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**The Impact of Traditional Religions on Religions Context
in Africa**

تأثير الأديان التقليدية على سياق الأديان في إفريقيا

A thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment for the Requirement Of a

M.A. Degree in English Literature

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Quranic Verses

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

قال الله تعالى :

﴿ إِنَّمَا يَخْشَى اللَّهَ مِنْ عِبَادِهِ الْعُلَمَاءُ ﴾

سورة فاطر: الآية 27

DEDICATION

To my beloved parents.

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed to examine the impact of the traditional religious beliefs and cultural practices with their underlying values on the religious pluralistic context of this Mfantse traditional area in Ghana, particularly, on Christian and Muslims relations. Beside this quest which has not received a sufficient scholarly attention, the need for this work also became evident in view of the emergence of religious extremism and intolerance by some the Christian and Islamic groups in the country.

The researcher adopted a descriptive analytical method which he followed through studying the information he collected which he deduced from resulted in the formation of Christian and Muslims though religious beliefs and cultural values which are rooted in the family and community structures.

At the end of the study the researcher presented some recommendations, these recommendations focus on the importance of religious leaders and actors should be role models within their communities preach the value of fraternity in humanity and contribute to educating the population on peace, social cohesion and the acceptance of the other. These roles particularly important when peace and social cohesion are threatened.

ABSTRACT (ARABIC VERSION)

تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى دراسة تأثير المعتقدات الدينية التقليدية و الممارسات الثقافية بقيمها الأساسية على السياق التعددي الديني لمنطقة مفاقتس التقليدية في غانا لا سيما في العلاقات بين المسيحيين و المسلمين إلى جانب هذا المسعى الذي لم يحظ باهتمام علمي كاف أصبحت الحاجة إلى هذا العمل واضحة أيضاً نظراً لظهور التطرف الديني و التعصب من جانب بعض الجماعات المسيحية و الإسلامية في البلاد .

تبنى الباحث المنهج التحليلي الوصفي الذي اتبعه من خلال دراسة المعلومات التي جمعها و التي استنتج من خلالها تشكيل المسلمون و المسيحيون من خلال المعتقدات الدينية و القيم الثقافية المشتركة المتأصلة في هياكل الأسرة و المجتمع ,و في نهاية الدراسة قدم الباحث بعض التوصيات التي تركز على أهمية أن يكون القادة قذوة في مجتمعاتهم و نشر قيمة الخوة و الإنسانية و المساهمة في تثقيف السكان و التماسك الإجتماعي و قبول هذا الدور بشكل خاص عندما يهدد السلام التماسك الإجتماعي .

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CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION

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INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction

Religious and cultural pluralism has been a prominent feature in human societies and this became intensified with the impact of modernity .the phenomenon of such pluralistic experience presents opportunities as well as challenges, particularly for religious traditions and cultures today .H. Byron Earhart states in his foreword to E .Thomas Lawson’s book “Religions Of Africa” “(1985) that one of the most fascinating aspect of our history in the richness and varieties of its religious tradition .this has tremendous impact on human relations in view of the resurgence of religion and its growing role in both public and private life .the social and political processes of secularization .which were thought to supplant religion and its influence, have in fact served to strengthen it .in the age of globalization ,religious traditions and pre-modern cultural forms ,which used to be localized have now become global phenomena.(Loimeier, 2013).

One may argue that in certain instances religion plays a major role in instigating violence.

These assertions indeed hold to some extent in view of the tremendous influence of religion in the lives of many people it has been observed that in Africa, the sources of social conflicts and even wars cannot be restricted to (among other things) ethnocentrism or dictatorship .(Musama,2000)

Inter-religious relations, especially, among Africa traditional religion (ATR) worshippers, Muslims and Christians are becoming sources of social tension and violence for many Africans and Ghanaians, in particular it is religion more than anything else that shapes their worldview and participation in social

life, the African traditional religious belief is that human beings don't live in this world alone, there is a sense of human beings "close relationship with nature ,humanity ,animals and plants have their own existence and plays in the universe as independent part of a whole ,there are also spiritual beings that are more powerful than humankind and this opens up the African to the divine and to seeking affinity with these spiritual powers .

Religious belief is thus diffused in all spheres of life filling them with meaning and significance in almost every form of activity such as family gathering, child-naming ,funeral ,fishing and trading ,there is a religious observance .(Wesleyan, 1842).

This understanding of the pervasive influence of religion on humanity from cradle to the grave and the African consciousness of the divine is captured in Ghanaian Akan proverb :(Obi nnkyer a bora nyame) meaning "no one teaches the child to know god" the consciousness of god is considered inherent in the child from birth.

1.1 Statement of the Study Problem

Ghana ,a west African sub-Saharan country ,is religiously diverse with a population of about 22 million .in terms of religious composition ,figures have been debated by the followers of various religious traditions in the country for political reasons .the official census however puts them at 65% Christian ,16% Muslim and 13% African traditional religion worshippers 'with the remainder belonging to other religions .

The earliest contacts of Christianity with the then gold coast (present day Ghana) was through the Portuguese merchants led by Don Diego "Azambuja at Elmina in 1482 .there is ,however ,a suggested earlier date than that the first batch of European merchants that introduced Christianity to the land of modern Ghana being the Portuguese who landed at shamaalong the western coast of the country in 1471 they were followed by another batch of Catholic missionaries from France in 1572

.though these attempts at planting the Christian faith in the country did not take firm roots it did ,however ,provide the necessary foundation for sustained evangelization by later missionaries ,there is no certainty as regards the exact time when Islam made its entry into modern Ghana .there is a general agreement among scholars that Islam was introduced into the tropical Africa through the efforts of Muslim traders and religious experts from the 8th century . These were **Berbers** who after the Arab Muslim conquest of NORTH AFRICA had converted to Islam .they took advantage of the trans-Saharan trade route which ran through Africa, Arabia, the Middle East and the Mediterranean into Europe to plant the Islamic faith.

1.2 The Relevance of the Study

I propose in this regard to study the history of ATR-Christian Muslim relations in the **Nkusukum-Ekumfi-Enyan** traditional area of the central region of Ghana from the 1920 through to the present this study has become important in light of the following development:

1. Inter-religious tensions and the consequent community division are gradually creeping into the Ghanaian society .though the country has been witnessing peaceful co-existence in the midst of religious plurality ,this harmonious relationship is now being threatened due to the emergence of religious extremism and fundamentalism both the Christian legacies of European cultural forms and American evangelical Christianity as well as the Arab cultural package of Islam seem to have marginalized and undermined to a significant extent ,some of the African religious and cultural values of Ghanaians ,which emphasize family unity ,community participation ,love and sense of family belonging .this puritanical attitude that frowns upon and condemns incorporation of any indigenous religious and cultural expression into Ghanaian Muslim or Christian life tends to undermine those positive values which have fostered social cohesion and understanding over the years .

1. Some of the indigenous beliefs and values which helped hold communities together as one people were looked down upon and even branded as paganism by some Arab Muslim and European Christian missionaries who come to evangelize the people of the then gold coast Bartels gives an account of this negative attitude towards the local cultures ,at this time by the early Methodist missionaries among the coastal **Mfantse** people, it seemed as if they could not accept the Christian faith and remain “good” citizens .

2. The devastating effects of poverty ,**HIV\AIDS** ,other diseases and the generally deplorable social-economic conditions of the people call for all agents ,including religious groups ,to relate and cooperate in tackling some of the forces which impact negatively on the life of the community .indeed ,religion has a duty to make the world a worthy place for humanity and all forms of life to live in ,this study tends to rediscover and reinforce some of the African religious ,cultural and community values ,which foster pluralism as a means of addressing these problems which confront common humanity .

1.3 TimeFrame

The year 1920 up to the present has been chosen as the period constituting the force of this study for the following reasons:-

On the Ghanaian religious scene, the impact of certain developments which contributed to the evolving changes that is relevant to this study began to take place .the emergence of African independent churches in response to European missionary Christianity which failed to address the indigenous needs of the people began to manifest in the 1920s .

In addition to this in the early 1920s there were European and American Pentecostal missions in Ghana, whose spiritual emphasis in worship appealed to the indigenous people .among them was the church of Pentecost which started as the faith tabernacle church in Asam an kese with peter.

1.4 Study Methodology

The research will have connected studies with the context of the selected area, cannot take the symbols within any particular culture or religious tradition for granted their meanings have to be decoded.

The choice for these means of gathering data-interview and observation .were to enable the researcher to ask relevant questions for explanations and clarity so that as much as possible understanding and meaning can be obtained with regard to the religious beliefs and cultural expressions of the people.

1- Discretion, analysis and interpretations of information would be based more on that has been observed and heard from the people than one's biases and imputed meaning.

2- the historical approach provided the tools for exploring the historical developments which have given rise to the growth of the three faith communities ,and how they have responded to their mutual interactions as well as their historical situations .the study intends to examine ,analyze and interpret through this approach ,the religious life of the people ,namely Christians ,Muslims and ATR worshippers who live in .

1.5 Study Hypotheses

1- That there has been cordial and peaceful Co-existence between Christians, and Muslims in the area chosen as a result of the impact of the indigenous religious beliefs and cultural values that are rooted in the traditional family structures and communal relationships.

2- The strong presence of the **Ahmmadiyya** a Muslim movement (AMM) in the area adds other dynamic to the inter-religious there .

3- That there are potential factors, which could threaten this peaceful Co-existence and these need to be identified and responded to

1.6 Study Objectives

The objective of this work is to research into the following:

- 1-the nature of relationship that has existed among Christianity, Islam and African traditional religion in the area
- 2- To explore and reclaim the dialogue of life which constitutes the very foundation of African religious experience and pluralism but which has been down played till now.
- 3- To explore and highlight African religious belief and cultural values of community belonging and unity in fostering inter-religions relations, especially, Christian –Muslim relations.

1.7 Delimitation of the Study

The impact of African religion among the African nations, that will take the traditional area of the central region of Ghana .this area has been chosen for the following reasons:

- i) African traditional religion ,Christianity and Islam have co-existed in this area for quite a long time .yet incidence of violent clashes among them has not been ,officially ,been reported .
- ii) Area is very accessible and can ,therefore ,be covered without much problem by the research.
- iii) Dominant presence of a different brand of Islam the **Ahmadiyya** movement in the area.

CHAPTER TWO
HISTORY OF ISLAM IN GHANA

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HISTORY OF ISLAM IN GHANA

2.0 Introduction

This chapter will examine the beginning and growth of Islam by focusing on the Sunni and Ahmaddiyya groups.

The choice of these is due to their relative dominance and socio-cultural impact in the area. A closer look will be at their involvement in the provision of social services. The beliefs and practices of Muslims and how these have impacted the indigenous worldview of the people will be examined as well.(Adogame, 2010)

The history of Islam in Ghana and for that matter the area selected for this study originates in the process by which Islam was introduced in the Sub-Saharan Africa by the Arabs and Berbers from the North Africa. The historical narrative of Islam in this traditional area cannot be adequately addressed without taking a look at the background mentioned above. This chapter will, therefore, commence with a brief historical overview of how Islam began and spread to West Africa and Ghana and then to this selected area.(Ammah, 2007).

Many open Global Rights authors have argued that religion and human rights activists can work together. I disagree. While this kind of strategy might work in Europe or the United States (US), it does not apply to Africa.(Ojo, 2007).

Western citizens enjoy high literacy rates and live in technology-driven societies. Many Africans, by contrast, are fully or partially illiterate, and still cling to their ancestors' traditions. For a society that still interprets life as it was lived in 1000BC, it is a daunting challenge to understand the notion of "human rights." Human rights are not the only foreign ideology that has had a

hard time sinking deep roots in this continent; so too have foreign religions. In Africa, people are less interested in the specific doctrines of a given religion, than in the religion's relationship with local customs and norms. (Ottenberg, 1984).

Any religion that threatens African traditional beliefs encounters great resistance, and those that succeed defer to local beliefs. It is a fallacy to think that these same religions can somehow become vessels for carrying human rights to Africa's people.

Consider my own country of Uganda. Here, Pentecostalism and its cry of 'only one living God' has had to fight hard to carve out a niche; many people view it as a campaign against traditional African values, rather than as a new and attractive religion. As a result, most of the Ugandans who join the Pentecostal churches do so in the hope of material gain.

Pentecostalism, in other words, has a long way to go before it establishes roots deep enough to have a truly spiritual relationship with its followers. Pentecostalism, in other words, has a long way to go before it establishes roots deep enough to have a truly spiritual relationship with its followers. At the moment, most pastors rely heavily on appeals to poverty-stricken followers whose ideological affinity is weak and unreliable.(Peel, 2000).

To sink deep roots in Africa, Pentecostalism, like Islam, Catholicism and Anglicanism, will have to accommodate local traditions. Two such instances of Pentecostal churches prohibiting or denouncing local traditions – where other faiths have not – pertain to (African) surnames being associated to the devil and baptizing followers with new "holy" names, and burial rituals involving heirs of the deceased.

For human rights activists in Africa, the lesson is this: religious success is intricately connected to African culture. Yes, the state may come in for assistance especially through the courts of law, but again it is the people that at the end of the day implement laws. Therefore, anyone hoping to improve gay rights in Africa must craft an approach that is independent of specific religions and politicians and addresses the fears of moral transgression by tradition-bound Africans.

A rapidly growing literature suggests that greater involvement in religion is associated with better physical health, better mental health, and enhanced feelings of subjective well-being across the life course (Ellison, 1994; Koenig, McCullough, & Larson, 2001; McFadden, 1995). With respect to well-being, the potentially beneficial effects of religion have been observed with a wide range of outcomes, including life satisfaction (Ellison, 1993), happiness (Poloma & Pendleton, 1990), self-esteem (Krause, 1995), and optimism (Idler & Kasl, 1997). Although this research has provided many valuable insights, it is less evident how the potentially beneficial effects of religion on subjective well-being arise. Part of the difficulty may be traced to the fact that religion is a complex multidimensional phenomenon that may affect well-being in a number of different ways (Ellison & Levin, 1998). For example, research indicates that religious coping (Pargament, 1997), prayer (Poloma & Gallup, 1991), and church-based social support (Krause, Ellison, & Wulff, 1998) may all play a role in this process.

To understand more fully the relationship between religion and well-being, it is important to expand the scope of inquiry by turning to dimensions of religion that have been overlooked by other investigators. The purpose of the present study is to examine one such facet of religion—religious meaning. A thorough review of the literature failed to uncover a satisfactory definition of

religious meaning. Therefore, for the purposes of this study, religious meaning is defined as the process of turning to religion in an effort to find a sense of purpose in life, a sense of direction in life, and a sense that there is a reason for one's existence. Although there has been little prior empirical work with religious meaning, there is good reason to suspect it may be associated with subjective well-being. Frankl (1963) argued that the desire to find a sense of meaning is the primary motivational force in life. Moreover, a number of investigators believe that one of the basic functions of religion is to help people fulfill this fundamental need. Evidence of this may be found, for example, in the classic work of Clark (1958), who argued that, "... religion more than any other human function satisfies the need for meaning in life". Similarly, in the process of developing his thought-provoking discussion of significance, Pargament (1997) observed that, "In essence, religion offers meaning in life"

Satisfying basic needs in life should be associated with enhanced feelings of subjective well-being (Maslow, 1971). If finding meaning in life is a basic goal of human existence, and religion helps people find meaning, it follows that religious meaning should be associated with greater subjective well-being.

The first goal of the present study is to see whether religious meaning is related to subjective well-being in late life. But rather than focus on this relationship alone, this study aims to contribute to the literature by bringing the potentially important influence of race to the foreground. This line of inquiry is justified because an extensive literature suggests that older African American persons are substantially more involved in religion than older White persons (Levin, Taylor, & Chatters, 1994). To the extent this is true, race differences may arise at two key junctures in this study. First, older Black

adults may be more likely than older White adults to derive a sense of meaning in life from religion. Second, the impact of religious meaning on subjective well-being may be stronger for older Black than older White adults. There do not appear to be any studies in the literature that evaluate the interface between religious meaning, race, and subjective well-being in late life.

The discussion that follows is divided into three main sections. First, the theoretical underpinnings of the study are developed in greater detail. Second, the study sample and measures are presented. The data analytic strategy is briefly presented at this juncture as well. Finally, results from a nationwide survey of older Black and older White adults are reviewed and discussed.(Sanneh, 1989).

2.1 Religious Meaning and Subjective Well-Being in Late Life

The theoretical rationale for this study is developed below in four components. First, an effort is made to clarify the nature of religious meaning by showing how it differs from a construct that has been examined more often in the literature—a general sense of meaning in life. Second, a rationale is provided for why religious meaning may be related to subjective well-being. Third, a case is made for why it is important to study religious meaning and well-being in samples composed of older people. Finally, the reasons why there may be race differences in religious meaning and subjective well-being are examined in greater detail.(.Larkin, 2008).

2.2 Religious Meaning and a General Sense of Meaning in Life

Most research in the field focuses on a general sense of meaning in life (Reker, 1997). This construct is differentiated from religious meaning by its scope or focus. As Reker (2000) points out, a general sense of meaning in life

can arise from any number of sources, including personal relationships, work, hobbies, and religion. In contrast, religious meaning obviously arises from one source alone. To date, most studies on religious issues rely on a general sense of meaning in life. For example, Petersen and Roy (1985) found that religious salience (i.e., the importance of religion) is associated with a greater sense of general meaning in life. However, they did not empirically evaluate meaning that arises specifically from religion, nor did they assess whether religious meaning is associated with subjective well-being. A major contribution of the present study arises from the fact that an effort is made to address these gaps in the literature.(Larkin, et, al 2006).

Research that focuses specifically on religious meaning is important for the following reason. The wider intent of this study is to find out why religion may be associated with subjective well-being in late life. If meaning plays a role in this respect, then it makes more sense to focus on meaning as it arises specifically from religion. If a general sense of meaning was used instead, it would be more difficult to know if the effects were from religion, work, interpersonal relationships, or some other secular influence.(Last, 2007).

2.3 Islam in West Africa

Muslim geographers and historians have provided excellent records of Muslim rulers and peoples in Africa. Among them are Al-Khwarzimi, IbnMunabbah, Al-Masudi, Al-Bakri, AbulFida, Islam reached the Savannah region in the 8th Century C.E., the date the written history of West Africa begins. Islam was accepted as early as 850 C.E. by the Dya'ogo dynasty of the Kingdom of Tekur. They were the first Negro people who accepted Islam. Trade and commerce paved the way for the introduction of new elements of material culture, and made possible the intellectual development which naturally followed the introduction and spread of literacy.

Eminent Arab historians and African scholars have written on the empires of Ghana, Mali, Songhay, and Kanem Bornu. They document famous trade routes in Africa - from Sijilmasa to Taghaza, Awdaghost, which led to the empire of Ghana, and from Sijilmasa to Tuat, Gao and Timbuktu. Al-Bakri describes Ghana as highly advanced and economically a prosperous country as early as the eleventh century. He also discusses the influence of Islam in Mali in the 13th century and describes the rule of Mansa Musa, whose fame spread to Sudan, North Africa and up to Europe.(Launay, 1992).

Islam made its entry from North Africa through the Sahara and gradually spread to the West Africa sub region. A large proportion of this region was once occupied by the ancient empires of Ghana, and Mali. What is of relevance to the purpose of this study is the Islamic history in the central and Western Sudan what today constitutes the West Africa sub region. The discussion that follows will examine, briefly, this account.(Bezabeh,2015).

The spread of Islam in West Africa took place in stages and through various means, among these were the military expedition and slave raids in the 8th century, the Almoravid movements, and the activities of Muslims clerics, scholars and merchants. This will be discussed in turns.

Islam reached the Savannah region in the 8th Century C.E., the date the written history of West Africa begins The Muslim-Arab historians began to write about West Africa in the early 8th century. The famous scholar IbnMunabbah wrote as early as 738 C.E., followed by Al-Masudi in 947 C.E. As Islam spread in the Savannah region, it was quite natural that commercial links should also come to be established with North Africa. Trade and commerce also paved way for the introduction of new elements of material culture, and made possible the intellectual development which naturally followed the introduction and spread of literacy, and for which parts of the Sudan were to become famous in the centuries to come. In the

Kingdom of Tekur, situated on both banks of the Senegal, Islam was accepted as early as 850 C.E., by the Dya'ogo dynasty. This dynasty was the first Negro people who accepted Islam.(Levtzion, et al, 2000).

It was for this reason that Muslim-Arab historians referred to Bilad al-Tekur as 'The Land of the Black Muslims.' War-jabi, son of Rabis, was the first ruler of Tekur in whose reign Islam was firmly established in Tekur and the Islamic Shari'ah system was enforced. This gave a uniform Muslim law to the people. By the time the Al-Murabitun of Almoravids began their attack on Tekur in 1042 C.E., Islam had made a deep impact on the people of that area. Al-Idrisi in 1511 described the Tekur Country as 'secure, peaceful and tranquil.' The capital town of Tekur was also called Tekur which had become center of commerce. Merchants used to bring wool to sell there from Greater Morocco and in return, took with them gold and beads. We have enough documents about the history of this region since it was known to the Arab historians as the Bilad al-Sudan, the land of the Blacks. In the medieval period, the most well-known empires that grew there are known until our day: The empires of Ghana, Mali, Songhay, and Kanem Bornu. Eminent Arab historians have written about the glories of these lands, notable among whom are Al-Bakri, Al-Masudi, IbnBatutah and IbnKhaldun. Besides these scholars, there were local scholars whose works have come down to us. As for example Tarikh al-Sudan, the History of the Sudan, by Al-Sadi and Tarikh al-Fattash by Muhammad al-Kati. There were famous trade routes, like the one from Sijilmasa to Taghaza, Awdaghost, which led to the empire of Ghana, and another from Sijilmasa to Tuat, Gao and Timbuktu. There were others which connected the present Nigeria with Tripoli via Fez to Bornu and Tunisia with Nigeria via Ghadames, Ghat, and Agades to Hausa land. These routes had made all the above mentioned places famous trade centers. These centers of trade invariably became centers of Islamic learning and civilization. New ideas came through visiting traders in the field of administrative

practices. We shall study briefly the expansion of Islam in each of the ancient empires of Western Sudan.(Linares, 1992).

2.4 Islam in the Ancient Empire of Ghana

Al-Bakri, the Muslim geographer, gives us an early account of the ancient Soninke empire of Ghana. His *Kitab fi Masalik walMamalik* (The Book of Roads and Kingdoms) describes Ghana of 1068 as highly advanced. Economically, it was a prosperous country. The King had employed Muslim interpreters and most of his ministers and treasurers were also Muslims. The Muslim ministers were learned enough to record events in Arabic and corresponded, on behalf of the king, with other rulers. “Also, as Muslims, they belonged to the larger body politic of the Islamic world and this would make it possible to establish international relations.” Al-Bakri gives the following picture of Islam in Ghana in the 11th century: The city of Ghana consists of two towns lying on a plain, one of which is inhabited by Muslims and is large, possessing 12 mosques one of which is congregational mosque for Friday prayers: each has its Imam, Muezzin and paid reciters of the Quran. The town possesses a large number of jurists, consultants and learned men.

2.5 The Military Expeditions and Slave Raids

In the first half of the 8th century, the Umayyad rulers of North Africa embarked upon military incursion and slave raids southwards, as far as the boundaries of ancient Ghana in the Sudan, such raids led to the opening up of the Sudan regions source of supply for slaves and gold.(Brenner,2000).

The North African raiders and traders, the majority of whom were Berbers, took advantage to develop the existing Trans-Saharan routes as very important commercial links from the North and West Africa.

2.6 The Almoravid Movement

In certain part of the Sudan region, various form of Islam such as **Khajirite**, **Ibadite** and **Sufrite**, which were perceived as mixed Islamic practices prevailed in the

11th century. These had earlier sought refuge in North Africa from a form of persecution by the **Abbasid** Caliphs in the 8th century. The perceived adulterated form of Islam in the area and other factors which will be discussed later motivated the founder of the Almoravid movement Abdullah B. Yasin to launch the Jihad of the sword among the **Sanhajias** in the early part of that century. It was Yahya B. Ibrahim, chief of the Judala branch of Sanhaja, who invited him into that region of what is today known as the Islamic republic of Mauritania. The chief had met Abu Al-Fassi a leading exponent of the Maliki School of law on his way from pilgrimage, in their conversation, the latter brought to his notice superficial nature of Islam among his people and he subsequently returned home to effect reforms.(Brenner, L,2001).

2.7 The Activities of Muslim Traders, Clerics and Scholars

Islam's penetration into the Sudan regions also came about by peaceful means. The Bambuk gold producing in the ancient Ghana controlled by the indigenous Dyula or WangaraMalinke, attracted Muslims traders to settle in the part of the Sudan region. Indeed ,it was difficult ,at some points ,to differentiate the muslims trader from the cleric or the scholar ,the same person ,sometimes happened to play the three roles as a result of this immigration ,some Dyula and Malinke became Muslims and together with some Muslims from the north Africa ,began to play a more active role in the trans-Saharan trade from the second half of the 8th century until the 10th century .the upshot of this was the creation for commercial centers.(Chesworth,2007).

Al-Bakri described in 1067, the extent of Muslim presence and influence in ancient Ghana "the capital of Ghana is made up of two towns one of which is inhabited by the Muslims .this Muslim town is a big town with twelve mosques, one of which is for public prayers on Fridays .

The reaction of the local people to Islam at this time varied very few, of the ruling elite in the Volta basin ,became Muslims during the period 1000-1600 .some of the rulers of the Mossi kingdoms in the upper Volta ,for example (now Burkina Faso)

developed a hostile attitude to Islam ,a situation that gave cause for AskiyaMuhammadure to launch his Jihad against them for failure to comply with the request to convert to Islam in 1498 . (Comaroff, et al, 1991).

Indeed, it was difficult, at some points to differentiate the Muslims trader from the cleric or the scholar, the same person sometimes happened to play the three roles. As a result of this immigration, some Dyula and Malinke became Muslims and together with some Muslims from the North Africa,

2.8 Religious Festivals

The discussion in this session will cover celebrations of both the traditional and Christian religious festivals.

As mentioned earlier the confrontational attitudes of some of the Christian missionaries to the African traditional religious experience pitted initially European Missionary Christianity ATR and its cultural expressions including the observance of traditional festivals. Busia records that some of the early Christian converts refused to be part of the community celebration of the traditional festivals and observance of some of the rites as a result of their new religious faith yet, the African finds his or her being within a community and its participation. Most of the Christian converts were in any case involved in the observance of their traditional festivals and rites of passage at the various levels within the society.

The mainline churches came with time to accept in principle that, the celebrations of the traditional festivals were community events of which they themselves formed part in addition they also perceived these traditional observance as important occasions for collective engagement in undertaking developments projects for these reasons they have become participants in the celebration of the AKWANBO festival, a major traditional remembrance event observed by almost all the communities of this ethnic group in commemoration of their migration from takyiman to this present location .(Cooper, B,2006).

2.9 Beginning and Growth of Islam in Modern Ghana

2.9.1 Islam in the Northern Ghana

From the late 14th and early 15th centuries Muslim traders from the upper Niger region, known in various ways such as **WangaraDyula**

And **yarse** became increasingly involved in the gold and cola nut trade which was **centred** in the forest region to the south of west Africa it was the quest for this trade that led some of these Muslim traders to settle in northern Ghana.(Witte, M,2015).

The communities in northern Ghana that came under the early influence of Islam were the **Gonjas**, **Mamprussi** and the **Dagombas** as well as the kingdom of **wa** .the exact date of Islamic penetration in the modern Ghana is not certain.

Gorman states that Portuguese trading at the coastal region of the gold coast reported of **Mand-Speaking** and Hausa Muslim traders engaged in buying slaves brought there from Benin in the 1480s ,**Samwini** on the other hand claims that **Dyula** or **Yarse** Muslim settlers who were **Mande-speaking** introduced the religion among the **Gonjas** in the 16th century and to the **Dayomba** and the **Wala** people by the 17th century.(Frederiks, 2009)

By the end of 19th century ,Muslim lived in almost every village with a prominent chief in affirmation of the latter position **MallamAbubakar** ,the daily **Imam** of the **Accra** central Mosque. **Ghana** also thinks Islam was introduced in the North of **Ghana** between the 16th and 17th centuries.(Gifford, 1987).

2.9 2 Islam in the Forest and Coastal Regions of Ghana

The influx of Muslims from northern Ghana towards the south comprising the forest and coastal areas of the country continued with the collapse of the **Salag** market. Islam's contacts with the **AshantiKingdom** in the forest zone of Ghana seem to have started in the 18th century .however ,visible presence of Muslim settlement especially in **Kumasi** the capital of the kingdom, seems to have occurred by the early 19th century these settlements were driven more by ethnic identities rather than

one's religious affiliation it was observed that Muslims served as representative of those in **Gonja**, **Dagomba** and **Mamprusi** in the northern region of Ghana the first two states were tributaries of the **Asante Kingdom** during this period .their presence in the royal court in Kumasi in effect server not only the economic and political interests of the **Asante** king but religious as well as later developments proved to be the case.(Hackett, et al, 2006).

The rulers in the Asante are said to have been particularly interested in the gifts and talents of the sharifs and the Muslim holy men who were believed to be endowed with **Baraka** (spiritual powers) to ensure success this was of prime importance to the kings of **Ashante**as they were engaged in various wars, at this time with neighboring ethnic groups in order to ensure dominance and territorial expansion, **Ashanti** kings made use of Muslim diviners in their courts and “thought it possible to win the intercession of the prophet in the interests of **Ashanti** Muslim religious leaders in this sense became very important in the royal court by offering prayers talisman and amulets to **Asante** kings for success in wars letters received by Muslim ulamas in Kumasi from their chiefs in the north testified to this Muslim, scholars, also served as advisers and secretaries to the **Ashanti** chiefs due to their literacy yet the traditional religious and cultural practices were adhered to and its claimed that none of the chiefs converted to the faith . (Hastings, et al,1994).

2.10 Looking Back

In what follows I will flesh out the desirability of making Muslim–Christian encounters central to the study of religion in Africa, and I will examine some of the empirical and theoretical implications of doing so. First, I would like to take a look back to review and assess how contemporary scholars have studied Islam and Christianity, as well as Muslims and Christians, in Africa.

CHAPTER THREE

**THE IMPACT OF CHRISTIANITY ON THE
INDIGENOUS LIFE**

CHAPTER THREE

THE IMPACT OF CHRISTIANITY ON THE INDIGENOUS LIFE

3.0 Introduction

This thesis attempts to investigate the extent to which the indigenous context has served as a factor for religious and cultural mediation, thereby impacting on the inter-religious relationships for both Christians and Muslims in this traditional area. However, these inter-religious and cultural engagement are mutually transforming that is the equally, important influence of these immigrant religions –Christianity and Islam –on the indigenous environment has also become an integral part of the people’s socio-cultural experience, a phenomenon, which cannot be overlooked in this discourse. This chapter, therefore, examines and analyzes the impact of the Christian beliefs, practices and missionary activities (such as provision of social services) on the indigenous communities in the area.(Hiskett,1994).

The indigenous environment into which Christianity and Islam penetrated was (and still is) intensely religious there was that strong awareness of and belief in the existence of a Supreme Being, conceived as the creator and sustainer of the universe and with whom humans tried to establish constant ties. Besides that the people also believed that ancestors and other spirits acted as intermediaries between humans and god, the nature of this traditional religion, as expressed in many areas in Africa, is very communal and utilitarian or pragmatic. That is, people born into that traditional community were, also born into the religion, in which they naturally participated as they grew up

through the traditional socialization processes. The universe was perceived as a wider community, consisting of a composite of divine spirit, human, animate and inanimate elements in a hierarchical order, but directly related, and always interacting with each other. In other words, the unseen forms an integral part of the reality as the visible the spiritual and the material are both aspects of the reality. Within the African religious life, persons also constitute a hierarchy among themselves according to their age or function in society as a rule, the order the person the more powerful his vital force the grater the responsibility he/she holds, the more intense their mystical powers. This explains the high value placed on respect for the elderly and leaders in African traditional life. This community web of relationships constitutes what Magesa refers to as the vital force.

The main focus of the traditional religion was on this worldly life and its sole purpose was the enhancement of the community life which of course included that of the individual most of the traditional ritual practices and values which will be discussed later derived from this understanding.(Hock, 2004).

The tradition of the people out of which the moral code is derived is actualized in the rites that were observed.

The communal nature of the indigenous religion engendered to a great extent communal traditional values which informed most of the ritual practices that were observed in the communities. Among these values were social solidarity, harmony, cooperation, sharing, love, generosity, hospitality, respect and the value for life as well as obedience to and respect for elders.(Holder, 2012).

The indigenous religio-cultural background that has been outlined above offers a snapshot into the traditional environment were Christianity and Islam

entered. This is to enable us to know what was in place before and to assess some of the changes that have, possibly, occurred after the encounter of the two immigrant religions – Christianity and Islam – with the indigenous religious and cultural universe.

The methodological approach for the discussions in this chapter will be as follows:

First, the discussions will focus on the Christian beliefs and practices as observed in the rituals of naming, marriage, funeral as well as the celebration of traditional and religious festivals. Some of the values, which inform some of these transitional rites, will be examined and analyzed.(Holder, 2012).

Secondly attention will be paid to the differences in the beliefs, practices and religious values of the various Christian denominations and the extent of their varying impacts on the indigenous life. Beside these, the impact of the provision of social services by the Christian on the traditional communities and other influences, resulting from these missionary activities will be addressed. Finally the extent of changes that have occurred in some of the ritual practices and their underlying values will be assessed. The intention here is to attempt to examine the measure of change that has taken place within the indigenous context as a result of the impact of the imported Christian norms and practices.(Ibrahim, 2015).

3.1 The Christian Evangelization and Its Impact

Even though Roman Catholic and the Basel missionaries preceded the Methodists in the gold in their respective evangelization attempts, it was the Wesleyan Methodists from the United Kingdom, who were the first to make inroads into the indigenous community of this area. Their enduring missionary

efforts in the face of various obstacles, the heavy death toll among their missionaries, and, sometime, the indigenous opposition finally had a breakthrough when the Mfantse religious cult at Mankessim (referred to in chapter three) which had a strong hold on the indigenous communities was brought to a decisive halt through Akwesis episode in 1851.

This encounter between Christianity and African traditional religion as practiced by the people of this area resulted in the shaking up of the ATR foundations from that time on words the rate of conversion among the indigence people to certainty particularly Methodism began to rise.(Isichei1995).

Crayner is of the view that many Mfants people who became disappointed with deceptions of the traditional priests\priestess of the *nananom POW* turned to the christen faith. One cold state in view of this change, subsequent cusses of the missionary work of the Methodist the Roman Catholic churches and other religious groups including Islam in the area during and after that time was facilitated partly, by this incident. Thereason for this religious change is not farfetched. The mfantse religious shrine, located at the nananom paw in mankessim became an institutionalized.

Forms of ATR on the land the retiles and practices performed there fostered and deepend the people believe in the Supreme Being as well as local deities ancestors who acted as intermediaries. in fact , the activates at the shrine centered more on the ancestors than any other deity , especially their three charismatic leaders obermankoma .son and odabagyan who were bored at sacred group in this area the people and their leaders tried to this sacred ground to consult nananom (the ancestors)on matters relating to their well

being . This dependence on the ancestors persisted till the corruption of the priests and priestesses at the shrine were exposed by AKweesi and some of his Methodist members of obidan.(Janson, 2014).

3.2 The Religious Conversions and the Change

In the traditional societies the chief was a political and religious leader as the final ethnic authority figure, he was the chief priest of his people. Among the Mfanter people, in particular, he entered the ancestral stool room during festive occasions as EGUADOTO and AHOBAA to make petitions to the ancestors on behalf of this people. In view of some of the induced changes in the traditional political and religious systems, engendered by the conversions of some of the traditional leaders, the indigenous value of the chief as an exemplary traditional religious and political leader was, severely, compromised their sacral role, especially came into contention as Christian teachings demanded that they break away with some of their traditional religious and cultural practices. Even when they took part and performed some of these traditional religious rites, the commitment was half-hearted. A manifestation of this crisis was witnessed during the reign of Rev. S .Q .(Janzen, 1978).

Ghartey, an ordained Methodist minister, who succeeded his father to the traditional seat of Winneba as Nana Ghartey V in 1946.

The provision of schools by the missionaries and the introduction of Christian morning worship at schools together with bible knowledge lessons became formal process of education and evangelization for the younger generation. As CaselyAsmoah rightly observed the mission schools besides its other-worldly benefits provided the right environment for the people to come under the influence of the Christian gospel. The Methodist and roman catholic churches

appeared in the eyes of the local people to offer almost the same content of teachings through their various bible and catechumen classes the exception being the RCC's emphasis on Mary saints and the use of the rosary. Both denominations taught on the salvific work of Christ and the need for the sinner to repent and believe in Jesus to be saved from eternal condemnation. Converts who went through confirmation classes were baptized and confirmed as full members of the church. These religious rituals were intended to equip them to remain in the Christian faith and live a morally good life as Christians. Though these formal Christian teachings and education were intended to induce Christian moral change the emphasis was on individual salvation. In this sense this new process of education and learning stood at variance with the old traditional system of informal education and socialization in the traditional system religion with its moral values was not taught the younger ones learnt by observation and participation. Its purpose was to effect a communal rather than individual salvation rooted in harmonious community relationships for the enhancement of the vital force.(Kukah, 2007).

Although some of the early missionary teaching made the people frowns upon their indigenous religious and cultural elements, most of the Christian converts could not just break away from them. Their Christian convictions and expressions were still underpinned by those indigenous values and religious thoughts that have been the basis of their nurturing and socialization right from birth. The African religious worldview which attributed sufferings and other strange happenings in life to spiritual causes, still, prevailed in spite of the teachings of the mainline Christian denominations which often denied them the lack of credible Christian spiritual response to some of these life challenges compelled some of them out of frustration and fear to resort to

other traditional priests or priestesses for answers. There were therefore some Christians who professed the Christian faith, alright, but were still tied to those aspects of the African traditional religious life, which dwelt on the fear of evil forces. (Laitin, 1986).

The emergence of the MDCC and the CP in Ghana and particularly, in this area did not just introduce diversity in the Christian missionary work, but, also sought to fill this indigenous spiritual vacuum. The Pentecostal churches, which placed emphasis on the power of Jesus, as demonstrated in the New Testament stories, provided answers and hope for the indigenous Christian converts and even some of the non-Christian who, also, sought for religious help. The intense prayers sessions fasting and teachings offered by these churches concrete spiritual channels for addressing those challenges.(Larkin, 2008).

The president of Ghana, Prof, and Evans Atta Mills made reference to this aspect of the Pentecostal ministry during his visit to the church on the occasion of the 39th general Annual Council Meeting by commending the CP for promoting both spiritual and physical well-being of Ghanaians.(Last, 2007).

The church of Pentecost's particular emphasis on the power of the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer with the initial of speaking in tongues, gave these new converts the needed self-confidence in the face of challenges it was not surprising that these churches gained converts from some of the established mainline churches as well as from the ATR adherents.(Launay, 1992).

Another serious challenge to the indigenous system was the questioning of certain beliefs and practices especially by the younger generation as a result of the new religious consciousness introduced by the Christian missionaries explanation were sought for the rationale behind the various traditional

religious taboos and sanctions as Christian converts claimed that they were no longer obliged to submit to the religious injunctions of the ancestors and other deities. This boldness no question elders by the younger people on matters of traditional beliefs and practices was really new and revolutionary in a culture where children and young people were taught to obey elders but not to question the traditional authority structure for ensuring conformity to social norms came under serious pressure this was further intensified by the western system of education and culture which became some of the important factors of social change in traditional communities at that time these and many other religious and cultural changes began to impact the indigenous context as Christianity grew and established itself firmly in this area and in Ghana this social shall be returned to soon.

Some of these changed were reflected in the religious festivals and traditional rites that were observed in the communities and our discussions will now turn to these aspects of the people's life.(Levtzion, 2000).

CHAPTER FOUR
SOME OF THE LANDSCAPES OF SUB-
SAHARIAN AFRICA AT THE SECT OF
RELIGIOUS

CHAPTER FOUR

SOME OF THE LANDSCAPES OF SUB-SAHARIAN AFRICA AT THE SECT OF RELIGIOUS

4.0 Introduction

This chapter will support some of the landscapes of sub-Saharan Africa at the sect of religious affair which has changed dramatically, in little more than century Muslims and Christians were relatively small minorities in the region .the vast majority of people practiced traditional African religious, while adherents of Christianity and Islam combined made up less than quarter of the population according to the historical estimates from the world religion data base.

Since then the number of Muslim living between the Sahara desert and the cape of good hope has increased more the number of Christian has grown even faster .Africa now is home to about one-in five of all the Christians in the world and more than one-in seven of the world's Muslims .(Linares, 1992).

Islam in Africa is revealed in the various schools of thought traditions and voices in many African countries, such as (Ghana).

The practice of Islam on the continent is not static and is constantly being reshaped by prevalent social economic and political conditions so Islam in Africa is often adapted to African cultural contexts and belief systems.

So the research will include in details the following points:-

- Polytheistic, attitudes to ATR, Muslim attitudes to ATR and Christians.
- On the relationship between Christianity and Islamic religions.
- indigenous response to Christianity and Islam and its impact.(Loimeier, 2013).

4.1 Christianity and Islam's Relationship with ATR

4.1.1 ATR as "Polytheistic" Religion

Both Christianity and Islam understand themselves as monotheistic religions and perceive ATR, on the other hand, as "polytheistic". From this perception flowed the general attitude of trying to draw a line of distinction by the former in their relationship with the latter, as regards that constitutes "the religious" and "the cultural" result of the institutional responses of the two mission religions than the attitudes of their respective members in grassroots relationships.(Meyer, 2004).

Most of the beliefs and practices of the traditional religion in which recognition was given to other deities and spirits were considered as "fetish" by some functionaries and members of the immigrant religions. Earlier on, however, we pointed out the unclear and complicated nature of this criterion, especially, when it comes to African worldviews, where the dichotomy between the religious and the cultural, hardly, exists. In addition, the concept of ATRs as "polytheistic" is highly debatable. For example, KofiAsareOpoku objects, strongly, to this description since in ATR the Supreme Being is considered unique and creator of all other gods, who depend on him and act as intermediaries between him and humans. But polytheism is grossly inadequate as a description African traditional religion, for a religion cannot be said to be polytheistic merely because there exist many divinities in that religion. In African traditional religion, however, the picture is quite different. God or the Supreme Being is outside the pantheon of gods. He is the eternal creator of all other gods, and of men and the universe. We don't intend to get entangled in this debated, but to point out that the polytheistic notions of ART derive from Christian and Islamic understanding and not from the traditionalists

themselves. These raises, rather a serious challenge to the dialogue of life that the sub-Saharan African context fosters as admitted by parrinder: “A curious feature of west Africa is the religious tolerance, especially in the coastal area, where members of different religions live together in such harmony that they may join in one another’s festivals”.(Mustapha, et al,2007).

4.1.2 Christian Attitudes to ATR

We noted, earlier that the initial attitude of the European missionary Christianity towards African religious beliefs and cultural practices were confrontational as well as rejection however we found that some changes have taken place in the course of time.

Among some of the reasons for the Christian attitudinal towards the ATR were the following:

First, there was the emergence of other AICs and Pentecostal groups in reaction. Mostly, to the inability of European missionary Christianity to take into account the indigenous religious context and needs. The above-mentioned incidence and other global developments within Christianity such as the Ecumenical movements and Vatican helped raise certain concerns among some African Christian scholars and religious leaders in respect of Christianity’s relationships with other non-Christian religions in the Nostra Aetate for instance, the RCC in view of some inherent virtues found in non-Christian religions, stated the need for Christianity to relate with the former as follows:

“men look to their different religions for an answer to the unresolved riddles of human existence .the church ,therefore ,urges her sons to enter with prudence and charity into discussions and collaboration with members of other religions” in the same spirit, some among the protestant tradition came to terms with some essential values in people of other faiths, by which the

Christian church could be enriched in entering into dialogue with them.(Mwakimako, 2009).

When we seek to understand the adherent of another religion we should not be concerned to arrive at a descriptive account of him as an example of his particular faith but we must rather treat him as someone who has something to teach us and something to manifest to us of God in response to these events, some of the line mainline Christian churches in Africa began to re-examine the Christian message and its relation to the indigenous religious beliefs and cultural expressions. The change in attitudes towards the indigenous elements was also influenced by the impact of European enlightenment and rationalization on the Christian church. Historicalcriticism, which became one of the approaches to understanding the biblical text, paved the way for liberal interpretation of certain biblical references to subjects such as idol worship and Christian exclusive claims.

Thirdly, some of the churches also came to the understanding of some of the inherent values of certain traditional beliefs and practices for religious expressions and living. Finally, there was the realization by the European established churches of losing members to the emerging new churches that offered worship experiences and programmes, which connected with the indigenous religious aspirations and spiritual needs.(Nolte, et al,2011).

4.1.3 Muslim Attitudes to ATR

Although Islam has been perceived as more affirming of the African traditional indigenous life than Christianity, we can rather, speak, on the basis of the findings of this research, of affinity instead of affirmation. That is ,most of the common elements between the two are found to be rites and practices inherent in official Islam, rather than what has resulted from its incorporation of the indigenous elements. Islam was much more resistant than Christianity

in the absorption of traditional elements. Unlike the European established mission churches, Islamic interpretation of Qur'anic reference, especially *tawhid* and linked beliefs and practices, has tended to be, strictly, subservient to the shari'a there is supposedly no room for liberal interpretation as the Qur'an is believed to be a direct revelation from Allah. Islamic tradition claims that “..when Mohammed heard this word, it sounded as a reverberating bell” the universal nature of the legal tradition and practice has accounted for the major differences between Christianity and Islam as regards the absorption of indigenous elements in this area. The primacy of Islamic Scripture, law and practice has been much more asserting in this area in the observance of traditional rites.(Meyer, 2004).

We, further, found that this Islamic resistance, also, derived from the resolve of some of its members, particularly, those of the settled communities and some radical groups to practice Islam according to the Sunna of the prophet.

This official Islamic response to the indigenous life notwithstanding, we found that certain indigenous cultural and religious elements have continued to shape some Muslim beliefs and practices in this area: the indigenous family structures and values inform the cordial relationship between Muslims and other non-Muslims. Furthermore, most of the indigenous Muslim religious experiences were derived from the traditional religious beliefs and practices.(Obadare, 2016).

On the use of indigenous elements to advance the cause of Islam, we discovered how the AMM found and developed the vernacular as an essential tool for ensuring better understanding of the Islamic message. In this effort, the Qur'an was translated into some of the Ghanaian local languages, among which was the Mfantse thereby facilitating the spread of the faith among the Mfantse people who were handicapped in the Arabic .this was in contrast with

the Orthodox Muslim position on the non-translatability of the Qur'an as practiced by the Sunnis in the Mfantse traditional area.(Ojo,M,2007).

4.2 The Indigenous Response to Christianity and Islam and Its Impact

We found in our analysis that while the spread of Islam in this traditional area and in the sub-Saharan Africa was, mostly, the result of indigenous initiatives, that of Christianity was began by European Christian Missionaries. This together with especially the similar marriage and family institution Islam shared with the African traditional life, has resulted in the perception of the religion by some as “African” in comparison with Christianity however it must be noted on the basis of our analysis that, this view derived, rather from the identity of the agents of Islamic evangelization and aspects of its cultural practice than its theological content.

Nevertheless, these differential perceptions and attitudes by the indigenous people towards Christianity and Islam have undergone some changes, which ,at the moment, give neither of the two immigrant religions any advantage over the other. Today, both Islam and Christianity are perceived as an integral religious heritage of the people. Sanneh makes reference to this reality in relation to Christianity when he spoke about Christianity as a “religion transcending ethnic, national and cultural barriers” this is, equally, true of Islam and this reality is reflected in the local cultural and religious forms of the two religions in sub-Saharan Africa. The shared indigenous religious context being an influential factor in this dynamic process. One could thus, speak of “indigenization” or “domestication” of both Christianity and Islam.(Ottenberg, 1984).

In recognition of these shared traditional beliefs, practices and values, among others, a pastoral letter issued by the African and Madagascar catholic Secretariat the need for dialogue rather than confrontation in respect of the church's relationship with non-Christian religions. It stated "ATR is the religious and cultural context from which most Christians in Africa come, and in which many of them still live to a great extent.(Peel, 2000).

Running through our analysis is the mutual impact of Christianity and Islam on the indigenous life, on the one hand, and the ATR and its culture on the mission religions on the other. The historical Christian and Muslim polemics and tensions, which were imported into the sub-Saharan African, sometimes with their associated violence, have been contained and, mostly, diffused by the indigenous impact.

Mention was made, earlier, of the legacies of European mission Christianity and Arab Islam, as well as emerging radical Christian and Muslims groups that are influenced, respectively, by Wahhabi Islamic and American evangelical religious ideologies besides their earnest desire to carry their respective faiths to other lands, both European Christianity and Arab Islam entered Africa in a competitive spirit and played down the relevance of the indigenous context for their mutual encounters. This scramble for the "redemption" of African souls and its associated polemics was reinforced, with the later arrivals of some of the exclusive and radical missionary religious groups, including the Pakistani Ahmadi missionaries whose missionary approach resulted in the break-up of the first Mfantse Muslim group that was found at Ekrawfo in fact, the Ahmadis were initially, noted for their preaching attacks on some Christian doctrines. Samwini commented on one of the reports that the Ahmadiyya Pakistani missionary Maulvi Hakeem wrote on the Movement's missionary activity in Ghana to the headquarters in

Rabwa: “what is clear from this report is Hakeem’s satisfaction and pride in ridiculing the church and Christian doctrines, without asking himself why his Christian Audience never reacted violently to his speeches, even at the central church of the town". The answer to the "why" in Samwini's question, which was not answered by him, could be found in the understanding of that indigenous Christian audience; their communal oneness, which embraces religious diversity living experience, with its tolerance, as has been established by the analysis of this research. For the most Africans and, for the matter, this Ghanaian ethnic group, religious diversity is a fact of life, helping worshippers to attain their varied spiritual and material needs.(Rasmussen,1993).

It is in this context that one can say that the indigenous mediation has, to an appreciable extent indigenized the tow immigrant religions and fostered religious tolerance and harmony between them. Long before the ecumenical movement, for instance, started to explore ways of healing the wounds of division among the Christian denominations, the spirit of ecumenism had manifested in communal living among most African communities and for the matter Ghanaians, serving as the foundation of societal relationships, which defied religious boundaries, while the historical and doctrinal divisions of Christian churches prevented them from receiving each other at the lord's table, among most Ghanaian and Africans, however, everyone, including visitors were always invited and made to participants were of diverse religious traditions as evidenced in our discussions. It is in recognition of the unifying role of some the indigenous practices and values in the midst of diversity within a community that the Most Rev Francis Lodonu, Bishop of Ho Diocese of the RCC called for efforts to sustain the extended family system through the promotion of "family feast" and family re-unions. He described the

extended family system "as a very important aspect of the Ghanaian culture which should not be left to whittle". (Larkin, 2008).

Through this process, the intra- and inter-religious harmonious relationships between Christian and Muslim groups in this area has been fostered through the bonds of traditional family relations and communal values. This indigenous role in fostering harmonious relations among the members of the various religious groups in the area was succinctly expressed by the people.

Unfortunately, the polytheistic perception of ATR by both Christianity and Islam, coupled with the incidence of religious extremism pose a serious challenge to this accommodating indigenous environment.(Last, M.,2007).

4.3 The Challenges

We mentioned above that one of the challenges to religious pluralism and peaceful co-existence among members of the diverse religious faith in area relates to the perception of ATR as a "polytheistic" religion, with "fetish" beliefs and practices by both Christianity and Islam. This perceived 'fetish' influence of the indigenous religious and cultural environment was, strongly, expressed not only in the early European Christian missionaries' attitudes towards ATR, but, also, by some puritanical Muslim groups in the sub-Saharan African region. This pejorative view of the indigenous religion and its cultural expressions, still, persists among some radical Christian and Muslim members. (Launay, 1992).

This poses problems, in terms of healthy dialogue based on mutual respect and understanding which is necessary for harmonious relations. This definition of ATR by others fails to take into account some of those relevant belief systems and values that are central to people's understanding of life realities and, which enabled some of the indigenous converts to connect with

certain aspects of the Christian and Islamic teachings. In affirmation with our analysis, it has been observed that Africans responded, for instance, much more positively to Christianity in places where ATRs were strongly practiced, thereby, pointing to a degree of indigenous compatibility with the gospel.(Meyer, 2004).

There is no doubt, as we noted earlier that, the expansion of Islam in this area and that of sub-Saharan Africa, also benefitted from this continuity with the indigenous religious tradition, such an attitude tends not only to marginalize some of the wisdom and inherent values embedded in certain indigenous practices, but also, to look down upon the adherents of the indigenous religion and the traditional institutions which, still, form the very foundation of these societies. Such attitudes, when exploited by radical religious groups in offensive preaching, has the potential to disrupt communities by undermining the authority of traditional chiefs, community leaders and family elders, who ensure the observance of those norms that are necessary for the maintenance of law and order.(Mustapha, et al,2007).

Within the constitution of the land, which provides the necessary legal frame for the maintenance of law and order in Ghanaian societies, traditional customary laws have their place and are duly recognized as such. One could therefore, imagine the kind of social disruptions that could occur, if the authority of traditional leaders are disregarded and treated with contempt for certain religious reasons. It was this tendency to disregard the authority of the traditional institutions on the part of certain religious groups that led to the violent clashes between some charismatic Christian churches and traditional worshippers, which was referred to earlier.

Those churches took the traditional injunction of banning drumming in Accra (a means of observing community silence just before the celebration of the

traditional “Homowo festival”) as a fetish” taboo” that had no bidding on them as Christians.

Some of these polemical attitudes, first fail to appreciate the dialogue of life which is already in place and fosters the peaceful co-existence of members of diverse faith in most Ghanaian communities, including this area, which is rooted in the family relations and communal values of the people.(Mwakimako, 2009).

Secondly, the perceived evil religious influences of ATR seem to ignore the various historical contexts which gave shape and form to some of the religious beliefs and practices of various religious traditions including Islam and Christianity.

Christianity came to terms with some of the pagan customs in Europe and absorbed them. The writer cites for instance the Christian celebration of Easter, originally known as Eoster which marked “the idea of the new birth symbolized in nature’s renewal of itself out of the death of winter and the return of the sun spring” he therefore laments the lack of openness on the part of Christianity to the incorporation of certain essential elements of the indigenous religious and cultural beliefs in Africa “the paradox of the situation is that whereas Christianity is about the most adaptable of all religions and has been able to adapt itself to suit the conditions in which it finds itself, this situation has not been quite evident in Africa” in a similar manner the Graeco-Roman world had its huge impacts on Christianity in terms of some aspects of religious conceptions and beliefs which informed some of the Christian doctrinal formulations.(Obadare,2016).

CHAPTER FIVE
CONCLUSIONS, FINDINGS AND
RECOMMENDATIONS

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSIONS, FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction

African Christians and Muslims cannot be excused for failure to explore their own given indigenous traditions, which constitute their inherent identity and mediate in their religious understanding and expressions. Unfortunately, most stories about Africa within the global community focus on the disruptive aspects of life as if Africa has nothing good to offer. Certainly, it is not every aspect of the indigenous religious beliefs, practices and values that is life-affirming. This study has, however, highlighted some of those positive elements, which foster the sustenance of community living in the midst of religious and cultural diversity. This unique indigenous contribution to a harmonious inter-religious relation, particularly, Christian-Muslim relations, must be upheld by African Christians and Muslims through dialogue of mutual respect and understanding. This will not be, only, beneficial to African societies, but, also, serve as a contribution to the global inter-religious and cultural encounters.

5.1 Findings Out

The findings of this research has, in this sense, proven the hypothesis of the thesis: that is, the indigenous African religious beliefs and cultural values have, positively, impacted on Christian-Muslim relations in fostering harmonious relationships among its members in the Nkusukum-Ekumfi-Enyan traditional area of Ghana and other areas in Africa as follow:-

- Christians and Muslims are shaped by the common indigenous religious beliefs and cultural values which are rooted in the family and community structures. It is true that the Arab Christians and Muslims in Palestine share the common Arab ethnic identity, but they do not have same family structures and relations with household systems that are bonded by intermarriages.
- Christians and Muslims live in the same household and share their life together as one people.
- The Arab countries, where majority of the people are Muslims, the relationship between Muslims and Christians are, also different.
- In the Ghanaian situation, that secular political climate, which has been in place over the years, has facilitated ATR's role in shaping expressions of religious pluralism, especially, Christian-Muslim relationships.

5.2 Recommendations for Religious Leaders

5.2.1 Protecting and Promoting Universal Human Rights

- Even if religious leaders and actors adhere to what they consider to be absolute truths, they should base them on ethical and human rights principles;
- Religious leaders and actors should promote the fundamental value of accepting others as they are, whatever their beliefs, without insisting that others should change their beliefs;
- Religious leaders and actors should discard ideas of being superior to other human beings;
- Religious leaders and actors should be role models within their communities; preach the value of fraternity in humanity and contribute to educating the population on peace, social cohesion and the acceptance of

“the Other”. This role is particularly important when peace and social cohesion are threatened;

- Protection of human rights, preventing discrimination based on religious or other fundamental beliefs, and the exercise of freedom of religion and belief, could help stem the misuse of religion to drive violence and war and could help promote peace and reconciliation in places marked by religiously motivated violence.

5.2.2 Preventing and Countering Incitement to Discrimination, Hostility and Violence

- Religious leaders and actors should prevent and contribute to the eradication of incitement to discrimination, hostility, and violence;
- Religious leaders and actors should be trained to recognize the difference between offensive speech, hate speech and incitement to discrimination, hostility and violence

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