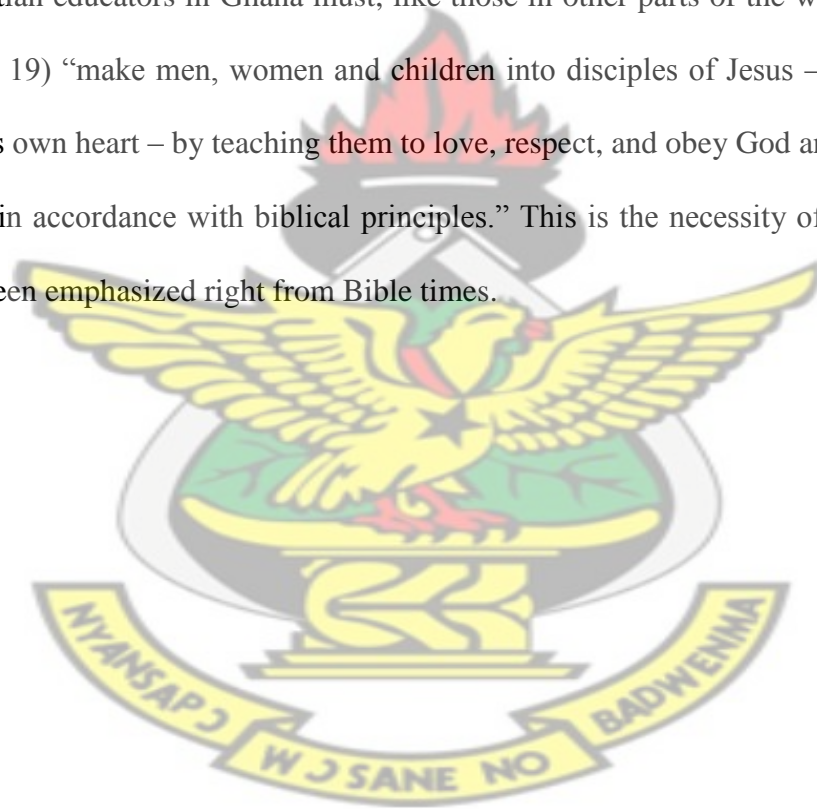
## **5.12 Concluding Remarks**

This chapter has sought to discuss the major issues identified from the data presented in the previous chapter. It is obvious that the churches surveyed are experiencing real impact in their educational endeavours. However, a second look



at the nature of their impacts suggests that there is more room for improvement if the educational ministries are to be more relevant in our African existential context.

Thus, Christian educators in Africa must realize the priority of the task of teaching in the church's educational ministry. According to Tolbert (2000, 13), "Teaching is our ministry. Jesus is our model. People are our passion. Transformed lives are our product. In addition, heaven is our goal. This is the essence of Christian education." Christian educators in Ghana must, like those in other parts of the world, (Tolbert: 2000, 19) "make men, women and children into disciples of Jesus – learners after God's own heart – by teaching them to love, respect, and obey God and to live their lives in accordance with biblical principles." This is the necessity of teaching that has been emphasized right from Bible times.



## CHAPTER SIX

### SUMMARY, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

#### 6.1 Summary

This thesis has dealt with the dynamics of Christian education with the African ecclesiastical context in mind. Christian education has been defined as a process by which persons are confronted with and are controlled by the Christian Gospel. In relation to the local church, it is an equipping ministry to all age levels that nurtures spiritual growth and outreach to the world.

This study has looked in some depths at various aspects of Christian education, its understanding, impact, materials and teachers/facilitators. The emphasis has been given to the increasing importance of Christian education in the local church. These values of Christian education in the local church are enormous. As the church embarks on its educational ministry Christ becomes honoured, the believers are strengthened, the church's heritage is conserved and there is also a parental guidance. It also establishes the church's belief and practices.

For successful church education ministry, the roles of the Christ, Holy Spirit as well as the personnel involved are of utmost importance. The programmes (patterns of learning) and the needed facilities and equipments are also essential. Effective Christian education in the local church must also have aims. These relate to evangelism, edification and equipping for Christian service.

For the study of Christian education in Kumasi, Ghana, the historical developments, the uniqueness, strength and structure of the Churches surveyed have been presented and this serves as an outstanding resource for those desiring to have a general overview of how Christian education is being carried out in the contemporary local Church.

The assessment and critique of the contemporary educational ministries of the Churches surveyed reveals that, the local churches are steadily making relevant impacts although the assessment of the impact are difficult to measure since there are divine and spiritual elements which may call for faith and discernment. For improved performance in these educational impacts, this work has argued at length that, there is the need to contextualize and incorporate some traditional patterns of learning in the areas of the educational content and curriculum and teaching methods to the receptors existential realities.

## 6.2 Recommendations

In the light of this research, the following recommendations are made:

- ***Consideration and establishment of special education ministry.*** That the Church's educational ministry should take a holistic look at intellectually impaired individuals who come to church. Here, training of personnel and special education classes should be put in place by providing an environment for intellectually impaired and physically challenged persons that will provide for their emotions, physical, mental and spiritual development. It is only in this way that we will be able to provide Christ to all humankind and also to recognize their uniqueness and

potential. The church must be aware that society has become more aware than ever of the special needs of the physically challenged and the church must recognize their special needs in ministry. It is there and then that special emphasis can be given to their needs by people with special training in these areas.

- **The local church ministries must not downplay the Christian call for discipleship.** The church must instead emphasize belief that is lived out in the whole body of life. It must clearly teach the basis of biblical faith in a way that is relevant to the African context.

- **That Churches encourage and recruit more women into its teaching ministry.** For New Testament women engaged in teaching and other forms of Gospel ministry with apostolic approval. For example, in Romans 16, ten out of the twenty-nine people commended for loyal service were women. Paul instructs older women to teach younger women and children.

- **There should be cultural sensitivity and contextualization of the content and methods of embarking on the churches educational ministry. The content of the instructional materials must encounter the traditional religious background of the people for relevant and contextual impact.** An authentic African theology of Christian education will clearly show how the Christian faith can be effectively taught in Africa, using terms familiar to Africans, acknowledging and affirming that which is good in the sight of God in African tradition, while condemning and

advocating a change from that which is reprehensible in African culture and tradition, in favour of biblical lifestyles. Jesus did not leave people the way he met them. He led the Samaritan woman to understand that worship of God was not to be done at any particular location, but in the sincerity of the heart (Jn 4:21-24). He taught a lawyer the true meaning of a neighbour (Lk 10:30-37); and he showed a religious leader the difference between intellectual religious adherence and being born of the Spirit of God (Jn 3:1-8). Christian education must lead to the understanding of the difference between religious rituals, traditions and prejudices on the one hand, and spiritual rebirth, reformation and empowerment on the other. An African theology of Christian education would define the role and place of the Holy Spirit in conviction, conversion and illumination, which can be understood in terms of the African traditional power of divination, but which replaces that power and confers the power of God, “the divine nature” (2 Pet 1:4) on the believer. **Moreover the churches could have classes for different language groups in the Bible Studies.**

- **There should be periodic and Continuous Organisation of workshop and seminars** especially for Christian educational facilitators. This training should cover the crucial topics necessary for effectiveness such as Bible knowledge and Theology, Human development, home and environment concerns, working with goals and objectives and programme planning skills.



- **That the churches take the educational ministries to the youth and teens through the vacation Bible school pattern seriously.**
- **The church should also examine the traditional patterns of learning** and possibly adopt or modify some of the good ones into the church for educational purposes.
- The educational ministry of the local Church should provide the platform where **there would be the rethinking of the major theological themes of the biblical message that should fulfil the African quest for the Supreme Being.** That is to say that there should be a contextual African theology of Christian education. An African theology of Christian education would insist on acknowledging the basic awareness of Africans that the almighty God exists, and that they have a legitimate concern to seek to worship him, but God has revealed how he may be more fully known and more acceptably worshipped.

This God, whom Africans worship without fully knowing, is to be revealed as the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, existing in three personalities (Father, Son and Holy Spirit). He sent his Son Jesus Christ to die for the sins of the world, and to be the only acceptable Mediator between God and man. The death of Jesus on a cross is the only sacrifice acceptable to God for the forgiveness of the sins of man. Man does not need to go through ancestral spirits who dwell in stones, trees or rivers, to approach God. Man does not need to fear spirits of nature or demonic spirits anymore because Jesus has overcome them by his death on the cross. Jesus is our

ancestor, elder, relative, sacrifice, defender and redeemer. Jesus satisfies all that Africans seek through African Traditional Religion, be it forgiveness of sins, appeasement of angry spirits, deliverance from poverty, disease and death, or protection against all kinds of enemies. These truths must form the content of Christian education in Africa.

- **There should be Creation of Teaching and Learning atmosphere of Love that is relevant to the African context.** God is love. He loves fellowship. Worshipping him involves fellowship between him and man, and between man and man. Learning about God can best be done in an atmosphere of fellowship. Just as Jesus lived in close relationship with his disciples, eating, sleeping and travelling with them, much as is done in African traditional education where teachers and students live together in close community, Christian education in Africa must be carried out in close, koinonia (κοινωνία) fellowship. Sharing and caring must define the relationship between teachers and students, and among the students themselves. This will not only enhance learning, but will help the students to put all they learn to practice. It will also restore the traditional African relationships of caring that have been lost through modern lifestyles. Western, existential individualism is contrary to the fellowship advocated by Christ and practised by the early church. Christian education in Africa should therefore become a means of practically demonstrating the Christian concepts of peace, honesty, conflict resolution, love and fellowship.

The Christian education ministry of the local Churches must be structured to meet the communal and practical needs of the receptors. God is the provider, for it is written, “On the mountain of the Lord, he shall provide” (Gen 22:14). God is the healer, for he says, “I am the Lord who heals you” (Ex 15:26). God is the redeemer, for it is written, “Fear not, for I have redeemed you” (Is 43:1). God is the one who is able to meet all our needs and solve all our problems. God is the one who can solve the problems of poverty, disease, war, and corruption in Africa. He does this through the ministry of prayer (Js 5:13-16); stewardship (Matt 24:45-47); and integrity (2 Cor 4:2).

Christian education must train believers in the habit of praying in faith, the attitude of faithful stewardship, and the practice of honesty. Christian education in Africa must train Church members to abhor political violence, corruption and unethical work practices, which are lifestyles abhorred in African traditional society, and were expected to be punished by African traditional gods acting for the almighty God. The God of the Bible does not need ancestral or traditional gods to punish the wicked. He has set a day when all the wicked will be brought to judgment and punished eternally, while the righteous are rewarded eternally.

### **6.3 Conclusion**

This study has looked at the dynamics of Christian education with special emphasis on some educational ministry of some selected churches in Kumasi, Ghana through a qualitative research design. The work has attempted to examine the theological

and biblical basis of Christian education to include the roles of the teacher, learner, teaching and learning materials and curriculum to the current situation in Africa. In doing that, attempt has been made to look at its implication for the Ghanaian ecclesiastical context.

Teaching is the most powerful nurturing ministry of the church and so the formulation of an authentic ministry of Christian education in the local churches in Ghana will ensure that Christian teaching is done in line with biblical content and biblical examples of teaching. The essence of a theology of teaching would be an expression of what God commands to be taught, whom he commands to do the teaching, how he commands the teaching to be done, and where he commands the teaching to be done. The objectives of the teaching would be the clear understanding of the principles of Christian life in the Bible, conviction of sin and repentance. The goals would be a people fully transformed into Christ-like lifestyles, prepared for life in heaven.

It has been argued in this study that this can be done successfully in Ghana when the content and curriculum is contextualised, and the method of communicating theology also becomes familiar and acceptable to the learners who are primarily Africans. Furthermore, by discussing some issues raised by the respondents, it has been pointed out that if the gap between Christian profession and Christian life in Churches in Ghana can only be bridged by an effective Christian educational ministry, there is the need to creatively embark on contextual theology of Christian

education. Thus, relevant educational ministry will serve as timeless guidelines for rectifying the issue of nominalism in the Ghanaian ecclesiastical context.

Since the research could not exhaust all the possible areas of religious education such as Islamic education and traditional religious education in the Ghanaian context, further research into these areas are recommendable. Further research should be conducted using comparative research design to compare Islamic education and that of Christian education.





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#### **Some Persons Interviewed**

Rev. Ben Oppong, Minister in charge of Christian education, Grace Baptist Church, 31<sup>st</sup> March 2011

Rev. Abraham K. Agyemang, Formerly of Calvary Methodist Church, 31<sup>st</sup> March 2011

Pastor Samuel Aduamah, Youth Pastor, Calvary Charismatic Centre, 30<sup>th</sup> March 2011

Pastor Sarpong Boateng, Minister in charge of Christian Education, Calvary Charismatic Centre, 25<sup>th</sup> March 2011

Mr. Eugene Oware Nyanor, Sunday school superintendent, Grace Baptist church, 29<sup>th</sup> March 2011

Pastor Roland Owusu Ansah, Harvest Chapel International, 30<sup>th</sup> March 2011

Rt. Rev. J. B. Impraim, Superintendent Minister, Calvary Methodist church, 10<sup>th</sup> March 2011

Mr. Oteng Sefah, Church Leader, Calvary Methodist church, 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2011

Rev. K. Adjei De-Graft, General Overseer, Frontiers chapel, 26<sup>th</sup> March 2011

Pastor Ransford Obeng, Founder and Leader, Calvary Charismatic Centre, Ayigya, 5<sup>th</sup> July 2011  
Rev. Doris Attafuah, Minister, Ramseyer, Presbyterian church, 30<sup>th</sup> August 2011

Rev. R. K. Asamoah Prah, District Minister, Ramseyer Presbyterian church, 30<sup>th</sup> August 2011

Mr. Samuel Kwasi Boateng, Catechist, Ramseyer Presbyterian church, 30<sup>th</sup> August 2011.

Rev. Kofi Antwi, Channel of Hope, Presbyterian Church of Ghana, 16<sup>th</sup> September 2011



## APENDIX

### QUESTIONNAIRE

#### Note to the Respondent

Please, I am working on this research work as part of my Master of Philosophy course requirement at the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology – Kumasi. I would be most grateful for your help in this sense. My study is on “THE DYNAMICS OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION FROM THE GHANAIAN PERSPECTIVE: A STUDY OF THE CHRISTIAN EDUCATION MINISTRIES OF SOME SELECTED CHURCHES IN KUMASI.”

#### PERSONAL INFORMATION

1. Name (Optional).....
2. Age group: [13-19] [20-40] [41-60] [61 +]
3. Sex: Male [ ] Female [ ]
4. Educational Level: None [ ] Elementary/Basic [ ] secondary [ ] Tertiary [ ]
5. Occupation:.....
6. Church Denomination: .....Position in Church:.....
7. Marital Status: Single [ ] Married [ ] Divorced [ ]

#### INFORMATION ON THE TOPIC

1. Do you understand the phrase “Christian education? [Yes] [No] [No idea]
2. What is Christian education? Please Explain.  
.....  
.....  
.....
3. Would you say there is conscious Christian education in this church?  
[Yes] [No] [No idea]
4. If yes, then what has been the pattern for Christian education in your church?.....  
.....  
.....
5. Can you mention some conscious educational programmes in your church?  
[Yes] [No]  
If yes, please write some of them.  
.....

- .....
- .....
- .....
6. Have these programmes (above) had any impact on your life in any way?  
 [Yes] [No] [No idea]  
 If yes, please explain  
 .....  
 .....  
 .....
7. Do you think there is nominalism among your members in spite of these educational programmes in the church? [Yes] [No]
8. What do you think is the course of nominalism?  
 .....  
 .....
9. Do you have a Christian Education Board or Committee in your Church?  
 [Yes] [No] [No idea]
10. What is the responsibility of the Christian education board or committee?  
 .....  
 .....  
 .....
11. Do you have a minister in charge of Christian education in your church? .....  
 [Yes] [No] [No idea]
12. Would you say the Christian education ministry in your church is focused towards the nurturing of the total person? [Yes] [No] [No idea]
- Explain your answer:  
 .....  
 .....  
 .....
13. Do you have any educational material for teaching in this church?  
 [Yes] [No] [No idea]

14. What is the content of the materials?

.....  
.....

15. Who are the facilitators or personnel responsible for teaching?

.....  
.....

16. Do they have the requisite expertise for handling the educational material?

[Yes] [No] [No idea]

17. Are there many women involved in the educational facilitation?

[Yes] [No] [No idea]

18. Do you have a special ministry for the physically and intellectually challenged persons? [Yes] [No] [No idea]

19. Do you have any traditional educational pattern in this church?.....

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20. Please any final comment?

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