

**INTEGRATING INDIGENOUS AKAN EDUCATIONAL PATTERNS INTO
CHRISTIAN EDUCATION IN THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF GHANA**

BY

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DECLARATION

I declare that apart from the sources specifically acknowledged in the thesis, this work constitute the results of my research in the subject and it has not been submitted in part or whole to any other Seminary or University.

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DEDICATION

THIS WORK IS DEDICATED TO MY DEAR WIFE MRS. FIONA NANA AKUA ANTWI AND OUR LOVELY CHILDREN: MAAME AFUA TWENEBOAH, PAPA YAW APEA, AND NANA AKUA NHYIRA ANTWI, FOR ENDURING DIFFICULT TIMES OF LONELINESS DURING THE TWO YEAR PERIOD OF ABSENCE FROM HOME TO PURSUE FURTHER STUDIES.



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ABSTRACT

This research attempts to examine the integration of indigenous Akan educational patterns into Christian education in the Presbyterian Church of Ghana. This work explores the moments and resources in Akan culture for nurturing people, especially the youth. The research notes that before the arrival of the Christian missionaries, the Akan as an ethnic group were nurturing their members using everyday moments and resources as teaching aids. However, with the advent of Christianity, these indigenous patterns were and are still being described as fetish, heathen and other derogating terms. Apart from examining the indigenous Akan nurturing patterns the research also explores Confirmation as one of the nurturing patterns of the Presbyterian Church of Ghana. The research revealed that there are some values embedded in Akan indigenous patterns of nurturing that could be incorporated into the Christian Confirmation process. The research therefore, recommends that the curriculum of the Confirmation process should be expanded to include other essential elements associated with some Akan indigenous nurturing patterns. Again Christian educators in the P.C.G. should give theological meanings to the ideas and values embedded in some of the indigenous Akan nurturing patterns.

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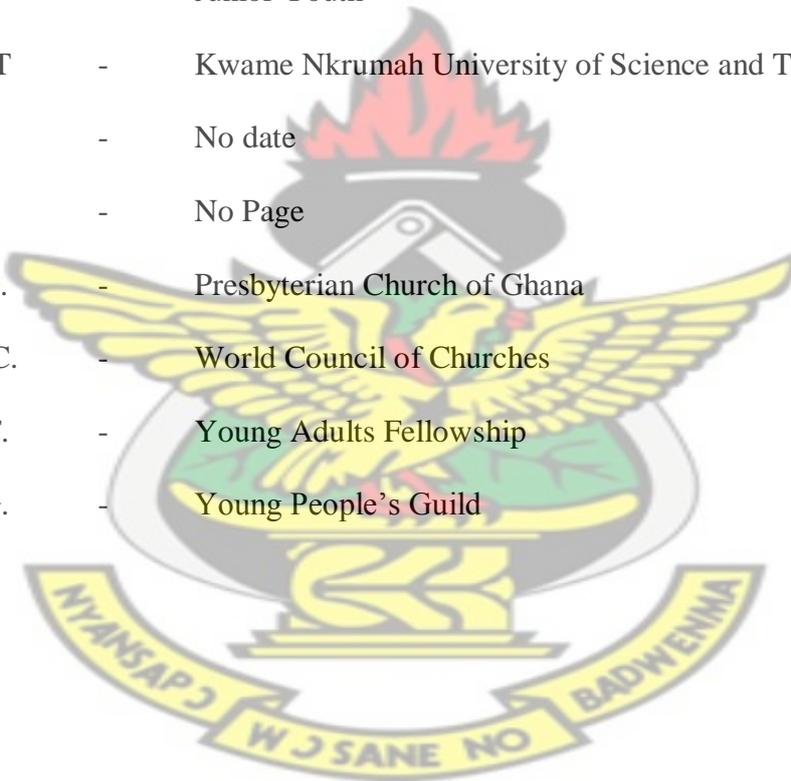
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SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

A.A.C.C.	-	All Africa Conference of Churches
AIDS	-	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
HIV	-	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
ISBN	-	International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia
J. H. S.	-	Junior High School
J. Y.	-	Junior Youth
KNUST	-	Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology
n.d.	-	No date
n.p	-	No Page
P. C. G.	-	Presbyterian Church of Ghana
W. C. C.	-	World Council of Churches
Y. A. F.	-	Young Adults Fellowship
Y. P. G.	-	Young People's Guild



CHAPTER 1

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction

This study attempts to examine the integration of indigenous Akan educational patterns into Christian education in the Presbyterian Church of Ghana (hereafter known as P.C.G.). The first chapter examines the background to the study, statement of the problem, research questions, and Objectives of the Study. It also discusses the research methodology, scope of the study, significance of the study, and the limitations of the study. Lastly, it reviews some relevant literatures on the topic, and outlines the organization of the Study.

1.1 Background to the Study

In the Bible, the instructions have been given as follows: “train up the child the way he [she] should go and when he [she] grows up, he [she] will not depart from it” (Proverbs 22:6, NKJV). The philosophy underlying the passage in the Bible is that at the tender age, human beings tend to be vulnerable, and there is the need to nurture, train, educate, equip, aid, form, fashion or instruct them so that they can perform their developmental task in the future. Megill (1976: 14) defines developmental task as “a task which arises at or about a certain period in the life of the individual, successful achievement of which leads to his/her happiness and to success with later tasks which failure leads to unhappiness in the individual, disapproval by society, and difficulty with later tasks.” The entire nurturing process should enable growing

persons to be accepted into the society. This nurturing process therefore becomes the agenda for every Christian education.

However, this nurturing, training, educating or formation process (to be used interchangeably in this study) has been seen by some African theologians, such as Sawyerr (1968, 1971), Pobee (1979), Dickson (1984), Bediako (1992; 2000), Appiah-Kubi (1979), Tutu (1975), Parratt (1997), as foreign in nature, thereby devaluing indigenous African patterns of nurturing (Parratt 1997: 3-4). This attitude, according to Parratt, left no room for a sympathetic appreciation of all that was good in African culture, nor for the assimilation of traditional [indigenous] ideas and rituals into Christianity.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Western education which is an offshoot of Christian education seems to make the Ghanaian (individual) alien to his cultural heritage. It is very common for a young person to go through the Western educational system, or be confirmed in Church without knowing anything about his/her culture. The Ghanaian Christian seems to condemn everything cultural and thinks that indigenous knowledge and values are at variance with contemporary Christian context, and even with the Bible. Simply put, it is assumed that the Bible is against culture and for that matter the Ghanaian culture as it were. It has been argued that for theology to be effective it is necessary to have local content. This, it is believed, will ensure the continued sustenance of that particular programme. Pobee (1997: 24) writes that theology emerges from, among other things, a historic community and a people's experiences. And in the effort to

construct Christian educational patterns for the Presbyterian Church in Ghana, the urgency to engage with indigenous educational resources cannot be overlooked. It is assumed that Christian educators sometimes fall into the temptation of seeking educational resources from communities outside their local environment and contexts of operation. Can the Ghanaian Christian educator look deeply into the real significance of indigenous patterns of nurturing within the Akan (Ghanaian) culture and consider whether or not those essential values could be related to Christian nurturing in the P.C.G.?

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1.3 Research Questions

What are the indigenous educational moments in Akan tradition? What are some of the resources for nurturing in Akan tradition? What are their values for Christian nurturing in the P.C.G.? Is there an affinity between the Indigenous and Christian pattern of nurturing? These are the issues which will guide this study in reaching the objectives stated below.

1.4 Objectives of the Study

This study therefore sets itself:

- a. to discuss some educational moments in the Akan indigenous settings,
- b. to analyse some of the resources for nurturing in Akan tradition,
- c. to establish some affinities of youth nurturing in Akan indigenous tradition and that of the Presbyterian Church of Ghana,

- d. And lastly to discuss some indigenous Akan nurturing values that could be useful in communicating the Christian faith in the Presbyterian Church of Ghana.

1.5 Research Methodology

In this research the triangulation approach was used in analysing data collected. The researcher made use of both primary and secondary sources of data. Primary data was collected using face-to-face oral interviews from respondents including traditional leaders, young people from both the church and communities, and Ministers on the subject. Questionnaires were also administered to two hundred (200) respondents, but only one hundred and fifty (150) were returned.

Again, for the secondary sources of data, relevant books, journals, thesis and unpublished dissertations, magazines and other authentic secondary materials were accessed and added on to the store of knowledge that was collected from respondents. The researcher also collected data through observation by visiting some communities to have first-hand information concerning the topic under study. The data collection was done between a 6 to a 12 month period. The first visit was made to seek permission to conduct the interviews, and subsequent visits were made to conduct the interviews. After each meeting, the information gathered was read carefully for clear understanding, and also to avoid distortion of any piece of information. The data for the study was gathered mainly through scheduled interviews with personalities from Woarakose, near Kumasi where *Bragro* is still practiced today, Manhyia Palace in Kumasi, and some other knowledgeable

indigenes from Bokuruwa-Kwahu. Data from the Church was mainly from the Accra New Town, Obo-Kwahu and Rose of Sharon Congregations in Santasi-Kumasi in that order.

1.6 Scope of the Study

This research focuses on indigenous Akan nurturing patterns and Christian education in the P.C.G. It discusses some moments and resources used in nurturing young people in the Akan culture, and nurturing in the P.C.G. The research also selects the Akan ethnic group as a main focus group because they are the largest single ethnic group in Ghana, according to the 2000 Ghana National Population Census (Odamtten 1996:9).

1.7 Significance of the Study

The researcher believes that this study will assist Christian Education in Ghana to adapt some of the educational resources available in Akan traditional educational patterns. It will also facilitate the integration of some Akan traditional educational patterns into the existing Christian educational curriculum in Ghana. The outcome of this study will demystify the notion that Akan traditional educational patterns have nothing to offer Christian educational activities in Ghana. Academically, this research will also contribute in no small way to the store of knowledge on the contribution of indigenous patterns of education to Christian education in Ghana. It will also serve as a baseline for future research into the area of Christian education in Ghana by other interested researchers.

1.8 Limitations of the Study

This study was limited in terms of time constraint where the number of conducted interviews was much less than we aimed to have. Again, the study was limited in the sense that not all the Akan ethnic groups in Ghana were sampled for interviews. Our focus was only in the Kumasi and Kwawu (Kwahu) traditional areas of Ghana. Additionally, not all the Presbyterian Congregations were visited, only three were sampled for interview. Moreover, not all the people sampled for interview had the time for the researcher to interview them. The research was not able to cover every aspect of indigenous Akan educational patterns. There is therefore the need for further study on the subject. Lastly, not all the administered questionnaires were responded to. This affected the quantity of the respondents proposed.

1.9 Literature Review

Almost all the literature on the subject of Christian education that we reviewed looked at the subject of Christian education from a foreign perspective. None treated the indigenous or Akan traditional educational patterns, which happen to be the focus of this study. However, we consider those works as relevant and will serve as secondary sources for our work in general. Several scholars have written about Christian education and how they ought to be carried out in the Church.

Megill (1976) explores education in the context of the African Church. In her book she discussed and further explained the religious and educational needs of both children and adults, and suggested ways in which those needs could be met. Megill's book, which happens to be one of the key reference materials for Christian education

in Ghana, also provides the necessary ingredients for Christian nurturing in the local Church congregation. Though the researcher sees Megill as a very important source for the research, it is silent on indigenous Akan patterns of nurturing. This research shall therefore explore further into the indigenous patterns of education within the Akan tradition.

Christian Education, according to Wyckoff (1955: 18) is:

The process of helping [forming] growing persons to achieve at each stage of their growth such habits, skills, attitudes, appreciations, knowledge, ideas, ideals, and intentions as will enable them at each stage to achieve or transform an ever more integrated personality, competent and satisfying living in their social environment, and increasing co-operativeness with God and man in the reconstruction or reformation of society into a fellowship of persons.

The import of Wyckoff's statement is that the aim of every Christian education programme is to nurture the Christian life at every stage. The writer seems to suggest that Christian education should help transform people by equipping them with values for social change. To him, Christian education is a process that does not exclude other human activities; it is wholistic in nature. Wyckoff's work presents the core framework of Christian education; however, he does not discuss the indigenous patterns of nurturing. This study shall ascertain the indigenous moments and resources for nurturing within the Akan tradition.

Harris (1989) on her part submits that Christian education should cover the total mission and ministry of the church. She calls them the Forms of Church curriculum. She admits that curriculum is more than materials. In her view, it is a lifespan which is experienced throughout the life of the church, not merely in the classroom. She lists these forms as follows: *Koinonia* — a participatory sharing in a common

religious commitment and spiritual community. *Diakonia* — the act of serving. That is reaching out to others, personally and communally, locally and globally. *Leiturgia* — a public service or the work of the people. This is what people come together to do in community, that is, prayer and the act of taking communion.

Harris (1989) again mentions *Kerygma* as another form of Church curriculum. This is the proclamation of Jesus' resurrection, which is central to Christianity. Finally, *Didache* — the instruction of all the members within the church community, and it is from birth to death. Through these forms of curriculum, the people see the church, experience the church, talk to the church, and so on. The Church on the other hand, as a pedagogical institution, teaches, educates and empowers the whole community through her various ministries. The researcher shares the same view with the Harris, but shall also draw values from the indigenous Akan educational patterns for contemporary Christian education which Harris (1998) did not cover in her work.

An African theologian, Mugambi (1995: 50) argues that Christian witness ought to be conducted in such a way that the local community identifies with the local church as a source of love, encouragement, guidance, counsel, hope, and reconciliation. According to him when a local church isolates itself from the needs of its members, it renders itself irrelevant. It becomes like salt that has lost its saltiness, or like light under a bowl (also see Matt 5: 13-16). The researcher agrees with Mugambi to some extent, however, he did not expand his work to cover the role of indigenous values in Christian witnessing [nurturing]. This research will consequently explore how indigenous Akan educational values could be used for Christian nurturing.

The Ministry of the Church is based on her history and theology. However, current socio-economic, cultural and political events are presenting real challenges to the people in the country, especially the Youth. Akrong (2003: 195) thinks that the challenges that confront the society today and the types of responses and interventions demanded from the Church call for a radical redefinition and re-conceptualisation of the prophetic ministry of the Church.

This assertion by Akrong indicates that the theology of the Church of Jesus Christ, which the Presbyterian Church of Ghana is a representative, is being challenged. The nurturing patterns of the Church are at risk. New and emerging questions are being asked concerning: sanitation, street children, unfair trade policies, divorce and globalization. Others are: the ecological crisis, poverty, drug use and addiction, indiscipline, corruption, violence against women, child trafficking, conflicts, HIV and AIDS, cyber crimes, and other social issues to which the Bible does not give clear solutions, are presenting complex problems to the Church and thereby affecting the patterns of nurturing and the philosophy of the Presbyterian Church Ghana (P.C.G.). Though, Akrong seems to suggest that it is time the Church re-examines her nurturing policies in curbing some of these social vices, he did not propose any antidote. The researcher shall consequently examine the values in Akan indigenous education for Christian nurturing in the Church; as a probable means of solving some of these vices.

Clark et.al. (1991: 11) say that we are to teach the revealed truth of God's written and living Word to persons of all ages and stages of life in the process of becoming Christ's true disciples. In the view of Clark and others, Christian formation and

instruction must help people to become true disciples of Christ. The writers did not expatiate on how Akan indigenous patterns of education could be used as pedagogical resources in explaining the revealed truth of God's Word. This study shall explore more into how Akan indigenous patterns of education could serve as additional patterns of nurturing in the Church.

Anthony and Benson (2003) also indicate that the church must not be timid. According to the writers the church is in battle for the minds of children and the youth, and it must provide them with the resources they need to withstand the pressures of contemporary secular humanism. Their work indicates the struggle the Church is going through as far as "capturing the minds of the children and the youth." However, their work failed to appreciate the indigenous patterns of nurturing the children and the youth. This research will focus on how the Akan peoples have been nurturing their young over the years.

Malphurs (2007: 80) holds that spiritual maturity involves both knowledge of the Bible and its application to one's life. This position by Malphurs is not wholly true. There are people outside the Christian faith who could be said to be spiritually mature, and yet are not Christians. With that understanding the researcher, however, is of the opinion that spiritual maturity depends not only on knowledge but experience. Mature people do more than study the scriptures; they also experience spirituality through other moments and resources. Malphurs' work does not talk about how indigenous people, including the Akan peoples of Ghana, have been ensuring maturity of the members through the various patterns of nurturing. This

research will therefore delve into some of the resources used for nurturing in Akan tradition.

Another theologian, Westerhoff (2003) also submits that Christian education is that deliberate, systematic and sustained collective effort of the community of faith which enables persons and groups to demonstrate Christian life styles. This is to say that Christian education in the church should not be an appendix or a postscript but rather it is the core of the church's ministry. The researcher agrees with the writer, but wants to emphasise that this nurturing process must not only have foreign content but indigenous components as well, which this study seeks to analyse.

One other scholar in the field of Christian education, Freire (1997) states that problem-posing education affirms men and women as beings in the process of becoming, as unfinished, uncompleted beings in and with a likewise unfinished reality. The writer seems to be saying that Christian education should not become a destination, but education, in which ever form it takes, must and should help us to move from one level to the other level. Thus education must aid us to become better people every moment of our lives. What Freire does not comment on is how [Christian] educators can use indigenous patterns of education in helping learners to become better people. The researcher will therefore investigate how indigenous patterns of education have been used for nurturing people over the years, and how they could be employed for Christian nurturing today.

Little (1995) notes that the ministry of teaching is crucial for the church to carrying out its mission. For the church to carry out its ministry in the 21st century, it must

train its members to transform society through their activities using time tested traditions and values that the people can associate with effectively. Her work will be of benefit to this research in discussing the nature of Akan indigenous patterns of education.

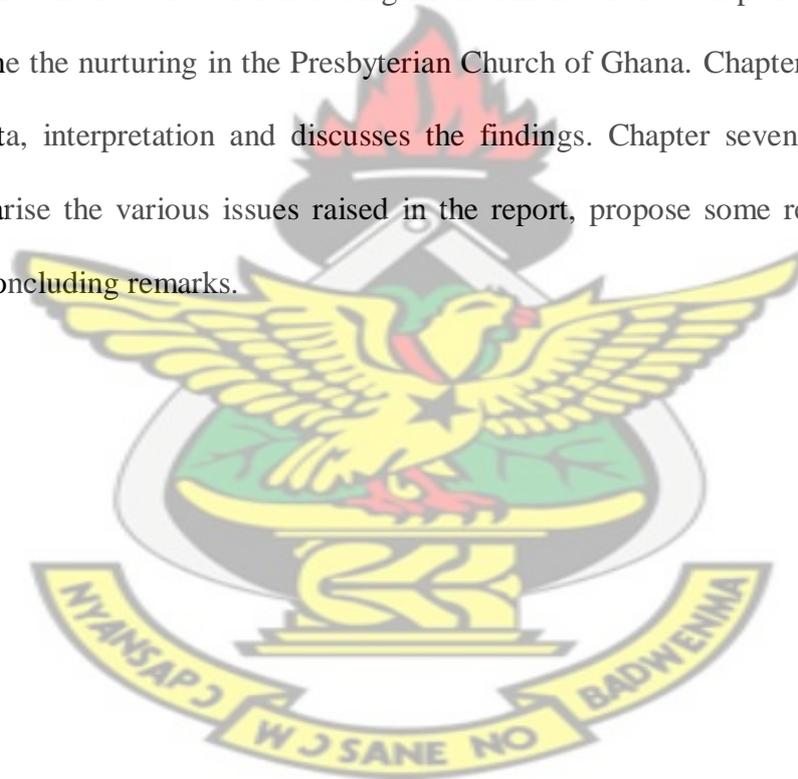
Cully (1960) on the other hand acknowledges that the educational task of the Christian church began simultaneously with the emergence of the church itself. According to the writer, as soon as converts were won to the fellowship of Christ's flock, some means had to be employed to nurture them in the faith. In the early church, new believers were taught how to be true disciples of Christ. Cully's work, however significant as it may be in discussing the educational task of the Church, failed to acknowledge that the new converts did not throw away their indigenous values and morals. This study will explore how the values in indigenous Akan education could be used for Christian education in the Presbyterian Church of Ghana. The researcher believes that to become a true disciple does not mean that one needs to relinquish the indigenous values and morals in one's tradition.

All these scholars have put forward valuable insights through their works, and helped to direct our thoughts for this research. Despite all these published materials just cited, none of them discusses the integration of indigenous Akan educational patterns into Christian education in the Presbyterian Church of Ghana. It seems not much research has been done on this topic as far as Christian education in P.C.G. is concerned. This can be due to the fact that none of the writers is a Ghanaian who understands the Akan traditional system. Again, this area appears to be a new field as far as Christian education in P.C.G. is concerned and much in depth study has not yet

been done. We believe this study will fill the vacuum and omissions not covered by the above scholars.

1.10 Organization of the Study

The study is divided into seven (7) chapters. Chapter one (1) gives the general introduction to the study. Chapter two (2) examines the socio-religious basis of Religious/Christian education. Chapter three (3) investigates the religious worldviews of the Akan. Chapter four (4) investigates some indigenous educative moments and resources for nurturing in the Akan culture. Chapter five (5) seeks to examine the nurturing in the Presbyterian Church of Ghana. Chapter six (6) presents the data, interpretation and discusses the findings. Chapter seven (7) attempts to summarise the various issues raised in the report, propose some recommendations with concluding remarks.



CHAPTER 2

SOCIO-RELIGIOUS BASIS OF RELIGIOUS / CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

2.0 Introduction

In the last chapter we examined the general introduction of the research, background to the study, identifying the nature of the issue, aims and objective of the study, significance of the study, limitation, research methodology, literature review, and organization of the Thesis. In this chapter, we shall consider the socio-religious basis of religious and Christian education in general from the time of the Patriarchs through to the onset of Christian education in Africa, with some concluding remarks.

2.1 Understanding Religious / Christian Education

Christian education is an education within a social process with much focus on the Christian home on the one hand and the church as a redemptive fellowship on the other (Miller 1956: 53). According to Miller (1956: 54) the task of every Christian education programme is to bring the individual Christian into the right relationship with the God of Jesus Christ and with his fellows, so that by grace the individual may do the task to which he is called. On his part Chaplin (1948: 136) defines Christian education as: “the effort to make available for our generation; children, young people, and adults, the accumulated treasures of Christian life and thought, in such a

way that God in Christ may carry on His redemptive work in each human soul and in the common life of all.” Coe (1929: 300) affirms that:

The purpose of Christian education is to lead each person into a decision to live as a Christian. He goes on to say that the individual’s fundamental questions must be answered; he needs to know who he is, who other people are, what the world is like, and where the world is going. Each individual needs to know his/her own nature, and with the help of all that we know about man, he learns to know not only his/her being but also what others are like.

The Church is a very important agent of education because it has been said that it is the cement of the community. It binds people of different backgrounds together to form a unit. It brings together, the young and the old, the affluent and the deprived, the male and the female, the Doctor and the patient, the Politician and the populace and all other identifiable groupings. Yet, again in the development of character and the strengthening of values within the various societies, the Church is so important that we cannot do without it (Mugambi 1995: 139). In an interview with Opuni-Frimpong, the former Head of Department and lecturer of Christian Education at the Department of Religious Studies at the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST), he maintains that the Christian must be given the truth (Information), and become what God expects from him/her (Formation). He/she will then develop into a new person (Transformation) and be able to face any new challenge that will come his/her way (Reformation). This is what Christian Education is intended to achieve.

In examining the reasons for Christian education in Africa, Megill (1980: 2) argues, “there must be education of children, youth, and adults, whether new converts or second or third generation Christians.” She goes on to say that this must be in the fundamentals of the Christian faith. According to her: “if the Church is not only to

grow in numbers, but also to lead its members to commitment to the Christian way in all of life, there must be continuous education.”

In expressing his opinion on the role of the Church in the society, Asante (2007: 98) submits that the Church as the *ekklesia* — ‘called out’ of God has a definite calling. According to him the Church is called to “Go and make disciples of all nations (also see Matthew 28: 19f).” He again asserts that the Church is also called “to be salt of the earth” and “light of the world” (as quoted from Matthew 5: 13-16). He further holds that the Church is called “to declare the wonderful deeds of him who called her out of darkness into his marvellous light” (also see 1 Peter 2: 9). What this means is that the Church must fashion, nurture, form, develop, or educate her members to perform these entire divine tasks. The Church ought to instruct her members to live more abundantly, as members of the society to which that church renders service.

2.2.1 Religious Education of the Patriarchs

This section investigates how education was carried out during the time of the Patriarchs. The biblical narrative in Genesis 12 gives a picture of God calling Abraham out of his environment into a different and unknown setting. Out of this obedience to God’s call came the family of Israel. They became a nation later on. This New Nation of Israel needed to have an identity just like the other nations (Sherrill 1944: 9). The two factors that shaped this identity of the nation of Israel were the exodus and the Covenant. In the exodus, the Lord Almighty delivered the Israelites from the hands of their enemies in the land of Egypt. Again, the Lord God

entered into a covenant with them that shaped how their lives should be even amongst the other nations.

There were several resources that served as teaching aid for the people of Israel. Amongst them are: the Family institution, the Torah, the Decalogue (The Ten Commandments), the various Laws (Levitical and Deuteronomical), and Festivals. Other resources were: The Manna, Stones, Miracles, the Exodus experience itself, as well as the name of the Lord. Benson (1943: 34) writes that these became their guiding principle and the means of nurturing the people from generation to generation. Even though the Israelites did not have a formal education as is practiced in our days, one could describe the pattern of education during the exodus as informal, indigenous, or participatory. On this, one agrees with Busia (1964: 13) in saying that “every community must have a way of passing on to the young its accumulated knowledge [social, intellectual and religious experience and heritage], to enable them play adult roles and to ensure the survival of their offspring, and the continuity of the community.”

The family institution was one means through which education took place. Miller (1956: 20) asserts the Old Testament stresses the significance of the family with its religious rituals and the responsibility of parents for bringing up children in the knowledge of the Law and the fear of the Lord. The family unit became the centre of Jewish religious teaching and education. Bushnell (1947: 13, 14) posits that books were not available during the early years of the patriarchs, but the memory of the Jews was trained to recall the chief points of their history. Every child in a pious

home was necessarily exposed to the central teachings in this manner. For example, God instructed the Israelites that:

Be on your guard! Make certain that you do not forget, as long as you live, what you have seen with your own eyes. Tell your children and your grandchildren about the day you stood in the presence of the LORD your God at Mount Sinai, when he said to me, 'Assemble the people. I want them to hear what I have to say, so that they will learn to obey me as long as they live and so that they will teach their children to do the same (Duet. 4: 9-10, GNB).

The instruction was to tell their children, so that they will learn, in order that they will teach their children to do the same. The older generation were to educate the younger generation, and the younger generation was to learn. This was how education was to be carried out. The same instruction was also given elsewhere as: “and in order that you may be able to tell your children and grandchildren how I made fools of the Egyptians when I performed the miracles. All of you will know that I am the Lord” (Ex 10: 2, GNB). As a result of this instruction from God, these words, among others, were learned by heart by every young person: “Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord, and you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might” (Miller 1956: 20, which was also quoted from Deut. 6: 4-5, RSV). Combined with this oral teaching was the following of the Jewish rituals in the home. Brown (1923: 17) admits that until the beginning of the Sunday school movement in the eighteenth century, the home was the basic institution for religious instruction.

2.2.2 Parents as Agents of Education in Israel

It is quite clear from Scriptures that the mother did most of the training of the children in the earlier years. The Book of Proverbs speaks of the “The words of King Lamuel, the prophecy that his mother taught him” (Prov. 31: 1). And concerning

Timothy, Paul said, “and you remember that ever since you were a child, you have known the Holy Scriptures...” (2 Tim 3: 15). Earlier in the epistle, Paul refers to the faith of Timothy’s mother and grandmother (2 Tim 1: 5). Young children then were taught by their mothers. The daughters, doubtless, remained under the guidance and oversight of their mothers until their marriage. As the boys grew up, they were more and more taught by their fathers, although they would never get away from the mother’s training altogether, mothers being integral in the lives of both sons and daughters.

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During such domestic training, the child did not only learn the words of the law, but also saw the law being lived in the home. For example, God noted this about Abraham: “For I have made him mine so that he may give orders to his children and those of his line after him, to keep the ways of the Lord, to do what is good and right: so that the Lord may do to Abraham as he has said” (see also Gen 18: 19, ASV). The duty was for parents to teach, to fashion, nurture, give orders, and educate their household to keep the way of the Lord. Those who expect family blessings, should then be conscious of family duty. Abraham thus became the agent of education, by virtue of his calling. Notwithstanding, our contemporary situation, the Christian thinks of the family as a Christian ‘cell’ and of the other groupings of children and adults in terms of the words of Jesus. Miller (1956: 17, quoting from Matthew 18: 20, KJV) states that: “where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.” He continues further that every gathering of Christian disciples in the name of the Master creates a redemptive and redeeming community, where broken relationships are healed and broken spirits are restored. The moment

for instruction was not left out. Quoting from Deut. 6:9; 11:20, Sherrill (1944: 231) reiterates that:

Israel was admonished: 'Teach them to your children. Repeat them when you are at home and when you are away, when you are resting and when you are working. Tie them on your arms and wear them on your foreheads as a reminder. For the benefit of children as well as adults the law was to be written upon the door-posts and gates.

2.2.3 Educational Resources Used in the Period of the Patriarchs

Brubacher (1947: 78) says that the Law was to be such an integral part of their lives that everything they did with both hands and minds were to be guided and governed by Scripture, and that was for their own good and preservation as well as a means of receiving blessings from God (Deut. 6: 25). Seymour (1982: n.p) informs that among the several resources the Jews used for teaching was the Manna. The Hebrews used the Manna as teaching aid, as a demonstration in teaching their children. It is written in the book of Exodus (16: 32-35, GNB) that:

Moses said, "The LORD has commanded us to save some manna, to be kept for our descendants, so that they can see the food which he gave us to eat in the desert when he brought us out of Egypt." Moses said to Aaron, "Take a jar, put two quarts of manna in it, and place it in the LORD's presence to be kept for our descendants." As the LORD had commanded Moses, Aaron put it in front of the Covenant Box, so that it could be kept. The Israelites ate manna for the next forty years, until they reached the land of Canaan, where they settled.

Additionally, Stones were used as a means of teaching the up and coming generation. In the words of Seymour (1982: n.p.) when they were crossing the Jordan, Joshua commanded them to take twelve stones out of the middle of the Jordan, from the very place where the priests were standing. "Tell them to carry these stones with them and to put them down where you camp tonight" (Joshua 4: 1-9). They were to build a memorial of their experience, of what the Lord has done for them.

Festivals were also resources for teaching and learning for the new nation of Israel (Ex. 12: 25-28). According to Groom (1980: n.p) the Hebrews had an abundance of holidays or festivals, some based on their tradition, others on agriculture and the natural changes of times and seasons, some on historical events connected with the national or religious life of Israel, and still others, simply on immemorial custom. These could be classified as pre-exilic and post-exilic. The pre-exilic list includes the three pilgrimage festivals, the Passover week, Pentecost, and the Feast of Tabernacles, together with the Eighth Day of Assembly at the conclusion of the last of these feasts, New Year, Atonement Days, the weekly Sabbath, and the New Moon. Amongst the post-exilic fasts and feasts are the: the Feast of Dedication, the Feast of Purim, the fasts of the fourth, the fifth, the seventh, the tenth months, and the Fast of Esther (International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia\festivals).

The three pilgrimage festivals were referred to as such because on those days, the Israelites gathered at Jerusalem to give thanks. They marked an agricultural breakthrough as well as commemoration of significant national events. Thus, the Passover is connected with the barley harvest; at the same time recalling the Exodus from Egypt. During the celebrations of these festivals, certain books were important in worship for example, the Song of Solomon was read during the Passover feast. Pentecost has an agricultural aspect, which is the celebration of the wheat harvest; it also has a religious side based on the rabbinical calculation which marks the day the Law was given, and interestingly, this religious side has completely overshadowed the agricultural aspect that among the modern Jews, Pentecost has become 'Confirmation Day', on which the book of Ruth was the main text read.

The Feast of Tabernacles is the general harvest festival and the anniversary of the beginnings of the wanderings in the wilderness. The main book used during this celebration is the book of Ecclesiastics. In addition to these annual festivals the pre-exilic Hebrews celebrated the Sabbath and the New Moon (International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia\feasts). By analogy to the weekly Sabbath, every seventh year was a Sabbath Year, and every cycle of seven Sabbath years was closed with a Jubilee Year (Levt. 25:8-18).

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Other books used were Esther which was read during the Feast of Purim, whilst Lamentations was the book read for remembrance of the Destruction of Jerusalem. Groom (1980: n.p.) emphasises that going through the various festivals, for instance, was a learning moment for the people especially the younger generation. He continuous:

The Jews were taught how to kill the sheep, how to collect the blood, which parts were to be eaten and not, they were all aimed at teaching the people lessons about the festivals. These festivals served as patterns of their indigenous continuous education even to this day. From the above the focus of education during the Pre-exilic and the post-exilic periods were to help the people shape their identity. To know who they are, where they are coming from, whom they serve, and how they should live among the other nations.

2.3.1 Religious Education after the Babylonian Exile

Shortly before the Babylonian captivity King Josiah gave official recognition and sanction to the teachings of the prophets, while the Deuteronomic legislation of the same period strongly emphasized the responsibility of parents for the religious and moral instruction and training of their children (International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia\education in the Old Testament). Seymour (1982: n.p.) states that:

During the exile in Babylon, the Lord promised the Israelites that Israel would remain in exile for 70 years, but after the 70 years He would show mercy to them; they would go back to their own land (Jer. 29:10). They were looking forward to this promise. Daniel and his compatriots were part of those in exile in Babylon at that time. Daniel studied the sacred books especially the prophet Jeremiah and found out that the 70 years were over for God's promise to be fulfilled (Dan. 9:2). Even though the 70 years were over Israel was still in slavery. The promise was yet to come to pass. So he prayed expecting deliverance from the Lord.

The main concern of the Israelites was to have a national identity in a pluralistic world, in a foreign land. The Babylonian culture was different from that of the Israelites. Their names were changed, they learnt new language. Their cultural settings were changed. They asked: "how can we sing a song to the LORD in a foreign land (quoted from Ps. 137:4, GNB)?" In other words, how were they going to live their faith in the midst of other faith? Education after the Babylonian exile therefore was to deal with the issue of the development of faith in a pluralistic society. The question of how to maintain the faith in times of difficulties, challenges, and trials, became the main focus of education (Groom: 1980: n.p.).

Brubacher (1947: 78-80) recalls that the educational significance of the prophetic writings were that the prophets themselves were the real religious leaders and representative men of the nation. They were the heralds of Divine truth; the watchmen on the mountain top whose clear insight into the future detected the significant elements in the social and religious conditions at that time.

On his part Sherrill (1944: 76) says that during this period it was the writings of poets, lawgivers, prophets and sages that were brought together into one sacred collection of scrolls, known later as the Old Testament canon, of which the Torah (the law) was the most significant in terms of education. The recognized teachers of

this period included, in addition to the priests and Levites, the “wise men,” or “sages” and the “scribes.” The Book of Proverbs forms the Biblical repository of the pedagogic experience, wisdom and learning of these sages. Apart from the Torah, Proverbs is thus the oldest handbook of education. The wise men conceive of life itself as a discipline. Benson (1943: 34) argues that parents were the natural instructors of their children. Quoting from Prov. 1: 8, he writes “My child, pay attention to what your father and mother tell you” (GNB). The substance of such parental teaching is to be the “fear of Lord” which is “the beginning of wisdom,” and fidelity in the performance of this parental obligation has the promise of success: “Teach children how they should live and they will remember it all their life.” (Prov. 22: 6, GNB).

2.3.2 Religious Education in the Synagogues

Jewish education in the time of Christ was of the orthodox traditional type and in the hands of Scribes, Pharisees and learned Rabbis. Bushnell (1947: 264) reasons that the home was still the chief institution for the dispensation of elementary instruction. Although synagogues, with attached schools for the young were to be found in every important Jewish community. Weigle (1939: 228) reflects that as in earlier times the Torah, connoting now the sacred Old Testament writings as a whole, though with emphasis still upon the law, furnished the subject-matter of instruction. To this were added, in the secondary schools (colleges) of the rabbis, the illustrative and parabolical rabbinical interpretation of the law and its application to daily life in the form of concise precept or rule of conduct.

Sherrill (1944: 90) posits that one of the resources they used in education was the Synagogues. From early on, the synagogue functioned as a communal centre and even as a hostel for travelling Jews. It also served as a local meetinghouse for study and, probably, prayer. They used the Synagogues as a pattern of religious formation. On his part Smart (1954: 117) holds that the Synagogues became the agency for religious education. Jesus himself benefited from the synagogue education: “then Jesus went to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, and on the Sabbath he went as usual to the synagogue. He stood up to read the Scriptures” (Luke 4: 8). Out of these synagogues came the rabbinic schools, which became the agent of religious instruction (Weigle 1939: 231).

2.3.3 Religious Education in the Rabbinic Period

Brown (1923: 124) states that changed historical circumstances, including subjugation of the Jews by the Romans and other social vices, created a need for further developments in Hebrew law and religious ideas in the first centuries of the 1st millennium A.D. Weigle (1939: 231) on his part states that after the completion of the Hebrew Bible and the end of prophecy, God’s Will could be discovered only through the interpretation of the written record of what had already been revealed. A new class of religious leaders called rabbis “teachers” arose to teach the law and apply it to current conditions. The rabbinic period lasted for about the first 500 years of the Christian Era. Rabbis derived their authority from mastery of the oral Torah. This they conceived of as a body of law and interpretations, which was revealed to Moses along with the written Torah and subsequently passed down by word of mouth from teacher to disciple. It was in use at the time of Jesus Christ, who was

himself addressed as such. Stewart (1924: n.p.) suggests that the rabbi was all together, student, interpreter, and teacher of the Torah, and to prepare men for this varied role, great academies were founded in ancient times in Palestine.

2.3.4 Religious Education in the time of Jesus

There are speculation surroundings how Jesus was educated. He was reared in a Jewish home, and thus was familiar with Jewish customs and teachings. On his part McCown (1940: 136) argues that Jesus may have known Rabbinical Hebrew and Greek. The cultural categories Jesus used, for instance, were all found in Palestine. His thought patterns were culturally related, example, the various parables, inheritance systems, food, sicknesses; means of transport were all elements within the Palestinian cultural environment. Miller (1956: 21) writes that Jesus educated the people with these familiar cultural identities. Religious formation and education during the early Church therefore was aimed at making the Christian faith relevant within different cultural settings outside that of Palestine. As the Christian faith moved outside Palestine into different cultural settings, new cultural questions emerged. Issues like the washing of hands, circumcision, Jesus as Lord and Messiah, resurrection of the dead, the Lord's Supper or Love Feast, all became big issues in the early church (Klausner 1925: 234-235).

2.4.1 Christian Education in the Early Church

Difficult pedagogical concepts became the object for Christian Education in the Early Church. Sherrill (1944: 91) suggests that one major problem the early church encountered was the issue of Spiritual gifts and divisions within the different

congregations. The promise of the Holy Spirit came with gifts. The manifestation of these gifts or charisma became a problem in the church (1 Cor. 1: 10-15). People received various gifts, teaching, healing, and prophecy, and these in no time, created divisions among the new converts. Some claimed to be for Apollo, for Peter, for Paul, and for Christ. The very source of help to the new church for growth became a huge fundamental problem. There was therefore, the need to educate people about the use of the gifts for the benefit of all. Boys (1989: n.p.) points out that:

Another difficult doctrinal concept during the Early Church was the issue of Parousia: the second coming of Christ. This idea created problems for the early Christians. The question was how soon was He coming? The Parousia created orthodoxy [right belief system], but bad orthopraxis [that is bad practises]. The fact that Jesus was coming soon made the people idle. They decided not to work at all, but wait for the return of Christ. This was the situation in Thessalonica (2 Thess. 3: 6-11). The belief system was good, but the practice was bad. The Early Church also faced much persecution as a result of the interpretation of some of these difficult concepts some of which were very strange to their hearers.

The ordinary unlearned people did not understand terms like: ‘eating’ the body of Christ and ‘drinking’ his blood, Jesus as King of Kings, the early believers sometimes branded themselves as the army of Christ; Love feast, and all such similar religious concepts exposed the early Christians as unskilful teachers (Sherrill 1944: 85-86). They were therefore subjected to persecution, hence, the dire need to educate the early believers to stand firm in the face of these persecutions.

Furthermore, meeting the needs of people within the church became a big issue for the early Christians. The early church had tribal and ethnic challenges. Sherrill (1944: 90-93) reports that some groups within the church were being discriminated against as others were seen as superior to the rest. An example was recorded in the book of Acts when it came to food sharing. The Jews and Gentiles had problems. When all these challenges are brought together the issue that attracted the attention of

the early church in terms of Christian education was, how to prepare converts for faithful discipleship as affirmed by Lotz (1950: 15-16). The question was how to be good disciples of Christ, as they wait for the second coming of Christ, as they faced persecution, as they receive the gifts of the Holy Spirit and as they encounter new cultures. Their focus was to nurture the disciples to be faithful even in the face of all these challenges.

Miller (1956: 22) emphasises that they used the house fellowships or community worship for Christian nurturing. Within the house fellowship they were engaged in *koinonia* - fellowship, *diakonia* - service, *leiturgia*, - worship, *kerygma* - Preaching, and *didache* - teaching (as seen from Acts 2: 42, 44-47). Another way of educating was the use of International consultation in Acts 15. It was a way of addressing problems creeping into the fabric of the early church. It was a learning moment that tried to answer the gospel culture encounter (Sherrill 1944: 90-93). Apostolic writings and pastoral letters became yet another way of explaining issues to the early Christians. These writings and letters were written to the faithful to encourage them in their faith, for instructions, rebuking and for admonishing.

Weigle (1939: 243) asserts that one other way that the New Testament Church used for Christian formation and nurturing was the family ministry. Christian parents had responsibility for their families, and much teaching and nurturing occurred in the home just as in the Old Testament. Miller (1956: 22) citing the Bible writes that: 'Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the LORD' (Eph. 6: 4, RSV). Sherrill (1944: 158) translates this same passage, "Nurture them in education and admonition of the LORD." This

involved family devotions, or family altars. It was an opportunity for parents to teach their children, and for children to learn from parents. The agents who were involved in Christian Education during the New Testament were apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, administrators, leaders of the church, leaders of the house fellowships, teachers, and parents; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ (Weigle 1939: 243).

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2.4.2 Christian Education in the Middle Ages

During the Middle Ages, or the medieval period, which lasted roughly from the 5th to the 15th century, Western society and education were heavily influenced by Christianity, particularly the Roman Catholic Church. Miller (1956: 23) observes that the Roman Catholic Church operated parish, chapel, and monastery schools at the elementary level. Schools in monasteries and cathedrals offered secondary education. Much of the teaching in these schools was directed at learning Latin, the old Roman language used by the church in its ceremonies and teachings. Gutek (2008: n.p) holds that the church provided some limited opportunities for the education of women in religious communities or convents. Convents had libraries and schools to help prepare nuns to follow the religious rules of their communities.

The monasteries had kept learning alive all through the dark Ages, especially through the copying and preserving of manuscript (Miller 1957: 23). There were schools connected with the monastic orders, open to those who wished to become members. He continues that for the education of priests there were the schools associated with the cathedrals, offering the liberal arts plus special study in theology. Universities

were established as genuine centres of learning. The church sponsored these schools to encourage formal education for the young to read and write. Out of these came theological seminaries which developed their own materials for training (Guttek 2008: n.p.).

2.4.3 Christian Education during the Renaissance

The period known as the Renaissance extends from the 14th century to the 16th century. Coe (1951: 225-46) acknowledges the fact that the period was characterized by a shift from the stifling control of the church over the affairs of mankind to a general sense of freedom for humans to control their destiny. The word renaissance is a French word meaning “rebirth.” The idea of rebirth originated in the belief that Europeans had rediscovered the superiority of Greek and Roman culture after many centuries of what they considered intellectual and cultural decline (Anthony and Benson 2003: 159). The preceding era, which began with the collapse of the Roman Empire around the 5th century, became known as the Middle Ages to indicate its position between the classical and modern world (Sherrill 1944: 26)

As the Middle Ages began to draw to a close, a number of learned scholars and philosophers began to stir up the hearts and minds of their students. The university was becoming a safe haven where the free exchange of ideas could take place without the threat of reprisal. Anthony and Benson (2003: 159) wrote that the church at that time felt threatened by this new academic freedom and resolved not to allow the resident scholars to express their minds so freely as they would have desired to. However, according to Matthews & Platt (2000: 230-231), the civil governments

wrestled control of these prominent cathedral schools away from the church, and they became sanctuaries of freedom for the pursuit of new ideas and philosophical inquiry. The renaissance period laid the foundation for the humanistic tradition of education, with its concern for aesthetics, for the good life in this world, and for the wisdom of the ancients in Greece and Rome. In his opinion, Miller (1957: 24) holds that the results of education were seen in the content of the curriculum, the rise of scientific thinking, and critical methods in the study of religions.

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2.4.4 Christian Education during the Reformation

The Reformation was a rediscovery of Scripture, centering on Martin Luther (1483-1546), who reacted against the moralism and legalism of Rome with its accompanying corruption (Miller 1956: 24). The New Testament faith of salvation by grace replaced the idea of salvation through merit. Luther was aided by the new means of communication and the printing press. In 1555, the peace of Augsburg recognized the Protestant churches. Coe (1951: 225-46) reports that although the reasons for the breakup of Europe's religious unity were complicated, two basic causes were clear; the radical reshaping of Western society and culture, and the timeless spiritual yearning of human beings. The final shake up came when Luther nailed up his 95 Thesis in 1517, this unwittingly sparked off the explosion of the Protestant Reformation (Antwi 2005: 2).

Sherrill (1944: 27) maintains that the Protestant emphasis on the Bible as the people's book led to revolutionary changes in education. The Bible appeared in the languages of the people in Germany, Switzerland, England and elsewhere. It was

essential that the people learnt to read in order to understand God's Word, participate in the services, and read the writings of the Reformers. Preaching also revived and became a most effective tool of education. Teaching in the Christian family was encouraged, and small catechisms were prepared for children. (Guttek 2008: n.p.).

Most important of all was the establishment of Christian schools. Both Martin Luther and John Calvin (1509-1564) proposed plans for elementary, secondary, and university education. According to Luther, the state together with the church ought to be responsible for education. In his view, this union would allow a combination of the human and Christian or religious education within one system for life to be wholesome. John Knox (1505-1572) also made similar proposals in Scotland (Miller 1956: 24). Simply put, Christian education during the Reformation targeted children.

Luther ([www. ReformationSA.org](http://www.ReformationSA.org).) warned:

I am much afraid that schools will prove to be wide gates to hell unless they diligently labour in explaining the Holy Scriptures, engraving them on the hearts of youth. I advise no one to place his child where the Scriptures do not reign paramount. Every institution in which men are not constantly occupied with the Word of God must become corrupt.

This was how important education was and still is to the Reformed traditional family including the Presbyterian Church of Ghana. Christian Education was aimed at making genuine disciples of Christ in every human activity. The Reformers maintain that people should become good citizens in the society; they must be salt and light wherever they are (Vieth 1947: 263). And Christian Education activities must help people to become genuine citizens in the society.

2.5 Emergence of Sunday Schools

Sunday school, in the Christian and Jewish education system, was the school system maintained by churches and synagogues where classes offering religious instruction to children or to children and adults were held on Sundays. The British religious leader Robert Raikes is generally regarded as the founder of the modern Sunday school movement. According to Miller (1956: 28) Raikes established the first Sunday school at Gloucester in 1780, as a means of furnishing both secular and religious education to children whose employment in the factories prevented them from attending the secular schools. Under Raikes's sponsorship, the movement spread rapidly; by 1786 an estimated 250,000 children were attending Sunday schools. Later, as the number of children attending secular schools increased, the Sunday schools began to devote themselves gradually only to religious instruction (Vieth 1957: n.p.).

The Sunday school movement spread to the Protestant churches of the U.S. early in the 19th century and by 1824 had become sufficiently well established to make possible the organization of a central coordinating agency, the American Sunday School Union. The activity of Protestant missionaries in many parts of the world brought about the further spread of the movement, and in 1889 the first World's Sunday School Convention was held in London. Such meetings, thereafter held periodically in various countries, gave rise to the formation of the World Sunday School Association in 1907 comprising numerous national and international Sunday school organizations (Encarta Encyclopaedia\Sunday School). The name was changed to World Council of Christian Education and Sunday School Association about 40 years later (Miller 1956: 28).

2.6 Christian Education in Africa

The Church in Africa has not been left out in the history of Christian education. From the beginning of Christianity in Africa, missionaries, and later, the African churches have been concerned about education, first of all for its converts, and then secondly, as a contribution and social responsibility to the nation. This concern has largely taken the form of schools for the general education of all. Most of the school systems in Africa were first started as mission or Church-related schools. According to the World Council of Churches (W.C.C. 1973: 1), the presence of general religious instructions in all the mission schools has down-played actual catechism or a fuller Christian education resulting into the neglect of Christian education in children and especially the youth, and even adults as well.

In response to this lapse, some church leaders drew the attention to the importance of having Christian education, and to make it effective through the local congregation. Consequently, when Christians in Africa realised the need for Christian education the church took up the responsibility to foster it through the local church body. Megill (1980: 2-3) writes among others that:

The All Africa Conference of Churches (A.A.C.C.) in 1984 embarked on a long process of research into a 'New Vision of Christian Education for Africa Today.' For this purpose two seminars were held in 1984 – one for English-speaking countries in Mindolo Ecumenical Institute in Kitwe, Zambia; and one for French-speaking countries in Douala, Cameroun. These workshops gave birth to a new and very challenging vision of Christian education based on the concept of the 'Village' and 'Baobab'.

In his introduction to the Working Group Reports during the seminar held in Kitwe - Zambia, Rakotondraibe (1984: n.p.), the Director Unit 1 of Research and Programme Coordination of A.A.C.C., reiterates that the village is considered as the expression of an inclusive community under God. For the majority of African people the

Baobab is the symbol of life, and especially the place of community growth. It is under its shades that the villagers meet and discuss not only to solve some conflicts but also to elaborate strategy for the growth and harmonious life of the whole community. The Baobab or shade of any big tree in a village is becoming the centre of life of the African community (A.A.C.C. 1984: 10-11).

2.6.1 The Aims and Objectives of Christian Education in Africa

According to Megill (1980: 4) the aim of Christian education is to nurture the total family of the church in the Christian faith, taking into consideration the needs of the whole person, his or her unique situation, and his or her total environment and family. She further states the objectives of Christian education in Africa to be:

- i. To help the whole village of believers to grow in knowing, understanding and appreciating their cultural, biblical and Christian heritage.
- ii. To help persons know and understand who they are in their specific situations with others.
- iii. To help persons to grow in their relationships with God and with their neighbours.
- iv. To help persons to know, understand and interpret what is happening in their village in the light of their Christian faith (the Gospel).

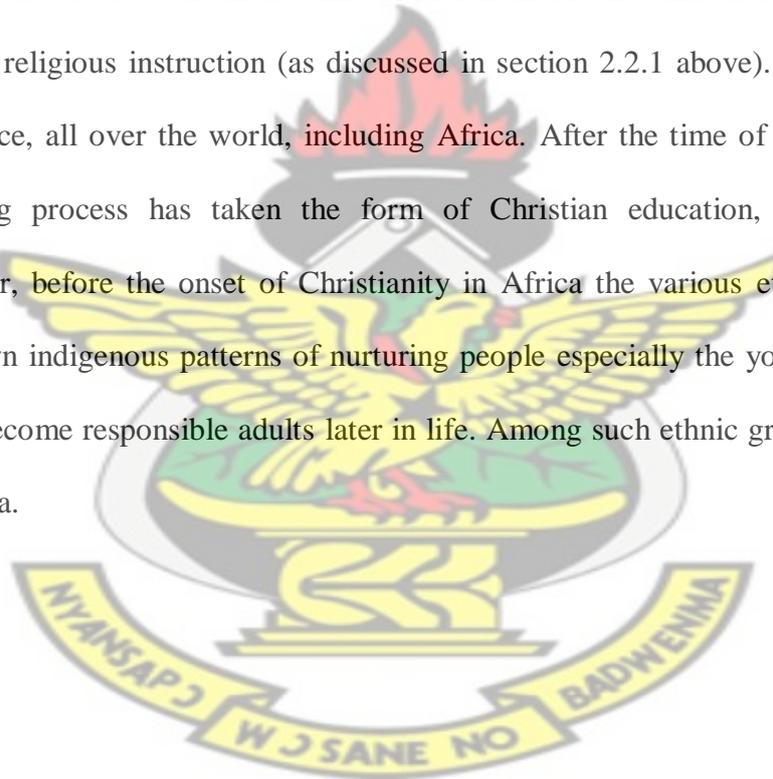
Nurturing the total family involves specific programmes for children, youth, and adults. On this, Nyomi, (1993:51) quoting Megill writes thus:

There must be education of children, youth and adults, whether new converts or second or third generation Christians, in the fundamentals of the Christian faith. If the Church is not only to grow in members, but lead its members to commitment to the Christian way in all of life, there must be continuous education.

This need has led many African churches to have Christian education programmes including Sunday Schools and active Youth Groups and Organisations, as well as Adult Fellowships. These have become the avenues for nurturing people in the Church in Africa.

2.8 Conclusion

From the above discussion, one could conclude that nurturing or the formation of people takes its roots from the time of Abraham. At that time nurturing was in the form of religious instruction (as discussed in section 2.2.1 above). It has continued ever since, all over the world, including Africa. After the time of Jesus Christ, the nurturing process has taken the form of Christian education, and instruction. However, before the onset of Christianity in Africa the various ethnic groups had their own indigenous patterns of nurturing people especially the youth on how they could become responsible adults later in life. Among such ethnic groups is the Akan of Ghana.



CHAPTER 3

THE AKAN WORLDVIEW

3.0 Introduction

In the last chapter, the research report examined the socio-religious basis of Religious and Christian education. It traced the history of religious education from the time of the Patriarchs, through Jesus' time through to the commencement of Christian education in Africa. The chapter was concluded on the note that, since time immemorial, the nurturing of people has been with the people of the various ethnic groups in the world. Among such people, is the Akan of Ghana. This chapter begins by investigating the religious worldviews of the Akan. It then examines some religious affinities and relationships, and also highlights the idea of the African identity.

3.1 The Etymology of the Akan

To a large extent, much research has been done on the Akan peoples in terms of their historical genesis, geographical settings, socio-economic, as well as religio-cultural systems (for example: Rattray 1927; Busia 1955; Manoukian 1964; Danquah 1968; Buah 1980; Warren 1973; Appiah-Kubi 1981; Ephraim-Donkor 1997; Ekem 2009). The researcher would be careful not to replicate what these scholars have

investigated and reported, but rather, refer to subject areas pertinent to this study as literature review.

Akan is one of the principal or rather, well known ethnic group in West Africa, inhabiting Ghana, Cote D'Ivoire, some parts of West Africa that speaks the *Twi* language (also see Ekem 2009: 27). The word is often pronounced *Akane*, and it is said to mean "foremost, genuine"; from *kan*, which is first. The best known representatives of the ethnic group are the *Asantes*, *Fantes*, *Akyems*, *Akuapims*, *Assins*, *Kwawus*, and several of the present *Twi* speaking tribes of [modern] Ghana and Cote D'Ivoire (Danquah 1968: 198-199; see also Arhin 1985: 13). The original form of the name, *Akane* or *Akana*, led to its corruption by the early Arabs of the Sudan into [old] Ghana [empire] and by the early Europeans who visited the Coast of West Africa into Guinea. Danquah (1968: 198-199) again reports that:

There is a theory that the old Ghana Empire or *Akane* in Taurus was the same as the Babylonian race known as *Akkad*, *Agade* or *Akana*, who lived on the Tigris and Euphrates, is strongly supported by the evidence of common features in the language of the ancient race and of the modern, as also in their customs. Assyrologist bear testimony to the similarity between the language of Sumer and Akkad and certain African languages, an ancient group which is not Semitic.

Debrunner (1967: 2) also maintains that the word *4kanni* ordinarily means a nice, refined, well-mannered man, a civilised or cultured person. In his estimation, Wiredu (1990: 243) writes that the word *Akan* refers both to a group of intimately related languages found in West Africa and to the people who speak them. The Akan forms the most predominant ethnic group in Ghana occupying about five of the ten regions, each group speaking a distinct dialect (Sarpong 1977:1). In his account, Buah (1980: 8) says that the Akan are the largest group in Ghana, totalling well over half of the people of Ghana, and occupying five of the ten administrative regions of the country

(also in Appiah and Gates 1999: 58). According to the 2000 Ghana National Population Census, about forty-nine percent of the national population of Ghana are Akan. According to Ekem (2009: 28) the geographical location of these Akan-speaking groups is conducive to farming, hunting and fishing. Frempong (2001: 144) states that the Akan have in common many political, social, religious and cultural institutions, though there are local varieties. The Akan speak dialects of a common language also called *Akan*, which is enriched by local varieties of vocabulary; expression and idiom (Buah 1980: 8; Ekem 2009: 27).

In his estimation, Ekem (2009: 28) writes that “Akan societies are mainly matrilineal and exogamous in their social set-up: inheritance and succession to ranks are usually traced through the mother’s lineage, and marriage is not normally permitted between members of the same kin group.” On his part Smith (1966: 65) adds that the basis of Akan society is religious, and the foundation of Akan religion is social. The whole political and social organisation is inextricably interlaced with religion, and at its heart lies the *abusua*, the clan or kindred group. He further posits that the *abusua* is the smallest social unit comprising the man, his wife or wives of a different *abusua* from their husband and their children. This further grows to become the extended-family. In his view, Rattray (1923: 35, 77) believes that the word *abusua* is synonymous with *mogya or bogya* (blood). To him, the *abusua* includes not only the living, but also the dead and the generation yet unborn.

Throughout the Akan society there are eight (8) major matrilineal “clans,” or *abusua*. According to Sarpong (2002: 65) these are: *Bretuo, Agona, Asona, Aduana, \$yoko, Asene, Asakyiri and !ko4na* (see Ekem 2009: 28, for the names of the seven clans in

Mfantse or *Fante*). Rattray (1927: 51) avers that an Akan by birth belongs to the *abusua* of his mother, but inherits the *ntoro/nt4n* or *kra* of his father. Ekem (2002: 29), writing on the social-political organisation of the Akan, explains among others that each lineage is headed by an *abusuapanyin* — family head responsible for its general welfare. An *4baapanyin* — leading elderly woman is also available to attend to the needs of female members. A number of clans come together to form a village or township. Wiredu (1990: 244) asserts that in Akan thinking, the person was (and still is) perceived as a union of three elements, the life principle or the *4kra* (soul) believed to come directly from *Nyame* (God) through which a person's destiny is determined, and in the absence of which a person ceases to exist biologically; the *mogya* (blood) principle, inherited from the mother, symbolises a person's biological existence; and the *sunsum* (personality) principle from the father (also in Ekem 2009: 35).

There are several indigenous worldviews in Akan culture (see Ekem 2009: 31). This section would examine examples of some indigenous Akan beliefs. Busia (1955: 3) explains, “when we think of a people's worldview, we consider their concept of the supernatural, of nature, of man, and society, and of the way in which these concepts form a system that gives meaning to men's lives and actions.” Among the Akan, and indeed African societies in general, one does not have to look deep in order to find *Nyame* (God). In the view of Garbrah (2000: 63) this is because life among the Akan is often expressed in religion. On his part, Mbiti (1969: 1- 2) writes,

Religion permeates into all the departments of life so fully that it is not easy or possible always to isolate it... there is no formal distinction between the sacred and the secular, between the religious and non-religious, between the spiritual and the material areas of life. Wherever the African is, there is his [her] religion: he/she carries it to the fields where he/she is sowing seeds or harvesting a new crop; he/she takes it with him/her to the beer party or to attend a funeral ceremony; and if he/she is educated, he/she takes religion with him/her to the

examination room at school or in the university; if he/she is a politician he/she takes it to the house of parliament.

Danquah (1968: viii) notes that Akan religious doctrine knows only one *Onyankopon* (Supreme Being). The Akan believe that *Nyame* is the ultimate explanation of the genesis and sustenance of both man and all things (Mbiti 1969: 15). It is therefore no wonder that the Akan have the proverb ‘*obi nkyer1 abofra Nyame*’, which renders as, “No one teaches a child to know about the existence of God.” Busia (1954: 205) writes this about the Asantes and their religious beliefs:

The gods are treated with respect if they deliver the goods, and with contempt if they fail; it is [Nyame] the Supreme Being (GOD) and the ancestors that are always treated with reverence and awe, a fact which an onlooker who has seen [an Akan] Ashanti chiefs and elders making offerings or pouring libations to the ancestors can hardly fail to observe. The Ashanti, like other Akan people, esteem the Supreme Being and the ancestors far above gods and amulets. Attitudes to the latter depend upon their success, and vary from healthy respect to sneering contempt.

According to Danquah (1968: 151)

Onyankopon—The Great Supreme Being, alone bears for the Akan a personal name, *Onyankopon Kwame* (the Saturday born God). He above all is knowable in experience and objectifies the ideals of morality and religion. If a deity is to be worshipped at all it is the God Kwame who should get veneration.

The writer further provides notes and glossary of some Akan words for *Nyame*.

Some of the numerous appellations are:

Tetekwaframo — he-who endures for ever; *Onyankopon*—the Great Supreme Being. He — who alone is the Great Shining One. Often pronounced *Nyankopon*. *Brekyirihunade*—appellation of God *Nyankopon*. He who knows what is happening behind him. Another title is *Odomankoma*—the Infinite, Interminable, and Absolute Being. As God, *Odomankoma* is generally associated with creation as distinct from *Onyame*, associated with life as such, and from *Onyankopon* associated with religion. The appellation of *Odomankoma* is *Borebore*, the Architect (Danquah 1968: 198-206).

Besides the conception of God, in the Akan spiritual universe, is the belief in the existence of spirits or deities; *abosom* and that of ancestral spirits, *nsamanfo* (see also Ekem 2009: 35-37), and also according to Danquah (1968: x), the *abosom* are in

fact regarded as God's children and spokesmen. Mbiti (1968: 15) explains that these spirits consist of extra-human beings and the spirits of men who died a long time ago. They explain the destiny of man. Rattray (1923: 86) reports that:

There is a belief in Supreme Being, 'Nyame or Nyankopon', who dwells somewhat aloof in His firmament. He delegates some of His powers to His vice-regents upon Earth. There are the lesser gods, who in their turn are graded in a regular descending scale, until they reach, or at times almost merge into, that class which the Akan themselves name *suman*, who are among the lowest grades of superhuman powers.

The Akan also believe in the existence of man including human beings who are dead, *nananom nsamanfo* (ancestors). The dead, the living and the unborn are ontologically bound to each other. An Akan is always proud of his heritage and he reveres *nananom nsamanfo* (Dankwa 2004: 67-100). Bediako in his opinion (1995: 219) avers that: "An ancestral 'spirit' is not thought of as a kind of nebulous being or personified mystical presence but primarily as a name attached to a relic, the stool, standing for ritual validation of lineage ancestry and for mystical intervention in human affairs." Writing on ancestors, Ekem (2009: 37) acknowledges that:

The dead discover their ultimate worth only in relation to the living and the unborn; the latter's existence is also considered meaningless without the former. Akan communities, therefore, place a high premium on the maintenance of this ontological balance....Children are named after them in the hope that they would emulate their noble examples. A remarkable feature about such ancestors is that, they are believed to be still alive, though unseen, except, perhaps, in occasional self-disclosure to individuals through dreams. Known as the 'living dead,' they wield tremendous influence on society. They are custodians of society's ethical norms, and are believed to reward the obedient, and punish those who violate such norms. Fertility and procreation, as well as good harvest, are dependent on their goodwill.

In Akan thinking, animals, plants and natural phenomena and objects constitute the environment in which man lives. These provide a means of existence and, if need be, man establishes a mystical relationship with them (Mbiti 1968: 16).

3.2 Religious Affinities and Relationship to Indigenous Akan Worldviews

Smith (1966: 65) argues that “the advent of Christianity and the adoption of the Christian faith by many Africans have not changed the traditional worldview, and it is this fact that has given rise to many of the problems which beset the Christian Church today.” This assertion by Smith may be true to some extent. But the issue is that the Christian faith did not consider the nature of the traditional world-view and their affinities to the Christian faith. This could have given the missionaries a link and an understanding into the traditional world-view better.

Turner (1977: 30-32) confirms the Akan World-view by listing certain affinities that are akin to other primal religious world-views. *First*, the traditional world-view has a sense of kinship with nature, in which animals and plants had their own spiritual existence and place in the universe as interdependent parts of a whole. The environment is, therefore, used with respect and reverence (without exploitation). The indigenous Akan world-view thus demonstrates religious attitude to man’s natural settings in the world (Bediako 1995: 93). He describes a *second* feature as the deep sense that man is finite, weak and impure or sinful and stands in need of a power not his own. This assessment of the traditional world-view considers man’s condition and the need to consult a higher spiritual being for sustenance (Bediako 2000: 87).

The *third* feature, “complementary to the second,” was the conviction that man is not alone in the universe, for there is a spiritual world of powers or beings more powerful and ultimate than himself. The traditional Akan worldview believes that there is a will behind every event, so that one does not inquire about the causes, but rather, who did it. These transcendent powers may be ambivalent-malevolent or

benevolent, but the world of the gods provides the meaning and the model for all human needs and activities (Bediako 1995: 94).

The *fourth* feature is “the belief that man can enter into relationship with the benevolent spirit-world and so share in its powers and blessings and receive protection from evil forces by these transcendent helpers.” The traditional Akan world-view emphasises the fact that there is that longing inside of man for the true life which has not yet been achieved, and to them, that is the African, this can only come from the gods (Bediako 2000: 87-88).

The *fifth* feature, which Turner identifies as an extension of the fourth, relates to the acute sense of the reality of the afterlife, a conviction which explains the importance that is placed on ancestors or the “living dead” in traditional Akan belief system. Life, in the traditional Akan worldview, is full of hope, because they hold the belief that the living and the dead will be reunited and both will share in the immortality of the gods (Bediako 1995: 94-95).

The *sixth* feature is the conviction that man lives “in a sacramental universe where there is no sharp dichotomy between the physical and the spiritual.” In the traditional world-view, the physical acts as the vehicle for the “spiritual” power. This is why symbols and objects play very important roles in traditional Akan world-view. Human life is a microcosm of the macrocosm that is the physical life is a direct reflection of the spiritual life (Bediako 2000: 88). All the six features mentioned above have direct bearing on the Christian faith and these factors are what the early

missionaries failed to discover and to address in the missionary work; hence the consequent challenges that are facing Christian education today.

3.3 The Encounter between Western (Christian) and Indigenous Akan Worldviews

The inability to appreciate the indigenous patterns of education in Akan culture has its roots in the history of the contact of African peoples with the West. The Akan have had their own indigenous patterns of nurturing, educating, forming, as well as instructing people especially the younger generation long before the arrival of the missionaries (Osei 2002: 5). However, with the advent of the missionary enterprise amongst the local people, these indigenous patterns of nurturing were described in the various documentations of earlier 18th and 19th century western missionaries and anthropologists as: primitive, pagan, and heathen. Other concepts used were superstitious, fetish, savage and sometimes even as barbaric (Bediako 1995: 6). This image is aptly described by Bediako (1992: 225) quoting Adrian Hasting as:

In fact, neither in the nineteenth nor in the early twentieth centuries did missionaries give much thought in the advance to what they would find in Africa what struck them, undoubtedly, was the darkness of the continent; its lack of religion and sound morals, its ignorance, its general pitiful condition made worse by the barbarity of the slave trade. Evangelisation was seen as liberation from a state of absolute awfulness and the picture of unredeemed Africa (the emphasis is mine).

Notwithstanding, Bediako (1995: 5) further argues that the image of Africa and of Africans as inherently inferior to Europe and Europeans was prevalent in nineteenth-century Europe and did not originate with the missionary movement. According to him:

It was as a result of theories of racial hierarchy and a chain of being elaborated to explain social, cultural and economic diversities between the different groupings of mankind,

perceived as races, this image ensured that consistently the Negro was relegated to the bottom of the scale. Therefore, even though the missionary enterprise itself was part of a different, benevolent European movement in Africa, missionaries also treated Africa and Africans as savage, ignorant and superstitious (Bediako 1995: 6).

3.4 The African Identity

A number of reasons have been assigned to the way and manner Africa and Africans were perceived especially in the eyes of the Europeans. Since the European contact with Africans was largely restricted to the slave trade, many Europeans knew Africans as ‘things’ but not as human beings. Therefore Africans were [and may still be] a possession to possess. One of the factors that accounted for this negative image of Africa was the concept of the great chain of being. This concept made the European culture superior to all other cultures, including the African culture (Baeta 1968: 55). This concept became a fundamental part of the intellectual worldview in Europe in the eighteenth century. It places the African [black man] as the last in the ranking order ‘White’, ‘Red’, and ‘Yellow’ races of humanity. Africans were generally considered as; inferior, backward, primitive, savaged, and uncivilised people, and there was the need to elevate the people of Africa to “assume their place among civilised and Christian nations” (Bediako 1992: 225-228).

The other source that contributed to this negative African image was the European civilisation. Developments in Europe had brought about a virtual identification of ‘European’ with ‘Christianity.’ The technical and cultural achievement in Europe was generally and confidently identified as the fruits of Christianity. Thus true

civilisation and Christianity were inseparable (Bediako 1992: 228). This was the ruling worldview of the Europeans. Smith (1966: 87) explains that:

the missionaries came from a western European consciousness at the time of developing technology with its cultural achievements... West Africa could only seem 'backward' and in dire need not only of the grace of the Gospel of Christ but also of the blessings of Christian civilisation.

Christianity was therefore used as the 'mighty lever' to bring the needed change (Bediako 1992: 228). He further contends that:

Africans were believed to be without literature, arts, sciences, government, laws, and also cannibalistic and naked... these ideas formed part of the stock of knowledge and persisted in the intellectual climate of Europe well into the nineteenth century when they became fused with evolutionary and racial theories of human achievement, civilisation, history and progress (Bediako 1992: 130).

The western missionaries who came to Africa therefore saw themselves as agents for the "total civilisation and elevation of Africa." In addition Europe was seen as the centre of Christendom, and this accounted for the way Europeans and their missionaries thought Africans needed to be civilised. Smith (1966: 86) avers that the missionaries were representatives of the thought and attitudes of their time. Europe considered itself as a people with divine mandate to civilise the world with Christianity. And in order that Africa and its people would be civilised to "take their place among nations," there was the need to evangelise the people through the Gospel of Jesus Christ. This will ensure Africa's civilisation and development.

On the whole, contact with the Africans in the 19th century and early 20th century by the European and North American missionaries left some harmful amount of negative and false impressions; which resulted in regarding anything African in the pre-Christian era as harmful, or valueless. Consequently, the African, once converted from paganism was as a sort of *tabula rasa*, on which a whole new religious

psychology was to be imprinted (Bediako 1992: 225). The impact of this largely negative European evaluation of Africa and African tradition has resulted in considering everything indigenous as of no-value. In their estimation Africa “lacks religion and sound morals.” However; it is a historical fact that the African, including the Akan, has had her own system of inculcating sound moral values into her people, long before the arrival of the European visitor: Africans do have sound moral values and are very much religious.

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Although it has happened in many other countries where Christianity has adapted to the conditions of the areas in which it finds itself, this situation has not been evident in Africa. This, it is believed, has been so because some anthropologists and sociologists maintain that in Africa; almost every cultural act must have a religious undertone. According to Bediako (2000: n.p.)

This mistake was due to the inability of the Western missionaries to engage Africa culture in the construction of theology for Africans, mainly due to the common view of the African religious thought as backward, unscientific, degraded and primitive, devoid of spiritual content, and antithetical to Christianity.

When therefore one considers that the dominant type of religion in Africa is the Africa Traditional Religion which is nothing more than polytheism; any attempt at fusing African culture with Christianity will be difficult. But is it true that anything pre-Christian in Africa is either harmful or at best valueless? Can the Church in Ghana be humble enough to incorporate some of the traditional Akan practices into its existing Christian educational curriculum? We hold that there is an urgent need for African Christian educators to re-design an approach to the study of Christian education by inculcating some of the indigenous patterns of education into the curriculum. The paradigm shift in the post-missionary intellectual evaluation of Akan

Indigenous knowledge will attract the needed respect and appreciation, an effort in which this research sought to accomplish. Rattray (1923: 87-88) expressed the same sentiments several years ago when he wrote among others that:

The educated African has been cut off from, and is cut of sympathy with, the life of his own people. He has learned in nine cases out of ten, if he has not actually been taught, to despise his own illiterate brethren and the unlettered past of his race. Concerning that past he really knows little or nothing, and generally cares less...that there might be something in the African's own culture and religious beliefs worthy of retention...such being the case, can one wonder that African pupils and converts alike have been quick to see and very ready to follow a trend of thought which denied, or ignored, the possibility of anything useful or good or ethical existing in the African's own religion.

Busia (1955: 1) also holds a similar position. He says,

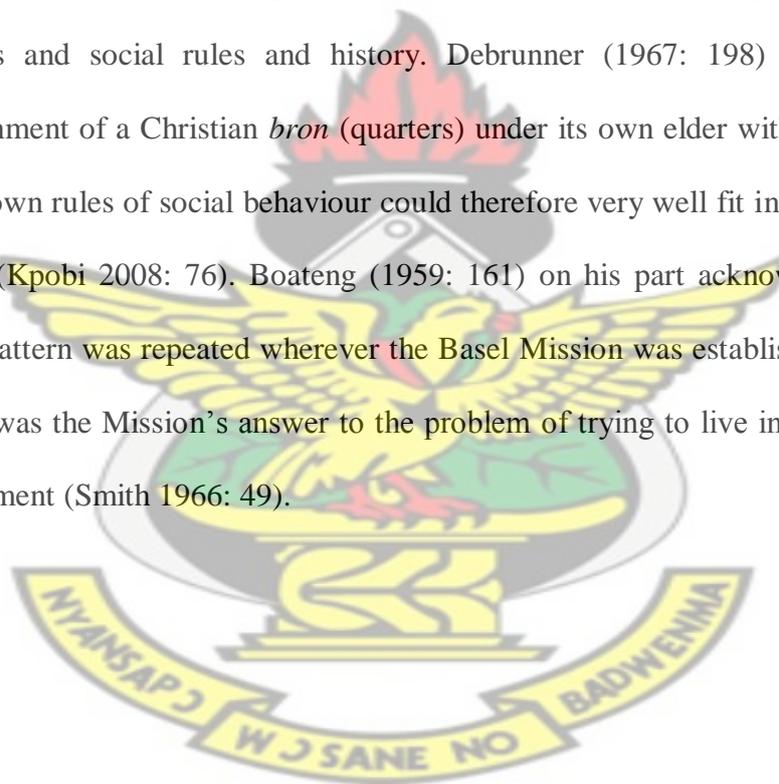
For the conversion to the Christian faith to be more than superficial, the Christian church must come to grips with traditional beliefs and practices, and with the world view that these beliefs and practices imply. It would be unreal not to recognize the fact that many church members are influenced in their conduct by traditional beliefs and practices, and by the traditional interpretation of the universe...the new convert is poised between two worlds: the old traditions and customs of his [her] culture which he [she] is striving to leave behind, and the new beliefs and practices to which he [she] is still a stranger. The church would help him [her] better, if she [he] understood the former, while she [he] spoke with authority about the latter.

Busia (1955: 2) on his part maintains among others that a person can become, and can be truly somebody only in and through the participation in a culture. So even though Africans can adopt a new religious identity, it would be very difficult to neglect their old cultural background. The Church in Africa should not throw away all the cultural categories of Africans. Another impediment of the encounter was the fact that the Western missionaries were seen as causing a lot of harm, especially division among the local inhabitants. Williamson (1955: vi) substantiates this notion by stating that “while the majority of Christians have accepted the Church in its outward forms, their inward spirit is still ruled by the attitudes and outlooks of the old culture.” According to Debrunner (1967: 174) an Old Chief of *Tumfa* is reported to have said this:

You brought us no good thing. Who brought the English to the interior? It is you, the missionaries, alone. Today we cannot even go hunting as we like (government having

prohibited forest hunting in company). You missionaries make two towns out of each town and bring division among us, who are brethren.

Thus, the missionaries were seen as being responsible of breaking up the family unit of the African, by creating what was called ‘Christian quarters.’ The local people thought that these ‘Christians’ will no longer acknowledge the authority of their chief (Agyeman 2005: 45-46). Each traditional *bron* (quarter) of an Akan town stood under the protection of its own tutelary spirit or spirits and was directed by quarter elders responsible to those spirits, as well as to the chief of the town. Often the inhabitants of a quarter belonged to the same *abusua* (clan). Each quarter had its own religious and social rules and history. Debrunner (1967: 198) argues that the establishment of a Christian *bron* (quarters) under its own elder with its own chapel and its own rules of social behaviour could therefore very well fit into the traditional pattern (Kpobi 2008: 76). Boateng (1959: 161) on his part acknowledges that the Salem pattern was repeated wherever the Basel Mission was established. The Salem pattern was the Mission’s answer to the problem of trying to live in a non-Christian environment (Smith 1966: 49).



3.5 Nature of Indigenous Education

Religious Education in Africa has always been part of an overall educational tradition, either as practised by indigenous societies or as imposed by outsiders. According to Gupta (1979: 67) the pattern of development of education in Africa

falls into three major periods, pre-colonial times, the colonial era, and the post-colonial or post-independence period.

It has often been suggested that there was no educational system in Africa before Western education was introduced to it. However, Haar (1992: 29) argues that informal schooling was in existence long before Africa was colonised, although the origin of formal school education lies mainly in the colonial era. African educationists have consistently argued that, naturally, there were systems of education in Africa before the colonial period. For “every community must have a way of passing on to the young its accumulated knowledge to enable them to play adult roles and to ensure the survival of their offspring, and the continuity of the community” (Busia 1964: 13). Education in the Akan tradition thus recognises the merits of an informal type of nurturing which is characterised by different values. As such, indigenous education has always aimed at preparing a child to take up its responsibilities as an adult member of society. In that sense it does not differ from the educational objectives in the Western societies.

Indigenous Akan education was largely informal and participatory: the young learnt by participating in activities alongside their elders. The older generation would pass on to the young the knowledge, skills, modes of behaviour and beliefs deemed necessary for them if they were to play their social roles in adult life and to contribute to the continued existence of society. Above all, they were taught their roles in the all-embracing network of kinship relations and the right and obligation connected with it (Busia 1964: 13-14). Nana Akyamfuo, a senior linguist from Manhyia Palace in Kumasi, in a personal video-taped interview, emphasises that the

form this took varied from the simple instruction given by the father to the complex educational system of the highly organised and sophisticated apprenticeship. According to him “children learn by doing.” Ocitti (1973: 103) parallel this system of education to that of the Acholi of Uganda when he wrote that:

there was no systematic teaching in the classroom style by specially trained teachers. Everybody was a teacher. Indeed experience was the most important teacher. At all stages of growing up, attention was focussed much more on the desirability of learning as against the desirability of teaching.

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3.6 Indigenous Teaching Methods

Customs and example were the principal teaching methods in the educational process in which the community had a vital role to play. Akyamfuo stresses the importance of communal aspect in indigenous education by admitting that “education was seen as a collective responsibility, a task of the entire village community.” He further explains that:

The child was in the centre of this education system and the nuclear and extended families were the primary agents for instructing the youth. They would teach them what the community regarded as good and evil and how the way they behaved would affect their families. After the first years of dependency on its parents, the child would start to participate in some sort of social life [developmental task] from about the age of six. The final stage of its education would take place in and by the community itself, from the age of fifteen and according to sex.

Osafo-Gyima (1974: 15-16) also comments that food production, marriage, and procreation were considered important elements for the preservation of society. Education, therefore concentrated on methods intended to achieve these goals. Busia (1964: 16) on his part notes that customs and traditions played an important role and instruction started early in life in the form of participation in rituals and ceremonies, through which a sense of dependence on God and spirits was expressed. According

to Nana Akosua Amponsaa Biraso 1, the *\$manhema* of *Domeabra* in the *Asante-Akyem* traditional area in the Asante Region, the task of explaining and imparting desirable religious knowledge, practices and observations was entrusted to the parents. The parents were expected not just to set good examples as devoted members of the indigenous faith; they were also expected to be custodians of ethics and social customs as well as of religious observance (also see Ocitti 1973: 80).

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3.7 Values in Indigenous Akan Educational Patterns

The Akan employ traditional values in the nurturing process of an individual as well as the entire society. It could therefore be said that every nurturing process, in the Akan context, has an educational value inherent within it. Dankwa (1990: 86-87) posits, among others, that there are established acceptable values within the family or community. To him, Africans are value minded people. As such, any person who exhibited great value is preferred. Thus, value to the African is very important. What people become after that nurturing process, or what is worth pursuing after, becomes the objective of indigenous education. In the view of Gyekye (1996: 70) “values are the patterns or principles of conduct that are considered most worthwhile and cherished by a society.” In Akan thinking, value-teaching was considered an important part of a child’s education. It was entrusted to the appropriate bodies and was usually closely linked to religion.

The Akan maintains that anything that brings disgrace to the person, the family, and the society in general is said to be an abomination. Society therefore frowns on anything that brings reproach to the personality. A person of good moral values is the toast of the society. The Akan believe that such a person is made, nurtured, trained,

educated to be, by the community, and not born. Danquah (1968: 120-121) writes that the Akan maxim: *Aninguase mfata Okanni Ba,* — “a thing of dishonour and a son of the Akan go ill together,” sums up the Akan attitude towards morality, dignity, and behaviour. In other words, an Akan is a person of dignity, one without disgrace in every aspect. In examining this maxim, Danquah (1968: 121) further states,

What made him [her] a person of importance, outstanding in the eyes of his [her] fellow-man [person], was the fact that he [she] had lived their life as an ordinary citizen and had not lost in dignity or honour and not suffered disgrace (‘anguase,’ ‘face descending to basement,’ ‘debasement of the person’). As a son of the Akan, he was born with an *anim*, a positively good Akan, and his success in life consisted in not having fallen below the high degree at his birth, that is to say, in not having allowed his face, presence or countenance, *anim* (to *gu*, fall, *ase*, down) to be lowered. To the noble Akan son, fall from grace is a fall during one’s own lifetime...it is a fall within the conscious power of each particular moral subject to avoid. Not to have fallen...is counted to the moral subject a thing of supreme achievement.

For this reason a lot of formal and informal activities are lined up for the Akan, especially the young ones, so that they start their journey towards the older and future lives well prepared, in order to avoid ‘*anguase*’—debasement of personality. The Akan has a maxim that supports this position: “*Biribiara nye yaw se aniwu,*”— “nothing is more painful than disgrace.” This absence of disgrace, this attainment and maintenance of dignity, makes the moral subject an excellent reason for nurturing. Debrunner (1967: 2) asserts that in Akan education an immense value is put on (ordered behaviour) *amane* and (character training) *bra pa*. He further contends that by these a man should prove himself as *wap4w* (polished) and *4kanni* (gentlemanlike).

According to Dzobo (1975; 85) every occasion or happening might be used to teach the young some lessons. Festivals and customary rites, family gatherings and planting and harvesting occasions, the installation of chiefs and funeral ritual observances are said to be occasions or moments for nurturing, the lessons of which are not lost to the young. At the same time, it is argued that any form of education

should be seen in relation to the cultural and environmental conditions of a society.

Majasan (1982: 1) explains that:

a system of education is the laid-down principles and practices regarding the upbringing of the children and the young adults of a society according to their culture. Culture is the coded interplay of man's reactions to his/her environment and social organisation which makes for stability and progress in society.

Salifou (1974: 12) notes that the relationship between education and culture is considered a thing of importance by all African scholars. He continues that:

In spite of its weaknesses and shortcomings in the light of modern times, they feel it would be a mistake to ignore the cultural values [and morals] inherent in the indigenous system....the big difference is that whereas in the old education [indigenous] system the family played a central role in the formation of the child, in modern times this role has been taken over by the school. This creates a situation which seems familiar to the modern Western educators, school and family representing two different realities.

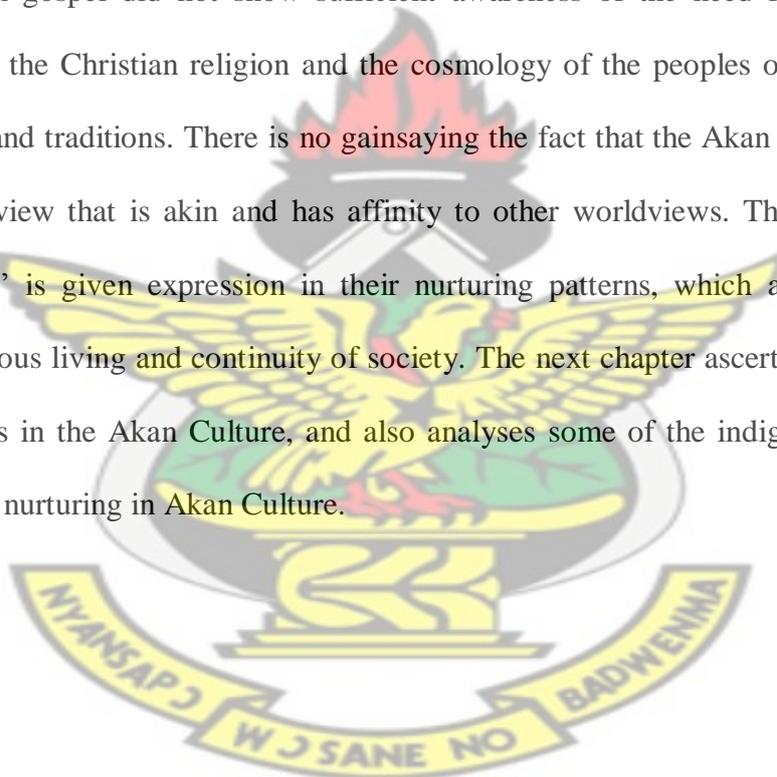
Some Akan scholars such as: Busia (1955), Nketia (1955), Danquah (1968), Osafo-Gyima (1974), Dankwa (1990), Bediako (1992), Gyekye (1996), all agree on the destabilising effects of Western education, notably the implied assault on, and depreciation of, their own religious beliefs and social customs. Sanda (1972: 75-76), describes the Western type of education as an instrument of alienation, a vehicle for exploitation, and the realisation of cultural imperialism, which together form part of the process of de-Africanisation of Africa and Africans.

It could be said that all the writers above feel humiliated by the way Western culture has been imposed on indigenous people. To them this has deformed their identity and they often put the blame on missionaries, whom they view as responsible for the wholesale introduction into Africa of Western values through schools, thereby devaluing values, knowledge and morals of the indigenous peoples. Akan indigenous knowledge and value system can be identified in: religion, humanity and

brotherhood, the family life, economic, chieftaincy and political aesthetic, human rights, ancestorship and tradition, communal and individual areas (Gyekye 1996: ix-xi).

3.8 Conclusion

This chapter has so-far focussed attention on the Akan primal worldview. The report also asserts that the missionaries who were responsible for the propagation of the Christian gospel did not show sufficient awareness of the need for an encounter between the Christian religion and the cosmology of the peoples outside European culture and traditions. There is **no gainsaying** the fact that the Akan had and still has a worldview that is akin and has affinity to other worldviews. That worldview or 'identity' is given expression in their nurturing patterns, which aims at ensuring harmonious living and continuity of society. The next chapter ascertains some of the moments in the Akan Culture, and also analyses some of the indigenous resources used for nurturing in Akan Culture.



CHAPTER 4

SOME INDIGENOUS EDUCATIVE MOMENTS AND RESOURCES FOR NURTURING IN THE AKAN TRADITION

4.0 Introduction

The previous chapter concluded on the note that the missionaries did not factor into their missionary agenda, the contributions of indigenous Akan worldviews, though there are certain affinities. This resulted in the negative way the missionaries perceived the indigenous content of nurturing the young people. This chapter investigates some indigenous moments and resources for nurturing in the Akan culture that could be used in communicating the Christian faith.

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4.1 Some Indigenous Educational Moments in Akan Tradition

Educational moments are the channels through which education takes place. Okpewho (1992: 115) asserts that “through these nurturing moments the younger members of the society absorb the ideas that would guide them through life and the older ones are constantly reminded of the rules and ideas that must be kept alive for the benefit of those coming behind them.” There is always the transfer of knowledge through these patterns which covers all aspects of traditional and contemporary life.

Indigenous educational moments enable citizens of the society to acquire knowledge about culture and to preserve it for the sake of cultural continuity. Agyekum (2000: 2) asserts that these moments deal with some historical events, and they portray the deeds and the excellence of the earlier generations of the society which the contemporary generation should emulate so as to maintain the dignity of the groups. He further states that these historical notions inculcate nationalistic and patriotic ideologies in the new generation. He goes on to argue that these moments provide the educational opportunities and draw attention to the fact that despite westernisation,

Christianity and modernisation, people cannot do away with the traditional family structures, systems, the patterns of inheritance and the interrelations between family members, as well as the opportunity and responsibilities that accompany them. These indigenous educational moments include:

4.2 Naming Ceremonies

In Akan tradition, the naming ceremony is a mark of acceptance into the family. The ceremony takes place on the eighth day after birth. According to Nketia (1955: 26) it is the responsibility of the father to arrange for this social event. He posits that in the Yoruba tradition for example, the ceremony takes place in the context of drumming, singing and dancing. Among the Gas the outdoor ceremony is not a matter for the parents only but also the relations of the parents and friends who are invited to the house of the husband or the husband's father's house.

Nana Yaa Gyamfua III, the queenmother of Woarakose, in a one-on-one interview, explains that in most Ghanaian communities, birth is marked by a simple ceremony which is called 'Naming.' It is also called an 'outdooring' because on that day the baby who until then has been kept out of public view is brought out. The ceremony is referred to as 'Naming' because it is the day on which s/he will be given a name. The naming gives the child his/her identity as an Akan and a member of his ethnic group. This ceremony is known in Akan as *Abadinto*. Ababio, the *Gyasehene* of Woarakose, near Kumasi in an interview also adds that, the Outdooring or Naming ceremonies are social events to which friends and relatives are invited. In describing the details of the ceremony, Ababio says:

...the person chosen to perform the rites should be of a good moral standard. The father is usually represented by his sister. The man performing the rites puts the child on his laps. He then asks for the child's name and announces it. Libation is poured during which he prays for prosperity for the child and furthermore asks that he should be blessed with many children. He then dips his right forefinger into water and wets the child's lips with the water three times. He mentions the child's name each time saying, for example, 'Kofi Antwi, *wose nsu a, nsu*' (Kofi Antwi, when you say water, it must be water). He does the same with palm wine or *adukrom* or *nyamedua mu nsu* [water fetched in a tree] and says, '*Wose nsa a, nsa*' (When you say wine, it must be wine) and then adds, '*Wose tuntum a tuntum, Wose fitaa a fitaa*' (When you say it is black, it must be black, and if you say it is white, it must be white).

Nana Acheampong the *Ankobeahene* of Bokuruwa in the Kwahu Traditional area confirmed this in an interview and further affirms that:

...presents are given to both mother and child by friends and relatives of the parents. The giving of these gifts mostly goes with the outdoor ceremony of the eight day when the little baby is brought into the sunlight and fresh air for the first time, and its name declared. It is on this occasion that it is formally welcomed into the society. If it is named after a living person, it must be arranged for the baby to be shown to the person. It is generally hoped that the baby will grow up to be like that person after whom it has been named, if he was an older person, would ensure that his spirit entered into the child by means of a speck of his spittle.

Though these customs given above are general for all classes of babies in Akan traditional setup, additional customs are sometimes observed according to the numerical order of birth and sex. For example, the Chief of a town must be informed when twins are born, and mothers of twins enjoy certain privileges. The next educational moment in Akan tradition is Puberty rites. This will be discussed into much details later.

4.3.1 *Bragro* as a Pattern of Nurturing in Akan Culture

After the child-naming ceremony, puberty rites are the next set of rituals of social status transformation which adolescent undergo in Akan culture. These ceremonies mark the entry of mostly young women into womanhood. The customs relating to puberty, seen as one of the events of the Life Cycle, according to Nketia (1955: 24),

frequently takes place in social situations which also involve complexes of activities.

Nketia explains further that:

It is an event of considerable social importance and preparations are made for it not only by those immediately related to the individual by ties of kinship but also by the society as a whole-in the regulation of attitude and behaviour to the young individual, and sometimes in the provision of services or organisations which absorb the individual. In terms of birth, there are the services of the 'native' midwives and nurses, in situations of puberty, there are voluntary helpers as well as friends, in terms of death there are relations and musicians to assist or pay tribute to the individual at some stage in his life.

Magesa (1997: 92) on his part explains that the most significant instruction on the life of the clan, the individual's right and responsibilities in society, and the transition from childhood to adulthood is achieved only at or around puberty during the process of initiation. This is the time when the individual's vital force and the power of life generally are formally confirmed and imprinted indelibly in the individual's rational consciousness. If there is a time in the Akan person's life during which a veritable 'forest of symbols,' to use Turner's phrase, is employed for the sake of instruction, it is during this period of initiation (Turner 1967: 54). Gennep (1960: 60) calls this 'rites of passage,' that is, the ceremonies that surround events in an individual's life, such as; naming, puberty, marriage, death, baptism and confirmation.

In the words of Oduyoye (2002: 80) "pregnancy is an abomination if the puberty rites have not been performed, and the prospective mother and father may be banished." She further posits that throughout most African cultures, puberty rituals are performed for women by women, and for men by men. The ritual for girls includes fertility rites, while for boys the rites elicit evidence of bravery. There are various idioms and euphemisms in the Akan language to denote the advent of the state of puberty. The most common one, used especially to designate the passing of the first menses is, *wa bo no bara* (the *Bara* state has stricken her), *kyima* (to

menstruate), *nsa ko n'akyi* (the hand has gone behind), *wa bu nsa* (she has twisted her hand), *wa kum esono* (she has killed an elephant: Rattray 1927: 69; Oduyoye 2002: 80).

4.3.2 Rites in *Bragro*

The researcher's personal observation from the field at Woarakose near Kumasi shows that the first rite for the day is the "enstoolment" which is performed by an old woman who has many children. She is placed on a stool three times, remaining on it the third time. The stool is usually placed on a mat covered with a blanket or *kente* cloth. A brass basin called *Yaawa* is filled with water containing *Adwera* or *Odwen-Ahaban* (leaves of Odwen) with an egg and a dry okro fruit is placed beside the girl. According to Gyamfua, the Queenmother of Woarakose, a woman sits beside the *Yaawa* and when gifts in the form of coins are put in the *Yaawa*, this woman sprinkles water with the *adwera* or *odwen* on the girl. She explains to the researcher that:

...the sprinkling of this water will protect her from evil spirits that may make her barren. Women sing and move around the girl. There is a lot of jubilation and merry-making. Libation is poured with palm wine or schnapps to thank the gods and the ancestors for looking after the girl up to this puberty age. She is presented with gifts by parents, relatives, and friends. All gifts presented are displayed around her.

The next rite is the *ti-yi* (hair cutting). Here, Gyamfua holds that, 'the initiate is given a special hair cut and the father pays some money for it. This money serves as capital for the girl. The finger and toe nails are cut and her hair is shaped into traditional *Dansinkran*' (women's traditional hair style in Akan). Maame Bea, tells the researcher that during her initiation, she was dressed in a new white cloth with her breasts exposed. Again, she was decorated with beads around the neck, wrist, and

ankles. The next stage is the ritual bath which takes place in a stream or a river. Gyamfua further explains that where there is no stream or river, water can be put in a *Yaawa* for the same purpose. Bea informs us that on that occasion her head (including the face) was covered with cloth and she was carried to the stream for what she was told to be ‘ritual bath.’ Respondents from Woarakose have it that on arrival, the officiating woman removes the cloth and dips the girl into the stream three times informing the spirits of the water of their presence and purpose. The *Brani* (neophyte) is then seated on a stool and lime is squeezed so that the juice drops on her head. The following items, *et4* (mashed yam), an egg, and three leaves of *edwono* tree are thrown into the stream to thank the spirits for a successful ‘ritual bath.’

Gyamfua emphasizes that in some Akan communities, parts of the finger and toe nails together with some cut hair are buried at the river bank. The actual ritual bath is done by about four women. They use a new local sponge, soap, and lime juice to bathe her. After bathing, the *Brani* is dressed in a rich *Kente* cloth with a pair of new *Ahenema* (native sandals) to match. Her *dansinkran* hair style is re-shaped nicely. She is carried home under a beautiful umbrella like a queen amidst singing of *Bragro* songs. When they get home, she is seated on a stool for the *Anoka* ceremony (giving the lady something to eat). The interview informed the researcher that this is the dedication ceremony. The food items for this ceremony are boiled eggs, *et4*, elephant skin, banana, and roasted groundnuts. Libation is poured and each of the food items is put into her mouth for her to taste it. This is the *Anoka*. Each food tasted is followed by a prayer, e.g., when the elephant skin is tasted, the officiating woman prays, saying: ‘May the elephant give you her womb so that you bear many

children.’ The initiate’s head is then covered with a cloth and a boiled egg is put into her mouth. She is forbidden to bite or chew it. She has to swallow the whole egg. She is given *et4* and she does the same thing with it. It is believed that biting or chewing those food items will make her barren.

The next ceremony is a great moment for children. Personal observation by the researcher indicates that the *Brani* holds the hands of two children (a boy and a girl) according to Gyamfua, and then let’s go their hands for them to rush towards a big bowl full of *et4* and eggs. As soon as the two touch the food, all the other children around rush to scramble for it. While the children are scrambling for the food, the *Brani* is blindfolded. She is asked to touch two of the children. It is believed that if she is able to touch a boy and a girl she will have children of both sexes. All this time, the initiate has not eaten; therefore, she invites a few of her friends and eats a good meal with them. There is festivity and merry-making afterwards.

With the feasting over, they all assemble to celebrate the day’s ceremony with a special dance. The *Bragro* singers drum, and all dance. As soon as the initiate takes the floor all others leave the floor. She dances with two or three girls and while dancing she shakes hands to thank all the people present. Her invited friends are left behind to serve her for six days. During this period they have some evening activities which include storytelling and other games for girls. They also learn traditional dances and songs, learn to play the *Dondo* (the armpit drum) and any traditional instrument meant for women. The Sunday of the initiation week is *Nnaase* (Thanksgiving Day). The initiate dresses gorgeously. Her outfit consists of *Kente*, a gold chain, a pair of native sandals, attractive beads and an umbrella. All those who

will accompany her also put on beautiful clothes. They go round to thank all those who helped to make her initiation ceremony a success.

4.3.3 *Kyiribra* (Anathema of *Bragro*)

Sarpong (1977: 48) says that *Kyiribra* (from two words *kyiri*: 'to hate' and *bra*: 'life,' 'menses') is the offence which a girl, with her accomplice, commits by 'taking-seed' before the performance of nobility [puberty] rites. Again it often refers to the ceremony that is performed to ward off the evil repercussions of the sinful act. Sharing his view on this subject, Rattray (1927: 74) reports that any laxity of morals prior to reaching puberty was commonly punished by death or expulsion from the abusua of both the guilty parties. If a man had sexual intercourse with a young girl prior to the appearance of her first period it was considered as an offence for which the whole community would suffer.

On the question on 'the forbidden' of *Bragro*, thirty (30) respondents, hold that if a girl becomes pregnant without going through the *Bragro* initiation rites she is banished from the community. The girl and her male partner are exiled from the community and sent to an uninhabited locality till the girl gives birth. Their families are summoned to the palace and made to pay some fine to pacify the community. Seventy (70) respondents, reported having heard about it but have very little information on *Kyiribra*.

Respondents further revealed that in traditional law, no woman is allowed to get married without having gone through the puberty rites and every young woman must remain a virgin prior to this. These laws ensure that young women grow up disciplined enough to control their sexuality and to prevent them from premature motherhood and unwanted and unplanned for babies. These laws are so important that any woman who becomes pregnant or breaks her virginity before the rites are performed is sometimes ostracized together with the man responsible for it. Akyamfuo in an interview alludes to this by saying that the *kyiribra* is abhorrence to society. In his words:

...she had disgraced her parents, telling the world that they did not bring her up properly and if even they did, she did not respect them and refuse to listen to them; She had demonstrated to the world that she is a flirt; She had concealed her menstruation and through that had desecrated the holy place of the land; She had also desecrated the deities of the land; No man would marry her in the future. On top of that, a heavy fine is imposed on the guilty party after which purification rites are performed to rid the society of the negative repercussions of their actions. The disgrace attached to the action and the bad omen that may follow was deterrent to the youth in the olden days therefore they shunned sex and that prevented teenage pregnancies.

4.3.4 Factors Mitigating the Practice of *Bragro*

On the question of why some people reject *Bragro*, seventy (70) respondents, gave the following reasons: that the introduction of formal education has devalued the practice as being associated with idol worship; and people are caught up with urbanisation and modernity. Commenting on this issue, Akyamfuo states that with the introduction of Christianity, formal education and urbanisation, the performance of puberty rites and ceremony seem to die a natural death. Most Christian Churches think the performance is associated with idol worship and do not encourage their members to indulge in the practice. Most of the girls who are lucky to have higher education also think it is demeaning to expose their breasts in public revealing their

nakedness and therefore they reject proposals by their parents to subject them to puberty rites ceremony.

Urbanisation has also contributed to the rejection of the rites and ceremony attached to puberty. This is because urbanisation has brought people from different ethnic groups into other towns other than their own and therefore natives cannot impose local rites on strangers from other ethnic groups living in the town. This has led to a loose society where all rites are ignored and the resultant effect being teenage pregnancy as well as the abundance of street boys and girls with its attendant negative consequences (Sarpong 1977: 92-98).

4.4 Marriage

Another educational moment is the institution of marriage in Akan tradition. The institution of marriage is one of the pillars on which the Akan culture rests. Among the Akan, marriage is considered as an important transitional stage in the life of the individual. Writing about the institution of marriage, Rattray (1927: 76) states that a young man or a young woman who has reached puberty will marry, or will be compelled to marry. Gyekye (1996: 76) also argues that it is the recognised social institution, not only for establishing and maintaining the *abusua*, but also creating and sustaining the ties of kinship.

4.5 Funeral Celebrations

Another educational moment is that of funeral celebrations. The Akan places great emphasis on the funeral celebrations of their dead relatives because the celebrations are done to honour them. Osei (2002: 56) reveals that, there was the belief that in the olden days relatives, whose funerals were not celebrated, lingered on the path to the land of *asamando* (the land of the dead), and to free them to their destinations, funerals were celebrated for them.

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4.6 Resources for Akan Indigenous Education

Resources are tools for the transfer of indigenous knowledge, values and morals to the younger generation in Akan tradition. According to Agyekum (2000: 3) “...through these the youth learn the language, culture and history of the Akan society and hence cherish their cultural heritage.” We shall briefly examine some of these indigenous resources.

4.6.1 Black Stools

Dankwa (2004: 72-73) writes that Black stools are intended to act as both the social contract document and history book of the original community. The forefathers, who at that time, had not developed the art of writing, gave special significance to their culture and rituals such as dolls, stools, and other valuable objects by which they chronicled their early history, practices and experiences for posterity. The elders use this in educating the younger generation about the history of the past chiefs of the community.

4.6.2 Traditional Symbols and Colours

Akan believes in symbolic gestures and symbols. Every symbol has a meaning in Akan tradition. The Akan therefore engages in what is termed visual aid approach to learning. Most of these emblematic traditional objects are used on particular occasions, to convey encoded messages (Dankwa 2004: 87-100).

Colours also have educational values in Akan societies. For example, the Akan will use gold or yellow to represent royalty, continuous life, prosperity, glory, maturity, and such novel situations (Sarpong 1974: 103). Whereas white colours go for purity, joy, victory; black and red represent death, pain, and other agonising moments.

4.6.3 Dance/Music/Drumming

Other indigenous resources for nurturing in Akan tradition are dance, music, and drumming. In indigenous Akan setting traditional music is one of the pedagogical resources for nurturing people. In all the Akan States, every aspect of life has its music accompaniment. Indigenous music permeates religious activities, social and political lives of the people. The Akan sing and dance when they are happy, when they are in sorrow, during wars, and during any occasion that brings them together as a group (Osei 2002: 102). Rattray (1923: 242) affirms that drums convey messages over great distances and in an incredibly short space of time. For example, during times of war, drums were used to direct soldiers so that they might not fall into the opposing camp (also in Osei 2002: 109-110). According to Sarpong (1974: 121)

Most of the instruments are used to provide music for dance; but some are used for other purposes, such as, providing rhythm for walking (mpintin) or working (rattles), giving alarm, or signal (atumpan), recounting or conveying messages (atumpan), reciting proverbs or wise sayings (f4nt4mfr4m), lauding people (especially rulers), abusing them, calling them, or congratulating them.

Drumming and dancing are dialogues and interactive talks in their own right.

According to Agyekum (2000: 10) Akan songs/music abound and are used in the rites of passage namely: birth, initiation, marriage, title taking and death. He says “there are certain satirical songs and lampoons which are meant to bring shame on the culprits and to discourage future misconduct.”

4.6.4 Proverbs and Wise Sayings

Proverbs and Wise Sayings are additional indigenous resources for nurturing in Akan culture. Proverbs may be regarded as a well thought through statements. Most Akan narratives, proverbs, riddles, drama all reflect the experiences of the people and it is a way by which knowledge is transferred (Agyekum 2000: 2). Proverbs very often contain high ethical principles and convey seriously or playfully sound practical advice, they often express high discernment and admirable judgment, and all these go a long way to demonstrate that the African possesses much esprit and sentiment, in spite of all outwardly apparent lack of material civilisation (Debrunner 1967: 2).

Dzobo and Amagashie (2004: 6) write that:

A proverb may be compared to a palm-nut; you may have to crack its hard shell of symbolism before you can see the ‘kernel’ inside it. A proverb has a ‘shell’ and a ‘kernel’, that is, a form and content. The content is always some moral truths, principles, values or attitudes and linguistic structure provides its form...the formal structure of a proverb provides for its denotative meaning and its content its connotative meaning.

Akrofi in his *Twi mmebusIm* also wrote that the proverbs are a most precious heritage of the Twi nation since ancient days and for all generations (Debrunner 1967: 3). According to Agyekum (2000: 3) Proverbs and Wise Sayings provide the opportunity for people to deepen their insight and knowledge of the Akan language, culture and environment.

4.6.5 The Use of Folk Tales

The uses of Folk tales, or *Anansesɛ m*, as an educational resource, have been with the Akan since time immemorial. According to Ackah (1988: 80) the commonest way in which children are taught to be good is by implanting in their minds, and making them believe, that there are disastrous consequences of doing what is wrong. Agyekum (2000: 5) writes that it teaches specific aspects of moral behaviour to the audience. The young ones are expected to develop certain virtues such as kindness, patience, sympathy and to deplore vices like greed, bullying, oppression, and others like that. The tales are direct replicas of the fundamental ways of life in the society couched in indirect forms to avoid disgrace. Little and bigger creatures are assigned various roles that show their respective values in the animal kingdom. By this medium, the beneficiaries improve and develop their environmental and ecological knowledge (Agyekum 2000: 5).

4.7 Indigenous Education in Akan Homes

O God my God my God, what miseries and mockeries did I now experience, when obedience to my teachers was proposed to me, as proper in a boy, in order that in this world I might prosper, and excel in tongue-science, which should serve to praise of men, and to deceitful riches. Next I was put to school to get learning, in which I (poor wretch) knew not what use there was; and yet, if idle in learning, I was beaten. For this was judge right by our

forefathers; and many, passing the same course before us, framed for us weary paths, through which we were fain to pass.

This statement by St. Augustine as quoted by Maynard (1974: 516) and cited by Ephirim-Donkor (1997: 91) succinctly describes St. Augustine's harsh boyhood training which was remarkably akin to the Akan indigenous educational pattern despite the vast geographical difference and history between West and North Africa. The Akan always desire that their offspring live exemplary lives and they consider any misdeed as a stigma, not only on the individual concerned, but on the whole extended family. For instance, in olden times, the Asante may seem, to the superficial observer, to have been merely bloodthirsty men and women unworthy of any sympathy whatever. Rattray (1927: vi) posits that "it is a singular thing that these people 'the Ashantees,' who had never seen a white man nor the sea, were the most civil and well bred I have ever seen in Africa. It is astonishing to see men with such few opportunities so well behaved." Ironically if such praise could be bestowed on a people who were at times thought to be guilty of the deeds that have been recorded by many European anthropologist and travellers, then there is the need to find out how these apparently opposing characteristics could be reconciled.

According to Oquaye (2000: 249) an Akan has an acute sense of the dependency of a human being and recognised that the individual needs the help of society. It further recognised that a human being was not an island so as to be sufficient unto himself (Wiredu 1990: 245). The learning process started with mothers and female relatives teaching children the moral, ethical, social and historical values of a given society. Child rearing was not left to the biological parents alone as the extended family played a major role in nurturing the young. At age five (5) children helped in caring

for younger siblings, hence establishing a life-long pattern of responsibility towards others. At the same time the child learned to relate to the extended family. If orphaned, the trauma was lessened because members of the extended family were ready to assume the role of fathers or mothers. Both mentally and physically handicapped children were cared for in the same way and when older, were given tasks with which they could cope. Every man, woman and child was expected to contribute towards the well-being of the community.

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Deviants were punished accordingly. The most severe punishment, for persistent deviance was exile from the community. There were no prison, policeman, and reform schools of orphanages in pre-colonial period. Both individualism and responsibility to community were encouraged. Children had their first type of education or formation from their parents in the home and family set up. For example, a hunter would train his son in hunting; a blacksmith would also train his male child in blacksmithing. Opanyin Akwasi Tawiah, an *Aduana Abusuapanyin* of Apradang, in the Kwawu [Kwahu] Traditional Area, in an interview, notes that parents were expected to teach their children especially the male children the vocations of their fathers; while the females had no choice but to follow their mothers to the farm and help her in the kitchen to learn everything else in housewifery.

Another form of indigenous education was through the method of apprenticeship. Respondents, numbering eighty (80) affirm that the need to acquire other trade apart from the vocation of one's parents, calls for people to send their male children to understudy other men with other skills. Such young people after qualifying served

their masters for some time before they went to establish their own trade in order to start work independently. Tawiah, in an interview mentions that, he became an apprentice learning blacksmithing for about three years. His master virtually became his foster father, mentoring him, until he finally graduated from his apprenticeship [and that became his profession for several years before reverting to becoming a full-time farmer.]

One of the traditional ways of training young ones to enable them take over from their parents' professions was to accompany them to their places of work as apprentices. Akyamfuo emphasises that the coming of age of a child was marked by the proper 'rites of passage' which constituted the culmination of an epoch in one's life. The male child looks forward to becoming a responsible man, while the girl child looks forward to being initiated in the *Bragro* ceremony and later becoming a mother and a wife. Biraso corroborates with this statement and mentions that: 'the goals of indigenous systems of education were clear. Indigenous education had to be relevant to the life and culture of the community and to the kind of life the young people were expected to lead. They were trained for their social roles in the home, the village or town, or the tribe.' Indigenous Akan education inculcates a religious attitude to life: reverence towards nature and the unknown universe.

4.8 Conclusion

The Akan had their own indigenous ways of nurturing long before the 'Whiteman arrived.' These moments and resources available for indigenous education touched the inner as well as the outer qualities of a person; intellect and character, personality

and general development of the individual. These enable the person to realise his innate potentialities and develop his special aptitude to the fullest level possible in society. The next chapter explores the educational moments and resources as pertains in the P.C.G.

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CHAPTER 5

NURTURING IN THE PRESBYTERIAN

CHURCH OF GHANA

5.0 Introduction

In the previous chapter the research generally discussed some indigenous moments and resources as pedagogical tools of nurturing in the Akan culture. The Presbyterian Church of Ghana has some educational moments and resources for nurturing. This chapter seeks to examine confirmation education as one of the patterns of youth character formation in the Presbyterian Church of Ghana.

5.1 Brief History of the Presbyterian Church of Ghana

The story of the P.C.G. covers the period from the landing in 1828 of the first missionaries of the Basel Evangelical Missionary Society (founded in 1815 in Basel in Switzerland) to the present day. Omenyo, in an article retrieved from the internet in June 2011, explains that the Basel Mission (BM hereafter), as was later called,

was a collection of German and Swiss farmers and craftsmen and their essentially middle-class spouses fired by a burning zeal for the cause applied themselves to the task of spreading Christian teaching and to persuade the people of the then Gold Coast, that the Pietist version of Christianity was their best hope for the construction of a moral and material better life.

Omenyo further describes the fate of the early missionaries as dismal, and state ‘it was one of stubborn determination on the one side, and tragedy on the other.’ Three times, at the beginning in the late 1820s and 1830s, parties of missionaries were almost completely wiped out by illness. The BM was compelled to adopt a new strategy which saw the transfer of the first batch of 24 ex-African Christian slaves from Jamaica and Antigua to the Gold Coast to be part of the missionary team at a

time when the BM was deciding to give up their mission in the Gold Coast. According to Smith (1966: 19) the missionary enterprise was assisted, after 1918, by missionaries from Scotland. Smith maintains that the Church owes its foundation and its ethos to the sacrificial endeavours of men and women sent to the Gold Coast under the aegis of the BM. Kpobi (2008: 75) writes that this illustrates a drama that brought together actors from different backgrounds and orientations together in very trying and bewildering circumstances to set in motion the processes leading to what we now call the Presbyterian Church of Ghana.

The history of the early beginnings of the work of the BM in the then Gold Coast can only be explained theologically as divine intervention in human affairs that transformed disappointments and despair into a great mission success story. Indeed one can describe the origins of the P.C.G. as a mustard seed planted on hard terrain and in difficult circumstances which defied all odds to become a church whose impact on Christian nurturing is enviable. Agyeman (1978: 78) writes that the singular dedication, vision and courage of Andrea Riis, the only surviving missionary of the BM from 1828 to 1832, kept the BM work alive in very trying circumstances. By all accounts the BM should have abandoned its mission work in the then Gold Coast. It is a mystery how the work was not abandoned, and all explanation defies ordinary simple historical explanation. Whatever the explanations, the role of Andreas Riis in this divine drama, so to speak, was very significant. The life and work of Andreas Riis on the mission field in the then Gold Coast unveils a complex drama made up of individuals drawn from different contexts and cultural backgrounds to accomplish a mission task which by all standards was beyond all expectations of any success in view.

When Andreas Riis arrived in the then Gold Coast he was attacked by malaria. According to Smith (1966: 30) Riis was cured by a traditional herbalist which enabled and encouraged him to relocate and continue the work. For almost five years of work without any converts, and a high number of the lives of the missionaries lost, it became very difficult to the BM to justify the continuation of the work. Andreas Riis was nevertheless able to convince the mission board that in spite of the initial setbacks, the mission work in the then Gold Coast must continue. Andreas Riis might have found encouragement and hope by a challenge reported to have been thrown to him by the Paramount Chief Nana Addo Dankwa I, Akuapemhene. He was reported to have said this to Riis, “when God created the world he gave all the different peoples of the world their own religions. God gave Christianity to Whitman, Islam to the Muslims and traditional African religion to the Black man. If you can show black man who is a Christian I would convince my people to convert to Christianity” (Agyeman 2005: 22; also in Nkansa-Kyeremateng 2000: 26; and in Smith 1966: 36).

Riis took this challenge seriously and might have given him ideas about what was possible under the circumstances of the mission work in the Gold Coast. He therefore proposed to the mission board that for the mission work to continue and bear fruits in the then Gold Coast, they must bring in Christians of African descent who could withstand the climate in Ghana and also demonstrate to the locals that one could be African and Christian (Smith 1966: 35; Kpobi 2008: 75-76). This argument convinced the BM to continue its work in the then Gold Coast and subsequently launched mission work in the Gold Coast in 1844.

The vision of Riis was vindicated because with the arrival of the African Moravian Christians they progressed steadily and grew from strength to strength and today the Presbyterian Church of Ghana has become one of the prominent churches in Ghana. The acting Governor of the then Gold Coast in 1917, Sir Alexander Ransford Slater, observed that: “the government regard the work of the BM as incomparably, the best on the Gold Coast. All who have intimate knowledge of the history of the Gold Coast recognize the deep debt that the colony owes to the Basel Mission” (Debrunner 1960: 284).

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5.2 Thoughts on Nurturing in the Church

During the pre-independence and probably a few years after independence, the Church organised its Christian education programmes around three institutions: the Chapel, the School and Christian community. Schools for instance, were the first to be established at a mission station and before long Teacher Training Colleges were established to train teachers for the educational programmes. In other words, the Church was in full control of its schools so that Christian education, doctrine and discipline were transferred onto the individual right from infancy. The Presbyterian Church was not an exception to these favourable historical occurrences. However, this was not to last ‘ad infinitum.’

Nurturing new converts on sound Christian principles was, and still is, one of the core values of the Church. The agenda was to train the ‘hand, the head and the heart of the African. The missionary educators believed that the life-styles of the indigenous people will be moulded and shaped by sound Christian principles. Other

respondents hold that the agenda was to prepare the Ghanaian to face the challenges of the society. Debrunner (1967: 296) claims that “education is the key to progress. Mix the materials badly; leave out the most important, and the arch will collapse; omit character training from education, and progress will stop.” Character training was the main focus of the missionaries at that time. This kind of nurturing by the Church promoted a form of education that brings home, school, church and community together as actors playing complimentary roles in the formation process (Bediako 1995: 48).

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Kpobi (2008: 76) on his part thinks that the emphasis of this nurturing philosophy should be character formation and the mastering of disciplines and skills that will help the converts function effectively in the society with a difference. The idea was to train the head, heart and hand. A formation process that makes the building up of personal character the foundation of the acquisition of knowledge (see Agyeman 2005: 56). It is this philosophy that has produced what is termed the proverbial ‘Presbyterian Discipline’ (Debrunner 1967: 258). Such rigid discipline helped to inculcate in the young people, the type of work culture and ethics needed for developing a new nation and personality. However, this type of ‘Presbyterian Discipline’ seems to have waned over the years and this study believes that the proverbial Presbyterian Discipline will be resuscitated through the incorporation of Akan indigenous patterns in the nurturing processes of the Church.

5.2.1 Youth Nurturing in the Presbyterian Church of Ghana

In Ghana as well as the Presbyterian Church of Ghana, the age group 12 to 35 years constitute forty percent (40%) or more of the total population (Youth Policy, 2000: 10). This age group is considered most vital and vibrant segment of society in terms

of physical strength, spiritual motivation and amenability to training. Undoubtedly, this is the very future of every human society be it church or nation.

Throughout its history of growth, expansion, and consolidation, the Presbyterian Church of Ghana has reckoned with the importance of the youth in its life and work. Although in the initial stages of its development, from mission to church, the youth presence, it would appear, had been taken for granted, in recent decades however, it has fully dawned on the Church that the youth form an integral part of the total membership of the Church. This fact is borne out by development taking place in the youth constituency, particularly with the promulgation of the current Youth Policy document (P.C.G. Youth Policy, 2000:1).

The nurturing of church members be it spiritual, material, vocational or theological takes place in all age groups. These are Children's Ministry, Junior Youth, Y.P.G., Y.A.F, Women's Fellowship, and Men's Fellowship. Apart from these distinct groupings, there are other specialised Ministries; Student Ministry, Prison Ministry, Media Ministry, Market Ministry, just to mention a few.

The young people in the Church are a part of the people of God, those who are within the faith. This is to affirm that there is one body, many members, and some of them are young. The Youth are young laity who have made the same commitment to Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord as adults have made. They have assumed the same privileges and responsibilities of discipleship as adults. But, the Youth need peer group activities in which their responsible membership may be shared with other

youth, within and beyond their church as denomination, and in the world (Youth Policy, 2000: 5).

The aim of Youth nurturing in the church is to satisfy the fundamental needs and aspirations of young people as well as prepare them for total participation in the church life and civil society at large. In an interview with Kofi Amfo-Akonnor, the Director for Church Life And Nurture (CLAN), at the General Assembly Office of the P.C.G., he states, ‘in the process of Youth formation, information and transformation, the P.C.G. employs resources such as worship, study, witness, recreation, service, proclamation and fellowship.’ He lists the objectives as follows:

- To assist the youth to develop a deeper and purposeful spiritual life through creative but Biblical based worship in appreciation of salvation provided by God in our Lord Jesus Christ.
- To provide the youth with sound Christian education through relevant study programmes.
- To establish commissions to search for and draw study materials for the various levels of the youth ministry.
- Develop blueprints in addressing youth related issues and interests. The Confirmation education which also serves as rites of passage among the adolescents will be a forum to answer the question and challenges of the youth.
- To enhance Christian influence and witness of the youth in the church, home, and community by providing them with relevant training to use the head, heart and hands for the service of others and the ultimate glory of God.

- Through the local congregations provide innovative, Biblical based recreational programmes for relaxation, sharing and improvement on inter personal relationship.
- The P.C.G. in designing curriculum and resources for Youth education, will consider the youth culture and appropriate media culture.

5.3 Confirmation as a Pattern of Youth Nurturing

One of the patterns that the P.C.G. has been using in her formative and nurturing processes is the Confirmation education. The Church's agenda for character formation of the youth is hinged on the Biblical truth that children or young people are gifts from God to parents and therefore are to be assisted to fully grow up physically, intellectually, socially, politically, and spiritually so that they can realise their full potential in the church and society. Amfo-Akonnor, the Director for Church Life and Nurture (CLAN), at the General Assembly Office of the P.C.G., in an interview says that:

As an initiation rite, confirmation marks the point in the Christian journey at which the participation in the life of God's people inaugurated at baptism is confirmed by the Minister by the laying on of hands, and in which those who have been baptised affirm for themselves the faith into which they have been baptised and their intention to live a life of responsible and committed discipleship. Through prayer and the laying on of hands by the confirming Minister, the Church also asks God to give them power through the Holy Spirit to enable them to live in this way.

Asare Ayeh, the Accra New Town District Minister of the P.C.G., in an interview also posits that the primary purpose of this practice was catechetical [teaching and learning], providing every baptised Christian with the theological knowledge necessary to make an intelligent confession of the church's faith. It was also viewed as enabling responsible participation in the life of the congregation and preparing

persons, in most cases young people or adolescents, to pursue their vocations in the world. Answering the question on the theological basis of confirmation, Ayeh says it was focused on the uniqueness of God's saving act in Christ, available to individuals through faith, and the calling of all Christians to serve God in every sphere of their worldly existence.

5.3.1 A Custom of the Ancient Church

Outlining the history of Confirmation in the church, Prempeh states that prior to the Protestant Reformation, Roman Catholic and the Eastern Orthodox Christians celebrated seven sacraments, one of which is "Confirmation." The others are: Baptism, Holy Matrimony (Marriage), Eucharist (Holy Communion), Holy Orders (Ordination), Penance, and Extreme Unction (Anointing). At the Reformation, however, the Reformers accepted only two sacraments into Protestant Theology. These are Baptism and the Eucharist. Though Protestant Theology did not accept 'confirmation' as a sacrament, the Church, including the Presbyterian Church of Ghana, continues to practise it. Prempeh continues that, during the first centuries of the church's life, confirmation was part of a much broader catechumenal process, and its primary purpose was to shape the habits of thought, action, and feeling of those who were joining the church.

Calvin (1581: iv. 19:12, 13), the French theologian, humanist, pastor, and a leading figure in the Protestant Reformation, on his part, emphasized that children should profess their faith publicly before being able to partake in the communion. This is as a symptom of the conviction that all Christians, children no less than adults, should

be ready to give clear testimony to their faith (Reid 1954: 53). In early times it was the custom for the children of Christians after they had grown up to be brought before the Ministers to fulfil that duty which was required of those who as adults offered themselves for baptism. For the latter sat among the catechumens until, duly instructed in the mysteries of the faith, they were able to make confession of their faith before the Minister and congregation. Therefore, those who had been baptized as infants, because they had not then made confession of faith before the church, were at the end of their childhood or at the beginning of adolescence again presented by their parents, and were examined by the Minister according to the form of the catechism, which was then in definite form and in common use. But in order that these acts, which ought, by itself, to have been weighty and holy, might have more reverence and dignity, the ceremony of the laying on of hands was also added. Thus the youth, once his faith was approved, was dismissed with a solemn blessing (Calvin 1581: Book. iv. chapter. 19:12, 13).

5.3.2 The Age of Confirmation

Anyone may be confirmed who has been baptised, who is old enough to answer responsibly for themselves, and who has received appropriate preparation. Calvin (1581: iv. chapter 13) proposed the age of ten as the appropriate age for confirmation. According to him, “a child of ten would present himself to the church to declare his confession of faith would be examined in each article, and answer to each; if he were ignorant of anything or insufficiently understood it, he would be taught.” However, in the Presbyterian Church, as per the decision of the 2005

General Assembly, candidates who are 15 years or in J.H.S. 3, or whichever come first, are permitted to be confirmed.

5.3.3 Preparation and Presentation of Confirmation Candidates

In the Presbyterian Church of Ghana, the Confirmation service is organised yearly, usually during St. Stephen's day, which is 26th December. Observation from this research indicates that, the candidates are first informed by the Minister or the agent-in-charge of the date of the Sunday morning service at which they will be presented to the congregation. During announcements the Minister or the agent-in-charge informs the congregation of the confirmation educational programme. The Minister then addresses the candidates as follows:

...beloved in the Lord, we have heard of the great task of God in which Jesus Christ has brought us salvation. In Holy Baptism he has given us a pledge of his salvation. From us he expects that we joyfully confess him as our Lord in our daily life. Through the instruction [nurturing, education, fashioning] you are about to receive, the church desires to lead you on, so that you may take part in the Holy Supper and become Christ's witnesses by word and deed all the days of your life.

Then turning to the congregation the Minister or the agent-in-charge says: "I ask you, who are members of this congregation, to surround these young people with your prayers. Endeavour to be examples to them, so that you may fulfil the obligation which you have taken upon yourselves in the baptism." The Minister or the agent-in-charge then prays for the candidates. Ayeh maintains that the purpose of the confirmation classes is to ensure that those who are confirmed have a proper understanding of what it means to live as a disciple of Christ within the life of the Church. It is envisaged that this preparation will take the form of learning by heart

the Apostles Creed, the Ten Commandments, the Lord's Prayer, and some portions of the Catechism.

5.3.4 The Liturgy for the Confirmation Services

Liturgically, the order for service of confirmation is brief. There are several stages in the ceremony. It consists of:

- The Minister addresses the congregation and those to be confirmed, informing them of the purpose of the gathering. He reminds the candidates of the significance of the ceremony and call upon them to prepare themselves to declare their faith publically.
- A declaration by the candidates that they renew the 'solemn promise and vow' made on their behalf at their baptisms. A prayer by the congregation led by the Minister asking that God will strengthen those who are being confirmed with the Holy Spirit.
- Candidates vow the discipleship of the Lord Jesus Christ in the presence of the congregation.
- The Minister lays his/her hands upon the head of each of the candidates as they kneel, calling them by name and saying: "Name..., may our heavenly Father renew the gifts of His spirit in you, that you may be grounded in faith, fervent in His service and patient in affliction, and holding fast to the hope of eternal life; through Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen."
- Prayers led by the Minister in which it is asked that God's Fatherly hand will be over the candidates, that His Holy Spirit will ever be with them and that

they will be led by God to attain everlasting life is made. (P.C.G. Worship Book: Ordinances 2010: 44-61).

5.3.5 The Content of the Confirmation Education

The best method of teaching and learning as part of the confirmation process is to have a manual drafted for this exercise, containing and summarising in simple manner most of the doctrines of the church. According to Prempeh, originally, there were seventy-three of them to be committed into memory by candidates; to be recited to the Congregation on the day of confirmation, and most especially to be taught, explained and discussed with candidates as a means of preparing them for a matured Christian life. However, today the lessons have been reduced to between eleven and twenty-five depending on the choice and taste of the agent overseeing the station and handling the would-be candidates (Tekpetey 1995: iii; P.C.G. Worship Book, Ordinances 2010: 51-54).

5.3.6 Some Theological Themes in the Apostles' Creed

I believe in God the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth; and in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried; he descended into hell; the third day he arose again from the dead; he ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty, from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead. I believe in the Holy Ghost; the holy Catholic Church; the communion of saints; the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body; and the life everlasting. Amen.

According to Latourette (n.d: 135) 'the present form of what we know as 'The Apostles' Creed' probably did not exist before the sixth century.' The Creed has its roots in apostolic times, and embodies, with much fidelity, apostolic teaching. It will be seen immediately that it had an important place in the early church, when as yet

no creed but itself existed. According to legend, before setting out on their respective missions each of the 12 apostles contributed one clause

The oldest usage of the term 'Rule of Faith' (regula fidei), now commonly given to the Scriptures, has reference to this creed. It was the creed that could be appealed to as held by the church in all its great branches, and so as forming the test of catholicity. It was as resting on this creed that the church could be called 'Catholic and Apostolic.'(Calvin 1581: IV.)

The Apostles' Creed, it will be perceived, has no theological or metaphysical character. It is not only the oldest, but the simplest and least developed of all creeds. It is a simple enumeration, in order, of the great verities which the church was known to have held, and to have handed down from the beginning; which Scripture also taught. Originating from the baptismal confession, it naturally follows the Trinitarian order suggested by the customary formula for baptism, the one given by the last chapter of the Gospel according to Matthew 'baptising them in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost'(Latourette n.d.: 135).

Like most Christian creeds, it contains three paragraphs, one for each person of the Trinity. The first paragraph begins, 'I believe in God the Father Almighty'; the second begins, 'I believe in Jesus Christ'; the third begins, 'I believe in the Holy Spirit.' These three assertions correspond to the three questions that were addressed to candidates for baptism in the early church. In those few words, 'Father, Son and the Holy Spirit,' is succinctly summarised the heart of the Christian Gospel: 'God Who is father, Who once in history revealed Himself in one who at once God and

man and Who because of that continues to operate in the lives of men through His Spirit.’ In this is the uniqueness of Christianity (Latourette, n.d: 135).

The Apostles’ Creed functioned in many ways in the life of the church. For one thing, it was associated with entrance into the fellowship as a confession of faith for those to be baptized. In addition, catechetical instruction was often based on the major tenets of the creed. In time, a third use developed when the creed became a ‘rule of faith’ to give continuity to Christian teachings from place to place and to clearly separate the true faith from heretical deviations. Indeed, it may well have been that the main factor involved in adding clauses to the Old Roman Creed to develop the Apostles’ Creed was its usefulness in these varied ways in the life of the church. By the sixth or seventh century the creed had come to be accepted as a part of the official liturgy of the Western church. Likewise, it was used by devout individuals along with the Lord's Prayer as a part of their morning and evening devotions.

The Trinitarian nature of the Apostles’ Creed is immediately evident. Belief in ‘God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth’ is affirmed first. But the heart of the creed is the confession concerning ‘Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,’ with special attention given to the events surrounding his conception, birth, suffering, crucifixion, resurrection, ascension, exaltation, and coming judgment. The third section declares belief in the Holy Spirit. To this Trinitarian confession are added clauses related to the Holy Catholic Church, communion of saints, forgiveness of sins, resurrection of the body, and life everlasting. The Apostles’ Creed continues to be used today much as it was in the past: as a baptismal confession; as a teaching

outline; as a guard and guide against heresy; as a summarization of the faith; as an affirmation in worship. It has maintained in modern times its distinction as the most widely accepted and used creed among Christians.

5.3.7 Some Theological Themes in the Lord's Prayer

Our Father who art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done, On earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; And forgive us our debts, As we also have forgiven our debtors; And lead us not into temptation, But deliver us from evil.

Lord's Prayer or Our Father, the only formula of prayer attributed to Jesus Christ in the New Testament and the most widely used prayer of Christians. It appears in two forms: A longer form in Matthew 6:9-13 is a part of the teaching on prayer in the Sermon on the Mount; a shorter form in Luke 11:2-4 is given as a response to the disciples' request, 'Lord, teach us to pray.'

The prayer consists of an introduction and seven petitions in the Matthew version, which seems to be a liturgical expansion of the original utterance of Christ. The Matthaean form, which has been employed liturgically since very early times, is:

A closing doxology, 'For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory,' was added to the prayer in ancient times, although it does not appear in most manuscripts of the Bible and is only a footnote in the Revised Standard Version. Its incorporation into the Lord's Prayer as early as the 1st century is attested by the version of the prayer in the *Didache*, a brief manual of instruction for converts to Christianity. Many Protestants ordinarily recite the doxology as part of the Lord's Prayer; Roman

Catholics incorporate it into the recitation of the prayer at Mass, but generally do not use it in private recitation.

The seven petitions of the prayer are modelled on the Psalms. The first three petitions are concerned with the glorification of God, and the last four are requests for divine assistance to humankind. The prayer reflects a community based on an eschatological hope, that is, a community praying for the completion of God's final plan. The petitions concerning forgiveness, temptation, and deliverance from evil are, in fact, best understood in relation to the end times. The prayer is actually a synthesis of the Christian faith; its balanced structure makes it an expression of the biblical hierarchy of values: first the things of God, then human concerns. After baptism, the Lord's Prayer is the best-known bond of unity among Christians of every tradition and is always recited in ecumenical gatherings.

5.4 The Contemporary Situation

It has already been mentioned in section 1.9 above that current socio-economic, cultural and political events, are presenting real challenges to the Christian education ministry of the Church in Ghana, more especially where majority of the people affected are the youth in the country. These contemporary and emerging issues; homosexuality, lesbianism, prostitution, environmental degradation, poverty, drug use and addiction, indiscipline, corruption, violence against women, child trafficking, conflicts, HIV and AIDS, cyber crimes, among many such other, are all challenging the theology of the Church, thereby questioning the nurturing activities of the

Church. It seems the Church's nurturing activities are not giving attention where it ought to.

In our contemporary Ghanaian situation, social deviance and indiscipline with its attendant religious intolerance are fast becoming the order of the day. In the words of Nziramasanga (1992: 86) this craving for social deviance decries the necessity and importance of Christian education for Africa [and Ghana]. He quotes the President of Zimbabwe, His Excellence R. G. Mugabe as saying among others that the Christian churches and schools are to teach character, responsibility and restraint to the children. This call by President Mugabe has been the ultimate objective of every indigenous pattern of nurturing. Responses from respondents show that the Akan aims at fashioning the younger generation to becoming responsible adult in the future, through the various patterns enumerated earlier on in the discussion. Through the various moments and resources, the Akan expect the younger generation to develop good moral values that will make him/her fit into the society. Such a person is seen as a well-nurtured person. This is not to say that the Church has not been doing its work, but could as well adopt some of the indigenous principles into her nurturing activities.

Another agent for teaching that President Mugabe mentions is that of the regular school. Gone are the days where the Churches were in total control of the mission schools in Ghana. During those days, Christian education was being offered in schools; however, due to the Government takeover (of these schools) in the late 1970s, the climate has changed. Christian education is no more being given in schools. The Christian denomination could no longer monopolise education as the

case was before, and this is having a negative impact on the nurturing activities of the church. The only avenue where nurturing is taking place is through the various ministries of the church. Yet, most, if not all, of these patterns, according to Prempeh in an interview, do not really touch the core of the development of the Ghanaian personality. To him, there is the need to let the church take a second look at the content of the confirmation lessons to include some aspects of indigenous values, so that those going through the catechetical training would become complete in their nurturing. Odamtten (1996: 8) insists that with the impact of western civilisation, and especially its science and technological advancement, political, economic, and social ideas, things are changing tremendously and fast too. According to him, the indigenous educational system (patterns and their values) are being seriously challenged. Modernity does not mean that we should forget our values.

5.5 Conclusion

It has been ascertained in this research report that the P.C.G. has been nurturing the youth through the pattern of Confirmation education over the years. The research believes that Youth nurturing must not be just a 'programme' put on by the Church on behalf of the Youth. Rather, it must be the Church living its life and doing its work involving both youth and adults. It must be an expression of the witnessing community at work, and partaking in the true nature of the church. This life means involvement in the worship and fellowship of the Christian community and share opportunity for witness, mission, service and the deepening of the personal life in educational groups, working groups, small informal groups, home life, civil life, and activities beyond the local community.

CHAPTER 6

PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

6.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the data, and discusses the findings which were gathered through field observations, one-on-one interview and designed questionnaires to some group of people in the study area; based on the research question set out in this research. These were:

- e. to ascertain some educational moments in the Akan indigenous settings,
- f. to analyse some of the resources for nurturing in Akan tradition,
- g. to establish some affinities of youth nurturing in Akan indigenous tradition and that of the Presbyterian Church of Ghana,
- h. And lastly to discuss some indigenous Akan nurturing values that could be useful in communicating the Christian faith in the Presbyterian Church of Ghana.

6.1 Presentation of Findings

As indicated in the methodology in section 1.5 above, self-administered questionnaires, one-on-one field interviews, personal observations were basically employed to gather the primary data on the field. The responses are based on the point of view and explanations of respondents.

A total of two hundred (200) questionnaires were administered, and one hundred and fifty (150) were completed and returned. Out of the total number fifty (50) respondents were males, whiles hundred (100) respondents were females. In addition, sixty (60) respondents were in the Youth age group (15 – 29); forty-seven (47) respondents were in the Young Adult age group (30 – 29); whiles forty-three (43) representing were Adults of 40 years and above. Stretching it further, within the Youth age group, twenty (20) respondents were male, whilst forty (40) of the respondents were female. With the Young Adults age group, twelve (12) respondents were male, with thirty-five (35) of the respondents being female. In the Adult group, that is forty (40) years and above, eighteen (18) respondents were male with twenty-five (25) respondents being female.

6.2 Some Educational Moments in Indigenous Akan Tradition

To the question of educational moments in Akan Tradition, forty-five (45) respondents from Manhyia indicated that, as far as youth nurturing is concerned, *Bragro*, Funerals, and Festivals are some of the moments of nurturing in Akan Culture. Thirty (30) respondents from Woarakose also stated *Bragro*, Marriage and Funerals as moments of nurturing. Twenty-seven (27) respondents from Kwahu-Bokuruwa went further to state that: Naming Ceremonies, the celebrations of Marriages, and Confinements, as some of the moments of nurturing. Fifty-seven (57) respondents maintain that the growth of the individual is marked by stages; birth, puberty, marriage, death and life after death. According to the thirty-six (36) respondents from Manhyia and Woarakose, there are rites and ceremonies for birth,

puberty, marriage and death. We will examine some of the indigenous educational moments in the following section.

6.2.1 Celebrating *Bragro* as a Pattern of Nurturing

Asked whether respondents have gone through the *Bragro* ceremony, thirty-four (34) out of hundred (100) respondents from Woarakose responded in the positive. Ababio in an interview explains that most Akan, especially the Asante and Bono perform the *Bragro* or *Brapue* for their daughters. A girl who is being initiated is called *Brani* or *Sakyima* (neophyte).

On the question of why the focus of *Bragro* seems to be only on the girl-child, twenty (20) respondents from Manhyia reveal that women are considered as the custodians of the family, so if they are properly nurtured they would in turn take care of the family as mothers, wives, and elders of the community. Fifty (50) respondents from Woarakose on their part assert that in Akan culture women represent the beauty, purity and dignity of the society and must be protected from any in famous activities by our traditional laws and regulations. Nana Biraso in an interview states that the most lasting impressions about life and the character of children are built during their early and formative years, which they spend mostly with their mothers. In an interview with Ababio, he notes that in the olden days before a boy would complete ‘standard 7’ (Middle School Form 4), the father would “sit him down” to advice him against certain social vices; bad company, drinking, illicit sexual activities, smoking, and so on. After the advice, they are given role models that is, personalities of good repute to mentor them. That was how boys were initiated in Akan culture.

On the question of how respondents understand *Bragro*, one hundred and five (105) respondents, from Woarakose, Kwahu-Bokuruwa, and Manhyia, say it is an initiation rites performed for girls on reaching puberty. Average age is between fourteen and sixteen (14 -16), or the age when they first menstruate. To the question as to how the *Bragro* process starts, Nana Gyamfua in an interview explains that as soon as a parent knows of her daughter's first menstruation, the girl is presented to the queenmother who by some physical examination ensures that the girl is not pregnant. The family of the girl provides all the necessary items such as, food stuffs, money, chicken, eggs, and so on, for the ceremony. The week long ceremony usually starts on a *Dwoda* that is on Monday. In Akan philosophy Monday is seen as the most *Dwo* 'peaceful' *da* 'day' of the week. Relatives, friends, with *Brannwom* (puberty songs) groups are invited. The researcher personally observed that on the day of the actual ceremony, which is on the Saturday, the initiation is announced early in the morning by the mother. She beats the metal part of a hoe or an old pan with a stick to announce the day. Immediately after the announcement the people assemble on the initiate's compound and sing *Brannwom* 'puberty songs' to begin the ceremony.

6.2.2 Rites in *Bragro*

It is apposite at this stage to examine into details the rites and values of *Bragro*, as observed by the researcher. The researcher's personal observation from the field at Woarakose near Kumasi shows that the first rite for the day is the "enstoolment" which is performed by an old woman who has many children. She is placed on a stool three times, remaining on it the third time. The stool is usually placed on a mat covered with a blanket or *kente* cloth. A brass basin called *Yaawa* is filled with water

containing *Adwera* or *Odwen-Ahaban* (leaves of *Odwen*) with an egg and a dry okro fruit is placed beside the girl. According to Gyamfua, the Queenmother of Woarakose, a woman sits beside the *Yaawa* and when gifts in the form of coins are put in the *Yaawa*, this woman sprinkles water with the *adwera* or *odwen* on the girl. She explains to the researcher that:

...the sprinkling of this water will protect her from evil spirits that may make her barren. Women sing and move around the girl. There is a lot of jubilation and merry-making. Libation is poured with palm wine or schnapps to thank the gods and the ancestors for looking after the girl up to this puberty age. She is presented with gifts by parents, relatives, and friends. All gifts presented are displayed around her.

The next rite is the *ti-yi* (hair cutting). Here, Gyamfua holds that, 'the initiate is given a special hair cut and the father pays some money for it. This money serves as capital for the girl. The finger and toe nails are cut and her hair is shaped into traditional *Dansinkran*' (women's traditional hair style in Akan). Maame Bea, former *Brani* (an old candidate of *Bragro*) tells the researcher that during her initiation, she was dressed in a new white cloth with her breasts exposed. Again, she was decorated with beads around the neck, wrist, and ankles.

The next stage is the ritual bath which takes place in a stream or a river. Gyamfua further explains that where there is no stream or river, water can be put in a *Yaawa* for the same purpose. Maame Bea informs us that on that occasion her head (including the face) was covered with cloth and she was carried to the stream for what she was told to be 'ritual bath.' Nana Gyamfua explains that on arrival, the officiating woman removes the cloth and dips the girl into the stream three times informing the spirits of the water of their presence and purpose. The *Brani* (neophyte) is then seated on a stool and lime is squeezed so that the juice drops on her head. The following items, *ε t4* (mashed yam), an egg, and three leaves of

edwono tree are thrown into the stream to thank the spirits for a successful ‘ritual bath.’

Gyamfua, the *Ɔbapanyin* of Woarakose notes that, in some Akan communities, parts of the finger and toe nails together with some cut hair are buried at the river bank. The actual ritual bath is done by about four women. They use a new local sponge, soap, and lime juice to bathe her. After bathing, the *Brani* is dressed in a rich *Kente* cloth with a pair of new *Ahenema* (native sandals) to match. Her *dansinkran* hair style is re-shaped nicely. She is carried home under a beautiful umbrella like a queen amidst singing of *Bragro* songs. When they get home, she is seated on a stool for the *anoka* (eating ceremony). The interview informed the researcher that this is the dedication ceremony. The food items for this ceremony are boiled eggs, *ε t4*, elephant skin, banana, and roasted groundnuts. Libation is poured and each of the food items is put into her mouth for her to taste it. Each food tasted is followed by a prayer, e.g., when the elephant skin is tasted, the officiating woman prays, saying: ‘May the elephant give you her womb so that you bear many children.’ The initiate’s head is then covered with a cloth and a boiled egg is put into her mouth. She is forbidden to bite or chew it. She has to swallow the whole egg. She is given *et4* and she does the same thing with it. It is believed that biting or chewing those food items will make her barren.

The next ceremony is a great moment for children. Personal observation by the researcher indicates that the *Brani* holds the hands of two children (a boy and a girl) according to Gyamfua, and then let’s go their hands for them to rush towards a big bowl full of *et4* and eggs. As soon as the two touch the food, all the other children

around rush to scramble for it. While the children are scrambling for the food, the *Brani* is blindfolded. She is asked to touch two of the children. It is believed that if she is able to touch a boy and a girl she will have children of both sexes. All this time, the initiate has not eaten; therefore, she invites a few of her friends and eats a good meal with them. There is festivity and merry-making afterwards.

With the feasting over, they all assemble to celebrate the day's ceremony with a special dance. The *Bragro* sings drum, and all dance. As soon as the initiate takes the floor all others leave the floor. She dances with two or three girls and while dancing she shakes hands to thank all the people present. Her invited friends are left behind to serve her for six days. During this period they have some evening activities which include storytelling and other games for girls. They also learn traditional dances and songs learn to play the *Dondo* (the armpit drum) and any traditional instrument meant for women. The Sunday of the initiation week is *Nnaase* (Thanksgiving Day). The initiate dresses gorgeously. Her outfit consists of *Kente*, a gold chain, a pair of native sandals, attractive beads and an umbrella. All those who will accompany her also put on beautiful clothes. They go round to thank all those who helped to make her initiation ceremony a success.

6.2.3 *Kyiribra* (Anathema of *Bragro*)

On the question on 'the forbidden' of *Bragro*, thirty (30) respondents, hold that if a girl becomes pregnant without going through the *Bragro* initiation rites she is banished from the community. The girl and her male partner are exiled from the community and sent to an uninhabited locality till the girl gives birth. Their families

are summoned to the palace and made to pay some fine to pacify the community. Whiles seventy (70) respondents, mostly in the Youth and Young Adult age group in Accra, reported having heard about it but have very little information on *Kyiribra*.

In his estimation, Sarpong (1977: 48) says that *Kyiribra* (from two words *kyiri*: ‘to hate’ and *bra*: ‘life,’ ‘menses’) is the offence which a girl, with her accomplice, commits by ‘taking-seed’ before the performance of nobility [puberty] rites. Again it often refers to the ceremony that is performed to ward off the evil repercussions of the sinful act. Sharing his view on this subject, Rattray (1927: 74) reports that any laxity of morals prior to reaching puberty was commonly punished by death or expulsion from the abusua of both the guilty parties. If a man had sexual intercourse with a young girl prior to the appearance of her first period it was considered as an offence for which the whole community would suffer.

Some Traditional Leaders from Manhyia and Woarakose further revealed that in traditional law no woman is allowed to get married without having gone through the puberty rites and every young woman must remain a virgin prior to this. These laws ensure that young women grow up disciplined enough to control their sexuality and to prevent them from premature motherhood and unwanted and unplanned for babies. These laws are so important that any woman who becomes pregnant or breaks her virginity before the rites are performed is sometimes ostracized together with the man responsible for it. Akyamfuo, in the interview, alludes to this by sayings that the *kyiribra* is abhorrence to society. In his words:

...she had disgraced her parents, telling the world that they did not bring her up properly and if even they did, she did not respect them and refuse to listen to them; She had demonstrated to the world that she is a flirt; She had concealed her menstruation and through that had

desecrated the holy place of the land; She had also desecrated the deities of the land; No man would marry her in the future. On top of that, a heavy fine is imposed on the guilty party after which purification rites are performed to rid the society of the negative repercussions of their actions. The disgrace attached to the action and the bad omen that may follow was deterrent to the youth in the olden days therefore they shunned sex and that prevented teenage pregnancies.

6.2.4 Factors Mitigating the Practice of *Bragro*

On the question of why some people reject *Bragro*, forty (40) respondents from Woarakose and Kwahu-Bokuruwa, gave the following reasons: that the introduction of formal education has devalued the practice as being associated with idol worship; and people are caught up with urbanisation and modernity. On the question of factors mitigating the practice of *Bragro* in our communities, Nana Akyamfuo, in the interview states that with the introduction of Christianity, formal education and urbanisation, the performance of puberty rites and ceremony seem to die a natural death. Most Christian Churches think the performance is associated with idol worship and do not encourage their members to indulge in the practice. On this same question, hundred (100) respondents from Accra and Kumasi say that girls who are lucky to have higher education also think it is demeaning to expose their breasts in public revealing their nakedness and therefore they reject proposals by their parents to subject them to puberty rites ceremony.

One hundred and four (104) respondents in total explain that urbanisation has also contributed to the rejection of the rites and ceremony attached to *Bragro*. This is because urbanisation has brought people from different ethnic groups into other towns other than their own and therefore natives cannot impose local rites on strangers from other ethnic groups living in the town. According to Sarpong (1977:

92-98) this has led to a loose society where all rites are ignored and the resultant effect being teenage pregnancy as well as the abundance of street boys and girls with its attendant negative consequences.

6.3 Marriage

Thirty-five (35) respondents from Kwahu-Bokuruwa, and Woarakose mentioned the institution of marriage as one of the moments of nurturing in Akan culture. Respondents hold that the institution of marriage is one of the pillars on which the Akan culture rests. Nana Acheampong, the *Ankobeahene* of Kwahu-Bokuruwa in an interview says that, marriage binds families together, and every man or woman who reaches adulthood is expected to marry and bear children for the family. He asserts that marriage is considered so important that, if a person is not married that individual is considered as not being matured. It is also important that during *Bragro*, these young people are educated in matters of sex, marriage, and family life and are thus made aware of the responsibilities of adulthood (Gyekye 1996: 76). Nana Acheampong further argues that before entering into marriage, young people must know what is expected of them in terms of their roles in a marriage relationship. On the question of the types of marriage in Akan tradition, seventy-eight (78) respondents from Manhyia, Kwahu-Bokuruwa and Woarakose categorise types of marriages as; *asiwa* (betrothal), *kunawade1* (widowhood), *mpenawade1* (concubinage), *ayet1* (replacement), *awowawade1* (debt substitution) and proper *awadeε* (marriages).

6.4 Funeral Celebrations

Respondents also mentioned the observance of funerals as one of the indigenous educational moment in Akan tradition. The Akan places great emphasis on the funeral celebrations of their dead relatives because the celebrations are done to honour them. Respondents explained that when an Akan dies, there is a great deal of music, drumming and dancing. Nana Agyei Akyamfuo, a Senior Linguist from Manhyia-Kumasi, in an interview acknowledges that funerals draw attention to the social status of the departed. This is to enable the living to learn from the deeds of the departed.

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6.5 Mentoring

On the question of the nurturing values in mentorship, Biraso states that it is another means of nurturing younger people to take up leadership position in the future. For example the current occupant of the Golden Stool, Otumfuo Osei Tutu II was sent to his uncle at *Sefwi Wiawso* in the Western Region to be mentored by his uncle, the *Sefwi Wiawso manhene*, at the age of five, to be nurtured, to learn how to become a future King of Asante. 'Living in the court of the palace, learning the intricacies that the traditional aspects of life in the palace entail, and at the same time going to school' (Odotei and Hagan 2003: 152-153). Similarly in the Bible, Jesus mentored his disciples for three years. He taught, nurtured, educated, and trained them through observation and direct contact. As an indigenous moment of education, mentoring provides the means for nurturing, by a qualified and matured adult professional, to become a person of value for the society.

6.6 Confinement

For confinement Biraso again explains that it is another moment of indigenous education in Akan tradition. The Akan rule is that a king-elect is normally outdoored after 40 days in confinement. During confinement the king-elect is taken through the basics of being a king. It is a period of spiritual purification and fortification, and also for teaching him the social and behavioural graces of his office. He is taught the history, customs, and constitution. Others are music, dance, how to walk, speak and govern the people in a way befitting a King (Odotei and Hagan 2003: 19, 36).

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6.7 Some of the Resources for nurturing in Akan Tradition

On the question of the resources for indigenous Akan nurturing, twenty (20) respondents from Woorakose mentioned Black Stools, Story-Telling and the use of Folktales. Respondents with royal background from Manhyia also listed the Golden and Black Stools, Traditional Drumming, Music and Dance, Proverbs and Wise Sayings as indigenous resources. Respondents from Kwahu-Bokuruwa stated Traditional Adinkra Symbols, the use of Colours, and celebration of Festivals, as some of the indigenous resources for nurturing. All these resources serve as essential tools for the transfer of indigenous knowledge, values and morals to the younger generation in Akan tradition.

6.7.1 Black Stools

Fifty-six (56) respondents from Manhyia say that among the Akan, The Golden Stool, and the Black stool are not only symbols of authority, but also the symbol of a people's unity and continuity. It is a major symbol which acts as both social contract

document and history book of the period of the reign of a past chief. In an interview, Nana Abrafi reveals that the forefathers, who at that time, had not developed the art of writing, gave special significance to their culture and rituals such as dolls, stools, and other valuable objects by which they chronicled their early history, practices and experiences for posterity.

6.7.3 Symbols

On the question of whether symbols have some pedagogical values, Nana Agyei Ababio II, the *Gyasihene* of Woarakose near Kumasi, the Akan believes in symbolic gestures and symbols. Every symbol has a meaning in Akan tradition. The Akan therefore engages in what is termed visual aid approach to learning. For instance, the linguist staffs, particularly the golden ones which often bear symbolic tops, as well as *Adinkra* Cloth designs, may be representations of a maxim or a proverb or descriptive qualities of a creature. Most of these emblematic traditional objects are used on particular occasions, to convey encoded messages.

Forty (40) respondents confirmed that Colours have pedagogical values in Akan societies. According to Nana Kese, the *Krontihene* of Woarakose near Kumasi, the Akan will use gold or yellow to represent royalty, continuous life, prosperity, glory, maturity, and such novel situations. White colours go for purity, joy, victory; whereas black and red colours represent death, pain, and other agonising moments.

6.7.3 Dance/Music/Drumming

For other indigenous pedagogical resources forty (40) respondents from Kwahu-Bokuruwa mention dance, music and the use of drums. The respondents explained that in indigenous Akan culture, traditional music is one of the educational resources for nurturing people. Gyamfua, in an interview says that, the Akan regard music, dance, and drumming as an integral part of human life. She explains that like all the Akan States every aspect of life has its music accompaniment. Indigenous music permeates religious activities, social and political lives of the people. Respondents Bokuruwa confirmed that musical ensembles such as: *donno*, *petia*, *apentemma*, *gyamadudu*, *f4nt4mfr4m*, *atumpan*, *mpintin*, *ntahara*, to mention a few, are usually used during various social, religious, cultural and other ceremonies.

Nana Acheampong, in an interview discloses that, in the olden days when there were no radios, the pair of talking drums was used to send messages to the people. Whatever messages the King wanted to send across was sent through the *atumpan* (the talking drums). He further reveals that: “when there was fire outbreak in a town or in the farms, people were summoned with the *atumpan* to go and quench the fire. Acheampong, in an interview says for example that “the *F4nt4mfr4m* which is a collection of different drums urged the Akan society to be united always because there is progress in where unity there.”

6.7.4 Celebration of Festivals

To the question whether a festival is an indigenous resource for nurturing, forty (40) respondents from Manhyia explain that *Afahye* or festivals are annual customs held in connection with the remembrance of historic occasion such as thanking *Nyame* for a good harvest or time to hoot at hunger, and other memorable events.

6.7.5 Proverbs and Wise Sayings

As to the question of whether proverbs and wise sayings are resource for indigenous nurturing, fifty-eight (58) respondents from Manhyia and Kwahu-Bokuruwa mention Proverbs and Wise Sayings. as additional indigenous resources for nurturing in Akan culture. Proverbs may be regarded as a well thought through statements. The respondents from Manhyia and Kwahu-Bokuruwa state that most Akan narratives, proverbs, riddles, drama, and wise sayings all reflect the experiences of the people and it is a way by which knowledge is transferred. Ababio in an interview says that “the school children in his community [Worakose] have started learning proverbs in schools. This is to enable them understand the Akan idioms and expressions.”

6.7.6 The Use of Folk Tales

To the question of whether folk tales have any nurturing values twenty-five (25) respondents from Manhyia and Kwahu-Bokuruwa mention the use of folk tales, or *Anansesem*, as one of the indigenous resources for nurturing in Akan culture. Nana Kese, in an interview, affirms that *Anansesem* (Kwaku Ananse Stories) are told by parents and older brothers and sisters to young children to illustrate disasters that can result from wrong-doing, and so frighten them from committing such acts. The tales are direct replicas of the fundamental ways of life in the society couched in indirect

forms to avoid face threatening. He adds that there are also aspects of language learning involving lexicon, proverbs, and poetry.

6.8 Some Affinities between Indigenous Akan patterns and Christian nurturing

Answering the question on the affinity of Akan indigenous nurturing patterns with that of Christian nurturing, respondents mention that it is seen in the concept of man. The basic concept of human being is more or less the same among all the ethnic and religious groups in Ghana. The human being is seen as God's creation and is believed to be a biological as well as a spiritual being. He is made up of three parts; spirit, soul and body. In bringing up the individual, it is envisaged that every aspect of the person's being will be catered for and nurtured. Education therefore, ought to take the form of aiding, or fashioning, or nurturing, or teaching the personality to developing the totality of the whole being. This is to enable the individual to live a good life within the *abusua*, either in the traditional setting or in the environment of the church. As a member of the *abusua*, the person's nurturing is the concern of all (Odamtten 1996:2). This basic concept of man must therefore become the underlying foundation unto which every educational policy could be constructed. The concept of man becomes the meeting place of Akan indigenous pattern and Christian educational pattern as far as nurturing of youth is concerned.

Another affinity between Akan indigenous patterns of nurturing and that of Christian education is seen in their methodology. Some respondents quoted the Bible saying "...the reverent and worshipful fear of the Lord is the beginning and the principal

and choice part of knowledge [its starting point and its essence]; but fools despise skilful and godly Wisdom, instruction, and discipline” (Proverb 1: 7; Amp). Respondents explained that this proverb of King Solomon states the genuine source of knowledge, wisdom, and instruction and sets us on the path of education-seeking. According to Nziramasanga (1992: 83), wisdom and knowledge-seeking are the basic purpose of all forms of education but the fear of the Supreme Being (Lord) remains a unique element of every education policy. While Solomon’s pronouncement belongs to the period before Christ, Jesus himself reaffirmed the need for Christian education in the Great Commission “...all authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples [students, learners, and neophyte] of all the nations...teaching [educating, fashioning, instructing, aiding, nurturing] them to observe all things that I have commanded you...” (Matt 28: 18-20, NKJV).

Throughout his public ministry, Jesus, the historically acknowledged greatest Teacher or Educator of all time, underlines the necessity of Christian nurturing or education. All through the Gospel, we learn of his work of healing and teaching. We see Jesus at 12 years old in a symposium in the Jerusalem temple with elders; we see Him in individual and small group seminars with Nichodemus and the twelve disciples [students]. While the topic during these educational encounters varied with personal interests, the law, religious traditions, culture, and history, they centred on His educational concerns for the individual human beings and his spiritual assurance (also see Nziramasanga 1992: 84). This system of nurturing has affinity within the Akan indigenous patterns of nurturing. Respondents illustrate that to the Akan a person who is said to be matured is the one who has been nurtured [or disciplined] in

the ethos of the tradition as s/he is growing up. Such a person has been schooled, instructed, educated, nurtured, fashioned, or aided in the knowledge and values of the tradition. The objective is to enable the disciple, neophyte or the student to acquire skills, wisdom, knowledge, experience to become what the society expects from him/her. Individuals who do not go through these nurturing processes are considered as 'unfit' or 'immature,' in spite of whatever age the person may be. In some extreme cases, such people are banished from the community.

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Ghanaian Christian educators should aim at promoting and preserving the indigenous knowledge, values and morals of the Ghanaian society. The concern is that it may seem as if the colonialist or the early missionary mentality is still very much alive in societies that were once colonised. There is still a widely held view that anything associated with culture and hereditary values is 'pagan' and thus backward as reflected by the vast number of foreign missionaries and even some urban population who feel embarrassed to associate themselves with their own cultural background. It is apt for the current generation to recognise this deeply rooted mentality as the product of a particular time and of specific policies in human history, and to acknowledge the limitations it imposes on development as a people of God with a specific culture, and the devastating effect on our Ghanaian indigenous values and moral milieu.

The growing trend of globalisation and modernisation are encouraging thousands to abandon their indigenous values, in the belief that new knowledge and new opportunities are found in modern technologies. Yet the realities of current socio-politico-economic and cultural challenges testify that this is not entirely the case. The

enormity of the threat posed by the breakup of indigenous values and moral systems have not yet been fully realised by many African and Ghanaian scholars although it has always been obvious to traditional leaders. A blend of indigenous moral values and knowledge will produce the needed context for socio-religio-cultural development. These indigenous values and knowledge systems provide codes of conduct that address all aspects of the community life. When these things are in place they keep the society in equilibrium.

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It has been stated that the greatest threat to the social stability of the African continent is the gradual erosion of indigenous values and knowledge and the accompanying destruction of natural wealth, such as plants, animals, insects, soils, clean environment, and human cultural wealth, such as songs, proverbs, folklore, respect for human life and authority as well as social cooperation. This robs people of their ability to respond to social as well as cultural change, both by removing the resource base, and by attacking the foundations of specific human identity. Every educational policy, be it religious or secular, must be familiar to the people it is intended for. Such patterns must be adoptable to the local environment. The researcher agrees with Senge (1990:31) in saying that every Christian educational policy should therefore aim at incorporating all the processes of raising up people especially the young ones into adulthood, and drawing out or developing their potential to contribute to the church and society that are traditionally found in their respective cultural environment

6.9 Interpretation and Discussion of Findings

This section interprets and discusses the various findings from the data from both the primary and the secondary sources.

6.9.1 The Concept of the Akan Life Cycle

In Akan philosophy, each person is expected to grow or develop to his/ her fullest potential, and indigenous education, which began when the child was in the womb, continues throughout the life of the person. Even after death, when the individual enters the land of the ancestors, who are believed to speak a bilingual language, education continues because the new arrival has to learn the language spoken in the land of the spirits (Opoku 1998: 48).

In Akan Culture, the growth of the individual is marked by stages; birth, puberty, marriage, death and life after death. After birth, the baby grows through the puberty stage into a young adult and then to adulthood. The adult then marries, brings forth children, grows old, and dies. After death, the individual moves into the next world. Some religious rites and ceremonies are performed for each stage. After birth, the baby grows through the puberty stage into a young adult and then to adulthood. The adult then marries, brings forth children, grows old, and dies. After death, the individual moves into the next world. Some religious rites and ceremonies are performed for each stage.

6.9.2 Educational Values in the Naming Ceremony

Findings from the research give credence to the fact that the naming ceremony signifies the incorporation of the child into the society, and also the public acknowledgement of fatherhood which thereafter makes the father responsible for the child. A name given to the child is also a mark of identity through which the society is able to identify the tribe of the child. Again, it is a mark of correction. People associated with the child's family are able to correct the child when growing up from doing anything untoward. Naming ceremonies are also important because they mark the beginning of the laying of the foundation for good morals and values such as truthfulness. Even though the child cannot talk and cannot understand whatever goes on around, the baby is taught to be truthful and this is seen in the "water and the wine or gin" given to him/her to taste. The baby is also named after someone or an ancestor with good character, and it is expected that when the baby grows, s/he will be like the person named after. Among some Akan, a cutlass is placed in the hand of a male child and a broom in the hand of a female child or a basket is placed over her for a few seconds. The purpose of this rite is to introduce the child to hard work.

6.9.3 Educational Values in the Various Rites of *Bragro*

In addition to all the resources and moments of nurturing, the institution of *Bragro* in Akan tradition has been a major resource for nurturing the younger generation especially among the girls, as mention by some respondents. In Akan culture, every act portrays one form of meaning or the other, and *Bragro*, as personally witnessed by the researcher, carries with it several rites. The researcher observes that there are three basic rites in the *Bragro* ceremony after personally observing the ceremony at

Worakose; Purification, Transformation and Fertility. Purification rites arose from the Akan concept of 'blood.' In Akan world view a woman is defiled by her menstrual state. Menstruating women were expected to live outside the house during the day: they cooked their food outside and were not allowed to handle the food for the household. The adolescent girl was as now required to undergo purification rites owing to the new state. Bathing in the river is to bring her into a new state of being. The transformation rites are closely connected with the purification rites and consist of shaving, dressing of the hair, oiling of the skin and adornment of the body. This is to transform her into a beautiful lady for all to admire.

The fertility rites on the other hand consist of a number of symbolic acts, such as in the Akan tradition, swallowing a hardboiled egg whole, surrounding the adolescent with little children throughout the celebration. This is to make the girl fertile when she marries. An egg in Akan culture signifies life and the girl is not supposed to chew the egg, else she would be 'chewing' her own children. Again, the girl being surrounded by children indicates that the adolescent is supposed to bring forth many children. Furthermore, the officiating old woman is also a symbol of fertility; for it is thought that old women send children to their daughters and grand-daughters from the unseen world. Elements symbolic of fertility and prosperity are also placed in front of the girl. There is a great concern for fertility because in Akan culture barrenness is considered disgraceful and marriages get broken on that count.

A ball of Ito 'mashed yam' is placed three times on her mouth and thrown out each time for the ancestors to eat to in sympathy bear witness to the fact that their granddaughter is of age. The stick in her mouth is to prevent her from talking to

people because she is not supposed to talk during the ceremony. The significance is that she will know when to talk and when not to talk, for women are expected to keep secrets. The stick is designed and marked beautifully to show that the girl should give birth to beautiful children in the future.

Moreover there is a great desire for the continuation of lines of descent, for increase in the membership of the kinship group. The occasion is also seen as a festival which proclaimed that the girl has come of age and to also announce her virginity. As part of the ceremony, the young girl is dressed (including the exposure of the breast) in a manner to highlight her physical beauty and physical maturity. This is an advertisement of her sexual purity. From then forward, her hand could be asked for in marriage if she is not already betrothed to a man. There is nothing a parent could wish for her daughter than a good marriage and a fruitful womb.

If these are the features of the *Bragro* rite, then what stops the church, and Christian educators within the P.C.G. from doing same for our girls who are going through the confirmation classes and do not have that kind of opportunity they would have had from the traditional settings, by incorporating these very important elements into the confirmation curriculum. By expanding the curriculum to including some of these values, instead of restricting the candidates to mere reproduction of some Biblical passages which they do not even neither comprehend nor appropriate. By so doing the candidates will benefit from both angles, which are; by preparing them in the faith and also by preparing them for society, and their world in which they live.

Despite the rejection of the ceremony by some people, the research believes that there are some valuable lessons in the practice which are still relevant in our contemporary situation. Every Akan indigenous cultural practice, beliefs and institutions have covert values, morals and important principles necessary for nurturing the younger generation, and *Bragro* is no exception (Gyekye 1996: xiii). Some of the core values associated with *Bragro* as gathered from the data are as follows

- i. a good husband is assured for the girl,
- ii. there is proper training on family life,
- iii. by means of *Bragro*, the girl learns common skills,
- iv. it is a preventive measure for girls to be preserved,

Those who don't go through bring disgrace to themselves, their families and the community. To bring dignity to the person, family and community it was necessary to pass through the rites. The girls are nurtured to know how to keep hygiene and maintain their homes. Girls who have pre-mature sex will not be allowed to have the rite. The rite serves as a deterrent of boys/men who would just go in for sex before marriage. When caught, the punishment is banishment from the community of both culprits, to show how seriously they value chastity in the society.

Data from the field give credence to the fact that the obvious reason for the introduction of these rites of passage and ceremony was to curb sexual immorality. The elders realised that most of the girls in the Akan traditional systems were becoming pregnant during the adolescent ages without being married. They therefore thought it wise to introduce this ceremony that would be compulsory for every

adolescent girl in Akan society. What this ceremony ensured was that the girl would protect her virginity into marriage. With unplanned pregnancy already avoided, if she fell to a faithful husband, and both husband and wife continued in faithfulness, some of the societal problems, like sexually transmitted diseases, unwanted pregnancy, street-children, and even HIV and AIDS, would have no ground to foster.

From the data compiled, the institution of *Bragro* contributes towards the maintenance of established morality. Every girl looks forward to such a day in her life, the presents she would receive on the occasion, she would be served as a 'queen-mother' by her peers, the festive atmosphere, the prestige and the honour of being served by other girls, and so on, would not want to be deprived of this privilege. Sarpong goes on to say that a good girl is one who greets people, who is not gloomy but keeps a cheerful countenance when talking to elders, and such like shows of good-grooming. The performance of the rites therefore becomes a reward to such good manners. The rites act as an incentive to the development of these virtues. **The Akan believe that they need properly trained mothers with good morals to bring up good children in the society. It is therefore little wonder that the initiation of women into adulthood is given more prominence in the Akan society than that of men. However, Rattray (1927: 69) argues that a father will instruct his son in sexual matters and warn him to be responsible in life.**

From the data, it is noted that the girl to be initiated, is confined and nurtured in domestic science and how to be a good wife, mother and female adult in the society. This is to add up to her training acquired from her parents. She would also be taught her duties towards her husband, her in-laws, the extended family and friends. So for

the Akan, nurturing young people especially the girl-child is the responsibility of the whole society and not only of the parents. Observation from the field indicates that the elderly women in the community have a part to play in the nurturing process. The occasion brings the whole community together. It also involves the *Ahemaa* (Queenmother) and the other elderly women with rich experience together with the younger girls of the community. Through this the elderly and experienced women bequeath indigenous knowledge, values and morals to the younger generation. In this ceremony, the old and the young unite to bring the good of the society.

In Akan traditional system, it is said that good name is better than riches; so it is more honourable for a girl to bring respect to her parents, through *Bragro*, than *Kyiribra*, shame. Everybody in the community would respect and speak well of that family. Such a person is said to come from a good home, and is known to have been well brought up. This is the desire of every Akan. Moreover, the rites enable a girl to acquire some capital for her future. She obtains this from gifts of money given to her by her parents, relatives, and friends.

Besides, thirty-two (32) respondents say the other undeclared purpose of this ceremony is to advertise her to a prospective husband. Through her rites, [it is assumed that] a girl is able to get a good husband since all men want girls with good morals. It is at this period that the girl is publically introduced to the inhabitants of the community that the girl is of age for marriage. Would-be husbands are now invited to come and ask for her hand in marriage. In the olden days maturity of girls is announced by this ceremony. One is considered not matured if she has not gone through this ceremony no matter how advanced she is in years. In all these

celebrations social values are emphasised in different types of actions, rites, movement, singing, dancing and speech. During the initiation, her friends stay with her for some days. They learn to live together, work together, and play together; which is another source of social harmony.

6.9.4 Educational Values in Funeral Rites

In Akan philosophy, death does not alter or end the life or the personality of an individual, but only cause a change in its conditions. A person who dies must be given a 'correct' funeral, supported by a number of religious ceremonies. If this is not done, the dead person may become a wandering ghost, unable to 'live' properly after death and therefore a danger to those who remain alive. It could be argued that a 'proper' funeral rite is more a guarantee of protection for the living than to secure a safe passage for the dying. The elders and the rest of the family heads come together to plan so that peace and unity will prevail. In Akan tradition, death affects everybody within the community. The purpose of activities preceding the funeral is to comfort, encourage, and heal those who are hurting. As such, the occasion is not left in the hand of the bereaved family alone. During the planning stage, the younger ones become the errand boys. Through their various activities they develop knowledge about diplomacy, management, culture of the people, protocols, and have good understanding of how funerals are planned and organised in Akan tradition.

6.9.5 Educational Relevance of Indigenous Resources

Most of the emblematic indigenous resources and objects are used on particular occasions, to convey encoded messages. Through these resources, the youth learn the language, values, morals and knowledge culture and history of the Akan society and hence cherish their cultural heritage. Indigenous symbols have been used in palaces as pedagogical materials for a long time. In the use of colours as educational resource, the Akan will use gold or yellow to represent royalty, continuous life, prosperity, glory, maturity, and such novel situations. Whereas white colours go for purity, joy, victory; black and red represent death, pain, and other agonising moments. All these educational resources embedded in themselves certain values meant for nurturing purposes. It is useful that the traditional messages intended by these symbols, colours, instruments, and activities are explained to enable the reader particularly the youth, to codify their inherent messages for the benefit of all society.

It was also revealed from the research that festivals, as indigenous resources, are means of recollection or retelling, reflecting, and responding to some past historical events. Festivals are not only time for or of celebrations, but as was observed in the Old Testament, and as discussed in section 2.2.3 above, it is a moment of teaching and learning. Pedagogical activities take place during the time of prayers, dancing, diplomacy, courtesy, eating, dancing, just to mention a few. Through these activities, the adults pass on some form of indigenous intellectual knowledge and values to the younger generation.

Again, *Anansesem*, or the use of folk tales, as an indigenous resource material in Akan culture, equip the younger-generation with the abilities to speak well in public,

a feature which every Akan should exhibit. The import of these imaginary or allegorical stories used in the *Anansesem* is that, the hearer develops the habit of character formation, from the values that are attached to each story. These stories posit and teach specific aspects of moral behaviour to the audience. The young ones develop certain virtues such as kindness, patience, sympathy and to deplore vices like greed, bullying, oppression, and care for the environment.

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6.9.6 Features and the Significance of Confirmation Education

The Researcher's personal observation indicates that the Church's system of confirmation is based on the genre as formulated by Luther, that is question and answer format. Another significant feature is that the catechism is acknowledged as an indispensable tool in promoting theological literacy, individual freedom and Christian unity. It provides Christians with a basic doctrinal framework, enabling them to reflect theologically on their work in the church and ordinary life.

Twenty-five (25) respondents also agree on the location of this practice. It is seen as making its primary contribution after Baptism and before First Communion, although persons continued to be instructed [nurtured] after they had been admitted to Communion through catechetical sermons and special teaching. These instructions were viewed as an opportunity to understand and accept the obligation of the covenant into which they were initiated already. Participation in the Lord's Supper was not allowed until a candidate had demonstrated an adequate mastery of the catechism through an examination by the minister and elders. Again, consensus emerged about the contribution of three institutions in catechetical instruction: the

home, the school and the congregation. Each of this was viewed as playing a critical role in catechetical instruction. Parents were expected to teach those in their charge and were held accountable if they did not. The report also revealed that in the olden days, the mission schools also were centres of catechetical instructions. Memorisation and explanation of the catechism was a standard part of the curriculum. Likewise, congregations were important centres of catechetical instruction.

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Forty (40) respondents indicate that Confirmation is a chance for candidates to explore the Christian faith. Some people who have also gone through the ceremony gave the impression that Confirmation is also a chance for candidates to connect personally with God, each other, and the wider church. Calvin (1581: iv. chapter 4-13) states that through confirmation Christians grow into maturity. Confirmation is a period of consolidating one's position as a true Christian, through consistent, systematic, and in-depth teaching. It is the time of teaching the great truths of the Bible. As Calvin further puts it "in baptism we are regenerated unto life; in confirmation we are equipped for battle." In other words, the candidate is prepared to face the numerous challenges in life.

Twenty (20) respondents maintain that Confirmation is entering into covenant with God since it is the time of confirming one's baptism as an adolescent. It is accepting what has been done for one by one's parents during infant baptism. The candidate thus renews the baptismal covenant made by the parents and guardians. According to Tekpetey (1995: iv) parents are Spiritual trustees of the infants and they have the responsibility of bringing to the notice of the adolescent that, they should take their

spiritual destiny into their own hands. This is done through confirmation. Ayeh, in an interview posits that confirmation is an initiation rite for the youth to partake in the Eucharist, which Christ expects from every believer. If one is baptised as an infant and is not confirmed, as per the regulations of the Presbyterian Church of Ghana, the person is debarred from the privileges of the service of the Lord's Supper (Liturgy and Service Book 1987: 152).

Fifteen (15) respondents further state that through the confirmation teachings, candidates are expected to become Christ's witnesses by word and deed all the days of their lives. Ayeh, in an interview observes that: "allegorically, confirmation could be likened to a relay race to reach the crown of life. From infancy to the time of the confirmation ceremony, the Christian race was started by one's parents. At the time of confirmation the 'baton' is handed over from the parents to the youth to continue the race of life."

6.9.7 Critique of the Confirmation Education

It seems that confirmation was and is still is the church's response to the indigenous rite of *Bragro*, in the Akan tradition, a careful look at the content of training, does not really scratch where it itches as far as the Ghanaian cultural context is concerned. The Confirmation lessons do not take into account the various indigenous patterns of nurturing as well as the cultural values of the Ghanaian. This seems to confirm the notion that the [Akan] indigenous patterns of nurturing cannot be used as a platform for Christian education or nurturing in the Presbyterian Church of Ghana. Thus Ghanaian Christian educators continue to devalue and ignore the indigenous patterns

of nurturing. It has become fashionable in the churches these days for adolescents to go through confirmation education without any insight into indigenous or cultural educational values. The young people therefore become half-baked in the knowledge of cultural values giving rise to several societal problems.

Again, critical issues raised by some respondents is that the teachings of the confirmation lessons are sometimes left in the hands of novice teachers and that makes the quality of learning catechism very poor. They do not have the capacity to nurture other young people. Personal observation by the researcher indicates that these novices are willing volunteers in teaching, but are not qualified. Moreover, the Ministers, whose pastoral duty it is to prepare these young ones for confirmation, may be engaged or busy elsewhere. One respondent writes:

...I have been doing this duty voluntarily for some years now; I have not been trained officially in this area. I take them through the lessons in the book, I help them to memorise the lessons, and make sure they are able to say it by heart. I just want to help those who decide to confirm. The Minister, due to his work schedule, comes in only in the last week for brush-up. Sometimes some of the Session members also come in to give a hand. All that we do is to help them recite the lessons. The candidates are always happy.

This brings to the fore the calibre of those who handle the Confirmation education. The question arises that, whose duty it is to conduct the lessons? In response to this question, Prempeh revealed that:

...it has been a challenge to the church, especially those in the remote areas. The Minister whose responsibility it is to run these classes is also burdened by other duties. They hardly get the time for such an important ministry of the church. The whole process needs to be re-examined and overhauled.

Another critical challenge is about the content of the confirmation education. A careful examination of the curriculum used for confirmation indicates that the content of the lessons seems not to be making the needed impact as far as issues

facing the contemporary generation are concerned. In addition, the cultural aspect as Christians with our own indigenous knowledge and value systems are missing. If Jesus used the cultural categories available during his time for teaching and nurturing, then it behoves on Ghanaian Christian educators to do the same, in order to produce the best and the most effective results.

Sarpong (1977: 95) in his opinion asserts that the Presbyterian and Methodist Churches seem to have replaced the rites [*Bragro*] with the Christian Confirmation. He however argues that, the Ashanti [Asante] Presbyterians and Methodists do not seem to be satisfied with this and may perform the *Anoka* (food touching the mouth) secretly before the confirmation, or afterwards. If this assertion by Sarpong is anything to go by, then one could say that to the average Akan or Asante, the Christian Confirmation lacks something vital. The Akan Presbyterian still sees the *Anoka* rite as equally important as the whole Confirmation ceremony, and without it the Confirmation ceremony is not complete; and thus he or she will still perform it.

In an interview, Prempeh called on the worship committee of the Presbyterian Church to include certain aspects of indigenous patterns of nurturing into the liturgy for confirmation in the church. Using *Bragro* as an indigenous pattern of nurturing in the Akan tradition for the basis of his comparison, Prempeh notes that the content in *Bragro* goes beyond the initiation ceremony, but the candidates are nurtured to become useful members of the society. They are fashioned to become good home keepers, responsible mothers and fathers, wives and husbands, and have other good ethics. He points out that these essentials are lacking in the content of the confirmation lessons and there is the need to do something about it.

One more challenge identified by the research is that the youth who do not belong to the Church setting are left out and go through life with no Christian education activities. What they know is what they copy from their parents, schoolmates or from street life. Such people sometimes become spouses of some Christian men and women. This invariably contributes a lot to unrest in marriages in the society.

Confirmation is a process of preparing a particular individual to become, within the church circles, a full mature Christian. However, in the process of teaching that individual the focus of confirmation is not on hygiene. Not on how to prepare a person to become a good husband or mother in the future, but strictly on faith; believing in God, Jesus Christ, and on the fruit of the Spirit as it were. On the other hand, in so doing, if certain aspects come in they come in as very peripheral but not essential lesson in the confirmation education.

Views from respondents demonstrate that confirmation is essentially a Christian upbringing and nurture into the Christian faith. Confirmation prepares a candidate for maturity as it has already been pointed out. However, maturity, we would want to believe, should go beyond memorising some few Biblical verses and being able to reproduce it for the purposes expressing one's faith in the Lord. The research believes that there is the need to bring in other experts, who are more qualified than those inexperienced volunteers, who may have offered their services without any skill.

Amfo-Akonnor, in an interview noted that the task of teaching is most often given to individuals who may not be very skilled in handling some of these values, and it is

the fault of the church. Because there is so much that is required of these candidates that no one person can teach all of the required. These people who handle these confirmation educational activities, in most cases, are not very qualified, but for the simple reason that they show interest and are readily available, the church abandons the task of teaching the candidates on them. The fact remains that, so long as they are able to teach the Bible lessons, the church permits them to carry out their teaching duty to the detriment of the students and the society as a whole.

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In an interview with Okine, who had received confirmation in the Secondary School in 1999, she affirms that the ceremony did not benefit her. According to her, it was fashionable, during school days, for students to go through the sacrament of confirmation, without the confirmation really going through them. She opines that:

...the joy of receiving gifts, parents organising parties with friends and relatives were some of the many reasons why most students want to go through confirmation. The lessons were not taken seriously, students do not really understand that sacrament and what it stands for, the lessons were rushed through, there was nobody to take us through and explain the text to us properly, we were made to memorise and recite the text. It was obvious that the tendency of forgetting the text was high even just after confirmation. Again, we were grouped together both Presbyterians and Methodists, with a Methodist Minister as the sole Agent. I could say that students who confirm at school are the worse off.

Another significant reading we can give to the various views expressed by respondents is the collective involvement of all. There is a sense of belonging from both the participants and the community in the nurturing process. The nurturing process involves everybody within the community; male and female, separate matrilineal families come together, the younger generation co-operates with the older generation, and the royals rally round with the ordinary citizen. For example, celebrating *Bragro* at Woarakose is a festive occasion. The occasion has been linked with the celebration of the *Behwekose* festival. It is an annual festival of the Chiefs

and people of the town and its surrounding communities. As such occasions both young and old are brought together to commemorate the rite, as part of the annual festival. By this, the community comes to know and accept the *Brani* (neophyte) into their adult company. This demonstrates the unity of the people, it gives opportunity for the young to learn from the older folks, it brings members from outside the community home. Development projects are embarked upon during such occasions, conflicts between people, and families are settled during such joyous occasions.

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Opinion shared by respondents show that the Confirmation preparation should be the task of the whole church community. Every member of the church must get involved in the preparation. By that act, the confirmants will feel that they are part of the church community; they would not feel isolated after the ceremony. Again, involving themselves in church activities will not be difficult for some of them. This is because the whole church has been part of their nurturing processes, in their up-bringing. The confirmants will feel welcomed into the ministry of the church community. Through this also, we believe that the youth will not leave the church for other churches. Furthermore, this sense of belonging will afford the confirmants an understanding and appreciation of the roles of the church; in the sense that fashioning people is the task of the church community. Some of the responses of respondents suggest that young people should be nurtured to have strong sense of belonging to the family, church and the community and must be always prepared, not only to accept responsibilities in adult life, but also to discharge them honestly and efficiently.

6.10 Integration of Indigenous Akan Patterns and Christian Education

In section 3.5 above we illustrated that the inability to appreciate the indigenous patterns of nurturing had its roots in the history of the contact with the early missionaries. They did not understand the indigenous patterns as at that time, so they brought in what they knew from their countries. Today, the church is not in the hands of the missionaries as such; contemporary Christian educators cannot blame the early missionaries for neglecting some of the indigenous values and patterns as far as Christian nurturing is concerned. Today, the Church is being managed by indigenous Ghanaians who should see the need for such incorporation. After 180 or more years since the establishment of P.C.G., the time is long overdue to integrate some of indigenous models of nurturing into the Church's system of nurturing. If Christian education, according to Nziramasanga (1992: 85) is for life in its fullness, then it is reasonable to say that the indigenous educational patterns could be employed to supplement the church's nurturing processes. From the field of research it seems that indigenous patterns of nurturing communicate feelings, insights, attitudes, facts, and meanings to the individual. In this vein, indigenous patterns could be employed in the teaching of the basic tenets of the Christian faith.

Some respondents support the argument that indigenous patterns of education are aimed at perpetuating the cultural heritage. Odamtten (1996: 18) holds that in the changing circumstances, this important objective must not escape our attention. According to Odamtten, we [Christian educators] must aim at passing on the heritage of the past to the youth to prepare them to cope with present challenges of life and live into the future with courage and steadfastness. Opuni-Frimpong, in an interview also argues that "God is the giver of all cultures, and God expects us to use what He

has given us in worshipping Him.” Quoting scripture to buttress his point, Opuni-Frimpong says ‘the Word became flesh (human) and lived among us’ (see John 1: 14, GNB). Opuni-Frimpong further says in the interview that:

...Christ used the cultural categories available to Him during His teaching Ministry in Palestine. If Christ were to be living in Ghana, He would have used the indigenous cultural patterns in His teachings. For instance, if mobile phones were in use at that time, Jesus would have talked about it. Again, if HIV and AIDS was an issue at His time, Jesus would have cured it. Again, if Jesus were to be an Akan, He would have put on the traditional cloth, used indigenous drums and dance the traditional rhythm, and so on. As Christian educators, we should be using the local resources and their values, and we should not always borrow from outside. The Church is now in the hands of indigenes and we should be able to blend indigenous patterns with that of the foreign patterns.

Ghanaian Christian educators should critically examine the positive ideas and values that are hidden in the Akan cultural ideology and to give them a theological reinforcement. Some of the values have to be retrieved, refined, improved, and re-evaluated. Incorporating some of the ideas and values in Akan indigenous nurturing patterns and giving them theological meanings for Christian nurturing will suggest that something worthwhile can be developed from the Akan cultural past. For example, elements of faith, that have survived many generations and proved their worth, can be considered suitable otherwise they must be regarded as worthless.

6.11 Conclusion

This chapter has been presenting data from the field research based on the objectives set. It has also been discussing the findings. This research argues that the interface of Indigenous Akan educational patterns and Christian education being suggested in this report ultimately aims at producing Christian men and women who will appreciate indigenous patterns of nurturing and be able to stand on their feet as Ghanaians with good moral values well rooted in their own cultural environment.

That is why a close collaboration and study of indigenous Akan patterns and Christian education in the Presbyterian Church of Ghana should be seen as very apt proposition. The indigenous nurturing patterns must be the soil in which Christian educational activities in the Presbyterian Church of Ghana could be planted and well-watered to enhance our theological reflections as Ghanaian Christians. The final chapter examines some of the issues raised in the study in order to make this modification possible, including the concluding remarks and some recommendations.

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CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSION: SUMMARY, ISSUES EMERGING AND RECOMMENDATIONS

7.0 Introduction

This research report has been examining the nurturing patterns in indigenous Akan and the P.C.G. It has also discussed some findings from the data as gathered from both primary and secondary sources. In this final chapter, the research attempts to summarise the various issues raised in the report, with concluding remarks, and propose some recommendations.

7.1 Summary of Issues Emerging out of the Research

Several issues emerge out of this research. That there are several moments in Akan culture which serve as avenue for indigenous nurturing. Again, there are several resources which also serve as tools for nurturing in Akan culture. That these resources have certain values and knowledge embedded in them that are still relevant for Christian nurturing within the P.C.G. To the Akan every indigenous educational pattern is education-seeking venture, and is carried out in various moments through varied resources. The findings revealed that because the indigenous resources form part and parcel of everyday life, there are no equipment and materials especially designed for nurturing purposes. The everyday objects used in life constitute those resources. This makes it possible to resort to direct instruction and encourages

practical activity. Daily activities in the home, community, and the environment in which the neophyte is involved are the means by which the person is educated, or fashioned.

In the Presbyterian Church of Ghana, the confirmation ceremony has been one of the moments where the nurturing activity has been carried out. From the research, it was also revealed that the confirmation classes have been one of the moments and resources which the Church has been using in nurturing people especially the youth but although confirmation ceremony has been part of the Church's ministry over the years, it seems that it lacked a defined curriculum, scope and relevance to the Ghanaian context. Again, it could also be said that the content of the curriculum does not go far enough in preparing the Ghanaian youth of the church.

This research has also confirmed that Christian educators should dialogue with Akan culture in modelling relevant and appropriate nurturing patterns for their mutual benefit. Another significant issue that has emerged out of this research is that there are some affinities between the Akan indigenous nurturing patterns and that of the P.C.G. in terms of the Confirmation process. Such affinities could be explored further in making educational patterns more accessible for agents of nurturing so that the valuable features in the indigenous Akan nurturing patterns could be incorporated in communicating the Christian faith.

The study has also unearthed certain indigenous Akan nurturing patterns that could be remodelled in order to make them relevant to our contemporary context. For instance, values in indigenous patterns are still relevant, but certain aspect seems as

humiliating to contemporary society, and such could be remodelled. For example, in our context, it seems demeaning to see young girls exposing their breasts for a *Bragro* ceremony. In our Christian context it could be most undesirable to see such scenes, and most Christian parents would not want to expose their adolescent girls in that manner. Nevertheless, Christian educators ought to educate members on some of the values associated with these indigenous nurturing patterns. Christian educators should not revile everything cultural. Beating of traditional drums, such as *Kete*, and *Fɔntɔmfrɔm*, could be used as modified media to communicate the Christian message. Teaching the young some form of traditional music and dance, like *Dwomkro*, would enable the younger generation to appreciate their cultural values. This research posits that, accepting the Lordship of Christ does not mean one should throw away everything cultural, but rather, that new life in Christ Jesus must renew and rejuvenate the old cultural practices for the good of all.

7.2 Recommendations of the Study:

The following are recommendations based on the critical assessment and forgone discussions:

- **Intensifying Cultural Theology in the Church**

Firstly, there should be the need to incorporate Cultural Theology into the Presbyterian Church curriculum. The interface between propagating the Christian faith and indigenous nurturing patterns must be the concern of every Christian educator in the Presbyterian Church of Ghana. The Bible, which is the major text for Christian nurturing in Ghana, is not against human culture in any way. Indeed, the

Bible is set in a cultural milieu. The Biblical writers wrote from different cultural contexts, which address several cultural issues. Jesus was ministering in a particular cultural context, using identifiable cultural categories. In the same way, Christian educators in the P.C.G. could incorporate indigenous nurturing values in communicating the Christian faith in the society. This would enable the young people to identify with and accept their own cultural settings.

Though Western missionaries described certain indigenous beliefs and concepts as heathen, idolatory, barbaric, fetish, and superstitious, the research has proved that this antagonistic approach was mistaken and unguarded. Their stand has not encouraged the integration of the Akan indigenous nurturing patterns into the Christian faith, meanwhile, we believe that such integration could ‘ennoble’ the Ghanaian to become culturally relevant within the society. Christian educators must educate their congregation knowing that as educators, they have been sent out to their own people and ought to understand themselves better. This could be done by developing a textbook on Christianity and Culture, running seminars and workshops, on the interface between Gospel and Culture, for the J.Y., Y.P.G., and Y.A.F generational groups.

- **Introducing Religious Tourism in the Church**

Secondly, the Church could organise ‘Religious Tourism’ to some traditional festivals such as Easter celebrations at Kwawu (Kwahu), *Akwasideε* at Kumasi, *Odwira* at Akropong and Kumasi, *Ohum* at Kyebi, and other places. Traditional leaders who are also Christian could be asked to explain and educate Church

members on the significance of such cultural activities and other indigenous nurturing patterns. This will enable the youth to appreciate some of these cultural activities on their own. Churches in such traditional areas could get involved in the planning of such festivals or encouraging their members to fully participate in such activities without compromising their Christian faith.

- **Reconstructing Some Indigenous Akan Patterns of Nurturing**

Thirdly, we also recommend the need to reconstruct some of the indigenous patterns of nurturing in Akan culture. Ghanaian Christian educators should critically examine the positive ideas and values embedded in Akan cultural ideology and to give them a theological meaning. Some of the values have to be retrieved, refined, improved, and re-evaluated. Integrating some of the ideas and values in indigenous Akan nurturing patterns and giving them theological meanings for Christian nurturing will suggest that something worthwhile can be developed from the Akan cultural past. For example, elements of faith, that have survived many generations and proved their worth, can be considered suitable otherwise they must be regarded as worthless.

Furthermore, it could generally be assumed that if certain cultural activities are still celebrated; for example; funerals, naming ceremonies, festivals, music and dance, storytelling, *Bragro*, in the various Ghanaian communities, it means that there are some valuable lessons to be picked from these educational moments and resources for contemporary nurturing patterns. And the objective is for the present Christian educators in the P.C.G. to identify with these cherished knowledge and values for

Christian nurturing. For example, storytelling, using traditional drums in praising God, using drama and dance in telling Biblical events, others like that.

- **Expanding the Curriculum of the Confirmation Lessons**

Fourthly, we recommend that the curriculum of the Confirmation lessons in the P.C.G. should be expended to include other essential elements associated with some Akan indigenous nurturing patterns. This should be based on the insights of developing the totality of the candidates; culturally, socially, and psychologically. This would help candidates in the Presbyterian Church of Ghana to engage in significant acts of faith exploration and to discover and to appreciate their cultural identity. Participatory, experiential pedagogies with Akan indigenous value systems are being advocated, against the internalising approaches of confirmation. Confirmation is an important step, but it is only one step on an ongoing journey of faith. The researcher agrees with Parratt (1997: 7) in saying that there are areas of Akan indigenous culture which may throw light on Christian thought. Therefore a general review of the curriculum and methods of nurturing the youth in the P.C.G., from the Children Service, through the J.Y. up to the Y.P.G., would be very necessary in order to give them a broad background which will enable them fit-well into the society as trained and well nurtured generation.

- **Strengthening Children's Ministry**

Fifthly, the study recommends that the Children's ministry in the P.C.G. is strengthened. The children service level is regarded as the initial stage in the attempt

to establishing a link in the general process of nurturing; from the home through the various generational groups of the church. It is important therefore, that the children service instructors receive the needed training which qualifies them to perform their duties with apt methodologies of nurturing. The educators must be people with experience with some knowledge in indigenous patterns of nurturing.

- **Strengthening Family Ministry in the Church**

Again, we also recommend that the family ministry within the P.C.G. is re-invigorated. It has been established that in Akan indigenous cultural setting, there is no separation between the home and community; the two dove-tail into each other. For this to be effective and yield results there should be a link between the home and the church. There should not be a wide gap between what goes on at home and that in the church. This means serious attention should be given to parenting in ensuring effective nurturing. Because of this there is the urgent need to strengthen the Family Ministry of the Church. The Family, as an extension of the church, serves as one of the patterns of nurturing. Parents have a responsibility of bringing their children up in godly manner. The strengthening of the Family Ministry will supplement the Christian educational activities of the Church in the family outside the church.

- **Encouraging Parental Responsibility**

Additionally, we recommend for the consideration of the Church to encourage Parental Responsibility through her Christian education activities. Given the clear Biblical instruction on the family's role and responsibility for child-training, as

discussed in 2.2.2 above, Christian educators in the P.C.G. ought to consider how best to support and enhance parental leadership. Responses from respondents point to the fact that it is important for the church and family to develop and cultivate a symbiotic relationship for culture and Christian ethics. Both of these divine institutions are vital to the nurturing process of the individual, and they complement each other. We assume that the local congregation could have a vibrant and unique impact on parents in the P.C.G. by:

- Challenging fathers to be godly dads that lead their families and train their children,
 - Providing an environment for families to be strengthened through: worshipping together, possibly in the same church, interaction with other disciplined and godly families, specific church-based training mentoring by experienced people, kids learning with and from adults,
 - Encourage children to celebrate parents' day, such as fathers' and mothers' day,
 - Ensure that scriptural and cultural precepts on family responsibilities are taught, modelled and upheld.
- Enhancing Pre-Confirmation Module**

Furthermore, we recommend the enhancement of Pre-Confirmation Modules of the Church. The model could take the form of “what you need to know before confirmation.” this is a Pre-Confirmation training module could be integrated into the existing Junior Youth training curriculum. This module could have topics such as:

- a. The Constitution of the P.C.G.,
- b. Who are the Officers of the Church?
- c. How are they related?
- d. How did the church come by the name Presbyterian?
- e. Some basic understanding of Reform Theology would be of help at that level.

We also believe that the time has come to incorporate some of these “non-essentials” into the Liturgy and Service book of the Church.

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- **Introduction of Virgin Clubs**

Lastly, it is the recommendation of this research that there should be the introduction of “virgins clubs” within the School Ministry of the Church. This would ensure that those who qualify for confirmation in schools would have kept their virginity. Parents would ensure that their wards conform to this regulation. The young people themselves would also be encouraged to go through this formation period. The programme should be planned in such a way that it would be attractive to the adolescents in not only the Church but in the whole community. This nurturing process should be run by experienced and respectable adult members of the Church and not just anybody. This could be organised on pilot basis in some few congregations in some of the Presbyteries like Akropong in the Akuapem Presbytery, Abetifi in the Kwahu Presbytery, Nsaba in the Central Presbytery, Osu in the Ga Presbytery, and Adum in the Asante Presbytery. After some time the programme would be evaluated, and the recommendations made would then be adopted for use in all the Presbyteries of the Church.

7.3 Conclusion

The fact that Christian educators in the Presbyterian Church of Ghana can incorporate Akan indigenous patterns of nurturing and their values into the Church's Confirmation agenda cannot be contended. The study concludes that confirmation is not scratching where it is itching culturally and that there is the need to include some facet of indigenous nurturing values associated with Akan culture. Values such as discreetness, diplomacy, compassion, respect for the elderly and those in authority, truthfulness, faithfulness, hard work, and the like of values are all integrated in the Akan culture which the forefathers have bequeathed to their descendants to serve as values to be appreciated and learnt. Christian educators could appropriately examine these values carefully and incorporate them into the confirmation agenda.

These values interestingly are not too different from the Christian morals, so that it would be expedient to give them a second look again and then instil some sound moral into our youth and the Ghanaian society at large; this is an urgent call since the present day youth are losing all their good sense of morality. Christian educators could supplement their nurturing patterns with that of the indigenous patterns in imparting knowledge, respect, skills, wisdom, morals, values and discipline to the youth in the Church and society. This, as it were, will also curb some of the social vices in the country.

Ghanaian Christian educators must retrieve, and interpret some Akan fundamental cultural nurturing values and show how these ideas and values provide a way of understanding and communicating the Christian faith, God's revelation in Christ. This research asserts that the revelation of God in Christ is forever available to

people of all generations and cultures. Christian educators must therefore search for living and relevant symbols in Akan culture that mediate the saving grace of God through Christ. It is hope that Youth nurturing in the P.C.G. will help develop and empower the young people to walk with God, fellowship with the Lord Jesus Christ, and be transformed by the Power of the Holy Spirit; so that they can fully identify and participate in the mission and ministry of the church.

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APPENDICES A

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR TRADITIONAL LEADERS

- 1) What is the nature of indigenous Akan patterns of nurturing?
- 2) What are the indigenous educational moments in Akan Tradition?
- 3) What are some of the resources used for indigenous nurturing in Akan Tradition?
- 4) What is *Bragro*?
- 5) What are the Rites in *Bragro*?
- 6) What is *Kyiribra*?
- 7) Who are the Agents of *Bragro*?
- 8) What are the factors mitigating the Practice of *Bragro*?
- 9) What are the core values in *Bragro*?
- 10) Is there an affinity between the indigenous and Christian style of nurturing?

APPENDIX B

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR GIRLS WHO HAVE GONE THROUGH THE *BRAGRO* CEREMONY

- 1) How do you understand *Bragro*?
- 2) What is *Kyiribra*?
- 3) What are some of the reasons some people give for rejecting *Bragro*?
- 4) Are there some Values in *Bragro*?
- 5) Are there some outmoded rites associated with *Bragro*?
- 6) How can the traditional authorities make *Bragro* relevant today?
- 7) Were you informed on the purpose of the rite?
- 8) How do you see yourself after the ceremony?

- 9) What are the benefits of the ceremony?
- 10) How do you see your peers who have not gone through the ceremony?
- 11) How do people see you after the ceremony?
- 12) What were you taught?
- 13) What is the expectation of the society from those who go through the ceremony?
- 14) What is the relevance of the ceremony for the younger generation today?
- 15) How can the ceremony be transformed to suit modern trends?
- 16) Is there an affinity between the indigenous and Christian style of nurturing?

APPENDIX C

(QUESTIONNAIRE FOR CHURCH LEADERS AND THE YOUTH)

- 1) What are the objectives of Youth formation in the Presbyterian Church of Ghana.?
- 2) What is Confirmation?
- 3) How has Confirmation being practiced over the years?
- 4) Why is Confirmation so important to the Church and the individual?
- 5) What are the content of the Confirmation education?
- 6) Who are the Agents of the Confirmation education?
- 7) Is the Confirmation curriculum adequate enough in preparing as well as developing the totality of the individual?
- 8) What are the core values of the Confirmation ceremony?
- 9) Is there an affinity between the indigenous and Christian style of nurturing?

APPENDIX D

PICTURES



Researcher at Worakese (the actual name is Woorakose)



Researcher with the *Aseni Abusuapanyin* of Woarakose

Nana Kwame Adomako I



Researcher with the *Krontihene* of Woarakose Nana Kese



Researcher with the *Gyasihene* of Woarakose Nana Agyei Ababio II



Researcher with the **Queenmother of Woarakose Nana Yaa Gyamfua III**



Researcher interviewing *Maame* Bea (an old candidate of *Bragro*) at Woarakose



The Researcher with Nana Agyei Akyamfuo Senior Linguist from Manhyia-Kumasi.



Researcher with Nana Abrafi (A Royal from Manhyia Kumasi)



Nana Akosua Amponsaa Biraso I, \$manhema of Domeabra, in the Asante-Akyem Traditional Area.



Collins Adusei, Secretary at the National House of Chiefs, Manhyia-Kumasi.

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- Nana Akosua Amponsaa Biraso I, the *\$manhema* of Domeabra, in the Asante-Akyem Traditional Area. 4th September 2010
- Opanyin Akwasi Tawiah. An Aduana Abusuapanyin of Apradang, in the Kwahu [Kwawu] Traditional Area, at his residence on 26th September 2010
- Nana Kwame Acheampong, the *Ankobeahene* of Kwahu-Bokuruwa. In the Kwahu Traditional Area. October 31st 2010
- Nana Yaa Gyamfua III, the Queenmother of Woarakose, near Kumasi. Interviewed on the 3rd of February 2011 at her palace.
- Nana Kwame Adomako, the *Asene Abusuapanyin* of Woarakose near Kumasi. On the 3rd of February 2011, at his residence.
- Nana Agyei Ababio II, the *Gyasihene* of Woarakose near Kumasi. On the 3rd of February 2011 at his residence.
- Nana Kese, the *Krontihene* of Woarakose near Kumasi. On the 3rd of February 2011 at his residence.
- Maame Bea. A *Brani* from Woarakose near Kumasi. On the 3rd of February 2011 at her residence.
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