UNIVERSITY OF OSLO, NORWAY

ENCOUNTERS BETWEEN CHRISTIANITY AND AFRICAN TRADITIONAL RELIGIONS IN FANTE FUNERAL PRACTICES

A critical discussion of the funeral practices of the Fantes in Ghana

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ABSTRACT

The study was about the Encounters between Christianity and the African Traditional Religions in *Fante* Funeral Practices. The research sought to answer the following questions; how do funeral rituals differ from rural-inland communities like *Enyan-Maim and Etsii-Sonkwaa* differ from urban-coastal communities like *Cape-Coast*, what form does the Encounters between Christianity and the African Traditional Religions in *Fante* funeral practices take, and what effect do the practices have on the individual ? At the end of the research, I arrived at the following conclusions:

That tension between Christianity and the African Traditional Religions are more contentious in the urban areas. At the rural areas there seems to be a comfortable marriage of the two. They don't see anything wrong with the mixture of the two religions. They happily perform rituals together.

I also concluded that an adoption of contextual theology and its anthropological model it appears may be the only way of getting urban Christians to tolerate traditional religious practices, and those who seek to mix the two traditions in funeral practices, but in doing this the fundamentals of the Christian faith should not be shredded away.

I also observed that in the urban areas, people are more guarded with their emotions and resources as compared to their rural folks who give liberally. I also concluded that the effects of funeral rituals it appears cannot be generated without the aid of women serving as agents, and alcohol to help aid loosing of consciousness so as to facilitate mourning and food to strengthen family and societal bonds. The research was carried out by the adaption of a Ritual Studies approach has focused its lenses on the Encounters between Christianity and ATR in *Fante* Funeral Practices. In doing so, I have stressed on both the positive and negative aspects of the encounters.

ABBREVIATIONS

ATR- African Traditional Religions

LMS- London Missionary Society

SPG- Society for the Propagation of the Gospel

WMS- Wesleyan Missionary Society

AIC- African Instituted Churches

MDCC- *Musama* Disco Christo Church

STI- Sexually Transmitted Infections

AIDS- Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1. Introduction

This is a study about the Encounters between Christianity and the African Traditional Religions (ATR) in *Fante* funeral practices. Funerals are a major tradition among the *Fantes* in Ghana, and it has been studied by both ethnographers and theologians. A funeral therefore, offers itself up for interdisciplinary study.

Funeral are also important because it is the means by which one becomes an ancestor. However, it is not everyone who becomes an ancestor. To be an ancestor, one has to fulfill the following obligations; one should have led an exemplary life which is worthy of emulation by the younger generation, one should also have lived to an old ripe age, had married with children, or at least had been responsible for the upbringing of some children of a relative. One should not also have died through any of the following means; an accident, suicide, or any form of violence. The person should not have died through any of the Sexually Transmitted Infections (STI), and other sicknesses regarded as unclean by the society such as Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS), lunacy, dropsy, leprosy, or epilepsy (Opoku, 1978:36).

My contribution to this area of study is to shed light on the Encounters between Christianity and the African Traditional Religions in *Fante* funeral practices. My approach shall be that of Ritual Studies. I shall also seek to ascertain how funerals performed in urban areas differ from those performed in rural areas. My urban area for this study shall be the Cape-Coast Municipality, whereas my rural areas shall be *Enyan-maim* and *Etsii-Sonkwaa*, both in the *Ajumako Enyan-Essiam* District. Both urban and rural areas are all derived from the central region of Ghana. I shall now define some key terms in the thesis.

1.2. Definition of Terms

Christianity in this thesis refers to the results of the missionary activities carried out by Western Missionary Societies like the London Missionary Society (LMS), the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel (SPG) and the Wesleyan Missionary Society (WMS) in the eighteenth century. The activities of these churches gave birth to the Anglican and Methodist Churches in Ghana as well as the Catholic Church.

Christianity also refers to the Churches that sprang up as a result of the work of the Liberian evangelist; William Wade Harris. Wade Harris' style of preaching was different, and he emphasized that the missionary churches engage the Traditional Religions. He endorsed polygamy and incorporated many aspects of Traditional Religions into his new brand of Christianity. However, he did found any church but encouraged his members to join the already established churches. Irrespective of this, many of some of his followers founded the African Instituted Churches who emphasized an encounter with the Traditional Religions. Among the *Fantes,* these Churches became known as the *Sunsum Sore* (Spiritual Churches) (Anderson, 2010:115-116).

Later on, others believing in this brand of Christianity, got in touch with the Apostolic Church in the United Kingdom who sent down missionaries to help establish the Apostolic Brand of Churches in the Gold Coast. These groups of Churches are now known as the Classical Pentecostal Churches. These churches comprise of the Apostolic Church of Ghana, the Christ Apostolic Church and the Church of Pentecost International (Anderson, 2010:116). So when I say Christianity in Ghana, I am referring to all these different brands of Christianity in Ghana.

The term *African Traditional Religion* in this thesis refers to all the indigenous religions of Ghana before contact with Arabs and Europeans. Prior to this contact, each tribe in Ghana had its own distinct set of beliefs and practices, which could be referred to as the tribe's religion. In this thesis, the focus shall be on the *Fante* Traditional Religion which presupposes all the beliefs and practices of the *Fantes.* The term Traditional Religion shall be used to represent the *Fante* Traditional Religion through most parts of the thesis.

The *Fantes* are a member of the *Akan* ethnic group. Most *Fante* towns like *Oguaa, Ajumako, Mankessim,* and Saltpond, are located in the Central Region of Ghana. Cape-Coast is the regional capital of the Central Region. It is important to this thesis because it is one of the first coastal towns to have contact with the Europeans. It is also among the first to have an encounter with Christianity. It can therefore be argued that of all the tribes in Ghana, the *Fantes* have been the most influenced by European culture in the country.

Other tribes in Ghana also tease the *Fantes* and Cape Coasters in particular that they cannot speak one line of *Fante* without mixing it with an English word. Most of the missionary schools and Churches which became the agents of colonization can also be found in this region.

One of the first African Instituted Churches, the *Musama* Disco Christo Church (MDCC), also originated from this region. They broke away from the Methodist Church to form their own Church when disagreements about the Holy Spirit and also about the right form of worship were not resolved between them and the expatriate leaders of the Methodist Church.

The *Ancestors* in this thesis refers to the members of the society who have passed on to the spiritual world and have been given the necessary funeral rites.

An ethnic group shall refer to groups like the *Akans* who share common ties in language, culture, heritage and religion. A tribe on the other hand shall refer to the *Fantes* who are like a social organization with a common ancestor. A clan however shall refer to the external family who I see as a social device for a group of people with a common descent.

1.3. Background

Ever since Christianity began its proselytizing activities in the Gold Coast (Ghana), it has encountered the various Traditional Religions of the territory. These encounters have been both positive and negative. Since funerals are an important tradition, it might be the place where some negotiations can take place. By negotiation, I mean a situation where there will be less acrimony and violence over whether a religious ritual should be performed at a ceremony or not. This might arise due to religious differences amongst family members. Another interesting point related to this is that most Christians are city dwellers whereas the Traditionalists are often dwellers in the rural areas, thereby adding a socio-economic dimension to this friction. This thesis will show how rituals can be been used as a medium for promoting harmonious living.

Harmony at funerals is very essential, particularly since without an appropriate funeral, one cannot become ancestor. Among the *Fantes*, both men and women can become ancestors. It is believed that people who qualify to be ancestors but are not given the appropriate rituals turn into ghost and haunt their living relatives until they are given the right rituals. It is for this reason that families do their best to give their deceased relatives the right rituals. I shall now move on to discuss some literature relevant to the thesis.

1.4. **Literature Review and Analytical Perspective**

1.4.1. Christianity and ATR

Anthropologist Marleen De Witte in the book "*Long live the dead Changing Funeral Celebrations in Asante",* writes that families seek to display wealth and prestige at funerals. They seek to do so because they desire to earn the admiration of well-wishers and of having the most prestigious family in the community. They do this by publicly presenting themselves as a single unit in the grieving of their dead relative (De Witte, 2003:531).

De Witte has noted that many people do not attend a funeral for the mere sake of it, but they do so in anticipation of something in return; like food, drinks and some entertainment in the form of music and dance (De Witte, 2003:531). The lack of provision of these items might make the patrons of a funeral declare that the funeral was not successful and most families do not desire the public to arrive at this conclusion, so they do everything within their power to provide these items.

People from various religious backgrounds attend funerals in Ghana. Membership of a particular religious group is not required for one to attend these funerals. Also these funerals have become an arena where creativity or innovativeness are birthed. De Witte has observed that there is a lot of innovation in *Asante* funeral practices. She observed different types of art and symbolic actions coalescing together to create beautiful scenes at funerals. Some creativity can also be seen in the performance of traditional drumming and songs at funerals. Poetry is also created on the spot to pay tribute to the deceased (De Witte, 2003:531). It is at this place in the funeral practice that the Traditional Religious Practices thrive.

De Witte's is surprised that in spite of the enormous pressure exerted by individualism, urbanization, the free market economy, and Christianity, Traditional Religious Practices are still performed by the extended family to date, in addition to Christian rituals (De Witte, 2003:532). In my opinion, the fact that these practices are still performed, attests to the resilience and dynamic nature of the Traditional religions which are able to incorporate and adapt aspects of new religions into its own.

Sjaak van der Geest in his article, ''*Funerals, for the Living: Conversations with the Elderly People in Kwahu, Ghana''* argues that *Akan* funerals are more social than religious; that is they are this worldly rather than other-worldly (van der Geest, 2000:107).

Akan funerals are the arena for regenerating and rejuvenating the society. Van der Geest has also observed that the dead body and the evidence of death are at the core of *Akan* funerals. In his opinion, rituals are ways of dealing with this shock and creating an atmosphere of victory which generates a positive attitude towards life (van der Geest, 2000:107). In the article, he takes the view that the reason for a funeral is not actually death but the opportunity to have a celebration or a festivity (van der Geest, 2000:107).

In Ghana like in Nigeria, there is a vast difference between the mentality of the urban elites and those in the rural areas. As stated earlier, for instance whereas most of the dwellers in the rural areas are adherents of the Traditional Religion, their counterparts in the cities are mostly Christians. To discuss this issue further, I have employed the studies of Peter Geschiere and Josef Gugler.

In their article, *'The Urbanization Connection: Changing Issues of Belonging and Identification'*, Geschiere and Gugler observed that during their research in South-Eastern Nigeria, they discovered that most city dwellers had maintained contact with their relatives in the rural areas. According to them, on their second trip to the same area, they realized that the involvement of the urban elites with rural folk had increased. Geschiere and Gugler attributed this increase to the influence of the introduction of multiparty democracy in Nigeria. The multi-party politics they argue has created the need for a type of politics which derives its strength from indigenous associations (Geschiere and Gugler, 1998:309). The same can be seen in Ghana where a majority of members of Parliament of the two major political parties are largely drawn from two ethnic groups, that is the Asante's and the Ewe's. In such situations, in order for one to thrive as a politician, one will have to belong to the political party which has the majority of seats in his area.

Urban elites attempt to influence rural folks with their culture. Geschiere and Gugler have also observed that there was a two-way relationship between the rural folks and the urban folks. In other words, there were some rights, duties and obligations which both parties had to meet in order to sustain the relationship. They also identified that there was some variety in the content of these relationships along the lines of politics and economics (Geschiere and Gugler, 1998:310).

Explaining further, Geschiere and Gugler, write that the urban elite see it as their responsibility to bring development to their rural folks by initiating big projects to entrench their relationship with the people of the village. They have also noted that in other places,

efforts to create such indigenous associations have not been successful. This has largely been the case because of distrust and suspicions of witchcraft by the city dwellers against their rural folks (Geschiere and Gugler, 1998:311). Here we see a conflictual relationship arising between Christianity and the Traditional Religions to destroy an otherwise mutually beneficial relationship.

This relationship is not actually mutually beneficial because, as Geschiere and Gugler have observed that it is mainly because of the desire of the urban elites to have access to some resources such as ancestral lands, that motivates them to maintain a relationship with their rural relatives who most often than not have the right and access to these natural lands and other natural resources.

Heaton, James and Oheneba-Sakyi write about the economic factors that influence people's attitudes towards religion. In their article, *'Religion and Socio-Economic Attainment in Ghana'*, they argue that the nature of development in Ghana can be explained by the role that religion plays in the society. According to them drastic changes in the educational and economic structures of Ghana help to make this role easily discernible (Heaton et al. 2009:71).

They have observed also that in Ghana, religion, globalization and development, contribute a lot to the shaping of social and cultural change. They have also noted that one's religious identity, belief and how one performs ones religion are increasingly becoming issues of public and private concern. Important rituals like funerals and weddings are all performed under religious auspices. Social networks are also built through the affiliation and patronage of religious activities (Heaton et al. 2009:72). A person who does not affiliate with any religion might feel lonely and be seen as an outcast in the society, because that person will not be seen as not belonging to any community. I will now present some ritual theories because it shall be the analytic perspective of the study.

1.4.2. Ritual Studies

The aim of this study is to present ritual as a possible arena for resolving conflicts between Christianity and the Traditional Religions. It is also an arena for possible social changes. According to Emile Durkheim, rituals are ways of acting that are generated inside societies and done to achieve the goal of stimulation and to create some projected images in the minds of the members of the group (Durkheim, 2001:11).

Catherine Bell on the other hand, asked about whether rituals mirror social change, resist it, follow it, or lead it (Bell, 1992:177). According to Bell, she prefers not to see ritual activity as a model for something, but rather to see it as a strategic, reinterpretation of the world. Most essentially, she prefers to see it as a very physical-bodily reinterpretation of the world (Bell, 1992:194).

She is also of the opinion that it is possible to argue in a positive way that the ritual lives of non-literate communities are different from societies where there are educated people and print houses. In these societies, according to her, the literate members create new forms of power and authority (Bell, 1992:182).

According to Bell, Ritual traditions have been cast as a medium for the resolution of basic oppositions or contradictions. In the first approach, ritual is the arena where social conflicts are resolved which again leads to a reaffirmation of communal unity (Bell, 1992:35). The second approach however, portrays ritual as providing change through adaptation or integration; this is where I think that the relationship between Christianity and the African Traditional Religions is coming to.

Bell notes that one of the results of the emphasis placed on rituals as a means of social change is that little attention has been paid to how rituals change (Bell, 1992:168). If one paid attention to how rituals change for example, one might identity that the Central Region of Ghana for instance, seems to be mixing aspects of Christianity and ATR together. She is also of the opinion that rituals are not intrinsically concerned with resisting change but rather are mere performance of perceptions.

Victor Turner worked amongst the *Ndembu* of Zambia. Although the *Ndembu's* are different from the *Fantes* of Ghana, they share some similarities in terms of color classification (Turner, 1961:31); hence my decision to use Turners analytic perspective to describe the *Fante* funeral rituals. Turner was someone who preferred group experience. Turner also investigated complex indigenous practices (Abrahams in Turner, 2011: vi).

"He was primarily excited by group life itself, as expressed in lived-through experiences of the participants. This is because he believed that it was within this that lay all those contradictory features that gave humans the ability to laugh and cry together" (Abrahams, 2011: vii). According to Abrahams, in his publications, Turner sought to bring out the changing and not static, as well as the combined effect and of what laid beneath those

indigenous religious traditions. In doing this, his main goal was to bring the reader into the center of the experience (Abrahams in Turner, 2011: vii).

Turner's concepts of *liminality* and *communitas* have been useful to many ethnographers. As he developed his ideas, he became more aware of the importance of the experiential sharing taking place in the creation of community. [1] The turn toward altered states of consciousness as part of a socio-psychological pattern development became the most attractive feature of this approach to ritual from the mid-1970's onwards (Abrahams in Turner, 2011: x).

Turner has observed that choices about whether a ritual should be performed are associated with crises in the social life of the villages. In his opinion, there is a close connection between social conflict and ritual at the levels of village, thus Turner like van Gennep described the ritual process as a break from the normal routines of tasks and space, which invokes an imitative enactment of the principles, underlying daily routines, which are particularized and examined, through a threshold state into a ritualistic world, which is removed from the normal daily perceptions of time and space (Turner, 1969:10).

In other words, Turner is saying that the death of a loved one is a crises situation which often necessitates the performance of a funeral. During the funeral, there is an imitation of some crisis that evolved prior to the demise of the individual from the physical earth.[2] During the act of imitation some things which we do on a daily basis are illustrated and opened up for extensive discussion and examined extensively for their worthiness.

Usually when people are performing a vibrant ritual, that is a ritual that places one in a state of trance, the participant may lose consciousness of his physical environment and of time as the participant may stay in the state of trance for a long time.

[1] Experiential sharing in this sense is the sharing of one's past experiences and feelings.

[2] At *Etsii-Sonkwaa* an imitation of the deceased selling oranges was performed. The deceased was an orange seller. The imitation that was performed was an enactment of her profession and not some crises that had occurred in her life prior to her death.

It is from the discussions above that I have decided that the following shall be the thesis's research questions;

1. How do *Fante* funeral rituals differ from rural-inland communities like *Enyan-Maim and Etsii-Sonkwaa* differ from urban-coastal communities like *Cape-Coast*?
2. What form does the Encounters between Christianity and the African Traditional Religions in *Fante* funeral practices take?
3. What effect do the practices have on people?

1.5. Method

The material contained in this thesis has been established on the basis of empirical study, conducted in the form of ethnographic fieldwork conducted in the Central Region of Ghana, in the specific towns of *Enyan-maim*, *Etsii-Sonkwaa and* Cape-Coast.[3] Whereas the first two areas are rural-inland communities, the last area is a town by the coast. Since an ethnographic method was used to collect the data, I shall proceed to define what ethnography is. According to Marcus, ethnography is the practices of fieldwork and writing (Marcus, 1998:33). He also posits that the objective of ethnography is to reveal hidden themes. Ethnography may also connect different elements of a culture. One other function which ethnographers perform is to create scenes on a page through highly selective and partial descriptions of observed details (Emerson et al. 1995:67).

1.5.1. **Participant Observation**

I adopted a qualitative method for the study. Primary data were collected by participant observation and qualitative interviews. I interviewed a funeral undertaker, a family head, an elder and historian of *Fante* culture at *Mankessim*, a Pentecostal pastor and six ordinary persons.

According to Spradley, in doing participant observation, if one selects an unfamiliar social situation, then one could build on this experience. This is because since one is a stranger one may not know the tacit rules for behavior, and this may lead to one naturally falling into the role of a participant observer (Spradley, 1979:53). Spradley is also of the views that once we have learnt these cultural rules, they will become tacit and we shall hardly pause to reflect upon our research or participant observations actions.

[3] To view a map showing the various Districts of the Central Region, see Appendix 3.

In my case, since I belonged to the environment, I had a difficult time observing and describing the phenomenon because they were familiar to me. I almost took many of the phenomenons for granted and later felt like I did not adequately describe them in my field notes. In another sense too it was an advantage that I did the observation from a familiar environment because this enabled me to communicate with the environment without a translator.

In the view of Spradley, the participant observer comes to a social situation with two purposes; to participate in events that are related to the research objectives and to witness the events and people and the mundane aspects of the environment, necessary for the research (Spradley, 1979:54). It was for this reason that I also dressed like someone who had lost a relative when he was observing the funeral. I wore a black shirt and a black trouser. I also took note of the main activity of the area, which was mainly the activity of buying and selling retail products and services. People of all ages were engaged in the business of buying and selling. Both women and men engaged in this retail business of selling food, electrical gadgets, clothing, stationary, biscuits, and soft drinks. Like most towns in Ghana, the selling of water in sachet rubber was a familiar scene. Traders who sold *Fante* kenkey and other food products were very vigorous in the sale of these items. This is because most of these food products were carried on the head and also because of the fact that these foods easily get bad within a short spate of time.[4]

It was for this reason that the traders sold vigorously. They are by far, the most vigorous and persuasive traders that I have encountered around my trips to various parts of the country. Buying and selling is very brisk in *Mankessim* (Big town). This is because *Mankessim* is a big market town and most of the inhabitants are traders. It seems like almost everyone in *Mankessim* owned a shop. The predominant scene is that of stalls and shops, which can mainly be seen in the city centre. That is the round about where the three founders of the *Fante* state are memorialized, in the form of statutes.[5]

According to Spradley, to do participant observation is to have a dual purpose. That is to engage in activities appropriate to the situation and to observe the activities, people and

[4] This was the scene at Mankessim where the office of the funeral undertaker who was my main informant was at.

[5] To view a picture of these statutes see Appendix 30.

physical aspects of the situation (Spradley, 1979:54). A participant observer must also have a sense of explicit awareness. I tried to do these in the fieldwork.

This means that one must seek to be aware of the things that are usually blocked out of one's mind. According to Spradley, we often do this to avoid overload. In order to become a good participant observer however, one will have to overcome years of what Spradley calls *selective inattention* (Spradley, 1979:55). This is a pretty difficult thing for a researcher to do, especially, one who is observing his own environment.

In the view of Spradley, a participant observer must also have wide-angle lens. According to him, ‘‘Not only must the participant observer have a heightened sense of awareness but he or she must also approach social life with wide-angle lens taking in a broader spectrum of information’’ (Spradley, 1979:56).

Spradley also thinks that it is essential that the participant observer has an insider and outsider experience. I was able to have this experience during the fieldwork. As an insider, I felt the same emotions that the deceased relatives felt. This is because sometimes the weeping was so infectious. But at the same time, I was careful enough to observe the reaction of myself and others to the events and situations (Spradley, 1979:57).

Another skill which the participant observer must have, according to Spradley, is the ability to be introspective. This means that the researcher should be able to use his or herself as a research instrument. The advantage of being introspective according to Spradley is that one gets to understand new situations and also acquire the skill of observing cultural rules (Spradley, 1979:57).

1.5.2. Interviewing

Spradley writes that ‘‘an ethnographic interview is a particular kind of speech event and all speech events have cultural rules for beginning, ending, taking turns, asking questions, pausing, and even how close to stand to other people’’ (Spradley, 1979:57). The ethnographic interview he explains is a bit different from the normal friendly conversation we have with our relatives and friends. Spradley also writes that it is highly recommended that one imagines the ethnographic interview as a combination of several conversations which the researcher gradually initiates to help his informant to give adequate answers to his questions (Spradley, 1979:58).

From experience, Spradley has observed that the three most important ethnographic elements are its *explicit purpose*: This requires that the ethnographer sets specific goals for the interview. This also means that the researcher will have to remind the informant about the aim of the interview at some intervals.[6] *Ethnographic explanations*: this requires that the ethnographer be prepared to regularly explain to the informant issues that the informant want clarified, in this way, the ethnographer will be able to learn about the informant's culture. The informant on the other hand will acquire skills on how to teach others his or her culture (Spradley, 1979:59). *Ethnographic questions*: these come in the form of descriptive questions, structural questions and contrast questions (Spradley, 1979:60).

1.5.3. Field notes

According to Margery Wolf, field notes are unvarnished descriptions of events as they occur. They could also be defined as analyzed facts gathered from participants in events. Some have also described field notes as the essential link between behavior on the ground and the ethnography on the shelf (Wolf, 1992:86).

Since I had been trained on how to conduct fieldwork during my observation of the Oslo Ski-VM 2011, I was able to ask certain kinds of questions and take note of certain kinds of behaviors. During the fieldwork, I recorded what I saw, heard, thought and understood to be the happenings. My father did certainly have some influence on my fieldwork, for he was the one that selected my main respondent for me. According to Wolf, it is not an unusual situation for an anthropologist to have someone influence his or her work. She cited an incident where natives determined for an ethnographer, what he should include in his field notes (Wolf, 1992:85).

1.5.4. Location

As stated elsewhere, the research was done among the *Fante* communities in the Central Region of Ghana that is among the people of *Enyan-maim, Etsii-Sonkwaa* and Cape-Coast. The research was done in these areas because of my ability to speak the *Fante* language and because there were some funerals to be observed there. Ethnographic work has been done about the *Akans* in Ghana, but not much has been done on the sub-groups within the *Akan* ethnic group. I therefore used the Master Thesis to do an ethnographic work on the *Fantes*

[6] I went through this process with my main informant several times.

who are a member of this big ethnic group. The Central-Region is not far from Accra where I stay hence, it was time effective and economically prudent to conduct the research there, particularly since I had only two months to conduct the study.

1.5.5. **Process of Collecting Data**

I arrived in Accra, Ghana on the evening of Friday, June 10th, 2011 to conduct the fieldwork. On the 25th of June, I and my research team left Accra for *Mankessim.* [7] The distance between Accra and *Mankessim* is ninety-five point seven kilometers (95.7km) in other words, 59.4 miles. We spent about three hours on the journey. This was because there were lots of vehicles on the road going in the same direction, thereby creating congestion on the road. The team took off at 10am and arrived at 1pm. When the team arrived, my father introduced me to the funeral *undertaker*[8] who gave me a brief introduction into *Fante* funerals; he then told the team that there was a funeral durbar at *Enyan-Maim*, so the team went there to observe the proceedings. After observing the funeral durbar at *Enyan-maim*, the *undertaker* suggested that the team return to Accra to reduce accommodation costs since there was no funeral activity to observe in the area until Friday the 1st of July, 2011, when he and his assistants were going to dress a body at *Etsii-Sonkwaa*.

On the morning of 1st July, 2011, the team headed back to *Mankessim* for a two day observation of a funeral at *Etsii-Sonkwaa*. After which the team returned to Accra. Whilst at *Mankessim*, the team stayed at a Hotel.

I returned to *Mankessim* on 12th July, 2011 with an assistant because I was not well. I had been attacked by the malaria fever and was gradually recovering. The assistant helped me to conduct interviews on *Fante* funerals. The team also visited the District Coordinating Council for *Mfantsiman-East* to gather information about the District. However, since no funeral was observed at that District, the information gathered from that District has not been utilized for the thesis. We also took the time to walk through the town. *Mankessim* was chosen for the fieldwork because it is the historical and traditional capital of the *Fantes*. However we could not observe a funeral there because it was their preparatory time for their festival. In most

[7] The research team comprised of my parents and at onetime my fiancée (the use of family relations to assist in anthropological research is not new, many anthropologists like *Victor Turner* and others have done so before).

[8] The *undertaker* is a person who dresses dead bodies. He is also a decorator for funeral settings. In some literatures, he is referred to as the *mortician*.

traditional areas in Ghana, there is a ban on funerals and other noise-making activities prior to the commencement of their annual festivals.

Some landmark scenes of *Mankessim* are the statute of the three leaders who led them to their present locations. These leaders are symbolized in the form of a whale (*obrumankoma),* an elephant (*oson),* and an eagle (*odapagyan*). On the evening of 15th July, the research team left *Mankessim* to return to Accra since there was no funeral to observe in the *Mankessim* area.

I observed a funeral at Cape-Coast from the 29th to 31st of July, 2011. I went with my research team. We stayed at a hotel at Cape-Coast. We attended the memorial service then we went to the cemetery. Afterwards we attended the final funeral rites ceremony which started on Friday and ended on a Sunday. I also observed the installation of a new successor to take care of the deceased's immediate family. This was the last fieldwork activity which I undertook.

1.5.6. Challenges

The funerals which I observed were outside *Mankessim* which I saw as problematic since I had earlier on decided that *Mankessim* would be the context of the fieldwork. The funerals which I observed were at *Ajumako Enyan-Essiam* District and at Cape-Coast Municipality. I explained this frustration to the *undertaker* who was my main informant. According to the informant, the people of *Mankessim* were about to celebrate their annual festival, hence a ban had been placed on funeral activities at *Mankessim*. It was for this reason that I could not attend any funerals at *Mankessim*.

I also had a challenging task of taking control of my fieldwork because of my parent's involvement, which I saw as over-protectionism. Their involvement I think is stemmed from the fact that I am studying in a Western University[9]. I am also a first-born male child who comes from a middle class nuclear family[10]. My father and mother seem to have the most cohesive nuclear family in their respective extended families; because of this they are very protective of their family, lest it falls out of being a model for their other family members.

[9] The term western here refers to Europe, North America, Australia and New Zealand.

[10] The term middle class here refers to the section of the Ghanaian society that have secure jobs, have a safe and stable home, have access to healthcare, retirement to security, ability to save for the future and the ability to provide good education, including University education for their children.

My parents are very proud of me and do not want any harm to come me. They want to see me progress, hence their willingness to assist me with the fieldwork by providing me with logistics such as transportation from Accra to the Central Region.
My father travelled outside Ghana to attend a work meeting, one week after my arrival in Ghana. This meant that I had to wait one week more before commencing with the field work. Since I had the phone number of the informant, I had wanted to call him and commence the fieldwork, but my mother advised against it. She said a face to face introduction will be much better. I lost one week of fieldwork because of this.

I had wanted to stay in *Mankessim*, but due to security concerns and over protectionism from my parents, I could not do that. I had to travel in between the Central Region and the Greater Accra Region. However despite these limitations, I was able to gather some valuable information.

1.5.7. Reflection on Fieldwork Challenges

My parent's attitude seems to be that of a superior attitude towards, rural life hence their desire to isolate me from their external family. I see this isolation as a limitation. This means that my family and others that are nuclear family oriented have a small community to rely on. This small family network comprised of my parents and my siblings. A broader family connection might have aided in the gathering of more field data.

Musa Dube, in her article *'Consuming a Colonial Cultural Bomb',* explains these issue better. In the following lines, I shall rely on her article, '*Consuming a Colonial Cultural Bomb'* to explain the effect the eighteenth century European missionary activities and colonialism has had on Ghana and on families like mine.

Due to the severity of the negative indoctrination against the Traditional Religions that was carried out by the missionaries and colonial officials, my parents see almost everything European as good and almost everything African as bad. The indoctrination of the African is so deep and severe even to the extent that some young Ghanaians cannot speak their own native languages like *Fante* or *Ga.*

The fact that a growing segment of the Ghanaian population cannot speak the local languages is worrisome. This shows that Ghanaians have adopted the culture of the British, such that most Ghanaians perceive the world through the eyes of the British and the West. It also means that by through the English language and other European languages like French, the British

and the West have been able to take possession of the land and minds of its former colonies. The imposition of the British language and culture means that *Fante's* and Ghanaians in generals feel alienated from their own cultures (Dube, 1999:34).[11]

Through colonization the British were also able to destroy any form of pride or esteem in the Ghanaian cultural heritage. Most educated Ghanaians have no pride in the cultural heritage that existed before contact with Europeans and colonialism. The cultural colonization of Ghana by the British has ensured that British and the West remain as dominant forces in Ghanaians affairs.

The power emanating from this cultural colonization has made nonsense of the political independence achieved on 6th March, 1957. This is possible due to the fact that most educated Ghanaians undergo a western system of education which means that most educated Ghanaians think from a western worldview. As if this is not enough, the top echelon of Ghanaian private and public service institutions are mostly graduates of Western Universities thus perpetuating the preference for western culture and values. The educated Ghanaian has thus been able to become an imitator and an ambassador of western culture. These educated Ghanaians dominate and oppress the rural non-literates with their western culture and values.

Some have said that European culture is Christian, if this is really the case, then most educated Southern Ghanaians have been Christianized to the extent that they do not want to be publicly identified with the Traditional Religions which is their indigenous religion. It is for this reason that my parents sought to negotiate my contact with the funeral practices which in some areas is permeated with a lot of practices from the Traditional Religions which they do not like.

During the missionary era *Fantes* were told to stay away from the dangerous and deadly beliefs of the Traditional Religions. The ancestors and other spirit beings of the *Fantes* were described as demons. [12] Through their missionary activity, western European missionary societies were able to alienate *Fantes* from their own culture. Some argue that the missionaries did some good by constructing schools, churches and hospitals, but still, others

[11] The *Fantes* had an extensive trading relationship with the British and other European nations spanning from the fifteenth century to the mid parts of the twentieth century. This contact was so long and intensive such that most *Fantes* cannot speak one line of *Fante* without speaking an English word. This applies to both literates and non-literate *Fantes*.

[12] The term missionary era refers to the period between the 15th and 19th centuries when there several attempts to Christianize the coastal states of what is today known as Ghana.

still insist that the very notion of saving Africa itself is an imperialist thought. So the missionaries are to a certain degree guilty of the charge of being collaborators of the colonizing agenda. This colonizing agenda was accomplished through the establishment of institutions such as schools, hospitals and trade centers which became the vessels through which the colonizers consciousness was superimposed over and against the traditional ones.

It is through these institutions of schools, churches and hospitals that the colonization of minds, hearts and space has taken place. For the establishment of Christianity to be successful, it appears, it could not have been done without the condemnation of other cultures as evil and dangerous. Despite all these negatives however there are some positive aspects of the European contact, for instance without the English language, Ghanaians might not be able to participate in the global economy and exchange trade and cultural ideas, particularly since English is the number one medium of communication globally.

In spite of the challenges that I faced during his fieldwork I was nevertheless able to get some useful information.

1.5.8. Secondary Sources of Data

Secondary sources of data including books, journal articles, book chapters, workshop papers, Constitution of Sovereign States, maps and other literature relevant to the thesis have been utilized and necessary acknowledgement given. Knowledge attained from my Senior Secondary School and undergraduate degree education has also been used built upon and utilized for the thesis. Knowledge attained by my position as a *Fante* from the Central Region has also been used.

1.5.9. Ethical Issues

I have tried to describe everything that I observed as accurately as possible. As Turner writes, it is a different thing to witness people performing the gestures and singing the sacred songs of their rituals and yet another thing to arrive at what these gestures mean to them (Turner, 2011:7). I sought the meanings of what I observed by interviews which were more like conversations. The families whose funeral I observed were not resentful of my interest in observing their ritual system. They were prepared to admit me in so far as I and my guide treated them with respect.

Like Victor Turner who had to offer medical treatment through his wife to get access to the information he was looking for, I also had to give something. During the research there were times that I had to buy petrol to fuel the car of my lead informant so that he could take me to the research site (Turner, 2011:9).

1.6. **Organization of Chapters**

This is how the rest of the thesis is going to proceed. In Chapter Two, I will present the context in which the research was done. I will present the *Fante* Funeral process in Chapter Three. I will also consider if there is some difference in the *Fante* Funeral practices in rural-inland communities like *Enyan-Maim* and *Sonkwaa* and from urban-coastal communities like *Cape-Coast*? I will present the Encounter between Christianity and the African Traditional Religions in Chapter four. I will also explore the possibilities of using Contextual Theology and it Anthropological Model to explore the possibility of doing theology in context. In Chapter five, I will present the Effects of *Fante* funeral practices. Finally, Chapter Six will summarize the descriptions, discussions and arguments made in the thesis.

1.7. Summary

This chapter has introduced the master thesis and the rationale behind it. It has also reviewed some literature relating to the thesis topic and research questions. It has described the method that was used to collect the data. These methods were participant observation, interviewing and field notes. The process through which the data was collected has also been presented. The location was also described briefly and the ethical issues that arose during the fieldwork have also been discussed here. The manner in which the chapter has been organized has also been presented here. I shall now present the context in which the thesis was conducted in Chapter Two.

CHAPTER TWO: SOCIAL AND POLITICAL CONTEXT OF THE STUDY

2.1. Introduction

I will present the Historical, Administrative, Economic, Social Structure of Ghana, and Religious Context of Ghana. I will also discuss the beliefs and practices of the people, such as the belief in ancestors and the pouring of libation. The scientific work of collecting data relevant to the study was carried out in the Central Regional Rural-Inland District of *Ajumako Enyan-Essiam* and in the Urban-Coastal District of Cape-Coast. Consequently these geographical areas shall be discussed as well. The context discussion shall commence with Ghana, then to the specific Districts of Cape-Coast and the *Ajumako Enyan-Essiam* District. I will also present the three major religions of Ghana. That is Christianity, the African Traditional Religions and Islam. I will present the *Akans* and the *Fantes* and their social organization. I shall also present the Chieftaincy Institution in Ghana as well.

2.2. History of Ghana[13]

The History of Ghana is relevant to the study of the Encounter between Christianity and the African Traditional Religions because prior to the encounter with the Europeans, there is no recorded encounter of Christianity with the Traditional Religions.

The Gold Coast attained independence from the British on 6th March, 1957. On the same day, the country's first Prime Minister, Kwame Nkrumah named the newly country Ghana. The name Ghana is not a new name it was the name of an ancient empire in present day Mali. It was famous for being rich in gold. The country presently named Ghana was also rich in gold, hence it former name the Gold Coast, which was given to it by the first Europeans to arrive in the Gold Coast who happened to be the Portuguese, but they did not call it the Gold Coast, they called it *Elmina*, meaning, the mine. The British later on adapted it to Gold Coast.

Ghana was still under the crutches of the British even after the attainment of political independence, for it had not yet obtained Republican status, and still had the Queen of England as its Head of State. The Queen of England was represented in Ghana by the Governor-General. On 1st July 1960, Ghana attained Republican status and was therefore able

[13] Most of the presentations about Ghana are derived from years of studying about the history and governmental systems of Ghana at the Senior Secondary School and University Level. During these periods, I read books from authors such as FK Buah (*History of Ghana,* Macmillan, London, 1980) and Adu Boahen (*Topics In West African History*, Schools Edition, Longman, London, 1966).

to elect its own Head of State. Ghana is still allied to the British, in the sense that it is a member of the British Commonwealth which has the Queen of England as its Head.

Ghana celebrates 6th March, and 1st July as public holidays. On both days, there are national ceremonies which often have the Head of State, Ministers of State, Parliamentarians, Members of the Council of State and the Judiciary in attendance. Also in attendance at such ceremonies are Chiefs, leaders of political parties, heads of various governmental agencies and departments, as well as religious leaders from the three major religions of Ghana. On these days most citizens use the day to go to the beach, visit some tourist attraction, or attend an entertainment event. Some working mothers and fathers also use the day by staying at home to spend quality time with their spouses and children.

Some religious organizations, mainly Christian ones, use the day to pray for the welfare of the country or organize group visits to tourist attractions in the country; an example of such institutions is the Calvary Methodist Church, Adabraka.[14] The Men's fellowship of the Church for instance uses the day to pray for the country by organizing an event which they call a 'retreat'. During this event, attendants are expected to fast from morning till mid-day. The fast is broken with fruits and soft drinks. During the program, participants of the event pray fervently. The Youth Ministry and other organizations like the Women Fellowship however, utilize the day by visiting tourist attractions.

As stated earlier, Ghana is a former British colony. The Cape-Coast Castle was the African Headquarters for the British when they participated in the Transatlantic Slave Trade from 1664 to 1807 (St Clair, 2007:1). The British were attracted to Ghana because of its mineral resources. It fought with other European forces like the Portuguese, the Dutch, the Danes and the Swedes to maintain its superiority in the then Gold Coast. When the trade in minerals resources likes gold, bauxite and manganese became less profitable, the British and the other European nations turned to the trade in slaves. Before the British colonized the Gold Coast, they were mainly based at Cape Coast and operated from the Cape Coast Castle which they bought from the Swedes in 1653 and expanded later on. The other parts of the country were controlled by the other European countries. For instance the Dutch were mainly based at the Elmina Castle after they had ousted the Portuguese from the Castle. The Danes were also based in the area now known as the Greater-Accra Region where they built the

[14] The researcher is a member of this church.

Christiansborg Castle which today is the seat of the Government of Ghana. During the Transatlantic Slave Trade period over a million Africans were shipped to the new worlds to work in the tobacco and sugarcane plantations.

The slave trade is alleged to be the main reason to account for the underdevelopment of Africa. Most African states were busily engaging in war in order to capture their adversaries and sell them as slaves to the Europeans. The focus on the war and the procurement of slaves led to the abandonment of the arts and manufacturing activities of most of the ethnic groups.

One important point about the slave traders and Christian missionaries is that they were somewhat collaborators. This is because most of the Castles had Chapels and Priests as part of the establishment. At the Elmina Castle, a Dutch Reformed Church was located right on top of the slave dungeon. The Priests and expatriate congregants of these Castle Churches saw nothing wrong with the slave trade and there is no record of any of them speaking against the slave trade. It appears like at the time the black race were not seen as human beings deserving to be treated with dignity.

In the form of local resistance to the exploitation of the Europeans at the time, the *Asante's* are recorded to have fought the British at various times. The *Fantes* are also recorded to have formed a Confederation to resist the expanding influence of the Europeans on their lands.

The signing of the Bond of 1844 on 6th March, 1844, gave the British the rights to control the affairs of the Gold Coast. This is because the local *Fante* Chiefs signed a bond with the British imploring the British to protect them from external attacks, especially from the *Asante's* who were the most dominant local force to reckon with at the time. The British after several wars finally defeated the *Asante's* and made it a part of their territory. As stated earlier, on 6th March, 1957, Ghana gained political independence from the British, and on 1st July, 1960 it attained Republican status, and thereby gained authority to manage its own political affairs. In the following lines, I shall attempt a description of the Administrative Structure of Ghana.

2.3. Administrative Structure of Ghana

The description of the administrative system of Ghana is relevant to this thesis because it serves as an indicator of the looming tensions between westernizing forces and Traditional Authorities in various sections of the state. On the religious scene, this tension is played out between Christians who uphold the values of western systems and institutions and the

traditional religious adherents who uphold the values of the traditional or indigenous ways of doing things.

Ghana practices a Unitary System of government which means that almost all the powers and resources of the state are vested in the Central Government. Ghana has an Executive Presidency which appoints Ministers of State and other high ranking state officials like the Chief Justice in consultation with the Council of State and with the approval of a two hundred and thirty membership Parliament.

Ghana has ten regional administrative regions which are the Greater-Accra Region, Brong-Ahafo Region, The Eastern Region, The Volta Region, The Northern Region, The Upper East Region and the Upper West Region. The capital of Ghana is Accra which is located in the Greater-Accra Region.[15]

Other major towns in Ghana are Cape-Coast, Kumasi and Sekondi-Takoradi. Cape-Coast is seen as the educational capital of the country. Kumasi is seen as the major link between the northern and southern parts of Ghana as it lies right in the center of the country. Sekondi-Takoradi is the region with the highest deposits of natural resources. It has gold, timber, bauxite and manganese. Oil was discovered there in 2005 and the government and private oil companies now export oil from the *Tano* River Oil basin which is located in this region.

The President of Ghana is assisted to run these ten regions by Regional Ministers and other Sectorial Ministers like the Minister responsible for Local Government and Rural Administration, and the Minister for Education. The President also appoints District Chief Executives who assist the Regional Ministers in their duties and responsibilities. Ghana currently has one-hundred and seventy Districts. The one hundred and seventy District Chief Executives are in turn assisted by elected Assembly members on a bi-annual basis.

Below the Assembly members are Village heads and Family heads who report to the Paramount Chief of their area. [16] In almost every District of Ghana, there is one or more Paramount Chief to be located in a District. The Chiefs are the cultural custodians of the people and wield a lot of political influence in rural Ghana. In some areas, their voices are

[15] For a map of Ghana with the ten administrative regions, see Appendix 1.

[16] Paramount Chiefs are Traditional Authorities responsible for more two or more villages which are often related by ancestry.

much more powerful than the elected Assembly man or woman, and sometimes even more powerful than the District Chief Executive. There are reported incidents where District Chief Executives and Paramount Chiefs have opposed the authority of each other. Sometimes persons nominated by the President to serve as District Chief Executives are opposed by Paramount Chiefs and their nominations get withdrawn. Sometimes too when the Presidency persists on imposing a candidate on the people, the District Assemblies may elect the person all right, but the person will not get the cooperation of the majority of the people because of the influence of the Chiefs. Some of these conflicts between the District Chief Executives and the Paramount Chiefs have been known to stall developments in certain parts of the country.

2.4. Economic Structure of Ghana

The description of the Economic Structure of Ghana is necessary for this thesis because it serves as a pointer to the alternative reasons for which a massive Christianizing campaign was commenced in the coastal areas of the country which are rich in natural mineral resources. It also could explain why some missionaries abandoned their missionary agenda's and decided to participate in the trade at the coast of what is now known as Ghana.

The major foreign exchange earner for Ghana since colonial times has been raw gold, and raw cocoa. Ghana has not been able to vary its exports. What is new is the discovery of oil and subsequently, its exploration. The country now exports oil in commercial quantities. That is about one hundred and twenty barrels a day. Other items which are exported in their raw states are timber, and cash crops like pineapples and banana.

Tourism is also another major foreign exchange earner for Ghana. This is because of the abundance of Forts and Castles on the coastline. Examples of these Forts and Castles are Fort William, the *Elmina* and Cape-Coast Castles. There are also game reserves like the *Kakum* Canopy Walk and Game Reserve Center in the Central Region, and the *Mole* National Park in the Northern Region. Waterfalls can also be found in Ghana, an example is the *Wli* Waterfalls. Mountains can also be found in Ghana. Ghana's tallest mountain is called *Afadzato*, which is the *Ewe* translation of the word mountain. The *Wli* Waterfall and Mountain *Afadzato* can both be found in the Volta Region of Ghana.

Agriculture (livestock, fishery and crops) is the largest employer in Ghana. Some have said that it is the backbone of the Ghanaian economy. The next largest employer is the government of Ghana, followed by the private sector which mainly consist of the service and retail

industries. There is a low manufacturing base in Ghana, accounting for the large number of unemployed youths. There is also low interest in technical and vocational education with most young people opting for clerical responsibilities which are known in Ghana as white-collar jobs.

2.5. Social Structure of Ghana

The description of the social structure of Ghana will enable the reader to know the rich cultural heritage of Ghana. It also shows the diverse nature of the country, in that there is a variety of tribes and languages. It is from this rich ethnic, linguistic and culturally diverse background to which the *Fantes* belong.

The *Akans, Ewes and Gas* can be found from the central down to the southern parts of Ghana, whereas the *Hausa* and *Mole Dagbani* groups can be found in the northern parts of the country. The *Guan* however can be found dispersed in smaller groups all across the country. The *Guans* are believed to be the original inhabitants of Ghana. But due to their small group nature, most of them have been absorbed into other ethnic groups, for instance the *Etsii* people who are believed to be members of the *Guan* stock, have been absorbed into the *Fante* ethnic group.[17]

Most of the major ethnic groups in Ghana celebrate annual festivals. These festivals are usually held during the harvest season. During this period, there is a lot of food to be harvested. The high harvest often leads to a heartfelt appreciation to the gods for another year of rainfall and good harvest. Most of these festivals are centered on a period when there was no food. But the *Adae* and *Odwira* festivals are a bit different, because these festivals have special aspects for celebrating the ancestors, who are often represented in the form of black stools. The *Adae* festival is celebrated by the *Asante's,* whereas the *Odwira* is celebrated by the *Akuapem's.* The *Fante* people of Cape-Coast celebrate the *Oguaa Fetu-Afahye* festival, the *Awutu* and the *Efutu* celebrate the *Aboakyer* festival, the *Ga's* celebrate the *Homowo* and the *Ewe's* celebrate the *Hogbetsotso* festival, whereas the *Dagomba* of northern Ghana celebrate the *Damba* festival.

During the festivals, families return to their hometowns to thank God for a successful year. They also travel to their hometowns to see family members and friends. Most importantly, at

[17] For a map showing the ethnic distribution of the country on the map of Ghana, see Appendix two.

these festivals, fundraising activities are held to raise money for developmental projects like the building of schools and hospitals. During these festivals too some Christians and Muslims suspend their religious beliefs so as to participate fully in the Traditional religious activities that are performed at some of these ceremonies. There are about seventy nine spoken languages in Ghana. Of these, the major languages are *Twi, Fante, Ewe, Ga, Hausa, Dagbani* and *Guan.*

2.6. Religions

2.6.1. Christianity

As stated earlier, Ghanaians first came into contact with Christianity through the Portuguese and other European merchant trading ships who often had a priest attached to the company. There are Chapels attached to almost all the Forts and Castles on the coastline of Ghana. It was from these Forts and Castles those earlier missionary activities were initiated. The earlier missionary activities failed because of the poor moral character (like drunkenness and having sexual intercourse with native women) exhibited by the priests attached to the merchant groups, and their association with the slave trade, many of their missionary activities failed. Later on in the eighteenth century, when missionary organizations like the London missionary society (LMS), the Wesleyan Missionary society (WMS) and the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel (SPG) decided to send down missionaries, Christianity began to take root in the Gold Coast.

One of the first activities of this generation of missionaries was to make the New Testament accessible to the natives by translating it into their own language. They also began to baptize people and systematically teach them the Christian message. For the purposes of equipping their students to read the bible for themselves and also serve as clerics, school buildings were constructed. Later hospitals were built to cater for the physical well-being of the missionaries and their students as well as the larger community. Most of the schools were started from the Castles to teach grammar to the children of the expatriates. These children were the results of promiscuous relationships with local women. These children are often referred to as mulattoes.

In the view of Omenyo, ‘‘the failure of the earlier missionary activities are attributable to the fact that the western missionaries who came to Africa were coming from a background of

Christianity embedded in the enlightenment which perceived itself as superior to African cultural values'' (Omenyo, 2006:44).

The Constitution of the Republic of Ghana allows for a religiously pluralistic environment (Constitution of Ghana, 6:35:5). For many years the three major religions have lived in peace and harmony. This is irrespective of the many tensions that arose during the eighteenth century missionary campaigns by western missionaries. But currently the springing up of many Pentecostal, Charismatic and Prophetic Churches, threaten to disturb this peace.

Most of these Churches appropriate some of the aesthetic forms of the Traditional Religions into the new faith, but yet turn around to condemn the beliefs and substance of the Traditional Religions. They accuse the adherents of the Traditional Religions as backward and evil. Thus the tensions which were quenched many years ago have been resurrected again. It is for this reason that the thesis is examining the Encounter between Christianity, and the African Traditional Religions in the area of *Fante* funeral practices.

The African Instituted Churches (AICs) are known as the *Sunsum Sore* in *Akan.* In English the term means Holy Spirit Churches (Omenyo, 2006:73). The invocation and presence of the Holy Spirit is important in the worship of this group. The African Instituted Churches are seen as the first wave of Pentecostalism in Ghana.

These Churches were most of the time started by members of the Mainline Churches.[18] In the words of Omenyo, ''the worship of the AICs is vibrant and full of lively music'' (Omenyo, 2006:73). This is very close to the indigenous way of worship. In other words, the AICs incorporated the indigenous mode of worship and made it distinct from those of the Missionary Instituted Churches who still limited their music to the singing of hymns and the playing of organs.

Like the Traditional Religions, most of the AICs have places which they regard as sacred. They also have objects which they have classified as sacred. They also observe food taboos such as abstinence from alcoholic drinks and tobacco and the eating of pork (Omenyo, 2006:74). The AICs also observe ''ritual taboos such as not engaging in sex in the night prior to a declared fasting and prayer'' (Omenyo, 2006:74).[19] The AICs are also noted for

[18] This refers to the Methodists, the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church, the Baptist Church, the Catholic Church, Presbyterian and Evangelical Presbyterian Church.

[19] Fasting here implies not eating and sometimes not drinking water.

exorcising evil spirits (Omenyo, 2006:74). This practice was performed by the Traditional Shrines and the Pentecostal Churches seem to have taken over this practice. Elderly women are now often accused of being witches by these Churches. This often leads to them being physically and verbally attacked. It so often happens that when an adult child is not advancing economically well, he or she might turn around to accuse his or her mother as being a witch and of being the cause behind the economic misfortune. This accusation often brings up division and conflicts within the family as mothers will not talk to their wards for showing them gross disrespect and abuse. Sometimes too, such children isolate themselves from their mothers for fear of her attacking them spiritually.

2.6.2. African Traditional Religions

Before the encounter with Arabs and later on Portuguese traders and missionaries in 1472, the indigenous inhabitants of the area presently known as Ghana, had their own various indigenous rituals and beliefs. For instance the *Fantes* had their own unique system of beliefs and practices. So did the *Ga's* and the *Ewe's.*

According to Opoku and Gyekye, most of the Traditional Religions of Ghana had a belief in a Supreme Being who created the universe including human beings and everything on the earth (Opoku, 1978 and Gyekye, 1995). Some have questioned whether the idea of the Supreme Being is indigenous to the African or it has come about as a result of Christian influence. Traditionalists also believe that this Supreme Being or creator is too big to govern the affairs of this mundane world. For this reason, he has appointed several emissaries in the form of gods and deities to assist him in governing this world.

In the indigenous worldview, most of these gods are represented in the form of natural objects such as large big stones, big trees, large river or strange animals that are also referred to as his children. Beyond these deities and gods are the ancestors who were once living members of the society but who have now passed on to the land of the dead. But this time, in the ancestral world. Apart from the ancestors, there is the belief in other spirit beings too, like dwarfs and amulets, as well as magic. Unlike the Abrahamic Religions, most Traditional Religions of Ghana do not have a sacred book. Instead they have oral traditions which they pass on from generation to generation.

2.6.3. Islam

Islam came to Ghana through trade mainly in the northern parts of the country. Usually conversions started from the Chief's palaces where Arabic scribes were employed by the Chiefs to assist with clerical duties. The proselytizing process was not confrontational; most of the practices became merged with traditional beliefs with time. The *Damba* festival of the *Dagomba's* in northern Ghana is believed to be derived from a mixture of indigenous and Islamic beliefs.

The first group that arrived in the area now known as northern Ghana is believed to be the Sunni Muslims. In the twentieth century, the Ahmaddiya Muslims also arrived in Ghana. The Ahmaddiya Muslim groups largely consist of southern converts thus their leadership is dominated by the *Fante's* and *Asante's*. The Shiites sect can also be found in Ghana. They are mostly involved in cultural and humanitarian activities in Ghana. The same humanitarian means was used by western Christian missionary societies to colonize the Gold Coast. The Shiites are the founders of the Islamic University College of Ghana.

2.7. Cape-Coast Municipality

As stated in Chapter One, it is important to describe Cape Coast and for that matter the Central Region of Ghana because it is among the first coastal towns to have contact with the Europeans. The first encounter with Christianity was also in this region. Since Cape Coasters were the people that have had the longest interaction with Europeans, they have been the most affected by the contact with Europeans. Other tribes in Ghana tease Cape Coasters that they cannot speak one line of *Fante* without mixing it with English words. Most of the missionary schools and churches which became the agents of colonization can also be found in this region. The first African Instituted Church in Ghana, the *Musama Disco Christo Church* (MDCC) broke away from the Methodist church in this part of the country. I was thus motivated by these factors to do a fieldwork there.[20]

Most of the *Fante* states can be located in the Central Region of Ghana. Cape-Coast is the regional capital of the Central Region. It is situated 165km west of Accra on the Gulf of Guinea. It has a population of 82,291 (2000 Census conducted by the Ghana Statistical Service). In the 16th century, Cape-Coast was ruled by several European powers including the

[20] Yes the word Disco may sound strange for a church but that is the name of the church.

British, the Portuguese, the Swedish, the Danish and the Dutch. The city's *Fante* name is *Oguaa.*

The history of the town is largely based upon the activities that occurred within and around the Cape-Coast Castle from the fifteenth to the nineteenth century. Men, women and children were shipped from this Castle to work as slaves in the West Indies, North and South America. The Castle has been designated as a United Nations Education Scientific Cultural and Organization (UNESCO) World Heritage Site (St Clair, 2007:2).

Cape-Coast developed earlier than other parts of the Central Region because of its early function as a major seaport and trading center. For most parts of the nineteenth century it was the administrative capital of the Gold Coast Colony, until 1877 when Accra became the capital city (Akyeampong, 1996:86).

2.8. *Ajumako Enyan-Essiam* District

This is one of the seventeen Districts in the Central Region of Ghana. The *Ajumako Enyan-Essiam* District is a rural one. Its land area is estimated to be about 541.3 km. The District is estimated to have a population of about a hundred thousand people. The major *Fante* speaking groups in this area are the *Ajumakos, Enyans* and *Bremans*. The District is composed of five Traditional Paramount Chiefs. These are the *Enyan Abaasa, Enyan-Denkyira, Essiam, Baa, Enyan-Maim* and *Ajumako*. The District comprise of nine area councils theses are *Baa, Ajumako, Mando, Abaasa, Breman,Essiam, Denkyira, Etsii-Sonkwaa* and *Enyan-Maim.* The major festival of the district is the *Akwambo* festival which is celebrated annually. The major occupation of the people is farming.

2.9. *Akans*

It is important to describe the *Akans* in Ghana because the *Fantes* are a part of the *Akan* ethnic group. Without this background, one may not understand the worldview of the *Fantes*. Also because they a member of this large ethnic group, they share many things including names and words with the other members of the group, so therefore a background knowledge of the *Akans* will set one on the path of understanding the *Fantes.*

Majority of the people known today as the *Akans* can be located in the inland forest areas of River *Pra* and Volta. The *Akans* comprise of the *Brong, Banda, Adanse, Assin, Twifo,*

Denkyera, Akyem, Wassa, Akwamu, and *Asante*. The *Fantes* however live separately in the coastal forest areas of Ghana, though they are part of the *Akan* group (Fynn, 1975:27).

The *Akans* believe that during the thirteenth century, they lived in the grassland areas of north-western Ghana. The *Akans* multiplied in numbers and soon created the states of *Bono-Manso* and *Banda*. The *Akans* traded in gold, kola nuts, and Ivory in exchange for cotton, clothes and salt (Fynn, 1975:27).

The *Akans* became so rich and powerful to the extent that, their number increased and placed enormous pressure on the resources of the land. As a result, some inter-tribal conflicts arose. To reduce the number of conflicts, some groups decided to move to find new lands (Fynn, 1975:27).

In their search for food, they had to defeat the *Guans,* the *Efutu, Kyerepon* and the *Asebu* in war so as to have access to their lands. These were the original inhabitants of the land, but because these states were loosely organized in terms of administration and warfare, they were easily defeated in the ensuing war.

Trade and other survival, and convenient factors have compelled most of the conquered people to speak the predominant language of their area, but in some areas, there has been a mixture of the *Twi* language and the language of the original inhabitants. *Twi* is the predominant language of the members of the *Akan* ethnic group. The *Fante* language for instance is believed to be a combination of the *Twi* and *Etsii* language (Fynn, 1975:27).

2.10. *Fante's*

This thesis is about the encounter between Christianity and the African Traditional Religions in *Fante* funeral practices, so in one sense, the thesis is about the *Fantes* if this is the case, then it is essential that one provides some background knowledge about the *Fante's.*

The *Fantes* are believed to migrate from *Techiman*. The first place that they settled at was *Akan-manmu.* They later on travelled southwards toward *Mankessim. Mankessim* is six miles from the Atlantic Ocean. The first *Fante* group to domicile at *Mankessim* is the *Borbor Fante* (Fynn, 1975:33).

The *Fante Borbor* comprise of the *Abora*, the *Ekumfi*, the *Enyanfo, Nkusukum and Anomabo*. When they initially arrived at *Mankessim*, each group settled at a different quarters with their individual warlords. Amongst the warlords, the warlord at *Kurentsir Amanfo* was the most

senior. He was recognized by the European traders at the time as the King of the *Fantes.* The *Fantes* were led to *Mankessim* by three warlords (Fynn, 1975:33).

When the warlords died, they were buried in a groove near *Mankessim*. The groove which is now known as *Nananom Pow* (the grave of our ancestors), has become a worship place. The groove has been so named because it is the place where their great warlords are buried. Perhaps because the place has become a worship center, lots of Traditional Priests can be seen at the place (Fynn, 1975:33).

To further strengthen their trading ties with their European partners, the *Fantes* moved closer to the coast where most of the trading activities were taking place. To date, most *Fantes* regard *Mankessim* as their spiritual home and visit the *Nananom* (ancestral) shrine, whenever they are facing a difficulty which in their minds they think they cannot find a physical solution, they resort to the shrines to seek spiritual solutions (Fynn, 1975:34).

Each of the *Fantes* States that moved away from *Mankessim* appointed a caretaker leader to protect their assets and interests at *Mankessim*. These caretaker leadership positions still exist to date and they still live at *Mankessim*. The caretakers are preferably women. Some of these women are ritual specialists as well. Their title is known as the *Obaatan*. Whenever the leaders of the new *Fante* States had to make some critical decisions, they meet at *Mankessim*. According to Fynn "by 1730 the *Fante* states covered the land between the mouth of the River *Pra* in the west and *Senya Beraku* in the east and extended from the coast inland for a few miles" (Fynn, 1975:34). The next section shall discuss Chieftaincy in Ghana because the Chiefs are among the first to be notified when a death occurs in a community.

2.10.1. Social Organization

The social organization of the *Fantes* forms the basis of their worldview; hence my decision to write about them, without this, one may not understand the funeral practices of the *Fantes*. The *Akans* believe that every individual is made up of *okra* (a soul), *sunsum* (spirit), *ntoro* (life spirit derived from the father) and the *mogya* (blood derived from the mother). Together, these elements combine to create a whole person. Amongst these three elements the *okra* was seen as the most important. It is believed to be the part of the human beings that never dies.

The source of the soul is believed to be from the Creator who gives it to everyone during birth. The *Akans* believe that it is an aspect of God in every human being. Since the *okra* is seen as derived from God, it is also seen as the bearer of *nkrabea* which means destiny or

(fate). This fate is believed to be assigned by the Creator; it is also believed to be unalterable (Opoku, 1978:94-95).

The *sunsum* is the second part of an individual. It is believed to be an intangible element. It is responsible for the character, disposition and intelligence of a person (Opoku, 1978:96). The next aspect of man is the *ntoro*. ‘‘The ntoro is transmitted from a father to his children, including males and females. It is believed that this is what accounts for the inherited characteristics of the children’’ (Opoku, 1978:98).

The *Akans* believe that a human being is created when the *ntoro* of the father combines with the *mogya* (blood of the mother) at the time of procreation.[21] The *Akans* believe that when a person dies, the blood returns to the earth. In *Akan* conception, the earth is conceived of as a woman, thus the reference to it as ‘mother earth’. Among the *Fante’s,* it is known as *Asaase Efua.* The *Akans* also believe that there are spiritual elements that influence every aspect of life.

Previously, *Akans* were identified by their *ebusua* (clan). In this thesis, the word *ebusua or* clan and external family shall mean the same thing. The term nuclear family however shall be used to indicate the small unit of a family known as the nuclear family, comprising of mother, father and children. In *Fante* the same word *ebusua* is used to denote the nuclear family. This is because prior to the westernization of Ghanaian societies, there was nothing like nuclear families. Those distinctions had not arisen yet because everyone saw his or herself as an active member of the clan (*ebusua*).

Every individual was tied to his *ebusua* by a blood relationship through the mother. Previously, though members came from different areas within the *Akan* State, they still recognized themselves as members of the same clan. Members of a clan believed that they had this blood relationship because they also believed that they originated from the same ancestress. *Akans* belong to the clan of their mother. Members of the same clan see each other as brothers and sisters. Members of the same clan are not permitted to marry one another. This is considered a taboo.

Due to the belief that all members of the same *ebusua* are brothers and sisters, if for instance a *Fante* who belongs to the *Asona* clan travelled to an *Adanse* area, he will be given a place to

[21] The *ntoro is a spirit* or a life force originating from the father.

farm by members of his clan living in the *Adanse* area.[22] The *Akans* do not only belong to their mother's clan, but they also inherit matrilinealy through their mother's brother. In other words, they inherit through their matrilineal uncle. This does not suggest that the father is irrelevant. The father forms an important component of the spiritual scheme of things. This is because the spirit of the individual derived from him.

Every clan is believed to have a totem. The totem designates the clan collectively as a single unit (Durkheim, 1987:88). "The clan is also united by mutual duties such as mourning their dead. It is also united by religious beliefs and practices that center on the clan's totem as well. The totem is thus seen as a sacred creature that serves as the collective emblem of the group" (Cladis in Durkheim, 1987: xviii). According to Cladis, without it, the clan could not exist. This is because "the totem provides members of the clan with their name, that is their identity and hence unity" (Cladis in Durkheim, 1987: xviii).

This might have been the case previously but currently identity is now more predicated on wealth and educational status. Most people are now more known by their father's last name than their mother's family surname. This change may be due to change in focus on nuclear families than extended family as the basic unit of society.

The animals and plants that are used as totems by *Akan* clans are chosen because they are believed to have at one time done something extraordinary to ensure the survival of the founder of that society. That animal then assumes a sacred status and becomes an object of worship of all the descendants of that ancestor Opoku therefore concludes that the general approach of traditional African societies is to ascribe certain powers to objects in nature. This ascription is concretized by the periodic offer of sacrifices (Opoku, 1978:10). The totem of the clan of the funeral that I observed at Cape- Coast was a crow bird.[23]

2.10.2. Chieftaincy in Ghana

The description of the Chieftaincy Institution in Ghana is important because Chiefs are the spiritual and secular leaders of some communities in Ghana. It is for this reason that Chiefs are present at most durbars in Ghanaian communities. It is also the reason for which Chiefs

[22] The *Adanse* are a member of the large *Akan* ethnic group.

[23] To see a picture of this, check appendixes 13 and 14.

are one of the first persons to be notified when a death occurs (Decentralization Workshop Paper, 2006:17).

The fact that they are among the first to be notified when a death occurs indicates the high prestige and esteem which is accorded to the Chieftaincy institution in Ghana. It is for these reasons that I will present the Chieftaincy Institution in Ghana.

Before one can become a Chief, the person must have been nominated, en-stooled or en-skinned.[24] A Chief, according to the 1992 Constitution of Ghana 'is a person who hailing from the appropriate family has been validly nominated, elected and en-stooled or en-skinned as a Chief or Queen Mother, in accordance with the prevalent customary law and usage' (Ghana's Constitution, 22:227).

The power to nominate and elect are the sole responsibility of the Queen Mother and the Kingmakers in most traditional societies amongst the *Akans* in the south. In the north however, it is the Overlord (Ruler of a large area) and his council of elders who nominate, elect and en-skin a chief. The term Overlord is often used in northern Ghana instead of the term paramount chief which is used in southern Ghana (Decentralization Workshop, 2006:16).

On the issue of participation in Chieftaincy, according to Professor John Nabila, a Chief and Lecturer at the Department of Geography and Human Resource Development, at the University of Ghana, other families within the community are also allowed to become royals since the chief is allowed to marry outside the royal family, provided that the person is from a family of good conduct. According to him, through this medium, all members of the society can participate and enjoy from the Chieftaincy Institution (Decentralization Workshop, 2006:16-17).

In some communities, the Chief performs specific religious functions. But in most communities, there are families that perform all the religious functions as priests and then as chief priest, depending on the location of the individual, that is whether the person is at the paramount or village level (Decentralization Workshop, 2006:17).

[24] Whereas en-stoolment is practiced among the Southern Tribes of Ghana like the *Akans, Ga's, and Ewe's,* en-skinnment however is practiced among the Northern Tribes of *Hausa's, Mamprugu's* and *Mole-Dagbani*.

Durbars are very common in most Ghanaian communities, particularly among the *Akans*. Chiefs do not dress in their full regalia at funeral durbars. They sometimes just tie a cloth around their head symbolizing the crown and the fact that they are Chiefs. This cloth is usually red in color. Durbars often reflect the strength and unity of a community. Durbars are also held to express thanksgiving for an abundant harvest and a period of peace.

2.10.3. Libation

The pouring of libation is so essential for the vitality and authenticity of any traditional event. It seems like without it, nothing can happen. It is for this reason that I have decided to describe it. The description of libation is important for the thesis because it is through the pouring of libation that a concrete expression is made of the fact that the dead are part of the community.

During the performance of most rituals like funerals, the participation, involvement and blessings of the dead are desired as living members of the community. An area where frequent demands for blessings are made is the area of childbirth. This can be seen in the fact that almost every libation ends with a demand upon the ancestors that they grant them a multiplication of children; this is illustrated further in the *Akan* saying that ‘‘*awufo po pe won dodow, n menne ateasefo?* (Even the dead want an increase in their numbers, how much more the living)’’ (Opoku, 1978:124).

Although libation is regarded as a religious act, yet it is not considered as an expression of worship. The pouring of libation is the way that the indigenous people show respect and esteem for their ancestors. The pouring of libation is the public display of the strong relationship between the living and the dead. It also demonstrates the fact that these relationships continue to exist even after death, and that death alone is not powerful enough to break this bond (Opoku, 1978:5).

Libation is sometimes done with food and drink at the same time. The rationale behind this is the belief that the ancestors continue to live similar life’s comparable to the ones they led whilst on earth thus the thinking of the people is that if they continue to exist, then they will require food and drink for sustenance. The performance of libation is often done by communal elders, on behalf of the society (Opoku, 1978:37). Individuals may also perform libation by pouring drink or water on the ground before commencing eating or drinking. The

rationale behind this is the belief that one is giving water or drinks to the ancestors since they might be thirsty or be in need of a drink (Opoku, 1978:37).

Libation pouring is a way of honoring the Ancestors, particularly since they were people who had distinguished themselves on the moral plane. In this way they are presented as examples to encourage good conduct amongst the living.

Wrongful acts which are performed by an individual and that may generate conflict between him and another person may be quenched by the pouring of libation at a private ceremony organized for the two disagreeing persons. For an offence that may bring or invoke the curse of the ancestors, a libation is mandatory (Opoku, 1978:157). This is still practiced in the rural areas under customary laws. However in cosmopolitan areas, the courts enforce the laws.

Opoku informs us that the offering of libation is one of the major functions of the family head. In-fact he derives his legitimacy by his ability to perform this role adequately. Aside from these qualities, he is also expected to exhibit extra-ordinary wisdom and agility (Opoku, 1978:11-12).

2.10.3. Ancestors

The belief in ancestor ship is very important to the worldview of the *Fante* hence my decision to write about it here, to create the background for the description in chapter three. The belief in and the creation of ancestor's points to the following, that there is a belief in life after death that family obligations do not end after death, and that the ideal community extends even unto death. Also, since there are societal ideals which one must meet before one can become an ancestor, the idea and concept of ancestor ship, serves as a form of social control.

In their hierarchy of spirits beings, Opoku and Gyekye, place the ancestors (*nsamanfo*), right after *Onyakopon* (the creator of the universe) (Opoku, 1978:9 and Gyekye, 1995:68). According to Opoku, the ancestors are treated with the utmost reverence and awe (Opoku, 1978:9). The ancestors are spiritual beings and the physical eye cannot see them. This also means that they have the ability to be everywhere. They are not limited to a particular geographical area. They are believed to have their feet planted in both the physical and spiritual worlds. Due to this belief, they are accorded the highest form of respect (Opoku, 1978:36).

The ancestors were also accorded high respect in the society because they have lived a full cycle of life. Similarly, elderly men and women that is people above sixty years are accorded maximum respect because they have gone through several phases of life which many in the society are yet to go through (Opoku, 1978:36).

When elderly persons become ancestors, they do not cease to perform their obligatory duties such as intervening on behalf of their families, instead they continue to perform these obligations, and their families continue to regard them as living members by pouring libation to them at their meetings. Their names and histories of the ancestors are perpetuated by the naming of children after them (Opoku, 1978:37).

As stated in Chapter One, it is not everyone that becomes an ancestor. To be an ancestor, one has to fulfill the following conditions. A should have led an exemplary life which is worthy of emulation by the younger generation. He or she should also have lived to an old ripe age, had married with children or at least had been responsible for the upbringing of some children of a relative. The person should not have died through any of the following means, accident, suicide, or any form of violence. A person should not also have died through any of the Sexually Transmitted Infections (STI), and other sicknesses regarded as unclean by the society such as Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS), lunacy, dropsy, leprosy, or epilepsy (Opoku, 1978:36).

2.11. Summary

Chapter Two has discussed the History of Ghana; it has also described the Administrative Structure of Ghana. The Socio-Economic and Social Structure of Ghana has also been presented. Christianity, the African Traditional Religions and Islam have also been presented. A brief background of the town of Cape Coast and the *Ajumako Enyan-Essiam* District has also been presented. The *Akan* ethnic group and the *Fante tribe* have been presented. The Chieftaincy Institution in Ghana was also introduced. I have also described the social organization of the *Akans* and the *Fantes.* The pouring of libation was described and discussed as well. The institution of the ancestors was also presented as well.

CHAPTER THREE: THE *FANTE* FUNERAL PROCESS

3.1. Introduction

In this Chapter, I will describe the processes that *Fante's* go through to organize a funeral for a deceased relative. The processes shall be described using Arnold van Gennep's *Rites of Passage* and Victor Turners *Ritual Process*. A *Fante* funeral is a series of events ending with a funeral durbar where friends and loved ones make donations to the Traditional State and the bereaved family. The series of events usually comprise of a one week funeral celebration often limited to the family members and a wake keeping ceremony open to the general public and sometimes to a select few. Prior to that, some activities like the presentation of *eguradzi* (bathing items) which are given to the deceased family by the in-laws and the children. The funeral also comprises of a church service where tributes are read in honor of the deceased, from which the family proceeds to the durbar ground to receive donations and to celebrate the life of the deceased.

3.2. Van Gennep and the Rites of Passage

In the view of Kimball, Van Gennep analyzed ritual behavior in its relation to the dynamics of individual and group life (Kimball in Van Gennep, 1960: v). According to Kimball, Van Gennep came at a time when ‘‘Auguste Comte had proclaimed the principles on which an objective science of society might be achieved’’ (Kimball in Van Gennep, 1960: vi).

According to Kimball, Van Gennep also emphasized that social events ought to be examined into their very details and in the local environment in which they were studied (Kimball in Van Gennep, 1960: vi-vii). The major source of Van Gennep's inspiration came from the tradition of *Positivism* which insisted that the general laws of social process should be derived from empirical observation rather than from metaphysical speculation (Kimball in Van Gennp, 1960: vii).

In view the of Kimball, ‘‘the analysis of ceremonies that makes up an individual's life crisis which Van Gennep called *Rites de Passage* is usually considered to be his unique contribution to Ritual Studies" (Kimball in Van Gennep, 1960: vii). According to Kimball, Van Gennep pointed out that, when the activities connected with rituals that are critically examined to determine their order and content, there are possibilities of differentiating three of them. These three are the rites of separation, transition and incorporation. He was also not only interested in the ‘‘what’’ but also in the ‘‘how’’ and ‘‘why’’ (Kimball in Van Gennep, 1960:

viii). According to Kimball, Van Gennep and others accepted the concept of the separation of the sacred from the profane in an individual or group life from time to time. According to Kimball, the individual who enters a threshold which is different from the one which he or she held, that individual becomes 'sacred' to those who are still in the old 'profane' stage. In most societies, the entrance of an individual into this new stage requires a celebration of the event, by the incorporation of that individual into the group life, and then afterwards, returning that individual, back to his normal schedule of life (Kimball in Van Gennep, 1960: viii-ix).

The analysis of rites of incorporation is credible for identifying the challenges common to people who feel alienated and do not belong to any group (Kimball in Van Gennep, 1960: x). According to van Gennep, the lives of most human beings are made up of a series of stages which have similar starting points and conclusions. In most cultures, these starting points and final stages are birth, puberty, marriage, fatherhood, and promotion to higher rank or position at the work place, specialization in a particular field or vocation and death. In most cultures as well, special events are held to commemorate these stages of life. The rationale behind the organization of these rituals is the equipping of the individual to transition from one demarcated position to another one, which is also clearly defined (Van Gennep, 1960:3).

In van Gennep's opinion, the rites of passage, that is the rites of separation, transition rites and the rites of incorporation are not all developed to the same extent by all peoples or in every ceremonial pattern (Van Gennep, 1960:11).

Van Gennep is also of the opinion that rites of passage are very pronounced in funeral ceremonies, whereas the rites of incorporation are rather pronounced at marriage ceremonies. Transitional rites on the other hand, are very vital in pregnancy, betrothal and initiation ceremonies. They may also be adequate for adoption rituals or rites associated with bringing forth a second child. So although theoretically a rite of passage comprises of pre-liminal, liminal, and post-liminal rites, they may not be used at the same level for describing all rituals. A writer may choose to emphasize one rite of passage over another one. As demonstrated above, in one life-cycle ritual, a particular rite of passage may be more pronounced than the other (Van Gennep, 1960:11).

Funeral events end with rites of incorporation; this signals the official entrance to ancestorship or liberation to for a widower. This stage is observed with a meal in common, and an exchange of handclasps (Van Gennep, 1960:28).

According to Van Gennep, “The performance of the converging rites is in accordance with the general idea that the sacred, the divine, the magical and the pure are lost if they are not renewed in periodic rites” (Van Gennep, 1960:157).

3.3. Rites of Separation

Van Gennep provides that he previously saw mourning as an aggregate of taboos and negative practices marking the keeping away from the community people affected by death who are hidden from the society because they are deemed to be in an impure state. But it later appeared to him to be more than a phenomenon (Van Gennep, 1960:147).

According to him, mourning is a threshold stage for relatives and friends and that when they go through the rites of separation, they come out of it reintegrated into the society (Van Gennep, 1960:147).

He provides further that in some cases, the transitional period of the living is a counterpart to the threshold stage of the deceased and of the first often implies the end of the second. When this happens there is an incorporation of the deceased into the world of the dead (Van Gennep, 1960:147).

Van Gennep writes that ‘‘during mourning, the living members and the deceased constitute a special group, situated between the world of the living and the world of the dead, and how soon living individuals leave that group depends on the closeness of their relationship with the dead person’’. Van Gennep also writes that ‘‘it seems right that widowers and widows should belong to this special world for the longest time; they leave it only through appropriate rites and only at a moment when even a physical relationship is not discernible’’ (Van Gennep, 1960:147).

He also provides that ‘‘during mourning, the social life is suspended for all those affected by it, and the length of the period increases with the closeness of social ties to the deceased and with a higher social standing of the dead person’’ (Van Gennep, 1960:148). This can be seen in the widowhood rituals where spouses of the deceased are kept indoors for a period of time. For the women, it is usually six months whereas it is three months for men.

3.3.1. The Undertaker

One observation I made during my fieldwork was that the pouring of libation is pervasive in *Fante* funeral ceremonies. In *Fante* societies, when a family hears that a member has passed away, the family picks up the deceased body to deposit it at the mortuary or preservation center.[25] Most families contribute money to send the body to the mortuary. But very poor families will bury the body immediately. But before this is done, libation is offered to the ancestors. A libation is a drink offering to the ancestors.

The immediate family then sends out messages to all relatives of the extended family (including aunties, uncles, cousins, nephews, nieces, grandparents and so on) to announce the death of the relative.

A family meeting is organized one week after the death of the relative to plan the funeral. Some important issues such as the estimated cost of the funeral are discussed. During the meeting, donations and contributions are collected from family members. A drink offering is given to the ancestors at this meeting too.

At a date agreed upon by the relatives of the deceased, the body is removed from the mortuary and placed in a funeral ambulance to take it to the family house (a common place where all members of the extended family meet from time to time to deliberate on important issues facing the family) to prepare it for the wake-keeping ceremony.

At *Etsii-Sonkwaa*, the family of *Aba Akyere* had already had done their one week funeral celebration.[26] They had decided on the funeral date of which my informant was aware hence his decision to take me there to observe the proceedings with the permission of the family elders. The family therefore welcomed us and gave the *undertaker* the flexibility of choosing a place to do the decoration. The *undertaker* chooses to do the decoration outside the family building that is in the open space in front of the family house. In Ghana, most of these open

[25] The preservation center is cheaper than the mortuary, which is often a part of a district hospital. The preservation centers are common in rural areas whereas the mortuaries are common in the towns and cities. The preservation center uses the method of embalmment meanwhile the mortuaries use refrigeration to preserve the body.

[26] When a person dies, the family meets after one week to plan the funeral. This one week observance is known as *nawotwe da* in *Fante*. In English, the common term is the one week funeral celebration. Perhaps the term celebration is used because, usually the meeting does not without eating and drinking. Otherwise one will not expect a meeting held to discuss the passing away of fellow relative to be punctuated with food and drinks.

spaces are referred to as the *compound*. We started work immediately, first by mounting a canopy. [27]

Whilst setting up the canopy for the laying in state of the deceased, the extended family welcomed an entourage from the deceased husbands family who brought bathing items from the spouses and children of the deceased. Some of the items presented were; different pieces of cloths, mats, traditional leather sandals, soap, shampoo, weave on, and perfumes.[28] The bathing items presented by the deceased's husband's relatives are often described to be insufficient to put more value on the deceased. It is believed that if they don't, the spirit of the deceased will not be happy.

The canopy was turned into a room sort of. The colors of the curtains used were red, brown, white and pink with yellow and green plastic flowers. The *undertaker* and his assistants, decorated the arena beautifully, and awaited the arrival of the dead body from the body preservation center.

At *Fante* funerals, the following colors are usually seen; Black (*tuntum*), White (*fitaa*), Red (*Kokoo*), Dark brown (*kobene*). The color black is used to signify sorrow, death and loss. It is also used to signify spiritual things. The color white symbolizes victory and spiritual purity. It also symbolizes hope, sacredness, joy and well-being. The color red is linked to blood in Akan Cosmology. It also symbolizes death and life and danger. Dark-brown colors also symbolize death and darkness (Dzramedo, 2009:160-161).

3.3.2. Body Preservation Center

The family of the late Aba *Akyere* has already met and observed the one week celebration. They have also decided to engage the services of an undertaker. The undertaker is responsible for dressing the dead body and also for preparing the venue for the wake-keeping ceremony. Whilst waiting for the dead body from the body preservation center, the undertaker received another offer from the family to convey some members to the body preservation center. This gave me the opportunity to observe the conveying of the body from the body preservation center to the venue for decoration. So I went with the *undertaker* to the preservation center to

[27] The term *undertaker* in funeral rites is used to describe the person who dresses the dead body and prepares it for public display during the wake-keeping ceremony. The undertaker was my chief informant on Fante funerals during my field work.

[28] To see a picture of these items being delivered, see Appendixes 6 and 7.

bring the dead body to the family house, for the wake keeping ceremony. The preservation center is at *Enyan-Denkyira*. Though in the same District, it was quite a distance. I think it took not less than one hour from Sonkwaa to get there. And the journey was worsened by the bad nature of the roads.

On our way to the preservation center, I saw some school buildings, young children playing football on a park. The sound of the siren from the ambulance seemed to have arrested onlookers as people stopped what they were doing to have a look at the convoy of vehicles passing through their towns. Churches could be seen on the road as well. One of the cars in the convoy was a pickup truck and people could be seen standing in it. Irrespective of how dangerous this is, this is a common scene in Ghana.

One has to notify the attendants at the preservation center in advance so that the body could be prepared for release on the appointed date. This is also to prevent unnecessary rush and pressure on the attendants. Irrespective of this notice there is still chaos at the preservation center, as clients fail to give notice far ahead of time. Stories were told of instances where families received other bodies other than those of their relatives. This meant that the wrong bodies had been given to the clients. The chaos could also be attributed to the high intake of drugs and alcohol by relatives, which usually causes rowdiness at the center.[29] There were different types of cars at the preservation center to convey the body to the family house. Some were commercial vehicles, others were private vehicles. A special ambulance that is vehicles specifically designated for carrying dead bodies was also there. Some of the vehicles seemed too small to convey dead bodies. How the families still manage to squeeze the bodies inside the vehicles still puzzles me. It seems like the owner of the preservation center is an Elder (Leader) of the Church of Pentecost. This is because his phone number is the sole means of making initial contact before physically visiting the premises.[30]

When we got to the center, we had to wait for a while until it got to our turn. When the body is delivered to the family the family checks to see if it is their deceased's body before they take it to the family house. There was wailing and crying whenever a dead body was released to a family. Usually the wailing is done in a dramatic way to symbolize the awful condition in which the death that has brought upon the family.

[29] These drugs I think are taken by relatives to aid them to be mournful and at the same time lose their state of consciousness and position themselves in a state of trance.

[30] To view the signboard of the church, see Appendix 5.

At the preservation center, I observed the pouring of libation when the vehicle to convey the dead body arrived. During the libation pouring, a prayer is said to ask for a safe collection of the body. There was also another libation poured when the vehicle was departing with the dead body. This time round, the libation is offered to ask for a safe transportation of the body to the family house. Relatives also took some of the drink after pouring the libation. It was surprising to see women taking this hard liquor in the open.[31] There was one particular woman who I saw with a bottle of hard liquor. This is usual because in the Ghanaian society generally, it is very rare to see a woman drinking alcohol. But as in funerals exceptions are made or to put it in another way, the generals of the society are suspended; it may just be in the following of that order.

A large portion of the road was not tarred. Some of the houses on the road were built with mud and bamboo sticks. Some of them had begun to destruct. There was lot of houses that had not been maintained on the road too. Most of the buildings were too close to the road.

The method used to preserve the dead body was embalmment. According to the *undertaker*, the embalmment was a better system of preserving the body as compared to the preservation of the body in a freezer.

Family members reacted emotionally whenever their deceased was brought out from the preservation room. There were signs of some family members having taken in alcohol and hard drugs like wee. This made them behave sometimes a bit aggressively, even to the extent of driving recklessly at the mortuary. Some of the families who arrived at the mortuary were impatient and verbally abused the mortuary attendants for delays in releasing the bodies of their deceased relatives. From the preservation center, the vehicle conveying the dead body drove through the nearby towns to the family house.

3.3.3. Arrival of the dead body

There was a crowd of about 300 persons awaiting the arrival of the dead body. Libation was poured again before the body was removed from the vehicle. After the pouring of the libation, the body was removed from the ambulance. At this instance almost everyone at the family house began to cry. Failure of any relative to cry at this instance it is believed will bring a bad omen on the family so almost everyone cried. Even men are allowed to cry at this moment

[31] Usually women who take alcohol do so only at drinking bars. Women seen drinking openly are seen to be low on morals.

although it is not expected for a man to cry. There is a local saying which says 'a man does not cry' meaning, '*obema onsu'*. After this, the body was kept at the family house before it was later on given to the funeral *undertaker* and his assistants.

The *undertaker* and his team were refreshed with food and drinks. We were given *kenkey*, fish and *shito* to eat. We were also given soft drinks. The food was enough to strengthen the *undertaker* and his assistants.[32]

3.3.4. Decoration of a Dead body

It was after this that we began dressing the dead body. The body is dressed afterwards and then decorated. I was surprised at the boldness by which the *undertaker* and his team handled the dead body. They treated it like a piece of item, and not something which once existed as a human being. Whilst the body was being dressed, the Catholic Church choir sang hymns.

> The liturgy is the primary locus in which spirituality is lived and interpreted. There is much emphasis on all sacraments. The celebration of the holy Eucharist for instance, is very central. For it is the source and summit of catholic spirituality'. In the view of Omenyo, 'Catholicism may be thriving in rural Ghana because its rituals such as the burning of incense and sprinkling of holy water appeal to the spiritual sensibilities and satisfy to a great extent the religious quest of the African (Omenyo, 2006:101-102).

The first thing they did when they received the body was to make it malleable. That is making the joints movable. This was particularly necessary as they had wanted to produce the deceased in a seated position. She was first dressed in a white dress, similar to a wedding dress. Cotton wool was placed under the eyelids to make the face a bit livelier. The same was done to the mouth. After this, the body was sprayed with perfume. The face was cleaned with a rag afterwards. Some amount of super glue was also applied to the lips of the deceased to make the mouth appear in a certain position. The faced was brushed with a body cream after this. A line is drawn on the face of the deceased to give a semblance of an eye lash. After this a wig is placed on the head of the deceased. Beautiful beads were also placed on her neck. The deceased looked so beautiful after the dressing.

The body was dressed whilst sitting.[33] It was later on displayed whilst lying down. There was supposed to be wake keeping service from the Friday night, but because of the power trip, it had to be postponed to Saturday morning.

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[32] To view a picture of this meal, see Appendix 30.

[33] To see the body beautifully decorated, see Appendix 8.

3.4. Transitional Rites

3.4.1. Wake keeping

At *Etsii-Sonkwaa,* in the morning, fellow traders with the deceased and members of the women's fellowship with the deceased came to pay their last respects by enacting a market scene of the lady selling oranges. This was preceded by some songs. The songs were all about the profession of the woman. Some of the persons who came to pay their last respects spoke to the dead body as if it was a living being. The children of the deceased went emotionally berserk when they came to pay their lasts respects. It was so dramatic that they had to be restrained.

Members of the Women's Fellowship guarded the entrance of the arena of the wake keeping area to honor the deceased. The women were dressed uniformly. They wore a simply sown *kaba slit*.[34] The color of this dress was violet, with a black scarf covering their heads.[35] Oranges were also placed on the decorated bed of the deceased. I was told that in earlier times libation was offered but at other times too, a goat is sacrificed. But from my observation, the singing, drumming and dancing aspect of the ceremony has not died out. The body of the deceased is later placed into the coffin after wake-keeping ceremony.

3.4.2. Burial Service

Signposts have been placed all over town to direct visitors to the house, the church, and the funeral grounds. On the way to the church, some women distributed small, black and white pictures of Uncle Ray to be pinned on the cloth and color printed funeral programs with the highlights of the service. These printed funeral booklets were very colorful and informative.[36] The wife, the children and the church, read tributes, in honor of the deceased. There seemed to be a cordial relationship between the priests of this church and the traditional authorities of *Oguaa.* A plaque on the wall of the church says that the plaque was unveiled on the occasion of the re-dedication of the church.[37]

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[34] *Kaba slits* are traditional dresses usually worn by Ghanaian ladies for attending ceremonies.

[35] To view a picture of this scene, see Appendix 9.

[36] Appendixes, 16 and 19 shows examples of the front covers of these booklets.

[37] See Appendix 4 for a picture of this plaque.

After the burial mass at the Christ Anglican Church, we sat in our vehicle and drove to the cemetery which was quite some distance away others boarded buses arranged for that purpose.[38] The body was transported in an ambulance. The atmosphere was peaceful, orderly and solemn.

In earlier times too farewell gifts such as rings, handkerchiefs and perfumes were dropped in the coffins. I did see this happen at I funeral I observed at *Nsawam* in the Central Region of Ghana. But I did not see any if this happening at the two funerals I observed in the Central Region. Tributes are also offered to the deceased at this time. In earlier times too I was told, Persons owing the deceased some money are invited to come forward and declare so. Those to whom the deceased also owed some money are also made to state their claim before the coffin is closed.

This rite is performed so as to ensure that the deceased passes on to the ancestral world peacefully. It is also done to ensure that the deceased does not spiritually attack those who owe him or her. The family of the deceased takes note of those owing the deceased and those to whom the deceased owes some money and decides on way forward to retrieve or pay the debt. The coffin is then covered with the offering of yet another libation. Another one is offered before the body is lowered into the grave.

3.5. Rites of Incorporation

According to Van Gennep, "he practice of sharing food and drinks is obviously a rite incorporation which is a physical union in nature and Van Gennep calls this a ''sacrament of communion'' (Van Gennep, 1960:29). He considered rites of incorporation as ''symbolic''. Van Gennep mentioned some of the acts of incorporation as eating, drinking, tying one to another and kissing (Van Gennep, 1960:29). ''The movement of objects among persons constituting a defined group create a continuous social bond between them in the same way that a ''communion'' does" (Van Gennep, 1960:31).

When we got to the durbar grounds, which looked like a local town football pitch, the durbar had already began. There were lots of people there, not less one thousand in number I believe. But this number was not static as people came and left the funeral grounds after giving their donations. There were people from Accra and other towns who had come to give donations to

[38] To see a picture of the Christ Anglican Cathedral, check Appendix 12.

members of the bereaved families. Those who left immediately after giving their donations were usually people who had travelled from far places such as *Accra, Kumasi or Sekondi*, and Takoradi to attend the funeral. These people usually come in groups. Interestingly there was a political party representation as well. Members of the New Patriotic Party (NPP) were at the durbar grounds in party colors to mourn with the family of one of their members who had passed away.

There were people seated on all four corners on the field under red and blue, and red and black colored canopies. The canopy at the northern side of the field was occupied by the chief and his elders. In other words, it was occupied by the royal family. Since the royal family was present at the funeral a donation was made to them as well. This means that donations were given at three levels. Firstly they were given to the *Oman* (traditional state), then secondly to the *abusua* (extended family) and then thirdly to the immediate family of the deceased (wife and children). The *Oman* usually had the lowest amounts from the donations. This is because the *Oman* hardly incurs any cost in the organization of the funeral. The cost is largely borne by the immediate family and to some extent by the *abusua.* The highest amounts are usually given to the immediate family, followed by the *abusua.*

Directly opposite the chief and his elders was a (southern canopy), under which sat entertainers and their equipment's, made up of musical instruments and loud speakers. Under this canopy also sat members of the military singing band. This group sang some popular highlife and gospel songs to entertain the crowd. Usually, the entertainers seated at the southern side of the pitch are invited to perform on a collective decision. That is all the families gathered at the durbar grounds agree that they should be the official music providers or entertainers at the funeral. This means that payment for these entertainers will be done based on the monetary contributions of the families there gathered in at the durbar grounds.

On the east and west sides of the field were seated families and friends of the bereaved families. Some of these families also had their own entertainers with them, for which they were solely financially responsible for. Some of them had with them brass bands and cultural troops. By cultural troops I mean perform by the use of indigenous musical instruments to entertain the public. Usually, these people sing, drum, or dance to traditional music.

Most of the families gathered there had either a table and a chair or both a table and a chair in front of their seats. The purpose of the table or chair, or table and chair were twofold. The first reason is that they placed a portrait or a picture of the deceased on it so that family and friends

can easily identify where they were seated. Families do not only place the picture on a chair but they also place pictures showing various aspects of the life of the deceased in the program booklet usually distributed at the pre-burial and burial services.

The second is to place a basket or bowl on it to collect the monetary donations.[39] These tables were mostly covered with cloths. The first roll was occupied by the leaders of the family, who collected the donations and also shook hands with guests. Some of the families at the durbar had their family linguist with them. Most often, these linguists carried along, a staff with the totem of the clan or a wise saying on it (one of the staffs had the crafting of a three elders sitting in a circle on it). The other members of the family usually sit behind the elderly ones who are very often, the leaders of their families. Most of the people were sitting on plastic chairs of various colors. Some of the colors of the chairs were white, brown, ash and blue. The chair of the chief and his elders was however different. It was largely wooden with aluminum embellishments. Since people had come from afar, cars could be seen everywhere around the field.

When a family arrives at the durbar grounds, they go round to greet other families and the royal family. They do this by shaking hands with the family heads who are usually seated at the front roll. Since it will be problematic walking through the seated audience to greet every one, they wave to the rest of the family. Whilst all of this was going on, there was a traditional dancer going round the durbar ground dancing *Adowa* to entertain the crowd.[40] The traditional dancer was bare-chested and also had a red cloth around his neck. From his waist down to his legs, he had a black cloth tied around his waist. Some members of the audience particularly from the royal family were appreciative of his dance so they gave him money.

At the funeral durbar, Chiefs present were not in their traditional regalia.[41] At best what they had was a red cloth tied around their head and sometimes laid on the neck. This was not a distinguishing feature enough as ordinary members of the public also had red cloths tied around their necks or head. Perhaps a more distinguishing feature was that the chief also had someone holding an umbrella over his head whilst he went round greeting the audience. At the same time, I saw people particularly, children selling biscuits, toffees and sachet water on

[39] To see an example of this, view Appendix 14.

[40] *Adowa* is a traditional dance amongst the *Akans*.

[41] The regalia here mean the objects signifying the symbols of office of the Chief.

the field. Whenever someone was making a donation, the master of the ceremony announced it to us the audience. In between the announcements by the Master of the Ceremony were music, drumming and dancing.

After the wake keeping, the body was conveyed to the church premises for the memorial service. As usual, kind words were said about the women. Her hard work as an orange trader and a dedicated member of the Women's Fellowship were specifically stressed upon as a worthy example to be followed by other Christians.

I also observed the burial service of the deceased. This was performed by the Catholic Church in the area. There was no libation poured at the cemetery. I was very surprised at this. I wondered if the presence of the priest was a factor. There were wreaths laid by the children and friends of the deceased.

A family meeting is organized after the funeral ceremony to share the cost of the funeral. A thanksgiving ceremony is organized the day after the family meeting to extend thanks to all the relatives and friends who assisted with the funeral. Female members of the family are specifically assigned the role of going round the community to extend thanks and gratitude to all those who assisted in the organization of the funeral. This often brings the funeral rites to an end. Some families however organize a 40 day anniversary to commemorate the transfer of their deceased relative from the physical world into the spiritual world. In this chapter, I have attempted a description of *Fante* funeral rites, based on my field work.

The funeral celebration took place at the house of the deceased. I was there with my research team. Not everybody likes shaking hands with everyone. I saw a lady who did not want to shake everyone but an elderly woman advised her to do it, since it was a customary practice at the funeral. That is to say, it is custom that is *amammere*. Moreover it is important to shake hands with everybody so that your presence is felt and noticed. People meet friends and acquaintances at funeral ceremonies.

Greetings have the effect of creating renewal and reinforcement of membership in a single or less restricted group. This can particularly happen in the case of relatives, neighbors, or members of the same tribe (Van Gennep, 1960:33). ‘‘Funeral rites also vary widely among different peoples and that further variations depend on the sex, age, and social position of the deceased’’ (Van Gennep, 1960:146).

The Disc Jockey (DJ) provides music for this event too. Whilst this is going on, the Master of Ceremony (MC) takes the microphone to announce donations from family, friends, sympathizers and guests. The MC announces the names of all those who give donations.

3.6. Making of Modern Ancestors

One of the requirements of ancestorship is that one should have had children and taken good care of them. Thus kindness and the ability to raise up children who are responsible adults, and who have attained higher education is a much cherished value in Ghanaian society today. This can be seen in the biographies and tributes printed in the funeral booklets.[42] This is even more important, particularly since, it is the nuclear family comprising of the wife and children in collaboration with the extended family that makes one an ancestor today. Previously it was only the extended family which did so. This can be seen in the fact that in the modern Ghanaian society, children of the deceased play vital roles in the organization of the funeral.

The making of ancestorship in southern Ghanaian societies where Christianity is the dominant religion is not complete without a church burial service. Even deceased persons who were not Christians have their families trying to get a church burial service for them.[43] This even happens in the rural areas. It appears like without a church service, the making of an ancestor is not complete. What is even more desirable is that the person was an active church member who occupied a position in the church. Such a person will get a tribute from the church as well.[44]

Families also seek to project aspect of the life of the deceased when he or she was a young man or woman in the program outline (a positive image of the life of the deceased as a youth in the program booklet). The showing of gratitude to all who sympathized with the family and gave donations at the funeral is also a much cherished value. So families will usually include an appreciation segment at the back of the booklet.[45]

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[42] To see copies of these biographies and tributes, see Appendixes: 17, 18, 22, 23, and 24.

[43] To see an example of these church burial services, see Appendixes 16, 20 and 21.

[44] See Appendix 24 where the late Raymond Ekyinaba Arthur obtains a tribute from his church for his work as a people's warden. Also Appendixes 9-11 where the Women's Fellowship members make their presence felt at funeral of Aba Akyere.

[45] To see an example of this, view Appendix 26.

The expensive nature of modern funerals is of great concern to the *Oguaa* Traditional Council. It has thus come out with some laws to moderate the costs. These laws were made in consultation with Heads of Families. Some of these laws are that no brass band should accompany *eguradze* (bathing items) to any family house in the Traditional Area no music should be played at funerals after 18:00 and that *nkae-nsa* (notification drink) should not exceed ten Ghana cedi (GHS 10.00).[46] Bereaved families are to contact their Family Heads for the list of to be presented at funerals.[47]

3.7. Observations

At *Enyan-maim* a rural area, the Traditional State Institution was very active. In that the Chief was present at the funeral durbars and reverence and donations were given to him. The pouring of through the various stages of the funeral was pervasive. It also seems like there is some mixture and tolerance of the two religions, existing side by side with each other without much confrontation.

At Cape-Coast also, the Traditional Authorities were still active but were not physically present at funerals. But they drafted laws to guide the performance of funeral rites. At cape-coast I saw a single pouring of libation. It seems like in areas where Christianity has been existent for a long time; the rituals are on the decline. However in the rural areas, the rituals are still on the same level.

3.8. Summary

I have presented the *Fante* funeral process. The classification of the process was performed by Arnold Van Gennep. After the classification work, the chapter moved on to discuss the *Fante* funeral process with the help of the classification invented by Arnold van Gennep. These classifications and sub headings were the rites of separation, transitional rites, and rites of incorporation. Some concerns of traditional rulers and church leaders such as the high cost of funerals were also presented. The making of a modern ancestor has also been presented. I shall move on with a discussion of some of the areas where there has been clashes between Christianity and the Traditional Religions in the area of funeral rites.

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[46] To view a copy of this public announcement, see Appendix 27.

[47] To view a copy of list, see Appendix 28.

CHAPTER FOUR: ENCOUNTERS BETWEEN ATR AND CHRISTIANITY IN *FANTE* FUNERALS

4.1. Introduction

In Chapter Four, I will present some of the tensions that have arisen between Christianity and the African Traditional Religion, in the area of funeral practices. I will also discuss if it is possible to resolve these conflicts by doing contextual theology. An idea proposed by Stephen Bevans, a Roman Catholic Priest. I will seek to apply his theory by specifically applying the Anthropological Model of doing contextual theology to the *Fante* context. Some of the areas where there have been conflicting issues are in the practice of libation pouring, ancestral rites and of the observation widowhood rites. Before we proceed, I think that it is necessary that we define the term, Contextualization.

According to Stephen Bevans, ‘‘Contextualization is the term used to describe the theology that takes human experience, social location, culture, and cultural change seriously’’ (Bevans, 2008:27). This means that to do Contextual Theology is to take human experience, social location, culture, and cultural change seriously. This is what some of the early missionary churches neglected until the African Independent Churches began springing up. Some current Pentecostal Churches are also purposely neglecting to do theology in the Ghanaian context because of their western orientations.

I will now move on to discuss some of the areas where there have been conflicting issues and compromises. Before we commence discussion on some of the specific conflicts and negotiations between the Traditional Religions and Christianity in funeral rituals, I will discuss some general areas where there have been conflicts and compromises.

4.2. Encounters between Christianity and the African Traditional Religions

According to Opoku, there have been many reported cases where conflict has occurred between adherents of the indigenous religion and Christianity. The conflict arose as a result of the insistent demand of the early missionaries that convert severed any ties with the tradition and beliefs of their people (Opoku, 1978:167). Opoku informs us that the early missionaries believed that before full conversion to Christianity could be possible, but one had to become a European of a sort. This meant that one first had to imbibe western culture and civilization. At the time, the Traditional Religions was seen as all evil with nothing good to offer. This perception of the Traditional Religions came under heavy criticism and scrutiny. Conversion

led to the neglect of Traditional Religious rituals as well as to the disregard of the gods, priests, and other functionaries who were critical to the efficient running of the indigenous religion. The neglect of the gods meant that the taboos and other prohibitions which were attached to the worship of gods were no longer observed in most Akan areas (Opoku, 1978:167-168).

Opoku writes that the agenda of the early missionaries was greatly aided by the introduction of western education, which in turn produced a new order and a new set of values. This created a situation where the products of these western institutions no longer felt like belonging to their original communities (Opoku, 1978:168).

Many of the Traditional ways of transferring knowledge suffered low patronage, because the products of the western mission schools refused to make themselves available for the performance of Traditional practices. Some of these practices were the rite of initiation and puberty rites. These rites enabled the transfer of indigenous knowledge. This is also meant that people became more secular than religious in their perspectives about life (Opoku, 1978:168).

According to Opoku, Traditional Religious adherents also maintain that the ideas or concept about God pre-existed Christianity and that what has happened is the addition of more ideas with the coming of Christianity (Opoku, 1978:168).

Also, interesting is the fact that irrespective of the massive proselytizing activity by evangelical Christians, the indigenous religion has remained resilient alongside the Christian religion. There are also examples of how Christianity has given way to the indigenous religion. An example is marriage is whose indigenous marriage ritual is a pre-condition for any form of marriage in Ghana.

Scholars of religion have observed that some Christians revert to the indigenous religion in times of difficulties such as an inability to give birth or recurrent misfortunes such as fatal deaths, and loss of wealth in weird circumstances. In such instances, these people usually visit the local shrine to consult the traditional priest (Opoku, 1978:168).

Opoku opines that the attainment of self-determination by African states from their colonial masters have led to an increase in the upholding of African cultural values which has made it much possible to be an adherent of the Traditional Religions than during the colonial era. This

means that to some extent, African culture is seen in a much better light by the highly educated elites in African societies than previously.

In Ghana, for example the pouring of libation a rite associated with the indigenous religion is performed on national events like the annual Independence Day parade, alongside Islamic and Christian prayers. Ghanaian governments also implicitly support cultural events by honoring special invitations given them by traditional authorities to attend these events. Besides their patronage of these cultural events, government leaders also provide state assets like loud speakers, sheds and platforms for the use of the Traditional Authorities (Opoku, 1978:167-169).

According to Opoku, aside from the conflicts and accommodations between Christianity and the Traditional Religions has also made a remarkable impact on Christianity. The versatility of the indigenous religion in Ghana can be seen in the modus operandi of the African Independent Churches that absorb aspects of the Traditional Religions into their liturgy. The new churches have been able to cater much better than the missionary churches for the spiritual needs of Ghanaians because they have adopted the *Akan* worldview which promotes wealth, prosperity and well-being, as well as the belief in evil spirits who are believed to be the causal agents of all problems of humanity.

The new churches have seen an increase in membership largely because they operate from this perspective which is still relevant for most people. A large chunk of the members of these churches were previously members of the missionary churches. A similar trend can be seen in the practice of Islam in West Africa where some amount of syncretism practices could be attributed to the mixture of the Traditional Religions and Islam (Opoku, 1978:170).

The resilience of the Traditional Religions shows that it has some permanent and enduring spiritual values. Some Africans believe that the resources of the Traditional Religions are much stronger than those of the other religions, because of this they turn to it at the birth of a new child, at puberty, marriage and death. It is also seen as a better avenue for securing one's welfare and destiny. The Traditional Religion is seen as a great resource for deriving normative norms that will be the backbone for maintaining strong ties between people and in the community and also serves as a guide in their relations with the environment, spiritual beings and the physical environment. The religion is also touted as being the inspiration behind the important cultural achievement in art, music, social institutions, political systems and ancient civilizations of Africa (Opoku, 1978:170).

4.3. Encounters in Funeral Practices

4.3.1. Libation

There are different responses of Christians towards libation pouring. Some Christians hold the position that the practice is unbiblical and unchristian. Pentecostals and Charismatics even hold the position that the practice is demonic.[48] The *Traditional Protestant Churches* are however, mute on this issue.[49] The 1958 Synod of the Church while not condemning the practice, decided not to approve the practice as one of its modes of worship (Osei-Bonsu, 2005:78).

During my research at *Etsii-Sonkwaa* I did not encounter any disagreement as to whether a libation should be poured or not. However, since libation had been poured at almost every stage of the funeral, one will think that at the pre-final stage of the funeral rites, another one libation will be poured again. Strangely enough, there was no libation. I am tempted to think that the mere presence of the catholic priest at the burial scene might have prevented this from happening. Perhaps the priest's prayer is seen as superior to a libation said by a family elder.

The nonperformance of the libation at the cemetery was particularly surprising to me since I know the Catholic Church in Ghana to be tolerant of the practice of pouring libation. An Arch-Bishop of the Kumasi Archdiocese of the Church and Anthropologist, Bishop Peter Akwasi Sarpong, has publicly spoken and written in favor of the practice, saying, it is based in scripture.[50] So I wondered why the family leaders decided not to pour libation at the burial. Maybe it was to avoid open confrontation with the priest, because though the Arch-Bishop of the *Kumasi* diocese is one of the foremost Catholic Bishops in Ghana, his views

[48] In Ghana, the Pentecostal Churches are comprised of churches like the Church of Pentecost International, the Christ Apostolic Church, and the Apostolic Church of Ghana. The Charismatic Churches are comprised of churches like the International Central Gospel Church, The Christian Action Faith Ministries International, the Word Miracle Church International, The Victory Bible Church International and the Royal House Chapel (*Ahenfie*).

[49] I use the term *Traditional Protestant Churches*, so as to distinguish between the Protestant Churches which were established by Missionary Societies and the Pentecostal Churches and Charismatic Churches who also claim to be Protestants. The Traditional Protestant Churches are most popularly known as *Orthodox Churches* in Ghana.

[50] An Arch-Bishop is one of the senior-most priestly ranks in the Catholic Church. An Arch-Bishop is only subordinate in rank to the Cardinal and the Pope. Ghana currently has a Cardinal from Cape-Coast who is the President of the Pontifical Council for Peace and Justice in Rome by name Peter Kodwo Appiah Turkson.

may not be shared by all the members of the church in Ghana. This is particularly so, since, the *Etsii-Sonkwaa* community is outside the administrative confines of the former Arch-Bishop. Also, I could see that the Catholic Priest was willing to allow the performance of indigenous rituals but in his absence. This is because at one stage, he asked if he should excuse them, so that they could perform their own rites. But still there was no libation. I will like to think that the action of the family elders at *Etsii-Sonkwaa* was because of the deference they have for the Priest.

At Cape-Coast, after the election of the successor, the landlord of the deceased house where the ceremony was held poured libation with *Fanta*.[51] This was new to me because I have never seen libation poured with soft drink before. Most of the libations that I have seen were all done with alcoholic drinks. But the issue here is the disdain with which a family member reacted to the pouring of the libation. She was so angry that libation was being poured that she walked away from the scene. Later on after interacting with the family member who was a woman, I got to know that she was a member of the Catholic Diocese of Accra and that she was very much against the pouring of libation. Her belief was stemmed from the fact that she was convinced that the act was demonic. I was quite surprised to see a catholic opposing the pouring of libation that much. This was because of the highly ritualistic nature of catholic worship and the fact that one of their leaders in Ghana had publicly proclaimed that the act of pouring libation was not wrong but was actually based in scripture. Her reaction might be derived from the earlier teachings of the missionaries and current Pentecostal or Charismatic Churches which still condemn and demonize the Traditional Religion and some of its practices like the pouring of libation.

At Cape-Coast, as well at the ceremony of installing a successor which I observed, the family elders decided not to pour a libation when the new successor was installed. Instead, they called upon the Anglican Priest who was present, to say a prayer on their behalf.

At both the rural and urban level, there seem to be high reverence of priests, such that whenever they are present, the practice of pouring libation is laid aside in favor of a prayer from a priest. The practice of pouring libation also seem to be still prevalent in both areas, irrespective of the heavy presence of westernizing and modernizing agents such as churches and schools in the Cape-Coast area.

[51] *Fanta* is a soft drink produced by the Coca Cola Bottling Company in Ghana.

4.3.2. Ancestral Rites

The *Akans* have a tradition of keeping stool ancestors. These are former Chiefs. Stools are used as symbols of office for Kings and Chiefs. For someone to become a stool ancestor, the person should have died as a Chief. He must also have conducted himself in accordance with the rules concerning the Chieftaincy Institution in his area. There should have been peace and general prosperity during his reign as well. When a person has met all these requirements, his stool is blackened and stored in the stool house so as to eternalize his memory. Every new Chief makes a stool for himself and uses that during his reign. A dead Chief is placed on his stool and bathed prior to being laid in state. This stool is then kept in a secret location until it is due for blackening (Opoku, 1978: 39).

The blackening of the stool commences during the performance of the final funeral celebration for the late Chief. The blackening is done by the late Chiefs stool bearer with the assistance of other stool-bearers. This ceremony is accessible to only a select few. It is often done at night in a sacred grove. The new stool in addition to the old ones is carried to the sacred grove. The new stool is washed prior to it being blackened. The older stools are washed first in a brass basin before the new one is washed with the same water (Opoku, 1978:40).

According to Opoku, this is a way of incorporating the new stool into the fold of the old ones. The new stool is blackened by the smearing of soot mixed with egg yolk. Afterwards, it is smeared with the blood of sheep. A piece of animal fat is then positioned in the center support of the stool. The stools are carried back to the stool house after the ceremony (Opoku, 1978: 40).

The purpose of this blackening of stool ritual is the belief that the stools are filled with the spirits of the individual chiefs. (This is why Christians will not like to participate in these rituals, becomes it involves another spirit other than the Holy Spirit). Due to this belief, the stool rooms are regarded as shrines where the spirits of the stool ancestors dwell (Opoku, 1978: 40).

It is around such beliefs that ancestral festivals such as the *Adae* and the *Ahooba* are celebrated. The *Adae* festival of the *Asantes* is celebrated twice every forty-two days. During this period, the ancestral stools are offered food and drink. The Chief is the one who officiate this ceremony. In doing so, he represents his people before the ancestors. The stool of every

chief is regarded as an ancestral stool and it is from this that the chief derives his authority, as the link between the living and the ancestors; he performs the rituals on behalf of his people. He assumes a humble position in relating to the ancestral stools. He assumes this position "by baring his shoulders and removing his sandals as a sign of respect" (Opoku, 1978:40).

The public feast of the *Adae* is held on a Sunday. On the Saturday prior to that, talking drums are used to announce the events of the public feast on Sunday. It begins with the announcement by initially calling upon the materials used in manufacturing the drums. The first call is to the cedar tree which is used in making the wooden aspect of the drums (Opoku, 1978:41).

According to Opoku the cedar tree is traditionally believed to have a powerful spirit and the drums which made out of it is identified with the spirit of this wood (Opoku, 1978:41). After the cedar tree has been awakened, the ear of an elephant is called next; this is because the top of the drum is manufactured with the ear of the elephant. The next in line to be called for cooperation are the spirits of the ancestral drummers. Then after, the names of the stool ancestors are called out. This process leads to a recitation of the history of the Traditional State (Opoku, 1978:42).

According to Opoku the calling of the spirits used in making the drums is significant, in the sense that it reinforces the fundamental African belief that the livings require the cooperation of the spirit in the successful discharge of their duties or the successful performance of rites (Opoku, 1978:42).

People from the adjoining villages join the Paramount Chief to celebrate this festival. On the morning of the *Adae,* the chief along with his elders and the stool bearers enter the stool house. The stool bearer knocks on the door before they all enter the stool house. Upon entering, they all remove their sandals and bare chest as a sign of reverence. The chief then greets the ancestors by saying *nana nom mema mo akye oo!* This means good morning ancestors. Afterwards he pours libation and calls each of the ancestors by name starting with the oldest. He gives each of them a drink. A sheep is killed and the blood is used to smear the stool whereas a piece of the sheep is placed in the middle section of each stool. A special meal is prepared by the stool-bearers under the supervision of the chief stool bearer. The chief of the town then offers this to the ancestral spirits whilst waiting for the food to cook.

The Paramount Chief sits in state to receive homage from his people. Prior to giving the ancestors food to eat, he gives the ancestral spirits, water to wash their hands. After tasting the food, the chief give some to those present then leaves the rest on a table for the ancestral spirits (Opoku, 1978:43). According to Opoku, the significance of these rites is that they give life to the stools and keeps the memories of prominent chiefs whose legacies becomes an exemplary model for succeeding chiefs (Opoku, 1978:43). As stated earlier Christians do not like to be associated with the ancestral rites because it involves reverence and veneration of other spirits which is contradiction to the Christian faith.

4.3.3. Widowhood Rites

Another site of controversy in funerals is the performance of Widowhood Rites. As stated earlier, Widowhood rites are practices performed for a surviving spouse. Unlike in western and Christian contexts, the occurrence of a death does not sever a marriage contracted on customary laws. Such a marriage can only be dissolved after the appropriate rituals have been performed for the living spouse and the deceased spouse. Until all the rites have been performed the living spouse will be tagged as a widow or widower. After all the ties with the deceased spouse have been severed and all the necessary rites performed, the living spouse is permitted to marry again (Oduyoye, 1995:149).

Traditionally widowhood rites were performed with the purpose of separating the spirit of the deceased spouse in preparation for a new husband within the man's family. Though the new husband may not engage in sexual relations with the widow, he is expected to take care of his late brother's wives, children, and also inherit his property. While the idea behind this practice is good some issues often crop up in relation to the inheritance of the property (Oduyoye, 1995:150-151).This is because some successors are often quick to inherit the property of the deceased especially if he was a wealthy man, but are slow to inherit the responsibility of taking care of the wife and children.

The main aspects of the widowhood rituals seem to be the following. The widow must perform a ritual bath. She must also wear a chastity belt around the waist for six months to drive away the ghost of the late husband and stop it from coming to make love to her. She must also stay indoors during the day. If she gets bored during the day, she can get out in the evening. She must also have sex with a stranger so as to transfer her bad luck to him. She was not to see this stranger again after the act. Men also undergo a similar ritual, just that their periods of confinement are very short as compared to that of the men (Osei-Bonsu, 2005:2-3).

With the widowhood rites the main issues seem to be that Christians see the whole performance of the rite as a giving of reverence to local gods. Another contentious issue is the making of the widow to have sex with a stranger. Christians see this as problematic because to them, sex outside the marriage institution is a sin. According to Aborampah, during the period of confinement ‘‘the widow is supplied with a charm to wear in order to repel evil forces’’ (Aborampah, 1999:262). Christians have a problem with the practice of giving a charm to a woman because it ascribes power to another entity besides from the Supreme Being. This also is counted as a serious sin so Christians would not like to be associated with such a practice. Aside from these religious factors the practice is also seen to be abusive and oppressive by Christians.

4.4. Other Encounters in Funeral Practices

Another example is burial rites where though relatives may be honored with a Christian burial in the church, some family members insist on the indigenous religion rites being performed (De Witte, 2001:169). Some relatives and friends do still drop items such as money, clothes, mats and drinking cups in the coffin. In families where members strongly adhere to the tenets of the indigenous religion, clipped nails, hair, sponge, soap, and towel may be also be dropped in the coffin (De Witte, 2001:169).

To such family members who may also be Christians, adherence to this practice does not mean that they are committing an act of apostasy. They often defend it by saying that they are adhering to the customs and traditions of their people, which they deem as vital to the survival of the Ghanaian society and identity. This group of people believes that it is only by the continual practice of indigenous customs that the Ghanaian society or identity can survive and retain its uniqueness (De Witte, 2001:169).

4.5. Contextual Theology

Without the mind of a contextual theologian, Western Theologians may persist to think and conduct ourselves like the way Stephen B. Bevans did in the late 1960’s. Stephen B. Bevans is the author of the book ‘*Models of Contextual Theology*’. In my view, theology in Ghana is still not done in a Ghanaian context but rather, in a western context. The lines below will demonstrate this fact.

According to Bevan's in the late 1960's when he was a theology student in Rome, he prepared an advent liturgy around the theme of the sun.[52] According to him, the central idea of the liturgy was based on the song by the Beatles George Harrison.[53] The title of the song was ''Here Comes the Sun''. The words of the song which he was referring to are: *''little darlin'', it's been a long, cold, lonely winter; little darlin', it seems like years since it's been here; here comes the sun… it's all right''* (Bevans, 2008: xix).

He recalls that after playing a recording of the song at the beginning of the homily he described to the congregation how it captured the essence of the liturgy of advent.[54] He explained to the congregation that Christ was the sun, who brings light to a dark world and warmth to a cold world Godless world.[55] Bevans also recalls that he was very excited about his homily. In his mind he thought that he had done an excellent job by explaining a traditional Christian symbol (the sun) in relative terms (Bevans, 2008: xix).

However after the sermon, he was shocked when one of the participants in the liturgy, an Indian confessed to him that the sermon was not fascinating to him in the least sense. According to Bevans, the man revealed to him that in India;

> The sun is not a very striking symbol for the coming of Christ into the world. In India the sun is an enemy. It is not something that brings refreshment; it is something that brings unbearable heat that is to be escaped by staying in the shade. The sun's heat makes men and women thirsty, and too much exposure to the sun causes sunstroke (Bevans, 2008: xix)

The man also confessed to him that ''he could not really relate to a God who comes into the world like the sun, despite the fact that the image is found very frequently in the advent liturgical texts'' (Bevans, 2008: xix). It was only after this incident that he began to do Contextual Theology. According to Bevans, it was this incident that introduced him to his ''first encounter with the fact that some of the predominantly western and northern liturgical and theological images are meaningless in other cultural contexts'' (Bevans, 2008: xix). This

[52] An advent liturgy is a pattern of worship that consists of prayers, hymns and sermons about the second coming of Jesus Christ who is believed to be the Savior of a corrupt and sinful world by Christians.

[53] The Beatles are a British rock band that became popular in the 1960's.

[54] A homily is a sermon in most catholic and traditional protestant churches.

[55] Most countries in sub-Saharan Africa do not experience a weather temperature below 15 degrees Celsius. I am a Methodist and most of the hymns that we sing at church still do have phrases like winter, cold, summer, spring, fall and so on, but to my knowledge, no one has come up to question that.

point came to him at that moment irrespective of the fact that he had previously read about this fact in books and that he had heard other people talk about it. According to Bevans, this particular incident made an impression on him because it was also his first time of encountering someone who boldly told him that he did not have any use for an idea that was very important to him and which he felt was deeply nourishing theologically and spiritually (Bevans, 2008: xix). I wonder why it had to take Bevans to have a personal encounter with someone who did not see the relevance of a western concept in a Christian tradition before he began to realize that not all western concepts apply in all contexts.

Christian Theology in Ghana must be up to date with current trends in Ghanaian culture. This is because according to Henri Bouillard, ‘‘a theology that is not up to date is a false theology’’ (Bevans, 2008:5). Theology in Ghana in some contexts like those of the traditional protestant churches is not reflective about the prevalent Ghanaian culture and concerns. This must be done in such a way as to remain faithful to the entire experience and contexts of the past. However care must be taken to always ensure that what has been received is applied to the Ghanaian context.

When some Ghanaians lay aside the injunctions of their pastors not to pour libation and yet confidently do it at funerals, they are not doing anything strange. They are only demonstrating the fact that there are some ambiguities in the Christian tradition that they are leaning on. For instance this ambiguity becomes worse when an arch-bishop declares that libation is great national heritage which should not be denied to Ghanaians who believe in libation as a form of prayer. Scriptures such as Numbers 29:33 and 2 Timothy 4:6 are used to support this viewpoint.

In fact doing theology in context is a moral imperative that all Christians Theologians must live up to. The councils of Nicea, Chalcedon and the Second Vatican Council all bear testimony to the fact that it is essential that Christians have a theology that is culturally inclined. [56]

As like any theory or practice there are merits and demerits or as some will put it, there are advantages and disadvantages in doing theology contextually. According to Bevans;

[56] The Second Vatican Council was the Ecumenical Council of the Roman Catholic Church that met between11th October, 1962 to 8th December, 1965.

> One drawback in seeking cultural identity as a theological source is the danger of falling into a kind of cultural romanticism, that is the basing of one's theology not contemporary culture but instead on what John Pobee calls a ''fossil culture'', a culture that did exist before colonization but that after colonization and contact with the western world does not exist except in some people's romantic fantasies (Bevans, 2005:25).

Finally, in doing contextual theology, it is not enough to focus on cultural identity, but it is also necessary that one takes into account popular religiosity whilst at the same time maintaining a balanced perspective (Bevans, 2005:27).

4.5.1. Anthropological Model of doing Contextual Theology

The basic goal of the anthropological model is to preserve the cultural identity of a person of the Christian faith (Bevans, 2008:54). According to Bevans, the anthropological model is anthropological because it is focused on the human person that is his value and goodness. It is also anthropological because it utilizes the perspectives of the science of anthropology, by the employment of this science; the theologian tries to get an understanding of the intricate web of human relations. He also tries to decipher the precepts that constitute human culture, when God is present (Bevans, 2005:55).

The present human condition of any context is the place where the anthropological model commences (Bevans, 2005:57). The deployment of the anthropological and sociological skills of the theologian enables him to tune his mind to identify the word of God hidden in that culture (Bevans, 2005:58). The anthropological model utilizes the knowledge gained from interreligious dialogue as a source from which a genuinely culturally sensitive theology could be achieved (Bevans, 2005:59).

The anthropological model is valuable to the theologian because it places human reality with the highest priority that it deserves (Bevans, 2005:59). The anthropological model also has the merit of opening up the eyes of men and women to Christianity in a new way. That is a Christianity which is not the imposition of alien concepts but instead provides a different outlook from which theology can be done from a more sincere and secure cultural and historical perspective (Bevans, 2005:60).

According to Bevan's the anthropological model is based in scripture. Its scripture basis can be found in Matthew 15:21-28; Mark 7:24-30; John 3:16 (Bevans, 2005:61). In these scriptures, Bevans writes that ''Jesus is shaken out of his cultural prejudice by the Syro-Phoenician woman. He learns from her and is enlightened by her faith'' (Bevans, 2005:54).

Bevans also suggests that from tradition, proponents of this model might cite certain passages from recent church documents, like the Vatican II, which encourages today's missionaries that they can use knowledge gained from their study of other cultures to win others to Jesus by sincere and patient dialogue (Bevans, 2005:54).

Irrespective of the strong arguments by the anthropological model, the primary concern of all Christian theology is the preservation of the Christian identity. This means that theologians take seriously the culture, social change and history of the peoples that they minister to. However care must be taken to ensure that the gospel and not culture is prioritized in the ministry. Whatever the case may be the content of message must not deviate from monotheism which is at the core of the Christian message (Bevans, 2005).

4.6. Observations

In the rural areas, there appears to be no confrontations. It seems the people understand that there will have to be a mixture of the two religions. However, in the cities, there are confrontations from the Pentecostal Christians who see the rituals as wrong and unchristian.

4.7. Summary

In Chapter Four, I have discussed the encounters between the Traditional Religions and Christianity. In doing this, I presented some general areas where there have been conflicts between Christianity and the Traditional Religions. I then moved on to discuss three specific areas in *Fante* funeral rites where there has been some conflicts between the indigenous religion and Christianity.

I presented the specific issues of libation, ancestral rites and widowhood rites. I then discussed some instances where there have been compromises in *Fant*e funeral rites. I also looked at the possibility of using contextual theology and its anthropological model to remove the conflicts and create a tolerable environment where the two religions can be used for the benefit of the Christian community.

CHAPTER FIVE: EFFECTS OF FANTE FUNERAL PRACTICES

5.1. Introduction

I will present the effects of the *Encounters between Christianity and the African Traditional Religions, in Fante Funeral Practices* in this Chapter. I will also discuss the question as to whether funeral rites really have effects and if they do work, how do they do this. I will also explore the possibility of alcohol and food as having an effect on funeral practices. I will present the effect women's roles have on *Fante* funerals as well. The effect of tears on the funerals shall also be presented. Other activities that generate an effect for the funeral practices will also be described as well.

One line of thinking is that rituals are efficacious. A second school thinks that they do not have any effect whatsoever. A third school of thought however opines that rituals work but not in the same way as the owners of rituals think. A fourth school of thought represented by Johannes Quack is of the opinion that the question of ritual efficacy is actually misguided. (Sax et al. 2010:3).

According to Sax, to analyze rituals as expressing inner states of feeling and emotion or symbolizing theological ideas or social relations or representing psychological states of the human organism, is to neglect the question of how they might be instrumental or how they might actually do things (Sax et al. 2010:6).

Rituals exist as an analytic category. In the view of Asad, Bell, and Bourdieu, we should concentrate on embodied cognition rather than on symbolic expression (Sax et al. 2010:8). In order for rituals to be effective, there must be abundant faith (Sax et al. 2010:9). Unlike biomedicine which cures diseases without actually healing, rituals aim to heal the human being (Sax et al. 2010:10).

According to Sax, the overt rejection of ritual healing is an assertion of one's social position as an educated modern scientific person (Sax et al. 2010:12). The healing that takes place at *Fante* funerals is an emotional type. It is one that temporarily relieves the grieving person of the pain of losing a dear one.

From my fieldwork, I can discern that funerals could be said to have several effects. The following are what I think are the effects of funeral rites; there is a high use of alcohol, there is a lot of weeping, women play significant roles, and food is used as a uniting factor. Time is

believed to be the cure of all pains including the pain of losing a dear one. There is also relief in the form of theatrical acts.

At funerals, the bereaved family does everything within its power to ensure that the family performs an appropriate funeral for the deceased. The quality of the coffin in which one is buried is also said to be therapeutic, a well done obituary could also be said to bring on some special healing effect to the bereaved family. According to Kearl,

> It is at funerals that one meets the widest spectrum of people, where you see how many lives can be touched by a single individual. The funeral is actually the finished picture of a person, proving a ritual occasion when one reflects on the success and shortcomings of a concluded biography. At death an individual undergoes the rites of separation from the world of the living, of transition from the living to the dead, and finally of reincorporation into the world of the world of the dead. Con-currently there is the need to ritually assist the survivor of death through their period of grief and back into the everyday routines of society (Kearl, 1989:95).

5.2. Alcohol and its Effect on Funerals

Alcohol plays a major role in most ritual activities, particularly at funerals. Indeed libation is poured at all the transitional stages of an individual's life. This includes the naming ceremony, the rite of puberty, the performance of marriage rites and last but not the least, at the funeral rites. It is a very pervasive act which is intertwined in all the ritual activities of the Akan. Almost no ritual could be complete without the performance of some libation. It is this pervasive nature of funerals that make alcoholic drinks very important in Akan ritual activities.

During the performance of the funeral rites at almost every interval, libation is offered. It must be stated here that libation is the major means of prayer among the adherents of the indigenous religion. Libation is mostly done as a form of prayers offered to the ancestors. The purpose is to secure a safe transition of the deceased relative to the ancestral world. At the first family meeting after the death of a family member, libation is poured. When the family goes to the mortuary to pick the dead body, there is another libation poured, when the family is about to depart the preservation center, there is another libation poured. We shall move now to discuss some concepts of the afterlife. We shall return to continue the discussion of alcohol on *Fante* funerals.

According to Professor Kwame Gyekye author of '*An Essay on African Philosophical Thought: The Akan Conceptual Scheme'*, the soul is a spiritual being in *Akan* thinking. This

belief is expressed in the *Akan* proverb, when a man dies; he is not really dead (*onipa wu a na onwui*). What this means is that when one dies, there is a part of him that does not perish. This non-perishable part is the soul. It is believed to be an eternal entity (Gyekye, 1995:100).

Upon death the soul is believed to exist in the world of the spirits, known in *Fante* as (*asamando).* In *Akan* philosophy, human beings are thought of as the children of God, and since God is believed to be eternal, an aspect of the human being is also thought to be eternal. In his case, the soul, the *Akans* have a proverb that says ‘‘god will die before I die’’ (*nyame bewu ansa na m'awu)*. This saying means that since God is eternal and will not die, likewise, I will not die either (Gyekye, 1995:100).

Emmanuel Akyeampong of Harvard University has done an important work on the socio-cultural importance of alcohol in the Ghanaian society. In this section, I will present the drinking of alcohol as one essential parts of *Fante* funeral. I will also seek to find out if there are any emotional effects that arise as a result of the drinking of alcohol at funerals.

There is no doubt among the *Fantes* that one of the major catalysts of human emotions at *Fante* funerals is alcohol. Akyeampong in his article titled ‘What's in a Drink? Class struggle, Popular Culture and the Politics of *Akpeteshie* (Local Gin) in Ghana,' published in 1996 give a history of alcoholic beverages in Ghana. According to Akyeampong, *Akpeteshie* one of the most popular drinks in Ghana became an image of class and popular protest during the colonial era (Akyeampong, 1996:215). Today, *Akpeteshie* as it was during the colonial era is mostly drunk by the urban poor and uneducated men in the society who cannot afford the alcoholic beverages imported from Europe.

According to Akyeampong, before *Akpeteshie* and schnapps which are now the most popular drinks for rituals, there was the palm wine. Palm wine was an important part of socialization among the *Fantes*. As stated earlier, alcoholic drinks feature very prominently in the rites of passage of naming, puberty, marriage, as well as funeral rites. It also features prominently at festivals and the en-stoolment of Chiefs as well as the performance of any traditional event. Rum and later on gin became known to the *Akans* by trade with the Europeans. These drinks later on became more prestigious and gradually gin replaced akpeteshie as the ritual drink (Akyeampong, 1996:216).

According to Akyeampong, at the colonial era, the consumption of liquor both (local and foreign) was so high that the colonial government decided to use it as a means of tax when the

poll tax failed (Akyeampong, 1996:217). Liquor is still important in Ghanaian societies today, but it is not the main source of government revenue. Currently the main sources of revenue for the government are the export of cocoa, gold and oil. *Akpeteshie* the most popular of these drinks was used for stress relief as well as for medicinal purposes.

In Ghana today, many people especially religious authorities regularly condemn the use of alcohol for any purpose at all. The main reason for this condemnation of the use of alcohol is because of its presumed corrupting nature and its ability to make one lose control of oneself. It also makes one speak words or perform actions inconsistent with one's normal character.

Also, condemning the drinking of alcoholic beverages was the colonial administration that attacked the distillation of *Akpeteshie* by arguing that *Akpeteshie* was injurious to the human body because of its lead and copper content (Akyeampong, 1996:226). Akyeampong argues that the main reason for the attack on the distillation and sale of alcohol was economic rather than health.

Akpeteshie was also identified with social nonconformist (Akyeampong, 1996:232). Today, it is identified with social deviants and nonreligious people. People who are often drunk or often seen at drinking bars are easy targets for proselytizing minded groups and individuals. This is because they are seen as sinful individuals who need redemption from the devastating influence of alcohol.

Alcoholic drinks were also used for ritual purposes such as the performance of funeral rites. According to Akyeampong, alcoholic drinks have been endorsed for use in religio-cultural frameworks even prior to the colonial era (Akyeampong, 1996:218). The obvious use of alcoholic drinks at ritual ceremonies means that it had been accepted by community leaders and the whole society as a ritual object. Local chiefs in particular were noted for the regular use of alcohol drinks for rituals (Akyeampong, 1996:219).

Ritual use of alcohol may imply that Alcohol has some established ties with spirituality (Akyeampong, 1995:265). Alcoholic drinks have become a favorite ritual artifact because it was seen as the main instrument used in the pouring of libation which bridged the gap between the living and spiritual worlds. In other words alcoholic drinks and thereby the pouring of libation became the main channels of communication between the living and the dead. Thus alcoholic beverages have become sacred fluids.

Because of the ritual use of alcohol at funerals and the often frequent scene of people getting drunk and behaving very rowdily, some have called for a ban of its use as a ritual object. However MacAndrew and Edgerton seem to have a rather positive view of the use of alcohol at funerals. They see ‘‘drunkenness as time-out, a state in which drunk people get away with certain conduct that are within-limits’’. In essence, Akyeampong thinks that drink is used to release internal social tensions. He also thinks that the incorporation of alcoholic drinks into rituals that re-enact and reinforce the beliefs and practices of the people makes alcoholic drinks a gateway into understanding the philosophy and religion of the *Fantes* (Akyeampong, 1995:265).

He has also observed that alcoholic drinks have strong ties to spirituality in both western and non-western societies. The spirits are credited as being the first users of palm wine. Alcoholic drinks possess a potent spiritual power. The Fantes actually encourage drinking during funerals viewing it as a means of releasing grief and loss. The fact that one drinks when one is in pain is a cultural fact in Ghana it is no secret at all as I learned from my fieldwork (Akyeampong, 1995:270). Drinks thus facilitated the transition of the dead person into an ancestral spirit (Akyeampong, 1995:266).

‘Drinks also unlocked the poor to the spiritual realm where all human requests were granted. In monopolizing the ritual use of drink, sacred power was fused with secular power’ (Akyeampong, 1995:267).The close association between the male elder’s monopoly over drink and their religious and political power led to the construction of an ideology of noticeable consumption among the powerful (Akyeampong, 1995:267).

In Ghana, men are noted for drinking alcohol. It is very rare to see women drink alcohol as well. Men are mostly influenced to drink to release stress from a distressing situation that they are going through. Some men too are influenced to drink from family members or peers. The few women who are seen drinking are often at drinking bars. The effects of drinking of alcohol on men are mostly negative. Men who drink alcohol are noted for beating up their wives at the least provocation due to the intoxication of the alcoholic drink. In Ghana public health practitioners have often educated the public that too much alcohol can cause impotency but yet still, many do drink alcohol. Evidence abounds in many homes of the inability of some men to impregnate their wives, because of the large intake of alcohol. Also the taking in of large lumps of alcohol can be addictive. Men who take in alcohol are known of prioritizing

the spending of funds towards its consumption, thereby neglecting other responsibilities such as the payment of rent, light and other utility bills such as water bills and paying school fees.

The drinking of alcohol has been identified as one of the causes of marriage breakdowns and divorces. This is because men who are alcoholics and take their drinks from drinking bars often become tipsy and dizzy and finally end up in gutters. The discovery that a husband was found in gutter often brings shame to a wife. Also men who are alcoholics and have difficulty in performing in bed might cause their wives to be unfaithful. It is for these reasons and many others that Christian and Islamic leaders condemn the use of alcohols at funerals.

5.3. Food and its Effect on Funerals

One major response to death is food, in the form of a funerary meal. According to Kearl, the sharing of food is also a way of expressing the positive and ongoing nature of life, and also of the sustaining and working for the future. Alcohol which is also described by food by others promotes increased feeling of well-being (Davies, 1997:49). The act of eating together is also seen as a way uniting divisions and strengthening of old ties and allegiances in a family and thereby in the community as a whole. The eating together at funerals also portrays the point that funerals are not only about disposing the dead body. But that is also about aiding the bereaved family and reorienting them to the world of the living. When this is done, the deceased is publicly acknowledged and commemorated, whilst at the same time, reaffirming the viability of the group through festive eating (Kearl, 1989:97).

5.4. Women's Roles at Funerals

Another effect of funeral rites is the significant role that women get to play within it. During funerals, women serve as agents.[57] The agent is usually an elderly woman who has herself undergone the rites before and is of an advanced age. She guides the widow during the performance of the funeral rites to ensure that nothing goes wrong. That is to ensure that all the customs and tradition of her people are observed so as to prevent any harm from occurring. The performance of the rites also ensures that the family does not incur the wrath of the ancestors either during or before or after the performance of the funeral rites.

Women also prepare food for the dead and the living. During the funeral as part of saying farewell to the deceased, women were supposed to prepare food for the deceased and place it

[57] By agents here I mean facilitators. They help to make things happen during the funeral process.

in front of the casket during the wake-keeping. This practice is hardly observed in present day Ghana. But women do still perform the culinary duties at funerals assisted sometimes by willing men.

They also wash the dead body. Before the coming into being of refrigerators for storing dead bodies, and also before the existence of mortuaries and preservation centers, it was the women who dressed and prepared the body for wake-keeping and the burial. But nowadays, their roles have been subsumed by funeral homes and under-takers.

They make beads for the dead body. Beads are ornaments used to decorate the body. The wearing of beads is very common in Ghanaian societies. Beads are often worn when one is attending an event, especially on festive occasions like a naming ceremony, the performance of puberty rites, marriage and during the en-stoolment of a chief and at festivals. It is also meant for protection against evil spirits. Sometime ago, *Akan* girls used to wear beads around their waist for protection. Men also wear beads on their necks and wrists. The women decorate the body with beads because it is believed that the deceased is making its final journey and thus has to dress presentably to meet his fellow ancestors.

They clear away flies from the dead body. Whenever the body is in public display, some family members particularly the women ensure that flies do not come around the body. They drive away the flies by using a small piece of cloth or a fan made of hard paper or rubber.

Women become channels of communication between the deceased and his external relatives during the funeral. During funerals, some women fall into trance and when they fall into this posture, they are able to prophesy events that will befall the family. If any of the prophecies are negative, the family is expected to take steps to remedy the situation.

Women cry and weep. Since men are not supposed to cry, at least not in public, the women do most of the crying at the funeral durbar or what is commonly known as the final funeral rites. Some of the women who do the crying are family members who are in state of grief and cannot hide their pain but burst out crying. Others are hired specifically for the purpose of crying. They cry for a fee. These women though they are not family relatives they are expected to wail and shed some tears during the performance of the final funeral rites.

Fante funeral ceremonies have also become a form of Social Security. According to Osei-Mensah, ‘‘*Akan* funeral ceremonies have become social security systems as well as fashion and entertainment for many participants especially women’’ (Osei-Mensah, 1999:269). In his

view, *Akans* value group membership hence the desire by women in particular to belong to groups. He has observed that women traders in particular as was the case of the deceased woman in *Etsii-Sonkwaa* who I observed who also belonged to the church women's group and the choir many other traders also belong to church women's groups and choirs. The benefit of being a member of such groups is that when one member dies, the living members will attend deceased member's funeral in uniform, singing. This is seen as prestigious as most market women will like a funeral like that.

Since affinity to external families is dying out among most Ghanaians especially of those under thirty years or more, Osei-Mensah has arrived at the conclusion that non-kin basis of social order, have emerged to supplement kin relations in some contemporary ceremonies. He is also of the opinion that the competition for status is eroding the performance many death rituals (Osei-Mensah, 1999:269).

Apart from the widow who is secluded from the public in some areas women are not ostracized from any part of the funeral, they are responsible for feeding the guests amongst other activities. There are no conflicts between men and women when it comes to roles in funeral. They both work in their assigned roles without any problem whatsoever. In small communities the presence of women is easily felt if the deceased was a member of a group like the women's fellowship or market women association or something like that.

5.5. Words and Songs at Funerals

At funerals, other family members and friends of the family encourage the living members of the family by assuring them all will be well. Through those kind and encouraging words, individuals who are in a state of shock and have consequently been changed through the experience of bereavement get some kind of emotional healing. Through those powerful words which are sometimes embedded in the funeral songs known as dirges, funeral rites emanates some kind of power through words, and through this, one gets to overcome the hardship of losing a dear one and thereby affirm the social goal of their culture (Davies, 1997:54).

People also speak defiantly at death at Fante funerals (Davies, 1997:42). In this way, the fact that a death has occurred is faced directly and addressed. A sense of transcendence is also achieved when one speaks defiantly at death directly by speaking and also against it through songs and words sang at funerals (Davies, 1997:41).

5.6. The Shedding of Tears

Studies show that majority of the crying during funerals actually occurs in people's private confines rather than in public. Shedding of tears has been identified with the loss of a loved one at funerals. The shedding of tears has been described by psychologists as being very therapeutic, that is very healing. Tears are also believed to display ideals and reveal social values (Davies, 1997:44).

However at public aspects of the funeral like when the family is receiving guests who have come to pay their last respects to the deceased, one person seeing the other crying may be provoked to cry as well. This is something that comes up naturally as a form of reaction as that moment people are most likely to be in grief and in some kind of emotional turmoil. During other aspects of the funeral too people openly shed tears. Even men who are by culture not expected to cry do cry publicly at some aspects of the funeral, especially at the moment when the body arrives from the preservation center. Most of the public tears are shed by women.

Osei-Mensah Aborampah is of the opinion that funerals provide opportunities for individuals to express grief over their own impending death. He further believes that it is the felt uncertainty about the nature of their death that makes them grieve more (Osei-Mensah, 1999:260).

Proponents of wake-keeping or laying in state ceremonies argue the therapeutic benefits of seeing the remains and the need to reaffirm not disguise the reality of death. (Kearl, 1989:98) Wake keeping they also argue actually do nothing for the dead but that, they rather console the living (Kearl, 1989:99).

The wake keeping and the funeral service at church it is believed, also serves as the final stage of the rite of transition as it prepares the stage for the rite of incorporation of the deceased into the dead and the reincorporation of the bereaved into the world of the living.

5.7. Other Effects

The practice of installing a successor for a bereaved family after the demise of its former economic provider promotes a sense of security and well-being. I also I think helps to restore the living relatives to their former state, prior to the loss of that relative.

Second funeral ceremonies like the forty day celebration among some *Fantes*, signify the conclusion of the bereavement role for the survivors and are the last time the bereaved can legitimately grieve in public. These secondary funerals also indicate the completed passage of the deceased from the indefinite state intersecting the physical world from that of the dead. I this way the funeral rites allow for collective forgetting and the ecstasy of fresh beginnings (Kearl, 1989:86).

Through funeral rites, the dead relations are maintained as social players. This is because they are invested with the ideal-type attributes of the living and thereby serve as flawless role-models who younger members of the society in particular are to emulate (Kearl, 1989:87).

Other benefits or effects of funeral rites are that they invigorate social bonds by the sharing of food and activities that are done in unity to portray family unity to outsiders (Kearl, 1989:88). Funeral ceremonies are also the place where friends and foe meet together to ritually interact (Kearl, 1989:88).

It is also at funerals that some family members and individual reconcile differences otherwise they might never do so. But at the appearance of death, the sharing or grief and the concern over some portended death, alone is enough to bring together two together who otherwise might have never been socially joined again (Kearl, 1989:88). Death opens the door to the younger generations to move up the social ladder as new leaders are appointed to succeed the departed souls (Kearl, 1989:111).

5.8. Observations

In the rural areas, I observed that emotions were shared freely when it came to showing grieve. At cape-coast on the other hand the emotions of the people were guarded. At cape-coast too, the hosts were conscious of the expenses being made. They seemed to be very vigilant in ensuring that they did not incur much loss. Because of this, food was not distributed to people who were absent from their seats.

5.9. Summary

In Chapter Five, I have presented the possible effects that could be generated from the organizing of a successful funeral by presenting some theoretical issues raised by William Sax and others. The possible effects that were discussed were the use of alcohol and food to generate an effect. The role of women at funerals was also presents, showing the vital roles

they play in *Fante* funerals as the main agents that make the funeral come alive. Words and songs were also presented as a general effect of funeral rites. The effect of the tears that are shed during funerals was discussed as well. Other minor effects of Fante funeral rites were presented as well. In the next chapter I shall summarize what has been described and presented in the thesis.

CHAPTER SIX: SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

6.1. Summaries

I have introduced the rationale for the *Encounters between Christianity and the African Traditional Religion in Fante Funeral Practices* in Chapter one. I have also reviewed some literature relating to the thesis topic and research questions. It has described the method that was used to collect the data. These methods were participant observation, interviewing and field notes. The process through which the data was collected has also been presented. The location was also described briefly. The ethical issues that arose during the fieldwork have also been discussed here. The manner in which the chapter has been organized has also been presented here.

I have presented the *Context* in which the research was done in Chapter Two. This included a description of the History of Ghana, the Administrative Structure of Ghana, the Socio-Economic and Social Structure of Ghana. It also included the presentation of Christianity, Islam and the basic beliefs that run through the Traditional Religions of Ghana. A brief background of the town of Cape Coast has also been presented. The Chieftaincy Institution in Ghana was also introduced. I also described the social organization of the *Akans* and the *Fantes.* The pouring of libation was described and discussed as well. The institution of the ancestors was also presented as well.

I have described the *Fante Funeral Process* in Chapter Three. The classification of the process was performed by Arnold Van Gennep and Victor Turner. After the classification work, the chapter moved on to discuss the *Fante* funeral process with the help of the classification invented by Arnold van Gennep. These classifications and sub headings were the rites of separation, transitional rites, and rites of incorporation. A description of how ancestors are made currently was given alongside some concerns of traditional rulers about the high cost of funerals.

I have presented the *Encounter between Christianity and the African Traditional Religion* in *Fante Funeral Practices* in Chapter Four. In doing this, I presented some general areas where there have been conflicts between the Traditional Religions and Christianity. I then moved on to discuss two specific areas in Fante funeral rites where there has been some conflicts between the indigenous religion and Christianity. I presented the specific issues of libation and funeral rites. I then discussed some instances where there have been compromises in

Fante funeral rites. I also looked at the possibility of using contextual theology to remove the conflicts and create a tolerable environment where the two religions can be used for the benefit of the Christian community. I then looked at the specific model of contextual theology which I think will be very applicable to the *Fante* and Ghanaian situation. This specific model of contextual theology is the anthropological model.

I have presented the *Effects of Funeral Practices* that could be generated from the organizing of a successful funeral in Chapter Five. I did so by presenting some theoretical issues raised by William Sax and others. The possible effects that were discussed were the use of alcohol and food to generate an effect. The role of women at funerals was also presents, showing the vital roles they play in *Fante* funerals as the main agents that make the funeral come alive. Words and songs were also presented as a general effect of funeral rites. The effect of the tears that are shed during funerals was discussed as well. Other minor effects of *Fante* funeral rites were presented as well.

6.2. Conclusions

The study was about the encounters between Christianity and the African Traditional Religions in *Fante* Funeral Practices. The research answered the following questions; how do funeral rituals differ from rural-inland communities like *Enyan-Maim and Etsii-Sonkwaa* differ from urban-coastal communities like *Cape-Coast*, what form does the Encounters between Christianity and the African Traditional Religions in *Fante* funeral practices take, and what effect do the practices have on the individual ? At the end of the research, I arrived at the following conclusions:

That tension between Christianity and the African Traditional Religions are more contentious in the urban areas. At the rural areas there seems to be a comfortable marriage of the two. They don't see anything wrong with the mixture of the two religions. They happily perform rituals together.

I also concluded that an adoption of contextual theology and its anthropological model it appears may be the only way of getting urban Christians to tolerate traditional religious practices, and those who seek to mix the two traditions in funeral practices, but in doing this the fundamentals of the Christian faith should not be shredded away.

I also observed that in the urban areas, people are more guarded with their emotions and resources as compared to their rural folks who give liberally. I also concluded that the effects

of funeral rituals it appears cannot be generated without the aid of women serving as agents, and alcohol to help aid loosing of consciousness so as to facilitate mourning and food to strengthen family and societal bonds. All this was done by utilization of a Ritual Studies approach focusing on the Encounters between Christianity and ATR in *Fante* Funeral Practices. In doing so, I have emphasized on both the positive and negative dimensions of the encounters.

Other conclusions that I have arrived at are that, the condition of the Ghanaian as a postcolonial subject still heavily dependent on his colonial masters and who therefore needs a new identity. I will like to suggest that this new identity may be derived from Bevans' contextual and anthropological models of doing theology. This is because contextual theology utilizes the culture of a people in its application of theology. I will also like to posit that the creation of this new identity is essential for peace and nation building.

Fantes can also place the worldview and doctrines of the Christian church into their own Traditional Religious Systems. When this is done, the Greco-Roman and Eurocentric traditions that have flooded the Christian faith will be made simple and a space will be created for the cultural values of the *Fantes* to be situated within Christian theology and worship.

The contextual theologian will be able to present a theology that is relevant if he commences with the thought and beliefs of the *Fante,* though this might be very different from the Traditional Christian formulations, it will be in conformity with the true spirit of the Christian faith.

I will also like to suggest that the performance of *Fante* funerals has an interreligious character which expresses itself more clearly in the rural areas than in the urban areas. The indigenization of Christianity in *Etsii-Sonkwaa* was very evident, at Cape-Coast, the relationship was very formal.

At *Etsii-Sonkwaa*, the people boldly poured libation and at the same time attended the burial mass. At Cape-Coast the Traditional Leaders are invited to special church ceremonies like Annual Harvests. The Chiefs on the other hand invite the priest when celebrating the annual festivals. One can therefore see a contextualization and intercultural theology already taking place at both levels though at the rural level it is a very practical mixing than in the cities.

The elimination of all divisions and the creation of a bonding atmosphere for peaceful co-existence is what I think contextual theology and its anthropological model seem to be all

about. The condemnation of the Traditional Religions previously might have been due to a lack of knowledge and understanding of the rich cultural values and heritage embedded in the traditional way of life which when shared might inure to the benefit of all and sundry.

The positive feelings generated from eating and drinking together, as well as from crying, dancing and laughing together at funerals may spill into other aspects of an individual's life which may generate a positive outlook on life.

The practice of installing a successor for a bereaved family after the demise of its former economic provider promotes a sense of security and well-being. It also I think helps to restore the living relatives to their former state, prior to the loss of that relative.

In concluding, I will like to quote Jone Salomonsen. In a book chapter, titled '*Shielding Girls at Risk of AIDS by Weaving Zulu and Christian Heritage*', Salomonsen writes that;

> Although most Zulus today live their lives according to the rules of the modern society with the majority who also identify as Christians, those aspects of indigenous customary culture that emphasize proper ritual family relations and proper ritual exchange are very much alive both in the courtroom and in the community (Salomonsen, 2009:21).

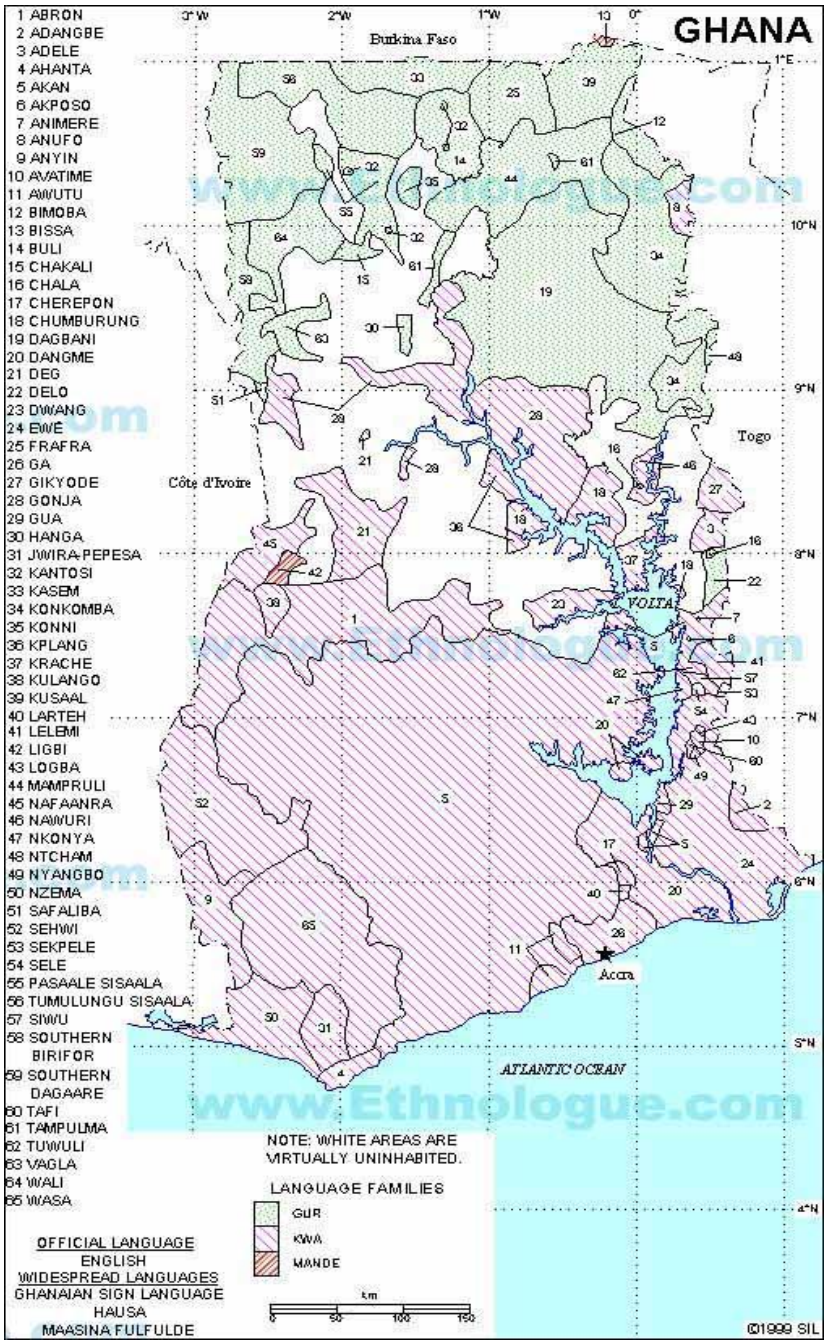
I will like to state the same can be said of *Fante* funeral practices, although at the rural areas, the mixing of Christianity and ATR is more explicit but in the urban areas it seems to be rather implicit. The same phenomenon is occurring in both societies, perhaps because of their similar histories.

APPENDIX

Appendix 1

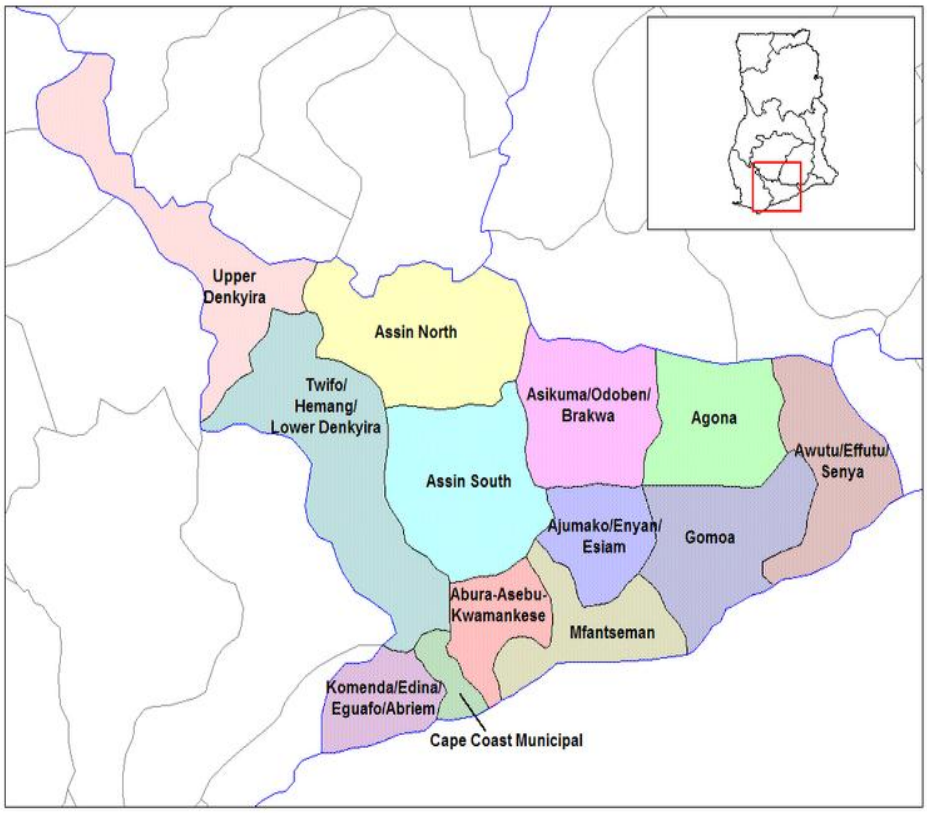
A map of Ghana showing the ten regions with their regional capitals

Appendix 2



Map showing the ethnic groups of Ghana. The *Akan* ethnic group is numbered 5. The *Fantes* are a member of this group. They can main be found in the Central and Western regions of Ghana.

Appendix 3



Map showing the Central Region of Ghana with its major districts

Appendix 4

Edifice showing cooperation between the church and traditional authorities

Appendix 5

Signboard of the body preservation Center.

Appendix 6

Female in-laws of the deceased bringing the bathing items to the relatives of the deceased spouse, for bathing of the corpse.

Appendix 7

The bathing items presented to the deceased family for inspection.

Appendix 8

A decorated corpse

Appendix 9

Women guarding the entrance of the wake keeping area

Appendix 10

Women fellowship members at the graveside showing group solidarity

Appendix 11

Catholic Priest and women fellowship members at the cemetery

Appendix 12

The Christ Anglican Cathedral at Cape-Coast.

Appendix 13

The extended family seated behind the *Asona* family staff. This staff has the totem of the clan engraved on it. The totem of the clan is a crow bird. Women are highly revered in the Asona clan.

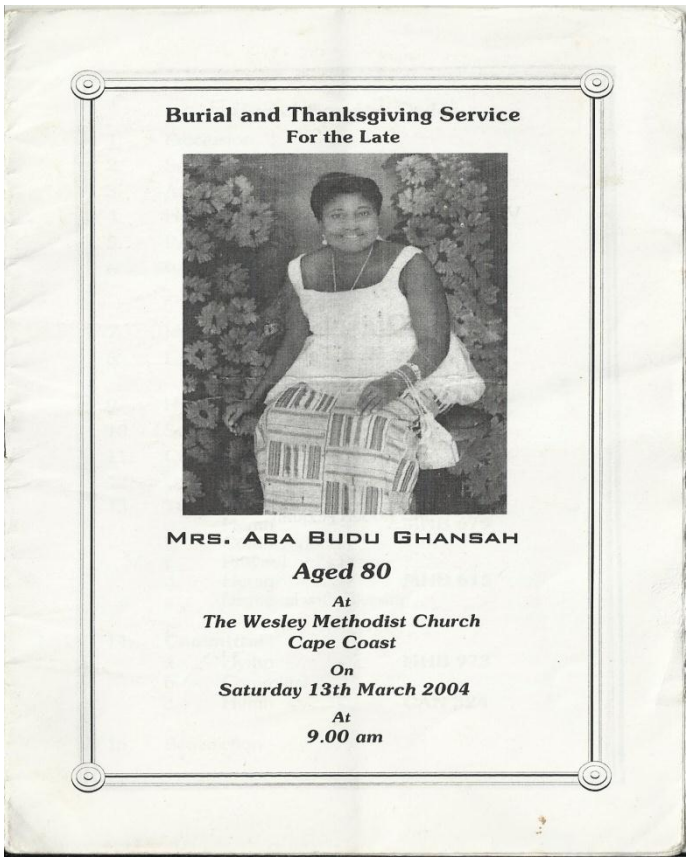
Appendix 14

The receptacle to receive donations from sympathizers of the extended family.

Appendix 15

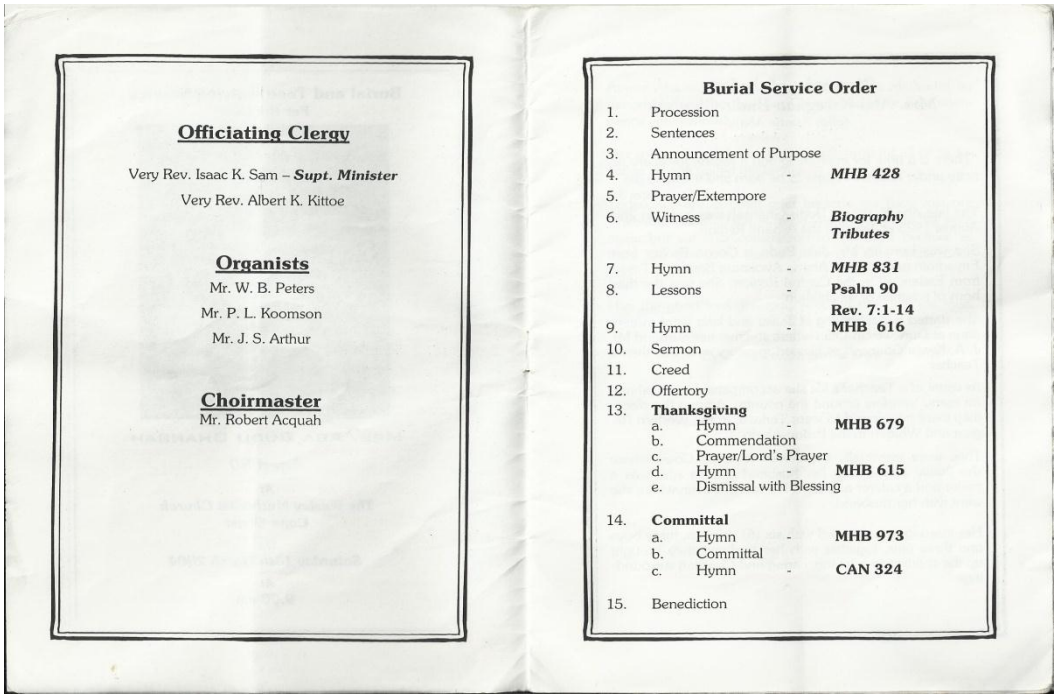
Table for collecting donations for the nuclear family, comprised of the bereaved wife and her children.

Appendix 16



Front cover of the booklet for burial service.

Appendix 16



Officiating Clergy

Very Rev. Isaac K. Sam – ***Supt. Minister***
Very Rev. Albert K. Kittoe

Organists

Mr. W. B. Peters
Mr. P. L. Koomson
Mr. J. S. Arthur

Choirmaster

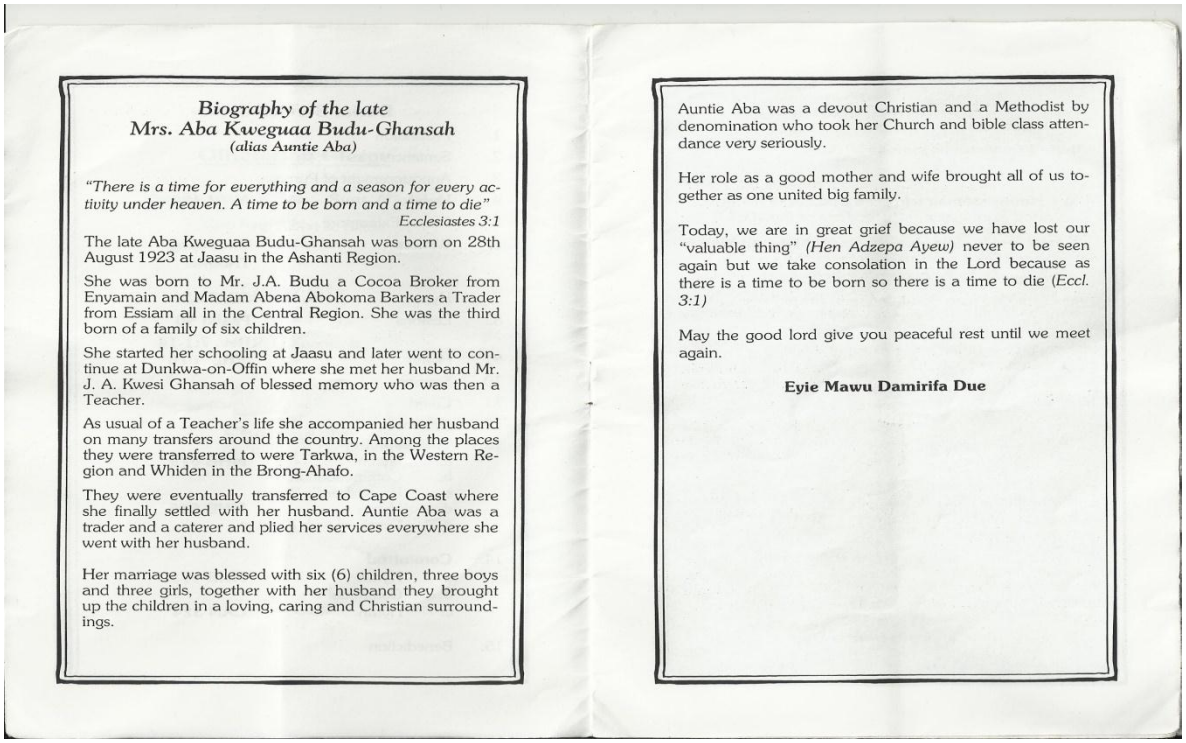
Mr. Robert Acquah

Burial Service Order

1. Procession
2. Sentences
3. Announcement of Purpose
4. Hymn - ***MHB 428***
5. Prayer/Extempore
6. Witness - ***Biography Tributes***
7. Hymn - ***MHB 831***
8. Lessons - **Psalm 90**
   Rev. 7:1-14
9. Hymn - **MHB 616**
10. Sermon
11. Creed
12. Offertory
13. **Thanksgiving**
    a. Hymn - **MHB 679**
    b. Commendation
    c. Prayer/Lord's Prayer
    d. Hymn - **MHB 615**
    e. Dismissal with Blessing
14. **Committal**
    a. Hymn - **MHB 973**
    b. Committal
    c. Hymn - **CAN 324**
15. Benediction

The program outline for the Burial Service of the Methodist Church.

Appendix 17



Biography of the late
Mrs. Aba Kweguaa Budu-Ghansah
(alias Auntie Aba)

"There is a time for everything and a season for every activity under heaven. A time to be born and a time to die"
Ecclesiastes 3:1

The late Aba Kweguaa Budu-Ghansah was born on 28th August 1923 at Jaasu in the Ashanti Region.

She was born to Mr. J.A. Budu a Cocoa Broker from Enyamain and Madam Abena Abokoma Barkers a Trader from Essiam all in the Central Region. She was the third born of a family of six children.

She started her schooling at Jaasu and later went to continue at Dunkwa-on-Offin where she met her husband Mr. J. A. Kwesi Ghansah of blessed memory who was then a Teacher.

As usual of a Teacher's life she accompanied her husband on many transfers around the country. Among the places they were transferred to were Tarkwa, in the Western Region and Whiden in the Brong-Ahafo.

They were eventually transferred to Cape Coast where she finally settled with her husband. Auntie Aba was a trader and a caterer and plied her services everywhere she went with her husband.

Her marriage was blessed with six (6) children, three boys and three girls, together with her husband they brought up the children in a loving, caring and Christian surroundings.

Auntie Aba was a devout Christian and a Methodist by denomination who took her Church and bible class attendance very seriously.

Her role as a good mother and wife brought all of us together as one united big family.

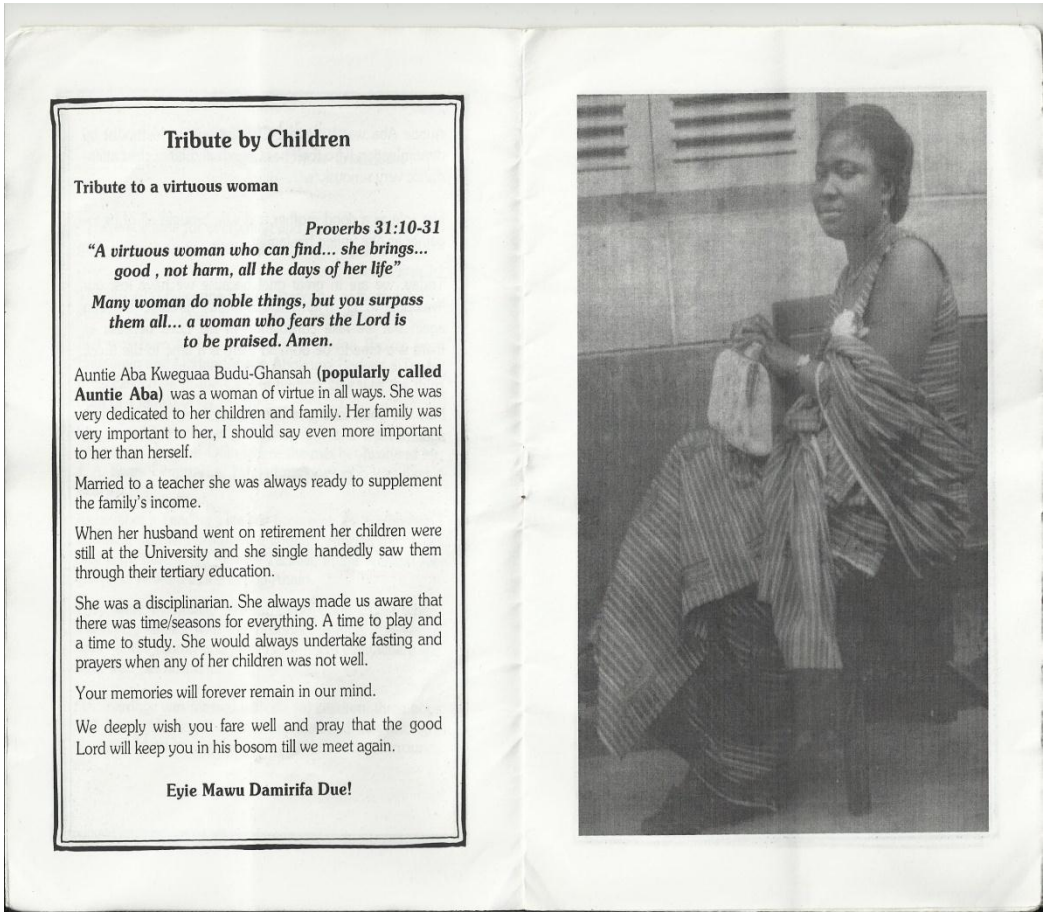
Today, we are in great grief because we have lost our "valuable thing" *(Hen Adzepa Ayew)* never to be seen again but we take consolation in the Lord because as there is a time to be born so there is a time to die *(Eccl. 3:1)*

May the good lord give you peaceful rest until we meet again.

Eyie Mawu Damirifa Due

What the society expects of an ancestor

Appendix 18



Tribute by Children

Tribute to a virtuous woman

Proverbs 31:10-31
"A virtuous woman who can find... she brings... good , not harm, all the days of her life"

Many woman do noble things, but you surpass them all... a woman who fears the Lord is to be praised. Amen.

Auntie Aba Kweguaa Budu-Ghansah **(popularly called Auntie Aba)** was a woman of virtue in all ways. She was very dedicated to her children and family. Her family was very important to her, I should say even more important to her than herself.

Married to a teacher she was always ready to supplement the family's income.

When her husband went on retirement her children were still at the University and she single handedly saw them through their tertiary education.

She was a disciplinarian. She always made us aware that there was time/seasons for everything. A time to play and a time to study. She would always undertake fasting and prayers when any of her children was not well.

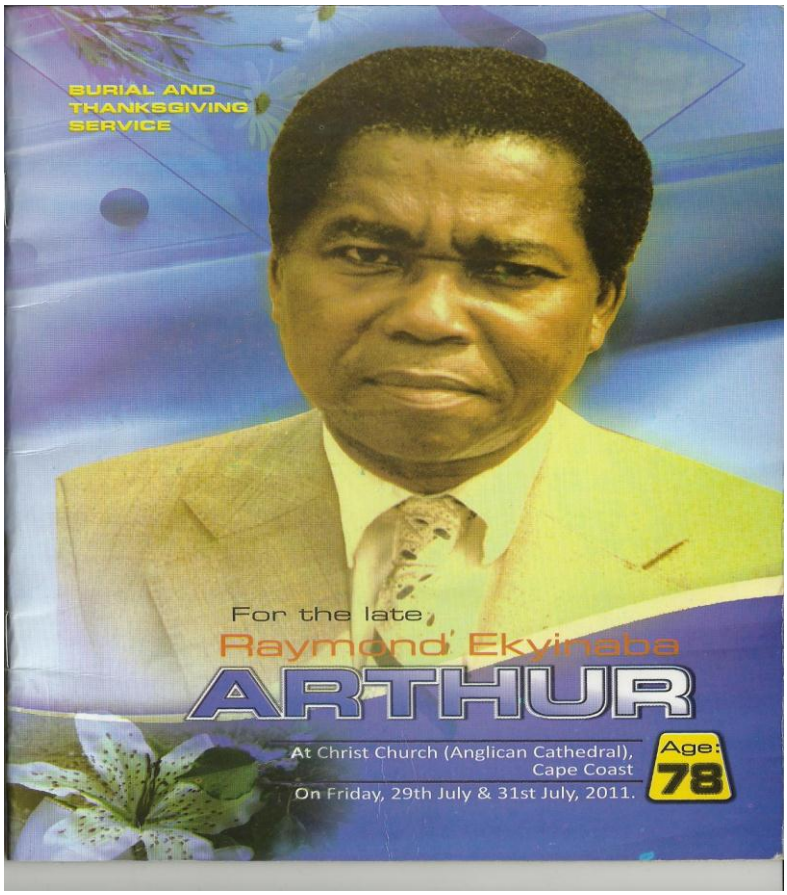
Your memories will forever remain in our mind.

We deeply wish you fare well and pray that the good Lord will keep you in his bosom till we meet again.

Eyie Mawu Damirifa Due!

Tribute from the children.

Appendix 19



Cover of the booklet for Christ Anglican Church.

Appendix 20

the late **Raymond Ekyinaba Arthur**

OFFICIATING CLERGY

Rt. Rev. Daniel S. A. Allotey	-	*Bishop, Anglican Diocese of Cape Coast*
Very Rev. Francis Ato Koomson	-	*Dean, Christ Church Cathedral*
Very Rev. Dr. Victor R. Atta-Baffoe	-	*Dean, St. Nicholas Seminary*
Rev. Canon Samuel Kojo Baisie	-	*Canon in Residence*
Rev. Canon Peter Amoako-Gyampah-		*Bishop's Chaplain*
Rev. Canon Kofi deGraft-Johnson	-	*Precentor*
Rev. Canon Augustine Kofi Buadi	-	*Succentor.*

WARDENS

Mr. Anthony Panyin Arhin	-	*People's Warden*
Mrs. Frances Renner	-	*Dean's Warden*

AT THE ORGAN

Mr. George Amissah	-	*Master of Music*
Mr. Frank Williams	-	*Organist*
Mr. Ato Grant		
Mr. Robert Tachie-Menson		

VERGERS

Mr. Emmanuel Josiah
Mr. John Crentsil
Mr. Rosky Davidson
Mr. Jonathan Dawson
Miss Cecilia Acquah

CHIEF SERVER

Mr. Percy Fiifi Aryee

IN ATTENDANCE

Christ Church Cathedral Choir
Voices of Canterbury
Cathedral Melodics

2

the late **Raymond Ekyinaba Arthur**

Order Of Service

FRIDAY, JULY 29, 2011
PART A - PRE-BURIAL SERVICE

1.	Reception of the Body		
2.	Processional Hymn	-	228
3.	Opening of Casket		
4.	Prayers		
5.	Filing Past	-	Hymn 186
		-	Songs by the Cathedral Melodics
6.	Lesson	-	Revelation 21: 1 7
7.	Filing Past	-	Songs by the Cathedral Melodics
8.	Tributes	-	
9.	Filing Past	-	Songs by Voices of Canterbury
10.	Tributes	-	
11.	Filing Past	-	Songs by Voices of Canterbury
			Hymn 290
12.	Covering of Casket	-	Hymn 165

PART B BURIAL SERVICE

13.	Clergy Processional	-	Hymn 231
14.	Intention/Introit Sentence/Rest Eternal		
15.	Collect		
16.	1st Bible Reading	-	1 Thessalonians 4: 13 18
17.	Hymn	-	240
18.	2nd Bible Reading	-	John 14: 1 6
19.	Hymn	-	264
20.	Biography & Tributes	-	
21.	Offering for the Bereaved Family	-	Songs by Cathedral Melodics
22.	Hymn	-	400
23.	Homily	-	
24.	Creed	-	
25.	Intercessions	-	
26.	Offertory	-	
27.	Courtesies	-	

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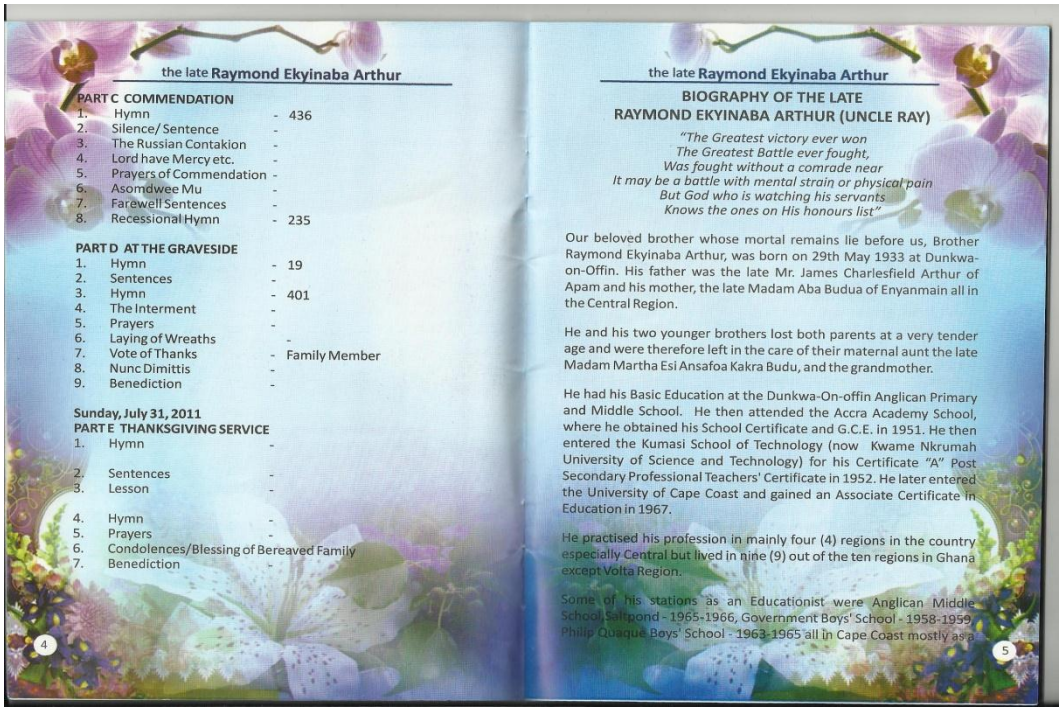
Program outline 1

Appendix 21



the late Raymond Ekyinaba Arthur

PART C COMMENDATION

1.	Hymn	-	436
2.	Silence/ Sentence	-	
3.	The Russian Contakion	-	
4.	Lord have Mercy etc.	-	
5.	Prayers of Commendation	-	
6.	Asomdwee Mu	-	
7.	Farewell Sentences	-	
8.	Recessional Hymn	-	235

PART D AT THE GRAVESIDE

1.	Hymn	-	19
2.	Sentences	-	
3.	Hymn	-	401
4.	The Interment	-	
5.	Prayers	-	
6.	Laying of Wreaths	-	
7.	Vote of Thanks	-	Family Member
8.	Nunc Dimittis	-	
9.	Benediction	-	

Sunday, July 31, 2011

PART E THANKSGIVING SERVICE

1.	Hymn	-	
2.	Sentences	-	
3.	Lesson	-	
4.	Hymn	-	
5.	Prayers	-	
6.	Condolences/Blessing of Bereaved Family		
7.	Benediction	-	

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the late Raymond Ekyinaba Arthur

BIOGRAPHY OF THE LATE
RAYMOND EKYINABA ARTHUR (UNCLE RAY)

"The Greatest victory ever won
The Greatest Battle ever fought,
Was fought without a comrade near
It may be a battle with mental strain or physical pain
But God who is watching his servants
Knows the ones on His honours list"

Our beloved brother whose mortal remains lie before us, Brother Raymond Ekyinaba Arthur, was born on 29th May 1933 at Dunkwa-on-Offin. His father was the late Mr. James Charlesfield Arthur of Apam and his mother, the late Madam Aba Budua of Enyanmain all in the Central Region.

He and his two younger brothers lost both parents at a very tender age and were therefore left in the care of their maternal aunt the late Madam Martha Esi Ansafoa Kakra Budu, and the grandmother.

He had his Basic Education at the Dunkwa-On-offin Anglican Primary and Middle School. He then attended the Accra Academy School, where he obtained his School Certificate and G.C.E. in 1951. He then entered the Kumasi School of Technology (now Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology) for his Certificate "A" Post Secondary Professional Teachers' Certificate in 1952. He later entered the University of Cape Coast and gained an Associate Certificate in Education in 1967.

He practised his profession in mainly four (4) regions in the country especially Central but lived in nine (9) out of the ten regions in Ghana except Volta Region.

Some of his stations as an Educationist were Anglican Middle School,Saltpond - 1965-1966, Government Boys' School - 1958-1959 Philip Quaque Boys' School - 1963-1965 all in Cape Coast mostly as a

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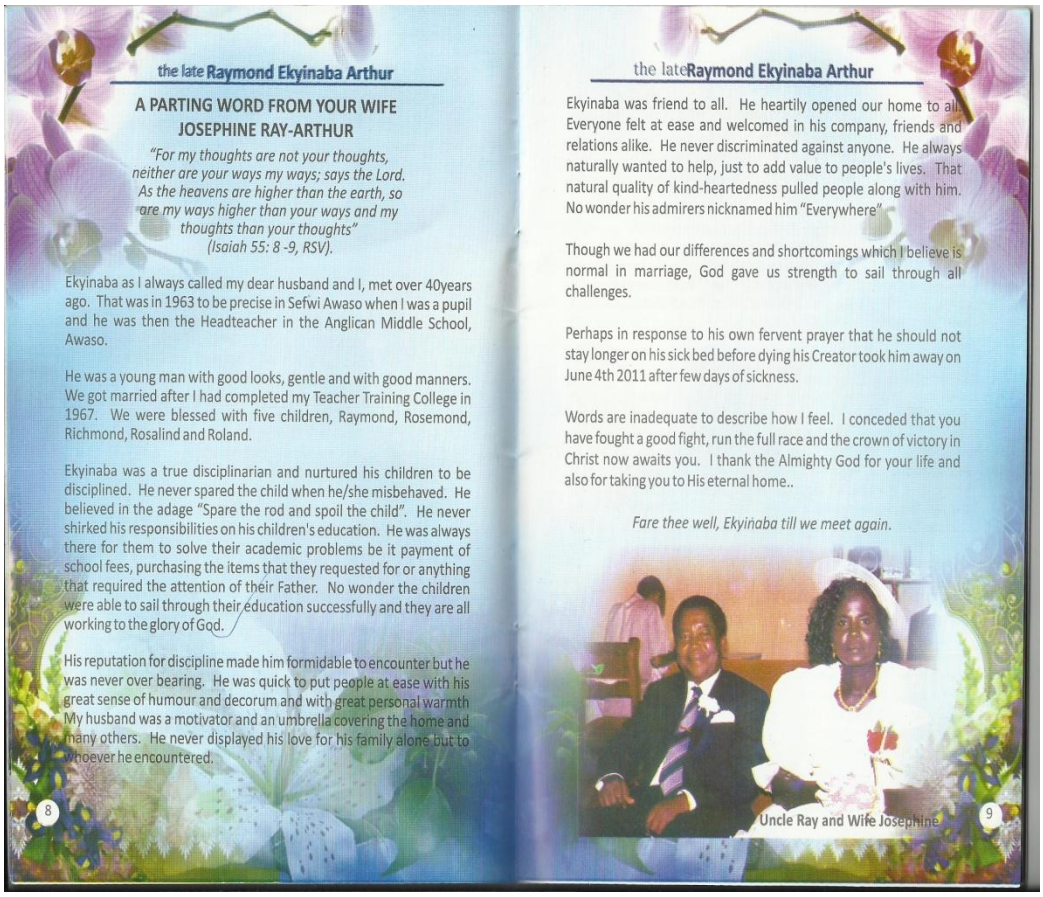
Program outline 2

Appendix 22



the late Raymond Ekyinaba Arthur

A PARTING WORD FROM YOUR WIFE
JOSEPHINE RAY-ARTHUR

"For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways; says the Lord. As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts"
(Isaiah 55: 8 -9, RSV).

Ekyinaba as I always called my dear husband and I, met over 40years ago. That was in 1963 to be precise in Sefwi Awaso when I was a pupil and he was then the Headteacher in the Anglican Middle School, Awaso.

He was a young man with good looks, gentle and with good manners. We got married after I had completed my Teacher Training College in 1967. We were blessed with five children, Raymond, Rosemond, Richmond, Rosalind and Roland.

Ekyinaba was a true disciplinarian and nurtured his children to be disciplined. He never spared the child when he/she misbehaved. He believed in the adage "Spare the rod and spoil the child". He never shirked his responsibilities on his children's education. He was always there for them to solve their academic problems be it payment of school fees, purchasing the items that they requested for or anything that required the attention of their Father. No wonder the children were able to sail through their education successfully and they are all working to the glory of God.

His reputation for discipline made him formidable to encounter but he was never over bearing. He was quick to put people at ease with his great sense of humour and decorum and with great personal warmth My husband was a motivator and an umbrella covering the home and many others. He never displayed his love for his family alone but to whoever he encountered.

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the late Raymond Ekyinaba Arthur

Ekyinaba was friend to all. He heartily opened our home to all. Everyone felt at ease and welcomed in his company, friends and relations alike. He never discriminated against anyone. He always naturally wanted to help, just to add value to people's lives. That natural quality of kind-heartedness pulled people along with him. No wonder his admirers nicknamed him "Everywhere"

Though we had our differences and shortcomings which I believe is normal in marriage, God gave us strength to sail through all challenges.

Perhaps in response to his own fervent prayer that he should not stay longer on his sick bed before dying his Creator took him away on June 4th 2011 after few days of sickness.

Words are inadequate to describe how I feel. I conceded that you have fought a good fight, run the full race and the crown of victory in Christ now awaits you. I thank the Almighty God for your life and also for taking you to His eternal home..

Fare thee well, Ekyinaba till we meet again.

Uncle Ray and Wife Josephine

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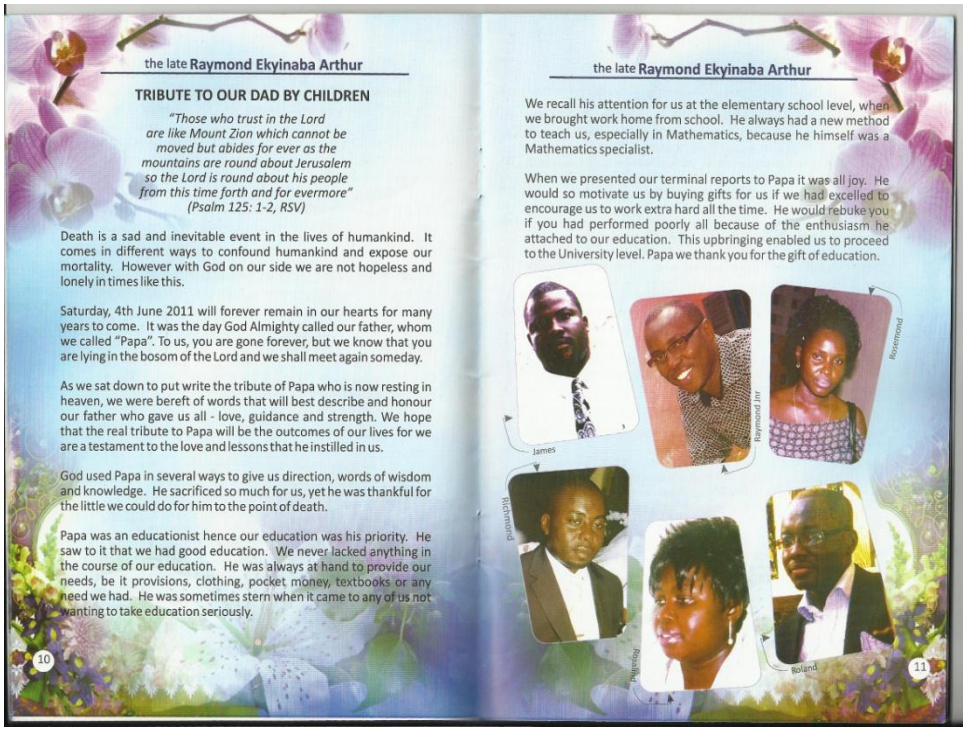
Tribute from the wife.

Appendix 23



the late **Raymond Ekyinaba Arthur**

TRIBUTE TO OUR DAD BY CHILDREN

"Those who trust in the Lord
are like Mount Zion which cannot be
moved but abides for ever as the
mountains are round about Jerusalem
so the Lord is round about his people
from this time forth and for evermore"
(Psalm 125: 1-2, RSV)

Death is a sad and inevitable event in the lives of humankind. It comes in different ways to confound humankind and expose our mortality. However with God on our side we are not hopeless and lonely in times like this.

Saturday, 4th June 2011 will forever remain in our hearts for many years to come. It was the day God Almighty called our father, whom we called "Papa". To us, you are gone forever, but we know that you are lying in the bosom of the Lord and we shall meet again someday.

As we sat down to put write the tribute of Papa who is now resting in heaven, we were bereft of words that will best describe and honour our father who gave us all - love, guidance and strength. We hope that the real tribute to Papa will be the outcomes of our lives for we are a testament to the love and lessons that he instilled in us.

God used Papa in several ways to give us direction, words of wisdom and knowledge. He sacrificed so much for us, yet he was thankful for the little we could do for him to the point of death.

Papa was an educationist hence our education was his priority. He saw to it that we had good education. We never lacked anything in the course of our education. He was always at hand to provide our needs, be it provisions, clothing, pocket money, textbooks or any need we had. He was sometimes stern when it came to any of us not wanting to take education seriously.

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the late **Raymond Ekyinaba Arthur**

We recall his attention for us at the elementary school level, when we brought work home from school. He always had a new method to teach us, especially in Mathematics, because he himself was a Mathematics specialist.

When we presented our terminal reports to Papa it was all joy. He would so motivate us by buying gifts for us if we had excelled to encourage us to work extra hard all the time. He would rebuke you if you had performed poorly all because of the enthusiasm he attached to our education. This upbringing enabled us to proceed to the University level. Papa we thank you for the gift of education.

James

Raymond Jnr

Rosemond

Richmond

Roland

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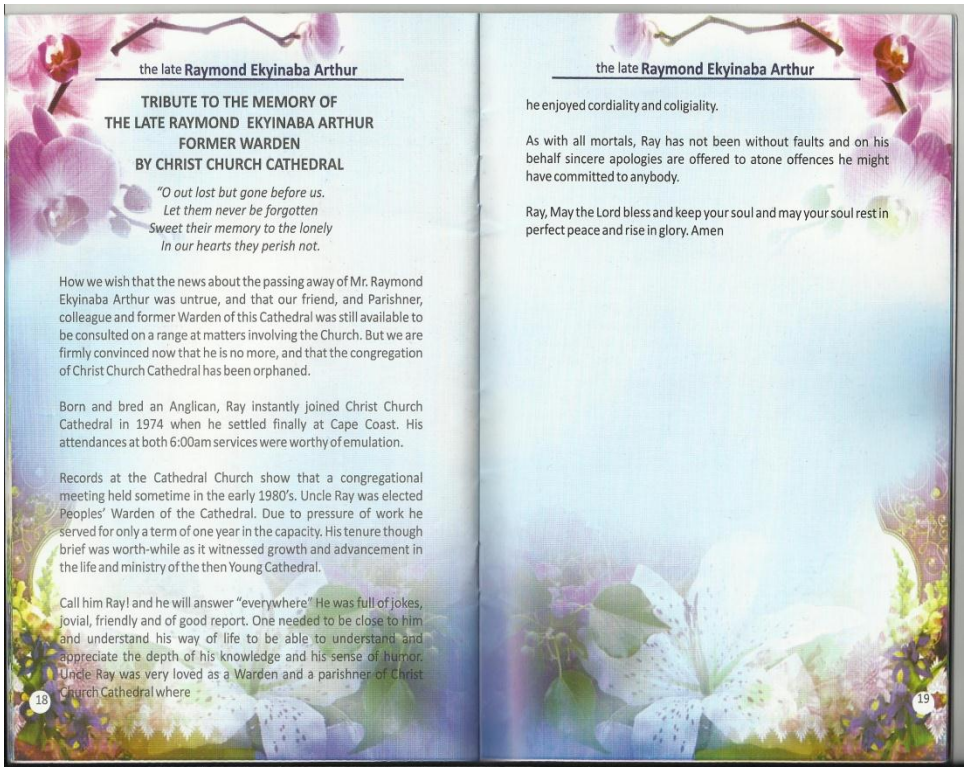
Tribute from the children.

Appendix 24



the late **Raymond Ekyinaba Arthur**

TRIBUTE TO THE MEMORY OF THE LATE RAYMOND EKYINABA ARTHUR FORMER WARDEN BY CHRIST CHURCH CATHEDRAL

"O out lost but gone before us.
Let them never be forgotten
Sweet their memory to the lonely
In our hearts they perish not.

How we wish that the news about the passing away of Mr. Raymond Ekyinaba Arthur was untrue, and that our friend, and Parishner, colleague and former Warden of this Cathedral was still available to be consulted on a range at matters involving the Church. But we are firmly convinced now that he is no more, and that the congregation of Christ Church Cathedral has been orphaned.

Born and bred an Anglican, Ray instantly joined Christ Church Cathedral in 1974 when he settled finally at Cape Coast. His attendances at both 6:00am services were worthy of emulation.

Records at the Cathedral Church show that a congregational meeting held sometime in the early 1980's. Uncle Ray was elected Peoples' Warden of the Cathedral. Due to pressure of work he served for only a term of one year in the capacity. His tenure though brief was worth-while as it witnessed growth and advancement in the life and ministry of the then Young Cathedral.

Call him Ray! and he will answer "everywhere" He was full of jokes, jovial, friendly and of good report. One needed to be close to him and understand his way of life to be able to understand and appreciate the depth of his knowledge and his sense of humor. Uncle Ray was very loved as a Warden and a parishner of Christ Church Cathedral where

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the late **Raymond Ekyinaba Arthur**

he enjoyed cordiality and coligiality.

As with all mortals, Ray has not been without faults and on his behalf sincere apologies are offered to atone offences he might have committed to anybody.

Ray, May the Lord bless and keep your soul and may your soul rest in perfect peace and rise in glory. Amen

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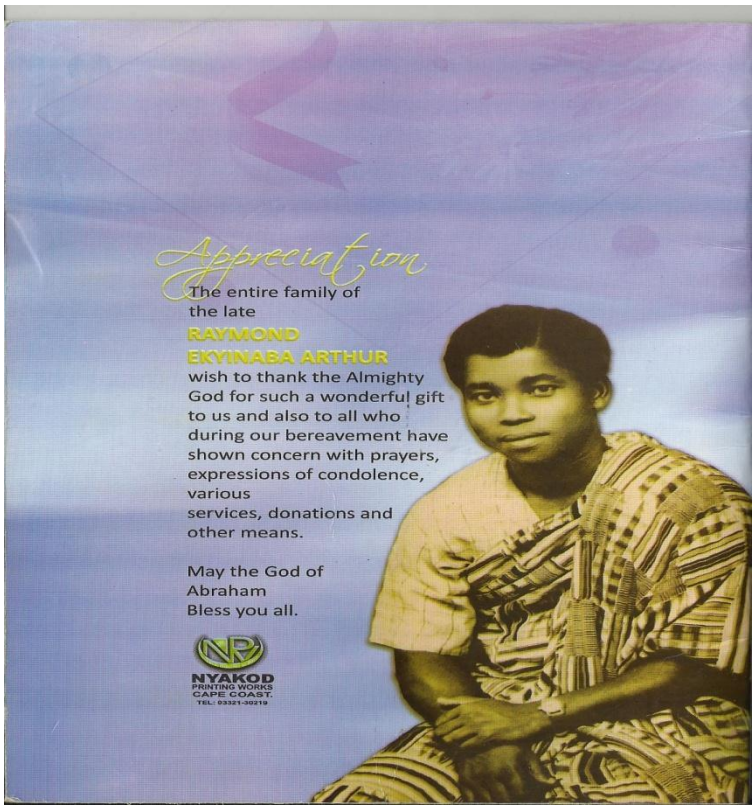
Tribute from the children.

Appendix 25

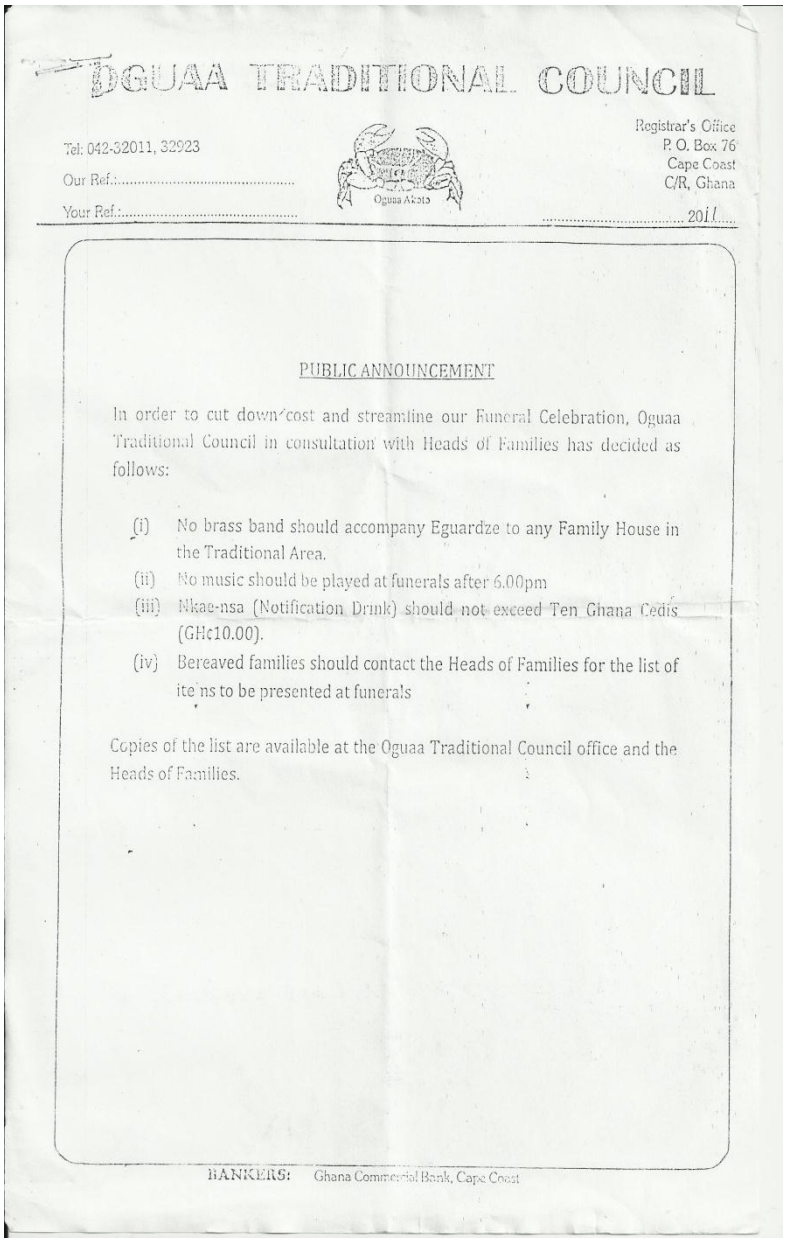
Some special moments in Uncle Ray's life.

Appendix 26



The booklet is an appreciation card as well.

Appendix 27



OGUAA TRADITIONAL COUNCIL

Tel: 042-32011, 32923
Our Ref.:
Your Ref.:

Oguaa Akoto

Registrar's Office
P. O. Box 76
Cape Coast
C/R, Ghana

2011

PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT

In order to cut down cost and streamline our Funeral Celebration, Oguaa Traditional Council in consultation with Heads of Families has decided as follows:

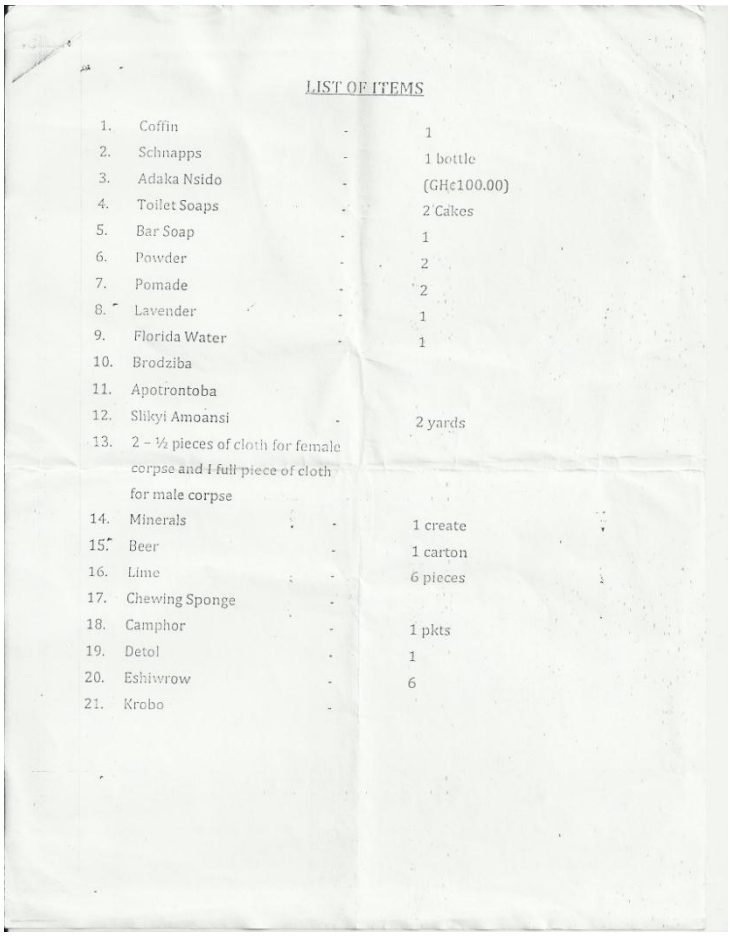
(i) No brass band should accompany Eguardze to any Family House in the Traditional Area.
(ii) No music should be played at funerals after 6.00pm
(iii) Nkae-nsa (Notification Drink) should not exceed Ten Ghana Cedis (GH¢10.00).
(iv) Bereaved families should contact the Heads of Families for the list of ite ns to be presented at funerals

Copies of the list are available at the Oguaa Traditional Council office and the Heads of Families.

BANKERS: Ghana Commercial Bank, Cape Coast

Laws to govern funerals at Cape –Coast.

Appendix 28

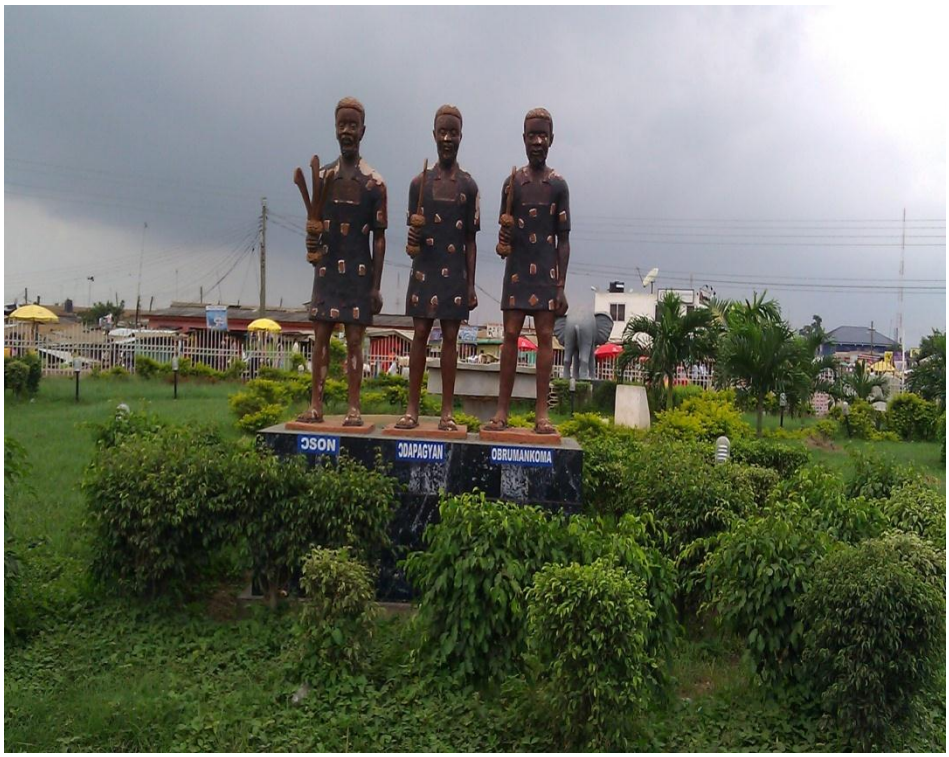


LIST OF ITEMS

1.	Coffin	1
2.	Schnapps	1 bottle
3.	Adaka Nsido	(GH¢100.00)
4.	Toilet Soaps	2 Cakes
5.	Bar Soap	1
6.	Powder	2
7.	Pomade	2
8.	Lavender	1
9.	Florida Water	1
10.	Brodziba	
11.	Apotrontoba	
12.	Slikyi Amoansi	2 yards
13.	2 – ½ pieces of cloth for female corpse and 1 full piece of cloth for male corpse	
14.	Minerals	1 create
15.	Beer	1 carton
16.	Lime	6 pieces
17.	Chewing Sponge	
18.	Camphor	1 pkts
19.	Detol	1
20.	Eshiwrow	6
21.	Krobo	

List of item to be given by in-laws

Appendix 29



The statutes of the three *Fante* leaders that led them to *Mankessim.*

Appendix 30

Motivation to keep on working.

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