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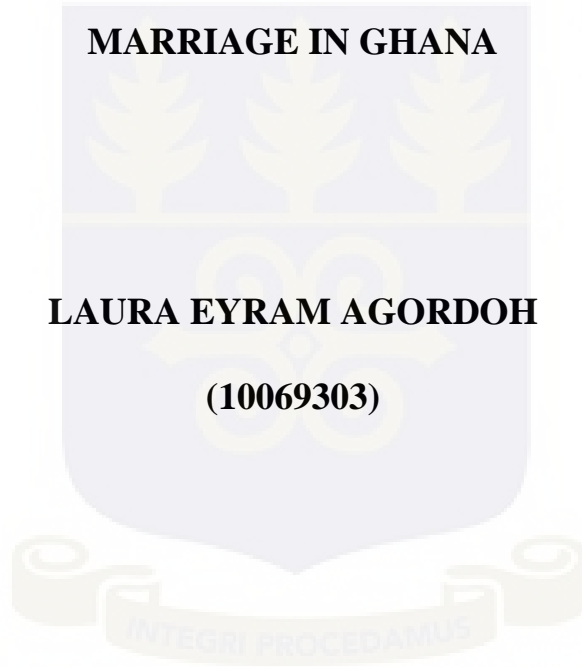
**TITLE: UNEQUAL YOKING:**

**A THEATRICAL EXPLORATION OF RELIGIOUS CONFLICT IN**

**MARRIAGE IN GHANA**

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**DEDICATION**

To The Glory of God

Felix Alornyeku

Shekinah, Sharon

Kekeli and

Kesinor.

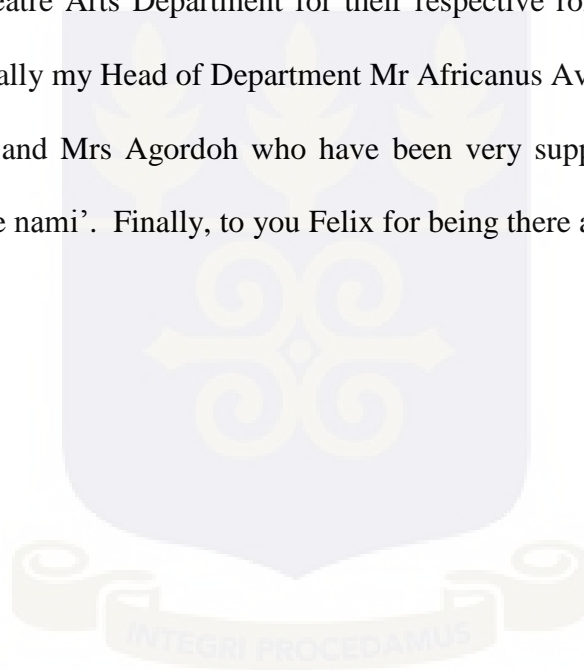


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I also render my heartfelt gratitude to Dr Regina Kwakye-Oppong in guiding me for appropriate vocabulary for my work. I wish to express my appreciation to all staff and students of the Theatre Arts Department for their respective roles during and after the play reading especially my Head of Department Mr Africanus Aveh.

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## ABSTRACT

Research has shown that conflict in marriage is inevitable. The incidence and prevalence of religious conflict in marriage, however, leaves much to be desired. This research intends to discuss religious conflict in marriage of same-faith couples. This is termed as intra-faith based marriages because couples practice the same-faith, with differences in doctrines due to church affiliation. This research through the play *Unequal Yoking* exposes the excesses of differences in doctrines of same-faith- as juxtaposed to marriages of inter-faith couples. The play further discusses other issues that are likely to cause conflict in marriage. This research also seeks to establish the fact that intra-faith based marriages have more conflict due to different practices in doctrines. Interviews and questionnaires were administered and findings based on the subject truly represented. The questionnaires were administered within the confines of The University of Ghana, Legon campus and with members of the Sheepfold Chapel on the Spintex Road in Accra. The questionnaires were administered to respondents who were legally married and living with their spouses. The data was collated and analysed accordingly.

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## CHAPTER ONE

### Introduction

It is a generally accepted notion that marriage is one of the basic institutions of man.

Webster's online dictionary defines marriage as;

a contract both civil and religious, by which the parties engage to live together in mutual affection and fidelity, till death shall separate them. Marriage was instituted by God himself for the purpose of preventing the promiscuous intercourse of the sexes, for promoting domestic felicity and for securing the maintenance and education of children (Webster's online Dictionary assessed on 10<sup>th</sup> June 2013 at 8:25am).

The above definition of marriage makes it obvious that although marriage is a partnership between two people, the main origin of the union is a command from God during the creation process. This lays the basic foundation for the connection of marriage to religion in its general sense and why couples seek God's blessings in their marital experience.

John Myers (2012:1), adds his opinion in his *Executive Summary of Marriage* when he thus posits; "Marriage is as old as humankind"<sup>1</sup>. According to Myers, God's creation of the human race was for man and woman to live together as husband and wife. Renzetti and Curran (1998:152) also define marriage as "a legally binding contractual agreement. However, unlike most contracts, the conditions of the agreement cannot be changed or negotiated by the two parties involved. Only the state has the right to set the terms for the marriage contract"<sup>2</sup>. The above statements in the opinion of the researcher, is an indication that marriage is much more than just a man and woman living together. It involves both families of the couple and the state. It is to be noted that the researcher is

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<sup>1</sup> Myers J. *Executive Summary on Marriage*. Newark, New Jersey, USA. 2012 p 1

<sup>2</sup> Renzetti, C. L. and Curran D. *Living Sociology*. Allyn and Bacon, A Viacom Company. 160 Goldstreet Needham Heights, MA 02194. 1998 p 152.

also of the view that marriage is much more of an individual commitment of both parties and the need for mutual agreement that binds the couple. Marriage, however, differs in various cultures and in Ghana for instance, the Ordinance, the Traditional, The Church and Moslem marriages are some of the types that exist. For the purpose of this research, I shall refer to marriage in the context of the Ordinance, Traditional and Church marriages which are legally recognised. As stated earlier, extended families of couples, the church and the state play vital roles most often in sustaining marriages in Africa.

Conflict exists in every human institution depending on the occasion or appearance of it. Like many other institutions of life, most marriages also experience conflict in one way or the other. Although conflict in marriage can be resolved, some of the issues that arise make it rather difficult or almost impossible to resolve. There is the probability of conflict when a couple of different religious backgrounds live together. Conflict, in such situations, may be due to the different religious affiliation or backgrounds of couples and cultural views among others. According to Joanides & Patsavos (2000:218), “family of origin significantly impacts religious practices of couples: It is important to explore family of origin tradition, its associated meaning and significance when discussing a couple’s current religious perspective”<sup>3</sup>. It is clear from the above statement that, religious affiliation in marriage is relevant to its success and prospective couples should assess their religious compatibility to each other before exchanging their marital vows.

Religious affiliations vary in people of different tribes and races depending on their faith and practice. However, for the purpose of this research, we have to identify the differences that exist between Inter –faith and Intra- faith marriages. Harley (1999:21) as

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<sup>3</sup> Joanides and Patsavos. *The Interfaith Marriage Challenge* at <http://www.interfaith.goarch.org/research.html>. 2000 p. 218. 18/10/2012 , 1:45am

quoted in Robinson defines Inter-faith marriages as “those between two persons of different religious traditions and Intra-faith marriages are between two persons from different denominations within the same religion”<sup>4</sup>. Landis (1949:403) also adds his voice by stating that;

Mixed marriages have been defined as marriages in which there are significant, obvious and unusual differences between spouses other than sex. Differences in faith, race, and nationality are the ones usually considered as falling under the definition of mixed marriages. It is usually assumed that extreme differences in background foster marital discord rather than marital rapport... Some young people feel that the discouraging of mixed unions among the followers of the different faith, is largely a battle for souls and there are no practical reasons why they should not enter mixed marriages. Many young people today are probably not much interested in the struggle for souls, but they are interested in knowing whether a mixed marriage has less chance for success than marriage within a faith<sup>5</sup>.

Deducing from the statements of Landis and Harley, it is obvious that the major problem is not within the premise of Inter-faith marriages and the researcher is of the opinion that, couples of this calibre are rather willing to work out their differences and live with each other as compared to those within the same religion. This study is, however, specifically based on conflict in Intra- faith marriages thus, will focus the discussion on issues that arise in this regard. The conflict of doctrine between same faith couples of different denominations will be explored in Christian religion. Doctrinal differences in relation to ways of worship, sex, food, education, fashion and other minor issues will also be discussed.

*The Collins English Dictionary* (6<sup>th</sup> Edition), defines conflict as a psychological opposition between two simultaneous but incompatible wishes or impulses sometimes

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<sup>4</sup> Harley, W.F. as cited in Robinson *You believe what . How to resolve conflicts of faith (Part I)*”, at: <http://www.marriagebuilders.com/graphic.mbi5040ga.html>. 1999 p. 21. 21/10/2012, 7:45am

<sup>5</sup> Landis, T.J. *Marriage of Mixed and Non Mixed Religious Faith*. American Sociological Review Vol 14, No 3. 1949 p. 402- 403

leading to emotional tension. ABANTU (2004:56) for development in an article for *Women Empowerment* backs this definition by stating that “conflict is about competition for power, resources and interests”<sup>6</sup>. Nevertheless, as a general phenomenon, conflict in marriage comes through different angles or root causes. David Knox (1943:312) in furtherance to the discussion states that in marriage “conflict develops when one spouse’s behaviour does not match the other’s expectations or hopes”<sup>7</sup>. He further admits that the interpretation of a partner’s behaviour is a major source of conflict. Knox’s ideology is an indication that the interpretation of a partner’s behaviour is solely dependent on the judgement of an individual. This chapter therefore seeks to explore issues that cause conflict in marriage with specific reference to religious conflict in Christian marriage.

### **Background to Study**

Religious inclination is of great importance in marriage. Vaughn Call (1997:382) relates to this by saying “affiliation is important because denominational differences in teaching and practices regarding marriage and divorce play a role in the formation of attitudes and subsequent marital behaviour”<sup>8</sup>. Kristen Curtis (2011:382) agrees with Call when she also states that “theological differences between partners are linked with more frequent conflicts overall and also with disagreements over household labour and finances”<sup>9</sup>. Although Curtis and Call agree on issues of religious inclination in marriage, Curtis implies that, other related causes such as labour and finances spring up conflicts as well. Deducing from the points made above, it is important to note that the religious affiliation of a couple plays a vital role in their marriage. Many prospective couples, however, do

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<sup>6</sup> ABANTU for Development. *Coalition for Women’s Manifesto on Ghana*. ©2004, p. 56

<sup>7</sup> Knox, David. *Exploring Marriage and the Family*. Scott, Foresman and Company, USA. (©1979. p.312

<sup>8</sup> Call, R.A.V., *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*. 1997, p. 382- 339

<sup>9</sup> Curtis K. T. *Religious Heterogamy and Marital Conflict* (Family Relations, Vol 39, No 4.) 2011, p. 382-387

not weigh the implications of the issues that arise later in the marriage to threaten it as indicated by Knox (1979) in saying unresolved conflicts that are likely to cause problems in the marriage, is seldom considered and both partners are taken by surprise when such conflicts surface. One of such conflicts is the religious background of couples. This is not to say that all marriages with different religious backgrounds cannot survive.

However, Tom Ellis (2011:2010) notes that, people`s religion emanates from the environment in which they grew up. He further stresses this view by saying that “whatever religion they grew up with is liable to determine their faith for the rest of their lives. This can produce serious problems when two spouses come from different religious traditions”<sup>10</sup>. It is clear from all indications that the religious choices of partners should be of priority to prospective couples as far as marriage is concerned. In agreement with all the views discussed on the need for religious compatibility in marriage, one may conclude that religion and culture play a vital role in holding a marriage together.

Although different faith or religions and practice bring about conflict in marriage, the researcher is of the opinion that same faith couples with doctrinal differences may have more issues to resolve as to their specific beliefs and practices than couples of different religious background. This is likely so because the inter faith couple, on the premise of their differences in doctrines, may be willing to accept to live with their differences and adjust to be able to cope with their partners. Same faith (Intra-faith) couples, however, though profess the same faith, may cling on to doctrinal differences which are likely to provoke serious conflict in their marriage as indicated earlier.

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<sup>10</sup> Ellis, T. *Consultants on Religious Tolerance*, Ontario. 2010. p.117

### **Problem Statement**

Differences in religious beliefs and practices seem to have destroyed many marriages in Ghana. Although playwrights have written works on religious conflict in marriage, not much has been done in the area of Intra-faith marriages. The problem of conflict in Intra-faith marriages creates a lot of confusion within the Christian Religion where couples fight over superiority of doctrine. With these ideas in mind, the researcher seeks to investigate the extent to which doctrinal differences within the same religion can be a subject of conflict in marriage. This will possibly establish the idea that marriages with differences in doctrines of the same faith may bring dire consequences for couples and there is the need for stakeholders to be a lot more sceptical when issues of religious compatibility arises. The findings will then be used to write a play.

### **Objectives**

- To generally, create a drama that reflects the consequences of differences in religious affiliations of couples within the same faith (Intra- faith).
- To examine the incidence and perceptions of religious issues in marriages.
- Suggest strategies to intervene and avoid Intra- faith based conflict in marriage.

### **Research Questions**

- What significant role does religion play in marriage in Ghana?
- How can couples avoid conflict that is based on doctrinal practices within the same faith?
- How does religious affiliation affect conflict resolution among couples of intra-faith based marriages?

### **Significance**

- ❖ A study into the incidence of religious conflict in marriage is imperative because it will help prospective couples investigate each other's religious inclinations and assess their compatibility with each before marriage.
- ❖ It will serve as a guide to couples on how to handle issues on doctrinal disparities when they occur.
- ❖ Also, this research will establish another artistic concept of importance to society because the play is a social drama which portrays religious conflict in a different dimension adding up to scholarly knowledge.
- ❖ The study will therefore provide a basis for the expression of conflict in marriage and its religious implications, cutting across every level of the marital experience. A play that is expressive in nature and will appeal to both young and old as well as guide them on their religious choices of marriage partners would be written out of this research.

### **Scope of Study**

This research is outlined as the study into the prevalence of conflict in marriage with religion as the focus. Marital conflict has general causes that can equally be discussed but the play focuses on religious marital conflict in Ghana. The expressive use of words will examine the issue of religious differences in the home of a couple. Another couple, however, may find it easy to resolve their differences because of the common religious affiliation. The first couple, however, resort to abuse and possibly, divorce due to differences in their religious doctrine and practice. Songs form an integral part of the play, exploring conflict and conflict resolution, climax and anti-climax, the use of tone, mood, proverbs, etc. will be beneficial to the advancement of the plot. The play is set in

Ghana today, where marriage goes through all the traditional and religious formalities as a basic requirement. Questionnaires will also be administered and findings of data collated to affirm the views of those interviewed for the research.

### **Organisation of Study**

This research runs through six chapters. The first chapter is an introduction that gives background information related to the topic being discussed. It also states clearly the problem statement, objectives, significance, scope and organisation of study. Chapter two discusses related literature in review of the proposed subject. It discusses marital conflict in general and its religious incidence among couples. The third chapter assesses the methodology and study design for the paper. Interviews conducted and data collected are presented in this chapter. Chapter four will basically deconstruct, analyse and contextualise the play. Chapter five summarises findings, give recommendations and conclusions. The final chapter presents the play *Unequal Yoking*.



## CHAPTER TWO

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### Introduction

This chapter intends to review relevant literature available on religious marital conflict of plays, identifying the incidence of religious and cultural interference in marital conflict. The presentation is limited to topics and issues related to the selected study area, specifying religious conflict in marriage of the same faith. The following topics will therefore be discussed.

- Christian marriage and conflict
- Religion and its influence on marriage in Ghana

The researcher is of the view that the issue of conflict in marriage is quite large and generalised. This notion, however, necessitates the review of plays and commentaries directly related and limited to religious marital conflict of the same faith only. Few plays are chosen with relevance to the study area. These plays have been chosen due to the direct connection they display in relation to religious issues that develop into conflict in marriage. It is important to state that although these conflicts are not same faith related, there are basic links to religiously based conflict in the general context.

Knox (1979) earlier discussed that conflict comes about when spouses are unfulfilled with expectations from their partners. These expectations in the researcher's view differ in every marriage. John Scanzoni (1975:37) further defines conflict as basic, non basic and irrational. According to him, "basic conflicts are the ones that threaten the marriage"<sup>11</sup> and an example of such is the religious inclination of couples. This kind of

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<sup>11</sup> Scanzoni, J. *Sexual Bargaining*. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice- Hall, Sex roles, economic factors and marital solidarity in black & white Marriages. *Journal of Marriage and Family*. 1975 pp. 37, 1, 130- 44

conflict places partners on totally different planes and perspectives and their attitudes towards each other is based on their religious affiliation. Non basic conflict, however, he describes as something that irritates both partners but does not put the marriage on the line. This may refer to issues of work, money, sex and its frequency and the different techniques of sexual gratification. They may be serious in nature but can be considered relatively less central to the bond of marital experience. In my view, however, issues that may threaten a marriage differ in persons of different tribes and races thus to a person, basic conflict may arise per the issue of sexual gratification and to another, it may be food. He finally concludes by implying that irrational or unreasonable conflict are the ones in which partners have divergent views on an issue and one partner ridicules the other, by enjoying the argument at the expense of the other.

### **Religion and its influence on marriage in Ghana**

Religion has been defined by the Webster's online Dictionary as a system of beliefs based on humanity's attempts to explain the universe and natural phenomena, often involving one or more deities or other supernatural forces and also requiring or binding adherents to follow prescribed religious obligation. Two identifying features of religion are that they to some extent;

- a. Require faith
- b. Seek to organise and influence the thoughts and actions of adherents (Webster's Online Dictionary, accessed on 4th Nov, 10:15pm).

Religion is defined by Durkheim (1982:129) thus;

a religion is 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 called a church, all those who adhere to them<sup>12</sup>

Durkheim further expresses his views by indicating that, religion further acts as a pulling force that brings people together either mentally or physically through religious services. In doing so he further indicated that religion is able to reaffirm the collective ideals and beliefs in the minds of all members of a given society. The researcher agrees with the above assertion of Durkheim in the opinion that, religion is built on faith and practices of certain values that the adherent holds sacred. In this regard, the religious person is under an impulse to act according to the rules and regulations that govern his or her faith whether these rules and regulations are reasonable or not. To buttress the points made so far, Call (1997:339) quotes Goldscheider by saying “a person’s religious experience includes affiliation with a specific church or synagogue, participation in religious services, beliefs in religious teachings and personal spirituality”<sup>13</sup>.

Gordon Allport (1950:51) also identifies with the fact that religious sentiments arise from needs, interests, temperaments, rationality and cultural response. He further reiterates that “the mature religious person can act whole-heartedly without absolute certainty, for religious aspiration is an intention to strive towards long range goals whatever the present risks and difficulties”<sup>14</sup>. The researcher on this note agrees with both definitions but is of the view that culture and the upbringing of an individual will rightly determine the person’s religious inclination or practice. By this, we may refer to the statement of Ellis (2010) that the environment in which people live establishes their religious identities for life.

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<sup>12</sup> Durkheim, Emile. Excerpts from *The Elementary Forms of The Religious Life*. 1982 p 129.

<sup>13</sup> Goldscheider as cited by Call, R.A.V. *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*. 1997 p432.

<sup>14</sup> Allport, G. *Journal of Marriage and Family*. Illinois: Published by National Council on Family Relations. Vol. 60, No. 2. 1950, p. 51

In discussing the issue of religion and marriage, Oduyoye (2009:99) further relates;

Religion is used to justify acts of violence against women, men and children, and can perpetuate silence placing women, particularly, at a greater risk of injury or death. Regardless of the particular religious affiliation, some aspects of religious beliefs and teachings are implicated when women and children experience violence.<sup>15</sup>

One may ask this question, is religion under condemnation here? The obvious answer is no but the researcher is of the view that, Ghanaian culture and probably many other cultures are built on various religious beliefs which reflect in the lives of the people.

For example, the people of Anlo in the Volta Region are permitted as part of their culture and tradition, to marry as many women as practicable. This notion is seen in the statement of Nukunya, (1996:98) “as is usually the case, and as is inevitable where many wives fight for the love of one man, one gains special favour perhaps through her beauty or character”<sup>16</sup>.

Finally, the researcher wishes to note what seems to be the case that most people, hide under religion and use it as a base to promote conflict in marriage as indicated by Oduyoye earlier.

## **Culture**

Culture is defined as the system of shared beliefs, values, customs, behaviour and artefacts that members of the society use to cope with their world and with one another and that are transmitted from generation to generation. (University of Maritoba Webpage accessed on 2nd of November, 2012 at 11:45pm,).

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<sup>15</sup> Oduyoye, A.M. *Architecture for Violence against Women in Ghana*. Gender Studies and Human Rights Documentation Centre. 2001, p. 100

<sup>16</sup> Nukunya G.K. *Rural Sociology*. Kinship, Marriage and the Family. 1999, p. 98-99

According to S.J. Salm and T. Falola (2002:113), the culture and customs of the people of Ghana makes traditional marriages imperative in the marital process. They further relate that customary marriage also known as traditional marriage represents 80% of marriages in Ghana and by far are the most common. They continue to state that “even ordinance marriages, those carried out in an official ceremony or Christian church, generally take place only after many of the traditional customs have been performed”<sup>17</sup>. This statement by Salm and Falola further build on the importance Africans and Ghanaians attach to their culture. It is observed, that the marriage of Mohammedans Ordinance provides a similar system for Islamic marriages. Once registered, they are regulated by Muslim laws. However, most Muslim marriages are never registered and therefore can only be regarded as customary marriage.

### **Christian Marriage and Conflict**

Generally in Ghana, the Catholic, Presbyterian, Evangelical and Methodist churches are known to form the early churches established by the Missionaries of various descents. These missionary churches were categorised under the brand name of ‘Orthodox’ churches. By the 1950’s, however, it had become evident that Pentecostal churches like the Church of Pentecost and Assemblies of God were on the increase with some differences in doctrine from the Orthodox churches. This movement did not end there because “the 1970’s saw a new wave and introduction of churches into what they call “Charismatic”<sup>18</sup>. The researcher, however, is of the view that, whatever the name or doctrine may hold, the bottom line is that they all profess to be Christians. This makes it important to observe that, differences in teaching and doctrines are the basic causes of

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<sup>17</sup> Salm S.J. and Falola, T. *Religion and Culture of Africa*. ©2002, p. 113

<sup>18</sup> Agordoh, A. A. *Development of Church Music in Ghana*. 2011, p.1- 2.

conflict in marriage where two Christians belonging to different denominations are concerned.

Dollahite (2004:223) asserts that “couples reported that religiosity affected the conflict in their marriage at three phases of the conflict process;

- a. Problem prevention
- b. Conflict resolution
- c. Relationship resolution

He further encourages that couples should look up to practitioners or counsellors, to assist them in their marital conflict by helping them to take a critical look at their religious beliefs and practices. Dollahite continues to say that these findings are important because they demonstrate that religion can be a source of discord in marriage, particularly the absence of religious congruence. On the contrary, he noted that religion could be a source to resolving marital conflict. To this end he thus posit: “unified religious participation in couples was associated with greater conflict resolution”<sup>19</sup>. In conclusion, Dollahite seeks to imply that religious belief and practice helped couples to prevent conflict by decreasing stress levels in marriage which in the end helped to unify couples. To sum it all up, the researcher agrees with the views of Dollahite in that, couples who practice the same faith may find it easy to resolve other conflicts which may not even be religious in nature. Most often, the conflict resolution process is likely linked to the practice of their faith which is based on common grounds. In doing so, they are easily able to bury their differences in the name of forgiveness as per the prescription of their faith.

### **Religious Conflict in selected Plays**

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<sup>19</sup> Dollahite, D.C. *Family Relations*. Blackwell Publishing, 2002, p. 223

Religious conflict has been the concern of some playwrights. This study will therefore expand further on some selected plays in this regard such as Ola Rotimi's *Our Husband Has Gone Mad Again* (1997), *The Father* (1987) by August Strindberg, *Atobra* by Daniel Appiah-Adjei (2011), *A Man For All Seasons* (1960) by Robert Bolt and Ama Ata Aidoo's *The Dilemma of a Ghost* (1965). This segment of the discussion will be based on the incidence and relevance of religious conflict in marriage and its implications on the parties involved. These plays have been chosen because they either directly or indirectly portray some aspect of religion and conflict.

### **Our Husband Has Gone Mad Again**

Ola Rotimi (1997) in *Our Husband Has Gone Mad Again* uses both religious and cultural differences between Lejoka-Brown and Liza as a platform to create a major conflict. Although the conflict presented in the play is not of the same faith, it is to be noted with concern that doctrinal practices spring out of religion hence the relevance of the play in this regard. As related in the play, Liza knew she was in an inter-faith marriage but had no idea whatsoever that it was a polygamous one. Her sudden appearance and the drama that ensued between her and her co-wives in the person of Sikira and Mama Rashida were enough to open her eyes to the fact that Lejoka-Brown had not told her the truth. To her, it was a whole new experience altogether as she accepted Mama Rashida and Sikira and she began to serve as an influence to them. The conflict of religion, however, reflects more between Liza and Lejoka-Brown when Okonkwo draws his attention to the fact that if Liza is a Muslim like he is, she would understand things better as reflected in the discussion below:

Okonkwo: You mean she doesn't know already that you have two other wives. (*Lejoka- Brown shakes his head mournfully*) well... (*Uncertainly*) maybe, if she's like you- a Muslim- she would understand.

Lejoka-Brown: (*vacantly*) she's not a Muslim

Okonkwo: No?

Lejoka-Brown: Catholic

Okonkwo : A catholic!

Lejoka-Brown: The very worst.<sup>20</sup>

It is expedient to note, that the fundamental or root cause of Lejoka-Brown and Liza's conflict is purely religious, than cultural. Although marital conflict exists between him and his other wives, the role Liza plays is far more devastating first, to him as a Muslim and then to his political career. The clash of religion is also very evident in the play when Liza returns from the beach dressed exposing parts of her body, an act not permitted in any Muslim community. To Lejoka-Brown, it was not an easy thing for him to be disgraced in front of his political guests so he put them through an ordeal in order to avoid them seeing Liza dressed the way she did. He quickly directs Liza into her room calling her "You cheap street woman" (p64). The words Lejoka-Brown used on Liza is an indication that in a Muslim community, only prostitutes dress the way she did. Clearly, Lejoka-Brown was wrong and should have informed Liza about her co-wives since it is an acceptable norm for a Muslim to marry as many as four wives if he is financially capable to take care of them. In my opinion, however, Liza lost interest in the marriage as soon as she realised what she had gotten herself involved in and was willing to free herself from the trenches of polygamy when she says:

Liza: Don't obscure the issue, please. It is quite apparent that a breach of what has been flagrantly committed by you...

Lejoka-Brown: (*gruffly*) As an African, I have a right to marry as many wives as I can handle...

Liza: Under native law and custom, true. But our marriage was performed in court, Mr Lejoka-Brown, in the Congo; under the French law: One

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<sup>20</sup> Rotimi, Ola. *Our Husband Has Gone Mad Again*. Oxford University Press , 1997 p 12- 70

man, one woman. So... don't you go around kidding yourself, fellow!

Lejoka-Brown: (*a growl*) consequences! such as? Liza: Immediate divorce proceeding for one thing. You can't be that asinine. The grounds are ample and valid breach of faith; extreme mental cruelty; incompatibility; adultery; gross negligence of...

These are clear statements that Liza's opinions are very different from those of Lejoka-Brown and there is little possibility of living together under one roof with such divergent views and faith or belief practices. One would conclude by saying that Liza and Lejoka-Brown are religiously incompatible.

### **The Father**

August Strindberg (1887) in *The Father* also deals with religious conflict between Laura and Captain. The play is another clear exposition of what Inter-faith marriages represent. This is due to the fact that Captain as an Atheist did not believe in God and would have nothing to do with the religion of his wife Laura which was Christian. It seems to portray Laura as a feminist and domineering woman, who was selfish in her marital ambitions. Clearly, however, the root cause of the conflict here is the differences in religious practice as to how each of them wanted to raise their only daughter. The conflict would not have aggravated if Laura and Captain had been practicing the same religion as Christians or decided to be Atheists. According to Jonas (Pastor) who is also Laura's brother, Laura is used to having her way since childhood. This draws us back to the statement of Ellis when he implies that people's upbringing is an influence on their lives later. This is captured in the Captain's complaints to Jonas thus:

Captain: More than her confirmation; it was the question of her whole upbringing. This house is filled with women and every one of them wants to bring up my little girl. Your stepmother wants her to be a spiritualist; Laura hopes to

make an artist out of her; the governess wants her to be a Methodist; Old Margaret steers her to the Baptists and the kitchen-help want her to join the Salvation Army. You can't pull up a person in several different directions at once without their coming apart. The trouble is that I, who have the primary responsibility for developing her mind and talents, am constantly thwarted. I've got to get her out of this house<sup>21</sup>.

Strindberg in this play, engages Laura as a feminist character who decides to use her power as a woman and a mother to their only daughter, to destroy the decisions of her Atheist husband. One can say that, primarily, the conflict would not have aggravated if Laura and Captain had been practicing the same religion. A consensus as to what Bertha did with her life would have been reached. When Laura, in her feminine character realised that there was nothing she could do to have her way, she psychologically abused the mind of Adolph into believing that he was not the father of their only daughter.

As stated by Oduyoye (2009:100) earlier that “religion is used to justify acts of violence against, children, men and women”<sup>22</sup>. The above statement clearly relates to Laura not being realistic with her actions. She clearly has the conscience to do the right thing but kept hiding under the umbrella of religion to justify her actions of abuse, self-interest and feminine zeal to destroy her husband. Laura's desire to raise Bertha her own way seemed to dwindle when Captain said “a child is brought up in the faith of her father- that's the law”. According to Biblical principles, as stated earlier in the book of Ephesians 5:22 of the King James Bible, the man is the head of the home. One can therefore say, that Laura was acting on her own impulse and the desire to ruin her husband's career so that she

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<sup>21</sup> Strindberg, A . *The Father*. Translated by Evert Sprinchorn. Published by Amber Lane Press. 1887 p. 20- 25

<sup>22</sup> Oduyoye, A.M. *Architecture for Violence against Women in Ghana*. Gender Studies and Human Rights Documentation Centre. 2001, p. 99

could always have him and refer to him as a failure, using religion as an excuse. She did not allow her husband to make the final decisions on how to raise their only daughter. Originally, we can see from the play that Laura and Adolph had other conflicts to resolve including the fight for superiority. The only reason it seemed Laura gained the upper hand was the disagreement over their child's future. Although there is a fundamental cause for religious conflict, Laura practically states "yes, it's strange, but I could never look at a man without feeling superior". This statement is in great contrast to Laura's own protestant faith assuming superiority over her husband and home. Earlier in the play, we discover that Laura had intercepted Adolph's letters, reported him to be mentally ill all in a bid to put him in an asylum and take over his home, money and property. Adolph is paralysed in the end and Laura gets her way. In conclusion, the researcher is of the opinion that the conflict in this play is not purely religious but a justification of one's action using religion as Laura says in the concluding part of the play;

Laura: I don't know that I have ever thought about or intended any of the things you imagine. Perhaps, some dim desire to remove you as an obstacle ruled my actions at times. If you see some design in them, it's possible it was there, though I wasn't aware of it. I never laid any plans. Things merely rolled along the rails you yourself laid out. And before God and my conscience, I feel that I am innocent, even if I am not, your presence was like a stone weighing on my breast, pressing and hurting until I had to shake off the burden. That's how it was, and if I have struck you, as a reflex action, I ask you to forgive me.  
(Strindberg, 595 20-25)

Pergamont (2001) also expressed his views by saying "People want to get something out of religion in their personal lives. They don't want to just sit quietly and be told what to

do. They want to have more in a way of experience and participation”<sup>23</sup>. The above statement in the researcher’s opinion is an indication that Laura’s actions were influenced by the desire to train their only daughter her (Protestant) way. She might have been zealous to take the credit for Bertha’s religious inclination as a way of snatching her from the possible grips of Adolph’s Atheism.

### **Atobra**

Appiah- Adjei’s (2011) *Atobra* draws our attention to another kind of religious conflict. Although Atobra and Agartha were not legally married nor bounded by custom and tradition, they were spiritually bonded by a ritual that had religious implications as indicated in the following lines;

Agartha: Kofi do you say that you love me?  
Atobra: More than myself, more than the morning dew.  
Agartha: Then prove it.  
Atobra: What would you want me to do to prove it?  
Agartha: Just this. (*Agartha goes to the kitchen .Comes back with a bottle of schnapp, a razor blade and a drinking glass*) Here is a razor blade, a glass and a bottle of schnapp. Cut yourself and let me cut myself for blood to flow from the view of each other. Let us drink from the same glass, each others blood to prove our love for each other. (Movement 2 p5)

The singular act of Agartha to force Atobra into a blood covenant is an action that binds them together both spiritually and physically. It is often said that such actions knit the souls of the partakers together and practiced as a ritual mostly before a shrine or god as demonstrated by Atobra and Agartha. There is a conflict of religion between Atobra and Agartha here because the former did not believe in the act of blood covenant but in order to please Agartha, he sells his soul as a sign of commitment. In most African countries including Ghana, religious practices are backed by rituals, especially in traditional

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<sup>23</sup> Pergamont and Mahoney. *Review of Religious Research*. Volume 44:3. 2001, p 220-236

religious circles. This point is relative to the statement of Diane Kayongo- Male (1984) in *The Sociology of the African Family* when she says;

Christianity spread through most of Africa during the colonial period. Missionaries were among the first Europeans to have rather intimate contacts with the inhabitants, though the contact was often negative. With little knowledge of the values of the Africans, many of the early missionaries denounced the sacrifice to ancestors, magic, betrothal of children, inheritance of widows, polygamy, many types of songs and dances, initiation ceremonies and bride wealth. Such denunciations over time did undermine traditional customs and beliefs which had protected married life and kinship relationships<sup>24</sup>.

One may conclude by saying that although the incidence of religious conflict is not regular in the play *Atobra*, the singular ritual of covenant between *Atobra* and *Agartha* is vital to the development of the plot and the conflict process.

### **A Man For All Seasons**

*A Man For All Seasons* by Robert Bolt (1960) is one play that carries a lot of significance in religious marital conflict. So far, it is the only play that categorically discusses Intra-faith or same faith conflict in marriage. The plot relates the true story of King Henry VIII of England and Sir Thomas More who would not endorse the divorce of the king to his ageing wife Catherine because she could not bear him a son. According to Christian doctrine, divorce and remarriage are against the laws and principles of the Catholic Church thus preventing King Henry from divorcing his wife the queen, in order to marry Anne Boleyn with whom he had fallen in love (Malachi 2:16). In his desperate attempt to have a son, he tries to force Sir Thomas More to change the doctrine of the Catholic Church. Despite the fact that this conflict of religion does not directly involve the exchange of words between Catherine and Henry, the victim here is Catherine. In the

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<sup>24</sup> Kayongo-Male, D. *Sociology of the African Family*. Longman- New York. 1984, p. 45

first place, observations proved that Catherine was the wife of the elder brother of King Henry VIII and should not have been given as wife to him after the death of her husband. The Pope, however, based on Deuteronomy 25 verse 17 of the old testament of the Bible (King James version), agreed for Henry to become king with his late brother's wife Catherine as queen. This action of the Pope is practically against the doctrine of the Catholic Church. When later Henry falls in love with another woman, he decides to use his authority with members of his court to grant himself divorce. The religious conflict here extends to Thomas Moore who refuses to change the doctrine to suit King Henry, the Pope and the Catholic Church as a whole. More's stand for God as he claims and commitment to the Catholic Church and doctrine makes him resign from the King's court as he says;

More: And when we stand before God and you are sent to paradise for doing according to your conscience and I am damned for not doing according to mine, will you come with me for fellowship?<sup>25</sup>

This issue of religious conflict of marriage and in marriage takes a different turn as Thomas More is executed and King Henry VIII breaks away from the Catholic Church; a birth of the Anglican Church of England with new rules and doctrines on marriage and divorce.

Henry's attitude brings into light Pergamont and Mahoney's (2003) statement that religion is distinctive because it incorporates into people's ideology of sacred things in the search for significant goals and values. Religion, he said "offers prescriptive messages about right and wrong behaviours that fulfil the parameters of sacred relationships"<sup>26</sup>. This statement by Pergamont et al shows clearly that King Henry, in an

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<sup>25</sup> Bolt Robert, *A Man For All Seasons*. Heineman Plays, 1960. 342

<sup>26</sup> Pergamont and Mahoney. *Review of Religious Research*. Vol 44:3. 2003, p. 220- 236

attempt to satisfy his selfish ambitions, decided to prescribe his own antidote to what he thought appropriate. He therefore sought to create principles that suited his desires with regards to marriage and divorce contrary to Catholic doctrine. It is obvious then that, King Henry's breakaway from the Catholic Church was a choice he made in search of distinctive goals to suit his prescriptions of right and wrong in his religious perceptions. In this play, the researcher relates to religious conflict in marriage since the marriage contracted between Henry and Catherine did not fall in line with the Catholic doctrine in the first place. Every other occurrence in the play is based on the mistake, allegedly, of the Pope to grant such a marriage. The consequences of the marriage, divorce and remarriage of the king were religiously connected to church doctrine and its implications on marriages.

### **The Dilemma of a Ghost**

Our next play for discussion is Ama Ata Aidoo's (1965) highlights on conflict in *The Dilemma of a Ghost*. Conflict between Eulalie and Ato is presented from the cultural perspective. Coincidentally, culture and religion seem to walk hand in hand as religion is said to be a subset of culture. The cultural and religious perspective of Eulalie and Ato which have divergent viewpoints created a platform for serious conflict in their marriage. Aidoo presents Eulalie in the European context which made her pay no particular attention to the concerns of her in-laws and the community at large in relation to childbirth. Other issues on the role and duties of women, in the Ghanaian context of marriage, their relationship with in-laws and other minor issues that are culture based, form the centre of conflict in *The Dilemma of a Ghost*. Lloyd W. Brown (2002:585) rightly affirms this stance when he boldly asserts:

The ghost's dilemma is not only presented within Ato's consciousness (by way of his dream), thereby emphasising the tales immediate

psychological pertinence. It is also presented in the communal context of the oral tradition to which it belongs (by way of the children's play song), thereby juxtaposing Ato's dilemma a Ghanaian with the communal custom which insist upon the need to deal with moral and social dilemmas. This kind of juxtaposition is as important to the play's structure as it is to the characterisation of Ato himself, for the play brings together the distinctive literary conventions of different cultural traditions.<sup>27</sup>

Brown further emphasises on his idea when he describes Eulalie as "the product of a machine-culture" when the women speak of a cultural tradition totally strange to her. She is portrayed as "progressively alienated" with the confrontations and expectations of a wife and mother in the Ghanaian context. On the other hand, the American background and upbringing, the religious culture and habits she represents results in her hostility to her in-laws. In agreement with Brown's assertion, Nukunya (1992:53) also relates that "Religion may be described as the beliefs and practices associated with the supernatural"<sup>28</sup>. He is of the view that, the concept of Religion embraces many aspects of man's relationship with the supernatural including magic, witchcraft, as well as practices associated with dead ancestors. It is thus clear that Ato's religious background was entirely different from what Eulalie was accustomed to hence the conflicting issues of stomach purification for childbirth and the call on ancestors for fertility.

On another note, in disagreement with some of Brown's (2002:585) assertion, the blame should be put on Ato who did not educate his wife properly neither did he take time to speak to his family members on their decision as husband and wife to delay childbirth. This action emphasises the lack of proper communication and dialogue as another source

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<sup>27</sup> Brown, W. Lloyd. *Modern African Drama. Oral Tradition in Dilemma of a Ghost*. Edited by Biodun Jeyifo. Cornell University. W. W. NORTON & COMPANY. New York. London. 2002 p 585.

<sup>28</sup> Nukunya, G.K. *Tradition and Change in Ghana. The Concept of Religion*. Ghana University Press- Accra. 1992, p. 52- 53

of religious conflict in marriage where partners do not take the trouble and time to speak on issues that will give a clearer understanding to their spouses. Generally in Africa and specifically in Ghana, marriage between two people involves the extended family. It therefore becomes imperative to inform or explain certain crucial decisions to those who matter most in the family as in the case of Ato whose family treasure was sold in order to enable him study abroad. It is assumed that in the repayment of the family's sacrifice, he was to return home to support his nephews and nieces and serve as a role model to them.

Finally, it is important to note that the clash of cultures, which has a bearing on the religious inclination of Ato and Eulalie, is fundamental to the conflict that ensued between them. Conflict in marriage is inevitable as identified in our discussion earlier. However, the incidence of religious conflict in marriage is quite basic and fundamental, causing a lot of confusion in the home of a couple. This is due to the religious inclination of couples who are not religiously united in the same faith and doctrine. The issue of religious conflict, however, is not of divergent religion as in the example of Muslim and Traditional or Christian and Traditional marriages. As observed, it is clear that there are deep rooted problems of differences in doctrinal teaching even among the different Christian denominations and the conflict that erupts from these marriages can result in serious consequences if the couple in question do not seek to resolve issues amicably.

## CHAPTER THREE

### METHODOLOGY

#### Introduction

This chapter exposes the general design, the collection of data and techniques used and also, the systematic study of the processes involved in writing the play. According to Barrault (1964:41) “drama is as old as man”; it is closely linked to him as his double for the theatrical game is inherent in the existence of any living being”<sup>29</sup>. This chapter will therefore be discussing the various stages involved in producing the play including the informal interviews, the distribution and analysis of questionnaires and relating people’s experiences as well as the researcher’s personal experiences. It is going to explore the various phases of religious conflict in marriage and how couples react to each other in real life situations. In another instance, August Wilson as quoted in Stephanie Arnold’s (1998:62) *The Creative Spirit* says;

To write is to fix language, to get it down and fix it to a spot and have its meaning and be fat with substance. It is in many ways a remaking of the self in which all the parts have been realigned, redistributed and reassembled into a new being of sense and harmony. You have wrought something into being and what you have wrought is what you have learned about life, and what you have learned is always pointed toward moving the harbourless parts of your being closer to home.

To write is to forever circle the maps, marking it all down, the latitude and longitude of each specific bearing, giving new meaning to something very old and very sacred- life itself.<sup>30</sup>

In agreement with Wilson’s statements, the researcher is inspired to relate most of her personal experiences in familiarity with issues from both the past and present. This idea

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<sup>29</sup> Barrault, J. *The Context And Craft of Drama* .Edited by J L Rosenberg . Chandler Publishing Company. 1964 , p 41-43.

<sup>30</sup> Arnold, S. *The Creative Spirit. An Introduction To Theatre* Edited by Mayfield Publishing Company . 1998, p 62.

in the general sense will expose the reality and practicality of the topic and issues being discussed in this chapter.

### **Study Design**

This study employs the qualitative and quantitative research methods. It involves the analytical and interpretative investigations into the role and perceptions of religion and conflict in marriage through the use of questionnaire and the play *Unequal Yoking*. With the piece of drama, inspiration is drawn from various angles, the working process is described and the issues given an interpretation in solving the issue of religious conflict in marriage.

### **Techniques of Data Collection**

Informal interviews and questionnaires have been employed as the main source for the collection of data. The researcher used questionnaires to collate data on the perceptions of people in relation to conflict in marriage. The questions focused mainly on married couples and people who were above the age of eighteen years and in a marriage relationship. The choice of this group of people was to give a fair interpretation to the views of people in marriage on conflict and how couples resolved such issues in the marriage. The researcher also wanted to find out if churches had the habit of preventing their members from marrying outside their local church. The research further gathered a lot of information from experienced marriage counsellors, books on marriage and conflict, articles on religion and religious conflict on the internet for the study.

Other readings include newspapers, journal abstracts, radio and television shows. These have been very helpful in the development of the play. One interesting aspect was the

study of different doctrines of different denominations in the Christian religion and the roles they play in the marriage of a couple. The development of the play was born as a result of the study of several churches which can be divided into the categories of Orthodox, Pentecostal, Charismatic and Independent Churches respectively. Some questionnaires were distributed within the confines of The University of Ghana, Legon and others were duly administered to members of the Sheepfold Chapel on the Spintex Road in Accra. The questionnaires were to determine the prevalence and impact of conflict in marriage with specific reference to religion. Initially, fifty questionnaires were given out but only thirty of these were duly filled and returned to the researcher. Most of the questionnaires were filled by the respondents themselves while the researcher filled some for those who were semi-literate. It is important to note that the questionnaires were strictly to be filled by married people. The tables and charts on the next page are the analysis of data collated from the questionnaires.

### 3.1 Social and demographic characteristics of respondents

Table 3.1 (a): Age of respondents from University of Ghana Campus

Age	Frequency	Percentage
18 – 30	13	43.3
31 – 40	11	36.7
41 – 50	2	6.7
51 – 60	4	13.3
Total	30	100

Source: Researcher's field work, 2013

Table 3.1 (b): Gender of respondents from University of Ghana Campus

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	10	33.3
Female	20	66.7
Total	30	100

Source: Researcher's field work, 2013

**Table 3.1 (c): Educational background of respondents**

Qualification	Frequency	Percentage
Primary	1	3.3
Secondary	5	16.7
Tertiary	24	80
Total	30	100

**Source: Researcher's field work, 2013**

**Table 3.1 (d): Types of marriage**

Types of marriage	Frequency	Percentage
Customary	8	26.7
Ordinance	22	73.3
Total	30	100

**Source: Researcher's field work, 2013**

**Table 3.1 (e): Duration of marriage**

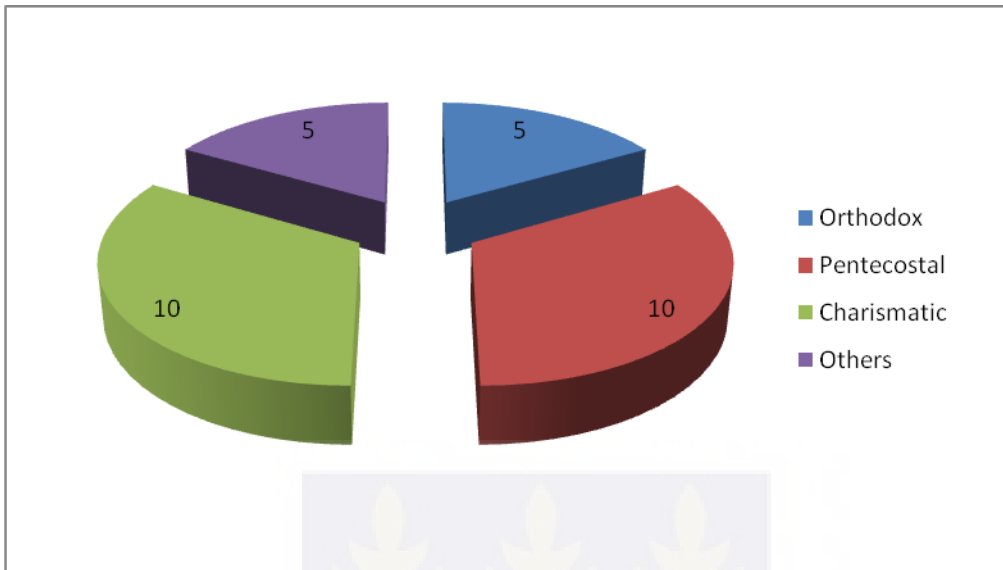
Years of marriage	Frequency	Percentage
Less than a year	6	20
2 – 5 years	9	30
6 -9 years	7	23.3
10 – 14 years	2	6.7
15 or more	6	20
Total	30	100

**Source: Researcher's field work, 2013**

The tables shown in figures 3.1 (a) to 3.1 (e) analyse in figures the demographic background of respondents to the questionnaires ranging from age, sex, educational background, length of marriage and type of marriage.

**3.2 Perceptions and impact of conflict in marriage**

**Figure 3.2 (a) Religious denomination of respondents**



**Source: Researcher’s field work, 2013**

Table 3.2 (a) shows a fair distribution of the religious affiliations of the various respondents. It is obvious from the chart that majority of the respondents belong to either the Pentecostal or Charismatic churches while a few of them belong to the Orthodox and other denominations within the Christian faith.

**Table 3.2 (b) Are you and your spouse, members of the same church?**

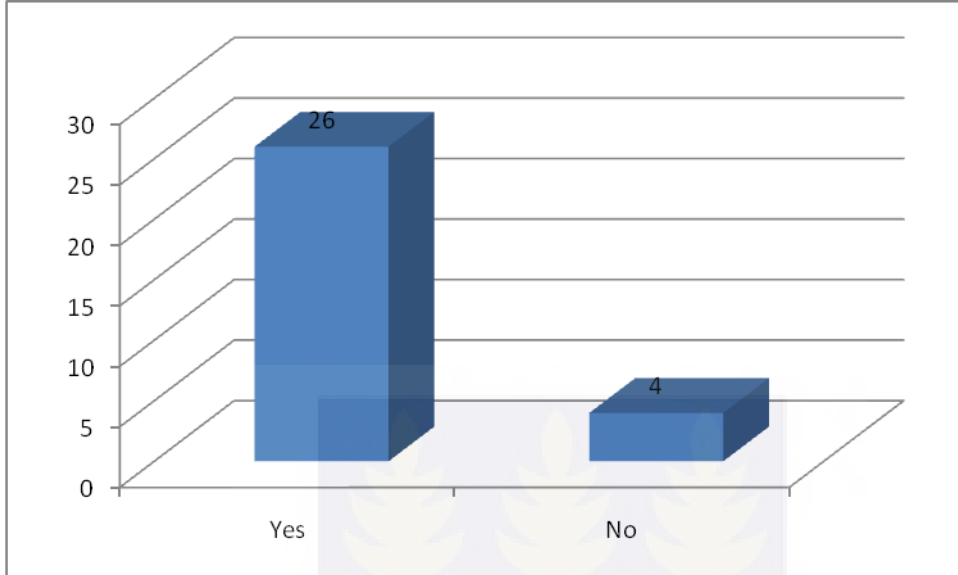
Are you members of same church?	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	21	70
No	9	30
Total	30	100

**Source: Researcher’s fieldwork, 2013**

Figure 3.2 (c) clearly confirms the prevalence of conflict in marriage as indicated in the figure above. Majority of respondents, forming 86.7 percent have been experiencing conflict or disagreement in their marital relationship. However, 13.3 percent do not experience conflict with their spouses.

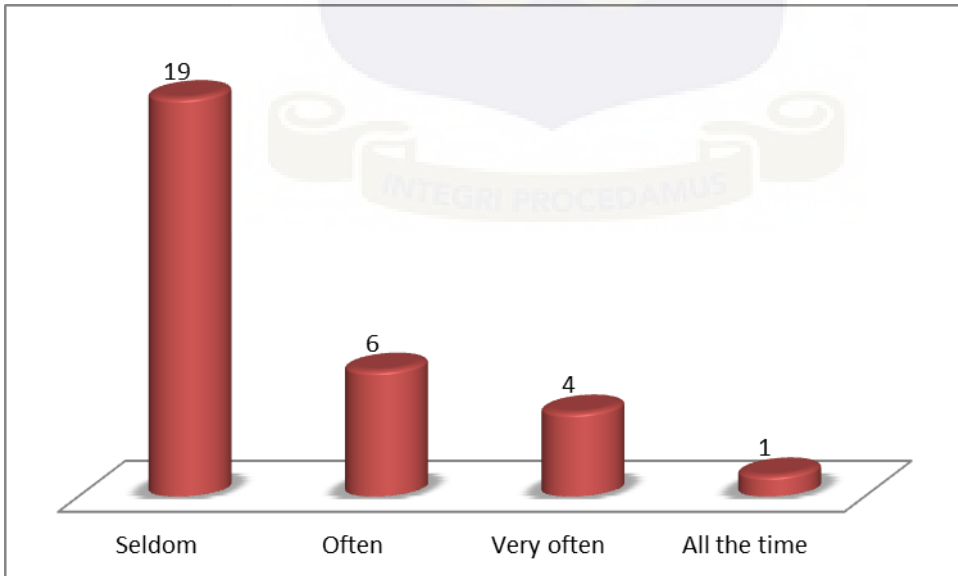
Table 3.2 (b) indicates that 70 percent of the respondents are members and fellowship in the same church with their spouses.

**Figure 3.2 (c) Disagreements in marriage**



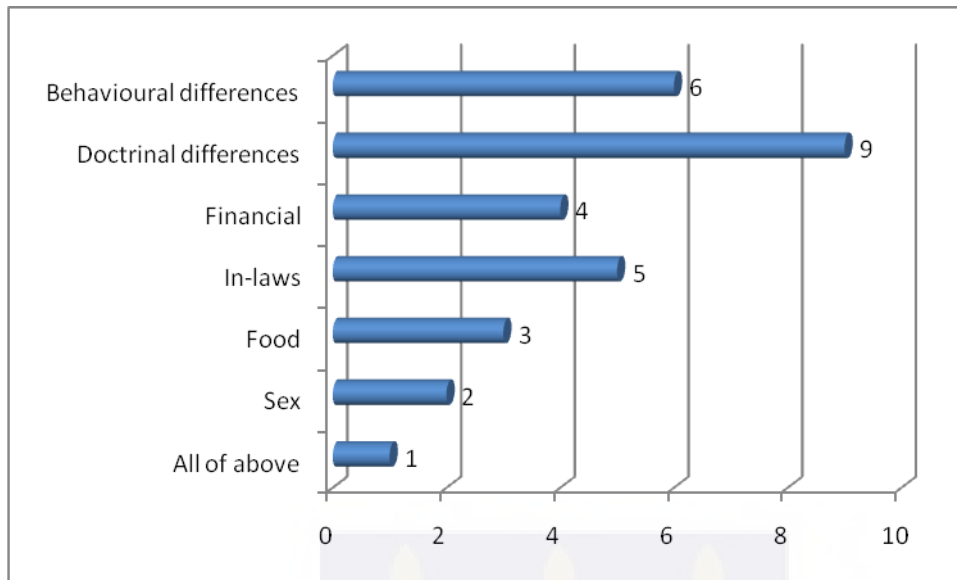
Source: Researcher's fieldwork, 2013

**Table 3.2 (d) How often do you disagree with each other?**



Source: Researcher's fieldwork, 2013

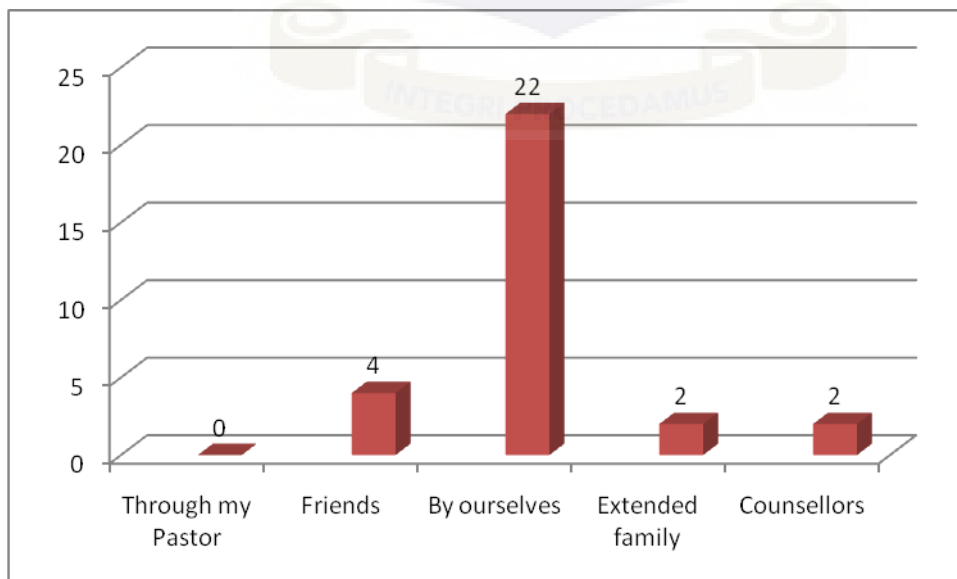
**Table 3.2 (e) Major causes of marital conflict**



**Source: Researcher’s fieldwork, 2013**

Majority of respondents indicated from table 3.2(e) above that the major cause of conflict in marriage is due to doctrinal differences among couples. It is however refreshing to notice that in table 3.2 (f) that 22 out of thirty respondents claim they resolve their marital disagreements with their spouses on their own or by themselves.

**Table 3.2 (f) Ways of resolving conflict/disagreements**



**Source: Researcher’s fieldwork, 2013**

**Table 3.2 (g) Are you in the right relationship**

Right relationship?	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	24	80
No	6	20
Total	30	100

**Source: Researcher's fieldwork, 2013**

**Table 3.2 (h) Change of Spouse if given the chance**

Change of spouse	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	6	20
No	24	80
Total	30	100

**Source: Researcher's fieldwork, 2013**

### **3.3 Diversity of doctrinal teachings and conflict in marriage**

**Table 3.3 (a) Doctrinal differences causing disagreements in marriage**

Doctrinal differences and conflict	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	26	86.7
No	4	13.3
Total	30	100

**Source: Researcher's fieldwork, 2013**

**Table 3.3 (b) Does your church agree to inter-denominational marriage**

Church rules on marriage	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	16	53.3
No	14	46.7
Total	30	100

**Source: Researcher's fieldwork, 2013**

**Table 3.3 (c) Would you marry someone from a different Christian denomination**

Marry from different denomination	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	8	26.7
No	22	73.3
Total	30	100

Source: Researcher’s fieldwork, 2013

**Table 3.3 (d) Effect of conflict on marriages**

Effect of conflict	Frequency	Percentage
Builds relationship	18	60
Destroys marriage	12	40
Total	30	100

Source: Researcher’s fieldwork, 2013

Generally, it is clear from the data that most couples fellowship in the same church but it is not clear whether they met in the same church or not. Upon further questioning, some however, said they met as worshippers from different churches, but for love for each other did not see denominational differences as a barrier. Others stated that to avoid doctrinal differences and some teachings that could affect their relationships; they thought it wise to marry from the same church. Another group indicated that though they met each other in different denominations, they made the decision to attend either the church of the husband or that of the wife, with most of the wives joining their husbands’ churches.

### **The Play Creation Process**

This section describes the methods and processes used in the development of the play.

Jean Villar is quoted in the *Context and Craft of Drama* by Corrigan (1964:52);

Playwright! You cannot employ the novelist’s resource of description and explanation; and what real good would his palette of true details from life be to you? Your characters must talk, whether in prose or verse, and you know that you have only one effective weapon: the spoken word<sup>31</sup>.

<sup>31</sup> Jean Villar as cited by Corrigan, W. R. *The Context and Craft of Drama*. 1964, p 51-53.

With the above statement in mind, I decided to create characters that would express themselves more and as well use body gestures. Argument or disagreement that breeds conflict mostly involves the use of words and gestures. For this reason, I tried to make my characters as expressive as they can be in carrying their messages across. In building the vocabulary for my play, I relied mostly on people's words during marital conflict, personal experiences and the experiences of other people in marriage as related to me. In developing the process of the play, I drew a lot of inspiration and guide from Gombrich (1993:43) as cited in Joseph Kingler's PhD dissertation which outlined the following methodology for playwriting as follows;

- a) Intuition
- b) Germinal idea
- c) Collection of data
- d) Rough scenario
- e) Scenario and conclusion<sup>32</sup>

Klinger also drew inspiration in Sam Smiley's (2005) *Structure of An Action*, thus making my work easier in avoiding the process of "re inventing the wheel"<sup>33</sup>. Although Kingler's methodology was of great help, I must confess I did not solely rely on his procedures for the writing of my play. Considering the fact that the play was my idea, I had to work in accordance with my decisions on what I thought was appropriate.

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<sup>32</sup> Gombrich E.H, *The Story of Art* cited by Joseph Kingler *Methodology for Playwriting*. A dissertation in Fine Arts, submitted to The Graduate Faculty of Texas Tech University, In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy(PhD) Approved. 1993 p 42-47

<sup>33</sup> Smiley Sam, Norman Bert. *Playwriting: The Structure of an Action*. Yale University Press. October, 2005 p. 21

## **Intuition**

With reference to the statement of August Wilson, “You have wrought something into being and what you have wrought is what you have learned about life”, I was given the focus for the idea to write about religious conflict in marriage. Aside that, observations from plays discussed in my literature review clearly reveal that not much work has been done in theatre with regards to Intra-faith based conflict in marriage. Having been married for over fourteen years, I discovered that my marriage was not without conflict. Despite the fact that my husband and I spoke the same language, had the same faith, prayed together most of the times and had passion for so many things in common, our marriage still had other issues that came up as conflict from time to time. The other issues that mostly resulted in disagreements include way of dressing, food, habits, money, friends, in-laws, etc. I resolved to be quiet and deal with some of the issues to the best of my ability until I started hearing from close friends about their marital problems. The title “*Unequal Yoking*” came to me when I listened to the bizarre experiences of a lady friend who was a devoted Charismatic but got married to a Muslim. Ten years after the marriage which was in 2007, she called me from Kumasi only to break the news of her divorce. This separation, however, came as a result of physical abuse, emotional torment and a lot of implications including the issue of religious differences. By this time, there was nothing I could do but to resort to counselling and encouragement. One observation that was vivid and clear was that, you cannot totally blame one party in such issues because the root cause of their problem was religious in nature.

I had a sudden awakening to the fact that my marriage was sustained because we (my husband and I) listened to the same sermons all the time, fasted together and prayed together.

Little did I know that I was to develop a deep interest in counselling married people and especially prospective couples as to how to choose their partners and handle conflict in their relationships. However, in consultation with my supervisor Ms Cecilia Adjei, I decided to focus on conflict in marriage of the same faith religion (Intra-faith). Personally, I have developed the desire to see the resolution of conflict between two people who profess the same faith and since marriage concerns almost everybody, it then becomes a social drama. The presentation of issues in a real and practical sense was my goal.

### **Germinal Idea**

Smiley's second step as cited by Joseph Kingler is the germinal idea in which he said "nothing is developed" but a piece of drama can be born. Character, place, incident, conceptual thought, situation or informational areas are the focus of the germinal idea. Initially, the play was to be about different religions but with time, I had to focus on the Independent and Charismatic Christian doctrines. This decision was to give me enough differences in doctrines that are susceptible to generating conflict between husband and wife. The Independent churches also popularly called Spiritual Churches in Ghana have a lot of doctrinally based biblical prohibitions on food, dressing, jewellery and days of worship which is in sharp contrast to the modern day "Charismatic believer". Although they all believe in God and Jesus Christ, the basis for conflict are the differences in church doctrine. Interestingly, there seems to be a focal point of agreement in the man being the head of the house as is practiced mostly in our Ghanaian society.

### Data Collection

In collecting data for my play, I focused on meaning concerning the Orthodox, Charismatic and Independent churches. I read a lot of articles and books on their doctrines and practices. I also had a lot of information on the internet on the Biblical foundations that characterised their faith. I interviewed some of them especially the married ones and there I discovered that most of those from the Charismatic churches were not encouraged to marry outside the church, as compared to the Orthodox churches, due to doctrinal differences. In general, it is obvious from interviews conducted that, Orthodox churches do not necessarily forbid their members marrying from other churches as compared to the Charismatic Churches.

Pastor Qolyns of the Legon branch of the Church of Christ, on the other hand, believes that conflict exists in every marriage irrespective of your religious inclination. He argues out his opinion that two people who have been brought up differently will have divergent views no matter how close they are. However, he asserts that the notion of superiority is common to the various churches and their doctrines and of course, no church will accept inferiority to the other. Twumasi Ankrah (1994:96), in his *Observations on Christian Churches in Ghana* asserts;

Initially, the Charismatic churches stood in marked contrast to the major Christian Missionary denominations- the so called Orthodox churches –by their emphasis on spiritualism, healing and the expressiveness of the congregation in times of worship...In their worship, the groups engage in various activities which (by their own assertion) are either meant to invoke the Holy spirit of God or to be interpreted as the sign of his descent upon the worshippers. These activities include rhythmic swaying of the body, usually with stamping to repetitious music both vocal and instrumental...<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> Ankrah ,T.K, International Review of Modern Sociology, Some Observation on Christian Churches and Worship in Ghana. Published by International Journals. 1994 p 96

The above assertion by Twumasi is a clear differentiation between the Orthodox and Charismatic churches, where doctrinal practices of worship distinguish them although they all believe in Jesus Christ and profess to be Christians.

### **Working Title**

*Unequal Yoking*

### **Characters**

In emphasising the role of religious conflict in marriage, I needed to create characters that were fanatic in their doctrine of faith. Mawuse, who was a Charismatic, was made an extremist character and this was intended to drive home the conflict of doctrinal differences. Larbi on the other hand, focused on his religion and was willing to bend at the beginning but later took a stride at his wife's extremist behaviour. Initially, I thought of bringing out tragic consequences of religious conflict but upon a second thought, I realised it was not going to drive home my message of religious tolerance. The play was then changed into a conflict resolution process where an appeal would be made to the consciences of the parties involved.

### **Subject**

The play will focus on doctrinal differences among Christians which are likely to lead to conflict in marriage.

### **Conflict**

The main conflict in the play is the doctrinal differences that spring up in the belief of Larbi and Mawuse several years after they have been married. Being a couple with religious differences, each of them fights for superiority of their faith resulting in serious

tension and conflict. The man did not believe that his wife's excesses could solve the problem of her inability to have more children, many years after their first child. Mawuse on the other hand, due to her new practice of faith, was made to believe that her problem emanated from her husband's family members whom she referred to as witches and wizards.

### **Dialogue**

The dialogue of the play did not follow a specific pattern but I decided to use provocative words that would cause parties to react to each other violently with abusive and degrading speech. Most of the lines were developed by inferring from the words of the person who last spoke. This is clearly the way the conflict developed from one stage to another. There are several instances, however, when I had to pick and use people's words during arguments with their spouse's. I developed an itchy ear, ready to listen to peoples marital problems which I infused into my play. Some of the lines were, however, changed from time to time when I read through and saw it as too vulgar or inappropriate. I also had to rely on the views of others who read through my play to change some words which they termed unacceptable.

### **Schedule**

It is important to note that I did not follow any specific schedule. I started the play and I had to break for almost three weeks in succession because my mind became blunt with no creative idea. That is not to say that I did not plot the play but an indication of putting sequential events, that were meaningful and connected to each other was my focus.

### **Scenario**

At this stage, it had become obvious that I was more comfortable with August Wilson's writing techniques in speaking about the things you have learned in life and bringing them to bear on your work. To this end, most of the characters in the play are people I have met in my life and how they relate to issues of conflict in marriage. Although the conflict situations did not directly fall in line with issues of religion, the traits displayed during these times were of vital importance to the development of the play. Practically, there is no character in the play whose traits cannot be inferred from friends, colleagues to family members.

Mawuse as an example was the close study of my school colleague and friend (name withheld). As a newly married woman, she displayed a lot of immaturity in handling issues of conflict with her husband. For the purpose of this study, I would like to describe briefly some character traits represented in my play.

### **CHARACTERS**

Larbi:

Gender: Male

Character: Brightmore Nugah

Although very tolerant in nature, when pushed to the wall, he is likely easy to take a firm stance with his decisions. He does not like to be taken for granted, especially by very close associates. Larbi is very independent and cannot be easily influenced. When he takes a decision, it is very difficult to persuade him.

Mawuse:

Gender: Female

Character: Imaginary

Due to the deviant nature of this character in the play, the playwright chose to put bits and pieces of different characters together. This character is moved to and fro by the wind of doctrine. Observations have shown that some women are highly susceptible to the influence of friends into all manner of religious doctrines. This may be due to one or two problems they encounter in their marriages. Such attitude only leads them deeper into strange doctrines in the name of church and Christianity.

Adatsi: Laud

Gender: Male

Character: Mr Africanus Aveh.

Mr Aveh is a lecturer at the Theatre Arts Department at the University of Ghana, Legon. Mr Aveh is a very friendly but principled person. He loves to see other people's problems solved sometimes at the expense of his own comfort. He is a very lovable person with the ability to make sacrifices for others in order to bring peace. Aside all of these, he is a very principled character.

Adadewa:

Gender: Female

Character: Miss Cecilia Adjei.

Ms Cecilia Adjei is a lecturer at the Theatre Arts Department of the University of Ghana, Legon. She is a very strong character who does not encourage wrong attitudes. She is very confident and tries to make wrong things right. Ms Adjei would make any sacrifices to make sure that the people she holds dear are comfortable. She is a problem solver. On

the other hand, she can be blunt and reactive. She enjoys helping others to achieve desired goals. She is hardworking and accommodating.

### **Outline of Work**

#### **Act I**

In this scene, we are introduced to the good old days of the Larbi when everything was fine. We also see the church activities of Mawuse, how she handles her home, family and work because of the prayer meetings. On the other hand, Larbi and Mawuse discuss the issue. Sadia talks about her mistress's church going activities. There is a confrontation from Larbi as he meets Akosua in his house ready to take Mawuse to church again. Larbi drives Akosua out. This leads to a misunderstanding between Mawuse and Larbi and he warns his wife from going to church. Larbi invites his wife to his uncle's funeral but she turns down the invitation, calling them witches and wizards. Akosua secretly visits Mawuse in her husband's absence and they have a prayer time, invoking spirits. Sadia tries to imitate them. Larbi and Adadewa come back from their uncle's funeral which Mawuse refused to attend. Adadewa discovers Mawuse's excesses and invites Abigail over for Christmas with her children.

#### **Act II**

Larbi and Mawuse argue over the release of Abigail to Adadewa's place for Christmas. Abigail reveals secrets her mother told her about Adadewa to her father. Adadewa is accused of the practice of witchcraft by Mawuse. Adadewa visits Mawuse in her brother's absence to caution her on irresponsible behaviour. Mawuse ends up accusing her in-laws openly as witches responsible for her inability to have more children.

### **Act III**

Larbi invites Laud over for a dinner which at Mawuse refuses to prepare the meals. There is a confrontation between husband and wife which results in Larbi throwing Mawuse out of their matrimonial home. She goes to report the issue to her family members who meet with the in-laws to settle the conflict. Pastors and family members are invited into the home of the couple. There is resolution of the long standing conflict between Larbi and Mawuse, but not without interjections of oppositions here and there. There is a final resolution as Larbi and Mawuse visit a medical expert to discover she was suffering from fibroid. Medical surgery is done and within a year, the couple give birth to twins.

### **First Draft**

The first draft of my play was the most difficult part. Although, I had written the characters and given them specific roles, it was not easy to consistently create tension and confusion leading to different conflict situations. I had to keep changing lines over and over again. It took me a great deal of time to build my characters and I kept working and framing them to reduce character flaws that have been observed, with several changes in grammar.

### **Revision**

The process of revision for my play was done solely with the help of my lecturer and supervisor, Ms Cecilia Adjei. She helped me in her capacity of a marriage counsellor whose interest was to make sure that the issues of conflict of doctrine were practically appropriate.

Characters were critically examined and assessed and given their best descriptions and roles. A few scenes were reworked and storyline changed to suit and propel the goal of religious doctrinal differences between Larbi and Mawuse. An example is that Abigail was initially created as a girl of about 19 years in the University but later changed to a 10 year old girl to suit the context of the play. One other important discussion with my supervisor was how to drive home the language and issues of conflict in the play.

### **Play Reading**

The play reading of *Unequal Yoking* was organised on Friday 12<sup>th</sup> April, 2013 at the Efua Sutherland Drama Studio of the School of Performing Arts at the University of Ghana, Legon. The time was 3pm and in attendance were lecturers, administrative staff and students of the Theatre Arts Department. Ms Cecilia Adjei who is also my Principal Supervisor acted as the chairperson for the event. The play reading was done by some graduate, final year and first year students of the Theatre Arts Department. The cast list is provided in the appendix. Various rehearsal sessions were organised prior to the final play reading event. During these rehearsals, students familiarised themselves with the script, pronunciation of words, noting down cues and the development of conflict before the play reading event. These helped in the presentation of lines in accordance with the tone and mood of conflict during delivery. As is the norm, a workshop was organised after the play reading to discuss issues arising out of the play presented. The presentation of doctrinal practices of the Seventh Day Adventist (SDA) church was critically challenged. Some people were of the view that it was like an attack on the S.D.A. church. Some Adventists' relevant issues in relation to doctrines were also discussed. Due to this development, in consultation with my supervisor, the focus of conflict was diverted from any specific church into general doctrinal practices of various churches put together.

### **Comments and Suggestions**

The following comments were noted during the discussions:

- 1) The language of the maid should be changed from pidgin into the use of English language with some words in vernacular.
- 2) The speeches were too long and should be reduced.
- 3) There are too many scenes and actions should flow without necessary cuts.
- 4) There were too many quoted scriptures in the play.
- 5) Names of churches should be changed and pastors alone should not resolve conflict. Other family members should be involved.
- 6) Mawuse's extreme church activities should not be limited to Saturdays only.

### **Unequal Yoking**

*Unequal Yoking* as a Bible phrase indicated in 2<sup>nd</sup> Cor. 6:14 by Paul where he states "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers; for what fellowship has righteousness with unrighteousness? And what communion has light with darkness?" has generated a lot of controversies with regards to marriage. In my opinion, however, the statement Paul made cannot be fit in a straight jacket as regarding marriage alone but other important issues that arise in the lives of a Christian. In another sense, the writer is of the view that *Unequal Yoking* in marriage can be presented in different perspectives. The writer's observation indicates that whereas *Unequal Yoking* can occur in the religious inclination of couples, it can also occur in other areas such as education, food, sex, clothing and culture among others.

The writer's *Unequal Yoking*, however, is specifically geared towards doctrinal differences of the same faith. The writer's opinion stands that, although two people may profess the same religion as may be the example in Christianity, various churches spring

up with different doctrines all under the same faith. These differences in doctrines of the same faith have the tendency to create a lot of controversies depending on the practice of what one believes in. To this end, the writer seeks to state categorically that the issue of *Unequal Yoking* is not different religions coming together but the same religious faith under different doctrinal practices. The play therefore seeks to expose conflict that may arise with regard to doctrinal differences of the same faith.



## CHAPTER FOUR

### FORMAL DECONSTRUCTING AND CONTEXTUAL ANALYSIS OF THE PLAY

This chapter formally deconstructs and analyses the play in its general context. Conflict in marriage is a generally accepted notion as indicated by Knox (1979) that, “conflict in marriage is inevitable”. It is, however, important to note that it comes in diverse forms and shapes. This brings into mind the general saying that “one man’s meat is another man’s poison”. With these issues at hand, this chapter discusses conflict in marriage with a specific indication to the role of religious conflict in marriage. *Unequal Yoking* is discussed based on its form and content, considering the religious and social context the play exposes.

#### **The Play**

*Unequal Yoking* is a social drama that elaborates the roles of religious differences in the lives of a couple. It is intended to evoke a change in the perceptions of religious differences in marriage. The play assumes its dramatic content from the doctrinal differences discussed and employs elements of humour, irony, sarcasm, language and most importantly, conflict. The play does not only criticise the role of doctrinal differences but tries to address the issue of intolerance and provides an alternative way to resolve such conflicts. *Unequal Yoking* also clearly condemns doctrinal superiority that some churches portray when their members assume that their doctrine is the best and all others are less important. The role of Mawuse is a clear indication that her religious inclination and doctrine, in her opinion, supersedes any other hence her persistent condemnation of Larbi’s family. Her new found church and doctrine seem to be giving her solutions to her problems by the death of her mother in-law and her husband’s uncle.

On this basis, she seems to feel superior in terms of religious practice. This is evident in her statement when she says;

Mawuse:        (*Arrogantly*) In fact, they are really powerful. Can't you see that your mother died and your uncle has followed? Very soon, that witch sister of yours will also go. Then, I will be free from their hold. (Act I Scene 1 p7)

The play criticises religious fanatics like Mawuse, who uses her religious doctrine and practice, to condemn acceptable societal norms and traditions. It is generally not acceptable in an African society to be absent from your mother in law's funeral but Mawuse goes to the extreme by using religion as a cover up. In addition to that, she accuses her in-laws of witchcraft and wizardry as being the cause of her inability to have more children. This action and attitude on the part of Mawuse is typical of religious fanatics who move from church to church, confused with various doctrines of the different churches they attend. Interestingly, any other social or family gathering is a taboo and she ends up not turning up at almost every family event both in her own family and that of her husband's. Larbi who is flexible and believes in freedom of worship suddenly realises that his wife (Mawuse) is getting out of hand and in an attempt to bring her to reason, more conflict ensues. However, the artistic purpose of the play does not limit the creativity of the artist. In exposing the practical and realistic tendencies of religious conflict in marriage, the play unfolds through a medium of the least provocation through words to deepen the conflict. The play also exposes the characteristics of issues that spring up conflict in every marriage. Marriage is an acceptable institution in every society and the role of conflict in marriage is unlimited and will forever remain with the society. The play operates within the normal home of a married couple in a contemporary Ghanaian society.

## CONTENT

### Theme

A varying number of themes play significant roles in *Unequal Yoking* but the most central of the playwright is *The need for religious and doctrinal tolerance in marriage*. Another very important issue that needs consideration in the play is *The need for religious congruence in marriage*. Although it is not the means to completely solve the prevalence of marital conflict, from the various discussions made so far in this study, it lessens the degree of the conflict situation. The play further dissects the actions and consequences of spouses who practice a different religion other than that of their partner and the effects it can have on their home and marriage in general. At the beginning of the play, Larbi and his wife are living happily until he begins to complain about his wife's unceasing church activities which are now getting out of hand. It is obvious that the main cause of the conflict is the religious change that affected Mawuse negatively in all fronts including her job. According to Larbi, he still could not find good reasons why Mawuse would resort to church 'adultery'. He refers to this in the following lines;

- Larbi: My dear, everything is the problem. Where did you go today too?
- Mawuse: Oh that, I went for a special prayer meeting with "Osofo I dey be" You Mean Sadia did not tell you?
- Larbi: In fact, this your everyday "pray for me" activity is becoming appalling. What at all is your problem in this life that has turned you into a church roaming ambassador?
- Mawuse: Is it not you I want to give more children? Look at Abi, she is almost eleven years and there is still no sign of pregnancy... (Act I Scene 1 p. 9)

The play as depicted the lines above, discusses the main reason for which Mawuse resorts to change of church which she indicated as looking for more children. This accounts for one of the various causes of doctrinal differences that breed conflict in the homes of couples which is detrimental to their unity of purpose in marriage. One very

important lesson that also runs in the play is the need for medical solution to questions we cannot answer by ourselves as it was discovered later that Mawuse had fibroid all the while she was moving from one church to the other. It further suggests that once a decision of marriage falls in place, doctrines of churches should not be used as a springboard for conflict as indicated by Adadewa on the next page;

Adadewa: The truth is that, I am a married woman with children too and I somehow understand how you feel in desperation for more children for my brother. All the same, the way you are going about the whole issue is quite unacceptable.

Mawuse: And what am I doing now?

Adadewa: I mean the way you follow friends about hopping from one church to the other. Aside that, you disrespect your husband so much that I just don't understand.

(Act II p. 27)

There is an indication from the above lines that Mawuse's disobedience accompanied her incessant church activities which is an unacceptable practice coming from a supposedly religious woman. Adadewa also thinks that her brother (Larbi) should take his stand as the head of the house and bring his wife to order as she says;

Adadewa: (*Still in shock*) So what have you done about it, did she give you any tangible reason?

Larbi: (*Bluntly*) She said she was looking for children or better still, she wanted to have more children. (ACT II scene 2 p. 15)

Apart from all other lessons in the play, *Unequal Yoking* also cautions prospective couples to be careful in their choice of marriage partners. Marriage is an established institution by God the creator himself and He does not agree to divorce as stated in Malachi 2:16 "I hate divorce" (King James Version). It therefore becomes a vital decision to finally conclude on the choice of a life partner. It also vividly speaks on the compatibility of a couple on most issues that affect them socially, spiritually, academically etc. It is important to note that the play does encourage couples with

doctrinal differences to be willing to live with each other. This can only be done if both partners are willing to work at understanding each other's doctrines and overlook petty issues that may spring up. In Mawuse's case, however, the issue of doctrinal differences surfaces several years after they had been married. It is to be noted that the driving force for Mawuse's change of church is her inability to have more children several years after the birth of their only daughter. The promise of powerful miracles for her to have more children however still did not materialise three years down the line of visiting powerful "men of God" and having several prayer sessions. It is evident in the play that although Larbi tolerates Mawuse's religious 'adultery' from the onset but cautions her against it, she (Mawuse) on the other hand, pretends all was well but later stands on the premises of doctrine to infuriate her husband, daughter and house help as she says;

Mawuse:        (*Disappointed*) How did you get that on?  
Abigail:        Daddy gave sister Sadia money to send me to the salon.  
Mawuse:        (*Turns to face her*) Is that true?  
Sadia :         Yes madam. That time, you are not in the house  
Mawuse:        And where was I when my daughter was sent to plait rasta  
                    without my permission?  
Sadia:         That time, you and Aunty Akosua go to church.  
Mawuse:        (*Furiously*) Shut up over there. Did I tell you I was going to  
                    church with somebody? You better mind business in this house.  
                    (Act II p.23)

There is no doubt from the above conversation that when it comes to Mawuse's doctrines, she considers nobody's freedom of worship including that of her husband and daughter. She is so indoctrinated to an extent that, she prevents Abigail from being flamboyantly dressed with the excuse that she would be exposed to danger of evil through witchcraft. One could rightly say that Mawuse is a victim of churches that appear out of the blue with strange doctrines, leading innocent women astray and destroying their marriages in the name of religion. These women from observations have been saddled with various problems that lead them into desperation and making them

victims of the so called miracle workers. Mawuse's accusations of witchcraft against her in laws stems from some sort of prophecy she received from some of the numerous pastors she visits with the excuse that they are responsible for her inability to have more children. These accusations and the fear of being overpowered, prevents Mawuse from attending crucial family gatherings including even the funeral of her mother in-law in the following lines;

- Mawuse: *(Retortingly)* In fact, they are the witches and wizards in your family, including that so called sister of yours, Adadewa.
- Larbi: Now I can understand so many things. You mean to say that two years after my mother's death, she still has your womb in the grave? *(Mockingly)* I suggest to you that your so called pastors are not powerful enough.
- Mawuse: In fact, they are really powerful. Can't you see that your mother Died and your Uncle has followed? Very soon, that witch of your sister will also go. Then I will be free of their hold.
- Larbi: *(Very furious)* This, is sheer stupidity. What the hell has come over you? Are you crazy or something? Have your senses been taken out of your head?
- Mawuse: Those questions can best be answered by your family members. (Act I p 12)

The above lines clearly expose the extent to which Mawuse has been indoctrinated with falsehood, causing a lot of problems in their home. This is also a deliberate attempt by the playwright to create excesses that will advance the course of doctrinal deviations for the purpose of conflict in the play. It is a very common thing among some of the so called "men of God" to accuse family members of their victims as practicing witchcraft. These actions of falsehood, has torn many homes apart and Larbi would have been a victim if not for the timely intervention of family and friends.

## FORM

### Plot

The play *Unequal Yoking* takes the form of a simple plot where events are arranged in a chronological manner. As the scenes unfold, we experience the gradual development of conflict that leads to the climax and anti climax of events between Mawuse and Larbi.

However, there are of few flashbacks which do not alter the flow of action but are heard in the speech of characters that add up to unfolding events. Below are the various stages of developing and analysing details to the advancement of the plot.

### Exposition

The play flows through a gradual “point of attack” where a common religious affiliation was expressed and later changed into differences in doctrinal practices. The conflict then develops through accusations and apportioning of blame by Larbi and Mawuse respectively. Mawuse is portrayed as a religious fanatic and can be described as abusive and infuriating. She stands on the platform of her desperation for more children, to misbehave towards the people very close to her. The play also introduces Larbi as a tolerant man, whose patience was running out due to his wife’s unproductive religious habits, which cost her her job severally, to the detriment of their only child and home. Larbi and Mawuse’s words and actions also provide significant information to the audience as to the religious deviations that are the root cause of conflict in that home as indicated in these lines;

- Larbi:            (*Downcasted*) Hmm sister, you don’t seem to know what is happening  
                         In “Donkorkrom” My wife is in a total mess as I speak to you now.
- Adadewa:       (*Confused*) As in what sense?
- Larbi:            The truth of the matter is that an intelligent secretary as my wife is, she  
                         has been sacked from two different jobs in one year.
- Adadewa:       (*Jumps out of her chair with both hands by either sides of her waist*)  
                         What are you talking about?
- Larbi:            It all started about three years ago... (Act II p. 20)

The seriousness of the issues raised in reference to the attitude of Mawuse, actually stands to confirm the excesses that affected her home, daughter, husband and marriage in the general sense of it. Her husband and daughter suffer the consequences of her actions when both of them suffer the psychological and emotional trauma of her religious and doctrinal excesses.

### **Rising Action**

Scene one introduces the happy family of the Larbi's which later turns into a living nightmare for members of the family. Mawuse who is later introduced as a 'doctrinal deviant' seems to be in total control of her home with her religious doctrine. She is not to be bothered about what others feel or how they are affected by her actions. Her role and references reveal the varying human characters the playwright seeks to portray. Every reaction emanating from Larbi, springs up as a result of his stance to correct the deviations of his wife. Although Larbi has had enough of his wife's attitude, the compulsion to act as a man who is in total control of his home comes from his sister, Adadewa.

### **Complication**

In Act 1 scene 11 of *Unequal Yoking*, we are exposed to the major complications of issues as discussed by Larbi and Adadewa. Religious conflict and the distinctively clearer issues are exposed as related to Mawuse's attitude of fanaticism. Mawuse is described as so full of doctrinal practices of different churches that she goes to the extreme of everything. Her actions reflect negatively in the fact that she sees every other person as evil and moving straight to hell because they have faulted God's law of not adhering to certain rules and regulations in the bible. She is reported by her husband as

using different types of oil, holy water and some powdery substances on herself and sometimes all around the house. To the playwright, she had been brainwashed to believe in strange doctrines that were not part of her earlier belief and practice. These are some signs that follow people who are desperate in solving problems they are faced with of which Mawuse is also a victim. These actions are referred to when Adadewa cautions her thus;

- Mawuse: Leave my womb alone oh, leave my womb alone. I need my children.
- Adadewa: You have been sacked severally from work because of this useless behaviour and you're here mentioning people. When was it you last visited a gynaecologist to check up on your case? Be careful no imposter of a "man of God" sleeps with you with the way you are going.
- Mawuse: (*Pointing to Adadewa*) it's you they will sleep with. Adzeto! (witch) ohoo, get out of my house.
- Adadewa : (*Already leaving*) I'm leaving but remember, since you refer to me as a witch, be ready to face the consequences when they occur. I only pity my brother. (*she walks out*)
- Mawuse; (*Shouting after her*) Pity yourself, you evil woman. (*she calms down a bit and begins to speak*) Look at this woman oh! "The impudence of a dying cockroach". One of these days, the Holy Spirit will strike all of them for me one by one. (*She quickly unties a bottle from a skirt she was wearing and begins to sprinkle some form of liquid in the room and specifically, the chair in which Adadewa sat. She continues to go round the room muttering something inaudibly until the lights fade on her.* (Act 11 p 28)

### **Crisis**

Act 11 exposes a major crisis in the play, as Mawuse tries to involve their only daughter (Abigail) in her excesses of doctrinal issues. In the first place, her young daughter is told in the face that, she and her father (Larbi) are heading straight for hell. She also persuades Abigail to dissociate herself from other family members because they are evil. It also carries the dramatic core of crisis when Mawuse tells her ten year old daughter that her aunty was a witch and persuaded her not to have anything to do with Adadewa.

The playwright sees those accusations coming from Mawuse, as unrefined for a ten year old to hear. It becomes also clear and relevant that after resolving several other issues, Mawuse will stop at nothing in her quest for religious superiority. Her actions depict several other people standing on the shoulders of doctrines, to offend people irrespective of the freedom of worship all are entitled to. In another vein, she gets so timid and fearful for her only daughter and in effect, tries to stop her from being dressed beautifully or flamboyantly. According to her new ideology, the little girl might attract witches and wizards who will use her for sacrifice by killing her.

### **Climax**

The major climax in *Unequal Yoking* reflects in Act III Scene I. The scene is unexpectedly filled with explosion of words by the Mawuse. This development and sudden turn around, almost results in a terrible fight between she and her husband, Larbi. She also springs up a surprise by not preparing dinner for her husband and his friend when it mattered most. The arguments between Larbi and his wife came to a climax when Mawuse accuses her husband of infidelity. The scene is filled with abusive words and accusations that are deep rooted but baseless, and this results in Larbi throwing Mawuse out of the house. This scene is highly dramatic because it did not seem right for her to confront Larbi before his bosom friend as indicated below;

Mawuse: ...You two can go outside and enjoy yourselves as long as you don't get that thing into my house. By the way, (*faces Adatsi*) Do you also treat your wife with so much disrespect and disdain as is done to me in this house or you are equally having affairs with girls around?*(both men are stunned but Larbi who is very furious screams at his wife.)*

Larbi: What the hell are you talking about? One more word from you and I'll give you the beating of your lifetime which you will never forget.

Mawuse: If you call yourself a man, beat me and you will see where it will land you. Useless man! (*she sucks her teeth at him. Larbi who could not hold his temper any longer bursts out, rising from his chair.*) Act 2 scene 3 p24.

It is finally revealed in this scene that, despite all that had taken place, the protagonist (Mawuse) will stop at nothing in her quest for religious freedom. The dramatic nature of scene is more pronounced with the presence of a third party, Adatsi. Mawuse formally accuses her husband of adultery before someone who was not an insider. The nature of the conflict that ensued between the two (protagonist and antagonist), makes it very clear that both parties had been pushed to their limit, hence the outburst. Finally, the verbal abuses of Larbi against his wife consistently due to her extremist behaviour pushed Mawuse to the wall leading to the explosion of a major conflict and exchange of words between the two. Larbi finally drives his wife out of their matrimonial home to her surprise.

### **Falling Action/ Resolution**

The explosion of Mawuse in accordance with her stand on what seems to be her true religious identity and accusations against Larbi unravels the plot leading to the climax of conflict which calls for a final resolution. Mawuse, who had taken her husband for granted all these while, suddenly realises that it is no child's play for her to be driven out so she calls for family intervention. The play ends with the gathering of both family members and a marriage counsellor who also acts as a pastor. The timely intervention of both families through the formal complains of Laud and Adadewa and finally, Mawuse herself saves the marriage in the end. It is imperative to note that, the duty of the family members was not to promote religious tolerance but to solve other issues that related to conflict in the home of the couple. A typical example is the accusation Mawuse levelled

against her in-laws on witchcraft. In a typical Ghanaian society, it is a taboo to accuse someone of witchcraft and especially, your in-laws. The effect of Mawuse's accusations was the fine imposed on her by her husband's family. Mawuse's uncle and mother could not intervene because she brought the case being settled and was found guilty. Mawuse's attitude and disrespect for her husband brought a lot of embarrassment and reproach to her family. It is also clear from the lines below that, both families agreed to bring some sanity and decorum into the home of the couple through the pastor and families to both parties. Coincidentally, both families seemed to have problems until it was finally discovered that Mawuse had a lot up her sleeves. Her family members in fairness, joined her in-laws to rebuke and correct her as exposed in the lines below;

Agbenya: My in-laws, please be patient with us because we have to ask our daughter a few questions so that we see how to solve this issue. (*He turns to face his niece*) Are your in-laws right in their accusations against you? (*Mawuse who is confused at the extent to which the issue was going will not speak but nods her head in the affirmative.*) I have been telling you that a child should not go out looking for trouble by opening his or her big mouth. The issue you have brought up is capable of destroying a home. How do we go about this issue now? You rather came accusing your husband of throwing you only for us to realise that the case is more than we can handle.

Mamavi: I am an old poor woman living in the village. I lived with your father and my in-laws in peace until the day "Mawu Sogbolisa" called him home. I have never shown this level of disrespect neither to your father nor my in-laws. Where did you learn that?

Agbenya: (*Interrupts her man*) Should things get worse, we will just pack her baggage and get her back to the village. What sort of disgrace is this one coming from you of all people? (*He turns to face the others present*) My in-laws, everything is clear that our daughter is – guilty.

Adu-Kumi: Then she should pay a fine apology to the whole family. This fine has got nothing to do with our son. After the

payment of the fine, we will then ask our son if he is still interested in keeping his wife. (Act III Scene 11, p. 40).

The playwright decides to end the play with a resolution that a solution of childbirth comes the way of the couple after seeking medical attention. Mawuse and Larbi are able to resolve their differences and live together happily ever after and to sum it all up, they celebrate their long standing wedding anniversary with the birth of their twins. Pastor Essel finally leaves the couple and audience with these words of appeal.

Pastor Essel: It is not totally wrong to worship in different churches as a couple but doctrinal differences of churches can easily breed conflict. That is why I advice couples that, it is always better if they can, to fellowship in the same church. This way, many of the excesses will not occur which is not already known to both partners. There is no better Christian doctrine except what we are made to believe. If you claim you are a Christian, don't look down on other doctrines. Let us all learn to respect, love and live with others without condemning them because they don't belong to our fold. Thank you.

## LANGUAGE

Language, which forms an integral part of *Unequal Yoking* is used by the playwright to achieve her aim of inducing conflict at every point in time. The role of the characters and the language that emanates from their lines or speeches is a tool that creates more conflict as portrayed in the play. Although the playwright may be judgemental and a bit stern on some characters, it is a deliberate attempt to create more avenues for a conflict situation. In *Unequal Yoking*, however, the language is the very simple everyday Ghanaian English. There are a few proverbs, however, that have been translated from the local dialect of Twi and Ewe respectively that are used. All these are intended to create more conflict. Language tone and mood cannot be isolated in *Unequal Yoking* because, the mood and tone of a language is a determining factor to its interpretation. The

language, tone and mood have been used as artistic and dramatic devices that create the atmosphere for an effective conflict situation.

Tone and Mood in *Unequal Yoking* forms an essential aspect of developing the drama and continuous exchange of verbal abuse. The tension that the playwright creates in the home of Mawuse and Larbi reflects in the tone of expressions they use with and against each other. Each character operates in a specific swinging mood at a point in time, thus enhancing the plot. The playwright in a deliberate attempt targets married audiences, choosing words that allow for continuity in generating conflict between couples.

## **SETTING**

The play “Unequal Yoking” is set within the geographical and cultural contemporary Ghanaian society. Specifically, almost all actions take place in the home of Larbi and Mawuse in the capital city of Ghana, which is Accra with the exception of Adadewa’s home and Laud’s office. However, within this environment, the play experiences the marriage and religious atmosphere upon which events in the play unfold. The religious atmosphere is seen with the inscription on a calendar “Jesus is the Head of this House”. Other indications of a religious home include the Wedding Picture of Mr and Mrs Larbi. Like every other home in Ghana, people go out and come in as the events unfold. It also serves as a convenient environment where Larbi and Mawuse “hurl” at each other’s throat without the interference of neighbours. The television set, radio, computer and furniture portray a middle class family, very simple and confined to their own environment

## CONFLICT

It is expedient to note that conflict in a play occurs when characters are opposed to each other through various means. The playwright's presentation of personality traits of characters and their obedience to these traits can easily be the focus for springing up conflicts. As indicated by Harold Rosenberg (1959:281) in *Character Change* when he posits "Religious thought also interprets the individual as an identity; it looks to the judgement that will establish his or her external role"<sup>35</sup>. Most conflicts presented in *Unequal Yoking* are based on religious differences of doctrine. To this end, the playwright intentionally tries to link the development of each conflict to the "religious thought of an individual". Most of these conflicts can be traced to the protagonist Mawuse, whose religious identity and thought did not fall in line with the others. Her deviations and extremist religious behaviour was the foundation on which most of the conflict developed. Larbi and Mawuse had developed a sharp contrast in their religious or doctrinal practice, which led to the deviations and major conflict in the play.

## CHARACTERISATION

Building characters in a play is quite a huge task as Conor Fingleton (1960:69) rightly states that "the play might not bring to life characters which have no intrinsic life of their own"<sup>36</sup>. He further buttresses his point by indicating that, the writer is at liberty to create characters that suit and relate to the issues of the play appropriately. To this end, characters in *Unequal Yoking* were apportioned distinctive roles that are of relevance to the storyline. An example

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<sup>35</sup> Rosenberg, Harold. *The Context and Craft of Drama*. (Ed by J. L. Rosenberg. Chandler Publishing Company. 1964 p 281.

<sup>36</sup>Fingleton, Conor. *The Family in Modern Drama*. Essays in Criticism. (Ed) by Travis Bogard and William J Oliver. Oxford University Press. 1965 p 69.

in the play is Adadewa, whose distinctive role was to push her brother (Larbi) into action against his wife's extremist religious behaviour. It was as if, although Larbi did not accept Mawuse's behaviour, he could not take a firm stand against her until an "awakening call" from his sister Adadewa. Larbi on the other hand, as a character, cannot be described as weak. One may call him "tolerant" due to the calm nature he exhibited in dealing with his wife's excesses. He is portrayed as a calm but firm character thus when he finally decides to stop his wife from going to church, it was without difficulty. Other actions from Larbi lead to a clearer discovery of his character traits. If he is pushed to the wall or taken for granted, he can act in a reactive manner to which the consequences can be disastrous. This kind of action occurs when he nearly beat Mawuse up for insulting him and calling him all sorts of names and finally throws her out of their matrimonial home.

Mawuse: Do you have a girlfriend to warm your bed or you are also sleeping with girls around? (*at this point, Larbi is furious and he screams to shout his wife up*).

Larbi: (*He rises up to attack his wife, but is held by Adatsi*) One more word from you and I'll give you the beating of your life time. Are you getting mad or something? How can you say a thing like that or what do you take me for?

Mawuse: (*Unperturbed*) Leave him and let him beat me and prove to all of us here that he is not sleeping with girls around. Unless man! (*She chuckles*) (*Larbi who could not control himself anymore burst out*)

Larbi: You are damn lucky my friend and brother is here. But you know something? Yes it's true. I'm sleeping with girls around, because they dress well and are attractive too. In fact, all of a sudden, I see you as this ugly man sleeping beside me every night and I have no passion at all for you... you my dear wife is crazy, read my lips, you are mad. (Act III p. 32)

The above lines are clear indications of what reactions might occur when people are tempted beyond a certain limit. Everything Larbi demonstrates at this point is beyond his usual calm nature of tolerating almost every negative action his wife puts up. One very

important character the playwright uses to project conflict in the play is Mawuse, who is also the protagonist. In the playwright's opinion, Mawuse is a typical representation of men and women who get carried away by strange doctrines looking for miracles that do not exist. Most of the times, there is actually no basis for the actions of such people, which puts them in danger of their very lives and the people around them. Some of these people sometimes close the door to sound and logical reasoning and actions that drive their case. Mawuse's church activities gave her no time for probable sexual intercourse with her husband and when asked the last time she visited the doctor on her inability to have more children, she responds thus:

Adadewa: You have been sacked severally from work because of this useless behaviour and you're here mentioning people. When was it last you visited a gynaecologist to check up on your case? Be careful no imposter of a "man of God" sleeps with you with the way you're going.

Mawuse: It's you they will sleep with. Adzet4 (witch), ohoo, get out of my house.(Act11 p. 29)

In the opinion of the playwright, Mawuse can best be described as deviant by nature with an addition of religious excesses. Her character is important because, it drives the pivot on which doctrinal issues are exposed and resolved in the play. It is also expedient to discuss the character of Sadia, the house help. She is the one who introduces the audience to her madam's extremist church going behaviour. Reportedly, she constantly gives Larbi information on the activities of Mawuse without which it is obvious Larbi would not have been able to find out very important information about his wife's behaviour. Sadia constantly makes a mockery of her mistress although she is not portrayed as a very stubborn house help. One very humorous and significant action of Sadia is displayed when she mimics the actions of her mistress after Akosua's visit in these lines;

*(Sadia suddenly appears and begins to clear the glass and clean the table before Mawuse leaves and moves straight into the bedroom. As soon as she gets out of sight, Sadia moves into the centre of the living room, tries mimicking Mawuse and Akosua's prayer time mockingly.*

Sadia: *(With her right hand lifted up)* Os4fo Meko, Nkyine, Kwadu, Mangoo, B4fre, Abrobe, where are you? *(She begins to walk around throwing her hands in the air to stagger)* Gb4gb4v4 go, Gb4gb4v4 fly away. *(she continues to mutter inaudible words until she drops to the ground in laughter and she suddenly stops to speak)* Eih, this my madam, so so fake pastors she follow. This one, I have to let my master hear it at all costs. (ACT II Scene I p. 13)

Although it is not indicated in the play, the character Sadia from the song she sang at the beginning of the play and a few other things trace her to be a religious person. It is imperative to note in conclusion that, all the characters involved in the play, no matter how minute their role, have been systematically outlined to matter in the plot and structure of the play. One very important character in the play, whose role is vital to the advancement of the plot is Akosua. Her role cannot be ignored because she is the brain behind Mawuse's deviation and excesses of visiting various prayer centres. She can best be described as a bad influence on Mawuse because of her excesses as well. She can also be described as uncontrollable probably because she was still not married at forty two and had the free will to do whatever pleased her. Although it is not indicated in the play as to how she met and became friends with Mawuse, it is quite clear they might have met at the market place. Her role is imperative because as hard as Larbi tries to control his wife and advice her, Akosua continually encourages her to ignore her husband because he was bewitched by his family members. She was very adamant and bent on pulling Mawuse along even when Larbi warns her and drives her out of their home.

## SYNOPSIS

Larbi and Mawuse have been married for almost 10 years (ten) with one issue. Both of them practiced the same faith and fellowshiped in the same church for years without problems. Along the line, Mawuse moves into excessive doctrinal practices and change of churches. This attitude made her lose jobs several times as she is indoctrinated to believe that her inability to have more children is from her husband's family. She neglects her home, child and husband in the name of doctrinal practices until she is faced with possible divorce. In addition to all of her extremist doctrinal excesses, she isolates herself from family gatherings and other social unions that may affect her church activities negatively. After being sacked from her matrimonial home, she now runs to her family for help in resolving the conflict between her and Larbi.

### Unequal Yoking as Social Drama

Stephanie Arnold (1998:53) asserts in the *Creative Spirit* that “plays and theatrical movements have frequently been a significant factor in challenging prevailing points of view and bringing about social change”<sup>37</sup>. According to Arnold, various theatrical performances have led to significant changes in theatre history with a clear example of the inclusion of women in Greek Theatre which was not the original case. The playwright in agreement with Arnold's assertion is of the view that the audiences in the theatre form the society. It is therefore imperative to note that “change” in the life of all people can easily be effected through use of the theatre as a major means to effect societal thought. As Drama is defined as the “mirror of life”, one cannot withhold the fact that theatrical performances hold the key to major revolutions both within the theatre and beyond.

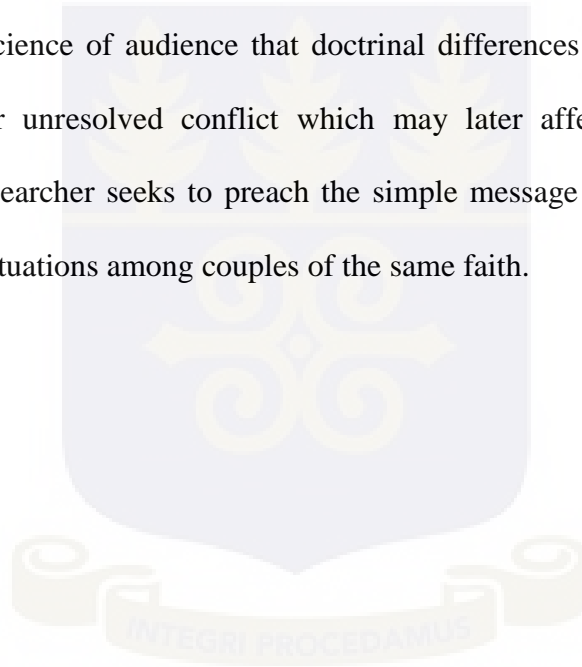
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<sup>37</sup> Arnold, S. *The Creative Spirit*. An Introduction to The Theatre (Ed) by Mayfield Publishing Company. 1998 p 53.

Myers (2012), in his Executive Summary of marriage states that;

Marriage is as old as humankind. From the beginning, God created the human race in his own image and likeness. Sexual complimentary have been present from the plan. Equal in dignity but complimentary in their sexual differences, men and women who are called to marriage are intended to form one flesh unions <sup>38</sup>

In support of Myers views, the playwright's intention is to convey a special message of religious tolerance in marriage to the society at large and help curb the issues of religious excesses among couples. It is to be noted with great concern that, the family unit is highly important in maintaining a peaceful society. The playwright therefore seeks to appeal to the conscience of audience that doctrinal differences in marriage should not form the basis for unresolved conflict which may later affect society as a whole negatively. The researcher seeks to preach the simple message of resolving conflict in doctrinally based situations among couples of the same faith.



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<sup>3838</sup> Myers, J. *Executive Summary on Marriage*. Newark, New Jersey, USA. 2.012 P1

## CHAPTER FIVE

### SUMMARY

This research is the study of different doctrines among Christians which discussed and exposed the prevalence, role and consequences of religious conflict in marriage. Specifically, it explored doctrinal differences among couples in same faith marriages. It is important to note that, conflict in marriage operates at different levels and perspective depending on what the couple see as a barrier to their peaceful coexistence. Although differences in faith are largely seen as problems, the researcher is of the view that same faith (intra-faith) marriages with differences in doctrinal practices are likely to face serious problems accompanied with various degrees of disagreements leading to conflict. The subject being discussed is of relevance because marriage has been one basic institution of man since the creation of the world. Society regards marriage as highly important in maintaining a peaceful community for all to live in. This study provides some observations and discussions on doctrinal differences among same faith (Intra-faith) couples and how the research was conducted. Observations from literature reviewed and other findings and the methodology used have also been discussed. Lastly, future recommendations have also been provided.

### Observations and Conclusions

The collective and collaborative nature of the theatre cannot be over emphasised since it presents the potent force to effect change in society. It is in this vein that Arnold (1998:32) emphasises this view when she thus posits;

Sometimes, the theatre retells the sacred stories of a community. Sometimes individual playwrights forge the body of work that interprets the life of the social group. The theatre is a gathering place for the public presentation of ideas. Because ideas are expressed

through characters caught in difficult or dangerous situations, the theatre creates an intensely emotional experience for the audience.<sup>39</sup>

With reference to the statements of Arnold, the presentation of marriage on the platform of religion is imperative due to the specific role it plays either in building or destroying marriages. As stated earlier, drama reflects society and in reflecting the issues that affect society; it is most effective through the use of the characters presented on stage. Since marriage affects almost every individual in the society, the reaction of the audience in drama goes a long way to teach moral lessons. Religious views of different doctrines can be highly competitive and sometimes detrimental to parties involved. It is for these reasons that religious tolerance in marriage needs focus or the attention desired in order to create the atmosphere for change in this perspective. As social drama deals with issues that affect society directly, it is important that *Unequal Yoking* is presented in this manner so that society can identify with issues related in the play.

Playwrights like Arthur Miller, Henrik Ibsen, Femi Osofisan, Wole Soyinka, Ben Abdallah, Kobina Sakyi among others have demonstrated the use of issues affecting their society, through their creative abilities, to educate and effect change. It is clear that these playwrights have been able to use dialogue to throw back the challenge of change to the conscience of their audiences in the theatre. However, it is evident that some writers face a lot of intimidation and displeasure and sometimes even death or imprisonment in trying to address issues of the society through the theatre. This only goes on to buttress the assertion that drama is like a mirror that reflects life itself. One may argue that religious doctrines as juxtaposed to each other may reveal certain loopholes and arouse certain unpleasant outcomes from certain churches, and how their doctrines may be

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<sup>39</sup> Arnold, S. *The Creative Spirit*. An Introduction to Theatre. Edited by Mayfield Publishing Company. 1998.

misinterpreted. Whatever the case may be, *Unequal Yoking* as a religious play does not identify with a specific church but outlines the development of Christian churches in Ghana ranging from the introduction of Orthodox Churches to Pentecostal, Charismatic and finally, Independent churches. It is to be noted that, although some of these churches in their doctrinal exploits claim superiority over each other, *Unequal Yoking* creates a platform for peaceful co- existence. On the other hand, doctrines of some Christian churches cause their members to behave in manners that are unacceptable to society as in the case of Mawuse, who would leave her job at the office on Fridays and go to church. Such actions from such members although seen through the eyes of doctrinal basis, should be condemned because it cuts down on productivity and efficiency in the lives of those involved and the society in general. These unproductive ventures bring about economic constraints and poverty on individuals leading to corruption and other social vices.

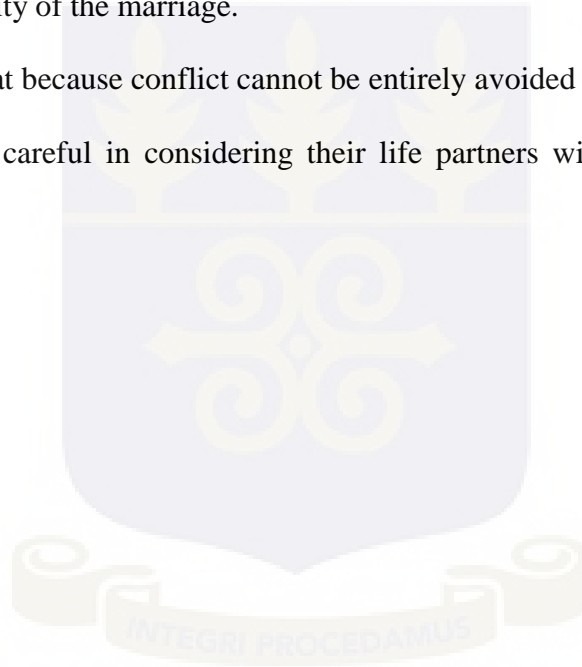
### **Recommendations**

The researcher has observed with keen interest that the issue of inter-faith marriages may not be as threatening as couples of the same faith (Intra faith) marriages with differences in doctrinal practices. With these ideas in mind, the following recommendations are given:

- Prospective couples should check their religious and doctrinal compatibility before marriage. In doing so, they may be willing to tolerate their doctrinal difference or agree on a common ground for the practice of faith in their homes. In addition, couples should be willing to put the marriage ahead of their doctrines of faith.

- Couples who are struggling with issues of differences in doctrines should seek counselling and appropriate measures to avoid such conflicts that may affect the children and other family members. In doing so they may agree to come together and unite in their practice of doctrine by attending the same church to avoid conflicting issues of doctrines from arising.
- It is also advisable that people marry from their local churches if possible. Since conflict in marriage is inevitable as discussed earlier, religious congruence in marriage will prevent the conflict of doctrine of faith which may be detrimental to the stability of the marriage.

It is only logical that because conflict cannot be entirely avoided in marriage, prospective couples should be careful in considering their life partners with specific reference to religion and faith.



## CHAPTER SIX

### CHARACTERS

- Larbi Benjamin - Young man in his late forties (A university graduate)
- Larbi Mawuse - Larbi's wife (A secretary)
- Abigail - Larbi and Mawuse's only daughter (Ten years old)
- Adadewa - Larbi's elder sister
- Akosua - Mawuse's friend
- Adatsi Laud - A banker and close friend to Larbi
- Sadia - Mr and Mrs Larbi's house help.
- Agbenya - Mawuse's uncle (An elderly man in his seventies)
- Adu- Kumi - Larbi's uncle and family head (*Abusuapanyin*)
- Pastor Charles Essel - A pastor and marriage counsellor in the church where Laud fellowships
- Mamavi - Mawuse's mother (An old lady of about 65 years)
- Dr Sey - A gynaecologist
- Mrs Adatsi - Wife of Laud Adatsi
- Invited guests at the naming ceremony

## SETTING

*The setting is in Accra, the capital city of Ghana, where everyday life is quite busy and stressful. Most actions take place in the three bedroom semi-detached compound of Mr and Mrs Larbi, specifically their living room. Other actions take place on the veranda of Adadewa's house and Laud's office respectively.*

### Act I Scene I

*This scene takes place in the living room of the Larbis. It is Sunday afternoon and the whole family, comprising Larbi, Mawuse and Abigail have just returned from church. Husband and wife are engaged in a conversation about the day's sermon. Their little daughter (Abigail) is about seven years old.*

Mawuse: Today's message was very inspiring.

Larbi: I can't agree with you more on this one as I always tell you that, our pastor is a good Bible teacher. His kind is not very common these days.

Mawuse: Say it again, my dear. All you see around are some of these fake pastors, deceiving innocent people with false miracles.

Larbi: In fact, we are really blessed in this ministry. After hearing such a great sermon, don't you think it will be good to top it up with fufu and "ebunebunu" (green soup)?

Mawuse: Eih, you and *fufu* can easily become twins.

Larbi: Food is made for the body, and don't forget to add my favourite snails.

Mawuse: How can I forget such an important accompaniment to my husband's

favourite meal? That will be suicidal for me.

Larbi: By the way, you may have to find some rice for Abigail to eat since you know she does not like fufu. Or would you ask her first?

Mawuse: My dear, don't waste your energy. Is she not my daughter? I know her too well to presume that she will request for rice.

Larbi: You cannot just rule out the possibility that she might change her mind. So, please, ask her first.

Mawuse: Well, if you insist I'll try. *(She calls out)* Abigail!

Abigail: *(She responds and runs into the hall)* Yes, mummy! Sister Sadia was removing my church dress for me.

Mawuse: Come to mummy. *(She tries to cajole her)* Today, mummy is preparing Special *fufu* for daddy. Will you eat?

Abigail: *(She shakes her head)* No, mummy! I like rice.

Mawuse: *(Turning to face Larbi)* You see what I was telling you? She will not even allow me to suggest anything else.

Larbi: It is still very good to find out issues before taking a stand. Now that she has spoken her mind, you know what to give her.

Mawuse: I hear you, Mr and princess Larbi. Abi, can you tell Sadia to quickly meet me in the kitchen so that we start cooking?

Abigail: Yes mummy! *(She runs into the bedroom)*.

Mawuse: Honey, I need to start cooking so I'm off to the kitchen.

Larbi: I'm also going to the barbering shop to trim my hair. Lest I forget, Laud has invited us to their tenth wedding anniversary tomorrow and I wish we would be there to support him.

Mawuse: *(Shows surprise)* But honey, tomorrow is Monday and people will be going to work including you and I. How can we possibly attend a ceremony like that?

Larbi: *(Teasingly)* You are once again at a total loss. Why? You hardly take interest in listening to news either on TV or by radio. I'm sure you have no idea that tomorrow is a public holiday.

Mawuse: Ah, ah, ah! *(Bites the tip of her right forefinger)* I can't imagine you beat me to this one again. You've won and I give up but I promise you, you will not get me the next time.

Larbi: *(Laughing)* "A decorated monkey is still a monkey" However, let's wait and see if the monkey will change into a cat someday.

Mawuse: You can tease me all you want but let's see whether you will remember your daughter's next birthday, not even to talk of your own birthday.

Larbi: Eih, women! They will always take their revenge. Anyway, my food is getting late. Can you please go now before we begin to eat late? You know, that is not a healthy eating habit.

Mawuse: Of course! Ah honey, I thought you said you were going to the barbering shop?

Larbi: Thanks for reminding me. *(Mawuse leaves and is followed by Larbi)*

*The next day, Larbi, his wife Mawuse and their little daughter, have just returned from Adatsi Laud and his wife's tenth wedding anniversary. Abigail is sleepy so she is taken to the bedroom by Sadia while Larbi and Mawuse remain in the living room, talking about the ceremony.*

Larbi: *(Calling out)* Sadia!

- Sadia: *(She responds from within and comes out a few seconds later)* Coming sir!
- Larbi: Kindly send Abi into the bedroom to sleep for a while. She was seriously dozing on our way home. *(She hands over Abigail whom he was carrying on his shoulder, to Sadia and she walks away with the child.)*
- Mawuse: That was a splendid and memorable ceremony. The most touching part was when they were flung by their three lovely children. What a spectacle!
- Larbi: Would you like us to celebrate ours too?
- Mawuse: Why not? The only thing I pray to God for is to have two or more children before that time comes.
- Larbi: How many more children are you talking about within the next three years?
- Mawuse: Four, will not be too much for me to ask for?
- Larbi: As much as I agree with you, the only request I make is for you to cook very rich food for me to eat. By doing so, I can easily impregnate you with twins, triplets and quadruplets. Ha ha haa!
- Mawuse: Look at you, when one is serious, you try to create a joke out of everything.
- Larbi: *(Jokingly)* Hurray! Does that mean we have a deal for more snails, “*akrantie*” and mushrooms?
- Mawuse: If that is what will bring the babies, why not. Honey, I’m a bit tired. Can I take a little rest before cooking?
- Larbi: You can rest as much as you like because we are dinning out tonight at your favourite restaurant.

Mawuse: Aren't you a darling?

Larbi: Of course I am and will always be. (*Mawuse is amused by Larbi's words so she smiles, shaking her head and walks away as the lights fade out on Larbi still in the living room*)

ACT 11 Scene 1

*A few years have passed and Abigail is about ten years old now. Still in the house of the Larbis, it is Saturday morning and Sadia is busy cleaning the sitting room as she sings along. She is a Junior High School dropout who cannot express herself properly in English. Larbi enters the sitting room dressed in jogging suits. He interrupts Sadia who had not noticed him.*

Larbi: Sadia!

Sadia: Yes sir! Sorry sir, I did not see you come in. Good morning.

Larbi: How are you?

Sadia: I'm fine sir. (*She waits for further instructions*)

Larbi: Your madam is still asleep. When she wakes up, tell her I'm gone to the gymnasium and I'll be back by nine O'clock.

Sadia: Yes sir! I'll tell her everything you say.

Larbi: (*Larbi ignores her last statement and is seen walking away but suddenly turns to tell her something*) One more thing, make sure the sitting room is cleaned properly and neatly kept because I'll be receiving visitors today. (*he walks away*).

Sadia Yes sir! *(She peeps to see if Larbi was completely out of sight. When she was sure the coast was clear, she began to speak to the audience in broken English)* Eih, you see my master, he is a very, very good man. Ask me why? When I first, I entered this house, my madam and my master went to the same church and this house was full of happiness. Now, my madam just start go some kind of church and different prayer meetings. Master complained and talk talk but the more he talk, the more madam does not mind. You just watch and you will see that I am not ‘*konkonsa*’ (*gossip*). What I see, is what I say. This house, “everybody for himself, God for us all” Well, I have to mind my work *(She continues to sing her song .She sings in Dagbani)*.

Bonito nanteee

Bonito nanteee

Nawuni beti sane

Bonito nanteee

Aluzin biele nkuto nante duniane

Sheleku biele nkuto nante duniane

Nawuni beti sane

Bonito nanteee...

*(She is stopped in the middle of the song by her mistress who is dressed in outing clothes looking like someone going to church)*

Mawuse: Sadia!

Sadia: *(Caught unawares)* Yes ma! *(Turns to listen to her)*

Mawuse: Where is daddy?

- Sadia: Daddy say I should tell you he is go to gyma. (*Unable to mention the word properly, she is stuck*)
- Mawuse: You mean Gymnasium?
- Sadia: Yes madam, he said he will be back by nine O'clock this morning.
- Mawuse: Oh okay, in that case, when he comes back tell him I've gone for prayer meeting at church with my friend Akosua. We should be back by 3pm (*She was about to leave when she stops as if she suddenly remembers something*) By the way, where is my daughter?
- Sadia: Madam, are you talk about Abigail?
- Mawuse: And who else would I be asking about in this house?
- Sadia: Sorry madam, Abigail is get ready to go for Saturday classes.
- Mawuse: Make sure she gets everything she wants and take good care of the house. I'm off.
- Sadia: Yes, madam. (*Mawuse walks off and it is not long before Abigail comes out of the bedroom. She is a girl of about ten years now dressed in a blue jeans skirt, a "T" shirt and a pair of sandals*)
- Abigail: Sister Sadia, I went to mummy's room and she is not there. Have you seen her?
- Sadia: Oh yes Abigail, your mom is gone for prayer meeting. Do you need something?
- Abigail: No sister Sadia, Daddy gave me money for my classes. I'm going. (*She walks out through the main entrance and Sadia shouts after her*)
- Sadia: Abi, your food is ready, won't you eat? (*There is no response and she goes back to work disappointed*) Oh, this small girl is really suffering. Every day she will not see her mother at home. Only church and different

prayer meetings my madam will attend. See, this small girl did not even take her breakfast before going out. Hmmm! God have mercy on the poor soul because her mother is not helping her at all. *(She finishes sweeping, admires the sitting room and walks out)*

*It is evening of the same day and Larbi is relaxing in the sofa of their living room watching 'TV' (television) when Mawuse enters. By this time Abigail had fallen asleep and Sadia is working in the kitchen.*

Mawuse: *(She sits by Larbi)* How was your day honey!

Larbi: *(Coldly)* Fine.

Mawuse: You sound so cold to me. Is anything the problem?

Larbi: My dear, everything is the problem. Where did you go today too?

Mawuse: Oh that, I went for a special prayer meeting with Os4fo "Idey be". You mean Sadia did not tell you?

Larbi: In fact, this your everyday "pray for me" activity is becoming appalling. What at all is your problem in this life that has turned you into a church roaming ambassador?

Mawuse: Is it not you I want to give more children? Look at Abi, she is almost eleven years and there is still no sign of pregnancy. My mother gave birth to me alone and to set records straight, she was also the only child of her mom. In fact, this issue has bothered me for too long. I must become pregnant at all costs. Why on earth should I be faced with repeating the family trend? Don't you think it is just fair for me to have more children? This whole issue is beginning to look like a family curse that needs special prayers.

Larbi: Is that what you think? Why on earth should you think that having only one child is a family curse? Is that why you resort to jumping from prayer camp to prayer camp? You have lost two different jobs already as a secretary due to this strange attitude of yours. Today it is Osofo “Ap4nkye”, tomorrow it is Os4fo “Akrantie”, be careful with your life oh, I’m warning you.

Mawuse: But I don’t go to these places alone. There are other people there too.

Larbi: (*Retortingly*) Are you like the other people who go there?

Mawuse: I always go with Akosua too.

Larbi: (*As if just woken from a trance*) That is even where the problem is. What kind of friend is this who is misleading you? Tell me, is she married?

Mawuse: That’s the more reason why she also goes to these prayer meetings. In fact, one of these days, her husband will appear.

Larbi: You see my point, (*disappointed*) you, my wife have become very foolish and ignorant. How can you a married woman leave your husband and child at home and follow a single woman without responsibilities to church? What about those who have no children at all, what should they also do? You wait until she turns you into a single woman and then you two become “birds of the same feather”.

Mawuse: I think you are exaggerating. The fact that we walk together doesn’t mean we should all be single.

Larbi: Tell me, how old is she?

Mawuse: She is only forty two years.

Larbi: That’s exactly what I’m talking about. She is unmarried and probably has no child at forty two. Who knows what kind of life she might have led in

the past? Here you are at thirty nine with a child and you think both of you are equal?

Mawuse: But that is her problem. I also have my own.

Larbi: Am I complaining. If I, your husband, do not complain, who will? Why do you run helter-skelter in search of a baby, or is the pastor going to make you pregnant? Can you even recall the last time we made love like a husband and wife should do?

Mawuse: Eih Larbi! The way you speak sometimes just amazes me. I hope you are not taking advantage of the situation to be looking for a mistress to sleep with.

Larbi: You see how your mind is being twisted? If you don't want me to go after another woman, why don't you play your role effectively? But you see, what I said is the truth. You cannot remember because it has been a while. I watch you come into this house with all forms of concoctions in the name of holy water and anointing oils. Be careful you don't infect yourself with cancer by inserting anything into your womanhood. Don't say I did not warn you.

Mawuse: This man of God I met today is more powerful than all, you will see that by the time I finish using that holy oil, a baby will be crying in this house.

Larbi: (*Ignoring her*) I don't want to listen to your nonsense. By the way (*with seriousness*) until now, you have not given me a specific reason why you did not attend my mother's funeral, although it is an issue. I need to inform you that Uncle Kweku's funeral is next weekend in my hometown. You need to prepare so that we can all go on the Friday and you come back on Sunday, while I wait for other family meetings.

- Mawuse: *(Bluntly)* I'm going nowhere.
- Larbi: What did you just say?
- Mawuse: *(Repeats)* I said I'm not going anywhere. Why should I be forced to attend the funerals of your family members who are the cause of my inability to have more children?
- Larbi: *(Furiously)* You refer to my mum and my uncle as the people who have tied your womb?
- Mawuse: *(Retorting)* In fact, they are the witches and wizards in your family including your so-called sister, Adadewa.
- Larbi: Now I can understand so many things. You mean to say, that two years after my mother's death, she still has your womb in the grave?  
*(Mockingly)* I suggest to you that your so called pastors are not powerful enough.
- Mawuse: *(Arrogantly)* In fact, they are really powerful. Can't you see that your mother died and your uncle has followed? Very soon, that witch sister of yours will also go. Then I will be free from their hold.
- Larbi; *(Very furious)* This is sheer stupidity. What the hell has come over you? Are you crazy or something? Have you lost your sense of reasoning?
- Mawuse: Those questions can best be answered by your family members.
- Larbi: Oh, I see. You have just lit a fire at the mountain top. Make sure this same fire does not burn you up. However, as the man of the house, you have to follow my orders. We are going for my uncle's funeral and that is final. *(He walks out of the sitting room angrily and Mawuse speaks after him)*

Mawuse: I say I am not going anywhere oh, you can't force me. (*She also walks towards the bedroom as the lights go out*).

*It is midweek about 6pm in the evening. Mawuse is getting ready to go for prayer meeting with Akosua who has come to wait for her.*

Akosua: My dear friend, we have to pray ahead of the meeting today so that we can receive powerful prophecies.

Mawuse: You are right my friend, we need divine intervention. Can you lead the prayer?

Akosua: Let us stand and hold hands together. (*They both rise to their feet, facing each other and holding each other's hands*). Shall we begin to speak in tongues?

Mawuse: God of "Osofo Zama", send your angel to our aid.  
*They begin to speak some strange languages and stagger alongside in a rhythmic pattern when Larbi suddenly enters. Larbi who is confused at the strange sight of his wife and her friend, looks on in amazement for a while. When he is convinced of the sight, he breaks the silence to the surprise of Mawuse and Akosua.*

Larbi: Ayeekoooh! (*He claps his hands for them*) Can you please tell me what the hell is going on in my house?

Mawuse: (*As if suddenly woken up from a trance*) Honey, you are home. Welcome. I hope all is well at work?

Akosua: (*Interjecting*) You are welcome sir!

Larbi: Thank you, but who are you? Have we met?

Akosua: No sir, my name is Akosua, I'm a friend to your wife.

Larbi: I see! I suppose you are the same Akosua my wife has been going to prayer meetings with.

Akosua: (*Gladly*) Yes sir! We are even going for prayer meeting this evening.

Larbi: By the way what do you do for a living?

Akosua: I'm a seller at the general market sir!

Larbi: (*Seriously*) Who gave you the audacity, to come into my home with chants? Do you know that your incessant church activities have cost my wife her job two times in the past one year?

Akosua: It's not because of the church sir but that is why we are still praying and asking God for solutions.

Larbi: Well, Akosua or whatever your name is, you have caused a lot of problems in my home already. I want you to know that my wife is a married woman with a family and a child to take care of. I would be very gentle with you by asking you to take your bag and get out of this house. Don't you ever try to come back here! Is that clear? (*Shyly, she picks her bag and walks out without saying a word*).

Mawuse: What is the meaning of that?

Larbi: (*Sharply*) "Every day for thief-man, one day for the master" So this is what you have turned my house into. Does this house look like one of the "pray for me" centres you've been attending? If I ever find that friend of yours in this house again, I'll show you two what I'm made of. Nonsense! If she is a woman, she should come here again and I'll show her where power lies.

Mawuse: (*Shocked*). You disgrace me in front of my friend?

Larbi: Of course I did!

- Mawuse: For what reason, did she offend you in anyway?
- Larbi: Yes, she offended me by coming into my house and leading my wife astray.
- Mawuse: What!
- Larbi: Oh yes, Mawuse! You think I don't observe how you walk about in this house when everybody is asleep sprinkling those concoctions over everything and everyone? Only God knows what those things contain, but if you don't stop that, one day, you'll receive a terrible slap from me.
- Mawuse: (*Cautiously*) I will not mind you. I'm going to church now but when I come back, we have to talk.
- Larbi: (*With authority*) You are not going anywhere, my dear wife.
- Mawuse: But that's not fair.
- Larbi: So, what in your opinion is fair? My wife leaves her only daughter and home always in the hands of a maid. Is that what is fair?
- Mawuse: Just let me go and I'll sort things out later.
- Larbi: I bet you, if you don't want me to get violent with you, you better go and take off those things you have on as clothes.
- Mawuse: You can't stop me oh, I'll go whether you like it or not. (*Larbi walks towards her and pushes her with one hand into the sofa as he addresses her.*)
- Larbi: Now you listen to me and listen very well. From today, you dare not move a step out of this house that you're going anywhere in the name of a prayer meeting. Is that clear? (*Mawuse who is surprised at her husband's attitude will not speak a word*). If you really want to be prayed for, why don't you go to our pastor rather than this "pray for me business" with

people you do not know from Adam? *(He walks out, satisfied within himself. When he leaves, Mawuse begins to speak).*

Mawuse: Oh my God, what has come over him? Please help me Lord, I need a child, help me, I need to get out of this situation. *(She is left in the sofa, pondering over events and the lights fade out on her.)*

### Act II Scene I

*The next weekend, Larbi has travelled with Abigail and Adadewa to their hometown for Uncle Kweku's funeral. Mawuse refused to go with them but is getting ready to attend a prayer meeting with Akosua who has come to visit her. Sadia was in the sitting room when Akosua enters.*

Akosua: Is your master in?

Sadia: No, Aunty. *(Akosua enters and she is offered a seat)* Please sit down, I will go and call madam now, now.

Akosua: Sadia, wait. I want to ask you a question. When is your master coming?

Sadia: Oh aunty, he is gone for funeral with Abigail in hometown. Only madam is in the house.

Akosua: Can you please give me some water to drink? *(Quite relaxed, Sadia goes into the kitchen and returns with a glass of water. She then goes to call Mawuse. A few minutes later, Mawuse walks into the living room).*

Mawuse: My sister, I hope I did not keep you waiting.

Akosua: Not at all, the most important thing is that the "monster" is not around.

Mawuse: Oh that, but I told you he was going for a funeral. You didn't have to be afraid of him.

- Akosua: My sister, you don't have an idea the drill he took me through the other day. I was sitting on thorns when he was speaking. I couldn't imagine he would react the way he did, blaming me for so many things.
- Mawuse: Well, you don't have to be afraid of him because he is a "toothless bull dog".
- Akosua: I hope they have not bewitched him too, seeing the way he reacted the other day.
- Mawuse: Say that again, but I can promise you that, me (*beating her chest*), I am more than a conqueror, nothing can stop me, now that I am about to have my breakthrough.
- Akosua: By the way, how are you?
- Mawuse: As you can see, I'm perfectly fine.
- Akosua: So what excuse did you give him for not attending the funeral?
- Mawuse: Shhh! Lower your voice, there is a saying that "walls have ears". I told him point blank that his family members have tied my womb.
- Akosua: And what did he say?
- Mawuse: He claims I have a psychological problem.
- Akosua: I hope you did not listen to him.
- Mawuse: Why should I when "Osofo Kalusha" has told me several times that they are all fighting me. To make matters worse, he kept insisting that I follow him to the village for funerals and on our way back, he will buy all these bush meat and snails that Osofo asked me not to eat again. To make matters worse, I have to cook with the items daily until they get finished when I am not even to touch them at all. God forbid! (*She moves her right*

*hand over her head*). Aside that, I am told snails will slow my process of having more children because they are very slow creatures.

Akosua: That's very smart of you, my friend. You have to be firm so that those witches and wizards will not overcome you. Besides, watch your husband very well because if you not careful, he may be going after another woman.

Mawuse: You think I don't know; I'm more than careful and monitoring him closely. Me, Mawuse (*rises to her feet and begins to mutter some words to which Akosua responds*) angel "Kankambianka" our guide, angel "Kankambianka" of "Os4fo Abotsi", rise up and shine your light around us.

Akosua: (*Rising to her feet and lifting her hands up in response*) Rise up and shine your light around us.

Mawuse: (*Still standing with her right hand lifted up*) Sanctify this house.

Akosua: Ameen.

Mawuse: Deliver Larbi, my daughter Abigail, my unborn babies.

Akosua: Ameen.

Mawuse: My job, my marriage, no woman will take my place in this house. Please, help me lord, deliver us.

Akosua: Deliver us!

Mawuse: Hear us, hear us! Hear us "Kankambianka" (*She suddenly unties a bottle in her handkerchief and begins to sprinkle something in the room as she walks around*). Deliver this house, drive every evil away, barrenness go, poverty go, children come, favour come ah ah (*she begins to stagger*)

Yes, yes, yes, I see, I see, I can see the children, God is good. Thank you, thank you, thank you “Kankambianka”

Akosua: *(Responds)* Ameen, Ameen.

*Sadia who had been watching them all this while unnoticed suddenly passes by with a bucket and draws their attention as they stop and sit down.*

Mawuse: Heh, what are you doing there, you witch? *(She quickly walks away without saying a word).*

Akosua: Is that not your house help?

Mawuse: Don't mind that witch, I'll sack her one of these days.

Akosua: Was she spying on us or something? Hey, you have to be very careful with that girl because for all you know, she might be an agent sent to spy on your activities and give progress report.

Mawuse: *(Uncomfortably)* Well, thank you my sister, but never mind, I'll take care of her.

Akosua: Just be watchful because she might even be targeting to take your husband.

Mawuse: She dare not try or else, I'll skin her alive. I just hope and pray that Larbi will be away next week on a workshop, so that I can attend the Friday's miracle service.

Akosua: That will be good for you because “Osofo Kalusha” has asked us to sow a special seed for our needs.

Mawuse: Eeeheh, *(showing excitement)* I have to make sure I sow more than all of you because my case is special. Did he mention the amount we should bring?

Akosua: Yes, he said two hundred Ghana cedis or more.

Mawuse: Oh okay. Let's see how it goes.

Akosua: *(Rises to go)* I should be on my way out, before your husband suddenly arrives again. Should I pick you up?

Mawuse: No! Can we go now? *((She walks with Akosua to the door as they leave together)).*

*Sadia suddenly appears and begins to clear the glass and clean the table. As soon as Mawuse gets out of sight, Sadia moves into the centre of the living room, tries mimicking Mawuse and Akosua's prayer time mockingly.*

Sadia: *(With her right hand lifted up)* Osofo Meko, Nkyine, Kwadu, Mangoo, B4fre, Abrobe, where are you? *(She begins to walk around throwing her hands in the air to stagger alongside)* Gb4gb4v4 go, Gb4gb4v4 fly away, pie go, pie k4. *(She continues to mutter inaudible words until she drops to the ground in laughter and she suddenly stops to speak)*

Eih, this my madam, so, so fake pastors, she follow. This one, I have to let my master hear it at all cost *(she walks out as the lights fade out on her).*

## Act II Scene II

*A few days later, Larbi and Adadewa have just returned from their uncle's funeral. They are seated on the veranda in front of Adadewa's house. Both of them are dressed in funeral clothes and Abigail is inside with her cousins.*

- Larbi: *(Sitting down)* What a stressful day! I'm really tired after all the errands. Who would think that this funeral will also come to an end?
- Adadewa: My brother, say it again. But at the end of everything, it was orderly and successful. We did not run at a loss after accounts were made. *(Suddenly changes topic)*. Larbi, you said your wife is not well, what is wrong with her this time around?
- Larbi: *(Down casted)* Hmm! Sister, you don't seem to know what is happening in "Donkorkrom". My wife is in a total mess as I speak to you now.
- Adadewa: *(Confused)* Inwhat sense?
- Larbi: I wish I would not be the one telling you this but since you asked, open your ears wide and get ready to collapse.
- Adadewa: *(Full of anxiety)* You have actually not said anything. Can you please be frank and tell me what is going on?
- Larbi: The truth of the matter is that, an intelligent secretary as my wife is, she has been sacked from two different jobs in two years.
- Adadewa: *(Jumps out of her chair in surprise with both hands by either sides of her waist)* What are you talking about?
- Larbi: It all started about three years ago when my wife met this friend by the name Akosua. She has been leading Mawuse as they hop together from prayer centre to prayer centre. She leaves work at anytime to attend "pray for me" services so, she is continually sacked and has to be changing jobs.
- Adadewa: *(Still in shock)* So what have you done about it, did she give you any tangible reason?
- Larbi: *(Bluntly)* She said she was looking for babies or better still, she wanted to have more children.

Adadewa: That aside, I remember vividly, she did not turn up for Mama's funeral two years ago. She was also not present at uncle Kweku's funeral. Do you have a reason for that too?

Larbi: *(Trying to withhold some information)* Maybe you have to ask her yourself. She is your wife too, isn't she? You have every right to know.

Adadewa: *(Suspicious)* I suspect that there is something you're not telling me. However, I'll definitely find out, even if it takes ten years.

Larbi: Sister, the truth is that Mawuse is giving me so much trouble that I have to be arguing with her all the time. We got married in the same church and had a daughter. All of a sudden, my wife begins to run from this "man of God" to the other with the excuse of looking for more children. She does practically nothing at home anymore, not to talk of taking care of Abigail.

Adadewa: *(Desperately)* Is there nothing you can do to stop her? Have you reported her to your Pastor?

Larbi: You don't have an idea what I'm going through. Have you asked why I had to carry Abigail with me to the funeral? Her mother is probably gone to one of her numerous prayer meetings again.

Adadewa: Do something now; are you not the man of the house?

Larbi: Sister, we argue all the time and the other day, I had to sack her friend from the house.

Adadewa: I'm completely at a loss here. There should be a reasonable excuse why your wife did not attend uncle Kweku's funeral.

Larbi: *(Chuckling)* You really don't want to know, do you?

Adadewa: If I didn't want to know, why would I ask?

Larbi: Well, since you insist, she claims all my family members are witches and wizards who have tied her womb and that's why she can't have more children.

Adadewa: (*In shock*) what! You can't be serious.

Larbi: You know me too well, why would I be joking with such serious issues? Am I a child? In addition to that, she brings home all sorts of things. Today, it is this holy water, tomorrow, it is oil, the next day, incense and at other times different powdery substances. She even goes to the extent of rubbing some of the oil on Abi in the name of protecting her from witches in my family.

Adadewa: Is it that serious? Be careful she doesn't poison you oh, considering how she's behaving.

Larbi: Say it again sister, some of these so called pastors can be very treacherous sometimes. I have to be watchful.

Adadewa: (*Honestly*) Sincerely speaking, we have to do something about your wife. She cannot be left to continue this way. She may affect your daughter negatively.

Larbi: (*Unconsciously*) To make matters worse, you see her burning incense and sprinkling this liquid all over the house every night.

Adadewa: Eih, to that extent?

Larbi: (*Shakes his head in frustration*) Sister, I'm really suffering, I'm totally confused and I don't know what to do with this woman again.

Adadewa: (*Trying to encourage him by patting him on the shoulder*) Don't worry, we shall find a way to resolve all of these.

Larbi: Thank you sister, for being there for me. I should be on my way out. Can you please call my daughter, so that we go home?

Adadewa: Aha! Talking of Abigail and the current situation, don't you think it will be good if she spends the Christmas holidays with her cousins?

Larbi: *(Relieved)* That will be an excellent idea. I believe she will be excited herself. Thanks for the offer and I promise to get her ready if only her mother will agree. *(Adadewa goes in to bring Abigail).*

Adadewa: Abigail!

Abigail: Yes, aunty!

Adadewa: See you soon, okay!

Abigail: Bye, Aunty Adadewa.

*They walk off the stage with Adadewa escorting them.*

*This scene takes place in the living room of the Larbis. Preparations are underway for Abigail to celebrate Christmas with her aunty Adadewa's children. She has just returned from the salon with Sadia. Mawuse does not know about this arrangement. She is watching television when they walk in.*

Abigail: *(Upon seeing her mom)* Hello Mummy, look at my hair *(turning around for admiration)* how do I look?

Mawuse: *(Disappointed)* How did you get that on?

Abigail: Daddy gave sister Sadia money to send me to the salon.

Mawuse: *(Turns to face Sadia)* Is that true?

Sadia: Yes, madam. That time you are not in the house.

Mawuse: And where was I that my daughter was sent for her hair to be braided without my permission?

- Sadia: That time ibe like you and Aunty Akosua go church.
- Mawuse: (*Furiously*) Shut up over there! Did I tell you I was going to church with somebody? You better mind your own business in this house.
- Sadia: (*Pretentiously*) Yes, madam.
- Mawuse: ‘Naniama’! (*nonsense*) Why didn’t you tell me that you have been given money to send her to the salon?
- Abigail: (*Interrupting her*) But mummy, Daddy said I’m going to spend Christmas with Aunty Adadewa.
- Mawuse: (*Taken by surprise*) You are what?
- Abigail: I’m going to Aunty Adadewa for Christmas and that’s why I did my hair.
- Mawuse: You and your ignorant father must be dreaming. Over my dead body, will you go to that house. (*Larbi who overheard the screams of his wife from the bedroom walks into the sitting room*)
- Larbi: May I know what all the noise is about?
- Mawuse: Why did you give money for Abigail to plait her hair? Why do you want to sell my only daughter to people who seek her?
- Larbi: (*Signalling Sadia to take Abigail away*) Both of you can leave now. (*Sadia walks Abigail into the bedroom area leaving Larbi and Mawuse in the sitting room*). Now, I want to hear you properly. Who are the people seeking your daughter?
- Mawuse: Who gave you the permission to send my daughter to your sister’s place?
- Larbi: (*Furiously*) And who the hell do you think you are to ask me that question?
- Mawuse: (*Vehemently*) I am her mother for heaven’s sake!
- Larbi: And what am I? Her uncle?

Mawuse: I have been trying very hard to protect my daughter by keeping her low. Now here you are, dressing her up to attract evil eyes.

Larbi: Watch your tongue, Mawuse. I think you are biting more than you can chew. This girl you call your daughter and love so much, hardly sees her mom not even to talk of spending time with her. I warned you not to go to these prayer camps again and especially, with that woman you call your friend. But what do I hear, people always see you with her. Why on earth have you stopped attending our church?

Mawuse: How can you stop me from serving God? I can serve God anywhere I want.

Larbi: Only you know the kind of God you are serving. Now that I want my daughter to spend time with a responsible woman too, you are here blubbering. Over what?

Mawuse: She is not going anywhere?

Larbi: Well, you don't have a choice, do you? Whether you like it or not, she is going.

Mawuse: If something bad should happen to my daughter, you'll pay dearly for it.

Larbi: *(Mocking)* Woman, cry for yourself because you have more problems than you can imagine. Shameless woman! *(He walks out as Mawuse sits in the chair confused)*

*A few hours later, Larbi is seen sitting by the computer in the living room when Abigail enters. She looks sad and confused as she walks to her father.*

Abigail: Daddy, I've been looking for you. Can I ask you a question?

Larbi: Of course my dear *(he pulls a chair for her to sit down)*, do sit down.

- Abigail: Are you fighting with mummy again?
- Larbi: Oh, baby! We are not fighting each other. The truth is that your mom does not want you to visit your auntie to celebrate the Christmas with your cousins.
- Abigail: Then why are you not talking to each other?
- Larbi: And who told you that?
- Abigail: Mummy said she is not talking to you because you didn't tell her you were taking me to Auntie Adadewa. She also said you stopped her from going to her church and prayer meetings and you disgraced her friend.
- Larbi: *(Holding his daughter's hands)* My dear, there are so many things you don't understand but I'm going to tell you one thing. I love your mother very much and we were not having problems when we all attended the same church. Her friend is misleading her to bad places. All I want from her is for her to stop roaming from church to church so that we can all attend the same church as before. Is that okay?
- Abigail: Yes daddy, but mummy says that our church is bad and we will not go to heaven because we do bad things.
- Larbi: Don't mind your mom okay!
- Abigail: *(Quite relieved)* Okay Dad, but mummy also says that I should undo my hair otherwise the witches in your family will use me for Christmas if I look too nice and gorgeous.
- Larbi: I can tell you now that your mother is very confused but let's hope and pray that she changes for the better.
- Abigail: Eheeh! Daddy, is Auntie Adadewa a witch?

- Larbi: *(A bit confused)* Your mom told you that too? Listen, my dear, don't ever say such things to the hearing of your aunty. Is that right? By the way, has she done anything bad to you before?
- Abigail: No daddy. She always buys me very nice things and I like going to her because she always takes good care of me.
- Larbi: Do you like her?
- Abigail: *(Convincingly)* Yes, daddy!
- Larbi: Now I think we have spoken at length. So, quickly get ready and let me send you over to your auntie's place for the Christmas holidays.
- Abigail: Is it true Daddy, would you send me for real?
- Larbi: *(Raising his right hand up)* I give you my word, just go and bring your bag.
- Abigail: *(Her face beams with a smile)* Okay daddy, thank you. *(She runs out with Larbi looking at her thoughtfully. Few minutes later, she returns with her bag)*
- Larbi: You're already here, that's good. Shall we go? *(Larbi takes the bag from her as they both walk out)*

### Act III Scene I

*It is early dawn almost daylight. Several days have passed since the last argument between Larbi and Mawuse. One can hear the cock crow in a still atmosphere of the morning. There is quietness everywhere as Adadewa is seen knocking on the door of Larbi and Mawuse. It is about*

*five in the morning. Larbi has travelled to his hometown on weekend with Abigail.*

Adadewa: *(Knocking on the door)* Agooh! *(She continues to knock until Sadia comes out)*

Sadia: Who is that?

Adadewa: It's me, Aunty Adadewa. Is your madam in?

Sadia: Sorry Auntie, *(she opens the door for her to come in and offers her a seat as she goes in to call her mistress).*

Mawuse: *(As she goes to sit down with surprise on her face)* Welcome, Aunty

Adadewa, Are you looking for Larbi? He has travelled to the village. Didn't he inform you?

Adadewa: *(Motioning her)* My dear, sit down because I came to see you and not my brother.

Mawuse: *(Uncomfortably, she sits)* Oh, okay, I hope nothing is wrong.

Adadewa: Everything is wrong but it will depend on how you take what I'm coming to say.

Mawuse: *(Shows mixed anticipation in her face)* I'm all ears, Aunty.

Adadewa: It has come to my notice that all is not well in this house.

Mawuse: Who says so and what did the person say is the problem?

Adadewa: *(She repositions herself in the chair properly to deliver her message)* As I said earlier, I'm not here to fight you but give you a word of caution.

Mawuse: *(Rudely)* I'm listening, Aunty.

Adadewa: The truth is that, I'm a married woman with children and I somehow understand how you feel in desperation for more children for my brother.

All the same, the way you're going about the whole issue is quite unacceptable.

Mawuse: *(Retortingly)* So what am I doing now?

Adadewa: I mean the way you follow friends about hopping from one prayer camp to another. Aside that, you disrespect your husband so much that I just don't understand.

Mawuse: *(Disrespectfully)* So, you came all the way from your house this dawn to come and give me some sort of warning. *(Facing her)* Tell me, who sent you here, is it my husband or your family members?

Adadewa: *(Showing readiness for her)* I'm telling you that nobody sent me here. However, considering the way you're behaving, I'm tempted to give you one warning: make sure it stops. A married woman does not behave the way you are behaving.

Mawuse: You know how a married woman should behave and you're here to teach me isn't it? Why don't you people rather untie my womb and allow me to have more children.

Adadewa: *(Not surprised, she gets up)* Mention the names of the people and I'll send the message to them.

Mawuse: *(Rises to respond. She places both hands on either side of her waist, ready to display)* You want me to mention their names? Oh no, my dear sister in-law or whatever you call yourself. They know themselves too well. The witches know themselves very well.

Adadewa: I see, now it is my family that has tied your womb, is that not so?

Mawuse: *(Unmoved)* Exactly!

Adadewa: Well, your message is quite clear and I'll tell all the parties involved but I need to warn you: since you have refused to listen to me, I hope and pray that no woman easily takes your place in this house. But should it happen, don't you dare come to the witches and wizards who are fighting you.

Mawuse: Leave my womb alone oh, leave my womb alone! I need my children.

Adadewa: You have been sacked severally from work because of this useless behaviour and you're here blaming people. When was it last you visited a gynaecologist to check up on your case? Be careful no imposter of a "man of God" sleeps with you with the way you're going.

Mawuse: *(Pointing to Adadewa)* It is you they will sleep with. Adzet4,(witch) ohoo, get out of my house!

Adadewa: *(Already leaving)* I'm leaving but remember, since you refer to me as a witch, be ready to face the consequences when they occur. I only pity my brother. *(She walks out)*

Mawuse: *(Shouting after her)* Pity yourself, you evil woman. *(She calms down a bit and begins to speak)* Look at this woman, oh! "The impudence of a dying cockroach". One of these days, the Holy Spirit will strike all of them for me one by one. My mother in-law, the queen of the witches is gone. The man they gave me as father during our marriage ceremony, is another and he's also gone. Very soon, it will be your turn. *(She quickly unties a little bottle from a skirt she was wearing and begins to sprinkle some form of liquid in the room specifically, the chair in which Adadewa sat. She continues to go round the room muttering something inaudibly until the lights fade out on her).*

*It is New Year's Eve and precisely, 31<sup>st</sup> December. Larbi is organising dinner with a few friends. He brings a bag of pork home for Mawuse to prepare. He comes home early from work to give her the meat.*

Larbi: *(Calling out)* Sadia, Sadia, *(pacing up and down)*, ah, is there nobody in this house.

Sadia: *(Running into the hall)* Yes sir, did you call me?

Larbi: Yes and where is your madam?

Sadia: She is inside the bedroom.

Larbi: *(Sharply)* Call her for me. *(Sadia quickly walks out and a few minutes later, Mawuse is seen at the doorway)*

Mawuse: *(Coldly)* You sent for me?

Larbi: Yes, I did. Here is a bag of meat I've bought. I need you to spice it properly and grill it for dinner. I'm expecting some friends over for some drinks. Mind you, I do not want you to hand over the preparation of the meal to the house girl and that is why I'm handing it over to you personally. *(He hands over the bag of meat to her, which she collects. Without saying a word, each of them depart)*

*Later that evening, Laud is seen with Larbi as they walk into the living room, laughing and chatting heartily. Adatsi Laud is an old friend of Larbi who has become like a brother.*

Adatsi: Charley, to think that marriage and work have condoned and connived to deprive us of being together as friends is no easy joke.

Larbi: So which of them is more jealous? Marriage or work? *(they burst into laughter)*

- Adatsi: I think both of them have their share of the blame.
- Larbi: Say it again my brother. *(As they sit, he calls out)* Sadia, *(she comes running)* Please serve some drinks and tell madam we are here. *(It is not long before Sadia comes in with a message)*
- Sadia: Good evening sir! My madam say I should tell you, she no cook.
- Larbi: *(Not sure of what Sadia was saying)* What did you just say?
- Sadia: My madam say... *(Before she could complete the sentence, Mawuse walks into the living room. She is dressed in a long sleeve shirt and long skirt covering almost every part of her body. Her hair is neatly combed and brushed back held in a pony style. She speaks with confidence)*
- Mawuse: Sadia, you can leave now.
- Sadia: Thank you ma! *(She walks out)*
- Mawuse: Good evening, gentlemen. *(Larbi and Adatsi watch her a bit confused as to her strange attitude)* I am deeply sorry for the inconvenience caused by not cooking your meal as scheduled. It is without any malice at all but if you care to know, my pastor has asked me not to either cook or eat pork again. Due to the consequences it will bring to me, I've thrown the bag of meat away since it cannot be kept in this house. I know my duty is to serve my husband but in this case it won't happen because I desperately need my children and whatever I'll do to have them, I will. *(She turns to leave but comes back as if she just remembered something)* You two can go outside and enjoy yourselves as long as you don't get that into my house. By the way, *(she faces Adatsi)* do you also treat your wife with so much disrespect and disdain as is done to me in this house or you are

equally having affair with girls all round? *(Both men are stunned but Larbi who is very furious screams at his wife).*

Larbi: What the hell are you talking about? One more word from you and I'll give you the beating of your life time which you will never forget.

Mawuse: If you call yourself a man, come and beat me and you'll see where it will land you. Useless man *(she sucks her teeth at him. Larbi who could not hold his temper anymore bursts out rising from his chair.)*

Larbi: You are damn lucky Adatsi is here. But come to think of it, you have grown horns haven't you. Take a good look at yourself. Are you a man, woman or an old lady? Yes it's true, I sleep around with girls because they dress well and are attractive. At thirty nine years, you can almost pass for an old lady. By the way, I want to believe that a very foolish man parading the streets of Accra with the title "Pastor" is deceiving you. All of a sudden, I see you as this ugly man, sleeping beside me every night and I have no passion at all for you. I warned you but you will not listen to me. You have pushed me to the wall and you have to be ready for the consequences.

Mawuse: What can you do to me? Nothing! You are a "toothless bulldog".

Adatsi: *(Confused and embarrassed, he rises to go)* I don't think I'm welcome here considering the turn of events. I'm leaving. Happy New Year Mr and Mrs Larbi! *(He walks out and is followed by Larbi but before leaving, he speaks to Mawuse)*

Larbi: This time round, I'll teach you a lesson. Get your things out of my house before I come back *(with emphasis)* Pack your things and leave my house!

Mawuse: I am going nowhere. It's rather you, who will leave.

*(Mawuse stands there both angry and confused. A few minutes later, Larbi enters the house and walks straight into the bedroom, returning into the living room with Mawuse's suitcases and other belongings.)*

Larbi: Get your things and leave my house this minute and don't ever come back.

Mawuse: What do you think you are doing?

Larbi: What does it look like? (Vehemently) I'm definitely throwing you out.

Mawuse: Has it come to that?

Larbi: I thought you said a few minutes ago that, I will rather be the one to leave. Now, we all know who is leaving and right this minute. By the count of three, I don't want to see you in this house. Otherwise, I will throw your things out.

Mawuse: Why are you doing this?

Larbi: I don't think you're getting the message. *(He moves Mawuse's luggage and throws them outside, pushing her along and locking the door behind her. Satisfied with his revenge, he walks straight into the bedroom, ignoring Mawuse who is heard banging and knocking on the door without a response until the lights fade out.*

*Days later, Larbi visits Adatsi in his office and they discuss issues.*

Adatsi: So, how are things between you and your wife?

Larbi: Well, nothing much has happened since you left because I drove her out.

Adatsi: You did what?

Larbi: I drove her out of the house of course. I am a free man; as free as a bird.

Adatsi: So what next?

Larbi: Nothing really.

Adatsi: You know what? I think you have more problems than your wife does.

Larbi: What do you mean?

Adatsi: How can a full-blooded young man like you, drive your straying wife out of your matrimonial home? Have you thought of who will take care of your little girl? What about their security? Or do you now want to give Mawuse FFO? (Full Freedom of Operation)

Larbi: What does that mean?

Adatsi: (*Teasingly*) I mean full freedom of operation

Nobody ta no do

Running away

Nobody ta no do

Running away

Larbi: (*Smiles*) it's not funny my friend

Adatsi: It's indeed not funny but I got you to smile at least.

But honestly speaking, I think the two of you need deliverance.

Larbi: I can't disagree with you on this one because I can't just imagine my wife saying, I'm having an affair with girls around.

Adatsi: That is an outrageous accusation and I believe you will not do such a thing but "there is no smoke without fire". There should be a reason for your wife's insecurity.

Larbi: My friend, I cannot just tell you everything. The reality on the ground is that, my wife is messing up 'big time' with everything and everyone around her. She hardly has time even for herself let alone her only daughter. As for me, you were a witness. I have tried everything to bring

her to book but 'kpaoh' (*not at all*). My wife will not listen. You cannot believe she told my ten year old daughter that my sister is a witch.

Adatsi: What, she could go to that extent? That reminds me, did your wife tell you your sister visited her in your absence?

Larbi: No oh! She could not have told me before leaving considering the circumstances under which I drove her out.

Adatsi: Let's drop that issue. But sometimes, I wonder why marriage is full of problems here and there. You will be surprised to know that there are times my wife and I have serious disagreements. The only advantage I have over you is that, both of us attend the same church and most of the times, we listen to the same sermon. The tension naturally dies away after going through such activities.

Larbi: Good for you my brother, in my case, my wife does not even have only one pastor. In fact, there are several of them if not more than five.

Adatsi: (*Laughing*) You must be joking.

Larbi: By this time, you should know that I'm more serious than the word itself. Today, it is "Osofo Kalusha", sometimes "Osofo Zama". I even hear there's one called "Kankambianka".

Adatsi: (*Now laughing hysterically*) I don't think you mean all that you're saying. However, if what you're saying is true, then your wife needs counselling.

Larbi: Why, are you a marriage counsellor?

Adatsi: Oh no but I know a few of them who can be of help. From observations, however, you cannot easily change someone's religion only because she is your wife. Maybe your wife had all these hidden in her and you did not know until now. But do you still love her?

Larbi: Of course, I do but she is now something else. Besides, she is already gone and I don't even know where she is. I wonder if she will be willing to come back after all that transpired between us.

Adatsi: Love is the most important thing and I promise you that, there's always a way out of every situation so please don't give up. You owe it to your daughter for now. Just hang in there and I'll be getting back to you.

Larbi: *(Rises to go)* Thanks, my brother, see you soon *(they shake hands and Larbi goes away. The lights fade out on Adatsi still working in his office.*

### Act III Scene 11

*Days later, a delegation from families of the couple, pay a surprised visit. It is early on a Saturday morning and Larbi is getting ready to go jogging as usual. Among the delegation are Mawuse, Adatsi Laud, Adadewa, Adu-Kumi (Larbi's family head), Agbenya (Mawuse's paternal uncle), Mamavi (Mawuse's mother) and Pastor Charles Essel, a renowned marriage counsellor.*

Delegation: Agooh!

Larbi: *(Already in the sitting room)* Ameen, you can kindly come in. *(The delegation walks into the room and Larbi expresses surprise as he offers them seats. He calls out Sadia to serve the guests with water)* Sadia, bring some water for our guests. *(Sadia later comes in with water to serve the guests and goes back. They exchange greetings)* This is quite a surprise but you are all welcome. "Abusuapanyin, Akwaaba".

All: Thank you. *(Abusuapanyin Adu-Kumi speaks on behalf of all present)*

Adu Kumi: My son, we are here this morning on a very pertinent issue and a complaint your wife brought to us. Your wife says you packed her belongings and drove her out. Is that true?

Larbi: Yes, Uncle!

Adu- Kumi: Can you tell all present here what brought about all that?

Larbi: Uncle, thank you once again for your concern on this issue and all those present are once again welcome. Before I say anything, it is just right to hear your part and the message you came with because I am your host.

Adu Kumi: You have spoken well my son. However, we cannot have a fruitful meeting without calling on God so we will kindly ask the Pastor who accompanied us here to pray as we begin proceedings.

Pastor Essel: Shall we bow our heads to pray.

Our father in heaven,

Hallowed be thy name and thy kingdom come.

As we meet here today, whatever we are here to do,

We pray that you will grant us divine success in Jesus name we pray.

Amen

All: Amen.

Adu Kumi: Thank you very much, Pastor. Agooh!

All: Aameh!

Adu- Kumi: You are welcome here my in-laws. We summoned you here this early morning to present a case before you for an amicable solution. We are also very grateful that you did not disappoint us on our request.

Agbenya: Our elders say that “when you cry for the hen, you cry for the hawk as well”. So, despite the fact that the call was sudden, we had to put everything aside to settle the issue.

Adu-Kumi: My daughter here (*pointing to Adadewa*) who is also an in-law to your daughter (*indicating Mawuse*) reported an issue to us few weeks ago. It was not long before you also called on us with a report from our daughter in law. Due to the nature of the complaint, we decided to call you in and settle the issue once and for all.

Agbenya: We are grateful and ready to listen.

Adu-Kumi: Thank you very much, my in- laws. In order not to waste a lot of time, I will go straight to the point to ask your daughter this simple question. Do you know this woman? (*Pointing to Adadewa*)

Mawuse: Yes “Abusuapanyin”.

Adu- Kumi: Did she visit you a few weeks ago?

Mawuse: Yes, please!

Adu- Kumi: Did you call her a witch? (*At this point everybody shows surprise and they begin to murmur*)

Mawuse: Please, she came to me with insults. That is why I told her that.

Adu- Kumi: So it’s true, I see. Did you also call her late mother who was your mother in- law a witch and that they have tied your womb so that you cannot have more children?

Mawuse: She called for it, Uncle.

Adu- Kumi: (*Addressing those present*) As you can all see, all the accusations levelled against our wife here are true. Our elders say that when you marry a man, you are married to his entire family. In other words, if you insult a man,

you have insulted his whole family which is a pure sign of disrespect.

*(Adadewa suddenly speaks in anger)*

Adadewa: My elders, I was the one who reported the matter in discussion. It was not long before Larbi got fed up and drove her out because he could not bear her behaviour any longer. As a sister in-law and the one in accusation, I would like to request that “our wife” (*indicating Mawuse*) take me to the so-called pastor who is accusing me of witchcraft, so that they can exorcise the witchcraft out of me. Otherwise hell will break loose right here in this house.

Pastor Essel: *(Pastor Essel sensing danger speaks)* My elders, I don’t think it has come to that. We are here to solve a problem and not to inflame passions. I would like to plead with sister Adadewa to be patient.

Adu- Kumi: *(With emphasis)* In my opinion, it is not Adadewa alone whose witchcraft should be exorcised. That includes myself and Larbi too, because Mawuse categorically sent us, the family, the message that we should leave her womb alone, so that she can have more children for our son. *(Agbenya, sensing that the case is not just something to throw over board, interrupts).*

Agbenya: My in-laws, please be patient with us because we need to ask our daughter a few questions so that we see how to solve this issue. *(He turns to face his niece)* Mawuse, are your in-laws right in their accusation? *(Mawuse who is confused at the extent to which the issue was going does not speak but nods her head in the affirmative).* I have been telling you that a child should not go out, looking for trouble by opening his or her big mouth. The issue you have brought us is capable of destroying a

home. How do we go about this issue now? You rather came accusing your husband of throwing you out, only for us to realise that, the case is more than we can handle.

*(Mawuse who now looks remorseful is quietly listening as her mother continues)*

Mamavi: I am a poor old woman, living in the village. I lived with your father and my in-laws in peace until the day “Mawu Sogbolisa” (*God Almighty*) called him home. I have never shown this level of disrespect to neither your father nor my in-laws. Where did you learn that?

*(Agbenya interrupts Mawuse’s mom)*

Agbenya: Should things get worse, we will just go back with her to the village. What sort of disgrace is this one, coming from you of all people? *(He turns to face the others present)*. My in-laws, everything is clear that our daughter is guilty.

Adu- Kumi: Then, she should pay a fine in apology to the whole family. This fine has got nothing to do with our son. After the payment of the fine, we will then ask our son if he is still interested in keeping his wife. “ana7 s1, aware1 no, y1ngo no”

Mawuse: My in-laws *(on her knees)* please, it has not come to that. I’ll plead with my in-laws not to speak about divorce here *(she rises up)*.

Agbenya: We are listening, my in-laws. We would be willing for her to pay the fine because what she did is an abomination.

Adu- Kumi: We would like our in-laws to know that we do not hold them responsible for their daughter’s actions. “If a child does not respect his elders, he pronounces the name of a palm branch wrongly”. Let it reach our

daughter in-law that, we request the following, immediately. (*he takes out a piece of paper from Adadewa and reads the items*)

1. One white sheep
2. Two bottles of schnapps (*foreign*)
3. Two crates of beer
4. Two crates of minerals

In addition to these, she will buy two half pieces of Holland to pacify her late mother in-law and her daughter, Adadewa.

Agbenya: Thank you very much my elders, but I will like to ask for a little reduction in the items for our daughter. The price of Holland is close to GH¢ 150.00(one hundred and fifty Ghana cedis) and since her mother in-law is no more, we are requesting that you consider scraping her part off.

Adu-Kumi: Your daughter should have known better that one does not speak evil about the dead. This is what the entire family agreed on when we met so there is nothing like consideration here. (*Agbenya quickly interacts with Mamavi and Mawuse as they discuss something inaudible to the audience, a few seconds later, he speaks*)

Agbenya: Well, my in-laws have spoken and we will get the items presented. Thank you very much.

Adu- Kumi: Thank you too my in-laws for the understanding. Shall we now proceed to the next issue at hand? My son, (*indicating Adatsi*) can you tell us what you know about the problem for which we are gathered.

Adatsi: As I came to report the other day, I have severally come to this home and all I see for some time now is the confusion in which Larbi and Mawuse are dabbling themselves. This has gone on to an extent that they hurl all

sorts of insults at each other. In fact, it is very complicated here and I would be very grateful if the issue were addressed.

Adu- Kumi: Thank you very much for the bold step to help your friend. He is not the only person who came to us but Adadewa as well. We would also like to hear her version.

Adadewa: *(A bit relaxed now)* According to what my brother told me, it all started about three years ago when his wife started attending certain churches and prayer camps with her friend by name Akosua. *(Pastor Essel quickly interrupts her for clarification)*

Pastor Essel: Are the churches which she attends now different from the one she and her husband attended previously?  
*(Larbi unable to hold his patience any longer, speaks out for the first time)*

Larbi: Yes, pastor. The interesting thing about the whole issue is that, this same friend has led her round a number of churches in town. It is not as if she has a specific church which is permanent. As a result of this attitude, she comes home with all sorts of funny doctrines and different concoctions and all that. The long and short of it is that, elders gathered, I did everything in my power to stop her but to no avail. You will be surprised to hear that there were times I came to meet my wife with her supposed friend, chanting and calling spirits in my own house. My wife has become so gullible to the so called “men of God” *(There is a little bickering and noise among those present until pastor Essel speaks.)*

Pastor Essel: Did she ever specify the reason for her attitude and change over?

Larbi: She claims our child is getting old and she wants more children but they are not forth-coming.

Adu- Kumi: Are you complaining she should give you more children?

Agbenya: Or are you putting pressure on her for more children?

Larbi: That's the point. In fact, I have never done any such thing and if she will tell the truth, she can confirm that I rather keep encouraging her that "God's time is always the best".

Mamavi: Then what is the problem with you my daughter. Speak forth because we are here to help you.

*(Mawuse who is totally broken down due to the turn of events speaks out in a low tone).*

Mawuse: I was deceived by Akosua who said she knew men of God who could make me get pregnant in no time.

Larbi: And you have been in this business for three years without a sign.

Adadewa: One interesting discovery I also made was that neither she nor her husband have seen a specialist to find out what the problem might be. For all you know, this is a minor medical problem which can be solved within a few weeks. I will insist that they seek medical advice immediately so that we all know what the problem is and see the way forward.

Adu- Kumi: I want to ask one simple question. The so called friend who keeps coming to you and sending you around, is she married?

Mawuse: No.

*(All the people show surprise and murmur for a while except pastor Essel)*

Pastor Essel: I don't think it is absolutely wrong for you a married woman to have a best friend in an unmarried woman. Some single women are very good and so are some married women very bad. A lot will depend on Mawuse, to make the right choice of friends.

Agbenya: May I know why you just left your old church where you and your husband were having fellowship? That is the root cause of all the problems we are trying to solve today.

Pastor Essel: It is not totally wrong to worship in different churches but doctrinal differences of churches can easily breed conflict. That is why I advise couples that it is always better, if they can, to fellowship in the same church. This way, many of the excesses will not occur which is not already known to both partners.

Adu-Kumi: At this point too, I think Mawuse needs to apologise to her husband for causing him so much pain.

Agbenya: At the same time, she has to stop every other church activity and return to her husband's church with immediate effect.

Mamavi: *(Facing her daughter)* I see this attitude of yours as very strange but I'm here to caution you once again that, a married woman does not make unnecessary friends. Your priority as a wife should be your husband and children. You cannot mess up your home in the name of a church. Now, in the presence of all those here, I want you to go and kneel before your husband and render an unqualified apology.

*(Mawuse walks from her seat and kneels down before her husband, asking for forgiveness as everybody present looks on in expectation)*

Mawuse: *(Before Larbi, on her knees)* I'm very sorry for everything, please forgive me and I promise it won't happen again. *(Still on her knees)*

Larbi: Your apology is accepted but I should not be the one to receive it. I think you owe it to all family members present.

Adu- Kumi: Well, Mawuse, your husband has spoken. If that is what will satisfy him, then do it.

Mawuse: *(Still in front of her husband, she turns to face the gathering)* I want to apologise to everybody present here that I'm sorry to have put you through all of this.

Adu-kumi: On behalf of all present, I accept your apology.

Mawuse: Thank you my elders *(drops a tear)*.

Larbi: *(Lifting up his wife)* It's okay honey. *(Pats her on the shoulder)*

Pastor Essel: I'm delighted that we are making serious impact on this issue. I would like to leave the couple with a few words of wisdom. A husband and wife can be unequally yoked in many instances. With Mawuse and Larbi, it was due to the issue of doctrinal differences. I think every couple, should learn to put their marriage before any other thing. Aside that, couples should learn to quickly put the mistakes of the past behind them. It is also not right to use religion as a platform, to frustrate the efforts of one another. I think a lot has already been said here and it is only appropriate that we ask permission to close the gathering by prayer.

Adu- Kumi: *(Jokingly)* I think we have even spent too much time here. We need to leave so that the couple can begin their second honeymoon. It's been a long day.

Pastor Essel: Thank you very much but before we say a prayer, I would like to see the couple embrace each other before us, so that we can be sure we performed our duties well. Lastly, don't forget to visit the hospital immediately as suggested by your in-law, Adadewa.

Larbi: I'll accompany her first thing on Monday morning.

Adatsi: It's highly important.

*(Larbi walks to his wife and they hug each other in a long embrace)*

Pastor Essel: I think it's okay, you can continue when we are gone.

*(They laugh and separate). Shall we all sing this song. (He raises the song and the others join him in singing)*

Let there be love shared among us

Let there be love in our hearts

Lord let your love fill this family

Cause us oh Lord to abide

Give us a fresh understanding

Of brotherly love that is real

Let there be love shared among us

Let there be love.

*Pastor Essel prays.*

Our Lord and Saviour Jesus, we want to thank you for all that you have done today. Bible says that behold how good and pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity. You have brought us together in love once again. Our prayer is that this union will remain... *(As he continues to pray, the lights fade out on them)*

*A few days later, Larbi and Mawuse are in the office of Dr Sey for the medical report of an earlier test conducted on both of them. Dr Sey is a gynaecologist and a specialist in fertility problems.*

Dr Sey: You are welcome Mr and Mrs Larbi.

Larbi: Thank you doctor, I hope you have good news for us.

Dr Sey: Well, thank God you have a positive confession. I believe everything will work well.

Mawuse: Doc, is there a problem?

Dr Sey: Actually, it is not something that cannot be solved if only you are willing to go through the needed treatment. According to the report before me, *(he opens an envelope and hands it over to the couple)* your wife has developed a little growth in her womb.

Larbi: You mean she has a fibroid?

Dr Sey: Yes, but hers is just a little obstruction in the womb which will require a minor surgery before she can possibly take seed.

Mawuse: Doc, if I go through the surgery, how long will it take me to conceive?

Dr Sey: Let's say, within the minimum of three months.

Mawuse: Can we do the surgery today?

Larbi: Honey, I know you want this as much as I do but I'm sure we need to book for an appointment.

Dr Sey: Your husband is right, besides we need to take you through some counselling sessions before the surgery. If you are ready, we can start today.

Mawuse: I'm ready.

Dr Sey: Kindly wait for me at the surgical ward so that we can book you for your sessions.

Larbi: Thank you very much, doctor. *(They walk out of the doctor's office as the lights fade out on him)*

*It has been a year since the operation was done for Mawuse. She has given birth to twins (a boy and a girl) and as part of the naming ceremony, the couple is celebrating their Twelve years wedding anniversary. There is loud gospel music at the background as family and friends have gathered for the ceremony. Among those gathered are Adadewa, Laud and his wife, Pastor Essel, family members, friends and well wishers. Larbi, Mawuse, their daughter Abigail and the little twins are all dressed in white lace and seated at the high table together with Pastor Essel and Adadewa, who is also carrying one of the twins. The master of ceremony is Laud, who finally speaks to commence the programme.*

Laud: D.J, can you please lower the volume of your music so that we begin the program for the day. *(The music is lowered and he continues)* Once again, you are very welcome to this very memorable occasion. Before we begin, shall we please call on Pastor Essel to give us the opening prayer.

Pastor Essel: I'm highly elated to be part of this joyous celebration. A year ago, we were here and today, we can all attest to God's goodness. Shall we all be up standing as we pray. *(He raises a popular tune and all the people join him in singing)*

Da na se

Da naa se

Da onyame ase

Efiri se,

Oye na na doye

Dooso ma yen...

*(When the song is over, he prays shortly and the programme continues.)*

Laud: Thank you very much for that touching prayer. It was an interesting sight as I saw Mrs Larbi shedding tears of joy while the song was being sung. We all agree that we are here because of Larbi and his wife. We will therefore like to have a word from our host.

Larbi: *(As he stands to speak, there is a loud cheer amidst clapping from the crowds which dies down immediately he begins to speak).* Thank you very much for that cheer because it really makes me feel like a father of many nations. I would like to congratulate my beautiful wife for her zeal and determination which has brought us this far. Honey, *(turns to face Mawuse)* about six years ago, you indicated that you wanted to have three or more children before our wedding anniversary. Today, your wish has been granted. I would like to thank all our friends, family and loved ones especially, my sister Adadewa and my good friend and brother, Laud. Before I sit down, may I invite my lovely wife to sing her favourite song in appreciation to God. As the party continues, please be informed that there's a lot of food and drinks so everybody should have fun. *(By this time, Mawuse was standing by Larbi amidst cheers)*

Mawuse: Today, I want to thank God for His faithfulness and if you know the song, please join me sing. *(She raises the song in Ewe and others join).*

Akpe mada na Mawu

Akpe mada na Mawu

Akpe mada na Mawu

Mada na Mawu

Mada na Mawu

Akpe mada na Mawu

Mada na Mawu...

**The End**



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APPENDIX I

THE PLAY READING SESSION ON 12<sup>TH</sup> APRIL, 2013 AT 3:00PM AT THE EFUA SUTHERLAND DRAMA STUDIO



Fig. 3.1 Students actors during the play reading



Fig. 3.2 Mawuse and Sadia in Act I scene I



Fig. 3.3 Sadia, the house- help reading her lines



Fig. 3.4 Adadewa and Larbi in Act II Scene II



Fig. 3.5 Larbi, Mawuse and Abigail in a discussion during play reading session



Fig. 3.6 Lecturers and researcher at the play reading session



Fig. 3.7 Some lecturers and student audience at the play reading session



Fig. 3.8 Pastor Essel, Adatsi, Adadewa, Pastor Obeng and Larbi in Act III Scene II trying to resolve the conflict between Larbi and Mawuse



Fig. 3.9 Lecturers and student audience at the play reading session



Fig. 3.10 Mawuse on her knees apologising to Larbi. Act III Scene II

**APPENDIX II**  
**QUESTIONNAIRE**

A questionnaire to assess ideas on the topic;

**UNEQUAL YOKING: A THEATRICAL EXPLORATION OF RELIGIOUS  
CONFLICT IN MARRIAGE IN GHANA**

This study is being conducted to determine the causes of conflict within marriages with specific reference to intra-faith based marriages in Christian religion. This is in partial fulfilment of methodology used in writing the play Unequal Yoking in the award of a Master of Fine Arts Degree. Your opinion is implored to answer the following questions. In this study, religion refers to Christianity and Intra- faith refers to the same religion. Thanks for your co-operation.

**QUESTIONNAIRE**

**Section (A): Social and Demographic Background**

- 1 Age of respondent (a) 18 - 30            (b) 31 – 40    (c) 41 – 50    (d) 51 – 60
- 2 Sex of respondent: (a) Male [ ]    (b) Female [ ]
- 3 Qualification: (a) Primary [ ]    (b) Secondary [ ]    (c) Tertiary [ ]
- 4 Are you married? (a) Yes [ ]    (b) No [ ]
- 5 What type of marriage did you contract? (a) Customary [ ]    (b) Ordinance [ ]
  
- 6 How long have you been married? (a) less than 1 year [ ]    (b) 2 – 5yrs [ ]  
(c) 6 – 9yrs [ ]    (d) 10 – 14yrs [ ]    (e) 15 or more yrs [ ]

**Section (B): Perceptions and Impact of Conflict in Marriage**

- 7 As a Christian, which denomination do you belong to? (a) Orthodox [ ]    (b) Pentecostal [ ]    (c) Charismatic [ ]    (d) other [ ]

8 Are you and your partner members of the same church? (a) Yes [ ] (b) No [ ]

9 Reasons for answer in question (8).....

10 Do you experience disagreement in your marriage? (a) Yes [ ] (b) No [ ]

11 How often do you disagree on issues in your marriage? (a) Seldom [ ]

(b) often [ ] (c) very often [ ] (d) all the time [ ]

12 What are some of the major causes of conflict in your marriage?

(a) Doctrinal differences [ ] (b) Sex [ ] (c) food [ ] (d) in-laws [ ]

(e) finances (f) behavioural patterns [ ]

13 How do you resolve disagreement in your marriage? (a) through my Pastor [ ] (b) friends [ ] By ourselves [ ] (d) counsellors [ ]

14 Do you think you are in the right relationship? (a) Yes [ ] (b) No [ ]

15 If given the opportunity, would you make a different choice? (a) Yes [ ] (b) No [ ]

16 Give reasons.....

**Section (C): Religion and Conflict in Marriage**

17 Do you think different Christian denominational teachings, beliefs and practices can cause conflict in marriage? Yes [ ] (b) No [ ]

18 Does your church agree for members to marry from other Christian denominations? (a) Yes [ ] (b) No [ ]

19 What are the reasons for any of the answers in question (18)?.....  
.....

20 Would you marry someone from a different Christian denomination? (a) Yes [ ]

(b) No [ ]

21 State reasons for your answer in question (20).....

.....

22 Does conflict (a) Build your relationship [ ] (b) Destroy your relationship [ ]

