

CHRISTIANITY AND AFRICAN TRADITIONAL RELIGION IN KUMASI: A COMPARATIVE STUDY

by

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this submission is my own work towards the MA African Art and Culture and that to the best of my knowledge, it contains no material previously published by another person not material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree of the University, except where due acknowledgement has been made in the text.

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DEDICATION

This work is first and foremost dedicated to the Almighty God for His Love and Abundant Mercies. Secondly, I dedicate it to my lovely wife, Mrs. Victoria Amponsah (Inspector of Ghana Prisons Service, Kumasi) and adorable sons, Caleb, Emmanuel and Mensa O. A. Amponsah for their patience and support.

Lastly, to my parents and loved ones for the wonderful roles they have played in my life, I shall forever be grateful.

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ABSTRACT

This thesis, Christianity and African Traditional Religion in Kumasi - A Comparative Study, sought to study the differences and similarities of both religions, whether there was the existence of peaceful co-habitation and their collective influence on their host communities.

The research findings outlined the differences and similarities in the host communities. The study also established the fact that there was peaceful co-existence of both religions and that their collective influence on their host communities were praise-worthy in terms of the promotion of social cohesiveness and the provision of certain social amenities

Primary data collection on the field, extensive interviews and observations were done. The descriptive, narrative, analytical and interpretative methods were applied in describing, analyzing, and interpreting the data collected. Recommendations were given to basically enhance the maintenance and entrenchment of the respect of freedom of worship and possible mechanisms of resolution to be applied in any religious conflict that may arise in the communities under consideration.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the study

The history of Ghana would never be complete unless perhaps a chapter or so is devoted to the story of Christianity and African Traditional Religion. What perhaps must be considered at this point in time is the comparative study of Christianity and Traditional Religion and to analyze them with respect to the contribution the movements have made.

Both religions are believed to have been sending their petitions or thanks for divine protection to a Being higher than they are. Christians are believed to serve and worship God through Jesus Christ. On the other hand, the African Traditionalists are thought to revere the Supreme Being (God) through their gods and Ancestors, that is, through divinity cults and ancestral veneration. Obviously, there exist certain differences and similarities in their respective beliefs and practices, taking cognizance of their ability to co-exist.

Three denominations within the commonwealth of Christendom were considered by the researcher, namely, the Roman Catholics, the Protestants and the African initiated Churches.

Roman Catholic Churches in Ghana were founded by the Roman Catholic Missionary Orders. They have by and large, retained the Roman Catholic Church's emphasis on the unity and authority of the church and have in the last half of the twentieth century, taken their place as full and equal partners in the worldwide Roman Catholic Church.

On the other hand, Protestant Churches were founded by Protestant Missionaries and have retained significant identification with the European or American Protestant Churches. Much emphasis is placed on the authority of the Bible and the need for an

individual to develop a closer relationship with Jesus Christ by considering him as one's personal saviour.

African Protestant Churches or African indigenous churches are said to be independent, depending upon who is describing them. They have typically grown out of a Protestant Mission Context, but often in frustration with the Western Missionaries, and have gone their own way and function without reference to overseas churches. They also use Christian versions of African Traditional Religions and may use Christian words in reference to God.

African Traditional Religion, like any other religion, has its own features, many of which are:

- Belief in smaller deities and ancestors to whom libations are made and sacrifices offered,
- Belief in the fact that the human being is weak and has to depend on benevolent transcendent powers for protection and sustenance and,
- They also believe in Causality meaning that, Africans generally believe that events have causes and that things in this world do not happen by chance.

The aggregate meaning of these beliefs is that there is a great deal of communication between the transcendent powers and human beings in order that people and communities would be protected. This is the focus of all the rituals and traditional festivals that are celebrated. Prayer is a medium of communication with transcendent realities and to that end, it constitutes a principal medium for the articulation of the cardinal beliefs of particular religions.

A typical African Traditional Religious prayer by the people of Akan descent in Ghana usually includes the declaration of attributes of God, other deities and the ancestors. Libations are often performed and supplications made.

1.2 Statement of the problem

Arguably the world's largest religion, Christianity nevertheless faces some amount of challenges? notably, competition with other religions such as the African Traditional Religion. (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/major_religious_groups).

This situation has led, in part, to religious conflicts in host communities. Kumasi, in the Ashanti Region of Ghana, is not insulated from such potential conflicts. A healthy respect and understanding of the general similarities and differences of both religions could help enhance co-habitation. Thus peaceful co-existence could lead to the overall benefit of members in host communities in terms of the provision of social amenities by religious charity work and the attainment of consistent spiritual upliftment.

1.3 Hypothesis

It is possible to study Christianity and Traditional African Religion in Kumasi in order to bring out their similarities and differences, their influences on host communities, discuss their co-existence and offer pertinent suggestions.

This statement is the main premise for which data is collected. The subsequent discussions, analyses and interpretations seek to substantiate or disprove the hypothesis.

1.4 Objectives

The main objective of this thesis is to study the beliefs and practices of certain Christian denominations and selected traditional shrines in Kumasi with the view to:-

- i. Examining the similarities and the differences between the two systems of religion.

- ii. Identifying and documenting the influences of Christianity and African Traditional Religion on the communities in which they operate and on the entire Ghanaian society.
- iii. Ascertaining whether these religions exist harmoniously together or not, and to what extent? Causes of conflict or harmony and their effects.
- iv. Offer pertinent recommendations that could contribute to knowledge and social use or impose the existing relationship to enhance religious tolerance and peaceful-coexistence of their adherents.

1.5 Scope of study

The research is mainly limited to Christianity and African Traditional Religion in Kumasi, the Ashanti Regional capital of Ghana, assess their impact on the well being of the people. While discussing these, references are occasionally made to events in other cultural settings within and without Ghana. Suburbs where research was carried out include Ahinsan, Ampabame, Ahwiaa, Atansemanso, Sokoban-Krofrom and Adum. This research work was carried out between the period of 1997 and 1999.

1.6 Limitation

Limited period of time and inadequate financial resources for field work and recording equipment could only allow for a few towns or suburbs within Kumasi to be covered in this research.

1.7 Significance of the study/importance of the study

Although Ghana has been described as a secular nation by the 1992 Constitution, majority of Ghanaians are Christians and in order to achieve harmonious co-existence with other religious bodies, it is imperatively right to look into Christianity and African Traditional Religion (which also has a sizable following) to see the best way peace could be well maintained and promoted among the people.

Although Ghanaians have often been referred to as a peace loving people, the influence of religion in the pursuit of peace cannot be overlooked. This research work sought to iterate the importance of religious tolerance among Christians of different denominations and adherents of African Traditional Religion.

1.8 Chapter organization

This research deals with a comparative study of Christianity and African Traditional Religion in Kumasi. There are discussions about their similarities and differences, co-habitation and their influences on the host communities. This study also covers their mode of practice, temples and shrines, including their mode of worship. The research is divided into five main chapters namely:

1. Opinion leaders
2. Church leaders
3. Intellectuals

Chapter one – introduction This chapter outlines, the background information, the statement of the problem, objectives, hypothesis and scope of the study. It also touches on limitations encountered, significance of the study, an assumption, methodology, chapter organization and definition of terms.

Chapter two – review of related literature This chapter assembles and reviews available related literature on the subject of this thesis and provides adequate materials for purposes of comparison and analysis.

Chapter three – methodology This chapter deals mainly with the data sampled, their analyses and discussions. The three hundred respondents to the administered questionnaires are grouped under subheadings such as: education, age, religious affiliation and views on Christianity and African Traditional Religion among others.

Research methodology The narrative method was employed in the historical overview of religious activities, roles and impact on the life of the people. The descriptive method, on the other hand, was applied when reviewing the various objects used in religious worship. This helped to identify, study and assemble facts about the religions, which can be there for posterity to judge. The analytical method helped in the examination, evaluation and interpretation of literature, personal interviews, publications, discussions, and critical observations. Data obtained from the field created a strong foundation for comparative analysis of both Christianity and African Traditional Religions in the Kumasi District.

Chapter four – comparative study Apart from interviews of both Christian denominations and Fetish Priests/Priestess, this chapter discusses the similarities and differences of both Christianity and African traditional religion, in terms of practice and philosophy in the Kumasi district. Remedial steps to address associated problems are also discussed. Furthermore, there is a discussion of issues related to promoting peaceful religious co-habitation and their influences on the host communities.

Chapter five – summary, conclusions & recommendations As captioned, this chapter briefly compares the literature review of the thesis and the research findings, subsequently determining the contributions to knowledge made by this research. There is then a summary of the thesis. Finally, there are also a conclusion and recommendations.

Definition of terms

Culture: It is the integrated pattern of human knowledge, beliefs, social forms and behavior that depends upon man's capacity for learning and transmitting knowledge to succeeding generations.

Socio-economic Development: Conscious human efforts aimed at sustainable increase in the living standards that encompass material consumption, education, health, psychological growth and environmental protection.

Beliefs: The mental acceptance of and conviction in the truth, actuality, or validity of something. It is also something believed or accepted as true, especially a particular tenet or a body of tenets accepted by a group of persons.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.1 Overview

A definition of religion is difficult to make, because religion has many facets, many of which do not appear to be religious by themselves. For example, religion involves gathering in groups. It involves communal eating. It involves theoretical discourse about the nature of the universe, and so forth. Countless definitions have been proposed by theoreticians. The most interesting thing is that the average person can tell when others are engaging in religious behaviour while many scholars and scientists have problems defining it. The concept of religion is like the concept of culture. It is easy to use it in ordinary discourse, but difficult to define it precisely (<http://atheism.about.com/od/religiondefinition>)

Many say the etymology of religion lies with the Latin word *religare*, which means “to tie, to bind.” This seems to be favoured on the assumption that it helps explain the power religion has. The Oxford English Dictionary points out, though, that the etymology of the word is doubtful. Earlier writers like Cicero connected the term with *relegere*, which means “to read over again” (perhaps to emphasize the ritualistic nature of religions?). The English word “*religion*” is derived from the Middle English “*religioun*” which came from the Old French “*religion*.” It may have been originally derived from the Latin word “*religo*” which means “*good faith*,” “*ritual*,” and other similar meanings. Or it may have come from the Latin “*religāre*” which also means “*to tie fast*.” Defining the word “*religion*” is fraught with difficulty. Many attempts have been made. Most seem to focus on too narrowly only a few aspects of religion; they tend to exclude those religions that do not fit well. As Jones (2006) wrote in his *Essay On Defining Religion*, “It is apparent

that religion can be seen as a theological, philosophical, anthropological, sociological, and psychological phenomenon of human kind. To limit religion to only one of these categories is to miss its multifaceted nature and lose out on the complete definition."

It is true that many societies do not draw a clear line between their culture and what scholars would call "religion." This does not mean that religion does not exist, but it is worth keeping in mind that even when we think we have a handle on what religion is, we might be far from that. Definitions of religion tend to suffer from one of two problems: they are either too narrow and exclude many belief systems which most agree are religious, or they are too vague and ambiguous, suggesting that just about any and everything is a religion.

The key to arriving at an acceptable definition of religion lies in recognizing that religion is a concept which is at once teleological, normative, and orienting (which also explains its enormous importance). It is teleological in that it aims at practice, or a way of life. It is normative, in that it is concerned with providing standards of both morality, or right and wrong, and teleology, or right purpose. And it is orienting, in that religions offer an account of the nature of human beings, the universe, and the relationship between the two.

We would define religion, then, in this way: religions are bodies of doctrine that specify a way of life centered on the maximization of the good, where the good includes both morality and right purposes. Religions often do this in the context of providing an understanding of human nature and its best orientation to the universe as a whole ("best" here meaning "most value maximizing").

(http://www.progressiveliving.org/definition_of_religion_defined.htm)

A good example of a narrow definition is the common attempt to define “religion” as “belief in God,” effectively excluding polytheistic religions and atheistic religions while including theists who have no religious belief system. A good example of a vague definition is the tendency to define religion as “worldview” — but how can every worldview qualifies as a religion? Some have argued that religion is not hard to define, however, the plethora of conflicting definitions is evidence of how difficult it really is. The problem lies in finding a definition that is empirically useful and empirically testable.

So far, the best definition of religion seems to be the one supported by *The Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, (http://www.progressiveliving.org/definition_of_religion_defined.htm) where it lists traits of religions rather than declaring religion to be one thing or another, arguing that the more markers present in a belief system, the more “religious like” it is:

- Belief in supernatural beings (gods).
- A distinction between sacred and profane objects.
- Ritual acts focused on sacred objects.
- A moral code believed to be sanctioned by the gods.
- Characteristically religious feelings (awe, sense of mystery, sense of guilt, adoration), which tend to be aroused in the presence of sacred objects and during the practice of ritual, and which are connected in idea with the gods.
- Prayer and other forms of communication with gods.
- A world view or a general picture of the world as a whole and the place of the individual therein. This picture contains some specification of an over-all purpose or point of the world and an indication of how the individual fits into it.
- A more or less total organization of one’s life based on the world view.
- A social group bound together by the above.

This definition captures much of what religion is across diverse cultures. It includes sociological, psychological, and historical factors and allows for broader gray areas in the concept of religion. It is not without flaws, though. The first marker, for example, is about “supernatural beings” and gives “gods” as an example, but thereafter only gods are mentioned. Even the concept of “supernatural beings” is a bit too specific; Eliade (1986) defined religion in reference to a focus on “the sacred” and that is a good replacement for “supernatural beings” because not every religion revolves around the supernatural. (http://www.progressiveliving.org/definition_of_religion_defined.htm).

Perhaps, a better definition, according to , www.progressiveliving.org/definition_of_religion_defined.htm, may be:

- Belief in something sacred (for example, gods or other supernatural beings).
- A distinction between sacred and profane objects.
- Ritual acts focused on sacred objects.
- A moral code believed to have a sacred or supernatural basis.
- Characteristically religious feelings (awe, sense of mystery, sense of guilt, adoration), which tend to be aroused in the presence of sacred objects and during the practice of ritual.
- Prayer and other forms of communication with the supernatural.
- A worldview or a general picture of the world as a whole and the place of the individual therein. This picture contains some specification of an over-all purpose or point of the world and an indication of how the individual fits into it.
- A more or less total organization of one’s life based on the world view.
- A social group bound together by the above.

This is one of the definitions of religion used in this research. It describes religious systems but not non-religious systems. It encompasses the features common in belief systems generally acknowledged as religions without focusing on specific characteristics unique to just a few. (<http://www.wordnet.princeton.edu/perl/webwn>). This definition is buttressed by Michael Bradshaw et al (2004), who briefly defined Religion as an “organized system of values and practices, including faith in and worship of a divine being or beings”. In *Religion in African Social Heritage*, Akoi (1970) further complements this definition by arguing from the point of view that Religion is a social fact and that it fosters solidarity, continuity and the enforcement of moral laws.

Religion therefore provides the sanctions that society cannot fully supply of itself, its moral and legal norms which could be kept in being as a body by secular sanctions. (<http://www.wordnet.princeton.edu/perl/webwn>).

Another definition used in this research is the one provided by the popular online encyclopedia, Wikipedia which defines religion as, “A system of beliefs, including belief in the existence of at least one of the following: a human soul or spirit, a deity or higher being, or self after the death of one’s body; A number of customs and rituals associated with such beliefs; Anything that involves the association of people in a system of social coherence based on a common group of beliefs or attitudes concerning an object, person, unseen being, or system of thought considered to be supernatural, sacred, divine or highest truth, and the moral codes, practices, values, institutions, traditions, and rituals associated with such belief or system of thought.” (<http://www.en.wiktionary.org/wiki/religion>)

2.2. Global Perspective on Religions

The world's principal religions and spiritual traditions may be classified into a small number of major groups or world religions. According to the 2005 survey of *Encyclopedia Britannica*, the vast majority of religious and spiritual adherents follow Christianity (33% of world population), Islam (20%), Hinduism (13%), Chinese folk religion (6.3%) or Buddhism (5.9%). The irreligious and atheists make up about 14%, and about 4% follow indigenous ethnic religions.

These spiritual traditions may be either combined into larger super-groups, or separated into smaller sub-denominations. Christianity, Islam and Judaism (and sometimes the Bahá'í Faith) are summarized as Abrahamic religions. Hinduism, Buddhism, Sikhism and Jainism are classified as Indian religions (or Dharmic religions). Chinese folk religion, Confucianism, Taoism and Shinto are classified as East Asian religions (or Far Eastern, Chinese, or Taoic religions).

In summary, religious adherence of the world's population is as follows: "Abrahamic": 53.5%, "Indian": 19.7%, irreligious: 14.3%, "Far Eastern": 6.5%, ethnic religions: 4.0%, new religious movements: 2.0%.¹² On the next page is a pictorial representation of the worldwide percentage by adherents of religions in Fig. 1.

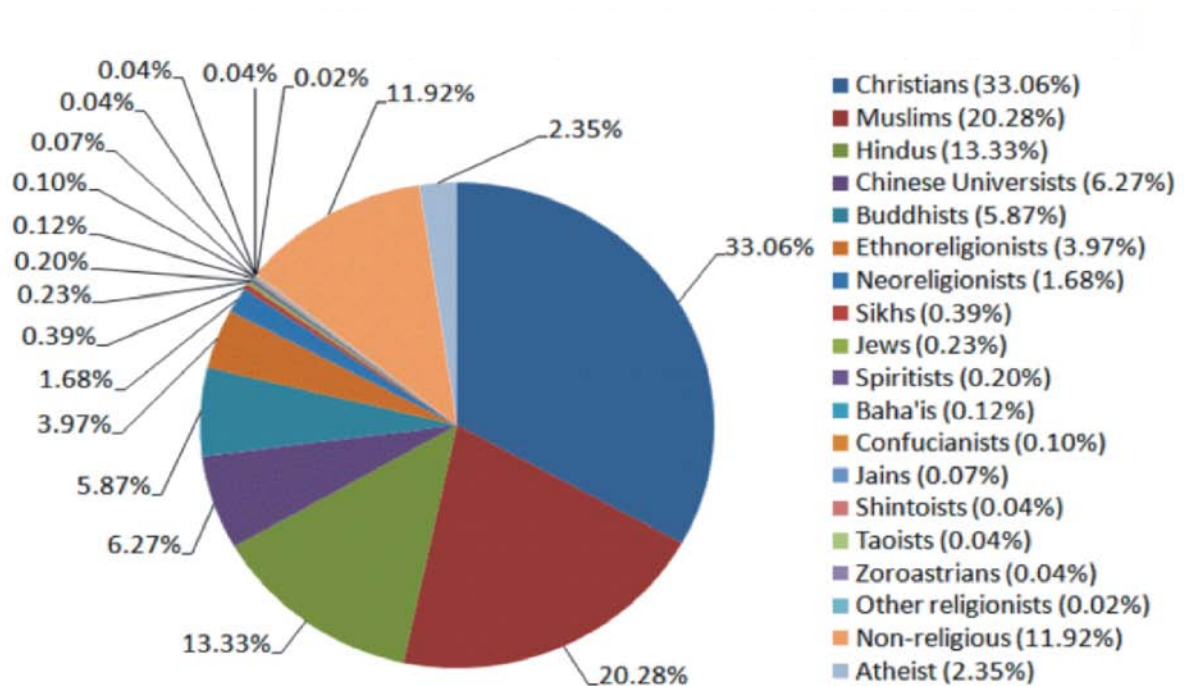


Fig. 1 Worldwide percentage of adherents to religion (mid 2005)

Source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/image:worldwide_percentage_of_adherents_by_religion.png.

2.3 Perspective On African Traditional Religion

The African continent has been beset with conflicting systems of philosophies and religions from the East and West, with each of these systems trying to out-manuever the others in order to gain a firmer foothold in Africa. The desecration of Africa in the past by the Western European powers seriously and adversely affected the traditional cultures of the indigenous African people to the extent that many traditional beliefs, social values, customs, and rituals were either totally destroyed or ignored. In most cases they were considered to be nothing more than “pagan” values and superstitions that played no part in traditional African culture. When we speak of Africa in this context, we refer to Africa south of the Sahara desert. The North belongs more to the Mediterranean world and the religion of Islam is well established in that part of Africa. (<http://www.afrikaworld.net/afrel/atr-socjustice.htm>). Culture, after all, is the way of life developed by people as they cope with survival. True culture then must include the traditional beliefs and spiritualism. In any case, at a certain point, the period of scorn for, or misunderstanding of African culture gave way to a period in which it was recognised and positively valued. (<http://www.afrikaworld.net/afrel/community.htm>).

While this is not quite true of the culture, it certainly is of its principal and fruitful element: the religious phenomenon. Its complexity is such that in order to define it several terms were invented by ethnologists: superstition, fetishism, animism, totemism, manism, magic, and paganism. All these terminologies express not only the complexity of the phenomenon, but also the awkwardness which its inventors felt when faced with such "inferior" forms of religion.

The most important thing is that it has been recognized that Africans have religions, or a religion, where these Africans have not only a link with the cosmos but also and above all with God. All agree in the recognition of the Supreme Being's location at the summit, in the structure of traditional religion in Africa. And if one considers it in its highest form – the mystical – one realises that it presents not only a sort of natural mysticism, a mysticism of insight, a mysticism of immanence, but also a mysticism of God's depth, a yearning of the soul for irrevocable union of the individual with God. Indeed, in Africans, who experience intensely this vertical dimension of their spiritual life, there is a deeply felt sense of direct participation in the existence of God, inwardly perceived as unique, immense, hidden, rich, "burning", just and good. So that, as has been noted, African mysticism is like others, an authentic, fascinating, complex and beautiful form of mysticism, one of the springs where parched souls can quench their thirst.

2.4 Misconceptions

The article *Can Christianity Dialogue With African Traditional Religion?* (<http://www.afrikaworld.net/afrel/sarpong.html>) narrates that in the hey-day of traditional religion in Africa, the word of mouth was considered much more sacred than the written word is now. The author, Archbishop Peter Kwesi Sarpong, laments that Written wills are being constantly contested in Asante as elsewhere with a disgraceful frequency. A hundred years ago, He contends, there was no way in which the verbal last testament of a dying person would be subtracted from, added to or disputed. Only one person may have heard it, yet it would be honoured. It was certain that that one person

would not put into the mouth of the dying person what he had not said. The word was powerful. Jesus taught this power of the word clearly. He never wrote down a word of what he said; but he founded a religion. African traditional religion does not tamper with the spoken word. Ceremonies of vital importance such as enstoolment of a chief, the marriage rite, the initiation of a priest or a youth into a secret society, the commissioning of a warrior, are all performed with ritual and words; nothing is written down. To break a verbal oath is one of the greatest felonies in Asante.

Archbishop Peter K. Sarpong continues that in his own life-time, Asante has seen a time when one could take food items from another person's farm without the latter's knowledge or consent. It was sufficient for the one who took the plantain or pepper to inform the rightful owner afterwards that he took it for personal consumption. He was believed, and would not abuse the trust by selling what he had taken.

That is what religion is about. Religion is about fidelity and conviction, not about interpretation and analysis of ideas. African traditional religion's lack of scripture has not, in any way, meant lack of effectiveness. Religion is to be practiced not just to be talked about.

Besides the negative view of African traditional religion, held by some people, based on its lack of scripture, African traditional religion, according to Sarpong, (<http://www.afrikaworld.net/afrel/sarpong.html>), has suffered other injustices especially in the way it has been labeled, namely;

'Paganism'

It has been called pagan. That this is a misnomer is easily seen from the origin of the word 'pagan'. The Latin root suggests that a pagan is originally a rugged, country person.

Later on, "paganism" was employed to refer to any religion that was not Islam, Judaism or Christianity. It is an injustice to call West African traditional religion, with a strong belief in a God who is unique, incomparable and a Creator, paganism.

‘Heathenism’

The word heathenism too is a misnomer when applied to traditional African religion. A heathen is somebody who is supposed not to know God, one steeped in the worship of idols. Nobody with the least knowledge of Africa can honestly say that Africans do not know God. In any case to designate a whole religion as heathenism is, to say the least, uncharitable.

‘Fetishism’

Why the word fetishism has caught on as a description of one form of African traditional religion is again one of those mysteries. The word derives from the Portuguese word *feitico* which means an object or an article. Discovering that the West Africans they met on the coast were wearing objects of religious value like charms, talismans and amulets, the Portuguese imagined that the religion of West Africans was a worship of such objects. One need not belabour the point that this is a great injustice. What about the wonderful names given to the Supreme Being and the honorific appellations he enjoys among us? The truth of the matter is that there is no religion in the world that can be called *fetishism*.

And if because sacred objects are found in African traditional religion, the religion is fetishistic, then we find ourselves in deep waters. There is no religion in which such objects are not found. In Christianity we respect statues and crucifixes, medals and rosaries. They, too, are objects. But we understand that these are a secondary aspect of

the Christian religion. Do they not also use prayer-beads? Do the Muslims not venerate the Kaaba?

‘Animism’

The term *animism* too, appears to be the choice of many. Coined by the great Tylor (1871) of Britain, animism is derived from the Latin word *anima*. The thinking behind the use of that word to describe African traditional Religion is that Africans believe that objects and animals have souls or spirits-*anima*.

While this may be true, it cannot be said that Africans believe that every object and every creature has such a spirit. In any case, again, the idea that some objects have spirits is not peculiar to Africa. It is simply incorrect to call African traditional religion animism.

‘Idolatry’

Idolatry simply means the worship of idols. The ideas found in African traditional religion comprise the belief in a Supreme Being, the ancestors, the lesser gods and powers and potencies.

Why such a religion can be linked with the worship of statues, pictures or images representing divinities which is how the Pan English Dictionary defines the word "idol" - is another of those inexplicable stereotypes. Even if, for the sake of the argument, it is admitted that lesser gods are idols one worshipped, then they form only part of the religion and, therefore, cannot be made to represent the whole religion. It is obnoxious to call African religion idolatry.

‘Primitive and Native’

Primitive is a derogatory term. It may mean first in time or it may mean “backward or “savage”. African religion is not backward nor does it precede any other religion. It evolved as human beings came to live in Africa. African religion should not be described as primitive. In the English language, the term native has come to connote uncivilized, somebody from Africa or one of the so-called “primitive” societies. This is an unfortunate understanding of the word native.

The Italian is as native to Italy as the Maori is native to New Zealand. Every religion, therefore, is native to where it is founded. African traditional religion cannot be singled out and dishonoured with the word “native”.

Christianity, on the other hand, is a monotheistic system of beliefs and practices based on the Old Testament and the teachings of Jesus as embodied in the New Testament and emphasizing the role of Jesus as savior. Christianity regards the Bible, a collection of canonical books in two parts (the Old Testament and the New Testament), as authoritative. It is believed by Christians to have been written by human authors under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, and therefore for many it is held to be the inerrant word of God. The books that are considered canon in the Bible vary depending upon the denomination using or defining it. These variations are a reflection of the range of traditions and councils that have convened on the subject. The Bible always includes books of the Jewish scriptures, the Tanakh, and includes additional books and reorganizes them into two parts: the books of the Old Testament primarily sourced from the Tanakh (with some variations), and the 27 books of the New Testament containing books originally written primarily in Greek. The Roman Catholic and Orthodox canons include other books from the Septuagint Greek Jewish canon which Roman Catholics call

Deuterocanonical. Protestants consider these books apocryphal. Some versions of the Christian Bible have a separate Apocryphal section for the books not considered canonical by the publisher. (<http://www.afrikaworld.net/afrel/sarpong.html>)

The History of Christianity in Africa began in the 1st century when Mark the Evangelist started the Orthodox Church of Alexandria in about the year 43 AD. Little is known about the first couple of centuries of African Christian history, beyond the list of bishops of Alexandria. (<http://www.wikipedia.org/Christianity.html>).

At first the church in Alexandria was mainly Greek-speaking, but by the end of the second century, the scriptures and Liturgy had been translated into three local languages. Christianity was also planted in north-western Africa (today known as the Maghreb), but the churches there were linked to the Church of Rome.

At the beginning of the third century, according to Wikipedia (<http://www.wikipedia.org/Christianity.html>), the church began to expand rapidly, and five new bishoprics were established. These were suffragans of Alexandria, and at this time the Bishop of Alexandria began to be called Pope, as the senior bishop in Egypt. In the middle of the third century the church in Egypt suffered severely in the persecution under the Emperor Decius. Many Christians fled from the towns into the desert. When the persecution died down, however, some remained in the desert as hermits to pray. This was the beginning of Christian monasticism, which over the following years spread from Africa to other parts of the Christian world.

The fourth century began with renewed persecution under the Emperor Diocletian. In the early fourth century, King Ezana declared Christianity the official religion of the

Ethiopian Kingdom of Aksum after having been converted by Frumentius, resulting in the foundation of the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church.

2.5 Christianity In Africa Today

At the beginning of this twenty-first century, Christianity is probably the main religion in most of sub-Saharan Africa, while in the northern part of the continent it is a minority religion, where the majority of the population is Moslem. There has been tremendous growth of Christianity in Africa. As evidence, only nine million Christians were in Africa in 1900, but by the year 2000, there were an estimated 380 million Christians.

According to a 2006 Pew Forum on Religion and Public life study, 147 millions of African Christians were "renewalists" (a term that includes both Pentecostals and charismatics). (http://www.wikipedia.org/Christianity_in_Africa.htm). Much of the Christian growth in Africa is now due to African evangelism rather than Western missionaries. In South Africa, it is rare to find a person with no religious beliefs, which is almost always Christianity amongst the whites, but Christianity is also popular amongst the blacks, especially city-dwellers. Christianity in Africa shows tremendous variety, from the ancient forms of Oriental Orthodox Christianity in Egypt, Ethiopia, and Eritrea to the newest African-Christian denominations of Nigeria and Ghana, countries that have experienced massive conversion to Christianity in the recent time.

Some experts tell about the shift of Christianity's center of gravity from the Western industrialized nations to Africa, Asia and Latin America in modern times. A Yale University historian stated, that "African Christianity was not just an exotic, curious phenomenon in an obscure part of the world, but that African Christianity might be the shape of things to come." (http://www.wikipedia.org/Christianity_in_Africa.htm). The statistics from the World Christian

Encyclopedia (David Barrett) illustrates the emerging trend of dramatic Christian growth on the continent and supposes that in 2025 there will be 633 million Christians in Africa. (http://www.wikipedia.org/Christianity_in_Africa.htm).

2.6 Perspective On Ghanaian Religious Mix

The country, Ghana, has an area of approximately 617, 810. 6 square Kilometres and an estimated population of approximately 21 million. The presence of Christian missionaries on the coast of Ghana has been dated to the arrival of the Portuguese in the fifteenth century. It was the Basel/Presbyterian and Wesleyan/Methodist missionaries, however, who, in the nineteenth century, laid the foundation for the Christian church in Ghana. Beginning their conversions in the coastal area and among the Akwapim, these missionaries established schools as "nurseries of the church" in which an educated African class was trained. Almost all major secondary schools today, especially exclusively boys and girls schools, are mission- or church-related institutions. Although churches continue to influence the development of education in the country, church schools have been opened to all since the state assumed financial responsibility for formal instruction under the Education Act of 1960. Various Christian denominations are well represented in Ghana. The Volta Region has a high concentration of Evangelical Presbyterians. Many Akwapim are Presbyterians, and the Methodist denomination is strongly represented among the Fante. The Roman Catholic Church is fairly well represented in the Central and Ashanti Regions.

The unifying organization of Christians in the country is the Ghana Christian Council, founded in 1929. ([http://www.wikipedia.org/Christianity/Religion and Law Research Consortium.htm](http://www.wikipedia.org/Christianity/Religion_and_Law_Research_Consortium.htm)). Representing the Methodist, Anglican, Mennonite, Presbyterian,

Evangelical Presbyterian, African Methodist Episcopal Zionist, Christian Methodist, Evangelical Lutheran, F'Eden, and Baptist churches, and the Society of Friends, the council serves as the link with the World Council of Churches and other ecumenical bodies. (http://www.wikipedia.org/Christianity_in_Africa.htm). The National Catholic Secretariat, established in 1960, also coordinates the different in-country dioceses. These Christian organizations, concerned primarily with the spiritual affairs of their congregations, have often played social roles in the country to enhance the system of governance in the country.

The religious composition of Ghana in the first post-independent population census of 1960 was 41 percent Christian, 38 percent traditionalist, 12 percent Muslim, and the rest (about 9 percent) of no religious affiliation. The percentage of the general population considered to be Christian rose sharply to 62 percent according to a 1985 estimate. (http://www.wikipedia.org/Christianity_in_Africa.htm). Whereas the Protestant (non-Pentecostal) sector remained at 25 percent, the percentage of Catholics increased by 15 percent. A larger rise, however, was recorded for Protestants (Pentecostals) -- 8 percent compared with their 2 percent representation in 1960. From being the smallest Christian sect, with a 1 percent representation among the general population in 1960, membership in the Independent African Churches rose the most--to about 14 percent by 1985. The 1985 estimate, again, also showed that the Muslim population of Ghana rose by 15 percent. Conversely, the sector representing traditionalists and non-believers (38 and 9 percent, respectively, in 1960), saw dramatic declines by 1985--to 21 and about 1 percent, respectively. This shift, especially the increase in favour of the Independent African Churches, attests to the success of denominations that have adjusted their doctrines to suit local beliefs.

There was not a significant link between ethnicity and religion; however, geography was often associated with religious identity. The majority of the Muslim population was concentrated in northern areas as well as in the urban centres of Accra, Kumasi, Sekondi-Takoradi, Tamale, and Wa, while the majority of the followers of traditional indigenous religions resided in rural areas. Christians lived throughout the country. ([http:// www .nifcon.anglicancommunion.org/ghana.htm](http://www.nifcon.anglicancommunion.org/ghana.htm)). Generally, the population is made up of adherents of African traditional religion, Christians, Muslims and more recently, pockets of religions and sects of Eastern origin. However, Christianity, Traditional religion and Islam are the three dominant religions. According to the 2000 population census, Ghanaians are predominantly Christian, with more than two-thirds (68.8%) of the total population claiming to be Christians. Muslims are the second largest religious group with 15.9% followed by practitioners of Traditional African Religions with 8.5%. (<http://www.wikipedia.org/Christianity/Religion and Law Research Consortium.htm>).

Pentecostal and charismatic churches are reported to be the fastest growing denominations in Ghana. Approximately 6.2 percent of the population does not affiliate itself with a particular religion. Other religious groups include the Baha'i faith, Buddhism, Judaism, Hinduism, Shintoism, Nichiren Shoshu Soka Gakkai, Sri Sathya Sai Baba Sera, Sat Sang, Eckankar, the Divine Light Mission, Hare Krishna, and Rastafarianism. There were also some separatist or spiritual churches that included elements of Christianity and traditional beliefs such as magic and divination. Zetahil, a practice unique to Ghana, combines elements of Christianity and Islam. There are no statistics available for the percentage of atheists. (<http://www.wikipedia.org/Christianity/Religion and Law Research Consortium.htm>).

The dominant religion in the Ashanti Region is Christianity (77.5%) followed by Islam (13.2%). The proportion of Christians is higher than the national average (68.8%), while that of Moslems is lower than the national average (15.9%). The proportion with no religion is however relatively high (7.3%). The region has 36 Traditional Councils, each headed by a Paramount Chief. The Traditional Councils are the decentralized units of administration by traditional rulers and are used to mobilize the people at the local and community levels for development. The traditional head of the region is the Asante King (*Asantehene*), the Otumfuo. All the Paramount Chiefs in the region are members of the Ashanti Regional House of Chiefs, with the Asante King as the President of the house. The main language spoken in the region is Twi.

Several festivals are celebrated in the region, the major ones being the *Akwasidae* and *Adae Kese*. These are religious festivals celebrated by some members of the Akan ethnic group to which the Asantes belong. The festivals are celebrated to remember past leaders and heroes. Though they are dead, their spirits are believed to be alive and taking interest in the affairs of the living, watching their doings and consulting with them particularly, at '*Adae Kese*'. (<http://www.wikipedia.org/Christianity>)

The Kumasi metropolis alone accounts for nearly one-third of the region's population. In the Kumasi township, different sects of Christianity, Islam, Buddhists and adherents of African Traditional Religion often vie for greater levels of influence among the populace albeit overtly or through more orthodox means like Evangelism, Crusades, Festivals, etc.

2.7 African Traditional Religions

African traditional religions, also referred to as African indigenous religions or African ethnic religions, is a term referring to a variety of religions indigenous to the continent of

Africa. Like ethnic religions from other parts of the world, African religious traditions are defined largely along community lines. Traditional African religions involve teachings, practices, and rituals that lend structure to African traditional societies. These traditional African religions also play a large part in the cultural understanding and awareness of the people of their communities. While African Traditional Religion and Christianity differ in many ways, some main similarities exist, including:

- A distant "all god" with intermediaries acting between us and him.
- Spirit or god possession
- The gift of offerings and sacrifices to the gods
- The use of altars
- Ancestor veneration
- Community leadership by a divine or semi-divine king or queen.

(<http://www.wikipedia.org/Christianity>).

Religion may be a difficult word to define, however it becomes even more difficult in the context of African Traditional life. Ethnic religion is not easy to define. It has sometimes been called 'primitive religion', but the word 'primitive' has a pejorative tone and is inappropriate. According to Parrinder (1962), religion lies at the root of African culture and it is essential to African life. The reason for this lies in the fact that religion is so all-pervading and soul-absorbing in Africa that there is scarcely a sphere of life activity which is not influenced by it. It gives inspiration to artists and craftsmen, to farmers and hunters, to rulers and subject, to historians and drummers. It motivates politics and legislation, upholds authority and comradeship, and ensures social stability in times of war and peace. Mbiti (1975) buttresses this position that religion is formal in all areas of human life. It has dominated the thinking of many people of different origins, particularly

Africans, to such an extent that it has shaped their cultures, their social lives, their political organization and economic activities.

Ancestor veneration is a practice based on the belief that deceased family members have a continued existence, take an interest in the affairs of the world, and/or possess the ability to influence the fortune of the living. All cultures attach ritual significance to the passing of loved ones, but this is not equivalent to ancestor veneration. The goal of ancestor veneration is to ensure the ancestors' continued well-being and positive disposition towards the living and sometimes to ask for special favours or assistance. The social or non-religious function of ancestor veneration is to cultivate kinship values like filial piety, family loyalty, and continuity of the family lineage.

While far from universal, ancestor veneration occurs in societies with every degree of social, political, and technological complexity, and it remains an important component of various religious practices in modern times. (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ancestor_worship).

2.8 African Traditional Religion In Ghana

Despite the presence of Islam and Christianity, traditional religions in Ghana have retained their influence because of their intimate relation to family loyalties and local mores (social rules prescribing behavior of individuals in a society, which, if violated, result in strong disapproval or punishment). The traditional cosmology expresses belief in a supreme being (referred to by the Akan as Nyame, or by the Ewe as Mawu). There are also the lesser divinities that take "residency" in streams, rivers, trees, and mountains. These divinities are generally perceived as intermediaries between the Supreme Being and society. Ancestors and numerous other spirits are also recognized as part of the cosmological order. (http://www.wikipedia.org/wiki/religion_in_ghana.htm).

For all Ghanaian ethnic groups, the spirit world is considered to be as real as the world of the living. The dual worlds of the mundane and the sacred are linked by a network of mutual relationships and responsibilities. The action of the living, for example, is believed to affect the gods or spirits of the departed, while the support of family or ethnic ancestors ensure prosperity of the lineage or state. Neglect, it is believed, might spell doom.

Veneration of departed ancestors is a major characteristic of all traditional religions. The ancestors are believed to be the most immediate link with the spiritual world, and they are thought to be constantly near, observing every thought and action of the living. Some ancestors may even be reincarnated to replenish the lineage. Barrenness is, therefore, considered a great misfortune because it prevents ancestors from returning to life. (http://www.wikipedia.org/wiki/religion_in_ghana.htm).

To ensure that a natural balance is maintained between the world of the sacred and that of the profane, the roles of the chief within the state, family elders in relation to the lineage, and the priest within society, are crucial. The religious functions, especially of chiefs and lineage heads, are clearly demonstrated during such periods as the *Odwira* of the Akan, the *Homowo* of the Ga-Adangbe, or the *Aboakyir* of the Efutu (coastal Guan), when the people are organized in activities that renew and strengthen relations with their ancestors. Such activities include the offering of sacrifices and the pouring of libations.

The religious activities of chiefs and lineage heads are generally limited to the more routine biweekly and annual festivities, but traditional priests--given their association with specific shrines--are regarded as specialized practitioners through whom the spirits of the divinities may grant directions. Priests undergo vigorous training in the arts of medicine, divination, and other related disciplines and are, therefore, consulted on a more

regular basis by the public. Because many diseases are believed to have spiritual causes, traditional priests sometimes act as doctors or herbalists. Shrine visitation is strongest among the uneducated and in rural communities. This fact, however, does not necessarily suggest that the educated Ghanaian has totally abandoned tradition; some educated and mission-trained individuals do consult traditional oracles in times of crisis. (http://www.wikipedia.org/wiki/religion_in_ghana.htm).

2.9 Characteristics Of African Traditional Religion

Religion is formal in all areas of human life. According to Mbiti (1975), it has dominated the thinking of many people of different origins, particularly Africans, to such an extent that it has shaped their cultures, their social lives, their political organization and economic activities.

In an African Temple or shrine, a worship might be characterised by libation, incantations, sacrifices, aspersions, medicinal rubbings, consecration (of food, amulets, priests, mediums), communion, all of which might be performed amidst drumming, singing and dancing. Akoi (1970), indicates that, in the course of these, a person might fall into a trance or begin to talk strangely and even prophesy-a phenomenon which was often strongly indicative of a spiritual visitation and promoted religious fervour amongst worshippers.

2.10 General Similarities Between Christianity And African Traditional Religion

2.11 Creator God

According to Boafo (1908), a common ground can be found in the area of how the universe came to be (cosmogony). Both Christianity and African traditional religions

have creation accounts. In Christianity, Adam sinned in the Garden of Eden, and an alienation of humans from God resulted. With this, alienation from an originally given right relationship of humans with God, death, both physical and spiritual, entered the world. In most African traditional religions, the Supreme God dwelt close to humanity until humanity offended God. The offended God departed and chose to dwell far away from the reach of humanity.

The Supreme Being in most African Traditional Religions is seen as the creator of humans and all other things. This Supreme Being is viewed in different forms and dwelling places, yet he is the almighty. He is often distant from humans because of some bad actions of humans.

There is much discussion among African theologians and missionaries alike concerning whether or not the creator God of various African Traditional Religions is Jehovah God. Some Bible translators have chosen to use the name *Creator God* and others have settled on *Jehovah* or simply *God*.

With Christianity, God rules by his divine Son and through governments, and family heads. But in traditional religion, God rules through lesser gods, ancestors, and families. Both religions believe in a Supreme God who is the creator. This Supreme God is also benevolent, a helper and a deliverer. God in both religions, rules by delegated authority. (Ebenezer Boafo, *Communicating The Message About Jesus To African Traditional Religionists*, 1908).

2.1.2 The Presence Of Evil

Humans are often believed to be the battle ground between evil and good forces in the world. Humans can also call upon evil forces to punish or persecute wrong doers or

enemies. Special functionaries have the greatest input into the forces of evil but all people can wield it to a lesser degree. The two religions claim that the universe is inhabited by spiritual beings as well as physical beings. These spirit-beings are both good and bad. In addition to the Supreme God, both religions acknowledge the existence of a head of the evil spirits who is a personal opponent to humankind and is notorious for rebellion and destruction. In Christianity, this evil one is known as humanity's accuser, Satan.

2.13 Unseen Realm

African Traditional Religions divides the world into the seen and the unseen realms.

Existence is lived in wholeness of those two 'realities'.

(<http://www.afrikaworld.net/atrcom.html>). The two realms interact with each other. Some personalities have lived in both realms more than once. People can move into the unseen realm during dreams, visions, or trances and, of course at death. There is constant communication between the Seen and Unseen. Most African Traditional Religions have functionaries who communicate with God and the spirits on behalf of individuals and the community. This does not negate the ability of individuals to communicate with the unseen. These functionaries are trained, initiated, and in many cases, from a bloodline that has a special window into the unseen realm. Communication takes many forms. Chief among them are prayers or incantations. In Traditional religions and Christianity are specialized ministers who administer certain functions for the people they serve. Christianity has prophets, pastors, priests, priestesses and elders, while traditional religions have priests, priestesses, and prophets. Sacrifice for sin is an important theme in both religions. In African traditional religions, sacrifices are human beings' attempt to turn back evil, or to bargain with God or divinities.

(<http://www.afrikaworld.net/atrcom.html>).

2.14 Emphasis On Community

Some would say that family is at the core of African society. Family is indeed emphasized. Society is broader than that. It is composed of friends, age mates, and relatives. Not only does each member of the community have a defined role to play, but there are responsibilities to each other that when transgressed bring about judgment from God or the other spirits. Both religions recognize the important role of the family as the basic unit of society. The family nurtures the individual and offers the individual a sense of community. (<http://www.afrikaworld.net/atrcom.html>).

2.15 Covenant

God has made covenants with humans on several occasions. Some of them include the biblical figures of Abraham, Jacob and Muhammad of Islam. The legendary priest, Okomfo Anokye, in African Traditional Religion, is believed to have been in covenant with God for which he was given special powers and abilities to play his remarkable role in Asante history. The breaking of those covenants is what is thought to have caused the Creator God to be so distant from humans. (Genesis 15:1 - 16).

2.16 General Differences Between Christianity And African Traditional Religion

According to Boafo (1908), the main differences between Christianity and African traditional religions exist in the domain of their respective claims and in their organization. Above all, they differ on how a human being enters a blessed eternity in the presence of a holy

and just God. In African traditional religions there is a faint line between humanity and the world of the spirits. Communication with the spirit world is the norm rather than the exception. God speaks the language of the people, the gods speak the language of the people, and the ancestors also speak the language of the people.

Christianity, Boafo (1908) maintains that God does not permit its adherents to communicate with any spirit apart from Him. God also forbids any attempt to contact the spirits of the dead. (Deut 18:10-11 There shall not be found among you any one that makes his son or his daughter to pass through the fire, *or that useth divination, or an observer of times, or an enchanter, or a charmer, or a consulter with familiar spirits, or a necromancer*). Certainly the Scriptures note that at times angels talked to human beings. Angels approached Abraham; an angel talked to Joshua; an angel appeared to Mary; and an angel appeared to the women who visited Jesus' tomb. Yet it is clear that the humans involved did not initiate these encounters.

On the other hand, African Traditional religions may be called nature religions, because they are generally directed towards the maintenance of vitality in the life and society of the natural man, while Christianity's emphasis is on a special spiritual kingdom centred on a unique individual, Jesus Christ, who is both God and Man. He is believed by Christians to give sinners forgiveness and to present God's new creation. In this regard, Christianity sees the Divine Being in terms of a unique Person revealed and involved in history, Jesus Christ of Nazareth. (Through Him God the Creator, who is also a Redeemer of creation, is fulfilling His will and purposes). For the African traditional religionist the Creator Supreme God is not far removed from human involvement, believing that divinities and ancestors serve as intermediaries between man and God. Through them God is accessible to humankind. Christianity's strong ethical consciousness

is based on God's action on behalf of fallen humanity (Colossians 3:1-3). For the adherent of traditional religions, God is believed to set the standard of righteousness through intermediaries.

That is why, for example, people say that somebody does not fear God when he commits a heinous crime. Therefore, Righteousness is to honour and sacrifice the Supreme Being to gods and ancestors, and to observe ethnic norms of behaviour and taboos. But when the Bible gives its readers explicit ethics and morals, it is God who sets the standard for righteousness. At the same time, He also gives righteousness and empowers righteous living of anyone who is "in Christ." A person is righteous in God's sight when he or she trusts Christ as the truly Righteous Saviour. In Christ is the central revelation of God's grace and forgiveness (Isaiah 59:14).

Unlike traditional religions, Christianity is not rooted in one land or race of people but is universal. According to Christianity, God speaks to individuals and groups of people across all cultures. God as Creator and Redeemer gives each and every individual a special sense of worth and dignity. Human self-esteem is not dependent upon one's social status or clan, prominence or fulfilment of ethnic ritual, but upon God esteeming individuals by saving them in Jesus Christ. In African traditional religions, The knowledge of God is just like a natural inheritance: passed from generation to generation, giving the group rather than the individual the sense of worth and dignity. With reference to Akan religion, for example, J.B. Danquah was noted to have said that "Akan religion, in its highest expression, is the worship of the race." (Ebenezer Boafo, *Communicating The Message About Jesus To African Traditional Religionists*, 1908).

Christianity has a sacred book, creeds and dogmas. It also partly expresses itself through cultic rites and religious practices. African traditional religions are expressed mostly through cultic rites and religious practices. Oral tradition and repetitive rituals convey beliefs in traditional

religions. Boafo (1908) and Hiebert (1978) classify Christianity as a high religion and traditional religions as a low religion. A high religion is systematized and well-organized. “High” religion places emphasis on the high God and cosmic ideologies. Low religions place emphasis on how to control spiritual power. Their main concerns are pressing earthly issues. However, it should be noted that the distinction between high and low religions depend on the bias of the speaker’s or writer’s religious affiliation or tenet.

2.17 Religious Co-Habitation In Communities

Religious intolerance is either intolerance motivated by one's own religious beliefs or intolerance against another's religious beliefs or practices. It manifests at a cultural level, but may also be a formal part of the dogma of particular religious groups. The mere statement on the part of a religion that its own beliefs and practices are correct and any contrary beliefs incorrect does not in itself constitute intolerance. There are many cases throughout history of established religions tolerating other practices. Religious intolerance, rather, is when a group (a society, a religious group) specifically refuses to tolerate practices, persons or beliefs on religious grounds. Religious intolerance may be purely religious, but can be a "cover story" for an underlying political or cultural motive. (http://www.wikipedia/religious_conflicts.htm).

According to the International Religious Freedom Report 2006, released by the United States Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, in the USA, there was no significant tension between traditional and mainstream religion (Islam and Christianity). Rather, there was some degree of overlap in religious practices as traditional religion still had a strong hold on society and in many cases coexisted with formal religions. Many Christians and Muslims, for example, held traditional religious beliefs while also adhering to mainstream religious doctrines or practices.

Similarly, many Catholics and Protestants also attended Pentecostal or charismatic church services. (<http://www.wikipedia.org/Christianity/Religion and Law Research Consortium.htm>). The report continued that relations between the various religious communities were generally amicable and spokespersons for these communities often advocate tolerance towards different religions; however, there was occasional tension among some religious groups. Public discussion continued over religious worship versus traditional practices and respect for the rights and customs of others in a diverse society. While some religious leaders actively discouraged religiously motivated violence, discrimination, or harassment, others, particularly lay persons associated with evangelical groups, continued to preach intolerance for other religions such as Islam and traditional religions. In an address during the first quarter of 2006, the Moderator of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of Ghana, Reverend Dr. Yaw Frimpong-Manso, described the practice whereby Christian leaders who honour invitations to the activities and share the same platforms with non-Christians and practitioners of other religions as dangerous.

In Ghana, in June 2006, the media reported of physical tensions between the Christ Apostolic Church (CAC) and the Ga traditional authority, a chieftaincy group for ethnic Gas in the Accra area, when members from each group physically confronted each other. This incident developed when the CAC violated the annual monthly ban on drumming imposed by traditional authorities in Accra. For years CAC's use of drumming and other musical instruments in their services was a source of tension between this group and the Ga traditional authority and in 2001 resulted in violence. (<http://www.wikipedia.org/Christianity/Religion and Law Research Consortium.htm>).

2.18 Contemporary attitude and practice

A number of countries worldwide contain provisions within their constitutions expressly forbidding the state from engaging in certain acts of religious intolerance or preference within its own borders. Examples include The First Amendment of the United States Constitution, Article 4 of the Basic Law of Germany, Article 44.2.1 of the Constitution of The Republic of Ireland, Article 24 of the Constitution of Turkey and Article 36 of the Constitution of the People's Republic of China. Many other states contain provisions forbidding discrimination on religious grounds. These include, for example, Article 1 of the French Constitution, article 15 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and article 40 of the Constitution of Egypt. (http://www.wikipedia/religious_conflicts.htm). It should be noted that these constitutional provisions do not necessarily guarantee that all elements of the state remain free from religious intolerance at all times, and practice can vary widely from country to country.

Other countries, meanwhile, may allow for religious preference, for instance through the establishment of one or more state religions, but not for religious intolerance. Finland, for example, has the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland and Finnish Orthodox Church as its official state religions, and upholds the right of free expression of religion in article 11 of its constitution. (http://www.wikipedia/religious_conflicts.htm).

Some countries retain blasphemy laws, forbidding defamation of religious belief, which are sometimes seen as a way of condoning religious intolerance. Whilst some countries retain laws forbidding all forms of blasphemy (such as Germany where in 2006 Manfred van H. was convicted of blasphemy against Islam), the connection between intolerance and blasphemy laws is most closely connected if the laws apply to only one religion. In Pakistan blasphemy directed against either the tenets of the Qur'an or the Prophet

Mohammed is punishable by either life imprisonment or death. Apostasy, the rejection of one's old religion, is also criminalized in a number of countries, notably Afghanistan with Abdul Rahman being the first to face the death penalty for converting to Christianity. (http://www.wikipedia/religious_conflicts.htm).

The United Nations upholds the right to free expression of religious belief in article 18 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights while article 2 forbids discrimination on the basis of religion. Article 18 also allows for the freedom to change religion. (GHANA-International Religious Freedom Report 2006, Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, USA., 2007). The Declaration is not legally binding, however the United States chose in 1998 to pass the International Religious Freedom Act, creating the Commission on International Religious Freedom, and mandating that the United States government takes action against any country found to violate the religious freedoms outlined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The European Convention on Human Rights, which is legally binding on all European Union states (following the passage of the Human Rights Act, 1998 in the United Kingdom), makes restricting the rights of an individual to practice or change their religion illegal in article 9, and discrimination on the basis of religion illegal in article 14. (GHANA-International Religious Freedom Report 2006, Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, USA., 2007)

In November, 2004, acts of intolerance were perpetrated in Zanzibar - Arsonists set fire to a Roman Catholic Church in central Zanzibar, burning chairs and chests filled with clothes in "an act of religious intolerance," a police official, Hamad Issa, said. ([religious_conflicts.htm](http://www.wikipedia/religious_conflicts.htm)). Though it is not always the case of tolerance because there is an example of intolerance in Zanzibar. Authorities believe unidentified assailants broke into the church and started the fire by igniting cloth sacks that had been soaked in gasoline. The blaze came amid a growing tension between Muslim

fundamentalists on one hand and the Roman Catholic Church on the other. The Muslim fundamentalists were also against the secular authorities who govern Zanzibar, an overwhelmingly Muslim archipelago off the Indian Ocean coast of Tanzania. Roman Catholics and other Christians make less than 1% of Zanzibar's one million people. Police had banned the Zanzibar Islamic Propagation Organisation from holding demonstrations, saying the group advocates killing leaders who refused to impose Islamic law in Zanzibar. However, moderate Zanzibar Muslim leaders and Tanzanian and foreign officials have expressed concerns about rising extremism among young Muslims in the archipelago, which includes Zanzibar and the smaller island of Pemba. (http://www.wikipedia/religious_conflicts.htm).

Religious violence is not a new phenomenon in host-communities. Religious divisions have been consistent factors in the political conflicts of the 29th to the 21st centuries. The violence that characterised South Asia since the partitioning of India and Pakistan in 1948 included setting on fire or dowsing with vitriol or sulphuric acid unsuspecting Hindu, Sikh and Muslim families. Religious beliefs were sometimes outlawed and often submerged, but seldom did they entirely disappear without a truce. (Cardice L. Goucher, etal. *In The Balance-Themes in Global History*, 1998).

2.19 Freedom of religion in Ghana

Although freedom of religion exists in Ghana, a Religious Bodies (Registration) Law 2989 was passed in June 1989 to regulate churches. (GHANA-International Religious Freedom Report 2006, Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, USA., 2007). By requiring certification of all Christian religious organizations operating in Ghana, the government reserved the right to inspect the functioning of these bodies and to order the auditing of their financial statements.

The Ghana Council of Churches interpreted the Religious Bodies Law as contradicting the concept of religious freedom in the country. According to a government statement, however, the law was designed to protect the freedom and integrity of genuine religious organizations by exposing and eliminating groups established to take advantage of believers. The PNDC repealed the law in late 1992. Despite its provisions, all orthodox Christian denominations and many spiritual churches continued to operate in the country. (GHANA-International Religious Freedom Report 2006, Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, USA., 2007)

Improved relations between religious groups were also aided by the creation of the Ghana Congress of Religions and Peace (GCRP) in July 2005. Modeled after the World Congress of Religion and Peace, it is composed of Christian and Muslim leaders and aims to foster tolerance between these two religious groups. As part of its activities, the GCRP lobbied government on issues of religious freedom, family planning and anti-abortion laws, and campaigned for compassion for those afflicted with HIV/AIDS. The GCRP is recognized by the Ghanaian government and enjoys good relations with the Government. ([http://www.wikipedia.org/Christianity/Religion and Law Research Consortium.htm](http://www.wikipedia.org/Christianity/Religion_and_Law_Research_Consortium.htm)).

2.20 Influence Of Christianity And African Traditional Religion On Host Communities

Christianity and African Traditional Religion exert different forms of influences on their host communities. The belief by their adherents that their religions play a key role in the sustenance and perpetuity of their host communities, is perhaps, one of the most enduring and positive influence. (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/social_resposibility.htm). This has led to a kind of religious social responsibility. Akoi (1970) reiterates the same point by indicating that religion was so fundamental to African life that the socio-religious

institutions which may seem to belong to the remote past, still influence the minds of modern Africans.

Social responsibility is an ethical or ideological theory that an entity, whether it is a government, corporation, organization or individual has, a responsibility to society but this responsibility can be "negative. In that it is a responsibility to refrain from acting (resistance stance) or it can be "positive," meaning there is a responsibility to act (proactive stance). This notion is often associated with business and governmental practices, religious groups, activist groups and local communities.

There is a large inequality in the means and roles of different entities to fulfill their claimed responsibility. This would imply that the different entities have different responsibilities, in so much as states should ensure the civil rights of their citizens, that corporations should respect and encourage the human rights of their employees and that citizens should abide by written laws. But social responsibility can mean more than these examples. Many religious groups and NGOs accept that their role and the responsibility of their members as citizens is to help improve society by taking a proactive stance in their societal roles. It can also imply that corporations have an implicit obligation to give back to society. (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/social_responsibility.htm).

The social values of Christianity contribute to its success in host communities. A typical example is the Central Aid developed from the International Central Gospel Church (ICGC) Educational Scholarship Scheme inaugurated on 29th December, 1988. The ICGC is an independent African church and is of the Pentecostal-Charismatic persuasion. (<http://www.mensaotabil.com/centralaid/edu-grants.php.htm>). It was the brain child of the Founder and General Overseer of ICGC, Rev. Dr. Mensa Otabil, who from personal experience has deep compassion for needy youth, whose educational attainment could be

hindered or stunted altogether by financial constraints. From this compassion, Central Aid, incorporated under the Companies Code, limited by guarantee, has implemented some programmes in providing access to education to both youths and adults. Against the background to enhance the accomplishment of its mission statement, in 2003, an expanded programme was put in place to assist children, youth and adults to harness their creative potentials and available natural resources for their individual development and of their societies. It is heart-warming to note that in the short term, plans/proposals include:

- Human Development/Education Support Services.
- Capital Accumulation/Welfare Support Services.
- Agricultural Development/Poverty Reduction Programmes.
- Help Our People Excel (HOPE) Centres.
- Life Enhancement Services.

(<http://www.mensaotabil.com/centralaid/edu-grants.php.htm>).

Contributions of the African Traditional Religion are mainly in the following areas – Herbal medicine, funeral rites, communal consensus on traditional issues and chieftaincy affairs. African Traditional Religion enfolds the whole of one's life and therefore there is no dichotomy between life and religion.

Virtue in African traditional religion is often connected with the communal aspect of life. Examples include such social behaviors as respect for parents and elders, appropriate raising of children, provision of hospitality, and being honest, trustworthy and courageous. In some ATRs, morality is associated with obedience or disobedience to God regarding the way a person or a community lives.

God, acting through the lesser deities, is believed to speak to and be capable of guiding the virtuous person as one's "conscience." But so could the Devil and his messengers. In indigenous African religions, a person is said to have a good or bad conscience depending on whether he does the bidding of the God or the Devil. (www.nationmaster.com/encyclopedia/african_traditional_religion).

Traditional Africans share the basic instinct of gregariousness with the rest of humankind. They share life intensely in common. There are communal farmlands, economic trees, streams, barns, and markets. There are also communal shrines, squares, masquerades, ritual objects and festivals for recreational activities, social, economic and religious purposes. Members of the same kindred or clan could distinguish themselves by their proficiency in a particular trade, skill or profession. Some traditional African communities or even entire language group may be experts in rain-making, wood carving, practice of traditional medicine, or black-smithing. For example, the Asantes of Ahwia and Krofrom of Ghana, are widely reputed for their skills in wood-carving and black-smithing respectively. These and similar features characterize the communal life of both agrarian and nomadic groups of traditional Africa. Closeness to nature, the experience of life in terribly hazardous environment, and the crucial need for security and better performance in means of livelihood are some relevant factors that combine to deepen the natural impulse for gregariousness and sense of community among different African peoples. (www.atr/community.htm)

For traditional Africans, community is much more than simply a social grouping of people bound together by reasons of natural origin and/or deep common interests and values. It is both a society as well as a unity of the visible and invisible worlds; the world of the physically living on the one hand, and the world of the ancestors, divinities and

souls of children yet to be born to individual kin-groups. The network of relationships among human beings are remarkably extended and deep. In fact, the words 'family', 'brother', or 'sister', etc. define far more for Africans than what they mean today for the average European or North American. The family for the traditional African, usually includes one's direct parents, grand and great grand parents, brothers, sisters, uncles, and aunts, cousins, nieces and nephews. And normally, a child would refer to any of his uncles or aunts as his father or mother, his nephews and nieces as his/her brothers and sisters. The extended family system is the model. The nuclear family pattern is alien and believed to be inimical to the traditional value of community. Actually, it is only in recent times that the latter system began to surface mainly in urban towns as a result of external influences on the African Continent. The extended family structure is held up to people as model, one in which parents, grand-parents, uncles, aunts, nephews and nieces live together and are cared for by their children, grand-children and other relatives in mutual love and respect.

The invisible members of any traditional community, especially ancestors and spiritual beings are thought to be powerful and by far superior to human beings. Their reality and presence in the community are duly acknowledged and honoured among various traditional African groups. The invisible beings are represented by different kinds of symbols like carved objects, shrines and sacred altars. They may also be recalled in personal names given to children, especially in cases where particular ancestors or spirit beings are held to have reincarnated in individual children. (www.atr/community.htm)

The presence of the ancestors is particularly felt in traditional African community. They are believed to be benevolent and powerful representatives of the community in the (spirit land). Their symbols and shrines are common features among most traditional

West African groups. This includes carved ancestral stools among the Akans of Ghana. Hence, the belief in ancestors and the supernatural order, in addition to its inherent religious import, provides traditional African groups a useful over-arching system that helps people organise reality and impose divine authority and sanction to their life. The *Adae* rites which take place every twenty-one days and the annual *Odwira* festival are high points of the Akan veneration of ancestral spirits. Furthermore, ancestors are generally held to be the custodians of the land on which their children live. They are guardians of family affairs, customs, traditions and ethical norms. Offence in these matters is ultimately an offence against the forefathers who in that capacity act as invisible police of the families and communities. Ancestors are thought to mete quick and severe punishments on people who disregard the hallowed traditions of the community, or infringe taboos and norms of acceptable behaviour in society. (E.Ikenga-Metuh, *God And Man In African Religion*, 1981).

Rites marking the transition of individuals and groups from one significant stage of life to another abound in traditional African societies. Similar rites are also found in several parts of the world outside Africa. Initiation rites have far-reaching implications for the life of individuals and the community at large. They are exposed to the 'treasured secrets', including the historical landmarks, myths and symbols of their community. Extracts of the instruction may read like this; "Now you are big. Never be rude to anyone older than yourself, especially, not your mother, father, father's brother, and mother's sister. If you do this your mother and father will die, and you will be poor ... and no one will care for you. This is a very evil thing.. You are big now! Do not do these things, to us ... they are taboos. Never lie with young girls. If you do you will die". (E.Ikenga-Metuh, *God And Man In African Religion*, 1981). The awe and mystery that often characterise the initiation ceremonies prove particularly favourable for the successful communication of

the accumulated wisdom of the people, including the ideal of harmonious co-existence in the community.

The area of morality is yet another relevant avenue through which traditional Africans try to 'shape' people and reinforce in them the important idea and value of harmonious community-living. Every social group evolves its distinct ethical code. Every society has its norms of acceptable behaviour, taboos and prohibitions. Many traditional African groups have in addition, motivational features and incentives through which compliance to the norms of approved behaviour and social ideals are encouraged. There are equally rituals of purification, as well as punitive measures that try to deter and curb the tendency to deviate. Religion may be distinct and separate from morality, as many scholars have rightly argued. For traditional Africans, however, the line dividing the two is very thin indeed. The vast majority of norms, taboos and prohibitions is directed towards protecting the community and promoting peace and harmony. (E.Ikenga-Metuh, *God And Man In African Religion*, 1981).

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0 Overview

This chapter is concerned with the description of the research methodology used for the study. It describes the various procedures and processes that were employed to collect the empirical data and the method of analysis employed.

3.1 Population

Five centres of African Traditional Religion and five Christian denominations namely; Glory and Hope Ministries International, located at Kortwi, the Calvary Redemption Church at Daban, the Musama Disco Christo Church (MDCC) located at Ahwiaa, the Seventh Day Adventist (SDA) and the Christ the King Roman Catholic Churches at Ahinsan were selected.

Christ the King Roman Catholic Church, with a population of 650 had Reverend Father James Boakye Agyeman as its parish priest while the Seventh Day Adventists Church, with Elder Karikari as its head, had a population of 255. Apostle Jeremiah K. Rawlings is the leader of the Muzama Disco Christo Church (MDCC) at Ahwiaa, Kumasi in the Ashanti Region with a population of 85. The Calvary Redemption Church also has a population of 250 members, with the head pastor being Rev. Emmanuel Amoah. The Glory and Hope Mission International, headed by Pastor Sampson Agyei Berko has a congregation size of 143. Hence, the sample space of the selected Christian community was 1,383, while the Africa traditional religion centres had a sample space of 374, resulting in a grand total sample space of 1,757, consisting of 1,243 women and 514 men.

3.2 Sample

For the entire five selected Christian centres, seven hundred Christians were sampled, while fifty African Traditionalists were targeted at the five shrines; ensuing in a sampled size of 750 people, which is 43% of the total population of the overall sample space.

Five Christian and three traditional leaders of the selected religious centres form another group of respondents by virtue of their advanced ages and long service in their field of activity.

3.3 Sampling procedure

Both purposive and random sampling techniques were used. The purposive type was used for the head of the various religious groups and their assistants. It was believed that each category of respondents were in positions to give relevant information.

Random sampling technique was used for the selected church members based on those who reported on time and on the day the researcher was there to administer questionnaires. At each of the religious centres, emphasis was placed on the leaders and members who could help in giving out the information needed (e.g. those who had spent more than two years in their various capacities). This was so because the researcher believed at least one year stay at a church would put the respondent in a state to provide a meaningful assessment of the activities that goes on at the various religious centres.

3.4 Research design

The research design that was used was the descriptive survey. The design sought to describe the situation as it currently exists.

3.5 Research instrument

A questionnaire which consisted of open and close ended items was developed for use. The first part of the questionnaire sought to provide demographic data such as age, gender, number of years being a member of the religious faith and roles played in their respective sects.

A section of the questionnaire was made up of items that looked at some of the roles both religions play in their various communities. Another section also looked at the religious leaderships' attitude towards women. Whether or not women were allowed to hold leadership positions in either Christianity or Traditional Religious Worship and to what extent even where it is permitted.

Apart from the above, some of the questions dealt with the comparative study of both the Traditional Religion and Christianity taking cognizance of their respective differences and their similarities during the interview.

3.6 Pilot study

The questionnaire was pre-tested in a pilot study. It was carried out at the Ahinsan Christ the King Roman Catholic Church and Okomfo Nana Opoku shrine, all in Kumasi, Ashanti Region for the Christians and traditionalists respectively.

These places of worship were selected for the pilot study due to the following reasons:

- i. proximity, and more importantly,
- ii. similarity and differences of characteristics to the sampled churches.

It was hoped that analysis of the pilot study would reveal the strengths and weaknesses of the items in the draft questionnaire.

3.7 Administration of questionnaire

Due to the unreliability of the postal system in Ghana and the fact that the selected churches and traditional centers are easily accessible, copies of the questionnaire were delivered to respondents by research assistant in the person of Mr. Adam Rahman a lecturer in Art education at K.N.U.S.T. and also (PhD) candidate. This procedure involved a lot of movement to the sampled centers and churches in order to facilitate direct contact with respondents. The method was certainly cumbersome; nevertheless, it ensured a very high return rate of the questionnaire. Out of a total of administered 750 questionnaires, 500 were responded to, amounting to about 66.67% response rate.

The researcher made prior arrangements with the head of each leadership both in the churches and the African traditional religious shrines before administering the questionnaires. At the close of services, members were contacted, briefed on the importance and purpose of the study and were also appealed to for their co-operation. It was after the briefing that copies of the questionnaire were distributed and left with the respondents for two weeks. The respondents were thus allowed 14 days to supply the needed information.

3.8 Method of analysis

The study was descriptive, so a qualitative and quantitative analyses involving frequencies, percentages, pie charts and bar charts were used in the analysis of data. Again total percentages were calculated for each item after the frequencies for each of the religions had been summed up for each item and section of the questionnaire. The responses of the open-ended questions were grouped according to common ideas expressed and a general pattern was sorted out for them. In some cases, frequencies were established for the groups of opinions observed and percentages were in that case calculated to give a clear picture of the responses.

3.9 Data analysis and discussion

Data for compilation of this work were collected at Ahinsan and beyond in October 2007 to March 2008. The data analysis and interpretation focused attention on the age, level of education, marital status and reaction of society.

Out of a sample size of 750 made up of 700 and 50 for Christians and Traditionalists respectively, who were served with questionnaires, 66.67% responded (i.e. 500 in absolute terms). The breakdown of the data is tabulated on the next page.

Table 1: Distribution of Respondents

Religion	Expected Respondents	Actual Respondents	Percentage of Actual Respondents
Christianity	700	486	69.43%
African Traditional Religion	50	14	28.00%
Total	750	500	66.67%

In order to analyse and interpret the data adequately, the 500 completed questionnaire were edited, coded and processed. The results of the analysis are presented in the following sections.

The survey revealed that respondent's ratio stood at almost 1:3 with regard to male and female distribution respectively, as exhibited in the Table 2 below:

Table 2: Respondent's Gender Ratio

Gender	Christianity	African Traditional Religion	Total	Percentage (%)
Males	162	5	167	33.4
Females	324	9	333	66.6
Total	486	14	500	100.0

In the case of Christianity, the female population represented 66.67% of the total sample size of 486, while that of the African Traditional religion indicated 64.29% of its total. The ratio is a true reflection of women always seeking spiritual intervention, being the weaker 'vessel'. Figure 1 below provides a picturesque representation of the above.

Figure 2 Respondents' Gender Ratio

3.13 AGE DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS

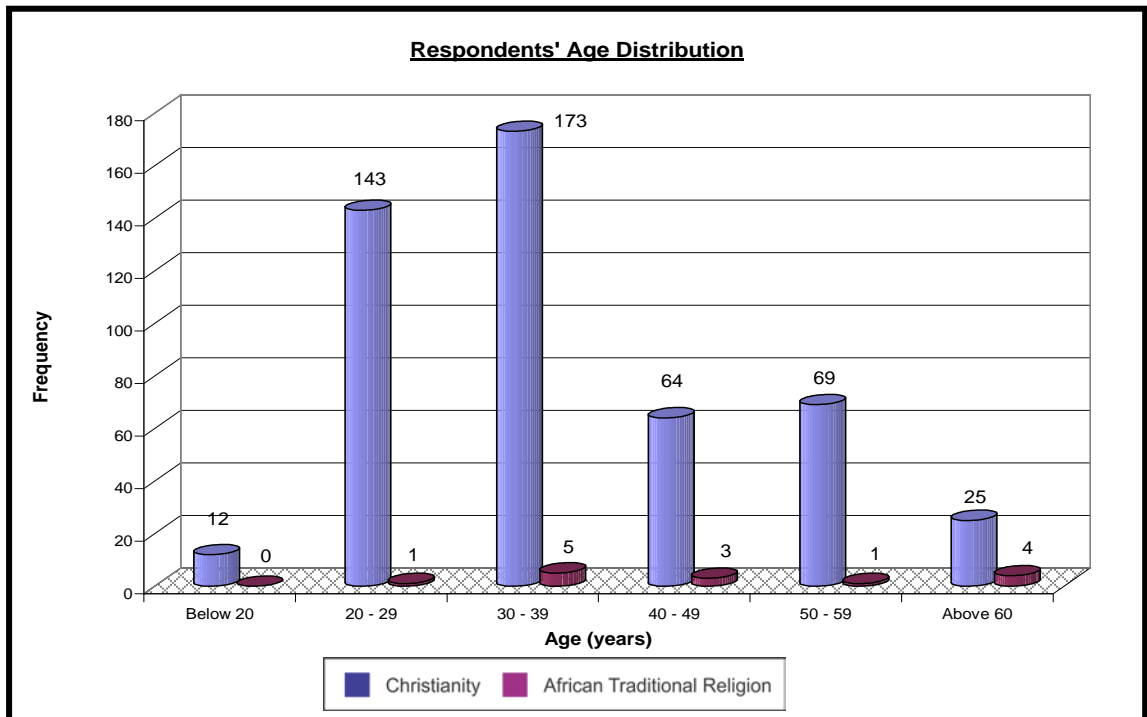
The study revealed that Christians aged between 30 and 39 years were the highest respondents, clocking an average of 35.6% with 173 respondents. Respondents above 60 years were 25 and the adolescents had the least of 12, representing a little over 2.47%.

Table 3: Age Distribution

Age (Years)	Christianity		African Traditional Religion	
	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Below 20	12	2.47	0	0.00
20 – 29	143	29.42	1	7.14
30 – 39	173	35.60	5	35.71
40 – 49	64	13.17	3	21.43
50 – 59	69	14.20	1	7.14
Above 60	25	5.14	4	28.57
Total	486	100.00	14	100.00

In the case of the African Traditionalists, it became evident that the same age group of 30 – 39 years as in the Christians had the highest respondents of 5, representing 35.71%; closely followed by those above 60 years with 28.57 percentage points. Again, the least respondents for the traditionalists were the age group of below 20 years, which attained 0.00 percentage points. The above is graphically represented below:

Figure 3 Respondents' Age Distribution



The researcher could conclude by the findings that people between the ages of 30 and 39 are very religious (be it Christianity or African Traditional Religion). The adolescents could be said to be not too enthusiastic about religious issues by virtue of the low respondents received.

3.14 Education level

As exhibited by Figure 4 on the previous page, irrespective of the religious beliefs, 318 respondents had Secondary/Technical level of education which represents the highest of 63.60%; 100 respondents registering 20% attended tertiary institutions and with 82 respondents, representing 16.40% were illiterates.

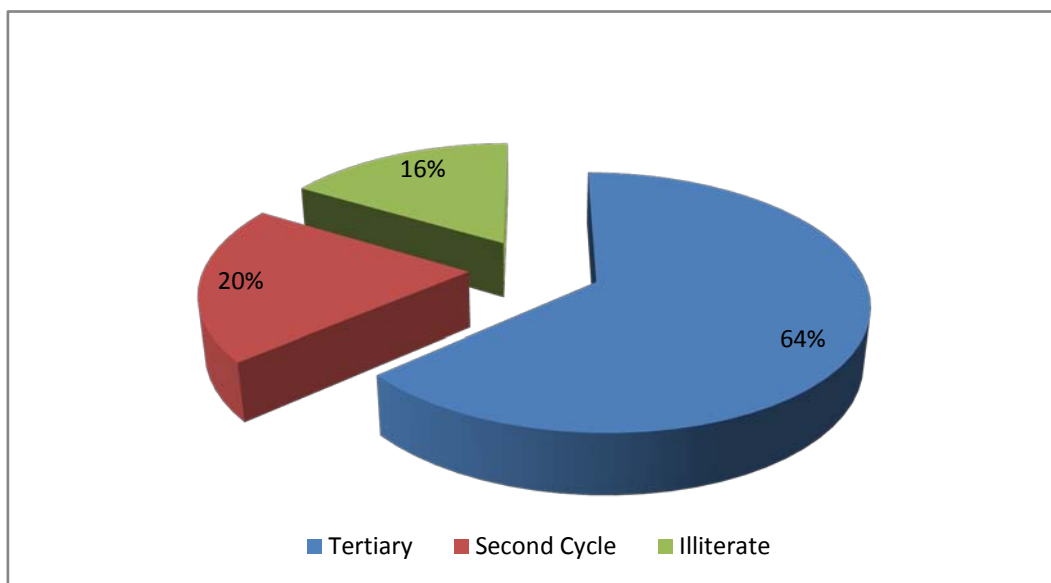


Figure 4: Levels of Education of respondents

However, it is more revealing to note that about 53% of the respondents who were members of the African Traditional Religion are literates, with 3% having attained a tertiary education. Again, Elementary education, though had 21% of the total, such respondents are equally shared (i.e. 50% each) from both religions.

3.15 Respondents' distribution - Christian denominations

Out of the 486 Christian respondents, the Catholic denomination had the highest, followed by the Charismatic churches and the least being the Protestant denominations as represented by the chart on the next page:

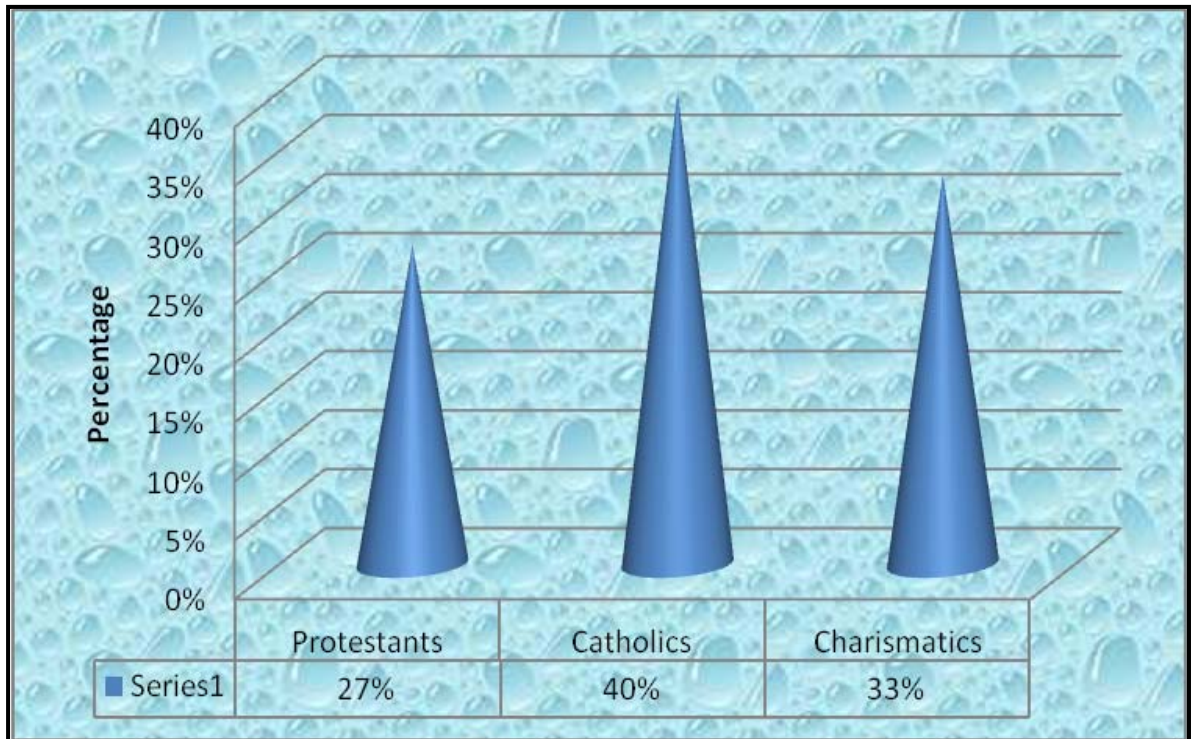


Figure 5: Percentage of respondents in denominations

3.16 Conclusion

The data sampled, its analysis and discussion, within the sampled space, enabled the researcher to firm up certain assumptions and discard others. The data obtained could help draw up policy papers for political leaders in the host communities to help engender peaceful co-habitation and deep respect for different religious persuasions.

CHAPTER FOUR
PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS
PROJECT ANALYSIS

04.1 Beliefs and objects of worship

The Christians unanimously maintained that the only way to worship God is through Jesus Christ and not lesser gods and ancestors. However, the use of man-made or natural objects like statues, stones, images and so on finds certain expressions in the way the Catholics also use them in worship. The African Traditional Religion have certain articles that are used during worship at their shrines, such as amulets, anklets, headgears, pots, guns, drums, cowrie shells, leaves, nails, etc, which are not used by Christians.

4.2 Acceptance of women as pastors/traditional

Priestesses

Within the Christian community, respondents with Roman Catholic background, by virtue of their doctrine, do not accept women as priestesses. This represents 42% of the respondents while the remaining 58% belonging to the Protestants and Charismatic denominations accept women as pastors. Also, African Traditional Religion accepts women as traditional priestesses. This is evident by the massive support in their response of 100% to the questionnaire administered to them (i.e. traditional respondents).

4.3 Polygamy

Polygamous marriages are acceptable in the African Traditional Religion. Nevertheless, Christians are divided in this area; in that, certain Christian groupings believe that so far as certain prominent characters were polygamous in the Bible, especially, in the Old Testament, there is nothing wrong with that. They further argue that people whom God calls His friends and men after His own hearts were all polygamous. These groupings, as per the research were in the minority, specifically 2% of the respondents.

However, majority 98% of Christian respondents are not in support of polygamous marriages among ordinary members, let alone among the pastors.

4.4 Philosophy

- **A Call into ministry and preparation**

In Christendom, before anyone becomes a pastor or a priest, a supposed “call” from God should be sensed. The individual then avails himself for preparation, which could be in the form of theological training in a Seminary or Theological School. However, this claim is not true of all Christian pastors or leaders. It was evident from some of the respondents that many so-called pastors are in ministry because of material gains. Others too have gone for “juju” to be able to perform miracles and have large membership of their churches. This would then inure to their benefit materially and in terms of fame. In the case of the African Traditional Religion, the training process or “initiation” is usually done at the shrine of a particular deity, where one is guided to know the rudiments of the art of priesthood before going out to serve.

- **Places of worship**

Both systems have places of worship, in other words, where they meet to have fellowship, such as a temple, church or shrine.

4.5 Views of respondents on christianity and african traditional religion

Among the numerous views of respondents’ knowledge about Christianity, the following as quoted below, were gathered by the researcher.

- A religion that follows the footsteps of Jesus Christ (i.e. His Behaviour, Teachings, Doctrines etc)

- Christianity is about how Jesus Christ came into the world and died for our sins; and Jesus is the Son of God
- It is a religion that believes that Christ is the Head and he leads church to salvation
- Christianity goes beyond a religion, rather it is a way of life.
- Christianity recognizes that the human being is finite and weak and has to depend on the benevolence of transcendent powers for protection and sustenance.

In the case of African Traditional Religion, respondents had the following to say:

- African Traditional Religion is that which believes in a Supreme Being who is the creator, preserver and sustainer of the universe, yet smaller deities and ancestral spirits are contacted through the pouring of libations, incantations and animal and in certain instances human sacrifices to pacify the smaller deities.
- African Traditional Religion recognizes that the human being is finite and weak and has to depend on the benevolence of transcendent powers for protection and sustenance.

4.6 Membership base

The study revealed that the introduction of Christianity has drastically reduced the membership base of the African Traditional Religion and increased that of Christianity.

Nonetheless, African Traditional religionists stated that certain Christians clandestinely come to their shrines for consultation, though they still go to church and participate in almost all Christian activities. It was even observed that certain Pastors nowadays derive their source of power from the African Traditional Religion.

4.7 Succession plan

The research illustrates that the succession plan not Christians are hereditary while from the traditional point of view, offspring of leaders are often chosen by the smaller deities to stand in the stead of the father or mother after their demise.

4.8 Matters of conversion

The study reveals that 65% of Christians believe that nobody should be forced to serve God. Other religions can do it. Anytime a Traditional religionist wants to be a Christian, that individual may be faced with a dilemma of obeying God and at the same time following the dictates of either divinity or ancestral veneration, both of which Christianity frowns upon. As it is said in the Bible, “no individual can serve two masters”. However, 82% of respondents from the African Traditional Religion indicated that anytime they get in touch with admirers they use magic, myths and the fear of the unknown to make people convert to their ways.

4.9 Interviews with traditional and Christian leaders

4.10 Interviews with African Traditionalists

4.11 Okomfo Nana Serwaa

Formerly a Catholic, now resident at Sokoban-Krofrom, Kumasi, Okomfo Nana Serwaa combines her knowledge of Traditional Religion and Christianity. She said, “When the spirit comes upon me, I am unaware of what I do or say. It is my spokesman (*okyeame*) who helps me during periods like that”. This traditional priestess even noted that our coming to her shrine was told her beforehand by one of her spirits. Nana Serwaa uses mostly a marine spirit, though there are other spirits who come upon her, but the number

generally varies. She claims that as many as over a hundred (100) spirits possess her and give her answers or solutions to the problems brought to her by her clients at different times. Some of the names of the spirits mentioned are; *Kwaku Abrantie*, *Nana Esi*, *Aladi Kofi*, and *Atia Mframa*.



Fig. 6 Okomfo Nana Serwaa of Akonedi-shrine, Sokoban-Krofrom

Source: The Researcher, 2007

Before being called to be a traditional priestess, she used to be a trader plying her trade between Ghana and La Cote d'Ivoire. At that time she frequented the powerful Akonedi Shrine at Larteh in the Eastern Region of Ghana. She used to petition the god of the shrine for profitability in her trading activities and also for protection. Eventually, in her own words, "The Akonedi spirit married me and I got lost." Initially, she was not aware of anything till she was found at Larteh. Subsequently she stayed at the shrine to undergo training for the role of a traditional priestess. This happened when she was in her twenties. She went through seven years of training or apprenticeship to enable her gain in-depth knowledge and experience.

She intimates that God is the overall spirit and they serve him through the lesser gods and spirits or *abosum*. She claims that different spirits often come upon her. These days, apart from emergencies, she generally visits the Akonedi shrine twice a year. Okomfo Nana Serwaa is in her mid fifties, having been a traditional priestess for close to thirty years.

The subsequent photographs (Figures 7 and 8) show the *Tree of Death* and one of her shrines. The Tree of Death is used in killing people spiritually for its eventual physical manifestation. Either gunshots are fired into the tree or concrete nails are driven into it to kill intended victims. These victims eventually die, no matter their locations. Okomfo Nana Serwaa claims that she does not kill indiscriminately and that the spirits or *abosum* guide her into taking every action. The shrine shown in Figure 8 shows a cross symbol embedded into the pillar shrine. It should be noted that there is some appreciable level of acculturation between both religions.



Fig. 7 The Tree of Death, Sokoban-Krofrom

Source: The Researcher, 2007



Fig. 8 A Shrine Of Okomfo Nana Serwaa, Sokoban-Krofrom

Source: The Researcher, 2007

Okomfo Nana Serwaa claims that most of her clients come to seek spiritual protection against all manner of spiritual problems, including spells, charms, divination, curses etc. Solutions to certain physical problems and the explanation of inexplicable natural phenomena are also sought by clients.

She claims that some Pastors also frequent her shrine, mostly to get the power to be able to “see” or have revelations of hidden truths regarding the spiritual realms for their clients. The presence of this ability in one’s life and ministry as a pastor causes numerical growth in one’s church. She laments that although these Christian pastors seek to disassociate themselves from them, ridicule or malign them as being demonic or agents of the devil, they are constantly looking for ways and means to acquire certain spiritual capabilities from them.

On particular days set aside for worship, she goes into a trance when the spirits come upon her and it is her assistant or *okyeame* who does the interpretations of her antics, signals and so on to the audience gathered. In days past she used to have a whole retinue of followers, dancers and singers but these days, it is mainly the *okyeame* who assists her. The reason for the dwindled number, according to her, is because of the upsurge of Christianity. Nana Serwaa observes that “followers”, who had previously served at her shrine or elsewhere are also regular church goers nowadays but tend to be troublesome in the various churches.

She also claims that unlike Pastors, as traditional priests and priestesses, they are held in awe and dread because they primarily do not advertise their presence, but are deeply respected by a significantly large number of people.

Her contribution to the growth of her community and society in general is through the payment of taxation. Additionally she offers counselling for the solution of a myriad of problems brought before her. According to her, the preparation of herbal treatments also form the bulk of her services to the Sokoban-Daban community and the nation as a whole.

4.12 Okomfo Nana Yaw Poku

Resident at Ampaame-Krofufurom, *Okomfo* Nana Yaw Poku is a popular figure in the community, who has practiced his role as an okomfo for close to twenty-eight (28) years. Formerly a staunch Catholic and christened John Baffour Awuah, he was then a Radio Technician and an Announcer stationed at Bekwai in the Ashanti Region of Ghana. *Okomfo* Nana Yaw Poku relates how in 1976, in his farm, he was called by a river goddess and fell into a trance for an indeterminate period and was led through the forest till he was found at Half Assini and brought back to Bekwai. During the trance, he was told of diverse forms of herbal healing and admonished not to be wicked to anybody. He was to lead a life of holiness and purity. His attempts at getting reintegrated into mainstream life was unsuccessful as he kept falling into trances. Thereafter his initiation began and was trained at the Ayanta Shrine at Bekwai for three years. Subsequently his role as a traditional herbalist and okomfo began in earnest in 1980, where he had a retinue of followers, counsellors, singers, including attendants of various sorts.

It is significant to note that *Okomfo* Nana Yaw Poku's maternal grandfather was also a traditional priest whose deeds impacted positively on his community when he was alive.

He intimates that his training involved taking herbal baths and “tuning” his spiritual ear to various spiritual voices, doing special dance forms and so on to adequately prepare him for service to his community.

At one point in his new chosen career, he offered services to over 600 persons per month. The services included healings for various ailments, spiritual fortification for overseas travelling, divination and/or foretelling of events, etc.

Interestingly, he never had any formal fees charged for the services rendered. He rather accepted thanksgiving offerings and token gifts. His main income is generated from his vast cocoa farms including benevolence from grateful individuals.



Fig. 9 Okomfo Nana Yaw Poku in his Consultation room, Ampaame-Krofufurom.

Source: The researcher, 2007



**Fig. 10 Okomfo Nana Yaw Poku during an interview with the researcher,
Ampabame-Krofufurom.**

Source: The researcher, 2007



**Fig. 11 One of the Shrine Spots of Okomfo Nana Poku, Ampabame-Krofufurom,
He frequently pours libation to the gods here for wisdom before entering
into consultations with visitors.**

Source: The researcher, 2007

However, along the line, the number of attendees and patrons gradually reduced because of the increasing presence of “spiritual churches”. People claimed having received healings, etc and being “born again”, thus shunning akomfos (traditional priests) and branding them as devilish.

Okomfo Nana Yaw Poku observes that he has made significant contributions to his community. In 1989, he established an orphanage. The inaugural ceremony was graced by no less a personality than Col. Osei Wusu(rtd.), then Ashanti Regional Minister. Moreover, he has acquired large tracts of land to build a school for the community. He has embarked on commercial farming activities to raise enough funds to complete this building project. Unfortunately, he claims, that attempts by him to collaborate with Christian churches around for community projects meet with cold receptions or attitudes because of misconceptions regarding him as a traditional priest. As an *Okomfo*, he rather champions the liberation rather than killing people, he proclaims. To buttress his point, he pointed out that he has even established a herbal clinic which has been duly registered with the relevant governmental agencies.

The *Okomfo* claims that he maintains his health primarily through balanced diet, consulting medical doctors as the case may be, doing physical exercise, particularly jogging and does not smoke. He emphasized the point that he was warned to abstain from smoking by the *Kwaku Abrantie* spirit. He does not also eat meat but mostly follows a vegetarian form of diet and does not also drink except for very special occasions where very little is permitted. He claims that he serves the spirit of the sacred Sudwanta River at Obuasi who initially called him into her service. Being frank and open for discussions, the *Okomfo* maintains that charlatan priests and priestesses abound in the society today. Therefore one has to be extra careful not to be deceived by them. He observes that if one was not called by any spirit, there would be no spiritual power backing one's call.



Fig. 12 Another shrine of Okomfo Nana Yaw Poku, Ampabame-Krofufurom.

Source: The researcher, 2007

Also if one was called but misbehaved by womanising and mishandling issues of money, etc, the spirit will leave and one's end thus was bound to be disastrous. He claims that people see these and conclude that all "Okomfos" are evil. He strongly makes the point that the same thing happens to pastors who claim to have been called and anointed by God. "The Supreme Being will judge me, since I serve Him through lesser beings and live my life according to his set pattern for me", he philosophizes.

4.13 Adam Ibrahim

Widely and variously known as a *Medicine Man*, *Odinsinin*, *Spiritual Healer*, *Traditional healer*, in Atansemanso in Kumasi, Adam Ibrahim understands his role as a purely traditional healer registered with the relevant governmental agencies and honours his tax obligations. He sees his work as complimentary to the practice of orthodox medicine. Therefore most of his items of trade involve the use of over a hundred different leaves/herbs. However, he has a shrine where he worships and enters into consultations with his patron spirit. He is of the firm belief that his work involves not only the temporal but also the spiritual. He succeeded his late father, Adama Sissala, as a *Medicine Man*. The largest attendance of people is usually on Sundays. Adam Ibrahim narrates a fascinating story of how his father was initiated into the role of the medicine man. According to him, the River Bufiame in Tumu-Buulu in the Upper East Region supports a few crocodiles. These crocodiles were always catered for by a caretaker. Incidentally, the caretaker died and a new one was to be installed in his place.



Fig.13 Adam Ibrahim during consultations at Atansemanso.

Source: The researcher, 2007

His late father, Adama Sissala, was called by the elders of the clan to take on that role since, they intimated, the river deity had determined it to be so. At that time he was a security man in Kumasi. Adama Sissala refused but the spirit “caught” him in Kumasi and instructed him to relocate to the Upper East Region. Thereafter he travelled to his native town of Tumu, where he underwent a total of six months of initiation and training. To crown the training, a festival was held, as is the custom and about 1:30am in the strange hours of the dawn, powers were conferred on him by the river deity. Subsequently, his powers were tried in the presence of the clan elders present as a witness to his new role. A prohibition list was then handed over to him in how he was to conduct his life, particularly in refraining from killing innocent people, drinking alcohol or blood, etc and the consequences of breaching any of those provisions. At that time, Adam Ibrahim stated, he was then a primary six pupil. His father rose to become a powerfully revered *Medicine Man*. After the demise of his father, the river deity again determined that his elder brother should take up the mantle but he flatly refused. His elder brother ended up being an imbecile. The lot then fell on him to take up the mantle. He thus underwent the rituals as were done in his father’s case and was established as the caretaker of the crocodiles. Eventually he relocated to Kumasi, although he frequents the Bufigame River to perform his spiritual duties and pays his vows to the clan elders.

At a point in time, with the permission of his patron spirit, he traveled to the Atiavi Shrine in the Volta Region for additional spiritual powers, where he was strictly forbidden from drinking blood. Moreover, he is forbidden from working on Tuesdays.

He caters for a whole range of infirmities, including stroke, broken bones, and asthma. He also solves cases associated with spiritual fights, spiritual illnesses. He claims that many pastors flock to his shrine for certain “spiritual powers”, including enabling them to “see” into the spiritual realms to deal with diverse problems, etc. He further stated that he offers spiritual assistance to some pastors in the erection of altars, foundation stones, etc to promote their ministries. Although, he has the ability to disappear or vanish at once when the occasion demands it, he intimates that it ultimately reduces one’s life span.

Adam Ibrahim claims that although he provides this and allied powers, he advises against that because of the ultimate shortening of one’s life span on earth. He also offers supernatural fortification and/or healing to people who have been attacked or “shot” spiritually. Adam Ibrahim states that in dealing with certain physical ailments, he has had to refer people to the Okomfo Anokye Teaching Hospital (KATH) in Kumasi.

He claims that he helps the community by settling domestic quarrels and disputes of various kinds, pays his taxes promptly and desires to establish a large herbal clinic. Apart from these he is also working with other traditional healers and Akomfos to establish entrepreneurial ventures to raise funds in helping with community projects.

Asked if he would compel his children to take after him, he flatly refused. The place of the next caretaker, he claims, is the sole prerogative of the riverian spirit he serves, the River deity of the Buiame River.



Fig. 14 Shrine and other healing materials of Adam Ibrahim, Atansemanso.

Source: The researcher, 2007



Fig. 15 Adam Ibrahim exhibits a powerful whisk he uses in creating charms/spells.

Source: the researcher, 2007

Interviews with Christian Leaders

4.14 Muzama Disco Christo Church (MDCC)

Muzama Disco Christo Church is a religious sect which professes Christianity. Though it has branches throughout the nation, particularly, in the southern sector of the country, it is predominant in the central region of Ghana. This church has an entire town in the central region as its Headquarters, namely “Muzano”.

The leader of this sect is referred to as “Akaboha”; the ascension to this high office is basically being a son from the family of the founder. “Apostle Jeminaiah K. Rawlings is the leader of the Muzama Disco Christo Church (MDCC) at Ahwiaa, Kumasi in the Ashanti Region.

The objects of worship of the Muzano Disco Christo Church are Holy Water, crucifix of all forms, copper rings with the inscription of the crucifix which is believed to give divine protection to members.

Members are expected as part of the doctrine of the church to say a special prayer for submission before entering the church. The church premises are also considered a holy ground, hence no footwears are allowed.

The weekly programmes scheduled for the church are as follows:

Mondays	-	Prayer meetings for entire church (i.e. normal church service)
Tuesdays	-	Marriage counseling with the pastor in the evenings and prayer session for marriage couples.

Pastor does general counseling from 6am – 2pm.

Wednesdays - Prophecy, Healing and deliverance - 9am – 12pm

Evening studies - Bible/Doctrinal Studies

According to the leader of the church holy water is used for healing services.

Thursdays - All night service (Confidential prayer meetings are held
for people with various serious problems)

Fridays - Divine Healing Service.

Saturdays - Leadership board meeting

Sunday s - Main church service: 9:30am – 11:30am

The church premises is considered as a sacred ground; hence it is always kept neat. The church ground is called by members as ‘mercy ground’ or ‘holy place’.

Apostle Jeminaiah K. Rawlings explained he is capable of praying in tongues during healing services when the spirit comes upon him. He further indicated that during such times, he could speak as many as nine languages. On the issue of prophecy, he intimated that there is always the need to have a witness who will deliver exactly what he says when the spirit takes over him.

The Apostle claims he uses water, palm fruit, anointing oil etc during counseling and consultations. He quoted Jude1:4 to buttress his claims. He categorically said that the Palm fruit is a symbolic victory sign.

The hierarchy of authority of the MDCC is as follows:

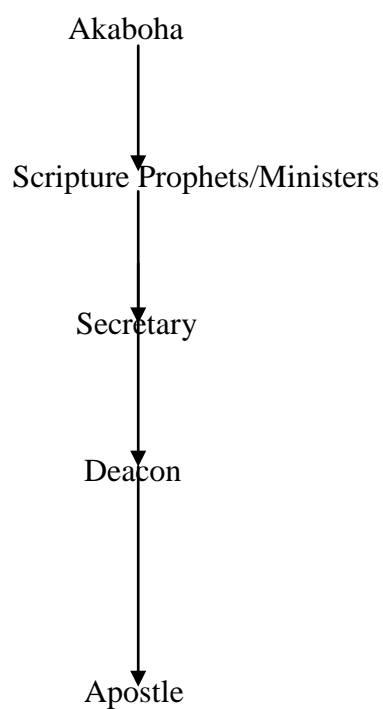




Fig 16 the Akaboha (left) and Apostle Jeminaiah K. Rawlings (right)



Fig. 17 The altar of the MDCC at Ahwiaa, Kumasi.

4.15 Seventh Day Adventist (S.D.A.), Ahinsan-Kumasi

Elder Karikari, heads this SDA branch at Ahinsan, Kumasi. Every Monday the Adventist Youth (AY) and Women Ministry meet. They have progressive classes (i.e. variety of programmes). Among other things, the youth have bible studies, quizzes and nature study (e.g. the study of stars, moon and so on).

They also undertake some military training to keep them fit and ready for a regular military and security forces work in the event of any member who wants to enroll in the security services.

Motive of the nature study;

- To let the youth know God and his creation
- They are able to serve God better by their level of understanding of the creation

Meeting Days

Mondays - Women Ministry

- The church organizes special programmes for the women to help pull them up (i.e. empowering them).
- On the same Monday evening the men, also called the A.M.O, are also raised up to learn more about evangelism.

Tuesdays -

- They have Health Ministry- The whole church is taught about how to keep themselves healthy and thus prolong their lives.
- Every other fortnight on Tuesdays, topics on stewardship are handled; such as:
 - a. Time management
 - b. How the body should be kept holy for God's use in His temple.
 - c. Possession – Members are made to know that they are caretakers of their possession. Members are trained to be content with what they have.
 - d. Talent – Members are taught to use their talents to serve God.

Wednesdays - Wednesdays are meant for prayer meetings, testimonies and word ministration.

Thursdays - Singing groups such as the choir, singing band come for rehearsal for the Sabbath day.

Fridays – The Youth department also come again for additional spiritual exercises since they believe that the youth is the pillar of the church.

Two other programmes are held on that day;

1. 6:00-6:30pm - Vesper Service: - it is a service that is performed in recognition of the Sabbath.
2. At 7:00pm - The youth department meets for prophetic studies, for example the books of Daniel and Revelation.

Saturdays - At 8:30am - Sabbath School (Bible Studies).

At 9:00am – Main church service commences with hymnals, after which three Bible lessons are read.

Between 11:00 – 12:00 - Divine Service (General worship). This is the time the word of God is preached. Thereafter, mission report from the World, announcements on funeral, weddings etc are read. Tithes are also collected. This money purposely goes to help or pay the minister.

Systematic benevolence (offering of money) is also collected for the purchase of items in the church. The church then goes on break by 12³⁰pm and resumes around 2:³⁰pm to study the rudiments of evangelism.

The SDA church believes in divine healing. No images are used in the church. During healing services the person makes a request before he/she is anointed and prayed for. They do not believe in the speaking of tongues. Witch hunting is not encouraged. However, if somebody requests for prayer of deliverance for a suspected witch, that could be done. No special grounds are reserved for prayers. The only place for their prayer meetings is in their church premises.

On the issue of marriage, the church does not encourage its members to marry from outside the church, but the men can marry and bring their wives into the SDA church. The church also engages in social activities involving cleanup campaigns within host communities and build hospitals.

4.16 Calvary Redemption Church, Daban – Kumasi

A thriving charismatic church headed by Prophet Emmanuel Amoah and assisted by two Associate Pastors. The services are conducted in mostly Twi and English. The meeting days are as follows:

Mondays - This day is set aside for counseling purposes, particularly, with new members who visited the church the previous Sunday. Again, the youth and the executive members of the welfare departments meet to deliberate on the way forward for each group and most importantly to adhere to set programs for the month or in certain instances the quarters of the year.

Tuesdays - It is a day meant for Bible teaching service which takes place between 6:⁰⁰-8:⁰⁰pm.

Wednesdays - Between 9:⁰⁰am and 4:⁰⁰pm, the church premises is opened to the entire congregation for what is termed general counseling. Also, All-Night church services are organized by the church which is aired on a radio station, Capital FM from 11:00pm to 4:00am.

Thursdays - Between 9:00am – 12:00pm, they have International Prayer Fellowship. This includes all members of the church who need some spiritual uplifting.

Fridays - All night prayer sessions are organized which starts from 11:00pm to 4:00am the next day.

During the Prophetic Session of the church, the leader and head pastor, Prophet Emmanuel Amoah often engages in prophecies as he is led by the Holy Spirit. The Head Pastor enquires about the problem and the Holy Spirit gives guidance as what should be done for the sick person. Anointing oil is often used during prayer sessions for the sick. There are no particular images or objects of worship, neither are there special prayer or sacred

grounds. Being a charismatic church, they pray in tongues and in their local languages. Through evangelism drives, increasing numbers of the host community members are joining the church.

The types of Music played during services are in both local and foreign languages (particularly English) with the accompaniment of normal guitar, musical keyboards, organ etc.

To have impact on their host community, apart from spiritual exercises, the church engages in social activities beneficial to the community. They include;

- Cleaning exercises in the community
- Organisation of sporting activities between the church's youth and the people in the community.
- Bible quizzes are sometimes organized where people from outside the church are also invited.

Few Scholarships are given to brilliant and needy members of both the church and host community for both academic and vocational pursuits. Sometimes the church embarks upon certain community-wide projects including the provision of water bore holes and so on.

4.17 Hope & Glory Ministries International, Kortwi-Kumasi

Pastor Samuel Agyei Berko is the founder and General Overseer of this church. As the Senior Pastor, he offers spiritual guidance and oversight over a host of activities connected with the church. The head pastor sometimes calls the sick and prays for them

and at times those who are sick come to be prayed for. The meeting days have been scheduled to run as follows;

Mondays - Resting day for the pastor and the lay leaders

Tuesdays - Counseling by the senior pastor for all church members and members of the host community

Wednesdays - Prayer meetings are held from 9:00am -10:00am. No services are held in evening.

Thursdays – No services or any programs are held.

Fridays - Between 9:00am and 1:00pm, prayer and deliverance sessions are held for members of the church

Saturdays- Whilst rehearsals are done by church singers, the ushers engage in cleaning and preparing the church for the worship service on Sunday

Sundays - The main worship service is held between 9:00am and 1:00pm.

The church is friendly to the community and has most of the times organized cleaning exercises in the community.

4.18 Christ the King Roman Catholic Church, Ahinsan-Kumasi.

Reverend Father James Boakye Agyeman is the parish priest of this congregation. Catholics share a common set of beliefs worldwide. One of the best-known statements of these beliefs is found in the Apostles' Creed. The church's foundational doctrines include the veneration of saints and the use of the rosary in prayer. Catholic worship includes paying homage to God, to Jesus Christ, to His saints, to the beings or even to the objects

which have a special relation to God. Painted images and statues of Christ, Mary, Joseph and a host of other saints forms part of the vibrant visual culture of the Roman Catholic Church. A typical week schedule is as follows;

Monday - 7:30am Weekday Mass

Tuesday - 7:30am Weekday Mass; 7:00pm - Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament

Wednesday - 7:30am Weekday Mass; 8:10am - Mass (Public Welcome)

Thursday - 7:30am Weekday Mass

Friday, 7:30am Weekday Mass

Saturday, 5:30pm Vigil Mass

Sunday - 8:30am Mass; 10:30am - Mass; 12:30pm - Mass

In accordance with these principles, it will readily be understood that a certain worship may be offered even to inanimate objects, such as the relics of a martyr, the Cross of Christ, the Crown of Thorns, or even the statue or picture of a saint. The relic of the saint is venerated because of the link which unites it with the person who is adored or venerated; while the statue or picture is regarded as having a conventional relation to a person who has a right to homage - as being a symbol which reminds Catholics of that person.

Prostration, genuflexion, kneeling, the sign of the cross, the lifting-up or imposition of hands or any other gesture, are part of the symbols of worship.

The Catholic Church is a socially conscious Christian church which upholds the philosophy of human dignity and excellence. It engages in promoting and staging events whose impact have reached to the depths of the host society and brought Christ to the

doorsteps of the people. Health outreaches, in conjunction with medical personnel, are embarked upon for the benefit of the host community.



Fig. 18 The Great Jubilee Grotto, where prayers and supplications are made. (At Christ the King Roman Catholic Church, Ahinsan).

Source: the researcher, 2007



Fig. 19 A statue of Mary, mother of God, intercedes for all saints. (At Christ the King Roman Catholic Church, Ahinsan).

Source: the researcher, 2007

4.19 Similarities between Christianity and African Traditional Religion in Kumasi.

The study shows that 40% of the Christian respondents believe that there are certain similarities between the two religions while 85% of the African Traditional Religion's respondents agreed to it. The similarities are enumerated below:

1. They all believe in the Supreme Being (i.e. God Almighty).
2. Singing of songs, drumming and dancing serves as a means of worship of the two religions.
3. The two systems have "Special Days" of worship. Most of the time, the African Traditionalists meet on Fridays whilst the Christians meet on Sundays. Apart from these days, they have some days set aside purposely for counseling, praying, consultations, etc. At this time of counseling, the leadership of the religious bodies have time for their respective members on individual basis. The counseling covers different areas of their lives.
4. The priests of the Christian churches, especially, the Catholics have a special costume (e.g. cassock) that they wear during services; so also do the traditional priests use special smocks with talismans of varying potency all over them.
5. The speaking of unknown tongues, falling into trances, revelations into the future lives of members, etc is characteristic of some Christian denominations and Traditional African Religion.
6. Witch-hunting is not the preserve of the traditional religion alone but certain Christian denominations engage in this practice.

7. Both religions strongly believe that they have contributed immensely to the high standards of morality, crime reduction, fraternity and general welfare of their host communities.

4.20 Peaceful co-existence among both religions in Kumasi.

Fortunately, in the Kumasi area under discussion, there has been no reported case of religious conflicts. Indeed, all the religious leaders of both religions attest to the fact that there has been peaceful co-existence. Although, the adherents of African Traditional Religion and their leaders contend that despite the decrease in their numbers and occasional insults in churches and on some radio stations, they had always exercised restraint. They stress the point that there must be respect for each other's beliefs. In October, 2007, on the nation's television (GTV), the former Vice President Alhaji Aliu Mahama urged religious leaders to lead exemplary lives that would influence the behaviour and perceptions of their followers. "The level of influence, whether positive or negative, derives from the attitude and example of leadership. You have a huge responsibility to your followers to provide the kind of leadership that shuns violence and intolerance that could be caused by differences in the belief system," he said. The former Vice President Alhaji Aliu Mahama was speaking at the opening of the 7th West Africa Inter-Religious Coordinating Committee (WAIRCC) regional consultation conference on the theme "Confronting Violence and Advancing Shared Security in West Africa."

Delegates from Liberia, Sierra Leone, Cote d'Ivoire, Senegal, Nigeria, Benin and the host country Ghana attended the three-day conference organized by the Ghana Conference of Religions for Peace (GCRP).

4.21 Influence of Christianity and African Traditional Religion on host communities in Kumasi.

Health Issues

Apart from conventional medical practice, the followers of these two religions are able to further maintain good health through alternative forms of medicine by the use of herbal medicine. This practice has been strongly entrenched in the various communities because of the widespread support by both religious bodies.



Fig. 20. Cowries shells are use to search into the spiritual realm the kind of sickness the person is going through. As shown at Adam Ibrahim’s shrine, Kumasi.

Source: researcher, 2007

However, there are very small numbers of some Christian denominations, particularly Charismatic's, who depend on 'Faith Healing' without the use of any medicine.

Counseling

The people in the community come to the leaders of both religious groups for counseling, since it is believed that they have eyes into the realms of the spirit. The community is counseled on almost every aspect of their lives, ranging from marriage partners to choice of schools for their children, etc.

Education

Respondents from the Christian community attested to the fact that their religion had positively impacted on the lives of inhabitants in the following areas:

- 1) Raising standards of morality and the provision of scholarships for educational pursuits.
- 2) Reduction in crime rates
- 3) Environmental Cleanliness- Provision of water boreholes and cleaning campaigns.

The followers of African Traditional Religion, on the other hand, indicated that the religion has brought some help in the area of;

- 1) Provision of good health through herbal medicine. The Nyantal Herbal clinic of Okomfo Nana Yaw Opoku, located at Ampaame, is a case in point, providing an alternative source of health facilities.
- 2) Raising of moral and ethical standards. However, it also puts fear in followers to strictly follow the tenets of the religion; because criminals and offenders could be spiritually killed by the deities.

- 3) Civil Responsibilities, particularly in the payment of taxes to district or local assemblies. Okomfo Nana Yaw Opoku, at Ampabame, has a restaurant on which he pays taxes to the Ampabame district assembly.

The influence of these two religions has largely been beneficial and has gone a long way in improving the social cohesion of host communities. Some of the Christian denominations have their parent churches providing facilities for Elementary, Secondary and tertiary education in Ghana, particularly, the Roman Catholic Church, Presbyterian Church of Ghana, the Methodist church of Ghana, the Evangelical Presbyterian (E.P.) Church of Ghana, the Seventh-Day Adventist(S.D.A.) Church and some charismatic churches.



Fig. 21. The Nyantal Herbal Clinic, for Okomfo Nana Poku at Ampabame-Kumasi.



Fig. 22 A restaurant for the community and visitors by Okomfo Nana Yaw Opoku at Ampabame, Kumasi.

Source: researcher, 2007

Comparisons between the Outcome of Literature Review and the Research Findings

The relevance of this work would be better acknowledged if there could be comparison between what has been encountered in the literature review and that of the research findings. It would also help to identify the various differences and similarities that exist between the literature review and research findings. During this endeavor, there would be the highlighting of some relevant observations referred to in the main thesis that would help broaden one's knowledge regarding the significance of the study.

The most visible points that emerged in both the literature review and research findings were; Religious Acculturation, Misconceptions about African Traditional Religion, Veneration of departed Ancestors and Divinities and certain Religious Activities.

i. Religious Acculturation

Religious Acculturation is a process in which members of one cultural group adopt the beliefs, values, symbols, behaviours, etc of another group. Although religious acculturation is usually in the direction of a minority group adopting patterns of the dominant group, acculturation can be reciprocal – that is, the dominant group also adopts patterns typical of the minority group.

The shrine of Okomfo Nana Serwaa, Sokoban-Krofrom has a symbol of a cross on its shrine which also is being use by Christians in the host community, signifying the death of Christ. Okomfo Nana Serwaa claims that the symbol on her shrine is a constant reminder to the public that she is not 'devilish' but rather works together with God, the Supreme Being. Furthermore, the speaking of strange languages or 'tongues' during trances or possession by spirits of the African Traditional priests is also seen replicated by the membership of the charismatic denomination in Christianity. This is commonly referred to as 'speaking in tongues'. Apostle Jereminaiah K. Rawlings of Muzama Disco Christo Church (MDCC),

Ahwiaa, Kumasi claims that he has the capacity of praying in tongues during healing services when the spirit comes upon him. He further indicated that during such times, he could speak as many as nine languages.

Furthermore, both African Traditional religion and Christianity have shown evidence of the exorcising of witch spirits from individuals. Deliverances from evil spirits are also done for adherents of both religions in the host communities.

ii. Misconceptions about African Traditional Religion

This is the situation where adherents of African Traditional Religion are labelled with derogatory terms by Christians in the host communities. Majority of those involved in this name-calling are Christians who claim we are the so-called ‘born again’ or and therefore shun adherents of African Traditional religionists. Examples of some of the derogatory names given to African Traditional religion are; paganism, heathenism, Fetishism, Animism, Idolatry, Primitive and Native, and Devilish or Demon worship. These negative perceptions have contributed in no small way to conflicts in the host communities under discussion.

iii. Veneration of departed Ancestors and Divinities

Veneration of departed Ancestors and Divinities are major characteristics of all African traditional religion. Rites of the *Adae* festival of the Asantes which take place every forty days and the annual Odwira festival are high points of Akan veneration of ancestral spirits.

However Christianity maintains the only way to worship God is through Jesus Christ and not lesser divinities and ancestors, (www.wikipedia.org/wiki/religion-in-ghana.htm). In

Christianity, moreover, consultations with the spirits of departed ancestors are forbidden. (2 chron. 33:6, “And he caused his children to pass through the fire in the valley of the son of Hinnom: also he observed times, and used enchantments, and used witchcraft, and dealt with a familiar spirit, and with wizards: he wrought much evil in the sight of the LORD, to provoke him to anger” and Lev. 19:4, 31 “Turn ye not unto idols, nor make to yourselves

molten gods: i am the LORD your God. Regard not them that have familiar spirits, neither seek after wizards, to be defiled by them: i am the LORD your God”).

iv. Other religious activities

Prophet Emmanuel Amoah of the Calvary Redemption Church, Daban – Kumasi, during prophetic sessions of the church, is led by the Holy Spirit. He is given guidance by the Holy Spirit coupled with ‘revelations’ of the problems and solutions of problems of church members or visitors. Anointing oil is often used during prayer sessions for the sick. There are no particular images or objects of worship. This scenario is fairly replicated in the case of the African Traditional religion where traditional priests go into consultations with their spirits or gods, often after libations are poured, and solutions prescribed for them by these spirits or gods. Sometimes in trances, ‘revelations’ are made by the fetish priests because their spirits or gods enable them to ‘see’ into the spiritual world and acquire information or solutions to problems of visitors or patrons. However, Apostle Jeremiaiah K. Rawlings of Muzama Disco Christo Church (MDCC), Ahwiaa, Kumasi, on the issue of prophecy, intimated that there is always the need to have a witness who will deliver exactly what he says when the spirit possesses him.

The objects of worship of Muzama Disco Christo Church, Ahwiaa, Kumasi, are Holy Water, crucifix which of all forms, copper rings with the inscription of crucifix which is believed to give divine protection to members. The drums, clapping of hands, dancing, lying prostrate, shouting/screaming, etc are both common to African Traditional religion and Christianity. African Traditional religion, objects of worship are similar to that of the Christians, namely; carved objects in wood, cement, etc, sacred altars, symbols of the crucifix and the whisk.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Summary

This study has been devoted to the comparative study of Christianity and African Traditional Religion in Kumasi. There was extensive literature review of the thesis and in line with the stated objectives, there was a study of the beliefs and practices of certain Christian denominations and selected traditional shrines in Kumasi with the view to examining the similarities and the differences between the two systems of religion, identifying and documenting the influences of both religions on their host communities and on the entire Ghanaian society as a whole. The research also sought to ascertain whether these religions co-existed harmoniously together.

5.1 Conclusions

Given the research findings from the research, Christianity and African Traditional Religion in Kumasi depict a great deal of significant differences and similarities. The study has established that there is harmonious religious co-existence among the people. The influences of both religions on their host communities were positively praiseworthy in terms of the maintenance of social cohesion and the provision of social amenities.

This study could be a source of information for scholars, researchers, policy – makers, curriculum planners, government agencies, politicians, businessmen, and foreigners alike.

5.2 Recommendations

In view of the study done, the following were recommended;

- Inter-religious Coordinating committees, like the Ghana Conference of Religions for Peace (GCRP) should be encouraged by the government to organize periodic fora or programs to further sustain and entrench the already existing peaceful co-existence.
- Further research into religious acculturation and syncretism could be embarked upon in the communities under consideration. By the researcher.
- The Ghana Centre For Democratic Development (CDD-Ghana) and the West Africa Network for Peace building (WANEP) could set regional offices to forestall any conflict that may arise.
- The Government could do its part by adopting educational curricula that instills the values of peace and tolerance.
- The pastors should stop taking powers from the traditional priests because when they do that they are deceiving the public.
- The priests should stop supporting the pastors with their powers because when they do that they help the pastors to deceive the public.
- Christians should do further research before seeking help from these false prophets.

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APPENDIX 1

DEPARTMENT OF ART HISTORY AND EDUCATION

COLLEGE OF ART AND SOCIAL SCIENCE MASTER IN AFRICAN ART AND CULTURE

Topic: **Christianity and African Traditional Religion: A comparative study.** A study is being conducted on the above topic and the researcher would be grateful if you could provide the necessary answers to the questions. Confidentiality is assured as facts are needed for academic purposes.

RESEARCH QUESTIONNAIRE

Please answer all questions below as sincere as you can. Please tick ☐ where suitable and give appropriate answers.

Gender: Male ☐ Female ☐

Age:

Below 20 years ☐

20 - 29 ☐

30 - 39 ☐

40 - 49 ☐

50 - 59 ☐

Above 60years ☐

Profession / Occupation

1. Are you a Christian? Yes ☐ No ☐

If yes indicate your denomination.....

2. What do you know about Christianity?

.....
.....
.....
.....

3. In your opinion what has been the impact of Christianity in your community?.....
.....
.....
4. Do you accept women as Pastors? Yes [] No []
5. Can a Pastor marry more than one wife and still perform religious activities Yes [] No []
6. Does your outfit prevent people from seeing some of your symbols for worship.
Yes [] No []
7. Please explain why
.....
8. Can a Pastor marry more than one wife and still perform religious activities Yes [] No []
9. Has the introduction of Christianity had any impact by way of reduction in African Traditional Religion membership? Yes [] No []
10. Is your leadership based on hereditary? Yes [] No []
11. Is it true that some of the Christians still consult African Traditional Religious leaders when in crisis? Yes [] No []
12. What are some of the most powerful shrines in your temple?
.....
.....
13. Can you name some of the shrines that are similar to that of African Traditional Religion?

14. Are there any similarities between Christianity and Africa Traditional Religion in terms of worship? Yes [] No []

If yes, explain
.....
.....

If no, explain
.....
.....

15. Is there anything Christians would never agree with African Traditional Religion in terms of worship? Yes [] No []

If yes, explain.....
.....
.....

If no, explain
.....
.....

16. Can Christians use their position to further their interest in God?

.....
.....
.....

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR YOUR TIME

Yours faithfully,

Amponsah Samuel Effah

4. Do you accept women as Priestesses? Yes [] No []
5. Can a Fetish Priest marry more than one wife and still perform religious activities Yes [] No []
6. Does your outfit prevent people from seeing some of your symbols for worship? Yes [] No []

Please explain why

.....

7. Has the introduction of Christianity had any impact by way of reduction in African Traditional Religion membership? Yes [] No []
8. Is your leadership based on hereditary? Yes [] No []
9. Is it true that some of the Christians still consult African Traditional Religious leaders when in crisis? Yes [] No []

10. What are some of the most powerful shrines in your temple?

.....

.....

11. Can you name some of the shrines that are similar to that of Christian religion?

.....

12. Are there any similarities between Christianity and Africa Traditional Religion in terms of worship? Yes [] No []

If yes, explain

.....

.....

If no, explain

.....
.....
.....

13. Is there anything Christians would never agree with African Traditional Religion in terms of worship? Yes [] No []

If yes, explain.....

.....
.....

If no, explain

.....
.....

16. Can Traditionalists use their position to further their interest in God?

.....
.....
.....

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR YOUR TIME

Yours faithfully,

Amponsah Samuel Effah

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