

**THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION ON SOME  
SELECTED MISSION CHURCHES IN AKYEM ABUAKWA**

**BY**

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**AUGUST, 2012**

## DECLARATION

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

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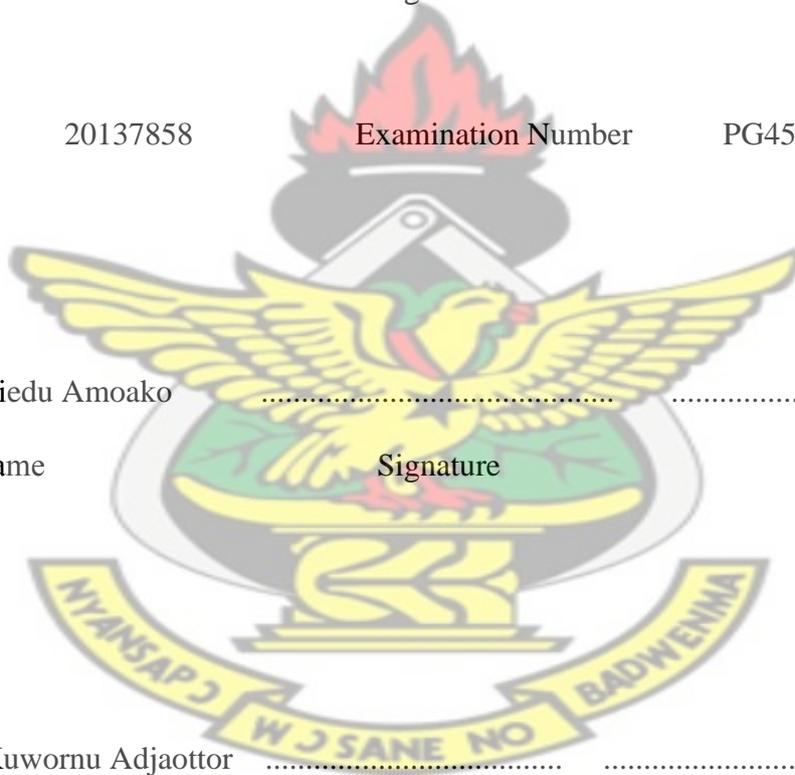
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Signature

Date



## **DEDICATION**

This work is dedicated to God Almighty who has been very faithful to me. I also dedicate this work to my lovely wife Mrs. Vida Asare Amoah and my children - Samuel Amoah Asare, Abigail Asantewah Asare, Priscilla Brakoah Asare, Emmanuel Nimako Asare and Susuana Gyamfuah Asare for the sacrifices they made while I pursued this programme.



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Furthermore, I render my sincere gratitude to the three selected mission Churches: PCG, the Methodist Church Ghana (MCG) and the Roman Catholic Church (RCC) and members of the various congregations in the Akyem Abuakwa Traditional Area for willingly responding to my questionnaire and granting me interviews that have brought this work to this far. Finally my thanks go to the traditional leaders of Akyem Abuakwa who furnished me with some necessary information for this work. To God be the glory, for the great things He has done.

## ABSTRACT

This thesis assesses and examines the effectiveness of Christian education in terms of its transformational impact on members of three selected mission Churches: Presbyterian Church of Ghana (PCG), Methodist Church Ghana (MCG) and Roman Catholic Church (RCC) in Akyem Abuakwa traditional area. The thesis emphasises that Christian education has never been effective in the three selected mission Churches. The causes are: failure among many members to set a high priority on Christian education programmes, the busy schedules of the adults and the youth, lack of parental interest in their children's education, the lack of interest in adult learning, failure of Ministers and Priests to visit children during Church service, high level of illiteracy in rural communities and small budget allocation for Christian education at the expense of heavy capital intensive projects in the Churches. Furthermore, most of the Christian education committees in various congregations are not functioning and there is lack of implementation of Christian educational policies. The study also reveals that lack of resources has affected Christian education in the three selected mission Churches.

Furthermore, the study then shows that the lives of most of the members of the three selected Churches could be transformed to be Christlike if members would give Christian education a priority. Christian educators should be qualified personnel who are well versed in the Bible. Christian education committees in the various congregations should be active and they should implement their policies. There is the need for proper planning especially in coordination, supervision and evaluation of Christian education programmes. Manpower development and organization of literacy classes should be emphasized in the three selected mission Churches.

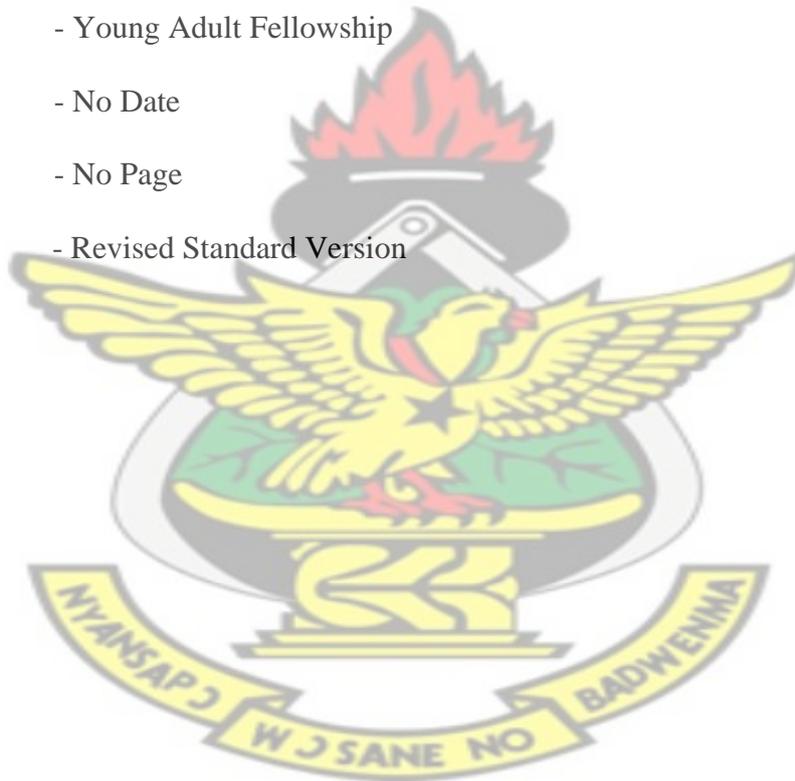
The study recommends that dependence on the Holy Spirit, if people are selected solely for the publication of Christian education materials and also if indigenous or traditional educational resources are given due consideration in Christian education programmes in the three selected mission Churches, there can be effectiveness in the educational ministry of the Church that will result in real character transformation in the lives of their members.

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

PCG	- Presbyterian Church of Ghana
MCG	-Methodist Church Ghana
RCC	-Roman Catholic Church
OT	-Old Testament
NT	-New Testament
YPG	- Young People's Guild
JY	- Junior Youth
YAF	- Young Adult Fellowship
n.d.	- No Date
n.p.	- No Page
RSV	- Revised Standard Version



## GLOSSARY OF AKAN TERMS

- Akyem Abuakwa - The largest of the Akyem states known as “Akyem Mansa” which is believed to be of the first Akan tribe to migrate southward after the fall of the ancient Songhai Empire.
- Akan - The ethnic group that speaks the *kwa* language of which Twi/Fante is one and consists of the following dialects: Asante, Akuapim, Akyem, Agona, Kwahu, Wassa, Fante and Brong.
- \$hema kyeame - A spokesperson to a queenmother.
- Nkyewie - Fried corn.
- Bragor4 - Puberty rite for an Akan youth, normally for girls.
- Kyiribra - Pregnancy before puberty rites.
- \$kyeame - Spokesman for a chief or a king.
- Kente - Akan traditional cloth
- \$kyehene - The paramount chief of Akyem Abuakwa traditional area.
- Kyebi - The capital town of Akyem Abuakwa traditional area.
- Ananses1m - Tales
- Bronikurom - Whiteman’s town. An area which was designated to Christians during the time of the missionaries.
- \$mam mu - An area designated to the traditional community.
- Apakan - Palanquin
- Adinkra - The Adinkra symbols are believed to have their origin from Gyaman, (former kingdom in today’s Côte D’Ivoire) king a

Nana Kofi Adinkra who used to wear patterned cloth, hence Adinkra symbols.

Akyeamepoma - The staff of the spokesman a chief.

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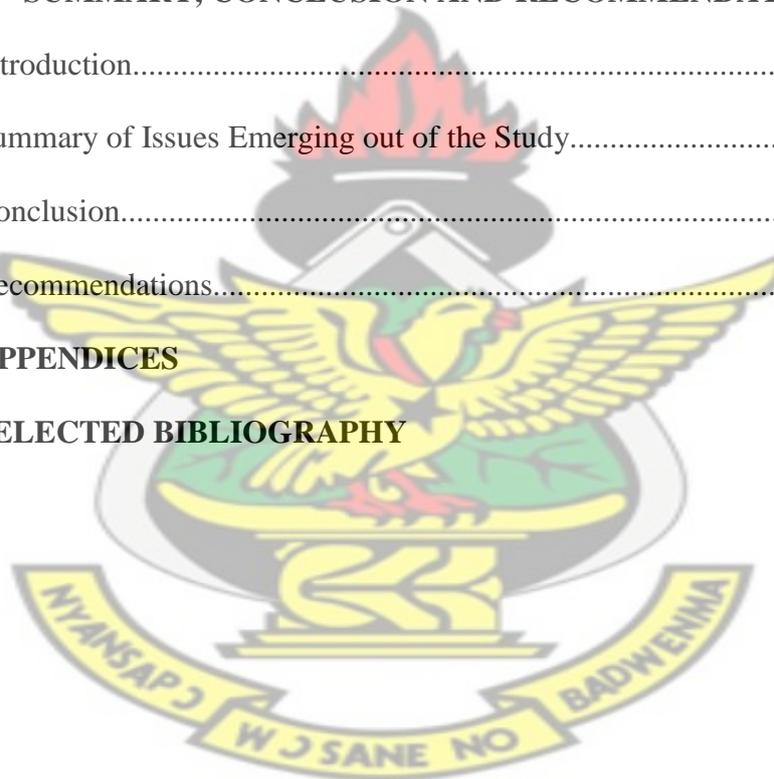
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## CHAPTER ONE

### BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

#### 1.1 INTRODUCTION

Christian education is one of the most important disciplines of the Church. Jesus Christ made a very profound statement about nurturing to his disciples: “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you...” (Matt.28:19-20 RSV). Jesus’ statement above means that the Good news should be preached to all nations. It also means that believers in Christ should be given the best of Christian education that would transform their lives to be loyal. The transformation of character means character that portrays Christ’s character of humility, obedience, love, honesty, patience, kindness, mercy and many others as described in the Bible (Phil.2:5, RSV). With these qualities, one would be loyal to his congregation or denomination.

The apostle Paul also admonished Timothy that, “...what you have heard from me before many witnesses, entrust to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.” (2 Tim. 2:2, RSV) This means that for Paul, well taught believers should teach others and commission them and they should teach others so that their lives would be transformed. Miller (1995:78) maintained that if the behaviour of an individual Christian, or a community does not conform to Christian principles, then one cannot say the objective of Christian education has been achieved. Christian education, based on the life and teachings of Jesus, aims at the transformation of both the mind and life and would definitely lead one to be loyal to one’s congregation or

denomination. Effective educational ministry in the Church then should result in maturity of faith that transforms character to be Christ-like and loyal. Tolbert (2000:13) confirms this by saying that “Teaching is our ministry. Jesus is our model. People are our passion. Transformed lives are our product...this is the essence of Christian education.” However, according to Obed (2008:37), there is increasing worldliness and decreasing Christ-likeness in the Church. It seems real transformed and quality Christian lifestyle that should be demonstrated as Christians are hardly seen among many Christians. The Christian Church does not seem to have the kind of effect Jesus envisioned for the Church when he gave the Great Commission (Matt. 28:18-20). According to Foli (2001:57), in the 1993 Ghana Evangelism Committee’s Church survey, there were 51% nominal Christians in the mission Churches and it could be even higher today.

Nominalism is a religious phenomenon describing a group of people who seems to take the name “Christian” upon themselves but do not live by the Christian lifestyle. It is a kind of Christian life which is characterized with a sense of disobedience, unfaithfulness, disloyalty and lack of commitment. This is not to say that there are no Christians who are loyal, faithful, committed, obedient and dedicated in the mission Churches. If we should agree with Taylor (1996:11) that effective study of the Bible and Christian education should lead to positive action (transformation) then it might mean that there may be something wrong with the Christian education within the Churches. The question then is, what kind of Christian education goes on in the Churches? Is the Gospel of Jesus Christ being effectively communicated and understood as Akan Christians? Has the education ministry of the Church been

effective? It is against this background that this research is being done focusing on some selected mission Churches in Akyem Abuakwa.

## **1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

Christian education is about the nurturing of Christian life and its effective practice which is expected to yield desired results. The value of any Christian educational practice should be measured by its transformational potential. For Wyckoff (1955: 23), among others, the aim of Christian education is to help persons to develop lives of integrity, loyalty, commitment and obedience and also help people to live in full awareness of God. The above mentioned aims seem hardly to come by in quite a number of Church members as indicated by the Ghana Evangelism Report cited by Foli (2001:57). When Foli was dealing with nominalism in Ghana, his study proved that there was a high nominal percentage of fifty - one (51) in the mission Churches in Ghana which suggest among other reasons that there is ineffective Christian education in the mission Churches. The issue at stake is that what are causes of ineffective Christian education in the selected mission Churches and how can the problems be solved so that one can confidently say that the essence of Christian education (Christlikeness) is achieved?

## **1.3 RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

What are the methods, contents and resource materials of teaching/learning process as an integral part of Christian education used in the selected mission Churches? How are Christian education committees and policies managed and implemented respectfully in the selected mission Churches? How often are Christian education programmes evaluated in the selected mission Churches? What factors hinder the

effectiveness of Christian education ministry of the mission Churches? How can Christian education ministry of the mission Churches be improved? How can the Akan Christian theologian contextualize Christian education ministry so that it becomes relevant to the Akan Christian that will result in character transformation?

#### **1.4 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

The objectives of the study are:

1. To assess the kind of educational content and methods employed and examine the educational materials used in the mission Churches and see their impact on the lives of the people.
2. To discuss how Christian education committees and policies are managed and implemented in the selected mission Churches.
3. To find out the factors that hinder the effectiveness of Christian education in the mission Churches.
4. To identify strategies that will enable the mission Churches strengthen their own Christian education programmes in bringing transformation into the lifestyles of majority of their members.
5. To identify and analyze the traditional education resources that could be employed to make Christian education more authentic and indigenous in the mission Churches.

#### **1.5 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

The significance of the study is the raising of awareness of the need or otherwise to reconsider the educational ministry in the mission Churches that will result in character transformation. Christian educators in the mission Churches may become

aware of the methods that will stimulate, guide and assist learners in seeking the relevance of the Christian faith. Miller (1957:11) believes that the most important factor in education is relationship. The study will also lead to improvement of personal relationship between man and God and between man and his fellow human being.

The study will help the leaders of the mission Churches to know how to deal with the needs of the various groups: children, youth, young adult, married couples, families, adults and old people, and address them accordingly. Furthermore, Pastors, Christian educators, seminary students, concerned laity, and others who read this work will be renewed in their commitment to this vital ministry and will build on the basics to renew and transform Christian education for the sake of the Church and its mission in the world.

Finally, the study will help the local congregation of the mission Churches to select the best educational resources and lesson materials and train good leaders for their Christian education programmes. If quality of life is achieved among Christians, it will have positive impact on the economy of Ghana with respect to reduction of corruption since Christians cover a greater percentage of 72.2 of Ghana's population as posited in summary report of the final results by Ghana Statistical service (May 2012).

## **1.6 SCOPE OF THE STUDY**

The scope of the work is limited to some selected mission Churches in Akyem Abuakwa though some vital information can be sought from any part of the country.

Akyem Abuakwa is very wide an area that the researcher would not be able to travel to every town within the area but for the purpose of this research, the researcher would like to concentrate on some selected congregation in some selected towns and villages in the area. The researcher will focus on three mission Churches within Akyem Abuakwa: the Presbyterian Church of Ghana (PCG), the Methodist Church, Ghana (MCG) and the Roman Catholic Church (RCC).

The researcher has chosen Akyem Abuakwa because he was born and bred in this traditional area. The researcher was also was baptized and nurtured in one of selected mission Churches. Hence, our selection to work within the above defined scope.

### **1.6.1 Akyem Abuakwa**

History, has it that the *Akyem* were believed to be one of the first Akan tribes to migrate southwards, after the fall of the ancient Songhai Empire. The Akyem states, commonly known as *Akyem Mansa*, consist of three main independent states, all grouped in the Eastern Region, with a common languages, culture, customs and historical background. The states are: *Akyem Abuakwa*, *Akyem Kotoku*, *Akyem Bosome*. *Akyem Abuakwa* is the largest of the three states in terms of land, size, population and natural resources.

Historically, the *Akyem*, were a part of the then all powerful *Adansi Kingdom*, the first nation to build mud houses in their kingdom at that time; hence the name “*Adansi*” (Builders). The then Ashanti Kingdom emerged, and under the leadership of Nana Osei Tutu 1, they fought and defeated the *Adansi* about the 14<sup>th</sup> century and absorbed the *Adansi* Kingdom into the growing Ashanti Kingdom.

The *Akyem* nations which were then part of the *Adansi* kingdom, broke away and crossed the River *Pra* to settle on its banks to avoid becoming subjects of the Ashanti. Nana Osei Tutu 1 decided to pursue them across the River *Pra* to teach them a lesson. That was a great miscalculation! While crossing the river with his army, he was shot by the *Akyem* who had laid ambush on the other side of the river. He fell dead into the river. This was on a Saturday; hence, the great oath of the Ashantis, (*Meka memeneda*- I swear by Saturday). For this, the *Akyem* who carried out this defeat became known as *Abuakwanfo* or *Abuakwafo*, (Guerilla Fighters). The Ashanti retreated and this tragedy made it a taboo for any Ashanti King, up to the time of Nana Prempeh I, cross the River *Pra* to the South, except their armies. The *Akyem* are matrilineal people.

Arthur (2004:5) posits that the *Akyem*, like any of the Akan, share the belief that, the universe that exist is the handiwork of the creator, *Tweduampom-Kwame*. The Akan believe the mother earth *Asaase Yaa Amponyinamoa* as the primeval source of matter from which everything was created. Aside this the Akan also believe in life after death. In fact, they share with most creeds and cultures that the body is an empty tin from which the soul will eventually leave for *Asamado* as indicates by Osei (2000:1). For this reason, the Akan refer to everything on earth as vanity. Among the *Akyem* for instance, they have their beliefs which determine their way of worship. The material and equipment used by the various religious groups are all form of artifacts. For example the traditional worshippers use things like talisman cowries, charms, and others which are all creative works of man.

The *Akyem*, like all the Akan tribes, practice polygamy. Again they practice traditional African religion and some of them are also Christians. They practice puberty rites. They are also into pouring libation to invoke the spirits of the ancestral world. Studies show that, a taboo is any action or practice that is considered contrary to the accepted norms, and moral values of society or town. Some of the major taboos of the Akan in Akyem Abuakwa are as follows: Adultery, stealing, murder, incest, rape, having sex in the bush, teenage pregnancy.

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### 1.7 METHODOLOGY

In gathering information and data, the researcher intends to use the qualitative method. This will help the researcher to receive information about people's opinion and ideas about the nature of Christian education taking place in some of the selected congregations within PCG, MCG and RCC in Akyem Abuakwa. For his primary data, the researcher will use interviews and questionnaire. Questionnaire would be distributed to hundred (100) people. Thirty (30) would be given to Ministers (ten each to the PCG, MCG and RCC Ministers). Another thirty (30) would be given to lay Christian educators or leaders and forty (40) would be given to Church members of the three selected Churches in Akyem Abuakwa. We will interview about twenty-five (25) people consisting of ministers and priests, lay Christian educators, ordinary members of the three selected mission Churches and traditional elders who are Christians in Akyem Abuakwa traditional area. We will interview each National Director of Christian education in the three selected mission Churches. Current statistics of the various mission Churches would be collected from the Ghana Evangelism Committee's office and Ghana Statistical Services Office. The figures will be analysed to access the current nominal percentage of the selected mission

Churches. For secondary sources, the researcher will consult various literatures like journals, periodicals and books on Christian education. We will also use the media, both print and electronic, and the internet.

### **1.8 PROBLEMS ENVISAGED**

The difficulty which may likely confront the researcher is the possibility of receiving responses from respondents and retrieving all questionnaire, which will be distributed and reaching the sources of relevant data for the research work. The researcher would not be able to travel to every congregation within Akyem Abuakwa because of time limit for the work.

### **1.9 LITERATURE REVIEW**

There are several literatures revealing that much work has been done in the area of Christian education. There is, therefore, the need for a review so as to help the researcher address the problem of the study. Megill (1978) gives a very vivid description of teaching and learning situations. She gives definition of Christian education and also emphasizes its aims. She stressed the importance of human development in the process with special emphasis on the developmental task of infancy and early childhood. In her work, so far as ministry is concerned, she categorizes the various age groups in the Church as: ministry to children, ministry with youth in the Church and ministry with adults in the Church. For Megill, one needs to take into consideration the age group when it comes to the type of method and content of study. She dealt in-depth into the curriculum of Christian education with special reference to scope, purpose, objective, and the design of the curriculum.

Megill's work lacks biblical and theological content which are very fundamental to Christian education. It is also limited to the context of a local Church congregation. However, her work gives guidance and inspiration for the common task to follow our Lord's command to "go teach" and to "feed my lambs, feed my sheep." Her work will be very useful to the researcher since though she was a foreigner, her work was written, taken into consideration the Ghanaian socio – religious and cultural setting. This work would be quite different from Megill's work in the sense that the researcher will take time to examine the historical and biblical foundations of Christian education.

Powers (1981) sees the Church as "a school." He contends that the Church does not simply have a school but it is a school. According to Powers, he saw his task in the new light: that of declaring, informing, pointing persons within the Church to the truth that they are already in the school. For him, the truth is that to be a disciple is to be a learner. And to be a disciple of Christ is to be one absorbed in knowing him. And to be joined with each other in the discipleship of Christ is to be joined in a fellowship of learning.

Powers maintains that the Church is a school inasmuch as the commission is to teach "them to observe all." Powers points out that education that leads to discipleship has several requirements. He mentions four requirements which are: (i) education that is true to the grace of the gospel requires a vision of the Church, its purpose and mission. (ii) Christian education requires theologically-informed objectives. (iii) it requires learning that provides knowledge, instills feelings, and aims at right living. (iv) there is also the need to evaluate the organizations, the teachers and leaders

which this kind of learning requires. In Power's work, he treats the qualifications for teachers/leaders but he is very brief. The study will be detail in this aspect since teacher/leader factor plays a very significant role in every pedagogical process.

Miller (1957) provides a theological framework for Christian education in terms of its history, modern secular thinking, and theological developments. Miller in his work also deals with methods, both as they are used in the classroom and as they are applied to worship. Practical problems of administration and organization are treated. He tries to write from foreign background but the researcher will write from local background. The way Miller has discussed the needs of those who learn will be of much significance to the researcher when the researcher analyzes and examines the needs of the congregations according to age group characteristics. Miller's work will be much useful to the researcher when it comes to analyzing methods used in the mission Churches.

Freire (1970) explores his best known analytical themes, with even deeper understanding and a greater wisdom. Certainly, all of these themes have to be analyzed as elements of a critical, liberationist, pedagogy. Freire points out the type of education that can liberate the oppressed. He describes the type of education which contributes to the oppression of the oppressed as "banking type of education". For him the banking type of education is characterised by an act of depositing, receiving, filling and storing of information with no communication. In this system, the teacher is described as a depositor, a describer, a domesticator. The student does not ask questions but only receives what is given to him. In this system, one's creative power is minimized. For Freire, the liberation of the oppressed could be

possible only when there is a change in the banking education system. Revolutionary education (humanist) system should be pursued. This is the *raison d'être* of liberation education. This type of education is problem posing and a type of education in which the student is given the opportunity to think and make contribution to knowledge. This type of education does not serve the interest of the oppressor. Problem posing education has to do with critical analysis, reflection and action and the process of becoming. Though his work does not directly deal with Christian education, there are certain principles of education which will be very useful so far as this research is concerned.

Wyckoff (1955) deals with Christian education as a vital means of transforming individual and societal social qualities to bring about quality living. He makes it clear that Christian education cannot be done without careful planning and preparation, taking into consideration the whole personality of a person. In his work he gives a vivid overview of Christian education. He makes it clear that for any programme, there is the need for careful planning. This involves translation of general programmes into specific programs. This means that one should know what a particular programme means for children, youth and adults. This requires analysis of the pupil and knowledge of the individual in the group and the psychology of human social development must be known.

He also maintains that educators should take into consideration the pupil's theological and philosophical background. For Wyckoff, some of the things we need to look for are the pupil's home, his achievements, and possibly his frustrations. Wyckoff's work will be of help to the researcher in the sense that the researcher,

through the various congregations, will have the fore knowledge of what he is seeking for with respect to the psychology, human, and sociological development. Wyckoff is of the view that Christian education must aim beyond the Church and concentrate on changing society as well.

Smith(1966) gives a vivid history of the Presbyterian Church of Ghana, tracing its history right from the Basel Missionaries and their mission to the then Gold Coast, their evangelistic, educational, Church planting and socio-economic activities. Smith deals with how formal education was introduced and established by the Presbyterian Church. However, he is very brief about Christian education in the Church. His work is very much historical, but, it will be very much useful to the researcher since Smith is more interested in the social and religious background and life of the Akan people helping his readers to gain more insight into the richness of Akan life and thought.

Farrant (2004) asserts that his book is not a cram book for examinations; nor is it all the information the practicing teacher needs to do his job well. In his book, he has provided for African primary teachers a basic course in principles and practice of education. He tries to enable the student teacher to extend what he acquires by introducing him to methods of study he can use throughout his life. He has also taken pains to treat what education is, the philosophy of education, education in Africa (traditional education), the child and his physical, mental, emotional and social development. Formal and non formal education have thoroughly been dealt with. He has extensively touched on the role and qualities of a teacher. Farrant's work is actually treated from academic point of view without any theological consideration. However, his work will be very useful to the researcher since he has treated a lot of

educational principles of which some would be applicable to Christian education. Our work will be different from Farrant's work in the sense that it would be more biblically or theologically based.

Vieth (1957) deals vividly and extensively with the organization, administration, and supervision of Christian education in the local Church. He also deals with the problem of conducting Church schools. He makes some suggestions about relationship and practice. Vieth suggests that good practice can follow only from sound theory. He has taken pains to treat what the Church is, its purpose, what the Church does, and outlined some principles for Christian education. For him, organization of programme for Christian education must be understood and planned in the light of the nature and purpose of the Church. He maintains that the Church school is created by the Church, and that the school exists and should be maintained in obedience to Christ's command, "Go therefore...teaching them to observe all things I have commanded you" (Matt.28:19-20, RSV). Vieth explain the organization, supervision, curriculum administration, motivation, award and discipline but he is very silent about evaluation which is equally important so far as education of any kind is concerned. His work will be very much useful to the researcher since it deals directly with the Church which is the focus of this work. The researcher's work will be different from that of Vieth in the sense that the emphasis would be on the marks of the Church.

Addo Dankwa 111 (2004) discusses the internal dynamics of the workings of the institution of chieftaincy. He maintains that chieftaincy embodies our lives, values, beliefs, giving credence to our traditions and outlook towards life. He tries to

reconstruct history, giving the rationale behind many of the cultural acts we perform now. He also traces the origins, character and change of the institution of chieftaincy and argues that the institution emerged from the social fabric of the land. Examining human societies, the author asserts that the paramount reasons for getting together are security and protection against external enemies or aggression and there is need to have leadership that inspires and motivates. He deals with some symbols such as the Linguist staff, Talking drum and the State sword. These and many others discussed in his work are learning devices which convey a lot of messages. The writer does well as an African to write from his traditional and cultural context but does not make any comparison or reference from the theological point of view. However, his work will be very useful to the researcher when assessing the relevance of the learning devices as Akan Christians.

Odamtten (1966) treats the basic concepts of human being and the place of the child in Akan society. He enumerates values such as truthfulness, humility, honesty, obedience, kindness, love etc. inculcated in children through the indigenous system of education. The writer compares the two systems of education, western and indigenous education. He is objective and not one sided. Much as he appreciates the good side of the indigenous system he also appreciates the good side of western education. He dwells on the fact that the best system of education for us as Africans is a blend of both traditional system and western educational system. He compares traditional education with western education, and I will compare traditional education with Christian education. His work will be useful to the researcher since he has treated extensively the patterns of traditional education and it will serve as a springboard for this study.

Miller (1995) explores both the organic relationship between theology and the teaching of religion, and the relationship between a wide variety of contemporary theologies and the teaching of religion. Miller maintains that the teaching of religion is a branch of theology, and that theology should satisfactorily explain, predict and verify what pedagogically occurs in the religious instructions or act. If the teaching of religion is a branch of theology, then theology should tell the religious educator how to teach. For Miller, the major idea is that theology has deep implications for religious education and that good theology may lead to a good educational philosophy. Miller's work will be very useful to the researcher as he explores theologies of the various congregations so as to access the kind of Christian education that goes on in the three selected mission Churches. He points out that quite a number of theologians agree that the Bible is not a reference book but a document which serves as witness to the fact and meaning of God's action in history. To him, biblical theology emphasizes on seeing the Bible with the "eye of faith" with the expectation of hearing "God speak." On the basis of this, Childs speaking at a pastoral conference in 1982 on the "Rise and Fall of biblical Theology", said scholars were seeking "a new way of doing theology and doing Bible study" that would bring a sense of "vitality and enthusiasm". According to Little, in this sense, theology then becomes source and norm for educational ministry. Emphasis would then be on the revelation through which the Christian is called to be and trained to be the Church in the world. Little's article in the work of Miller will be of much help to the researcher because the congregations among which we research include Presbyterian congregations, and since Little has outlined in detail the various marks of Presbyterianism, there will be easy assessment and evaluation of result of Christian education that goes on in the PCG.

Little (1967) also points out in her work that there is the need to construct education that is theologically informed and theology that is educationally viable in the world of many cultures and religions. The implication is that both theology and education are to reform in this perspective. Miller raises issues on an ecclesial context for education and nurture. This will help the researcher to study the Christian education in the various congregations taking into consideration the cultural context within which people learn.

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Cully (1960) places first the article of Clement of Alexander with the title *Christ the Educator*. In his work, Jesus is cited as a good example of an educator. The patterns used by Jesus are of much significance to the researcher since they give a complete and a very good picture of who a good and effective Christian educator is. Gangel and Sullivan's article in Miller's "Theologies of Religious Education" treats Jesus as being the master teacher. He touches on his theology of learning, his teaching methods and what he expected from those who follow him. This work will help the researcher to identify the common threads, principles and practices and the interpersonal relationships which produce effective learning experiences.

Opuni Frimpong (2012) explores the place of African indigenous systems in Christian mission and contemporary social issues. He mainly concentrates on indigenous leadership and its relevance to Christian leadership development. For him, the relevance of Christian faith is possible only when African Christianity is understood in terms of African world view and Indigenous Knowledge System. He notes with concern the tension that exists between the Christian faith and Akan culture using the Akan experience as a frame of reference. Opuni submits that there

are rich ingredients and values in indigenous leadership formation that needs to be tapped to enhance Christian leadership formation. Hence the exploration into the available indigenous resources that will provide an authentic Akan Christian leadership theology. His work emphasizes the perspective of leadership formation. This study will differ from his in the sense that the researcher will emphasize extensively the means of arriving at an authentic practicable indigenous Christian education. Opuni's work will however, be very helpful to the researcher since he has extensively dealt with some important Akan Christian indicators.

Harris (1989) argues that Christian education covers the total mission and ministry of the Church. She refers to them as Church curriculum. She submits that curriculum is more than materials. In her view, it is a lifespan which is experienced throughout the life of the Church, not merely in the classroom. She enumerates these forms as follows: *Koinonia* - a participatory sharing in a common religious commitment and spiritual community. *Diakonia* – the act of serving. That is reaching out to others, personally and communally, locally and globally. *Leiturgia* – a public service or the work of the people. That is what people come together to do. Harris mentions *Kerygma* as another form of Church curriculum. This is the proclamation of Jesus resurrection, which is central to the Christian faith. She finally refers to *Didache* – the instructions of all the members within the Church community. Through these forms the people see, experience and talk to the Church. Church on the other hand as a pedagogical institution, teaches, educates, empowers the whole community through her various ministries. The researcher shares the view with Harris, but shall draw values from the indigenous knowledge system which will be useful and relevant to indigenous Christian which was not covered by Harris in her work.

## **1.10 ORGANIZATION OF THE STUDY**

The study is divided into seven chapters. The first chapter deals deal with the background information to the study consisting of the introduction, statement of the problem, research questions, objectives of the study, significance of the study, scope of the study, methodology, problem envisaged, literature review and the organization of the study. The second chapter concentrates on the historical and biblical foundations of Christian education. The third chapter has to deal with what Christian education is, its aims and how personality affects character transformation. The fourth chapter is about the teaching and learning process of Christian education in the mission Churches in Akyem Abuakwa.

Chapter five deals with the relevance of indigenous or traditional education to Christian education. In the sixth chapter, the researcher deals with the data analysis, interpretation and discussion of the various information received from the various target groups. The kind of teaching materials used, the content of study in the various congregations, their methodology and patterns will be analysed critically to assess whether they are applicable and relevant to Christian nurturing that can bring transformation into the lives of members of the mission Churches. The final chapter will be the concluding chapter and it has do with the summary, conclusion and recommendations of the study.

## **1.11 CONCLUSION**

So far, attempt have been made to outline the background, the statement of the problem, the objectives and significance of the study. The scope and the methodology of the work and problems which are likely to be confronted in the

course of the study and the available literature have been reviewed. The next chapter deals with the historical and biblical foundations of Christian education.

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**CHAPTER TWO**  
**HISTORICAL AND BIBLICAL FOUNDATIONS OF CHRISTIAN**  
**EDUCATION**

**2.1 INTRODUCTION**

The previous chapter discussed the general introduction to the study. For a clearer view and increased interest of how Christian education can transform lives effectively in the mission Churches, there is an urgent need to look at some of the foundational pieces by which Christian educational ministry is built. With an understanding of these pieces, the educational ministry would be planned and built appropriately to the needs and concerns of a particular community of believers. The second chapter examines the historical and biblical foundations of Christian education.

**2.2 HISTORICAL FOUNDATION OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION**

The history of Christian education reflects a diverse, reflective, and innovating discipline within the Christian community and even the society. As submitted by Cully (1960.:9), the educational ministry of the Christian Church began simultaneously with the beginning of the Church itself. As soon as converts were won to the community of fellowship, some means had to be employed to nurture them in the faith. From the first century to the present, the Church has had to be concerned with the teaching aspects of its corporate existence. In investigating historical foundations, educators are forced to consider aspects of education which are more subject to change in different times and places. In dealing with the challenge of educational ministries, Christians can in fact learn lessons from the past

that provide insights for current and future needs. Kwamena-Po (2011:ix) affirms this fact that if one tramples on the rights of the past generation one cannot claim the regard of its posterity.

Christian educators have a legacy of faithful instruction, both beneficial and detrimental to developments. Christian education cannot be regarded as stagnant, isolated, or one dimensional. Christian educators become aware of what would benefit them in their contemporary context as they study the past. The study of history, therefore, is foundational to understanding the task of Christian education.

### **2.2.1 History and Christian Education**

According to Eleanor and Wade (2007:35) the study of history of education is not primarily concerned with dates, events, or even persons; or rather it is about ideas. History serves as basis for the modern education's development as educators interact with particular philosophical perspectives in socio-cultural context. Grimm (1975:114) noted that Martin Luther considered history as the story of divine providence and a practical guide for life. He praised historians for aiding the understanding of worldly events and for noting the wonderful acts of God.

Christian educators can also view the accounts of past efforts in Christian education as providing key insights and lessons. Thus, the past serves as an ever present tutor for present and future Christian education. Christian educators do not have to reinvent the wheel. This means that Christian educators are not in to make new discovery but access and re-evaluate the past educational thoughts and practices. They have the potential to identify principles, purposes, and goals of education

which may be eternal and unchanging through the study of history. Santayana (1905:12) in support of the past as a guide to the present submits that those who ignore the mistakes of the past are bound to repeat them. Christian educators can carefully assess how social, economic, political, technological, and religious factors may hinder effective educational efforts and renewal. They can discern how God has revealed and transmitted truths through various educational processes in the past.

### **2.2.2 Adoption of Strategies and Methodology**

In addition, they may adopt educational strategies and methodology that were effective in the past to present realities. While the writer affirms this assertion it should also be noted that in an attempt to achieve this, certain key questions need to be posed in affirming the past: (i) What caused awakening, renewal, or growth in godliness and how did educational efforts foster this development? (ii) How did Christians effectively relate their faith to their cultures and how did they educate for this living faith?

### **2.2.3 Christian Education Heritage**

Every community has a heritage or memory which can serve to guide its life. The Christian community is one such community, and the heritage or history of Christian education can help guide present and future ministries. Christian education and education in general have depended upon what Bailyn (1960:45) has identified as the great axles of society: family, Church, community, and economy. Bailyn in his perspective is right, however, the writer wishes to submit that in the context of contemporary society, education also depends upon the school, media, various social and community agencies and internet services.

Sloan (n.d.:16) points out that Churches have given expression to many of the core values and life views of the larger community. They have also carried the prime responsibility for certifying, preserving, transmitting, and transforming those values and views from generations to generations. In this effort, the Church has employed all the traditional means of education: teachings; of the Christian faith; teachers (ministers, Sunday school workers, and spiritual guides), textbooks (scripture, creeds, and commentaries); and teaching aids (rituals, sermons, catechisms, and spiritual disciplines). Having considered the Christian education heritage, we survey from the pre-Christian sources of the Old Testament (OT) and Greek education to post Reformation developments.

#### **2.2.4 The Old Testament and Christian Education**

The Old Testament teaching included instruction and admonition. Instruction involved informing persons of God's truth and demands. Education centered in the Torah, the law of God, first communicated orally, then written in the scriptures. God was the measure of all things, all of life was dedicated to God. The purpose of education in the OT was for holiness and transformation. People were to be trained in the very ways of God and the focus was on godly character and wisdom.

Barclay (1974:16) contends that the primary context for education was the home, and parents were responsible to instruct their children in the law, bring them into wedlock, and to teach them a trade. Beyond the centrality of the home as a house of worship, participation in communal religious life served to educate persons. During and subsequent to exile, synagogues and schools developed to teach the Hebrew language, oral tradition, and the written scriptures. Teaching methodology depended

upon oral communication with various memory aids, including poetry, word play, and acrostics. The guiding principle in these teaching efforts was that persons would bring honour and credit to the name of God and their families through their lives. God's honour was expressed through an obedient life, an expression of worship and reverence. Ng's and Thomas (1981:52) account of how a Hebrew child learned to worship described the spirit of the OT educational heritage:

How did the Hebrew child learn to worship? First through a relationship with a worshipping parent, a member of a worshipping community; through intentional education built into the rituals of home community worship; through a multitude of sensory experiences, vivid, thought provoking symbols and dramas; through a life of ethical actions growing out of worship; through a pattern of recurring Sabbath and festivals that recreated the Hebrews' story; and eventually through a form of public, community gathering which made teaching an essential part of the Liturgy.

The above statement substantiates the fact that the Hebrew community in the OT was deeply and actively involved in education. The immediate family and the worshipping community were the major setting for their educational process. Their use of thought provoking symbols and dramas and the active involvement of parents through home community worship is almost similar to the Akan traditional education.

### **2.2.5 Greek Heritage and Christian Education**

Butts (1947:45) an educational historian, makes this observation: "we think the way we do in large part because the Greeks thought the way they did. Thus to understand our ways of thinking we need to know how the Greeks thought." Butts by this statement, meant that Christians think and do what they do as a result of Greek influence. Of greater influence in the Christian community was Plato. Heschel (1959:37), a Jewish educator, compares the insights from the Greek heritage with those of the OT and today: "The Greeks learned in order to comprehend. The

Hebrews learned in order to revere. The modern man learns in order to use.” The researcher agrees with Heschel that comprehension and reverence are important so far as learning is concerned but application of what has been learnt as a result of their teaching is very essential. The challenge remains for Christian educators to enable persons to revere, appreciate, and stand in awe of and worship God as a result of their teaching. This challenge also applies to those who teach in homes as parents and family members, in Churches, schools, and communities as Teachers, and Pastors.

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In the New Testament the disciples of Jesus followed the Jewish pattern of worship and learning. Several New Testament books show the use of different methods of education reflecting Jewish customs. Timothy was influenced by both his grandmother, Lois, and his mother, Eunice (2Tim.1:5; 3:15, RSV). Still others assimilated their faith from pagan Jewish backgrounds. Kennedy (1966:22) rightly supports that Paul, for example, was thoroughly trained in the law under the tutelage of Gamaliel in Jerusalem. He made use of this training to become an effective advocate for the faith among the Gentiles and Jews.

Education gradually came to emphasize a distinctive way of life for God’s chosen people. Christians were identified as followers of the Way (Acts 9:2; 24:14, RSV). “The Way” specified moral expectations for a follower of Christ which were clearly outlined in the *Didache*. *Didache* refers to the original teachings of the Apostles. Education emphasized the teaching by and about Jesus, for his very presence he represented the way, the truth, and the life (John 14:6). The disciples of Jesus were commissioned to teach others to obey everything Jesus had commanded (Matt.28:20,

RSV). The way of knowing and the life in the NT called for active engagement in the world in obedience to Christ's reign and in response to the experience of Christ as Lord in the midst of life.

### **2.2.6 The Early Church and Christian Education**

In the early Church, there was an emphasis on the faithful transmission of the Christian heritage. External and internal challenges had to be addressed carefully reflecting on the faith. In this context the community was maintained by stressing the canon, a rule of faith, and Church order. The canon identified those accepted sources which were to ground the faith and be its final authority. The rule of faith included the confession of Jesus' Lordship, the Apostles' Creed, and summaries of biblical history which were to be believed by those faithfully following Jesus. Kennedy (1980:1) submits that Church order specified the organization and discipline necessary to define the true Church and those with valid authority in directing the Church's shared life. Various educational forms emerged to deal with the challenges of interpreting the faith in the light of unfulfilled eschatological expectations. In particular, catechesis arose as an essential component of passing on the faith. Westerhoff (1981:2) points out that the Greek source for this term refers to another's word and deeds. The term Catechesis was then first used referring to instruction by oral repetition in which persons were taught by having them sing the answers to posed questions. In order to fulfill the need for catechesis, catechumen classes emerged in the various localities to support home training and worship services. According to Dujarier (1979:94) the form and length of this catechesis varied, but generally the training continued for three years. This period served as a time of training and probation before full acceptance into the Church.

In addition to catechumen classes, catechetical schools were formed. Christianity soon found itself needing highly educated apologists to interpret the faith in Hellenistic terms and to defend it against cultured attackers. A typical example was the university in Alexandria where future leaders of Christian thought were instructed in different disciplines and philosophies of Hellenistic culture. Kennedy (1966:21) maintained that Tertullian was of the view that to use the thought forms of Greek philosophy to express the gospel was dangerous and even heretical. On the other hand, for Origen, it was essential to synthesize the Christian faith with contemporary thought forms in order to address the world on its own terms. The researcher affirms the position of Tertullian that it is dangerous to use the Greek thought forms to interpret the gospel because there are some Greek philosophical views which are not in conformity with the ideas of the gospel. For example, Greeks hold the view that matter is evil in Gnosticism. The Gnostics were of the view that God was separated totally from matter because matter is evil. For them creation was an accident, a mistake, the malevolent act of an anti-god as indicated in an unpublished notes of Edusa-Eyison (2002).

### **2.2.7 The Middle Ages And Christian Education**

The middle age refers to the period of history between classical antiquity and renaissance. After Constantine and the establishment of Christianity, the role of Christian education changed. The Church no longer required training for joining its members. Kennedy (1966:23) maintained that the Church leaders had to find new ways to nurture large numbers of people in the understanding and the appreciation of the faith. With the fall of Rome and the collapse of imperial power, the Church became the social institution with continuing influence. As a result of power

vacuum, ecclesiastical interest increased in the direction of all areas of human life. Taylor (1960:14) asserts that the emerging dominance of the Church had a profound impact on education. Worship then emerged as the chief medium of Christian education. The elaborate character of worship included the mass, which was celebrated daily; the various Christian festivals associated with the liturgical calendar, and religious drama of the morality as suggested by Taylor (1960:33). During this time the family declined in its relative importance in educating on the faith. Celibacy or the single life emerged as viable option and manifested a redefinition of the Christian faith.

### **2.2.8 The Renaissance and Christian Education**

The renaissance was (a reawakening, a rebirth) a renewal of learning which took place between fourteenth, and sixteenth centuries. Miller (1957:23) rightly noted that the revival of learning was associated with the rise of the universities. A broadening aim characterized renaissance education, with more emphasis on individual development. The great technological advance of printing made self education possible. This means that there was great access to quite a number of information and facts which individuals could read to enhance their life. An issue that emerged from the renaissance reintroduced questions from the Greek education heritage, in particular, the place of human reason in relation to the Christian faith. For some renaissance thinkers, reason was enthroned above faith. According to Gaebalein (1985:252) Augustine in contrast maintained that if one did not believe in God that person would not come to know the truth. Anselm of Canterbury in the eleventh century stated, "Believe that you may know." The researcher shares in the views of Augustine and Anselm and further suggest that this principle extends beyond

religious faith to other endeavors in that believing, as commitment, leads to the knowledge of truth. This stance in Christian education implies the need to emphasize personal belief in Christ and scripture as the essential foundation for inquiry in the pursuit for knowledge and truth.

### **2.2.9 The Reformation and Christian Education**

Reformation refers to a kind of religious action of the 16<sup>th</sup> Century that began an attempt to reform the Roman Catholic Church which resulted in the creation of Protestant churches. According to Miller (1957:24) the reformation was a rediscovery of scripture, and was as radical in its way as the renaissance rediscovery of Greek humanism. Martin Luther in the reformation reacted against the moralism and legalism of Rome with its accompanying corruption and the New Testament faith of salvation by grace which was replaced by the idea of salvation through merit. During this era pastoral preaching and teaching were revised to encourage the active participation of the laity as learners and pastors were to assume the educational leadership of their congregations.

#### **2.2.9.1 Emphasis of Reformation**

The authority of the Bible was emphasized with a return to the sources of the Christian faith. *Sola scriptura* affirmed the sole authority of the scriptures over that of the church. There was an emphasis on justification by faith (*sola fide*). A distinction was made between faith and belief. Faith emphasizes the one with whom one walks whereas belief emphasizes content and creed. In the view of the researcher, both faith and belief are important, but salvation is seen in terms of personal faith, a personal commitment to and trust in Jesus Christ as Lord and

Savior. Another principle was priesthood of all believers as noted by Kennedy (1980:3). This means that each and every one has access to God through Christ and is a significant member of Christ's body, the Church. These three principles fostered a new vision in Christian education. The aim of Christian education then was to train all Christians to be disciples of Jesus/priests of the living God. This was to be realized in part through translating the Bible into the vernacular.

Kennedy (1980:3) submits that the home was viewed as an extension of the Church for instruction of all its members and Luther stressed the centrality of home instruction by writing catechisms for children and regularly encouraging parents to assume their teaching responsibilities. If the kind of teaching that goes on in the Church is the same kind of teaching that goes on in the home it would indeed bring transformation in the lives of Church members. According to Benson (1943:83) other reformers like Zwingli and Calvin in Switzerland and John Knox in Scotland also organized schools and developed catechisms to the instruction of children in the faith. Knox also promoted the Minister's role as a teacher of children in the Christian faith. Sunday afternoons were used for instructions in the catechism by the minister. John Wesley was influenced by the Moravians. He too focused much on his early educational efforts on children and helped establish schools where parents were expected to give spiritual instruction at home and support the school's effort as well. We are of the view that Christian educators of today like the leaders of the past need to be clear on their purpose, educational strategies and use of methods that promote the knowledge of God and a growing relationship with him. Having discussed the historical foundations the researcher wishes to state that Biblical models rather than history should guide Christian education. This leads to a transformational aim of

Christian education that is actualized most naturally within the context of both the OT and the NT which deals with teaching and learning situations that transform values, beliefs, attitudes, and behaviour patterns.

### **2.3 BIBLICAL FOUNDATIONS**

Eleanor and Wade (2007:13) asserts that, the Bible is the centre of the Christian faith. It serves as the primary text book for Christian education. The Bible supplies the content of instruction, model of education, methods of education and the rationale for Christian education. For this reason the Bible is the primary lens through which Christian education is perceived. Furthermore the Bible is seen as foundational to Christian education for its claim of revelation and inspiration (1Tim.3:15-17, RSV). It is therefore the essential source for understanding Christian thought and practice in education.

Having established the fact that the Bible is the primary lens for Christian education the researcher wishes to state categorically that, in order to think responsibly about and practise Christian education from a distinctly theological position, Christians and in particular, educators, must carefully examine the biblical foundations for Christian education. It is crucial that Christian educators' thoughts and practices be guided by God's revealed truths as they seek to be obedient to Christ in the task of education. A good exploration of biblical foundation will provide an essential standard for judging education and will also provide a dynamic educational experience. All educators have models or paradigms that guide their thoughts and practices. In most cases these models remain unexamined. The challenge for Christians in this era, is to examine their models for education to make them explicit and to undergird them with biblical

foundations. Fackre (1987:157) contends that models suggested by various biblical foundations provide guides with which to consider past, present and future educational efforts. Several foundations of education can be identified in the Old and New Testament. What follows are some biblical paradigms or mandates in the Bible so far as education is concerned.

### **2.3.1 Educational mandate in the Book of Deuteronomy**

Deuteronomy chapter six is seen as one of the models of education. In Deuteronomy 6:1,2,4-9 (RSV), Moses exhorts the people of Israel to remember God's activities in their history, to teach God's commands and above all, to love God:

Now this is the commandments, the statutes and the ordinances which the Lord your God commanded me to teach you that you may do them in the land to which you are going over to possess it, so that you may fear the Lord your God so that you and your sons and your son's son, by keeping all his statutes and commandments which I command you,...talk about them when you sit at home when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. Tie them as symbols on your hand and bind them on your foreheads. Write them on the door frames of your houses and your gates.

Moses' teaching is directed to the people of God who are called to relate their faith in God to all of life. Tennent (1984:67) observes that this passage from Deuteronomy promotes insight about the goal, the teacher, the student, and the setting of biblical education.

#### **2.3.1.1 The Goal of Biblical Education**

The educational mandate Moses gave in the last section of the text requires passing on the commandments of God to next the generation. For Moses as an educator, the ultimate goal is to foster a love of God expressed in loyalty and unqualified obedience. To love God is to answer a unique claim, (a special response to God) to be obedient, to keep God's commandments, to heed them, to hear God's voice, and

to serve God. This means that transformation in one's life may depend on how much love one has for God. The teaching of Moses is challenging hearers to a total life response to God characterized by heartfelt devotion.

### **2.3.1.2 The Teacher of Biblical Education**

From Moses' perspective as a good teacher, teaching is the particular responsibility of parents and Deuteronomy chapter six focuses on this role. In the ultimate sense, God is the teacher in biblical education. God is the author and discloser of all truth, and both educators and students stand under this truth. The truth can be communicated in a variety of ways, always involving a relational dimension. A relationship of love, trust, openness, honesty, acceptance, caring, support, forgiveness, correction and affirmation is to characterize interactions between teacher and student. Richards (1975:314) contends that the teacher, like parents, is called to model the love of God which he or she hopes to encourage students to follow.

### **2.3.1.3 Content of Biblical Education**

The essential biblical education according to Deuteronomy chapter six are the commandments, decrees and laws of God which Moses was directed to teach. But this content is vitally related to the whole of life. The content of God's revelation is to be taught or impressed upon the people, to be discussed at various times, to be tied and bound to one's body, and to be written public and readily observed locations. The content is both foundational and radical. It is foundational in providing the basic truth and structure upon which all life is nourished or affected. Radical in the sense that it was a kind of education which aims towards a change. Thus both stability and

growth are assured to the extent to which the content of education is based on God's revelation.

#### **2.3.1.4 Setting for Biblical Education (Teaching Moments/Occasions)**

The setting for teaching as described in Deuteronomy indented above includes all those situations in which parents can impress upon their children the commandments of God. There are various occasions when teaching is to be done: at home, walking along the road, lying down, and getting up. God's commandments are to be present even as symbols upon people's hands and foreheads, and the frames of houses and gates. The whole of life provides situations in which people can be disciplined in ways of God. Moses being a good example of an educator exhorts the people of Israel to remember God's commandments and to teach them. The context for this teaching is the home, in which people learn to relate their faith in God to all of life. The educational moments described in the book of Deuteronomy also entails celebration. It is celebration in the sense of encouraging participants to praise God. God is praised for his gracious activity, care, providence, judgment, justice and righteousness. Participants in this educational event are called by Moses to recognize their utter dependence upon God and to respond to obedience to divine demands in all spheres of human activity. Pazmino (1988:24) therefore confirms that in addition to liberation, celebration is an outcome of education that is biblical in character. Festivals are also moments when great lessons are taught. The Passover served as teaching and learning moment when the Israelites were reminded of their salvation history (Ex. 12:14, RSV).

### 2.3.1.5 Resource Materials in Biblical Education

Some identifiable resource materials were first, the law. In Deuteronomy chapter 17: 11 (RSV), Moses said to the people of Israel to act “according to the instruction which they give you, and according to the decision they pronounce to you...” Second, manna was used as a resource material (Ex.16:32, RSV). Third, as Moses recommended, they also used symbols: “ And these words which I command you this day shall be upon your heart... tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads” (Deut. chapter 6:6-8, RSV). From the above we can say that contemporary Christian educators have great lessons to learn from what has been described in the book of Deuteronomy.

### 2.3.2 The Psalms as Educational Material

The Psalms served as a religious prayer and praise books. It also served as a religious instruction material in the temple. David, Sons of Kora and Asaph were great teachers who were remembered with great wisdom who taught their generation. In Psalm. 78:1-8 (RSV), Asaph instructs his generation as follows:

Give ear O my people, to my teachings. Incline your ears to the words of my mouth . I will open my mouth in parable, I will utter dark sayings from of old things we have heard and known, that our forefathers have told us. We will not hide these truth from our children; we tell the next generation about the glorious deeds of the Lord...so the next generation might know them- even the children not yet born... Then they will not be like their fathers, stubborn, rebellious, and unfaithful, refusing to give their hearts to God.

Wherever the need arises for what God has said and done to be transmitted to succeeding generations, then there is a context for Christian education. Both the OT and NT communities have a shared memory or history. Followers of the living God are not to forget, but rather to learn from the victories and failures of people in the past. In the OT times, the family was the primary setting for education. According to

Barclay (1959:11-48) in exilic and post-exilic times, the agencies of education also included both synagogues and schools.

### **2.3.3 Educational mandate in Nehemiah 8:1-18**

Another biblical educational foundation is found in the book of Nehemiah. Following the return of the exiles from captivity, Ezra reads the law to the people (Neh. 8:1-18, RSV). Ezra's ministry is an instrument for renewal, in the life of the community, those able to understand are assembled to hear God's word. The hearing and heeding of God's word issues in the restoration of life and worship. Pazmino (1988:25) noted with clarity that when God's word is clarified people can understand. When people see the implications of biblical teachings, then they can respond in ways that are pleasing to God. We wish to submit then that the tasks of education include enabling others to come to an understanding of God, divine revelation, and expectations for personal and corporate life. The responsibilities of educators or teachers include: (i) proclamation, that is, reading, speaking, or sharing of God's Word; (ii) exposition, that is, the translation and explanation or opening up of the meaning of God's Word; and (iii) exhortation, that is, the suggesting of direct application and response for those who hear. It must be noted that unlike the educational mandate in Deuteronomy, Ezra's instruction is an example of education that goes beyond the immediate family situation to include the whole nation.

### **2.3.4 Wisdom Literature**

Crucial in understanding of education from the perspective of the OT is the concept of wisdom and in particular, as it is found in wisdom literature. In the Hebrew world wisdom which was viewed intensely as practical, resulted in successful living. A

special group of persons was endowed with the gift of wisdom and had the responsibility of sharing their advice for successful living. Hubbard (1962:1333) affirms that wisdom in its fullest sense was only to be understood in relation to its source mainly God. This means that wisdom in its fullest sense belong to God alone as noted in the Bible (Job 12:13ff, RSV).

The universe and man are the products of his creative wisdom (Prov. 3:19ff ; Job 10:8, RSV). Natural and historical processes are governed by his wisdom, which includes an infallible discrimination between good and evil and is the basis for the just rewards and the punishment which are the lot of the righteous and the wicked (Isa. 28:23-29; 31:2, Ps.1, 37, 73, RSV). Hubbard (1962:1333) concludes that biblical wisdom is both religious and practical. Stemming from the fear of the Lord, it branches out to touch all of life...Wisdom takes insights gleaned from the knowledge of God's way and applies them in the daily walk. In this regard, the researcher wishes to give credence to the notion that education at its best must be theocentric (God centered), seeing God as the source so far as the OT is concerned.

### **2.3.5 The New Testament and the Education Ministry of the Church**

In the NT, the OT patterns of education persist, but the followers of Jesus are provided with a new agenda for their educational efforts. One of them is most explicit in Matthew 28:18-20 which is the core text in this work. It is a difficult task to teach obedience. Yet there is the promise that Christ's very presence, as well as his authority, will empower his disciples to disciple others, be it in the home, the Church, or the classroom. The challenge posed for current efforts in the mission Churches is this: Are Christians being nurtured and taught all that Jesus taught? If so,

there is a basis for affirmation and continued reliance upon God's gracious undertaking. If not, there is a challenge for careful evaluation and renewed efforts. In addition to this educational commission, the whole pattern of instruction of Matthew's Gospel shows how teaching was conducted in the early Church.

### **2.3.5.1 The Gospel of Matthew as Educational Material**

Matthew's Gospel is a teaching manual for discipling Christians. According to Barker (1969:264), there are five major sections in the Matthew's Gospel and they comprehensively address major areas of the Christian life. For him there are three elements that the Christian community shares with its members: a vision, a mission, and a memory. The first teaching session is the sermon on the Mount (Matt.5-7 RSV). This passage contains Jesus' teaching on the personal and social ethics of the kingdom and provides a vision for participation in the kingdom. Matthew 10:1-42 records Jesus' charge to the twelve disciples, outlining his teaching on mission. Jesus sent out his disciples as an extension of his own ministry. The third teaching section, Matthew 13:1-52, includes the parables of the kingdom in which Jesus teaches about redemptive history. The kingdom has small beginnings, but grows in the midst of an evil world. The history of the kingdom provides a framework for understanding past, current, and future developments in the mission of the kingdom and this deals with memory.

Matthew 18:1-35 contains Jesus' discourse on Church discipline in which he describes the nature of his disciples' commitments to one another in love and truth. This passage addresses the area of mission as related to a local body of disciples who are called to model community of love, healing, reconciliation and justice. The final

section, Matthew 23:1-25 contains Jesus' teaching on eschatology. The happenings at the end of the present age with the in breaking of the present age of God's kingdom fulfilled on earth are described. Thus, the focus again is on vision. The NT model of Christian teaching, then, centers upon the shared Christian vision, mission, and memory as the followers of Jesus Christ seek to be faithful to God's calling in the world.

### 2.3.5.2 Educational Agenda in the Gospel of Luke

Another agenda which needs to be taken note of is the method of Jesus. In Luke 24:13-35 (RSV) methods from the master teacher (Jesus), were outlined with his discussion with two disciples on the road to Emmaus.

That very day two of them were going to a village named Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem, and were talking with each other about all these things that had happened. While they were talking and discussing together with each other, Jesus himself drew near and went with them. But their eyes were kept from recognizing him. And he said to them, "what is this conversation which you are holding with each other as you walk?" And they stood still, looking sad. Then one of them named Cleopas, answered him, "Are you the only visitor to Jerusalem who does not know the things that have happened there in these days?" And he said to them, What things? And they said to him, "concerning Jesus of Nazareth," who was a prophet mighty in deed and word...but we had hoped that he was the one who was going to redeem Israel...He said to them, "How foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken..." And beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the scriptures concerning himself....They asked each other, "Were not our hearts burning within us while he talked with us on the road and opened the scriptures to us?" They got up and returned at once to Jerusalem. There they found the eleven and those with them, assembled together and saying, "It is true! The Lord has risen and has appeared to Simon." Then the two told what had happened on the way, and how Jesus was recognized by them when he broke bread.

Key components of this teaching episode are discussion (v. 14), open inquiry (v.17), correction and clarification (vv. 25-27), role modeling (vv.30-31), and the need for response (vv.33-35). Whereas this educational encounter includes the dimension of declaration as evidenced in Jesus' exposition of the scriptures, it also includes the dimension of dialogue that enables the disciples to be engaged not only at the level of their minds, but also includes their affections, wills, and actions. Here is educational

encounter that calls for a head, heart, and hand response to the good news declared by Jesus. Jesus' approach in interacting with these disciples includes three noteworthy elements. First, Jesus asks them questions (vv.17-19). The master teacher knows the answers to the questions, yet he wants his students to think for themselves. Second, Jesus listens. He hears the response to the questions he asks. Teachers often fail to listen to students and allow adequate time for thought. It is only after questioning and listening that Jesus both exhorts these disciples and opens the scriptures, explaining their meaning.

Stein (1978:15) comments concerning Jesus' teaching that he used a wide variety of methods. Stewart (n.d.:64), also submits that Jesus' teaching was made up of some general principles and particular features. The general principle - Jesus' teaching was authoritative but according to Anthony (2008:114) he was not authoritarian; Jesus trusted in the power of truth to convince his hearers. He wanted people to think for themselves but did not force or impose on his hearers. He lived what he taught. This means that Jesus incarnated his message in his life and ministry.

Before commanding his disciples to serve and love one another as he had loved them (Jn13:12-17,34-35), Jesus demonstrated the full extent of his love by washing his disciple's feet. He loved those he taught. Jesus loved his students, his disciples, in a way that indicated the deep longings of every heart for an intimate relationship with another person and with God. The relationship of love with Jesus was also characterized by equal concern for truth as the master teacher communicated it. Jesus' teaching was oral instruction. It was occasional in nature and elicited by quite casual events. It was adapted to his audience, and he used illustrations and parables.

These principles help one to understand the character and nature of the Master Teacher and provide insights for Christian educators in their ministry.

### **2.3.6 Wisdom from the Holy Spirit**

Wisdom from the Holy Spirit is another important factor which needs to be considered seriously. Effective teaching and learning require the continuing presence and work of the Holy Spirit. Teaching itself is described as one of the gifts bestowed upon the church by Christ through the Holy Spirit (Eph. 4:7-13; 1Cor 12:27-31). Teaching is not only a Spirit-endowed and motivated gift, but teaching also requires that the teacher be continually filled and guided by the Spirit in the teaching and the learning process. The biblical foundations for Christian education are multiple but can be woven together to provide an impressive and well planned education ministry of the Church.

### **2.4 CONCLUSION**

In this chapter attempt have been made to examine the historical and biblical foundations of Christian education. It was observed that the Word of God serves as an essential standard for judging every meaningful Christian education both as a theoretical and practical endeavour. God's Word should, therefore, be considered as the primary source for Christian educators upon which all truths should be assessed. The challenge for Christian educators, therefore, is to pursue an education that is Christian which is defined by biblical teachings. History cannot be sidelined so far as Christian education is concerned because it provides insights for current and future needs. In a popular *Akan* adage, it is said, *tete w4 bi ka, tete w4 bi kyerl*, literally meaning "the past has something to tell, the past has something to teach". History

has a lot to offer in all disciplines of which Christian education is not an exception. Christian educators in the mission Churches today can then carefully assess how certain factors hindered effective educational efforts and thus discern a realistic means that will guide future educational ministry. The next chapter focuses on the concept of Christian education and examines personality development in the light of Christian faith.

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## CHAPTER THREE

### THE CONCEPT OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION AND TRANSFORMATION OF PERSONALITY

#### 3.1 INTRODUCTION

In chapter two, the foundational issues of Christian education were examined emphasizing historical and biblical foundations. It is also realized that the history of Christian education can help guide present and future ministries. It has also been established that effective Christian education can be defined only in terms of biblical teachings with good theological base. This chapter explores the meaning of education and the concept of Christian education and its objectives. The chapter also deals with the Church, its meaning, marks and functions. Furthermore, it shall concentrate on transformation in relation to one's personality and finally look at how the Church serves as an agent of transformation.

#### 3.2 MEANING OF EDUCATION

For us to be able to arrive at a clearer understanding and meaning of Christian education, there is the need to have a good understanding of the word "education". Yount (2008:5) referring to a debate with Terry, an educational expert in a philosophy class in 1974 postulated that the term education has its etymology in Latin roots: *educare*, which means "to train or to mold," and *educere* meaning "to lead or draw out." *Educare* emphasizes the preservation of knowledge and the shaping of the next generation in the image of their parents and that calls for direct instructions, subject mastery, and becoming good, reliable worker. *Educere* emphasizes the preparation of a new generation for changes that are to come.

*Educere* calls for questioning the givens, and creating new ways of seeing the world. He further submits that maybe education was supposed to draw out the natural gifts from students. In this sense education is an endeavour of drawing something out of students. It is defined as an endeavour that leads or draws the student out of something. That “something” could be ignorance, poverty, lifestyle, attitude, unhappiness, and even sin. Nigel Lee (2001:2), however, argues that the word education is often used today with an expanded meaning to cover the opposite process as well. According to him, today, by education, it does not only mean what is drawn out of someone. It also means what is put into someone which could be called indoctrination or “inducation” as coined by Nigel Lee. This means that they are both addressed to the whole person, not to only part of the person concerned.

Nevertheless, we shall use the word education in a broader sense to cover both that which is taken out of someone which God had previously put into them as well as that which is being implanted in someone from God’s world. Education, therefore, is a process of encouraging the development of knowledge and virtues in human beings and by incorporating them into his personality from outside. Miller (1957:40) then rightly describes it as a process whereby the accumulated wisdom of society is passed on to its members, and at the same time, a process whereby members of a society reach out for new knowledge. Education is not information or knowledge.

Aggarwal (2003:15) quotes Whitehead that “a merely well-informed person is the most useless bore on earth.” This means that education is not synonymous with just receiving of information and knowledge. One’s mind is not to be stuffed with all kinds of knowledge. Information and knowledge should lead to constructive thinking

and application to daily living. Aggarwal continues to explain that by education we mean whatever broadens our horizons, deepens our insight, refines our reactions, and stimulates our thought and feeling. It includes all influences - cultural, economic, geographical, political, religious, social and spiritual. An educator, therefore, is one who does not just impart knowledge and information but one who facilitates to lead people to constructive thinking, such that one's horizon is broadened, insight is deepened, reactions are refined and thoughts and feelings are stimulated.

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Groome (1980:20) cites Cremin by defining education as deliberate, systematic and sustained effort that transmits, evokes or acquires knowledge, attitudes, values, skills or sensibilities as well as outcomes of that effort. We are of the view that the strength of his definition is in his emphasis on education as “a deliberate, systematic, and sustained activity.” With Groome’s words “deliberate” and “intentionality”, he raises another important aspect of educational work. To approach something deliberately means to give a careful thought. To be intentional means to plan for something to happen.

Having considered what education stands for, we then deal with the concept and the meaning of Christian education. Here it is instructive to note that the term education in “Christian education” has a very different meaning but there are some aspects of the definition of education which are relevant to what Christian education really is. For example, Christian education can never be mere receiving of information or instruction in the Christian faith.

### 3.3 WHAT IS CHRISTIAN EDUCATION: SCHOLARLY POINT OF VIEW

In dealing with the concept of Christian education, the most important question to consider is what is Christian education? Tye (2000:9) believes that it is important to consider such a question because it determines what we do in the name of Christian education. That is to say, our understanding of what it is will influence and shape what we do, why we do it, and how we go about this vital ministry of the Church.

Tye (2000:9) cites Melchert that:

If we are unclear about what it is or what we are looking for in the process, the best we can hope for is to get to where we are going part of the time by accident. Our people and our God are entitled to expect more from us than that. The Church's educational ministry should not be carried out by accident. We need to have some clarity about what we are doing.

The researcher is in agreement with Tye in the above statement because if one does not understand a concept, attaining its objectives would be very uncertain and it could only be attained by accident. It is therefore, very important to have a clearer meaning of Christian education. Very often when the words "Christian education" are mentioned, people think automatically of "Sunday school," and education for children. Christian education may mean more than that. As cited by Taylor (1976:11) Shinn describes Christian education as "the effort to introduce people into the life and mission of the community of Christian faith." Persons offered that introduction may then decide whether they will adopt that life and mission. It is then a process of continuous introduction. It is the work of the entire Church in all of its life; and it brings to people the opportunity and demand to make a decision. Considering Shinn's view, Christian education involves every person in the community of faith.

In support of Shinn's view, Vieth (1957:17) also submits that Christian education introduces the learner to knowledge about God, man's relationship to God, the Bible, the Church and the meaning of Christian living. But this does not end with

knowledge. It seeks to touch the learner's whole life that it may become his purpose to do the will of God. Considering Vieth's point of view, we believe that effective Christian education aims at life transformation.

Megill (1998:4), defining Christian education in more holistic terms, said it is a process of nurturing the total family of the Church in the Christian faith, taking into consideration the needs of the whole person, his unique situation, and his total environment and family. According to Megill, the educational ministry involves the children, youth, and adults in the Church and even extends to one's immediate environment as she referred to Dobler (1963:8) that education within the Church is also evangelism, calling people to commitment. In this sense every member within this teaching-learning fellowship is a teacher to people within its fellowship and to the unchurched. Nevertheless, to a certain extent the teaching function of the Church has been and should be delegated to certain individuals or groups to perform on behalf of all as submitted by Dobler (1963). Miller (1957:54) cites Case by defining Christian education as:

The effort to make available for our generation-children, young people, and adults-the accumulated treasures of Christian life and thought, in such a way that God in Christ may carry on His redemptive work in each human soul and in the common life of man.

This means that Christian education involves all age groups, and the task is to bring all these age group of Christians into the right relationship with the God of Jesus Christ and his fellows, so that by grace the individual may do the task to which he is called. Our own definition then begins with affirmation of what others have said. Christian education for us is a humanitarian discipline which extracts and develops those gifts given by God to each person; and inculcates and develops those special graces, general virtues, general items of knowledge to be communicated from God to

every person in accordance with Jesus Christ as the incarnate Word of God in consonance with scripture as the written word of God.

It is a ministry that engages people in the understanding of Jesus' commandment to love God and to love our neighbour so that one will be responsible to his environment. It attempts to help people experience life in Christ and as a result people transmit a witness of love to the world. Christian Education addresses the whole human being and that it involves body, spirit and mind. It involves not only the whole person, but also all of God's creation as it moves people to learn how to relate to God, neighbour and all of God's creation. Specifically, in the local Church we think of Christian Education as encompassing every activity, which attempts to spiritually uplift the members of the congregation and it is not restricted to any one learning environment. For us then Christian education involves prayer, singing, Bible study, and virtually all activities that take place in the congregation. Christian Education therefore involves events that form and transform people and their environment. Our definition of Christian education expands to include activities and events that call together communities for the purpose of strengthening the Church through the strengthening of individuals and groups spiritually and in their daily walk with Christ.

The researcher wishes to state that Christian education is multidisciplinary in nature and that any attempt to define it depends on subjectivity. It is therefore not possible to give one universally accepted definition of Christian education. One significant fact to note about Christian education as expressed by Anthony (2001:13) is that it requires a lifelong learning and is best accomplished in the context of a caring

community that meets periodically in both small and large assemblies. Small group activities allow for personal accountability whereas larger assemblies facilitate corporate worship, fellowship, prayer, and exercise of spiritual gifts. Christian education is more than merely teaching Christians.

### **3.4 OBJECTIVES OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION**

To understand the objective of every subject there is the need to have a clear idea about the nature of objectives. According to Powers (1981:33), objective is to provide a focus and also to serve as a magnet within an ongoing enterprise. For example the objective of a construction project is to complete a building. That is the focus but there may be many other objectives under it. For example, the foundation must be completed, though completing the foundation cannot be substituted as the final objective. The objective act as a magnet pulling an organization towards its ultimate purpose. In dealing with the objectives of Christian education we are trying to point out the purpose of one's efforts in Christian education. Just as it is important to define the concept of Christian education, it is equally important to know why it is being done. If it is unclear as to how education should be done in the Church, it would end up with outcomes which are not intended for. Powers (1981:32) citing Aleshire expressed that in dealing with the objectives of Christian education the questions we need to pose are: what is it that Christian education should do? How does it support the other task of the Church?

To trace the purpose of Christian education, one can think of the example of Jesus. He was very clear as to the purpose of his ministry. Using the words of the prophet Isaiah, he claimed his goal of bringing Good news to the poor, proclaiming release to

the captives, recovery of sight to the blind, letting the oppressed go free, and proclaiming the year of the Lord's favour (Lu. 4:18-19). This means that, for Jesus the purpose of Christian education in the Church is to lead all people to wholeness (spiritually, physically, psychologically) so that their transformed lives would in turn draw the unbelieving community to Christ.

Tye (2000:21) submits that this core purpose of Jesus' ministry shaped what he did, where he went, what he said, and with whom he spent his time. His ministry was empowered by the clearness of his vision. A clarity of purpose, therefore, will provide shape to and empower the educational endeavours in the Church. Considering the objectives of Christian education, Vieth (1947:17) submits that it could be summed up in the one word "discipleship." A disciple is one who has committed his life to God through Jesus Christ and knows that he has been accepted by him. He has a living faith in God, with convictions about God's relation to the world and to mankind, and man's dependence on, and obligation to God. He has a Christian attitude toward himself and others. The objective of Christian education is to provide a proper understanding of Jesus Christ, who he is, why he came, what he did, what he will do, and what he is like. It includes the understanding of the lordship, his deity and humanness, as well as his roles as servant, saviour, creator and king.

For Megill (1998:4) the objectives of Christian education are: (i) to help believers grow in knowing, understanding and appreciating their cultural, biblical and Christian heritage. (ii) to help people know and understand who they are in their specific situations with others. (iii) to help people grow in their relationships with

God and with their neighbours. (iv) to help people know, understand and interpret what is happening in their environment in the light of their Christian faith. This means that the purpose of Christian education is to equip people to understand what life is all about to enhance their relationship with God and with their fellow human beings.

In an interview with some Christian education committee members of the selected mission Churches a critical question, what is the purpose of Christian education, was posed. One said the purpose of Christian education is to teach the Bible. Another said it is to apply the Bible. A third committee member responded that it is to provide nurture and support for one's faith journey. A fourth person said that it is to transmit the Christian heritage to the next generation. All the four answers seem to be good and worthy purposes of the educational ministry of the Church. In an interview with Rev Kofi Amfo Akonor, the National Director for Church Life and Nurture of the P.C.G, he stated that any information he gives is given on behalf of P.C.G. He then gave the purpose of Christian education as follows:

1. To promote and ensure adequate understanding of the great affirmations of the Christian Faith.
2. To relate personal and community life of Church members to Christian moral standards so that ultimately our children may be brought to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and grow into Christian maturity.
3. To ensure that Church members receive relevant programmes on burning socio-political and cultural issues.

The overall aim of the Syllabus is to help members grow in relationship with God, fellow human beings, and the environment as well as the self (self transformation).

The Very Rev Ofori Akyea, the National Director for Christian education of the MCG, also gave the objective of Christian education in an interview as bringing up the children in the Church in a Christian way so that morally they would be upright to do what is expected of them when they grow. He added that, it is very important to catch them young so that they would not depart from the word of God but be abreast of time in the word of God. Mrs Faustina O. Yeboah, Regional Director of Roman Catholic Education unit of Greater Accra Dioceses on behalf of the Episcopal Chairman of Education for the RCC submits that the aim of Christian education can be inferred from the mandate given by Jesus Christ to the disciples to “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations...teaching them to observe all ...” (Mathew 28:19-20, RSV). For her, the aim of Christian education is to teach children to attain Christlike behaviour. She describes Christian education as holistic and states that the emphasis is not knowing but becoming. She said that Christian education should transform a person from one state to another.

Wyckoff (1955:23) asserts that the aim of Christian education is to nurture the Christian life. For him nurture involves Christian instructions, the redemption of the individual, and the redemption of the society. Christian education cannot, therefore, achieve its purpose unless it instructs the people in the basic aspects of the Christian faith. In our view, we could not be satisfied with instruction alone, to live Christian education at the intellectual level. It should aim at formation of Christian character. This involves three concerns: developing lives of integrity; developing lives that are socially aware; and living lives in full awareness of God. Groome (2003:22)

maintains that the purpose of Christian education is “to enable people live as Christians, that is to live lives of Christian faith.” For him, this means “to help people live their lives according to God’s own vision and intention for all people and creation,” a vision that includes efforts on behalf of justice, human dignity, and freedom for all.

The researcher wishes to state that just as there is no one universally accepted definition of Christian education and that every congregation can define it in terms of its activities so is the purpose of Christian education. The objectives of the educational ministry of the Church could be numerous too, depending on how one defines it. It should also be noted that Christian education is a ministry of the Church and because of that it is very important to know what the Church and its aims are. This will help Christian educators to give appropriate aims of Christian education.

### **3.5 THE CHURCH: ITS MEANING**

Organization and programme for Christian education must be understood and planned in the light of the nature and purpose of the Church. The educational ministry is created by the Church and has no independent life of its own. It exists only within the total life and work of the Church. According to Vieth (1963:9), the Church is maintained in obedience to Christ’s command “Go therefore...teaching them to observe all things I have commanded you” (Matt. 28:19-20).

Miller further states that the nature of the Church and the quality of life in the Church determine the kind of education that goes on. This means that one cannot talk about Christian education without talking about the Church and vice versa. It is, therefore,

important to know what the Church is, its marks and purpose. According to Grenze (2000:464) the Greek word translated "Church" in the New Testament is *ekklesia*, a compound word composed of *ek*, meaning "from" or "out of," and *kaleo* "to call." Together, the two words mean, called from, or out of, denoting a company of people chosen and called. There are three stages of meaning from the perspective of the Greeks, Jews and Christians. In the understanding of the Greeks, it specifies a lawful assembly of persons assembled in a city to transact a business. They are called out of the whole population.

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In addition, early Jewish scholars, translating the Hebrew Scriptures into Greek (the Septuagint), chose *ekklesia* to render the Hebrew word *qahal* "assembly" as indicated by Grenze (2000:464) In the context of the OT the term was applied to the company of Israelites in the wilderness, whom God had chosen and called out of Egypt (Acts 7:38). When employed in the Christian or New Testament sense, *ekklesia* designates a company or assembly or congregation of people chosen by God, whom he had called and separated from the world. Considering *ekklesia* from all the three perspectives we realize that the assembly was called out for a purpose. The word "Church" is used in two ways in the NT. In its primary sense it means a visible, local congregation, or an organized company of disciples meeting at a given place and for a given purpose. More than ninety of the hundred and fifteen instances in which "*ekklesia* is rendered Church in the NT," says Scott and Liddel (1977:206), are applied to a visible, local congregation or assembly. A Church is a congregation of baptized believers united by covenant to carry into effect the will of the Lord Jesus Christ. The visible Church is known as the Church militant. Needless to say, one particular group, organization or denomination cannot claim to be the visible Church

as expressed by Cully (1960:159). On the other hand the word “Church” as Wyckoff (1955:72) explains is “the true Church which includes the cloud of witnesses who have gone before us, and even now surround us as believers”. For him the visible Church that we see is only a reflection of the true and invisible Church. The invisible Church is known as the Church triumphant.

### **3.6 MARKS OF THE CHURCH**

There are some identifiable characteristic features of the Church. Grenze (2000:468) outlines four marks of the Church as one, holy, catholic, and apostolic. These four attributes, known as “marks” or “notes,” provide an excellent framework to consider traditional views of the nature of the Church.

#### **3.6.1 The Mark of the Church as One**

The confession of “one” Church is an indication of unity in the Christian community. While the term “one Church” does not occur verbatim in scripture, it is clearly implied in the great Biblical images of the “People of God” and “the Body of Christ”. In Ephesians, unity is plainly directed when all the members are called to one hope, with “one Lord, one faith, one baptism, and one God and Father of us all” (4:4-6, RSV). According to Boonzaayer (1999:30) the Church as addressed in the book of Ephesians assumes unity not only for the local congregation but for all congregations; it is addressed as a microcosm of the Church, not a portion of the Church.

### **3.6.2 The Mark of the Church as Holy**

The Church is “holy”. Boonzaayer continues to argue that holiness is an essential characteristic, and not a production of the Church. It refers more to her identity rather than a trait. Yet the Church, is composed of human beings who frequently do not demonstrate this attribute of holiness. This reality calls into distinction the difference between the holiness of the Church and the sinfulness of its members. The Church is, therefore, described as holy not because her members are sinless but because of the holiness of the head, Jesus Christ. Moltmann (1993:354) supports this view that “the Church is holy because God shows himself to be holy in the grace of the crucified Christ acting upon it.” As the fate of Christian’s salvation rests in the grace of God, and not in their own merits, so the holiness of the Church is founded on who it belongs to, and is set apart for, not on the actions of its members.

### **3.6.3 The Mark of the Church as Catholic**

The third mark is the catholicity of the Church. The word “catholic” is commonly understood to mean “universal.” The Church is universal in the sense that it is always inclusive of all believers. It is without geographical, racial, or organizational boundaries. But it is catholic in another sense. The Church has a mission to the whole world. This mission is to include everyone irrespective of race, nationality or sex. All individuals in the body of Christ are a part of the whole whose head is their Lord. Sabev (1993:13) argues that universality of the mission, inclusivity, and oneness in Christ are all characteristics of the whole and complete Church known as “catholic.”

### **3.6.4 The Mark of the Church as Apostolic**

The final attribute or mark of the Church is that it is apostolic in nature. By apostolic it means that which is related or derived from the teachings of the apostles. McGrath (2003:503) submits that these teachings were given initially to the original apostles of the New Testament and that fundamentally, the term “apostolic” means “originating with the apostles” or “having a direct link with the apostles.” The Church’s apostolic character signifies that the Church is the Church of Jesus Christ. In the same way it identifies Jesus Christ as the originator and cornerstone of the Church (Eph. 2:20, RSV). The Church is not a mere movement that started with Christ and can reinvent and restructure itself at will. Its essential teachings are eternally founded on Christ who provided them (1 Cor. 3:11). To maintain the link there is the need for an effective Christian education in the various congregations.

## **3.7 FUNCTIONS AND PURPOSE OF THE CHURCH**

According to Erickson (2007:1060) the Church has been charged to carry out Christ’s ministry in the world. To accomplish this, certain functions must be met. He pointed out four functions of the Church which are: evangelism, edification, worship, and social concerns.

### **3.7.1 Evangelism**

Earley and Wheeler (2010:55) submit that the word evangelism literally means “to communicate Good news.” Good news as they describe it, is Jesus’ death on the cross to pay for the sins of humankind and open the way that leads to God. The meaning of evangelism as Good News still holds as described by Niles (1951:96) as “one beggar telling another beggar where there is bread” For him, the bread

represents the Living bread who is Jesus Christ. Evangelism is telling someone how to meet the Living bread, Jesus Christ. The one topic emphasized in Jesus' last words to his disciples is evangelism. In Matthew 28:19 (RSV) he instructs them, "Therefore go and make disciples of all nations." This means that the Church is to preach and teach. The Church, therefore, exists that teaching may be done through preaching, Christian education and other means.

### 3.7.2 Worship

Another activity of the Church is worship. As specified by Segler and Iradley (2006:4), the OT term translated "worship" *shachah*, to mean "to bow" or to "prostrate" oneself. From the Greek perspective the term *proskuneo*, meaning literally "to kiss the hand towards one" or to "prostrate oneself" is an act of religious devotion usually directed towards a deity. Worship is derived from the Old English "worthscipe," meaning worthiness ([en.wikipedia.org/wiki/worship](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/worship)). It implies that worship is the recognition of the worthiness of a higher being. Underhill (2001:193) defines worship thus: "The absolute acknowledgement of all that lies beyond us. " Worship, the praise and exaltation of God, was a common OT practice as can be seen particularly in the book of Psalms and that the people of God are presented as recognizing and declaring his greatness. In this aspect of its activity, the Church centers its attention on who and what God is. It aims at appropriately expressing God's nature, not at satisfying their own feelings. The purpose of worship, therefore, is to glorify, honour, praise, exalt, and please God. The nature of the worship God demands is the prostration of our souls before Him in humble and contrite submission. The implication of worship for Christian education is that Church members should be taught adequately the greatness of God. The education ministry

of the Church should programme its activities in such a way that the greatness of God may be revealed to Church members.

### **3.7.3 Edification and Fellowship**

According to O'Donovan (2000:164), provision of fellowship and mutual encouragement among the community of believers are another significant functions of the Church. He illustrates this with a burning stick which burns well when it burns with other burning sticks. Also through sharing of experiences in the Lord, by teaching the word of God, and by using the gifts of the Holy Spirit, individual Christians are built up in the love of God and in their faith in Jesus Christ. The education ministry of the Church should, therefore, aim at promoting programmes that will enhance fellowship and edification of Church members.

### **3.7.4 Social Concerns**

Cutting across the various function of the Church is its responsibility to perform acts of Christian love and compassion for both believers and non Christians. According to Wirt (1968:19), Jesus cared about the problems of the needy and the suffering. Thus, Christians need to be caring and have concern for needy and suffering society. In its teaching role the Church must proclaim concern for the needs of all people. The love of the Christian is to reach out, not only to those of the household of faith, but to men everywhere. Love, which dwells in the heart, must express itself in deeds. Failure to help reveals a heart void of love for God. This the Church must teach. There is a clear imperative in Scripture assigning to the Church this teaching responsibility. That includes teaching its members social concern. Really the purpose and meaning of the Church are far ranging. But educationally it is clear that the Church is

designed to support a purpose inherent in the nature of the new life God gives believers in Christ. This purpose, the Bible hints in the words of Paul: God has chosen us “...to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the first-born among many brethren” (Rom. 8:29, RSV). According to Richards (1975:20) all life has a character and nature of its own and that life that God gives to believers in Christ has its own nature and character. Simply put, the life that Christians are given in Christ is God’s own life. As that life grows in them they become more and more like him. The focus of Christian education is supporting believers to be like Christ. Every effective Christian education aims at transforming lives to be like Christ. For this reason there is the need to discuss what personality is and how life is transformed since in one way or the other, in transformation, personality is involved.

### **3.8 WHAT IS PERSONALITY?**

There is the need to consider what personality is and how it develops. Various definitions point to the idea that personality involves a pattern or global operation of mental systems. According to Burgur (2010:4) personality can be defined as a consistent behaviour pattern and intrapersonal processes originating within the individual. The first part of this definition is concerned with consistent pattern of behavior. Personality researchers refer to these as individual differences. The most significant point here is that personality is consistent. These consistent behaviour patterns can be identified across time and across situations. The second part of the definition concerns the intrapersonal processes. Intrapersonal processes involve all the emotional, motivational, and cognitive processes that go on inside of a person that affect how he acts and feels.

It is important to note that, according to the definition, these consistent behavior patterns and intrapersonal processes originate within the individual. However, we wish to submit that this does not mean that external forces do not influence personality. Certainly the way parents raise up their children affects the kind of adults the children become. Its implication for Christian education is that parents should bring up their children according to the dictates of the Christian faith. Laurent (2008:11) explains that the word personality describes that which is personal, that which belongs to one human being only. For him, to have a personality means to possess one or several qualities, one or several defects, or even a turn of mind, an original character not like that of others, but truly one's own and free from imitation. Some important things to note so far as personality is concerned are that first it is unique, each individual is different, he responds differently, his hopes, his aspirations, his ambitions, and his achievements are different from those of other persons.

Personality involves a relationship between the individual and God that is of special nature, in which he can if he will respond to God as a person, partake of the nature of the divine within his own life, and thus know and do the will of God. When people are restored to the image of God, they have more of an affinity to God than they have to things and other creatures. Wyckoff (1955:102) rightly argues that it is at this point that transformation takes place in which one's spirit is more truly with God than with the earth or the society. The question then is, what is the place of personality in transforming a Christian to be like Christ?

### 3.9 HOW PERSONALITY DEVELOPS AND BECOMES CHRISTIAN

As to how personality develops, three factors need to be taken into consideration. They are heredity, environment, and the developing of self. According to Jones and Burks (1936:89) heredity is the transmission of traits of various kinds from parents to children through the germ cells of the parents. These germ cells, called the genes, determine that the child, provided he has fairly normal environment, will develop particular traits similar to those of the family from which he comes. The traits then become part and parcel of his personality. If one's parents are Christians, the probability of growing to become a Christian is high.

By environment is meant the totality of a particular surrounding conditions as described by WordWeb Dictionary. The environmental factors that exert pressures on one's personality formation are the culture in which he is raised, his early conditioning, the norms of his family, friends and social groups, and other influences that he experiences. The environment to which a person is exposed plays a substantial role in shaping his personality. According to Adedeji (1985:48) teachers must be aware that since no two individuals have the same social environments, they will normally exhibit different personality patterns. Wyckoff (1955:111-112) then states that in Christian education it is considered that the most real aspect of the individual's environment is the existence of God. Thus God, society, and nature define the larger conception of environment. The third factor in the development of personality is developing the self. According to Baumeister (1999:93) the self is the individual as known to the individual. To put it in another form, the self is "I" as I know myself. For Baumeister, the self consists of two things, the physical body and a set of definitions (identity). A person's identity can be roughly defined as the totality

of his or her answers to the question “who are you?” The identity includes an interpersonal aspect (including social roles and reputation), a concept of a person’s potentiality, and a set of priorities and values. Other writers have used “self” to refer to all or part of an individual’s personality. For example, Wicklund and Eckert (1992:3) equate self with one’s “behavioural potentials”.

Tesser (2002:185) suggests that self is “a collection of abilities, temperaments, goals, values, preferences that distinguishes one from another...” As to how personality transforms to become, Christian reference is made to one of the two views of knowing God, being the immanence of God. The word immanence, for Packer (1973:29) means “within” and it carries the idea of something completely immersed in another thing. In this sense it is said that God is one with his creation and cannot be separated from his creation. Those who hold this view contend that something of a divine spark or force is found in each person. Therefore, to know God and to be transformed, the seeker must know himself and discover within “the self” the qualities of God as noted by Richards (1998:22). In support of this assertion, Wilhoit (2008:137) refers to Calvin in the first chapter of his Institutes that “without knowledge of self there is no knowledge of God.” This means that without self-consciousness there is no consciousness of God; without consciousness of God there is no self-consciousness. For those who hold this view, knowing God does not involve knowing objective information about God or even knowing him as a person. Knowing God involves a communion with an inner force, the “Divine within.”

The researcher agrees with Richards and Calvin that knowing God does not involve propositional knowledge about God but much depends on a personal and unidentifiable experience that is distinct to each believer. Based on this idea we strongly hold the view that teaching of the Bible alone cannot bring about transformation in the life of a person. Christian education then should not only aim at acquisition of information and knowledge of God but must include a real encounter with God which can really bring about transformation.

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### **3.10 THE CHURCH AS AN AGENT OF TRANSFORMATION**

We will now examine how the Church functions as agent of transformation. By transformation is meant the process of changing the whole person to become healthier, lighter, more energized and aware as described by Philips (2010:1). According to him, in transformation one's awareness expands, mindset is redirected, and emotional bumps and past bruises are healed. For him real transformation has spiritual connection and takes place inside in one's being. This means that one begins to awake and become aware of his true nature, purpose, strengths, as well as potentials. There is a change in old beliefs, habits, and life style. One experiences spiritual rebirth and decides to make an effort to live a life full of joy, love and purity.

From the perspective of the Christian faith, transformation is simply being "born again" or experiencing a change from within. According to Obed (2008:146) to be born again means the Holy Spirit quickens one's spirit and becomes spiritually alive and renewed. He continues to affirm that if genuine change fails to occur at the point where one claims to have received Jesus as his personal Lord and Saviour, then no

transformation will follow in his life. The Church then has a significant role to play in the transformation process. It must be noted that much of education is concerned with helping people know what their teachers know. Christian education is concerned with helping people become what their teachers are. Richards (1998:33) then opines that the education ministry of the Church is concerned with transformation. For him we “teach” to communicate and to build up the life of God which faith in Christ firmly plants in the believer. Gradually one is driven to Jesus’ words to capture the meaning of teaching and learning as they are understood in Christian education: Transformation then is attained as a result of the Church’s teaching ministry (Richards, 1998:33). Wyckoff (1955:110) contends that it is a basic conviction among Christian educators that in becoming Christian, personality takes new quality. The identity of the individual remains the same but his spirit and life are so renewed and changed (transformed) that he may in a very genuine sense think of himself as a new person. It should, however, be noted that the Holy Spirit operating constantly in the Church is the agent of transformation.

### **3.11 CONCLUSION**

In this chapter, the researcher tried to deal with the meaning of education leading to the objectives of Christian education. What the Church is, its true marks as one, holy, catholic and apostolic have been dealt with. Furthermore, transformation of a Christian so far as personality is concerned and transformation through an encounter of the self and with God, with the Holy Spirit as the agent of change have also been treated. In the next chapter, the study shall examine and discuss the teaching and learning process as integral part of Christian education as pertained in some of the selected mission Churches.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### TEACHING AND LEARNING PROCESS OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION IN SOME SELECTED MISSION CHURCHES

#### 4.1 INTRODUCTION

In the preceding chapter, the study considered what the Church is, its marks and functions, the concept of Christian education, transformation of Christian life and personality. The study then discusses the teaching and learning process of the Church as an integral part of Christian education. The scriptural representation of the Church as a body, an organism that grows and matures, also implies a teaching function for this institution. Also, the recognition of the gift of teaching by the NT (Rom. 12:4-7; I Cor. 12:28) assumes the necessity of teaching in the local Churches. Though teaching and learning cannot be Christian education in its entirety, they play a very significant role in the educational ministry of the Church. It is clear that teaching is the significant missionary assignment of the Church and whether people accept the message or not teaching must take place. Anthony (2002:36) supports this assertion by saying that Bible study is at the heart of Christian education.

Tolbert (2000:13) puts it this way: “Teaching is our ministry. Jesus is our model. People are our passion. Transformed lives are our product. And heaven is our goal. This is the essence of Christian education.” In this chapter we shall look at what teaching and learning are, the Church as a school, the Sunday school concept, the Christian educator or the teacher and his qualifications, age groupings in the teaching and learning process, methods of teaching in Christian education, the Bible as a resource

material and the Holy Spirit in the educational process. We shall finally look at supervision and evaluation of teaching and learning in Christian education.

#### **4.2 TEACHING AND LEARNING**

Teaching deals with behavior and for that reason a definition of teaching must include one's behavior. Teaching is more than talking, and learning is more than listening. Megill (1998:5) defines learning as the process by which behaviour is originated or changed through practice or training. As a process it means that learning does not take place instantly. It should also be noted that learning is a change in behaviour. However, we cannot say that any change in behavior is learning for the taking of certain drugs, such as cocaine, marijuana, cause change in one's feelings and action to misbehave. This cannot be described as learning. Therefore in defining learning, emphasis is laid on change caused by practice or training, that is, through experience.

It usually concerns a discovery of a solution to a problem or thought, memorizing the found solution, and applying this solution to the problem. As gradually one understands more from what he learns and begins to practice it, the learner owns what he has learnt. The Christian educator's challenge is to create and manage Church members learning experiences that lead to understanding and applying God's Word that leads to spiritual discovery and growth. From the point of view of Christian education, teaching then is the process whereby qualified leaders in the Church guided by the Holy Spirit and using Scripture as their authority creatively structure and manage formal and informal learning experiences in such a way that learners are:

1. Led to discover what Scripture says, what it means, how it applies to their lives, and to respond appropriately to its message.
2. Guided in the formation and expression of godly character, qualities and essential Christian attitudes in keeping with scriptural emphasis.
3. Directed in the development of a distinctly Christian lifestyle in obedience to the will of God and the pattern of Christ, and encouraged to live it in the power of the Holy Spirit.

Effective teachers should understand that learning being a process brings about transformation in a person's life and the change does not come overnight. They should not therefore expect a single lesson to accomplish all that God desires in a learner's (members of the congregation) life. Christian educators should exercise patience and faithfulness in ministry week after week to see lives formed in the image of Christ.

#### **4.3 THE CHURCH AS A SCHOOL**

Powers (1981:11) citing Aleshire article describes the Church as a school and not just having a school. To be a school means education is a central reality in the life of the Church. Aleshire expressing his full view said:

For the truth is that to be a disciple is to be a learner. And to be a disciple of Christ is to be one absorbed in knowing him. And to be joined with each other in discipleship of Christ is to be joined in a fellowship of learning. With crystal clarity the picture leaped from my memory of Jesus surrounded by the twelve, issuing that invitation, "Take my yoke upon yourself and learn of me." Did they not always call him "teacher?"

Considering the fact that the disciples saw themselves as learners who learned from Jesus Christ and Jesus demonstrating himself as their teacher portray the idea of the Church as a school as expressed by Aleshire. The idea of teacher and learner

situation in the Church as it is in a school suggests the Church being a school. However, the statement that the Church is a school might be considered an overstatement. But the Church in many significant ways is a school. The Church seems to be a school inasmuch as it tries to abide by the commandment of Jesus in Matthew “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations ... teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you...(Matt. 28:19-20, RSV). We wish to agree with this assertion inasmuch as the commission is to teach “them to observe all”, for teaching is a natural and valued activity in schools. The Church is a school in the sense that the teaching of faith is not an adjunct to the tasks of the Church. It is really a part of being a Church.

It is appropriate to think of the Church as a school inasmuch as its task is helping persons learn to love God and fellow human being. Of course, the Church is not just a school. It is far more since the outcomes of its efforts to educate should be persons whose lives have been transformed. In some ways it might be true to say that not only is the Church a school than most of the institutions that go by the name. Through the grace and powerful presence of God, the Church can do in its education what most schools could only wishfully dream of doing. Another channel by which true education is disseminated is through the church. The church should be a school where Christians are being taught in a systematic way “all things” which Jesus Christ commanded.

#### **4.4 THE SUNDAY SCHOOL MOVEMENT**

The Sunday school idea is an important aspect of Christian education. It could be said to be the main source of Christian education in Africa as captured by Megil

(1998:84-89). The idea of Sunday school started with industrial revolution that occurred in Europe during sixteenth and seventeenth Centuries. Children were employed in factories and lived hopeless lives since parents neglected them. It aimed to teach the youngsters reading, writing and knowledge of the Bible. Sunday schools were first set up in the 1780's in England by Robert Raikes, a Christian philanthropist and editor of the Gloucester Journal. He was supported by many clergymen to provide education to working children on their one day (Sunday) off from factories. The movement rapidly grew and spread to American colonies because conditions were favourable. In 1785 it was reported that 250,000 children were attending Sunday School and there were 5000 in Manchester alone. No child was charged for a fee, rather each child received a coin and a free meal which served as motivation to stimulate interest as early as 1811. Some few challenges like financial difficulties, some preachers preaching against the idea that it was a hopeless assignment and many others noted by Miller (1957:29-31) cropped up.

The Sunday school movement was non denominational. By 1824, because of favourable conditions the American Sunday School Union was formed which pioneered a lot of activities like establishing schools and preparation of study materials. In 1907 the World Sunday School Association was formed but later became the World Council of Christian Education which merged with World Council of Churches in 1972. But denominational rivalries broke up the union and it lost its effectiveness. Each denomination picked the idea and operated its own Sunday school.

#### **4.4.1. Horace Bushnell and the Sunday School Concept**

Originally the kind of teaching that persisted so far as Sunday School was concerned was that no matter the situation of a child, he remains a sinner until he was of age to decide about his faith. Such a theology was inhuman and dangerous and built frustrations in children. In 1846 Horace Bushnell picked this area of study as his thesis. His thesis proved that a child born to and brought up in a Christian family was already saved and does not need any radical or emotional conversion experience which will give him salvation like mature people. For Bushnell (1969:4), “the child is to grow up a Christian, and never know himself as being otherwise.” He meant that the spirit and character of the parents at all cost influence the life and character of the children. Hence the Christian family becomes a means of grace, a channel for the Holy Spirit to effect salvation of the children. Bushnell was therefore described as the great emancipator of children from a devastating repression as indicated by Miller (1957:30).

#### **4.4.2 Sunday School Today**

Today, the term Sunday School implies a period on Sunday when Bible teachings are given to children in the Churches. The time of Sunday School depends on the local situation. In the selected Churches, Sunday School takes place almost at the same times the adults have their Sunday morning worship service. Today, Sunday school implies more than education of the children. In many instances Sunday school refers to the youth and adult teaching programmes.

#### 4.5 AGE GROUPINGS IN THE TEACHING AND LEARNING PROCESS

One basic need in Christian education is the age groupings in the teaching and learning process. Vieth (1957:36) contends that every Church is a complex institution dealing with all ages. In almost all the questionnaire administered, it was observed that respondents indicated that there are three groups or divisions that could be identified in every Church which are children, youth, and adults. In an interview with Rev. Kofi Amfo Akonor, the P.C.G. National Director for Church Life and Nurture, he made it clear that there are even sub-divisions within some of the groups for teaching purposes. He pointed out that the P.C.G. has the following groups: Children's Service, Junior Youth (JY), the Young People's Guild (YPG), Young Adults Fellowship (YAF) and the Adult groups (Men's and Women's Fellowships). These groups are known as generational groups. He continued to say that, taking the children service, there are various sub-divisions as follows:

Beginners (Nursery Class: 4-5 year olds)

Primary (Lower Primary: 6-8 year olds)

Junior (Upper Primary: 9-11 year olds)

Concerning groupings in the Church we wish to state that it is very important because every group has its implication for effective Christian education. In an interview many respondents said many factors have to be taken into consideration. They include : methods of teaching, selection of appropriate teaching materials, content of lessons and length of lessons. The National Director for Christian Education in the MCG, The Very Rev Ofori Akyea also points out that in Christian education the church cannot do away with age grouping. He said among the children in the Church, there are a session of them who cannot read and write (3-5 years) and

cannot easily understand certain basic concepts. Other age groups ranging from 6-9 years and 10-12 years are also present in the Church. For him varied approaches are used in teaching this category of children. Mrs Faustina O. Yeboah, Regional Director of Roman Catholic Education unit of Greater Accra Dioceses on behalf of the Episcopal Chairman of Christian Education committee, supports the idea of learning and age groupings by saying that the science of teaching indicates that there are differences in the way people of various ages learn a material content. She explains that the ability to understand is not the same for everybody. It is, therefore, important for Christian educators to seek proper ways of contextualizing the main discipleship programmes to meet the needs of the various groups.

#### **4.6 RESOURCE MATERIAL FOR CHRISTIAN EDUCATION**

It was observed that almost all who were interviewed identified the Bible as the first resource material. Apart from the Bible, Osei Nimako, P.C.G. Catechist of Calvary congregation at Kade said, other Christian literature and other relevant books are used. Others specifically mentioned hymn books and catechisms. In addition to the Bible, Samson Kwayisi, ordinary member of St. Theresa of the Child Jesus Catholic Parish mentioned that Bible commentaries are very common in all Theological bookshops and whoever needs them have access. He reiterated that these days most of the Church members have the opportunity to pursue theological training and, therefore, have access to most of the theological books. For him Church manuals and Church constitution cannot be left out. Rev Theophilus K. Sakado, a PCG Minister at Kade pointed out that children learn by “showing.” According to him, this involves the use of pictures and other audio-visual aids. Derrick also submitted that devotional materials like *Light for our path*, *Daily Guide*, *Our Daily bread*, *Church*

*almanac* and many others form part of the resource materials which are used by various families in their homes, Churches, and work places. Projectors, video clips, Television shows and many others form part of resource materials in Christian education as noted by Father Amo Oduro, a Roman Catholic Priest at St. Catherine Parish at Kade.

#### **4.7 THE HOLY SPIRIT IN THE TEACHING AND LEARNING PROCESS**

According to Yount (2008:75) the role of the Holy Spirit is essential in the supernatural transformation of learners through Christian education. Christian education without the Holy Spirit is meaningless. Dickason (1991:121) contends that “the Holy Spirit is sovereign, most wise, and ultimate teacher of spiritual truth. He makes God’s truth relevant to the person involved and enables applications that cause life and growth. This means that teaching and learning effort are in vain unless they are in cooperation with the Spirit. He is of the view that the Holy Spirit helps the Christian educators by giving them discernment of God’s truths and empowering them to instruct students in the way that produces spiritual transformation. As the author of God’s written revelation, the Holy Spirit helps both teachers and students to understand the Bible’s message through illumination. The purpose of illumination is to understand Biblical truths. Only the Holy Spirit creates the necessary change so that believers can achieve the goal of becoming more like Christ. The Holy Spirit makes Christian education dynamic and distinct from any other type of education.

Zuck (1998:2) argues that three factors define Christian education: (i) the centrality of God’s written revelation (ii) the necessity of regeneration, and (iii) the ministry of the Holy Spirit. Discipleship is the goal of the teaching ministry of the Church. That involves a defined process, but must also be depended on the Holy Spirit in every

aspect of teaching: Bible study, development of the lesson plan, and management of learning experiences. He must be invited into the entire teaching/learning context. Life transformation is the need, Christlikeness is the goal, and the Holy Spirit is the key dynamic. We, therefore, say effective teaching ministry is dependent on the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit then plays a vital role in Christian teaching.

#### **4.8 THE PRAYER IN THE EDUCATIONAL PROCESS**

According to De Beer and Jaarsma (2000:12) every Christian activity has some dimension of prayer in it. The teaching and learning process in Christian education is no exception. Prayer and the word give the education process its power. The Christian educational structure which is desired to build in the life of a Christian (Children, Youth, and Adult) is based on prayer and the word. In the word God speaks to Christian learners and in prayer they speak to God. Through prayer the Lord implants the new life that must ever constitute the basis for Christian nurture. In this sense, the saying “Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it” (Ps127:1) becomes relevant. The Christian teacher takes the needs of his pupils to the Lord in prayer in his personal devotions. Parents pray for their child’s teacher and the child is to be encouraged to pray for his teacher. We think strongly therefore that there can be no Christian education without prayer.

#### **4.9 PRINCIPLES THAT GUIDE THE BIBLE IN CHRISTIAN TEACHING**

The goal of teaching the Bible should be life transformation and not just information.

Bracke and Tye (2003:3) had this to say that

We live in an “information” culture. One of the growing fields of information is the information systems management. We are hungry for data, for facts, for more and more information. We often approach Bible study from this perspectives in which the goal is the learning of “facts” about the Bible.

With reference to the above statement, Bracke and Tye are not saying that knowing the fact about the Bible is not important. They are of the view that such information is crucial starting point which makes the study of the Bible more easier especially when one knows the books of the Bible and their sequence. Yet knowing facts and conveying information about the text does not mean learning has taken place as has already been understood. Effective teaching of the Bible then should bring about change of behavior or transformation as a goal. Bracke and Tye therefore conclude that “to teach the Bible faithfully is to have transformation as the main goal and it results through an encounter with God who empowers transformation. The second concern so far as the teaching of the Bible is concerned is the process of teaching and learning. If the assumption is that the Bible is to be taught in ways that all involved will understand and be transformed, then certain dynamics of teaching and learning should be taken into consideration. There is the need to know how people learn. The brain which is the primary organ of learning should be explored. According to Blacke and Tye (2003:5) this will help the skilled teachers in planning their teaching lessons.

Another factor that informs effective teaching of the Bible concerns culture. Culture refers to the way of life of a given community or people. Culture includes behaviour, speech, traditions, beliefs and values, institutions and their structures, relationships and how they are organized, and ways of thinking and doing things. They believe that teaching the Bible in the Church is an intercultural educational experience. Intercultural educational experience concerns how one teaches and learns across culture. Cultures of modern world and cultures of biblical times are different. People of these context speak, behave, believe, relate, and organize their lives in different

ways. Misunderstanding of different cultural contexts can lead to distortions and incorrect interpretation of biblical texts. Another aspect of culture that needs to be considered is the different cultural perspectives of the people in the Church. Although people may belong to the same Church, they may have been brought up in a different Church tradition and may bring that cultural perspectives into the teaching and learning process of the Bible. Again people also come from different social positions in the community that carry cultural perspectives - about how wealth and poverty, for instance, are viewed. An awareness of these cultural lenses is important, too. There is also the need to explore the place of the Holy Spirit in Christian teaching.

#### **4.10 CONCLUSION**

The study has dealt with the significance of teaching and learning process in Christian education. The Church as a school and those who qualify to be teachers or educators have been discussed. We also tried to establish the relevance of age groupings, content and resource materials in Christian education. The study has unearthed the place of the Holy Spirit, prayer, and the necessity of evaluation in the teaching and learning process. The principles that guide the Bible in Christian teaching with respect to cultural context has also been dealt with. The study then focuses on the relevance of indigenous education in Christian education in the next chapter.

**CHAPTER FIVE**  
**THE RELEVANCE OF INDIGENOUS EDUCATION TO CHRISTIAN**  
**EDUCATION**

**5.1 INTRODUCTION**

In chapter four we discussed the teaching leaning process of the Church as an integral part of Christian Education. The Christian faith has made giant strides in Ghana. However, it appears to have minimal transformational effect on Christian life as noted by Tienou (2001:156). Anderson (2001:275) points to the lack of relevance of missionary theology. That is to say in many cases the Gospel of Jesus Christ is not being effectively communicated in the indigenous context. This may be, at least in part, a failure of Christian education. In view of the statement of Hayes (1991:40) that “the value of evangelical Christian education will rise or fall on the soundness of its theological foundations,” it is imperative that indigenous Christian educators describe a theology that will buck up an effective Christian education ministry in the local Churches.

Are there some aspects of Akan traditional education that can be integrated into Christian education that the Akan Christian would be at home with? Is it imperative that as African or Akan people, Christian educators can take some aspects of Akan indigenous education that will enhance Christian education ministry? This chapter seeks to explore the elements of indigenous educational system and its relevance to Christian education ministry of the mission Churches.

## **5.2 INDIGENOUS EDUCATION SYSTEM**

Indigenous education is not the formal Western type of education which possesses formal learning patterns and resources like schooling and books. It is an effort put forth by the elderly to inculcate societal values into people as a result of adequate indigenous knowledge. According to Farrant (2004:30) its teachers are mostly unpaid, yet they prepare young people for such important skills as the provision of food, shelter, clothing and the general mastery of the environment; they introduce them to nature, the seasons and their effects. Opuni-Frimpong (2012:98) adds that this type of education is provided for, from the cradle to the grave.

## **5.3 CHARACTERISTICS OF INDIGENOUS EDUCATION**

Indigenous education is noted for its collective and social nature. It is seen as the collective activity and the mutual help that extends from the family to the community at large. Its cornerstone is the extended family and brotherhood derived from it. This type of education is communal in nature. Indigenous education is goal oriented and it is completely effective. It believes that each child should be given proper training because he exists as a future leader and backbone of his communities. Character training and respect for elders and other essentials for community life are aimed at in the training process.

Farrant (2004:30) points out that there are no drop-outs because the elders make sure that those under training are well trained at every stage and are promoted automatically and not based on selection. Kwamena-Po (2011:4) rightly asserts that the main education agency is the home and the teachers are parents and elders in the family. The brain behind is ingraining in the young members of the community good

character and good health. The second purpose is also to let them be abreast of their history, culture and beliefs that will prepare them to be socially responsible in their community. Gyekye (1995:8) describes the Akan traditional education as being rich in indigenous philosophical thoughts and are highly embedded in oral traditions of which proverbs, riddles, folksongs are not exception. There is no way one can see these African philosophical ideas in any document for indigenous African philosophy is not a written philosophy. It is written in the minds and hearts of the people. However, Nana Addo Danquah 111 (2004:72) trying to identify the nature of Akan documentation sees Akan indigenous symbols, like Black Stools as indigenous forms of documentation and referred to them as “books.” He also points out that there is no good reason to reject these philosophical thoughts because they lack written sources.

Gyekye further argues out that if one rejects the philosophical thoughts of Africans, then it implies that they are not able to conceptualize their experience. Opuni-Frimpong (2012:100) argues that indigenous education aims at helping members of a society to have access to knowledge and experience. For him education deals with what the society refers to as “relevant” experience. That is the knowledge that one acquires should be able to lead him to live responsibly and become useful in his society. The process of transmission could be formal or informal and institutionalized.

#### **5.4 EDUCATIONAL MOMENTS IN INDIGENOUS EDUCATION**

Education moments imply time, period, and stages in person’s life in which teaching and learning take place. The process of learning cuts across all stages of human life.

That is, it runs through the various developmental stages in life, from early childhood to the period when one attains old age. In identifying the educational moments in the Akan traditional system, one can mention the rites of passage - birth, naming ceremonies, puberty, marriage and death. It should be noted all these stages exist in the church as well. Opuni-Frimpong (2012:113) citing Prempeh noted that Akan traditional education has specific values that have to be transmitted to specific age groups at some specific times. He explains clearly that the kind of method and content that could be adopted to teach a six (6) year old child would not be the same as how one would teach a person when he is sixteen (16) or eighteen (18). In the same vein this is applicable and relevant to Christian education. Serious consideration has to be given to the content of study of a particular subject matter within various age groups in the various local congregations. It is also important to note that the approach with which a Christian child would be taught will be completely different from the approach that will be used to teach an adult Christian. For instance, for children to understand Biblical concepts, the concepts should be explained in simplest forms illustrating them with pictures and using other forms of audio visual aids.

According to Abdou (1968:17) when a child reaches the age of six (6) or eight (8), the mother, in case of a girl, the father in case a boy, assumes the main responsibility of his education. In a complete village setting the boy will begin to accompany his father to farm. The small girl will fetch water with her mother, go to market and carry the purchases, sweep, or wash the dishes, later a little at a time, the range of activities widens. The young girl will begin to cook certain dishes, grind with her mother, go shopping at the market or sell certain food items. Learning of some of

these practical domestic activities could be included in the Christian programme of the Church so that the children and the youth of the church will have the opportunity to learn them. We observe here that in the indigenous system of education, children are very much involved in the education process and it has been very effective. Christian educators in the church could adopt this approach so that teaching and learning process would be more learner centered rather than teacher centered.

#### 5.4.1 Birth and Naming

In naming ceremony for instance, Opuni-Frimpong (2012:113) insists that for the first time one hears and learns “when we say yes it is yes, and when we say no, we mean no,” signifying or insisting on choice of what is truth and abstain from what is a lie. He explains that during this moment no one tells that a person is being educated, but it is a moment that one learns the desirable values. In Christianity when one believes and receives Jesus Christ, it is said he is born anew or has received new birth. Such a person baptized with water receives a new identity and becomes a member of a new family (community of believers) who has certain rights and obligations to fulfill. This then calls for a period of education (convert classes). Just as in naming ceremony truth as an important value in society is learnt, the new believer is taught to live by the truth in his baptism.

#### 5.4.2 Puberty Rites as Moment of Education.

Puberty is the initiation from childhood to adulthood and it is an occasion for considerable rituals and ceremony. It is the coming of age for boys and girls in the society. Puberty rites (*bragor4* in the Akan context) are performed to usher the young adult girl into full adulthood (Quarcoopome, 1987:113). According to Asare

Opoku (1978:112), Puberty rites involve seclusion of the young men and women in a camp away from home for a period of time during which the instructions and the entire experience given them help to bring about physical, emotional and psychological changes in them. They are taught the secrets of womanhood and are given lessons in sex education and birth control. The return to their homes after the rites signifies a rebirth into a new stage in life. The brain behind the puberty rites is to educate the person concerned to be well equipped for marriage. Being encamped at a place for two to three weeks for learning shows how important the education of the youth is in the indigenous setting. Much time (two to three weeks) should be set aside in the Church for the children and the youth, secluding them to be given enough of such teachings as it is received when one undergoes puberty rites. One would argue that in the Church, there are camp meetings for the children and the youth. It is observed that during their camp meetings almost all their teachings are theoretical. During puberty, teaching is also given on how to relate to men properly so that they can maintain a good marriage and their dignity in society.

According to Nana Owusua Dufie, *Shemaa Kyeame* of Kyebi, the linguist to the queenmother of Kyebi, at puberty rites, girls who will grow to be women, wives and mothers are taken through much training like housewifery, dressing, child caring, and ideas about marriage to enable them to become good wives. They are shown how to clean all her parts as a grown up. All along, the young lady might not have had sex before and therefore the elderly women would teach her how to prepare to go and sleep with a man. In an interview with Mr Collins Adusei, a Senior Registrar at Asante Regional House of Chiefs, a traditionalist and at the same time a Christian, he said, the girl is taught to chew *nkyewil* (fried corn) before she goes to sleep with her

husband. This is to remove any bad odour from her mouth. He concluded that such rich teachings of the traditional education is not available in the Church and the Church should make an effort to tap them. The researcher is of the view that one cannot conclude outright that none of these aspects of learning takes place in the Church. Some of these are taught during premarital counseling but not all. The most important question to even ask here is, how many people benefit from such study? Those who benefit from premarital counseling are those who are privileged to be engaged in marriage in the Church. The above mentioned study areas could be integrated with the Christian education curriculum to enhance the Christian education programme of the Church. This can be done by tapping the rich experiences of the elderly members of the Church and also inviting traditional elders in the community to teach some of these indigenous aspects which are not directly found in the Bible.

Madam Grace Nyantakyiwa, an elderly women's Fellowship executive member of the Ebenezer Presbyterian Church at Kyebi, responded in an interview that she had the opportunity herself to go through the *bragor4* and testified that before the *bragor4* the parents took pains to speak to her to be very careful not to engage in any sexual act right from childhood. She said, when she first had her menstrual period, she was taken to the queen mother's house. The first thing the queen mother did was to apply a means to check and prove that she was a virgin. Madam Rose Konadu, an elderly Woman of the Methodist Church at Apinamang responded that she knows of a family house in Apenaman in Akyem Abuakwa which has become desolate because a girl in that house became *kyiribra*. *Kyiribra* means becoming pregnant before puberty rites.

Madam Konadu says, when a girl becomes *kyiribra* it brings serious repercussion on the entire family. Much seriousness should be attached to the teaching of premarital sex in the Church as it is done in indigenous education. There is some kind of emphasis placed on the repercussions associated with the *kyiribra* and this puts some fear into a person who had not yet gone through puberty and, therefore, desist from early sex. This aspect of indigenous teaching should be inculcated in Christian education programmes to check the problem of teenage pregnancy. Madam Paulina Frimpong of Boadua Catholic said children and youth of today are very difficult to control because of their access to a lot of dubious information from the internet. According to Paulina Frimpong, if the *Brakor4* were to be practised today, it would be very difficult to have the youth engaged in it.

In an interview with the Women's Fellowship of the Methodist Congregation at Kyebi, it was observed that most of the Christian Churches think the performance is associated with idol worship and do not encourage their members to indulge themselves in the practice. Madam Charlotte Antwi, an elderly Church member at Methodist Church at Kyebi responded that most of the girls who have had higher education also think it is demeaning to expose their breasts for other people to see, therefore, they would have rejected proposal from their parents to subject them to puberty rites even if it were to be practised today. Many of the youth in an interview about *brakor4* responded that, that period was known as *bagyimi ber1* or uncivilized era and as such puberty rites are ignored. We wish to state that it poses a big challenge to the Churches to find a means to integrate the educative elements in the puberty rites to enhance the Christian education elements in the Church. This could be done if the blessing or the confirmation of the youth is given a critical attention.

The above discussion proves that there are a lot of things that can be learnt from the traditional system that can enrich Christian education in the Church.

### **5.4.3 Marriage**

Marriage is another developmental stage where education takes place in the indigenous set up. Marriage should not only be considered as a union between two individuals but as a bond between four families. This kind of union emphasizes the extended family system. In premarital counseling of Christian education, emphasis should be placed on the teaching of the extended family system. Before getting involved in marriage, the family members of the prospective marriage partners investigate as expressed by Nkansa Kyeremateng (2010:67) to ensure that one's choice is from a sound and healthy social background. Akan customs and tradition expect the man to be careful in searching for a wife. This idea of being vigilant in choosing a partner calls for serious prayer for God's guidance as one seeks for a marriage partner.

We wish to state also that though those seeking partners need to pray, they should also investigate as it is done in the traditional system. In Akan traditional set up when a girl is married she is expected to be well trained, in the sense of moral purity, modesty and diligence in the performance of household chores. A young man who wanted to get married, no matter his age would be educated by his parents or an elderly man to get the requirements that would lead to successful marriage before embarking upon it. Immediately the young couple starts having children the man takes a fatherly responsibility. As a result he learns to train, advise, support, defend and discipline his children. It is seen education commences that from the very

beginning of the marriage. In most cases much attention is not attached to post-marriage counseling in the Church. The Church should have post-marriage counseling programmes to help those who have just married and those who have married for long time. This will stabilize most marriages and reduce the high percentage of divorce. These good educational elements can be integrated into the Christian education curriculum to enhance the education ministry of the Church.

#### 5.4.4 Death

The significant moments during which education takes place are management crisis and bereavement. The traditional Akan have their own way of managing crises. During funerals, sympathizers go round to shake hands with mourners. They also give donations after they have been served with drinks. A lot of educational values are derived from this management. It is a communal affair. In case a husband dies, the widow goes through a period of mourning being assisted by other women helping her deal with the pain. For more than forty days other women accompany her. She is always confined or does not move alone to make sure she does not harm herself.

The widowhood rites (kunyay) and other practices during death in the Akan tradition are informed by their belief system. For example, during burial a typical traditional Akan believes that the side of the coffin in which the head of the dead person is situated should point towards home. Their belief is that the spirit of the dead person will move away from home if his head points away from home. An Akan Christian minister and elders of the Church cannot just neglect such concerns, because failure to address them can place victims in a very critical unbalanced psychological position. The Christian community has more to learn from the traditional system in a

more practical way. In the Christian community, at the time of death, the Church will visit and pray for the widow, conduct burial and memorial thanksgiving service for the dead and finally make donation to the widow and the bereaved family. The Church should go on further to learn from the traditional system by organizing specific and appropriate Christian widowhood programmes for some number of days that will keep up widows and other Church members who are affected by death.

#### 5.4.5 Games

Games play a very significant role in the initiation of the child and adolescent in social life. In traditional African society, children play according to their age. The child learns to live with children in the same age group. Through games they fulfill a determinant role and to work with others as a team. In working as a team they learn to socialize and become exposed to certain social roles in life. For instance, dolls are “married” to little boys in the same age group as the girl who is the “mother”, or both boys and girls play as being married. As indicated by Abdou (1968:24) it is undoubtedly true that while amusing themselves children learn a great deal about various behaviour patterns of adult life. The Church’s involvement in games has indeed been very minimal. Most Churches fully engage in games only during “Emmaus day.” Emmaus day is the first Monday after resurrection Sunday. Well planned Christian education programme should have both indoor and outdoor games in it. The church’s involvement in games will enhance socialization process in the Church.

## 5.5 SOME EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES FOR INDIGENOUS EDUCATION

Resources of indigenous education are the materials and means by which knowledge is being transmitted to individuals and groups in traditional education. Unlike Western or missionary education which was noted for resources like books and schools, resources for African traditional education are different and unique. Opuni-Frimpong (2012:112) citing *Skyeame Ampratun* lists some of the resources used as cultural categories such as festivals and traditional ornaments. He argues that though those resources are not documented in books, they are generally accepted by the indigenes of a particular area and also easily recognized in proverbs, dances, sound of drums, wearing of particular ornaments and the use of specific regalia on particular occasions. Nana Addo Dankwa 111 (2004:72), however, refers to the Black Stools as “Books” which serve as important resource materials in teaching the history of chiefs in particular communities during traditional leadership formation. Christian educators can adopt some of the indigenous resources to enhance the education ministry of the Church.

Another notable educational resource material in African traditional education is the use of adinkra and other traditional symbols. Some few example of the symbols that could be mentioned are *akoma*, *gye Nyame*, *owuo atwedie*, *eti nta* and *sank4fa*. (designs shown in appendix f). All these symbols have educational values and each has its own lesson to teach. *Akoma* , “the heart” portrays the idea of patience and tolerance. That is *nya akoma*, “take heart.” *Gye Nyame*, “except God” emphasizes the omnipotence of God’s power that he and only he can do everything. *Owuo atwedie* “the ladder of death” explains the mortality of humankind and the fact that death is an inevitable event. *Fi hankra*, circular house or complete house signifies

safety or security in the home. *Nyame bewu na mawu*, “if God dies I may die” means God’s perpetual existence or only God is eternal. Some traditional symbols that are normally found on top of linguist staff or *akyeamepoma* are for example the *sank4fa*, *eti nta*, *!s1n k1se1 na lgye ah4ho4* and many others also serve as resource materials. The figure *Sankofa* depicts a bird looking backward. Nana Addo Dankwa111 (2004:99) indicates that it is an idiomatic expression or figuratively it means that history should be a guide for the future. Akrong (2000:54) comments that *sank4fa* portrays the idea or aspect of development which means going back to our roots.

The *eti-nta* for instance is represented by a mythological man with two heads. The meaning of the double headed figure is that *eti kor4 nk4 agyina* (one head alone cannot hold consultation). This serves an educational resource in the sense that it has some good lessons to teach the community. The lessons that the *eti-nta* conveys among others are: (a) Participatory democracy brings about peace and satisfaction because everybody, irrespective of his position in life, feels a sense of belonging. (b) Since everybody has been consulted, it means that decision by consensus, has the blessing of the majority of the people. This means that dictatorial tendencies would not be tolerated. It also reminds us that cooperate decision is very important as outlined by Nana Addo Dankwa111 (2004:17). *!s1n k1se1*, the big pot portrays a sense of hospitality. The above mentioned symbols that have been discussed have theological significances that can benefit the learner in Christian education and at the same time make teaching easier for the educator. For instance, the symbol, *owuo atwedie obaako nforo* has some biblical inferences: Psalm 89:48 states “What man can live and can never see death? Who can deliver his soul from the power of

shoel?” (RSV) Hebrew 9:27 also states that “And just as it is appointed for men to die once and after that comes judgment...” (RSV). Furthermore, Genesis 3:19 confirms that “In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread till you return to the ground for out it you were taken, you are dust, and to dust you shall return” (RSV). All these biblical references point to the fact that every human being will die. When Christian educators are teaching the concept of death, ladder can be used as a good resource material that will be more understandable to the children, the youth and the adults of the Church. Children for instance, learn better when concepts are expressed in pictorial form. Indigenous symbols should be used in pictorial forms when developing teaching manuals for the educational ministry of the Church.

Manus (2002:49) suggests that “indigenous non-biblical material should be appropriated as resources for biblical studies in Africa,” but they should be “both theologically legitimate and contextually urgent. He proposes (2002:52) “folklorizing” which means “a retrieval of indigenous African narratives, folktales and poetry for reconstructing biblical theology in the context of African cultures” while eliminating the dehumanizing elements in the culture. This means that there are a lot of resources in the traditional set up of the Akan people which are not mentioned in the Bible but can be very useful in the educational ministry of the Church. Such resources, however, should not conflict with sound biblical principles.

## **5.6 SOME EDUCATIONAL METHODS IN INDIGENOUS EDUCATION**

Methods have to do with the techniques of teaching and learning process. It is dynamic, effective and inspirational as indicated by Aggarwal (2003:20). Below are some of the various methods employed.

### 5.6.1 The Use of Proverbs

Proverbs, for instance, stand tall from the rest of African folktales in terms of traditional education because of its educative and communicative powers that deal seriously with culture, politics and history as argued by Boateng (1983). They are used in most Akan expressions and sometimes the ability to use them, gives the speaker more recognition of intelligence and wisdom. Among the Akan, proverbs are expressed not only in words but in the language of the drums and the sound of the horn blown by the attendants of chiefs. Even patterns woven in cloth by weavers express some proverbial saying. One such pattern in *Kente* cloth is *Ti kor4 nk4 agyina*, literally meaning “one head does not go into council”. The brain behind this is that it is better if decisions are taken by two or more people. Akan proverbs could be very useful in Christian education. Some of the proverbs can be used in preparation and delivery of sermons. Appiah-Kubi (1999) asserts that they constitute a veritable instrument for citizenship development since they are used to educate, encourage, reprimand and advise. The following are some few Akan proverbs that address some concepts of responsible citizenship:

1. Truth: the idea of truth is expressed in a number of proverbs. One example is *pae mu ka 1y1 den, nanso Ima ahot4*. Honest confession is difficult to make but it brings peace of mind. This proverb means that it is important to admit truth openly as it will cause one’s conscience. The phrase *pae mu ka* for instance has direct or indirect link with the biblical text: For God has not given us the spirit of fear and timidity, but of power, love and self discipline. Christian educators teaching about truth can use this proverb to make it more meaningful.

2. Obedience and respect: Respect and obedience to the elderly and to authority and spiritual leaders, are observed and instilled in every Akan family (Gyekye, 1996). This attitude is expressed in the proverbial saying: *sI wo sen wanya tenten a wone no tiIn nnyI pI*, “if you are taller than your father, it does not follow that he is your equal.” This means that however well off a person is in life, it is his duty to give respect to those who are superior to him in age. This proverb will be very much useful to the Christian educator who teaches the youth to respect the elderly. The proverb can be used in collaboration with a Bible text like “honour your father and mother...” (Exodus 20:12, RSV) to make teaching easier.
3. Patience: the Akan proverb that demonstrates the idea is: *sI Ikwan ware a ewie Ipono ano*, however long the distance, it ends at the door. In other words, if there are some difficulties a person is going through in the course of a good life, they are bound to come to an end sooner or later, and it is up to the person who is going through such difficulties to wait patiently to the end.

Kahl (2000:80) argues that proverbs are the most reliable and authentic expressions of traditional value systems. He advises that Akan proverbs should be turned to because they express the desirable quality of human relationships to God and to one another. Considering all the uses which could be inferred from the use of proverbs, we wish to state that if they could be integrated in the educational ministry of the Church it would be more practicable, understandable and relevant to African or Akan Christians.

### 5.6.2 Nurturing and Mentoring

A method that cannot be lost sight of is nurturing people to identify with societal norms that bring honour and dignity to one's family. Much as one is prepared for his own achievement in African traditional education, he is also prepared for harmonious participation in community life. This means that one is not to be selfish. Gyekye (1998:35) argues that African society places a great emphasis on communal values and he cites examples as sharing, mutual aid, caring for others, interdependence, solidarity, reciprocal obligation, and social harmony. These and many others are learnt through nurturing. Refusing to demonstrate these values means one has not learnt.

Nurturing plays an important role in traditional education. In every good nurturing process, there is an atmosphere of love, peace, cordiality, sharing, caring, kindness, and compassion. Christian education without nurturing is never complete. The implication of indigenous education to Christian education is that parents and elderly people in the Church and in the various homes should live exemplary lives and create atmosphere characterized by love, peace, cordiality, kindness etc. which are tenets of good nurturing. Much education takes place unconsciously as children interact with parents and elders in the Church and in their communities. Mentoring is a method of teaching in which the learner learns by observing the educator as a role model. Normally the mentor is a person who has good name in a society and sets good example for others to emulate. This method of education in the Akan traditional society is mostly applied in leadership formation. Royals who are aspiring leaders are strategically sent to live with some particular leaders who have distinguished themselves in good leadership styles and are knowledgeable. Nana

Osei Tutu<sup>11</sup> was mentored by Sefwi-Waiwso Manhene, the late Nana Kwadwo Aduhene as cited by Opuni-Frimpong (2012:130-131)

### 5.6.3 The Use of symbols

The showing forth of traditional symbols and the *Akyeamepoma* ( linguist staff) is one of the means by which learning takes place. Anytime there is an occasion when the *Akyeame* (linguists) come out with their *Akyeamepoma* portraying some of the already mentioned symbols, then the atmosphere is set for learning. In this instance, no one tells whoever sees these symbols to learn. Whoever observes them and becomes inquisitive learns through questioning the elderly who explain the brain behind every symbol. It is interesting to note that all the traditional symbols have good lessons to teach. Theologians and Christian educators should begin to deal with the theological significance of the symbols so that they can be integrated with Christian education lessons to enhance the teaching and learning process of the church. A typical example of a symbol that appears on *Akyeamepoma* is a bird with a head turned looking backwards. This symbol is known as *sank4fa*. *Sank4fa* portrays the idea that history has something to teach. According to Akrong (2000:54) the mission with the idea of *sankofa* are trying move away from the inherited missionary negative attitude towards African culture and religion to come to terms with traditional religion and culture that will produce an authentic African Christianity. In dealing with the challenge of educational ministries, Christians can in fact, discern lessons from the past that provide insights for current and future needs.

#### 5.6.4 Confinement and Christian Education

Confinement is a process of keeping a person for a particular period with the purpose of training him to acquire certain skills that will enable him fulfill a particular assignment in life. It is mostly applied during leadership formation, traditional Priesthood and puberty rites. When people are nominated, elected or selected as chiefs or any other traditional leadership positions they are confined. It is important to note that confinement is a period of serious systematic education in the traditional system.

Among the people of Akyem Abuakwa, to be more precise at Kyebi, the person who is selected as the next *\$kyehene* (the Paramount chief of the Akyem Abuakwa traditional area) is confined in the house of *Ank4beahene* for more than one month and he is totally confined and does not go to his own house. During this period the person so selected goes through a serious teaching and learning process. Experienced and knowledgeable elders are assigned with this responsibility. According to \$sabarima Amponsah K4bea 11, the *Ank4beahene* of Kyebi, the selected elders are given such responsibility to make sure they closely monitor the selected leader to know his weaknesses and strengths. This is not to reject him but to help him. In Christian education, confinement as described in indigenous education is applicable in ministerial formation. There are good lessons that Christian educators can learn from the indigenous education so far as confinement as a method of education is concerned. The kind of seriousness attached to confinement in indigenous education is worthy of note. Those under training are not allowed to go to their own homes hence the term confinement. Christian leadership training should take a clue from this because in most of the seminaries some trainees move outside the seminary

without permission though it is the seminary's policy not to go out without permission. Opuni-Frimpong (2012:135) cites Addo Fening that the period of confinement lasts between four and six weeks and during this period the newly elected leader is taught the acceptable way of speaking in public, human relations, how to wear traditional cloth and proper way of dressing and how to dance at public gatherings. He is also taught state governance and how to conduct traditional meetings. At Trinity Theological Seminary, Legon where some of the Christian ministers are trained, they are given the opportunity to study various aspects of their ministry that would be helpful to them. We wish to state however that considering the activities that take place during confinement in indigenous education one can say that it is more practical than as it is in Christian leadership formation and it makes training more effective. Practical aspect of ministerial formation should be more emphasized.

#### **5.6.5 Ananses1m (FolkTales)**

*Ananses1m* (Folk tales) are stories that are formulated from Ghanaian or Akan traditional point of view in which the spider (Ananse) is the principal character exhibiting wisdom and prudence in order to survive in dangerous conditions. Though it is not a formal role, it can be seen as a means for education, socialization and the inculcation of morality into the younger generation. Ayite Nyampong (2008:48-51) discussing the role of the elderly in traditional society highlighted that in the traditional system the elderly continues to be productive more especially in the area of storytelling to children and youth. In telling Ananse stories, the Akan language, customs, cultural values and traditional beliefs are taught and learnt. Ananse stories can be relevant to Christian education. They are stories that really address real life

situations. However, we wish to state that Ananse story is dying out of the Akan traditional system and it is indeed a great deficit to the Ghanaian society. Christian theologians and educators should begin to retrieve such stories and in the cause of teaching Christian moral values, they can modify them to serve as introduction to their lessons.

### **5.7 AKAN CULTURAL OR MORAL VALUES**

According to Gyekye (1998:55-58) Akan or African moral or cultural values are those kinds or patterns of conduct that are considered most valuable and thus cherished by the Akan community or Africans as people. Gyekye indicates that when one considers these moral values across the entire continent of Africa, there seems to be some commonalities. Therefore, many a time, they are referred to as African cultural values even when we are referring to Akan moral or cultural values. Akan moral or cultural values could be used interchangeably within African moral or cultural values in this work.

Asare Opoku (1978:182) states that African cultural values are normally defined by religious considerations because as in African, religion and culture cannot be separated from one another. That is the reason why taboos, customs etc. have their compelling power from religion. However, Gyekye sees this, as a mistake since African moral values are also derived from experience of the people in living together to ensure a harmonious and common life. Thus moral values of the Akan people are aimed towards successful communal living, not forgetting kindness, compassion, generosity, hospitality, faithfulness, truthfulness, concern for others, and the action that brings peace, justice, dignity, respect, and happiness as some of

the moral values. It is important to note that selfishness is totally rejected by the society because of its egoistic tendencies. Considering the Akan cultural values, it could be said that they are not in conflict with Christian virtues described in the Bible as the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22, RSV). In this sense indigenous education is in harmony with Christian education. The most important question to ask is whether there is any justification to avoid or despise all cultural practices and old patterns of life as an Akan Christians? Or do we need to bring the indigenous knowledge systems face to face with the Christian ideas so that there will be integrative interaction that would bring about a kind of fusion between them that will lead to a relevant indigenous Christian education?

## **5.8 TOWARDS AN AUTHENTIC PRACTICABLE INDIGENOUS CHRISTIAN EDUCATION**

In a paper presented by Busia during the Conference of the Christian Council of Gold Coast in 1955 on Christianity and African culture, he raised a very serious concern as an Akan Christian and scholar. The core concern of his paper was a kind of question which was food for thought. Busia (1955:6) posed the question: Can the African become Christian only by giving up his culture, or is there a way by which Christianity can ennoble it? The brain behind this question was that there were some available African indigenous systems that must assist the Christian faith to reconfigure itself in its new cultural home as noted by Opuni-Frimpong (2012:51). A very serious concern that Opuni-Frimpong raised was that, Busia, after raising his thought provoking question did not further ask how African culture could as well ennoble the Christian faith in its effort to settle in African cultural soil? As an Akan sociologist of a reputable standing in the world of scholarship and at the same time a

Christian, S.G. Williamson, former Principal of the then Trinity College expected him to come out with his tangible suggestions which could have addressed both positions (Busia,1955:iv). Here are some few suggestions for discussion that would lead to us towards a meaningful and practicable indigenous Christian education.

### **5.8.1 Inductive Method of teaching**

Inductive method of teaching is the kind of teaching in which teaching is done from the known to the unknown. When Paul was in Athens, he endeavoured to lead the Athenians from worshipping the God they did not know, to knowing the God they worshipped (Acts 17:22-31). This accords with the inductive method of teaching. Gnanakan (2007:16) says “learning is most successful when we go from the known to the unknown. A child will learn from what is already familiar to him or her then grows to absorb additional information.” This is could be adopted by the church’s education ministry. Such a method would affirm that *Onyankop4n Twedeamp4n Kwame* (Almighty God) known to the Akan as the One who revealed himself to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and commanded Moses to teach the descendants of Abraham his laws. He is the One who was incarnated as the Son of God, and died for the salvation of humankind. If the Christian educators would approach the teaching process from the perspective of the inductive method, teaching and learning process will become practical, easy and understandable to bring about real change in one’s life.

### **5.8.2 Adoption of the Communal System in African Traditional Society**

The early Church lived in a community that resembled the communal system common in African traditional societies. It was in such communities that “...they

devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching..." (Acts 2:42,RSV), where "Now the company of those who believed were of one heart and soul and no one said that any of things he possessed was his own, but they had everything in common" (Acts 4:32, RSV). And "... all who believed were together and had all things in common" (Acts 2:44, RSV), the result was that "the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved" (Acts 2:47, RSV). The education ministry of the believer went on successfully because of the communal system. Ango (2006:7) supports this idea by saying:

African communalism, respect for elders and concern for the plight of others are nearer biblical value systems than western existentialist individualism. This does not mean that Christian educators must go back to advocating African Traditional Religion with non-Christian practices, but...western approaches that agree with biblical concepts and practices...should be integrated with African concepts and practices that do not contradict the Bible.

The essential elements in African traditional system like the communal system were in conformity with biblical value systems and were better than Western individualistic tendencies. The communal system should be integrated with the Christian ideals and those that are not in conformity with the Christian faith should be neglected. By its nature the communal system can promote the Christian education ministry. When the missionaries in the Gold Coast came to start missionary work, one of the strategies they adopted was to build an exclusive Christian residential area and in Kyebi (capital) in Akyem Abuakwa it was known as *Bronikurom* (Salem). Those who were converted to Christianity moved from their original settlement known as *Iman mu* to settle at *Bronikurom* (Salem). This means that Church members were nearer to their chapels and their mission houses. They could easily attend evening Bible studies, morning devotions and other Church activities. Hence, communal system promotes the education ministry of the mission Churches.

### 5.8.3 Contextualization

Contextualization is “the construction of theology with the ultimate concern for its relevance to the cultural context in which it occurs” as defined by Hunter (1990:224-225). He prefers the use of the term ‘contextualization’ to the use of ‘indigenization’ because the latter denotes ‘too static an understanding of what should happen when Christianity is introduced into a given culture.’ This means that contextualization covers a wider perspective than indigenization. Christians need to make their theology understandable to other Africans. As Kato (1985:12) puts it, “Africans need to formulate theological concepts in the language of Africa. But theology itself in its essence must be left alone.”

Onaiyekan (2001:5) declares that “the burden of the African exegete would be to examine the word of God and apply its message to the realities of the here and now.” The aim is not to change the essence of theology, but to contextualize it to benefit Africans. This means that an Akan Christian educator needs to understand the Akan context in seeking to teach Akan Christians the ideas put forward by the theologians. For Abogunrin (2003:17) “The task before biblical scholars in Africa is for a Christology that is authentically African, but which is at the same time catholic and from which Christians from other continents can draw lessons, inspiration and encouragement.” In conformity with contextualization the MCG is at the moment faced with the task of making its teachings and practices relevant to Ghanaian environment as noted by Ekem (2009:114). Dickson (1976:166-168) identifies five reasons such a policy on indigenization was very essential: indigenous ministers will understand their people’s superstitious and heathen practices, they will be effective in their mother tongue language, there will be reduction of financial cost of training

ministers, and local personnel can solve the high mortality rate among the missionaries. Dickson (1984:97-98), however, pointed out that these objectives could not materialize. It is seen that among the RCC, their liturgical celebration comes closer to the Akan/African religious tradition with its employment of various symbols to effect group and individual salvation. Jesus Christ in the Corpus Christi as expressed by the Catholics is an attempt to construct Catholicism from Akan world-view and in this sense Jesus is presented as the victorious *Asahene* who sits in *apakan* (palanquin) as indicated by Obeng (1996:190). Sarpong (1990:6-17) argues that:

One cannot think of African religion or life without externals such as gestures, symbols, signs depicting some innermost realities. Such sacrifices are found everywhere in our society. Hence, our ministers must be formed to consider worship as the summit towards which all activities of the Church are directed and the foundation of all powers, especially in the case of the Eucharist.

Sarpong implies that the world-view of Africans as people have a lot of external cultural categories which are recognized and that in ministers formation and in the worship life of the Church they should be taken seriously. The PCG similar to the other mission Churches also sees the need for contextualization. The PCG has agreed that her ministers have an alternative gown to the black preaching gown which is bage in colour. However, many of the ministers still resort to the black coloured gown (attracting much heat) which was introduced by the missionaries. In an interview, many of the respondents say that *tuntum no mu na sunsum w4*, meaning “there is spirit in the black colour.” This implies that many a time the Akan people are not ready to give in to contextualization.

#### **5.8.4. Inculturation**

Waliggo (1986:12-13) defines inculturation as the honest and serious attempt to make Christ and his message of salvation evermore understood by peoples of every culture. In other words, it is Africanisation of Christianity or an endeavour to make Christianity “feel at home” in the culture of each people. For an authentic indigenous Christian education, Ukpong (2005:17) suggests for African theologians the process of inculturation, which he describes as “a dynamic on-going process by which people consciously and critically appropriate the Bible and its message from within the perspectives and with the resources of their cultures.”

On 14<sup>th</sup> November 2010, the PCG (Asante Presbytery) organized a thanksgiving service for Nananom (Chiefs and Queenmothers) for their contribution towards Church growth in Ghana. During this function the Very Rev Dr Yaw Frimpong Manso, the then Moderator of the General Assembly of the PCG stated that “it will be necessary to take a closer look at the significance of the traditional institutions and practices to determine the extent to which Christians could participate in some of them without sacrificing their Christian principles.” By this he meant that there are some good things in the African traditional institutions and cultural practices that could be tapped to enhance Christian life. The Christian life and doctrines should be reformulated into the very thought patterns of Akan indigenous community. It is in the light of this that Pobee (1979:81-98) describes Christ as the great ancestor. As such he has power and authority to judge, reward and punish. He, however, points to the supremacy of Christ’s ancestorship for the fact that he has authority over all cosmic powers. Abogunrin (2003:96-107) cautions that “Christian scholars...should resist the attempt to equate Christ with any of them (African ancestor-heroes).

It should be noted that the uniqueness of Christ should not be compromised in order to make any hero (ancestor) equal with Christ. Mutiso-Mbinda (1979:59), therefore, concludes by describing Christ as an ancestor *par excellence*. It is in this regard that it is suggested that if Christian educators would adopt indigenous terminologies in their teaching and learning process and also use indigenous cultural categories it would make Christian education more understandable and effective. However, serious caution has to be taken not to end up in syncretism. Syncretism is an attempt to mix the truth of the Bible with the teachings of the African Traditional Religion such that the result becomes unbiblical as indicated by O'Donovan (2000:5). In an attempt to find an indigenous Christian education, caution be taken not to mix the truth of the Bible with the teachings of Africa Traditional Religion. Indigenous Christian education should be truly Christian or Biblical but also African in expression.

#### **5.8.5 Production of Materials that meet the needs of the African Church**

The knowledge of God is not new to Africans. Idowu (1962:5) has noted among the Yoruba that “In all things they are religious.” Danquah (1968:39) also postulating the monotheistic nature and affirming the religiosity of the Akan people, contends that “Akan religious doctrine knows only one God. Everything else found in the land, is nothing else but superstition...” but the researcher does not totally agree with Danquah. Asare Opoku (1978:15) also uses a lot of Akan terminologies to describe the Supreme Being who is the creator God as *\$domankoma*, *Onyame*, *Nana Onyankop4n* and *Twedeamp4n*. Akan Christian theologians or educators can delve into the etymological meaning of some of the terminologies and integrate them in Christian teachings in the church. For instance the word ‘Onyame’ comes from

“Nya” meaning get and “mee” meaning satisfied. Onyame therefore means “when you get him you becomes satisfied.” “Twedeamp4n” comes from “twere” meaning lean and “amp4n” meaning not falling. The full meaning of Twedeamp4n means “when one leans upon him, he would not fall.” When Christian educators are able to explain into detail some of these words in Christian teaching then church members especially the children and the youth would appreciate and mention the name of God with meaning. There are also proverbs, and ordinary statements that together express *Nyame’s* omnipotence, omniscience, goodness, dependability and immortality. This raises great possibilities for communicating the Christian faith to the Akan people or Africans because Christianity, by its unique and universal message, stands the best chance of fulfilling that which is implied in the African concept of God (Idowu 1962:215). It means that in many instances, the Christian concept of God agrees with the African concept, such as in the idea of God’s sovereignty and omnipresence.

Our theologians have to produce materials to meet the needs of the indigenous Church. The traditional and adinkra symbols, proverbs, folklores and other cultural categories can be used to develop teaching materials that will make Christian education relevant to the Akan indigenous context. Confirming this, Manus (2002:49) suggests that “indigenous non-biblical material should be appropriated as resources for biblical studies in Africa,” which is “both theologically legitimate and contextually urgent.” He proposes (2002:52) “folklorizing” which means “a retrieval of indigenous African narratives, folktales and poetry for reconstructing biblical theology in the context of African cultures” while eliminating the dehumanizing elements in the culture.

### **5.8.6 Cultural transformation in conformity with biblical precepts**

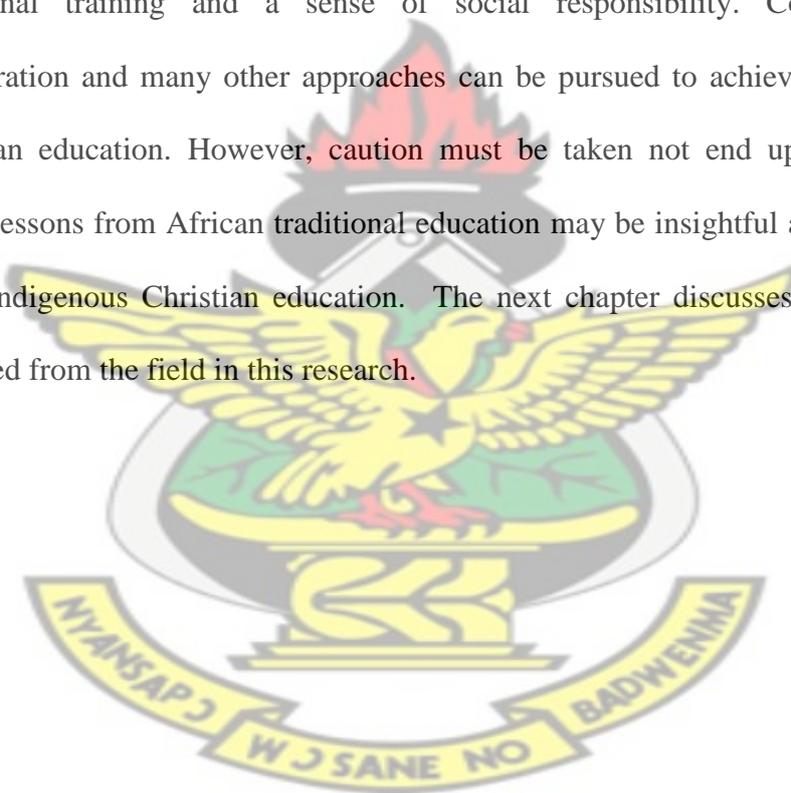
In some instances the Christian faith is in conflict with the Akan cultural heritage. This can be seen in J.B. Danquah's memorandum to the joint committee comprising representative of the Akyem Abuakwa and Synod of the PCG. In 1958 Synod of the PCG decided as indicated by Kwamena-Po (2011:374) that "...If stools were merely symbols of unity and authority then the Church could recognize them as such. But other means of blackening them must be found, as slaughtering of sheep was an outmoded custom." Whenever such situation exists as having some of the customs being outmoded, there is the need for a conversion. Concerning conversion or transformation, Walls (1996) states that:

Conversion implies the use of existing structures, the turning of the existing structures to new directions, the application of new material and standard to a system of thought and conduct already in place and functioning. It is about substitution, the replacement of something old by something new, but about transformation, the turning of the already existing to new accounts

This means that those aspects of Akan culture which are in conflict with biblical principles should be converted and re-oriented towards God. A theology that seeks the transformation of a people's culture to conform to biblical precepts is in complete agreement with the way Jesus conducted his teaching ministry. Christ sought to change the way his audience thought. He developed an intimate relationship with them, used figures of speech and narrative techniques to illustrate his teaching, and involved his audience physically, mentally and emotionally in his teaching, such as in the parable of the Good Samaritan, where he dialogued with the lawyer, invited the lawyer's comments, and instructed the lawyer to go and do what he had understood (Lk 10:25-37, RSV). There is a close relationship between Christ's approach to teaching and the way African traditional teaching encourages audience participation. Christian educators should adopt this style to make Christian education more relevant to the Akan Christian.

## 5.9 CONCLUSION

The discussion in this chapter has highlighted issues dealing with African traditional system of education. In this type of education, people's belief in and acceptance of morals, lessons, and roles drawn from religion, legends, proverbs and folklores were buttressed by practical examples in the various stages of life corresponding to the norms of the societies. The customs and the use of folktales were heavily relied upon as the principal agents for the indigenous type of education. This type of education prepares children for strong character development, adult leadership formation, other vocational training and a sense of social responsibility. Contextualization, inculturation and many other approaches can be pursued to achieve an indigenous Christian education. However, caution must be taken not end up in syncretism. These lessons from African traditional education may be insightful and eye-opening to an indigenous Christian education. The next chapter discusses the data so far collected from the field in this research.



## CHAPTER SIX

### PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF FIELD DATA

#### 6.1 INTRODUCTION

In an attempt to assess the transformational impact of Christian education on the three selected mission Churches: PCG, MCG and RCC, interviews were conducted with some target groups and questionnaire was administered in some selected congregations in Akyem Abuakwa. This chapter seeks to present the findings, analysis and interpretation of the data collected from the field.

#### 6.2 PRESENTATION OF RESPONSES

The main source of the research findings has been through interviews and administering of questionnaire. We interviewed Ministers or Priests, Lay Christian educators, Church members, and members of Christian education committee of the PCG, the MCG, and the RCC in some selected towns and villages in Akyem Abuakwa. The three National Directors of Christian education of the three selected Churches were interviewed. Questionnaire was distributed to the various target groups for their responses. Even though the responses vary in some instances, there were recurring views in most of the instances. As a result the responses are presented in their frequencies of their occurrence. That is, conclusions were drawn ranging from views that were most expressed to those that were least expressed. Questionnaire was distributed to One hundred (100) people in all with the following breakdown: Twenty (20) to Ministers, Thirty (30) to Lay Christian educators, Thirty (30) to ordinary Church members, and Twenty (20) to Christian education committee members. Out of the hundred, eighty (80) people responded to the

questionnaire. Data was collected from Ghana Statistical Service showing the summary report of the final results of the 2010 Population census to assess the current percentage of Christians in Ghana as shown in appendix G. A visit was paid to the Ghana Evangelism Office in Kumasi.

### **6.2.1 Meaning and Description of Christian Education by Respondents**

Responses to what Christian Education is, were given by the National Directors of Christian education of the three selected mission Churches, PCG, MCG and RCC. Responses were given by some of the eighty respondents from the various congregations to the above mentioned subject. Rev. Kofi Amfo Akonor, the National Director for Church Life and Nurture of the PCG, responding in an interview to what Christian education is, said the PCG has a working definition which is as follows:

Christian Education is a dynamic process of communicating and transmitting the saving knowledge of God in Christ Jesus as revealed in Scripture to the members of the Christian community in constant relevance to daily life as experienced from the cradle to the grave. In this process Christian nurture and personal growth which lead to productive service in the Church and Society are experienced in the power of the Holy Spirit, as Children, Youth and Adults become willing and active participants of the daily changes which take place in their relationship with God in Christ, the Church all humankind, the outside world, nature and even with oneself.

From the above definition, one can say that Christian education is a process and it concerns passing on of the saving knowledge of Jesus Christ with the Bible as its basis. Christian education starts in childhood and continues till adulthood. It involves nurturing and aims towards spiritual maturity. From the point of view of Amfo Akonor, Christian education concerns those outside the Church as well.

In another interview with the Very Rev. Ofori Akyea, the National Director of Christian education in MCG, he stated that Christian education concerns the education of children in the Church, how they are brought up in a Christian way so

that morally they would be upright to do what is expected of them when they grow. He added that it is very important to catch them young so that they would not depart from the word of God but be abreast of it right from childhood. As to whether the education of the youth and the adults is also included in Christian education, he responded that in their setting the youth and the adults are under a different directorate and he reiterated that Christian education deals with children of ages of about two up to seventeen (17) years. Mrs Faustina O. Yeboah, Regional Director of Roman Catholic Education unit of Greater Accra Dioceses on behalf of the Episcopal Chairman of Christian Education committee of the RCC, disclosed in an interview that Christian education is a holistic kind of education which was introduced by the early missionaries to prepare the children, the youth and the adults members of the Church to be morally upright and disciplined to live responsibly in the Church and in the society. Respondents from various local congregations, lay Christian educators, Christian education committee members and Ministers and Priests of the selected Churches were allowed to express their views as to what Christian education means to them and various ideas emerged.

Acquaye Derrick, a member of Bethel Methodist Church at Akwatia said Christian education is the administration and coordination of programmes or strategies to facilitate the spiritual growth of believers to be like that of Christ. Rev Amoako Baah, a Minister of Bethel Methodist at Akwatia also explained that it is an attempt made by the Church in offering to its members all they need in seeking a relationship with God through Jesus Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit. According to these two respondents, every programme in the Church that promotes spiritual growth of Church members constitutes Christian education.

Rev Oduro-Hama, a Minister of Emmanuel Presbyterian congregation at Akwatia in an interview stated that Christian education is the training of people that enables them to live as Christ lived and instilling into learners, Christian principles so that they will be fully qualified and equipped to do every good deed. Ackom Richard, a Lay Christian educator at Emmanuel Presby congregation, Akwatia responded that any process or activity that facilitates holistic growth in the life of Christians could be described as Christian education.

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Odei Rockson, a member of the Presbyterian Church at Boadua submits that Christian education is a type of education that helps the individual to live right with God and with his or her fellow human being. According to him it is about relationship with God and with other people. Rev T.K. Sakado, Minister of the Calvary Presbyterian congregation at Kade argues that Christian education involves training people in the Church to know Christ. Osei-Nimako, a Catechist of Calvary congregation at Kade opined that Christian education is the process where one is taught and guided to lead exemplary Christian life. Rockson and Sakado stressed the fact that Christian education does not only take place in the congregation but outside the congregation as well.

Various respondents were requested to describe Christian education in one or two words and the following were some responses that were given: Danso Kennedy, Lay preacher of St. Anthony Catholic Parish at Akwatia described Christian education simply, as, teaching and learning of Church doctrines, Aikins J.E., Class teacher of Akwatia Methodist emphasized teachings, Amponsah Mercy (Mrs) described it as religious information. Ackom Richard, a Lay Christian educator of Emmanuel

Presbyterian congregation at Akwatia used holistic growth, Rev Sakado said training, and Acquaye also gave spiritual growth. Boatemaa Abenaa of St. Francis Parish at Kade religious instruction.

### **6.2.2 Objectives of Christian education from Respondents**

Sixty (60) percent of the respondents agreed that Christian education aims at faith maturity which leads to transformation of one's life into Christ-likeness. All the three National Directors of Christian education reiterated that Christian education aims towards spiritual maturity and that if it does not change one's character then it is not effective.

### **6.2.3 Christian Educators and their Qualifications**

Eighty (80) percent of the respondents support the view that those who qualify to be educators in the congregations should be those who are well trained in ministry. Samson Kwayisi, a member of St. Theresa of the child Jesus Catholic Church at Adankrono further responded that the qualification should be seen in terms of those who have been filled with the Holy Spirit and have good knowledge of the word of God. Rev Oduro Hamah, Minister of the Emmanuel Presbyterian Church at Akwatia, Rev. Sakado, Minister of Calvary Presbyterian Church at Kade, Osei Nimako, a Catechist of Calvary Presbyterian Church at Kade and Kennedy Odame, Lay preacher of St. Anthony Catholic Parish at Akwatia are of the view that those who qualify to be educators should be Ministers, Priests, Catechists, Society stewards, evangelists, Counselors, Sisters, Presbyters, Para Church group leaders, Day born group leaders, and Youth leaders in the Church. Ninety percent (90) of the respondents from all the target groups argue that some selected people with special

gifts who are specially trained are those who qualify to be educators in the congregations. These respondents explained that Scripture speaks of those with the gift of teaching, and that those people so gifted are those who should be allowed for the teaching programme of the Church. According to them teaching is a skill, and skills require training and development.

Gifty Amponsah, a Christian educator of Anyinam Catholic Church submitted that if someone is of weak morals he or she should not be allowed to be an educator in the congregation. Her argument was that someone blind cannot lead a blind person .

Osei Nimako raised an issue that those who qualify to be educators should be those who are mature in the Christian faith. He said if teachers are to lead others in growth in discipleship, then they must be persons who are seeking to mature in their own expressions of belief. Aikins O. Danso, a class teacher of Ghana Consolidate Diamond Methodist Church at Akwatia submitted that anyone who qualifies to be an educator should be a person who understands the word of God, gifted, committed, and prayerful. In an interview with Rev Ofori Akyea, he said those who are Christian educators in his Church are chosen based on interest of the teachers. That is to say if one is interested to be an educator the opportunity is given. About seventy-five (75) percent of the respondents confirm that the Christian education teachers in their congregations were chosen based on interest expressed to be teachers.

#### **6.2.4 Content of Christian Educational Programmes**

In a discussion with Rev Kofi Amfo Akonor concerning content of educational programmes, he responded that the PCG has a syllabus which covers specific subjects to be studied. He cited an example that content of study covers areas of

Biblical and theological issues (God's relationship with humanity); the universe (the environment and ecological issues); History of the Church; Theology of humanity; Ethical issues; Social and economic issues; Political and cultural values; The Bible and science. In reality seventy-six (76) percent of the respondents said the teaching content of Christian education programme concentrated on teaching on belief about God, Jesus and the Bible. The research findings show that emphasis on the teaching of cultural and indigenous awareness in Christian education is only twenty-four (24) percent. This means that the cultural and indigenous aspects of education are given least consideration in Christian education.

#### **6.2.5 Teaching Methods or Educational Process**

Concerning the appropriate methods employed in the educational ministry of the various congregations in the three selected churches, research findings show that the way Christian education is done matters. Ninety (90) percent of the respondents responded that Christian education was effective in their congregation. They affirmed that teachers encouraged participants to raise questions about doctrine, theological ideas and encouraged theological reflection on human experience more especially from the perspective of the youth and the adults. Aikins J. E., a class teacher of MCG at Boadua, in an interview responded that participatory method is mostly used in his congregation and it is very effective. By participatory method, he meant a procedure of learning in which the educator only facilitates as a leader and members of the congregation contribute significantly. Concerning why he thinks this method is used, he said, in this method, everyone is made to think and is engaged in solving his own problems.

Seventy (70) percent of the respondents pointed out that teaching done in small groups through discussions enhance Christian education in the Church. The study reveals that sixty percent of the respondents admitted that Christian education is ineffective in their congregations. Explaining why most of the respondents gave such an answer, they responded that normally most of the congregants do not benefit from teaching programmes. For instance, because the Christian education teacher/Church member ratio is low, one person is normally appointed to stand before the congregation to lead using lecturing method. They also responded that teaching programmes are interrupted by other Church programmes and that they either suspend, or less than the stipulated time is used for teaching programmes.

Other methods which respondents mentioned were brainstorming, preaching of sermons, role play, talks, debates, symposia, seminars, singing of gospel songs and hymns, learning of catechisms and the history of the Church. Others are also of the view that story telling, drama, video and film shows, Church retreats, convention and conferences are also included. Rev Eric Agyepong, a Minister of the P.C.G. at Asiakwa and a clerk of the Akyem Abuakwa Presbytery of the PCG states that selection of appropriate method is very important and he added that no matter how important the content may be it will be forgotten if it has no significance for Church members who are learners. Adding his voice, Rev Asante Anom a Minister of the MCG at Asiakwa, also says the educational process yields no better results if it is presented in a confused and vague manner and if there is no opportunity to put it into practice. Sixty-five (65) percent of the respondents were of the view that as Akan Christians it will be more appropriate to consider the good aspects of the Akan traditional education and incorporate them into Christian education to make it more

practical and indigenous. On some of the traditional educational resources, mention was made of proverbs, folklore and the use of thought - provoking stories. On the reality seventy-five percent (75) of the respondents affirmed that indigenous and traditional resource materials are rarely used in the congregation in the selected Churches.

#### **6.2.6 Christian Education Committee and Policy in the selected Churches**

On the question as to whether the selected Churches and their congregations have Christian education committees, ninety-eight (98) percent of the respondents confirmed that they have. In an interview with Osei Nimako, a Catechist and a Lay Christian educator of Calvary Presbyterian congregation responded that his congregation does not have a Christian education committee as to why his congregation does not have such an important committee; he responded that he cannot answer. He then added that most of the congregations in the rural areas do not have such committees and that the agents are responsible for every planning. On the other hand, some of the respondents responded in affirmative. Reverend Ansah Peasah, District Minister of Anyinam responded that they have Christian education committee. With the exception of only two (2) percent of the respondents who reported that they do not have Christian education committees, majority of the congregations do have Christian education committees. The National Christian Education Director of the MCG, expressed with confidence that in his Church they have Christian education committees right from the National level to the local level. He gave the composition of the committee at the National level as the Director of Christian education, the secretary to the Director, Cordinators (Ministers) from the various Dioceses and superintendents of the various Dioceses and also representative

from the board of ministry. Interview with Mrs Faustina Yeboah indicate that the RRC has a Christian education committee. She said the RRC has the committee for Christian education at all levels: Parish, Dioceses and the National. She went on to say that they have a policy but concluded that when it comes to implementation one cannot say that it is hundred (100) percent.

Hundred (100) percent of the respondents affirmed that they have Christian education policy. But the problem was with its implementation. Reverend Amoako Baah, a minister of the G.C.D Methodist Church at Akwatia, affirmed that his congregation has a Christian education policy. He said every six months a teaching material is received from the Lay Ministry Directorate to be used for teachings in the congregation. He said, many a time the policy is not fully implemented because of interruption with other programmes. Reverend Amfo Akonor responding to whether the PCG has a policy, answered yes and no. Yes, in the sense that there are scattered lay down procedures which serve as a guide in the Church and no in the sense that one cannot point at one published document as PCG Christian education document. He cited an example that it is the policy of the PCG that not less than thirty minutes of every Sunday should be used for Bible Study in every congregation. Concerning the concrete steps taken by his Church to own one, he said, the Department of Church Life and Nurture which is responsible for Christian education in the PCG has quite recently detailed some representatives of the National Union of the Presbyterian Students of Ghana (NUPSG) in the tertiary institutions to draft a policy for study and approval. Very Rev Akyea confirmed that the MCG has a Christian education policy which is documented. He said, it spells out what should be done in Christian education. He also made it clear that the Church even has a syllabus which

shows what, when and how a particular content of study should be taught. On the issue as to how workable the policy is in the selected churches, twenty-four (24) percent of the respondents responded that their policies are workable.

### **6.2.7 Supervision and Evaluation**

On the issue of assessment, supervision, and evaluation the Church needs to have ways to look at what it is doing and assess how it is working. Too often in the Church, a programme is undertaken and it may not work in the way it had hoped, and it is abandoned without any effort to find out what really happened. This can lead to waste of resources that does not reflect good stewardship on the part of the Church. Learning to assess and evaluate are important parts of a vital educational ministry. Rev Amfo Akonor, National Director for Church Life and Nurture of the PCG confirmed that the PCG has no proper way of evaluating Christian education programmes.

He added that measurement or evaluation of learning of feelings, attitudes, or beliefs (in the sense of convictions that really change one's life, not just a formal statement) are much more difficult to measure. Considering also from the point of view of the respondents of the questionnaire about eighty (80) percent made it clear that in their Churches, what is achieved or lost in Christian education is seldom evaluated. Very Rev Ofori Akyea, Christian education Director for Christian education said in an interview that evaluation is done in his Church through submission of reports from the societies, circuits, Dioceses to the National level. He testified that the Church's effort put forth in the process of evaluation is not the best. He said, reports given do not give the exact reflection of what happens in the various segments of the Church

so far as Christian education is concerned. He confirms that much has to be done with respect to evaluation. Concerning the view of the RCC on evaluation, Mrs Faustina Yeboah comments that evaluation is done by organizing quizzes and through submission of reports.

### **6.2.8 Transformational Impact**

Concerning transformational impact of Christian education, sixty percent of the respondents support the fact that there is impact of Christian education on members of the three selected mission Churches yet it is quite minimal. Responding to the assertion that most Church members live unChristlike life though Christian education goes on in the Church, all the three National Directors of Christian education of the three selected mission churches said, the Church is doing all that it can to educate its members yet many are not transformed.

The PCG Director cited an example that one theologian said: “the holy Church is a distorted Church and the distorted Church is a holy Church.” This means that the Church contains all sorts of characters (good and bad) yet it is described as perfect and holy because the blood of Jesus cleanses it. He explains that inability of some Church members to demonstrate Christlike behaviour does not mean there has never been an impact of Christian education on members of the Church.

On the question of areas where impact is felt, he said, it is not very easy to measure the spirituality of Christians, yet their commitment in Christian giving, regular attendance to Church programmes, one’s positive attitude towards work, response to the realities of life, demonstrate some kind of impact of the educational ministry on

members of the Church. On this same issue, the Christian education Director said one cannot challenge the assertion that the lifestyle and character of most of the members of their Church is questionable though preaching and teaching are going on in the Church. For him it would be very wrong for someone to think that the problem is with the method of Christian education in the Church. He was of the view that there was nothing wrong with the method used in teaching Christian education in the Church but the problem is with the people. He said one cannot say Christian education has no impact. He said impact is seen in the way the children in the Church perform certain functions in the Church. He cited examples of leading liturgy and reading Bible passages in Church service.

#### **6.2.9 Hindrances and Challenges**

Almost all the respondents indicated that Christian education faces some challenges and that there are some hindrances towards its effectiveness. Christian education Director for PCG agreed that there are some hindrances and challenges so far as Christian education is concerned. According to him, quite a number of congregations of the mission Churches are in the rural areas where literacy level is low. It becomes difficult to have access to people who can read and write to take leading roles in the educational ministry of the Church. Rev Father Amo Oduro, of St Francis Parish at Kade noted that in the rural areas where there is no electricity, it becomes difficult for them to have access to Information and Communication Technology which continues to be beneficial to some of the congregations in the cities. Rev Kofi Amfo Akonor responded in an interview again that inability to produce relevant materials frequently seems to be a problem. According to him, those who are engaged in production of educational materials are ministers of the various congregations and

District ministers who are responsible for their full time ministerial and administrative assignments. They do not have enough time at their disposal for publication. Teaching materials which should have taken three months to be prepared, take six to eight months to be completed. This means that manuals for Christian teachings are not available on time. He said that an antidote to this kind of situation is to establish a separate committee that will be solely responsible for publication of study materials and manuals.

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Very Rev Ofori Akyea pointed out that one major challenge facing the Christian education ministry is the lack of pastoral touch. That is, the Ministers do not visit the children at their service on Sundays. He also pointed out that in their Church they normally have Week celebration for children and during this period both parents and Ministers refuse to attend such programmes. Analyzing the questionnaire reveals various factors that affect the educational ministry of the Church. Fifty-one (51) responded that there is lack of interest among adults in adult educational programmes.

Sixty-five (65) percent of the respondents confirmed that failure of congregation to maintain involvement of their youth also is an issue to be considered. There is the difficulty in finding volunteer teachers, about sixty (60) percent of the respondents affirmed that there is apparent lack of interest of clergy in education of the children. Almost half of the respondents pointed out that there is a problem of drawing parents into the educational process. Seventy percent (70) respondents pointed out that there is apparent failure of current programmes to address adequately and appropriately the changing needs and interest of adults, adolescents, and children.

### **6.2.10 Christian Population and Nominal Percentage**

A visit was paid to the Ghana Statistical Service office at Kumasi to collect the percentage of Christian population in Ghana. The Report indicates that 72.2% of Ghanaian population is Christian. On the issue of nominal percentage of Christians, the Ashanti Regional Coordinator of Ghana Evangelism Committee at Kumasi could not produce any new figure apart from the 2001 figure which appeared in the research of Foli. Mr Osei Buabeng, the Regional Coordinator in an interview said the committee is still in the process of compiling their data. He however posited that any new figure that might come out would be higher than the existing figure.

### **6.2.11 Suggestions by Interviewees**

Various respondents started giving some significant suggestions as to how Christian education can be improved. Eighty-five (80) percent of the respondents assert that education should be given priority. Seventy-five (75) percent of the respondents said, manpower training should be a matter of priority of the Church where all members should be made to engage in the educational ministry of the Church. Others suggest that non-formal education should be a matter of great interest and priority to raise the literacy level in the Churches more especially in the rural congregations. Rev Ansah Peasah, Anyinam District Minister of the PCG also suggested that members of the Church should be encouraged to show commitment in the educational ministry of the Church. Rev. Father Amo Oduro, pointed out that all logistics that would enhance educational programmes should be made available in the Church. He continued to suggest that Christian teachings should not cover only biblical studies but should include Church policies, Church constitution and other areas concerned with the socio-economic and politico-cultural practices of members.

Rev Eric K. Agyepong, Clerk of the Akyem Abuakwa Presbytery of the PCG argues that more time should be allocated to Bible study so that people can contribute and ask questions. Eighty-seven percent of the respondents strongly suggests that members who are Christian educators or lay Christian educators should be motivated. The same percentage of respondents also mentioned that Preaching which is one aspect of Christian education should address all aspects of human needs (spiritual and physical). Ninety-five (95) percent of the respondents clearly suggest that much depends on the inspiration and support of the minister or the priest. Almost all respondents agreed and proposed “thinking” approach and should be placed on a high value.

### **6.3 DATA ANALYSIS**

#### **6.3.1 Variety of Definitions**

To sum up the various responses that appeared on the questionnaire, the following lists of words and phrases were given by respondents to describe Christian education: nurture, religious instruction, teaching, spiritual growth, socialization, conserving the faith, faith development, conversion, good character formation, moral development, transformation and schooling. From the above, the words and phrases appear to be varied and they do not appear to suggest the same thing. It means that people have different interpretations for Christian education mean differently to different people in the Church. A critical analysis of the response suggests various ways of understanding the concept. First, Christian education is seen as religious instruction. The terms teaching, instruction, transmitting of faith, conserving of faith, and schooling suggest this understanding. These phrases and words are described as such (religious instruction) because they deal with structured teaching process for the

passing on of knowledge especially fact and information to Church members. The second description of Christian education that emerges out of the terms is socialization process. These descriptions highlight the ways in which people become part of a particular group, take its identity, and acquire their beliefs, and behaviours. Out of the eighty (80) respondents to the question as to what Christian education is, it was observed that none of the definitions was found to be the same. Even in the same Church or congregation, definitions of Christian education varied. Furthermore, considering the descriptions and the definitions of the National Directors for Christian education of the three selected Churches, PCC, MCG and RRC, we realize that there is no one approach to define Christian education. There is, therefore, no one universally accepted definition of Christian education. We, therefore, agree with Groome (2003:12) who believes that the enterprise of Christian education is too complex, for there cannot be one universally accepted definition.

On the issue of what Christian education hopes to achieve, answers of respondents prove that Christian education aims towards achieving Christlike character among members. But as to whether the aim is achieved or not, a high percentage of respondents indicate that Christlike character is hardly to come by in the selected mission Churches. Concerning the context for Christian education, seventy (70) percent of the respondents affirmed that Christian education takes place only in the Church. Only thirty (30) percent made mentioned that apart from the Church, Christian education takes place in Christian homes and schools. This indicates that parental responsibilities of Christian education are most neglected.

### **6.3.2 Selection of Christian of Educators, Appropriate Content and Method**

The study has discovered that those who should be selected as Christian educators should be persons who are committed Christians. They should be Christians who are well versed in the Bible and have been given training of a sort. The study also proves that all those who should be selected as educators should be those who are filled with the Holy Spirit. We accept the fact that it is not easy to measure the spirituality of people, yet their way of life, attitude and responses towards certain situations can indicate their level of faith, maturity and spirituality to some extent. They should be people of good morals.

The above criteria can result in effective Christian education. But in reality, about seventy-five (75) percent of the respondents responded that their Christian education teachers were selected based on the interest expressed by the teachers themselves. We wish to state that selection based on interest expressed by Christian education teachers alone is not enough to be able to appoint well qualified people to teach. Depending on expression of interest alone could result in ineffective Christian education. Gathering responses from the various target groups of the three selected mission Churches, it appears that Christian education aims at living like Christ and for that matter those who should be selected as educators should demonstrate Christlike character. We agree with this because a blind person cannot lead another blind person and one cannot give what he does not have. It emerged that those who have special gifts should be tapped and given special training to lead Christian education programmes in the Church. In selecting Christian educators in the Church, person's salvation status, Christian commitment, knowledge of the Bible, moral uprightness and one's level of spirituality should be taken into consideration.

Furthermore, the person should be given training in Christian education. From the research, it has been noted that Biblical content of Christian education covers a greater percentage of Christian education programmes. The percentage of content addressing cultural and indigenous awareness is very low twenty-four (24) percent. Almost hundred (100) percent of the respondents responded that the Bible is the major resource material. Indigenous resources do not have any place in Christian education programmes in the various congregations. Since Christian education does not take place in a vacuum but takes place in a particular or specific cultural context, cultural resources of the area within which it takes place should be given due consideration.

Ninety percent (90) of the respondents are in favour of participatory method in which Church members (learners) are allowed to engage in discussion, questioning and answering method. This shows that these methods employed in the education ministry of the Church are very significant matter. High value is placed on members encouragement to think about what is taught and discover their own answers. This means that in Christian education, methods employed should not only be theoretical but should be practical as well.

### **6.3.3 Functional Christian Education Committees, Effective Implementation of Policy, and Proper Evaluation of Christian Education Programmes**

How functional is the Christian education committees at congregational and denominational levels? The responses were analysed in terms of inactive, moderately active and active. Out of the eighty (80) respondents, forty (40), forming fifty (50) percent responded that the committees in their congregations were inactive. Twenty-

five percent were moderately active and another twenty-five (25) percent were active. It could be deduced from the figures that though most of the congregations have Christian education committees, quite a number of them are not functional and it could be possible cause of ineffective Christian education in the three selected mission Churches. The data so far discussed shows that almost all the selected mission Churches have Christian education committees. However, quite a number of them are not functional. In the same vein quite a number of them have policies guiding their Christian education programmes. The main problem as indicated by respondents lies with the implementation of the policies. This can be said to be a contributing factor to the ineffectiveness of Christian education of the mission Churches resulting in a high level of unChristlike behaviour in the mission Churches.

Considering the high percentage of respondents as to whether proper evaluation is done in the three selected mission Churches, the study reveals that there is a big problem so far as evaluation is concerned. Without proper evaluation there can never be effective planning. Since Christian education demands effective planning, improper evaluation could, therefore, lead to ineffective Christian education.

#### **6.3.4 Problems of Christian Education – Respondents Views**

A careful study of the data makes it clear that there are some problems associated with Christian education in the three selected mission Churches which severely hinder the effectiveness of Christian education. The crux of the problem is failure among many members to set a priority on Christian education. Other problems identified include busy schedules of adults and the youth which imply that other things seem more important to potential learners of all ages, lack of parents interest

in their children's learning and its attendant lack of interest in their own learning. Also failure of Ministers to visit children during service emerged as a serious issue. It should be noted that the influence of the Pastor is very significant. Mission Churches are found almost in every community. It appears that the rural communities (where illiteracy level is high) outnumber the metropolitan communities and this tends to affect the quality of Christian education in the rural mission Churches. If the Christian educator is an illiterate, teaching will become difficult because he will not be able to read and understand teaching materials and manuals. However, in the Bible, Peter and some of the disciples were not learned but they were able to make great impact in the early Church. The data also reveals that in some instances very small budget allocation was allotted to Christian education in the Churches. More often than not the Churches make big allocation of budget for Church projects at the expense of the education ministry of the Church. This tends to be a great disservice to the Church because Christian education ministry occupies a very significant position in the Church. The small budget allocation for Christian education affects the quality of Christian Educational resources that need to be used in the Church.

### **6.3.5 Improvement of the Education Ministry of the Church**

The following are some of the suggestions given by respondents on how Christian education could be improved. A high percentage of respondents think there is the need to give special attention to manpower training. This is a laudable idea because the teacher as an educator is a very important factor. If the educator is given the best of training he would be able to apply very good educational processes given that he has good content and other good resources. On the issue of high illiteracy rate, the introduction of the non-formal education in the Churches would be of great benefit.

All age groups in the various Churches should be motivated to be committed and take Christian education seriously.

#### **6.4 INTERPRETATION OF RESPONSES**

As has been critically discussed and examined, Christian education has no one universally acceptable definition. One defines it according to the context and setting of his own Church or congregation. It is very important for every Church or congregation to define Christian education as it understands it so clear objectives can be set. The most important thing to note so far as the definition of Christian education is concerned is that, though it may vary, it should be biblically based and theologically sound. Authentic Christian education should be theocentric (God centered) and christocentric (Christ-centered) as indicated in the study. The main aim of Christian education is to achieve Christian maturity and to live a Christlike life.

The data analysis reveals that there have been lapses in Christian education in the three selected mission Churches and it could be said that the problem is likely to persist in majority of the mission Churches in Ghana. The resultant effect is the high degree of disloyalty and lack of commitment of majority of members of the mission Churches. Almost all the respondents accept the fact that there are some problems that contribute to ineffectiveness of Christian education which are: failure among many members to set a priority on Christian education, adults and the youth busy schedules, lack of parents interest in their children's learning, lack of interest in adult learning, failure of Ministers to visit children during service, high level of illiteracy in rural communities and small budget allocation for Christian education in the

Churches. The study supports the findings of Foli who maintains that Ghana Evangelism Survey Report in 2001 revealed that 51% of the Christian population of the mission Churches were nominal Christians. In an interview with Mr Osei Buabeng, Ashanti Regional Coordinator of Ghana Evangelism Committee, he posited that no new figure has been released but he was of the view that the current nominal percentage of the mission Churches, should it be ready, would be higher than 51%.

Most of the Christian education committees in various congregations are not functional and there is lack of implementation of Christian educational policy. It has also been realized that some of the Churches to some extent, lack the use of effective relevant indigenous resources. The research shows that effective Christian education programmes requires strong, committed and competent teachers. Such leadership requires training, skill and knowledge. Hence effectiveness in Christian education requires planning, training, and significant congregational support in terms of allocation of budget. All categories of respondents emphasized at least annual evaluation of programmes. The quality of worship experience is also shown to have an important educational effect on members, even though the study was not designed to make a thorough and detailed study of worship. The study also proved that parental involvement in children's Christian education is very important. Busy schedules prevent many families from having family devotions. Adult education should be taken seriously so that they will be well equipped spiritually to play active role in the religious upbringing of their children.

## 6.5 CONCLUSION

This session has dealt extensively with the data presentation from the field. Also analysis has been done to know what Christian education and its objectives are. In this chapter some of the qualities of Christian educator have been highlighted. The kind of educational content and process were examined. It has been observed that there could be effective Christian education only when there is an active Christian education committee and a workable policy. The next chapter deals with the summary, conclusion and recommendations.



## CHAPTER SEVEN

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

#### 7.1 INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapter, the data of the respondents was analysed. This chapter concentrates on the summary of the findings, conclusion and recommendations.

#### 7.2 SUMMARY OF ISSUES EMERGING OUT OF THE STUDY

We have tried to examine the effectiveness of Christian education of the three selected mission Churches: PCG, MCG and RCC with respect to its transformational impact using Akyem Abuakwa traditional Area as our catchment area. The following are the summary of the findings from the study: On the meaning of Christian education from the three selected mission Churches, the PCG, the MCG and the RCC, it is observed that each of the three Churches has its own definition of Christian education. Even within one particular denomination the definition of Christian education varies when it comes to congregational level. It could be stated with clarity that Christian education is multidisciplinary in nature and that there are many approaches to its definition. It is, therefore, not possible to give one universally accepted definition of Christian education. One can define it depending on the context of his congregation. However, each congregation or denomination cannot neglect the theocentric and christocentric nature of the definition of Christian education. In summary, Christian Education is a discipline that deals with the extraction of individual gifts from and inculcating general virtues into people in accordance with the command of the Word of God. No matter how varied the definitions are, objectives and the ultimate goal of Christian education of each

congregation leads people to live a Christlike life. Almost all respondents of the selected mission Churches are aware that every effective Christian Education should be Biblically and theologically sound. The ultimate teacher of Christian Education is always God, operating preeminently through the Parents but also through the Church and the School.

Quite a greater percentage (70) of respondents indicated that Christian Education takes place only the Church. This presupposes that majority of parents were not aware of family and parental responsibility of Christian Education. But it should be noted that mothers and fathers have a more active role to play in the Christian Education of their children, by means of conversation, family devotions, and guidance in their domestic life. This calls for special efforts to strengthen the spiritual life of parents and the adults in the various Churches. Ninety percent (90) of the respondents were quite satisfied with the methods employed and agreed that methods employed were more practical.

Almost all the denominations (98%) concerned in our discussion have Christian Education committees at their national level, however not all local congregations within the various denominations have it. Most Christian Education committees (50%) are non functional or inactive. Almost all the three selected Churches have Christian Education policies. The PCG however reported not having a policy document, yet there are various policies guiding the educational ministry of the Church. The most important issue here is that though they have policies few (24%) of them implement them. The study has discovered that fifty-five percent (55) of the

respondents admitted that training was rarely done and support for teachers, leaders and educators was also very little.

The study has proved that the Bible is the predominant and the most important resource material in the curriculum of Christian Education. It must be studied in the Churches. The curriculum for every age group must be Bible-based and Bible-centered. Discipleship cannot be made without getting into the Bible (2 Timothy 3:14-17, RSV). However, it was observed that there was a high level of illiteracy more especially in the rural congregations. Respondents also mentioned that there are a lot more new (life related) areas of educational ministry that have been identified:

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- Differently abled – (visually, hearing and orally impaired, mentally and physically challenged)
  - People in Politics
  - Mission to the Palace
  - Ministry to porters (Kayayei)
  - Ministry to small scale entrepreneurs (Tradesmen and women)
  - Ministry to commercial transport workers
  - Ministry to people in the media
  - Ministry to business men and women
  - Ministry to the Judiciary
  - Ministry to gays & lesbians
  - Ministry to the terminally ill

Appropriate syllabus should be developed to address the above mentioned new areas in ministry. This will make Christian education more relevant to the society. In majority (80%) of the congregations, Christian education is not evaluated. In one sense this is being done all the time, but in another sense it is probably rarely done. Even though the use of indigenous materials and cultural categories of the Akan traditional educational system could be useful to the Christian education ministry, it

is absent. Respondents however suggested the use of local symbols, proverbs, and thought provoking stories to make the Bible more understandable to an Akan Christian.

The study has shown that congregational life also has much influence on effectiveness of Christian education and for that matter character of Church members. In congregations where thinking is encouraged at all age levels and where opportunities to give and to receive help are offered, people freely engage in Christian education. A greater percentage of the respondents suggested that if an atmosphere of friendship is maintained in the congregation, Church members are encouraged to involve themselves in the Church's educational programme. The study discovered that the rate of involvement in formal Christian education programmes is low. Lack of members involvement in formal Christian education programmes of the selected Churches was seen to be alarming most particularly at the youth and the adult levels.

### **7.3 CONCLUSION**

It is an undeniable fact that Christian education goes on in the selected mission Churches yet the lifestyle of quite a number of its members is questionable. That is to say that majority of Church members are not able to live Christlike life though Christian education goes on in the Church. We are not by this saying that there has never been an impact of Christian education on the lives of Church members. The study reveals that there is impact but it is quite minimal. The facts as indicated in the study remains true that all things being equal, effective Christian education should result in character transformation.

The pertinent question that occupies the heart of the study is, what have been the causes of ineffectiveness of Christian education that have affected the lifestyle of many Church members? The study has revealed that there has never been any problem with the content of study, neither has it been with the methods employed in Christian education. Failure does not lie with the Bible and its interpretation. Failure is due to a combination of number of a factors: there is a failure among many members to set a priority on Christian education, adults and youth are too busy and have little time for Christian education in the Church, parents do not show much interest in their children's religious upbringing, many families do not have family devotion with their children, ministers do not pay regular visit to Sunday schools, high level of illiteracy more especially in the rural communities and small budget allocations are given to Christian education in quite a number of the Churches.

It has been realized that a lot of Christian education committees and policies only exist by name. Most of the committees are inactive and most of the educational policies of the Church are not implemented. Having realized that Christian education is not an area without challenges, there is also the need to note that there is way out. Christian education should be given a high priority. The Sunday schools in the various mission Churches should be well organized and Ministers should show much interest in it. The Churches should revitalize their educational committees which are not active and see to it that educational policies are implemented. Proper and regular evaluation of Christian education programmes should be a matter of serious concern of the mission Churches.

It should be noted as indicated in the study that emphasis should be laid on training of and continued support for Christian education teachers, youth leaders and other educators of the Church. A spirit of learning, cooperation, and commitment should exist and good resources should also be available. In educational moments of the Church, high value should be placed on “thinking.” Members of the Church should be encouraged to think about what is taught and they should discover their own answers. This will enhance renewal of mind and heart of Church members. The worship life of the Church members is very necessary because it has an effect on the members. It should be designed to include children, youth, and adults in meaningful ways. It is an instructional and celebrative moment for the Church family. Where the worship life is active, the atmosphere is conducive for educational process in the Church and this could significantly contribute to transformation of character of Church members. The Holy Spirit factor is indispensable to successful and effective Christian education that results in Christlikeness. Music is seen as a powerful tool for the educational process. For example, the director for the youth choir could stop in the course of rehearsal to discuss the meaning of the words being sung. This means that effective music ministry in the mission Churches can bring about transformed lives.

For effective Christian education that brings about transformation, the focus should not only be on the Church. Emphasis should also be placed on the home as well. Mothers and fathers play a very important role in the religious education of their children. Through family devotions, conversation and other religious instructions, children’s lives are greatly influenced by their parents and other relatives. For this

reason, parents and all elderly people in various communities should be very cautious of how they manage their lives.

We wish to state that Christian education matters and if majority of the members of the three selected Churches have not been able to live Christlike character, all boils down to the fact that Christian education has never been taken seriously in the selected mission Churches. But there is hope towards achieving effective Christian education that can result in real transformation of character of members of the mission Churches if the recommendations of this study are seriously considered.

Since man's chief end is to bring glory to God, surely Christian education ministry must be well prepared, relevant, transforming, flexible, varied, and designed to change behavior. This should encourage us in our task of Christian education. Christ not only told his church to teach, but added, "And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age." He who has mandated the task will see to it that it is ultimately fulfilled.

#### **7.4 RECOMMENDATIONS**

We put forth the following recommendations:

- (1) Every Church should be able to define Christian education from their own context and set their objectives since there is no one universally accepted definition of it.
- (2) The study has indicated that the Bible is the basic resource material in Christian education and for that matter the most important curriculum of the Church's educational ministry. The various Church boards in the

selected mission Churches should make sure that all of their members, especially those who can read, own a Bible and they should study and apply it in their lives.

- (3) Christian education should address real-life issues in Ghana in a practical way, and this will become a means of improving, developing and nurturing the Church in its authentic walk with Christ.
- (4) Parents play a very significant role in the education ministry of the Church. Adult education should be taken seriously so that the spiritual life of parents would improve to influence their children.
- (5) Those who should be selected as teachers of Christian education should be those who study and apply the Bible to their lives.
- (6) Every congregation should have a Christian education committee. Churches which currently have a Christian Education Committee are endeavoured to make it as useful and functional as possible. Those which do not have, should take the necessary steps to initiate one.
- (7) The mission Churches should provide regular training for Christian educators in each programme.
- (8) Once a year this committee should conduct a thorough evaluation of all the Christian education programs. The goal is to identify areas of weakness and take steps to make improvements in those areas.
- (9) The Church should work in collaboration with non formal education division to organize literacy classes for its members who cannot read and write. This will help majority of Church members in various congregations of the selected Churches more especially those in the rural areas to read the Bible in their own local language.

- (10) Regular production of manuals and teaching materials is very important in the educational ministry of the Church. Churches should appoint committees which will be solely responsible for producing manuals and teachings materials to ensure continuous education in the congregations.
- (11) The three selected mission Churches should take advantage of all available resources. For Christian education to be more effective, serious consideration should be given to the involvement and the use of indigenous resources and cultural categories of a particular cultural context. For instance, congregations of the three selected mission Churches in this study are in Akan community (Akyem Abuakwa) and therefore, Akan traditional educational resources like the use of proverbs, folklores, symbols etc. could be employed in the teaching and learning process of the Church to make Christian education more indigenous. Contextualization then is the best approach towards indigenous Christian education.
- (12) Christlikeness is the goal of the Christian education ministry of the Church as revealed by a greater percentage (60%) of respondents. That involves a defined process, but must be dependent on the Holy Spirit in every aspect of the educational process: Bible study, development of the lesson plan, and management of learning experiences, worship and others. The Holy Spirit must be invited into the entire educational process. Without him, the needed life transformation cannot be realized.
- (13) Christian Education is centered in and emanates from the worship life of the congregation. It should be a matter of great concern that the Ministers and the Priests of the mission Churches nurture members in their growth

in faith so that they will have strong commitment to and involvement in Christian education. Pastoral visit, inspiration and support therefore, is very important.

- (14) We are of the view that if all aspects of Christian education are pursued and teaching is neglected, Christlike character would hardly be achieved. Christian educators in the mission Churches in Ghana must realise the priority of the task of teaching in Christian ministry. Toussaint (1983:383) rightly notes that teaching results not only in numerical growth but in Christ-like character. The mission Churches in Akyem Abuakwa and in Ghana as whole must take recourse to teaching in order to experience tangible character transformation.

The educational ministry cannot be characterized by sporadic attendance, unfulfilled assignments, sloppy instruction, boring classes, and limited methods. The Church of Jesus Christ must stand tall over against all other institutions in pagan society. The purpose for which Jesus gave the educational mandate should be fulfilled. Christ not only told his Church to educate, but added, “And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.” He who has mandated the task will see to it that it is ultimately fulfilled. But Christian education ministry must be well prepared, relevant, transforming, flexible, varied, and designed to change behavior. If this is done with serious consideration of the above recommendations, the mission Churches and even all the denominations in Ghana, would experience effective Christian education. This will in turn have a positive impact on the lives of 72.2% of Ghanaian population (Christians) thereby reducing high incidence of corruption in Ghana.