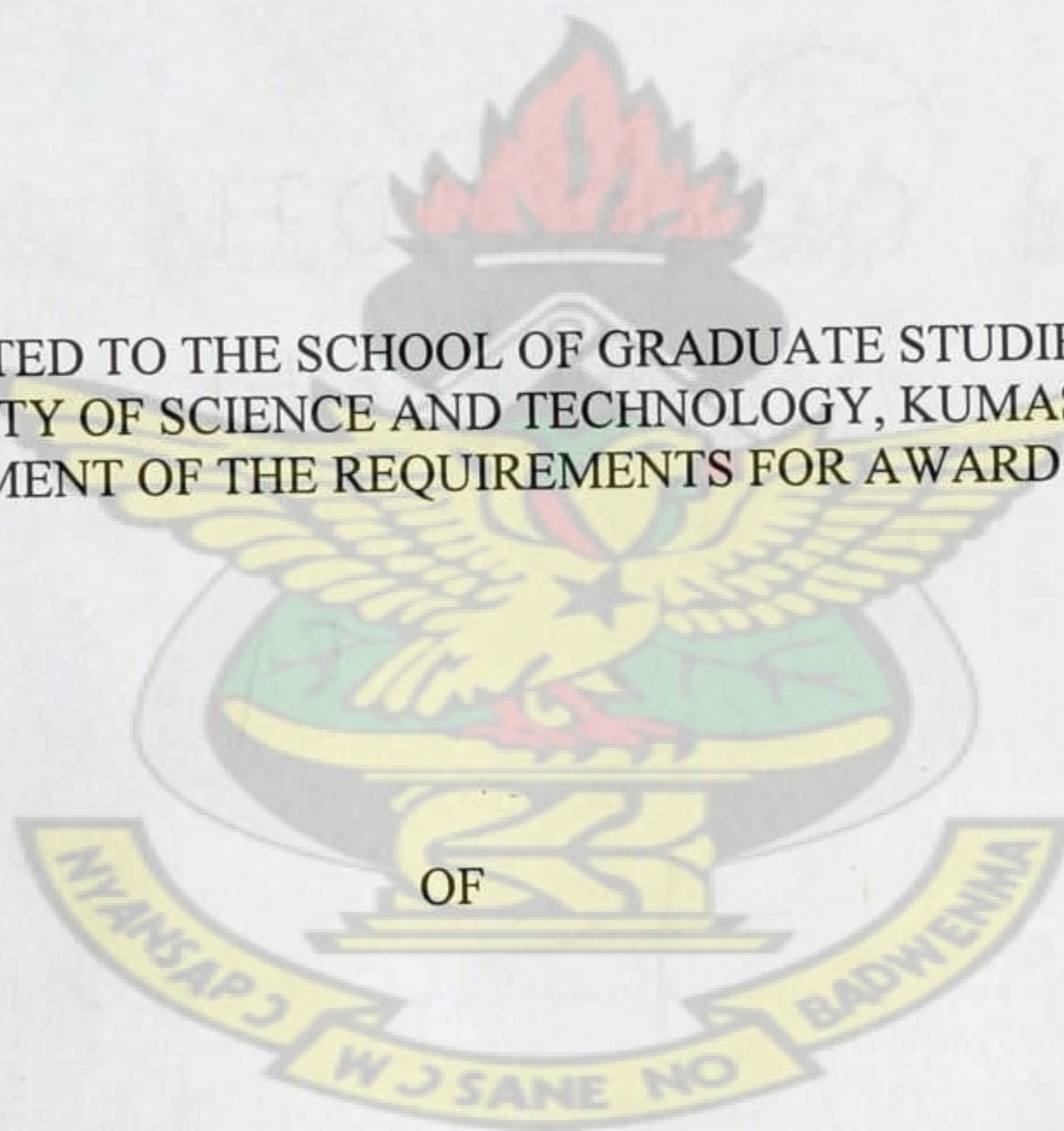


PAUL'S MISSIONARY STRATEGY IN ATHENS [ACTS 17:22-34]: A PARADIGM FOR
EVANGELISM IN KUMAWU, AN AKAN COMMUNITY.

BY

KNUST
REV FELIX TAWIAH DANQUAH

A THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES, KWAME
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MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY IN RELIGIOUS STUDIES

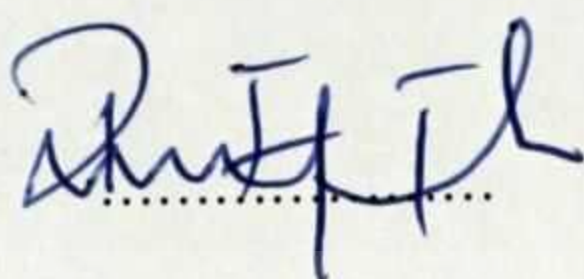
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DECLARATION

I declare that this thesis is my own original work and that all reference to other people's work have been duly acknowledged. I further certify that this thesis has neither been presented in whole nor in part to any other institution for any degree.

Felix Tawiah Danquah (Revd.)

(Student)



Signature

16/10/13

Date

Certified by:

Rev, Jonathan E. T. Kuwornu-Adjaottor



Signature

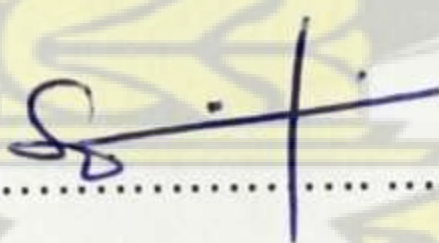
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Date

Supervisor

Certified by:

Very Rev Dr. Nathan Iddrisu Samwini



Signature

16/10/2013

Date

Head of Department

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my spiritual father The Rt. Rev. John A.Y. Adubah and Wife and to my family, Evans Korankye Danquah, Anna Fobi Korankye Danquah, Abigail Korankye Danquah, Nadia Korankye Danquah, Felix Korankye Danquah for their prayer support and encouragement.

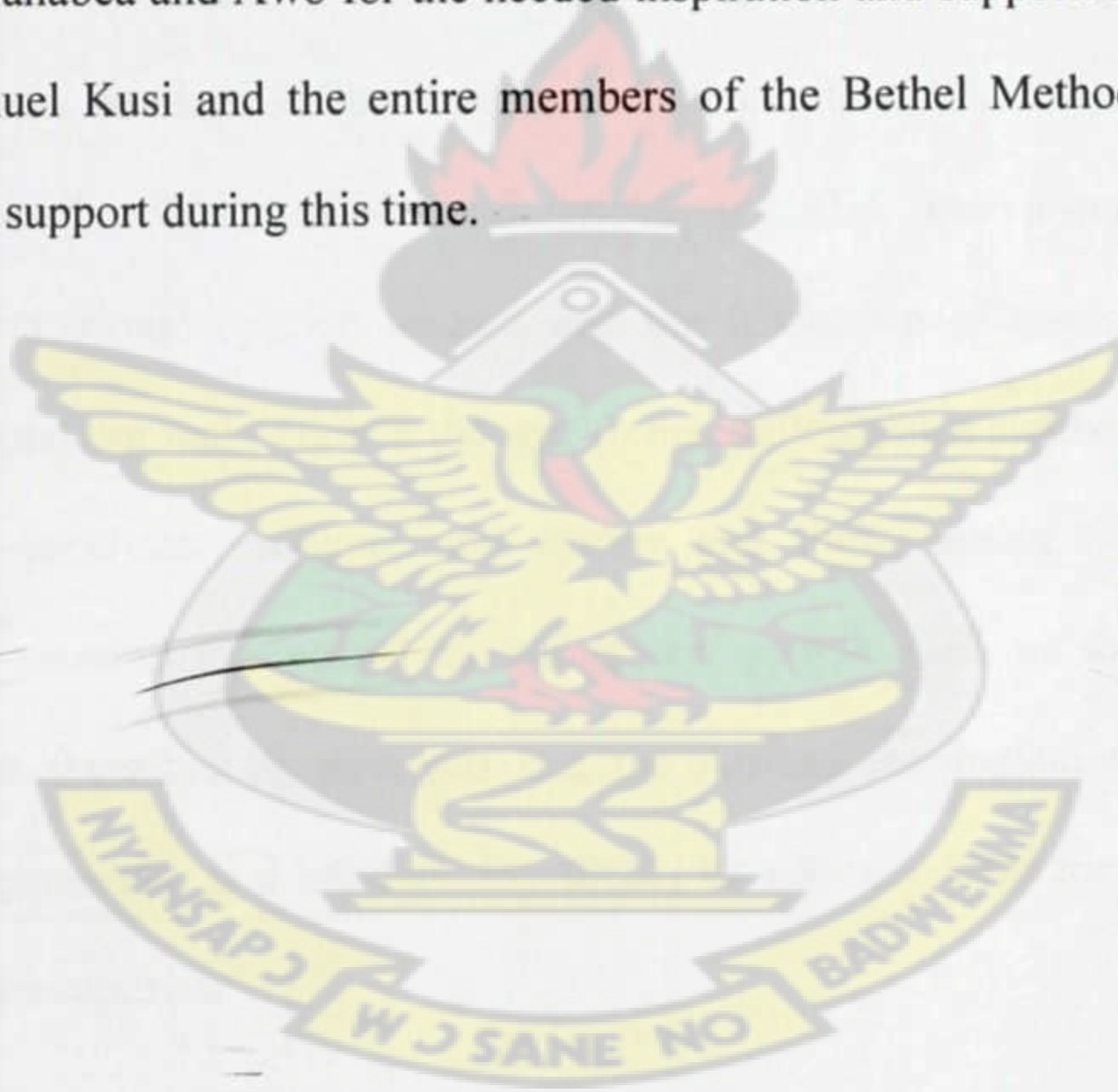
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Special thanks to my brother and friend Rev. Lt.Cr Paul Adjei-Djan, his wife Selina and the two lovely daughters Nanabea and Awo for the needed inspiration and support. I am grateful to the Very Rev. Samuel Kusi and the entire members of the Bethel Methodist Church, Ayigya for their prayer support during this time.



ABSTRACT

The general perception about most indigenous Akan churches is that they are syncretic, situation in which some indigenous members of a church reluctantly give up the traditional worship for the gospel message. This syncretistic attitude can be attributed partially to the inability of the pioneering evangelist to express appropriately a cultural-based gospel that takes into consideration the values and religious worldviews of the indigenous people. In Acts 17: 22-34 Luke presents Paul's missio-theological strategy for evangelism in indigenous communities. This research is based on an exegetical study of Acts 17:22-34. It aimed at identifying the approach of Paul in his Areopagus address and its implication for communicating the gospel message in the indigenous communities. The researcher did an exegesis of the text, read, relevant books and articles and also interviewed traditional religious practitioners, traditional opinion leaders, and the leadership of some churches in Kumawu. The study found out that people's thought forms, philosophies and beliefs have an enormous impact on worldview, religion and culture and these should be taken into consideration when presenting the gospel to indigenous people such as the people of Kumawu. The research therefore recommends that the African theological categories of Contextualisation, Indigenisation and Inculturation should be effective tools for evangelising the indigenous Akan communities.

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CHAPTER ONE

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

This chapter focuses on the background of the study, statement of problem, Objectives of study, Significance of study, Area or Scope of study, Organisation of the research, and Literature review.

1.2 Background to the study

It is obvious that there are many issues which precipitate discussion and understanding of the relationship between indigenous religion and Christianity. As Paul and the early followers of Christ proceeded to universalise and disseminate the gospel message to the people of pervasive cultures, they encountered people of diverse religious and philosophical orientations. This is still the case in Christianity even today as the gospel is preached to people in the various indigenous communities. The gospel of Christ is not preached in a vacuum. It is proclaimed to the cultures of the world. The research therefore contributes to the reader's understanding of the outstanding issues between Christianity and the various cultures it encounters. The study also offers a paradigm for relating the Christian message to the practitioners of the indigenous religions.

The study is founded within the theoretical framework of contextualisation, inculturation and indigenisation as examples of the theological categories of African Christianity with reference to Acts 17:22-28. These theological systems emanated from the African theologians in their determination to make theology cultural-based so as to be expressed appropriately in the African context. An exegetical study of the passage in Acts 17:22-28 reveals the Apostle Paul's

missionary strategy, especially in the presentation of the gospel to people of other faiths. Ukachukwu describes this as Paul's evangelisation outreach to Athens.¹ Dwelling on the worship of the "unknown God" among other 'gods' by the people of Athens, Paul addresses the people from the known to the unknown. He starts with the people's familiar things within their reach and their cultural realities. Paul's approach provides us with an evangelism strategy which the researcher establishes as a model of presenting the gospel to people of other faith. That is "how to relate biblical truth in culturally relevant ways (i.e., contextualisation), and how to formulate a cultural apologetic message that retains its theological integrity in the midst of a culture of compromise."² In other words, it is about confronting the worldview of the people with the gospel of Christ without necessary frowning on the indigenous cultural values such as language, belief systems, songs, folklores, adages or proverbs, traditional practices and festivals. The people's philosophy and thought forms therefore become an effective means by which the gospel could be transmitted.

According to Paul's model in the selected text, what is usually labelled "idolatry"³ is termed mildly as "religiousity". The term idolatry is the worship of a material image that is held to be the abode of a super human personality. The concept of idolatry originated as a result of the encounters between the major monotheistic religions of Judaism, Christianity and Islam and polytheistic forms of worship. It is believed that the indigenous communities of Africa worshiped God through various images and mediums before the introduction of Christianity and Islam. In traditional Africa, God is experienced, through everyday language, artefacts and their

¹C. M. Ukachukwu, *Intercultural Hermeneutics in Africa Methods and Approaches* (Nairobi, Action Publishers. 2003) 67

²D. J. Charles, *Engaging the (Neo) Pagan Mind: Paul's Encounter with Athenian Culture as a Model for Cultural Apologetics* (Acts 17:22-33) Trinity Journal. 1995, 60.

³ From two Greek words eidolon (*eidolon*) meaning image and latria (*latria*) meaning worship.

nomenclature. The African's experience of a Supreme Being (God) is an all-pervading reality in the Africans' daily life and belief systems.

For the people of Kumawu (an Akan indigenous community in Ghana), like most African communities, the Supreme Being is perceived to be far removed from mortal man. They observe the sacredness of certain creatures as the abode of supernatural beings. A typical example is the "papa" tree which had been preserved and venerated over the years. Like the people of Athens, the religiousity of the people in this area can easily be observed owing to the various shrines and names of family and community gods. For them, these are the mediums or deities through which they can reach the Supreme Being. Various names and artefacts depict knowledge of the Supreme God.

A reflection on the traditional beliefs of the people of Kumawu will reveal the "unknown God" of nature and the creator of all things who Christians believe has revealed himself specifically to mankind through his Son Jesus Christ.

1.3 Statement of problem

A critical observation of the traditional people of Kumawu indicates that there is syncretism⁴ and lack of total commitment among Christians in the traditional community of Kumawu. Some people in this area observe or participate in a traditional festival generally perceived by most Christians to be idolatry, even when they have become Christians. Again some of the members of the church in the local Ashanti communities such as Kumawu usually invoke deities to act in

⁴ Syncretism is the combination of different beliefs or the combination of different systems of philosophy or religious beliefs and practices

certain supernatural circumstances. They also consult other mediums for help and call on them to deal with their enemies. Some members of the Christian church continue to pay allegiance to personal, family or community gods. This has become a serious bone of contention among the churches in the local communities. The people in this area reluctantly abandon the native religious beliefs and practice completely even after conversion.

The researcher was of the view that the church lacked an understanding of the Pauline approach in confronting people of other faiths with the gospel as demonstrated in the text selected - Acts 17:22-28. An in-depth study of the text will provide a Pauline missio-theological paradigm for effective presentation of the gospel in the indigenous culture.

1.4 Research Question

The questions that come to mind as one begins to analyse critically the seemingly syncretistic nature of the church are as follows:

- Are the practices of the Christians in Kumawu actually syncretistic or a misconception?
- Can we get to the worldview of the people we seek to evangelise with the gospel using the “known” values, languages, beliefs, festivals, philosophies to introduce the “unknown” realities of divinity?
- Was the religiousity of the people “unknowingly” understood as superstitious by the early Christian missionaries?
- How does one worship the transcendent God in his or her own cultural setting?
- Is the gospel of Christ anti-cultural or intercultural? Should Christianity be view as “alien” or “foreign” to the cultures of the indigenous communities?

- How was the gospel presented to these communities by the early Christian missionaries?

More specifically, was the people's pre-missionary religiosity factored into the presentation of the gospel?

1.5 Objective of the Study

The research sought to identify the Pauline missionary strategies as recorded by Luke in the book of Acts and how they could be appropriated in the indigenous cultures, analyse the evangelism approaches or methods of the pioneering churches and to propose a strategy for doing an effective evangelism among indigenous Akan communities such as Kumawu.

To be able achieve this objective, the researcher aimed at Investigating the views of respondents on the pre-missionary religiosity of the indigenous people of Kumawu, the perceived syncretism among members of the Christian church and found out the perception of respondents on the influence of Christianity on traditional worship and vice versa.

1.6 Significance of Study

The research will help people realise that contextualisation, inculturation and indigenisation as African theological phenomenon could be effective method for evangelising the indigenous Akan communities such as the Kumawu Traditional Area in their unique religious environment.

The study will also encourage the development of a contextualised evangelism approach that takes into account the traditional way of life of the people using the findings from the exegesis of Acts 17:22-28 as a paradigm of evangelisation.

1.6 Delimitation of the Study

A research into the effects of the various approaches or methods of propagating the gospel in various African communities is a broad area of study. The researcher used the Kumawu community as the study area. Kumawu is one of the paramount jurisdictions of the Ashanti kingdom covering a very large geographical area with surrounding villages which extend to part of the Afram Plains. It forms part of the Sekyere Afram Plains District, where the researcher had domiciled for the past four years.

The choice of Kumawu is informed by various cogent factors including the people's rich history and the indigenes' ardent adherence of cultural and traditional values of the Akan and in particular the Ashanti tribe in Ghana. It is obvious that the area chosen might not be the exact representation of the communities of Ghana since different missionary strategies might have been employed by the early missionaries at different places. The researcher therefore considered the commonalities but not complete generalisation. Although this work does not discuss everything about the topic, it could be used as a stepping-stone for further research on the subject.

1.7 Study Area and Scope

The research seeks to study Paul's address on the Mars Hill (Areopagus) in Acts 17:22-28. The pericope selected has been described as a "missionary sermon". Reading of this text in the African context to where the gospel has not been preached or is in conflictual relationship with the Indigenous religion in that cultural setting will be of great relevance for evangelisation. The study of the text in relation to the approaches early Christian missionaries had used in most

communities of Africa. The resultant effect of the contemporary African theologies of contextualisation, indigenisation and inculturation on the Christian doctrine is crucial in this discussion. The research examines this approach of Paul in the African context. By reflecting on the address of Paul at Athens, this research seek to propose a contextualised model for encountering indigenous people and people of other faiths especially in the Akan indigenous communities such as Kumawu.

The research examines the various approaches of evangelism used by the pioneering Christian missionaries in the indigenous communities such as Kumawu. The work among other things also examines the historical and cultural background of the traditional beliefs, the “Papa festival”⁵ and other cultural categories in the Kumawu Traditional area.

1.8 Methodology

The researcher employs the qualitative method of research. He made use of both the literal and the inter-cultural hermeneutic exegetical approach on the text in Acts 17:22-34. As a method for Data collection, the researcher makes use of primary and secondary sources of information. Primary data was obtained from interviews of Christian and traditional religious leaders in the community. This will include interviews with some prominent traditional leaders, traditional Priests as well as some priests of the Christian religion in the Kumawu tradition area.

In addition to these primary data collection is the search through journals, theological books, Bible commentaries and books on African traditional religions and African Christian theologies.

⁵ A festival cerebrated by the people of Kumawu traditional Area

The researcher analyses and examines the findings draws conclusions. He therefore submits recommendations to that effect.

1.9 Literature review

Richard J. Gibson⁶ writing under the topic “Paul and evangelisation of the Stoic” in the book, “*The Gospel to the Nations*” (edited by Peter Bolt and Mark Thompson) pays particular attention to Paul’s evangelistic contacts with the philosophers of Athens (Stoics and the Epicureans). He argued that, the New Testament mention explicitly the stoics and placed them in evangelistic contact with Paul. For Gibson, Paul engaging the philosophy of the people with the gospel (Acts 17:16-18) in a debate was in a way an evangelical activity. This has been a characteristic of Paul’s model of presenting the gospel to Gentiles (Acts 2:12-13, 23:7-8, 28:24).

Gibson further explains that the debate between Paul and the Hellenistic philosophers as philosophical and theological approach. He therefore posits that it was a Hellenistic speech about true knowledge of God. It can also be said of this speech as a “Judeo – Christian missionary sermon”. According to Gibson it is paradigmatic or model for Paul’s preaching to educate the pagan audience and that the speech is perhaps the most fundamental, philosophical and theological approach.

The researcher is of the view that Gibson underestimated the cultural compliment in the Paul’s approach by concentrating too much on the stoics. In any case the constituents of the council included other philosophical schools of thoughts as well as indigenous members of the Athenian community of Paul’s time. The people’s religiosity, songs, adage, which Paul had used as the

⁶ R. J. Gibson *The Gospel to the Nations* “Paul and evangelisation of the Stoic” 2000, p309

central idea of His speech is given little attention in Gibson's presentation. The researcher then seeks to emphasise that the people's worshiping in ignorance might have caused the deep distress in Paul and so the significant motif for Paul's speech was the people's "ignorance" or the "unknown God". It should be stressed with emphasis that even though the stoics and the Epicureans were very knowledgeable, the "worshiping of unknown god" for the Apostle, implies an epistemic failure.

Mary N. Getui, Tinyiko Maluleke and Justin Ukpong expounding on *Interpreting the New Testament in Africa*⁷ refers to contextualisation as a method of evangelisation. He further states that the universal relevance of Christianity is derived from its efficacy in a particular culture at a particular period in history. He distinguishes between culture and context and defines culture as the "total manifestation of a people's self-understanding and self-expression, through politics, economics, ethics, aesthetics, kinship and religion". In their view these can be communicated and appropriated through Language, beliefs, values and the indigenous practices of the people. Relating to Paul's strategy at Athens as demonstrated in his speech at the Mars Hill, Ukpong et al, opine that as a methodology, one can start with contextual experience and proceed to draw universal principles out of that experience.

In the view of the researcher, the import here is that the universal relevance of Christianity is derived from its efficacy in a particular culture at a particular period in history. This was not emphasised in their work. This method in my view could by extension be used to encounter other faith adherents with the gospel of Christ. It should not be limited to just contextualising

⁷ Getui, et al *Interpreting the New Testament in Africa*, Nairobi : Action Publishers, 2001 p 17-29

Christianity as a theory but should be viewed as an approach or method for reaching out to unbelievers in a particular setting and culture.

The researcher therefore had gone beyond the consideration of contextualisation as an African theological category to the use of this phenomenon as an evangelisation strategy. The research intended to employ contextualisation as a paradigm of evangelisation in the indigenous communities. This paradigm requires the Re-reading of the gospel message in African perspective. It should also include highlighting on the use of indigenous “known” values such as traditional customs, festivals and languages. The major subject of this research was about culture and context in missionary reflections. This is necessary because “Culture and context” in theologising, cannot be taken for granted if an effective missionary work is to be done in the communities in Africa.

Chris Manus Ukachukwu⁸ a Nigerian theologian explores the dynamics and scope of intercultural hermeneutics. He uses various case studies to illustrate the methods and procedures for intercultural hermeneutics. Writing on the theme *Paul's Speech at the Areopagus* explains that Acts 17:22-34 provides another vista of reading this text not on “Liberation” but on the need for the construction of an indigenous theology of mission and evangelisation. What Ukachukwu has sought to do in his work was to re-read the text, Acts 17:22-34 in the African perspective. He provides an Igbo version of the speech followed by a critical analysis of the speech. With the exegesis of the text in Greek and Igbo he reflected on the interrelationship between the context of the text and the African situation using the Igbo folklore. Reflecting on

⁸ C. M. Ukachukwu, *Intercultural Hermeneutics in Africa Methods and Approaches*. Nairobi, Action Publishers. (2004) (200 p 67-82)

the relatedness of the two contexts he concludes that, granted that, the speech is a missionary sermon, it is intended to demonstrate Lukan theology of the religious status of the non-Jew, Africans inclusive. This is an issue for consideration in this research.

Using this idea of Ukachukwu as explained above, this research will further investigate the existing missionary strategies of the Christian churches in the Akan local communities especially in the Kumawu Traditional Area using the speech in establishing the fact that the bedrock of the proclamation of the gospel should be cultural-based missionary sermons especially in Akan Mission lands.

In Mante's ⁹ view, the inadequacy of African theologies of indigenisation is as a result of African theologians in their attempt to apply "the Christian message" to African traditional categories. He suggested formulation of Christian theology based on African ontology. He cited John Mbiti: Kwesi Dickson, Fashole-Luke, and Appiah Kubi as African theologians with this phenomenon. He therefore analyses the concepts of inculturation with particular emphasis on the problems associated with indigenisation.

On The impact of other Religions as a Problem for making Christianity indigenous, he states that the two major religions, Christianity and Islam have influenced Africa with their theology and world-views. They have been effective through formal education in these Religions. Both religions teach monotheism which opposes the worship of the traditional deities. They relate religious experience to salvation history in their scriptures.

⁹ J. O. Y. Mante, *Africa Theological and Philosophical Roots of Our Ecological Crisis*. Accra : SonLife Press, 2004 p 91-93

Mante sees a conflict with salvation history in relation to indigenisation. He Traces the salvation history from Abraham through Israel and culminating in Jesus Christ. The church is given *Kerygmatic* (proclamation) mission and *Heilsgeschichte* (salvation history) is established in both Testaments. For him the problem is the relation between traditional beliefs and salvation history. African Christians may accept pre-Christian Cultures and consider African cultures as not demonic. Mante contends that African culture is salvific in itself and does not need any other salvation history.

This understating of Mante sets the platform for this research in the attempt to draw on Indigenisation as an approach or the African way of adapting the Christian salvation history into the cultural categories of the indigenous societies. The researcher through this work proposes that Christian theology of indigenisation can only survive when it receives the necessary evangelical or missionary considerations in contemporary African Christianity. This means that African cultures should not be static but must be dynamic and acknowledging mutual interdependence of other cultures and in relation with the Christian salvation history.

Albert Barnes¹⁰ commenting on Paul's speech at the Mars Hills as recorded by Luke in Acts 17: 22-34 states that the speech commences Paul's explanation of the doctrine of God. For him "It is evident that Luke has recorded but a mere summary or outline of the discourse; but it is such as to enable us to see clearly his course of thought, and the manner in which he approached his audience. According to Barnes Paul's language was perfectly respectful, notwithstanding the fact that his heart had been deeply affected by their idolatry. Everything about this discourse is tranquil, momentous, and argumentative. Paul understood the character of his audience, and did

¹⁰ Albert Barnes *Notes on the Bible*, 1834. at www.sacrad-text.com/bib/cmt/barnes/int000.htm

not commence his discourse by denouncing them, or suppose that they would be convinced by mere dogmatic assertion. No happier instance can be found, of a dignified argumentation, than is furnished in this discourse.

Interpretations of the Greek term *δεισιδαιμονεστερού* (deisidaimonesterou) as “Ye are too superstitious” is considered by Barnes as “unhappy translation”. He states that

We use the word superstitious always in a bad sense, to denote being over scrupulous and rigid in religious observances, particularly in smaller matters; or to a zealous devotion to rites and observances which are not commanded. But the word here is designed to convey no such idea. It properly means reverence for the gods or demons. It is used in the classic writers in a good sense, to denote piety towards the gods, or suitable fear and reverence for them; and also in a bad sense, to denote improper fear or excessive dread of their anger; and in this sense it accords with our word superstitious. But it is altogether improbable that Paul should have used it in a bad sense.

Barnes assertion indicates that, it was not Paul's custom to unnecessarily blame or offend his audience. It is not usual that he would commence his discourse in a manner that would only excite their prejudice and opposition. He specifies, Acts 17:23, as proof on the subject, he does not introduce it as a matter of blame, but rather as a proof of their devotedness to the cause of religion, and of their regard for God.

The whole speech is unruffled, dignified, and argumentative suitable for the place, the speaker, and the audience. The meaning of the expression, in Barnes understanding is "I perceive that you are greatly devoted to reverence for religion; that is a characteristic of the people to honour the gods, to put up altars to them, and to recognize the Divine agency in times of trial." The proof of this was the altar for the unknown God. Its bearing on his purpose is that such a state of public sentiment must be favourable to an inquiry into the truth of what he was about to state. Paul sought through the speech to persuade the minds of the people but not to condemn. Such manner

of presentation or approach is very vital if effective evangelisation among the indigenous and cultural pervasive communities such as Kumawu (an Akan community in Ghana) is to be realised. The researcher through this work seeks to reaffirm Paul's usual approach as an appropriate missionary strategy for evangelisation in the traditional settings and people of other faiths.

John Drane¹¹ in his book titled *"Introducing the New Testament"* states that "Paul was perhaps the most successful Christian missionary there has ever been". He mentions that "Paul was also a sophisticated strategist". His methods of communication were based on considerable insight into the ways people think and take decisions. According Drane, Paul speaking to the Athenians who had no Jewish or biblical background adopted a completely different approach from his earlier work. Comparing Paul's Approach at Athens with Paul's addresses to pagans at Lystra, Jews and Gentiles, "God-fearers", who had Jewish and biblical background, begun from the Old Testament and points out how the promises made had been fulfilled in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus.

At Athens, he began with the Greek concept of God as creator, benefactor and presence within the universe. He then went on to speak of the human search for God, who is not far from humanity, a statement which he supported by quotations from the Greek poets Epimenides and Aratus. Thus in the view of Drane, Paul is seen as a missionary with a mission approach which had the religious and cultural background of the people he evangelised as the starting point.

¹¹ J. Drane, *Introducing the New Testament*. Oxford, Lion Publishing 1986 p.308

It is therefore justifiable to agree with Drane that Paul was a “Sophisticated Strategist”. Paul was always aware of the need for variety in his presentation of the gospel message. This can also be identified in the letters he wrote. He was always ready to get alongside with his hearers. It was this sensitivity to people and flexibility in his evangelism that made Paul said “I make myself everybody’s slave in order to win as many people as possible...all things to all men, that I may save some of them by whatever means are possible” 1Cor 9:19-22.

Drane’s observation of Paul’s Missionary strategy in the view of the researcher is quite relevant to missionary work in the Akan indigenous communities such as Kumawu in Ghana. This notion has not been profoundly expressed in Drane’s line of thought in his work. The researcher therefore in this work seeks to emphasise the need to adopt a kind of missionary strategy akin to that of Paul as Drane has observed in the evangelisation of indigenous communities. And that the Gospel message should be presented as a cultural reality. Such emphasis will help develop intercultural theologies using Pauline missio-theological paradigm for evangelising the traditional communities in Africa.

Kuwornu-Adjaottor¹² Writing under the subtopic “biblical interpretation with African categories” re-emphasises the great importance of indigenous language in the presentation of the gospel. He mentions Bediako, Quarshie and Ekem as some of the proponents of mother-tongue theology and biblical hermeneutics in Ghana. He Cites Bediako who posits that “God speaks into the African context in idioms, and that it is through African mother tongues we confront ‘the great things God has done’ (Acts 2:11). The method of contextualisation and inculturation of the gospel message is emphasised by the researcher in this work. Furthermore in this work The

¹² J.E.T. Kuwornu-Adjaottor, Interpretation of *mias gunikos andra* (1Timothy 3:2a) in some Ghanaian mother-tongue Translations of the Bible: *Journal of African Biblical Studies Cape coast: GABES*. (2010:44)

researcher intends to provide the African biblical exegete with a clue for understanding and disseminating the gospel message to the African people in their experience with the Word of God without compromising the basic truth of God's salvific plan which is meant for people of all cultures.

John D. K. Ekem¹³ in his book *Priesthood in Context* discusses the peculiarity of the phenomenon of the Akan¹⁴ priesthood in some Christian and primal communities in Ghana. Ekem examines the religious worldview of the Akan peoples. He discusses among other issues the indigenous concept of Supreme Being, the Lesser Divinities, the Ancestral Spirits and Salvation in Traditional Akan thoughts. He stresses on the importance of the religion of the people in defining the unique identity which mark the Akan people as "Primal" religious communities.

Ekem demonstrate through his discussion of priesthood in Akan Traditional Religions that it is a living institution that continues the past and modifiable to the present. Relating this to the role of *akomfoɔ* in the Akan traditional society, he indicates that *akomfoɔ* regularly contribute to the well-being of groups and individuals, and thus continue to occupy a respectable place in Akan communities. "By virtue of their calling, rigorous training and functions as sacral mediators, prophets/prophetesses, counsellors, healers, birth attendants and contributors to socio economic development, *akomfoɔ* can be described as the custodians of Akan traditional spirituality".

¹³ J. D. K. Ekem, *Priesthood in Context: A Study in Some Christian and Primal Communities of Ghana and its Relevance for Mother Tongue Biblical Interpretation*. Accra: Sonlife Press, 2009

¹⁴ He makes references to aspects of priesthood among the Ewe and Ga peoples of Ghana as well.

He argued that it is inappropriate to approach the institution of traditional priesthood with a prejudiced mind, full of negative forgone conclusions. For him due to its astute implications for shaping the concept of Christian priesthood or Christian ministry, it is legitimate to ask whether Mission-founded Churches in Ghana have taken serious note of important values within Akan traditional priesthood that could help to enrich their own understanding of priesthood/ministry. The discussions in the book points to the pioneering missionaries' inability to use the indigenous religious concept of the Akan people in evangelisation. This aspect of missionary encounter is implied in Ekem's presentation in his book and needs to be made emphatic. The study therefore seeks to further look into the strategies used by these pioneering churches in the Kumawu traditional area and further draws on the implications for spreading the Christian gospel in these indigenous communities.

David Nii Anum Kpobi¹⁵ a senior lecturer at the Trinity theological Seminary with his wide ranging experience in mission programs worldwide writes to explore the mission of the churches in Ghana. He traces the history of these mission churches in their effort to jointly impart the Ghanaian society with the gospel of Christ. From the perspective of ecumenism the churches begun with a world ecumenical movements which resulted in the missionary movement in Africa. The common effort of the missionary movements resulted in the establishment of churches in Africa.

Kpobi narrows down to the Ghanaian arena concentrating on the ecumenical activities of the churches. He gave ample coverage to the activities of the main ecumenical bodies, the Christian council of Ghana and the Ghana Pentecostal council. Churches belonging to these ecumenical

¹⁵ D. N.A. Kpobi, *Mission in Ghana: The Ecumenical Heritage*. Accra: Asempa Publishers. 2008

bodies are the most visible institutions in Ghana today. He explains that one of the relative success of the Christian church in Ghana has been the bringing together of people from diverse backgrounds to form a faith community. According to him the gospel permeated the fabric of Ghanaian society; the church was able to break barriers of previous warring tribes and building bridges all across the nation.

Kpobi then deals with contemporary trends and challenges of the Ghanaian mission exploring the future direction of joint effort of the churches. His emphasis is that the churches in Ghana have a common destiny and therefore a common obligation to engage in a common witness and demonstrate a united front. Kpobi seems to limit the success of engaging the Ghanaian community with the gospel to witnessing in unity. The research reveals the inadequacy of Kpobi's idea of witnessing in unity as a way out, since the idea is without a serious consideration of the fragmented nature of the Ghanaian religio-cultural setting. The work therefore further stresses the need for an in-depth study of the various but unique cultures of the people in their geographical locations in the contemporary Ghanaian society to be able to witness and plant vibrant churches.

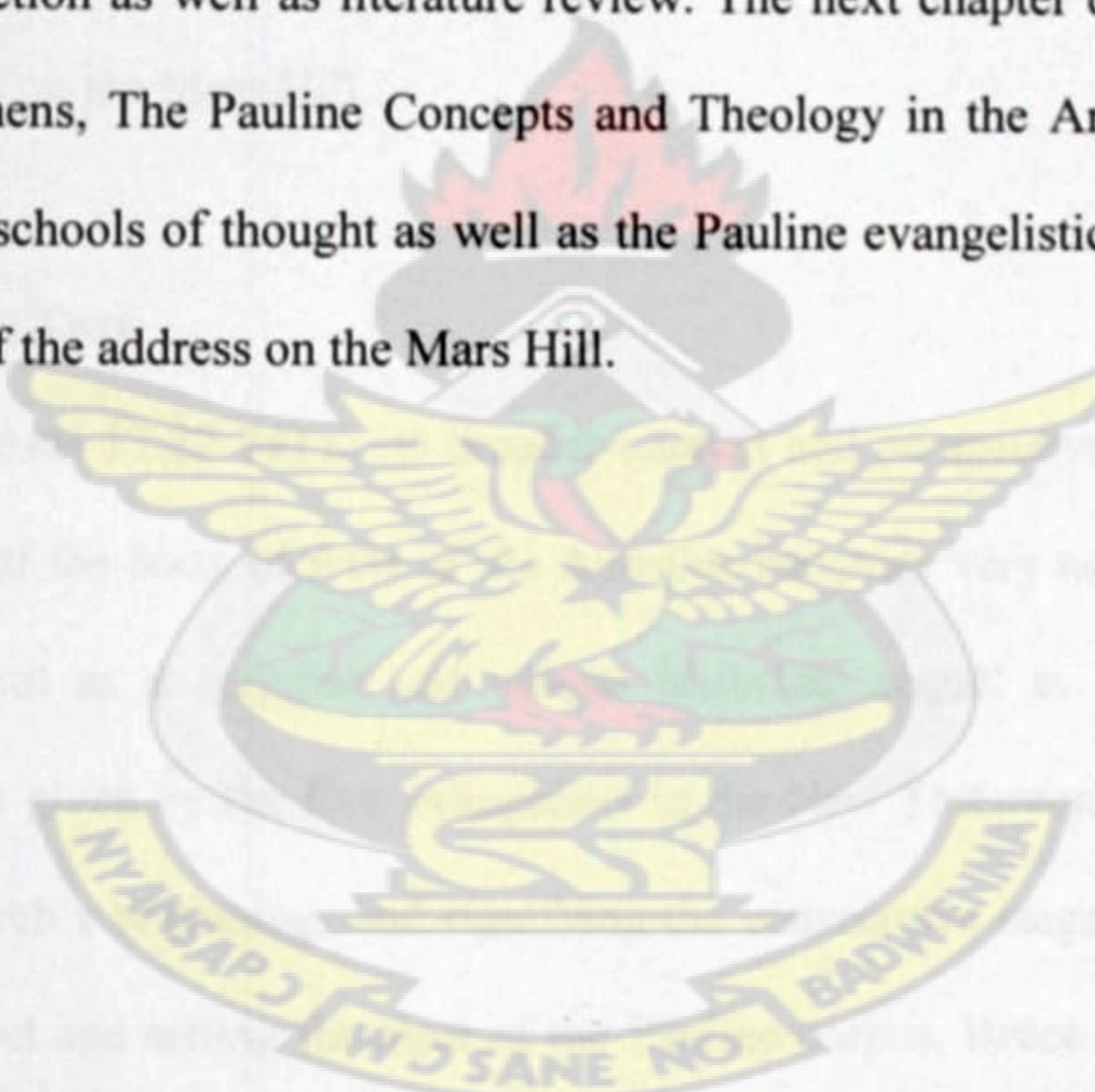
1.6 Organization of the Study

The research is organised into five chapters. The first chapter covers the general introduction. This is made of the background, statement of problems, study area, methodology, and objective of study and significance of study and literature review. Chapter two deals with a general overview of the book of Acts, it includes the authorship, date of writing, recipient and the message it conveys as well as the exegesis of Acts 17:22-28.

The third chapter focuses on a brief history, the socio-cultural and religious setting of the people of Kumawu. This chapter further covers the re-reading of the Areopagus address in the context of evangelization of people of diverse cultures with the people of Kumawu in retrospect. The fourth chapter is the Data collection and discussions of finding from the field. The fifth chapter comprises the summary, recommendations and conclusions.

1.10 Conclusion

The discussion above pays attention to the background of the research, statement of problem, significance of study, area or scope of study, objectives of study, organization of the research, methods of data collection as well as literature review. The next chapter deals with the Socio-cultural setting of Athens, The Pauline Concepts and Theology in the Areopagus Speech, the various philosophical schools of thought as well as the Pauline evangelistic strategy as revealed through the exegesis of the address on the Mars Hill.



CHAPTER TWO

PAULINE MISSIONARY STRATEGY IN ATHENS (ACTS 17:22-34)

2.1 Introduction

The previous chapter focused on the background of the study, statement of problem, objectives of study, significance of study, area or scope of study, organisation of the research, and Literature review. This chapter looks at the brief background to the text, the socio-cultural and religious setting of Athens, the Pauline concepts and theology in the Areopagus speech, the various philosophical schools of thought as well as the Pauline evangelistic strategy from the exegesis of the address on the Mars Hill.

2.2 Background to the Text

Putting the pericope (Acts 17:22-34) in its broader context and perspective, an overview of the structure and content of the book of Acts of the Apostles becomes very necessary. The Acts of the Apostles stands out as a singular and unique historical sequel to the four Gospels. It continues the narrative given by the four evangelists in the New Testament accounts, idealising the account of the church's beginnings and signifying the consecutive stages of its development. It forms the background and setting for most of the Pauline corpus. Bruce comments that, "it is Luke that we have to thank for the coherent record of Paul's apostolic activity"¹⁶. Rackham states that "We can hardly overestimate the importance of the Acts of the Apostles".¹⁷ The book is relevant in providing basic information and a stimulating challenging insight into the early

¹⁶ F.F. Bruce, *Commentary on the Book of the Acts*, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989 p. 27

¹⁷ R. B. Rackham *The Acts of the Apostles*. London: Methuen & Co., Ltd., 1901, p. xiii.

church. The zeal, the faith, the joy, the commitment, and the obedience of the early saints are examples to all believers even today.

Tradition accepts Luke as the author of the Gospel bearing his name and also the Acts of the Apostles. While he does exclude himself from those who were eyewitnesses to Jesus' ministry, he repeatedly uses the word "we" in describing the Pauline missions in Acts of the Apostles, indicating that he was personally there during those times.¹⁸ One of the reasons given is what is referred to as the "we sections" of the Acts of the Apostles (Acts 16:10-17, 20:5-15; 21:1-18; 27:1-28: 16). All These passages record the change from the third person (he or sometimes they) to the first person plural "we". It is therefore reasonable to state that the writer was Paul's companion in the account he gives.

Early Church Fathers like "Irenaeus, Clement of Alexandria, Origen and Tertullian all identify Luke as the author"¹⁹ of the third gospel and the Acts of the Apostles. Among the Fathers, Irenaeus (AD 180) gives the clearest evidence that Luke was the author of the third gospel and the Acts of the Apostles. Church tradition dating from the end of the second century attributes this Gospel to "Luke, the beloved physician" (Colossians 4:14), one of the "fellow workers" (Philemon 1:24) mentioned by Saint Paul. Guthrie like Drain observes that, the Muratorian Canon, the anti-Marcionite Prologue to Luke, Irenaeus, and Clement of Alexandria, Origen and Tertullian all specifically state that Luke was the author, not only of the gospel, but also of the Acts of the Apostles. Moreover, at no time were any doubts raised regarding this attribution to Luke and certainly no alternatives were raised²⁰

¹⁸ F.F. Bruce, *The Speeches in the Acts of the Apostles*. (London: The Tyndale Press, 1942)

¹⁹ J. Drain, *Introducing The New Testament* (Oxford, Lion Publishing: 1986) p 184

²⁰ D. Guthrie, *New Testament Introduction*. 4th ed. (Downers Grove, InterVarsity: 1990) p. 114.

The only gospel which Marcion a fanatical follower of Paul added to his New Testament which comprised only Pauline letters is the gospel of Luke. His reason for choosing only the gospel of Luke could be that he considered it to have been written by Paul's companion and thus carried with it Paul's outlook. The same tradition also attributes to Luke the Acts of the Apostles, which, together with the Gospel bearing his name, is commonly regarded as having formed a larger work on the origin. The external evidence for the author of Luke-Acts is sufficient enough for Blaiklock to claim that, "as early as the middle of the 2nd century the Church appears to have believed unanimously that Acts was written by Luke, the physician, the friend and fellow traveler of Paul."²¹ While a number of modern scholars would disagree that Luke is the author, none would argue that the early church had no question regarding Luke's authorship.

Most modern scholars accept Luke's authorship of both works. Some scholars, however, because of factual contradictions between Paul's letters and the accounts of Paul in Acts, doubt that Luke and Paul were closely associated during Paul's missionary work.

For Dayton²², the direct references to Luke's authorship of Luke-Acts are most compelling. He listed several of these references that help build the case for Luke the Physician as the author of both works. He indicates that Irenaeus quotes from nearly every chapter of Luke's Gospel and makes frequent reference to Luke as its author. Clement of Alexandria also quotes from the Gospel of Luke and attributes it to Luke. Tertullian makes use of this Gospel when writing against Marcion and labels it as Luke the author.

Though it is difficult to conclusively prove the authorship of Luke-Acts, considering the author's apathy to signing his name; however, the facts are very clear that both the internal and external

²¹ E.M. Blaiklock, "Acts of the Apostles." Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible. 1975) 1:39-53.

²² W.T. Dayton, *The Gospel of Luke*. Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible. 1975) p 1000-1008

evidence point to Luke as the author of both works. Examining both the internal and external evidences the overwhelming weight of it falls on Luke the Physician as being the author of Luke-Acts. There would appear to be far stronger grounds for retaining the tradition of Lucan authorship for both the gospel and Acts than for rejecting it.

The book of Acts has a similar literary style as the Gospel of Luke. Luke might have used various sources which included His own personal experience and involvement. This first primary source can be unearthed from within the text itself. This is clearly indicated by the “we” usage of certain parts of Acts (16:10-40; 20:5-28:31). A second source of information would have been Paul himself, with whom he had a considerable period of personal interaction. The apostle’s conversion and his experiences in ministry undoubtedly might have been discussed between them as comrades. A third source would be the other witnesses whom Luke might have consulted (20:4-5; 21:15-19). James is mentioned in Acts 21:18-19 as one with whom Luke had made contact. James might be able to deliver information about the preceding chapters in Acts. Furthermore, it may be conjectured that while Paul was incarcerated for two years in Caesarea (24:27), Luke would be free to thoroughly investigate Paul’s work in Palestine (Luke 1:2-3). Having carefully researched into the eyewitness accounts, Luke, by the Spirit’s direction, penned the Book of Acts.

1.1.1 2.5 Structure and content of Acts

Various ways had been employed by scholars to outline the book of Acts. Conzelmann divides the book of Acts into halves, with Acts 1:1- 12:25 designating the work of the Spirit in and around Jerusalem, and then Acts 13:1-28:31 focusing on the activities of the Apostle Paul.

According to Conzelmann the first section shows the church as being bound to the law, while the second section portrays Christian Gentiles who have been freed from the law.²³

It can also be divided into three parts with each focusing on a particular audience, key personalities and specific phases in the expansion of the gospel message. The first section (Chapters 1-7) deals with the beginnings of the gospel witness and the establishment of Christianity in Jerusalem. The key people are the Apostles and particularly Peter. The second section (Chapters 8-12) records the spread of Christianity to Judea and Samaria through preaching and persecution. Philip preaches in Samaria, Peter to Cornelius in Caesarea and the Apostle Paul encounters Christ on the way to Damascus. The final portion of Acts (Chapters 13-28) deals with the spread of the Gospel to the ends of the Roman Empire through the ministry of the Apostle Paul and associates like Barnabas, Silas, Luke and Timothy.

Luke's second volume records carefully chosen historical accounts and theological discourses that tie between the Gospels and the Epistles, outlining the development of Christianity from Jews to Gentiles. It records famous sermons and speeches by the Apostle Peter, Stephen and the Apostle Paul. The Apostle Paul's marvelous conversion to Christ and his three missionary journeys and final trip to Rome are recorded in Acts. Luke emphasizes the coming of the Holy Spirit and His ministry in his work. The promise Christ makes concerning the Comforter and its fulfillment, in Acts gives us the account of His dramatic entry and empowerment of believers in order to be Christ's effective witnesses.

Luke also reveals a progression of the gospel that divides the book into six parts. At the end of each section is a summary statement (Act 6:7, Act 9:31, Act 12:24, Act 16:5, Act 19:20, Act

²³ H. Conzelmann. *A Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*. (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1987). p. xlviii.

28:30-31). The progression begins in Jerusalem (Act 1-6:7), extends to Judea, Galilee, and Samaria (Act 6:8-Act 9:31), Syria and Cyprus (9:32-12:24), Pisidia, Pamphylia, Lycaonia, and Cilicia (12:25; 13-16:5), Asia and Greece (16:6-19:20), and finally Rome (19:21-28:31).

2.3 Paul's missionary Strategy

A careful study of Luke's presentation reveals an apparent missionary strategy of Paul. Kane understands Pauline mission strategy to mean a flexible method or procedure, developed under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.²⁴ For him therefore, the pattern can be summarised as "start where they are." When he reaches out to non-believers, he starts at the point where they can understand, and then quickly move them to the message of the gospel.

Allen writes, "It is quite impossible to maintain that St. Paul deliberately planned his journeys beforehand, selected certain strategic points at which to establish his churches and then actually carried out his designs."²⁵ Paul might have developed his theology and most of his mission strategy while doing missions.²⁶ This is to say that Paul was a "missionary par excellence" due to what we discover about his missionary activity recorded in the book of Acts and the implications in the Epistles. His missionary activities contributed remarkably towards the progression of the gospel from the limited sphere of the Jewish community to the broader frame of the Gentile world thereby becoming a preeminent model for missionary outreach in religious history. The proclamation of Jesus Christ was at the heart of his missionary task (Rom. 10:14 15) as he

²⁴ J. H. Kane, *Christian Missions in Biblical Perspective*. Grand Rapids,: Baker Book House, 1976 p 72-93

²⁵ R. Allen, *Missionary Methods: St. Paul's or Ours?* Grand Rapids, Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1991 p 10

²⁶ C. T. Bennett, "Paul the pragmatist: Another look at his missionary methods." *Evangelical Missions Quarterly* 16, 3 1980 133-138.

communicated Jesus Christ through his lifestyle, work and activity which would affect the destinies of humankind of various faith and cultures.

It is easy to deduce from the Pauline corpus some of the strategies used in his evangelisation activities. For instance, Paul confining many efforts to the main Roman provinces was in fact very strategic (Romans 15:18-19). He directed his work mainly "to bring about the obedience of the Gentiles" (vs. 18). Secondly, he confined his ministry to the unreached areas of the Roman world. Paul claims "from Jerusalem round about as far as Illyricum I have fully preached the gospel of Christ" (vs. 19). The concentration of his mission was on four of the most populous and prosperous provinces, Galatia, Asia, Macedonia and Achaia.

Again, Paul chose large cities as strategic centres. Paul's did not preach in every place himself, but from cities where he established centres of Christian life. The gospel then spread to the provinces. According to Allen the cities he chose to plant churches were the centres for Roman administration, Greek civilization and Jewish influence or of some commercial importance.²⁷ Paul's intention was to have the congregation situated in the city to be a centre of light. Particularly, the church in Rome was of strategic importance when Paul planned to begin work in the West. (Rom. 15: 23 24)

Another very strategic characteristic of Paul's mission was the use of the Synagogues as his starting point. He preached the gospel of Christ "to the Jew first", thus his strategy was to target the people of the covenant in the synagogue. (Acts 14; 14:1; 17:1 2, 10) as their custom demanded usually visiting rabbi was invited to give a word of exhortation (Acts 13:15). In the

²⁷ R. Allen. *Missionary Methods: St. Paul's or Ours?* (Grand Rapids, Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1991) p 13

Synagogues, Paul had the opportunity to begin by preaching the gospel to a gathering usually consisting of three distinct classes: Jews, proselytes and God fearing Gentiles. The gospel would be presented to these devout, attentive, and intelligent audiences. Paul was comfortable since this entire group of people had knowledge of the one true God, and the Old Testament expectation of the Messiah.

As a strategy, Paul preferred to preach to responsive people. For him the spread of the gospel and the extension of God's kingdom were of paramount importance. He intended to preach the gospel to every ethnic group. However, he realised that it would be better to start with responsive groups. Whenever a group of people obstinately refused the message and persecuted him he moved on. The devout Gentiles were found to be most responsive to the gospel (Acts 17:4; 18:7), whilst the Jews opposed his message (Acts 14:2,19; 17:5).

Paul ultimate goal was to plant strong, indigenous churches. This was also quite strategic since these congregations were to be equipped to spread the gospel in neighbouring towns and villages (1 Cor 7). Paul spent considerable length of time setting up these churches and training matured local leaders. These churches were intended to become self-governing, self-supporting and self-propagating (Acts 14:23; 20:17, 1 Thess 1:8). Another Pauline missionary strategy was his attitudes to become "all things to all men" (1 Cor 9:19-23). He makes himself a servant to all, for the purpose of gaining all men to Christ. This meant the complete subordination of every personal interest, to the work of Christ. The "all" would not include that which would be in violation of God's law or compromising the gospel of Christ. Concerning the gospel message, he was obstinate and dogmatic (Gal 1:6 9).

Paul skilfully communicated an unchanging message. Commenting on Paul's approach to evangelisation at Athens, Drane states that "Paul was perhaps the most successful Christian missionary and also a sophisticated strategist"²⁸. His methods of communication were based on considerable insight into the ways people think and take decisions. For instance Paul's communication of the gospel to the Jews, he reasoned from the scriptures. He began with their own historic beginnings and swiftly proceeds to the life of Christ, the promised Messiah (Acts 13:16; Acts 3). To the Gentiles, Paul reasoned from nature (Acts 14:14-18), and used circumstantial object lessons to bring about an understanding of the gospel (Acts 17:16-23).

2.4 Paul in Athens

Athens (Greek *Ἀθῆναι Athenai*) the capital and largest city of Greece was also the dominant city in the Attica region and one of the world's oldest cities. Athens was a center for arts, learning and philosophy and the home of Plato's Academy and Aristotle's Lyceum. It is widely referred to as the cradle of Western civilisation and the birthplace of democracy.²⁹ This is largely due to the influence of its cultural and political achievements. Today, as a cosmopolitan metropolis, modern Athens is central to economic, financial, industrial, political and cultural life in Greece.

Luke in Acts 17:15-16a records the circumstances of Paul's visit to Athens. The troublemakers from Thessalonica had caught up to Paul in Berea. They recognised that Paul was the vocal one and so they would go after him more than they were after Silas and Timothy. In order to save Paul's life, he was escorted to Athens by the brethren. Paul left instructions for Timothy and

²⁸J. Drane, *Introducing the New Testament*. (Oxford: Lion Publishing 1986).p 308

²⁹J. C. Wells, *Longman pronunciation dictionary*. Harlow, England: Longman1990. p. 48.

Silas to join him there as soon as possible. Eventually Timothy and Silas joined Paul as soon as they could. Then while still in Athens, Paul sent Timothy back to Thessalonica to strengthen and encourage the church.

Whilst in Athens Paul was preaching the good news about Jesus and the resurrection (Acts 17:18) in the Market place. It is possible that “Paul’s hearers thought he was speaking about two deities, Jesus (the male deity) and Resurrection (the female deity). In light of the fact that there were a number of religions in which the male deity was brought back to life by the female deity, it is possible that Paul’s hearers understood him to be speaking of two gods, Jesus and Resurrection.”³⁰ From hearing the words Jesus and Resurrection (v. 18), the Athenians inferred that Paul was advocating “foreign gods.” Athens was familiar with many ‘gods’, but a god called Jesus and a god called ‘resurrection’ were unknown to them. In the Areopagus address Paul also refers to Jesus (“the man appointed”) and the resurrection (“by raising him from the dead”, Acts 17:31).

Paul came face-to-face with a great number of *aide memoirs* of pagan religions all over the Agora (the market place of about six-acres), including emperor worship, with temples, statues and altars. For instance, there were thirteen small altars dedicated to Augustus alone.³¹ Paul, a strict monotheist would be distressed and appalled by these indications of polytheism hence the phrase *κατείδωλον* (*kateidolon*) which means ‘full of idols’. According to Wycherley “A ‘forest of idols’ gives the full flavour of the word, just a little heightened.” He interprets the prefix *κατά*

³⁰ M. B. Newman, and E. A. Nida, *A Handbook on the Acts of the Apostles*. New York: United Bible Societies, 1972 pp 336-7.

³¹ K. Lake and H. J. Cadbury, *English Translation and Commentary*, Vol. IV *The Beginnings of Christianity, Part 1, The Acts of the Apostles*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1965, 209-210.

(kata) as 'covered with' or 'luxuriant with' pointing out that it is literally true that the whole city was seen to be full of idols.³² The numerous statues and altars were the evidences of the Athenian religiosity. It is in this idol ridden and philosophically minded city that Paul proclaims the "God who made the world and everything in it" (Acts 17:24). This explains the significance of Paul's speech (Acts 17:22-31) in the immediate context of its historical, religious and philosophical background, as a response to the situation and need at Athens.

2.4.1 The Areopagus

Luke writes that "they took him and brought him to a meeting of the Areopagus." (Acts 17:19) The Areopagus was the main governing council of Athens after 86 BC.³³ For Gill "The phrase, the Areopagus, can refer either to the body of people or to the actual hill of Ares."³⁴ This could mean that they took him to a council meeting on the hill, Mars Hill or Ares Hill. In the first century A.D. the council met in the Agora, before the Stoa Basileios.³⁵ Bruce states: "This aristocratic body, of the most venerable antiquity, received its name from the Areopagus, 'the hill of Ares', on which it met in early times, and it retained that name even when it transferred its meeting place to the Royal Portico in the city market place."³⁶ "Paul then stood up in the meeting of the Areopagus," (v. 22). This would imply the body of people rather than the hill. It is difficult to stand in the middle of a hill. Also, at the end of his speech, Paul is said to have gone forth from the midst of them (v. 33), translated in the NIV as "At that, Paul left the Council."

³² R.E. Wycherley, "St. Paul at Athens," *Journal of Theological Studies*, 19:2 (1968): 619.

³³ Gill, "Achaia," *The Book of Acts*, 441

³⁴ *ibid* 448

³⁵ F.F. Bruce, *The Acts of the Apostles. The Greek Text with Introduction and Commentary*. 2nd Ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1952) p 335.

³⁶ F.F. Bruce, *Commentary on the Book of Acts* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1984) pp 351-2.

Daryl gives a different dimension of the issue. For him the Areopagus Council had several commissions, one of which was educational. "Acts 17:22-23 may well have been Luke's report of the Apostle being led before these elite educational commissions for an informal inquiry."³⁷ Formal or informal, it is in this setting of the Council of the Areopagus that Paul gives his formal speech.

2.4.2 The Epicureans

The Areopagite council included some members of the two main philosophical sects in Athens at the time (Epicureans and stoics). Paul might have taken their schools of thought into consideration since they form part of the audience he has to address. Epicureanism is a system of philosophy based upon the teachings of Epicurus founded around 307 BC. Epicurus (341-270 B.C) was an atomic materialist of the Athenian colony of Samos. He generally attacked on superstition and divine intervention. Epicurus believed that pleasure is the greatest good. But the way to attain pleasure was to live modestly and to gain knowledge of the workings of the world and the limits of one's desires. After the death of Epicurus, his school was headed by Hierarches.

Religiously, the Epicureans emphasise the neutrality of the gods. According to them gods do not interfere with human lives. Epicureans believed there were no spiritual realities outside of the material world as constituted by the atoms, and even the soul is nothing but a part of this world. They believe that gods, matter, and souls are all made up of atoms. Souls are made from atoms, and gods possess souls, but their souls adhere to their bodies without escaping. Humans have the same kind of souls, but the forces binding human atoms together do not hold the soul forever.

³⁷ J. C. Daryl, "Engaging the (Neo-) Pagan Mind: Paul's Encounter with Athenian Culture as a Model for Cultural Apologetics (Acts 17:16-34)" *Trinity Journal* 16:1 (Spring 1995): 52.

The *Riddle of Epicurus*, or Problem of evil is a famous argument against the existence of an all-powerful and providential God or gods. Epicurus' view was that there were gods, but that they were neither willing nor able to prevent evil. The Epicureans were structured like religious associations. Commenting on the religious nature of this philosophical sect, Koester states that Epicureanism

was expected to provide the basis for the realization of the life of true happiness and friendship... its founder was seen as a divine figure. Friendship, community, and mutual pastoral care were understood as religious duties... These were not designed to build up the community because the community was there to serve the individual: the only goal was to establish the true happiness and imperturbability of the individual soul.³⁸

These characteristics of the philosophical sect are significant factors of their popularity at the time when Paul visited Athens. Meeks identifies a similarity between the Epicurean communities and the Christian communities founded by Paul. Meek states that "they [the Epicureans] strove to produce the intimacy of a family among the members, who included male and female, slave and free, bound together by love... Moreover, it is recorded that Epicurus undertook to maintain that unity among groups of his followers settled in different places, by writing letters 'to the friends 'in those places.'"³⁹ This statement about the Epicureans is akin to the teachings and practice of the early church. However, in contrast with Epicurus who based his system on a materialistic conception of the universe, Paul sought to build up a believing community, and not just a collection of individual believers.

³⁸ Koester Helmut, *Introduction to the New Testament*, Vol. 1, *History, Culture and Religion of the Hellenistic Age* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1980), p 147.

³⁹ W. A. Meeks, *The First Urban Christians* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983), pp 83-84.

Pleasure was the bedrock and the main motivational principle undergirding Epicureanism. This in certain cycles was associated with hedonism.⁴⁰ Because there was a strong cult of Epicurus as founder, philosophic orthodoxy was maintained among Epicureans more than in any other School. In summary the followers of Epicurus (who died at Athens B.C. 270), or adherents of the Epicurean philosophy (Acts 17:18), was a system of atheism, and taught men to seek as their highest aim a pleasant and smooth life. They have been called the “Sadducees of Greek paganism”.⁴¹ This is because they have characteristics similar to Sadducees in the Jewish tradition.

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2.4.3 The Stoics

Stoicism was very popular in the Roman Empire. This philosophy came from Zeno of Cyprus (335-263 B.C.) who died at the age of 96. He regularly held his classes in the porches of the market place, called STOA; specifically the Stoa Poikile on the Athenian *agora*--the painted porch hence the name “Stoics.” Zeno gained the respect of the Athenians as the first to scientifically study Greek grammar and vocabulary. Bruce states that “In theology they were essentially pantheistic, God being regarded as the Word-soul.”⁴² The only goal was to live in agreement with the Logos which is rational discernment. This ideology was later modified by Zeno’s successor Chrysippus as “to live in agreement with nature (*physis*).” In later Stoicism, ‘Nature’ does not refer to the external physical world, but to the true ‘nature’ of human beings. Human reason is seen as identical with that reason which governs the cosmos.

⁴⁰ R.W. Vunderink, “Epicurians,” *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, (1982)

⁴¹ M.G. Easton, *Easton’s Bible Dictionary*. (Oak Harbor: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1996)

⁴² F.F. Bruce, *Commentary* 350.

Stoicism lacked the concept of a personal God. It was materialistic and deterministic. But it was not a “meaningless determinism, but rather [they saw the order of the world] as the result of a most perfect legislation in which everything has been perfectly arranged. It was therefore possible to identify the world reason with Zeus, who predetermines and rules everything through his law.”⁴³ Copleston states that, Stoics were fatalists. Everything that happens must be accepted. However, this “cosmological determinism is modified by their insistence on interior freedom, in the sense that a man can alter his judgment on events and his attitude towards events, seeing them and welcoming them as the expression of ‘God’s Will.’ In this sense man is free.”⁴⁴

In behaviour, Stoics aimed for imperturbability, perhaps comparable to Paul’s ‘contentment’ in Philippians 4:11-13, as the ultimate virtue. All affections are “pathological states of the soul from which the wise man must free himself in order to reach the goal of imperturbability.” The Stoics shared with Paul a belief in a Creator God, but it was not the same God that Paul proclaimed. The God of the Stoics would never have personalised himself by being incarnated as a man.

2.5 Paul’s speech

It has been two millenniums following the Paul’s event in Athens, and yet the psychological and the methodological aspects of his speech as well as the theology of his message can be considered relevant as an evangelistic model of presenting the gospel to pagan cultures of our time. As Luke describes in Acts 17:22-34, Paul stood in the midst of Areopagus and delivered his apologetic address to the Athenians philosophers. We notice in Paul’s Areopagus speech, that his basic message remained unaffected but his approach to Athenian audience was different from

⁴³ Koester, *Introduction*, 148.

⁴⁴ Copleston, *History of Philosophy*, 389.

all other speeches he made. In this particular instance, Paul framed his message within the given cultural context and adopted a philosophical strategy that befitted his audience.

Various scholars have shared their views on the address of Paul at the Areopagus. Jaeger in his book, *Early Christianity & Greek Paideia*, comments that it is likely that what Luke has given us is a summary of Paul's speech. According to him the speech might have been done in "Greek and with all the subtleties of Greek logical argumentation."⁴⁵ In the perspective of Bruce, the classicists have found the speech to be meticulously authentic, and above a mere literary invention. He cites theologians, such as Schweitzer, Debelius, Conzelmann, and Vielhauer as those in contrast with this view. Bruce illustrates the Paulinism of the speech by stating some of the characteristics of Paul evidenced in his other writings, for instance his desire to be "all things to all men,"⁴⁶ and with the situation in Athens.

Paul in the speech seeks to establish various connections with his hearers, from which he can then proclaim the true God. Moulton recognises the speech as having "delicately suited allusions" to Stoic and Epicurean tenets.⁴⁷ Paul meets the Greco-Roman paganism at the point of truth in scripture. Although he does not quote directly from the Torah, he proclaims the narrative provided by the Torah. Furthermore, he proclaims the gospel, Christ and the resurrection. In order to make this proclamation, Paul recognises the truth already inherent within the culture, and mildly critiques the culture pointing out the fallacies related to temples and idols.

⁴⁵ W. Jaeger, *Early Christianity & Greek Paideia*. London: Oxford University Press, 1961. p 7.

⁴⁶ E.F. Bruce, *Paul, Apostle of the Heart Set Free*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1977, pp 243-4.

⁴⁷ J.H. Moulton and W.F Howard., *Grammar of NT Greek* ii. Edinburgh, 1929. p. 8,

To be able to understand why Paul's approach at Athens on Mars Hill is so different from his previous messages, the background of this event should be understood in its historical context. The preceding passage (17:16-21) provides enough information for the readers to know the people involved in the plot that led Paul to the Mars Hill. Paul was in Athens, reasoning with Jews in the Jewish synagogue and the God-fearing Greeks in the marketplace. Epicureans and Stoic philosophers happened to be part of his audience. This kind of audience demands philosophical, intellectual, persuasive reasoning and well articulation of views. Paul was charged for introducing foreign deity. He was taken to the Areopagus to respond to the inquiries from the council concerning his new teaching in the market place of Athens.

2.6.1 The Greek text (Acts 17:22-34)

²² Σταθείς δὲ Παῦλος ἐν μέσῳ τοῦ Ἀρείου Πάγου ἔφη "Ἄνδρες Ἀθηναῖοι κατὰ πάντα ὡς δεισιδαιμονεστέρους ὑμᾶς θεωρῶ ²³ διερχόμενος γὰρ καὶ ἀναθεωρῶν τὰ σεβάσματα ὑμῶν εὔρον καὶ βωμὸν ἐν ᾧ ἐπεγέγραπτο Ἀγνώστῳ θεῷ ὃ οὖν ἀγνοοῦντες εὐσεβεῖτε τοῦτο ἐγὼ καταγγέλλω ὑμῖν ²⁴ ὁ θεὸς ὁ ποιήσας τὸν κόσμον καὶ πάντα τὰ ἐν αὐτῷ οὗτος οὐρανοῦ καὶ γῆς ὑπάρχων κύριος οὐκ ἐν χειροποιήτοις ναοῖς κατοικεῖ ²⁵ οὐδὲ ὑπὸ χειρῶν ἀνθρωπίνων θεραπεύεται προσδεόμενός τινος αὐτὸς διδοὺς πάσιν ζωὴν καὶ πνοὴν καὶ τὰ πάντα ²⁶ ἐποίησέν τε ἐξ ἑνὸς πᾶν ἔθνος ἀνθρώπων κατοικεῖν ἐπὶ παντὸς προσώπου τῆς γῆς ὀρίσας προστεταγμένους καιροὺς καὶ τὰς ὁροθεσίας τῆς κατοικίας αὐτῶν ²⁷ ζητεῖν τὸν θεὸν εἰ ἄρα γε ψηλαφήσειαν αὐτὸν καὶ εὔροιεν καί γε οὐ μακρὰν ἀπὸ ἑνὸς ἐκάστου ἡμῶν ὑπάρχοντα ²⁸ Ἐν αὐτῷ γὰρ ζῶμεν καὶ κινούμεθα καὶ ἐσμέν ὡς καὶ τινες τῶν καθ' ὑμᾶς ποιητῶν εἰρήκασιν Τοῦ γὰρ καὶ γένος ἐσμέν ²⁹ γένος οὖν ὑπάρχοντες τοῦ θεοῦ οὐκ ὀφείλομεν νομίζειν χρυσῷ ἢ ἀργύρῳ ἢ λίθῳ χαράγματι τέχνης καὶ ἐνθυμήσεως ἀνθρώπου τὸ θεῖον εἶναι ὅμοιον ³⁰ τοὺς μὲν οὖν χρόνους τῆς ἀγνοίας ὑπεριδὼν ὁ θεὸς

τὰ νῦν ἀπαγγέλλει τοῖς ἀνθρώποις πάντας πανταχοῦ μετανοεῖν ³¹ καθότι ἔστησεν
 ἡμέραν ἐν ᾗ μέλλει κρίνειν τὴν οἰκουμένην ἐν δικαιοσύνῃ ἐν ἀνδρὶ ᾧ ὥρισεν πίστιν
 παρασχὼν πᾶσιν ἀναστήσας αὐτὸν ἐκ νεκρῶν ³² Ἀκούσαντες δὲ ἀνάστασιν νεκρῶν οἱ
 μὲν ἐχλεύαζον οἱ δὲ εἶπαν Ἀκουσόμεθά σου περὶ τούτου καὶ πάλιν ³³ οὕτως ὁ Παῦλος
 ἐξῆλθεν ἐκ μέσου αὐτῶν ³⁴ τινὲς δὲ ἄνδρες κολληθέντες αὐτῷ ἐπίστευσαν ἐν οἷς καὶ
 Διονύσιος [ὁ] Ἀρεοπαγίτης καὶ γυνὴ ὀνόματι Δάμαρις καὶ ἕτεροι σὺν αὐτοῖς⁴⁸

2.6.2 Transliteration of the Greek Text (Acts 17:22-34)

²²Statheis de Paulos en meso tou Areiou Pagou ethe Andres Athenaiοi kata panta hos
 deisidaimonestrous humas theoro ²³dierchomenos gar kai anatheron ta sebasmata humon
 euron kai bomon en ho epegegrapto Agnosto Theo ho oun aynoountes eubeite touto ego
 katangelo humin ²⁴ho theos poiesas ton kosmon kai panta ta en auto houtos ouranou kai
 ges huparchon kurios ouk en cheiropoitois naois katoikei ²⁵oude hupo cheiron anthropinon
 therapeuetai prosdeomenos tinos autos didous pasin zoen kai pnoen kai ta panta?
²⁶epoiesen te ex henos pan ethnos anthropon katoikein epi pantos prosopou tes ges horisas
 prostetagmenous kairous kai tas horthesias tes katoikias auton ²⁷zetein ton theon ei ara ge
 pselapheseian auton kai heuroien kai ge ou makran apo henos hekastou hemon
 huparchonta ²⁸En auto gar zomen kai kinoumetha kai esmen hos kai tines ton kath humas
 poieton eirekasin Tou gar kai genos esmen ²⁹genos oun huparchontes tou Theou ouk
 opheilomen nomizein chruso he arguro he litho charagmati technes kai enthumeseos
 anthropou to theion einai homoion ³⁰tous oun chronous tes agnoias huperidon ho Theos ta
 nun apangellei tois anthropois pantas pantchou metanoein ³¹kathoti estesen hemeran en he

⁴⁸ Nestle-Alan, *Greek-English New Testament*. Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1981.

mellei krinein ten oikoumenen en dikaiosune en andri ho horisen pistin paraschon pasin anastesas auton ek nekron. ³²Akousantes de anastasin nekron hoi men echleuazon hoi de eipan Akousometha sou peri toutou kai palin ³³houtos ho Paulos exelthen ek mesou auton ³⁴tines de andres kollethentes auto episteusan en ois kai Dionusios [ho] Areopagites kai gune ovomati Damaris kai heteroi sun autois.

2.6.3 Literal Translation of the Greek Text in English

²² And Paul, having stood in the midst of the Areopagus, said, 'Men, Athenians, in all things I perceive you as over-religious; ²³ for passing through and contemplating your objects of worship, I found also an erection on which had been inscribed: To unknown God; whom, therefore not knowing you worship, this one I announce to you. ²⁴ 'God, who did make the world, and all things in it, this one, of heaven and of earth being Lord, does not dwell in temples made with hands, ²⁵ neither by the hands of men is he served needing anything, he giving to all life, and breath, and all things ²⁶ he made also of one blood every nation of men, to dwell upon all the face of the earth having ordained times before appointed, and the bounds of their dwellings ²⁷ to seek the Lord, if perhaps they did feel after him and find, though, indeed, he is not far from each one of us, ²⁸ for in him we live, and move, and are; as also certain of your poets have said: For of him also we are offspring. ²⁹ 'Being, therefore, offspring of God, we ought not to think the Godhead to be like to gold, or silver, or stone, graving of art and device of man; ³⁰ the times, indeed, therefore, of the ignorance God having overlooked, does now command all men everywhere to reform, ³¹ because he did set a day in which he is about to judge the world in righteousness, by a man whom he ordained, having given assurance to all,

having raised him out of the dead.' ³² And having heard of a rising again of the dead, some, indeed, were mocking, but others said, 'We will hear you again concerning this;' ³³ and so Paul went forth from the midst of them, ³⁴ and certain men having cleaved to him, did believe, among whom is also Dionysius the Areopagite, and a woman, by name Damaris, and others with them.

2.6.4 Exegesis of the Text

Before we can do an exegesis of Acts 17: 22-34 we should briefly examine the immediate setting provided to us by the author in vv. 16-21. As Paul examines the many idols he becomes upset at what he sees. Athens has statues of gods and men. Statues were notable for every sort of material and creativity. The Apostle like most monotheistic Jews of his day was disgusted by this sort of paganism.

Paul stood in the midst of the Areopagus. *The New International Version* reads: "Paul then stood up in the meeting of the Areopagus," but the Greek says σταθείς δὲ Παῦλος ἐν μέσῳ τοῦ Ἀρείου Πάγου ἔφη (*statheis de Paulos en meso tou Areiou Pagou ethe*) "And Paul, having been made to stand in the midst of the Areopagus, said." Σταθείς (*statheis*) is a verb participle, aorist passive of the word ἵστημι (*istemi*) which means "to cause to stand". This would imply that Paul was made to stand ἐν (*en*) in μέσῳ (*meso*) the middle of the body of people rather than the hill. It is difficult to stand in the middle of a hill. Also, at the end of his speech, Paul is said to have gone forth from the midst of them, translated in the *New International Version* as "At that, Paul left the Council." It can be understood therefore that Paul was made to stand in the midst of the council at the Mars Hill to give a response to the informal inquiry to the council. It is in this

setting of the Council of the Areopagus that Paul stands and gives his formal speech. He stands in the midst of his audience, rather than at a specific location.

ἀνδρὲ Ἀθηναῖοι (*andre Athenaioi* : men of Athens: vocative or address) signifies a shift from setting the scene to the audience of the speech. Paul addresses his audience whom he had observed closely. The apostle took time to familiarised himself with the people and their religion evidenced by the idols and altars he saw. So he concludes that his audience is *δεισιδαιμονεστε*. The Greek word *deisidaimoneste* is an adjective, accusative masculine plural and comparative. In this sense it has been used superlatively (*δεισιδαιμονέστερος*) to mean “very religious.” Paul gives his assessment of the Athenians. He "sees" (*theoreo*, in the sense of perceives or understands) that they are *very religious*.

There has been some discussion as to the meaning of *δεισιδαιμονεστε*. *Desidaimoneste* may be understood either negatively as superstitious fear of the gods or in a neutral sense, or even a positive sense. Bruce appears to be inclined to render *desidaimonesteros* as negative superstitious.⁴⁹ However, the word religious serves a better purpose in this context since the expression is neutral or positive. Furthermore, the word is comparative making the superlative translation very religious the best rendering of that, “the Athenians are religious *κατὰ πάντα* (*kata panta*), in all things” which echoes a common sentiment. Paul demonstrates a respectful and neutral recognition for their religious endeavours but that is not to acknowledge that their kind of religion leads to the true, saving faith.

⁴⁹ F.F. Bruce, *The New International Commentary on the New Testament: The Book of Acts*, 335.

One of these objects of worship was an altar *βωμὸν (bomon)* that attracted Paul's attention because it was dedicated to *Ο ΑΓΝΩΣΤΩ ΘΕΩ (Ho Agnosto theo)* "The Unknown God." Paul begins from a monotheistic point of view. The statement is in the singular to emphasise a monotheistic worldview. Paul acknowledged that, knowledge of a Supreme Being (God) is central to the religiosity of the Athenians, but observes that the Athenians, worshiped *εὐσεβείτε (eusebeite)* the Supreme Being ignorantly as "an unknown god." For Paul this is an indication that the Athenians were ignorant of God's identity.

Paul now introduces the "unknown god" as the true God who made all things: *ὁ θεὸς ὁ ποιήσας (ho theos ho poiesas)* "God is the One making". Syntactically, the nominative following a nominative, *ὁ θεὸς ὁ ποιήσας (ho theos ho poiesas)*, functions in an exegetical capacity referring to the God the apostle proclaims, as the Creator God. The proclamation of God as the creator and his universal reign is summed up when Paul refers to God as being the Lord (*κύριος kurios*) of heaven and earth. Conzelmann argues that God being the Creator and Lord allows for a polemic against the *σεβάσματα (sebasmata)*.

χειροποιήτοις ναοῖς (cheiropoietois naois) means "temples made by humans." *χειροποιήτοις* is a compound word of *χειρὸς (cheiros: hand)* and *ποιεῖν (poieo: I make)* This suggests that God is not against temples, but those made by humans. God creates his own temples and needs not to be maintained (*θεραπεύεται⁵⁰ therapeutai*) or cared for by humans. Paul then makes a shift from his critique of paganism to his own understanding of God as the one who gives life and sustains all living beings.

⁵⁰ A verb, present indicative passive, 3rd person singular of the Greek word *therapeuo* meaning *I heal*. *oude hupo cheiron anthropon therapeutai* (Acts 17:25) literary means "neither by the hands of men is he (healed) cared for."

“God made all people, to dwell upon all the face of the earth having ordained times before appointed...” (v.26). Fitzmyer notes that, divine determination seeks to guide human beings: so they are to seek out the God who is near to them. He argues here that Paul might have been influenced by the rendering of God found in the writings of the Hebrew prophets who understood God as moving nations around at his will.⁵¹ This is to say that God placed human groups in specific locations at specific times in history according to his own wise purposes.

Furthermore, in verse 27 are the two Greek words *ψηλαφήσειαν* (*pselatheseian*); an optative aorist active, third person plural and *εὔροιεν* (*heuroien*) also an optative aorist active, third person plural. These words are functioning in a conditional optative mood, indicating a remote possibility.⁵² The two words together literally mean, they did feel after him, touch, or handle and did find or perceive him. Since both words are in aorist tense, they place the action sometime in the undefined past. Therefore, it appears that an aorist with a conditional optative mood is presenting a hypothetical situation suggesting a possible condition in the future. In other words, the Apostle is telling his audience that God placed people in the right places during the right times in history for those people would seek God in actuality. For Bock, since the optative is a mood of possibility expressing a possibility of finding God, he proposes that the natural theology can function in such a way that humans can find God without special revelation.⁵³ We note from the statement that the context suggests that the optative implies a possibility without actual fulfillment in Pauline thought.

⁵¹ D. B. Wallace, *Greek Grammar, Beyond the Basics: An Exegetical Syntax of the New Testament*, Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1996. p. 484.

⁵² J. A. Fitzmyer, *The Anchor Bible: The Acts of the Apostles*, 609.

⁵³ B. L. Darrel Baker *Exegetical Commentary of the New Testament: Acts*. Grand Rapids, Baker Academic, 2007.

Paul's usage of the Greek word *γὰρ* (*gar*) "for" signifies that verse 28 supplies the basis for the statement made in verse 27. The reason why humans should seek God is because God is near. For Bruce the two statements in verse 28 as quotations echo Epimenides the Cretan who wrote, "For in you we live and move and have our being." "For we are also his descendants," echoes Aratus who wrote, "In every way we have all to do with Zeus, for we are truly his offspring."⁵⁴ For Paul, God's omnipresent being is the ontological support for our finite existence. He quotes from the Greek poets to demonstrate their contradictory ideas, not because he agrees with them. Paul then proceeds to argue that the Greek theory and the Greek practice are also inconsistent with each other. God's nature cannot be compared to physical idols the Greeks adore since our nature is derived from God, as his sons and daughters. An infinite and eternal Creator cannot be compared with his finite, temporal creation. Paul implies that the natural human tendency is to make a god in the image of human ideas. In Paul's view, idolatry is ignorance because it refuses to acknowledge the best image God has provided for us. Humans derived from a Living Being and so it would be absurd to imagine *ἐνθυμήσεως* (*enthumeseos*) the Living Being as lifeless. Paul contends that since we are formed by God, we are like him, living and intelligent beings. We are more excellent in our nature than the most precious and clever works of art. Therefore the original source of our existence cannot be like gold, and silver, and stone (v.29). Man himself is far more excellent than an image of wood or stone, how much more the source of all wisdom and intelligence.

The "time of ignorance" *χρόνους τῆς ἀγνοίας* (*chronous tes agnoias*) refers to those many years in which the Gentiles received no instructions from the true God whose saving act was limited to

⁵⁴ Bruce, 338-339.

his people (Israel) and those who would come to know God through Israel. It is suggested that this somehow nullifies the penalty of sin because the opportunity to repent was never granted. It appears that Paul understands *ἀγνοίας* (a noun genitive feminine singular, ignorance) to function not as an excuse for sinfulness but rather merely the opposite of hearing the gospel. In other words, hearing the gospel is a privilege granted by God that was not deserved.

The address also presents an eschatologically inspired proclamation of the coming judgment. God will judge *τὴν οἰκουμένην* (*ten oikoumenen*) the world *ἐν ἀνδρὶ* (*en andri*) in a man. The universal sovereignty of God is regenerated here with the announcement that God will judge the world (*τὴν οἰκουμένην*).

Ακούσαντες δὲ ἀνάστασιν νεκρῶν (*akousantes de anastasin nekron*) “hearing of the raising of the dead” The doctrine of the resurrection is a central element to gospel proclamation. It is therefore evident that the resurrection is non-negotiable. It appears that the resurrection is the one idea that the Athenian minds could not comprehend. Bock also notes that, once Paul mentions the resurrection, the speech comes to a halt.⁵⁵ Earlier, these same people thought *ἀνάστασιν* (*anastasin*) “resurrection” was a female deity. Now that it is being explained as God raising a man from the dead the Athenians cannot bare to hear Paul any longer. At this point Paul leaves his audience. Again, this likely explains Paul’s position amongst the people, not necessarily the location. The narrative appears to suggest that the Apostle’s homily was unsuccessful in convincing his audience concerning Christ. However, the author ends with a summary statement:

⁵⁵ Bock, 558.

there were some who believed including one from the Areopagite audience and a woman named Damariz. Damariz must have been a woman who had a good reputation for her to be singled out.

2.7 Paul's Concepts and Theology in the Areopagus Speech

Paul's presentation was in a logical sequence as a philosopher. His rhetoric was not merely to justify his "new teaching" in Athens by telling them who Jesus was and what he did, but also to counteract the Athenians' understanding of God, human life, and the universe as a whole. The contents of Paul's sermon are counter-arguments against the tenets of Epicureanism and Stoicism. Theologically speaking, one can identify the basis of Paul's address as structured on the foundation of the "Unknown God concept" and five successive doctrinal categories. These include the doctrine of God, man (Biblical Anthropology), Salvation (Soteriology), Christ (Incarnational Christology) and the End-Time (Eschatology).

2.7.1 The concept of "Unknown God"

The speech reveals an Athenian concept of the Unknown God. Don Richardson's story of the altar to an unknown God is actually "based on a tradition recorded as history by Diogenes Laertius, a Greek author of the third century A.D. in a classical work called *The Lives of Eminent Philosophers*."⁵⁶ According to him Athens was struck by a plague in the sixth century before Christ. Various sacrifices had been made to the multitude of Athenian gods in their attempt to avert the situation, but the plague continued. Finally, the oracle instructed the Athenians to call on Epimenides, a Cretan hero, for help. He advised them to have hungry sheep ready by dawn, and to bring them to Mars Hill. Shepherds were instructed to watch them and see if any lay

⁵⁶ D. Richardson, *Eternity in their Hearts*. Rev. Ed. Ventura: Regal Books, 1984. pp. 9-25.

down, which would be very unusual, as the hungry sheep would naturally want to graze first rather than lie down. Then Epimenides instructed the shepherds to mark the spot where the sheep laid down. The sheep that lay down were sacrificed there on special altars which were inscribed “To an Unknown God.” After that the plague was lifted, and the Athenians showed their gratitude to Epimenides. Richardson suggests that only one such altar was preserved by the time of Paul’s visit.

Paul uses the existence of the altar as a clue to his evangelistic message. Paul having observed the city full of altars and temples of various gods familiar to them by their names noticed one of them with an inscription to the unknown god in bold letters. Luke records Paul comment “For as I walked around and observed your objects of worship, I even found an altar with the inscription: TO AN UNKNOWN GOD (ΑΓΝΩΣΤΩ ΘΕΩ)”. Paul uses a neutral expression “objects of worship”. He avoided being judgmental by not condemning the peoples’ religious practices. Paul acknowledged their culture and beliefs, including the altar to the Unknown God. He would then seek to meet the Athenians on their own ground by the use of a fairly neutral expression referring to them as very religious people. In fact, people of all cultures are religious, whether they acknowledge it or not. Even an atheist is a religious person, since he has certain basic presuppositions that control his thought and behaviour. In Athens, however, the problem was mainly polytheism with atheism being the least. Perhaps Paul was aware of the story of Epimenides and the altar, for in verse 28 he quotes a line from his poetry and in his letter to Titus (1:12-13) he quotes him again, as ‘a prophet’. Both quotations come from the same piece of poetry, which in the original refer to Zeus:

They fashioned a tomb for thee, O holy and high one -
The Cretans, always liars, evil beasts, idle bellies!
But thou art not dead; thou livest and abidest forever;
For in thee we live and move and have our being.⁵⁷

Quoting this poem gives the indication that Paul was indeed familiar with Epimenides' role in the lifting of the plague centuries earlier, it is therefore not surprising that Paul uses this knowledge as an 'opener' in his evangelistic work. He proclaims the Unknown God to the Athenians. The root word for 'unknown' is the same as the one that describes the Athenians themselves as being ignorant worshipers. He uses what they confessed to know not about, as a link to the living God they need to know. Daryl points out the irony in Paul's message as it relates to ignorance. He states that "not only in a city of great learning but before the Areopagus Court, which was composed of thirty of the most **literate** men of Paul's day."⁵⁸ It is therefore remarkable to note that such an elite group of people could be ignorant about the living God who made the world and everything and should be acknowledged as the Lord of heaven and earth. As a result Paul seeks to introduce his monotheistic concept of God but would not despise their preconception.

2.7.2 The concept of God

Paul's theology of God is tied to historical analysis and contextualisation. Dunn gives a clue for entering into Paul's belief of God. He explains that Paul's conception of God can be analysed from the context of the theology within which the references to God were made. Dunn emphasises Paul's Judaic monotheistic characteristics. However he states that it should not be exaggerated since most of the old religions and religious cults of the time envisaged a supreme God at the head of a divine hierarchy. Hellenism for instance recognises deities in many

⁵⁷ Bruce, *Commentary*, 1984, p 359

⁵⁸ J. C. Daryl, "Engaging the (Neo-) Pagan Mind: Paul's Encounter with Athenian Culture as a Model for Cultural Apologetics (Acts 17:16-34)" *Trinity Journal*, 16:1 (Spring 1995): 47-62.

manifestations. This is in contrast to the radical monotheistic belief of Jews and for that matter Paul. It is this exclusiveness of monotheism and the intolerance to idolatry that made Israel unique among the nations in the ancient world. Paul a Jew shared that intolerance.⁵⁹ It is obvious in Paul's address that he intended to maximize the force of the confession of God as one by affirming it boldly in the face of these other common beliefs, so that others would also believe. Even though he did not attempt to teach this truth as a theological issue, one could deduce Paul's conception of God from the context in which he made references to God.

Paul in his theology expresses a notion that God is "knowable" from the creation of the world. He implied that the concept of creation reveals the concept of the creator. God is the divine architect of creation, a conception held in Stoic thought. The use of words such as "eternal deity", "from", "through" and "to", in Rom. 1:20, Rom.11:36 are typically Stoic terminology. Paul could then easily make use of his point along with these philosophical thought at the time. According to Elwell, Paul took no time to clarify that God whom he proclaimed is the Creator God. God created all things (v. 24a) and his lordship is over everything including heaven and earth. This statement answers the Stoics' understanding of God and the universe.⁶⁰ The Stoics believed that the universe is eternal and God and the universe or created things are indistinguishable. For stoics, God is not a created being but the Creator who has an absolute control over the universe.

Paul explains the independence of God (v. 25a). God does not depend on humans or his creation for anything. Above all, God is unfathomable and incomprehensible; he is the central and totality

⁵⁹ J. D. G. Dunn, *The theology of Paul the Apostle*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 1998. p.28

⁶⁰ W. A. Elwell, ed. *Baker Commentary on the Bible*. 4th ed. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2006. p 911

of the entire universe. Paul indicates in the speech that God makes a dwelling place for human beings (v. 24), sustains human beings (v. 25), and provides for human beings (v.26). Therefore, He is a self-existing God from eternity who rather cares for the work of his hands. He is personal and self-sufficient and the source of all living beings. God is Sovereign and has put everything in order.

2.7.3 The Concept of Man

The concept of common ancestry is one of the Athenians' world views of humanity. For them "they originated from the soil of their Attic homeland and were thus superior to all other men."⁶¹ Elwell seems to conceptualise the origin of the people of Athens. In his view the people have come from the soil. However, Paul tells Athenian philosophers that God has assigned people their lives and boundaries in the existing world. Paul mentions human lineage in verse 26, but does not elaborate exclusively how God created the human being. Paul's theological objective was to communicate the truth of the Gospel that humans are to unite in worship of one true God. Paul wishes that humans may seek and find God who is not far (v. 27-28). Paul himself did not explain how to seek and find God but there is an underlying meaning in the text which seems to suggest wishing or hoping to find God. Barnes on the other hand sees that God should be sought diligently and accurately if He is to be found.⁶² This explains the special revelation of God and his active involvement in the affairs of humanity.

⁶¹ *ibid* p 911

⁶² A. Barnes, *Albert Barnes' Notes on the Bible*, e-Sword, Ver. 9.8.3, Commentary, Acts 17:27, Computer Software.

2.7.4 The Concept of Salvation

Paul points out the ignorance of his audience concerning God's grace to them. He makes a point that God forgave their past and now entreats them to come to the saving knowledge of God and directs his speech on salvation after revealing God's common grace. He reinforces his arguments by emphasising that we are God's offspring (vv. 29-31). Paul's soteriology aimed at correcting the Epicurean view of salvation which denied the immortality of the soul. Dismissing Greek misconstrued philosophy of God, universe, and life, Paul declares that all Athenians should repent (v. 30).

The development of Paul's logical arguments for repentance has obviously progressed from previous verses where Athenians were exchanging the glory of eternal God with mortal and impermanent things of the world. Rost maintains that Humanity's struggle in his search for God is not in vain.⁶³ As the apostle explains, God is near and imminent, and his immense bridges the gap between the finite, depending, and created man, and the eternal, transcendent Creator God. God seeks a relationship with humanity, which is ultimately accomplished through repentance. Paul re-emphasises the need for seeking God sincerely, and repenting from their sins and introduces to them whom they should repent and turn to.

2.7.5 The Concept of Christ

Paul pays particular attention to his pagan audience who did not know God. Subsequently, he initially revealed God and his diverse attributive nature to them. He then introduces Jesus Christ as the appointed judge of the entire universe. He posits that Jesus is the man appointed by God

⁶³ S. Rost, "Paul's Areopagus Speech in Acts 17." *Encountering New Religious Movements: a Holistic Evangelical Approach*. Ed. Irving Hexham and John Morehead. Grand Rapids, Kregel Academic & Professional, 2004. p 124.

whom he raised from the dead (v. 31b). The foundation of this theology is the person, and the work of Jesus as the pivot of the proclamation of the gospel. Paul also reminds them about God's mercy such that the Lord Jesus overlooked sinners' premeditated ignorance through his immeasurable grace (v. 30). God is still waiting for sinners to come back to him through His son Jesus the Christ.

2.7.6 The Doctrine of End-Time (Eschatology)

Paul invalidates the Athenians' concept of life and death in his discourse. In their view there is no life after death and no judgment of the dead. However in contrast to their viewpoint or philosophy, Paul's Christology confirms the God has appointed the resurrected Jesus as the judge of the world on fixed a day. The resurrection of Jesus is therefore used as an argument for the judgment after death. In the words of Gundry, Paul "identifies Jesus as the man whom God designed to judge on his behalf and whom he resurrected from among the dead."⁶⁴ It follows that for Paul, the justice of God is unavoidable and His judgment is inevitable. So Paul appeals to his audience to repent from the sins of the past in order to be vindicated and to receive the right to become the children of God.

2.8 Paul's Methodology

The contents of Paul's address on Mars Hill, provides us with some basic practical teachings for optimistic approach in evangelism. Firstly, Paul observes the city of Athens and learns about their culture, religions, and worldview with enthusiasm. (Acts 17:16-18). Next, he finds common ground as he recognizes the religiosity of the Athenians. So, he uses the inscription "TO AN

⁶⁴ R. H. Gundry, *Commentary on the New Testament: Verse-by-verse Explanations with a Literal Translation*. Peabody: Hendrickson, 2010, p 534.

UNKNOWN GOD” as a point of reference to share his faith in their own context. Having studied the situation very well, he thought that a direct attack on Athenian religion will prove counterproductive. Spence and Excell state that

Paul in his speech heartily recognizes the worshipping instinct; he sees the dissatisfaction with all existing forms of worship which indicates an aching and yearning of soul to know the full truth of God. Paul admits a real worship in paganism. He admits that the incompleteness and imperfectness of the worship followed from their ignorance. He attempts to guide the worshipping faculty aright, by instructing their understanding, and by declaring positive truth of Divine revelation.⁶⁵

This is to say that though Paul does not compromise his monotheistic faith, yet does not confront Athenians’ religion in an aggressive tone. Rather he pursues a philosophical reasoning which is logically consistent, well taken and understood. He does not shun people with different worldviews.

Contextualisation is therefore the strategy in Paul’s methodology. He contextualises his sermon in Greek philosophical setting, as a part of his apologetic fashion. He communicates through their particular cultural categories to make the gospel quite intelligible to the people. In Asante’s view, “the gospel which is always expressed within the limits of a particular culture, is intended for people of all cultures and must be communicated not only in categories that would make it intelligible to the people but also in ways that would make it relevant to their social-cultural contexts”.⁶⁶ There has always been some correlation between Christianity and the culture of the peoples it encounters.⁶⁷

⁶⁵ H. D. M. Spence, , and J. S. Exell. *The Pulpit Commentary*. Vol. II. Chicago: Wilcox & Follett, 1983. p 42.

⁶⁶ E. Asante, The Gospel in Context: An African Perspective. *Interpretation: A journal of Bible and Theology* 2001, 55 (4) 355-66

⁶⁷ P. S. Conteh, *Essays in African religion and Christianity*. Accra: Cynergy Media, 2012. P. 74.

Paul supports his logic with the quotation from two Greek poets, Aratus (315- 245 B.C.) and Cleanthes (331-233 B.C.); “for we are God’s offspring”.⁶⁸ He earns some credibility in his claims by citing their own poet as he deals with their erroneous conceptions. Morgan argues that Paul, by quoting those pagan poets, defended their truth “men as Gods’ offspring” from its misuse.⁶⁹ It is clear that Paul does not hesitate to contextualise his message. Rost observes that Paul’s sermon can be viewed at in the light of contextualization in symmetry of philosophy and theology as he addresses the Greeks from their own philosophical point of view and proclaims sound doctrine that is concluded with the call to repentance.⁷⁰

2.9 Conclusion

The exegesis and discussions of the speech (Acts 17:22-34) reveal that peoples ‘thought forms or philosophy and belief have an enormous impact on the religion and culture as well as the worldview of the people. The discussion in this chapter provides an exceptional cross-cultural missionary approach appropriate for presenting the gospel to the intellectuals, and people of other faiths and cultures. Paul’s philosophy, theology, and methodology are indispensable if the gospel is to be ministered in diverse cultures.

Luke might have more than one particular purpose in preserving the address the way it is. Luke’s main concern seems to be with Paul’s uncompromising faith, witnessing, and methodology in the pagan culture.⁷¹ In view of this, Luke would not leave out significant details of the Areopagus

⁶⁸ W. A. Elwell, ed. *Baker Commentary on the Bible*. 4th ed. p 911.

⁶⁹ C. G. Morgan, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 1946. Reprint. New York: Fleming H Revell, 1965. p 328

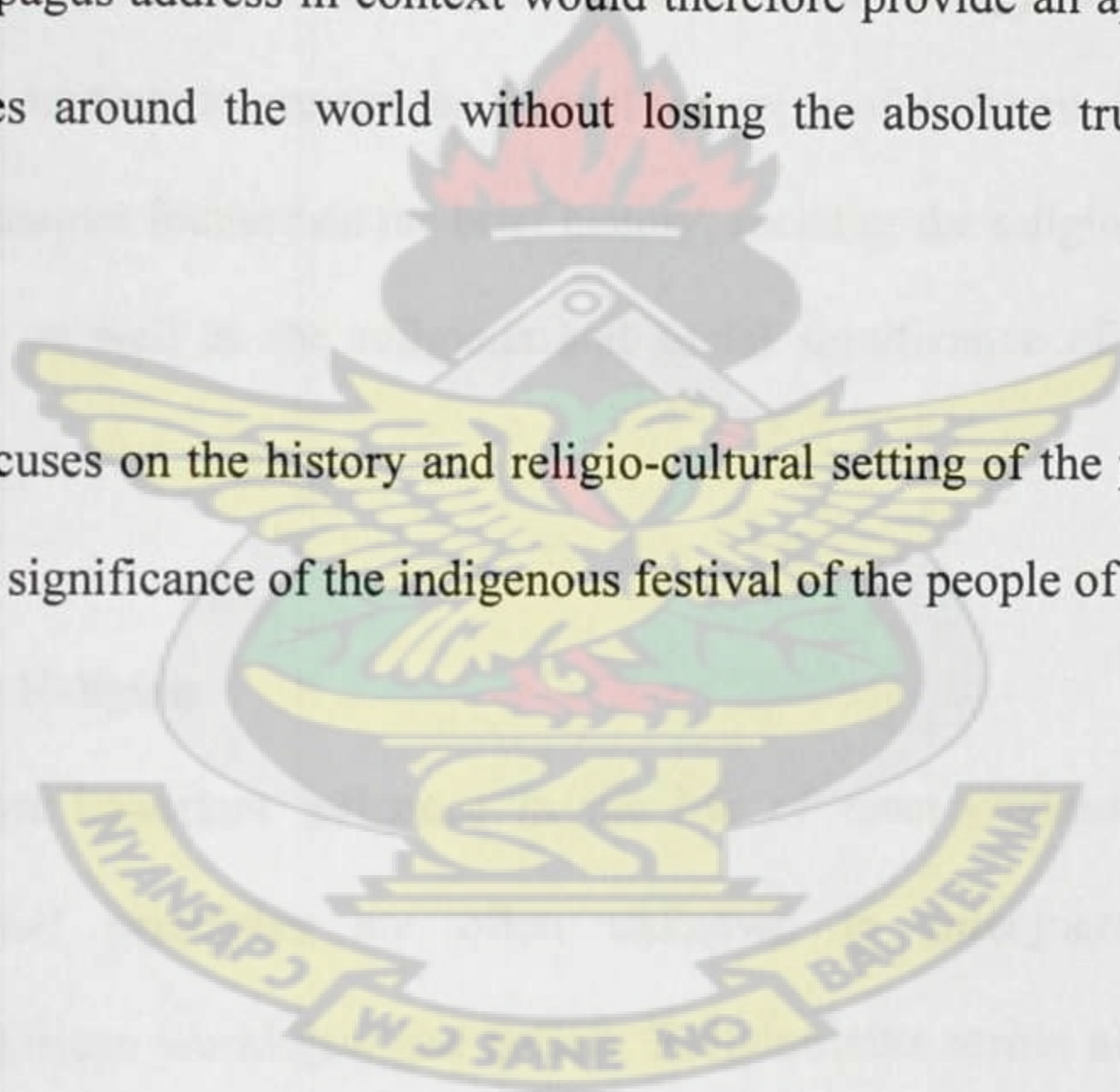
⁷⁰ Rost, “Paul’s Areopagus Speech in Acts 17.” *Encountering New Religious Movements: a Holistic Evangelical Approach*. Ed. Irving Hexham and John Morehead 2004. P. 131.

⁷¹ Fernando, Ajith. *The NIV Application Commentary. Acts*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1998.

address, including the result of the address. In this sense, Luke accomplished his purpose by recording this historical event. His words were highly calculated and précised witness of God.

Furthermore, the foregoing discussion includes an aspect of the doctrinal nature of the content of the Areopagus message. These are rich and sound doctrines which bear historical significance and the mark of orthodoxy. The doctrinal categories are the truth of the Gospel and cannot be compromised. They are the orthodox and universal truth which can be applicable throughout all ages. The doctrines and the methodology drawn from the message can be an effective medium for presenting share the Gospel to people of different cultures and other faith communities. A re-reading of the Areopagus address in context would therefore provide an appropriate method for evangelical churches around the world without losing the absolute truth of the Gospel in pervasive cultures.

The next chapter focuses on the history and religio-cultural setting of the people of Kumawu as well as the religious significance of the indigenous festival of the people of Kumawu.



CHAPTER THREE

THE HISTORY AND RELIGIO-CULTURAL SETTING OF KUMAWU

3.1 Introduction

The preceding chapter, focused on the exegesis and discussions of the text in Acts 17:22-34 which afford us with an exceptional cross-cultural evangelistic approach, applicable for the propagation of the gospel to people of other faiths and diverse cultures with Paul's philosophy, theology, and methodology. The studies also indicated the doctrinal nature of the content of the Areopagus message. These doctrinal categories and the methodology drawn from the message provide an effective medium to present the Gospel to people of different cultures and other faith communities. This chapter focuses on the brief history, social or the religio-cultural setting of the people of Kumawu as well as the religious and social significance of the "*Papa Nantwie*" festival.

3.2 The Indigenous Religion

Religion is the most important influence in the life of most communities in Africa. The fundamental essential principles are often unknown to foreigners who consequently misunderstand the African worldview and beliefs. Religion cuts across all sphere of life of the Africans. Therefore any study of a religion in the African context cannot be done in isolation, or without the study of the indigenous people who practice the religion. Awolalu explains that, the constituent of Traditional Religion are the indigenous religious beliefs and practices of the people in their peculiarity.⁷² For him therefore, an indigenous religion is that which is native or foundational, handed down from generation to generation, upheld and practised by the people

⁷² J. O. Awolalu, *Studies in Comparative Religion*, Vol. 10, No. 2. (Spring, World Wisdom, Inc. 1976).

even in their contemporary times. Though it is a heritage inherited from the past, it should not be treated as an outmoded part of the people's traditional way of life. It is rather to be treated as that which connects the past with the present and the eternity. It is a religion that is practised by living men and women. It follows that Akan traditional religion is the religion which resulted from the sustaining faith held by forebears, and which is being practised today in their various forms, shades and intensities by a great number of the people, including some individuals who claim to be Muslims or Christians. It is traditional and therefore a way of life of the people in their peculiarities.

Culture is dynamic. Therefore, Traditional Religion as a module of culture cannot remain intact because of modernisation. However indigenous religion is by no means extinct. Adherents of indigenous religion are very conservative, resisting the influence of modernism, including the introduction of Islam, Christianity, Western education and improved medical facilities. They cherish their tradition and worship with sincerity because their worship is quite meaningful to them. They hold tenaciously to their covenant that binds them together.

In the view of Awolalu, African religion is deliberately considered singular, though conscious of the fact that Africa is a large continent with multitudes of nations which have complex cultures, innumerable languages and myriads of dialects. John Mbiti states that "there are about one thousand African peoples (tribes), and each has its own religious system ..." ⁷³ However in spite of all these differences, there are many basic similarities in the religious systems. For instance the concept of God, the concept of divinities and spirits and the beliefs in ancestral cult are

⁷³ J. S. Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy*, London, Heineman, 1969, p.1.

common in many indigenous communities in Africa. Every local community has its own local deity, festival, and name for the Supreme Being, but in essence the pattern is the same. There is that perceptible "Africanness" in the whole pattern.

An indigenous religion is mainly transmitted by oral tradition. Its tenets are not formally documented on paper but in peoples' hearts, minds, oral history, rituals, shrines and religious functions. It has no founders like we have for Islam and Christianity, Muhammad and Christ respectively. It has no scriptures, missionaries, or even the desire to propagate the religion. This notwithstanding, the adherents are loyal worshippers and find it difficult to sever connection with it even when they become converts of the Christian faith. This is a common phenomenon in most African communities. It is therefore crucial for any missionary to acquaint himself with the history, culture and the traditional belief of the people among which he/she intends to evangelise.

3.3 The Historio-Cultural Background of the Kumawu Community

The historical, cultural and religious backgrounds of every ethnic group or tribe clearly give evidence of the identity and deeply felt meaning to the very existence of the people. Kumawu is the traditional capital of Kumawu Porcupine Traditional State. It is situated 57.92 kilometers or thirty six miles (36 miles) North-East of Kumasi, the capital town of the Asante Kingdom.

It is located in the serene mountainous area having been walled by a range of hills or mountains which form part of the Akuapim – Kintampo range of mountains. It has a population of about twenty-two thousand (22,000) people and it is the administrative capital of the Sekyere Afram Plains District. The Kumawu traditional area shares boundaries with Asante Asokore Traditional

council as well as with the Asante Effiduase Township It also shares border with Asante Beposo Paramount Traditional State as well as Asante-Mampong Traditional State. Kumawu assumed importance as partner to the founding of Asante Kingdom by Otumfoɔ Osei Tutu I and Okomfo Anokye in the year 1699. This was during the leadership of their king Barima Tweneboa Koduah I, who played an important role in the war that liberated the people of Ashanti from the rule of the power of Denkyera and subsequent establishment of the Ashanti Kingdom.

The initial fragmented nature of the people of Kumawu could be attributed to the migration of the various groups of people who made their final settlements in the area. Oral tradition states that the people of Kumawu were immigrants from Atebubu, Sekyere, Akwamu in the Eastern Region, Asumenya Asantemanso, Kwawu, Wassa, and later some from Asante Juabeng, the Nkonya Guan area and others from Asante-Akyem Adomfe.

Opoku Agyemang a native of Kumawu and also a teacher, in an interview indicates that the first settlers' village was Bankafo. These were immigrants from Atebubu in the Brong-Ahafo Region led by Nana Siaw. According to him the second settlers were the Sekyere Boanim near Atwea Mountains settled at Dadease-Tanoso.⁷⁴ Later their chief, Adomako Pim was made the Krontihene (a sub-chief) of Bankafo. The third group from Akwamuland in the Eastern Region settled at Akyenakrom. The group from Asumenya Asantemanso led by Nana Kwadwo Adofo Ahyeé were the forth and most dominant group to have settled at Asaman, currently called Hiawa, a suburb of Kumawu. Oral tradition has it that, these people migrated from Asumenya Asantemanso (Asumenya near Asante Bekwai) as a result of over population and made their first settlement at Penimase and later moved to Gyakyee. From Gyakyee they moved to Tikrom and

⁷⁴The current residential area of the staff of the Sekyere Afram Plains District Assembly in Kumawu.

then to Abira. From Abira they settled at Abenamu near the Abena River, (a river near Kumawu) and later made their final settlement at Asaman. All these immigrants chose to settle in this area because of the proximity to the River Onwam and the River Afram. These rivers were the source of drinking water and also for fishing. The vast fertile land along these rivers for farming purposes, coupled with the protective environment of the surrounding hills and the favourable weather conditions might be some of the reasons for their settlement in the area.

These groups later united under a new name “Apemso” the original name of Kumawu, with Nana Kwadwo Adofo Ahyeé as their chief. The change of name was as a result of the death of the kum tree planted by Okomfo Anokye. *Kum dua no awu*, meaning the kum tree is dead later became “*kum awu*” or Kumawu. There are a number of towns and villages which together formed the Kumawu Porcupine Traditional State. These include Bodomase, Woraso, Bodwease, Pepease, Besoro, Aninangya, Temante, Teteaban, Amanfrom, Abenaso, Abotanso, Drobonso, Kumawu-Wonoo, Akosua-Nkwanta, Jeduako, Saabuso, Apapasu, Asasebonso, Densubon, Kyeiase, Anyinofi, Aframso, Kumawu-Amanfrom, and other smaller villages dotted in the Afram plains area.

3.4 The Religious Worldview of the People

At the heart of every culture lies the worldview of the people. That is how a particular group of people perceive, understand, and interpret reality. Every culture has within its religious system certain practices directed towards the achievement of what is considered the highest good. Paul demonstrates in his speech at the Mars Hill (Acts 17: 22-34); that there is truth already inherent within the culture of the people. The people of Kumawu, an Akan community, share in the

general worldview of the Akan. Their religion is based mainly on oral transmission through history, rituals, shrines and involvement in religious functions.

They believe in the existence of a Supreme Being, lesser gods and spirits as well as the ancestral cults. Danquah explains that, the Supreme Being is variously referred to as *Onyankopon*, *Onyame* (also spelt, *Nyame*), or *ɔdomankoma*. The Akan *Onyame* implies the basic idea of Deity as understood in Christian theology. *Onyankopon* denotes the supremacy of God, the One Greater *Nyame*. *ɔdomankoma*, denotes the Infiniteness of *Nyame*.⁷⁵ The people of Kumawu, like any other Akan community, perceive the Supreme Being as being the creator of the universe. Thus everything in the spiritual and the physical world today is as a result of the direct action of the Supreme Being⁷⁶. Moreover, it is a general belief of the people in this community that the Supreme Being is the one who sustains and keeps the world and everything in it at every given moment. He is seen to be the one who provides and protects this world.⁷⁷ He is responsible for rains, sunshine and other natural occurrences. It naturally follows that the Supreme Being is believed to be all-powerful being who has the power to do anything he desires. He being present everywhere is an indication that the Supreme Being has complete knowledge and is eternal.⁷⁸

The Supreme Being is perceived by the indigenous people of Kumawu as being essentially good. They understand that *Onyankopon* is not only kind, but that he does not do wrong. Gehman states, "Whatever tragedy is experienced is blamed on witchcraft or the living-dead. God is

⁷⁵ J. B. Danquah, *The Akan Doctrine of God*. London: White Friars Press, 1968. p.43.

⁷⁶ B. Kato, *Theological pitfalls in Africa*. Kisumu, Kenya: Evangel Publishing House, 1975 p31

⁷⁷ J.S. Mbiti, *Introduction to African religion*. 2nd ed. Oxford, United Kingdom: Heinemann Educational Publishers. 1991 p 49, 52

⁷⁸ W. O'Donovan, *Biblical Christianity in African perspective*. 2nd ed. Carlisle, UK : Paternoster Press. 1995 p 41.

seldom charged with wrong doing in Africa”⁷⁹. Next to Onyame is *Asase Yaa*, the earth goddess, who is responsible for fertility. The Kumawu community traditionally sets apart Tuesday for the veneration of the earth goddess. They prohibit working on the land on this sacred day. It is strongly adhered to within the religious cosmos of the people of Kumawu.

Next to the earth goddess *Asase Yaa*, is the ancestral cult. Like any other Akan community the people of Kumawu believe that the survival of humans and their community is dependent upon the help given by the ancestors (*The dead but living*) the divinities and other spirits. The tradition holds that the living continue to relate to the dead. This is implicit in various religious practices such as pouring of libation (the traditional prayer) and also through naming of new babies. Babies are named after their forefathers who during their lifetime in the community had lived a life worthy of emulation. The Akan popular saying “*samanpa na yeto no abadin*” (we name babies after good ancestors) indicates that only those who deserve to be venerated are people who per the norm and traditions of the community had lived a worthy life. Therefore how the people relate to the ancestors and the spirit force is crucial to their holistic well-being. All of these explain the Akan understanding of humans and the community.

The worship of one Supreme Being (God) is referred to as *Onyamesom* (literary meaning *God's worship*). *Onyamesom* is used in traditional context to relate to rites and practices followed and conducted according to custom, or in relation to specific personal or communal needs.⁸⁰ This belief is evidenced in the peoples' daily life usually expressed in myths, folklore, names, drum

⁷⁹ R. J. Gehman, *African traditional religion in biblical perspective*. Nairobi: East African Educational Publishers.

⁸⁰ S. G. Williamson, *Akan Religion and the Christian Faith*. Accra: Ghana Universities Press, 1965, p. 87.

texts, songs, proverbs, religious rituals, ceremonies, festivals, and religious practices.⁸¹ For instance the Akan expression “*Onyame nku wo a ɔdasani bre kwa*” means that God is the only custodian of human life. Such sayings and proverbs are often used to express the indigenous knowledge about God. The indigenous people in this area do not confuse the identity of *Onyame* and that of the *abosom*. Whereas they would usually discard *abosom* that they consider non-performing, *Onyame* cannot be discarded. They hold unto the absolute uniqueness of the Supreme God. It would seem that even before the introduction of Islam and Christianity the people of Kumawu were assured of the supremacy of “the incomprehensible term of human transcendence”⁸²

A study into the language and various expressions used for the Supreme Being by the indigenous people of Kumawu affirm Christaller’s comments that the Akan, presumed by outsiders to be polytheists, were “to a great extent rather monotheist [since] they apply the term for *God* only to one Supreme Being.”⁸³ . Patrick Ryan makes the same important observation in his article on the distinction of God from gods by the Yoruba and the Akan.⁸⁴

It is obvious that the indigenous people esteem the Supreme Being far above the other deities. The people of Kumawu worship a host of divinities or gods (*abosom*), believed to be the children of the one supreme God. These *abosom* are of three categories, that is the state god, family or clan gods, and gods of the medicine man. The most famous gods are associated with rivers,

⁸¹ Ibid. p.85

⁸² P. J. Ryan, ‘Arise, O God!’ The Problem of ‘Gods’ in West Africa,” *Journal of Religion in Africa* XI, 3 1980:169.

⁸³ J. G. Christaller, *A Dictionary of the Asante and Fante Language*. Basel: Evangelical Missionary Society, 1881 p342.

⁸⁴ P.J. Ryan, ‘Arise, O God!’ The Problem of ‘Gods’ in West Africa,” *Journal of Religion in Africa* XI, 3 1980:169.

rocks, mountains and forests in the area. Generally, the continued existence of a particular god *ɔbosom* in the religious pantheon of the Akan largely depends upon the ability of that *ɔbosom* to function to the satisfaction of supplicants. In the case of Kumawu, some of the family gods have ceased to function, since most of the members of the family have become converts of the Christian faith.

It is worthy to note that the various immigrants who made their final settlement at the present location of the Kumawu community had come along with them their stools as well as their various deities. These deities have their various shrines and attendants even now. For example people from the Akwamuland have “Buruku” as their god and those from the Nkonya Guan area came with “Dente” whilst Sekyere Boanim people who established the Dadease-Tenaso came with the god “Tano”. There are also the native or family gods as well as some personal gods. All of these gods have their shrines and attendants called *akomfoɔ* (priests) and *abosofoɔ* who are the custodians of the traditions of the deities and also lead adherents in performing rituals normally revealed by the gods through the *akomfoɔ*.

3.5 The Papa Nantwie Festival of Kumawu

The religiousity of the people is also demonstrated greatly during the celebration of the “Papa Nantwie” festival. During this festival the belief systems become evidenced through the performance of the various rituals. The festival which pre-dates the founding of Asanteman is held every two years on the second Akwasidae⁸⁵ of the chosen year. It is essentially a memorial festival celebrated to commemorate brave warriors who died in the many wars against *Ataala*

⁸⁵ A special Sunday observed as sacred day by most Akan especially Asante. It falls on every 40 days of the traditional almanac.

Fiam the former great overlord of the Afram Plains. The original red bullock was slaughtered by Adofu-Ahyie, the founder of the present Aduana family of Kumawu-Apebiakyere. These people had migrated from Essumegya as indicated earlier. While he was cutting the carcass he reputedly urged all onlookers to beat, cut and shoot at him and observe his stamina, bravery, fearlessness and immunity to pain and death. Having successfully performed this, Adofu-Ahyie placed the meat in a pot which was itself set into a hole in the ground. Subsequently, the meat was cooked without any source of fire.

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All young men intending to join the impending war against Ataala Fiam were to dip their hands together with their weapons, cutlass or gun, into the boiling pot and grasp a piece of meat. If they felt pain they were warned not to go to war, for they would die. If they grasped the meat painlessly, they would survive. Thus an army of brave warriors was gathered which eventually, under the late Nana Fekan and Barima Tweneboa Kodua, seized the Ataala's vast land from near Yeji to the confluence of the Afram and Flao (Volta) for Kumawu. Later, forming one of the original five states to found Asanteman, Kumawu joined in the war of independence against Dankyira during which the self-sacrifice of Nana Tweneboa Kodua earned him the title "Barima" (the man amongst men) which his successors, alone amongst Ashanti chiefs, have inherited.

The festival begins with the Purification of the *abosom* at the forecourt of the Ahenfie (*palace*) on the Friday preceding the Akwasidae. On Saturday (*Memeneda Dapaa*), the sacred black wooden stools (*thrones*) are carried in procession through the town in darkness, for the Traditional washing and purification of the soul of Kumawuman and the Black Stools to be done.

The Sacred Black Stools are taken from the stool House escorted by the Omanhene, Ohemaa and Elders to the Anorkosu Stream for purification. The procession of the burning torches of dried "palm" branches dipped in palm oil provides light for the procession of stools. From the stool house the stools are taken to be washed in the Anorkosu stream. During this time a bonfire burns at Papaase as the *akomfoɔ* perform their "*Akom*" (spirit induced dances). After purification the stools are sent to the principal royal mausoleum. On the morning of Sunday (Akwasidae) the purified stools are visited by the Omanhene and the normal joyful Akwasidae rites performed and rich food prepared at the mausoleum and shrines.

In the afternoon the Omanhene and his sub-chiefs process in "Batakari" (dark brown war smock in remembrance and imitation of their ancestors) to *Papaase* where the Kumawumanhene seeks to imitate his ancestors by slaughtering the bullock while being beaten. The young men also show of their bravery by cutting pieces of meat while under fierce assault. The *Papa* tree itself is believed to be very medicinal which provided cure for many diseases of Adofo Ahyie and his clansmen, the original inhabitants. It is beneath this tree that the bullock is slaughtered. The *Papa* tree is considered sacred till today. Women in their menstrual period are forbidden from going near the tree.

When all are satisfied, the Omanhene departs for his palace and by midnight the royal stools are brought safely back to their usual place having blessed and purified. The festival is concluded on the following day when the Omanhene and his elders sit in state to bid farewell to visitors and well-wishers until the next festival.

The festival is significant since it is observed to exhibit and reinforce the socio-cultural values of selfless leadership, heroism and patriotism of the Royal family and Kumawuman in the wars of independence on the Afram Plains. The festival is especially in the memory of Barima Tweneboa Kodua, the celebrated war hero of the Asante war of independence from Denkyira. Since the founding of Asante nation, Kumawuman has shown constant and unflinching loyalty to the Golden Stool and the Asante Union.

3.9 Conclusion

We realise from the discussions in this chapter that to be able to discover and encounter what people actually know, believe, and think, about deity and the cosmos, largely depends on the peoples' origin and history as well as their traditional and cultural way of life. The study of the history, social and religio-cultural setting of the people of Kumawu includes the discussion of some religious significance of the "Papa Nantwie" festival. The next focuses on the discussions of the finding from the various interviews conducted regarding the encounter and the effect of the Christian faith on traditional and religious life of the people and drawing on the implication of Pauline evangelistic approach in the cultural setting of Kumawu.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS, INTERPRETATION AND DISCUSSIONS

4.1 Introduction

The chapter three of this thesis discussed the indigenous religious beliefs and practices of the Akan with the Kumawu traditional area in focus. A brief history and the socio-cultural setting of the people of Kumawu were discussed. The chapter also included a re-reading of his address on the Mars Hill (Acts 17:22-34) drawing on the relevance of Paul's evangelistic strategy for evangelization in the local context of the Akan. This chapter presents the analysis, interpretation and discussions of the findings from the field. The interviews conducted revealed the religiosity of the Akan people living in the Kumawu traditional area, as variously demonstrated in the people's belief systems and some of their traditional practices. The interviews sought to explore the views of respondents about the traditional religious worldview beyond the usual conflictual issues involving the Christian faith and the traditional belief systems. This chapter therefore examines and discusses respondents' views concerning the various evangelization strategies adopted by the pioneering churches in the Kumawu area.

4.2 Research Questions

- How does one worship the transcendent God in his or her own cultural setting?
- Can we get to the worldview of the people we seek to evangelise using the "known" values, languages, beliefs, festivals, philosophies and introduce the "unknown" realities of divinity?

- Was the religiousity of the people “unknowingly” understood as superstition by the early Christian missionaries?
- Is the gospel of Christ to be viewed as anti-cultural or transcultural?
- How was the gospel presented to the Akan communities by the early Christian missionaries?
- Is there any relationship between Christianity and the traditional religion of the indigenous Akan communities?
- How has the church influenced the traditional society of Kumawu or vice versa?
- Are the practices of the Christians in Kumawu syncretistic or misconception?

4.3 Data Collection Procedure

Interview questions were designed to solicit the views of interviewees to achieve the objectives this thesis. They were mostly formulated from the research questions of the thesis. A one-on-one interview was conducted on different occasions to obtain information from some Christian and traditional religious leaders as well as *nananom* (traditional opinion leaders) in the community. Interviewees responded to the structured questions orally in Asante-Twi. The interviewees included six leaders from some selected churches, two traditional priests and six traditional opinion leaders, in the Kumawu tradition area.

4.4 Pre-Missionary Religiousity of Kumawu

It has been the major line of thought in this research about Paul’s evangelistic paradigm of getting to the worldview of the people he sought to evangelise with the gospel using the “known” values, such as beliefs and thought forms to introduce the “unknown” realities of divinity. The

people of Kumawu like the people of Athens in Paul's days adhered to an indigenous religion with belief systems inherited from their forbearers. The traditional religion and practices guided the mode of life of the people before the encounter of Christianity and Islam. It is therefore necessary to explore further, the traditional religious situation of the Akan people in Kumawu from the indigenous perspectives.

What was the Akan traditional religious pattern that existed before the encounter with the Christian faith? What characterised the religious situation of the Akan people in the Kumawu traditional area before the introduction of the Christian faith? The findings include the indigenous concept of God, the divinities and spirits as well as the veneration of ancestors. The findings of these investigations reveal the pre-missionary religious situation as pertained in the Kumawu area as well as the people's concept of life.

4.5 The Indigenous Concept of God

The conception of God in the indigenous context of Kumawu Traditional Area is expressed in the way of life of the people there. Nana Kwasi Darko, the Nsumankwahene of Kumawu Traditional Area, is also the custodian of religious norms and practices. He is also the head of all the traditional priests (the *akomfoɔ*) in the area. He posited (in an interview granted on 17th January, 2013) that the belief in a Supreme Being (one God), who lives in the sky, is axiomatic to the people in the Kumawu area, hence the adage in Twi, "*obi nkyere akwadaa Nyame*," meaning, "no one introduces the Supreme Being to the child." The Akan generally belief in a Supreme Being. According to Nana Darko, the Supreme Being is the creator or the one transcendent God, who's self-evident, is indisputable. They refer to the Supreme Being by

various names such as *Oboadee*, *Nyame*, *Onyankopon Twereampɔn*. Nana Darko's view presupposes that the Akan in the Kumawu Traditional Area believe that the Supreme Being (God) is experienced as an all-pervading reality. The people within their cultural setting acknowledged God, ancestors, divinities and other spirits as the constituents of the spiritual realm. Nana Darko argued that "even before the Christians introduced 'their God' to us, the people in the area perceived God as the creator of the universe and that they believed that *Onyankopon* was the one who sustained the creation and humankind." They believed that *Onyankopon* is responsible for rains and sunshine. He said emphatically that the divinities are the children of the only one God. They are the intermediaries through whom God communicates to human beings and vice versa.

Osheneba Otuo Akyiampon, the Twafɔɔhene of Kumawu, on the same subject, added that the belief in a Supreme Being is paramount in Akan traditional worldview. For him, this belief is well expressed in the nomenclature of the indigenous Akan. He explained that the Supreme Being is given different names by different groups of people. He continued that one gains greater insight into the indigenous concept of God whenever one examines these names. The names are descriptive of the character and attributes of the Supreme Being. For him, names are very important in Akan society. Therefore the names given to the Supreme Being are very essential to the people's belief in God. For instance among the Akan, every person is born with a day name. The person's day name is derived from one of the seven *Okragyena* (guardian sponsors), after whom the seven days are named. *Onyakopon's* day name is *Kwame*, the soul name of a male child born on Saturday as affirmed by Antubam.⁸⁶ It follows that naming the

⁸⁶ Kofi Antubam, *Ghana's Heritage of Culture* (Leipzig: Koehler and Amelang, 1963), p.34.

Supreme Being *Kwame* then indicates that the Supreme Being is a personal God to the indigenous person.⁸⁷

Akyiampon also mentioned names of certain artifacts, plants as well as human beings as evidence of their belief in the existence of an omnipotent God. Children born to parents miraculously after a long period of bareness were sometimes named *Nyamekye* (gift from God), *Nyameama* (given by God), and *Nyamedɔ* (God's love). Names of some "adinkra" symbols, like "Gye Nyame" (except God), "*Onyame bewu ansa na mawu*" (God will die before I die), just to mention but a few, demonstrated their belief in the existence of the Supreme Being. He also mentioned "*Nyamedua*" (a particular tree in the forest named after God), used for various religious purposes. According to him, this tree is highly medicinal. People used the roots and the barks to prepare concoctions which could cure many diseases. Each household had a forked post of *Nyamedua* erected at the entrance to the house to signify protection. A pot or a clay bowl was placed on the fork post. The post usually contained *nyankonnsuo*⁸⁸ and "*adwera*" (watery shrub); and the people were sprinkled with the water as a prayer for God's protection. This for them is also a symbol of purity, sanctity, consecration, cleanliness, and good fortune. *Adwera* is used in *asubɔ* (purification) ceremony and *akradwaree* (soul washing) ceremony. For example, when one recovers from a long spell of illness, one performs an *asubɔ* ceremony to sanctify one's soul and appease the spirits for protecting one's life. This ceremony starts with bathing with water in which *adwera* leaves have been seeped. Akyiampon explained that this ritual is often accompanied by the expression: "*Adwera nsuo, wo ne nkwansuo, nsu korogyenn a wohuru nso*

⁸⁷ S. G. Williamson, *Akan Religion and the Christian Faith* (Accra: Ghana Universities Press, 1965), p. 87.

⁸⁸ literally means God's water (water collected directly from the sky during rains)

wonhye." Literally meaning, "water of life, you are the pure clean water that boils, but does not burn."

Nana Kwasi Baffoe Ababio, the Akwamuhene of Kumawu traditional area, added that the erected *Nyamedua* (originally called *osinuro*) forked post and the pot on it indicated for them the presence of Onyame, the Sky God who protected the entire household against evil spirits. According to him, the content of the pot included three *nyameakuma*⁸⁹ (God's axe). Baffoe referred to the erected forked *Nyamedua* with the pot, usually clothed in white calico as the *gyinaee* (the sacred presence of the sky God) of the family or the entire household. He said the presence of the *gyinaee* warded off evil spirits. Abraham writes concerning the *Nyamedua* as a sign of acknowledgement of the people's dependence on God.⁹⁰

Akyiampon (*Twafoohene*), is also the caretaker of the state deity called *Afram* (the deity which dwells in the river Afram, a tributary of the Volta River) of Kumawu stated that, the people of Kumawu worshiped the Supreme Being through the *abosom*, just as the Christian believes that he or she can get to God through his son Jesus Christ. The divinities mediate between God and humans. He also emphasised the belief that divinities and spirits dwell in nature. For him rocks, rivers and some plants possess spirits. Concerning God and divinities, Darko affirms that the Akan traditional believer perceives pantheon of deities with the Supreme Being at the apex of the hierarchy followed by *Asase Yaa* (earth deity), the *abosom*, *nananom nsamanfoɔ* (the ancestors) and *ahomhom* (spirits). This for him is demonstrated greatly in the content of libation (prayers).

⁸⁹ An axe-shaped stone believed to have been planted in the soil by lightening.(stone age)

⁹⁰ W. E. Abraham, *The Mind of Africa* (Chicago : The University Press 1962) p.58

In the opinion of Bosomtwi Mensah, a retired educationist and also the *Asona abusuapanin* (the head of the *Asona* clan of Kumawu), the people in their cultural setting acknowledged God as the Supreme Being who rules and directs the affairs of the universe including the activities of the deities. The above provide the interactions with some traditional leaders of the Kumawu traditional area. Judging by the traditional practices and the everyday language as indicated, one can deduce that the Akan people in the Kumawu Traditional Area experience God as a constant participant in the affairs of human beings.

4.6 The belief in Divinities and Spirits

Generally the Akan traditional beliefs include the existence of divinities, the ancestors and other spirits such as *asuman*, *mmoatia* (dwarfs) *abayifo* (witchcrafts) and *sasabonsam* (the mythical monster). Rivers, rocks, some plants, are usually considered as the abode of these divinities. The study has also revealed that the Akan in general and in particular the people of Kumawu, venerate the earth as a great deity next to the Supreme Being. The earth is generally known in the Akan traditional parlance as *Asase Yaa*. According to Darko, *Asase Yaa* takes the next drink after the sky God frequently called "*Otweduapon Kwame*" during libation. *Asase Yaa*, the mother earth is believed to have power and is a spirit of its own which could be helpful if propitiated and harmful when neglected. This power in the earth according to Busia was conceived as a female principle, *Asase Yaa* (Earth) whose natal day is Thursday.⁹¹ The Akan consider *asase* (land) as the physical and feminine aspect of the dualistic nature of the universe. God, the Creator is the spiritual and masculine aspect of this duality. Hence, the Akan people refer to the earth (*Asase*) as *Yaa* (among the Twi-speaking Akan) or *Afua* (among the Fantse-speaking Akan), and God as

⁹¹K. A. Busia, *The position of the Chief in the Modern Political System of Ashanti*, (London: Frank Cass & Co LTD, 1968 p. 40)

Kwame.⁹² When asked whether there is a particular priest or priestess for *Asase Yaa*, Serwaah, Darko, Bosomtwe and Akyiampon answered “no”. However, they all affirmed that *Asase Yaa*, the Earth deity is second to the Supreme Being and is followed by the *abosom*, *asuman*, *nsamanfoɔ*, and some spirits in that order of honour as always implied in the content of the traditional prayer or drum language at a chief’s installation, festivals and at all important ceremonies.

The people in this area do not consider *Asase Yaa* as a goddess since it has no priest nor is she consulted for divination when there is sickness, need or crises as they would petition the *abosom* for assistance. The Akan adage says “*asase nye ɔbosom; ɔnkyere mmusuo*” meaning the earth is not a deity; she does not divine. However they believe that, *Asase Yaa* was created on a Thursday by the Supreme Being (*Onyame*). Therefore, Thursday is considered a sacred day on which traditional believers do not farm on the land in order not to disturb mother earth. Busia wrote that “To avert misfortune, work on the land was prohibited. It was desirable to be on good terms with the deity of the earth.”⁹³

Okomfoɔ Serwaa is a renowned traditional priestess and a native of Kumawu. Responding to the question that sought to inquire about the religiousity of the indigenous people before the introduction of Christianity. She begun by narrating the circumstances that led to her calling to the traditional priesthood. According to her, she was a Christian before she got “married” to the deity. She refers to her relationship with the deities which usually possessed her as marriage. So she is spiritually married to the deities. According to her the Kumawu community has a great

⁹² ibid

⁹³ ibid

number of deities. The people in the area do not worship the sky God or the earth deity alone. Serwaa indicates that the traditional people protect themselves against evil spirits with the powers of the *abosom*. She mentioned some of the deities as “*Subɔntire* and *Fɔtene*” (which she claims live as a couple, *Subɔntire* as the male deity and *Fɔtene* the female), *Asuafu*, *Koromwam*, *Kyiribra*, *Baako*, *Kwankyempɔn*, *Onwam*, *Tano*, *Bruku* and *Afram*. Most of these deities mentioned, according to her are “river spirits” and any one of them can possess her and reveal to her clients some spiritual things whenever the need arose. The origins of these deities can be traced to the very beginning of the Kumawu state. According to her all of these deities have their shrines, priests and priestesses. Okomfoɔ Nsiah believes that every *abosom* comes from Onyankopɔn. They derive their powers from Onyankopɔn who is too remote to deal directly with humans. For him, Onyankopɔn chose to reach human beings through these *abosom* who usually possess loyal servants.

The priests or priestesses function as the temporal abode of the deity and also the custodian of the shrines. He referred to shrines as the abode of the deities. According to him shrines are mostly made of brass pan or a bowl containing some sacred objects. The content of the shrine represent the body of the deities. The shrines of the deities attract awe and sanctity from their custodians since they are considered as the potential abode of the deity. He added that such shrines abound in traditional worship setting since every deity has its own shrine. There are branch shrines of some of the renowned *abosom* (*Tano*, *Afram*, *Kwankyenpon*, etc) in the various villages and towns in the Kumawu traditional area. The deities and ancestors also inhabit manufactured objects. Deities are believed to be in images and statues usually kept in sacred

emphasised that, death does not sever the deceased person from his or her continuing relationship with the community and that the ancestors are regularly summoned from *asamando* to join the living on various important occasions through the pouring of libation. Bosomtwe reaffirmed the General belief in life after death as held by the Akan. He noted that the ancestors play an important role in the Akan indigenous community. The Ancestors also known as *nananom nsamanfoɔ* have a prominent place in the thought forms, religious beliefs and practices of the indigenous people of Kumawu. He explained that the ultimate aspiration of every person is to reach the spirit world of one's ancestors, to be venerated by one's descendants as an ancestor and eventually to be reincarnated. Therefore, ancestors are people who have made it to the spirit land and are venerated by their descendants.

Both Okomfoɔ Kwaku Nsiah and Okomfoɔ Serwaa agreed that the people perceive the ancestors as part of the elders of the families with enhanced powers to bless, protect or punish the families. They are invoked to share at gatherings and ceremonies. They are seen as symbols of peace, unity and prosperity in the family. The ancestors are not worshipped, but are highly respected as spirit members of the families. They are next to the divinities in the hierarchy. Ancestors act as intermediaries between God and the members of their families. On the same subject, Nana Darko posited in the following words:

The ancestors are feared, but at the same time, they are loved and respected and are believed to be everywhere. Unlike the gods, the *nananom nsamanfoɔ* have neither priest nor priestess. However, they are honoured and appeased because they are believed to be watching and protecting the living. They visit the home of the living regularly to eat and drink. In view of this, tradition demands that on some occasions a special food should be prepared and placed in the sacred ancestral room for the consummation of *nananom*.

Opoku Agyemang, a teacher and a native of Kumawu noted that it is the belief that the ancestors are in close contact with the Supreme Being. The ancestors are honoured mostly during festivals

and sacred days. He also mentioned *Akwasidae* as the major festival that existed before the introduction of the *Papa Nantwie* festival. It is held in a cycle of every 40-42 days and is always on a Sunday. He indicated that the traditional Akan community of Kumawu often has special events such as *akɔm* which is the traditional worship service with drumming, singing and dancing to the ancient songs and rhythms composed by the forbearers to commemorate *Akwasidae*. Every family in the community also sets aside this day to celebrate their family ancestors in other special ways.

4.7 The People's Concept of Life

The indigenous Akan people of Kumawu can be considered as people who value the sanctity of life. For them life is that which the Supreme Being gives. The overriding concern of the people is the enjoyment of *nkwa* (life) in totality. It is the enjoyment of long life, vitality, vigour, and health. It means life of happiness and felicity.⁹⁴ Bosomtwi's view about *nkwa* (life) is having good health and long-life. According to him *nkwa* for the people in this area includes the enjoyment of *ahonyadee*, (possessions; prosperity), that is, wealth, riches, and substance. As the adage goes "*wo wɔ nkwa a wowɔ adee*" (prosperity is tied to life) is a common philosophical expression of the people in the Kumawu area. Generally for the Akan, *nkwa* also connotes *asomdwoee*, that is, a life of peace and tranquillity, free from agitation.⁹⁵ The ultimate end of one's existence is the enjoyment of holistic *nkwa*, but it is also clear from the indigenous practice and experiences that there are some forces, which prevent the individual from enjoying life in its fullness.

⁹⁴ J. G. Christaller, *A Dictionary of the Asante and Fante Language* Basel: Evangelical Missionary Society, 1881. p 277

⁹⁵ Ibid. 468.

The indigenous religious person is well aware that to experience *nkwa* in its full manifestations one must work hard, with the realisation of the fact that there are powerful forces in the realms of the spirits that fight against the individual's progress in life. For them abundant life is available through the mediation of the spirit beings (divinities and the ancestors). These they request for in their daily prayers in the traditional settings especially during the Papa festival by the *Ɔmanhene*. Every family gathering of the people often commenced with the pouring of libation. The following is a sample of a traditional prayer, normally said by the head of family during the festival or the commencement of a new year. The person praying lowers his cloth below the shoulders and with a drink (normally schnapps) says:

*Otumfoɔ onyankopɔn nsa nie,
Asase Yaa nsa nie.
Nananom Nsamanfoɔ momɛgye nsa nnom.
Enye bɔne bi nti na yerefɛre mo.
Afe asane abeto yen bio.
Moahwe yen so amma musuo biara anto yen.
Monnye nsa nnom.
Yɛasɛ mo hɔ nkɔsoɔ afe yi mu.
Momma musuo biara mmeto yen.
Momfa nsutɔɛɛ aduane, nkwadaa,
and.apɔmden ne yiedie mmɛhyira yen.*

Almighty God here is drink
Earth deity here is drink
Great ancestors come and have a drink.
We are not calling you because of any evil.
Another year has come.
You have protected us from all calamities.
We are offering you drink.
We beseech that the year will be prosperous.
Don't allow any evil to come near our habitation
Bless us with rain, food, children, health
prosperity

The above prayer provide the general pattern of the Akan traditional prayer (pouring of libation). The contents of this prayer, like many other prayers found among the various ethnic groups in Ghana, elucidate the concerns of the people and the need for vital power which comes from the Supreme Being and the non-human spirit entities. The Akan traditional prayer calls for power, life, prosperity, fertility, success, and wealth.⁹⁶

⁹⁶ D. M. Beckmann, *Eden Revival* (London: Concordia, 1975), 17.

Interview with Bosomtwi also indicates that uncertainties and anxieties usually originate from the challenges of the individual's daily life. Some of which are believed to be as a result of the fear of evil spirits and malicious persons, witches and sorcerers. According to him people seek the protective presence of the benevolent divine force, through some protective and preventive rites. Protective rites are meant to immunise potential victims from *abayifoɔ* (witches and wizards), *nkaberekyerefoɔ* and *asumantufɔɔ* (sorcerers, charmers and bad medicine men) and evil spirits. Most of the time the individual realises that, the constant efforts made in order to bring meaning to life proves futile. When this happens, the people involved go for *abisa*. *Abisa* is a religious term, implying "asking" or obtaining or seeking information on a particular issue from the diviner, medicine man, or traditional priests. The intention is to contact the spiritual realm to find out what might have caused the problem. It is through the *abisa* that one is able to remove what would likely prevent the person from enjoying *nkwa*, which embodies *ahonya*, (wealth) *asomdwoee* (peace and tranquillity). It is to the religious practitioner, that one goes for *abisa*. One needs to know the forces behind the problems or the factors that might have caused the woes. This information is relevant to the individual in order to be able to arrest the situation. This may require that the individual performs some protective rites to secure protection against the enemies. It may also require that some purificatory rites be performed in order to appease the ancestors or the divinities for some particular reason.

Traditional practitioners mostly found in Kumawu traditional area include the *adunsinfoɔ* (medicine men or traditional doctors). Most of these people are herbalists who use herbs in providing cure for various diseases. Some *adunsinfoɔ* are believed to be possessed with spirits which reveal to them the particular herbs which cure the diseases. Some *adunsinfoɔ* claim to

have the ability to hear the voices of the plants talk indicating what they can do. Some *adunsinfoɔ* require their patients to perform some rites. Purification and protective rites appropriate for curing and sustaining the physical wellbeing of the person is performed in most cases.

4.8 Religious Significance of some Traditional Practices

According to Nana Kwasi Darko, Nsumankwahene, the Akan belief systems are variously displayed in the way they communicate with the Supreme Being (God), and the other deities. Such communication is normally termed as divination. Traditionally, and among the indigenous people of Kumawu Traditional Area, this communication takes place through the following practices of the indigenous people.

4.8.1 Nsaguo

Nsaguo (libation, is the traditional prayer of the Akan people). The pouring of gin, whiskey or schnapps and the calling of the names of the deceased, for him, reaffirms the belief that the dead continue to live and are concerned with the welfare of the living. He indicates that the content of libation also reveals the interrelation of the hierarchy of Onyankopon (the Supreme God), Asase Yaa, ancestors and the deities. On the same subject, the Akwamuhene Nana Kwasi Baffoe Ababio who is also the chief of Kumawu Wonoo mentioned some of the various occasions on which libation are poured. They include the Papa festival and sacred days such as *Akwasidae*, *Fɔdwoɔ*, *Kwabena*, *Awukudae*, *Fofie* and *Memenada Dapaa*. He said that the and elders

usually go to 'Banmu'⁹⁷ on such occasions to offer drink to the spirits of the dead chiefs and queens whose corpse are kept in the sacred ancestral rooms (*baamu*: the royal mausoleum). According to Oheneba Otuo Akyiampon, he does not eat in the morning during festivals and Akwasidae until the libation is done in the stool room⁹⁸. As the caretaker of the Afram deity, he visits the shrine early in the morning on the sacred days to offer drink to the deity before he comes back home to eat. During funerals and family gatherings they would give drink and sprinkle food for *Onyame*, *Asase Yaa*, *abosom* and *nananom nsamanfoɔ*.

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4.8.2 Akɔm

Akɔm is a common phenomenon in the Kumawu traditional area. It is a practice which is well defined and very much acclaimed by its practitioners and adherents in the area. According to Okomfoɔ Afia Serwaa, *akɔm* is not just dancing under the influence of a deity. For her, *akɔm* is the totality of what one say or do, whilst under the influence of the deity. Nana Kwaku Nsiah the Okomfohene (the chief priest of the traditional area) stated that *akomfoɔ* serve the deities by following their guidance and keeping their taboos. *Akomfoɔ* receive divination, healing, interpretation, discernment from their deities. They also solicit powers and take on the characteristics of the deities when possessed and are able to dance, sing and relay messages from the *abosom*.

⁹⁷ The royal mausoleum: a building adjacent to the Kumawu Police headquarters. This is where the preserved bodies of the dead royal occupants of the Kumawu porcupine stool (chiefs and queens) are kept. The sub-chief in charge of this house is *Nana Banmuhene*.

⁹⁸ The Ancestral room in the palace contains the sacred black stools of the ex-chiefs.

4.83 Festivals

Bosomtwe maintained that the Papa Festival has some religious overtones. He mentioned some religious significance of the festival. According to him the Papa Nantwie festival was used to test the combat readiness of the traditional Kumawu warriors. A live bull tied to the *papa* tree was slaughtered by the *Papasehene*.⁹⁹ The warriors, having bathed in the concoctions and believed to have become spiritually fortified against gun shot and clashing cutlasses, try to cut parts of the carcass of the bull amidst beating, clashing cutlasses and gun shots. The warrior, who is able to cut the meat without being hurt, was selected for the impending war. In the past this was done before the army went to war and it was a test of the efficacy of their juju. According to Darko, the Papa Festival is also an occasion for the purification of the sacred black stools of Kumawuman. The purification marks the beginning of the festival. On Saturday night (*Memeneda Dapaa*), the sacred black stools are carried in procession through the town in darkness, for the traditional washing or purification. The sacred black stools are taken from the stool house and escorted by the *Ɔmanhene* and some of the elders to the Anorkosu stream for the rite of purification. *Teneɛ akotene*, (the burning torches of dried palm branches dipped in palm oil) provided light for the procession.

For Darko, various traditions with religious connotations are observed during the celebration of the *Papa* festival in addition to the cleansing of the black stools. The festival brings together the deities in a feast. In the evening of the first day of the festival, all the deities in the traditional area in their various shrines are brought to the palace to be fed. The *Ɔmanhene* and the *Nsumankwahene* lead the people to give food and drinks to the *abosom*, thereby invoking or

⁹⁹ *Papasehene* is the sub-chief in charge of the *papa* tree to which the ritual bull for the festival is tied for slaughter during the festival. The tree is specially honoured by members of the community.

summoning them to participate in the celebration. This is followed by drumming and dancing of the priests and priestesses under the influence of the deities. The above are some of the few traditional practices in the Kumawu area which also indicated the religiousity of the people in the pre-missionary era and even now.

4.84 The Encounter between the Indigenous Culture and the Christian Faith

The researcher through the interviews investigated how the pioneering Christian evangelists encountered the traditional religion with the gospel. This also revealed the tension that exists between the traditional beliefs and practices and the Christian faith. Darko narrated how the pioneering Christian evangelists presented the gospel to the indigenous community. The leaders of the churches usually introduced themselves to the chief and elders with drinks (bottles of schnapps), before they were allowed to preach or organise crusades. Parcels of land were later given to them by the chief for their settlement. Darko posited that the missionary churches such as Presbyterian, Anglican and Roman Catholic Churches were given large parcels of land because of their intention to establish schools for the community.

Responding to the question on how the missionaries made their first contact with indigenous people of Kumawu, Dwamena Boaten, the district minister in charge of The Presbyterian Church of Ghana in Kumawu, said that the Presbyterians were the first to evangelise the Kumawu Traditional Area in the year 1896. According to him, it was the joint effort of the traditional ruler, Barima Kwame Afram and Rev. Fritz Ramseyer a renowned missionary who prepared the people spiritually, morally and socially for Christ. The Good News got to the palace. Barima Kwame Afram, the then Omanhene, and his entourage visited Ramseyer in Kumase and pleaded

with him to come to Kumawu to establish both a church and school in Kumawu . Ramseyer was delighted and ordered one Aboagye of Petrensa in Asante Akyem to establish the church and the school in Kumawu. This was the beginning of Christianity in the area. To ensure effective ministry, converts of the Christian faith were made to live together at a common place they refer to as the "*Salem*". This settlement helped to evangelise the town and its environs. As a result Kumawu became a centre of Christian nurture and education in the area within the jurisdiction of the Omanhene. This also paved way for missionary work to be initiated by other Christian missionaries.

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Samuel Opoku, the Superintendent Minister of the Methodist Church at Bodomase in the Kumawu Traditional Area added that, the Methodist Church in the year 1919 started the Bodomase church. The church spread from Bodomase to Besoro, Abenaso, Woraso, and Timate, all of which are within the Kumawu traditional area. The Kumawu Methodist Church was the last to be established in the Bodomase circuit in the year 1952. The Methodist church, also established schools in all the villages and towns where they had branches of their churches. Bosomtwi remarked that the churches used these schools as nursery grounds for teaching and nurturing children in the rubrics of the Christian faith. Children were taught the catechism and the singing of hymns. Church attendance on Sundays was compulsory for all children who enrolled in these schools. As a result of this the churches were initially referred to as *sukuu* (school) by the indigenous people.

The interview with the Reverend Ministers of the Presbyterian Church, Methodist Church Anglican Church as well as the Catechist of the Catholic Church in Kumawu affirmed that

formal education in schools was used as an effective strategy by all the missionary churches in the evangelisation of the traditional area. They were all emphatic on the significant role of education in pioneering evangelism. The gospel was taught to the adult converts at the various meeting places. Person-to-person and house-to-house evangelism were adopted by most of the Pentecostal churches that came after the established missionary churches. The Ghana Apostolic Church was the earliest Pentecostal church to evangelise the area. Following the example of the Presbyterian Church they also established a school. They were followed by the Church of Pentecost and later the Christ Apostolic Church.

Opoku Agyemang said the churches presented Christianity as a foreign culture. The people in this area considered generally the church as *Obroni asore* (Whiteman's church). According to him some members were motivated to join the church out of curiosity. They had wanted to know what *Obroni* have brought to them. Others were genuinely converted, because they became convinced that the Christian way of worship was the only way to Onyame.

4.85 Apparent Tension between the Christian Gospel and the Indigenous Culture

There seem to be a kind of tension between the gospel message and the cultural practices of the people in the Kumawu area. Almost all the people interviewed expressed this conception. Darko made a profound statement when he asserted that, the Christian Gospel was anti-cultural in its presentation. The way of life and worship of the indigenous people were perceived as expressions of heathen, unbelief and evil superstition. All people outside the church were considered to be living in the "kingdom of darkness". He lamented that "the early evangelists made us understand that all the traditional practices of the people were devilish". Through their

teachings, the gospel preachers branded *nananom abosom* (deities) *afahye* (festivals), *nsaguo* (libation), *akom* (prophecy) and *musuyie* (divination) as fetish. Responding to this same subject, Okomfoɔ Serwaa expressed strong sentiment about the use of derogatory statements to describe traditional worship and indigenous way of life. Some of such statements include *abosomsom ye nkwaseasem* (meaning it is foolishness to worship the deities), *ɔbosom nni nkwa na wama wo bi* (there is no life in ɔbosom so he cannot give life), *abosomsom ye nnaadaa* (idol worship is deceptive) and many others. She concluded that some preachers pay no heed for the traditions of the people.

Nana Sarfo Agyekum, Aduanahene of Kumawu Royal clan in an interview granted on the 14th February, 2013, posited that although the Christian message is good, the presenters failed to contextualise the message. They presented it as a belief in a foreign and “unknown God.” He argued that, if the same God who revealed himself to the people of Israel is the one whom the Akan also consider as the Supreme Being of the universe then the indigenous religion should be the starting point. He based his argument on the fact that God might have revealed himself to the forebears of the Akan religion in a way different from the people of Israel. For him the gospel message is about the same God our fathers worshipped through *nananom abosom* (the deities of the forebears) and the ancestors.

Commenting on the attitude of the preachers of the gospel, Nsiah stated that, the Christians scornfully perceived *akomfoɔ* (the Traditional Priests) as agents of the devil and yet when they are in trouble they come to them for help. Some of the pastors interviewed were of the view that, preachers had usually condemned some of the practices of the traditional people that were

in conflict with the gospel message. Emmanuel Asomadu, the pastor of Deeper Life Ministry argues that the gospel is not against the cultural practices of the people. Rather the gospel message exposes the bad practices of the people. He continued that the gospel is not to be perceived as anti-culture since Jesus was brought up in a particular cultural setting. Adu Acheampong,¹⁰⁰ Osei Tutu¹⁰¹ and almost all the traditional opinion leaders and the two traditional priests interviewed expressed a common view on the Christian attitude of disdain towards the indigenous religious practices.

4.10 Indigenization or Syncretism?

People would want to worship God in their own cultural context. In this regard the churches like the Church of Pentecost and the Ghana Apostolic Church that showed temperance for some traditional practices, such as drumming and dancing, singing songs composed in the local language and with the indigenous rhythm saw considerable growth in numbers in the Kumawu Traditional Area. The use of the indigenous language in worship paid much dividend in evangelism and church growth for some of the churches as against the use of Western hymns and liturgical practices of the mission churches.

Nana Ofori Amponsah, the Sanaahene of Kumawu Traditional Area, indicated that he does not think that there is anything wrong with a Christian who observes the traditions of the land. He claims in Twi that “*Nananom mpanimfoɔ bi nom ye Akristofoɔ, nanso wɔtete adwa so*” which means that some elders who are occupants of stools are Christian. This position explains why

¹⁰⁰ Kwasi Adu Akyiampon, a native and a leader of Methodist Church interviewed on the 7th February, 2013

¹⁰¹ Augustine Osei Tutu, the Catechist, Catholic Church, Kumawu interviewed on the 24th January, 2013

some Indigenous Christians hardly dissociate themselves from the traditional way of life after conversion.

Pastor Isaac Ayerakwa and Elder Martin Antwi all of the Church of Pentecost at Kumawu, in a joint interview, agreed that some members of the church continue to consult the *abosom* for help in times of need. Antwi opined that, most of the members continue to believe that the *abosom* and the ancestral spirits of the land have powers to protect, guard and guide humanity. He continued that some of the members of the church belong to the royal family of the Kumawu traditional area and are required to participate in the traditions of the land. These include the veneration of the ancestors of the occupants of the royal stool of Kumawu. Bosomtwi¹⁰² added that some members of the church consult these gods for help because they think they would act faster in times of need. He claimed that this accounts for the seemingly syncretistic attitude of some members in the church. He explained syncretism as the situation whereby some members of the church combine the practice of the Christian faith and the traditional belief system.

According to Nsiah, preachers of the Christian faith totally condemned and branded the traditional religion as barbaric, heathenism, animism, devilish, idolatry, demon worship, primitive and outmoded practice. "These notwithstanding, members from their churches come to me often for divination", he claimed. Nana Nsumankwahene pointed out that about 70% of the cases they usually settle at the palace dealt with "curses" with *abosom* involving people who profess to be Christians. He concluded that the missionary version of Christianity presented to us in this area can be described as "hypocritical" because many of their converts still patronise the traditional religion, especially in times of crisis.

¹⁰² Bosomtwe Mensah is a retired educationist, a leader and a local preacher of the Emmanuel Methodist Church and the current *abusuapanin* of the *Asona* clan of, Kumawu.

4.11 Correlation between Christian faith and Traditional religion

It is quite obvious from the information gathered from the interviews that both Christian and the Traditional religions are built on three major pillars of faith, morality and worship. These are expressed in the beliefs and practices of both religious communities. The findings indicate that both religions have some commonalities.

4.11.1 Belief in God

The two religions (Christianity and Traditional) have a common belief in a Higher Power or Supreme Being with some influence on devotees. The two faith communities believe in the supremacy of God as the maker and sustainer of life. Both Christianity and Traditional religions portray God as the Being who created the world and who rules over the universe. God is usually held to have the following attributes: holiness, justice, sovereignty, omnipotence, omniscience, benevolence, omnipresence, and immortality. God is also believed to be transcendent, meaning that he is outside space and time. Therefore, God is eternal and unable to be changed by earthly forces or anything else within creation. These attributes enable or even compel adherents to comport themselves in their socio-cultural life in a manner they believe will please the object of their worship. The adherents of both religions meet from time to time to express in public their faith in, and dependence on, their spiritual overlord.

4.11.2 Prophecy and Prayer

Christians, like the traditionalists, believe in prophecies. Prophets of the church under the influence of the Spirit of God prophesy and they are interpreted to the audience. In much the

chosen by the *ɔbosom* (deity). He stated that “a person does not chose the deity he or she marries, but it is the deity who chooses the person he wants to marry.” The person is noticed as becoming a subject to some spiritual influence. Usually the god reveals himself in a dream to the person he wants to “marry.” When these persist, a fully qualified priest or priestess is called upon to interpret this phenomenon. The person is then persuaded to train for the priesthood after the priest has been able to identify the deity who wishes to “marry” the person.

Training for traditional priesthood, according to Nsiah, lasts for a minimum of three years. The novice leaves his or her home and lives with the trainer. The trainee observe a three year period of celibacy. According to Nsiah the training is a serious undertaking and involves the family of the novice, the deity and the priest under whom the novice trains. He emphasised that the training for the priesthood requires great personal discipline.

4.11.4 The Belief in Life after Death

Veneration of the souls of the departed is a major characteristic of the traditional people in Kumawu. However in Christianity, consultation with the spirits of departed ancestors is forbidden. In the perspective of Akyiampon, belief in life after death is common to both religions. He compared the veneration of the ancestors to the veneration of saints among some Christian churches. According to him, the Christians call on the names of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and others in prayer and they are treated with respect. The Catholic Church, for instance, set some days aside for a special Mass to honour the saints. All Saints Day is celebrated by Anglican and the Methodist churches as well.

4.11.5 Idols or Object of Worship

Christians uphold that the only way to worship God is through Jesus Christ and not lesser gods and ancestors. The traditional religion has certain articles that are used during worship at their shrines. These include amulets, anklets, headgears, pots, guns, drums, cowrie shells, leaves, nails, which Christianity considers as idols. However, the use of objects like statues or images such as the crucifix, holy water, anointing oil and rings are found in certain expressions in the manner of worship within some churches.

4.12 Influence of Christian Faith on the Traditional Community and vice versa

The interviews with traditional leaders reveal the effects of the inception of Christianity and the evangelization activities on the way of life of the indigenous people in the Kumawu Traditional Area. It is important to note that almost all the people interviewed agreed that the introduction of the Christian faith and practice had affected the traditional community both negatively and positively. Almost all interviewees agreed that Christianity has influenced the community positively through education.

Akyiampon acknowledged that apart from the disdain attitude towards the traditional worship, the beliefs, practices as well as the provision of formal education by the pioneering missionary churches in the area positively affected the way of life of the people in the Kumawu traditional area. The schools established by these churches, served as catalyst for the enlightenment in the area. Most people, who went through the formal education in the missionary schools, later became teachers, doctors, nurses and prominent figures in the society.

4.13 Discussions

4.13.1 Paul's Methodology in Context

Paul's Areopagus speech retained the basics of the gospel message; his approach to his Athenian audience was different from all other speeches he made. In this particular instance, Paul reframed his message within the given cultural context and adopted a philosophical paradigm relevant to his audience at the time. However the fundamental truth of his proclamation remained unaffected. In order to make this proclamation, Paul acknowledges the already inherent truth within the culture, and mildly points out to the fallacies related to temples and idols.

Paul saw the need for decorum or propriety in his speech by the use of a quite neutral word which could also be used in a positive or in a negative sense. He describes the people with the term "very religious," (*'deisidiamonesterous'*). This in Twi means *"Nyamesomfoɔ papa."* It is a compound word combining *Nyame* (god), and *som* (worship) which literally means *god's worship*. This could be understood in its neutral and or sometimes positive sense. Positively, it expresses an acknowledgement of the deep religious feelings of the people. Thus Paul avoids the use of any derogative word to describe the peoples' religiousity. As can be noted from the findings so far some derogative words like paganism, primitive, savage, fetishism, *juju*, heathenism, animism, idolatry, and polytheism had been used by Christian evangelicals to describe the indigenous religion. The use of such words could be misleading and counterproductive.

It is important at this point to examine some of these words and bring out their connotations and understanding to the Akan people especially of Kumawu. For instance The *New Webster*

Encyclopedic Dictionary defines *primitive* as pertaining to the beginning or origin, original, first, old fashioned which is characterized by the simplicity of the old times. This in the language of the people means *ntetekwaasem* (an outmoded practice). In a sense the word describes the people's religion as an old fashioned practice. The use of this word in describing the religion of the people in the western scholars' thought refers to a practice which is uncultured, untamed, violent, brutal, uncivilized, untaught, rude, barbarous, inhuman, close to savagery which is the opposite of civilization.

The foreign missionaries as well as evangelicals had always branded most of the traditional practices of the indigenous people fetish. "Fetishism" is another misleading term used to describe the indigenous religious practice of the people. The dictionary meaning of "fetish" is any object, animate or inanimate, natural or artificial, regarded by some uncivilised races with a feeling of awe, as having mysterious power residing in it or as being the representative or habitation of a deity. Therefore fetishism is the worship of, or emotional attachment to, inanimate objects. However Rattray corrected this wrong notion of the early investigators when he said:

Fetishes may form part of an emblem of god, but fetish and god are in themselves distinct, and are so regarded by the Ashanti; the main power, or the most important spirit in a god comes directly or indirectly from Nyame, the Supreme God, whereas the power or spirit in a fetish comes from plants or trees, and sometimes directly or indirectly from fairies, forest monsters, witches, or from some sort of unholy contact with death; a god is the god of the many, the family the clan, or the nation. A fetish is generally personal to its owner.¹⁰³

Parrinder has remarked that the word "fetish" is a most ambiguous word, and the time has come for all serious writers and speakers to abandon it completely and finally.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰³ R. S. Rattray, *Ashanti*, 1923, pp.24ff.

¹⁰⁴ E. G. Parrinder, *African Traditional Religion*, London, 1954

Again, one such misleading word often used by the Christian missionaries and evangelicals to describe the indigenous religion is "idolatry". It is quite simplistic to explain an idol to mean false god, and idolatry to mean the worship of false gods or that which is not real. Actually the word idol is used to describe an object which is an emblem of that which is worshipped by a group of people. The object may be a piece of wood or of metal or a stone. These objects are symbolic. Each of them has a meaning beyond itself, and therefore is not an end in itself. Symbolic representation is not peculiar to African Traditional Religion. It is found in most religions. It is used principally to aid man's perception and concentration and to remind the worshipper of the divine presence. This idea in some sense is similar to the symbolism of the cross and statues of saints in some Christian churches. As such, it must be wrong to describe an object of representation or a symbol as an idol.

The missionary churches refer to the practice of religion of the people of Kumawu as "Polytheism" (the worship of many gods). Parrinder describing the traditional religious practice of Africa says:

In West Africa, men believe in great pantheons of gods which are as diverse as the gods of the Greeks or the Hindus. Many of these gods are the expression of the forces of nature, which men fear or try to propitiate. These gods generally have their own temples and priests, and their worshippers cannot justly be called animists, but polytheists, since they worship a variety of gods.¹⁰⁵

Parrinder's attempt to avoid the use of the term "animism" (the belief that things in nature, e.g. trees, mountains, and the sky, have souls or consciousness), in describing the traditional religion of the Africans used the term "polytheism". This term ranks all deities equally, sometimes placing the Supreme Being or the Creator a little above the others, or sometimes the first among equals.

¹⁰⁵ E. G. Parrinder, *Theistic Beliefs of the Yoruba and Ewe Peoples of West Africa*. In *African ideas of God*. London, Edinburg House Press. 1996.

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¹⁰⁵ E. G. Parrinder, *Theistic Beliefs of the Yoruba and Ewe Peoples of West Africa*. In *African ideas of God*. London, Edinburg House press. 1996.

Contrary to the type of polytheism and the structure Parrinder suggests, the people of Kumawu like any other Akan community place *Onyankopon*, the Supreme Being above all other divinities. Almost all of the interviewees in this research indicated that the divinities are the children of the Supreme Being. These divinities reside in creatures like rivers, rocks, plants, some hand-made objects and are limited in power compared to the Supreme Being. They believe that the Supreme Being is all-powerful, unique, without fault and owes his existence to no one. They do not represent him in the form of an image as they do with the divinities. Therefore for the people of Kumawu, this conception of polytheism is wrong. They never rank the Supreme Being, *Onyankopon* with the divinities (*abosom*). *Onyankopon* is a compound word of three Twi words, *Onyame*, (god) *koro* (only) and *pon* (great) literally meaning the One-Great-God. In actual fact, the Akan people generally demonstrate in their daily lives the veneration or worship of a monotheistic God (the one Supreme Being).

The belief in a monotheistic God can be said to be self-evident since his existence can be proven cosmologically and his active involvement in their day to day life activities. The indigenous worshiper perceives one Supreme Being, the highest venerable majesty, who has several servants (the divinities) or intermediaries under Him who carry out His desires. This is to say that the people of Kumawu hold the Supreme Being as one in a class of his own. It is therefore not appropriate to describe their kind of religion as polytheistic.

Really speaking, a critical analysis of the use of these terminologies or expressions to describe the indigenous religion as discussed above reveals an engendered motif of cultural differential. Perhaps the Western missionaries and their scholars wanted to distinguish between their religion

people, but as a welcome opportunity to exhibit, celebrate and display the treasure chest of the Christian faith.¹⁰⁶ He does this without infringing on the Athenian culture.

The exegesis of the text (Acts 17:22-34) indicates that Paul frames his message within the given cultural context. He adopts a philosophical paradigm that befits his audience. It further suggests that Paul might have taken the pain to study the religion, philosophies and the culture as well as the various traditional practices of the people. The mission of the gospel has always been built within the context of various cultures. The gospel which is rooted in the culture and traditions of the people of Israel was transmitted and flourished within different cultural environments. It was first revealed and proclaimed in the Jewish culture and later in the Greco-Roman cultures as well as the cultures of the peoples amongst whom it spread.¹⁰⁷ There has always been some correlation between Christianity and the culture of the peoples it encountered.

The gospel is intended for people of all nations of various cultures and generations (Matt. 28:19; Acts 1:8). The gospel is supposed to be expressed within a particular culture. Asante shares in this view. According to him, because the gospel message is intended for people of all cultures, it must be communicated through the various indigenous cultural categories that would make it more intelligible and relevant to their social-cultural contexts.¹⁰⁸ It follows therefore that for the gospel to be intelligible, it must be expressed vividly in the cultural context of the people it encounters.

¹⁰⁶ A. E. McGrath, *Mere Apologetics: How to Help Seekers & Skeptics Find Faith*, Grand Rapids; Baker Books p11

¹⁰⁷ J. S. Mbiti, Christianity and African Culture. *Journal of theology for South Africa* 1 (September) 1977:29.

¹⁰⁸ E. Asante, The Gospel in Context: An African Perspective Interpretation: *A Journal of bible and theology* 55 (4): 2001 p. 355-66.

At the heart of a culture are the shared beliefs, feelings and values of a community of people. People form mental views of their world through their experiences. So long as the messengers of the gospel live in their own culture, they are largely unaware of it. As they enter into new cultures, they become keenly aware of the fact that other people live differently. There are differences in dress, food, language, behaviour, beliefs and feelings. There are the realisations of fundamental differences in worldviews. This is to say that People in different cultures do not live in the same world with different people of other cultures, but in radically perceived different worlds.

Since culture includes the values by which people judge the experiences of their lives, these values determine what is right and wrong, what is good and what is evil, in the culture. Therefore the acknowledgement of the existence of cultural differences should be at the center of the missionary task, which is to minister to pervasive cultures. That is how the communication of the Gospel and planting of vibrant churches in cultures which differ markedly can be successfully done. This is to say that, for the gospel to be understood by the indigenes in a given socio-cultural confines, it must be expressed to relate to the various indigenous cultural categories. Such cultural categories should include festivals, language, proverbs and idioms, poems, artefacts as well as traditional belief systems of the people. A variety of perspectives from human life can be seen to arise from the life-situation of the people and therefore, the gospel of Jesus Christ cannot be separated from the cultural and religious heritage of the people. For instance, Jesus' use of parables in most of his teachings in relations to the church was done to contextualise his messages. He does not despise the traditions, thoughts forms, and world views of the people. He taught with the principle of "start from the known to the unknown." He dwells

on life situations that were familiar to the people, idealises and transforms them into something new.

The example of Jesus is emulated by Paul in his Areopagus address (Acts 17:22-33). Paul found a common ground with his audience in language and thought. He does this by quoting and referring to their own poets and the popular philosophies at the time. Deissmann describes Paul's Areopagus speech as "the greatest missionary document in the New Testament"¹⁰⁹. The speech is relevant for providing a paradigm for disseminating the gospel in all-pervasive cultures and the other faith communities. Charles states that by the exegesis of the speech we learn how to relate biblical truth in culturally relevant ways (i.e., contextualization), and how to formulate a cultural apologetic message that retains its theological integrity in the midst of a culture of compromise.¹¹⁰ Paul had time to familiarise himself with the religion and culture of the Athenians at the time and so he was able to contextualise his message and theology. Understanding the Akan worldview would be the wheel upon which the gospel would run in the Akan indigenous communities such as Kumawu since one cannot effectively have a discourse with that which is not intelligible in one's thought.

The findings reveal that the lack of understanding and the missionaries' inability to contextualise the gospel message made the African religionists accuse Christians of being insensitive and apathetic to their beliefs and culture. The misapprehensions are based on ignorance of the beliefs, feelings and values of indigenous people. This attitude partly accounts for the dual religious practices of the many African Christians who are reluctant to give up their religious heritage

¹⁰⁹ Adolph Deissmann, *Light from the Ancient Near East*. New York, H. Doran 1927 p.384

¹¹⁰ D. J. Charles, "Engaging the (Neo) Pagan Mind: Paul's Encounter with Athenian Culture as a Model for Cultural Apologetics (Acts 17:22-33)" *Trinity Journal*. 1995, 60.

completely for a religion they do not understand, and which they perceive to be condemning them.¹¹¹

Again the Christian faith should be incarnated into the culture of the people. For faith to become completely thought through and fully lived, it has to become fully received and inculturated. This is pointing to the fact that an effective or a successful dialogue with the Akan indigenous communities requires contextualising the gospel message. It is about consciously and intelligibly communicating the gospel of Christ through the various cultural categories such as language, festivals, and proverbs and with proper understanding of the traditional beliefs and practice of the people. Contextualization is therefore a missiological strategy for presenting the gospel in the indigenous communities such as Kumawu. It is a dynamic process of reflecting on the interaction between the gospel as Word of God and the context as a specific human situation in obedience to Christ and His mission in the pervasive cultures. Fundamentally, it is a missiological process by which the gospel is communicated with the aim of seeking to make the Christian faith relevant and meaningful to particular people and culture and at the same time remaining faithful to the principal text of scripture.

The mission related churches lacked the ability to meet the spiritual needs at the level of the Akan experiences. The churches established by the pioneering missionaries propagated the Christian religion but was not able to dialogue appropriately with the indigenous people in religiously convincing terms. As a consequence makes the church apparently an alien institution in the community even today. The mission churches initially failed to root themselves in the life and institutions of the indigenous people of Kumawu. They concentrated their efforts on teaching

¹¹¹ P. S. Conteh, *Essays in African religion and Christianity*. Accra: Cynergy Media, 2012 p 76.

the rubrics of the Christian faith without paying heed to the traditions of the people they sought to evangelise.

Central to the above is the significant issue of the relationship between Christianity and the indigenous culture. The expression of various beliefs in relation to the gospel message is that which must dominate the discourse. Actually the relationship between Christianity and the traditional way of life of the people of Kumawu could be used as a missionary strategy. It is quite revealing from the findings that some customs and traditional beliefs and practices of the people of Kumawu could be an effective tool for teaching the gospel. We realised that most of the practices of the people of Kumawu could be relevant to the teaching of some basic Christian virtues. For instance, the practice where people defy the affliction of being beaten and ignore the flashes of cutlasses and gun shots, endeavour to cut part of the carcass of the *papa nantwie* (the cow slaughtered during the papa festival), could show case how courageous men could persist through great difficulties in their pursuance to accomplish a task. It further teaches the Christian virtues of perseverance, persistency, forbearing in the faith or the courage to withstand and overcome the challenges in the Christian life.

Again the fear and reverence of the indigenes for the local deities would not allow the indigenous person to encroach upon the various taboos. These taboos guided the mode of life of the people in the Kumawu Traditional Area as indicated by Bosomtwi and others in the interviews conducted. More importantly, most of these taboos do not in any way conflict the norms prescribed in the Christian scriptures. We also learn from the findings that some of these rules were meant to protect and conserve the natural resources and were also conducive for healthy

community living and peaceful coexistence. People were afraid of the consequences of being punished physically and spiritually. These taboos could be embellished to teach the Christian virtue of obedience which would ensure the strict observance of what the gospel teaches and as well rekindle the awareness of the judgement of God.

Going by Paul's paradigm in the Areopagus address, the language forms such as appellations, drum language, idioms, traditional song as well as proverbs could be used to communicate the Christian message. Appellations, drum languages, idioms, traditional songs of the people of Kumawu during festivals are full of the expressions of the attributes of the Supreme Being, the deities, ancestors and the other benevolent spirits. Some aspects of these cultural categories express indigenous concepts of God and the other divinities. Paul's usage of the extract of the poems of the two Greek poets was to get along with people from the known concepts of the unknown reality of God as expressed in the Christian faith and practice.

4.13 Conclusion

The record of finding of the investigation conducted to solicit the views of respondents from the Kumawu indigenous community has been quite revealing. The interviews were designed to explore the pre-missionary religiosity of the people of Kumawu. The indigenous perspective of the transcendence reality of God and divinities was comprehensively expressed by respondents.

Some religious significance of cultural practices such as *nsaguo*, *akom* and *Papa Nantwie* festival has also being investigated and discussed in this chapter. The discussion revealed how the faith was propagated initially in the Kumawu traditional society. We learn that formal school

education was one of the churches strategies for mission in the area. For instance Children who enrolled in these schools were taught the rubrics of the Christian faith.

The fifth and final chapter of the thesis is the summary and conclusions of the discussions so far. These will include the lessons and recommendations of the researcher based on the search and finding as indicated in this chapter.

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CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, THEOLOGICAL THEMES EMERGING OUT OF THE SPEECH, RECOMMENDATION AND CONCLUSION

5.1 Introduction

The records in the previous chapters indicate that the research is based on an exegetical study of the passage in Acts 17:22-34 and the missionary strategy of the Apostle Paul, especially as he presented the gospel to people of other faiths and cultures. The research is incorporated in the theoretical framework of contextualisation, inculturation, and indigenisation. These theological terminologies are coinages from the African Christian theologians in their fortitude to make theology culture based and expressive in the African context. The research aims at identifying the approach of Paul in the Areopagus address and determining the efficacy of this approach in communicating the gospel message in the indigenous communities of the Akan people of Kumawu.

The readings and interviews and discussions in the preceding chapters shed light on the pre-missionary religiosity of the indigenous people of Kumawu and the encounter between the indigenous faith and the Christian faith. The research elucidates the relevance of facilitating a contextual assimilation of the gospel of Christ in various traditions as a paradigm for converting indigenous people of pervasive cultures. This chapter gives the summary of findings, theological themes and issues from the finding as, recommendations and conclusion.

5.2 Summary of Findings

Acts of the Apostles, the second part of the work that begins with the Gospel according to Luke, continues the narrative given by the four evangelists in the New Testament accounts. In this account the author continues his two-part narrative of Christian behaviour and service idealising the account of the church's beginnings and signifying the consecutive stages of the religious development and thus given the setting for most of the Pauline corpus. Luke might have more than one particular purpose in preserving the address the way it is. Luke's main concern seems to be with Paul's uncompromising faith, witnessing, and methodology in the pagan culture.

The exegesis and discussions of the speech (Acts 17:22-34) reveals that peoples' thought forms or philosophy and belief have an enormous impact on the religion and culture as well as the worldview of the people. The discussion in the preceding chapters provide an exceptional cross-cultural missionary approach appropriate for presenting the gospel to the intellectuals, and people of other faith and cultures. The implication of the doctrines and the methodology drawn from the Pauline address could be an effective paradigm for presenting the Gospel to people of different cultures and other faith communities. This is to say that a re-reading of the Areopagus address in the various cultural contexts would provide an appropriate missio-theological paradigm for evangelisation in the pervasive cultures around the world without losing the absolute truth of the Gospel.

Through the readings and the interviews conducted, the religiousity of the Athenians of Paul's time as well as the Akan people living in the Kumawu Traditional Area have been explored. For the people of Kumawu, their religiousity is variously demonstrated in their belief systems and

some traditional practices. To a larger extent, the religious significance of some major traditional practices such as *nsaguo*, *akom*, and the *Papa* festival of the indigenous community have been interpreted and discussed in details in the preceding chapter. The dialogues through the interviews sought to discover the opinions of interviewees about the traditional religious world-view outside the normal tension that exist between the Christian faith and the traditional beliefs. The discussions in the previous chapters had also examined and deliberated on the views concerning the various evangelisation strategies adopted by the pioneering churches in the Kumawu area.

5.3 Theological Concepts Emerging out of the Speech

The address of Paul on Mars Hill (Areopagus) unveils various concepts and profound theological or doctrinal expressions. These include the Athenian concept of the Unknown God, the Doctrine of God, the Doctrine of Man (Biblical Anthropology), the Doctrine of Salvation (Soteriology), the Doctrine of Christ (Christology) and the Doctrine of End-Time (Eschatology).

- **Concept of the Unknown**

The altar of the Unknown God gave Paul the clue to his evangelistic message. Observing the city full of altars and temples of various gods familiar to them by their names, he noticed one of them with an inscription “to the Unknown god” in bold letters. He then proclaimed the Jewish monotheistic God, without despising the Athenian preconception of God. His proclamation was based on the “Unknown God” of the Athenians. He uses what they confessed to know not about, as a link to the living God they needed to know. Paul intends to make the confession of a monotheistic God profound and emphatic. This is founded on a historical analysis and the philosophical context of the Athenians.

Though he does not attempt to teach this concept as a theological doctrine, He affirms it boldly in the face of these other common beliefs, so that others would also believe. Paul's conception of God is obviously expressed from the contextual analysis of the speech.

• **The Concept of humanity**

The concept of humanity or the doctrine of man is another major point of discussion in the Areopagite speech. The Athenians' worldview of humanity is well captured in the speech. The address disputes the people's concept of the origin of their ancestry as one from the soil of the Attic homeland. This popular anthropological worldview have been conceptualised as the origin of the people of Athens. However, Paul tells Athenian philosophers that whatever the case it is God who has assigned people's lives and locations on the surface of the earth.

• **The Concept of Salvation**

Paul teaches in the address a kind of soteriology which aimed at correcting the Epicurean view of salvation which denied the immortality of the soul. Paul's theological objective is to communicate the truth of the Gospel that humans are to unite in worship of one true God. He teaches that God ignores the times of ignorance and now beseeches the Athenians to realise the saving knowledge of God. He then dismisses the misconstrued philosophy of the Greeks about God, the universe, and life. Paul re-emphasises the need for repentance and search for God. God seeks a relationship with humanity, which is consummated through repentance.

• The Concept of Christ

Paul taught the doctrine of Christ (Christology) and the Doctrine of End-Time (Eschatology) in the Areopagite speech. Paul links his Christology with the judgment of God. God has appointed the Resurrected Jesus as the judge of the world on a fixed day. For Paul, the justice of God is sure and His judgment is inevitable. He presents Jesus Christ as the appointed judge and Lord of the entire universe.

5.4 Indigenous Religion

The African life is viewed as that which is situated in religion. Traditional religion is the indigenous religious beliefs and practices of the people in their locality. Indigenous religion is that which is instinctive, inherent and foundational, usually transmitted orally from the forebears of the particular community. It follows that Akan Traditional Religion is that which resulted from the sustaining faith held by their forebears. It is traditional and therefore a way of life of the people in their localities.

5.5 Religious Significance of Kumawu Papa Nantwie Festival

The celebration of "*Papa Nantwie*" festival greatly demonstrates the people's religiousity. This festival pre-dates the founding of *Asanteman*.

- It is celebrated to commemorate brave warriors who died in the many wars against *Ataala Fiam*¹¹². The festival is especially in the memory of Barima Tweneboa Kodua, the celebrated war hero of the Asante war of independence from Denkyira. The festival is

¹¹² The former great overlord of the Afram Plains

observed to demonstrate and to buttress the socio-cultural values of selflessness, heroism and patriotism of the people.

- It was also used to test the combat readiness of the traditional Kumawu warriors. In the past this was done before the army went to war as a test of the efficacy of their juju.
- It offered the people the opportunity to do the purification rite for the sacred black stools of Kumawuman.
- The festival again brings together the deities in a feast led by the *Ɔmanhene* and the *Nsumankwahene*. This ritual is done in the evening of the first day of the festival. All the deities in the traditional area are brought to the palace to be fed beckoning them to participate in the celebration. This is followed by drumming and dancing of the priests and priestesses under the influence of the deities.

5.6 Pioneering Evangelists Encountered the Indigenous Kumawu Community

5.6.1 Established Contact Firstly With Traditional Leadership

The leaders of these churches usually introduced themselves to the chief and elders with drinks before they were allowed to preach or organise crusades. They recognised the indigenous leadership of the people. The first missionary church to be established in the Kumawu Traditional Area is The Presbyterian Church of Ghana in the year 1896 as a result of the personal contact between Barima Kwame Afram, the then Ɔmanhene and Rev. Fritz Ramseyer, a missionary. This was the beginning of Christianity in the area. The activities of the Presbyterian Church paved way for other Christian missionaries.

5.6.2 Through Formal education in schools

The churches used Formal education in established schools as nursery grounds for teaching and nurturing children in the rubrics of the Christian faith. Children were taught the catechism and the singing of hymns. Church attendance on Sundays was compulsory for all children who enrolled in these schools. As a result of this the churches were initially referred to as “*sukuu*” (school) by the indigenous people. Education was used as an effective strategy by all the missionary churches in the evangelisation of the traditional area.

5.6.3 Personal Evangelism

The gospel was taught to the adult converts at various meeting places. Person-to-person, house-to-house evangelism were adopted by most of the Pentecostal churches that came after the established missionary churches. The Ghana Apostolic Church was the earliest Pentecostal church to evangelise the area. Following the example of the Presbyterian Church they also established a school. They were followed by the Church of Pentecost and later the Christ Apostolic Church.

5.6 An Apparent Syncretism

The gospel presenters’ lack of understanding of the indigenous way of life and their inability to contextualise the gospel message made the traditionalists refer to Christianity as being impervious and apathetic to their beliefs and culture. As a result converts become reluctant to give up their traditional religious heritage. This attitude accounts for the dual religious practices of many indigenous Christians. Most people in the Kumawu Traditional Area perceive Christianity as a foreign culture. They often refer to the church as “*Obroni asore*” (Whiteman’s

church). Initially most members were motivated to join the church out of curiosity. They joined the church because they wanted to know what “*Obroni*” (whiteman) have brought to them but were not totally converted. However a few others were genuinely converted, because they became convinced that the Christian way of worship was the only way to *Onyame*.

5.7 Delimitation

Kumawu Traditional Area might not be the exact representation of the communities of Akan communities since different missionary strategies of evangelisation were used by various missionary groups at different localities of the Akan people in Ghana. The researcher can therefore only reflect on the commonalities but not absolute generalisation. It is obvious that this research does not deliberate fully everything about the issue at stake; it could be used as a basis or the starting point for further research on the subject.

5.8 Recommendations

The researcher upon the findings and discussions so far wish to recommend:

- That the African Christian theological categories, of Contextualisation, Indigenisation and Inculturation should be used as a theological paradigm for evangelizing the local communities of the Akan people.
- That going by Paul’s paradigm in the Areopagus address, missionaries should learn and communicate the gospel message through the various language forms (appellations, drum language, idioms, traditional song, proverbs etc) of the people to ensure effective evangelisation among the indigenous Akan people.

- That evangelisation process of the church in the communities such as Kumawu should be dominated by the expression of various indigenous beliefs in relation to the gospel message.

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5.9 Conclusion

In view of the findings and the discussion so far one can conclude that the faith the pioneering evangelists presented to the indigenous Kumawu society has not become inculturated enough and so has not been completely thought. As a result it has not been a faith fully received by most of its converts and therefore they cannot fully live it. They would reluctantly give up the traditional way of life. Thus one can conclude that

- The pioneering evangelists failed to go by Paul's paradigm in the Areopagus address. They propagated a religion which failed to dialogue appropriately with the indigenous people. The Christian Gospel was anti-cultural in its presentation. The missionary failed to root the gospel in the life and institutions of the indigenous people of Kumawu.
- The churches lacked the ability to meet the spiritual needs of the indigenous people's experiences.
- The gospel presenters' attitude was that of disdain towards the people's way of life as well as the indigenous worship. The use of derogatory statements to describe traditional worship and indigenous way of life is intolerable.
- As a result of the lack of understanding of the people's way of life and the ability to contextualise the gospel, the indigenous people perceived Christianity to be insensitive and apathetic to the beliefs and culture of the people
- The language forms such as appellations, drum language, idioms, traditional song as well as proverbs were ignored. These could have been embellished and used to communicate the Christian message. It is extremely important for Christian missionaries
- to learn local languages and study the local culture.

The above factors point to the fact that an effective or a successful dialogue with the Akan indigenous communities requires contextualising the gospel message. It is about consciously and intelligibly communicating the gospel of Christ through the various cultural categories with proper understanding of the traditional beliefs and practice of the people. Contextualization is therefore a missionary strategy of presenting the gospel in indigenous communities such as Kumawu. It is a dynamic process of reflecting on the interaction between the gospel as Word of God and the context as a specific human situation in obedience to Christ and His mission in the pervasive cultures. Fundamentally, it should be seen as a missionary process by which the gospel is communicated with the aim of seeking to make the Christian faith relevant and meaningful to particular people and culture and at the same time remaining faithful to the principal text of scripture.

Central to the discussion in this work is the significant issue of the relationship between Christianity and the indigenous culture. Actually the relationship between Christianity and the traditional way of life of the people of Kumawu could be used as a missionary strategy. It is quite revealing from the findings that some customs and traditional beliefs and practices of the people of Kumawu could be an effective tool for teaching the gospel. We realised that most of the practices of the people of Kumawu could be relevant to the teaching of some basic Christian virtues as well.

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Mr. Bosomtwi Mensah	Asona Busuapanin, Kumawu	17th November, 2012
Mr. Kwasi Adu Acheapong	A native and a leader of Methodist Church	7th February, 2013
Mr. Opoku Agyeman	A Teacher and a Native, Kumawu	11th September, 2012
Nana Afia Serwaa	Traditional Priestess, Kumawu	17th November, 2012
Nana Kwaku Nsiah	Chief Priest of the Traditional Area	6th November, 2012
Nana Kwasi Baffoe Ababio,	Akwamuhene, Kumawu	24th January, 2013
Nana Kwasi Darko,	Nsumankwahene, Kumawu	17 th January, 2013
Nana Ofori Amponsa	Sanaahehe, Kumawu	14th February, 2013
Nana Sarfo Agyekum	Aduanahene, Kumawu	14th February, 2013
Oheneba Akyiampon	Twafoghene, Kumawu	24th January, 2013
Pastor Isaac Ayerakwa	Church of Pentecost Kumawu	6th March, 2013
Rev. Dwamena Boaten	District Pastor, Presbyterian Church	7th February, 2013
Very Rev. Samuel Opoku,	Superintendent Minister Methodist Church	7th February, 2013

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APENDIX 1

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

- I. How is God, the divinities and spirits perceived by the people in your cultural setting?
- II. How do the people in this area relate to God and the divinities?
- III. What is the religious significance of some cultural practices such as:
 - a. *nsaguo* (traditional prayer)
 - b. *akom* (prophecy in the Akan traditional worship),
 - c. festival (the Papa Nantwie),
 - d. funerals and family gatherings in the Kumawu traditional area?
- IV. In your own view how can you describe the pre-missionary religious life of the people of Kumawu?
- V. How do the Christians describe the religiosity of the indigenous people of Kumawu?
- VI. Do you perceive any correlation between the Christian faith and the traditional beliefs of the people in the indigenous community of Kumawu?
- VII. Do the members of the Christian church observe or participate in the traditional practices?
- VIII. If they do, how do they get themselves involve?
- IX. Generally, in what ways has the church influenced the traditional society of Kumawu?
- X. How was the gospel presented to the indigenous members of the community by the early Christians?

- I. How did the pioneering Christian evangelists factor the world-view, values, language, beliefs, festivals, proverbs and some wise sayings of the people in their evangelistic activities?
- II. What is your personal view about the position that the gospel message is anti-cultural in its presentation?
- II. How in your view has the Christian church been influenced by the traditions of the people in the community?



APENDIX 2'

INTERVIEW WITH OKOMFOONANA AFIA SERWAA

17TH NOVEMBER 2012



APENDIX 3

NANA KWASI DARKO (NSUMANKWAHENE)

17TH NOVEMBER, 2012



APENDIX 4

OPANIN BOSOMTWI MENSAH (ASONA BUSUAPANIN)

17TH NOVEMBER, 2012

