

UNIVERSITY OF GHANA



THE IMPACT OF CHRISTIANITY ON TRADITIONAL BURIAL AND FUNERAL
RITES OF KASENA PEOPLE IN NORTHERN GHANA

BY

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DECLARATION

I, Aketira John Bosco do hereby declare that this thesis is the result of my own research carried out under the supervision of Dr. Alhassan Sulemana Anamzoya at the department of sociology and references cited have been fully acknowledged. I accept full responsibility for any mistakes it may contain therein.

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DEDICATION

I wish to dedicate this work first to the almighty God and his son Jesus Christ for showing me divine grace throughout the period of this research work. Secondly this work is dedicated to my wife Grace Akebe, my parents Mr. And Mrs. Aketira George and to all my siblings; Lydia, Caesar, Mabel, Cletus, and Emmanuel Aketira for being there for me at all times and offering me financial support and words of encouragement as well as moral support.



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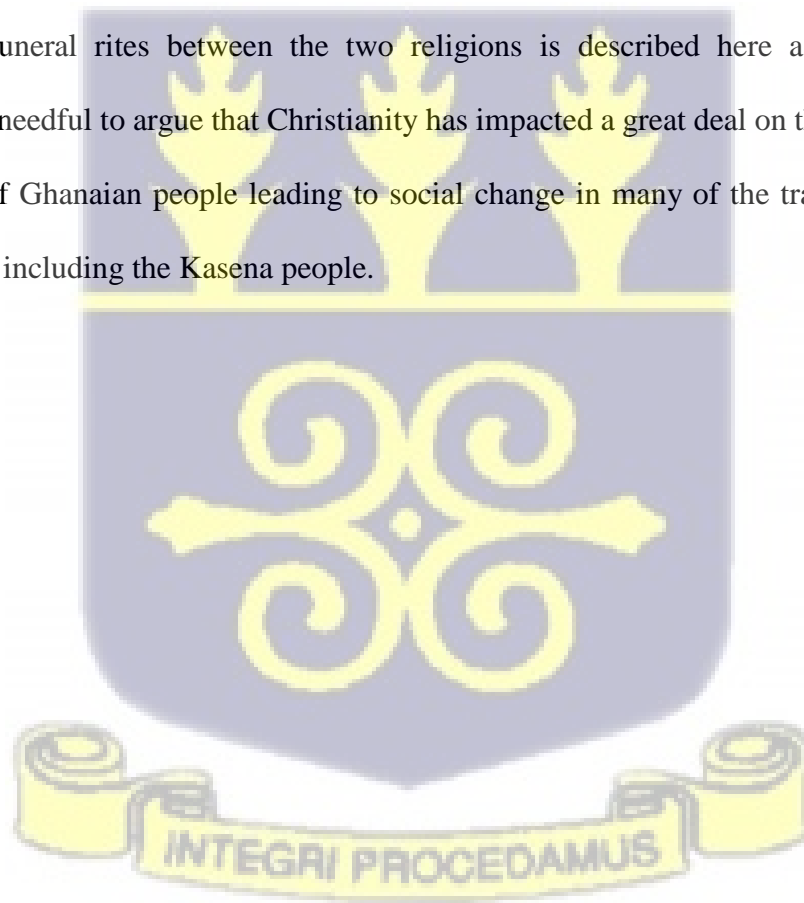
ABSTRACT

This study seeks to make an inquiry into the traditional view and approach to death, burial, and funeral rites of the Kasena people of Northern Ghana. It will also take a look at the kind of changes Christianity influenced on the Kasena people of northern Ghana. The research was thus focused on the traditional funeral rites of the Kasena people and the changes therein that are attributable to the alien Religion-Christianity. The study was designed to identify the specific changes that can easily be observed in the traditional funeral ritual process as a result of the introduction of Christian religious beliefs and practices in Kasena society. The study also looked at the history and development of Christianity in Ghana as a whole and specifically in Kasena society. This research design was solely qualitative and was based on review of documents, some of which are unpublished. Participants observation was not initially anticipated but opportunity was later given for the researcher to observe the performance of fresh funerals in both traditional and Christian ways. Data was also collected through focus group discussions and in-depth interviews. The focus group discussions were conducted for Christian religious leaders-a funeral committee made up of members from various Christian denominations. It is formed by what is called “*the joint council of churches*”. Traditional sextons were purposely selected for an in-depth interview. The *bayɛ* (also called burial experts or undertakers) were also taken through focus group discussion to unravel the traditional burial ritual processes in Kasena traditional society.

The data analysis concentrated on the Kasena traditional funeral rites and customary processes for both *lu-lia* (wet or fresh funeral) and *lu-fula* (dry or the final funeral rite). It included the Christians involvement in the funeral rites of the Kasena people. It also looked at the Christian teaching about Kasena traditional rituals. What Christians are allowed to actively participate in and what they are not.

The significance of Kasena traditional funeral rituals regarding social control, socialization, taboos and the tendencies for conflict between the two religious persuasions.

Findings made from the research are the consensus building and tendencies for religious conflict in the Kasena society. While it emerged that largely, the two religious believers have found a way of co-existing peacefully, one can also identify some aspects where traditional funeral rites have defied the speedy replacement of traditional funeral processes by those of Christianity. The point of divergence in funeral rites between the two religions is described here as dysfunctional and conflictual. It is needful to argue that Christianity has impacted a great deal on the socio-cultural and religious lives of Ghanaian people leading to social change in many of the traditional societies of Northern Ghana including the Kasena people.



CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 background of the study

Africans have a wide range of unique customs that give them a clear cultural distinction from people of other societies around the globe. One of such cultural practices is their socio-religious response to the death of members of their families, lineages or clans. The response is the performance of burial and funeral rites. Death has been noted to be a necessary and inevitable end of man on Earth. The fact that all shall die, if not now at least some day has set people thinking about how to approach it when it eventually happens. It is also a scientific fact that when one dies he will not be seen again in his physical form. The scientific part of it is the Religious belief that if one will be seen at all, it will not be here on earth. For these reasons, people found the need to have distinctive socio-cultural, religious, sociological and symbolic ceremonies that they can organize for the burial and farewell of members departing to eternity. One of the things adopted is religion because of one of its function which as noted by Assimeng (1989: p.6) is the “control of the activities of men in their encounter with social and natural environment”. In this sense man’s activity is the funeral necessary to help them encounter the natural occurrence – death.

People in different ethnic societies have varying views and ideas about death, how it happens, and what becomes of the deceased after death. For these reasons, a study of how different cultures and religions came to exist in the same society will enable us better understand these varying views and ideas that are held by people of different cultural and religious backgrounds.

Michael Tagoe (2009) as cited in Alhassan Mohammed’s MPhil thesis (2011), defined culture as “beliefs, values, and attitudes that structure behavioral patterns of specific groups of people”.

Durkheim (1915: p.47) cited in Nukunya (1991: p.53) on his part defined religion as “a unified system

of beliefs and practices relative to sacred things, that is to say things set apart and forbidden-beliefs and practices which unite into one single moral community call church all those who adhere to them". There is a general belief in the inevitability of death, life and judgement after death. There are those who also "believe in the power of the dead to influence the life of the living". For this reason, funeral rites start right at the point of death until judgement day or when the spirit (soul) of the dead assumes the status of an ancestor or ancestress and can be worshiped.

From the definition of culture by Tagoe (2009) and religion by Durkheim (1915), one can say that religion and culture are one and the same since they all function to regulate the pattern of society along which peoples' lives are guided. The customs, the beliefs and religious practices of all societies determine the way the dead human body should be prepared for laying in state and burial. For instance, while some religious and cultural persuasions will have the luxury to delay the laying to rest of a deceased relative, others like those of an Islamic cultural background are taught to hurriedly go through to the end of the burial process. While some cultures will cremate the body of their deceased relatives, other cultures will require that the body be glorified with coffins and well decorated grave (or house for the dead). Yet other societies like the Egyptians will mummify by embalming and wrapping them with beautiful garments and lying in well decorated tombs.

The belief that death is not the end of man and that only his body is destroyed but his soul goes elsewhere and even attain the power to oversee the lives of the living (Nukunya, 1992: p.56) by punishing wrong doers and rewarding conformists is a belief held by most African societies. People of other socio-religious backgrounds like Christians have held that while there is life after death, that life awaits a judgement of the supreme God and that depending on your life here on earth one might either enjoy it with God in heaven or with Satan in hell. Traditional Africans on their part, believe that the soul of dead person can hover around for some time as a ghost (Abotchie, 1997: p.39) and is believed to have powers that can harm his earthly life time enemies.

All the above beliefs and religious practices have created varying ways in which the dead are treated but there are others that are universal and are commonly practiced by all religions and cultures. These include; “bathing” the dead body, covering them with garments, saying prayers before burial, among others. In Ghanaian societies, much of the funeral processes are guided by customary practices and religious beliefs of the people. For instance, the time for being emotional by crying, the positioning of the body in the grave, the direction to which a male or female body will face, the time for burying a male or female body are all a function of culture and religion of the people in that society. One can also talk about the use of the colors of clothes, shaving of hairs, wearing headgears, and ropes all of which are determined by the customs, religion and culture of the people. Some other features of funerals in some Ghanaian societies are the music, drumming, and dancing which makes the funeral ceremony a merry making event worthy of celebrating. Yet in some other Ghanaian societies all forms of merry making and celebrations are not allowed when the dead person is deemed as; too young to die, a result of murder or suicide.

Such merry making activities may include all kinds of loud music, drumming and dancing. Songs at such funerals are dirges and they are sung at low tone and their meaning reflects the extent of grief and sad mood of the people, more so when the body is not yet buried.

The human life for traditionalists is a cycle with various stages; birth, puberty, marriage, and death. The transition from one stage to another is marked by ceremonies and funeral rite is one such ceremony that marks one’s transition from the human world to the spirit world. Some Ghanaian societies like the Akans, personify their nation state in their leader who is always a king or a chief. The funeral of the king is therefore an occasion for the performance of elaborate rituals which often carry along every member of the community or the nation state.

It should be understood here that the different methods applied in the disposal of dead body vary from society to society because of their varying climate, cultural, and religious inclination. Kututera, A.

(1995, unpublished; Fred T. S. (1987) noted that festivities, drumming and dancing at funerals constitute common cultural elements among Dagon in Mali, and Frafra in Northern Ghana. He added that they are always infused with symbolic, religious performance which represents the spirit of the underworld.

1.2 Statement Of The Problem

Funeral grounds in Ghana are identified by music and dance of various styles, loud wailings by mourners, the dress code which in Southern Ghana, according to (Annane-Poku and Twombly, 2016) is black and red. Despite the universality of funeral as a socio-cultural element, one can see distinctive ways in which various societies show grief for the demise of their relations or loved ones. Annane-Poku and Twombly, (2016) argued that “the particularities of Ghanaian funerals can be a little mystifying”. Performing funeral rites involves going through elaborate ritual processes right from the point of death to the end.

Christianity is a religion in which followers believe in the trinity. Trinity in the Christian religion is one God in three; God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. They are sometimes referred to as polytheist, which means a belief in the multiplicity of God. Christians also hold the belief that they shall live again after death—in heaven or in hell depending on how they adhered to the teachings of the religion. According to Christian teaching, living an “after life” in heaven is achieved through a belief in Jesus Christ and the teachings of the Holy Bible as the true word of the supreme God himself.

Christianity is seen as a foreign culture and Howell (1997) describes acceptance of it as “a Break with the past”. According to her such a break with the past is marked with the burning down of shrines and refusal to participate in the performance of rituals of all kind including funeral related ones. Nukunya (2003) noted that Ghanaians had heard and knew about Christianity but were reluctant to

accept it. Rev. Fr. Kazaresam (c.f Howell, 1997:1) also noted that “people are Christians only on Sundays and for the rest of the week, they are “real Kasena” people. Fr. Kazaresam explained that “in times of crisis and illness, some Christians would seek help through divination and participation in sacrifices and rituals as well as requesting prayers in church”. There are Christians who are not sure of their spiritual safety should they totally abandon their traditional religious customs for which reason they would always participate in some and stay away from others. Kwotuah (2007) observed that true Christians among Kasenas would avoid aspects of Kasena funerals that do not conform with the teachings of the Christian religion. Such Christians according to him would often engage in banter with traditionalist over which way to perform the funeral of their relatives—the Christian way or the traditional customary practice. This is more so when the family is divided with some being Christians and others being traditionalist. There is therefore a mixture of tradition and Christianity and tradition in some cultural aspect of Kasena life.

Followers of African traditional religion hold the belief that, polytheism, which is a belief in the multiplicity of gods arranged in a hierarchy with the Supreme God at the top necessary to serve as intermediary between the sinful man and the sinless supreme God, Nukunya (2003).

A lot of differences abound between Christianity and traditional religious beliefs and practices. For instance, there is great difference in how they conceive of life after death, where a person goes to live his or her life after death and what he or she becomes after death. There is also a great variation in how Christians and traditionalists conceive of the end of the world and of the judgement day. While some Christians believe that salvation is possible only through Jesus Christ, traditionalists hold the view that they can approach God through their ancestral spirits and the lesser gods.

A lot of the African traditional religious beliefs and practices still exist till today but the speedy and forceful intrusion of foreign cultures and religions are fast eroding them away and taking their place. This is more evident in northern Ghanaian traditional societies such as the Kasena. Nukunya (2003)

has noted that Islam's entry point into Ghana is the North where it started spreading to the south. Christianity on the other hand, spread to the North from the South after several years of evangelization. The advent of Christianity has penetrated many parts of Northern Ghana including the Kasena society and the consequences have been the fast wiping away of traditional religious and cultural values one of which are burial and funeral rites. In fact, Christianity is creeping into every fabric of socio-cultural, economic and religious life of Northern Ghanaian societies, including Kasena. It is not uncommon to see a Kasena funeral ground being dominated by Christian religious activities thus thwarting every bit of traditional ritual process that would have been going on. Followers of the Christian religion have by this approach always imposed their religious values on the people thus undermining the traditional views about burial and funeral rites. The consequences are that it leads to the extinction of traditional cultural values.

In view of the ever spreading Christian religion with its values taking the place of tradition, one would ask; what is in store for the culture and social life of the Kasena people. The spreading Christian religion appears to characterize every fabric of Kasena social life. Researchers have to look at funeral rites but many dealt with work of undertakers as can be illustrated in the work of Rev. Kazaresam (unpublished). It was titled *Bayaaro* (undertakers). Others like Abasi (1995) also dealt with Lu-lia (wet or fresh funeral). Some scholars like Howell (1997:253) sought to look at the role of *songo tiina* which literally means house owners (that is clan heads) at funeral ritual processes. Akara (1999) studied the 'bu-jora' (literally meaning the return of a child). This means the death of an infant. None of them worked on the dry funeral and whether agents of social change have had any influence on these ritual processes.

In light of the mention research gap, this study seeks to identify changes in Northern Ghanaian Kasena burial and funeral rite processes occasioned by the introduction and fast expansion of the alien religion – Christianity. This is done by focusing the study on the actions and inactions of members

of the Christian religion to bring these changes about. This study also aims at uncovering the motivation behind the acceptance of the Christians demand for changes in these traditional funeral ritual practices. Of interest to this study is also to find out whether or not some of these traditional ritual practices have persisted defying all the quest for their replacement with Christian practices.

In pursuit of this, the western part of the Kasena Nankana West District is chosen as a study area. This area is chosen because of the dominance and continuous expansion of churches in that area. It is also observed as would be revealed by the demographic statistics that people of other religious persuasions in the area are woefully insignificant and cannot be deemed to have such a forceful influence that brings about social behavioral change.

1.3 Objectives Of The Study

The general aim of the study is to explore the Kasena society to discover how the intrusion of Christianity, its belief systems and values have impacted on the burial and funeral ritual processes among the Kasena of Northern Ghana. In other words, the study is broadly focused on how Christianity as a religious group contributes to significant changes in the major traditional burial and funeral rituals of the Kasena of Northern Ghana. Specifically, however, the study aims at addressing the following objectives:

- To find out the major Kasena traditional burial and funeral ritual activities that take place when someone dies in the community.
- To identify the major changes that have occurred in traditional burial and funeral rites as a result of Christians religious influence. (TO BE DELETED)
- Identify some of the key changes that have occurred in funeral performance as a result of the widespread acceptance of Christian values among the Kasena in Northern Ghana.
- To examine the approach Christians use in persuading the indigenous people to change some of these funeral rites.

- To understand the motivation behind the acceptance of these Christian values in the performance of funerals among Kasena people.

. To find out whether there are traditional funeral rituals that have resisted change despite the forceful influence of Christianity.

- To find out whether there are practices common to both tradition and Christianity in burial and funeral processes.

-

1.4 Definition of Concepts

In this section I have attempted to define the traditional concepts used. This will help readers get the meaning of these concepts so that they can better understand their application in the research report.

The following are some of the Kasena traditional concepts commonly used in traditional burial and funeral rites:

- **Lua:** funeral
- **Bayaaaro:** the institution of undertakers or burial experts. It can also be used to mean the rituals of initiation into the art of undertaking dead bodies or perform burial.
- **Bayaa:** Singular form of undertakers or burial experts
- **Bayɛ:** plural form of undertakers or people who are specially initiated through rituals and assigned the duty of preparing the body, grave digging and burial of the dead.

Lu-lia: literally means wet funeral (also called fresh funeral). The wet is attached to denote how mourners are soaked in tears as they cry for the death of their relative.

- **Lu-fula:** final funeral which sometimes may take place after the death and burial of the person.

- **Lua-fulim:** the art of performing the final funeral rites of a person in Kasena traditional society.
- **Churu:** ancestral world. The place where it is traditionally believed everybody will go and live his life after death.
- **Lua-keirim/lua-kwim:** the first stage of the final funeral rites.
- **Gaasem:** a ritual that marks the end of the mourning period for biological parents who lost their child. During this period the parents are supposed to stay away from certain kinds of meat which is called “*black meat*”. It also stands for a ritual that marks the end the third year after the performance of a husband’s funeral or fourth year after the performance of a wife’s funeral. Before the end of this period, the surviving couple is forbidden from eating and touching funeral food and drinks.
- **Tiga-banja:** this world or the human world. Literally it means “on top of the land”
- **Tiga-tu:** land custodian
Fulim: the very final rite which is marked by the cutting into pieces and burning of the quiver (for male funeral) or the breaking of pots and burning of basket (for female funerals).
- **Yugu-jeinna:** head sitter. These kind of women are always supposed to sit close to the corpse or the funeral mat and must be there till burial is done or the funeral mat is burnt.
- **Sinya-Guli-Magena:** women sitting round the corpse or the funeral mat and singing dirges while playing a musical instrument called *sinyaa*.
- **Kara or konkɔɔ:** a woman’s court yard
- **Naboo:** animal Kraal
- **Bujwora:** a returned child
- **Chichiru:** a spirit child
- **Lira:** spiritual power

- **Anu:** my mother
- **Akwo:** my father
- **Kadeim:** a widow
- **Botara:** orphans. That is those who have lost their parent(s)
- **Yibeeili/yibeeila:** grave.

- **abɔɔlo:** a girlfriend or boyfriend
Achiro: my brother or my sister

- **Diga-pɔrɔ:** a round room that is built

- **Goli:** goad or a weapon made with wood

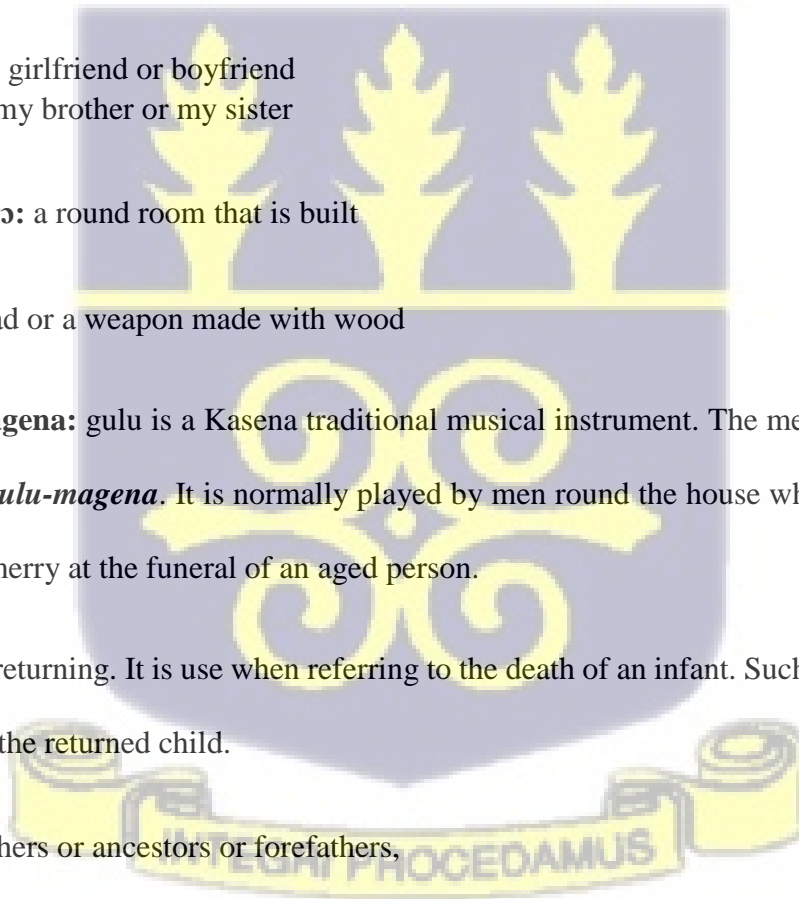
- **Gulu-magena:** gulu is a Kasena traditional musical instrument. The men who play the *gulu* are call *gulu-magena*. It is normally played by men round the house while singing dirges or making merry at the funeral of an aged person.

- **Jwoori:** returning. It is use when referring to the death of an infant. Such a child is called *bu-jwora* or the returned child.

- **Kwa:** fathers or ancestors or forefathers,

- **Gare-bwora:** a smock. It is a common traditional dress of northern Ghanaians. It is worn for fashion, funerals, etc. It is offered to be put on for the dead as they are being buried.

- **Yupuga:** a headgear provided for the dead man before burial since he needs to wear clothes on his way to the ancestral world.



- **Jɔgɔ:** a pant created in the form of a triangle. It is usually provided for the dead person before burial is done.
- **Punga:** a sacred pot which all women must have. It is broken into pieces at the final funeral ritual for women for the woman whose funeral is being performed.
- **Chwoɲa:** it is called quiver. It is a sacred object owned by all men. It is usually caught into pieces and burnt with flames during the final ritual that marks the end of the funeral for men.
- **Naboo:** animal kraal located in the middle part of the Kasena traditionally built house. It houses cattle, sheep, goats, and donkeys.
- **Kara/Konkɔɔ:** a woman's court yard.
- **Dedonɔ:** an old house site. A place that use to be a house from which the ancestors of the lineage once lived.

1.5 Theoretical Framework Theory

This study is linked to the conflict theory. Conflict theorists see the social world in a continuous struggle. To them, social behavior or behavior of larger groups (religious, political, tribal, football teams, business entities, employers and employees, etc.) is best understood in terms of conflict or tension between or among them." It doesn't have to be violent". Conflict sometimes end in positive rather than negative result. It can take the form of negotiations, arbitration, dialogue, lobby, party politics (campaigns), evangelization, warfare, competitions for customer, members into a particular religious' groups through sermons, propagating the values of the group and the benefits therein.

Conflict theory is manifested in group behavior in time pasts such as civil rights movements, gender activism, civil society groups and think tanks making inputs into budget, policy formulation and implementation etc.

For Karl Marx, conflict or struggle between groups with opposing interest is inevitable. Though Marx narrowed it to be a struggle between two broad groups'- social classes. One with capital and another without it.

It must be noted that other social science scholars have found conflicts not to be exclusive foundation of a class system but a social phenomenon of everyday life. In each instance, a social scientist studying culture, religion and other group behavior would want to know, who benefits more than the other, who suffers at the instance of the other, dominate at the expense of the other.

In this study, we are looking at a conflict situation between two opposing groups with different religious practices each influencing the other in pursuant of winning membership and creating a social change that will be to their advantage.

Traditional religious beliefs and practices are seen to have characterized every facet of Kasena society, from economic, to health, from education (socialization) to rites of passage, etc. Christianity being a borrowed culture, is seen to be in conflict with tradition. It is in competition with tradition for followership or for space in the socio-religious life of the Kasena people. Dahrendorf (1958), said, conflict as a theory lay emphasis on social change and redistribution of material things, benefits and opportunities thus 'making them more radical and activists'.

Religion is culturally universal and its role in all human societies cannot be overemphasized. Religion's role may be latent (hidden, intended or covert). It may also be manifest (openly known, clearly stated). Considering the ideas and world views of people from varying socio-cultural and religious backgrounds. Conflicts can sometimes result in positive rather than negative ends. The potential for conflict under the circumstance of a clash of cultures and religious values is eminent here. The forceful intrusion and replacement of one socio-cultural and religious values by other socio-religious beliefs and values have occasioned instances of a banter between believers of the indigenous

culture and tradition on one hand and those of the alien culture on the other which in this case is Christianity.

1.6 Purpose of The Research

Christian Kasena in Northern Ghana, have over the years been facing a challenge with how to perform funerals of relatives and fellow Christians. This is because African traditional customs have been applied strictly to funeral performance before the advent of Christianity. There are many rituals to be performed which Christians deem fetish and in contravention with the teachings of the Christian religion. The acceptance of the Christian religion as noted by Howell (1997:1) has often been dramatic and symbolized by the refusal to participate in pagan or fetish activities. After several years of teaching the Bible, some aspects of traditional customs have been reluctantly abandoned and replaced by Christian religious practices in funeral performance and in many other cultural lives of the Kasena people in Northern Ghana.

This dissertation is the report of a research that sought to identify those aspects of traditional rituals and customs that have been influenced in one way or the other by the Christian religion. It also sought to identify those Kasena socio-cultural and religious practices that are still in practice side by side with Christian socio-religious beliefs and practices in the performance of funerals among the Kasena of Northern Ghana. One thing that has become a challenge is the fact that most Ghanaians in general and Kasena Christians in particular do not clearly understand the meaning attached to traditional customs and cultural elements in funeral performance and how Christian teachings can be used to explain or interpret them. In the midst of this ignorance they seem to advocate for the total abandonment of every aspect of traditional beliefs, values, customs, practices and rituals in the performance of funerals. For this reason, the dissertation sought to identify and understand the meaning attached to various customary practices and rituals associated with the performance of funerals in order to clarify why they have been abandoned or made to exist side by side with Christian

religious activities. It is the researcher's intention to bring to light through this study the manner in which Christianity affected the traditional cultural values, norms and practices of Kasena people in northern Ghana. As noted earlier death is just one of the stages in the life cycle of man. Transition from one stage to another is marked by ceremonies and one must qualify by your life time conduct and character to merit a culturally defined burial and funeral rites that is befitting without which one's life after death at the status of an ancestor or ancestress cannot be guaranteed. This has in a lot more ways helped to enhance social control, moral and social conformity among people in African traditional societies Abotchie (1997). Sarpong (1974: p.41) stated that; the Ghanaian is constantly preoccupied with the thoughts that the ancestors are watching him. The pre-occupation serves to regulate his daily life and behavior, while there is a very potent and a sanction to morality. To this end, providing intellectual, sociological explanation of how burial and funeral rights are performed in society will beef up existing knowledge about culture and social control as well as law and order. This study was therefore purposively designed to provide sociological explanation to the existing cultural processes pertaining to Kasena burial and funeral rites and to identify changes that might have arisen due to the introduction of Christian religious beliefs and practices.

Foreign culture and socio-religious practices and the media; print (newspapers, journals), electronic (radio, television), and social media (Facebook, twitter, WhatsApp), have so well adopted some elements of Northern Ghanaian culture. These are music, dancing and festivals thus drawing the attention of the current generation to just these few things to the neglect of other African socio-cultural and religious values and practices. These things include rituals, taboos, sacrifices, rules, customs and norms etc., which are equally available for study into their nature and how changes in them come about. Therefore, one of the purposes of the study was for the researcher to explore the Kasena society and its culture, customs, beliefs and practices associated with the death, burial, and

funeral rites of the people through which sociological knowledge can be added to what already exist about African culture and society.

Inherent in the culture of Kasena in Northern Ghana is a procedure for “culturally acceptable” changes in some of the rituals that are performed at burial and funeral rites. There is a point in time when such inherent rules have been applied at different times in different Kasena communities which created a few differences in the ritual processes. It is probably for this reason and reasons of few and negligible linguistic differences in the language that Howell (1997) argued that the Kasena do not constitute a homogenous society. This study is thus all the more purposeful to ensure that a comprehensive research report is produced to correct the distortions in facts about Ghanaian culture in general and that of the Kasena in particular. This report is important because it will help evaluate the otherwise intellectually neglected cultural practices relating to the death, burial, and funeral rites among Kasena of northern Ghana.

1.7 Significance Of The Study

This study is relevant as a guide for policy formulation especially in curriculum development in education, in the preservation of Northern Ghanaian cultural heritage, and for tourism development as most of these awesome and valuable cultural practices if preserved, can be of immeasurable tourists’ attraction to the country in general and the northern part of the country in particular. It is also relevant in creating opportunity for the intellectual world to make sociological perspective into the cultural and socio-religious dimensions of death, burial, and funeral rites of the various cultural societies of Northern Ghana. It is relevant and more so since culture and religion are the pillars on which hinges the spirituality and morality of the people in any society and they affect the world view of the people regarding social order, social stability as well as social change and development. Any sudden attempt to cause a change may lead to the collapse of the social order and moral fabric of the

society. One of the significance of the study is to determine whether there are economic, social, and moral benefits accruing to the indigenous Kasena people in the practice of their culture regarding funeral rites and whether such changes as may have caused by the agents of social change leads to a loss of these benefits. It is equally significant in determining the kind of changes brought to the burial and funeral ritual processes through the advent of Christian religious culture and whether the changes are by no means beneficial or detrimental to the social, cultural, and moral lives of the people.

Burial and funeral rites in Kasena society vary from person to person based on gender, marital status, age, health status of the deceased, and the cause of death. This study is relevant in revealing the various processes and changes therein as influenced by Christianity. Ritual procedures in burial and funeral rites are spelt out by the cultural beliefs and customs of the people. By this they help guide group and individual behavior. For instance, culture determine the form and procedure as well as the events that take place at the funeral of a particular deceased person in a traditional society like the Kasena in northern Ghana. Funeral rites are also believed to qualify one to reach the destination where his “after life” begins. It is this that helps guide the conduct and behavior of the people’s individual and group life. This study is therefore relevant because though it is not a novelty, it will help youngsters and scholars make sense of the culture, beliefs, customs, and values of the Kasena people of northern Ghana especially that aspect that has to do with the death, burial and funeral rites of any member of the communities.

1.8 Limitations Of The Study

A study into any aspect of African cultures cannot be successfully done without facing or surmounting some daunting challenges. One limitations of this particular study is the time frame within which the researcher is expected to deliver his research report. A longer period is required for

the researcher observe and collect primary data at funeral grounds. This unfortunately could not happen.

The research could not cover many other Kasena communities in order to reveal the extent of influence Christianity and the church has on Kasena funerals. Thirdly, the researcher is likely to rely heavily on in-depth interview and observation of funeral related cultural activities for data. Another challenge was that of oral narration and the fear is that participants would not give the true account of the realities in the past and present or they may give an account that is inaccurate since all their knowledge about their culture is grounded in oral history and practical experience. It is the researcher's hope that these challenges will be surmounted and a successful research conducted.

1.9 Delimitations Of The Study

The researcher intends to delve into the traditional burial and funeral rites of the Kasena people of Northern Ghana as determined by their cultural norms, customs, values, beliefs and practices. It will also explore those areas within the culture regarding Kasena burial and funeral rites that are affected by Christian teachings, beliefs and practices. Abasi (1995) indicated that he could not fully qualify to be a *bayaa* (an undertaker or burial expert) because his initiation into *bayaaro* was cut short by his conversion to Christianity and by school education.

Sample units for the study will be; clan heads, *bayɛ* (undertakers), leaders and founders of various Christian denominations that are established in Kasena land, archives from the Catholic Museum and library in Navrongo. Some major communities to be covered in the research will be in the western portion of the Kasena Nankana District (Chiana, Nakong, katiu-Saa, and Kayoro).

1.10 Organization Of The Research Report

This study is arranged in seven chapters. The first chapter deals with the introduction which entails the background of the study, statement of the problem identified that requires a research into it. In this chapter is the objectives the research intends to achieve at the end of the research work. These objectives are arranged in part as the general objective and in another the specific objectives. The theoretical framework within which the research work is situated will also be captured in this chapter. Also in the first chapter are; the purpose of the study, significance of the study, the limitations or the challenges that are expected to be encountered in the course of the study. The last in this first chapter are the delimitations and how the research report is organized.

The second chapter covers a review of the literature relating to burial and funeral rituals. The Christian views about funeral rites, life after death, and initiation *bayaaro*. Traditional rituals that are acceptable to Christianity regarding funerals and burial rites. Chapter three deals with the background of the study area. The political, relief features and social institutions and the population dynamics, tribal distribution and the geographical dynamics of the study area. The forth chapter entails the research methods and techniques to be used in the data collection process. The fifth chapter of the report has to do with the research findings on traditional burial and funeral rites, and the Christian religious funeral rites. The report ends with chapter seven (7) which entails the conclusion and recommendations.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

In this chapter of the study will be an analysis burial and funeral rites of the Kasena people. These rites are performed variously for the dead based on their age, marital and health status, as well as the nature of death. What has the introduction of Christian religion impacted on ideas, views, beliefs and practices relating to these rites. The research will take a brief look at how modernity and other religious persuasions - Islam, Buddhism have had on the performance of funeral related rituals among the Kasena people of Northern Ghana. The observation of burial and funeral related customs, beliefs and rituals is a distinctive human phenomenon. Abasi (1995) indicated that for the Kasena people, “life finds in death both its measure and its renewal”. For Mohammed (2011), funerals “are deeply associated with religious beliefs about the nature of death and of an afterlife”. To him, “funerals also have important psychological, sociological, and symbolic functions for the survivors”. Death for the African is a transition, a stage that can open up to a rebirth if not a return to life in a physical body. At least to immortality of the soul or spirit (Abasi1995; Lemoal, 1989:13). Abasi (1995) indicated that rebirth is not a matter of re-incarnation alone but also about the destination of life of the soul after the death of the body. Death requires series of concrete responses that are in line with the “eschatological beliefs” of each ethnic society, (Abasi, 1995). One of the reasons for these responses is to ensure that the surviving relatives of the deceased do not suffer the loss to a large extent and also to ensure that decomposing body is properly handled to avoid any further effect on the living. The second reason is that funeral and burial rites will prepare the dead to embark on his long journey to *churu* (ancestral world). For Abasi, (Africa, vol. 3, 1995), these actions will establish equilibrium in both the human and the super-human spheres and make rebirth possible

The review of the literature for funeral rites is in two parts. The first one will look at the ritual processes of a traditional funeral and the second will look at the Christian religious point of view regarding death, burial and funeral rites. With the traditional funeral ritual processes, attempt will be made to look at funerals for the aged, infants, men, and women, and for people based on the nature of death. It will then be followed by the Christian perspective of funeral rites. In addition, consideration will be made on examining the impact of Christianity as well as modernity and other religious persuasions on funeral rites in Kasena society of Northern Ghana. The chapter ends with a conclusion. The researcher at every end point will be mindful to make comparison of research findings to the topic being studied.

2.2 Kasena Traditional Burial, Funeral Rites And Religious Practices

There are several processes to be followed in the performance of funerals among the Kasena in Northern Ghana. A funeral begins after the elders have confirmed the death and subsequently permit public announcement of the death. Funerals have two phases in any Kasena Community. The first is the *Lu-lia* (wet or fresh funeral) and the second is *Lua-fulim* (final funeral rite). In yet some Kasena communities- like Chiana, the second phase is sub divided into; *Lua keirim* (crying) and the *Lua-fulim* (final funeral rites) (Howell, 1988 unpublished). The long and elaborate rituals are limited to grown-ups or older men. While the Mamprugu are noted to have five stages in the (5) performance of funerals (Mohammed, 2011), Kasena funeral processes are uncountable. Each process is marked with various forms of rituals or traditional religious activities, (Rattray, 1932; Mohamed, 2011). George B. Eager (1996), cited from Kwotuah (2016) attempted to contrast between burial rituals and funeral rituals. This was seen in his statement that; “the rapidity of decomposition, the excessive violence of grief, the reluctance of oriental to allow the dead remains in the houses of the living explains what the indecency of haste seems”. Bible soft, (2004) and Wejong (1976) have indicated that the length of time and the process in traditional funeral rites among the Kasena people, vary

slightly from community to community. Mohammed (2011) indicated that though the Mampurusi are patrilineal, burial rites slightly differs between them and Ibrahim Mahama (2004) spoke about three stages in the funeral processes among the Mampurusi people of northern region.

Abasi (1995) spoke about soothsaying or consulting the diviner to ascertain the cause of death and the view of the dead person regarding how he wants the funeral celebrated. This stand was supported by Howell (1988 unpublished) who indicated that the diviner is also consulted for the deceased to show those who should not participate in the burial and funeral rites. Such people are required to stay at a place far removed from the funeral home-usually his mother's family home until everything regarding the funeral is completely over.

Abasi (1995) whose article was titled *Lu-lia* (translated as wet or fresh funeral), focused his attention on the first phase of the funeral rites for the aged. In terms of stages the Jewish tradition has six separate periods (Mohammed 2011) but Dacher (1989:75) identified five stages and in some cases three for the people of the Manpurugu traditional area. According to him these stages usually allow the bereaved persons to express their feeling of sadness, grief, and loss of a relative.

The first phase of Kasena funerals which is what they call *lu-lia* (the wet funeral or fresh funeral) is described by Ellen Levine (1997) cited in Mohammed (2011) as the period between death and burial which according to her is the period of shock to the surviving family members and close associates and they may likely fall into a state of despair. According to Jewish religious law, one is obliged to mourn for seven people who are considered one's immediate family members-father, mother, brother, son, daughter, and spouse. The next period of mourning is the next three days that follow the burial. It is called time for weeping and lamentation, Mohammed (2011)

Abasi (1995) spoke about *bayɛ* (undertakers) and their role in the funeral ritual process. Howell (1988 unpublished) referred to them as grave diggers or burial experts. They are specially initiated through

a lengthy, and elaborate rituals for the initiation process into *bayaaro* which means an institution of burial expertise, the art of undertaking Abasi, (1995). Preliminary survey of the study area revealed that at the end of the initiation rituals, they would always swear an oath to make themselves available at all times to bury the dead without failure no matter what the circumstance may be. Because of the critical role they play, Abasi (1995) stated that they are well revered in the Kasena traditional society the same way as the diviner, medicine man, chiefs, and other political office holders. They are more than grave diggers (Cardinal 1920; Ovesen, 1986: p.10) cited from Abasi (1995).

According to the Jewish tradition, the 7th day following the burial of the deceased marks the 3rd period of morning, in which family members would return to their respective home and gradually pick back their normal lives and re-joining society in day to day activities Mohammed (2011). At this time of bereavement, a Jewish family would exhibit signs of sadness and loneliness occasioned by the sudden loss a member. They would at their period of mourning begin to show signs of gradual recovery from grief and shock. At a Jewish synagogue, the deceased children would always recite the mourners kaddish (a Jewish religious ritual) at the Sabbath service on weekly basis for eleven 11 months following the death and burial of a parent.

Jewish religious law does not encourage perpetual mourning even though they recognize that people's rate of recovery from grief of death and mourning emotions vary from person to person. This is because, Jewish belief system emphasizes on life rather than death by realizing that there is life even when death occurs. Death and funeral rites from available literature, is a universal natural phenomenon and is always given varying socio-religious response across societies and cultures. The worlds over there are significant variations in the social responses and interpretations people give to death. And this assertion is recognized in the works of Evans Pritchard (1940; Capt. R.S Rattray 1932; and Abasi A. K. (1995) among others.

2.3 Infant Deaths And Bereavement

The death of infants is regarded as abnormal Abasi (1995) and unusual Howell (1988 unpublished). An infant is not clearly defined in traditional Kasena society. It is however described as a speechless and suckling child. The dead body of such a child is only buried without any special funeral organized for it. Such children are suspected to be bad or spirit children for which reason hairs of both parents are shaved thrice Howell, (1988 unpublished). During the second shaving, the mother's hair is shaved in the form of a cross while the father's is shaved round. This is necessary to change them so that the child would not recognize them if it had the intention of coming back to them as a new baby. They were forbidden from eating certain kinds of food and meat from some animals. This ritual process is often ended with a final ritual call *gaasem* which is done with the use of yeast, mud fish and "Tou-Zaafi" (TZ) meant to end the period and to prepare them for the next child.

2.4 Kasena Lu-Lia (Wet Or Fresh Funeral Among The Kasena)

Various cultures have designed their funerals in such a way that the outlook might appear similar, but the details will show a sign of variation in terms of how elaborate certain socio-religious or ritual activities may be carried out for various individuals; men and women, the aged and under-age, married and single as well as health status of the deceased. Other societies may have varying rituals and socio-cultural or religious activities for people based on their societal standing (e.g. a medicine man, a chief, slave etc.). Others will consider whether one is first born or not (Mohammed 2011). The performance of different ritual processes for different categories of deceased persons is evident in most customs worldwide.

At death, some African societies think same of infants, twins, under-age death and people dying of strange disease or infections. Mongols and deformed children are not treated as "returns" they do not belong to human society but to the wild and are seen as disgust spirits with evil intentions caught red-

handed engaged in acts that threatens mayhem on their parents and the entire society. At some times, proof of their spirituality is sought from a specialized medicine man and they are eventually killed through rituals by the same medicine man Kazaresam (1975 unpublished) cited in Howell (1997); Goody (1959) cited in Mohammed (2011). When these kinds of deaths occur, the body is either buried at cross-roads, Goody (1959), at an anthill located at a sacred grove called “evil forest” Abasi (1995). It is believed such places will prevent their possible return to human society. There are varying explanations of where children come from and how they are born. Any deviation of a child’s birth and growth process leads to varying social reaction to it. When such a death occurs, it is seen as a relief from impending predicament from spirits as a result of the way their burial and funerals are organized and executed in a way that they will not dare return to normal human world and their evil intention of causing havoc to parents and society averted Young and Papadatou (1997) cited in Mohammed (2011).

For them (Young and Papadatou, 1997), a child’s age, gender, family position and cause of death may affect the meaning attributed to such loss and determine the rites of passage as well as the appropriate grieving behaviors within a given culture. Not all infant deaths are seen as abnormal as infant deaths centuries ago were on the high side and were largely normal as most were due to ill health such as malaria, fever, diarrhea and poor nutrition and mourning therefore takes place within a few days.

In recent times however, improvement in medical science and technology rate of infant mortalities have drastically reduced. Such deaths have been rare such that any such death is easily considered as a misfortune, tragic and unnatural but does not seem normal and parents seem to think that the cause of death must be found.

When one dies, his spouse is called a “widow” or “widower” and the children are referred to as orphans with no culturally assigned concept to described parents or grandparents nor did the inlaw

(Schmitt, 1987) cited from Mohammed (2011). Rando (1986), has however indicated that attention has in recent times been drawn to the lived experience of many parents over the loss of their children under one circumstance or the other. Young and Papadatou (1997) have argued that parent of a person dies alongside the death of his child and they would lose the dreams and expectations they hold for the child in life especially so when children are a source of pride, meaning, and also a source of social security and hope at their old age. Taylor and Francis (1978) have found that such parents will have to start again contending with life without the child they have lost to death and they would always replace the single word question “why”?

The grieving and mourning of bereaved parents sometimes knows no bounds. And for McCrowry, (1987), it can last for more than ten years. Any tragedy that happens, even to a neighbor, reminds them of their loss. In Western society, children are considered innocent of the world’s since and that they are assured of a place in heaven- an assured life after death.

McCrowry (1987) found that among the Greeks, death before marriage marks a loss of earthly happiness and would always dress such people with wedding attire but conceived of a child’s death as bad death likening it to violent death and it is described as shameful to the family. Papadatou and Young (1997) showed that suicide and homicide deaths among children are the most shameful such that parents are not allowed to openly show grief over it. Japanese on their part have created separate cemeteries for the burial of the children’s corpse Young and Papadatou (1997) but the Yoruba of Nigeria would throw it into the bush since to them burial makes the body offensive to the earth shrine. Hindus of India who cremate their adult dead bodies would bury their infant corpse rather than cremate it, Schmidt (1987)

2.5 Burial and Funeral Ceremony Of The Aged

Abasi (1995) has indicated that, in traditional Kasena society, death brings about a “spill-over” of the world to the “other world” and the living get mixed up with the dead”. Someone must always stay with a seriously ill person until he passes on because according to Abasi (1995) one must not die alone but must be held by another to die. The other world which literally means “the world of the dead” (known in kasem as *churu*) becomes “a theatre for the funeral drama” in which actors and actress are constituted by the living in *tiga-baga* (this world). The aged would often want to share a word with the closest relations especially children if not at least the eldest or the most loved one among them. Holding and giving or attempting to give water to the aged is customarily recommended among the Mampurusi (Mohammed 2011) and Abasi (1995) has shown that this is the same among the Kasena of Northern Ghana. Abasi (1995) has indicated that there are three phases to each funeral in Kasena land and each phase last for 3 days. This could not be true of all Kasena communities because social change occurred to their culture at different time, different rate and at different form or manner. Abasi (1995) considered funerals, the various rites performed at funerals as whole and that we should understand them as an unfolded drama. They are designed in regularities or linear sequence of events from the point of death to the end of the *fulim* (final funeral). When a person dies his body is covered with a cloth and laid either in his first wife’s room, mother’s room or a room in the house reserved for sacred purposes. If it is a woman she might be laid in her own room or in the room of her mother-in-law or in the sacred room. Children are not allowed to see the corpse (Mahama 2004) and men are seated outside-the front yard of the house. As soon as the elders gather, confirm the death and announce the funeral, singing, drumming and dancing by the youth outside can start while the women - known in Kasem (the Kasena language) as *yugu-jeinna* (women who sit round the corpse) will sit round the corpse and sing dirges (Abasi; 1995). He indicated that the merry making that is characterized by singing, drumming and sometimes dancing lends credence to the notion of

good and bad deaths. A bad death among the Bobo, for instance, is death of a pregnant woman or one at Labor and the burial process is different. Death at old age of a successful married man blessed with many children is different from that of a young man whose death is considered sudden and unexpected or death from a strange disease, suicide (Abasi 1995) and this is seen as suspicious or abnormal death. In Kasena society Kwotuah (2016) indicated that *gulumagena* (literally means drum beaters) and *Sinya-gul-magena* (by women sitting round the corpse) starts spontaneously and the children and all others who call him their father (or uncle) are to offer food, money, drinks, collar, water, to the drummers and singers who are performing both outside and inside. Radcliff-Brown (1940; 1949) cited in Mohammed (2011) referred to this as “behaviors of the privilege”. Among the Mapurugu, Mohammed (2011) has indicated that some of the children, more so the younger ones, and grandchildren might imitate some of the actions of the deceased which he described as “derogatory actions”. There is according to him some “joking relationship between brother-sister-in-laws during funeral rites among the Mampurusi. The funeral performance process involves elaborate rituals processes that are sub – divided into several phases as dictated by Mampurugu belief systems. Kasena extract meaning from themselves, their body gestures, the social actions their historical context (Devisch, 1993), cited from Abasi (1995) when an aged person dies and funeral rites are under-way. Dacher (1989:75) as cited from Abasi (1995) identified 2 or 3 main stages in the funerals: the close kin and the so-called second burial or final funeral” rites. Abasi (1995:452) on his part spoke of two main phases in Kasena funeral rites - the period of the corpse and the process of “ancestralization” or Burial and funeral rites. It must be noted that, these two phases have their own sub - divisions which are based on the age, status, and role of the individual. The entire community or chiefdom attends the funeral rites of a chief or land custodian in Kasena land but cannot witness the burial especially of the chief whose death and burial is to be kept a secret.

2.6 The Christian Conception of Life After Death

Christians like almost all religions the world over have conceived of death as an inevitable occurrence and have always considered that all human bodies will experience it someday sometime (Genesis 3:19). It matters not the person's social and spiritual status in the religion. Prophets, kings, pastors, evangelists, the rich and the poor alike will someday experience it. It is only Jesus Christ who, even though died, as by Christian belief, conquered death and by his own power returned to life on earth (Matthew 28:2-7; Mark 16:6-7; Luke 24:6-7; John 20:1-10). Christians believe that death is the result of the sin of disobedience to God (Romans 3:23 and 6:23) and that it was a means of assembling human souls for judgement where the righteous will be rewarded while the disobedient-people who do not believe in God through Christ Jesus (John 3:15) will be punished (Hebrews 9:27; 2Corinthians 5:21).

Christians are expected to show love and compassion to any dying individual which is similar to the Islamic teaching that also require the person to sit by the dying person (Abu Aisha, 2002) cited from Mohammed (2011). According to Aisha, the Islamic funeral rites start from the point of death of the person. In their expression of life after death, Islamic faithful are expected to declare their faith in the only one true God (Allah) as last words on earth and they would be sure of entering eternal life and this is regardless of his previous sins and disobedience. In much the same way Christians hold the view that repentance (John 3:3, 5, 7; Acts 17:30-31) and strict adherents to Christian teachings in the Holy Bible will guarantee one's entry into Heaven (also called the Kingdom of God, abode of God,) (Matthew 5:8-12, 6:9-13) and that there is no forgiveness of sin after death (Luke 15:7). At the point of death, confession prayer to God leads to forgiveness of sin (Bible). In Islam, people close to "the dying person should supplicate and close his eyes there after" Mohammed (2011). Christian's belief in the life of the hereafter is enshrined in the Bible.

2.7 Types Of Deaths

Kasena speak of normal death, abnormal and bad death (Abasi 1995) and (Howell 1988 unpublished) in her work on *death and burial among the Kasena*, categorized them into usual and unusual deaths. Deaths of the aged are a normal death and are well celebrated for living a successful life here on earth. In Jewish society, if one dies at an age close to or shortly after marriage it is regarded as an abnormal death. Other forms of abnormal deaths include dying through circumstances such as thunder and lightning, suicide, dying alone, dying by accident (falling from a tree, drowning, by fire) or in the bush, dying away from home. The death of babies is only seen as *jwoori* (the returning) of the baby. One's death is regarded as a normal and successful one only when you live a fulfilled life and this is determined by leaving behind many children and grandchildren after attaining an old age.

2.8 Kasena Traditional Conception of Life After Death

In the Kasena traditional conception of life after death is regarded as a rebirth into the ancestral world and is marked by the performance of series of rituals without which the dead cannot reach the *kwa* (fathers or ancestors) in *churu* (ancestral world) Abasi (1995: p.451). It amounts to embarking on a journey and the destination is *churu* (ancestral world) and upon your death, the burial and funeral rituals only serve to prepare you for that journey and to propel you smoothly for a safe arrival in the *churu* (ancestral world). The dead require drinking water in order to start the journey with a healthy and strong soul. They are also offered gifts that will be used as he embarks on the journey. These gifts include: Cowries (in modern times money), food as they are needed for the journey and on arrival at *churu* (ancestral world). Success in the journey to the *churu* (ancestral world) depends on the performance of rituals. Various African stories abound about the origin of death but they all lead to the conclusion that man was not the creator of death and that it leads to a point of going and not returning to the world of the living but to the land of the ancestors where one would continue to live.

2.9 Burial And Funeral Rituels For Abnormal And Bad Deaths

It must be noted that the Kasena people have categorized death into Normal, Abnormal and bad deaths Abasi (1995) and Howell (1988 unpublished) referred to them as unusual deaths. Oseku-Afful, (1997: P.37), also revealed the two types of deaths in ‘Fantsi Land’. The particularities of burial rites and place of burial varies from death to death depending upon whether the death is good (normal), or bad (abnormal). According to Howell (1988 unpublished), one of the unusual deaths in Kasena traditional society is “dying away from home” which could be near the home, for example at the back yard of the house, far from home as in Accra and in a girlfriend’s home.

Oseku-Afful (1997:37), gave examples of bad deaths in ‘Fantsi land’ as suicide, motor accident, drowning, falling from a height, war and during child birth. In the first instance, the body is buried there and a symbolic burial is done again at home. The body is carried to the house and normal burial is performed after a cleansing ritual is conducted on the body when the death is at a short distance away from home. It is considered a disgrace to the entire community when one dies in the home of his in-laws or his girlfriend and depending on the distances may either be buried there and a second burial is done in his own home or the body is carried home and a onetime burial is conducted (Howell, 1988 unpublished). Goody (1959) delved into ritual practices that exhibit commonalities between the Lo-Dagaaba of North Western Ghana and those of medieval Europe in the 10th and 11th centuries AD. He found that infant deaths among the Lo-Dagaaba and the death of witches, thieves, murderers etc. constitute socially unapproved deaths such that, their bodies must be buried in such a manner that they would not be able to return to human world by any means. There are separate rituals for such deaths distinct from those considered to be normal deaths. They are usually buried in places far removed from normal place of burial. Some of these deaths are considered to be offends against human society such that they do not deserve honorable burial and funeral rites. The graves for such offenders are normally located by watercourses, on an anthill, cross roads, the bush and in some

societies like the Ibo of Eastern Nigeria; they are buried in the sacred grove called the “evil forest”. It is to indicate that, those are the places they belong and not among normal humans in their places of habitation. These kinds of burials are the same between Lo-Dagaaba and Medieval Europe of the 10th and 11th Centuries but Abasi (1995) had also found the same practices among Traditional Kasena of Northern Ghana in their cultural practice regarding funeral and burial rites. Dying by suicide, in the bush, at labor or during pregnancy, of a Mongol, a leper and by suffering a strange or incurable disease (elephantiasis) is an offence and their burial must reflect an attempt to punish the disease and to ensure that they do not return to the human world again.

Sociologically, Goody (1959), explained that these differences exist rather in a single cultural entity and not between cultures and reflect the stratification of these categories of death and even the individuals during their life time. For instance, a Mongol (a person with Down syndrome), a leper, and a deformed child cannot assume a position of authority in most traditional societies of Ghana (Opoku, 2009 cited in *Journal of Religious Studies* Vol.3 2009). It should also be noted that Christians don't allow infants and the excommunicated to be buried in the church yard or church owned cemeteries because they are considered to be sinful. Lunatics and Mongols (thought to be demon possessed) are not buried in the church yard or church cemetery, Goody (1959). He added that victims of suicide, homicides are threats to the survival of the ethnic group. Their actions amount to disobedience against the sixth of God's commandments “thou shall not kill, (Exodus 20:3-17).” For these same reasons, the Romans would bury such people rather than the usual cremation. The parricide, a patrilineal society would undignifies the worst sinner by putting a cock into the sack containing the body, a cock- as a sign of impurity (Goody 1959).

Mohammed (2011) indicated that the Manpurugu have the same kind of grave for all categories of corpse, unlike those of the Lo-Dagaaba, where grave and grave sites vary from corpse to corpse

depending on their social status. For normal deaths, Capt. R.S Rattery (1932) described “**the grave as oblong**”.

In terms of positioning of the body in the grave, it is indicated that the body is carried in a mat to the grave place on the ground and removed. It is then placed in the grave on its right hand side facing the East (male) and on the left facing the West (female) (Rattray, 1932; Abasi, 1995). The Interpretation is that men rise to work at rise and women to cook at sunset (in the East and West, Respectively).

In terms of clothing the corpse for the burial, the Manpurusi bury with Goat skin (Rattery, 1932) and the Kasena men According to Abasi (1995) are buried with *gare-bwora* (a smock), *jɔgɔ* (a pant made in the form of a triangle) and *yu-puga* (a headgear). For the women, a piece of cloth made of locally weaved smock is used to cover them. Some, according to Abasi (1995) latter removed these clothes before burial and others will bury with them.

The Manpurusi give what they call “food for the road” Mohammed (2011) but the Kasena according to Abasi (1995) give water, food items, kola, tobacco so that the dead would not lack material needs and begin to ask for help while on the journey to *churu* (land of the ancestors). The believe in life after death is reflected in the way the corpse is treated, the way burial is carried out and in the worship of ancestral spirits after the burial and final funeral rites have been performed. The act of becoming an ancestor after meeting qualification requirements in their earthly life time helps in the society (Abasi, 1995).

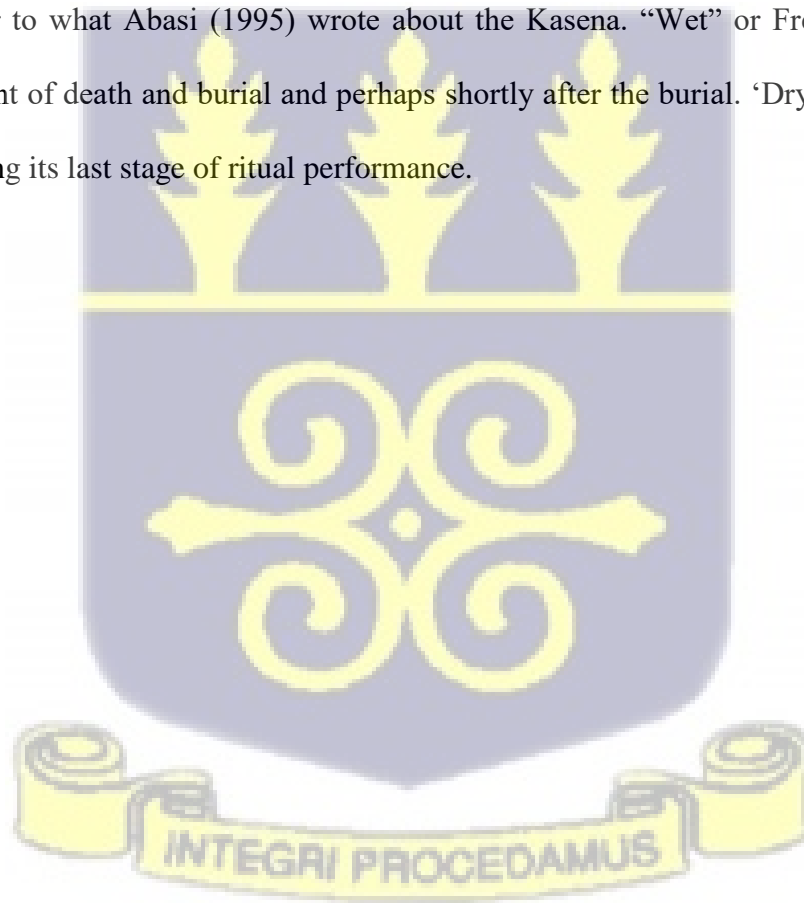
Even when one’s life meets all the moral standards thus making them qualify for life of the “here after”, he still has to be “seen off” or his way prepared for him to safely reach his “fathers” (kwa) and this is through performance of all the rites of passage beginning from naming and ends in the final funeral rites. Without the performance of the culturally defined burial and funeral rites, the soul of the departed would linger endlessly on earth and may torment the children and family members with

series of misfortunes (Ibrahim 2004:90-91; Abasi 1995; Goody 1959). The sociological explanation for the offer of food and other items to the dead has slight variation but the general significance is the same at all times. The Lo-Dagaaba, for instance, believe there are rivers on the way to the ancestral land for which reason the dead would have to pay for the ferry to carry them across, Goody (1959). Taylor (1997) has shown that there are significant commonalities in the belief concerning life after death and the immortality of the human soul. Goody (1959) wanted to emphasize that, the Lo-Dagaaba were suffering psychologically from the thought that there would be retribution in the next world; they are certainly no more so than most of us because we all emphasize on the importance of reward and punishment in the system but this is inherent in all thoughts of future life including life here on earth and after death. It is only a reflection of social control which extends to the supernatural and the uncertainties that characterize death. The fear then sets in when we consider that death will not put an end to the idea of rewards (for conformity to the norms and, value and socio-moral rules) and punishment (for wrong doing or for deviant behavior or disobedience to the norms and values). Mohammed (2011) spoke of three (3) categories of sanctions. The first is by “the living over the living” and the second is by the “dead over the living. The third and last is a sanction of the “dead by the dead and by supernatural beings” seen as more powerful than the soul of the dead. Among LoDagaaba, there are issues about the Ferry man’s punishment to the thieves, witches, debtors, murderers, etc. The manner in which burial and funeral rituals are carried out determine the severity of some of the punishment of the dead by the dead and by the supernatural Goody (1959).

Belief in life after death and the detailed performance of funeral rituals, and customs is prevalent in all societies and come about as a result of contradictory views about eternity of social system and the morality of its individual members. People, be it here on earth while alive in the performance of their funeral and burial rites and in the hereafter are not treated in like manner and this is because of the

differences in social life-character, behavior, conduct, morality, and obedience to social death for Nukunya (2003) is based on the traditional world view and socialization, for which religion believes, it is only the physical body that is affected but the soul goes to the land of the spirit, to join the already departed soul. In that land of the spirit, the dead are able to watch over the affairs of the earthly world punishing offenders and rewarding those who conform to acceptable ways and put up exemplary behaviors". The fact that qualification to become an ancestor, helps regulate behavior and maintain social control. Glascok and Braden, (1981) supported this idea when they asserted that death is just one phase of "a series of stages" which allows opportunity for "communication with the living" and that death is just "a transition" which takes time and involve the help of surviving relations. This help comes in the form of "series of steps" through the journey and these steps are funeral rituals. According to them, the funeral, the funeral process involves providing items for a smooth and successful journey. They survivors often perceive the dead as physically present with them on earth despite their invisibility (Collins Murray Parks, 1997) that therefore makes it imperative for them to honor the dead with performance of series of rituals. The essential role of funerals as a means of social control has found expression in Abotchie (1997) when he said "to the southern Ewes, the belief is held that the ghost or the soul of the dead person lingers near his mortal remains until the final rites have been performed, and either cannot or will depart to the land of the dead before the rites". The dead should have in their earthly life time done honor to their family members by strict conformity and adherence to the life values and norms of the community. He must have shown due abhorrence to the mortal crimes defined by the culture of the community. Even in death, some Ewe societies have room for symbolic cleansing of the dead of all the disobedience shown to their society. Abotchie, (1997) spoke of the ritual cleansing of the body when he said: "The body of the dead person is removed from the death chamber to an enclosure within the compound where a pit is dug and the body laid across it for cleansing". This assertion by Abotchie (1997) of the southern Ewes is reaffirmed by Rattray (1932) findings about the manpurugu. According to Rattray, (1932), when a

man is about to die they hold him and give him water to drink. When he is dead, the body is bathed twice. The first one is known as “bad water bathing”. While the second one is described as “good water bathing”. This is not different from what Abasi (1995) found about the Kasena of Northern Ghana where a person is not allowed to die alone and must at his point of death be given water followed by the bathing for burial. Samuel Ayimboras (2002) found that among the Frafra of Upper East Region of Ghana, funerals have two phases- the “Wet and dry” (fresh and final funeral rites) which is similar to what Abasi (1995) wrote about the Kasena. “Wet” or Fresh funeral h occurs between the point of death and burial and perhaps shortly after the burial. ‘Dry’ period is when the funeral is entering its last stage of ritual performance.



CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 The Period Of Study

The period for data collection lasted three (3) months. The first month was spent on searching for materials relevant to the study and this took the researcher to the Navrongo Roman Catholic Museum. The Roman Catholic Library located in the minor Basilica, Navrongo. This allowed me to complete the literature review within the second week of the second month. Also completed was the background of the study area. For this, I had to visit the Kasena-Nankana Municipal and Kasena-Nankana West District assemblies for relevant information.

The researcher's own experience as a native of the area where he was born and bred helped in this regard. This is because I have observed, participated and curiously asked questions regarding funeral and other traditional activities of the area and this has helped a great deal in writing the background of the Kasena society which is under study. I have in fact attended some funeral rites since childhood and even during the period of the study, I have had the opportunity of witnessing and keenly observing burial and final funeral rites, something I initially did not anticipate would happen. Some of the burial rites were done traditionally and others were by the Christians with whom the deceased or their relatives worshiped.

As part of the preliminary or background work, the researcher visited Abulu, Kanania, all in the Chiana Traditional area and participated in various burial and final funeral rites conducted separately by Christians and traditionalists. I have also found the unpublished work by Augustine Kazaresam – titled "*Bayaaro*". Another work I found was an unpublished work written by Prof.

Allison M. Howell of the Akrofi-Christaller institute of theology, mission and culture. She titled it “Kasena Death and Burial” written in 1988. These documentary materials found for the study were carefully read and form part of the literature review.

3.2 Research Design

As indicated in chapter one, the study employed the qualitative research design as a methodology. It was necessary to adopt the qualitative method since I could not tell beforehand what I would find yet there was the desire to generate a data that is rich in details and encompassing the opinions embedded in the context (Maxwell, 1996). It was all the more important to use the qualitative method because a quantitative method would have given data that is shallow and based largely on prior knowledge and predetermined answers of the researcher. This would ignore hidden but factual details of the issues under investigation. A quantitative method would have also generated data with a higher degree of inconsistencies thus making conclusions quite confusing. Secondary sources of data will also be employed. For example, some notable unpublished works and archives would be consulted for information. Processes followed in the traditional funeral rites of the Kasena people of Northern Ghana. This was aided by the use of an interview guide and unstructured observation. The unstructured observation and interviews helped obtain information, especially during funeral ritual activities and the funeral processes of the Christians.

Also used was a guide for the focus group discussions.

3.3 Fieldwork

The fieldwork covered a period between the last two weeks of July, 2017. It was during this field work that primary data was collected in 3 major communities of the Kasena Nankana West District; Kayoro, Katiu-Saa, and Chiana traditional areas. They were chosen for the primary data collection because Christian religious denominations abound everywhere in those communities. These churches

include but not limited to the: Roman Catholic church, Good News Bible Church, Presbyterian Church of Ghana, Fountain Gate Chapel International, Calvary Charismatic Centre, the Church of Pentecost, Church of the Lord Mission, etc.

3.4 Sampling Method

The sampling method used was only one because according to Simons (2009:34) cited in Obeng (2010:14), if the study is to gain insight into a particular social phenomenon, the sampling method is often purposive. More so because, the information needed to achieve the objectives of the study are not evenly spread among traditionalists and members of the Christian fraternity. Although everyone, Christians and traditionalists attend funerals, practical activities at the funeral are carried out by identifiable categories of people and not random selection from the public. For this reason, the sampling could not follow the canon of probability, the canon of probability according to Bryman (2001 cited in Obeng 2010: p.15) will make the researcher interact with people who are well informed about the subject under investigation, Kumekpor, (1999: p.138) explained that; *“where it is known that certain individual units, by their very characteristics will provide more and better information on a particular subject than randomly selected units then such units are purposefully picked up for the study. The selection does not involve intricate procedures of random sampling. It simply involves picking units on the basis of their known characteristics”*

In keeping with the principle explained above, the sampling method was purposive. I interacted with a total of 75 respondents through focused group discussions, and in-depth interviews. The clan heads or community elders were twenty-four (24) in all. Eleven (11) from Chiana-Kania, seven (7) from Katiu-Saa, and six from Kayoro. There were also a total of fourteen (14) elderly women selected across the three (3) major areas (Chiana-Kania, 7; Katiu-Saa, 4; Kayoro, 3). The undertakers summed up to fifteen (15) while church leaders were twenty-three (23).

The Kasena are a culturally homogeneous society, and as such have the same elements of culture and customary procedures, some of the participants were assembled for focus group discussion using a guide for moderation to avoid the participants' possible deviation to irrelevant issues. The church elders and pastors of God News Bible Church whom I later learnt have constituted a funeral committee were met for a focus group discussion. The *Bayɛ* (undertaker) are normally initiated in a sanctuary, located at the house of the *Baya-pɛ* (chief undertaker). For this reason, groups of *Bayɛ* (undertaker) were assembled at the house of the *Baya-pɛ* (chief undertaker) for a focus group discussion at Kanania.

An unstructured interview was also conducted on the clan and community heads since assembling them was quite hectic. The clan head and community leaders were also purposely selected because there were older and younger ones such that the older ones have many years of practical experience in funeral performance than the younger ones. About 5 clan heads were interviewed. The researcher carried with him a camera phone with which he took videos and photos where necessary.

3.5 The Research Instrument

Instruments for the research were the interview guide. As for collecting the data, the methods used were the interview and focus group discussion. *The most important, most effective and most widely used method is the interview method* (Kumekpor, 1999). It must be noted that the in-depth interview was used because traditional funeral rites in Kasena land is quite lengthy and ritual involving. This necessitated an in-depth interview of the undertakers, the clan elders, and the elderly women. The in-depth interview will thus enable the researcher to obtain every bit of relevant information needed for the study.

As regards the focus group discussion, respondents were met on a face-to-face basis using the interview guide. It was used to interact with the church leaders. Respondents were allowed to openly

express themselves (Flick 2009 cited in Obeng 2010:17) as they interact among themselves over issues relating to the matter under study. It was to gain insight into the funeral processes before, during and after the burial of the deceased. The interview guide was used so that answers were not repeated, or skipped Bryman (2001). Even though the interview guide sought to put the discussion on track, a bit of details outside a question were allowed so as to gain more information that would otherwise not come up. I also threw follow up questions at the respondents in order to probe respondent further on the issue under study. By this the gain more elaboration and seeming inconsistencies are clarified while facts and figures are reaffirmed.

The interviews were conducted in Kasen. This was to allow respondents express themselves adequately. The researcher as however duly bound to translate the English version of the interview guide to ensure it is reasonable equivalent to the Kasen.

3.6 Field Problems

One of the challenges the researcher faced was how to assemble the respondents for the focus group discussion which was necessary in order to avoid spending time collecting inaccurate information. It was the researcher's idea that at a well moderated focus group discussion, each participant will be corrected if he or she is deviating or giving inaccurate information. It was difficult to assemble them because of the season - farming activities during the day. It was really difficult for the researcher to establish any social contact with the sampled respondents for interaction. Especially when farmlands have been prepared and are waiting for the rain to start planting and sowing.

Another issue is that, most of the respondents would normally attend communal labor because the period of the research was the farming season. They would normally return at dusk tired and unable to honor the invitation for the focused group discussion.

The researcher however had to schedule with the respondents, the time and venue convenient for them. For those who were sampled for interview, they were often met at their own homes late in the evening for the interaction. For the focused group discussion, I was able to meet with the pastors and church leaders on Sundays when they closed from church service having pre-arranged with them. And for the *baye* (undertakers), their leader called them together for our discussion at his house when I contacted him but that also was not easy to succeed.

The researcher had to refresh the *baye* (undertakers) with alcoholic beverage at the close of the interaction but for the church leaders, no refreshment was made.

Another challenge was the argument about the future of traditional funeral rites and other traditional beliefs and practices. Some have argued that the church had taken over everything concerning the socio-religious life of the people ranging from naming ceremonies, marriages, to funeral rites. They have rendered useless the norms, values, forms of taboos, beliefs, customs and family structure and created disobedience in children because they no longer hold any fear of punishment from the gods and ancestors.

To those people therefore the church is a threat to the socio-cultural and religious life of the people. Others held the view that what the church has doing is good and that some of the practices were outmoded and nothing good could be said of them in a modern world. They cited widowhood rites, burial without the use of coffin as examples and the lengthy funeral rites which demand a waist of material and monetary resources. These two conflicting positions were confusing to the researcher thus putting him in a dilemma as to which one to take.

3.7 Positive Field Experience

Notwithstanding the above challenges encountered by the researcher, there were some positive experiences chalked. Even though the researcher is a native and is fluent in Kasem (the language of

the Kasena people), having been born and bred there, schooling and his Christian background did not allow him to have full knowledge of basic traditions of the area. The research work has thus become an opportunity for him to have social interaction with relevant individuals thus exposing him to valuable socio-cultural religious and moral issues of the traditional Kasena people. For instance, having been granted the permission to interview and to observe events at some funerals, I had the opportunity to see in detail various burial rites – things I would not know if not for this research work.



CHAPTER FOUR

BACKGROUND OF THE RESEARCH AREA

4.1 A Brief History

The Kasena people can be found in two of the 15 districts of the Upper East Region of Ghana.

The two districts which were until recently (2007) combined, have other smaller tribal groups;

Nankana and Builsa. The two districts are the Kasena-Nankana Municipal and the Kasena

Nankana West District Assemblies. The capital towns are Paga-a town at the Ghana-Burkina

Faso border (for the Kasena Nankana West Districts) and Navrongo (for the Kasena Nankana

Municipal assembly). There are also constituencies with separate members of parliament and they

are Navrongo central and Chiana-Paga constituencies. Paga is the capital town of the

Kasena Nankana West District. Major towns and communities in the Kasena Nankana

Municipality are; Navrongo (Kasena), Manyoro (a mixture of Nankana and Kasena), Natugnia

(Nankana), Kologo (Nankana), Naaga (Nankana) and Biu (Builsa). In the Kasena Nankana West we

have the following Kasena towns and communities; Chiana, Kayoro, Nakong, Katiu, and Paga.

Sirigu, Mirigu and Kandiga together constitute the Nankana communities in the District.

The two districts share boundaries to the west with the Sisala East district of the Upper West Region

and the Builsa North District of the Upper East Region, to the East with the Bolgatanga municipality

(and the Upper East Regional Capital) and to the South with the West Mampurusi District of the

Northern Region. Ayanoore (2011) indicated in his MPhil Thesis that the two districts stretched 55km

from the North to the south and 53km from the East to the West (cited from KNWD, 2006) he added

that the two districts combined, have an area measuring 1,657

(639.8sq mile) with an estimated population of 175,000 (for the two districts *ibid* as of 2008).

Navrongo and Paga are noted to be among towns with significant history of booming commercial

activities owing to the cross border movement of people. Chiana and the surrounding communities

have the history of engaging in crop farming and animal rearing cattle, sheep, goats, guinea fowls, etc. the border in Paga has also facilitated its export and import activities as well as auxiliary activities; forex bureaus, clearing and forwarding, and petty trading activities, etc. Tourist centres abound in the district(s) these include the Tono Irrigation Dam which apart from the farming and fishing also creates room for swimming and other forms of recreational and entertainments activities. There are also the crocodile ponds at Paga, the Pinkoro (a mystery rock) and the slave camp. Local industrial activities such as basketry and pottery can be found in the Eastern part of the District(s).

4.2 Natural Land Features Of The District(S)

A large part of the district is low lying. The low lying areas covered Paga and its surrounding communities. These areas however have some view undulating grounds and hills. In the western part covering Chiana, Katiu, Nakong and Kayoro there are many hilly areas, large number of mountains. The soil in the western part is largely rocky and gravel but the other parts are loamy with a small part being clayed. Ayanoore (2011) reported of the low-lying areas being 100 meters above sea level. He mentioned hills such as fie (280metre high), Busono (350 meters high) and Chiana-Zambao (360 metres high). Some of the mountains are Pi-Singa (meaning Red Mountain), Pi-zono (Black Mountain), Mulisa, Changono, and Kayila among many others that can be found in the western part of the district.

In terms of ecological zones, the district(s) belong to the Guinea Savannah ecological zone with natural vegetation, short trees and grasses that are sparsely distributed with widely spaced shrubs (Fayorsey et al, 1994) cited from Mohammed (2011). Trees that are commonly grown in the area are Dawadawa, shea nut, baobab, mangoes, cotton trees, mahogany, Neem trees etc. densely packed trees can only be found along the banks rivers such as the Sisili river in the western part of the district.

There are few rivers some of which flow into the Tono irrigation dam at Navrongo and the others flow into the White Volta. These rivers get dried up in the dry season except the Sisili River. There is the Tono irrigation dam constructed in 1975 by the then Acheampong military regime. Other dug outs can be seen dotted around in the district which provide water for domestic use, as well as for dry season agriculture. Between the months of November and February is the harmattan season characterized by cold, dry and dusty air masses blowing from the east to the west (also call the north-east trade winds). Its origin is the sandy dessert thus making them dry and dusty. There is no moisture as rainfall is virtually absent during this period of the year. Rainfall use to start in April every year but climate change has gradually shifted the beginning of rainfall to May and sometimes June. The tropical air mass which brings rainfall blows between June and October (Tonah, 1993) cited from (Ayanoore, 2011) and sometimes it continues up to November. Temperatures are so high between March and may sometimes recording a maximum of up to 42 and above during the day and a minimum of 18°C at night

4.3 Residential Pattern Of The Kasena People

In Kasena land, people live in compound houses containing the paternal extended family. It is common to see a big house structured such that there are courtyards for members of the subextended family or for each nuclear family. One would also find round and rectangular rooms built in the form of chamber and halls. The rooms and the courtyards are built round with the center used as animal kraal (housing sheep, goats, donkeys and cattle) with a gate located at the front yard for use by both animals and humans. Each compound house becomes a home for about 30 or more of extended family members.

It should be noted here that modernity, education and migration for purposes of formal employment and private businesses as well as urbanization are gradually changing this kind of settlement pattern

of the people. There is in recent times, increasing nucleation of families because of the desire to stay separate from their extended families. I must emphasize however that majority of our people still live in local form of settlements, most of which are in the rural areas of the communities

Houses are constructed using mud, clay and mixed with water as well as dry bricks. Roofing on the other hand is done with long straw grasses fetched from the bush and patched on top of well laid out wood. Others are roofed by casting mud on top of a carefully and neatly packed stick on top of pole-like wood leaving hollow roofs for drying and for the people to sleep on when there is heat. This kind of roof is flat. The roofing with grasses gives it a conical or a mushroom shape.

Outside a house is a grass or millet stock roofed hats that are constructed using poles with all sides widely opened. Another is built and roofed with grass. They are used as a gathering place for the entire family at both day and night time and for meetings by men or elders of the lineage, clan or community where necessary. In a particular compound, one could see a father or grandfather as head of the family his wife (or wives) his sons (married and unmarried) and his unmarried daughters. Abasi (1995) indicated that a compound could have as many as fifty (50) people divided into several smaller family groups each staying in a separate courtyard in the same house. It could be a whole lineage with many extended family units.

Kasena lineage is exclusively patrilineal with exogamous clans. Marriage is forbidden from taking place between members of the same clan or of the same community. They also practice patrilocal residence as women are required to live with their husbands their fathers' compounds (Fayorsey et al, 1994) cited from Ayanoore (2011).

4.4 Socio-Religious And Cultural Background Of Kasena People

There are, among the Kasena people, various religious groups but predominant and clearly visible ones are the traditional religion which constitute 54% of the district's total population of

149,491. The Christian religion follows with 34.8% of the total population. Believers of the Islamic religion are the least with 6.3% and 0.6% are those with other religious groups. 2.8% of the population constitute people without affiliation to any religion (Ghana statistical service, year 2000 population and housing census report). Paga in the Northern part of the district, has a lot of Islamic worshipers but statistically, records show that traditional religious worshipers are more than the Islamic worshipers in the districts. They are closely followed by Christians and Islamic religious groups respectively. Christian denominations commonly found in the area are the Roman Catholic, Good News Bible Church, Presbyterian Church of Ghana, the Methodist church of Ghana, the Anglican church of Ghana, Fountain Gate chapel international, the church of Pentecost, Assemblies of God, etc. Roman Catholic has 67.9% of the total Christian population followed by the Pentecostal and charismatic with 14.6% and the least are members of churches registered with the Christian council of Ghana with 5.7%. Those with other churches (the ones that use prophylactic instruments for their worship) constitute 11.8% of the Christian population (GSS 2000, population and housing census report). The Islamic groups are the; Orthodox (AL Sunna and the Tijaniya) and Ahmadiya Muslim mission, etc. Many of the religious groups have built facilities in support of education in the Kasena-Nankana district(s). The Roman Catholics have Primary and Junior High Schools (JHS) built everywhere in the district(s). They also built the Notre Dame Minor Seminary-primary, Junior and Senior High Schools, Our Ladies of Lourdes Senior High School, St. Bernadette Technical Institute, St. John's etc. We also have English-Arabic primary and Junior High Schools built in Paga and Navrongo.

It should be noted that majority of the people abide by and participate in traditional socio-religious activities including those who see themselves as Christians and Muslims. Such activities may include marriage ceremonies, naming ceremonies and funeral rites. Abasi (1995) indicated that the *churu* (ancestral world) is only entered at death. On his part, Adongo et al (1998) said the soothsayer (also

call diviner) is the one who plays intermediary role between the living and the ancestors. He emphasized that the diviner plays the critical duty of communicating with the ancestral spirits as the living are required to liaise with them on all matters regarding the socio-cultural, and socio-religious and customary life of the people-marriage, death, ill health, etc, before decisions are taken. Kasena land ownership is characteristically communal as individuals could not acquire and own land. The research has discovered that in every community there is a person called *Tiga-tu* (Land owner or land custodian). Even the *Tiga-tu* (land custodian) is only seen as a custodian and holding the land in trust for the whole lineage or the clan. He has the customary duty to pour libation or sacrifice for the earth God on regular bases. He has the responsibility of holding the land in trust for the entire lineage, clan or community. Land is only acquired by a farmer and after meeting the land acquisition requirement, the land is transferred to the family head through a ritual performance. This ritual involves the sacrifice of a fowl and a guinea fowl, TZ is cooked and the meat, Pito and TZ are used to request the earth god for an opportunity for that family to own the land and to sacrifice for the god. Even Chiefs have to tread cautiously when dealing with issues of land and land ownership despite being the over-Lords of the Kasena Towns and communities.

In modern times however, land is being sold for cash to individuals who do documentation through a legal process that requires the approval of the chiefs thus making them very important stakeholders in the land acquisition process in Kasena land.

Another traditional activity that is held in high esteem by all without religious consideration is the Kasena festivals—the *Fao* (harvest) festival. It is celebrated annually to mark a successful harvest chalked with the support of the gods and ancestors. In such a ceremony, the rich Kasena cultural values are displayed amidst merry making. As part of the festivals are traditional music, dance and the playing of Kasena traditional musical instruments. War dance performed with pump and pageantry can be observed in the festival and the costumes are always traditional regalia including

wearing the horns and holding the tails of wild cows and other animals. This symbolizes bravery and conquests they have achieved in history against wars, slave and cattle raiders.

4.5 Various Forms Of Economic Activities

The main economic activity among Kasena is subsistent farming. Agriculture has engaged about 68.7% (KNDA, 2000) cited from Ayanooore (2011). Most farmers have both crops and animal farms. Crops produced among the people are rice, millet, groundnut, maize, beans vegetables etc. animals being reared are cattle, sheep, goats and poultry. There are, a considerable number of the people who are engaged in formal public and private sector employment. These people include teachers, nurses, and police among others.

We have self-employed people who are engaged in food processing, sachet water production, artistic activities, etc. Others are also engaged in small scale industrial activities such as wood processing, quarry activities, basketry, pottery, weaving, transport operators, etc. These people constitute 10.4%. Sales workers 9.2%, professional technician workers 3.5% and others 1.0% (KNDA, 2006). Almost all lands are cultivated which lends credence to the fact that Agriculture dominates every aspect of the Economy. Even people who are engaged in other economic activities including formal sector workers, traders and artisans, engaged in farming and rearing of animals birds. Crops are cultivated around houses, and in the bush, away from human settlement.

4.6 Spatial Distribution

Despite the speedy urban development going on in the district(s), the largest portion is still predominantly rural in outlook. This is because urban developments are only in Navrongo, the central part of Paga and Chiana. Most of the people live in local housing structures and are sparsely distributed. Densely populated and closely packed communities are the few urban areas; in between housing structures of the rural communities are farm lands. Major towns are seen along major roads.

Paga and Nogesenia are located along the Trans-national - ECOWAS road while Chiana is on the Navrongo–Tumu road.

In terms of language, the Kasem language belongs to the Guri-Gonja group of languages. Thus, Kasem is a Grushi language. The Nankana (or Frafra) who speak Nankam (Frafra) who are also part of the district have their language belonging to the Mole-Dagbane group of languages (Nadem 1974; Tona, 1993) cited from Ayanoo (2011). Fayorsey et al, (1994) indicated that the Kasena are culturally homogeneous and have social structures and religious activities sharing common characteristics with other voltaic speakers in the Northern part of the country. Urbanization and inter-marriages have made people multi-lingua. It is thus difficult according to Tona (1993:60) cited from Ayanoo (2011) to make significant distinction between the Nankana and Kasena.

4.7 Communal (Or Village) Structure Of The Kasena People

The kinship system is basically patrilineal in outlook. The people, by their financial capability, are polygamous, (that is his financial and material resources)

The presiding elder holds over-all authority and is responsible for over-seeing the day to day activities regarding the family gods, land related customs, social control, marital affairs, justice, land issues in the family, lineage, clan and community. He is equally responsible for appropriating family, clan, lineage or community property. Each household has a head and a group of households make up a lineage over which there is a presiding elder or head.

A clan which is made up of a number of lineages must also have an elder heading that clan. Clans come together to make up a village or community. The community has an elder who is confined to customary and ritual duties while another is properly chosen to act as a sub-chief or divisional chief with the responsibility of playing the role of a chief in that community as well as joining others into

serving as counsellors to the paramount chief or the overlord. The various divisions or communities will together form chiefdom and the head is the paramount chief.

At every level of the community, the head settles disputes, and appropriate family, lineage, clan properties. A dispute for instance is expected to follow the appropriate protocol before it gets to the top (that is the overlord). It has to start with the family head, to the lineage head then to the clan or community before going to the paramount chief whose final word settles the matter. This has however been rendered ineffective by the coming into practice of modern democratic system of justice delivery which involves the police and the judiciary.

4.8 Tribal Dynamics Of The Kasena Nakana District(S)

The Kasena Nankana districts have a mixture of three (3) tribes; the Kasena, Nankana and Builsa. The total population of the district as of the year 2000 was 149,491. The dominant tribe is the Nankana tribe with 53% of the total population. Following from a distance is the Kasena tribe comprising 34.8% of the total population and the least populated tribe is the Builsa who confined to one community call Bui and comprising only 1.8% of the total population of the district (GSS, 2000 population and housing census).

Ayanoore (2011) in his thesis reported that Navrongo was exclusively Nankana but inter marriages with the people of Chiana, Paga, Kayoro, Katiu and Nakong which are exclusively Kasena made them see themselves as one tribe. It must be noted that the Kasem language dominates the entire district. It is common to see Nankana people speak Kasem but the same cannot be said of the Kasena as majority of them cannot speak nor understand the Nankam. Most of the Nakana people can however speak the Kasem and even those who cannot speak can at least understand when someone else speaks.

The Nankana see themselves as one and the same can be said of the Kasena. This is evident in how each one of them historically succeeded in uniting the people against external threat such as slave and cattle raiders, etc. the Kasena tribe for instance, though claimed that they originate from different ancestors; they all trace these ancestors to one location in Burkina Faso (known then as Upper Volta). Having stayed together all this while however, they see themselves as one and share a common purpose for this unity.

The fact that there are some visible tendencies for division cannot be ignored and this is often made manifest during electoral contest, campaigns and patterns of voting as well as the allocation of positions of authority. The Kasena for instance have autonomous chiefdoms each with its own independent overlord. The cases of Chiana, Katiu, Nakong, Kayoro, Paga and Navrongo can be cited as illustration.

In Navrongo for instance the Nogisia clan traces its origin to Zeko—a location in Burkina Faso.

The people of Kologo on their part trace theirs to Mampurugu in the Northern Region of Ghana Ayanoore (2011). Howell (1997) on her part discovered that the people of Chiana had an ancestor called “Wusiga” who also originate from Burkina Faso. The people of Katiu are descendants of the same ancestor called “Wusiga”. It should be emphasized here that each clan is numerically and economically self-sufficient and can exist depending solely on its own resources for survival.

4.9 Political Dynamics of the Kasena People

The history of Kasena people indicated that, each major chiefdom traces its lineage to a particular ancestor and the original home is usually Burkina Faso where a large population of Kasena people can be found. Paga, Chiana, Nakong all trace their history to Burkina Faso.

The present location of each of the Kasena chiefdoms is dictated by how the ancestor migrated to their present location in northern Ghana. For this reason, the major Kasena chiefdoms are Paga,

Chiana, Kayoro, Nakong, and Katiu, each of which is ruled by an independent traditional leader. It should be noted that the immigration of the people was not without their cultural practices. For this reasons, it is common to find homogeneity in cultural practices of various kinds.

Chiana and Katiu in the western part of the district share boundary to the west with Sisala East District. To the east, with Chuchuliga in the Builsa North District and to the north with Kayoro. Each of these places mentioned are independent of the other and are each ruled by a paramount chief.

4.10 The Economic Life of Kasena People

One can rightly describe the Kasena people together with their Nankana, Builsa and their Neighbours Burkina Faso as practicing an agrarian economy but it is equally not strange to find people engaged in other economic means of survival. Agricultural activities only dominate but the other forms of livelihood are thriving. Agricultural activities include crop farming (that is mixed cropping of maize, millet, groundnut, rice, sorghum, beans, round beans, etc.), pastoral farming (cattle, sheep, goats, poultry, donkeys,) fishing, forestry among others. Factors that encourage and continue to encourage agricultural activities in the area are arable lands for cropping as well as, a wide and long stretch of grassland conducive for grazing. Food processing businesses such as chop bars, rice pebbling, Shear butter procession, etc. Others are retail business activities in the markets and at various locations at the rural communities.

There are small scale industrial activities such as wood work (wood products for decoration and for construction), artisanship, water processing, construction activities, stone quarry, sand winning, etc. from which people gain their livelihood. Suffice to add that the Tono irrigation dam since its construction in 1975 by the Ignatius Kutu Acheampong's military regime is helping to make farming an all year round economic activity.

Labor work is organized on communal basis for the people to give mutual support on voluntary basis to one another. It should be noted that the trend is changing with the monetization of every facet of human socio-economic, religious, cultural and political life where monetary values are calculated on everything one does. Price tags are put on everything people do for each other now.

Most agricultural activities are for subsistence purposes but some are sold to meet people's everyday basic needs that require money. However, cash crops like shear nuts, baobab, *Dawadawa* are also part of the people's source of livelihood. They are meant purposely for sale, either processed or in their raw state. Groundnut is largely sold in its raw state but people buy it for processing to add value to it as the oil is extracted and the solid bi-product sold separately.

Communal labor is organized to give support to one another, to widows, the weak, aged and to elders including the chief. Other forms of help given to people during the season for agricultural activities are ploughing with bullocks, cutting trees and grasses, seeds, fertilizers, harvesting, planting or sowing.

During the dry season, lineage members come together to help one another in terms of building and construction. Others are engaged in charcoal burning, organizing firewood for sale while some take advantage of the available dugouts and the Tono irrigation dam to engage in dry season farming from which they cultivate rice and vegetables of all kinds for sale and for home consumption.

4.11 Summary and Conclusion

The researcher devoted this chapter as an over-view of the tribal dynamics of the Kasena Nankana District(s), the economy of the people, political boundaries, socio-religious activities of the people, the tribal composition, a brief history among other issues. Emphasis is laid on the homogeneity of each tribe with special emphasis on the Kasena people since the study is basically about an element of Kasena culture. If one is to gain an insight into the culture and socio-religious life of Kasena

people, then an overview and history of origin must essentially be emphasized. The chapter also discusses the political dynamics of the Kasena people, their origin and cultural orientation as a foundation to discuss how changes to their cultural practices come about.



CHAPTER FIVE

KASENA TRADITIONAL FUNERAL RITES

5.1 Introduction

The Kasena of Northern Ghana are apparently under a pervasive influence of African traditional beliefs and practices. This is evidenced in the numerous religious rites performed by the indigenous people in almost every occasion or social function (festivals, rites of passage, tragedies, moments of joy, etc.) in the communities. Funeral rites among the Kasena of Northern Ghana for instance, are elaborate and follow quite a lengthy process of ritual performance. In the rites of passage for example, rituals and ceremonies are performed to mark turning points in the life of an individual – birth, adulthood and death. It is revealed in the field work that every funeral is dictated by one's social standing, marital status, nature of death, age among other things. It is found also that failure to comply the wishes of the gods in following all the ritual processes will spell doom, not for the disobedient individuals but the entire community. Kasena may trace their ancestral history to a single ancestor originally located in Burkina Faso (Howell 1997). For this reason, one could rightly refer to them as people of tribal homogeneity. It is imperative to note however that minor variations exist in funeral performances. A few uneasily identified linguistic variations can also be noticed. These differences exist between the Kasena of Navrongo in the central part of the Kasena-Nankana district, Paga in the North and Towns like Chiana in the Western part.

These changes are attributable to agents of social change; intermarriages, urbanization, intruded foreign languages, formal classroom education, electronic and social media. The effect of these agents in bringing social change into the cultural practices of various tribal communities, occurred at varying times and intensity. The direction of change may have varied from community to community.

One of the significant agents of social change on which this study placed focus is religion. The dominant foreign religion in the entire Upper East Region is Christianity. Its impact on the social life of the people including their traditional way of performing funerals has been quite phenomenal. In the ensuing discussion, an attempt will be made to look at Christianity impacted traditional burial and funeral rites of the Kasena people in Northern Ghana.

5.2 Events Preceding the Death of A Prominent Member Of The Community

It is revealed in an in-depth interview with clan heads in the various communities under the study that certain events sometimes precede and hence predict the possible death of a person in the community. Such events may include a heavy and unexpected down pour, the crying at night of an owl, a wind storm, the falling of a tree, etc. These according to a participant at katiu-Saa, called Aduah could mean “*O ye nɔn-laa mo*” (to mean he is a good man). This was unanimously agreed by other participant during the interaction except to add that sometime the events could also mean; “*nɔn-balɔɔ mo chira jaane naa tangɔna mage ya go*” (to mean a bad person has been eliminated from human society by the ancestors or the gods).

An animal could die to extend his life span a short time forward as another participant called *Abuga* had said. These prominent individuals could be a traditional priest, a chief, or a spiritually powerful and influential individual. Such an individual may not be holding any portfolio but his prominence is well recognized and respected. According to them, Strange wild animals or birds may appear and surprisingly harmless. These are usually totemic animals of the family, lineage or clan. These animals may include; elephants, lions, leopards, wolf, tigers, deer, pythons, etc. Sometimes strange birds may come and sit on a tree near the house or on the walls of the house and portray an unusual behavior. Doves or cats in the house may refuse to eat or portray a very unusual behavior. Strange and unexpected atmospheric or weather conditions, smoky sky, rainbows, which can be interpreted to mean a forewarning sign or a sign of announcement to the people about a death yet to occur of a

person in the community. To the question of, what these signs would mean to members of the community and what are they expected to do, it was revealed that certain people have gained enough spiritual powers to determine these occurrences and can spiritually work to avert that fast approaching death even if it means replacing it with someone else's life. Others may verbally instruct family members what they should do and what they should not do. Others would reveal their secrets to the person they trust most.

Sociologically, these signs and the interpretations given to them shows that, a person can be forewarned about a looming death, so that they take precautionary measures to avert it. Psychologically one could prepare his minds as they await that impending end of their lives on earth. Since there are no time limits between the occurrence of these events and the actual death of the person, it may play a significant role towards social control.

It was revealed during my interaction with the clan heads that the events may likely occur at the very moment of death which is seen as the gods blessing his journey to *Churu* (ancestral world). Unanimously, the respondents (clan heads) agreed that interpretation of what the events meant can only be done by a diviner. One of the participants also added that the events may happen after the death or during the performance of his final funeral rights. This assertion was also agreed by all the respondents at the in-depth interview. This was also interpreted to mean that the ancestral world and the gods at large are participating in his funeral celebration and given their blessings as he journeys to *churu* (ancestral world).

This, according to interviewed participants, is also essential for social control as observers are encouraged to conform to societal norms and to abide by rules and regulations or the taboos of their community. Upon the death of a person the funeral is known as *lu-lia* (fresh funeral) until burial is performed. Kasena funerals are therefore organized in three (3) phases; *Lu-Lia* (wet or fresh funeral). *Lua-kwim or Luakeirim* (second phase of the funeral which is "crying" or mourning) and *Lua-fulim* (final funeral rites).

In my interaction with the church leaders (the joint council of churches), respondents stated that no one will know beforehand the date and time he or she will die. Unanimously they agreed that God does not show or reveal with signs that someone will die and no one has the power to postpone his date of death. They added quoting from (1Chr21:14-15; 1 Sm 31:4-6) that death is inevitable because it is the result of the sin of man. Mr. Paul Agao of the 'Church of God' argued that death does not discriminate and that even saints, pastors, the rich, the poor and every other person will die someday somehow. He quoted (Ps 49: 10-14; Ps 116:15) in the Bible to buttress his point. As to the foreknowledge of one's death, they indicated that only Jesus as seen in (Mtt 16:21; Mtt 17:22-23; Mtt 20:17-19) could foretell his death. It was also said that Elijah's death was already revealed to the prophets of Bethel, Jericho, and the fifty men who went with them (Elijah and Elisha) to the Jordan. Jesus according to Avoata John of the Fountain Gate Chapel international, beyond foretelling his death, had power to conquer death. He supported his point with a verse in the Bible (Jn 12:23-25).

5.3 Stages Of Kasena Funerals

***LU-LIA* (WET or FRESH FUNERAL)**

In Kasena Traditional Society "Wet" or fresh funeral is known as *Lu-Lia*. The period for *Lu-lia* starts at the moment of death to the 3rd or 4th day, for males and female. Wet funeral (*lu-lia*) denotes the shearing of tears by the bereaved family and loved ones for the great loss they have suffered in the death of the person.

It must be noted that a fresh (wet) funeral ends either on the 3rd or 4th day after burial but this does not mean relatives resident in distant places would not have an opportunity to come. A common proverbial statement in response to late comers to a funeral is the saying that "*ko poe tiga ne mo se ko ba poe wE ne*" which is translated to mean "it can only be rotten in the ground and not on the surface of the ground or land". Another short one is "*wara ba poe*" to mean "greetings do not rot". *Lu-lia* is associated with merry making characterized by drumming, music and dance only when the

person dies a normal death. They must have been married, have children and dies a morally upright man at an old age. For infants, the entire funeral ends at the moment of burial. Every abnormal death is deemed a tragedy that has to be forgotten for life to go on and there can't be a stretch of time for the observation of a normal *lu-lia* (fresh funeral). Mourning for an infant though is over, the parents are taken through a "hair shaving" ritual which denotes the shaving away of a bad luck. It is done three times during the second time the hair of mother is given the shape of a cross. Food (TZ) with mudfish is given to them to eat after the third shaving. In Frafra communities however, Fred T. S. (1987: P.46) indicated that the deceased sons and daughters have their hair shaved.

5.4 Announcing The Funeral

In all interactions with the respondents (clan heads) in an in-depth interview, I posed this question to each of them; *what do you do when someone dies?* Their responses were given in the local language – Kasem, and later translated into the English language. This is an interpreted summary of their responses; When a person dies, the house owner (usually the presiding elder of the lineage), who presides over all matters in the house (marital affairs, childbirth, puberty rites, death, burial, funeral rites, sacrifices, and libation), would inform other elders of the lineage. One of them is sent to the diviner or soothsayer to ascertain the cause of death and the funeral's related issues. More so, when the deceased is a young man or woman. *What will you do when you finally know the cause of death?* The answer in short was that the living will be forewarned to take caution. If it is an older person it may turn out from the diviner that certain people deemed to be his loved or hated ones are forbidden from participating in the performance of the funeral and thus have to leave the funeral premises until the funeral rights are completed. Follow-up questions sought to know who a 'house owner' is. A participant called Awe Naboo indicated that such a person is usually not necessarily the oldest person in the community but could belong to a generation of fathers.

The announcement begins with a person sent to inform the nearby house which intend has to tell the next in that order until all have been told of the death. At the *Lu-lia* (wet or fresh funeral) of an older person, guns (which use powder) are fired and trumpets blown to further announce the death. Relatives who live in faraway places are informed by a person walking there and personally informing them. At Kayoro, a participant stated that these days; *ba laam kwei foona mo ba maa jaane lui, konto nam ba lana* (to mean people simply use mobile phones to inform others about the death of a relative which traditionally is unacceptable).

It is imperative to note that people are forbidden from travelling, working or attending any other thing until the corpse is buried. I was told that anyone who fails to adhere to this rule, the culprit will either hurt himself by the instrument he is using, a stone, snake or scorpion, or by any other form of calamity. At this moment, the undertakers do not have a role to play yet.

When news someone's death gets to the leadership of the church, they would quickly begin to announce the funeral to members of the church

Grave diggers known as **bayɛ** (undertakers) are invited and told to take over the work of the grave digging and burial of the corpse. The grave diggers would then ask for a hoe, blade and Kasena axe and Kasena bowl (Howell, 1988 unpublished). When these materials are made available, they are placed at the gate or entrance of the house and the **bayɛ** (undertakers) are required to collect them on their own from that place.

The burial places for the dead body in Kasena land is determined by the age, sex and position in the family or lineage. I discovered that when the person dies away from home and the body is already decomposing to a certain extent, the burial place may be changed from where it would normally be buried. For instance, instead of outside a courtyard, may be opened and burial is quickly done by putting the body into that grave and covering it. Generally, however, the following locations are selected for the burial of a person depending on who the deceased is or his social position in the family.

House owner (the person who first builds the house) is buried in his (first) wife's inner-court yard (Kara or Konkolo). Old men of the house are buried at *naboo* (animal kraal) which is usually located in the middle part of the house. It houses animals (cattle, sheep, goat, donkeys, etc.)

Young men are normally buried outside but not far removed from the house. It could also be at *dedongo* (old family residential site). The same applies to young women who are not married. One can call them daughters of the family. Children are also buried at this same place or location. Babies or infants are buried along the path or road leading to their mother's biological family house or community.

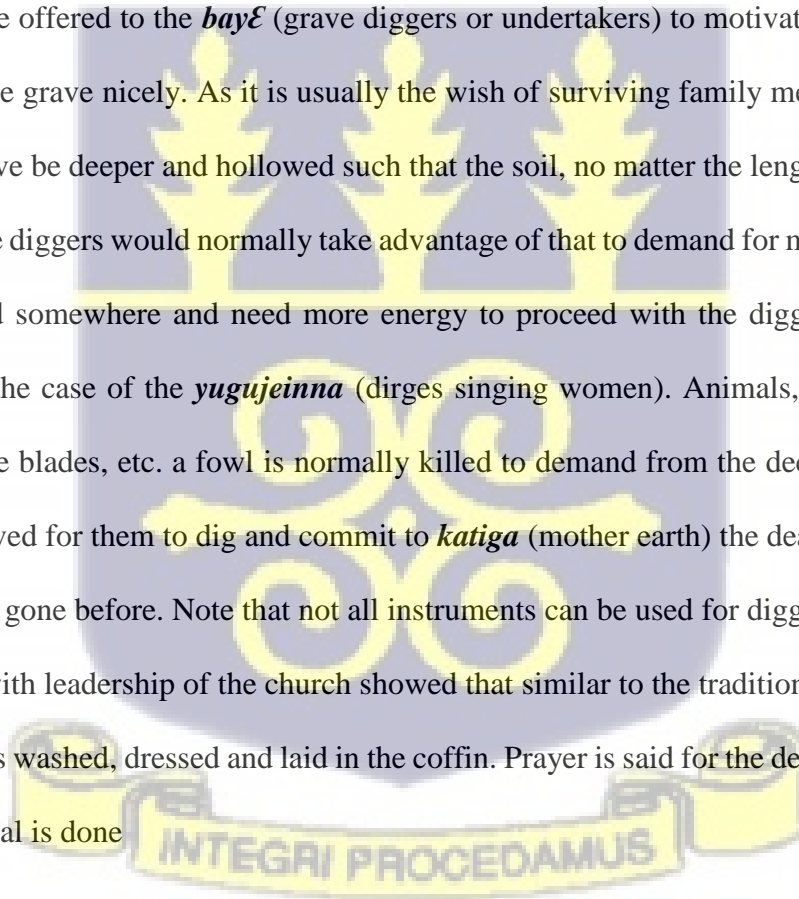
My own preliminary observation which was confirmed at the focus group discussions revealed that, a mixture of millet flour and water is used to pour libation in the name of the dead person shortly after the death and its subsequent announcement. The body is bathed by women and clothes-made of a typical Northern Smock and pants sown in the form of a triangle (for men) are provided. The dead body is normally laid in a sleeping mat made out of a bunch of tall grasses fetched from the bush. Abasi (1995) indicated that when someone dies, he is kept in his own room, his (first) wife's room, his mother or grandmother's room. In some lineages or families, the body is kept in the elder-most woman's room until it is buried.

An exceptional circumstance arises when the person is aged and successful by traditional standards, he is brought out into the *Naboo* (animal kraal) and set-up in a majestic or warrior form and made to hold his bow and arrows. This signifies that he was a brave warrior or a hunter who fears nothing deadly. At the *Naboo* (animal kraal), he is leaned against his own millet silo. If it is an old woman, usually the wife of the house owner, the body is brought out from the room into her own courtyard *kara* or *konkolo*.

It emerged in confirmation of the researcher's own knowledge and recent observation that only women sit around the corpse and sing dirges all through till the body is carried away by the *baye* (undertakers or grave diggers) for burial. Dirges are sung while playing an instrument made of a good

or small calabash and this is done only when the deceased is an old person. While they sung these dirges, people, usually, all those who call him their father, would come and offer gifts of material things; drinks, cola, food, groundnut, millet flour, fowls and in modern times, money to the dirge singing women amidst prayerful statements directed at the dead person and those who are those gone before. Such prayers may be seeking for his blessings when he arrives in *churu* (ancestral world) as well as wishing him a safe arrival in the *churu* (land of the ancestors). At the grave site, gifts of material thing are offered to the *bayɛ* (grave diggers or undertakers) to motivate them to dig deeper and to prepare the grave nicely. As it is usually the wish of surviving family members as well as in-laws that the grave be deeper and hollowed such that the soil, no matter the length of time would not touch him. Grave diggers would normally take advantage of that to demand for material things saying they had stacked somewhere and need more energy to proceed with the digging. Material things offered as with the case of the *yugujeinna* (dirges singing women). Animals, fowls, food, drinks, water, millet, hoe blades, etc. a fowl is normally killed to demand from the deceased and ancestors that a way be paved for them to dig and commit to *katiga* (mother earth) the dead body as they have done with others gone before. Note that not all instruments can be used for digging.

My interaction with leadership of the church showed that similar to the traditional practice, the body of the deceased is washed, dressed and laid in the coffin. Prayer is said for the deceased as a Christian ritual before burial is done



5.8 Burial Of The Corpse And Related Issues

The *baya-pɛ* (chief undertaker) would by himself or send somebody to inform on his behalf the completion of the digging. The grave is inspected by a team of elders. Permission is granted by the elders for the burial to continue. Undertakers often carry out the body in a locally made sleeping mat to the grave site. While the burial is underway, horns are blown from the rooftop while guns are fired up. If the decease is an old man who died a normal death. Yelling by women accompanies the burial

process if it is an old woman who died a normal death. A grave in typical Kasena tradition must have a round shape, with a narrow entrance but the narrow entrance leads to a deeper and wider cavern. Fred T. Smith (1987: 46) and Abasi (1995) described it as 'room' for the deceased and it is constructed in like manner as a traditional sleeping place. Before digging, the entrance is measured using a calabash and digging must be within, and not outside the measured line.

5.9 Positioning The Corpse In The Grave

All dead bodies are placed on their side except infants and lepers. It emerged that the body of the infant is not treated like the grown-ups because he has not fully joined human society. More so when he is considered to be a *bu-jwora* (a returned ancestor) or a *chichiru* (spirit child). A leper's burial is supposed to be a punishment for the diseased that afflicted him/her. The room in which the body is kept must be cleansed after the burial. A hole is created at the base of the dragged out into the grave. The grave for leper's body is not like the normal traditional grave. It is created with four square shapes and the body is not carried but dragged on the ground into the grave. There is therefore no specific position for the body of a person who dies with leprosy.

5.10 Appropriate Time for Traditional Burial In Kasena Society

Man can be buried at any time of the day. This means men can be buried at day time or night time. A woman is however buried only during the day time. For children it does not matter the time. They are buried as and when the grave digging is completed. A child's grave is not dug deeper as it is one with grown-ups. The reason for giving women only day time burial (usually in the morning or evening) is that her biological family must be present during the burial. Sometimes their journey may be so long that they cannot arrive in time to witness the burial. They may have given her *lira* (amulet or a spiritually protective object) which requires that only her relatives should remove by performing a ritual before she is buried.

The most important reason for burring women only during the day is that women fear to go out at night. If she is buried at night, her spirit (soul) may not leave the body and embark on the journey to *churu* (ancestral world). Men, on the other hand, have no such problem because they can hold weapons with which they can protect themselves. Such weapons are bows and arrows, an axe or a *goli* (a goad). A woman only had her calabash or pot.

During the burial, *bayɛ* (undertakers or grave diggers or burial experts) may have their own *lira* (spiritual power) for self-protection against the dead body which is believed can turn into a ghost and harm them or any other person in the community. A sacrifice of chicken may be done for the removal of “*lira*” (the spiritual power) by the dead woman’s biological family. Millet is also put at the grave as an offer of food to the dead so that they can have something to eat while on their way to *churu* (ancestral world). Before burial the eldest son of the deceased is brought to talk to the father. They would share their last secret before the burial is done, it is believed that at this moment every authority will be handed over to the eldest son and he in turn would accept that responsibility. He would then offer gifts of material things to the undertakers as gifts to the dead to make his journey a successful one. If for any reason (absent, sick, travelled, etc.) the eldest son could not do it, then they would use the next eldest son.

A pot is normally used to cover the edge (or entrance/mouth) of the grave to prevent material things falling into the grave. If, however, one dies through a contagious disease (leprosy, tuberculosis, elephantiasis), he is buried by pushing back the soil into the grave. This is also done when the body is not buried early on and it begins to decompose. Undertakers would have a bath by the grave side. The sticks used for the digging and burning would be left by the grave side. The pot from which water is drawn for bathing by the undertakers (grave diggers) would also be left by the grave side. The undertakers would then inform the elders of the lineage (or community) that they had finished with the burial. People would then troupe in turns to thank the elders and the undertakers before they disperse. The mat used to carry the body would be placed upside down at the courtyard.

5.11 Mourning The Dead

The researcher observed in many funerals that mourning the dead in Kasena society is done by wailing, yelling and weeping publicly and mentioning the name of the dead person and indicating how each one is related to him. For instance, *a chiro* (my brother or sister), *a bɔɔlo* (husband or wife literally refers to a girlfriend or boyfriend), a nu (mother), *a nyena* or *a kwo* (to mean my father or grandfather) etc. the wailing crowd would then lament about the dead not informing them before he or she died, how they are going to miss him or her.

5.12 The Final Funeral Rite

The final funeral rite which can be described as the dry funeral is sub-divided into *lua-kwim* or *lua-keira* (literally means crying the funeral) and *lua-fulim* (the final funeral rite). Many events occur over a period of days. Some of these events occur at the same time at different locations but they are largely done in chronological sequence.

The final funeral rite is preceded by the head of the family consulting the diviner for the opinion of the dead person and the ancestors regarding the pending funeral. It is for him to know whether there would be peace, good health and progress in the family, lineage, clan or community after the funeral or not. If he has the permission of the ancestors then, he goes ahead to organize the community elder for them to fix a date for the start of the funeral rituals. Several pending funerals of lineage can be performed simultaneously.

When the date is fixed, every relative living everywhere must possibly be informed to be present and these people must include the daughter, in-laws, uncles etc.

The first day of the *lua-kwim* or *lua-keira* is characterized by entertainment (music, drumming and dancing) and the “*bringing down*” of the *lua-sara* (sleeping mat). It is on this same mat that the body had been kept before burial. Though the pace of event is dictated by the elders, a daughter of the

family leads the execution of these events. She is often referred to as *kadekɔ* (a daughter performing the funeral rites). The mat is normally kept and preserved by hanging it in *diga-pɔrɔ* (round room). The mat is brought out of the room through a ritual. They would give it water (millet flour mixed with water) they would talk to it before picking it out of the room into the courtyard. For an old man of the room into the base of his millet silo, but a woman's mat is kept in her court yard. Both cases, a cloth made of a traditional smock is spread on the mat. Sitting around the mat are the daughters the person who held him to die would sit on it and the widow as well. Dirges are sung by men outside and women sitting round the mat.

The following day, is *nɛ-ferim* (literally means to plaster his or her legs). This is done with animals and fowls on the sleeping mat of the dead person. While they speak to the mat saying, I bring to you from your children, these fowls and animals. It could be a sheep, or a goat. The animals are knocked with a stick to death and kept on the public heap of garbage in front of the house. Not everybody can eat the meat. It is eaten by specially initiated people. They are usually undertakers. The animals are taken away in the evening after the sleeping mat has been burnt to ashes.

A woman's mat is brought out and kept under a tree along the path that leads to her biological family house and around it, entertainment, dirges are sung as people offer gifts purposely to the dead person and taken by the women sitting round the mat. For an old man, his children and other young men perform war dance.

The third day is marked by the contribution of food stuffs by women and men which is cooked for all to eat. Those who are forbidden to eat are people who lost their spouses and their funerals have not been completely performed. If it is performed, it must take four (4) years (woman) or three (3) years (man) for the spouse to eat anything funeral related. Before the food is eaten rituals of sacrifices are performed. This ritual is called *gaasem* and is done at a funeral Food stuff contributed, include, millet, round beans, beans, Shea nuts, fish, meat, fowls, and guinea fowls, etc.

The following day is *voro dE* (diviner day). It is the day when diviners are consulted on various issues including the cause of death and whether the funeral will end successfully. Food (TZ) is cooked with goat or sheep meat for all to eat. Pieces of the food is carried and placed on the wall as women dance to music and drums round the house. They would dress and act like the dead person. This is done to symbolize the joking relations people have with the deceased person. The food is called *do-gola* (preparation and eating of TZ by joking relations) who are usually women the dead man's would call his wives or his son's wives. This *choŋa* (also called quiver-a sacred object traditionally held by all men) is brought out and sacrifice is made to it by the undertakers. His eldest son would be held to close his eyes and then climb up through a ladder to look into his father's millet silo for the first time. This is called "*leisi-tio or leisi-tul*". "Tio or tula" refers to a millet silo

5.13 Lua-Fulim (Final Funeral Rites)

This stage of the funeral is the last stage of it. Pots and local baskets are requested from those experts who produce them for sale. Other materials are bows and arrows, if it is a man. A daughter of the family who is properly married is requested to come and *zori yi-beila* (blacken the graves).

The following day the widows are required to go out start begging for food. This signifies the fact that they now lack a source of livelihood because they have lost that person (i.e. her husband) who uses to provide for them. She ends the begging by going to her *yigino* (intermediary person whose mother usually comes from the same place as the widow) house. A diviner is brought to the funeral house to determine the cause of death usually the diviner would say that his death is by natural cause. The funeral is ended by *chonga zagem* (cutting the man's quiver- the sacred object) or breaking the woman's *puŋa* (sacred pot) and locally made baskets. The next day would be good buying daughters of the family who would be returning to the husbands' houses. It is done with the cooking of various kinds of food for all to eat.

5.14 Widowhood Rites

One of the significant aspects of Kasena traditional funeral rites is the widowhood rites. Widows are not allowed to eat anything used or cooked in the name of the funeral. They are attended to by women who hail from the same home community and they are responsible for cooking her food separately. It should be four (4) years after the final funeral rites had been performed before they could eat anything funeral related. A widower takes 3 years before the widow could eat funeral food or drinks. A widow is given a ritual bath called “*jwooni*” (a widow’s ritual bath). It is done with hot water which while it is boiling; it is fetched and poured on the widow. She is not expected to show a sign of pain because, if she does, it means she has a hand in the death of the husband’s death or before his death, she had cheated on him. It could also mean the man died holding a grudge against her. She is expected to appear with her bare body and wearing only leaves to cover just her genitals. She always had a local rope round her head. Her head is shaved in form of a cross at the end of the widowhood rites. She must always stay in-doors and goes out only when it is necessary for instance, attending nature’s call. While going through the ritual bath, the women standing around would always wail or yelling intermittently. If a man dies without a wife, a pestle is used as his wife for the ritual bath. Widowers do not go through a ritual bath but they have taboos to abide by as the funeral is underway. The ritual bath for the widow is also meant to prove that she never cheated on her husband.

5.15 Funeral Related Taboos

- The elaborate and lengthy ritual processes that characterize the Kasena traditional funerals have some taboos for people to observe. One of them is the taboo that one should not eat funeral food or drinks when the funeral of your spouse is not completed and last for 3 years (men) or 4 years (women).

- Another taboo relates to the *choja* (quiver sacred object) of the sacred pot. Rituals are performed on it before they are destroyed and burnt. During the performance of that activity, fire is set to provide light for the performance of the ritual. If your father or mother is not dead and his or her funeral performed to its total completion, one is not allowed to see that fire nor its light.
- Food prepared and used to sacrifice the dead person, is set aside for the children of the deceased. These children are called *Botara* (orphans) and the food is *gole* (also called orphans' TZ). It is a taboo for people to eat it when their parents are still living or they died but their funerals have not been performed completely.
- The widow is at the end of the funeral made to choose a new husband from the deceased's brothers. When this is done, children born by the woman are in the name of the deceased. It must be stated here that it is only necessary but not compulsory for the widow to marry. She can refuse to choose a husband by saying "she wants to live with the grave of her late husband. Age is not a factor in choosing a husband since she can choose a child or a grown up.

5.16 The Importance Of Funeral To The Traditional Kasena Society

Funeral rituals are of immense importance to the Kasena for the following reasons.

- They see funeral rites as an ancestral heritage. It is handed down to them by the ancestors and they have a socio-moral duty to hold on to it by continuing the practice in order to avert the wrath of the gods and the ancestors.
- The Kasena hold the view that God gave this culture to the ancestors and abandoning them would mean disobedience to God and to the ancestors, which to them is punishable in many ways; death, ill health, poor harvest and other calamities. For them, the white people were also given a unique culture which is a belief in the Christian's book-the Bible as well as formal education (Nukunya, 2003: p.123). They should therefore not impose it on them. They should

go ahead with their culture and allow them to continue with their own culture and religious practice.

- Kasena's believed that the *chiru* (spirit or soul of the dead) would not go to *churu* (ancestral world) if the funeral is not performed by the relatives and this could have dire consequences for the surviving family members.
- An opportunity for the family, lineage, clan or the community to take stock of their social life since everyone gathers there.
- It is also an occasion for the people to socialize the youngsters and new members of the community on their culture.

5.17 Funeral Rites of the Unmarried

An unmarried person's funeral ends on the "*vorodε*" (diviner's or soothsayer's day). It is on this same day that *fulim* (final funeral ritual) is done by cutting and burning of his *choŋa* (the quiver-sacred object). A pestle is taken for a wife and given the widow's ritual bath. The pestle is symbolic of a wife and it is use to symbolize widowhood rite.

5.18 Funeral Rite for Children

An infant is only buried but has no funeral. An infant is traditionally defined by the Kasena as a child after whom the mother has not given birth and it is considered that the child does not want this world. If the mother has experienced frequent death of her babies, the child, during the burial could be given a mark on any part of the body especially its head to indicate that they had discovered it to be the same child who has been "coming and going". When such a child comes again, it is believed will come with the mark and would go come back which means the child will not die again.

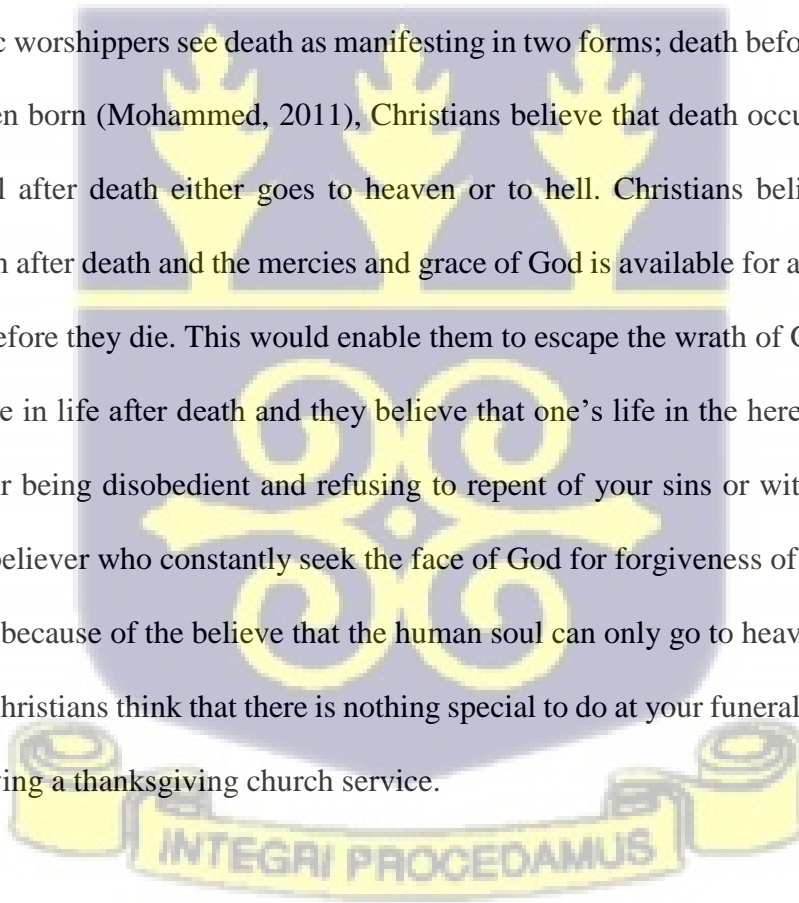
5.19 Funeral Rite For A Leper

A leper's body is not carried to the grave but dragged on the ground. The funeral for a leper is performed separately from other funerals in the house. At a leper's funeral, concoctions are prepared for all attendees to put their hand and feet into it to prevent them from contracting the disease.

5.20 Christian Burial and Funeral Rites

While the Islamic worshippers see death as manifesting in two forms; death before creation and death after one has been born (Mohammed, 2011), Christians believe that death occurs to man only once and that his soul after death either goes to heaven or to hell. Christians believe that there is no forgiveness of sin after death and the mercies and grace of God is available for all and he will forgive their iniquities before they die. This would enable them to escape the wrath of God.

Christians believe in life after death and they believe that one's life in the hereafter is either in hell with the devil for being disobedient and refusing to repent of your sins or with God in heaven for being a faithful believer who constantly seek the face of God for forgiveness of sin. It emerged from the research that because of the believe that the human soul can only go to heaven base on one's life while on earth, Christians think that there is nothing special to do at your funeral than merely burying the body and having a thanksgiving church service.



CHAPTER SIX:

RELIGION AND SOCIAL CHANGE

6.1 Ways Adopted By The Christians To Takeover Funeral Rites

During the focus group discussion with leadership of the church, I asked how they organize and carry out burial and funeral ceremonies a member dies. The presented to me a document which they wrote discussed and approve of it. The document spells out how a funerals of members of the church are organized and carried out. When a Christian dies, the family is supposed to inform the church through the nearest believer and member of the church. The church then mobilizes its membership to gather at the funeral home. Where the family refuses to inform the church, the church would have to mobilize the membership and move to the house. To a follow up question on why the family would refuse to inform the church about a member's death. Their answer as that the rest of the family members are not members of any church. In other words, the person is the only one that family who goes to church, the rest are traditionalist. What approach would you use to in order to take over the funeral? 'We use dialogue' Elder Enoch of the Church of Pentecost retorted. Is dialogue your only approach to convincing the people to allow you perform the funeral according to the Christian beliefs and practices? One peter Banavaetei of the said; 'some instances, the wife and children are members of the church such that they would already have discussed with elders of the clan before our arrival'. It is the church's responsibility to provide venue, canopies, chairs, water, food, and the casket for the burial of the deceased member and some traditionalists are impressed by that so when they do not even attend the church, they invite members of the church to come and take over the funeral. This is however not the same in all cases since there are times when the family opts to provide their own coffin for the burial may be for the reason that they want a higher quality one the church sometimes would not provide. The youth of the church takes charge of the grave digging while the women gather

round the body and begin to sing Christian songs. When the coffin is ready and the digging is completed, the body is brought out, a prayer is said and a leader gives a sermon before the youth carry the body to the grave for burial.

The second phase of a Christian funeral is usually a memorial service organized jointly by the church and the family. Christian funerals in Kasena land as observed by the researcher, are like normal church service except that an opportunity is given for reading of tributes where there are any and to remind themselves with the scriptures about the love of God, death and God's impending judgment. To the question of whether there is resistance to Christian burial and funeral practices and if yes in what manner are they resisting it, the response was yes. Some of the resistance come in a radical manner while others take a softer stand. At abulu, a village in kayoro, I observed in one burial and funeral of one Paabu of the Abadang family the church she attends (Christ Salvation church) decided to remove the body from the coffin and withdrew from the funeral at the orders of the pastor (Emmanuel). It was because one element of tradition –sacrifice of a chicken by the biological family as a pre-burial rite was performed. This resulted in a defection of one of the branches of the church to church of the lord mission. This is an illustration of a radical or conflict resistance by the church to tradition at funerals. At the funeral of Ayamo Yevere in ChianaKania, observed a conflict between, Norbert and Ajeisong, son and niece of the deceased regarding which of the religions should take charge of the burial and funeral of the deceased. In the end both cultures were concurrently applied.

6.2 History Of Christianity Among The Kasena People

Christian funerals are devoid of almost all the elaborate traditional ritual processes. It emerged from the discussions that Christians are not supposed to submit to any traditional rituals should they want the church to get involved in the funeral rites of members' or their relatives. According to J.H Nketiah, (1958), 'the celebration of funeral is regarded as a duty and no pain is spared to make it a

memorable one'. Worshipers are usually confused about which aspect of a funeral is acceptable and which one is not. Sometimes Christian members of a deceased family will favor traditional burial and funeral rites. Why? I posed this question to the leadership of the church they gave the following explanation;

There is a traditional law that that body of deceased belong to its family. The family members are duty bound to adhere to all traditionally dictated rites that are to be performed at the funeral. The fear of disastrous consequences such ghost hunt makes these family members oblige. The deceased might have left a verbally expressed will that his funeral be performed by the traditional processes for which reason, the family will comply.in yet some other cases, the deceased may will that his burial and funeral be handed over to the church for Christian burial. This might also be due to the fear that failure to comply with the will of the deceased may lead to the family or entire clan suffering negative repercussions.

Some of the churches are indifferent to the traditional practices. In other words, they are reluctant to resist repulsive traditional rituals at burial and funeral rites though they no accept them as right. These reasons necessitated the various churches setting up funeral committees to coordinate funeral activities. As part of its responsibilities, the committees are expected to set rules for members regarding burial and funeral rituals in their various communities. It must be noted that all the churches have formed what they call the joint council of churches. This council intends created a joint committee to be responsible for funerals of non-believers who have Christian relatives that are willing to hand their funerals to be performed by them. If for instance, a Christian's mother or father dies a non-Christian, it is the responsibility of the joint committee of churches that will coordinate the funeral activities. It emerged from the focus group discussions the church leaders, that Christians can perform funeral rites of the following kinds of people.

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A Christian who is a baptized member and in good standing in his or her church. This means that he should be a living faithful Christian life, and serves God in the church till his death.

- The second is a child of Christian parent or parents who may not have been baptized perhaps due to his/her age since because baptism symbolize a person who voluntarily and willingly surrender himself to the will of God as a way of expressing his or her faith and believe in him through Jesus Christ. A child may not have the sense and consciousness to do this voluntarily and has to be allowed to grow before taking baptism. The exceptional case is that of the Roman Catholics who have Infant Baptism. As Jesus said let the children come to me and do not stop them for the kingdom of god belongs to them (Matthew 19:13-15; Mark 10:13-16 and Luke 18:15-16). This shows that they are already proven to be innocent of sin and are more Christian than grownups who are baptized.
- A church member who avails himself for baptism but did not get the opportunity to do so. This could be that he is undergoing a prescribed Christian teaching awaiting a set date and time to do so.
- A member of the church in good standing who took ill and has duly and appropriately informed the church about his ill health before he dies. He is deemed a member in good standing because he could not attend and participate in church activities solely because of his ill health.
- The church is also committed to perform the funeral of a backslider who has realized his sinful and unbelieving conduct and character and has come to seek the face of God before his death.

A church member who dies while undergoing his Christian religious discipline.

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In response to the question of the kind of people whose funeral the church cannot perform, it turned out that the following people could not enjoy a Christian burial and funeral rites.

- A Christian who has backslidden (fallen into sin), reject church discipline and refuse to repent. Such a person is deemed to have abandoned his Christian beliefs and has joined the unbelieving world and therefore cannot be given any Christian burial and funeral rite.
- Christian funeral rites are grounds for the propagation of the gospel of Christ. It is an opportunity to “win souls for Christ”. This is the reason why at all funerals, Christians will offer prayer at every stage of the process not for the dead but for the living. A pastor will also be given the opportunity to share the word of God with attendees before or after burial so that the unbelieving members of the gathering can give their lives to Christ and be saved (Rev. Francis Kupoe, 2017 a verbal explanation)

6.3 The Dos And Don'ts Of Christians At The Traditional Funeral Rites

The document I received from the joint council of churches and from further interviews the selected members of the church leaders, it emerged that, many of the rituals performed at every stage of a traditional burial and funeral rites are deemed by the Christians as fetish and stand in polar opposite of the Christian beliefs, teaching and practices. For this reasons, they are expected to keep away from these rituals and not participate in performing them. The following things are permissible to be done by the Christians when they attend a relative's traditional funeral rite.

Show respect and appreciation to the “*yugu-jeinna*” (women who must sit round the corpse with the dirges singing team of women) and the *bayɛ* (undertakers) for doing the laborious job of singing, drumming, digging and burying the corpse. This should not include talking

- to and demanding anything or action from the deceased because that is deemed by the church as idolatry.
- A Christian is permitted to offer food, drinks, water and money to the *baye* (in appreciation for the work they are doing). A controversy was observed here as in-depth interview revealed that while some churches (Roman Catholic) permit the offer of alcoholic drinks, the same cannot be said of some other churches (Good News Bible Church, Calvary Charismatic Centre, Fountain Gate Chapel International, Christ Salvation Church, the Church of Pentecost etc.). For them one can offer food, water and non-alcoholic beverages to all participants at the funeral ground. They should however not be understood to mean an offer to the deceased person because that amounts to fetishism.
- Believers are allowed to attend the traditional funeral rites of relatives and where it is his or her responsibility to offer animals and other essential materials for the traditional funeral rite, he or she could do so. If however, such a relative was a believer, it would not be necessary for such items to be provided since the funeral would have been performed by the church. If the person can afford, food, the animals can be slaughtered for the preparation of food for all to eat without exception.
- A Christian may not need to perform his relative's funeral twice—one by the Christian burial funeral process and the other traditional ritual beliefs and practices. One's it is done by the church; there should not be any funeral again.

Christianity does not sanction nor permit women members to undergo traditional widowhood rites since they deem it fetish and an aspect of pagan religious activities. Widowhood rites are aspects of traditional funeral rites for married people who die leaving behind the wife (the widow).

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- A Christian whose wife dies is permitted to provide every item required for the traditional funeral rites but should not himself participate or submit himself to pagan ritual process during the funeral rites. This means he should not be part of anything that relates to sacrifice and should strictly reject anything fetish.
- Where the dowry (or marriage payments) has not been paid aforetime, it should be provided or given to the in-laws on demand before the commencement of the traditional burial and funeral rites.
- A Christian should not agree to go down the grave and speak to his father before his traditional burial neither should he do it to his mother. He should not be part of the **Choya-Zagem** (destroying the father's quiver –a sacred object) nor the mother's **puja** (sacred pot). Should not agree to climb up and look into the father's millet silo (Tula)
- He or she should not participate in the war dance because it is done round the gods, shrines and sacred places in the community in honor of these fetish and pagan objects of worship. This is because it is against Christian beliefs and the achieving of the Holy Bible
- He should not take part in breaking and burning the **choya** (quiver) because it is preceded by sacrifices and while destroying and burning it one has to be talking to it. Idol worship is against the commandments of God. You should not eat the food offered as sacrificed to the quiver because it is against Christian teaching. It is paying homage to idols because the food is offered to unclean spirits (1corinthians 10:20) the same applies to the **puja**

(the mother's sacred pot). You should not carry it, eat the food used in sacrificing it, nor participate in breaking it because all those things are elements of Idolatry and it will not bring glory to God if you do (1 Corinthians 10:31).

6.4 Christianity And Inheritance

A Christian man is allowed to inherit his father or mother after their funerals have been completed but the inheritance should not include idols and you should not offer sacrifices before the inheritance are handed over to you. If the sacrifice is the condition for the inheritance, then he or she is to reject the inheritance for the sake of his faith in God through Jesus Christ. 'For what shall it profit a man to gain the whole world and loose his soul' they quoted from the Bible (Matthew 16: 26).

6.5 Christian Concept Of Death And Life After Death

In an in-depth interview with members the churches, I asked whether they have categories of death. They generally stated that any form of death is death and one can die by any means. Specifically however, individual members of the clergy alluded to the traditionalists' view of good and bad deaths by saying that certain deaths arouses awe such that people are tempted to give it some spiritual interpretation. This answer shows that they couldn't say for a fact that such deaths are good or bad. Follow up question were requesting for their agreement or otherwise about good deaths. On what they would do if death of a member of the church falls within that category of bad death. Their greed to pray before touching or carrying the person who dies through thunder and lightning, curses, and one who hangs himself. They are not to submit to any ritual process nor exercise fear in processing the body for burial.

Christians shall not have a second burial for a deceased member nor support a second burial for someone who died away from home and has already been buried. The church would however hold a memorial service (Christian funeral rite) at his home community to show love and to mourn with and comfort the bereaved.

In my encounter with the clergy, the question of how they perceive of life after death was posed to them Christians believe that the soul of an unbeliever goes to “Hades” (Luke 16:19–31) where there is no water but an unquenchable flame. This is evident in the rich man asking Lazarus to touch his tongue with just a drop of water (Luke 16:24). It is believed that the soul cannot return to life on earth nor receive forgiveness and cross over to heaven. There is life after death (Luke 16:20–25). There is torment for the unbeliever’s soul after death and no forgiveness of sin after death. The dead cannot communicate with the living directly nor through a diviner who is a fellow human being who is still alive. The churches also teach about life after death of the believer who dies in Christ and his soul goes to the presence of God where there is eternal comfort and joy.

6.7 Can The Dead Go With Material Things To The Life Hereafter?

Christian teaching says that the dead do not have the capacity to desire and carrying with them earthly material things of this human world. If one goes to heaven, he does not lack anything and hence would not need anything of this earthly world (Ecclesiastes 5:15; job 1:21; timothy 6:7; revelation 7:16; 21:1-8; mark 12:24-27; psalm 49:16-17). In heaven there is no more hunger, pain, thirst nor marriage and other earthly pleasures. If the person is going to Hade/hell, then it is for him to suffer torment and would not have material things such as food, water, nor anything that can give him comfort while there.

6.8 Do The Dead Have Power Over Human Life?

“For the living know that they will die but the dead know nothing; they have no further reward, and even the memory of them is forgotten. Their love, their hate, and their jealousy have long since vanished; never again will they have a part in anything that happens under the sun”.

(Ecclesiastes 9:5-6). It can be said that considering the reading quoted from the book of Ecclesiastes, Christians do not believe the dead have any power to interfere, participate in human affairs and cannot punish nor reward the living for disobeying society’s norms or reward them for obeying them. They cannot inflict pain, sickness, bareness, death of anyone on earth for failure to perform their funerals through traditional ritual processes. They cannot cause any misfortune to befall anyone if they refuse to offer sacrifice to them. They no longer have human feeling, reasoning or emotions and have no flesh and blood that befits earthly life nor that of another world (i.e world of the dead).

6.8 Christians Teaching About Sacrifice to The Dead

It came out from the discussion that Christianity frowns upon ancestral worship and idolatry. It is punishable by God almighty. King Saul (the first king of Israel was punished severely for idolatry (1 Samuel 28:1-25) it is considered that consulting the dead, directly or through diviners is idolatry and hence an abomination that is punishable by God himself (Deuteronomy 18:9-14; Leviticus 20:6-7; 1 chronicles 10:13-14). Bible says the devil or Satan is an Angel of light. He can disguise himself in several ways so that people can lose their relationship with God. (2 Corinthians 11:14-15).

6.9 Major Changes in The Traditional Funeral Rites

Traditionally, Kasena do not bury the dead with a coffin (casket). Christianity had introduced it and most dead bodies are buried in coffin. The other thing is that because of Christianity, divination to

find the cause of death is no longer in practice. If even the funeral is not being performed by the church, divination rarely takes place. If they do it is only a symbolic form of it.

Grave designing is no longer the exclusive duty of the *bayɛ* (undertakers) because they alone went through the initiation rite to deal with the dead. All young men of the community now participate in digging, handling the body and burial or covering the grave.

The shape of a traditional grave is measured using a calabash to ensure that entrance (mouth of the grave) is narrow. The tools used are specially designed for that purpose. It was discovered that where the Christians are handling the funeral, these calabash and tools are not used but pick axe and shovels are used. If, however, the funeral is a traditional funeral, the calabash is still used but the edge (entrance) of the grave is will not take the shape of a typical traditional one. Undertakers no longer use fowls, millet and other materials to perform rituals before burial but prayers are offered to the Christian God led by church leaders before burial.

This makes it unnecessary for and brings an end to the second burial.

Children of the deceased are not made to go into the grave to have a final work with the body before burial is completed as it used to be the case.

As a result of Christianity, many of the funerals end at the *Lu-lia* (wet or fresh) funeral stage.

Even when traditional processes commence, they are no longer the lengthy ritual processes.

Widowhood rites have been stopped completely.

Inherent in the process is a traditionally approved means of stopping the widowhood rite. It starts with a man whose mother is a biological member of the family, breaking the pot used to boil the herbs for the widow's ritual bath.

This marks an end to taboos relating to funeral food and places within the funeral house are no longer adhered to.

For instance, it was compulsory for the children to be there when the mother's *punya* (a woman's sacred pot) or the father's *Chwoŋa* (quiver-a sacred object) is being destroyed but this is no longer the case. People whose fathers are still alive or died but their funerals have not been performed were forbidden from seeing the flames burning the quiver or the broken sacred pot but these have all been violated lately without sanction.

Men are no longer forced or even required to look for the first time into the father's millet silos as first sons and daughter do not do so for their mother's sacred pot as first daughters as was the requirement. Sacrifices and rituals of various kinds have been abandoned because those who are supposed to perform such rituals have vehemently refused to do so owing to their Christian religious affiliation.

6.10 Traditional Funeral Rites That Are Still In Practice

It emerged from the findings that certain aspects of the traditional processes have defied Christian influence and continued to take place till date. These are

Second burials still take place for people who “died away from home” and has already been buried.

The person could die in a different town or village where he works as a migrant.

Initiation into *bayaaro* (the institution of undertakers) which involves the performance of lengthy and elaborate rituals

The creation of traditional graves still persists among non-Christians, many of whom do not have the resources to buy coffin and could not be supported by anyone.

A new phenomenon was observed where non-Christians are buried with coffin and the traditional grave created in a symbolic form on top of the “modern” grave.

The various foods that are cooked during *Lu-fula* (dry funeral or final) funeral are still in practice.

Manny of the ritual processes for which the food is cooked are still practiced though on rare

occasions. It was equally observed that many people do not trust the hygienic conditions of the food and drinks and often refuse to eat it. Others refuse to eat it because they are forbidden by their Christian religious faith.

6.11 Burial And Funeral Rites Common To Christians And Traditionalists

Both religions recommend the bathing of the dead body before burial. Both provide clothes for covering the body before burial.

At all times, songs are sung and musical instruments played amidst merry making. The difference is that while Christians sing to praise God in all funerals, traditionalists do so only at the death and funerals of the aged and not young ones or at abnormal deaths. Their merry making is in honor of the dead.

At all-time both provide food, drinks and offer support to the bereaved family. But while Christians provide the food for all equally, the traditionalist have taboos guiding some of the food and funeral activities.

They both share the idea that there is life after death. Christians however think that one can only go to God in heaven or to Satan in hell and once you die; you have no power over the living and cannot have salvation again



CHAPTER SEVEN

CONCLUSION

7.1 Christian Religion and Social Change In Kasena Society

Many Ghanaians in general and Kasena of Northern Ghana in particular are either Christians or Muslims but still hold on to their religious values, beliefs and practices (Assimeng, 2006).

Christianity has changed the African mode of socialization by introducing Western education and it was through schooling that many of the people accepted Christianity. Nukunya (2003 p. 121), stated that, *“The churches seriously combined the teaching of the Bible with formal classroom education”* hoping that *“those who went to the schools would eventually accept the gospel”*. He indicated that indeed *“it was only when the advantages of education started to unfold that the pace of schooling and conversion quickened”*. The same can be said of the northern part of the country where evangelization became more successful by means of formal education.

Another social change is in the area of health care as the white fathers and other missionaries sought to associate traditional healthcare system as fetish, and of pagan origin. Seeking healthcare through the traditional health care is to them idolatry and is thus against the teaching of the Christian religion. They also introduce their new belief systems where people were taught to refuse participation in the ritual and other traditional religious practices. This has gone a long way to weaken the traditional authority pattern

Another change was in the area of marriage. Polygyny was part of traditional social way of life of the Ghanaian but Christianity came preaching monogamy. Marriage is no longer strictly traditional in the way it is contracted.

More recently, Ghanaians are experiencing changes in traditional ritual performance.

7.2 Conclusion

There appears to be some forms of conflict in the appreciation and appropriation of some of the values of the two cultures; Western and Kasena. The conflict theory is here by applied as means to examining the similarities, and parallelism in the forms of cultural expression. Even though Ralf Dahrendorf (cited in George Ritzier, 1983) indicated that conflicts do not at all times end violently and can sometimes end in consensus building, there is need to examine the cultural nuances that has the tendency of leading to violent ends so as to avoid needless religious physical conflicts.

The impact of religion on the social life of a people cannot be overemphasized and Christianity, one of the major religions of the world is not an exception. The contention here is whether we can attribute social change in contemporary times to a functional or dysfunctional phenomenon.

This is a matter that should be subjected to theoretical discussion. Conflict theorists argued that the changes are dysfunctional and of conflict but the functionalists think that it is based on consensus building and therefore, it is functional.

The stated problem for this study was to find out how Christianity impacted the social life of the Kasena people regarding their funeral performances. From the foregoing analysis, the following conclusions can be drawn;

Under circumstances where there is resistance in the application of one religious beliefs and practice in the performance of burial and funeral rites by another (Christianity and African traditional religions), the conflict or tension is resolved by;

- Reaching compromise where some traditional rites are incorporated into the Christian religious practices in conducting the burial and funeral rites.
- A concurrent application of both religious practices. The Christian are independently going about their own funeral process alongside the traditionalists.

- There is a total withdrawal of the church from participating in the entire funeral process. It has also been noted that many of the traditional rituals that are performed during funerals are repulsive to the church and are consequently resisted by the church when they are being applied to the death, burial and funeral of a members of the church. One of the strong religious views held by traditionalists in the Kasena society is that, their death can be foretold. This belief is in stark contrast with Christian beliefs, who regard the signs of foretelling the death of an individual as mere coincidence. This among others remains one of the reason why, certain rituals are deemed by the church as mere pagan practices that are without essence.

From the study, it has emerged that there is an attempt at cultural co-existence as both traditional worshippers and Christians alike have found a way of tolerating and accommodating each other's socio-religious practices. For instance, the church may preside over the burial rites of a deceased member but the traditional ways of preparing and dressing the body before burial still persist and is handled by the traditional pall-bearers and traditional women who turn and oil the body to avoid rigor mortis. This form shared form of understanding allows the Church to bury the deceased member while ensuring that the family and the traditional society remain relevant in the funerary.

An average Kasena man combines both Christian and traditional beliefs and practices when confronted with burial and funeral rites of deceased relatives. This is so because of the following reasons; the pervasive influence of cosmology, the superficial conversion to Christianity, and true conversion with inadequate doctrinal knowledge regarding death and life after death. It is also discovered that church members are not able to draw a line between aspects funeral related traditional practices that are acceptable in Christianity and what is not. For this reason, they choose and pick those aspects of Christian and traditional practices that meet their own understanding of the scriptures and at the same time settle their fear of a possible consequences. Some simply follow blindly the

instructions of their leaders without applying their own knowledge and wisdom in interpreting the scriptures.

One can in some instances see traditional beliefs and practices complementing those of Christianity in the performance of funeral rites and vice versa. For instance, traditional graves are no longer used but ritual of traditional grave measurement preceding the digging is done by applying the traditional ritual procedure while the real digging and burial is done by the church performing Christian prayer.

The researcher observed in a few instances of stiffer resistance to traditional practice by the church at burial and funeral rites of members of the Christian fraternity.

There is no acceptance policy to guide funeral and burial ceremonies thus creating conflict and tension between the church and those who believe in and adhere to traditional beliefs and practices relating to burial and funeral rites in Kasena land.

7.3 Recommendations

All kinds of people, regardless of race, creed or location are uniquely identified by their culture and belief system (religion). This distinguishes them from people of other societies. Kasena societies have their own unique funerary practice. From the foregoing conclusions I wish to make the following recommendations;

Having established that of traditional beliefs and practices in burial and funeral rites, lead to social control, the Kasena society should take measures to preserve and protect their cultural values by promoting those institutions and further incorporating these practices in the educational curricular through the teaching of Ghanaian language and Culture. Hence, All African societies should develop their educational curriculum to include the cultural practices so that the younger ones can learn and be well abreast with it.

Some Kasena funerary are not entirely at variance with Christianity, hence, the scripture should be properly interpreted to the people in order to avoid needless enculturation of the indigenous people.

Bible teaching has to be effective and in context with the culture and tradition of the people. To avoid clashes and acceptance policy should be formulated by the governing bodies of the churches to ensure that burial and funeral rites of the Christian fraternity are in tandem with the scriptures.

Foreign cultural practices should be appropriated cautiously so that they do not undermined the indigenous culture of the people. I therefore sanctioned, Africans and Kasena in particular to create enabling and enduring traditional institutional structures such as the essence of life, the sanctity of life, and the belief in the sacredness of the ancestors, as a means of promoting, protecting and preserving the material, symbolic and non-material culture of the people which acts as a means of social control. This will enhance the moral fabric of the Ghanaian society they imbibe the concept of life in the hereafter which is contained in the religious values of most of the religions should be instilled in the minds of the people. This constant reminder that people will be held individually liable for their personal deeds will help curb misbehavior among the youth.

Culture is part of the social life of the people in any society. Culture is dynamic and subject to change the same way as any other forms of social change more so when the agents of social change is specifically directed towards the culture of a people. These agents are; Western education, colonialism, foreign religions, technology, modernity, etc. I wish to recommend that government and civil society organizations make efforts to ensure that forms of neo-colonization that undermines local cultures are discarded. Cultural Innovative Technological tools and software for indigenous culture should also be developed so as to ensure that the indigenous cultural values of the people are not washed away and an alien culture adopted.

Research work should be encouraged on the cultural elements of the various Ghanaian tribes especially those of smaller ethnic societies in the northern parts of the country. This will help create

a pool of literature on the culture and social life of northern Ghanaian people so that future generations will not be lost out completely on the cultural and socio-religious values of tribal communities.

I would also like to recommend that an annual cultural exhibition be organized with government funding through the ministry of chieftaincy and culture. This will not only encourage the preservation of indigenous Ghanaian culture and social practices but is one of the surest ways of making known or public other rich cultural expressions. This cultural exhibition should be organized with the support of the regional houses of chiefs on regional or district bases so that majority of the local people can participate.

Since most of the artifacts for funerals are often seen only during funerals, I wish to recommend that cultural museums be built at least in all districts. This will serve as store houses for the people's cultural artifacts. It will also encourage and promote tourism in our various communities and districts and aid social anthropological research into culture and history of the ethnic groups in the country.

The peaceful co-existence between the traditional worshippers and Christians based on mutual respect and due regard for each other's religious values should be commended and encouraged through the organization through games and other religious competitions. This will serve to prevent religious extremism with its negative consequences.



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APPENDIX A

Interview Guide for community Elders (the funeral experts)

- Do you believe incidences precede the death of member of the community and if so what are some these events?
- The meaning of death to the traditional Kasena people?
- Categories of deaths in Kasena traditional society.
- What do you do in each of these categories when someone dies?
- Do you also have categories of funeral rites? If so do mention them.
- What do you do to the body before burial?
- Mention and describe some of the death and burial rituals/customary practices in Kasena traditional society
- Do you offer gifts to the dead person at Kasena burial and funeral rites? What are some of these gifts if you do?
- Do you communicate with the dead body? If so what do you say and at what instance?
- Do you think the churches have created a change in the performance of Kasena funerals? What are those changes?
- Are there commonalities between Kasena funerals and funerals of the Christians? Please illustrate.
- Do Christians attend traditional funerals?
- If yes, do they participate in the traditional funeral rites?
- How can people become Ancestors in Kasena traditional societies? Please narrate how burial is organized for the following people: women, men, lepers, victims of suicide, thunder and lightning, curses, dying alone, etc.

- Are there changes that you will attribute to other agents of social change?
- Do you have experiences of conflict between the traditionalists and Christians as they take over funerals from the traditionalists? If yes can you identify with illustration those aspects of conflicts?
- What are Kasena attitude towards these changes?
- Can you identify changes in the traditional Kasena funerals and do you attribute these a changes to

APPENDIX B

A guide for focus group discussion with the *joint council of churches'* funeral committee.

- Christian understanding death.
- The meaning of funerals to members of the Churches.
- Common burial and funeral practices between Christians and traditionalists
- Differences in burial and funeral rights that can be identified between Christians and traditionalists
- Explanation of the Christian burial and funeral rites
- Does Christianity permit believers to attend traditional funeral rites?
- Incidence of conflict between Church members and Christians regarding burial and funeral rites.
- Whether or not there are indications for which reason we foresee future occurrences of conflict and whether Christianity will wipe out traditional funeral rites in the future.
- What kind of funerals will Christians agree to perform and which one they will not?

- Reasons for allowing members of the churches to attend traditional funeral rites.
- Explanation of Christian's belief in life after death.
- The usefulness of the belief in life after death
- What changes have the Christians brought on the burial rites and funeral performance of Kasena people?
- since Christians you recorded
- Christians belief in the power of the dead to influence the living

Appendix c

A guide for focus group discussion with burial experts

It will focus on the role they play and the rituals they perform before, during and after traditional burial. Topics for the discussion will be;

- Preparation of the body for burial
- Rituals during the burial process.
- Grave goods and how they are appropriated
- Communicating with the body
- The Mystery about ghost and treatment of the body during burial to prevent incidence of ghost
- Factors that determine the burial place.
- Changes in the burial process that can be attributed to the churches
- Combination of elements of tradition and Christianity in the burial process
- Conflict between Christianity and tradition in the burial process burial corpses in

Kasena society

- Indications as to whether the church will completely take over the Burial and funeral related Taboos

Appendix d

Topics for the discussion will centre on:

The role of the women before, during and after the burial rites

Role of the women as *yugu-jeinna*

Role of the women as *kadeko*

Role the women as *sinya-gul-magena*

Role the women in special rituals for the funeral of women

Their role in carrying out labor work at the funeral

Funeral taboos

