

**RELIGION AND ETHICS: RESPONSES OF SOME
GHANAIAN RELIGIOUS BODIES TO HIV/AIDS,
CORRUPTION AND ENVIRONMENTAL
DEGRADATION**



EMMANUEL ADJETEY QUAYE

**THIS THESIS IS SUBMITTED TO THE
UNIVERSITY OF GHANA, LEGON, IN PARTIAL
FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENT FOR
THE AWARD OF AN M.PHIL DEGREE IN THE
STUDY OF RELIGIONS.**

JULY, 2003

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this thesis was carried out by me at the Department For The Study of Religions, University of Ghana, Legon under the supervision of Dr Rebecca Ganusah and Mr Harry L. K. Agbanu

I have not taken undue advantage of any person or source, except as indicated in the reference.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Thanks be unto the Almighty God for preserving my life for all these years of schooling.

I wish to express my profound appreciation and gratitude to the individuals through whose support and encouragement I have been able to produce this work

I wish to single out a few of them who deserve special mention. They are Dr Rebecca Ganusah and Mr Harry L. K. Agbanu, my supervisors, for their encouragement, patience, insightful comments and suggestions, which helped very much in shaping this work. I pray the Almighty God richly bless them and their families. I wish to thank the lecturers of the Department for the Study of Religions, University of Ghana, especially Rev. Abamfo Atiemo and Dr. Rabiatu Ammah, both lecturers at the Department who kept encouraging me when the going was tough.

My profound appreciation also goes to Mr Theophilus Adjei Agoe of Regimmauel Gray Ltd., for his financial support. Further, I acknowledge with gratitude the prayer support of Ms. Vivian Match and Mr. Prosper C. Korto of the University of Ghana, Legon.

Moreso, I wish to express love and appreciation to all my respondents for taking time off their busy schedules to answer the structured questionnaires given to them.

I finally extend a hand of appreciation and thanks to Ms. Leticia A. Ocloo of the Regional Institute for Population Studies (RIPS), University of Ghana, Legon, for typing this work. To all I say, the Most High God continuously bless you.

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DEFINITION OF TERMS

In order to facilitate reading and discussion that will follow in this thesis the following terms and abbreviations have been explained.

- | | |
|-----------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| AIDS | - Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome |
| Ameer | - The head and Spiritual Leader of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Mission, Ghana. |
| Asantehene | - The king of the Asantes. |
| Diocese | - It designates a portion of Christians who are entrusted to a Bishop to be nurtured by him, through the Gospel and the Eucharist in the Holy Spirit. |
| Faith Community | - It refers, in this thesis, to the adherents of the Catholic Church, the Salvation Army, the Ahmadiyya Muslim Mission and the Afrikanian Renaissance Mission. |
| Hadith | - It contains the words of wisdom that the Prophet Muhammad (peace be to him) is reported to have said and is recorded by his followers during his lifetime. |
| HIV | - Human Immunodeficiency Virus. |
| Jamaat | - It is a community made up of members of Ahmadiyya Muslim Mission. |
| K .S. | - Kaposi Sarcoma – it is a cancer of the skin which occurs commonly in certain parts of Africa in mild and benign form. |

NGO	- Non-Governmental Organization.
PLWA	- People Living With AIDS
Religious Bodies/Groups	- It represents the Catholic Church, the Salvation Army, the Anmadiyya Muslim Mission and the Afrikania Renaissance Mission.
STD	- Sexually Transmitted Disease.
Seven Paths	- This is the seven basic teachings of the Afrikania Renaissance Mission which every member must practice religiously.
Shrine	- It is the worship centre of the Afrikania Renaissance Mission.
SMA	- Societas Missionum ad Afros, that is, Society of Afrikan Mission.
Sunna	- It contains the ways, customs or examples of the Prophet Muhammad, which were recorded by his followers during his lifetime.

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ABSTRACT

Issues of HIV/AIDS, bribery and corruption and environmental degradation are all life threatening issues, which touch on cultural norms and practices, socio-economic and human responsibilities and therefore need to be taken seriously by all. This study discusses these issues and the programmes of activities that have been put in place by the Catholic Church, the Salvation Army, the Ahmadiyya Muslim Mission and the Afrikania Renaissance Mission to help civil society fight against them in the country.

The study further identified certain factors as being responsible for the thriving of the above moral and ethical issues. The major striking factors, from the findings of the research, being ineffective enforcement of laws and lack of commitment to religious teachings. By the latter, we mean, the adherents of the religious groups who form about 93 percent of the country's population as indicated by the 2000 population census, do not seem to put into practice the moral teachings that are given or taught by the leaders in the Churches, Mosques and the Shrines. These and many others are responsible for the prevalence of these moral and ethical problems facing the Ghanaian society.

It is recommended, therefore, that the religious bodies need to take issues of moral education and moral reformation of the individual as priority concerns and act accordingly to help create a moral community in which virtuous acts would be upheld and vices would be abhorred by all.

CHAPTER ONE

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

The field of ethics and morality is one of the pivots of a sound, peaceful and solid society. Morality is the cement that binds society together, without which society disintegrates. It is in ethics that philosophers discuss and try to discover how we human beings ought to live. Ethics and morality therefore are concerned with right, wrong, duty, responsibility and value which are important determining factors of the survival of a society.

Daily reports from the law courts, the print and electronic media on immoral practices such as fraud and embezzlement, dishonest acquisition of property, prostitution, HIV/AIDS and sexuality, bribery and corruption, and environmental degradation have become issues of great concern.

Kudadjie Joshua N., in an Article, 'Morality in Ghana', asserted that;

For many years there has been much talk about low morals in Ghana. Some have rightly observed that our moral fibre has completely broken down. For, is it not true that at all levels, in private as well as in public life, there is a high incidence of moral impropriety? There is the evidence that the once cherished values of honesty, 'clean money', hard work, respect for old age and authority, womanhood, godliness and self-esteem - all these virtues and more have gone with the wind. In their place, the ugly vices of promiscuity, dishonesty, laziness, disrespect, ungodliness, vanity etc., have become normal for many Ghanaians.¹

¹ Kudadjie, J. N (1989) 'Morality in Ghana', B. A. Yawson (ed), *The Christian Sentinel*, Vol. 3. No.5, Accra. The Methodist Church, Ghana, p 16

Kudadjie, however, noted in this same work that, 'Ghanaians have demonstrated the desire to be morally righteous and great people'. Aspects of these ideas can be found in national documents and codes such as the Constitutions, Oaths of Office, all of which encourage good standard of every individual citizen.

Looking at the moral value of the oaths taken by those elected or appointed to high offices, it can be inferred that, Ghanaians as a people, have sincerely desired to create highly disciplined moral community. But this is far from realization, for, morality has continued to degenerate in the country. To buttress Kudadjie's assertion, Samuel Wood also noted in his book: Ethics in Business and Public Administration: Introductory Essays and Cases, that 'Ethical standards in workplace, both public and private, are less than satisfactory. The workplace in this country appears to be characterized by such vices as plunder, greed and rapaciousness'.²

In a symposium organized by the Religions Students' Association of Ghana – Legon branch, on the 20th of December, 2000, under the theme, '*The Moral and Spiritual Dimension to Modern Governance: The role of the Political Party*', Prof. Kudadjie noted that:

Modernism, and even post-modernism need not, and does not, stop a people from learning from their own culture. It does not stop a people from pursuing the philosophy and wisdom of pragmatism. It does not stop a people from seeking to be truly human. It need not stop a people from placing what can be demonstrated to be crucial for their survival and well-being in the hands of the governors.³

² Wood, S. (1994), *Ethics in Business and Public Administration: Introductory Essays and Cases*, Accra: Ascupa Publishers, p.16

³ Kudadjie, J. N. (2000), 'The Moral Dimension to Modern Governance: The Role of the Political Parties', p4. Unpublished paper.

He was suggesting that

moral development is crucial, if not more, than economic development, the nurturing of democracy, industrial promotion, and the development of science and technology. Without morality, all these efforts will come to nothing.⁴

Some political and traditional leaders have also expressed similar sentiments, showing the alarming nature of the moral problems the country is facing. For example, in his inaugural address at the Independence Square in Accra on January 7th, 2001, President J.A. Kufour declared a zero tolerance for corruption. He said that his Government would deal ruthlessly with any official who is found dabbling in corruption.⁵

Furthermore, in the March 27th edition of the Daily Graphic, under the heading, 'Help Government fight corruption-Kufour,' the paper reported that President J.A. Kufour has tasked religious leaders to join forces with the leadership of the country to help fight corruption and immorality. The President made the call when addressing the 72nd National Convention of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Mission at Ashongman, near Accra. He further appealed to the religious leaders to help change the trend with their prayers and other means.⁶

President Kufour said also that in spite of standards set to prevent corruption, there is the tendency for people, especially office holders to indulge in immoral acts. The theme for the convention was 'Prospects and Challenges of the New Millennium: The Moral Factor.'

⁴ Kudadjie, J. N. (2000), op. cit. p. 4.

⁵ Branford, N. & Okyere O. (Jan. 8, 2000), 'As President Kufour steps into office', Elvis D. Ayeh (ed) Daily Graphic, No. 148109, Accra, The Graphic Communications Group Limited, pp. 1 & 3.

⁶ Kwarteng K. J. (March 27, 2001) 'Help Government Fight Corruption-Kufour', Elvis D. Ayeh (ed) Daily Graphic, No. 148175, Accra, The Graphic Communications Group Limited, p. 11.

Furthermore, the Vice-President, Aliu Mahama, at the launching of a survey report on corruption carried out by the Ghana Anti-Corruption Coalition (GACC) in Accra, on the 1st of February, 2001, reiterated the Government's wish to establish the Office of Accountability to implement a Code of Conduct for top-level Government appointees. The idea behind the creation of this moral office is to make sure that Government appointees would be guided by such moral and ethical codes, which the Government thinks, will put the appointees to check.⁷

Earlier, on August 26, 1997, the Daily Graphic reported that the then Head of State, Ft.Lt. Jerry John Rawlings called on Church leaders to join the state to rid the country of corruption, abuse of power and the wanton use of freedom without responsibility. President Rawlings said, 'where there is wrong doing, whether in the Church or State, let us root it out. Even though the task is not going to be easy, both State and Church can do it if they cooperate'.⁸

A traditional ruler, the Asantehene - Otumfuo Osei Tutu II was also quoted in the January 11th 2001 edition of the Daily Graphic as saying, 'If corruption and other social evils are not checked, they would undermine national development effort and peaceful co-existence.' The Asantehene, in effect was calling on the clergy to channel their energies towards helping to rid society of corruption and other social evils. The clergy,

⁷ Kwarteng E.K & Mantaw S.A. (Feb 1, 2001), 'Government to establish office of accountability', Elvis D Ayeh (ed) Daily Graphic, No 148130, Accra, The Graphic Communications Group Limited pp1 & 3

⁸ Okyere, J. & Salia A. K. (Aug.27, 1997), 'Church, State must check vices... says President Rawlings', Elvis Ayeh (ed), Daily Graphic, No 14526, Accra, The Graphic Corporation pp 1&3

he said, have a moral responsibility to help in the national effort of catering for not only the spiritual needs of their congregation, but also, the physical development of society⁹

As noted by the political leaders, religious leaders have themselves also recognized their civic roles and responsibilities in the society, hence, the call for moral renewal in the country

This is reflected in their Communiqués, Pastoral Letters and sermons on issues such as bribery and corruption, HIV/AIDS and sexuality, and the environment. For instance, the Ghana Catholic Bishops' Conference in 1997, issued a pastoral letter on bribery and corruption, stressing on its prevalence in the country, the consequences and suggested remedy for the two evils. The Bishops, in their 1998 Communiqué, further declared a crusade against the twin-evils

STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

The above immoral practices such as: bribery and corruption, environmental degradation, fraud and embezzlement and prostitution have been of concern to some over the years. The religious bodies (faith community) over the years have established themselves as important social institutions in the society. This community is a visible and influential factor in the Ghanaian society, which cannot be ignored. The central problem of this study is thus to examine the extent to which the Catholic Church, the Salvation Army, the Ahamadiyya Muslim Mission and the Afrikania Renaissance Mission are

⁹ Nehemiah, O (Jan. 11, 2001), 'Help rid society of corruption', Elvis D. Ayeh (ed), *Graphic Graphic*, No 148112. Accra, The Graphic Communications Group Limited pp 16 & 17.

confronting the problems of HIV/AIDS, Bribery and Corruption and Environmental Degradation

The research also tries to identify and discuss the practical steps taken by these religious bodies/groups after issuing the various Communiqués, Pastoral Letters and Public Statements on the above issues.

The work would further try to ascertain the attitudes and responses of the members of these religious bodies/groups, concerning the issues their leaders are helping to address

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The aims and objectives therefore are

- (1) To look at the historical development of the religious bodies/groups under study.
- (2) To ascertain the official stand of the Catholic Church, the Salvation Army Church, the Ahmadiyya Muslim Mission and the Afrikania Renaissance Mission concerning HIV/AIDS, Bribery and Corruption, and Environmental Degradation.
- (3) To evaluate the roles of the religious bodies/groups in their crusade against the moral problems that have been identified
- (4) To find out the attitudes and reactions of the members of these religious groups to the issues under discussion
- (5) To suggest and recommend how best these groups could help solve these ethical problems, where necessary.

SCOPE OF STUDY

The focus of the study is on HIV/AIDS, Bribery and Corruption, and Environmental Degradation, as being addressed by the Catholic Church, the Salvation Army, Ahmadiyya Muslim Mission and the Afrikania Renaissance Mission. The selection of these religious bodies/groups is based on the fact that:

- (1) they are representative enough when we consider the major religious bodies/groups in the country
- (2) they have strict ethical and moral codes of conduct
- (3) they are very much involved in social services
- (4) they are deeply involved in addressing and voicing their sentiments on moral and ethical problems that confront the country.
- (5) they are also known to have documents on almost all their activities

METHODOLOGY

Some materials (information) required for the work were gathered through interviewing of selected individuals of authority as far as the religious bodies are concerned, with guided sets of questions. These include various heads of the religious bodies, secretaries, Public Relations Officers (PRO), and in some cases, elders (other office holders) and workers of the religious bodies. These leaders were selected because they are not only the official custodians of information required but are also those who can be trusted to provide credible answers to relevant questions. Some members (non-leaders) of the identified religious bodies were also, however, interviewed to ascertain their attitude and reaction on the said problems and on the views expressed by their

leaders. Other information required was gathered through the completion of structured questionnaires administered to some members of these religious bodies/groups

Other primary sources of information were:

- (1) The communiqués of the religious bodies, 1970–2001.
- (2) Pastoral letters and public statements, 1970–2001.
- (3) Constitutions of the religious bodies.
- (4) Other official documents issued by these religious bodies on the identified problems

The choice was made because this is the period when documented activities on the religious bodies under study are relatively easy to access.

Secondary sources include books, articles and journals that are relevant to the work. Theses, which are related to the topic, were also consulted.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Kudadjie, Joshua N., in his book Moral Renewal in Ghana: Ideals, Realities, Possibilities (1995), shared some pertinent issues on the general level of morality in Ghana. He divided the book into three major parts. Part I is under the heading *Creating a Moral Community in Ghana: The Ideals*. Part II is under the heading *Creating a Moral Community in Ghana: The Realities* and the final Part is treated under the heading: *Creating a Moral Community: The Possibilities*.

In Part I, '*The Ideals*', Kudadjie recounted speeches of past Governments since independence, from Presidents Nkrumah to Rawlings, about how each planned to make Ghana a moral community, and the desire of Ghanaians to live morally good lives.

In Part II, '*The Realities*', the writer reviews some of the steps taken to realize the ideals and evaluated their actual performance, that is, he attempted a brief survey of the actual performance in relation to the high moral ideals that were set. He looked at evidence as recorded in the findings of Commissions of Enquiry, Government statements and court reports and empirical research among the people.

In the final part, '*The Possibilities*', Kudadjie identified the causes of low morality, and made some suggestions and recommendations, which he thinks if heeded to, will really go a long way in the bid to help create a moral community. He finally concluded with the solutions or the way out of the identified problems.

Even though the writer touched on some of the issues to be discussed and threw a special challenge to the religious bodies on how to deal with some of the moral issues identified, he did not address the official stand and the practical steps being taken by the religious bodies/groups identified by this researcher. The research thus continued from where Kudadjie left off by focusing on the roles and the official stand of the identified religious bodies/groups in the moral recovery of the Ghanaian community.

Emmanuel Asante's book, *Stewardship* (1999) was also of great help to the research work. The relevant chapters include chapters 6, 8, and 9 with topics such as Stewardship of the Environment, the Church's response to HIV/AIDS and Sexuality and

Sexual Defilement of Female Children. In all these topics, the writer broadly looked at the Christian attitude towards the topics raised, and what the Christian community is doing about them.

This work has gone further to study what has been done on the said problems or topics by focusing on specific religious bodies/groups, their official stand and the methods and measures adopted to deal with the ethical and moral problems.

Chapter 12 of Nukunya's book - Tradition and Change in Ghana: An Introduction to Sociology (1991) titled 'Tribalism, Bribery and Corruption', is also of importance to the work. The author spoke about some of the measures taken by past Governments - either military or civilian to curb the incidence of bribery and corruption. These include setting up of Commissions of inquiry, probes and trials. Nukunya further treated the forms and levels of corruption, identifying the reasons for particular acts of corruption and why some individuals become easily corrupted.

Additionally, he traced some of the factors that have promoted the act of bribery and corruption in the Ghanaian society to certain beliefs and practices of the Ghanaian traditional and contemporary societies. According to Nukunya, the effects of bribery and corruption can be both negative and positive. Corruption, in the main, involves the diversion of public property and funds into private hands, and the obvious negative effect is the loss of revenue to the state. Such losses may have adverse consequences not only to the government but also to the individuals in the society. This means loss of money for development projects and for other social services. Nukunya reiterated that, some

commentators find some positive elements in bribery and corruption. For instance, bribery may expedite action in situations where cumbersome bureaucratic procedures create unnecessary delays. Furthermore, the wealth accumulated from corrupt practices also goes sometimes into investments, which may help in the development process. He concluded with some suggested solutions, which will help solve the twin-evil of bribery and corruption. The contribution of this work to that of Nukunya's is the research into the practical steps taken by the religious bodies/groups to help solve or at least minimise the practice of bribery and corruption in the country.

The book entitled -The Church and AIDS in Africa (1998), written by A. Shorter and E. Onyancha, was of great importance to the work. The work is about a case study research carried out by these two researchers on AIDS, the effects of the disease on the Kenyan society and how Church related NGO's and the Churches in Kenya are helping the Government to fight the spread of the disease. The authors treated, into some detail, the various methods used by the Churches to fight the spread of the AIDS disease. The authors also treated the thorny issue of the usage of condoms in the prevention of the spread of the HIV virus and the rift between some religious groups, especially the Catholic Church and the Government, on the promotion and use of condoms. This thesis brings up further, what the major identified religious groups are doing to help stop the spread of the AIDS disease in Ghana.

Christianity and Ecology (1992), edited by E. Breutly and M. Palmer, has also been of great help to the thesis. The work is divided into four main parts. Part I has the

heading, *'What is the crises'* This has to do with an introduction to the environmental crisis and the factors responsible for the crisis.

Part II has three sub- headings, *'The Bible and the natural world'*, *'The influence of the Bible on Christian belief about the natural world'*, and *'Preserving God's creation'* This part is about some of the roots of Christian thinking about creation, the environment, and the place of the human being within it. The writer examines in a critical way the images of nature and the role of human beings in nature within the biblical context. Further questions about the extent to which the Bible can actually supply us with workable models for the Christians' new relationship with nature, looking at the history of Christian abuse of nature, were also treated.

Part III also has three sub-headings These are; *'Monasticism; An ancient answer to modern problems'*, *'St. Francis and ecology'* and *'The Protestant tradition'* This section accounts for the many historical strands for instance, the Benedictine Movement and the teachings of St. Francis and the ways in which these strands have worked out in practice in the past. It looks at what the Church in the past had done about nature. What the teachings of St. Francis (the best known Christian saint who was very much concerned with ecology) were, and the failure of the Franciscans to follow the teachings of their founder. The final section of part three treated the dramatic and the devastating changes that certain aspects of the Protestant revolution brought upon the world's ecology

The fourth part of the book gave a wide-range analysis of how Christians are responding to the environmental crisis within the Church today. The writers made it clear that the Church has a major role to play in the struggle to save the earth from environmental destruction. This thesis looks at the role the selected religious bodies are playing in the Ghanaian society to help address the environmental crisis.

Al-Qaradawi Yusuf, in his book - The Lawful and the Prohibited, treated issues on, 'the Prohibition of Bribery', 'Gifts to Officials' and the use of 'Bribery to Redress a Wrong' (pp 499-503). The author discussed the position of the Holy Qur'an and the Islamic Shari'ah on giving and receiving of bribes.

Another Islamic book - The Qur'anic Foundations and Structure of Muslim Society (volume I), has, in its first Chapter, a theme on 'Theory of Moral Judgment', that discusses what moral judgment is all about and what the Holy Qur'an has to say on it.

The second Chapter on the topic, 'The Moral Law' treats the Qur'anic affirmation of the characteristics of the nature of the Moral Law, with a brief discussion on Kant's Categorical Imperative.

The 'Ends To Which The Moral Law is Directed' comprises the third chapter. This chapter looked at the two 'Ends'-the Immediate and Ultimate with its four-dimensional end. These dimensions include the Moral and Spiritual Well-being of the Moral Agent, Moral and Spiritual Well-being of Others, Material Well-being of Others and the Material Well-being of the Moral Agent.

Chapter seven of the above book discusses the *'Integralistic Moral Philosophy and Comprehensive Moral Code'*. It has to do with the treatment of the Qur'anic concept of God as an 'ethical Being' and His behaviour towards human beings in the ethical way. The writer established the fact that, 'For human beings to behave ethically or properly, they must imitate God who is the ethical ideal'. The writer also discussed some ethical implications of certain aspects of the Qur'anic teachings.

The *'Integrated Individual; Basic Qualities of a Muslim'* was the topic for discussion in Chapter eight. This section has to do with the unique nature of the human being in the created cosmos and the qualities the human being (specifically, the Muslim) is supposed to exhibit. This material has helped in my understanding how a Muslim is supposed to behave vis-avis the HIV/ AIDS disease, bribery and corruption and the environment.

STRUCTURE OF WORK

The study has been structured into seven chapters

In chapter one, which is the introduction, the researcher states the problem, aims and objectives of the study, scope of work, methodology, literature review, structure of work, limitation of the work, and relevance of the work. The second chapter deals with the historical background of the selected religious bodies/groups. Chapter three focuses on the HIV/AIDS menace and the response of the religious bodies/groups to the menace.

The fourth chapter treats Bribery and Corruption in the country and the role being played by the identified religious bodies/groups to help find solution to the problem. The

fifth chapter discusses Environmental degradation, focusing on the destruction of the forest, land, and the indiscriminate throwing of litter and the role of the religious bodies/groups in finding solutions to these crises as stewards of the environment.

The sixth chapter discusses the findings of the study and assesses the impact of the programmes of the religious bodies/groups, which aimed at helping society fight against the identified moral and ethical problems. Chapter seven concludes the study. In this chapter, a brief summary is given on all the issues discussed in the various chapters. The chapter also makes some suggestions/recommendations to the Religious bodies, the Government and NGO's on what could be done to effectively confront these problems.

LIMITATION OF THE WORK

Due to lack of finance and time, the researcher could not visit the length and breath of the country to assess the impact of the programmes of the selected religious bodies/groups in the various Regions. Only some selected areas where the programmes of the religious bodies/groups were being implemented were visited to assess their impact. Also, the unwillingness of some of the respondents to answer the structured questionnaires given to them acted as a limitation to the work, even though this did not significantly affect the data that was obtained

RELEVANCE OF RESEARCH

The primary rationale behind this study is to assess the impact of programmes and activities of the identified religious bodies/groups on the ethical and moral problems of HIV/AIDS, Bribery and Corruption and Environmental Degradation. The religious

leaders and members of the faith community are opinion leaders. They can therefore contribute tremendously, in helping to solve the ethical and moral problems of HIV/AIDS, Bribery and Corruption and Environmental Degradation, which threaten the very survival of the citizens. It is therefore imperative to know what practical steps these religious bodies/groups are taking to help solve the problems raised.

Further, the findings of this research will be a source of study material for current and future researchers, students, religious leaders and their followers.

CHAPTER TWO

BRIEF HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF THE RELIGIOUS BODIES/GROUPS

THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IN GHANA

The Good News about Jesus Christ that was preached by Apostles did not reach West Africa until the end of the 15th century. Although all of North Africa became Catholic during the first centuries, when many martyrs died there for refusing to worship the pagan emperors of Rome, the Gospel penetrated beyond the vast expanse of the Sahara desert.¹

Catholic Church In The Southern Sector Of Ghana

It was through the concerns of the King of Portugal, Prince Henry the Navigator, a devout Catholic, who sending his ships out year after year to find a way to West Africa and thence to the South and Eastern Africa that the Christian Faith was first introduced to the West African coast.²

¹ Fisher, A. (2000). *The Story of the Catholic Church in the Diocese of Accra*. Accra, Catholic Book Centre, p. 1

² *ibid*

In the Gold Coast, the first mass of the Portuguese Catholics was offered on the sandy beach of Elmina on the 10th of January 1482.¹ By Mass, we mean a communion service where special bread and wine representing the 'Body' and 'Blood' respectively of Jesus Christ are shared among Christians who have gathered for that purpose.

By 1554, the King of Portugal realized that the Catholic Church would never be established by the Chaplains; paid officials that they were. Their loose life and greater interest in gold or gain hindered any effective evangelization of the natives. Real missionaries were needed, men belonging to a Religious Order, who lived in poverty and worked in groups. Only among them could zeal be found for the task as well as the continuity in the work.⁴

The King, however, experienced difficulty finding Portuguese missionaries for the land of Mina (as Gold Coast was first named), as the Jesuit Order, which was first approached, declined for lack of sufficient personnel at the time. It was not until 1572, ninety years after the Portuguese sailors built the Elmina castle, which the first missionaries arrived on the coast. They were Portuguese Augustinians, who went out into the villages, living among the people, sharing their life and food. They initially had some successes as they made adult converts and chiefs and baptised their followers.³

¹ Pfann M.A. (1965). *A Short History of the Catholic Church in Ghana*, Cape Coast, Catholic Mission, pp 1-9

⁴ Elsbom (2000). *op cit*, p. 2

³ *ibid*.

After four years, however, and for reasons not well known, the people of Komenda and Eguafu attacked the Monks, killed them and ransacked the Church.⁶

After this dreadful event, missionaries were no longer sent to the West coast (Gold Coast) Thus, the first organized attempt to plant the Church (Catholicism) among the people ended in a failure.

The Portuguese crown in the land of Mina began to decline Gold was also no longer so plentiful even though the spice and silk trade with the Far East, via the Horn of Africa, had become prosperous. At the same time, the power of the Protestant nations of northern Europe was growing. After a struggle between the Protestant nations and Portuguese Catholics for five decades, the former eventually captured Portugal's last stronghold, the fort at Axim The Protestant nations took complete control of the coast, making further Catholic missionary efforts useless Occasional efforts were still made by Catholic missionaries in succeeding years, but all ended in dismal failure.⁷

Another attempt to evangelise the people of the Gold Coast came from an Englishman, Sir James Marshall, a former Anglican Priest who had converted to Catholicism, and a long time judge in the Gold Coast Sir James had wished to become a Catholic Priest, but had lost an arm and it is a strict rule that no cripple can be ordained in the Catholic Church In his desire to see Catholicism established in the Gold Coast, he wrote through the English papers, requesting for Catholic missionaries for the Gold Coast He further wrote to the Catholic Fathers in Lagos when he became acquainted

⁶ Pfann (1965), op. cit. pp. 1-9

⁷ Elbernd (2000), op. cit. p. 2

with the *Societas Missionum ad Afros* - Society of African Missions (SMA) missionaries- who were working there, to extend their mission field to the Gold Coast.⁸

The SMA missionaries in Lagos also wrote to their superiors in Europe pleading for missionaries to be sent to the Gold Coast. The Rome Cardinals hesitated because the Gold Coast had become known as the 'White Man's Grave'. That is, a country where no Europeans could escape tropical diseases and death. They eventually agreed and created the Apostolic Prefecture of the Gold Coast. This meant that, the superior of the missionaries evangelizing the land would do it on behalf of the Holy Father. The *Societas Missionum ad Afros* was thereby given the green light to extend their mission work to the Gold Coast. This was in late 1879. Father Planque who took over the leadership of SMA decided to send Fathers Auguste Moreau (33) and Eugene Murate (31) to Elmina to re-establish the Catholic faith in the Gold Coast. The two men arrived at Elmina on the 18th of May 1880. They landed at the beach aboard a British warship. But Father Murate died on the 5th of August 1880, less than three months after his arrival in the Gold Coast.⁹

Father Auguste Moreau – to be known as the Father of Ghanaian Catholicism, - moved out of the hotel where he was lodging, into a spacious house. This house later became the first Catholic Mission School in Gold Coast. The opening of the Mission was attended with remarkable success as Father Moreau's school was at once crowded and could no longer accommodate the people. In January 1883, his work began to show result as he baptized fifteen boys and gave them the first Holy Communion.¹⁰

⁸ Ebbornd (2000), op. cit. p. 14

⁹ Pfann (1965), op. cit. pp. 14-17

¹⁰ Basu J. M. (1956). *Catholic Pioneers in West Africa*, London, Clowmore and Reynolds Ltd. p147ff

Father Moreau learnt the local Fante language. He wrote the first Fante Catechism and translated the Catholic hymns into Fante. Through the school, many lay apostles emerged. Among them was Francis William Haizel Cobbina who played an important role in the evangelization of the people of Cape Coast.

In 1886, Father Moreau's health broke down. Years of hard work and lack of good food had weakened him considerably. His doctor ordered him to go for sick leave in Europe. On his way home, he died and was buried at sea near Axim.¹¹ Father Pellat succeeded him. With the help of Francis William Haizel Cobbina, Father Pellat opened the following stations, Agona, Shama, Brenu-Akyinim, Adjua and Cape Coast.

The period between 1886 and 1892 had been good periods for the Gold Coast Catholic Mission. Three resident stations at Elmina, Cape Coast and Keta had been established and the Mission also had many converts. 1893 was, however, to be a time of great trials. A number of missionaries died. Newly opened stations were closed down due to the frequent deaths. For instance, in Elmina, Cape Coast and Keta there were desperate and unending struggles with disease, poverty and death. The Yellow Fever was of all the tropical diseases, the most dangerous for the Europeans.¹²

The British Governor and some of the foreign Catholics, who lived in Accra, wrote to Father Joseph Pallet asking him to found a Mission in Accra. The request was

¹¹ Dansuah K. (1980), *Catholic Church in Ghana, Cape Coast*, Mfantsiman Press Ltd, p. 14 & 15.

¹² Pfinn (1965), *op. cit.* pp. 37-39.

granted and Fathers Otto Hilberer and Eugene Raeses arrived in Accra in January 1893 to start a mission there ¹³

The good results chalked by the missionaries in the Gold Coast in less than twenty years encouraged the Holy See to elect (create) an Apostolic Vicariate in the Gold Coast. This creation took place on the 12th of May 1901. This meant that the Mission would henceforth be ruled, on behalf of the Holy Father (Pope), by a Bishop.

Father Albert Maximilan, a German member of the SMA was then consecrated in Europe as the first Bishop of the Gold Coast. During a visit to Elmina, Bishop Albert was taken ill. He was hospitalized in Elmina a few months, and went on a sick leave but died peacefully in his native country Germany, on December 15, 1903. Before his death, he asked that his heart be taken to Cape Coast, the Mission he had loved so dearly.¹⁴ Bishop Isidore Klaus was then appointed as the second Apostolic Vicar. He assumed his new office on the 29th of November, 1904. Bishop Klaus also died in 1905, after one year of his assumption of office ¹⁵

On April 12, 1906, Bishop Ignatius Hummel, a Frenchman, became the new and third Apostolic Vicar of the Gold Coast. By the time he arrived, the total number of Catholics in the five residential stations of Elmina, Cape Coast, Keta, Saltpond, Axim and their outstations was seven thousand five hundred (7,500). Bishop Hummel worked hard to see to the establishment of several Catholic Missions and schools in the Gold

¹³ Pfann (1965), op cit p. 47

¹⁴ *Ibid.* pp. 45 - 48

¹⁵ Damash (1980), op cit pp. 18-20

Coast and the strengthening of existing ones. He died in 1924 after eighteen years of hard work in the Gold Coast. At his funeral, the Governor of the Gold Coast said, 'Bishop Hummel had done more than anybody else to lay a good foundation of Christian education'. Before he died he had more than 80 schools in his vicariate.¹⁶

Father Ernest Hauger (1925-1932) became the fourth Apostolic Vicar of the Gold Coast. He landed at Cape Coast on the 20th of November, 1925.¹⁷

The Catholic Church continued to expand across the country with the creation of dioceses, the appointment of bishops, the establishment of new stations (parishes), schools and health institutions.

The statistical survey of the Catholic Church in Ghana shows a steady growth from 1880 when the first two SMA missionaries, Fathers Auguste Moreau and Eugene Murate landed in Elmina. As at December 2000, the number of Catholics in Ghana was two million four hundred and twenty four thousand (2,424,000) out of about a population of eighteen million four hundred and ten thousand (18,410,000) with 18 diocese, 318 parishes and 21 bishops, out of which 3 are retired.¹⁸



¹⁶ Danquah (1980), op. cit. p. 22

¹⁷ *ibid.* p. 23

¹⁸ *Statistical Yearbook of the Church (2000)*, Rome, the Vatican Press (Libreria Editrice Vaticana).

Catholic Church In Northern Ghana

Catholic Christianity was introduced in Northern Ghana in 1906 by the Missionary Society of Our Lady of Africa, then popularly known as the White Fathers (WF).¹⁹ A Frenchman, Cardinal Lavignerie, who was the Archbishop of Algiers, was the founder of the Association. He ruled that before attempting to convert the heathen, his missionaries should try to resemble as much as possible, their African brethren: in dress, food and the way they lived. The White Fathers travelled in Caravans like the Arabs, moved down south across the Sahara to the Sudan. Their missionary activities extended to Waga-Dugu (Ouagadougou), present day Burkina Faso. The people called them White Fathers because they always saw them dressed in white. In fact, their habit was chosen to resemble Arab clothing: a *gondoura* or robe and a *burnous* that is a cape with a hood. To show that they were Christians, they wore rosaries around their necks instead of the stripes of beads worn by the Muslims. Two of the White Fathers – Morin and Chollet left Waga-Dugu on April, 1906 and entered Navrongo in the same month.²⁰ The people living in Navrongo were Moslems and pagans. It was reported that traditional priests who feared the strangers' influence told their people that, if they went nearer to them, the White men would catch them and eat them. So for the first year, the Fathers mostly saw people running away from them. But with time, some individuals began to appreciate what the Fathers were doing. After all, they had cured many diseases which the traditional priests could not cure, and they asked for no payment.

¹⁹ Osei – Bonsu J. (ed) (1997). *Ecclesia in Ghana: On the Church and its Evangelising Mission in the Third Millennium*. Cape Coast, p. 13

²⁰ Pfann (1965), *op cit* pp58-59

The people also accepted the gospel message and some were even baptized. And just as it had happened in the south, small outstations began to blossom round the central station of Navrongo.²¹ The Jirapa and Kaleo Missions were established in 1929 and 1932 respectively. In July 1933, the Apostolic Prefecture of Navrongo was elected into a Vicariate, the fourth in the Gold Coast and Monsignor Morin became its first Bishop.²² The Catholic Church in the northern part of Ghana has since 1933 grown steadily with the establishment of parishes and preaching posts in towns and villages. As at 2000, the north has five dioceses with four bishops and one archbishop.

The first Ghanaian to be consecrated as a bishop was John Kodwo Amisshah. This took place on August 16, 1957 in Cape Coast.²³ Ghanaians, thereafter, were consecrated Bishops in quick succession. For example:

- The Rt. Reverend Peter Kwasi Sarpong was consecrated as a Bishop on 8th March, 1970
- The Rt. Reverend Dominic K. Andoh was consecrated a Bishop on October 3rd, 1971.
- The Rt. Reverend Rudolph Akanu was consecrated as a Bishop on March 31st, 1973.
- The Rt. Reverend Francis A. Lodonu was consecrated as a Bishop on June 29th, 1973
- The Rt. Reverend James Kwadwo Owusu was consecrated as a Bishop on June 30th, 1973.²⁴

²¹ Pinn (1965), *op. cit.* pp. 60-61

²² *Ibid* p. 91

²³ Damuah (1980), *op. cit.* p. 32

According to the Code of Canon Law – the Constitution of the worldwide Catholic Church - neighbouring Churches are grouped into Ecclesiastical provinces, with certain defined territories. The purpose of this grouping is to promote, according to the circumstances of persons and place, a common pastoral action or platform of various neighbouring dioceses, and more closely, to foster relations between the diocesan Bishops²⁵. This led to the setting up of the Ghana Catholic Bishops Conference and the Catholic National Secretariat in 1960. The latter is to run and coordinate the affairs of the former. The Conference is basically made up of the various diocesan Archbishops and bishops and is responsible for all major decisions concerning the Catholic Church in Ghana. The first Secretary-General of the Bishops Conference was Rev. Father O’Leary and the current (as at 2003) is Monsignor Joseph Ankrah. The secretariat is made up of nine autonomous Departments. The nine departments are, Education, Ecumenical Relations, Socio-Economic Affairs, Health, Social Communications, National Catholic Service Centre, Pastoral Action, Clergy and Relations and Catechetical Section²⁶.

Renewal In The Catholic Church – Worldwide

In 1959, Pope John XXII announced an ecumenical Council or gathering of all the Bishops of the world. The Pope had asked the Church to pray that this Council would be a ‘new Pentecost’. This ecumenical Council meeting became known as the Vatican II. It was held in four sessions within a three-year period at the Vatican, in Rome (1962-1965). At this meeting, the Bishops outlined a vision of renewal in all areas of Catholic life

²⁴ Dumas (1980), op. cit. pp. 35-36

²⁵ The Catholic Church (1983), *The Code of Canon Law*, London, Collins Liturgical-Harper Collins Publishers, p. 76

²⁶ Dumas (1980), op. cit. p. 36

understanding of the Church and its role in the world, liturgy, roles of clergy, religious and laity, ecumenism, missionary activity and communications. The Bishops completed the last session in December, 1965 and returned home to begin to make this 'new Pentecost' real in their dioceses.²⁷

This charismatic renewal movement began in the United States in February 1967. A group of University students at Duquesne University in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania made a retreat in which they experienced a deep infilling of the Holy Spirit, which they later named the 'Baptism of the Holy Spirit.' Their lives were transformed. Jesus became real to them and each gave his or her heart to Him, the scripture became a living word, the sacrament became powerful times in the Lord's presence. They found out that they had new zeal in preaching the Gospel and serving others in love. To praise God and to form communities, people began to meet together for prayer meetings in which they spent time in praising and worshipping the Lord, witnessing to the Lord's power in their lives, using the spiritual gifts such as tongues and prophecy, hearing scriptural teachings and interceding for the needs of the Church and the world. The students found that the gifts of the spirit mentioned in Scripture (1 Corinthians 12, Romans 12) were being given to them.²⁸

The first Charismatic prayer Groups (Catholic Charismatic renewal movements) began in Ghana in 1970. Since then, the renewal has experienced a steady growth numerically and in-depth faith formation. The renewal enjoys the approval and support of the Ghana Bishops' Conference. About one thousand prayer groups with

²⁷ Osei-Hosoya J. (1997), op. cit. p. 67

²⁸ *Ibid*

approximately fifty thousand members are now active in all the eighteen dioceses of the country. The Renewal is making an appreciable impact on the quality of life and depth of faith formation of Ghanaian Catholics. The Renewal is currently one of the fast-growing groups in the local Churches. By renewal, we mean the activities that hitherto, had never been experienced or practised in the Catholic Church. For instance, the establishment of prayer cells in all the Parishes, speaking in Tongues during prayer sessions and the holding of deliverance and healing services at the Parishes.

A National Service Team (NST) composed of the eighteen Diocesan Coordinators and Assistants across the country direct the work of the Renewal in Ghana. A seven-member National Executive Team, which includes a priest who is the Episcopal Liaison with the Bishops' Conference and a Layman who is the full-time National Coordinator of the movement, handles the day-to-day affairs of the Renewal.²⁹

The Catholic Church in Ghana is concerned about the healing of the whole man. It acknowledges that the health services are a continuation of the Healing Ministry, which Christ exercised while on earth. This realization is in line with Christ's own manifesto as found in Luke 4:18 (cf. Isaiah 61:1) '*The Spirit of the Lord has been given to me, for he has anointed me (referring usually to a consecrated person to carry out the assignments or the commandments of the Lord). He has sent me to bring the good news to the poor, to proclaim liberty to captives and to give the blind new sight, to set the down trodden free, to proclaim the Lord's year of favour.*'

²⁹ Osei-Bonsu J (1997), op. cit. p. 68

Putting this Prophecy into concrete action, the Catholic Church in Ghana has from the 1950s established many health institutions, especially in the marginalized rural areas. As at 2002, the Church could boast of 31 Hospitals, 66 Clinics (all of which have Primary Health Care centres attached), 5 Large Primary Health Care centres, 40 home-based HIV/AIDS programmes at Pramso (4), Agroyesum (6), Agomenya (15), Akwatia (8) and Bator (7) and 5 natural Family Planning/Family Life Education centres at Wa, Tamale, Sunyani, Jumasi, Ho and Kpandu³⁰. The Church's Health Delivery Services together with those of other Christian Churches constitute 40% of the health delivery services in the whole country.³¹

To facilitate social development, the Church has set up various structures and systems that are visibly present at all the levels of her organizational hierarchy. In the various dioceses in Ghana, there are such offices as development offices and health departments. In pursuance of the socio-economic upliftment of the people, the Catholic Church in Ghana has undertaken various developmental projects or programmes, which include:

(a) Agriculture – An Income Generating Activity

This is central to the development process of the Church. The focus is on how to help poor farmers in the rural areas generate income by increasing output levels and improving their living standards without compromising the environment. For example, in the Damongo diocese and the Archdiocese of Accra, support was given to about 24 farming groups in the form of extension education and the supply of farm inputs.

³⁰ Information received from the Health Department of the National Catholic Secretariat, Accra.
³¹ Osei Bosso J (1997), *op. cit.* p. 71

(b) Income Generating Activities (IGA)

This is being undertaken to help the rural poor especially the women, to generate income to improve their living conditions. Here, assistance is given in the form of skills training and provision of inputs to enable them undertake viable economic ventures. For example, in the Archdioceses of Accra and Cape Coast, about 8 groups are being supported annually with credit facilities to undertake projects that include, fish smoking, kenkey production, bread baking, making of batik, tie and dye and dress making

(c) Formal Education

The good formative years of children academically and morally through formal education has long been a priority area of action by the Church. To date, the Catholic Church of Ghana has to its credit Kindergartens (903), Primary (1747), Junior and Senior Secondary Schools (728), Agricultural Institutions (3), Teacher Training Colleges (8), and Technical and Vocational Schools (50). The Church has also established a University College at Fiapre in the Brong Ahafo Region.

(d) Rural Water Supply

The Church has provided 1,857 boreholes, 426 hand-dug wells and 38 small-scale dams in the various diocesan parishes across the country as at 1997¹²

The Administrative Structure Of The Catholic Church

The Pontiff (Pope) who resides in Rome heads the worldwide Catholic Church. The Pope is the final authority in all matters affecting the Church

¹² Osei Bonsu J (1997), op cit p.78

The hierarchical structure of the Catholic Church is as follows

- (1) **The Roman Pontiff (Pope)** - the Supreme Head of the Church.
- (2) **The College of Bishops** - (Ecumenical Council).

The College of Bishops exercises its power over the universal Church in solemn form in an ecumenical council.³³

(3) **The Synod of Bishops.** A group of Bishops selected from different parts of the world forms the Synod of Bishops. They meet together at specified times to promote the close relationship between the Roman Pontiff and the Bishops. The group assists the Roman Pontiff in the defence and development of faith and morals as well as the preservation and strengthening of ecclesiastical discipline. The Synod of Bishops also discusses matters proposed to it and sets forth recommendations.³⁴

(4) **Ecclesiastical Province/Episcopal Conference:** Neighbouring particular Churches are to be grouped into ecclesiastical provinces, with a certain defined territory. The purpose of this grouping is to promote, according to the circumstances of persons and place, a common pastoral action of various neighbouring dioceses, and foster closer relations among diocesan Bishops. The Ecclesiastical Province or Episcopal Conference, as a permanent institution, is to be the assembly of the Bishops of a country or of the territory, exercising together certain pastoral offices for Christ's faithful of that territory or country. The Episcopal Conference makes general decrees only in cases where the

³³ The Catholic Church (1984), op. cit. p. 56

³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 59

universal law has so prescribed, or by special mandate of the Apostolic See, either on its own initiative or at the request of the Conference itself.³⁵

The Administrative Structure Of The Ghanaian Catholic Church

The Ghanaian Catholic Church has been grouped into four major ecclesiastical provinces. The Provinces are made up of a number of Dioceses put together. They are Accra province comprising Accra, Koforidua, Ho, Keta-Akatsi and Jasikan dioceses. As at present, it is headed by Archbishop Dominic K. Andoh. The Kumasi province, made up of the dioceses of Kumasi, Obuasi, Sunyani, and Konongo-Mampong. This is headed, as at present, by Archbishop Peter Kwesi Sarpong.

Archbishop Peter Turkson is the current head of the Cape Coast province that consists of Cape Coast, Sekondi-Takoradi and Wiaso dioceses. The Tamale province consists of Tamale, Wa, Bolgatanga-Navrongo, Damongo and the Yendi dioceses and is also currently headed by Archbishop Gregory Kpiebiaya.

These provinces come together to form the Ghana Catholic Bishops' Conference (Episcopal conference), the decision-making body of the Ghana Catholic Church. It must be made clear, however, that every province and the diocese can sometimes take decisions with regards to how they are run, depending upon whether the decision is a major or minor one.

³⁵ The Catholic Church (1984), op cit, pp. 81-82

THE SALVATION ARMY IN GHANA

The Salvation Army in Ghana has its roots in England. William Booth, a native of Nottingham, in England, started it. William Booth was converted to Christianity at the age of 15. He was invited to take charge of the Spalding (Lincolnshire) Methodist Circuit, which had embraced the Methodist Reform Movement³⁶

William Booth became a student of Theology in London under Dr. William Cooker. William Booth became popular through his revival services in Bristol, Guernsey and the Staffordshire. Due to some misunderstandings with his superiors, Booth resigned from the Methodist Church in 1861.³⁷ In the letter of resignation, William Booth said, 'Knowing that the future will most convincingly either vindicate or condemn my present action, I am content to await for its verdict.'³⁸ This was to say that the future would be the best judge of his resignation from the Methodist Church.

On Sunday 2nd July, 1865, William Booth was invited by the East London Special Services Committee to conduct the first of a series of Church services in a tent erected on a disused burial ground in White Chapel in England. After the service the people, impressed on him to give himself up and stay there as their leader. This compelled him to found an agency (fellowship) called 'The East London Christian Revival Society', which later became known as the 'East London Christian Mission'. William Booth and

³⁶ Hale M. (1990). *Marching On! The Salvation Army - Its Origin and Development*. St. Alban, Campfield Press, pp. 1&2

³⁷ *Ibid.* p. 3

³⁸ *Ibid.* p. 6

his followers faced a lot of hostility and indifference, especially from the atheists. William and his followers held their meetings in tents and later in dancing saloons.

The core of his teaching was on 'holiness' and 'salvation' of the individual³⁹ In 1869, the name of the fellowship was changed to the 'Christian Mission' due to the establishment of some of the fellowships outside East London, at areas such as Edinburgh and Norwood. The name of the Mission was changed again in 1878 to 'Salvation Army'⁴⁰. They chose the new name because the members of the fellowship were believed to be fighting for God and the salvation of the people against the powers of darkness and evil. Military titles were adopted, uniforms similar to that of the military were chosen to be used by the leadership of the Church, and stations received the name Corps. William Booth became known as 'The Captain'⁴¹.

The motto of the Salvation Army is 'Blood and fire', the blood representing the blood of the Lamb of God (Jesus Christ) and the fire representing the Holy Spirit or Holy Ghost of God.

One of the leading principles upon which the Salvation Army is based is the right of women to equal share with men in the work of the Army. The founder and his wife believed that if women were given equal opportunities with men, they would prove to be at par with their men counterparts intellectually, morally and spiritually⁴².

³⁹ Hale M. (1990), *op. cit.* p. 10

⁴⁰ *ibid.* pp. 16-17

⁴¹ Hale M. (1990), *op. cit.* p. *ibid.*

⁴² *ibid.* p. 23

From 1880 onwards, the Salvation Army found it necessary to embark on outreach programmes into other communities (countries). A native of the Gold Coast (now Ghana), King Hudson, also known as Amoako Atta, was the first to introduce the Salvation Army faith to Ghanaians. He came from Agona Duakwa in the Central Region.

According to Major Samuel Kwao Oklah, one of my informants, in December, 1920, fire broke out in Amoako Attah's petrol station and destroyed all his acquired properties including his house. As a result of this, he travelled to London to seek greener pastures. While in London, he became involved in the activities of the Salvation Army and later felt that God was calling him to be an officer in the (Army) Church. He entered the Salvation Army Officers Training College in London.

At his commissioning and ordination, King Hudson Amoako Atta (later to be known as Lieutenant King Hudson) was appointed to pioneer the work of the Salvation Army in the Gold Coast in 1922. Lieutenant King Hudson Amoako Atta opened the first Salvation Army Church in his hometown, Agona Duakwa on the 22nd August, 1922. His first converts were some family members and other town folks. From Duakwa, the Army spread to other parts of the country. From 1922 to date, there are 236 Churches known as Corps or Societies, which are grouped under divisions and districts across the country.

The Ghana Territory of the Salvation Army has its headquarters in Cantonments, Accra, under the leadership of the Territorial Commander. The international head of the worldwide Salvation Army Church is in Britain.

Social Work

From its inception the Salvation Army has pursued a holistic approach to the development of the human being. Its motto, 'Heart to God and Hand to Man' has not only been a motto but one that is to be realised nationwide.

In 1950, the Salvation Army started medical and social work in the country with the establishment of clinics in the rural communities to address the health needs of the people.

Presently, the Salvation Army has eleven (11) Hospitals and Clinics and Rehabilitation centres located in the following areas:

- Ba and Agona Duakwa in the Central Region
- Anum, Akim Wenchu in the Eastern Region
- Wiamease in the Asante Region, and
- Adaklu -Sofa in the Volta Region⁴³

The Rehabilitation centres take care of persons with mental disorders, epilepsy and certain other human disabilities.

In the latter part of the 1990, the Medical and Social service Department (MSD), which is in charge of the health and social services of the Ghanaian Territory, introduced

⁴³Information received from Major Samuel Kwasi Okla, the Public Relations Officer of the Salvation Army Ghana Territory.

programmes in almost all its clinics, which were aimed at curbing the spread of the HIV/AIDS disease. We shall discuss more about this in chapter three of this work.

The Salvation Army is also involved in other social services. With the growing number of street children in Accra, and the rapid spread of Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STD) among the street children, the MSD has stepped in to help improve the reproductive health of the street 'girl mothers' and the street children in general. In this regard, the MSD, in collaboration with the Government and some Non-Governmental Organizations such as the Ministry of Health, National AIDS Control Units, Planned Parenthood Association of Ghana (PPAG), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and Catholic Action for Street Children (CAS), have set up a centre called *Anidaso Fie* (Hope home) at Mamobi in Accra, to locate and to take care of street 'girl mothers' and their children. The centre helps to improve their welfare by providing them with medical treatment and vocational training in areas such as bread making, Tie and dye and batik making. The centre also provides vocational training skills for people such as prostitutes who had quit prostitution. They get these prostitutes after visiting the various places where they engaged in prostitution and appealing to them to give up prostitution and avail themselves for this free skill training. Those who give up prostitution are then engaged in the training.

One of the training centres is also located at Adaklu-Sofa in the Volta Region. Vocational skills taught there include, Bread making, soap and beads making.⁴⁵

⁴⁵ Information received from Major Samuel Kwao Okia, the Public Relations Officer of the Salvation Army Ghana Territory.

ISLAM IN GHANA

The religious influence of Islam spread to the then Gold Coast (now Ghana) through Muslim traders and teachers (especially those from the Mende tribe) who were influenced by or were themselves scholars and clerics of Islam⁴⁶

Through trade, these Mende Muslims had made their presence felt in modern Ghana by the end of the 15th century. In the 1480s, the Mende were reported to have engaged in buying slaves brought from Benin and Congo to be sold at Elmina in Ghana. The development of these northwestern and northeastern trade routes during the 16th century by the Mende and Hausa was very instrumental in the establishment of Islam in Ghana⁴⁷. By 1817, according to Fisher, Muslims were reported to be living in Ashanti, numbering about three hundred people⁴⁸.

THE AHMADIYYA MUSLIM MISSION IN GHANA

The Ahmadiyya Movement of Islam was founded in March, 1889 by Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (1835-1908) of Qadian, a small town in Punjab, India⁴⁹. Ghulam claimed to be the Mahdi (one whose advent heralds the end of a period) of Islam and was branded as a heretic and an imposter by orthodox Muslims. The movement claims to be

⁴⁶ Ous-Gorman Rashood (1978), 'Islam in Freetown', M.A. Thesis submitted to the Department For The Study of Religions, University of Ghana, p. 32-34

⁴⁷ *Ibid*

⁴⁸ Fisher, H. J. (1963), *Ahmadīyah*. London, Oxford University Press, p. 117

⁴⁹ Ous-Gorman R. (1978), *ibid* p 71

a revival of Islam in its pristine purity as preached and practised by the Holy Prophet of Islam and that Ahmadiyya alone stands as the true Islam⁵⁰

Mirza Ghulam began having visions and dreams at the age of 40, which he later claimed to be divine revelations. The culmination of this revelation was in 1888 when he claimed to have been commissioned by God (Allah) to initiate disciples into his fold. Thus in 1889, he had about 40 people pledging their allegiance to him.⁵¹

To distinguish his group from the rest of the Muslims (the orthodox), he chose to call his teachings Ahmadiyyah and his followers Ahmadis. This name was chosen because Ahmad, another form of the name Muhammad, symbolises a specific manifestation of the prophet Muhammad.

The claim of Ghulam Ahmad that he was a reflection of Muhammad implied that there was no need for a new book (scripture) or law, hence the Ahmadis use of the Quran as their law and scripture. Ahmadis refer to themselves as *Jamatul-Ahmadiyyah*, that is, the Ahmadiyya Community. The spiritual head of the worldwide movement is under the title *Khalifatul-Masih*, that is Successor to the Messiah-Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad.⁵²

The Ahmadiyya Muslim movement is organized into *Jamaat* or what is known as community. The international or the worldwide *Jamaat* is headed by the Caliphate, the

⁵⁰ Guse-Gorman R. (1978), *op. cit* *ibid.* p 72

⁵¹ *ibid.* p 74

⁵² *ibid.* p 76

ritual head of the worldwide *Jamaats*. It also has the various national or country *naats*. There is the national, regional, circuit or district and lastly the local *Jamaats*. The hierarchical structure of the Ghanaian Ahamdiyya *Jamaat* is as follows:

The national *Ameer* is the administrative and spiritual head. Two national deputy *meers* follow him. This is followed by the national executive council (Majlis-E-Amla), the national Advisory Council (Majlis-e-Shoora) and the regional Presidents (responsible for the administration of the affairs of the regional *Jamaat*). There are also regional missionaries (who supervise the work of all categories of missionaries in the Region). Next in command come the circuit or district Presidents and missionaries. Below the district Presidents and missionaries are the local *Jamaat* heads.³³

Though the Mende Muslim traders came to Elmina as far back as the fifteenth-century, it was not until the nineteenth century, that Muslims fully settled among the Fantis.³⁴ Before then, there were Muslim traders who came to sell their wares and returned to their homes up north.

In 1872, a Hausa and a Muslim cleric Constabulary from Nigeria, Muallim Abu-Bakr Bin Siddique, came to the Gold Coast (now Ghana). In 1885, he converted two Fantis, Benjamin Sam, a Wesleyan teacher-catechist and a trader and Chief Mahdi Appah to Islam. Ben Sam started propagating Islam at Gyinankomah where he converted many

³³ The Constitution of the Ahmadiyya Muslim *Jamaat* in Ghana, which was promulgated on the 22nd of August, 1992.

³⁴ G. S. G. (1978), op. cit. p. 45

he people from the surrounding towns and villages. He and his followers decided to build a new township for Muslims. Ekrawfo was therefore built as a Muslim township.⁵⁵

The first Ahmadi Missionary, Alhaji Maulvi Maulana Abdul Rahim Nayyar was sent to the Gold Coast from London on February 9, 1921 in a cargo boat and arrived at Saltpond, Gold Coast, on March 1, 1921.⁵⁶ According to Guar-Gorman, on arrival, Maulvi Rahim Nayyar in concert with the Fanti Muslims made Saltpond the headquarters of the local Ahmadi. Majority of the Fanti Muslims accepted the Ahmadiyya religion and Maulvi Nayyar as their spiritual leader.⁵⁷

Upon the recommendation of Maulvi Nayyar, Alpha Maulvi F.R. Hakkem was sent from Qadian to Ghana in 1922 to succeed him. On the arrival of the latter, the former left the shores of Gold Coast (Ghana) to Lagos-Nigeria to undertake another mission of the Movement there. Maulvi Hakkem is credited with the opening of many stations in the various regions and towns, notably among them were Ashanti, Gomoa, Assin and Agona. In 1929, Alhaji Maulvi Ali came to Ghana to succeed Maulvi Hakkem, after the completion of the latter's assignment. He extended the activities of the Ahmadiyya movement to Northern Gold Coast (Ghana) in 1933, specifically to Wa.⁵⁸

Other Pakistani missionaries were appointed by the world wide spiritual head of the Mission to head the Ahmadiyya Mission in Ghana until in December, 1974, when

⁵⁵ Guar-Gorman R. (1978), *op. cit.* p. 61

⁵⁶ Ahmadiyya Movement in Ghana (1921-61), Saltpond. Ahmadiyya Movement-Ghana, p. 1

⁵⁷ Guar-Gorman (1978), *ibid.* p. 80

⁵⁸ Ahmadiyya Movement in Ghana (1921-61), *op. cit.* pp. 2-1

Maulvi Abdul Wahab Bin Adam, the first Ghanaian Ahmadiyya International missionary, was appointed by the Supreme Head of the Ahmadiyya worldwide Mission as the *Ameer* (head) and Missionary-in-charge of the movement (Mission) in Ghana. Maulvi Adam's parents were both of Akan origin and stayed in Adansi Fomena in the Ashanti Region. His mother hailed from Adansi in the Ashanti Region and the father from Anomabu in the Central Region. Before his appointment in Ghana as the *Ameer* of the Ahmadiyya movement, he was the deputy Imam of the London mosque (from 1972-1974).⁵⁹ Maulvi Wahab Adam has thus remained as at the time of writing, the Ameer-in-charge of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Mission in Ghana.

Doctrine Of The Ahmadiyya Muslim Mission

There are some doctrinal differences between the Ahmadiyya and the Orthodox Muslims. The Orthodox Muslims do not believe in the teaching and the prophet hood of the founder of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Mission. They believe Prophet Muhammad (peace on him), as the only Messenger of the Islamic faith.

(I) Oneness of Allah and Prophethood

Doctrinally, the Ahmadis share with the Orthodox Muslims the same basic belief of the divine oneness of Allah and the Apostleship of Muhammad. The Ahmadis, however, believe that the Prophet Muhammad is not the last prophet of Islam, that is, they do not see Prophet Muhammad (peace be on him) as the seal and last of the prophets to appear.

⁵⁹ Fair-Corham (1978), op cit p 85

The Ahmadis believe sincere followers of the prophet of Islam can receive visions and reflections of Muhammad.⁶⁰ According to Fisher, the Ahmadis' argument is based on the Quran grammar and mysticism. A favoured verse is Surah ii: 4, which is taken to indicate latter prophets, has part of the verse read. '*wabilakhirati hum yuqimuna*' - 'and they are sure of the hereafter'. The Qadiana Quran translates '*alakhirati*' - 'the Hereafter' as what is yet to come, that is, further prophets.⁶¹

(II) The Quran

The Ahmadis believe that the Quran was created by Allah (God), as against the Orthodox Muslim belief that the Quran was uncreated and has existed from the very beginning of creation.⁶²

(III) The Mahdi

Additionally, the Ahmadis believe in the appearance of a *Mahdi* (the guided one) and reformer. This *Mahdi* and reformer, they believe made his appearance in the person of Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad - the spiritual leader and founder.

Social Services

The Ahmadiyya Mission believes in the total well-being of the individual. The Ahmadiyya Mission, Ghana, has therefore undertaken certain socio-economic projects such as building of schools, hospitals and clinics and the provision of humanitarian services within the country.

⁶⁰ Gaur-Gorman (1978), op cit p 80

⁶¹ Fisher (1963), op cit p 37

⁶² *ibid* p 40

It is on record that, in 1970, when the late Hazrat Mirza Nasir paid an official visit to Ghana, from London, he initiated for West African Ahmadis what was called a new 'Leap Forward Project', also known as the *Nusrat Jahan* Scheme, which means 'Service to humanity'. Under this project, more secondary schools and hospitals were to be established by the Ahmadi Missions in West Africa. Since the inception of the project, Ghana has been favoured with six new Ahmadi schools across the country, for example, the Talim Islam (T I) Ahmadiyya Senior Secondary School at Ekumfi Assarkyr in Central Region, T I Ahmadiyya-Senior Secondary School at Salaga in Northern Region and T I Ahmadiyya Senior Secondary School at Wa in Upper West Region⁶³

Besides the educational institutions, the Mission has built six hospitals across the country. They can be located in Asokore and Kokofu in the Asante Region, Swedru in Central Region, Techiman in Brong Ahafo Region, Daboase in Western Region and Kaleo in Upper-West Region. The Mission has built four additional Homoeopathic Clinics; one is in Buadi (a suburb of Kumasi) and the rest are at Koforidua, Mankessim and Sekyedumasi.⁶⁴

The Mission also offers scholarship to deserving Ghanaians to further their education either here in Ghana or abroad. The award is not based on religious affiliation but on merit, and even Christians and others can make use of the scheme. During his

⁶³ Ahmadiyya Muslim Mission, Ghana P 2

⁶⁴ *ibid*

second visit to Ghana, Hazrat Khalifatul Masih III offered four scholarships to some Ghanaian students to study in any university in Pakistan⁶⁵

The Mission also offers humanitarian services to the disadvantaged in the society. A case in point is the victims of the December 2001 Bawku tribal war, where items such as clothing and food were presented to them by the Mission through its Non-Government Organization (NGO) 'Humanity First'. Furthermore, Ahmadi Muslim Engineers from Pakistan have trained some Ghanaian Ahmadi Muslim Youths in the technology of the manufacturing of water hand pumps. Through this technology, the trained youths have been able to supply clean water to certain towns and villages in different parts of the country.⁶⁶

The Ahmadiyya Muslim *Jamaat* in Ghana has a special *Jamaat* department known as the Family Life Education, which is headed by the second deputy Ameer. This department deals with issues such as drug abuse, population, street children and HIV/AIDS. Due to the dreadful nature of the HIV/AIDS disease, a special committee has been created within the Family Life Education department with the sole task of formulating policies and programmes that will help fight its spread amongst the *Jamaat* members in particular, and the nation as a whole. The programmes and policies of this committee will be discussed in chapter three.

⁶⁵ Ahmadiyya Muslim Mission, Ghana op. cit. p.2
⁶⁶ *Ibid*

AFRIKANIA RENAISSANCE MISSION (A.R.M)

The Afrikania Mission, also known as 'Reformed African Tradition' or *Sankofa* (Return to our Root) emerged in 1982. A former Roman Catholic priest, Rev. Fr. Vincent Kwabena Damuah, founded it. Vincent Kwabena Damuah, son of Kwesi Appong and Anima Nsowah, was born at Asankragua in the Wassa Amenfi district of the Western Region of Ghana in April 1930. He was trained for Catholic priesthood and ordained in December 1957 at Cape Coast. On the 25th Anniversary of his ordination, that was on December 22, 1982, Father Damuah resigned from the Catholic Church and founded the Afrikania Mission, which he explained to be:

The ancient religion of Africa that is now reformed and born again for our benefit. It takes the best of the old Africa and blends it with the best of the new Africa for a synthesis for the mutual benefit of mankind.⁸⁷

Damuah, who later became known as Osofo Okomfo Damuah, claimed the Afrikania Mission is the Religion of African ancestors which has been 'born again' to restructure, reform, reorganise, transform and update the African Traditional Religion to make it relevant to contemporary times. The Afrikania faith is based first on God, and secondly on the traditions of Africans who gave the world the first major civilization in history about six hundred years ago.⁸⁸ Damuah admonished his followers to see the Religion as a way of life and not a matter of believing in certain propositions and practising some rituals. It is a family, with God as the Grandfather. The Afrikania

⁸⁷ Asare Opoku (June, 1993). *Damuah and the Afrikanian Mission: The man and his message - some preliminary considerations in Trinity Journal of Church and Theology*, Vol. 3, Accra, Presby Press, p. 40
⁸⁸ *Ibid* p. 42

Mission is committed to the study, defence, preservation and promotion of African values.

The name 'Afrikania', according to Azasu Kwakuvi, comes from a compound of two Akan words *afri* and *kania*. *Afri* in Akan means, 'has come out of', and *kania* means 'light'. The term, therefore, means bringer of a civilization, and by civilization, Afrikanians mean tolerance of other people's view no matter how provocative they may sound, peaceful coexistence, truth and honesty, love, forgiveness and reconciliation.⁶⁹

According to Azasu, the spelling of Afrikania also reveals its close resemblance to that of the name of Africa. Afrikania may therefore, be identified as the Religion of the people of Africa and people of African descent.

Asare Opoku has reiterated that, Damuah chose the titles *asofa* and *okomfo* to give him respectability and identity to further his course. He explained that, the Akan word *asofa*, which Christians have applied to themselves since the introduction of Christianity into the Akan world, originally referred to the official who interpreted the utterances of possessed priests and priestesses at the shrines, while the word *Okomfo* refers to a priest or priestess who is the servant and mouthpiece of a god or goddess. The *Okomfo* is possessed by a deity and usually receives a call after which he or she undergoes a period of training before assuming office. These titles *asofa* and *okomfo*, will therefore give Damuah a true African identity.⁷⁰

⁶⁹ Azasu, K. (1993), *African Traditional Religion - Afrikania: A Brief Exposition*, Accra, Berasa Book Industries Ltd., p. 7

⁷⁰ Asare O. (1993), *op. cit.* pp. 59-60

The Afrikania Mission had its greatest trying moments after the demise of its leader, Osofo-Okomfo Kwabena Damuah. Osofo-Okomfo Kwabena Damuah died at the Nyaho Clinic in Accra after a short illness on Thursday, August 13th, 1992. His death created a leadership struggle between Osofo Kofi Ameve and Osofo Dankama Quarm.

Osofo-Okomfo Damuah appointed Osofo Kofi Ameve, as his deputy and he remained that until the former's death. Osofo-Okomfo Ameve missed the funeral of the leader because he, at the same time, had lost his brother and had to see to his burial in their hometown in the Volta Region. In the absence of Osofo Ameve, Osofo Quarm was appointed to officiate at the burial of Osofo-Komfo Damuah. This made Osofo Quarm to 'erroneously' feel he was the leader of the Mission. This confusion brought a division among the followers - those loyal to Osofo Quarm and those loyal to Osofo Ameve and Dr Dartey Kumojo. Dr Dartey Kumojo was the one who headed the Mission temporarily, immediately after the death of Osofo-Okomfo Damuah.

Those loyal to Osofo Ameve and Kumojo worship at the Arts Centre in Accra while those loyal to Osofo Quarm also met at the Airport residential area at H/No B2 Sewhi Road in Accra. But the latter and his followers now worship in his house at Adentan near Accra. Osofo Kofi Ameve is an eminent Historian. He is also a private business executive. The congregation has conferred on him the title 'His Divine Holiness'. Osofo Kofi Ameve is now known and called as, His Divine Holiness Osofo-Komfo Kofi Ameve.

As part of his reorganisation policy, His Divine Holiness added, 'Renaissance' to the Mission's names, hence the new name, Afrikania Renaissance Mission. Osofo Kofi Ameve then adopted a new symbol of an African map with the *Sankofa* (return to our roots) and the *Gye Nyame* (unless God) signs inscribed inside the map. The original symbol of the Afrikania Mission established by Damuah had only the *Gye Nyame* sign inscribed in an African map.⁷¹

Those loyal to Osofo Quarm also now have their Mission as a separate group, known as Afrikania Mission, with its headquarters at Adentan near Accra, while the Afrikania Renaissance Mission headed by His Divine Holiness Osofo Kofi Ameve has its headquarters at Odorkor, near Accra.

Osofo Quarm, it is interesting to note, was also in training at the Catholic Seminary at Pedu, near Cape Coast, to become a Roman Catholic Priest. He left the Seminary, as he could no longer believe in the teachings of the Church, to become, like Osofo-komfo Damuah, a priest in the Afrikania Mission.

For the purposes of the research work, we will like to deal with the Afrikania Renaissance Mission, headed by His Holiness Osofo Kofi Ameve. This choice was arrived at because the Afrikania Renaissance Mission is well organised and more recognized both nationally and internationally. According to His Holiness Osofo Kofi

⁷¹ Information gathered from Osofo Quarm.

Ameve, the Mission has branches all over the country and in Britain, Holland, Canada, Ivory Coast, Togo and Benin

The Afrikania Renaissance Mission (ARM) has published her own Holy Scriptures known as the Divine Acts. It basically contains the philosophy of the Mission⁷² According to the spiritual head of the Mission, His Holiness Ameve, this basic philosophy is to retell the story of the black people and their place in world history. It also contains the beliefs, practices and the worldview of the African. He further reiterated that the Afrikania Renaissance Mission decided to come out with her own scriptures to help project the Afrikania Religion and everything about the African. This will make the Mission to be autonomous and unique, as the other world Religions that had their own Holy Scriptures and doctrines

The Mission undertakes both physical and spiritual healing. At their head office, the Mission has established a spiritual consultation centre where individuals who are even not members of the Mission come to consult about their sicknesses, businesses, marital problems and other issues. After the consultation, some of the clients are referred to shrines like *Kitko* and *Dagbamasi* in the Ketu and Akatsi district respectively. Other clients are referred to *Kweku Fri* and *Komfo Kudi* in Wenchi (Brong Ahafo Region) and Kumasi in (Ashanti) Regions. At these shrines the clients are given herbal treatment and other spiritual help.

⁷² Ameve, K. (n.d). *The divine Acts*, Accra, Afrikania Renaissance Mission

Aside from the spiritual activities, the Mission has also established a Priestly School at Odorkor within the premises of the Head Office. This school offers training to all individuals, both national and international, who intend to become divine priests and priestesses of the Afrikania Renaissance Mission. Courses taught include those on Chieftaincy, Marriage, Concept of God and Priesthood. Among those I saw at the school during my visit, was a Canadian national.

The Afrikania Renaissance Mission is one of the strong advocates on how best people can help conserve or stop environmental degradation. We shall discuss more of the Mission and environmental issues in the fourth chapter of this work. The worshipping centres of the Mission are known as shrines. His Holiness Kofi Amede heads the day-to-day administrative activities while the priests and priestesses of the Mission administer the shrines.

The Afrikania Renaissance Mission believes in the concept of life after death, among others, and this is expressed in libation prayers in which the ancestors and other spirit powers are communicated with. It also believes that life in the other world depends on what one does for others as well as for oneself in the present life.

We shall, in the following Chapters, take up the Religious Bodies and their activities in relation to our chosen ethical and moral issues.

CHAPTER THREE

SL/SL	HEADING	EDITION	PLACE OF PUBLICATION	PUBLISHER	CLASS YEAR
	nodeficiency role of the Church, the ance Mission as AIDS was ase Control heve that he or human history ould infect 58 s first reported healthy male to Neequaye, ased as a result o not normally	TITLE Religion and ethics: responses of Ghanaian religious bodies to HIV/AIDS: a and environmental development by Emmanuel Adeyeye Quaye.	Quaye, Emmanuel Adeyeye.	2nd, 1999.	University of Ghana
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ACC. NO.					
NO. OF SEE REFS.					

Prof P. (2011). 'The World's Deadliest Epidemic',
Vision Journal of Human Development, Fourth Quarter,

CHAPTER THREE

THE ROLE OF RELIGIOUS BODIES/GROUPS IN THE FIGHT AGAINST HIV/AIDS DISEASE

This chapter seeks to look at the deadly disease of the Human Immunodeficiency Virus and Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (HIV/AIDS) and the role of the chosen identified religious bodies/groups of the Ghana Roman Catholic Church, the Salvation Army, the Ahmadiyya Muslim Mission and the Afrikania Renaissance Mission in the fight against the disease

In June 1981, the first official report of the disease, now known as AIDS was made in a nine-paragraph report of the United States (US) Centre For Disease Control¹ Five people were affected No one reading those nine paragraphs could believe that he or she was looking at what would become the most devastating epidemic in human history. It was inconceivable that within the first 20 years of the epidemic it would infect 58 million people worldwide and kill 22 million of them

The Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) epidemic was first reported in New York and California in USA in 1981 among previously healthy male homosexuals who presented opportunistic infections. According to Neequaye, opportunistic infection is caused by an organism whose virulence is increased as a result of decreased (very weak) host resistance or some micro-organisms that do not normally

¹ Prot P. (2001), 'The World's Deadliest Epidemic: 20 Years and Counting', Randy Miller (ed), *World Values Journal of Human Development*, Fourth Quarter, p. 1.

cause infections become virulent and others that usually give rise to mild or localised or self-limited disease become aggressive or disseminated.² AIDS is a fatal viral infection caused by a retrovirus that infects lymph glands and destroys lymphocytes through gene alteration; spreading the disease between individuals mostly through semen, blood and blood products, uterine secretions and through placenta and infected mothers milk.³ The term AIDS was officially adopted by scientists in the United States of America, in 1982 the year in which it was first reported in tropical Africa.

Africa, south of the Sahara, is the worst affected area of HIV/AIDS disease, and recent estimates released by A joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) and World Health Organisation (WHO) indicated that 23.3 million Africans, south of the Sahara, are infected.⁴ The situation in Ghana is also taking an alarming dimension. As at September 2000, the National AIDS and Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STD) Control Programme (NACP) reported 41,229 registered cases of HIV/AIDS. There may be higher figures, for these numbers represent only those that were reported at the Government hospitals.

THE ORIGIN OF HIV/AIDS

The origins of HIV/AIDS remain a mystery. Scientists, researchers and even religious bodies all over the globe have come out with several theories.

Neema, A. R. (1986). *AIDS: Facts and Fiction*. Accra, University Press, pp. 3 & 4.

Cox, F. D (2000). *The AIDS Booklet*, New York, McGraw Hill, Sixth edition, p. 6.

Your Right to an HIV/AIDS Free Life. Christian Home Week, (2001). Family/Gender Issues Unit of the Christian Council of Ghana and the Department of Pastoral Care of the National Catholic Secretariat, Accra, p. 1.

Scientists and researchers have propounded theories to explain the origin of the killer disease. Prominent among these is the theory that traces the origin of the AIDS disease to the African continent. Scientists working in the continent have pointed to the claim that the long-tail African green monkey was the carrier of the virus that causes the AIDS. Some scientists claimed that, there are similarities between certain identified virus in the green monkey and that of the HIV. This conclusion was also reached probably because these monkeys have been known to carry viruses that normally transmit diseases. This theory has, however, been rejected.⁵

Yet, more recently, there is an increasing suspicion that Americans may have manufactured the AIDS virus. This is due to the many pieces of documented evidence of how the Americans exterminated populations with specially prepared germs during the Vietnam War of the 1960's. It is therefore believed among some theorists trying to unearth the origin of AIDS that the AIDS virus was prepared in the laboratory.⁶

Furthermore, in an article carried by a Soviet newspaper – *Izvestia*, of 14th April, 1987, it was reported that a group of Harvard University Scientists speculated about the possibility of the AIDS virus being manufactured in an American military laboratory with the hope of producing a new bacteriological weapon. The newspaper further reported that, as far back as 18 years ago, the U.S.A. scientific circles discussed the possibility of

⁵ Agadzi, V. K. (1989). *AIDS... The African Perspective of the Killer Disease*. Accra, Ghana Universities Press, pp. 20-23

⁶ *ibid.* p. 36

drawing a special programme for the manufacture of biological materials against which the human body cannot produce immunity.⁷

On the 27th of October, 1986, a BBC television newsman announced in the 7:00pm news that one Dr. Jona Seale of London had reported that the AIDS virus was artificially created by American Scientists during laboratory experiments which went disastrously wrong. Apart from Dr Seale, another physician, a Californian from America, Dr Robert Strecker also said that 'it must have been genetically engineered'. Professor Jacob Segal, being more specific, pointed out that the 'AIDS Bomb' was manufactured at a secret American laboratory at Fort Detrick, Maryland. He reiterated further that, the United States scientists of Fort Detrick created the virus by combining part of the visna-virus with human T-cell leukaemia virus type 1.⁸

From the religious perspective, was an Article, from a private Ghanaian News Paper - Gospel News of September 10-24, 2001, which had a front-page heading - **BIBLICAL PROOF FOR AIDS.**⁹ In the said Article, the general overseer and founder of Practical Believers International Ministries - Apostle Dr. Kodjo Summey was reported to have affirmed that 'there are three laws covering the world, which when violated, can end one in catastrophe'. These laws are, the Natural, Manmade or Artificial and Spiritual laws. The spiritual law, according to Apostle Summey had been violated by mankind

⁷ Agadzi, op. cit. p. 37

⁸ *Ibid.* pp. 37-38

⁹ Dapatom, A. K. (September 10-14, 2001) 'Biblical Proof for AIDS', Dapatom A. K. (ed). Gospel News, Vol. 9. Accra. The Gospel News Publication, pp. 1&3

hence the HIV/AIDS disease, which to him, is a 'plague' He quoted Deuteronomy 28:20-23 to buttress his argument. The verses read

The Lord will send upon you curses, confusion, and frustration, in all that you undertake to do, until you are destroyed and perish quickly, on account of your evil doings, because you have forsaken me. The Lord will make the pestilence cleave to you until he has consumed you off the land which you are entering to take possession of. The Lord will smite you with consumption, and fever, inflammation, and fiery heat, and with drought, and with blasting, and with mildew, they shall pursue you until you perish And the heavens over your head shall be brass, and the earth under you shall be iron.

To the Apostle, therefore, the AIDS is a disease of punishment from God for the sins of human beings

The founder of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Mission worldwide – Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad is also reported to have prophesied about a plague that was to appear in some parts of the world. The prophecy reads: 'A type of plague will spread in Europe and other Christian countries which will be very severe'.¹⁰ This prophecy interpreted by his followers, is related to the HIV/AIDS pandemic

The Hadith of the Holy prophet (*the words of wisdom that the Prophet of Islam is reported to have said and recorded by his followers during his life time*) of Islam also

¹⁰ Mirza, T. A. (1998). *Revelation, Knowledge and Truth*, United Kingdom, Islam International Publication Ltd. pp. 647 & 648.

contains a prophecy about an impending incurable disease that will befall man due to his sinfulness. According to this tradition reported by Ibn-e-Majah's *kitab-ul-Fitan*, the Holy prophet states

It never happens that permissiveness (*fahsha*) overwhelms a people to the extent that they display their acts of sex shamelessly and they are not uniquely punished by God. Among them, invariably, pestilence is made to spread and such other diseases, the like of which have never been witnessed by their forefathers.¹¹

It must be noted, that, the world is yet to accept as conclusive, any particular theory with regards to the origin of the AIDS disease. All the theories discussed so far are all speculative.

HIV/AIDS IN GHANA

The AIDS disease was first reported in Ghana in 1986, five years after it was diagnosed among the five homosexuals in the United States of America. The first AIDS patient in Ghana died on May 28th 1986. Since then, the number of death rose cumulatively to 48,587 by the end of the year 2000. It is estimated that about 40,000 other Ghanaians are living with the virus¹². According to M.A. Bossman, the AIDS disease seems to have been brought into the country from Abidjan - Cote d'Ivoire. This is because the first patient to be diagnosed as having the HIV/AIDS disease was a

¹¹ Mirza, T. A. (1998), *op. cit.* pp. 647-648

¹² Afuro-Yeboah, T. (Dec 1-6, 2001), "Counting the losses on World AIDS Day - 'I Care Do You?'," Owusu-Sarpong W. (ed), *Spectator*, Vol.1, No 730, Accra, New Times Corporation, p. 13.

Ghanaian female deportee from Abidjan (in early 1986). A lot of these deportees, predominantly female, from Abidjan later tested HIV positive¹¹

Since the first case was reported in Ghana in 1986, the disease has spread across a wide segment of the population. Today, there is no district in Ghana where cases of HIV/AIDS disease have not been reported. In fact, it has become one of the major causes of death in our hospitals. It is, for example, reported among the top ten major causes of death in Ghana, ranking 7th and accounting for 3.3 percent of deaths recorded in health institutions¹⁴

One aspect of the HIV/AIDS, which has dreadful implications for socio-economic development of Ghana, is the age and sex distribution of reported cases. The trend shows that it is the economically more active ages of between 13 and 39 years that are mainly affected. The peak ages of reported HIV/AIDS cases are 25-29 years for females and 30-34 years for males. Currently, it is estimated that over 200 people are infected daily with HIV.¹⁵

The table below is showing reported cumulative AIDS case in Ghana by ages from 1986 – May 2001.

¹¹ Bosman, M. A. (1998). 'The AIDS menace as a challenge to the Ghanaian Church: The Response of the Mainline Church in the Asogyaman and Manya Krobo Districts'. An MPhil Thesis submitted to the Department For The Study of Religions, University of Ghana, p. 47

¹⁴ Ministry of Health Report for 1999, Accra

¹⁵ *Ibid*

Fig 1 Reported Cumulated AIDS Cases in Ghana by Ages, 1986 – May 2001

Age Group Years	Female		Male	
	No	%	No	%
0 - 4	442	1.5	454	2.5
5 - 9	107	0.4	109	0.6
10 - 14	89	0.3	56	0.3
15 - 19	746	2.6	138	0.8
20 - 24	4103	14.4	836	4.6
25 - 29	6684	22.9	2672	14.7
30 - 34	6085	20.8	4023	22.1
35 - 39	4469	15.3	3881	21.3
40 - 44	2636	9.0	2440	13.4
45 - 49	1648	5.6	1747	9.6
50 - 54	1075	3.7	897	4.9
55 - 59	475	1.6	435	2.4
60+	529	1.8	424	2.3
Not stated *	161	0.3	83	0.5
Total	29249	100.0	18195	100.0

*Assumed No of cases not reported.

Source: National AIDS/STD Control Programme (NACP) - Korle-Bu, Accra.

The above table represents cumulative AIDS cases in Ghana as recorded according to ages from 1986 to May 2001. It can be deduced from the table that innocent

children between the ages of 0-9 are also infected with the deadly AIDS disease. This is infection from mother to child. Medical professionals have made it clear that such transmission could be avoided if the infected mothers receive proper antenatal care and are given proper childbirth delivery. The figure also shows that the least infected group is the ages of 10-14, which has been named as *Window of Hope*. It has been established that their infection is mainly due to rape¹⁶

The table further portrays that the most infected age group is the ages between 15 and 49. This age group is known as the *Working force*. These groups are infected with the disease mainly through heterosexual intercourse. In fact, this is very frightening and the future of the nation is threatened, for if those who are economically productive are the most infected, then the future of the nation is in danger. On the next page is the reported cumulative cases in Ghana by Regions (1986-2001)

¹⁶ Ministry of Health Report for 1999, Accra.

Fig. 2: Reported Cumulated AIDS Cases in Ghana by Regions 1986 – May 2001

Region	Cases	Percentage
Ashanti	14396	30.3
Brong Ahafo*	3540	7.5
Central	3139	6.6
Eastern	7319	15.4
Greater Accra	7596	16.0
Northern	2372	5.0
Upper East	2316	4.9
Upper West	781	1.6
Volta	1753	3.7
Western	4146	8.7
Not stated (assumed number of cases not reported)	86	0.3
Total	47444	100.0

* No reports for the period Jan - May 2001

Source: National AIDS/STD Control Programme, Korle-Bu.

The figure 2 shows the cumulated reported cases on regional basis from 1986 to May 2001, with Ashanti recording the highest, followed by Eastern and Greater Accra respectively

Fig 3: Reported HIV/AIDS Cases at Korle-Bu Fevers Unit from Jan. to Dec. 2001

Month	Male (15-49) Yrs	Female (15-49) Yrs	Total
January	99	74	173
February	59	74	133
March	47	81	128
April	42	75	117
May	47	51	98
June	52	57	109
July	47	83	130
August	37	54	91
September	34	66	100
October	43	69	112
November	49	51	100
December	53	73	126
Total	609	808	1417

Source: Korle-Bu Fevers Unit, Accra

The above figure shows reported cases of the sexually active and the economically productive group (14-49 years) as recorded at the Korle-Bu Fevers Unit from January to December 2001

It must be noted that the figures found in the tables (Fig 1, 2 and 3) are only reported AIDS cases in the country's hospitals. Other patients who have not reported at the hospitals and whose records cannot, therefore, be found may also be of a sizeable number.

The alarming nature at which the disease is spreading should be the concern of all, especially the religious or the faith community. For, the 2000 population census shows that religious people form about 93 percent of the population in Ghana. The implication also being that majority of the people infected belongs to one religious group or the other. It is imperative, therefore, that we look at the action plans of some of the religious bodies/groups, which complement the efforts of the Government and Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) to help stop the spread of the HIV AIDS pandemic.

The 2000 population census¹⁷ had the following figures to represent the faith community in Ghana:

Christian	- 69%
Muslims	- 15.6%
Traditional Adherent	- 8.5%

The above figures show that majority of Ghanaians, about 93 percent belongs to one of the three major religious traditions - Christianity, Islam and African Traditional Religion. These revealing figures throw a big challenge to the leadership of these

¹⁷ The Statistical Services Department, Accra

religious institutions to rise up to the challenges HIV/AIDS is posing to them and come up with realistic and achievable programmes in their campaign against its spread

HIV/AIDS IN THE CHURCH, MOSQUE AND SHRINE?

Agadzi has reported that some American Catholic homosexual priests were infected with the AIDS disease. The story, which appeared on the front page of a Ghanaian newspaper,¹⁸ was first reported in the London Sunday Times of February 22, 1987. This indicates the indiscriminate nature of the AIDS problem, of attacking even the 'untouchables' of society namely, the 'rich' and the 'sacred' or the 'holy' - Twelve Catholic priests were told to have died of AIDS in the United States of America.

There is also a reported case in the USA of a dying priest who told reporters at his bedside that he was a homosexual. He is reported to have said, 'It is important that people know about me, and know that I died of sexually transmitted AIDS'.¹⁹ This was a priest who took the vow of sexual chastity, among other vows.

Homosexuality among Catholic priests has become such a serious matter in the USA that the Vatican was compelled to issue a strongly worded pastoral letter to warn those priests involved, and further called homosexuality a 'disordered' practice.²⁰

¹⁸ Sam Clegg (March 11, 1987). 'AIDS Kills 12 Catholic Priests', Sam Clegg (ed). People's Daily Graphic, No. 11296, Accra, The Graphic Corporation, pp. 1&4

¹⁹ Agadzi (1989), *op. cit.* pp. 146-147

²⁰ *ibid.* p. 148

Although the Ghanaian newspapers have not emphatically reported of Ghanaian Christians dying of AIDS, the research has revealed that some of the AIDS victims who have died were Christians and Muslims. Reverend Ministers, Pastors and Imams have buried such victims. A visit to the Fevers Unit of the Korle-Bu Teaching Hospital where I interacted with some of the AIDS victims on admission, and those who had come for counselling and weekly check-up revealed that most of the people I spoke to either belonged to the Christian, the Islamic or the Traditional Religion.

The Executive Director of the Muslim Relief Association of Ghana (MURAG) Alhaji S. A. Wahab – a Non Governmental Organisation (NGO) in the crusade against the spread of HIV/AIDS - working especially in Muslim communities said that, 'some Muslims in the communities in which we operate have died of the AIDS disease and there are also some people still in these communities living with the HIV/AIDS'. He further stated that, through their Home Based Care, some staff of his are caring for some of these Muslim AIDS patients and even cited an example, where an opinion Muslim leader had infected his two wives with the HIV virus before his death. Interactions with some of the members of the Afrikania Renaissance Mission also revealed the possibility of some of their members being infected with the disease.

We now turn our attention to what the Religious Bodies/Groups are doing to curb the menace of the HIV/AIDS disease.

THE CATHOLIC CHURCH AND HIV/AIDS DISEASE IN GHANA

The Roman Catholic Church in Ghana is one of the religious bodies/groups that has been addressing the HIV/AIDS pandemic that has plagued the society. The Church has done this through

- Communiqués and Pastoral letters on the disease
- HIV/AIDS Educational programmes
- Seminars and Workshops
- Home Based Care
- Institutional Care
- Clinical Management
- Pastoral Care
- Research into a herbal medicine for AIDS cure
- Training of HIV/AIDS counsellors

In the Catholic system of administration, every diocese is to carry out its own HIV/AIDS plan of activities by adopting and developing all of the above or some of them. This is done in collaboration with the various hospitals selected in the diocese.

For example, the Accra and Koforidua dioceses are to work with the Bator Catholic hospital in the Volta Region, the St. Martin's hospital at Agomenya, and the Catholic hospitals at Akwatia and Nkawkaw, all in the Eastern Region. These, in other words, are the mandated institutions within which the dioceses are to work in the creation of awareness and care for the HIV/AIDS victims and others in the society. These

hospitals in consultation with the dioceses are to develop achievable programmes aimed at fighting the spread of the HIV/AIDS pandemic and how to care for the already infected and affected individuals in the society.

The Ghana Catholic Bishops' Conference, in some of their annual conference communiqués had issued out statements on the HIV/AIDS disease. Such statements can be found in the 1987, 1988, 1989, 2000 and 2001 communiqués. For example, at the end of their annual conference in Tamale, held from July 7th to 11th, 1987, a portion of the communiqué reads as follows:

we are greatly distressed by the introduction of the horrific disease - AIDS into our society. The way the experts tell us AIDS is contracted should indicate to us that there is much value in moral decency and sexual propriety. We consider it is most unfortunate that instead of promoting good sexual morality, many are advocating the use of condom as a means of protection against AIDS.²¹

In addressing the solution to the HIV/AIDS pandemic, the Bishops had this to say:

... Looking further than Africa, we would once more like to emphasise morality as the answer to the pandemic of AIDS that is posing a serious threat to mankind.²²

In 1990, the Ghana Catholic Church published a document on AIDS, titled *Ghana Catholic Bishops Speak on AIDS*. The message in this document focused on the AIDS

²¹ Ghana Bishops Speak (1999). A Collection of Communiqués, Memoranda and Pastoral Letters of the Ghana Catholic Bishops' Conference, Accra, National Catholic Secretariat, p. 119

²² *ibid.* p. 132

disease, those affected by it and those who take care of the infected, the attitude the family should adopt towards their relatives who contract the disease and the pastoral side of the issue. Excerpts of the message are as follows

To Healthcare workers:

We appreciate what healthcare personnel and scientists all over the world are doing in this area. It is our hope and prayer that sooner or later the epidemic of AIDS will be eliminated by the development of an effective treatment or vaccine. Until that time this deadly disease is a profound challenge to us all, but most immediately to our healthcare workers. It calls forth in you a stronger sense of Christian dedicated compassion, care and concern for those affected by AIDS. Welcome those patients warmly to your health units and give them care and attention.

To The Families:

In our traditional society, families play a unique role, and are a centre of support for each member. Therefore, we appeal to you to maintain this tradition in dealing with your unfortunate AIDS members, otherwise family harmony can be shattered. We exhort parents to be faithful to each other and thereby promote moral values and healthy living for their children.

To The Christian Community:

In the spirit of faith and hope we challenge you, members of all Christian communities, not to be afraid of AIDS patients. Be actively involved in trying to help them to help themselves. Remember, AIDS is not just an individual sickness but affects the entire community. The gospel message teaches us not to reject, make judgements, gossip, make humiliating remarks and

hasty presumptions, which demoralise AIDS patients. Instead show compassion, clear-sighted in assessing the situation and do what you can to help them

To The Youth:

Dear young men and women, you must see the unique place you occupy in society, how much you mean to your parents, educators and those who care about your personal development and the development of our dear nation. You who are the future leaders of our nation and have the duty to preserve your health and energy for the difficult task that lies ahead of you... Therefore, to avoid the disease, have a will of your own, do not be pressured by others, so that you can live and love without fear of AIDS.

To Those in Authority:

We appeal to you who are in authority to help solve in every way the new problems posed by the spread of AIDS. To do everything in your power to prevent the spread of AIDS. Ensure that patients are offered the right to continue working as long as they can do so satisfactorily and that their condition does not pose a health or safety threat to others.

To The Clergy and Religious:

We the Clergy and Religious must do all we can to help such people. We should be actively involved with them and their families. Let our teachings be truthful, upholding Christian values, let us not be judgemental or discriminating. At the same time, let us help the patients to cope with their guilt and self accusation. We also have a responsibility to make sure their unmet needs are taken care of by the the right people

To The Patients:

To those of you afflicted with HIV or AIDS, you are God's children. We encourage you to have a positive attitude to your condition and to have trust and hope in God. Turn to our loving God in TRUST and CONFIDENCE. Remember we are with you in your suffering. Your spiritual care and that of your loved ones is our responsibility in a special way. Be assured that you have our full support in all your needs.

In conclusion the Catholic Bishops had this to say;

Although we must deal with death, we want to help people experience quality of life until the last moment. We dedicate ourselves to spiritual support, practical care and to educational effort to reduce prejudice and to stop the spread of AIDS disease. We, the Catholic Bishops of Ghana beg the Holy Spirit for inspiration, courage and humility as we try to respond to this situation. Through our actions, may His kingdom come more fully into the world.²⁵

We can deduce from the above messages that the Catholic Church is trying to take the 'bull by the horn', in helping to stop the spread of the disease by addressing all concerned to put their axes to the plough. The Church believes that when this is done, the spread of the HIV/AIDS disease would be reduced drastically. The Bishops conference further, in the 2000 communiqué issued statements on the AIDS pandemic that point to how powerless mankind has become in the face of the AIDS epidemic and the possible solution to stop the spread. The Bishops reiterated thus

²⁵ Ghana Bishops Speak on AIDS (1990), pp 1-5

We are powerless in the face of the escalating spread of the HIV/AIDS. We know the cause of the spread of HIV/AIDS. The main cause is moral life, yet time and time again we are presented with the condom as the panacea for preventing HIV/AIDS. Apart from the condom not being a full-proof remedy against HIV/AIDS, its use, even if it were effective, inevitably brings in its wake sheer sexual irresponsibility and immorality, which are as evil as HIV/AIDS. The phenomenon of HIV/AIDS is detrimental, especially to the youth.

The Catholic Church has associated herself with the disease, admitting how powerless the Church has become in the face of the AIDS pandemic.

The Catholic Church, in the 2001 Communiqué, further emphasised the need for moral uprightness which includes sexual abstinence to the unmarried, and fidelity within marriage as the surest means of curtailing the spread of the deadly AIDS disease.

The Catholic Church does not allow their medical professionals and clinical institutions to promote the use of condoms as a means of preventing the spread of the HIV/AIDS. To the Church, such promotion rather encourages promiscuity among the youth and infidelity among some married individuals. The controversy surrounding the promotion and use of condoms as a means of preventing the spread of HIV/AIDS will be discussed later in this chapter. In educational programmes, the Church rather promotes total abstinence among the youth and sexual faithfulness between couples.

The Akwata St. Dominic's hospital formally started addressing the issue of the AIDS disease in 1990. The Catholic National Secretariat gave the Akwata hospital a film van to use in the campaign against HIV/AIDS disease in the Akwata township, and the surrounding villages and towns. The various communities are educated on what the HIV/AIDS is all about, the effect it will have on the individual, family and the entire society. Leaflets on AIDS are distributed and film shows on people infected with AIDS are screened to create awareness.

According to sister Miguela Keller,²⁴ the Church has trained and is using peer educators and victims of HIV/AIDS (AIDS patients) to carry out the education. The peer educators were first selected from St. Roses Secondary School and trained by Reverend Father Alex Bobby Benson who is the hospital's chaplain and Director of Clinical Pastoral Education Programme. Some of the AIDS patients used in the education are members of "Matthew Chapter '25' club" which was founded by Rev. Fr. Max Bobby Benson of the Akwata St. Dominic's hospital on 19th of May, 1999 with nine (9) HIV/AIDS patients. The number, as at the time of writing, has increased steadily to twenty-eight (28) with 10 males and 18 females. The club is called Matthew Chapter 25 because of what Jesus Christ said in verses 31 – 46, that

... For I was hungry, and you gave me meat. I was thirsty, and you gave me drink. I was a stranger, and you took me in. Naked, and you clothed me, I was sick, and you visited me, I was in prison, and you came to me.

²⁴ She is the co-ordinator of Primary Health Care, HIV/AIDS counsellor and the AIDS Campaign team leader at the Akwata Hospital.

The project was initially meant to bring together People Living With AIDS (PLWA) in the Kwaebibirem District. But it now has members who are outside the intended district. The group was initially meeting at the Catholic Parish Hall at Akwata, but currently, they meet in front of the house of Rev Fr Benson. They meet every Wednesday to interact with one another, play indoor games, and get medical care where necessary. The problems of individuals are listened to and they are counselled appropriately. Each member of the club is later given money to use to pay for transportation fares.

As part of the club's programme, members visit the communities, schools and Churches to educate the people about the devastating nature of the HIV/AIDS. Listening to peers, who tell about the need to abstain from sex before marriage, as they have been able to abstain, does encourage those not yet affected to be chaste till they are married. Furthermore, seeing those infected with the AIDS disease and their state, does put fear in the people, and causes them to change their promiscuous sexual behaviour.

Some are also trained to act short plays or sketches on HIV/AIDS disease, among other plays. The team organises artisans, dressmakers, tailors and seamstresses, workers of the Ghana Private Road and Traffic Union (GPRTU) within the areas and educates them on the dangers of the disease and what they can do to help stop its spread.

A similar club is founded at the St. Martins hospital at Agomenya. The Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) is sponsoring it. It has about two hundred

(200) members who meet once every month at the hospital to share ideas, and are given food supplements, clothing, pastoral care and medication where necessary

The 'Care Amansi West' is another HIV/AIDS club formed at the St. Martins hospital at Agroyensum in the Obuasi diocese, in the Ashanti Region. They also do similar activities as the above-mentioned clubs. These associations are meant to give solace to those suffering from this highly stigmatised disease, and for the victims to come together and encourage one another.

The market place and some selected offices are also visited with the HIV/AIDS education campaign message. HIV/AIDS pamphlets are distributed alongside the various talks. The hospital had also produced a film titled 'Meeting AIDS with Compassion'. This film is to educate the public on the dreadful nature of the disease, and the need to show love and compassion to those infected with the disease.

Clinical care and AIDS Management are also going on at the Nkawkaw Catholic hospital and Bator Catholic hospital. Those diagnosed as HIV positive are normally admitted at the hospitals and are treated for the opportunistic diseases such as coughs, fever, diarrhoea and tuberculosis with the appropriate medications. In AIDS management, the hospitals do their best not to do anything by way of sheer negligence that will cause the spread among its staff and also encourage the HIV/AIDS patients to do their best in order not to spread the disease.

Home Based Care It is the situation where People Living With AIDS (PLWA) on discharge from the hospital, continue to be cared for at their homes by staff of the hospital and at times by some individuals from the community trained for such purposes. It entails regular visits by the hospital home-care team or regular visit to the hospital by the AIDS patients. This Home-Care is very important since it has been proven that a family that accepts the AIDS status of their family member prefers the patient being close to them at home for better care and support. Such care and support enables the sick person to feel loved and thereby live a bit longer than expected. Also, the very sick and dying people often prefer to stay at home, especially when they know they could not be cured at the hospital. Furthermore, the relatives of the AIDS patient may be able to carry out other duties more conveniently at home, in addition to taking care of the sick person. Home-care also offers opportunities for the hospital team to educate the families and communities about HIV/AIDS prevention. The Agomenya St. Martins hospital as at September, 2002, had about 82 home-based patients. The AIDS patients are given food supplements, clothes and drugs.

The Bator Catholic Hospital as at the time of my visits, had 7 (AIDS patients) for whom it provides home-care services while the St. Martin's hospital at Agroyesum-Obuasi had 35 home-based patients.

Among the named hospitals visited, it was only at Akwata St. Dominic's hospital that there is a trained pastoral care worker in the person of Rev. Fr. Mex Bobby Benson. He provides the needed pastoral care for all the sick in the hospital, with special attention

for those living with HIV/AIDS Rev. Fr Benson has opened a school to train clinical pastoral workers at the St. Dominic's Hospital, in Akwatia, where the major focus is on pastoral care for the AIDS victims. The infected person has a lot of guilt feeling, full of anger for the person who infected him or her, and fights against the pain of isolation. It is therefore helpful to have a pastoral worker who will help the patient to turn to God and try to forgive all those who in one way or the other have caused him or her the pains he or she is currently facing.

The St. Dominic's Hospital, in collaboration with Nouguchi Memorial Institute for Medical Research (NMIMR), and Mampong Centre for Herbal Medicine, is using herbs to treat some of the opportunistic diseases such as fever, chronic diarrhoea, thrush in the mouth and throat. The herbal tonic also helps those AIDS patients whose menses had ceased to begin having their menstruation. According to Sister Miguela Keller-the co-ordinator of primary health care, HIV/AIDS counsellor and the leader of the AIDS campaign team - one Doctor Osei from Nouguchi approached her to allow the AIDS patients that visit the hospital to use herbal medicine that is prepared by one Reverend Robert Ofose, while further research was to be conducted into the potency of the medicine. It therefore implies that an initial test to check the potency of the medicine has not been completed. That is, the test is still ongoing. The AIDS patients testified to the potency of the herbal tonic that even though it could not cure the AIDS disease, it cures the opportunistic diseases and gives them very good appetite to eat well. HIV/AIDS patients from all over the country come to the Akwatia St. Dominic's hospital with empty gallons for the herbal tonic at a minimal cost of two thousand cedis per gallon. Each of the patients is given ten thousand cedis by Sister Keller's outfit for

transportation back home. The Nkawkaw Catholic hospital has also been using the tonic for the HIV/AIDS patients

This is an evidence of the nationwide acceptance of the herbal tonic by the PLWA. An AIDS patient I spoke to reiterated in the Akan language '*Me nua, se enyc saa eduro ye aa nka mewu dadaada*'. This literally means, 'my brother, if it hadn't been for this medicine, I would have been dead by now'.

Another important project that some of the institutions in the diocese are undertaking include, income-generating project for the PLWA. The Bator Catholic hospital has established a project for registered AIDS patients and they produce items like pillows and local mats. Those who are strong are given money to enter into vegetable farming. The St. Martin's Hospital at Agroyesum-Obuasi had snail, grass-cutter, and rabbitry farming as an income-generating venture for the registered HIV/AIDS patients.

At Akwatsa, the PLWA are given money to trade on their own. On one of my visits to the hospital, Sister Miguela showed me a receipt of a sewing machine she had bought for one of the AIDS patients to help her generate some income to cater for her dependants and herself.

An amount of twenty-two million, one hundred and thirty three thousand cedis (¢22,133,000) was spent on HIV/AIDS patients by Sister Miguela's outfit during 2001. This amount comprises the bi-weekly transportation fares and amounts given out for

trading, feeding and the payment of school fees of orphans of AIDS victims. On his part Rev. Fr. Bobby Benson had spent an amount of fourteen million, five hundred thousand cedis (¢14, 500, 000) on members of the "Matthew Chapter 25" as shown in an unpublished annual report of the club. It covered the cost of food, transport, medical and Christmas party for the AIDS patients

The National Catholic Secretariat also organises workshops and training seminars for health and non-health personnel drawn from the various dioceses across the country. The aim of the training workshop is to adequately equip these personnel with the needed knowledge in HIV/AIDS to enable them to effectively deal with all issues on the disease. All these efforts are aimed at curtailing the spread of the disease.



Nana Yaw Abrokwa, a worker at the Health Department of the National Catholic Secretariat, told me that the secretariat had almost finished a proposal of establishing a permanent AIDS Commission, which shall be solely responsible for all HIV/AIDS programmes of the Ghana Catholic Church. The secretariat is further developing an HIV/AIDS programme to be included in the syllabi of the various seminaries to be studied by priests, sisters and other religious workers in training at their seminaries. This will enable them to have full knowledge of the disease and be able to teach their parishners and offer proper pastoral care for the AIDS patients. The proposal on the AIDS Commission and syllabi for the AIDS disease for priests, sisters and religious workers has been forwarded to the National Bishops' Conference for approval. Furthermore, the National Catholic Secretariat and Health Departments of the Accra and

Koforidua dioceses have also printed HIV/AIDS materials with titles such as 'Live and Love Without Fear of AIDS', 'Choose Your Life' and 'Wanted for Murder – AIDS THE KILLER'. These pamphlets are distributed throughout all the Archdioceses and dioceses to further help create HIV/AIDS awareness. These materials contain vital information on HIV/AIDS and other information on the need for the youth to avoid premarital sexual intercourse.

Collaborative Efforts of the Catholic Institution with Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs)

The World Health Organization (WHO), Nouguchi Memorial Institute of Medical Research and United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) in collaboration with the St. Martin's Catholic hospital at Agomenya are running a programme, dubbed 'Prevention of Mother to Child Transmission of HIV/AIDS' (PMTCT). The aim of this programme is to encourage voluntary testing of women, especially those pregnant in the community. The pregnant mother is counselled and encouraged at the Ante-Natal Clinic to undergo a voluntary test for HIV/AIDS. When she agrees, the test is conducted to find her status, whether HIV positive or otherwise. If it is found out that she is a carrier of the virus, the hospital then puts her under special treatment, on the Niverapine drug (in form of a tablet). This is meant to reduce the risk of infecting the child with the AIDS virus. The baby is also given the liquid form of the Niverapine medicine seventy-two (72) hours after the child's delivery.

The same hospital (St. Martin) is also undertaking a programme known as the START Programme, which is solely sponsored by Family Health International (F.H.I.).

The START project has a comprehensive HIV/AIDS programme, which focuses on behavioural change. The programme also provides Anti-retroviral drugs to HIV positive persons and maternal support to HIV/AIDS carriers. In brief the programme looks at prevention, treatment and support for HIV/AIDS patients. One may say that the Catholic Church in Ghana is doing a lot to bring at least solace to the HIV/AIDS patients.

We shall look now at what the Salvation Army is doing as part of their programme to help curtail the spread of the HIV/AIDS disease.

THE SALVATION ARMY AND THE HIV/AIDS DISEASE IN GHANA

The Salvation Army (SA) Church is one of the religious organisations that has taken up the fight against the spread of the HIV/AIDS disease. In the latter part of the 1990's the Medical and Social Services Department (MSD) of the Salvation Army - Ghana Territorial Command - introduced programmes in some of its clinics and hospitals that are to help in curtailing the spread of the HIV/AIDS disease.

According to the Salvation Army:

The adherents of the Salvation Army are motivated by God's love and aim to demonstrate the practical healing ministry of Jesus Christ by providing services and programmes to alleviate human suffering and enhance healing and restoration of body, mind and spirit for the individual and community.

The Salvation Army believes that every individual is important in the sight of God, and has the potential to be whole in body, mind and spirit. Persons who suffer from

any illness, including Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV), should not experience rejection at any level from the society in which they live. The Salvation Army further seeks to promote quality relationships between those infected and other persons involved, including families, friends and community members.

The Medical and Social Services Department (MSD), using the community-based participatory approach, has adopted strategies that would take care of HIV/AIDS patients as well as those that would prevent the spread of the disease and create the necessary awareness of it through education and counselling.

The activities of the Salvation Army can be put under the following headings

- Education/schools HIV/AIDS project,
- Home and Community Based-Care,
- Clinical Management,
- Capacity Building Training of Trainers,
- Advocacy and Sensitisation Workshops and Seminars,
- Training of Community Care Giver (CCG),
- Production of Educational material

The education/school's HIV/AIDS project has to do with a programme where-by trained 'AIDS workers' do visit various schools and communities to educate them on the devastating effects of the disease on both the infected and the community. They also identify professionals – artisans, hairdressers, shoemakers (cobblers), and wayside mechanics and educate them on the HIV/AIDS disease. The schools are targeted because

they fall within the high-risk infection bracket (the ages of 18 and 34). The Salvation Army also distributes prepared HIV/AIDS leaflets, which contain all the necessary basic information on HIV/AIDS

The Salvation Army (SA) has empowered its various medical institutions in places like Sofa in the Volta Region, Wenchi in the Brong Ahafo Region, Anum and Begoro in the Eastern Region, Agona Dunkwa in the central Region as well as Wiamoase in the Ashanti Region to carry out clinical management of the HIV/AIDS disease and Home and Community Based-Care for PLWA. According to the Salvation Army's HIV/AIDS coordinator and the head of the Medical and Social Services Department, Major Asante, there are trained medical staffs and trained community volunteers who pay regular visits to AIDS patients in their homes. The counsellors visit such patients to provide them with food supplements, drugs and clothing. This Community Care Givers (CCG) are also somewhat trained to provide pastoral care to the patient, through which the patient's emotional, psychological and spiritual needs are catered for.

In situations where the AIDS patients have been isolated and neglected by their families, the trained staffs of the Salvation Army do visit such individuals on daily basis to render to them the necessary care as, for example, bathing and feeding them. The personnel try to convince families to accept the patients and treat them as they will treat any other sick person in the family. The Salvation Army believes that persons who suffer from the Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) should not experience any rejection at any level of society from their family or the society in which they live. Consequently the

Salvation Army, through its home and community care, tries to promote quality relationship between those infected, their families, friends and community members

Another stride of the Salvation Army in helping to curb the spread of AIDS in the community is the training of HIV/AIDS counsellors at their various clinical institutions. These trained counsellors are involved in both pre and post counselling activities. The pre-counselling had to do with the situation where individuals who complain of the opportunistic diseases associated with the HIV/AIDS disease are encouraged to go voluntarily for the AIDS test

It also aims at conscientising them on how to receive the shocking news in case they test positive. The post-counselling has to do with the pieces of advice given to the individual who is tested to be HIV positive. This includes how to live a healthy life and cope with the discrimination and stigma that may come from some family members and society at large when they are told about their HIV status. These trained counsellors also form part of the Home and community Based-Care team that visits the terminal AIDS patients at home

The objective of the training workshop, according to Kennedy Japiong,²⁵ is to equip and broaden the knowledge and skills of participants about HIV/AIDS prevention and care and to also stimulate the minds of committed and well-motivated individuals to

²⁵ An HIV/AIDS consultant at the Medical and Social Department at Salvation Army headquarters in Oso-Accra

accept the challenge of voluntarism. I met o AIDS patients at the Akwatia St. Dominic's hospital and the Korle-Bu Teaching Hospital tw (Fevers Unit), who narrated their pathetic stories to me. The St. Dominic's patient told me that the family would have nothing to do with her when they got to know of her status as an AIDS patient. Even her children were advised not to come near to her since she would infect them with the disease. No one would eat her cooked food for fear of being infected with the AIDS disease. She was really isolated. This act and behaviour from the family caused her a lot of emotional and psychological torture. She therefore appreciates so much the Home based-care. At the Korle-Bu hospital, the AIDS patient narrated to me that, when the family got to know of her HIV/AIDS status, she was openly discriminated against. According to her, anytime she finished having her bath, a member of the family, in protective gloves and shoes and detergent would go and scrap the whole bathroom. Food is placed at the entrance of her door. The counsellors, therefore, educate such families who are ignorant about how to handle those infected with the disease.

In line with the training programme in giving their staff and community volunteer, the requisite knowledge about HIV/AIDS, the Salvation Army also organises training workshops for selected members from their various divisions or districts across the country. The trained personnel at this workshop become what they call the Regional Response Teams (RRT) or Divisional Resource Team (DRT) or the Community Based Volunteers (CBV) on HIV/AIDS. According to my informant, Major Asante, the HIV/AIDS co-ordinator of the Salvation Army, the RRT or DRT team is responsible after their training, for the planning and coordination of all HIV/AIDS activities within the

division or district. The RRT or DRT Committee is made up of three (3) persons from their educational institutions (the regional director, a teacher and student), three (3) from the clinics (the administrator, an outreach person and a community volunteer) five (5) from the Church (the district/divisional commander, the head of the women's organisation, divisional youth leader, ordained Church leader, and a lay person), two (2) community representatives (male and female appointed by the chief and queenmother or an opinion leader) and one (1) representative from the district assembly

According to Major Asante, the overall goal is to strengthen and empower the community to participate and design sustainable HIV/AIDS programmes, which will eventually lead to a reduced risk of HIV. He further reiterated that the RRT or DRT would serve as coordinators and advisory bodies to the Community Based Volunteers in their respective divisions

The Salvation Army is also seeking for donor funds to establish a permanent fund that will cater for the orphans of the AIDS victims in their areas of operation. Available reports of the Medical and Social Department (MSD) offices indicate that some orphans are catered for, through the payment of their school fees and provision of other material needs of theirs.

As part of the Salvation Army's policy in helping curb the spread of the AIDS pandemic, the Salvation Army had also printed HIV/AIDS educational leaflets both in English and other two Ghanaian languages (Dagbani and Ewe). The Dagbani leaflet is

entitled *CHEL DABEM KA MALI TAMAHA*, meaning 'from fear to hope' and that of the Ewe is *TSO Vɔvɔ Me Yi Mɔkpɔkpɔ Me*, also means 'from fear to hope' This is aimed at helping the indigene to read about HIV/AIDS in his/her own language for better understanding The Salvation Army, as I was told, is in the process of securing the services of language experts in the other local languages to help them translate the HIV/AIDS messages into the remaining languages The Salvation Army had also printed HIV/AIDS stickers, cups and T-shirts, with the common objective of creating awareness about the disease.

In addition to the printing of the HIV/AIDS materials, the Salvation Army had further developed an audio videotape titled, *SHARED CONCERN* The film shows how an individual could be infected with the disease and its devastating effect on the future plans of that individual It also teaches how to prevent the disease.

The various hospitals and clinics of the Salvation Army, for example, those in Anum, Begoro and Agona Duakwa have been equipped with the necessary medical equipment that will help to carry out clinical management of HIV/AIDS.

According to Major Asante, the Salvation Army is also seeking for a donor support to establish income-generating activities for the people living with HIV/AIDS. The Salvation Army believes that the best way to control the spread of the deadly disease is through Total Abstinence among the unmarried and faithfulness to one's spouse. In addition, the Salvation Army, unlike the Catholic Church, promotes and encourages the use of condoms by those individuals who find it very difficult to abstain or remain

faithful to their partners. Thus, some of their HIV/AIDS educational stickers read - **The Salvation Army says, PREVENT AIDS - AVOID UNPROTECTED SEX**

The philosophy of promoting the use of condoms comes from the fact that, the HIV/AIDS programmes have to do with the whole society and not only the Faith community, which somehow understands the need to abstain from sex or remain faithful to married partners. The question that is usually asked is, *what happens to those who are outside the faith community and cannot either abstain or remain faithful?* The Salvation Army believes that such people should be allowed and encouraged to use condoms to protect themselves even though the condom is not hundred percent safe. One of my informants at the Salvation Army's head office reiterated, 'if the promotion of condoms coupled with other measures had helped countries like Uganda to reduce the rate of HIV/AIDS spread, why don't we support the Government in the promotion and sale of condoms, as we also educate the populace on the importance of abstinence and faithfulness?'

We shall then turn to the Ahmadiyya religious body to find out how best they are also trying to cope with the situation

THE AHMADIYYA MUSLIM MISSION AND THE HIV/AIDS DISEASE IN GHANA

The Ahmadiyya Muslim Mission in Ghana officially started addressing the problem of HIV/AIDS in 1993. The Mission has a department known as the Family Life Education at the head office in Accra. This department is responsible, among other

issues, for mapping out programmes that would deal with the HIV/AIDS disease. Haphis Ahmed J. Saeed, who is the first deputy Ameer, heads this department, which has a ten-man national coordinating committee

Yusif Quainoo, a member of the above committee, said that since their members are also at risk of being infected with the disease and there were cases where some members were actually infected with HIV/AIDS disease, there is the need for them to get serious in mapping out strategies to deal with the incurable disease. The strategies adopted include holding of workshops and seminars, training of members as peer and mature educators and counsellors, Friday mosque preaching (exhortation), clinical management and schools' educational programmes. The Ahmadiyya Muslim Mission has well-developed organised district, regional and national *Jamaat* (community) rallies (conferences), where some of the moral issues that include HIV/AIDS disease are discussed.

The Mission, through her health institutions, offers clinical testing for HIV and the treatment of the opportunistic diseases. The health institutions are made up of the clinics and four homoeopathic hospitals. These Mission hospitals can be located in Buadi near Kumasi, Kofondua, Mankesim, Sekyedumasi, Techiman and Swedru. They have trained HIV/AIDS personnel who give pre and post counselling services to the infected and the affected. The trained staffs are mandated to educate also the communities in their areas of jurisdiction about the deadly disease. Inclusive in this HIV/AIDS coordinating teams are the regional missionaries and managers of the Ahmadiyya schools. The trained

counsellors are to extend the education to all the Ahmadiyya schools, and to disseminate all the necessary information about HIV/AIDS to the pupils and students.

Another strategy the Ahmadiyya Mission is adopting is to increase the knowledge about the HIV/AIDS disease by the inclusion of the subject HIV/AIDS in the syllabus of the Family Life Education in all the Junior and Senior Secondary schools across the country. Yusif Quainoo had said that the Family Life Education formally comprised such topics as population, drug abuse and sexuality. And as the saying goes, 'information brings transformation', Yusif Quainoo felt that the students would serve as resource persons in their education campaigns against the spread of the disease if they are well informed.

The annual rallies or conferences of the Mission are also used to exhort and educate members on moral issues with the current focus on HIV/AIDS menace. Other ethical and moral issues treated during these rallies centre on honesty, chastity, faithfulness, accountability, respectability and certain fundamental truths of the Ahmadiyya Mission. The Mission believes that through these rallies, the Ahmadiyya *Jamaat* (community), especially, the youth would be equipped with the necessary moral attitude to help the crusade against the spread of the HIV/AIDS disease.

The Home Based-Care Programme, according to Yusif Quainoo, is not well developed, but the few members of the Mission who are known to have HIV/AIDS are visited and given the necessary spiritual, emotional, psychological and material needs.

This is a way to show love to the afflicted and to help them in such times. This is in line with the Hadith which says, *'He who believes in Allah and the Last Day should be beneficent towards his neighbours'*.²⁶

The Ahmadiyya Mission, as part of its immediate future plans to help stop the spread of the HIV/AIDS, will concentrate her HIV/AIDS activities in the northern part of the country, notably, Wa, Bolgatanga and Tamale municipalities and their immediate environments. According to the Mission's AIDS coordinator – Yusuf Quainoo, the concentration will enable the Mission to use her scarce resources more effectively in their AIDS campaign. He said that the north was chosen since it is the least affected area with HIV/AIDS disease, the concentration will therefore help to fully equip the inhabitants with the requisite HIV/AIDS knowledge hence keep the spread of the disease at its lowest.

In addition, the Mission is in the process of forming **VIRGIN'S CLUB** - a club of young girls and boys in the schools who have not experienced sexual intercourse. The aim of this club will be the promotion of chastity and purity among the youth, inculcating in them the importance and joy of remaining a virgin until one is married.

The Mission is also to collaborate with the traditional rulers in their area of concentration to promote certain good traditional practices that help promote chastity and

²⁶ Muhammad, Z. K (1988), *Wisdom of the Holy Prophet*, (Third Edition), United Kingdom, Islam International Publications Ltd., p. 59.

responsible sexual behaviour in the society, for example, sexual and other behavioural taboos.

The Ahmadiyya Mission, like the Catholic Church and the Salvation Army, believes that the best way of controlling the spread of the HIV/AIDS disease is through the promotion of total abstinence from sex and faithfulness to partners in marriage. However, the Mission has also realised that in spite of the education, people are still getting infected and are infecting others. Since the Mission cannot look on, it therefore, tries to promote the use of condoms, even though not a priority, as a means of offering protection against the spread of the disease to those who find it extremely difficult to abstain or remain faithful to their spouses. Yusif Quainoo puts it that, 'Islam does not encourage pre-marital and extra-marital sexual intercourse, but human as we are, not every individual can adhere to such commandment from Allah'.

Consequently, the Mission has refused to associate itself with the philosophy of those who think that the promotion and use of condoms would promote promiscuity and unfaithfulness among the Ghanaian populace.

We shall now look at what the Afrikania Renaissance Mission religious group is also doing to help fight the spread of the HIV/AIDS disease.

THE AFRIKANIA RENAISSANCE MISSION AND THE HIV/AIDS DISEASE IN GHANA

According to the Afrikania Renaissance Mission's spiritual head and leader, His Holiness Osofo Kofi Ameve, the education on the HIV/AIDS disease has been restricted to only the members and to the communities where the Mission's shrines are located due to the limited resources at their disposal

The Mission is of the view that the ever-increasing spread of the disease is due to the breakdown of the traditional moral belief systems, the outright rejection of taboos and the breakdown of the extended family system. The leadership of the Afrikania Renaissance Mission believes that a reintroduction of traditional beliefs and practices such as the strict adherence to the performance of puberty rites, for example, *dipo*, and the observance of taboos (sexual taboos) will actually help to curtail the spread of the HIV/AIDS disease in the Ghanaian society.

As the first step, members of the Mission who are to lead the Sunday worship programme are given a few minutes to educate members of the Mission about the dreadfulness of the HIV/AIDS disease and what to do to keep themselves from being infected with the virus. Members of the Mission, especially the priests and priestesses of the various worship centres (shrines) also do educate the community about what the HIV/AIDS is all about, how not to get infected and how to help family members who unfortunately have been infected with the disease.

The Afrikania Renaissance Mission, in collaboration with the Ghana Psychic and Traditional Healers Association, is trying to research into a herbal tonic, that is, to discover herbal medicine that will be potent enough to cure the HIV/AIDS disease. Consequently, His Holiness Kofi Ameve, had said that, 'I have asked these herbalists to enter into trance (the spiritual laboratories - he claims) and ask the gods or divinities to give them directions as to what types of herbs they can use to cure the deadly HIV/AIDS disease'. His Holiness also alleged that a member of the association, Dr. Noamesi of Asamankese has found a cure for the HIV/AIDS disease. But that the strange thing about that herbal medicine is that, after curing the disease, the men become impotent.

At the time of this research this is all the Afrikania Renaissance Mission is doing to help fight against the spread of the disease.

We shall now have a brief discussion on the controversial issue of the use and promotion of condoms as a means of preventing the spread of the HIV virus.

THE CONDOM CONTROVERSY

The use of condoms as a measure to prevent the spread of the HIV/AIDS disease has developed a lot of debate within the religious circles.

The Effectiveness of Condom

Condoms were invented in order to prevent pregnancy by obstructing the passage of sperm. They were not originally intended to prevent the passage of the HIV virus.

The HIV virus is much smaller than a sperm. A 'micron' is 1/100 millimetres, and sperm has a diameter of 3-5 microns. The diameter of the HIV virus is 0.1 micron.

Since the latex from which condoms are made has pores of up to 5 microns in diameter, there could be a possibility of the HIV virus passing through a condom. An actual study over eighteen months of couples, where one was HIV- positive and the other negative, produced the following results: where there was no sexual contact, none of the HIV – negatives became positive, where the couples had sex without protection, 81% of the negatives became positive, where condoms were used, 17% of the negatives became HIV-positives.²⁷ This result shows that the condom is not 100% safety measure against the HIV

As the battle against HIV/AIDS rages, the promotion of condoms appears to be the number one preventive strategy, as messages of partner limitation, faithfulness and abstinence do not seem to be catching on with people, especially among the youth. Experts at the forefront of the battle against HIV/AIDS think condom-based prevention campaign on HIV/AIDS should be the key strategy since it is useless these days talking to the youth about morality as a way of preventing the spread of the disease.

This position taken by the experts who are doubling efforts to reach out to all segments of the community with condoms has not gone well with most religious groups. The religious groups are saying more emphasis should be placed on abstinence and faithfulness because condom promotion is not an effective method of preventing HIV/AIDS and sexual immorality

²⁷ Shorter, A & Omyacha, E. (1998) *The Church and AIDS in Africa*, Kenya, Paulines Publications Africa, p. 104.

Mrs. Bernice Afi Heloo, the director of Pro-Link, a Ghanaian Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO), is a strong advocate of the use of condoms especially the female condom as a preventive measure to the spread of the HIV/AIDS. She said that 'Religion is proving to be a barrier and we cannot talk to them about condoms. This is an obstacle since Church members are getting infected too'

My investigations, however, revealed that, apart from the Catholic Church which is strongly against the use of condoms, many of the other religious bodies, for example, the Salvation Army, the Ahmadiyya Muslim Mission and the Afrikania Renaissance Mission believe that, room should be made for those who can neither abstain nor remain faithful to their partners, to use the condom. The Catholic Church is of the view that this kind of liberty will open the floodgates of promiscuity, especially, amongst the youth. Hence the Church has persistently disassociated itself from the promotion and use of condoms. Below is the reproduction of portions of the Ghana Catholic Bishops' Annual Conference Communique of 1987, 2000 and 2001 respectively to voice their stand on the use and promotion of condoms. It states:

We consider it most unfortunate that instead of promoting sexual morality, many are advocating the use of condoms as a protection against AIDS. What we need is self-control, discipline and observance of the natural Laws of God.²⁸

The 2000 Communique had this to say

We are powerless in the face of the escalating spread of HIV/AIDS

²⁸ Ghana Bishops speak (1999), op. cit. p. 119.

We know the cause of the spread of HIV/AIDS. The main cause is immoral life, and yet time and time again we are presented with the condom as the panacea for preventing HIV/AIDS. Its use even if it were effective, inevitably brings in its wake sheer sexual irresponsibility and immorality which are as evil as HIV/AIDS.²⁹

We reiterate that the only remedy to the spread of AIDS is a clean, moral, sexual life. It is pre-marital and extra-marital sex that is, fornication and adultery that can cause havoc. That is why we dissociate ourselves from the school of thought of those who promote the use of the condoms as the solution to counteract the spread of the HIV/AIDS VIRUS. The use of condoms is bound to open the floodgates of sexual promiscuity among especially the young, which will bring in its trail a lamentable increase in the incidence of teenage pregnancy, abortion and prostitution. As we have repeatedly done in the past, we should like on this occasion again to stress the importance of upholding moral standard as the only sure way of preventing and combating AIDS. This includes total abstinence outside marriage, fidelity within marriage, and avoidance of drug abuse.³⁰

The above statements clearly show that the Catholic Church is strongly opposed to the promotion and use of condoms as a means of preventing the spread of the AIDS disease. This official condemnation of the use of condoms by the Catholic Church is based on the Church's attitude to artificial contraception in general. In the Church's

²⁹ A Communiqué issued by the Ghana Catholic Bishops' Conference at their Annual Plenary Assembly held at Cape Coast from 10th to 15th July 2000, p. 4.

³⁰ A Communiqué issued by the Ghana Catholic Bishops' Conference at their Annual Plenary Assembly held in Wa, Upper West Region, from 5th to 13th July 2001, p. 6.

view, using condoms is opposed to the sixth commandment of God, '*You shall not commit adultery*', which forbids the misuse of God's gift of sex which is intended for the transmission of life in marriage. According to the Church, using a condom not only makes nonsense of sexual intercourse itself, it is an encouragement to sin sexually. The Catholic Church, as a social institution, has the moral obligation of making sure the moral fibre of the individual and the community as a whole, is taken to the highest level. Therefore, to promote the use of condoms is to defeat the work of the Church.

The Church believes that teaching and convincing its members and the entire society of their responsibility to do what is right, (instead of saying that it is difficult to overcome sexual temptation) should be the way out. To the Church, the scripture has stated categorically that, '*there is no temptation that man can not overcome*' (1st Corinthians 10:13). Hence every man is very capable of overcoming any sexual temptation. The Church asks, 'Where lies the argument in condom promotion for those who can neither abstain nor be faithful?'

The opponents of the promotion and use of condoms as a preventive measure to the spread of HIV/AIDS argue further that the condom promotion advertisements in the electronic and print media do not even teach how the condom is to be used. There is therefore a great possibility of people using it wrongly, thereby ending up causing more harm to themselves and their innocent sex partners. Furthermore, the advertisement seems to give simple message that 'early sex is permissible if only condoms are used.'

Mr. Maurice Ocquaye, the former Salvation Army AIDS project coordinator, however, contends that if some religious bodies are against the use of condom because it

is seen to be 'worldly', then they should extend their argument against the use of injections, drugs and other medical inventions which are not in the Bible. According to him, the Salvation Army does not condemn the use of condoms as a preventive measure against HIV/AIDS. He further reiterated, 'No Pastor or Bishop has the right to judge anyone. The individual member would give account individually to God'. But was quick to add, 'the pastor or bishop owes it a duty to give all the information available to their congregations. The individual would then decide whether to use condoms if abstinence or faithfulness proves difficult.'

The President John Agyekum Kufour, a Catholic, in his address to the nation on the world AIDS Day on the 1st of December 2001, also observed that, "the most reliable protection against the spread of HIV/AIDS is abstinence and for those who cannot abstain it is imperative that we encourage fidelity among the partners. But if that tool should fail, then the best protection is the condom. And here we should not shy from practising the popular slogan, which states, 'If it is not on, then it is not in'".

The debate on the use of condoms was recently brought to the fore at Kenya where a leading newspaper, *The Nation*¹¹, published the ongoing debate about how to deal with the country's AIDS crisis. The debate sparked off conflict between the President and a prominent Catholic Bishop, John Njue. The President, Daniel Arap Moi announced that state-run radio and television would give free airtime to help educate the population about the use of condom and AIDS prevention, while Bishop John Njue

¹¹ 'The Nation' in *The Ghanaian Times* of Wednesday, June 28, 2000 p. 6

rejected the use of condoms and instead called for faithfulness among married couples and abstinence for others. 'Nobody has ever died of faithfulness', the Bishop said. The Kenya Government then published a letter from an international organisation, 'Catholic For A Free Choice,' which called on Bishop Njue, 'to follow the humanitarian example of the French and German Bishops who have recognised the moral imperative of allowing the use of condoms to prevent the spread of AIDS and allow the Catholic faithful to make their own decision about condom use'. It can be inferred from the ongoing argument that the Catholic priesthood is even divided on the use and promotion of condoms as a preventive measure in the campaign against the spread of HIV/AIDS.

The condom debate is thus creating some confusion amongst the religious community. It is the view of this researcher that no matter what happens, not all will adhere to the moral teaching of total abstinence or to remain faithful to one's partner. The Catholic Church must humbly know that not all its members will obey the teachings of the Church in their totality. Those who think they can neither abstain nor remain faithful to their partners may be allowed to use condoms if this will save them from being infected with the AIDS disease. The Government should also not only promote condoms but come out with national moral policy to help revamp the ever-alarming moral decadence the country is facing.

We shall make fuller suggestions concerning the issue in our later chapters, as we turn our attention in the next chapter to the problem of Bribery and Corruption in Ghana and what the identified Religious bodies are doing to overcome it.

CHAPTER FOUR

ROLE OF RELIGIOUS BODIES/GROUPS IN THE FIGHT TO STAMP OUT BRIBERY AND CORRUPTION FROM THE GHANAIAN SOCIETY

THE ROLE OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IN THE FIGHT AGAINST BRIBERY AND CORRUPTION

The Catholic Church, Ghana, is much awoken to the socially worrying act of corruption. And by corruption we are referring to 'the use of public office for private gain'.¹ According to the dictionary of Social Science, corruption is 'the violation of a public duty or a departure from high moral standards in exchange for (or in anticipation of) personal pecuniary gain, power or prestige'.² From its etymology in Latin - *Corumpere*, means 'to break into pieces', 'to destroy or annihilate', 'to falsify', 'to spill', 'to mar or make worse', 'to ruin or weaken morally or to damage'.

We can infer from the above definitions that corruption is a deviation from a set of moral standards or rules that guide the conduct of persons for private gain. In the moral realm, actions are right because they have value for persons or promote the welfare of society as a whole, while wrong actions are those that are harmful to the society. The Catholic Church in Ghana has been playing various roles that would help in overcoming the problem of corruption in Ghana. It does this through the issuing out of Pastoral

¹ Nukunya G. K. (1992). *Tradition and Change in Ghana: An Introduction to Sociology*. Accra, Ghana Universities Press, p. 237

² Gould J. & Kolb I. W (eds), (1964). *A Dictionary of Social Science*, London: Tavistock Publications, p. 142

letters, communiqués, organization of workshops and seminars, conferences, society meetings and the holding of prayer sessions and sermons on corruption. Through this, the Church appeals to the mind and conscience, and therefore, the morality of the individual members, to adopt a lifestyle that is devoid of such a social vice.

In the Church's opinion, it is love and unity that can help solve this social and moral problem of corruption. For, no individual who loves his or her neighbour will indulge in corruption, the Church believes. Since according to the Bible, love is not selfish, takes no pleasure in sinful acts but delights in the truth (1 Corinthians 13:4-10), the Catholic Church teaches about the need for all to love one another. This, she believes, can help stamp out corruption from the society. The Church believes that, if the 69 per cent of Christians, according to the 2000 population figures, will demonstrate and practise this scriptural kind of love, then, they can influence their non-Christian faith community to emulate them, thereby creating a new society devoid of social vices like corruption.

The Catholic Church runs a paper, *The Catholic Standard*, which discusses national issues among other religious matters. Corruption forms an inevitable and indispensable part of the issues discussed. The medium is used to educate the public about the evil effects of bribery and corruption, encouraging society to thus stay away from them.

The Catholic Church, with the aim of conscientising her adherents and the public on the negative effects of corruption, further issues Pastoral Letters and Communiqués to that effect. For instance, in 1974, a Pastoral Letter was issued to the general populace to denounce the acts of bribery and corruption. The Church called public attention to the danger that bribery and corruption pose to both national peace and prosperity. The Pastoral Letter which centred on Justice and Peace had an aspect on bribery and corruption which states:

Bribery and corruption, favouritism and nepotism, extortion and intimidation, lying and intrigues, have become so common in Ghana that they are almost taken for granted, and their inherent injustice is overlooked. But the gravity of the danger they pose, both to the national peace and prosperity, and to the dignity of the human person, is not thereby minimised. Once more, we denounce them, and draw your attention to their malice.³

The Pastoral Letter further reminded Ghanaians about the dangers of taking for granted the act of bribery and corruption and warns of its effects on the national economy and prosperity

In 1997, the Church issued out another Pastoral Letter on bribery and corruption to the whole nation. The Pastoral Letter touched on subjects that include prevalence of bribery and corruption in the society, pointing out certain areas and sectors where the

³ Ghana Bishops Speak (1999). *A Collection of Communiqués, Memoranda and Pastoral Letters of the Ghana Catholic Bishops' Conference*, Accra, National Catholic Secretariat, p. 11

twin-evil is practised, the consequences of bribery and corruption and suggested remedy for fighting and stamping out the phenomenon. It states:

We your Bishops, decried among other things, the prevalence of bribery and corruption in our society and... everything possible must be done to eradicate it from the society and prevent its institutionalisation. In Ghana today, bribery and corruption may be found in our courts and tribunals leading to perversion of justice at times, behaviour abhorred by God and condemned by the prophets (Amos 8:6, Exodus 23 6-8 & Deuteronomy 16: 18-19)... It is bribery and corruption on our roads, resulting in gross disregard for traffic rules and regulations and consequently causing the loss of precious lives through accidents that could have been averted. These are found in our hospitals and health delivery centres, where the fellow Ghanaians have been left unattended and have even died, because they could not afford the extra money being demanded before treatment. There is bribery and corruption in our schools, and educational institutions right from admission to kindergarten, through basic, junior and senior secondary schooling, to qualifying examinations in tertiary institutions. From the look of things not even religious practices have been exempted. For some time now, newspapers have been unearthing scandalous cases of bribery and instances of corruption in our Churches and Church-run institutions such as schools, hospitals and various social services.⁴

The Pastoral Letter further examined the sinful consequences of the continuous existence of bribery and corruption in the country. It said:

⁴ Ghana Bishops Speak (1999), op cit. pp 299-300

In today's Ghana, hardly anyone believes in the integrity of officials in government, in private or public employment. Very few believe in the true value of a certificate or qualification, or in the honesty of an interviewing panel. Applications must have 'weight' or be 'supported' by something, either in kind or cash or with a recommendation of some sort. This state of affairs is very dangerous because it is undermining the integrity and credibility of civil society and eroding the confidence of the Ghanaian both in him/herself as well as in the state. When, in a nation, law and order are subverted by monetary considerations, there is nothing but anarchy and a state of lawlessness. People tend to disrespect law and carry out unlawful acts with bravado. After all they can buy justice or pay for their lawless behaviour and walk away. Bribery and corruption with impunity naturally breeds other evils such as greed, hard-heartedness, covetousness, theft, blackmail and even murder.⁵

The Pastoral Letter also suggested some remedies that could help minimise the act of bribery and corruption in the Ghanaian society. It pleaded with all those involved to

repent from the sins of bribery and corruption, that is, in both commission and omission and Ghanaians are to exact no more than the rate. That is, Ghanaians should not exact more than the correct rate for wares and for services rendered. Workers are to earn whatever they do legitimately and honestly.⁶

As said by the Bishops, the issue of bribery and corruption has been taken for granted. For, most think it is a normal thing to do. No single sector of the economy could

⁵ Ghana Bishops Speak (1999), op. cit. p. 301

⁶ *Ibid.* pp. 302-303

be exempted from the acts of corruption. The consequences of this state of affairs are detrimental to the growth and survival of the economy. For, no investor will invest in such corruption - prone economy. All coup plotters since 1966, have cited the act of corruption by Governments officials or the ruling party as the major reason for the coup d'etat. For example, in the 1966 coup d'etat, one General Albert Ocran, a member of the coup plotters said, 'the objective of his colleagues for staging the coup was to put an end to the moral decline including bribery and corruption and to ensure that such shameless plundering does not occur in Ghana'.⁷ All the stakeholders, including the religious community need to seriously come out with practical solutions in helping address the evil of corruption in the society.

Furthermore, the Bishops Conference, in their 1998 communiqué, declared a national crusade against bribery and corruption. Excerpts of the Communiqué are as follows

Bribery and corruption at all levels of our national life is now taken for granted. It has become a dangerous social cancer that is eating its lethal way into the fabric of the civil service, the Ghana Education Service, the Police Service, Parliament, the Judiciary, the various arms of Government Business, the Churches, the Armed Forces, even alas the Sacred Ministry. We hereby declare a crusade against bribery and corruption and appeal to the whole church, clergy, religious, and laity to begin it right away with intensive prayer. Let us celebrate Masses, use Novenas, hold prayer meetings, and organize pilgrims, adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, Symposia, etc all for that purpose. We call on all Christ faithful to form small units and cells of all people committed to honesty and

⁷ Koticha K. C. (1981), *The Corruption of Power*, University Press of America, p. 118

probity, to wage a relentless war on dishonesty and impropriety.

It is not going to be easy. Those who are so committed to the defence of their compatriot and the promotion of justice in this country should be prepared

- (i) never to give bribe, under any circumstance whatsoever, no matter what their needs may be
- (ii) to vow never to demand or accept bribes, even if this will deprive them of a job to which they are entitled:
- (iii) to commit themselves to combating any acts of bribery and corruption that they notice or that comes their way.

In doing this, they should be ready to be condemned, they may be imprisoned, they may be fined heavy sums of money; they will be hated; they will be persecuted; they will be disgraced. However, they should always remember the words of the Lord, "Blessed are those who are persecuted in the cause of uprightness: the kingdom of Heaven is theirs; (Matthew 5:10)."⁸

One would generally agree with the Bishops about the need to intensify prayers in a bid to stop the act of corruption in the society. But the issue here has to do with an inbuilt character which the individual must be willing to do away with. For, such an individual may even be part of the prayer meetings, but still give or accept bribes. It is imperative for the individual to willingly decide to change his or her character as regards the giving and accepting of bribes.

⁸ A Communique issued by the Catholic Bishops of Ghana in 1998

The Bishops' Conference issued a follow-up Pastoral letter on the crusade against bribery and corruption in 1999. In this Pastoral letter, the Bishops applauded the Government's effort and that of other institutions that were trying to eradicate the evils of bribery and other social vices. The Bishops went on to offer further suggestions that they believed could help curb and finally eradicate the 'twin-evil' of bribery and corruption from the society. In this Pastoral Letter more practical steps to combat bribery and corruption were given. The Pastoral Letter reads

In our Communiqué in July 1998, we the Archbishops and Bishops of Ghana declared a crusade against Bribery and Corruption, two evils that have become endemic in our dear country. This Pastoral Letter for 1999 is a follow-up to that and a similar Pastoral Letter issued earlier in Advent 1997 on the same subject of Bribery and Corruption in Ghana. Bribery and Corruption is a sin. It is a sin against God's law and against Jesus' commandment of love of neighbour (Luke 10:27). There is no society that does not frown upon and condemn it outright. This is simply because, Bribery and Corruption is anti-human (destructive of the individual person), anti-social (destructive to human society) and outright evil. In fact, it is (in a way) a crime against humanity. In our last Pastoral Letter, we stated, and again we repeat that whoever gives bribe or demand one, receives bribe, whoever connives or even condones such act, is equally guilty of this sin, no matter the circumstances surrounding it or the motivating factors. He or she therefore must examine his or her conscience, repent of this sinful behaviour, and take steps to avoid future recurrence.⁹

⁹ A Pastoral Letter titled *Bribery and Corruption: A follow-up of our crusade*, issued by the Catholic Bishops of Ghana in 1999, pp. 1-4.

The Pastoral Letter identified three main factors that have led to the thriving of bribery and corruption in the country. These are:

- (i) the human need for survival individually and communally;
- (ii) the lack of moral discipline and civic responsibility both personal and socio-cultural, and
- (iii) the ineffective political machinery and administrative systems that rather allow people to indulge in malpractices and crimes without fear of detection or punishment.

According to the Bishops, any solution to this canker of bribery and corruption would call for a three pronged attack in answer to the three causes above, namely the human need for survival, moral formation to virtue, and the institution of a political and administrative system that guarantees and safeguards individual, human and social rights and enforces civic responsibilities.

That is, first and foremost, the genuine human need for survival, individually and socially, namely: food, shelter, clothing, security, companionship and a modicum of comfort now and for the future must be guaranteed by whatever human institution one belongs to, be it the family, tribe, the place of work or the state. Corollary to that the individual and the society must be ready to take care of these basic needs.

Secondly, there is the need for the holistic formation of the person and of society in civic responsibility and moral rectitude, the end result must be to inculcate into the Ghanaian, love for his/her fellow man and woman and for his/her country. This is our specific task as a Church and as Christians. We must work hand in hand with Government and other religions. Thirdly, to cure Ghana of bribery and corruption, there is the need for a system of good leadership in Government and an administration that guarantees and safeguards, protects and enforces the rights and responsibilities of all citizens, especially, protecting the weak and the poor from exploitation by the rich and the powerful¹⁰

The Bishops further suggested the following solutions, which can help rid the country of bribery and corruption: intensive prayer, bribery and corruption awareness creation, the formation of integrity clubs in parishes and schools.¹¹

Unrelentlessly, the Bishops Conference, once again, in 2000, denounced the act of bribery and corruption in society. In its communiqué for the year 2000, the Bishops observed that

There are reported cases of corruption in the judicial system, the police, the ministries and immigration and custom services. It is disconcerting that bribes are demanded from people before they are awarded contracts, or are granted permits to develop their land. It amounts to open disregard for human life when some medical

¹⁰ A Pastoral Letter titled Bribery and Corruption: A follow-up of our crusade, issued by the Catholic Bishops of Ghana in 1999. pp. 4-5

¹¹ *Ibid.* p. 5

personnel take bribes before attending to critically ill patients
Some of our own clergymen, who are to promote true religion
and morality, have turned religion into machinery for the acquisition
of wealth and deceit ¹²

The Catholic Bishops have consistently, within the past 8 years, called the attention of the general public through their Pastoral letters and Communiques on the great negative effects of bribery and corruption on individuals and the prosperity of the nation and the need for all to change from indulging in such an anti-human and anti-social behaviour

According to the current General Secretary of the Bishops' Conference - The Rev. Fr Monsignor Joseph Ankrah, the Church has not asked governmental machinery such as the police or military to go to the offices to check bribery and corruption and to prosecute people found guilty of the act, but all they are doing through their Communiqués and Pastoral letters is 'appeal to the conscience, mind and morality of the individual and the general public to change their life style and to refrain from getting involved in acts that promote bribery and corruption'

The Catholic Church also organizes workshops and seminars in the various parishes for its societal groups such as the Christian Mothers, Catholic Women's Association, Legion of Mary, Knight and Ladies, the Catholic Youth Organization (C.Y.O.) among others. At these workshops and seminars, the act of bribery and

¹² A Communiqué issued by the catholic Bishops of Ghana in 2000

corruption and its attendant social, economic and spiritual effects are discussed. During such fora, the pastoral letters and communiques on bribery and corruption are deliberated upon. The deliberation is aimed at sensitising the participants on the need to adopt a lifestyle devoid of the acts and to find means of implementing the suggested ways of eradicating them from the society, as suggested by the bishops.

The Catholic Bishops' Conference also encourages the various parish priests to use the pulpit to preach some of the sermons and exhortations on the evil act of bribery and corruption to their congregations.

The schools Chaplains are also exhorted to use the daily school mass sessions to educate the students to shun all social vices such as bribery and corruption, which are sins before the Almighty God. The parishners and students are thus conscientised in these exhortations to esteem virtues such as probity, accountability, faithfulness, truthfulness, and honesty and to practise and promote a life of integrity in their communities.

The Church believes in the biblical exhortation that admonishes all to train the child the way he or she should go and when he or she grows up will not depart from the teaching given (Proverbs 22:6). The Church has therefore taken a serious view of the above admonition by intensifying her moral education in the schools and Church Sunday Schools (what we normally call - 'Children Service'). It is believed that such training will enable children to pursue virtuous actions, when they grow up.

The Catholic Church had further suggested certain ways to the congregations and the general public it believes could help curb the spread or eliminate the twin evil of bribery and corruption from the society. The suggested codes/regulations are

- Never give bribe, under any circumstance whatsoever, no matter what the needs may be.
- Everybody should vow never to demand or accept bribe even if this will deprive them of a job to which they are entitled.
- All are to commit themselves to combating any acts of bribery and corruption, which they notice or that come to their attention.¹³

One agrees with the Catholic Church in the suggestions put forth as above to help curb the spread or help eliminate bribery and corruption from the society. The impact of the observation and teachings on the lives of the people will be examined in a later chapter.

We shall now turn our attention on the role of another religious group - the Salvation Army in helping to stamp out bribery and corruption from the Ghanaian society.

¹³ Ghana Bishops' Speak (1999), op cit p. 308

THE ROLE OF THE SALVATION ARMY IN THE FIGHT AGAINST BRIBERY AND CORRUPTION

The Salvation Army, I was told, has not mapped out any major programmes against bribery and corruption as they had done in the case of the deadly HIV/AIDS disease, which we discussed in chapter three of this work. It has, however, an internal educational programme for members. Major Samuel Kwao Oklah,¹⁴ in an interview, said that, 'the Salvation Army, though not in favour of bribery and corruption, had not written any paper against those immoral acts. The Church has however, mounted an educational campaign against bribery and corruption through the teaching of christian principles in the congregations'.

In the words of the Salvation Army's Territorial Commander of Ghana - Colonel Bernard Ndwiga, corruption is thriving in the society because of the 'ignorance of our own identity and importance'. In other words, he thinks that we humans do not know who we are and our importance in the society, hence our indulgence in the acts that promote bribery and corruption. According to him, the Salvationists are taught to prove with their lives that they are followers of Christ and are, therefore, separated from bribery and corruption. He believes the Church (Salvationist and other Christians) should be true to the principles of Christian ethics of being the light and salt of the world. 'Our lives are to bring people together to reflect that of Christ (the founder of Christianity), of peace and unity in order to fight corruption', he said. Colonel Ndwiga further asserted that,

¹⁴ Public Relations Officer and the Administrative assistant to the chief secretary of the Salvation Army - Ghana Territory

'every individual liberated by Christ, respects each other's views, and has a spirit of tolerance that respects people on their merit and ability'

The Salvation Army does not have any external programmes aimed at dealing with the issue of bribery and corruption but rather has internal Church ethical teachings aimed at inculcating in the members the spirit of integrity. The Salvation Army believes that such teachings will influence the larger society thereby helping curtail the moral problem of bribery and corruption

Our next attention is on the Ahmadiyya Muslim Mission and their role in the fight against bribery and corruption

THE ROLE OF THE AHMADIYYA MUSLIM MISSION IN THE FIGHT AGAINST BRIBERY AND CORRUPTION

In Islam, bribery and corruption are mortal sins. By mortal sin, we mean, a highly classified sin, which is against the teachings of Islam, and which, when committed, Allah does not forgive. The person who commits this sin is believed to be deprived of many social privileges of the religion, for example, the privilege of becoming a leader or an Imam. No matter how learned one is, no position of trust will be given to such a person, who also deserves Allah's punishment.

Islam prohibits a Muslim's approach to officials of a Government or their subordinates for the purpose of offering them a bribe, to accept it, or to arrange matters between a giver and a taker of a bribe.¹⁵

According to Yusuf Al-Qaradawi, 'the proliferation of bribery in a society leads to corruption and oppression unjust decisions are made and just ones are blocked, undeserving persons are given chances and deserving ones are passed over, and the spirit of greed permeates the society in place of the spirit of dutifulness' The Holy Prophet of Islam (S.A.W) is reported to have said, 'Allah's curse is on the one who offers the bribe and on the judge who accepts it'.¹⁶ The Ahmadiyya Mission has, therefore, taken a serious view of the acts of bribery and corruption and has adopted ways of curbing and eliminating them from the society through her sensitisation programmes and activities.

According to Faddela Rasheed Abu Bakr Guar-Gorman, one of the elders of the Mission, the members of the various *Jamaat* (community) are taught Islamic moral teachings from the Quran, the Hadith and Sunna of the Holy Prophet of Islam (S.A.W). The Quran is the Holy Scriptures or the Sacred Book of Islam containing The Prophet Muhammad's oral revelations received from Allah The Hadith contains the wise sayings of The Prophet Muhammad, and the Sunna contains the way, custom or examples of The Prophet Muhammad. Muslims usually use the word Hadith and Sunna interchangeably to mean the same thing. Most of these teachings or exhortations centre on the need for the

¹⁵ Yusuf Al-Qaradawi (1960), *The Lawful and the Prohibited in Islam*, U.S.A. American Trust Publication, p. 330

¹⁶ *ibid* p. 130

individual, and for that matter, a practising member to shun all dishonest behaviour and rather be an advocate of virtuous practices in his/her Jamaat. That is, the Ahmadi Muslim is to champion what is right and fight what is wrong, seek what is true and abandon what is false, cherish what is beautiful and wholesome and avoid what is indecent. 'Truth and virtue should be his or her goal', Guar-Gorman emphasised.

These moral teachings further obliged the Muslim (Ahmadi) to be a shining example of honesty and perfection, fulfilling his or her commitments and performing his or her tasks truthfully. The Ahmadi is admonished to seek knowledge and virtue by all means, and to develop a good sense of social consciousness. As a responsible agent and a conscious trustee of Allah and thus accountable to Allah on the judgement day, he or she needs to be mindful of this, and avoid all acts that lead to bribery and corruption in the society.

The Quran states thus:

Do not devour each other's wealth among yourselves through deceit and falsehood, nor offer your wealth as a bribe to the authorities that you may deliberately devour a part of other people's wealth through injustice (Surah 2: 189).

Islam, therefore, sees the giving and taking of bribes as one way of consuming someone else's wealth wrongfully. The Friday mosque teachings do exhort the Ahmadi Muslim to guard his or her external behaviour, words, thoughts, feelings and intentions. For such will prevent the individual from engaging in corrupt practices. The mosque

moral teachings aimed at helping the Ahmadi Muslim shun all acts of corrupt practices also centre on some of the major pillars of Islam. These faith pillars are the daily prayers (Salat), Fasting (sawn), Alms-giving or Charity (Zakat) and pilgrimage (Hajj)

Guar-Gorman says the faithful practice of the Salat helps the individual to realise his natural and instructive aspirations to greatness, high morality, to excellence and virtuous growth. It also fosters the good and decent elements in individuals and therefore suppresses the evil and indecent inclinations in the human. The rationale behind the teaching and the enforcement of the practice of the major faith pillars is to help the Muslim (Ahmadi) to develop high sense of moral sensitivity to be able to shun all evil practices such as bribery and corruption. They are to imitate Allah, who is the ethical Ideal (Surah 2: 138) in order to be able to practise and live good ethical and moral life in the *Jamaat* in which they live.

The Holy Prophet of Islam (S.A.W) said, 'He who receives and he who gives a bribe are both headed for the Fire and Allah has condemned the giver and receiver of bribes and their go-between.'¹⁷

According to the Ameer and Missionary-in-Charge of the Ahmadiyya Mission of Ghana, Maulvi A. Wahab Adam:

¹⁷ Muhammad Z. K (1998). *Wisdom of the Holy Prophet*, (3rd Edition), U.K, Islam International Publication Ltd., p. 56.

the only guarantee for individual and national integrity is our success in instilling in the hearts of all the rank and file of the citizenry, a firm and unshakeable faith in God, who will unfailingly call us sooner or later to account for our omissions and commissions of our present life.¹⁸

The Ameer is further affirming the importance of the Islamic moral teachings for the individual which have the potent force of instilling in such persons good ethical and moral character, thereby helping curb the spread of bribery and corruption in national life

The Ahmadiyya Mission organizes workshops and seminars on bribery and corruption for her members especially the leadership – the national council, regional missionaries and presidents, circuit and local *Jamaat* missionaries and presidents. The first deputy Ameer of the Mission - Maulvi M. Yusuf Yawson, in an interview revealed that such seminars and workshops are aimed at educating and conscientising the leaders of the various *Jamaat* about the danger the 'deadly disease' of bribery and corruption poses to the whole society. The various leaders are supposed to share the knowledge acquired at the seminars with the *Jamaat* members. It is hoped that such information on corruption will bring about transformation in the life of the Ahmadi adherents, thereby helping transform the society of all such vices as bribery and corruption

¹⁸ Ahmadiyya Muslim Mission: A Collection of Speeches delivered at the 70th Annual National Convention of the Mission, from 17th to the 19th of December 1999, at Ashongman - Baston-e-Ahmad, Accra p.20.

Maulvi Yusuf Yawson admitted that such seminars and workshops were not often organised, but was quick to add that, 'the few ones organised have been of immense benefit to our members'

Maulvi Yusuf Yawson further revealed that, the various Jamaat conferences (rallies) are another platform by which moral issues such as bribery and corruption affecting the entire society and humanity are discussed. The leadership of the Mission uses such conferences to further educate her members through Quranic, Hadith and Sunna's teachings by emphasizing on moral and ethical issues affecting the society

The 1999 and 2001 National Convention of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Mission, Ghana, had as its themes '*National Integrity - A Key Component of Moving Ghana Forward*' and '*Prospects and Challenges of the New Millennium: the Moral Factor*' respectively. Commenting on the 1999 theme at the convention, the Ameer and Missionary-in-charge of the Ahmadiyya in Ghana, reiterated:

No matter how well developed a nation might be in education, standard of living, health, political stability and the right cultural values and practices, absence of individual and national integrity shall constitute a serious drawback that eventually leads to the destruction of that nation.¹⁹



¹⁹ Ahmadiyya Muslim Mission: A Collection of Speeches delivered at the 70th Annual National Convention of the Mission, from the 17th to the 19th of December 1999, at Ashongman - Buxton-o-Ahmad, Accra, p. 7

It can be deduced from the above that, the Ameer was stressing the need for the Ahmadi to live honest lives and eschew all forms of corrupt practices, which only end up in drawing the country back in her economic growth. As a measure to help curb the spread of bribery and corruption, the Ameer proposed the 17th of December of each year to be declared and celebrated as a National Integrity Day. On this day, both the print and the electronic media are to be dominated by stories, features and plays on the effect of the twin evil of bribery and corruption. He said, 'each year, there should be a 'hunt' for true men and women of integrity in our country and they should be commended and rewarded for distinguishing themselves as such'

The issue of bribery and corruption featured also in the Ameer's opening address to the 2001 Annual Convention of the Ahmadiyya Mission, Ghana. The speech appeared in the *Review of Religions Journal* of June/July 2001. In the article, Maulvi A. Wahab Adam lamented on the rampantness of corruption in the Ghanaian society. According to him 'corruption saps the economic energy of a nation as AIDS destroys the immune system of a human being'. The Ameer proposed the promulgation of a code of ethics to guide members of Government and all Ghanaians, whose ultimate aim should be, 'a complete transformation of the attitudes of Ghanaians'.²⁰

²⁰ Maulvi A. Wahab Adam-Ameer, Ghana (2001), 'Prospect and Challenges of the New Millennium: The Moral Factors'. Rafiq H (ed) in *Review of Religion*, UK, Islam International Publication Ltd., Vol. 96, No. 619, p. 56

In the Ameer's exhortation on bribery and corruption, one basic fact stands clear. No economic growth is possible without the eradication of corruption or at least the attempt to minimise it in the society.

The Ahmadiyya Muslim Mission, Ghana, according to Maulvi M. Yusuf Yawson, is also using her educational institutions across the country to create awareness about the evil effects of bribery and corruption amongst her students. This is done through the moral and religious education lessons taught in these institutions. The pupils and students are made to cherish and value acts of virtues – honesty, chastity, truthfulness, loyalty and contentment. This is why Ahmadiyya schools are also known as '*Talim Islam*' (T I) (meaning the impartation of Islamic knowledge or education). Maulvi Yusuf quoted Proverbs chapter 6 verse 22 of the Christian Holy Scriptures or Bible a popular biblical verse to support his assertion of the importance in teaching and training the child (youth) morally. It states, 'Train the child the way he should go and when he grows, he would not depart from it'. He said Ahmadis believe in some aspect of the Bible, hence, the biblical quotation.

He believes when children are properly trained morally, they will grow up being very upright and honest in their dealings with their fellow human beings and neighbours. Hence their generation shall experience no acts of bribery and corruption or these would be experienced at their barest minimum.

Maulvi Yusuf further reiterated, 'the Ahmadi parent is encouraged and persuaded to impact the Islamic moral teachings to his or her children and wards at home'

'Charity begins at home' the saying goes. Based on this, the Ahmadiyya Muslim Mission, Ghana, has both internal and external auditors to audit their accounts annually. This, according to Maulvi Yusuf, will help check acts of corruption among the employed staff of the Mission. Thus, setting the integrity pace

We now turn to the programmes of the Afrikania Renaissance Mission, aimed at fighting the acts of bribery and corruption in the Ghanaian society

THE ROLE OF THE AFRIKANIA RENAISSANCE MISSION IN THE FIGHT AGAINST BRIBERY AND CORRUPTION

Uprightness and honesty are some of the virtues demanded of all Afrikanians. Bribery and Corruption are seen as acts of selfishness, evil and criminal, according to the teachings of the Mission.

The Afrikania Renaissance Mission frowns on bribery and corruption in our society. The Mission has, therefore, adopted certain internal measures to help check the spread of these societal evils.

In an interview with the spiritual head of the Mission, His Holiness, Osofo Komfo Kofi Ameve, it came to light that though the Mission has not spoken or written anything on corruption directly, members are seriously being conscientized and taught about the evil and destructive nature of the practice. The members are persuaded to live by the ethical and moral teachings of the Mission and to practise what they are taught by their priests and priestesses. His Holiness, Osofo Ameve, quoting a portion from the Seventh Path teaching of the Mission to show the Mission's abhorrence for corruption, said that, 'Do not accept bribes or anything you have not earned and whatever service man renders to his neighbours is service to God'. The Mission also teaches members to be aware of the fact that the gods of their ancestors will punish whoever indulges in corrupt practices.

According to His Holiness, Osofo Ameve, the members will be able to influence their neighbourhood and society as a whole with their solid ethical and moral teachings, thereby helping solve the problem of bribery and corruption. The Mission had, therefore, not issued out anything publicly through the print or electronic media, organise any seminar or workshop, or mount any massive public education on the issue of bribery and corruption.

According to His Holiness, the belief system of the Africans and for that matter Afrikania, is such that, acts like bribery and stealing are crimes against society and a religious offence punishable by God. And traditional Africans perform rituals to detect a thief (a corrupt person). The Afrikania Mission, therefore, is advocating for a mechanism in which corrupt officials shall be sent to the shrines for the gods to determine their

innocency. 'This may seem unscientific but a powerful medium of solving the moral problem of bribery and corruption in our society', argues his Holiness Osofo Amede.

Just as the HIV/AIDS, Bribery and Corruption have become major moral problems facing the society, so are we also confronted with another serious moral problem on which our very human existence and survival depends. This is, the wanton destruction of the environment through the activities of human beings. We therefore turn our attention to the next chapter to discuss the various programmes and activities of the following religious bodies, the Catholic Church, the Salvation Army, the Ahmadiyya Muslim Mission and the Afrikania Renaissance Mission in their fight against the destruction of the environment

CHAPTER FIVE

THE ROLE OF RELIGIOUS BODIES/GROUPS IN HELPING FIGHT AGAINST ENVIRONMENTAL DEGRADATION

Another major life threatening problem which is facing Ghanaians as much as the issue of the HIV/AIDS disease and Bribery and Corruption, is the wanton destruction of the environment.

Paul Collins had stated that our self-definition as human beings is derived from two primal sets of relationships. The first is our relationship to one another and to the natural world and all that is in it. The second is our mysterious, intangible, and difficult relation to the transcendent: it is within this context that we sort out our meaning of existence. This he calls spirituality or religion.¹ According to Collins, the environment is central to the future of religion. He argues, 'Religion will gradually cease to exist if the natural world continues to be devastated at the present rate. There is a dependent inter-relationship between the development of religious attitudes and the sustainment of the natural world'.²

The argument of Collins shows that the future of religion hangs on the sustainability of the environment and this throws a big challenge to the religious groups

¹ Collins P. (1995) *God's Earth, Ireland*. Gill and MacMillan Ltd. p. 3

² *Ibid*

to come out with practical and workable solutions to help protect the environment from total destruction.

Environmental degradation has become a global problem. The United Nations (UN) has therefore established and sponsored a permanent council for environmental affairs - the United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP).

Ghana is endowed with abundant natural resources from which the people derive their livelihood. Adequate care, however, has not been taken to guard against the depletion of the resources as people make attempts to meet their socio-economic needs. This has given rise to a number of environmental or ecological problems, such as desertification, soil degradation, deforestation, water and air pollution, climatic changes, and uncontrollable waste generation among others

It is estimated that Ghana had 8.2 million hectares of untouched forest at the turn of the century. But much of this original forest vegetation has been removed through conversion to various forms of land use such as, farming, surface mining and estate development. It is estimated that only 2 million hectares of the closed forest actually remains.⁵ Thus, the Ghanaian forests are shrinking and turning into savannahs, and the savannahs are becoming deserts. The environment or ecology was given to humankind by the creator God to nurture and care for, but humanity has turned to exploit it without properly taking care of it.

⁵ Christian Council of Ghana - Development and Environment Unit, *Arbor Week Celebration* (2000), p. 2.

The major crisis areas we shall be discussing in relation to the Religious Bodies' involvement have to do with land degradation - sand winning and stone quarrying, water and air pollution, waste generation, mining activities, bush fires and desertification. These we will like to describe briefly before we proceed with the involvement of the Religious Bodies.

a. Destruction of Forest Lands

The forest and the land are being degraded and destroyed through the wanton logging of economic trees for timber, extraction of firewood for domestic and industrial use, charcoal burning and bush fires. The rampant bush fire, which occurs yearly, destroys the forests and the vegetation cover crops, exposing the soil to erosion. Once revered traditional sacred groves are being destroyed. Garbrah, quoting Tufuor, lamented on how reserved sacred groves are being encroached upon. For example, *Nananom Pow*, the once densely forested grove at Obidan village near Mankesim has now become grassland⁴. Currently, the rate of deforestation is 0.8 per cent per annum.⁵

b. Mining, Sand Winning and Stone Quarrying

In spite of arguments that may be put up for economic benefits, the environmental problems created through mining activities must be a worry to all. In particular is the surface mining, which is now on the increase and is causing a lot of environmental hazards to the communities in which the activities go on. These hazards range from land degradation, air, and water pollution through the contamination of surface and underground water, which most times serve as drinking water for the rural people.

⁴ Garbrah, B. W. (2000) 'The Ecological Implication of some Akan Traditional Religious Practices and Festivals' in *Trinity Journal of Church and Theology*, Vol. X, No 1 & 2 p. 69

⁵ Christian Council of Ghana (2000), op. cit. p. 3

Sand winning and stone quarrying are also on the increase, and these are degrading the land and seashore at a very fast rate. The alarming nature of the sand winning can be seen, for example, when one is travelling along the Ofankor-Nsawam and Tema-Aflao roads.

c. Waste Generation and Insanitary Practices

As one walks through the cities, towns, and villages we see many suffocating dung hills, human and domestic wastes, the filthy state of our lorry parks, markets, and the indiscriminate throwing of paper, polythene bags etc. along the highways.

The choked drainage (gutters) is no better. All these cause serious health hazards to many people, especially, the poor. In the big cities like Accra, and Kumasi, such sights are common to find. This is the awful state of the Ghanaian environment today.

d. Water Pollution

Industrialisation has also contributed to the environmental crisis. The production of industrialised goods usually results in the discharge of effluent into nearby rivers, ponds and streams thereby contaminating the waters, which often serve as a source of drinking water for the inhabitants living around the industrial areas or down stream. The effluent further affects animal life in these areas. For example, the Korle Lagoon in Accra is under very serious threat of extinction due to the discharge of industrial raw waste into it. These waste products from the industries affect all manner of life: human, animal and plant alike.

The reduction in vegetation cover along river catchment areas coupled with the off land cultivation close to river and stream banks are also other sources of worry. The effect of such activities is the annual dry-up of these waters, which act as drinking water. It causes perennial water shortage. Some of the rivers also act as the tapping source for the urban treated water. Recently, we witnessed the water crisis that the Cape-Coast municipality experienced due to the human activities described above.

c. Bushfires

Bush fire is another source of environmental crisis that is facing the country Ghana. It has become a routine that every year portions of the forests and savannah lands are destroyed through bushfires, which are set by certain unidentified individuals. Those who set the bush fires do so to trap game for domestic consumption and for commercial purposes. These bushfires destroy the vegetation cover thereby exposing the land to erosion; economic trees are destroyed, and various kinds of animals are killed. Most forest areas, because of the perennial bush fires, are turning into savannah zones and most of the savannah areas are becoming deserts.

There are very important reasons why the religious or faith communities need to be concerned about the environmental crisis or degradation. In a very deep religious sense, for example, in Christian understanding, the whole creation is believed to have come from God (Genesis 1:1-31). For instance, the sun, the moon, the waters, the air, the land and its plants and all other life forms contribute to making life possible. Humanity is supported by and depended on these living and non-living elements her continuous existence. The environment has also been entrusted to human beings by the Creator to be

stewards of. The religious or faith communities, therefore, have a role to play in the struggle to save the environment from total destruction. According to Pope John Paul II, 'The ecological crisis is a moral issue.'⁶ And since Religion and Morality are intertwined, the religious community is in a vital position of leading the campaign against the destruction of the environment upon which their very survival is dependent.

THE CATHOLIC CHURCH AND ENVIRONMENTAL DEGRADATION

Pope John Paul II has observed that 'the world peace is threatened by humanity's lack of due respect for nature, which is seen in the indiscriminate plundering of the natural resources' The Pope further asked all Catholic faithfuls to emulate the example of Saint Francis of Assisi who offered a shining example of genuine and deep respect for the integrity of creation. In 1979, Pope John Paul II proclaimed Saint Francis of Assisi as the heaven patron of those who promote ecology. 'It is my hope that the inspiration of Saint Francis will help us to keep ever alive a sense of 'fraternity' with all those good and beautiful things which Almighty God has created' The Pope emphasized.⁷

The Catholic Church in Ghana, in its bid to help address the environmental crisis, has come out with programmes which include the issuing out of communiqués and the celebration of *Abor Week* (*Abor is a Latin word which means tree. It is therefore a week dedicated to tree planting*). The Bishops' Conference, in 1998 and as a way of demonstrating their commitment to the regeneration and preservation of the environment,

⁶ Message of Pope John Paul II on the Celebration of the World Day of Peace, 1st January 1990, p. 2
⁷ *ibid.* pp. 5&6

stewards of. The religious or faith communities, therefore, have a role to play in the struggle to save the environment from total destruction. According to Pope John Paul II, 'The ecological crisis is a moral issue.'⁶ And since Religion and Morality are intertwined, the religious community is in a vital position of leading the campaign against the destruction of the environment upon which their very survival is dependent.

THE CATHOLIC CHURCH AND ENVIRONMENTAL DEGRADATION

Pope John Paul II has observed that 'the world peace is threatened by humanity's lack of due respect for nature, which is seen in the indiscriminate plundering of the natural resources' The Pope further asked all Catholic faithfuls to emulate the example of Saint Francis of Assisi who offered a shining example of genuine and deep respect for the integrity of creation. In 1979, Pope John Paul II proclaimed Saint Francis of Assisi as the heaven patron of those who promote ecology. 'It is my hope that the inspiration of Saint Francis will help us to keep ever alive a sense of 'fraternity' with all those good and beautiful things which Almighty God has created' The Pope emphasized⁷

The Catholic Church in Ghana, in its bid to help address the environmental crisis, has come out with programmes which include the issuing out of communiqués and the celebration of *Abor Week* (*Abor is a Latin word which means tree. It is therefore a week dedicated to tree planting*) The Bishops' Conference, in 1998 and as a way of demonstrating their commitment to the regeneration and preservation of the environment,

⁶ Message of Pope John Paul II on the Celebration of the World Day of Peace, 1st January 1990, p. 2
⁷ *ibid.* pp. 5&6

formally instituted the first full week of every June of every year as 'Arbor Week' 'Arbor' as said earlier on, is a Latin word for 'Tree'. Therefore 'Arbor Week' means 'a week dedicated to tree planting. History had it that, in 1925, the Governor of the Gold Coast, Sir Frederick Gordon Guggisberg (1919-1927), instituted an 'Arbor Day' to originally encourage the planting of palm trees. Later, however, the planting of 'nim trees' replaced the 'palm trees' to create avenues, parks and as some sort of a national afforestation venture⁸. Therefore, 'Arbor Week', is recalling this historical environmentally friendly precedent, extending it from one day to one whole week and from only a tree planting concern to cover the total care of our environment. The rationale behind this Arbor Week is to

- re-awaken and conscientise people about their religious and moral obligation and responsibility as stewards of God's creation for the proper care of the earth.
- identify and embark on possible practical solutions or actions to solve the environmental problems in our various communities and homes.
- advocate and seek for the enforcement of policies and laws governing the sustainable use and management of our natural resources
- examine and judge for ourselves, our lifestyles, sanitary practices and the state of our immediate surroundings and take remedial measures⁹

⁸ Raphael N. A (1991), 'Arbor Week: A Response to Environmental Care', Takoradi, St. Francis Press Ltd., p. 10.
⁹ *Ibid*

Though the Ghana Catholic Bishops Conference instituted the Arbor Week, the celebration now involves religious bodies or groups and other organisations such as the Christian Council of Ghana, the Ahmadiyya Muslim Mission, Afrikanian Mission, World Vision, and the National Commission on Culture. This is to uphold their religious and moral obligation and responsibility as stewards of God's creation. The celebration is under the auspices of the Environmental Protection Agency.

The Catholic Church is promoting environmental care as a religious and moral obligation. In 1980, a portion of the Bishops' Conference Communiqué to the Catholics and Ghanaians centred on environmental crisis such as desertification and the wanton destruction of powerless farmers' property. In the communiqué, the Bishops lamented the indiscriminate burning of bush and forest in, especially the northern part of the country and the wanton destruction of the poor farmers' cocoa and crop farms by timber loggers and road contractors. The Bishops, therefore, appealed to the Government through the communiqué to use her powers to put a stop to "bush burning without supervision and the felling of trees without the corresponding afforestation". Excerpts of the Communiqué read as follows:

The conference notes with great concern that there is indiscriminate burning of bush and forest in certain parts of the country, especially in the north, which can only hasten the process of desertification. The Conference, therefore, appeals to the Government to use its powers to put a stop to burning without supervision and the felling of trees without the corresponding afforestation ... The Bishops' Conference consider the wanton destruction of poor farmers' cocoa and crop farms by timber and road contractors to be a crime against justice.¹⁰

¹⁰ Ghana Bishops Speak (1999), 'A Collection of Communiqués, Memoranda and Pastoral Letters of the Ghana Catholic Bishops' Conference, Accra, National Catholic Secretariat, pp. 44 & 45

The Bishops' Conference, in its communiqué in 1987, decried also the depletion of our forest through deliberate cutting of trees or bush burning. Although the Conference acknowledged the economic value of timber to Ghana, it appealed to the timber contractors to exercise restraint and be circumspect in the felling of trees and to all, especially the youth, to intensify their efforts in afforestation. The Bishops had this to say

We are fully aware of the economic value of the timber of Ghana. However, the way it is being cut for export, we need no prophet to tell us the future of our forest situation is very bleak. The desert is slowly but surely descending upon us. We wish to see an intensification of efforts at afforestation, and the involvement of all, especially the youth, in it.¹¹

The 2000 and 2001 Communiqués of the Bishops further touched on the destruction done to the environment by timber contractors and surface miners, and cautioned all about the dangers ahead if those involved do not 'repent' from their activities. The Communiqué among others said:

Our environment is being desecrated at a frightening rate as we have had cause to point out in our previous Communiqués. It was recently reported that in a few years' time as much as about 35% of the surface area of Ghana could become a desert, and yet we look on powerless when our wood is cut for short-term economic gain without it being replaced. Laws governing the replanting of trees by timber contractors for trees they cut must be enforced rigorously... Otherwise our nation is heading for... a sure ecological-catastrophe.¹²

¹¹ Ghana Bishops Speak (1999), op. cit. p. 120

¹² A Communiqué issued by the Ghana Catholic Bishops' Conference at their Annual Pastoral Assembly held in Cape Coast from 10th to 15th July 2000, p. 3.

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Rev. Fr Joseph Ankrah¹⁴ reiterated that, the communiqués were meant to appeal to the consciences of people and help them transform or change their negative behaviour towards the environment. 'Since the words of Bishops are taken seriously, their opinion are also respected', emphasised the general secretary

The National Laity Council¹⁵ of the Catholic Church has also taken up the issue of environmental crisis, and for three (3) years, at their annual National Laity Congresses, centred their themes on the environment. For instance, the theme for the 1997 and 1998 were 'The Church and the Protection of the Environment' and 'The Protection of our Environment as our Christian Responsibility' respectively. This was to enable the laity of the Church to rise up to their moral and religious responsibility towards the environment, to help create awareness in their communities about the destructive effects of the environmental degradation and to compliment the efforts of their Bishops.

Additionally, some of the dioceses have also embarked on Agro forestry and tree planting projects. In the Bongo Agro Forestry Project, an average of 120 tree seedlings are planted every year within the area. The Church also gave support to fifty farm

¹³ A Communiqué issued by the Ghana Catholic Bishops' Conference at their Annual Plenary Assembly held in Wa, Upper West Region, from 5th to 13th July, and 2001, p. 6

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families in the establishment of family woodlot and about eighty schools in Garu undertake tree planting on competitive basis. These projects are undertaken in the Navrongo-Bolgatanga diocese.

The department of Socio-Economic Development (SED) of the National Catholic Secretariat also undertakes education programmes, including, seminars for selected farmers in their various areas of operation. These farmers are taught farming techniques and practices, which are environmentally friendly. The rationale is to help minimise the harm and destruction their farming activities can cause to the environment.

We now turn to discuss the activities of the Salvation Army, which are aimed at helping to curtail environmental destruction.

THE SALVATION ARMY AND ENVIRONMENTAL DEGRADATION

The Salvation Army believes that as a people, made in the image of God, (Genesis 1:27) humanity has a responsibility to use the resource of the earth in a way that ensures that people in this and future generations do not suffer from poverty or injustice due to the misuse and depletion of the resources of their ancestors. Responsibility was given to humanity to cultivate and keep the earth (Genesis 2:15) but humanity has rather destroyed and is still destroying God's creation.

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According to the Salvation Army, God's instruction to 'subdue' the earth and 'rule' over every living thing (Genesis 1.28) cannot be interpreted to mean man's indiscriminate exploitation of the environment. It has observed that, God gave his people rights and privileges concerning the environment but included in these rights and privileges are duties and responsibilities. Members are, therefore, taught to have concern and regard for all life forms, to adopt a responsible lifestyle that will protect and enhance the environment and to care for those who are adversely affected by certain harmful environmental practices and who are the victims of environmental vandalism. Salvationists are encouraged, therefore, to consider seriously their personal responsibility towards the environment by taking practical steps to preserve and renew God's creation.¹⁶

Based on the position statement of the Salvation Army, the corps or communities have taken the responsibility to educate their members and neighbours on the need to care for the environment and avoid all activities that harm the natural world. The group known as the **League of Mercy**, established in the various corps, has as one of its basic aims, the promotion of environmental friendliness. This group, made up of men and women, mobilises the community to adopt action plans that lead to the protection of the environment. Tree planting activity had been adopted by some of the corps in their communities, which is aimed at encouraging afforestation.

The women of the 'Army' are at the forefront in the environmental education programme of the Church. They have formed what is called the **Home League of**

¹⁶ The Salvation Army (1992). *Position Statements*, p.15

Women group. The Home League is a group of women mobilised in the community for activities on environmental protection and cleanliness. Seminars are organised for some selected women from these groups in order for them to be well equipped and resourced for the environmental action plan in the community.

Their activities have taken them to places such as Wiamaase where the rural people were taught the proper disposing of their refuse (waste) and how to protect the streams, ponds and rivers from which they fetch their drinking water from being contaminated

We shall now look at what the Ahmadiyya Muslim Mission is doing to fight against the destruction of the environment.

THE AHMADIYYA MUSLIM MISSION AND ENVIRONMENTAL DEGRADATION

Protection of the environment is of great concern to the Ahmadis and they have therefore, instituted some programmes to conscientise members about the need to protect the environment and sustain it, as their religious and moral responsibility.

There is a Missionary Training College at Saltpond that teaches the students issues about the environment and what should be done to help keep it from destruction. The prime aim is that, such missionaries who will be working in the various regional, district and local *Jamaats* (communities) will be well informed on environmental issues thereby, informing the community about the dangers of their human activities on the

ecology 'For, information brings transformation', according to Maulvi M Yusuf Yawson.¹⁷

The various wings of the Mission – the *Majlis Khuddamul Ahmadiyya* (Ahmadiyya Youth Organisation), the *Lajna Imaillah* (Ahmadiyya Muslim Women's Association) and the *Majlis Ansarullah* (Ahmadiyya Muslim Elders Association) also engage in tree planting activities. For instance, the Brong Ahafo Jamaat has a tree-planting project while the youth wing of the Gomoa Jamaat also has a citrus and coconut plantation. The Mission also takes part in the celebrations of the Arbor Week, which is meant to create environmental awareness and to encourage tree planting in the various communities across the country.

The Mission further mounts educational platforms to educate the communities on the need for proper environmental management, especially, on bush fires, which has become very rampant in the various rural communities during the dry season.

The Mission also supports environmental Non-Governmental Organisations (NGO) with resources and funds to help them carry out their environmental awareness education programmes. Notably amongst the NGOs that benefit from such resources and funds, is the *Evergreen Club of Ghana (ECOG)* based in Accra. One of its major programmes is the organisation of school children in and around Accra to embark on tree planting in their localities.

¹⁷ The first deputy Head of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Mission, Ghana

Another religious body we shall discuss by looking at the activities taken by them to help fight against the environmental degradation is the Afrikania Renaissance Mission.

THE AFRIKANIA RENAISSANCE MISSION AND ENVIRONMENTAL DEGRADATION

One of the Seven Paths of Afrikanians is to protect the environment and keep it neat. It is an important obligation for every Afrikania to respect the whole of creation.

The Mission's priestly school at Odorkor in Accra, where priests and priestesses from all over the world are trained, has environmental conservation as one of the subjects taught. It has the rationale of equipping the students with the requisite environmental knowledge since such enlightened priests or priestesses are able to better influence their subjects (congregation) to desist from partaking in acts that degrade the environment.

The Afrikania Renaissance Mission, further celebrates the environmental awareness week (Arbor Week) celebrated annually by religious bodies and groups in the country. They use such occasions to mount platforms in the various communities where their shrines (places of worship) are located to educate the community on environmental issues.

The Mission is advocating for the 'Sankofa' idea - 'Going back to the roots.' This is the promotion and observance of taboos, and traditional beliefs and practices as the surest way of protecting the environment. According to the spiritual leader and head of the Mission - His Holiness Osofo Kofi Ameve 'the forebears (ancestors) conserved

nature by declaring sacred groves and forests and the observance of taboos which placed exceptional restrictions on vital animals, bird species and water bodies' There were taboos concerning the forest and river bodies. For example, in the fishing and farming communities, days such as Tuesday and Thursday are taboo days in which no body is supposed to either go to the farm or fishing. These taboos prevented the people from polluting, over exploring and mismanaging the natural resources. 'This is why my Mission is advocating the observance of these taboos in our contemporary society', his Holiness has observed. His Holiness believes the depletion of the forest and other forms of harm that are caused to the environment can actually be redressed through the enforcement of taboos and other traditional practices and beliefs geared towards protecting the environment. For example, the ban on fishing and hunting during certain periods of the year, throwing of human excreta into river bodies and the felling of certain prescribed tree species all aimed at conservation and replenishing of the used resources.

We shall, in the next chapter, discuss the impact of the activities of the religious bodies, if any, on the people.

CHAPTER SIX

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

HIV/AIDS

HIV/AIDS, we said in our earlier chapters, is caused by viral infection, but the issues raised by the pandemic are far from being purely medical or clinical. The issues touch on moral, cultural norms and practices, social and economic issues, gender, human responsibilities and sexuality.

The HIV/AIDS pandemic has become the greatest threat to Africa's development and, therefore that of Ghana. One dreadful implication of the HIV/AIDS disease on the socio-economic development of the country has to do with the age and sex distribution related to the disease as showed in the figures/tables (figures 1, 2 and 3) provided in chapter three of this work. The study shows that the economically productive ages between 15 and 49 are the most infected. Incidentally, sexual activities which are the major way of infection tend to be at their highest within this group.

This also is a major concern for religious bodies, since this age group forms the 'backbone' of a productive human resource of these religious bodies. The current rate of the spread of the AIDS disease, where about two hundred fresh cases are daily reported in the country should be a worry to all. One can imagine what will happen in the next twenty years, if the current rate of infection should continue.

The poor, in particular, are very susceptible to HIV infection in a number of ways; among which is the need for survival which drives most of them, especially the female youth into prostitution. Others indulge in occasional sex with different partners for favours such as jobs, money or free services, which expose them to the HIV AIDS disease. However, we also know that the AIDS is not a respecter of persons. It does attack the rich, the poor, the religious and the non-religious. Kudadjie¹ has earlier lamented the break down of morality in society as the cause of the woes of the country. The traditional virtues of honesty and chastity have become a thing of the past. Everybody does what seems right in his or her own eyes. There is so much indiscipline in the society.

In spite of the noble concerns of the religious bodies as expressed in the earlier chapters, it came out through my findings that somehow, the faith community has failed to exemplify God's (Allah's) standard on sexual morality. The issue of sexuality is seen as a 'taboo' to be discussed openly even at religious gatherings. It was found out that about 95% of the larty interviewed, reiterated that, issues on sexual morality are barely discussed at religious gatherings, and members are left uninformed about such issues, thereby lacking the necessary information which could enable them make informed choices and take decision concerning their sexuality.

¹ Kudadjie, J.N. (1995), 'Morality in Ghana', B.A Yawson (ed), *The Christian Sentinel*, Vol. 3 No.5, Accra, The Methodist Church, p. 16

The issues of love, compassion for People Living With AIDS (PLWA) and stigmatisation are thorny issues that religious bodies are yet to grapple with. In spite of the laudable ideas on the need to show the above to PLWA, it was found out that most of the religious adherents are very guilty of not showing love and compassion to the PLWA and rather tend to shun and stigmatise them.

It was also found out that the HIV/AIDS menace poses great challenges to the faith community. When we consider the effect of the disease on the orphans and those to be born, these children are faced with the threat of the disease through the various stages of life, that is, before birth, after birth or till death lay its 'icy' hand on them. The faith community seems not to be doing much to help such people.

The AIDS pandemic has also caused many families to disintegrate, that is, it has brought about broken relationships between families and patients. The faith community is, therefore faced with the challenge of carrying the message of reconciliation to such families and to help restore a sense of wholeness to such broken relationships, and to build a sense of trust and encouraging the families to accept the victims back into their fold.

With the exception of the Afrikaans Renaissance Mission, all the religious bodies discussed have elaborate HIV/AIDS programmes that are aimed at helping civil society to fight the spread of the disease. Among other things, the Salvation Army, in collaboration with some Non-Governmental Organisations (NGO's) such as United

Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the Catholic Action for Street Children (CAS) and the National AIDS Control Programme, has established the *Amidaso Fie* (Hope Home) in Accra. The centre seeks and cares for street girl-mothers and their children and prostitutes who are willing to give up prostitution. These girls (women) are trained in income generating activities such as batik and soap making, as alternative to engaging in prostitution. A crèche is provided at the centres to cater for their babies during their training periods. This is a great stride that needs to be copied by many other religious groups in the country.

It was discovered that about 90 percent of the leaders interviewed, had no knowledge about their members who have been infected with the HIV. The lack of knowledge has arisen because most members do not inform their respective religious leaders about their predicament for fear of tarnishing the family's reputation and being shunned by friends and all others, since the disease is most associated with sexual promiscuity. More education needs to be done in this area to enable both the infected and affected persons to report such unfortunate situation to their religious leaders for the necessary spiritual and physical help.

It was found out from the research that about 96 percent of the members of the various religious bodies are aware of these programmes and activities. Such a high level of knowledge has helped in at least creating the awareness about the issues we are concerned with.

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On the issue of promoting the use of condom, has provoked extensive discussion among the faith community in particular. While some think the promotion and use of condom as HIV/AIDS preventive measure is not a sin, others think otherwise. The Roman Catholic Church sees it as a way of encouraging promiscuity while the other religious bodies discussed, see nothing wrong with the promotion and use of condoms as a preventive measure to the AIDS menace. It must be pointed out, however, that, all the religious bodies accept total abstinence as the surest measure of preventing the spread of the HIV.

Interestingly, 77 percent of the Roman Catholic respondents who answered the question of whether, given the option, they would use the condoms, responded in the affirmative. This shows that although their leaders have strongly opposed the promotion and use of condoms as HIV preventive measure, majority of the members do not share same view with the leaders, as they are prepared to use the condom whenever the need arises.

BRIBERY AND CORRUPTION

Bribery and Corruption, as discussed earlier, are universal, age-old or global phenomenon that know no boundary, race or religion. It came out from the research that the fight against corruption in Ghana dates back to pre-colonial times and had culminated in setting up Commissions of Inquiry. Some of these were the Watson Commission of 1948, the Jibowu Commission of 1958 and Annin Commission of 1970. These Commissions were set up by the Government of the day to look into the factors that

promote bribery and corruption and to suggest ways of dealing with this moral, social and developmental evil

The major factors found to be responsible for bribery and corruption include: low wages and salary, cumbersome procedure in acquiring goods and services, lack of accountability on the part of office holders, traditional cultural practice of giving, and poor morals

The print and electronic media keep on exposing corrupt practices. Religious leaders keep exhorting their members and the entire society against indulging in the acts of bribery and corruption. Individuals, when found guilty of the acts by the law courts, are sentenced to various prison terms. And yet, the act of bribery and corruption keep on thriving in society.

One would then say that the various measures adopted to check corruption have somehow failed to achieve the desired results. This is because the root cause of the problem seems not to be tackled. The identified root cause has to do with the individual. That is, the individual has not acquired good morals.

Eighty percent of the religious adherents pointed out that majority of those who are usually corrupt are those occupying high offices and are well paid - having their survival needs being met. The issue therefore seems not to be a matter of poverty or low remuneration, but may be, that of greed. Newspaper reports also seem to point to the above observation. For example, on the 4th of February, 2002, the Daily Graphic, under

the heading '2 interdicted over ₵ 400 million fraud', reported that two top officials at the Ga District Assembly with head office at Amasaman were alleged to be in the centre of a huge financial scandal running into about 400 million cedis. They have been interdicted, pending further investigation into their conduct ² We can also cite the report about Mr Victor Selormey, a former deputy Minister of Finance in the National Democratic Congress (NDC) Government who was jailed for a scandal involving 1.2 million dollars computerization project ³ Such examples seem to support the observation of the people that, many of the corrupt are occupying high offices, those who must be having at least their survival needs met. This is, however, not to say that, the least privileged in society cannot also be corrupt. Indeed, the other 12 % of the respondents said that people are forced to engage in corrupt practices because they are in low-paid jobs and need something that would supplement their salaries or wages. Other factors they pointed out include, cumbersome procedure in acquiring goods and services, traditional cultural practices of giving and poor acquired morals. Thus, the religious bodies need to work on the morals of the individual, by having well developed ethical and moral educational programmes which focus on the training of the 'head,' 'heart' and 'hand' of the human being. The 'head' is to think about noble and virtuous things, the 'heart' is to love and support right actions; and the 'hand' is to work hard to earn honest living.

² Fusuwi A. B. A (February 4, 2002), '2 Interdicted Over ₵400m Fraud', Elvis D. Ayeh (ed), *Daily Graphic*, No 148439, Accra, The Graphic Communications Group Limited, p. 1

³ Deborah Fynn (December 11, 2001), 'Selormey Jailed For 8 years', Elvis D. Ayeh (ed), *Daily Graphic*, No. 148394, Accra, The Graphic Communications Group Limited pp. 1 & 3

the heading '2 interdicted over € 400 million fraud', reported that two top officials at the Ga District Assembly with head office at Amasaman were alleged to be in the centre of a huge financial scandal running into about 400 million cedis. They have been interdicted, pending further investigation into their conduct ² We can also cite the report about Mr Victor Selormey, a former deputy Minister of Finance in the National Democratic Congress (NDC) Government who was jailed for a scandal involving 1.2 million dollars computerization project ³ Such examples seem to support the observation of the people that, many of the corrupt are occupying high offices, those who must be having at least their survival needs met. This is, however, not to say that, the least privileged in society cannot also be corrupt. Indeed, the other 12 % of the respondents said that people are forced to engage in corrupt practices because they are in low-paid jobs and need something that would supplement their salaries or wages. Other factors they pointed out include, cumbersome procedure in acquiring goods and services, traditional cultural practices of giving and poor acquired morals. Thus, the religious bodies need to work on the morals of the individual, by having well developed ethical and moral educational programmes which focus on the training of the 'head,' 'heart' and 'hand' of the human being. The 'head' is to think about noble and virtuous things, the 'heart' is to love and support right actions; and the 'hand' is to work hard to earn honest living.

² Fusuwi A. B. A (February 4, 2002), '2 Interdicted Over €400m Fraud', Elvis D. Ayeh (ed), *Daily Graphic*, No 148439, Accra, The Graphic Communications Group Limited p. 1

³ Daberah Fynn (December 11, 2001), 'Selormey Jailed For 8 years', Elvis D. Ayeh (ed), *Daily Graphic*, No. 148394, Accra, The Graphic Communications Group Limited pp 1 & 3

These teachings should be carried out publicly through the print and electronic media and at specially organized fora sponsored by the faith community. The basic aim should be to cause a behavioural change in which the individual would become aware of his or her 'evil' doings and willingly decide to 'repent' and turn over a new 'leaf'. If this major root cause is addressed, then bribery and corruption could be greatly minimised or eliminated from society.

There was a significant difference among the four religious bodies that have been studied when we look at their programmes that are aimed at helping to fight bribery and corruption. The Catholic Church and the Ahmadiyya Muslim Mission have somehow put certain programmes in place to help address the issue. The Salvation Army and the Afrikana Renaissance Mission have no such programmes, even though they do preach against the practices.

Although efforts of the religious bodies are commendable, these do not seem to have made any appreciable impact on the society. Interviews conducted among members of the religious bodies revealed that about 75 per cent are unaware of programmes that their religious groups are pursuing to help fight against bribery and corruption. Some even accused their leaders for not coming out boldly to condemn public officials and even known members of the congregation who were found to be corrupt or involved in acts that promote bribery and corruption. This shows that the religious bodies (faith community) have a lot more to do in their bid to help civil society fight against bribery and corruption.

ENVIRONMENTAL DEGRADATION

The human being cannot stand in isolation from the natural world, for, both the natural world and human beings depend on each other for survival. This implies that, the destruction of the natural world threatens the very survival of all humans.

The following factors were found to account for the environmental problems that are faced today:

(1) Poverty and Greed

Due to poverty, the individual forgets about the various environmental injunctions and indiscriminately fells trees to sell or to burn charcoal in order to raise revenue for sustenance. About half the population of Ghana is estimated to live in poverty, and two thirds lives in households in which the per capita income is less than 60 per cent of the national average. Poverty is, therefore, one of the strong impediments to adopting practices in preserving the environment.⁴

Merchants also engage in timber logging, wantonly cut down trees for export and domestic use and due to lack of enforcement of land management laws and policies. Furthermore, surface miners, though aware of the impact of their activities on the environment, do not take care to properly reclaim the wasted land. The reclamation of land is sometimes done haphazardly, and agricultural activities, which are the main stay of the communities in which the mining activities take place, are greatly affected. The

⁴ Osei-Bonsu J (ed) (1997), *Ecology in Ghana. On the Church in Ghana and its Evangelising Mission in the Third Millennium*. Cape Coast Mission Press, p. 158

environment, do not take care to properly reclaim the wasted land. The reclamation of land is sometimes done haphazardly, and agricultural activities, which are the main stay of the communities in which the mining activities take place, are greatly affected. The religious groups have not been able to effectively check such an abuse of the environment even though, the scriptures categorically have asked religious people not only to cultivate the land, but also to keep it. (Genesis 1:28-30 and Genesis 2:7,15)

(2) Population Growth and Industrial Activities

The rapid population growth and industrial activities have also led to the generation of both domestic and industrial waste, which the authorities are finding very difficult to handle or dispose of. There is so much filth in various parts of Kumasi, Accra and some regional capitals in Ghana that solutions to clear the filth appear to be nonexistent.

It is becoming increasingly difficult to take care of the environment in contemporary life. Traditional society used to preserve the environment through the use of taboos, among other things. For example, there are taboos which banned the hunting of some animal species and the felling of certain trees. Also, certain periods of the year are declared taboo days for hunting for animals or for fishing in rivers/streams/sea. In areas where these taboos/proverbs are still enforced, the land and other natural resources are least exploited. These taboos are now being kicked against with impunity, due to so-called 'modernity' and sometimes Christianity. Christians would not associate themselves with traditional taboos, even where they are for good reasons, because the taboos are usually associated with spirit powers other than the Supreme Being. To down-play the

traditional taboos that are made to preserve the environment is to create a vacuum that the Christian and the Islamic religions are yet to fill

Furthermore, beside the economic and social benefits that are derived from technological and industrial development is the harm some of the by-products that such technological advancement are also causing to the environment. For instance, industrial by-products from industries sited in Accra and its environs are polluting the Korle Lagoon

Other factors that cause environmental degradation include inadequate public education on the proper use of the environment, in other words, the lack of knowledge of understanding of the inseparable relationship between humanity and the environment (nature).

It was found out that the programmes of activities of religious bodies in fighting environmental degradation had not generally created the necessary societal impact. The Ghana Catholic Church could be said to have done a lot to create the necessary environmental degradation awareness, looking at their programmes of activities as discussed in Chapter 5. The Salvation Army women's group is also worth mentioning. The Home League, of women's environmental activities at Wiamaose in the Asante Region as discussed in chapter 5, has created the necessary environmental impact, especially in the area of sanitation. The women in the community have been taught the need to maintain and keep proper sanitary condition that will help keep the stream in the village, which also acts as source of drinking water, from being contaminated. This also

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guards against the destruction of the vegetation cover around the riverbanks, which checks the stream from drying up especially during the harmattan season.

One would, however, say that there is much to be done to create the desired impact on the lives of the people.

The religious bodies need to acknowledge the seriousness of the environmental crisis by recognising that the future of humanity and that of religion is dependent on proper environmental care, since the spiritual and the physical (material) world are inseparable.

CHAPTER SEVEN

CONCLUSION

SUMMARY

This work is concerned with some major moral and ethical issues of HIV/AIDS, bribery and corruption and environmental degradation, which are all life threatening issues

We looked at the programmes and activities that are being carried out by some religious bodies in the country, notably: the Catholic Church, the Salvation Army, the Ahmadiyya Muslim Mission and the Afrikania Renaissance Mission, aimed at helping society to address or fight against the issues. We also discussed the impact of these programmes and activities on the society. Before that, we briefly discussed the historical inception of the identified religious bodies in the country.

On HIV/AIDS, we discussed the discovery of the HIV on the world scene and also in Ghana. We also looked at how scientists and the religious bodies are trying to trace the origins of the disease of which no definite conclusions have yet been reached.

There was also a discussion on the various programmes and activities, for example, the home based care, clinical and institutional management, training seminars and workshops that have been put in place in the management of the disease. We also looked at the controversial issue of the promotion and use of condoms, as one of the

means of preventing the spread of the disease and what the religious bodies under discussion had to say on it.

It was found out that some contributing factors to the spread of the AIDS menace in the country include: irresponsible sexual practices, that is, the failure of the faith community to exemplify God's (Allah's) standard on sexuality, influence of western culture, breakdown of the extended family system, travels and migration, and general breakdown in morality.

In the case of bribery and corruption, we discussed the various programmes that are being carried out by the identified religious bodies in the fight against the twin-evils. Some of these programmes are: issuing of Communiqués and Pastoral Letters, organisation of workshops, and educational campaigns against the twin-evils.

We found that the major factors responsible for bribery and corruption include greed, low wages and salaries, cumbersome procedure in acquiring goods and services, lack of accountability on the part of office holders, traditional cultural practices of giving and poor acquired morals. It has been realised also that the various measures adopted to check corruption have, somehow, failed to achieve the desired results. This is because, the root cause of the problem seems not to be tackled. The identified root cause has to do with the individual. That is, the individual has not acquired good morals.

The study further discussed environmental degradation caused mainly by the destruction of forest lands, mining, sand winning and stone quarrying, waste generation and insanitary practices, water pollution and bush fires.

Consequently, we discussed the salvaging programmes of the religious bodies which are aimed at helping society fight the continuous degradation of the environment on which the sustenance of humanity depends. Some of these programmes are: the institution of the Arbor Week celebration, the issuance of Pastoral Letters and Communiqués, advocacy for the enforcement of environmental taboos, Agro forestry and tree planting projects, educational programmes and community mobilisation for environmental protection.

It was found out that factors such as poverty and greed, rapid population growth, lack of enforcement of environmental principles or laws, technological development, and inadequate public education on the proper use of the environmental resources account for the environmental problems being faced today.

The major striking factors from the research indicate that lack of effective enforcement of laws and commitment to religious teachings are mainly responsible for the prevalence of these moral and ethical problems of HIV/AIDS, bribery and corruption and environmental degradation facing the society.

SUGGESTIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS

1. TO THE RELIGIOUS BODIES

As discovered, most of the religious bodies are very guilty when it comes to showing of love and compassion to the People Living With AIDS (PLWA). It is, therefore, suggested that a good education needs to be carried out in this area so that adherents of the religious bodies would understand the need for showing love and compassion to victims and to do away with the issue of stigmatising them.

By good education, we mean that the religious bodies should add to the preaching and exhortation (which seem not to be yielding the required results) new ways such as acting of plays, drama on AIDS and the screening of HIV/AIDS related films which centre on the need to show love, compassion and the doing away of stigmatizing PLWA. This could touch the hearts of viewers, hence, helping to change the preconceived ideas about PLWA. Furthermore, members of the various religious groups can pay regular visits to the hospitals and to homes where HIV/AIDS patients are kept. Prayers as well as material needs can be met through such visits. And the PLWA could themselves be invited by these religious bodies to share their experiences with them.

Moreso, the HIV/AIDS poses great challenge to the faith community when we consider the effects of the disease on orphans and those yet to be born and the children are faced with the threat of the disease through the various stages of life, that is, before birth, after birth and till death. The faith community must therefore develop and improve upon their existing programmes and help protect these children from being infected with

the virus. The faith community should develop the 'catch them young' programme, where children of say 5 years to about 12 years are given a thorough and continuous education on HIV/AIDS. This can be done at Sunday schools and Makaranta schools and at special children's rally of these religious bodies. Young adults who will soon enter into marriage should also be asked to remain chaste till they are married and should be encouraged to have HIV tests that will determine their HIV status before committing themselves into the 'web' of marriage. This would avoid innocent partners being infected with the HIV soon after marriage. Though difficult, this education we believe, will in the long run yield the desired results.

With regards to those who have lost their parents to the AIDS disease, the religious bodies (faith community) should set up an endowment fund to cater for both the educational and other material needs of these orphans. The religious groups could adopt the children by creating a kind of 'saalem' - a segregation community for them, to continue with their education until they finally 'give up the ghost'.

In addition, the religious bodies should embark on an educational campaign against stigmatisation of school children infected with the AIDS virus in the various Primary and Junior Secondary schools to accept, show compassion and love to the unfortunate ones.

To stop the confusion and the divergent opinions on the promotion, sale and use of condoms as a means of preventing the spread of the HIV, which have the danger of creating division amongst religious bodies, it is recommended that a dialogue between the leaders of religious bodies be held and a communiqué issued at the end of such a deliberation

Also, the formation of AIDS Clubs by religious bodies and individuals within the faith community should be encouraged. All should emulate the example of 'Matthew Chapter 25 AIDS Club' founded by Rev. Fr. Alex Bobby Benson at the Akwatia St. Dominic's Catholic hospital where AIDS patients come together for solace, sharing love, problems and having fun. The club should aim at promoting the welfare of PLWA and to give them the necessary training that can be used in the dissemination of AIDS information in the various communities. This we believe, will create the needed societal impact since they themselves are carriers of the AIDS virus.

One would say that bribery and corruption could not be attributed to low remuneration per se, but rather to bad morals that have been acquired by the individual. It is therefore, suggested that religious bodies work on the morals of the individual, by having well developed ethical and moral educational programmes, which will focus on the training of the 'head', 'heart', and 'hands', of the human being. The 'head' is to think

about noble and virtuous things, the 'heart' is to love and support right actions and the 'hand' is to work hard to earn honest living

The teachings should be carried out publicly through the school system, print and electronic media with the basic aim of causing behavioural change in the individual to become aware of his or her 'evil' doings and to willingly decide to 'repent' and turn over a new 'leaf'. If this major root cause is addressed, then bribery and corruption could be greatly minimised or eliminated from society.

As suggested by the Ameer-in-charge of Ahmadiyya Muslim Mission, Ghana, that a day be set aside every year to create a nationwide awareness of consequences of corruption on the society, it is further suggested here that a whole week for such a nationwide awareness be initiated by the various religious groups. And, during that week long celebration, activities such as public lectures, anti-corruption floats, debates, symposia, sermons, public education and print and electronic media advertisements be carried out. This, it is envisaged, will help create that necessary societal impact.

Religious bodies should further, develop and intensify the moral teachings by coming out with handbooks and pamphlets specifically on bribery and corruption and support the teachings with quotations from their holy scriptures.

As admitted by majority of the members of the religious bodies, members were unaware of the programmes that their leaders have put in place to fight bribery and corruption, it is suggested that the leaders of these religious groups should educate their membership on the programmes and get them involved in the implementation of the programmes. Those who are found guilty of bribery and corruption should be publicly exposed to serve as deterrence to others.

Bribery and corruption are 'diseases' of the body politic. Therefore, the correct diagnosis will help find the appropriate cure for it. For instance, if a physician is able to diagnose the root cause(s) of any human disease, he or she is better able to prescribe the correct medicine for its cure. Therefore, if all religious bodies and stakeholders properly address the root cause, as found by the researcher, then, the prevention and or the elimination of bribery and corruption from the society could be achieved, or at least be minimised. An Akan proverb says, 'No one was born with a bad head, but picks it from the earth', meaning, no human being was born with the instinct of being corrupt but he or she learns such behaviour here on earth. It is our hope that with good ethical and moral teachings by religious leaders at various worship centres, workplaces, institutions of learning and homes, people will be able to say 'No' to acts of bribery and corruption and other societal vices.

In dealing with environmental degradation, we begin by recommending that a national debate be held on the promotion of traditional taboos and certain traditional practices and beliefs, which focus on the preservation of the environment. Some

examples of these taboos are ban on hunting and fishing during certain periods of the year, and the pouring of soapy water and dumping of human excreta and other waste products into water bodies. The main reason given for the imposition of these environmental taboos (prohibitions) is to conserve and protect the environment from degradation. For, we found out that in areas where environmental taboos are still enforced, the environment is least exploited.

Furthermore, with well-explained quotations from the Holy Scriptures, religious bodies should prepare lessons on the environment in books for the community. Additionally, they should form environmental clubs in their congregations (and this will be most useful to those who cannot read) and their institutions of learning. These clubs should liaise with environmental Non-Governmental Organisations (NGO's) for better promotion of friendly environmental programmes.

World Environmental Day declared by the United Nations (UN) and the Arbor Week (tree planting week) instituted by the Catholic Church and now embraced by most religious bodies should be made more popular through the participation of the electronic and print media. This will provide the needed advertisement and coverage. Consequently, it is recommended that a national recognition award should also be instituted by the religious bodies, to be awarded to individuals, corporations, organisations, district assemblies and even religious bodies that greatly promote and get involved in environmental preservation activities, during this annual celebration. Such

awards have the ability of encouraging both individuals and corporate organisations and institutions to get involved in acts that promote environmental preservation

(2) TO THE GOVERNMENT

The Government must take the issue of moral reformation seriously by encouraging the formation of moral reformation clubs at workplaces. These clubs should embark on moral educational campaigns in and outside the workplaces, that is, within and outside their various departments. The club members should be encouraged to live by example, so that they would serve as role models for their colleagues. Part of the funds allocated by the Government for fighting the spread of bribery and corruption should be released for sponsoring the clubs. Club members must put mechanisms in place to check the temptation of misusing the funds on other ventures by club members.

Additionally, the Government must equip institutions responsible for the conservation, preservation and the protection of the environment with the necessary equipment and strengthen their capacities with the appropriate Legislative Instrument (L.I), so that they can effectively enforce all the environmental laws to protect the environment. The institutions must also have the power to prosecute offenders to serve as a deterrent to others.

(3) TO NON-GOVERMENTAL ORGANISATIONS (NGOS)

The NGO's, which are involved in the fight against the spread of HIV/AIDS, should collaborate with the religious bodies, involved in same issues. This will enable both parties to put their expertise and scarce resources together to achieve maximum

results. Moreover, it will avoid duplication of efforts in the same locality, which has the danger of creating unnecessary competition and wastage of the organisations' scarce resources.

Also, some of the NGO's which are financially sound should be prepared to open their doors of training, seminars and workshops to the various religious bodies to help train members of these religious bodies. This will help in effectively fighting against the major issues discussed in earlier chapters.

To conclude, one would say that since the human factor greatly determines the measure of success that society attains in its developmental endeavours, it is imperative that moral regeneration campaign be given all the needed attention and seriousness it deserves by the religious bodies, and other stakeholders.

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Monsignor Joseph Ankraah (Rev. Fr.) - The General Secretary of the Ghana Catholic Bishops' Conference.

Osofo Kwesi Dankama Quarm - The Spiritual Head of the Afrikania Mission

Osofo Yaw Bɔ̀bɔ̀nkronkron - A high Priest of the Afrikania Renaissance Mission.

Yusuf Quanioo - The HIV/AIDS Coordinator of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Mission Ghana

APPENDIX A

DEPARTMENT FOR THE STUDY OF RELIGIONS UNIVERSITY OF GHANA, LEGON

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR RESEARCH INTO GHANANIAN RELIGIOUS BODIES AND SOME ETHICAL AND MORAL ISSUES

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR THE LAITY/NON LEADERS

KINDLY ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS AS OBJECTIVELY AS YOU
COULD.

(A) Level of Education Tick where appropriate.

- | | |
|------------------|--------------------------------|
| i) Primary | ii) Middle Form Four |
| iii) J S.S. | iv) S S S |
| v) O-Levels | vi) A-Levels |
| vii) Polytechnic | viii) Teacher Training College |
| ix) University | x) Other, specify |

(B) Religious Affiliation

(C) Marital Status: Tick where appropriate

- | | |
|-------------------|-------------|
| i) Single | ii) Married |
| iii) Separated | iv) Widowed |
| v) Other, specify | |

(D) Age

HIV/AIDS

(1) What causes HIV/AIDS?

- Germs
- Virus
- Germs and Virus
- No idea.

(2) Where did you first hear about the HIV/AIDS disease?

- Church/Mosque/Shrine
- Work
- TV
- Radio
- School

- (3) How is the HIV/AIDS disease spread? List as many ways as you can.
- i)
 - ii)
 - iii)
- (4) List the various ways through which the disease cannot be spread.
- (5) Who is at risk of being infected with the disease?
- (6) What part is your Church/Mission playing to help solve the HIV/AIDS epidemic?
- (7) Are you aware your Church/Mission has issued out Pastoral Letters or Communiqués concerning HIV/AIDS menace?
- (8) If yes, state three issues that the Church/Mission said about HIV/AIDS
- i)
 - ii)
 - iii)
- (9) In your opinion, do you think such Pastoral Letters or Communiqués will help address the HIV/AIDS menace? Give reasons for your answers.
- (10) Apart from such Pastoral Letters or Communiqués, what other steps has the Church/Mission taken to solve the HIV/AIDS menace?
- (11) Do you agree with the leadership of your Church/Mission concerning the use of Condoms as a means of stopping the spread of HIV/AIDS? Yes
- (12) If yes, give reasons for your answer

- (13) If you are given the option, will you use the condom Yes No
- (14) Give reasons for your answer.
- (15) Do you think it is morally right for the government to promote the use of condoms as a means of preventing the spread of HIV/AIDS? Yes No
- (16) Give reasons for your answer.
- (17) What activities or programmes are your Church/Mission undertaking to help care for the infected and affected HIV/AIDS victims?
- (18) Has your Church/Mission ever organised a workshop or seminar on HIV/AIDS
Yes No
- (19) What campaign activities (awareness programmes) have your Church/Mission embarked upon to help prevent the spread of HIV/AIDS?
- (20) List any ways in your opinion, through which your Church/Mission can help prevent the spread of HIV/AIDS

ENVIRONMENTAL DEGRADATION

- (1) How did you first hear about the problem of environmental crisis or degradation
- | | | |
|--------------------------|---------------|---------------|
| i) TV | ii) Work | iii) School |
| iv) Church/Mosque/Shrine | v) Newspapers | vi) Workplace |

(2) List some of the environmental problems you know

(3) What are some of the human activities that harm or destroy the environment?

(4) Have you ever come across fellow Christians/Muslims/Afrikanaians discussing environmental problems?

Yes No

(5) What is a Christian's/Muslim's/Afrikanaian's responsibility towards the environment?

(6) Has your leadership issued out any communiqué on the environment before?
Yes No

(7) If yes, then mention some of the issues raised in the communiqué.

(8) Is your Church/Mission involved in any afforestation or environmental protection project?

(9) If yes, what kinds of environmental protection project?

(10) If No, why?

(11) As a Christian/Muslim/Afrikanaian, will you support the use of traditional practices as a method in the preservation of the environment? Yes

(12) If yes, give reasons for your answers

(13) Has your Church/Mission ever organised a forum or a seminar on the proper use of the environment? Yes No

(14) What are some of the ways Christianity/Islam/African Traditional Religion recommends for the proper protection of the environment?

(15) What other programmes are your Church/Mission embarking upon to help protect the environment from destruction?

BRIBERY AND CORRUPTION

(1) List some factors that are responsible for bribery and corruption in the country

(2) In your opinion, do you think your Church/Mission has done enough to help the Government to fight bribery and corruption? Give reasons for your answers.

(3) Has the leadership of your Church/Mission issued any communiqué or Pastoral letter on bribery and corruption? Yes No

(4) List any practical steps that your Church/Mission has taken in her crusade against bribery and corruption

(12) If yes, give reasons for your answers

(13) Has your Church/Mission ever organised a forum or a seminar on the proper use of the environment? Yes No

(14) What are some of the ways Christianity/Islam/African Traditional Religion recommends for the proper protection of the environment?

(15) What other programmes are your Church/Mission embarking upon to help protect the environment from destruction?

BRIBERY AND CORRUPTION

(1) List some factors that are responsible for bribery and corruption in the country.

(2) In your opinion, do you think your Church/Mission has done enough to help the Government to fight bribery and corruption? Give reasons for your answers.

(3) Has the leadership of your Church/Mission issued any communiqué or Pastoral letter on bribery and corruption? Yes No

(4) List any practical steps that your Church/Mission has taken in her crusade against bribery and corruption

(5) Has your Church/Mission ever organised any awareness programmes on bribery and corruption? Yes No

(6) As a Christian/Muslim/ Afrkananian, what in your opinion could be the most appropriate ways of fighting bribery and corruption?

(7) What should be the Christian's/Muslim's/Afrkananian's attitude towards bribery and corruption?

(8) Give some verses from your Holy Scriptures that speak against bribery and corruption (if you could)

(9) List ways through which, in your opinion, your Church/Mission could help curb the spread of bribery and corruption

APPENDIX B

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR LEADERS

CHURCH: CATHOLIC AND SALVATION ARMY
MISSION: AHMADIYYA AND AFRIKANIA RENAISSANCE

- (1) When did your Church/Mission start addressing the issue of HIV/AIDS?
- (2) What practical steps or programmes have been taken by the Church/Mission fight against the spread of the HIV/AIDS disease?
- (3) Does your Church/Mission sponsor all these programmes?
- (b) If No, then who are your co-sponsors?
- (4) Has your Church/Mission got any research department that deals exclusively with issues of HIV/AIDS?
- (5) What moral and ethical issues are your Church/Mission faced with, with regard to her crusade against the spread of the HIV/AIDS disease?
- (6) Do you know of any reported HIV/AIDS case or victim among your members?
- (7) What future plans do your Church/Mission got in its bid to help fight against the AIDS spread?
- (8) What is your Church's/Mission's view or stand on the promotion and use of condoms as a preventive measure to the spread of the HIV/AIDS disease?
- (9) Has your Church/Mission made any public statement or issued out an Communique/Pastoral Letter on HIV/AIDS?
- (10) How is your Church/Mission currently dealing with the issue of sexuality?
- (11) Have your programmes aimed at fighting the spread of the HIV/AIDS disease made the necessary impact in the locality of operation?
- (12) If Yes, in what ways?
- (13) If No, why the failure?
- (14) Do you have any personal opinions on the disease?

BRIBERY AND CORRUPTION

- (1) What in your opinion has contributed to the thriving of bribery and corruption in the society?
- (2) How can these identified problems be solved?
- (3) In your opinion, have the Religious bodies done enough to help civil society fight against the spread of bribery and corruption?
- (4) If Yes, why has bribery and corruption still persisted in the society?
- (5) If No, why no such efforts?
- (6) What role can the religious bodies play to help civil society eliminate bribery and corruption from the society?
- (7) Has your Church/Mission got any programmes aimed at helping the society fight against the spread of bribery and corruption?
- (8) If Yes, what are these programmes?

ENVIRONMENTAL DEGRADATION

- (1) What factors have accounted for Environmental degradation?
- (2) What programmes has your Church/Mission put in place to help stop society from further degrading the environment?
- (3) Have these programmes made the necessary societal impact?
- (4) Is there any specific environmental problem that your Church/Mission is dealing with?
- (5) Do you think the continuous degradation of the environment poses a danger to humanity and religion?
- (6) If Yes, in what ways?

