

**The Impact of African Traditional Religious Beliefs and Cultural Values on Christian-
Muslim Relations in Ghana from 1920 through the Present:
A Case Study of Nkusukum-Ekumfi-Enyan area of the Central Region.**

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I certify that all material in this thesis which is not my own work has been identified and that no material has previously been submitted and approved for the award of a degree by this or any university.

Signature.....

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Topic: The Impact of African Traditional Religious Beliefs and Cultural Values on Christian-Muslim Relations in Ghana from 1920 through the Present:

A Case Study of Nkusukum-Ekumfi-Enyan traditional area of the Central Region.

Abstract:

The inception, evangelization and missionary activities of Christianity and Islam in Nkusukum-Ekumfi-Enyan traditional area in the Central Region of Ghana resulted in the conversions of the indigenous people, mainly, from African Traditional Religion (ATR) to the two mission religions. The religious beliefs, practices and the provision of social services of these immigrant religions have impacted on the religious and cultural life of the traditional communities. Yet, the indigenous religious beliefs and cultural values have served not only as the mediation of expressions for both indigenous Christians and Muslims in this area; they have, also, shaped, to a great extent, the forms of Christianity and Islam that developed as well as the relationships between members of the diverse religious groups.

This thesis is an attempt to examine the impact of the traditional religious beliefs and cultural practices (with their underlying values) on the religious pluralistic context of this Mfantse traditional area in Ghana, particularly, on Christian-Muslim relations. Besides this quest, which has not received a sufficient scholarly attention, the need for this work also became evident in view of the emergence of religious extremism and intolerance by some Christian and Islamic groups in the country, which, at times, has undermined some of the traditional religious and cultural values, which have fostered peaceful co-existence over the years. Through this process, the extent of that changes that have resulted from the interaction of the two main mission religions (Christianity and Islam) with the indigenous context, are, also, assessed.

The research tools used, namely interview and observation (of transitional rites and festivals), made it possible to explore both the religious and socio-cultural history of the people, which existed, mostly in oral tradition. In this sense, one of the contributions of this research lies in its role of “rescuing the memory” of the indigenous people.¹ This effort becomes more relevant as the potential for losing this important aspect of the people’s narrative history increases, with the older generation passing on from this life and the reality of the main stream of the historical account coming from European sources. This study contributes to the scanty local scholarly material in this field of study, which, for some time now, has relied on non-indigenous sources, often, with their underlying assumptions and biases.

The central argument of this thesis is that although a larger percentage of the indigenous population are converts to Christianity and Islam, it is the indigenous beliefs and values which, mainly, serve as the mediation for their religious and cultural expressions. This indigenous influence has enhanced harmonious relationships among members of Christianity and Islam in the area.

The thesis is in two main sections, namely sections A and B. Section A comprises chapter one, which focuses on the introductory and methodological approach of the research and chapters two, three and four, which constitute the historical background of the people and, Christianity and Islam in the area. The chapters five, six and seven, which deal with the data analysis of the research and the conclusion (chapter eight) form the section B.

¹ “Memory and Mission” in *Dictionary of African Christian Biography*(DACB), New Haven: OMSC, 2006, p. 1

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