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Holistic Ministry: a Christocentric Foundation and Its Application Toward Developing a Curriculum for Ministerial Education in Ghana

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HOLISTIC MINISTRY: A CHRISTOCENTRIC FOUNDATION AND
ITS APPLICATION TOWARD DEVELOPING A CURRICULUM
FOR MINISTERIAL EDUCATION IN GHANA

A Project Report
Presented in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Ministry

by
Walton S. Whaley

August 1982

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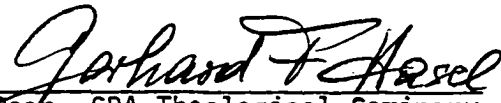
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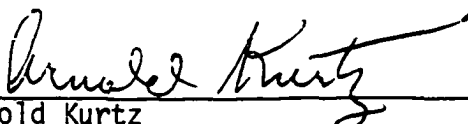
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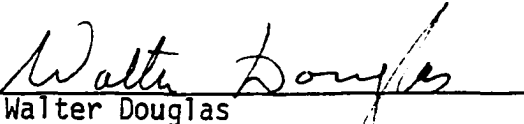
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NOTE

This Doctor of Ministry project report falls in a category described in the Seminary Bulletin as "Project II" in fulfillment of requirements for an alternate curriculum plan under which the candidate prepares two related papers--a theological position paper addressing some issue or problem in the church theologically, and a professional paper addressing this issue or problem from the standpoint of ministerial practice.

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PREFACE

The researcher has risked the possible charge of being presumptuous and unqualified to undertake this study. After nearly fourteen years of mission service there is still so very much to learn about Africa and Africans.

Nevertheless this study is the outgrowth of deep concern for the church in Ghana whose membership has drastically outgrown its leadership. From the laity has come a mandate for the establishment of an educational center for educating their ministry. This project is an attempt to give direction for the implementation of that mandate.

The purpose of this study is to examine the Biblical revelation and traditional views on some aspects of religious and cultural beliefs within a limited field, among the Akan people of Ghana; and then to conceptualize a viable curriculum for the education of a specialized ministry in that context.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Heartfelt gratitude flows toward those whose questionings and suggestions and support have contributed to the completion of this research project:

To my Lord Jesus Christ for the gracious fulfillment of His promises;

To my wife Leola and our children, Susan, Walton, Janice, and Sharon for their all-out support;

To Dr. Norman Miles for his patient and encouraging chairmanship;

To Dr. Arnold Kurtz, Dr. Walter Douglas, and Dr. Lawrence Geraty whose critical skills helped shape the final product;

To my church for lengthening the cord and strengthening the stakes of Christian education.

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

The Seventh-day Adventist Church in Ghana had an annual growth rate of 8.8 percent during the ten-year period from 1970-1980. There were 13,570 baptized members in 1969¹ and 30,865 in 1979.² At this annual growth rate of 8.8 percent, the Adventist Church in Ghana will grow five times as large in twenty years, and eleven times as large in thirty years.³ This amounts to a projection of 154,000 members by the year 2000 and 339,900 members by the year 2010, and this is a conservative projection. However, it is useful to point out the fact that the Adventist Church in Ghana faces a thrilling and sobering challenge: to equip a specialized ministry and commission it to equip the laity for witnessing to the nation and for nurturing the people of God.

The religions of the nearly 11 million population is 43 percent Christian, 12 percent Islam, and 38 percent traditional. Eight major national languages are spoken in addition to English, the official language. Therefore, evangelizing and, at the same time, nurturing the rapidly growing Adventist community in the faith of

¹Seventh-day Adventist Year Book (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1970).

²Ibid., 1980.

³Calculations based on Ralph D. Winter's "Logarithmic Aid Sheet" as found in The Means of World Evangelism: Missiological Education, Alvin Martin, ed. (South Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 1974), p. 421.

Jesus Christ is a massive task that dictates the involvement of every member. There is a need for a ministry that is specifically trained to mobilize the total church for deployment of its spiritual gifts for internal nurture and external witness. Only when the community is strong within can it expect to be strong without.

The purpose of this study was to articulate a theology of Christocentric holistic ministry appropriate to this task as a guide toward the development of a curriculum for training a specialized Adventist ministry for Ghana.

If the Adventist message is to sink its shaft deep into the soul of Ghana with permanence and authenticity, there must be developed an inclusive and contextual training process for ministry that probes the holistic life concepts of the Ghanaian people.

In order to facilitate the above task, this study was organized as follows: Part I focuses on "the dominant ethnic group in Ghana"--the AKANS.¹ This part of the study was designed to set forth theological magnetism for the project. A Biblical view and Akan perspectives on major themes are presented and a Christocentric impact on these themes is provided. Part II provides a dynamic curriculum design for training a specialized ministry that is grounded in the thesis of Christocentric holistic ministry. Christocentric holistic ministry is defined as the High Priestly ministry of the All-Sufficient Christ empowering the pastoral ministry for nurturing the whole community. It suggests that Christ has provided for the holistic need of His

¹Kofi Appiah-Kubi, "Healing and Wholeness in an African Society," in All Africa Conference of Churches Bulletin, vol. 11, no. 1 (Nairobi, Kenya: Information Department of the All Africa Conference of Churches, n.d.), p. 25.

Body. Through the dynamic of conversion experience, facilitated by the creative power of the Holy Spirit, holistic growth in grace and in the knowledge of Jesus is given primacy. It is an attempt to filter the whole of life through the mind of Christ. The whole Body, a mental, physical, spiritual, and social entity, is invested by the perfection of Jesus Christ and is commissioned to minister both internally and externally. The centrality of the Christ event is treasured as the theological lodestar for utilizing the African bias for seeing life holistically.

Organization of the Study

Chapter I introduces the Akan as a people with a holistic outlook and states the purpose for this study.

Chapter II surveys Biblical and Akan religious views in God, man, sin, and redemption.

Chapter III surveys Biblical and Akan cultural views on marriage, family, and community.

Chapter IV provides a theological application of Christocentric holism to the Akan situation.

Chapter V introduces Part II of the project and makes a statement on the new perimeters for this work.

Chapter VI contains a review of related literature concerning curriculum for ministerial education.

Chapter VII outlines a two-year curriculum model for ministerial education in Ghana.

A summary and conclusion follows.

PART I

TOWARD A THEOLOGY OF CHRISTOCENTRIC HOLISTIC
MINISTRY IN THE CONTEXT OF THE RELIGIO-SOCIO
PERCEPTIONS OF THE AKAN

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Concepts of the wholeness of the human person are imbedded in Akan thought.¹ The "whole man" in the Akan context is a member of a family who belongs to a particular group and clings to a causal connection with nature and with the supernatural. "The complete or full man in the Akan society is the one with total wholeness of mind, body and spirit."² A strong religious heritage serves as the foundation and adhesive of Akan culture. The religion is mainly nature worshipping, though with the introduction of Christianity, most of them have become Christians. Since the Akan makes very little or no distinction between religion and culture--though both are important to him--it is vital that the gospel communicator become conversant with the religious, social, and cultural dynamics that make the Akans the people they are. The purpose of such a quest from the standpoint of

¹The Akans are people who live predominantly in the Ashanti, Brong Ahafo, Central, and Western Regions, and part of Eastern Region of Ghana. They are one single dominant ethnic group in Ghana. They are made up of the Ashantis, Kwahus, Akims, Akwapims, Fantis, Nzimas, Wassas, and the Brongs. The Akans live mainly in the forest area and have farming as their main occupation. The fact that Ghana is the leading cocoa-producing country in the world can be attributed mostly to the sweat and toil of the Akan farmer. Trading and other civil services also engage the forest-dwelling Akan.

²Kofi Appiah-Kubi, "Healing and Wholeness in an African Society," p. 25.

effectively communicating the good news of redeeming love is articulated by the Apostle Paul:

For though I am free from all men, I have made myself a slave to all, that I might win the more. To the Jews I became as a Jew, in order to win Jews;--To those outside the law I became as one outside the law . . . that I might win those outside the law. To the weak I became weak, that I might win the weak. I have become all things to all men, that I might by all means save some.¹

This paper was undertaken with the hope that it would become one vehicle by which the gospel would take a sojourn into Akan thought seeking bridges to the soul via Christocentric holistic ministry.

The bias of the researcher is evident from the start. He believes the Bible to be the Word of God for all mankind. Its universal scope is miniaturized in the history of Israel and maximized in the Person of Jesus Christ. It begins on a universal note and ends on the same. The drama-in-between is the unfolding of two principles at war with each other. Every person on planet earth is involved in the struggle. Every people has the right and duty to acquaint itself with the issues and decide on which side of the struggle they wish to belong. There is no neutral ground, and the stakes are eternal.

¹1 Cor 9:19-22. Here Paul illustrates the necessity of entering into the framework of a culture in order to work from the known to the unknown in winning people to Christ. He exercised the freedom of adaptability with one consuming goal--to win men. Paul was not being a mere spiritual Charlatan; he was imitating Christ (1 Cor 11:1). The grace of God must be brought down to where men are--down into their circumstances and against the background of their experiences and through the pain of their necessities--that they might catch a glimpse of redeeming love and reach out from the bondage of their lives to grasp the freedom of life from above. No approach insensitive to the issues of culture and background must be allowed to impede the thrust of saving love.

CHAPTER II

A SURVEY OF THEOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVES: THE BIBLICAL AND TRADITIONAL AKAN RELIGIOUS VIEWS

A Biblical View of God and Man Sin and Redemption

God and Man

The Biblical views of God and man, sin and redemption provide the framework in which every people on planet earth may find their reason for existence and their destiny. The Bible reveals God as Creator, Sustainer, and Lord of all. He is the Sovereign God who has made Himself known to man in word and deed. He has given himself completely and uniquely in Jesus Christ so that the revelation of Himself might be full and complete--absolutely adequate.

The Bible reveals Jesus Christ as the key to the personal mystery of God. In Him "the light of the knowledge of the glory of God" is seen (2 Cor 4:6). This knowledge is crucial for all humanity. For in it is bound up the privilege of eternal life (John 17:3).

It is Jesus Christ who has fully made known what God the Father is like. Love, grace, and truth were placarded in the life of Jesus with such finality that He could say, "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by Me"

(John 14:6). That is to say: No man past, present, or future comes into intimate, personal, saving relationship with the Father except by an intimate, personal, saving relationship with Christ. This, we suggest, is what it means to know God and receive eternal life.

With solemnity and great significance, the Bible unveils the creation of mankind as the high point of creation. Adam and Eve were created with the capacity to love and be in control of their environment. They were created total persons with perfect reasoning, moral, and communicative powers.

Mankind was all that God intended them to be. As the holy pair settled down in their garden home their lives were radiant with purity. The love of God, implanted in their very being, was reflected in their love for each other, for God, and for all creation. They were surrounded with such advantages as were designed to ensure them of never-ending happiness and growth.

That this freedom of love was wholly lost brings us to the consideration of sin and the plan of redemption.

Sin and Redemption

The Bible, in seven tragic verses, sets the stage for the long history of sin, described conceptually and perhaps most positively as pāsha--rebellion against God.¹

¹H. Wheeler Robinson, "Old Testament Terminology for Sin," in Man's Need and God's Gift, ed. Milliard J. Erickson (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1976), pp. 103-05.

The sad record of sin's intrusion into a world created by God reads like an awful nightmare against the background of the Creation story. Satan, fallen angel and originator of sin, using the beauty of a serpent to beguile, skillfully manipulated the transference of man's allegiance from God to himself. Complicity on the part of Adam and Eve in the light of their advantages makes their rebellion inexcusable and irrational. They were sharers in the holiness and righteousness of God, depositories of divine love with which to govern and rule the earth and give back to God loving worship. With one stroke of self-seeking Adam and Eve shattered their wholeness, blighted their love, and became sharers in the evil and hatred of God's enemy. They became the vehicle for human brokenness, misery, and woe.

Man's attempt to overstep the bounds of his creaturely dependence upon God and grasping at autonomy was the root of all the evil and friction in the world.¹ God's dealing with the fallen pair indicates that human responsibility for sin in the world is taken with deadly seriousness. Immediately the garden of delight becomes the garden of disenchantment. Harmony and peace have been shattered, a perpetual deadly struggle with evil has begun.

This sin of Adam established the lordship of death over all humanity on the basis of the corporate solidarity principle where all men are counted as "in Adam."

Man's estrangement from God caused by sin was radical and deep. Man had perverted his freedom (to love) by using it in the

¹Ellen G. White, Patriarchs and Prophets (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1958), pp. 57-58.

wrong way. He voluntarily rejected God's purpose for his existence and grasped at omniscience only to find ruin and death. With his powers perverted, his nature weakened, and with moral and spiritual death weighing heavily upon him because of his separation from God, man could not reverse what sin had done to him or God's world. The floodgates of death and woe were opened by sin (Matt 25:41). Evil spirits [demons, agents of Satan, his "angels" (Rom 12)], were unleashed upon the earth and all nature began to groan (Rom 8:20-22). The kingdom of darkness (Eph 6:10-12) was inaugurated on earth when Adam sinned.

As already noted, God has personally involved Himself in man's dilemma. He has come to man's rescue. He has provided for the reversal of all the damage that sin has wrought. His pitying love did not abandon humanity. He is sovereign and in control of the universe. His reign has been challenged on earth, but He will prevail. His Kingdom is now and forever. His answer to the plight of sin is the plan of redemption.

It costs God dearly to redeem the world, to reverse the tragic consequences of sin. The Father sent His Son into this world to be man's Substitute, to die the death man deserved to die. He sent Him to break the shackles that bound men to sin and death, to bring an end to the estrangement, to restore wholeness to man and fellowship and perfect love, and to establish a new community--a redeemed community renewed in love, reconciled to God and one another.

The sinfulness of sin demanded no less than the death of the Son of God. On the cross, man's Substitute became the Surety of man's redemption. God accepted the liability of paying sin's wages even before the foundation of the world. The Lamb was yielded long

before the fact, but the agony of the cross was no less painful to the heart of God. On the cross, God the Father entered into the realm of sin and in His holy wrath dealt with sin. He embodied sin in His sinless Son. He Himself suffered (vicariously, for God cannot die) the terrors of the second death. How else may we understand the Scriptures that tell us "the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all"; "He hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin"; "He should taste death for every man"; and at the same time, "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself" (Isa 53:6; 2 Cor 5:21; Heb 2:9; 2 Cor 5:19).

The consciousness that God the Father entered into pain and agony and death through His Son's sacrifice on the cross--a pain and agony and death that rightfully belongs to all mankind--reaches down into the depths of every human need and all men's needs. All mankind may find satisfaction and hope in His redeeming love. The brokenness of sin abounds but the wholeness of redemption overflows for all mankind.

The cross says God is love, people have value, the devil is conquered, redemption is real, and "Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (Phil 2:11). The coming of God in Jesus Christ to redeem mankind is the wondrous story of lavish, everlasting love.

With these ideas in mind, we seek to enter the thought world of the Akan. His concepts of God, man, sin, and redemption are bound up with strong sentiments for his religious heritage. The Christian communicator must come to grips with the Akan perceptions of reality if he is to effectively communicate Christ as the all and in all of Akan life.

A Survey of Akan Traditional Religion

From a traditional Christian view the God of the Bible is Creator and Lord of all things by His own word and will. He is the sovereign God who makes Himself known to man in thought, word, and deed. In the creation of man, the redemption of Israel, and the incarnation of Jesus Christ, God reveals Himself as a personal, intimate, and social Being who has life in Himself. He is indeed the Living God, the "I AM" (Exod 3:14). He is the cause of being and existence in the universe, and in Him, man lives and moves and has his being. He is the "source of man's creation-life, redemption-life, and resurrection life."¹

The Akan concept of God is derived from an altogether different source than from the Bible. One must therefore shy away from the temptation of placing traditional religion before the firing squad of biblical revelation, without first giving an in-depth hearing to what traditional religion says. In this section we are constrained to present only a survey of Akan traditional religion--to try to avoid being insensitive to that which makes people what they are; and at the same time to propose something better for wholeness of life.

The Supreme Being

Onyame, one of the Akan names for the Supreme Being,² is believed to be a transcendent and unique being. There exists the

¹Carl F. H. Henry, "A Critique of Process-Theology," in The Living God, ed. Milliard J. Erickson (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1973), p. 407.

²"The two commonly used names are Onyame and Onyankopon, meaning probably 'the shining one' and 'the only great one,'

awareness that Onyame is dependable and trustworthy. This idea is traced from one of the titles accorded the Supreme Being, that of Tweadumpon, which is translated as "lean-on-a-mighty-tree-do-not-fall." There is also the awareness that he is the Creator of all, the source and origin of that "vital power" so indispensable to make one fully human, the Giver of rain and sunshine, the ruler and preserver of His creation.¹ Yet he manifests his power through a pantheon of gods--the abosom.² They are his agents as are the ancestors through whom He keeps a loving but watchful eye on man.³

However, one investigator of Akan religious life has judged that "belief in God is a philosophy rather than a living faith. . . . His qualities and demands are willingly admitted, but they exercise little if any influence on practical life."⁴ A key expression supporting this estimation comes from Williamson, a missionary professor to the Gold Coast and Ghana for twenty-six years (1933-1959):

There is much evidence to support what conversation with Akans will confirm, namely, that, as one said, "we never doubt the power of Onyame." He is man's final help and succour; all originate in him, hence without him man is helpless; in the midst of change he is the permanent, and to him man appeals when all else fails.⁵ (Emphasis supplied)

Onyame'. Onyankopon also receives the day-name Kwame, the name of a male born on Saturday, which is reckoned to be the Supreme Being's day of worship." Sydney George Williamson, Akan Religion and the Christian Faith (Accra: Ghana Universities Press, 1965), p. 87.

¹ Ibid.

² Dennis M. Warren, The Akan of Ghana (Accra: Pointer Limited, 1973), p. 22.

³ Peter Sarpong, Ghana in Retrospect: Some Aspects of Ghanaian Culture (Accra: Ghana Publishing Corporation, 1974), p. 10.

⁴ D. Westerman, Africa and Christianity, 3rd ed., 1949, cited in Williamson, Akan Religion and the Christian Faith, pp. 97-98.

⁵ Williamson, p. 100.

Here is evidence of the belief that "the individual has the right of direct approach to Onyame."¹ On the other hand, the door to the mysterious spirit-world is left ajar and the "all else" is seen to be the most influential aspect of Akan religion--the spirit-ancestors.² Along with them there is the placating of the gods and anxious avoidance of evil spirits, particularly witches. "When all else fails" there is Onyame.

Pobee guides us:

A traditional Ghanaian, be he Akan, Ewe, Ga, or whatever, believes he is surrounded by numerous hosts of spirit beings, some good, some evil, who are able to influence the course of his life for good or for ill. So he believes in the Supreme Being, gods, and ancestors, and tries to get their good will in all sorts of ways.³

It is important to delineate and define, in somewhat more detail, the spirit-world in which Akan man functions. Pobee says:

The first spirit-being is God, the Supreme Being, called Onyame or Onyankopon. He is Oboadee, i.e., Creator, the Sustainer of the universe, the final authority and overlord of society who has power of life and death. . . . Homo Akanus also conceives of this God as a big potentate who may, therefore, not be approached lightly or bothered with the trivial affairs of men. Consequently, God the Supreme Being has delegated authority to the abosom (gods) and to the mpanyinfo (the ancestors), who, therefore, act in loco Dei and pro Deo.⁴

We may understand from this description by Pobee that the twin pillars of the spirit-world of the Akan consists chiefly of the

¹Ibid., p. 101.

²A provocative essay comparing the veneration of the African ancestors with the doctrine of Communion of Saints is found in Edward W. Fashole-Luke, ed, New Testament Christianity for Africa and the World (London: SPCK, 1974), pp. 209-20.

³J. S. Pobee, Toward An African Theology (Nashville: Abingdon, 1979), p. 28.

⁴Ibid., p. 46.

Supreme Being and the ancestor-spirits. Between these two entities are the gods (abosom) who are lesser deities. Suffice to say, the concept of a Supreme God was the heritage of the Akan long before the coming of Christian missionaries.

Abosom

The abosom are the lesser gods who are consulted for divination in case of illness or need. They inhabit stones or trees or rivers, but these objects are not gods within themselves. They are merely natural shrines--concrete places where the gods may be contacted from time to time. The Akan does not confuse the shrine and the spirit that inhabits it.

The abosom are considered the children of Onyame from whom they derive their power, and it is further suggested that the asuman (charms) derive power from the abosom.¹ An image that helps to explain the relationship of these Akan religious elements to the Supreme Being is that of the linguist.

"The linguist is a court official through whom the chief speaks on all public occasions, and through whom others speak to the chief; he is the chief's ear and mouthpiece."² The abosom are Onyame's linguists. They are considered servants acting as intermediaries between Creator and creature.³

The Akan believes in many abosom and the reason given for not trusting in the one great Spirit that is the source of all derived power is that there are "many 'powers' in evidence so it

¹ Ibid., p. 90.

² Ibid., p. 89.

³ Ibid., p. 102.

would be unsafe to ignore them."¹ Some of these powers are good and render help, while others are evil and cause much ill. The evil spirits are said to be under the control of Sasabonsam, the prince of evil.

Sasabonsam

In the living universe apprehended by the Akan, there are spirit-powers both good and evil. Sasabonsam is the chief evil power and he has close dealings with witches--his chief agents--and sorcerers and workers of black magic. The witch's power is considered wholly evil, destroying life.

A witch is by nature evil. There cannot be a good witch. At best a witch uses his witchcraft for selfish motives--to get children, money, good crops, or be old. At worst he employs it to harm others, or take their children from their bellies, or make them sick, or kill them and eat them, or prevent them from getting money, etc.²

The motive for the desire to be old is to be understood in the context that "the older a witch becomes, the more powerful he is supposed to become, and the more unscrupulous."³ Male witches are considered the most ruthless. In Ghana, when one falls sick and suspects a witch the search is made among one's own relatives. Witchcraft is the chief fear and anxiety of the common man.⁴ This is the driving motivation for the use of charms and fetishes subscribed to by a solid cross-section of Akan society. To witchcraft is ascribed illness, misfortune in business, sudden death,

¹Ibid., p. 90.

³Ibid., p. 46.

²Sarpong, pp. 45-46.

⁴Pobee, p. 48.

motor accidents, childlessness,¹ and a host of other evil manifestations. To protect oneself and family from calamity by witchcraft, or some other evil power in the spirit-world, one is duty bound to invest in necessary objects of vital force to counteract the evil forces believed to surround one at every level of human existence.

Akan traditional religion is intense. Its deeply felt influence is evident not only in the constant appeal to the gods (abosom) but also in the use of protective charms (asuman) against evil forces.

Asuman

Asuman (charms) is a compendious term, covering every type of 'power' from the lesser god to the amulet. So extensive is their distribution, so greatly are they used, that this aspect of West African religion has earned for itself the unfortunate name of 'fetishism'. Yet asuman are but the logical consequence of belief in a living universe wherein all that is and may be results from the presence and manifestations of 'power' in many forms and at many levels, much of it dangerous to man. The suman (fetish) in this situation is used either as an insurance to guarantee success and well-being, or to protect from evil.²

These asuman are various talismans such as horse hairs, beads, animal skins, strings, stools, drums, bracelets, etc. They are believed to possess power to counteract the spirit-power that threatens life. They are primarily weapons of defense, but they can also be used against others' well-being or prosperity.

Some charms may kill by magic, others may be used as poison antidote. Some can cause impotence in any male trying to commit adultery with the owner's wife.

¹Williamson, p. 160.

²Ibid., p. 103.

This is why the power of the minor deities (abosom and asuman) is said to be beneficent and dangerous.

Though the gods do not have physical bodies, their personalities, namely their values, attitudes and thoughts, are likened to those of man. Thus they command the love, attention, and respect of human beings, giving them good harvest, children, and so forth, and providing moral sanctions for society by rewarding or punishing where and when necessary.¹

On the other hand, one who flouts their taboos can expect to meet calamity or distress, even death. The question of taboo--vis-a-vis 'sin'--is the next consideration.

Sin

A sense of sin is very much alive in Akan society. Pobee cites several metaphors that seem to substantiate a congruence of thinking between the biblical and traditional Akan world-views on sin, i.e., a debt, backsliding or deceit, to transgress a law.² But clearly the primary emphasis is that sin is: (1) an antisocial act against the individual or society; (2) against the ancestors and God; and (3) against the spirit-world.³ Personal forces of evil are at work, it is firmly believed. Bad luck, witches, and demons are manifestations of Satan or Sasabonsam. Disharmony with the universe, sin, brought on by breaking a taboo is deemed dangerous. By relegating God to a secondary role in the formation and regulation of his ethics, the Akan seeks to escape the destructiveness of individual

¹Pobee, pp. 47-48.

²Ibid., pp. 108-09

³Ibid., p. 111.

and corporate sin on a social level via the gods and ancestors who ostensibly act as agents of God. Remedy for sin involves the placating of the ancestors and gods to avert the consequences of disharmony which is often punishment and sometimes death. These "agents" are authorized it is believed to settle the issues of sin, whether individual or communal. They act in the place of God (*loco Dei*) and for God (*pro Deo*).

It is important to stress that the social or horizontal dimension is where the Akan primarily experiences sin. Pobee says this relates to the Akan's theory of existence--cognatus ergo sum (I am related by blood, therefore I exist).¹

"Sin is any act, motivation, or conduct which is directed against the sensus communis, the social harmony and the personal achievement sanctioned by the traditional code."²

Pobee seeks to show through Akan maxims and proverbs that Akan society believes sin also to be against the ancestors and God.³ Nevertheless, the weight of evidence is that the preoccupation of the Akan as relates to sin is communal and therefore sin falls under the domain of the gods and ancestors for redress. They provide the ethics for good living. They are the agents of Onyame.

Ancestor-Spirits

With the concept of the Supreme Being as transcendent and practicably inaccessible to man, the other side of the twin-pillared Akan ontology--the ancestors--flourishes with pervasive, intensive, and resilient force. A passage in Pobee is probably the best way

¹Ibid.

²Ibid.

³Ibid.

to relate authentically the impact of this 'most potent aspect' of Akan religion.

Perhaps the most potent aspect of Akan religion is the cult of ancestors. They, like the Supreme Being, are always held in deep reverence or even worshipped. The ancestors are that part of the clan who have completed their course here on earth and are gone ahead to the other world to be elder brothers of the living at the house of God. Not all the dead are ancestors. To qualify to be an ancestor one must have lived to a ripe old age and in an exemplary manner and done much to enhance the standing and prestige of the family, clan, or tribe. By virtue of being the part of the clan gone ahead to the house of God, they are believed to be powerful in the sense that they maintain the course of life here and now and do influence it for good or for ill. They give children to the living; they give good harvest; they provide the sanctions for the moral life of the nation and accordingly punish, exonerate, or reward the living as the case may be. . . . Thus the living depend on the ancestors for their children, and the dead are inextricably involved in the Akan family. There is thus a dependence of the living on the ancestors whose authority is nevertheless derived from God. Insofar as there is a dependence, the attitude of the living toward the ancestors is something more than veneration.¹

In African society, the cohesion of the family, nuclear and extended (the dead, the living, and the unborn), is the basis of the whole society.² "The reverence paid to the ancestors is symbolic of the thinking with regard to the cohesion of the family."³

It emerges thus far that identity, vitality, solidarity, and continuity are some of the deep soul needs of the Akan. These needs are believed to be met by departed ancestors who take a lively interest in the affairs of their descendents and mediate their cases before Onyame. The link-up between the family and the ancestors is a powerful bond and constitutes the stiffest resistance met by Christianity in Africa.⁴ To be linked with their dead ancestors is

¹Pobee, pp. 46-47.

²Ibid., p. 79.

³Ibid.

⁴Edward W. Fashole-Luke, "Ancestor Veneration and the Communion of Saints," in New Testament Christianity for Africa and the World,

said to be, for Christians and non-Christians alike, "the passionate desire of Africans."¹ This mystical linkage between the ancestors and the tribe leads us to take at least an overview of the system of chieftancy.

Chieftancy and the Stool

According to Appiah-Kubi,

The chief occupies the local and central position in the Akan society. Rise to the throne or the stool is by maternal inheritance. The stool or throne is the symbol of national unity. It enshrines the religious and cultural identity of the people.

It links the living with the dead ancestors. The ancestors are said to be the custodians of moral and ethical behaviour of the people. They punish evil and reward good.²

Appiah-Kubi goes on to say that the chief is the evident incarnation of the ancestors. Ancestral power is enshrined in the stool or throne of the chief or king, making it religious and sacred. The chief is therefore mandated to be a person of very high ethical and moral standards in the ancestral tradition. The ancestors are believed to bring peace and harmony to the society through the upright and spiritual rule of the chief. The stool or throne is a religious as well as politico-social emblem of the Akans.³ As occupant of the stool of the ancestors, the chief himself is considered sacred--the intermediary between the tribe and his royal ancestors--and is therefore treated with the greatest veneration.⁴

Religious rites are frequently observed and the chief functions

ed. Mark E. Glasswell and Edward W. Fashole-Luke (London: SPCK, 1974), p. 209.

¹Ibid., p. 210.

²Appiah-Kubi, p. 26.

³K. A. Busia, The Position of the Chief in the Modern Political System of Ashanti (London: Frank Cass & Co., 1968), pp. 26-27.

⁴Ibid., p. 35.

as a priest to the ancestors.¹ He offers the sacrifices deemed necessary for the welfare of the tribe.²

One rite lasts a full day every twenty-one days. It is called the Adae, "those ceremonies at which the spirits of the departed rulers of the clan are propitiated, their names and deeds recalled, and favours and mercy solicited." "No one is permitted to work or go to farm on an Adae."³ There are two of them within every successive period of forty-two days. They are held on Sundays and Wednesdays.

Another ceremony is the Odwera ceremony. It is an annual celebration that lasts over a week. It is a yam-eating festival in honor of the principal gods. Mashed yam mixed with palm-oil and eggs are first offered to the gods and then to the ancestors as a thanksgiving for the year's harvest of yams. Busia states plainly: "It is a feast of the dead."⁴ Busia confirms the anthropological research on these cycle of rites sensitively done by Rattray (1923) and Bowdich (1819). Bowdich described these rituals more than a hundred and sixty years ago, which Busia claims have persisted down to the present day (1968).⁵ A lengthy description would be outside the purview of this paper, but Busia's interpretation of such rites from a sociological standpoint is germane.

The dominant desire of the people is for increase and fertility. They want the earth to be fruitful, the women to bear children, the men to prosper in their undertakings. These

¹Ibid., p. 27.

²Robert S. Rattray, Ashanti (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969), p. 92.

³Busia.

⁴Ibid., p. 29.

⁵Ibid., p. 27.

are desired so that the race may continue. Those who give these things are the gods, the Supreme Being, and the ancestors.

When the people come together for these ceremonies, they express their solidarity in relation to the chief and his ancestors, on whom their common loyalty is focused. Their joint participation in these ceremonies strengthens their unity and cohesion.

The symbols which are used in the sacrifices are the objects of common interest on which the life of the tribe depends. As the chief's mother explained, these rites were held because 'in the old days, there used to be famine'. Food was and is a matter of common interest, so is the desire for the continuance of the race. So the tribe comes together to ask for food and for increase--for fertility of the soil and for the procreation of children.¹

There is a mystical linkage between the people and their ancestors and the chief. Great care is taken in social interactions to avoid violating taboos and bringing calamity upon the whole society. Sacrifices are dutifully performed and celebrations observed. The chief is brought into a unique, close relationship with the dead, says Busia, and from the moment of his enstoolment "he becomes the intermediary between the tribe and his royal ancestors without whose aid misfortunes would befall the community."²

One of the features of the Odwera ceremony mentioned above was that it was a cleansing of the nation from defilement³--a collective purgation of sin. So the ancestors, represented by the chief, settle the 'debts' of the people, protect them from calamity at the hands of Satan, and satisfying the gods with food and drink, opens the way to prosperity, peace, and harmony.

At this point the Akan concept of death is an important touchstone. The belief in the continuation of life after physical death exists among all African peoples. Upon physical death the

¹ Ibid., p. 36.

² Ibid., p. 26.

³ Ibid., p. 29.

individual is not annihilated. His body certainly rots behind, but the spirit continues to exist and inhabits the spirit world as the living-dead. Mbiti explains that "the living-dead is dead in body but alive in the other world, and in the memory of those who knew him as a person. It is vitally important, therefore, that everyone should have someone to remember him after death. So long as the living-dead is remembered, he is experiencing personal immortality."¹

The Akan believes that death is not and cannot be the end of all that he lives for, loves and works for. He knows that part of man's personality survives after death. He calls this "ghost" or "ancestor." Death is regarded as the occasion when a deceased person sets out on a journey to the underworld or spirit world to which his ancestors have already gone. A dying person is given water to prepare him for the journey. Gifts are placed in his coffin for use on the journey and on his arrival. Funerals are elaborately performed and well attended. The deceased are expected to visit the living now and again, bringing material gifts.

All of this demonstrates that for the Akan death does not sever the ties of kinship.

The ancestors are believed to be always watching the behaviour of those they have left behind on earth, sending them help and protection, or punishing them with misfortune if they do not act well.²

¹ John S. Mbiti, "Eschatology," in Biblical Revelation and African Beliefs, ed. Kwesi Dickson and Paul Ellingworth (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1969), p. 165.

² Busia, p. 24.

The priests of the gods make known the wishes of the ancestors. The ancestors are believed to be the custodians of the laws and customs of the tribe. They punish with sickness or misfortune those who infringe them. In such ceremonies as the Adaye or Odwera, the chief functions as priest to the ancestors.

"The religion of the Ashanti is mainly ancestor-worship," writes Busia. "Ancestor-worship is based on the lineage system, the members of a lineage forming a cult-group in relation to their own ancestors. The tribe as a whole is a cult-group in relation to the chief's ancestors."¹

This attempt to briefly survey Akan traditional religion is just that--an attempt. One from outside cannot hope to gain the proper perspective and depth that one imbibes who is nurtured in the religious-traditional womb of the Akan. Dependence upon the investigations of other 'outsiders' has been necessary, but the corroborating of 'sons' has hopefully given credence to what has been stated.

Chapter III takes us deeper into the Akan's thought on the questions of marriage, family, and cultural reality.

Ibid., p. 39.

CHAPTER III

A SURVEY OF MARRIAGE AND FAMILY: THE BIBLICAL AND AKAN CULTURAL VIEWS

A Biblical View of Marriage, Family, and Cultural Reality

Marriage

Man was created just as God wanted him to be--"a unity which includes both male and female. . . . Together they form the full unity which is human life."¹ Man--male and female--is seen to be the crown and climax of God's creation. The two are a complete whole in the marriage relationship. The oneness they realize belongs to their God-given nature. The two uniquely become one--mentally, physically, spiritually, and socially. When a man leaves his family and 'cleaves' to his wife with this holistic understanding, the indispensable elements of marriage are intact, and a complete, new, and unique relationship is established. In the biblical view, a man-united-to-his-wife is a full unity, a complete entity. God created marriage in His image--or, just as He wanted it to be. And when He saw all that He had made, indeed it--the created order (including man 'clinging' to his wife)--was very good.

¹Robert Davidson, Genesis 1-11 (Cambridge: University Press, 1973), pp. 25-26.

In the biblical account of creation human beings are the image bearers of God as individuals and as a corporate person. God created human beings as male and female so that in a real sense, as Karl Barth has noted, man and woman together constitute the image of God.¹

The worthiness and dignity of both man and woman is emphatically noted in the multiple declaration of their special creation: "So God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them" (Gen 1:27).

Equal values and equal status are ascribed to both male and female in their pristine state. It is in this ideal condition, the sinless and perfect condition of creation, that marriage must have its proper assessment.²

The role of sex is clearly defined in husband/wife relationships in the very beginning. As a consequence and result of marriage, there is the blessing of continued creativity and fruitfulness: "And God blessed them, and God said to them, 'Be fruitful and multiple'" (vs. 28).

But it must be understood that in the divine perspective, fertility "is not the priority of relationships, nor is it the sole objective and ultimate goal of marriage. Marriage itself is the priority, from which flows fruitfulness."³ As Walter Trobisch points out:

¹ Bruce J. Nicholls, Contextualization: A Theology of Gospel and Culture, ed. Klaus Bockmuehl (Downers Grove: Inter Varsity Press: Exeter the Paternoster Press, 1979), p. 16.

² Axel-Ivar Berglund, "The Biblical Concepts of Man/Woman Relations" in Church and Marriage in Modern Africa, ed. Trevor David Verryrn (Groenkloof: Ecumenical Research Unit, 1975), p. 13.

³ Ibid., p. 14.

Leaving, cleaving, and becoming one flesh are sufficient. Full stop. . . . The full stop means that the child does not make marriage a marriage. A childless marriage is also a marriage in the full sense of the word.¹

The hermeneutical setting of Genesis 1 and 2 may be construed as "a message from God about His supreme creation--man."² Therefore the concepts of marriage therein found are God's concepts of marriage. It is fair then to point out that God's concept is man-woman orientated, not fertility-orientated.

With Adam's marriage covenant complete ("This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called³ woman [ishah], because she was taken out of man [ish] vs. 23), the supreme will of God concerning His ideas of man/woman relationships are stated: "Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh. And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed" (Gen 2:24, 25).

Berglund shares an interpretation of these verses that is a helpful response to the fertility consciousness that is so widespread (i.e., the understanding that the primary purpose of marriage is the birth of children). He says,

i. "A man shall leave his father and his mother": In the conditions of the ideal marriage, the woman is not incorporated into the clan or family of the husband . . . a clear witness against the fertility and procreational thought-patterns characteristic of fallen man.

¹Walter Trobisch, I Married You (New York: Harper and Row Publishing, 1971), p. 42.

²Berglund, p. 13.

³The disclosure of a name creates communion and facilitates self-giving (Brunner).

ii. "Cleave": . . . The woman . . . is taken from the man. It is to the woman taken from himself that he is to "cleave." The urgency to "cleave" to one woman is underlined by the single persons used in the Creation narrative. The language is a very clear symbol of unity, a belonging together, a total committal to one another without interference caused by a second belonging elsewhere. . . . In the eyes of God the woman is first and foremost a wife; thereafter she may perhaps be the mother of children. But the primary concern is that of being a partner in marriage, a wife, a co-human, and so united with and to him, that nothing and nobody can break that unity.

iii. "And they shall become one flesh": The words are clearly anti-discriminatory in that they lift the woman to the level of the male. Again directed against the fertility-orientated concept, which assumes the inferiority of the woman, the message is one of equality between the partners in marriage, a sharing at every conceivable level. Like the man, the woman has value in herself and as a person. Her value lies in her own right, not primarily in her children as is the case in the fertility-orientated concept. The oneness in flesh implies an uncompromisable equality between partners in marriage. The woman according to God's Word, is not an instrument for a definite purpose (i.e., that of child-bearing). She is a human being, to be valued by males because she is valued by God. This equality of sexes is conveyed by the apostle Paul when he proclaims there being "neither male nor female."¹

This lengthy passage from Berglund has critical implications for the Christian witness regarding marriage. The Bible underlines the divine truth that the chief aim of marriage is not procreation and fertility. It underlines equality, monogamy, and unity as God's concept of marriage in the ideal condition of Paradise. Any twisting or distortion of holy and sacred marriage must be seen from the fallen side of human experience through the stained viewing glass of sin. Fertility-orientation is an early digression from God's concept and has vivid expression in the Old Testament writings. Even pious and God-fearing men are victimized by this insidious world-view. But their complicity is not the model for the new humanity God was calling into being through Jesus Christ. The reign of God beams

¹Berglund, pp. 18-20.

back to Eden lost and forward to Eden restored. The message of the kingdom is that the same quality of existence at creation is in process now and will be perfectly restored when God creates a new earth. Eden is therefore our reference point for what was ideal in marriage. The New Testament witness is that in Christ the ideal has been restored (see Eph 5:21-33). A biblical view of the family is our next important consideration.

Family

The family in the Genesis narrative and throughout Scripture appears to have the formula: father plus mother plus child(ren) equals family. There is also the extended family relationships that evolve from this nuclear family or household and traces back through grandparents and great-grandparents to ancestral lineage heads such as were represented, for instance, by the sons of Jacob, i.e., the tribe of Judah, the tribe of Levi, etc. One's tribal identity was carefully preserved for religious and social reasons. A strong sense of belonging was thereby engendered. Distinctive cultural values were fostered and upheld. The family was the central pillar of society. But a closer look at the biblical record reveals some cracks in that pillar and reason for serious reflection as to the meaning of family in the context of the Gospel.

It was outside the Garden of Eden, in the milieu of good and evil, that Eve conceived and gave birth to Cain and Abel. This first experience of familyhood was marred by tragedy. The principles of good and evil clashed in the lives of those two brothers and the disastrous outcome was a foretaste of the sad struggle that the human

race has experienced ever since. Cain and Abel represent the division of mankind over the issue, who is God? It is a division between those who believe God and obey Him, and those who do not believe God and follow their own way. Each of these two streams of thought and behavior have intermingled at times and flow through families, clans, languages, races, cultures, and nations. Polygamy represents a case in point.¹

No one perfect family model is explicitly given in Scripture. Bits and pieces of counsel are scattered throughout like jewels in a field. Basic principles may be searched for, dug out, and put to use in developing familiness. But the overriding emphasis of the Bible is not just the preservation of the human family system however it is arranged. The emphasis of Scripture is the formation and growth and solidarity of the family of God. Those who believe and do God's will--that is family. It is a family of obedient ones that God is gathering together from all nations of the earth. To "seek first the Kingdom of God" is to put belonging to the family of God as top priority over all other allegiances. Such was the counsel of Jesus. On one occasion He was told that His kinsmen were outside the house where He was and wanted Him to come to them. His response was:

Who is my mother, or my brethren?
 And He looked round about on them which sat about Him, and said, Behold my mother and my brethren!
 For whosoever shall do the will of God, the same is my brother, and my sister, and mother. (Mark 3:32-35)

This is not a denial of filial relationships; it is

¹See appendix.

prioritizing relationships, getting back to the basics of human existence, pointing back to Edenic reality. We are sons and daughters of God first and foremost.

Marriage and the family as a part of the creation order reflected the divine relationship that Deity sustained toward the human race. The plurality and unity of the father-mother-child(ren) model is a powerful expression of the nature of God. Therefore, any perversion of the biblical understanding of marriage and the family in terms of co-humanity, holism, dignity, unity, creativity, and continuity casts a shadow upon the character of God and thereby comes under the judgment of God. Marriage and the family groans with all the rest of creation from the ravages of the Fall and is held amenable to the claims of redeeming love. The gospel condemns elements that are contrary to the biblical model, but at the same time it is the gospel that heals and restores. In Jesus Christ, marriage and the family are subsumed in sovereign grace. The transforming principle of God's unlimited love and unmerited favor are bound up in Christ "for in Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. And ye are complete in Him. . . ." (Col 2:9, 10). He is able to subdue all things unto Himself. In Him the creation order is restored. Man--male and female--in Christ, in the marriage relationship, is a complete whole. In Him the family once again becomes a reflection of the divine reality. The conception and birth of children is an added blessing to the wholeness that is already there. The gospel brings marriage and the family, marred by sin, into the atmosphere of redeeming love, and they are hidden and protected with Christ in God.

In our quest for understanding we look at marriage and the family in Akan society in the next section.

Marriage, Family, and Cultural
Realities in Akan Life

The basic social unit of Akan existence is the family. Expressed in Latin, Akan man theorizes cognatus ergo sum, I am related by blood, therefore I exist, or I exist because I belong to a family. Familyness is the determining dynamism that Akan man understands as the basis of his existence and that of the whole society. In his family purview, the Akan's communal sense takes in the living, the dead, and the yet-to-be-born.¹ This inclusive reckoning is more adequately covered by the term extended family. It progresses from the nuclear family of father-mother-child and is extended to include grandparents, blood relatives, and in-laws. This extended family, constituting a dynamic unity, or togetherness, ". . . ensures (sic) the rearing of children, physical security and comfort, economic cooperation, and social living."² The cohesion of traditional family life is due mainly to the Akan way of looking at life. Blood relationships take precedence over all other relationships, and this has important implications upon marriage, child-bearing, and cultural experience.

Akan View of Marriage

African marriage, in general, is a bond between two groups of persons, namely the kinfolk of the woman and the kinfolk of the man. Traditionally, the emphasis is laid on compatibility of the

¹Pobee, p. 49.

²Ibid.

couples rather than romantic love. Parents must give their consent. They are particular about social status, hereditary malfunctions (insanity, diseases), and incest taboos. In Africa, marriage payment, paid by the bridegroom to the bride's kinfolk is an essential part of the legitimation of marriage. It may be construed as a type of social, legal, and economic insurance policy. It is abusive to designate this practice as "purchasing a wife" inasmuch as it (1) functions as part of a betrothal contract between two families; and (2) serves as a deterrent to divorce.¹ On this last point, it is to be appreciated that both families have a stake in the marriage and marriage is not just a contract between two individuals. Divorce threatens the solidarity of two whole families involving hundreds of people and is not to be taken lightly.

Procreation, the Major Concern

The aims of marriage in Akan society are related to the cognatus ergo sum discussed above. A major concern is having and raising children. It is through the children that the marriage is sealed, and the two families are thus solidly united by having common descendants.

It is an accepted fact that marriage and having children are the means of continuing the family. When one considers that the Akan family consists of the living, the dead, and the unborn, one can begin to understand the stress childlessness puts on a marriage. Childlessness is considered a disaster by the marriage partners--

¹Oliver V. Madu, "Kinship and Social Organization," in African Society, Culture and Politics, ed. Christopher C. Mojekwa et al. (Washington, D.C.: University Press of America, 1978), pp. 78-79.

particularly the husband, because his authentic existence is at stake. Broader yet, the clan of the woman is threatened by the lack of children in a marriage, since children are considered, first and foremost, members of the woman's kinfolk. The woman's kinfolk hold the man responsible for this failure and exert considerable pressure on the marriage. This stress is "vented" in several ways. The husband may take a concubine to prove his virility in order to maintain his respect in the society and to increase the clan, or he may divorce his wife.¹ Most divorces stemming from childlessness are usually instigated by the woman's kinfolk. In cases where the wife discovers that she is the cause of the childlessness, she would give approval to the man to marry a second wife. A translation of an Akan proverb says, "A serviceable wife is often blessed with the birth of a tenth child." The implication of this proverb toward a barren wife is obvious.

If it is the man that is sterile, the disaster is greatly compounded. An African man's inability to pass on his ntoro (spirit) through an offspring denies him status as a person. It subjects him to great ridicule because he "is considered as something less than a human being."² In his view, he loses face with the living and the dead. His communal responsibility is fractured by his incapacity to produce children. "Man's chief end, as an individual and member of his clan, is to multiply and increase; he is a repository of this

¹Ibid., p. 130.

²Walter Trobisch, I Married You (New York: Harper and Row Publishing, 1971), p. 42.

'life-force' and the right use of it is his chiefest responsibility."¹
 Consequently he fears sterility more than death. In fact, it is reported that many men in African society have committed suicide because of alleged sterility.²

John S. Pobee, an Akan author and New Testament scholar at the University of Ghana, states the case for the communal aspect of the Akan world view:

A man is a compound of mogya (blood), sunsum, also called ntoro (spirit), and kra (the soul or individual personality). The mogya he inherits from the mother; it symbolizes his material aspect. The blood makes him a biological being; it gives him status and membership within a lineage, and obligations as a citizen. The sunsum and kra make a spiritual being.

It is important to emphasize that by virtue of the sunsum he belongs to his father's kinship group. Thus an Akan belongs by birth to two kinship groups. Truly he exists because he belongs to a kinship group. From birth to death, through puberty and marriage, the kinship group is involved with him and he with them.³

Important to this Akan ontology is this differentiation by the noted Akan sociologist, K. A. Busia, cited by Pobee:

As a spiritual being a man receives a two-fold gift of the spirit: that which determines his character and individuality he receives through his father, i.e., sunsum or ntoro; but his soul, the undying part of him, he receives from the Supreme Being, i.e., kra.⁴

It follows that sterility and barrenness frustrates the Akan man's biological being, depreciates his social status within the lineage, and makes impossible the fulfillment of his spiritual obligation to pass on what he receives.

Small wonder that procreation is the major concern of Akan

¹Sidney G. Williamson, Akan Religion and the Christian Faith, ed. Kwesi Dickson (Accra: Ghana Universities Press, 1965), p. 99.

²Pobee, p. 130.

³Ibid., p. 49.

⁴Ibid.

marriage and the lack of it traumatizes the marriage relationship. Some of the unfortunate spin-offs of infertility and sterility are divorce, polygamy, prostitution, drunkenness, consultations with spirit mediums, use of magic, or suicide.

Rattray, an early anthropologist of Ashanti life, triggers the thought that what might ravage the male mind in such a situation is his personal contribution to the extinction of his clan. "The extinction of the clan would mean the extinction of all hope of return to this world"¹--a reference to the Akan's religious concept of reincarnation, which is the belief that the dead are born again as a different person. Suffice it to say at this point that the longings, hopes, and fears of a lifetime are bound up in the conception and delivery of offspring.

Investment, Second Aim of Marriage

A second aim of marriage in traditional society is investment.² For the man, the investment is a mundane concern for a good housekeeper and cook. Incompetence on the part of the woman in this regard can be reason for public exposure and grounds for divorce. However, the woman's investment is both practical and of essence to the survival of her clan.

First of all, all her debts and liabilities belong to the husband. That is the extrinsic practical element. But a deeper consideration of an intrinsic quality establishes the Ashanti³ woman as a powerful force in Akan society. The Ashanti is a matrilineal

¹Rattray, Ashanti, p. 80.

²Pobee, p. 130.

³The Ashanti are the major tribe of the Akan grouping.

society where descent is usually traced through the mother. So all her children and all the material wealth she herself inherits or accumulates belongs to the family to which she is connected by blood. This two-pronged investment insures the continuity of the woman's line and family and improves the financial circumstances of the maternal side.

What stresses the import of the investment aspect for the woman is the fact that when her husband dies, his kinship group inherits all his self-acquired property, and she, the widow, with her children can be ousted and relieved of all property and goods belonging to the deceased.¹ This unseemly aspect of matrilineal descent is being challenged although not vigorously. The drawing up of a will by the husband giving personal and self-acquired property to one's children is now a legal alternative but subject to challenge in the courts by the family.

Matrilineal descent was seen by Rattray as the key to the importance of women in communalistic society. "The whole conception of 'mother-right' affords the woman a protection and a status that is more than an adequate safeguard against ill-treatment by any male or groups of males."²

Matrilineal descent is the essence of Akan royalty regulations. The role of the Queen Mother in the selection and day-to-day guidance of a chief probably contains the link that holds the process together and resists the modern sociological attempts to change to a patrilineal order. The major issue in the chieftaincy is blood-kinship

¹Williamson, p. 117.

²Ibid., p. 79.

and that is realized only through the female line in Akan understanding. The Queen Mother, as the personification of womanhood, says, "I am the mother of the man. I alone can transmit the blood to a king."¹ This appears to be the female watchword and control factor in Ashanti matrilineal descent. Rattray was told:

Under no conceivable circumstances whatever can a male transmit his blood, which he derived from his mother, and in consequence no Ashanti can, according to orthodox belief, have a drop of the male parent's blood in his or her veins.²

Any effects of modern genetical studies on this ancient Ashanti belief may not soon occur, but the DNA phenomenon in which genetic information is transported from the male to the female in the conjugal act provokes thought. The technique of blood-typing in order to settle questions of disputed paternity is also a threat to this matrilineal tradition. However, the fact that such traditional beliefs are encapsulated in the deeper levels of being serves as a barrier against such a western-oriented scientific intrusion, and the deep-seated sentiment could hold its place for generations to come. Still, economic inflation, urban life, and a growing consciousness of paternal responsibility are at work creating tensions against the matrilineal principle which may someday trigger its alteration.

The Role of Children

In the matrilineal societies, "the husband has no legal claim over his own children. By custom, they belong to his wife and her people."³

¹Rattray, p. 79.

²Ibid., p. 77.

³Benezeri Kisebo, Laurenti Magesa, and Aylward Shorter, African Christian Marriage (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1977), p. 104.

The maternal uncle or mother's brother controls his sister's children in African matrilineal societies. Yet the child does not cease to regard his father as important. The belief is that the child is so mystically linked to his father that not even his uncle, with all the legal authority he has over the child may sever this relationship. Also, the child calls upon himself fatal consequences for any disrespectful behaviour or insult toward his father. In spite of the fact that they are not legally bound to him, the children live with their father and serve him faithfully until he dies.¹

The Role of the Father

The father of the family is the spiritual head of the household and his moral authority is respected. He exercises priestly functions--acting as mediator between the ancestors and his family and performing acts of worship established by tradition.

Sons receive specialized training in the life and duties of their sex from their father, and the daughters from their mother. Separate social worlds are formed but each complements the other.

Because of the inability of the father's people to pass on wealth to his sons at his death, a father often teaches his sons his trade, pays for their schooling, or both. In traditional Africa, the parents are assisted in the education of the children by the whole community. It is considered a collective responsibility to teach the values, customs, and cultural traditions of the community.

In the foregoing discussion of Akan family life, the emphasis has been on the indigenous ways of life, as held by "traditional Africa." It must be admitted that there is now taking place a rapid transition from old ways of life to new ones, particularly in urban Africa. But the family dynamism is still very much alive. Its importance ascertains that:

¹ Ibid.

The abusua (family) is the summum bonum of Akan ethics. It is the end to which all motivation and conduct should be directed; its welfare and continuance constitute the individual's supreme obligation. Life that is life cannot be sustained outside the abusua.¹

Attached to this high concept of family are cultural celebrations that throb with intense solidarity. These jubilations of a worshipping people are worthy of careful study for they are keys to a people's heart. At no point in our discussion of the Akan can we escape the reality that "religion is all-pervasive in Akan society."² This is noted especially as we discuss Akan culture in the next section.

Cultural Realities in Akan Life

Like most African societies, "life is marked by crisis points, by rites de passage."³ Birth, puberty, marriage, and death alter the religious and communal status of the society and are therefore amenable to symbolism, sacrality, and celebration in harmony with the religious postulate noted above. Rites of passage dramatize the entrance and the exit of each crisis point and involve the whole community.

Birth

The birth of a child is commemorated shortly after the eighth day of life in a public family ceremony where naming takes place. Naming is a very important undertaking that links the new child to his or her ancestors. The infant is given his family names after being received into the lineage.

¹Williamson, p. 107.

²Pobee, p. 44.

³Ibid., p. 123.

Puberty

The transition from infancy to adulthood is commemorated for girls only. Puberty "is an important point in an Akan woman's life." Parading in the streets with special songs, bathing in the sacred stream, and partaking of a ritual meal are the substance of this important celebration which informs the community that the girl has become an adult and is eligible for marriage. This process is now common only in rural areas.

Death

Death is the supreme evil, the final tragedy.¹ Everyone is expected to die, but at death an explanation must be found for why the person died at that given time.

At death a person passes to the spirit-world, as an asaman (spirit-ancestor). The rite of passage for the dead calls for ceremonies that include the gathering of the family, and the preparation of the corpse for the journey to the spirit-world. The funeral follows burial and all relatives and friends make it a point to be present lest a charge of foul-play be attributed to them in connection with the death of the deceased.

More positively, funerals are social events which stress the unity in the lineage and the town. Through this celebration it is seen that death reaffirms cultural values: revitalizes society's interrelationships, thus renewing society's vitality and strengthening the community bonds. The Akan has a 'before death' attitude and an 'after death' attitude that gives balance to his animistic faith.

¹Williamson, p. 104.

Other elements of Akan culture include libation, a sort of contact rite for approaching the spirit-ancestors, recognizing their presence and help. It is a rite of thanksgiving and is offered at most ceremonies; in fact, it is a daily practice for most Akans, a part of their prayer life.

Ancestor-rites, drumming and dancing, and the practice of polygyny are yet other elements that the Akan treasures as his expressions of value; he is said to be himself when he engages in them. This must be understood as the way in which he perceives reality and maintains harmony with the most fundamental influence in his mind from birth to the grave--the ancestors.

Conclusions

What we have discussed in this paper so far has demonstrated the need of a genuine encounter of Christian thought and African life. We have been discussing two levels of reality. Williamson concludes that Christian faith and Akan religion finds no common ground of fellowship and no common viewpoint.¹ Christian anthropologists and Christian humanists will raise their voices in loud protest over such a disappointing conclusion. But Williamson's point is clarified when the two emphases are placed side by side as he has suggested.²

Christianity Represents:

Monotheistic faith

Historical and unique revelation: the personal revealed through history and nature based on 'will' and 'purpose'.

Traditional Religion Represents:

Animistic faith

Numinous awareness of the natural environment: the personal revealed through nature based on 'force' and 'power'.

¹Williamson, p. 151.

²Ibid., pp. 137-51.

Intrusion of the Divine into the human for ethical reality.

Socialized ethics: Man as he is, is man as the Creator intended him to be.

Non-ethnic universal faith: Individual freedom.

An ethnic faith: Socialized personality.

Sacred Book: Revelation.

Cult rites, shrines, amulets, charms: Participation.

The dilemma is made graphic by the following summaries of the two views (figure 1).

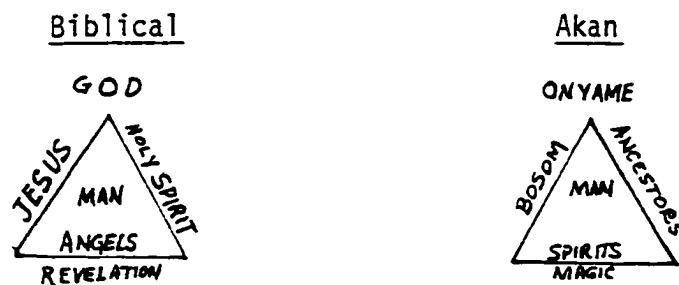


Fig. 1. The Biblical and Akan views of religion.

The tendency to absolutize cultural values and interpret them as amenable to equal correspondence based on scientific premises is deemed highly questionable. As a reaction to past and present insensitivity on the part of Western missionaries toward the culture and religious expressions of indigenous peoples, there has been widespread acceptance of the principle of dynamic equivalence in human studies. This principle holds that there is parity of human sciences to natural sciences. So cultural anthropology, an example of a human science, employs the art of structural analysis to interpret the exploration and discovery of a cultural object as a scientific procedure.

To be able to attach "scientific method" to a discipline is prestigious, but a recent warning has surfaced in the writings of T. K. Seung.

Says Seung:

In natural science, the immense power of structural investigations is derived from the universality of natural structures. For example, the structure of a carbon atom is never constrained or compromised by space and time; it is the same in any part of the spatiotemporal continuum. Because of this structural universality, to know the structure of one carbon atom is to know the structure of all carbon atoms. Since the universality of natural structures has been the fundamental premise for natural sciences, structural programs have been constructed on a corresponding premise, namely, the universality of cultural structures.¹

Seung goes on to say that "this assumption of structural universality has lately been eroded"² and the implications of this erosion has already impacted upon structural programs, i.e., linguistics and anthropology.

Cultural anthropology has been in the forefront of reading into traditional and cultural expressions fundamental identity and similarity between different cultures. An extension of this concept is to presuppose a framework of fundamental identity and similarity between traditional religions and cultures--and the gospel. Christian anthropologists have apparently presumed the validity of these structural universals and have built up an almost overwhelming doctrine of traditional and biblical equivalence.

Leaders of the Third World, chafed by the insensitive Western influence and cultural domination of their theological thought-life, have embraced this "scientific" support in their righteous call for a Christianity that reflects the African context; or Asian, or Latin American as the case may be. What is critical to understand is that when we deal with human tradition (history)

¹T. K. Seung, Structuralism and Hermeneutics (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982), preface x.

²Ibid., preface xi.

and culture we do not have "a timeless subject analyzing a timeless object in a timeless perspective."¹ The transformation of tradition, the diversity of culture, and the relativity of history destroys the validity of structural invariance. In other words, the foundation of dynamic equivalence between the finite and the infinite, the eternal and the temporal, the human and the divine rests on sinking sand. The insensitivity, the neglect, and the suppression of a peoples' cultural roots needs to be dealt with and a new formulation established. Yes! But to swing to the other end of the pendulum and elevate human values to the same level of God's unique act in a unique Person, in a unique historical situation, in a unique relationship with a specific people who were entrusted with a unique revelation is begging to be inside the house that is built upon sand and is collapsed and washed away by the floods of syncretism. This is the danger confronting the Third World Church.

Having said this, a clear statement needs to be made regarding the contingency--"points of convergence"--that we had hoped to find in this survey of Biblical and Akan realities. What appear to be interchangeable ideas and views are present, but superficial similarities cannot be weighted with genuine convergence. Convergence implies motion, a movement from one point to another on the part of two or more common subjects toward a common meeting place. As Williamson implies, this simply does not happen. The two contexts do not share a fundamental identity. There is a polarity of familiarity and strangeness. They involve two different horizons. They are two levels of reality.

¹Ibid., p. 158.

They do not naturally intersect.

Nevertheless One Reality majestically moves toward the other reality. The approached reality stands expectantly still--its empty hands stretched forth with longing desire. That is the proper posture of every culture upon whom the gospel of saving grace descends--empty handed with yearning desire. We do not dictate the terms of God's movement. He comes as He wills. We do not offer our values as exchange or as incentive for His movement. Then grace would not be grace. He comes as He wills--intruding into our thought-forms, cultural-forms, religious-forms, and communal-forms challenging the totality of our being to consider Him and decide. The point of convergence for all men is at the foot of the cross. That's where God's movement leads and contact is made between the two levels of reality. There is no room at the cross for parallelism or accommodation or nationalism. We simply stand there all amazed at the love God proffers us.

It must be emphasized again that the only point of convergence possible between these two expressions of reality is Christ Himself. There is no meeting elsewhere. The gospel comes as an intrusion from outside providing confrontation and choice and hope.

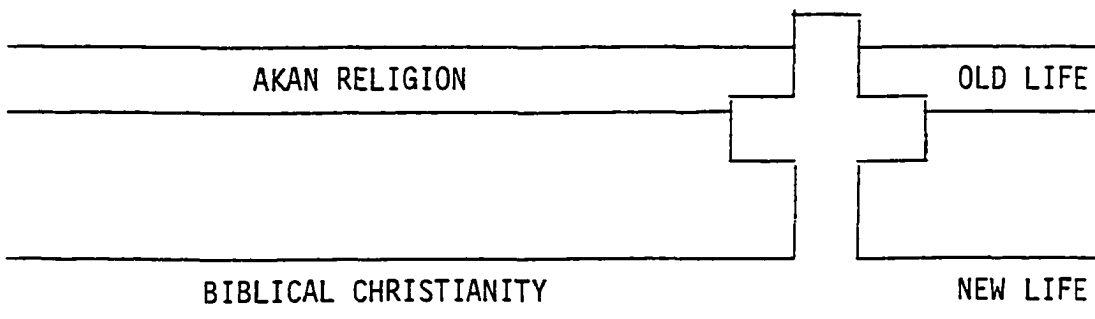


Fig. 2. Biblical Christianity calls for the intrusion of the cross into all world views.

Christians from everywhere are mandated and empowered by their Lord to make this intrusion into the life of every nation, kindred, tongue, and people as a witness of His saving love. All who chose to become His disciples are to be initiated into His new family and taught the mysteries of the new life culture. He promises to be with His people always (Matt 28:18-20). Primacy must be given to what God has done in Jesus Christ.

The Christian communicator must understand that traditional religion is not just a part of the Akan's life, it saturates the whole of life. Any attempt to bring the Akan into a genuine encounter with Jesus Christ must involve his whole personality and penetrate to the deep levels of his being as a corporate person as well as an individual. It will be necessary to expand this concept of a holistic approach in chapter IV.

CHAPTER IV

THE IMPACT OF CHRIST UPON AKAN TRADITIONAL RELIGION AND CULTURE

The good news of Jesus Christ is that the Creator and Sustainer of man is also his Defender, Redeemer, and Friend. The OT record of God's activity in human experience contradicts the Akan traditional belief that God is remote--too great to be concerned about trivial and particular problems faced by man. The insistent incursions of Deity into the historical situations of a particular people (the Jews), as revealed in the Scriptures, guarantees God's concern for meeting the needs of all people. But the Incarnation, the coming of Jesus Christ into the human family bearing the name Emmanuel, "God with us," is the supreme revelation of Divine involvement in the issues and events of human life. That God is both transcendent and imminent may pose a dilemma in human thinking, yet the reality of a living faith in the incarnate Christ can impregnate the Akan mind with a positive belief in a personal God who is working in the world to reveal Himself and establish His kingdom. To deeply experience Onyankopon Kwame with us, in us, and for us, in the personal fabric of daily living would relieve the need for salvific or material dependence upon ancestor -spirits--whose existence in a spirit world involved

in earthly affairs meets with decided repudiation in the Scriptures.¹

The liberating promise of Jesus is that "ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free," and "ye shall be free indeed" (John 3:32,36). The truth about the status of dead ancestors needs to be fearlessly, yet patiently and humbly shared with the Akan people. They share with the rest of the world the common belief that tends to blind the mind to truth: the belief that life continues after death. This belief gives basic support to spiritistic religions and is a stumblingblock to the message of the gospel everywhere. Unless it is removed from the mind by the power of God through sound Scriptural teaching and Spirit-filled acceptance of revealed truth, thorough conversion to Christ is impossible. God promised to give His people a new mind and a new attitude, to take away the old and bring in the new (Ezek 36:26). His promises are still good today.

Thus far, the impact of Jesus Christ upon Akan traditional religion is first of all a corrective. Onyame, to use the Akan nomenclature, is more than a philosophical object of belief, He is a deeply personal God who is involved closely with people's lives and well-being. Onyame relates to every sphere of human activity. He is indeed dependable and trustworthy, "a very present help." Belief in a Supreme Being would constitute a vital point of convergence if relieved of animistic concepts.

Secondly, the necessary transfer of allegiance from the

¹See Job 14:12-14; John 5:28; Acts 2:29,34. At death, all men, good and bad, rest in the grave. They are not conscious (Ps 146:3,4; Eccl 9:5,6,10). They cannot communicate or receive communication (Job 14:20,21). They cannot return (Job 7:9,10). They cannot intercede (Isa 38:18). They all await the call of the Lifegiver (John 5:28,29).

ancestor-spirits to Jesus Christ requires nothing less than the miracle-of-conversion experience. For if Onyame is the God of the Scriptures, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the true and living God of all people, the Creator, Sustainer, and Lord of life, who has revealed Himself in Jesus Christ, then only faith in and acceptance of Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord and the consequent radical break from dependence upon ancestor-spirits, lesser gods and magical charms will meet the demands of Onyame for total allegiance. The yearning of the human heart for continuity and belonging is satisfied completely and uniquely in Jesus Christ.

Turn unto Me, and be ye saved,
All the ends of the earth: for I
am God, and there is none else.

Ask Me of things to come concerning
My sons, and concerning the work
of My hands command ye Me.

To whom will ye liken Me, and make
Me equal, and compare Me, that we
may be like? . . . I am God, and
there is none else; I am God, and
there is none like Me.

I am the Lord: that is My name:
and My glory will I not give to another,
Neither My praise to graven images
[nor stones, nor trees, nor rivers]. (Isa 45:22,
11; 46:5,9; 42:8, KJV) (Insert supplied.)

In the same appealing attitude as He spoke through the Hebrew prophets, the King of the heavenly Kingdom says to Akan man: "Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (Matt 11:28). "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by Me" (John 14:6).

In Jesus Christ alone, true rest of soul may be found for the Akan. The wearying stress of survival in a spirit-dominated world,

the fear of the dead, the incessant placating of the "gods" and anxious searching for protection from evil spirits is dissipated and lifted. Jesus Christ is the Supreme Liberator from all the oppression of the spirit-world.

The role of the Liberator was claimed by Jesus as His own (Luke 4:18-21). His appointment of the Twelve, casting out demons, healing the sick, raising the dead, feeding multitudes, cleansing the temple, and teaching with authority were all potent evidences that the Liberator had truly come, the new order had arrived. It is the reign of God in the person of His Son, Jesus Christ, for the purpose of putting His enemies--Satan, sin, and death--under His feet.

The good news of the kingdom is that now in this present evil age the three-fold power of Satan, sin, and death is already defeated by the redeeming power of Jesus Christ. This three-fold power of evil has been met with crushing force by the threefold power of God the Father and God the Holy Spirit in the person of the God-Man, Jesus Christ. Therefore deliverance for all humanity from all evil forces is available right now. The life and blessings of the kingdom of grace are a new experience for all who believe on God in Jesus Christ (John 5:24; 1 John 5:11). In place of dependence upon the abosom and asuman (spirits and charms), Jesus Christ offers Himself to the Akan as the only Mediator, the Linguist of God. He claims, "All things are delivered unto Me of My Father" (Matt 11:27). In other words Christ is saying, I am in intimate relationship with My Father, Lord of heaven and earth (vss. 27,25). Come unto Me that you may have a saving knowledge of God. Come unto Me, you who are

sick of your frailty and weary of vainly serving the spirit-world. I will give you rest, the satisfaction of all your needs: whether it be identity, vitality, solidarity, or continuity; whether it be health, communal prosperity, rain, social harmony, or fertility. I am your Peace and your Tranquility. Come to Me in complete trust and I will enter into every sphere of your life to bring you into harmony with God and the community. "All things" . . . "All power both in heaven and in earth is given unto Me" (vss. 27; 28:18). "If you shall ask anything in My name, I will do it" (John 14:14). Such as the gracious promises of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ to all who come to Him and put their whole trust in Him.

The miracle-of-conversion experience is the catalyst for the revolutionary change that Jesus says is absolutely necessary. He articulated this dynamic principle in His night audience with Nicodemus (John 3).

Nicodemus: Something Different

Nicodemus came to Jesus with his pedigree, intellect, religion, wealth, prestige, and culture. The Saviour simply bypassed these human qualities of a morally good man. These, good in themselves, are not the requisites for entrance into the kingdom of God. Jesus stressed something utterly different. It was something outside of and beyond the manipulation and skill of man to produce. It was something radically different from the prevailing concept of what constituted a whole person, a true child of God, a citizen of the kingdom of heaven. It was something so revolutionary that Nicodemus' theological frame of reference was disoriented.

And so it must be with the Akan. All that a man is and has and needs are disoriented when he encounters Jesus Christ. Something new and different from outside his world view penetrates and transforms and revolutionizes his whole being. That something different is the conversion experience. "All men must be born again," born from above, in order to qualify as fit citizens for the kingdom of God. The works of the flesh, Adam's sinful nature, can never evolve into a life that pleases God. "That which is flesh is flesh." Only the recreating work of the Holy Spirit sweeping through the life situation and particular circumstances can bring the Akan to newness of life. "That which is born of the Spirit is spiritual."

The Akan must be convinced that it is regeneration, not reincarnation, that brings the new life experience. "Birth is the beginning of life; to be born again is to begin anew."¹ Akan man must have a new nature, new principles, new affections, new aims, new beliefs. He must accept the fact that old wineskins (traditions) cannot contain new wine (the gospel of Jesus). In order to become a transformed Christian, a new power, a new Life-Force, must enter into the Akan man's mind (Rom 12:2), to regenerate, remold, and remodel his whole conceptual structure of existence. That new Life-Force, Jesus says, is the Spirit. To be born again is to be totally regenerated by the Holy Spirit. The same Spirit that brooded over the chaotic deep in the creation of the world; the same Spirit that brooded over the Virgin Mary in the birth process of the Redeemer of the world; the same Holy Spirit, the Third Person of the Godhead,

¹Matthew Henry, Commentary of the Whole Bible, 6 vols. (Old Tappan, NJ: Fleming H. Revell Company, n.d.), 5:833 (on John 3:3).

broods over every honest, seeking person who focuses on Jesus Christ as their only hope. Working like water, the Holy Spirit cleanses and purifies and refreshes the soul. Working like wind, the Spirit powerfully moves the heart's allegiance from the things of the flesh to the things of the Spirit. Working like fire (Matt 3:11), the Holy Spirit purges the undergrowth of fear and dread from the soul--the fear of evil forces, of witchcraft, of calamity, of death--and plants the seeds of love, joy, peace, justice, and freedom in a new man--a new creation created whole in Christ Jesus (Rom 8:15, Gal 5:22).

Regeneration, the new birth, is absolutely necessary and absolutely mysterious. How the Spirit is able to root out of the heart the affections we have for things which stand in opposition to or in competition with Christ--things which we met when we were born and with which we are nurtured until they are bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh--we cannot tell. But it can be experienced (Col 3:1-15). It happens.

Final deliverance by the power of God from the forces of evil in the world is the assurance of the gospel (Heb 2:14; Rev 20:7-9). Until then the spirit-world is frustrated by conversion experience that transforms all the spheres of life. Christians, "strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might" (Eph 6:10-18), are liberated from Satanic bondage and are commissioned ambassadors for Christ to bring others out of darkness into God's light.

In effect, the impact of Jesus Christ upon the religion of any person or group or culture is to disengage the old and establish the new. "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and

take up his cross, and follow me" (Matt 16:24). There must be a deliberate, cheerful, and resolute choice to follow Jesus and then come to grips with His terms: (1) Man must deny himself: to deny oneself is not to destroy oneself or one's culture. It means to accept a new identity, a new vitality, a new solidarity, a new continuity, and a new authority; to allow freedom from all mental containers that are irrelevant to survival; to focus on Christ as a new object of faith; and to set the stage for the revolution of one's beliefs and the transformation of one's culture.

(2) Man must take up his cross: the cross belongs to him not to Christ. It is not primarily the symbol of man's afflictions, persecutions, or troubles, rather it is the sign of his sinfulness. All are to take it up in penitence and lay it on the shoulders of Christ who is willing to bear it for all to Golgotha's hill. There, all can watch Him bear on the cross (which is really man's) the sins (which are man's) in His own body as man's Substitute and Surety. There, all mankind watches Him die on man's cross in man's stead for man's sins. His heart is broken; men's hearts are broken. He dies; mankind dies. To take up the cross means that men agree with God that the only remedy for sin is death. It is self-identification with Christ who covenants with His blood to save all from eternal death. "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me" (Gal 2:20).

(3) Man must follow Christ: for to follow Christ in the light of the cross is a precious duty and privilege. It means to

follow Him in service, in sacrifice, in joy or in sorrow, in daily living. It means to follow Him in denouncing injustice and oppression against helpless people. It means to follow Him in loving obedience to His Word. It means to follow Him in a covenant relationship sealed by His blood into Christocentric holistic ministry for every other soul needing to be reconciled to God.

To the Akan Jesus says, as He said to the Samaritan woman,

Whosoever drinketh of this water [traditional religion]
shall thirst again:
But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give
him [the Holy Spirit]
Shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give
him [the Holy Spirit]
Shall be in him a well [wellspring] of water [a source of
continual supply]
Springing up into everlasting life (John 4:14, KJV)
(Inserts supplied.)

The Akan world view and his understanding of reality is not herein denuded of any worth. No theory of tabula rasa could possibly survive the cascading evidence of cultural similarity to the Biblical revelation. Akan symbols and categories of thought contain a wealth of knowledge that are channels for cross-cultural penetration. The plea here is for a Christocentric holistic approach where the whole of life is filtered a priori through the mind of Christ as revealed in the Holy Scriptures. In other words, a genuine encounter of Biblical revelation upon Akan life in its totality is primary in moving the Akan view toward a point of convergence where free choice is possible. There is no movement without this divine intrusion--God's initiative.

We may now suggest what the impact of Christ upon Akan familial and cultural experience might be.

The Impact of Christ upon Akan Marriage,
Family, and Cultural Life

Towering above every family tree, plumbing the depths beneath all the roots of familial allegiance, and subsuming all the hopes and fears of Akan cultural existence is the gracious provision that "Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (Phil 2:11).

The case for the centrality of Jesus Christ has been expressed in many ways. One writer says: "God's gracious saving activity comes to expression in the life and activity, the suffering, death, and resurrection, as well as in the exaltation and heavenly ministry of Jesus Christ."¹

Significant Other

The incarnation of Jesus Christ provides the Akan Christian with a model for the centrality and priority of Christ in the total life. By renouncing His own Godhood in order to be human, Christ identified Himself with all human problems. The whole Christ-event, from the incarnation to the empty tomb, is a concrete demonstration of divine activity in human reality that validates both divine and human existence. His conquest of all evil forces in the struggle to maintain His sinlessness, His destruction of the power of death to hold Him in the grave, His creation of a new community built upon Himself through suffering and the shedding of blood pleads that Jesus Christ is the Significant Other--the Supreme Lord of

¹Gerhard F. Hasel, New Testament Theology: Basic Issues in the Current Debate (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1978), p. 164.

all--who died but rose again and is alive forevermore. He alone is worthy of man's complete trust.

Jesus Christ is Lord--the dynamic unifying Center--the Significant Other whose authority may be supreme in every facet of every situation in the Akan Christian's familial and cultural life. The home where Christ is Lord will radiate unity, love, justice, and freedom. Both father and mother will exercise their God-given responsibility to train their children in proper ways. They will teach that all things were created by Jesus Christ; all things hold together in Him (Col 1:16,17), even the condemnation and acceptance of God. That is to say, by the shedding of His blood on the cross for the sins of humanity, Jesus Christ became the ultimate satisfaction to God's two-fold justice: punishing justice and demanding justice. The punishing justice requires the complete condemnation of the guilty one; the demanding justice still desires the rendering of an inviolate obedience during a man's lifetime, not after death.

In Jesus Christ God has fulfilled the requirements of His two-fold justice. "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself" (2 Cor 5:19). God spent His wrath against sin at the cross, where Christ bore "our sins in His own body" (1 Pet 2:24). That satisfied punishing justice. When it comes to the demanding justice of inviolate obedience, again the cross speaks. Paul articulates it: "And being found in fashion as a man in the body, He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross" (Phil 2:8). (Emphasis supplied.)

Because of this, says Paul, "God has highly exalted Him, and given Him a name which is above every name: that at the name of

Jesus every knee should bow, . . . and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (Phil. 2:10,11). Demanding justice is satisfied in the obedient life and death of Jesus. And God has provided that all of Adam's children may share in the life and death of Jesus and experience the transformation necessary to become sons and daughters of God once again. The fear of punishment by evil forces, and of failure to have our needs met, is vanquished in the knowledge that in Jesus Christ we are safe and complete. Regardless of the limitations sin has imposed upon our physical and mental faculties, the totality of our being is alive and well in Jesus Christ. Such teaching will give the youth a solid hope.

Transforming Power

The authority and constraint of the Spirit of God is the new factor in the life of every man who comes into union with Christ. It is in the person of the Holy Spirit that the presence and power of Jesus Christ is brought to us today. This indispensable provision--the indwelling power of Christ made real in the personal and corporate life through the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit--is the only experience that can plumb the depths of Akan thought, reorient Akan religious beliefs, restructure Akan values, transform Akan outlook, and expose Akan marriage, family, and cultural experience to redemptive love.

When Jesus Christ is the Significant Other in men's lives, all the spheres of life are brought under the influence of transforming power. By accepting Christ as Saviour and Lord, the

Christian comes under the direct guidance and practical tutelage of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit does not speak of Himself, but rather increases the Christian's knowledge of and intimate relationship with his Lord (John 16:13-15). Through rootage in God's Word, the indwelling Holy Spirit engages the believer in an ongoing process of conversion experience. This practical reshaping of the whole life takes place as the Christian comes to know God, sense Him, and feel His nearness and power.

The assurance of the constant presence of Christ via the Third Person of the Godhead--indwelling, possessing, controlling, guiding, teaching, and transforming in all of life--is the divine answer to the dynamic drive for power, for human vitality which, to the Akan, is the core, the generative principle of all life. The Christian argument is that the Akan's quest for the meaning of life is guaranteed for him only in Jesus Christ through the dunamis of the Holy Spirit.

Transforming power will be made concrete in the Akan Christian's life as his traditional thinking about the marriage relationship, children, the dead, and the community are subsumed in Christ by the Spirit in conversion experience. As new thinking emerges from the study of God's Word and prayerful reflection is habituated, a powerful influence is unleashed. When the impact of Christ as Saviour and Lord of the whole of life becomes a reality, and the Holy Spirit is personally and corporately understood and received as the Supreme 'Life-Force', it will revolutionize the Akan familial and cultural life and redeem it to God.

The transforming of the African's basic drive for dynamic

force in his existence involves his reorientation toward the purpose of all life. His concept of power is that it affirms this life, that all in this life exists to serve man and to affirm his living presence, leading one theologian to say, "African spirituality is Christian humanism." Jesus Christ says, "No?" The purpose of life is not to glorify man and be served but rather to glorify God and serve others. The purpose of dynamic force, Spirit-power in the life of a Christian, is for obedience to God and giving humble service to others. Affirmation of life is tangible when we deny ourselves by giving of ourselves in service for the benefit and affirmation of others. This is the new dynamic that Jesus Christ injects into the meaning of life and is an example of the required reorientation facilitated by transforming power. This power not only transforms, it also brings integration to the complexity of life.

Summary: The Integrating Force

The welfare and continuance of the family, corporate solidarity, and authority with justice may be summarized as among the deepest concerns of the Akan. To these concerns Jesus Christ speaks with compassion and understanding love.

"I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly" (John 10:10). In these few words of promise to all men, the Lord Jesus addresses the deep needs of Akan existence. His words are, first of all, an affirmation of His incarnation: "I am come." Prior to this He has declared, "Before Abraham was, I am" (John 8:48). Now He affirms, "I am come." In

essence "the Eternal" I AM (John 1:14), "came down from heaven" (John 3:13), "was made of a woman" (Gal 4:4), "was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death and tested death for every man" (Heb 2:9). In other words, God became a man in order to die for all men "that they may have and enjoy life, and have it in abundance--to the full, till it overflows" (John 10:10, Amplified Bible) even eternal life (John 10:27,28, Amplified Bible .

The incarnation in the light of the cross is a powerful integrating force. It assures the Christian family of God's complete, personal interest in their welfare in this present world, and that His interest moves far beyond the borders of this life jutting into eternity.

It must be proclaimed to the Akan community that the Incarnation--the intrusion of the Divine into the human--makes sense at the cross of Calvary. The decisive act of God--the outpouring of His wrath against sin and, conversely, the outpouring of His mercy toward the sinner--converges and diverges at the historical focus of the cross lavishing forgiveness and hope, grace and truth, justice and love to all men everywhere, that all may behold His glory, the glory of the unique Son of the Father, the Word made flesh (John 1:14).

The cross is God's stage where the long drama of a Creator seeking reconciliation with His creation comes to a dramatic climax. He had sent His covenant promise to the ancient fathers by the prophets, revealing Himself in many different ways as Maker, Deliverer, and Provider. Finally, at the right time--in the midst of history--He sends forth His covenant Son to reveal Him (the

Father) as the Reconciler and the Reconciled. It is the Living Word that speaks the mystery of the Incarnation: "Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father in me, He doeth the works" (vs. 10). It is at the cross that the work of God answers with finality the holistic need of mankind. "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself" (2 Cor 5:19).

And then God answers death on the cross with resurrection from the grave--giving Africa and the world the model of a God who renounced His status as God in order to identify with humanity, die for humanity, and give eternal life--resurrection life--to humanity, thus creating a new humanity that lives and moves and has its being and hope in Christ Jesus alone.

God has made Jesus Christ the Significant Other, the dominant desire of all nations. Jesus Christ is the all-in-all of Akan man's deepest yearnings, the solitary answer to the Akan's quest for identity and hunger for continuity. The whole Akan community may experience in Christ, with Christians on every continent of the earth, a dynamic surge of corporate solidarity and a sense of authority with justice (where greed, alienation, misery, and oppression are overcome) through the transforming and harmonizing power of the Holy Spirit. The reality of a new creation--God's new mankind--the whole man renewed in Jesus Christ is proffered in the gospel--the power of God unto salvation unto all who believe (Rom 1:16).

The second affirmation of Christ's promise is that He is the Source, Giver, and Sustainer of life. This presupposes a state

of death for those who do not enter into saving relationship with Jesus Christ, as the context of John 10 implies, i.e., "I am the Door, any one who enters in through me will be saved--will live" (John 10:9, Amplified Bible). The unsaved state is therefore a state of death--spiritual death--that responds only to the quickening power of God activated in fellowship and in union with Christ (Eph 2:4,5, Amplified Bible).

This may be a new dimension for Akan reflection, for by tradition the Akan believes that "man as he is, is man as the Creator intended him to be."¹ The Pauline injunction, "Be not conformed to this world but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind" (Rom 12:2) is a vital call to the Akan Christian at such an impasse. The East African theologian, Timothy Njoya, maintains that "God summons Africans every moment to abandon the liturgical traditions of their ancestors and worship Him without the chains of culture and egocentrism."²

This bold "iconoclast" speaks in the context of conversion experience which he describes as a "radical break from the past, a critical self-reorientation toward the future (Christ) and, in terms of continual change."³

The incarnation of Christ, His life, death, and resurrection, and the transforming power of the Holy Spirit suggests the Christocentric impact and integrating force needed in a theology of family

¹Williamson, p. 143.

²Timothy M. Njoya, "Dynamics of Change in African Christianity: Africal Theology through Historical and Socio-Political Change" (Ph.D. dissertation, Princeton Theological Seminary, 1976), p. 30.

³Ibid., p. 82.

and cultural life bringing the gospel to bear upon the Akan people.

We must now propose a curriculum for ministerial education in Ghana that will provide the church with a specialized ministry--a Christocentric holistic ministry that will be instrumental in meeting the needs of the Akan and, mutatis mutandis, of West Africa.

PART II

CHRISTOCENTRIC HOLISM APPLIED TOWARD A CURRICULUM
FOR MINISTERIAL EDUCATION

CHAPTER V

INTRODUCTION

At the outset of this project the provision for ministerial education in Ghana was a four-year ministerial training program that would prepare certificate level ministers for the fields. Within a year after this project was underway a decision was reached by the Afirca-Indian Ocean Division of SDA at its year-end meeting in Abidjan (1981) that the entry point for ministry for all its fields would be the B.A. degree. This necessitates a phasing-out of the current ministerial program. A strong recommendation from the Ghana fields to the West African Union followed which called for the establishment of a two-year junior college with primary emphasis on ministerial education. The consequent proposal of the church leaders reads:

The West African Union of Seventh-day Adventists proposes to establish a junior college within its territory for the purpose of providing two years of Seventh-day Adventist college education for students who wish to prepare for ministerial and other church related vocations requiring the B.A. degree.

The Union has requested permission to establish a two-year diploma course with credits transferable to the Adventist Seminary of West Africa in Nigeria or any other Seventh-day Adventist college. This shift of program is reflected in the proposed curriculum model in chapter VII.

CHAPTER VI

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

The work of Nelson and Manalaysay,¹ Currie,² Nkou,³ and Miller⁴ are reviewed for their relevance to this study.

Nelson and Manalaysay is basically a compilation of the instruction given by Ellen G. White on the principles of Christian education. The material is arranged in twenty-one units for teaching "Principles of Education." Unit twelve, "The Curriculum," and the Introduction, which outlines a nine-fold program of education under the rubric of mental, spiritual, and physical education, are especially pertinent to the holistic approach of the present work.

Currie has pioneered the field of theological education curricula in the Third World for the Seventh-day Adventist Church. No formal studies had been undertaken prior to his work.⁵ Currie

¹Andrew N. Nelson and Reuben G. Manalaysay, The Gist of Christian Education (Riverside, CA: Loma Linda University, 1971).

²Alexander Shand Currie, "Strategies for Seventh-day Adventist Theological Education in the South Pacific Islands" (Ed.D. dissertation, Andrews University, 1977).

³Joseph Nkou, "Teaching the Bible to Black Africans (Toward a Methodological Approach to Bible Teaching Applied to the Beti Tribe of South Cameroon)" (Ed.D. dissertation, Andrews University, 1980).

⁴Paul M. Miller, Equipping for Ministry in East Africa (Dodema, Tanzania: Central Tanganyika Press, 1969).

⁵Currie, p. 40.

has distilled some of the non-Seventh-day Adventist literature on theological education curricula in the U.S. and in the Third World, the latter including Africa. He has also given a helpful survey of Third World models showing their strengths and apparent weaknesses. This includes Adventist as well as non-Adventist curricula models. Close cultural similarities of the studied regions to Africa makes Currie's work extensible and useful.

Joseph Nkou's research among the Beti people of the Camerouns gives extremely valuable insights to a process of teaching the Bible to African peoples which may well lead to a major breakthrough. He gives seven laws of teaching that are anthropologically sound and affirming. His grass roots research and interviews with Cameroon scholars are authenticating.

Paul M. Miller grapples with the question, "What is the ideal pattern of ministry of God's people within East Africa and of the ordained ministers in their midst?" Again, extension (from East Africa to West Africa) is necessary as certain useful principles and concepts emerge as to the task of the full-time minister and how to prepare him to carry out that task.

Ministerial education in the Seventh-day Adventist Church has not operated in a vacuum. It has had inspired direction through the years that has proved its relevance wherever its principles have been followed.

In these days when theological education is being bombarded by cultural, nationalistic, and racial demands for "accommodation,"

"adaptation," or "contextualization," particularly along humanistic lines, it is essential to have a clear "voice" guiding through the rocky straits.

Perhaps the very first consideration in curriculum development for ministerial education in Ghana is to state the SDA objectives for Christian education in general:

To restore in man the image of his Maker,
 To bring him back to the perfection in which he was created,
 To promote the development of body, mind, and soul,
 That the divine purpose in his creation might be realized.¹

Obviously, such a high objective has more than a this-world perspective.² However we suggest that in this philosophy of education the answer to the human quest for identity and purpose has its center.

The curriculum specialists are agreed that a needs assessment is necessary "to identify and validate needs and to establish priorities."²

Yet one must ponder:

Our ideas of education take too narrow and too low a range. There is need of a broader scope, a higher aim. True education means more than the pursuit of a certain course of study. It means more than a preparation for the life that now is. It has to do with the whole being, with the whole period of existence possible to man. It is the harmonious development of the physical, the mental, and the spiritual powers.³

¹ Ellen G. White, Education (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1952), pp. 15, 16.

² Ibid., p. 19.

³ David Pratt, Curriculum: Design and Development (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1980), p. 78.

⁴ White, Education, p. 13.

While we respect the work of curriculum designers and lean heavily upon their expertise, we suggest that the Seventh-day Adventist educational philosophy, found in the writings of E. G. White, may provide a safe outline for basic curriculum development and offer a timeless needs assessment package "off the shelf"¹ for ministerial education. As Currie discovered, the specific information has to be searched for,² but it is there. His conceptual model gleaned from Ellen G. White is reproduced in fig. 3 for further discussion.

This conceptual model designed from the writings of Ellen G. White gives a broad spectrum in which to develop a viable Christocentric holistic approach to curriculum for ministerial education in the Adventist context.

One problem to be noted is that although students will have the prerequisite of a broad educational foundation before coming to the college,³ all the qualifications listed may not have been developed because of the secular nature of their previous studies. This deficiency could be rectified, or an attempt made, by placing in the curriculum a period of in-depth spiritual orientation along the lines of "initiation" into ministerial life. This "rite of passage" should involve all the staff members and students. It should be structured so as to make a considerable spiritual

¹Pratt, p. 84.

²Currie, pp. 200-02.

³Prerequisite for entrance includes General Certificate of Education passes in at least five subjects including English, or completion of twelve years of formal education.

A CONCEPTUAL MODEL FOR THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION
CURRICULUM DESIGNED FROM WRITINGS OF
ELLEN G. WHITE

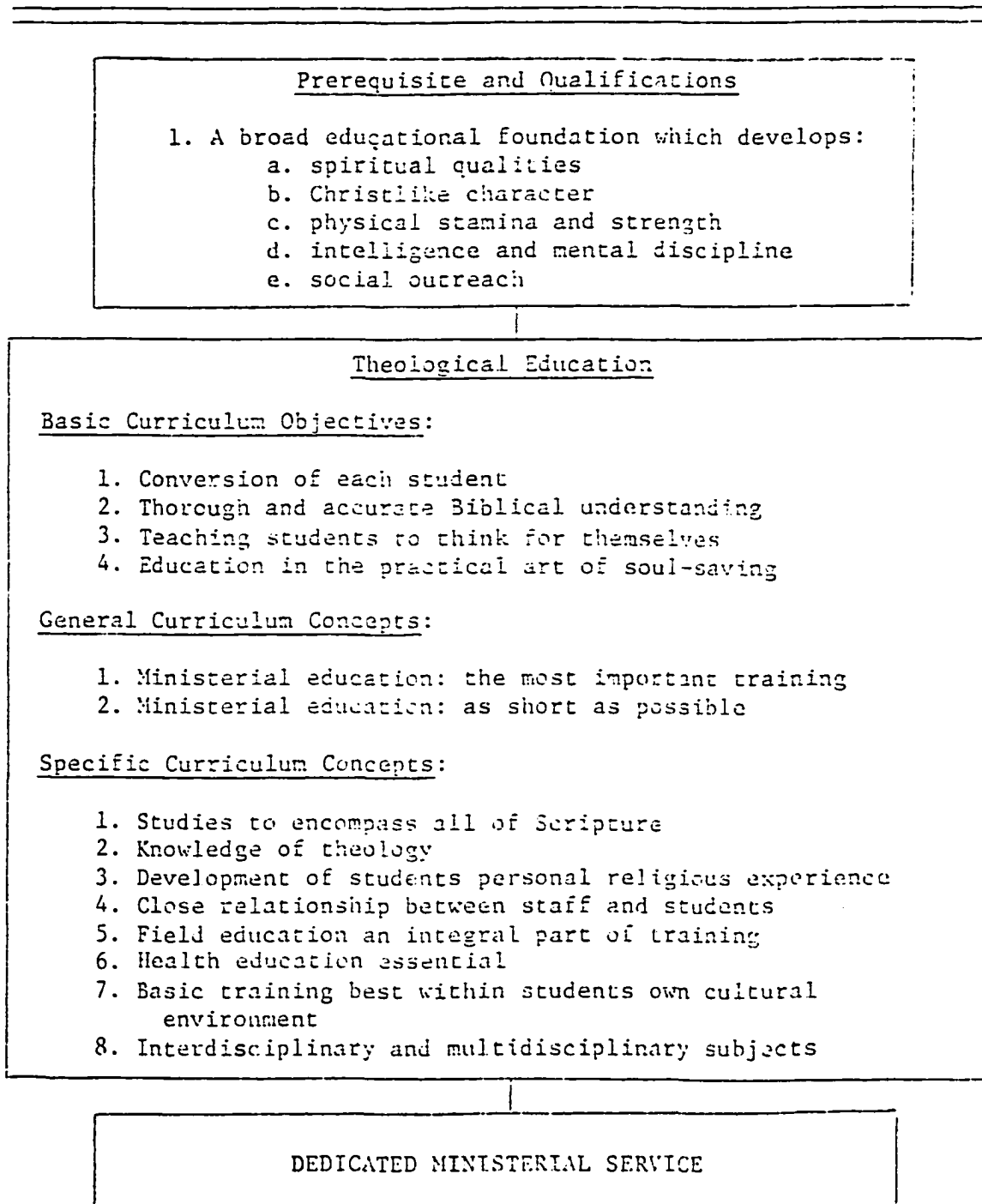


Fig. 3. Conceptual model.

Source: Currie, p. 201.

impact.¹ This will be an opportunity to share spiritual dynamics such as Bible study for devotional purposes, prayer, meditation, group sensitivity, the work of the Holy Spirit in the life, values reinforcements, work ethics, physical exercise, and diet therapy. A ten-day to two-week period preferably at the beginning of the school year would seem appropriate. Such a bonding experience between staff and students at the very beginning of the school year should portend better learning as well as better teaching. Social outreach could take the form of visitation in the nearby communities to greet the chiefs and elders and conduct a needs assessment for the purpose of community involvement during the school year.

From this Christocentric holistic beginning the program of education should continuously reinforce the commitments made until a mature, well-informed, poised Christian leaves the halls of learning and engages life in the streets of experience.

Missing from Currie's design is Ellen White's emphasis on manual labor.

Every youth, on leaving school, should have acquired a knowledge of some trade or occupation by which, if need be, he may earn a livelihood.²

There should be work for all students, whether they are able to pay their way or not; the physical and mental powers should receive proportionate attention.³

¹"While the pursuit of knowledge in art, in literature, and in trades should not be discouraged, the student should first secure an experimental knowledge of God and His will." Ellen G. White, Counsels to Teachers, Parents, and Students Regarding Christian Education (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1957), p. 19.

²White, p. 218.

³Ellen G. White, Fundamentals of Christian Education (Nashville, TN: Southern Publishing Association, 1923), p. 423.

Currie gleans from White's writings an interesting assortment of interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary subjects important for ministerial students to understand, but he makes the point that these subjects were not to detract "from Scriptural studies which were to dominate the curriculum."¹

The schemata suggested by Nelson and Manalaysay is not specific for ministerial education but the concept should be applicable. One should not read too much into mere outlines, but integration of life does not necessarily happen from what is proposed. Rather, the old Grecian separation between the mental, spiritual, and physical appears to prevail. The minister's need to be professional, practical, and contextual in a holistic framework could probably sum up what this model offers to ministerial education.

Nkou argues for the consideration of the basic patterns of African thought in communicating the gospel to them. He notes four patterns in Beti thinking: experience, symbolism, participation, and initiation (credibility). Though Nkou does not speak in terms of curriculum, his section on communication in chapter V of his dissertation is seminal. In the chapter he gives seven laws of teaching:

1. Communicate in the same language and thought pattern of the learners
2. Appreciate and apply the positive aspects of the peoples' values
3. Discover the needs of people and try to meet them

¹Currie, p. 207.

4. Be conscious of your modeling power
5. Make not only converts, but also followers (discipling)
6. Use progressive revelation rather than confrontation
revelation on non-central issues
7. Recognize the normative function of the Bible.¹

Nkou suggests that there should be "a permanent and dynamic dialogue between African experience and divine revelation"² with the acceptance of biblical revelation--the Old and the New Testament--as authoritative and normative leading to "the inner transformation of African experience by the power of the Word of God."³

Nkou's suggestion that the negative appraisal of heathendom be replaced by a positive appraisal has merit. But in this researcher's opinion the term might better be "tempered by," rather than "replaced by." This preserves the necessary tension for aggressive confrontation with the saving claims of Jesus Christ.

Nkou slips into the sandy soil of the "similarities-equals common-ground" motif. Common ground indicates equal access between two or more parties. Either could initiate a move toward the other. Either could subsume the other and we would still have, e.g., the Kingdom of God.

The similarities from the human side are admitted, but they are deemed static and unproductive of movement toward God. Until breathed upon by the Breath of God--the Holy Spirit--in regenerating power, heathen ideas and practices are dry bones in the valley. The little lights may blink as evidence that "God has been here in the

¹Nkou, pp. 136-47.

²Ibid., p. 148.

³Ibid., p. 149.

distant past." But only when the light of the gospel shines full force upon these "little lights" can there be correspondence, a throbbing pulsating radiance that says "Emmanuel!" "God is with us now!" And we suggest that it is from this point--when God has taken the initiative and induced into the African consciousness His saving love through the good news of Jesus Christ--it is at this point that biblical theology and traditional beliefs may dialogue with humility, understanding, and productive charity.

"Spiritual things are spiritually discerned." Human pride of any dimension from any quarter suffocates the gospel and fogs the issues. Universality of ethical principles means that God in His providential love "makes His sun to shine on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust" as evidence of His impartiality. Any people without ethics would perish from the face of the earth as they would without sunshine or rain. Thus God's impartial distribution of that which is for man's best good.

The above argument is not a rejection of a peoples' values. But in the economy of salvation the only real value is Jesus Christ. The only real point of contact between God and man is Jesus Christ. The only belief that has saving merit is belief in Jesus Christ. The issue is one of emphasis. Human values can never function as trade-offs; they may, however, be used as channels to the soul. There is a lot of tearing away and burn-off when a people come face to face with Jesus Christ, but the Holy Spirit will do that work and preserve whatever values He wants to use in the new life structure of the converts.

Njoya puts it succinctly:

Conversion experience may find it necessary or unnecessary to utilize the old traditions which are renounced in order to be converted or stimulate him to undergo conversion as a means of salvation, but this development process does not need affinities to the past. The past no longer dominates the present in any legitimate way except as an oppressive authority to be abolished, but is in conversion experience subservient to the future. In this sense the logical conclusion of conversion is promise, hope and survival. Its aim is maximum enjoyment of fellowship with God and neighbors and regards as idolatry any relations that tend to absolutize themselves as the donor of salvation. It rejects dependence on any other position or power except that of God.¹

In Miller we have a strong appeal for training a ministry that is equipped to train the laity, the total church, for its ministry to society as well as to itself. Miller advocates a tent-maker ministry with special training led by fully-trained and fully-supported equippers or teacher-preachers.

These tent-maker persons should be middle-aged professional persons who should be called by the church, trained, and ordained as ministers. Miller suggests one year of special education for these people. Such a minister would be more of a ministerial assistant who is self-supporting and given the responsibility of caring for one or two churches. He would be part of a team headed by a full-time ordained minister. Out of a variety of discussions with African church leaders, lay leaders, and political leaders, Miller proposes a radical transformation in the preparation of ministers who are to serve the church as equippers, trainers of God's people for ministry. Written in the 1960s, one closes Miller's book pondering "What might have been!"

¹Njoya, p. 157.

CHAPTER VII

A PROPOSED CURRICULUM FOR TWO YEARS OF MINISTERIAL EDUCATION

Christocentric holism is placing Jesus Christ at the center of life and allowing Him to direct the totality of our personhood--mental, physical, spiritual, and social--toward the goal of the plan of redemption, which is, our complete restoration in the image of God--the wholeness in which we were created.

Christocentric holistic ministry is therefore the extension of ourselves as ambassadors of Jesus Christ engaging the world in its totality for the purpose of bringing its brokenness into the healing presence of Christ and thereby building up the kingdom of God--the gathering in of God's children from every nation as trophies of His grace.

The indispensable work of the Holy Spirit in the total life of the believer is acknowledged with gratitude and joy. He is the "go-between" between the church and the world. As long as Christ is central, the Holy Spirit is pleased to use the church as an instrument of God's grace in the world. A ministry dedicated to the task of keeping alive the centrality of Jesus in the hearts and lives of church members is of prime importance. The minister's education should help to facilitate his effort to carry out this task.

In our survey of Akan reality we perceived that the centrality of their world view is man--man seeking identity and wholeness. It is the Christian's challenge to present an alternative view, with Christ at the center of life, fulfilling the Akan desire to be the total person he longs to be. Again, it is the minister's education that should prepare him for the rigors of effecting change in a people's outlook.

Consequently, the curriculum for ministerial education should reflect the holistic concerns of the people he must nurture and the people he must win, aside from his own personal needs.

Knight has given an invaluable insight to curriculum development in Christian education that compliments the African bias for seeing life holistically. He proposes a curriculum model that sees the Bible as foundational and integrative. The model and its description appears in figure 4.

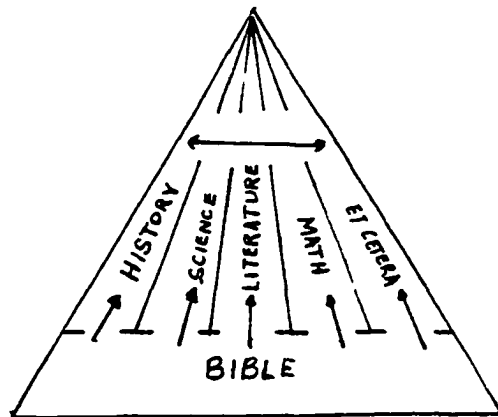


Fig. 4. Curriculum Model: The Bible as foundational and integrative.

This model implies that the Bible provides a foundation for all human knowledge, and that its overall meaning enters into every area of the curriculum and adds significance to each topic. From this position the Bible is both foundational and contextual. It is the point of integration that lends understanding to all

our topics of study. There is no separation between the sacred and the so-called secular. Neither, as the horizontal arrow shows, are there any hard and fast divisions between the various subject matter fields. Every topic in the curriculum impacts upon every other topic, but all have their fullest meaning when seen from God's viewpoint.¹

White for many years stressed the foundational character of the Bible in true education.

The students are to be educated in practical Christianity, and the Bible must be regarded as the highest, the most important textbook.²

"The word of God should have a place--the first place--in every system of education."³

The precepts and principles of religion are the first steps in the acquisition of knowledge, and lie at the very foundation of true education.⁴

It is therefore axiomatic to give to the Word of God its central place in the curriculum for ministerial education and allow it to play its dominant role as the matrix of the whole program.

An adapted version of Knight's model adds a third dimension toward which ministerial education must be responsive, and that is the basic needs of the society outside the school. These needs must be constantly brought forth and impressed into the students' consciousness so that he seeks in all of his learning to find ways and means to meet basic societal needs in the context of his ministry. Thus field work should constitute an essential component of ministerial education.

The above concept is illustrated in figure 5.

¹George R. Knight, Philosophy and Education (Berrien Springs: Andrews University Press, 1980), p. 201.

²White, Fundamentals of Christian Education, p. 231.

³Ibid., p. 542.

⁴Ellen G. White, Testimonies for the Church, 9 vols. (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1948), 4:427.

THE BIBLE AS FOUNDATIONAL, INTEGRATIVE, AND CONTEXTUAL

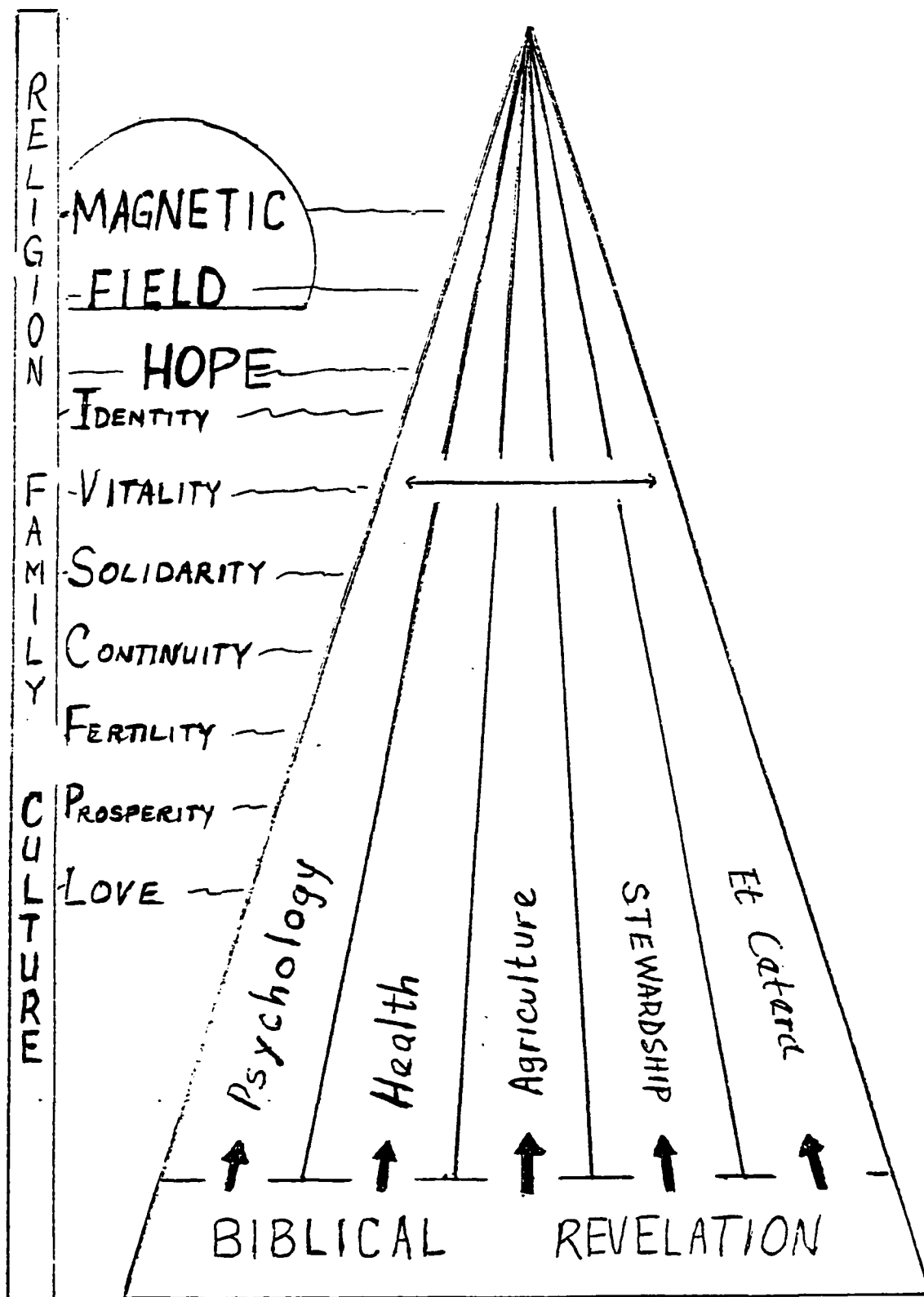


Fig. 5. Adaptation of Knight's model showing third dimension.

Source: Knight, p. 201.

Knight's model calls for a thorough and accurate Biblical understanding, a conceptual knowledge of theology, and studies that encompass all of Scripture, as in White. The illustration that "there is no separation between the sacred and the so-called secular" coincides with the African concept of holism. A third dimension is added to this model, for the African student never escapes his roots. His societal cohesion sets up a magnetic field between his educational pursuits and his background. Behavioral sciences will help him to discover the basic needs that pulsate from the religious-familial-cultural reality of his environment. From his own personal religious experience fortified by biblical understanding, the student shall relate his learnings to this magnetic field. The question that must constantly be raised in his consciousness is this: "How can I use this knowledge I have gained to meet the needs of my people?" This reflective contextualization would then be related to skills learned and a program of positive action through Christocentric holistic ministry would be developed and implemented.

Shown in figure 6 are methods Jesus used in training the twelve disciples. Jesus' training was both cognitive and affective, but learning by doing appears to be the method He most engaged. Ministerial education today would not wander too far afield if Jesus' methods were contextualized and applied.

A working paper, "The Professional Training of Pastors" stressed the need for "an overall plan and focus" for ministerial education for the Seventh-day Adventist Church in North America. A ten-year training program was outlined in which the college was recognized as the level where the basic ministerial training takes place.

A holistic curriculum must be designed to produce a minister who can efficiently train God's people for their role in ministry.

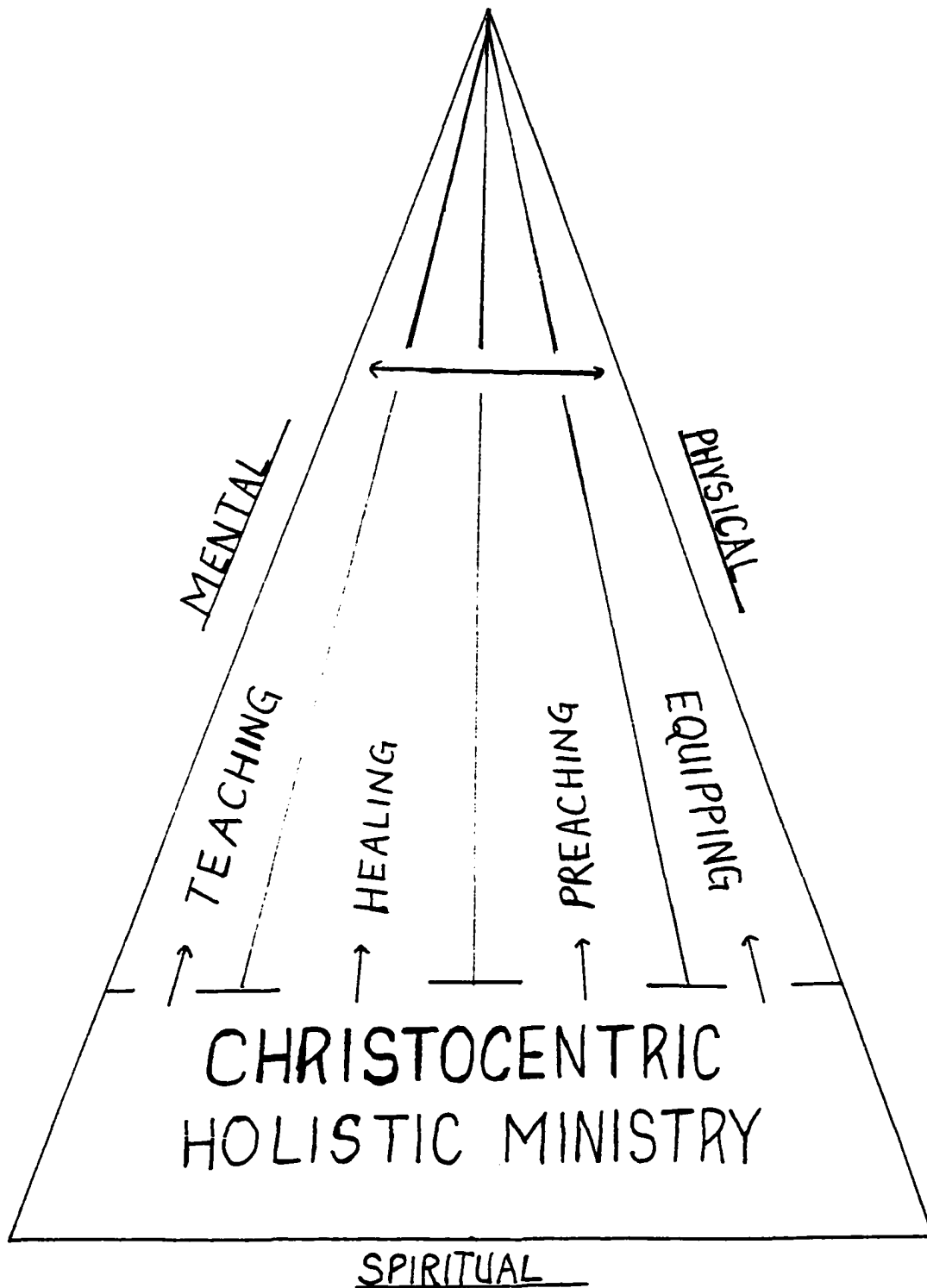


Fig. 6. A model depicting Jesus' methods for teaching the twelve.

Suggestions for curriculum were given for this basic training as follows:

- Emphasize basic communication skills
- Involve in personal and public evangelism
- Expand liberal arts education
- Provide practical skills exposure
- Teach general pastoral leadership skills
- Teach basic Biblical knowledge
- Teach Biblical languages only in upper division level¹
- Avoid advanced pastoral and theological courses¹

Field experience is expected to follow the college experience by a one-year exposure-observation-study emphasis. This program is to be followed by seminary training that is oriented to produce the professional minister.

It appears that the above ten-year pattern would exceed the immediate needs of the Third World. A pattern of training should be urgent, localized, and expressive of the region in which the training takes place. But at the same time, the curriculum designer must be cognizant of the world outlook that ordination to the gospel ministry implicates in the Seventh-day Adventist Church. The working policy of the Church on ordination states:

The spiritual rite of ordination constitutes the official recognition by the Seventh-day Adventist Church of his divine call to the ministry as a life commitment, and is his endorsement to serve as a minister of the gospel in any part of the world.²

¹"Professional Training of Pastors," working paper prepared for consideration prior to implementation at the 1981 NADCA session of the Autumn Council of the General Conference of SDA. (Xeroxed.)

²Seventh-day Adventist Church, Constitution, Bylaws and Working Policy (Abidjan, Ivory Coast: Africa Indian Ocean Division, 1982), Section L 25 25. "Ordination."

The following proposed curriculum has the infrastructure of Christocentric holism assumed and represents a two-year course of study in a junior-college setting. The student would be able to continue his studies and earn either a Bachelor of Liberal Arts or a Bachelor of Theology degree. Currie differentiates.

The basic difference between the Bachelor of Theology and the Bachelor of Liberal Arts is one of emphasis. Whereas the theology program concentrates on preparing persons for a profession, the liberal arts program provides a broad basis for professional studies. Although both curricula take approximately four years to complete, the liberal arts curriculum does not prepare the student as professionally for the ministry as does the Bachelor of Theology curriculum. The rationale for this is that the theology program prepares persons specifically for the ministry while the liberal arts program lays a foundation for professional training.¹

The content of the ministerial education being proposed in this paper compares with the above-mentioned working paper's curriculum suggestions, but adds a battery of seminars and workshops over the two-year period as a context for church-and-world involvement. These seminars and workshops are developed by the students under guidance and in-put by an instructor. The students go to the field and present the programs in churches or schools on weekends. They also develop standard evaluation forms for the receptor group, their peers, and their instructor from which they are graded. A full report from each student participant would be required for each seminar/workshop.

The curriculum proposed constitutes the first program that will be attempted at the junior college in Ghana, West Africa. It must be recognized that curriculum design is an on-going process

¹Currie, p. 255.

and that change is inevitable. Human resources, facilities, cost, instructional materials and equipment, and administrative skill must all be included in the assessment of a curriculum's viability. These considerations are outside the scope of this project but are recognized as essential areas for detail planning in a complete curriculum.

Below is an example of a Third World Christian educational program that is holistic in outlook. As suggested earlier, integration of life does not necessarily follow such an outline. There appears to be a need for "something more" to tie it together. Perhaps "Christocentric" explicitly added to each major heading would help; i.e., Christocentric Mental Education.

PROGRAM OF EDUCATION

I. MENTAL EDUCATION

1. Theoretical General Courses in history, mathematics, languages, literature, music, etc.

Theoretical Vocational Courses in accounting, stenography, library science, art, etc.

2. Practical Work Experience in accounting, stenography, library, commercial art, etc.

3. Social Association in clubs, programs, etc.

II. SPIRITUAL EDUCATION

4. Theoretical General Courses in Bible, missions, ethics, sacred music, etc.

Theoretical Vocational Courses in evangelism, colporteur evangelism, homiletics, etc.

5. Practical Work Experience in church and community service, evangelism, and colportage.

6. Social Association in vespers and church services.

III. PHYSICAL EDUCATION

7. Theoretical General Courses in science, health, etc.

Theoretical Vocational Courses in woodworking, agriculture, cooking, sewing, etc.

8. Practical Work Experience in woodworking, agriculture, cooking, mechanics, etc.

9. Social Association in physical recreation.¹

The emphasis on Christ-centeredness cannot be overstressed. If the student can be led to focus on Christ throughout his total program of study, he will develop beauty of character, depth of knowledge, and spiritual power for executing his work well.

One of the keys to the virility of any curriculum is a staff of cooperative, dedicated, and consecrated teachers who are themselves in personal contact with Christ.² Their example will be most potent in keeping a Christ-centered focus alive in the school.

Some of the curriculum components that are hidden in any curriculum outline may provide more instruction than the formal courses themselves. Currie has adapted a curriculum component model for use in theological education that is helpful in seeing these components in relation to the whole process.³ The student is surrounded by such things as learning environment; content material; teaching

¹Nelson and Manalaysay, Introduction, n.p.

²White, Education, p. 261.

³Currie, p. 261.

strategies; evaluation techniques; organization of time, space, and personnel; audio-visual aids and instructional materials; student, staff, society, and facilities resources; and the educators' personality, behavior, and language. The theological educator, church and society, and his own religious experience are further components that, working together harmoniously through inspiration, relationships, exposure, and dialogue, molds the student in his development and professional growth. The construct is reproduced in figure 7.

In the list of proposed courses an effort is made to give the student the basic theological tools for his educational experience. At the same time, the student needs an expansive outlook as a future leader and the school must constantly provide a vital mix of classroom and ministry to develop this.

Students must be challenged continually with the application of truth to life and ministry. Otherwise, they will tend to become cold, bookish, academic, boring in their approach to God's Word. A warm, vital, life-changing, committed outlook is the desired objective.

The seminar-workshop component is a strategic vehicle for addressing the issues that the Akan world outlook raises for the Christian faith. These seminar/workshops will give opportunity for the student to dialogue with his heritage and share an alternative view that he is convinced will help his people to have a better quality of life. It is an endeavor to help the student to allow his faith and knowledge to be church-and-world directed.

The content of curricula and the methods of communicating

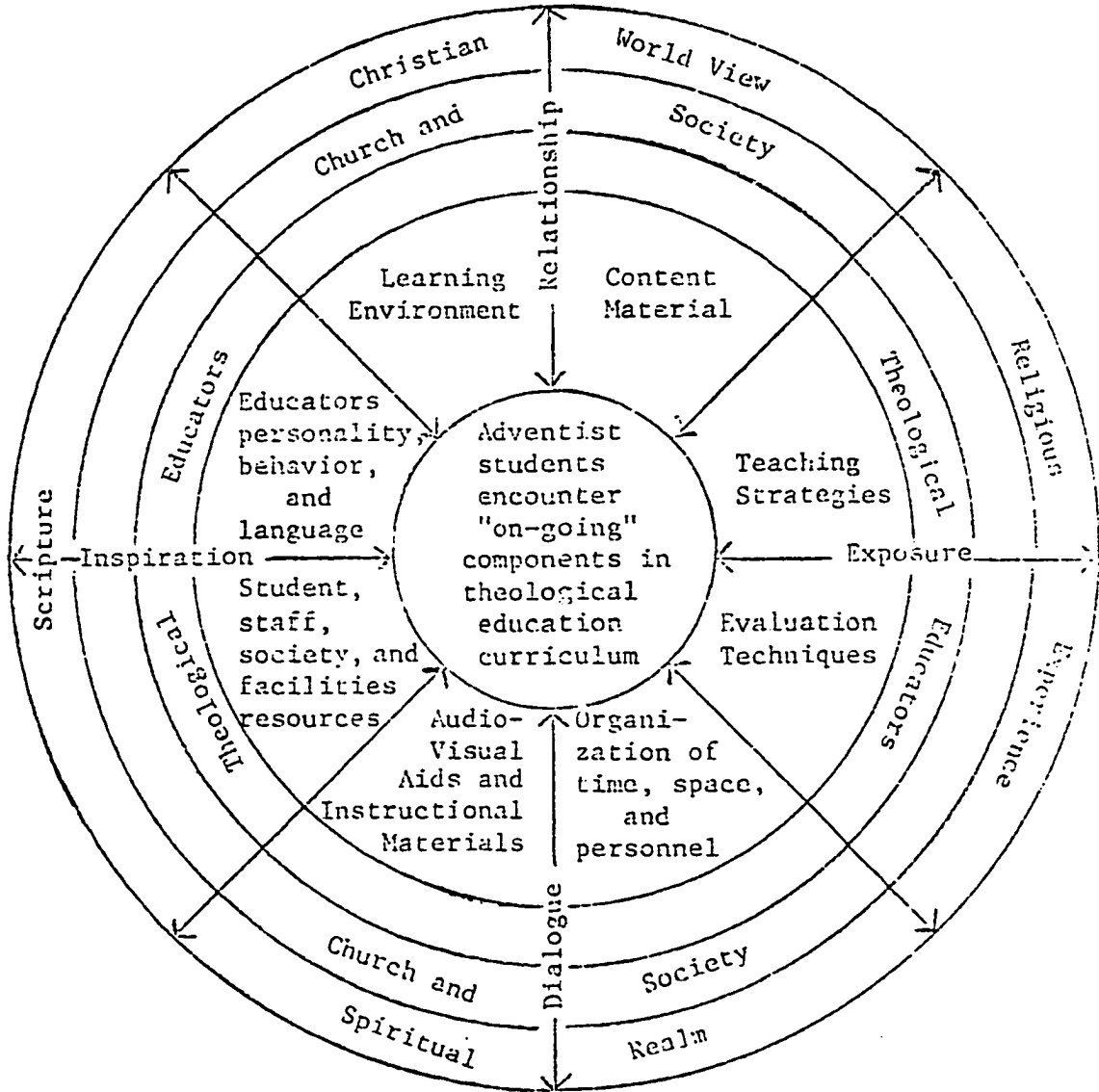


Fig. 7. Theological education curriculum component model.

Source: Adapted from a design by Marcella R. Lawler, Strategies for Planned Curricular Innovation (New York: Teachers College Press, 1970), p. 19.

PROPOSED COURSES

Theology	Seminars/Workshops	Business	Secretarial	General
FIRST YEAR: 48 Cr.				
Fundamentals of Faith	Spiritual Dynamics (Orientation)	Introduction to Business	Beginning Typewriting I and II	Fundamentals of Speech
Life and Teachings of Christ	Group Dynamics		Shorthand Theory	Freshman Composition
Prophetic Guidance	Communications			Anatomy and Physiology
History of the Bible	Youth Ministry			Agriculture: Vegetable Gardening
Field Practicum	Stewardship			History: Topics in African History
	Worship			
SECOND YEAR: 48 Cr.				
Daniel and Revelation	Urban Problems	Principles of Accounting	Records Management	French I
New Testament Epistles	Community Health Programming		Business Communication	Psychology
Evangelism	Lay Leadership			Anthropology
Greek I	Human Development			Health Principles
Field Practicum	Church and Politics			Teaching Skills
	Home and Family Life			History of the Christian Church - I
	African Religions			

knowledge may of necessity be different from the Western approach. Verbal symbols may need to be supplemented by participatory actions as a vehicle for the transmission of learning. The emphasis of particular courses may need to focus on aspects relevant to the African situation rather than to doggedly follow the traditional line of thought. For instance, rather than crowding in a long line of dates in teaching Biblical history, the better method in the African context is to make use of genealogies. Africans measure time in generations not as a succession of dates to be memorized. This will help the student to understand that the Biblical past is just as real as the present.

Business skills such as shorthand and typing will assist the student to overcome dependence upon dictation in note taking and also give him skills that are useable for making a living. The advantage of being able to keep accounts and write good business letters needs no elaboration in the ministerial context.

A working knowledge of anatomy and physiology will greatly aid the student in understanding the body processes and in being able to communicate to the people in his environment the importance of achieving and maintaining good health.

Ghana is surrounded by French-speaking countries, hence the introductory French course. Africans are adept at learning languages so Greek can be introduced in the second year without traumatizing the program or the student.

Teaching Skills will be an attempt to formalize what the student has been observing and doing throughout the education process, i.e., peer tutoring and dialoguing between faith and life.

Field practicum translates into Pastoral Ministry and is the platform for the student's expression of a Christocentric holistic ministry. Sharing between classroom and field, formulating outreach programs, and researching the church's impact on cities and towns would constitute the on-going contribution of this course.

Other curriculum considerations should surface here as well. The classes do not exceed six classes a day and each class period would be 45 minutes in length. Each term would be ten weeks in duration. Adequate vacation time for rest, colporteur ministry, evangelism, and/or farming is provided the students. Time for rest, revision, farming, and recruiting is also provided the administration and staff.

The daily program calls for five hours of classroom work. This leaves time for three to four hours of manual work daily. The work program should include both teachers and students, especially in the school garden.

Chapel periods, morning and evening worship, and regular meal time fellowship could constitute an important daily ritual. Some opportunity for vigorous exercise should also be provided for in the time scheduling.

Most Sabbaths could be spent at nearby churches for Sabbath School, worship, and mission activities. The evening vespers could give opportunity for sharing and praying about the day's experience.

Small group prayer fellowships on campus should be encouraged and faculty members should feel free to be involved.

Student-body activities should be encouraged along the lines of the triadic pattern followed by the college. Every effort must

be made to inculcate the principle of Christ-centered holism into the total college experience.

The following proposed curriculum is subject to many variables but represents an initial attempt at preparing a specialized ministry for doing the work of training the laity for internal and external witness--nurture and evangelism--in the context of Christocentric holistic ministry.

It is possible to come up with a four-term-year and reduce the program to one and a half years. In that case a field component can be added in which a student researches a need in a given community, structures a plan for meeting that need, and implements his plan for three months as a partial fulfillment for his diploma.

The major objectives proposed in the general introduction to this study are now complete. The final section presents a summary and states some conclusions.

A PROPOSED CURRICULUM MODEL FOR THE JUNIOR COLLEGE IN GHANA

Credit	Term One	Credit	Term Two	Credit	Term Three
<u>First Year</u>					
4	Fundamentals of Faith	4	Life and Teachings of Christ	4	Freshman Composition
1	Typing I	4	Communications: Speech, Writing, and Drama	2	Typing II
4	History of the Bible	4	Anatomy and Physiology	2	Prophetic Guidance
1	Pastoral Ministry Visitation and Community Research	2	Pastoral Ministry (a) Spiritual Dynamics ¹ (b) Group Dynamics ¹ (c) Stewardship ¹	4	History: Topics in W.A. History
4	Introduction to Business	2	Typing I	2	Agriculture
2	Shorthand Theory			2	Pastoral Ministry (a) Communications ² (b) Youth Ministry ² (c) Worship ²
16		16		16	
<u>Second Year</u>					
4	Daniel and Revelation	4	N.T. Epistles	4	Evangelism
4	Psychology	4	Health Principles	4	French I; Greek I
2	Anthropology (Introduction)	4	Principles of Accounting	2	Records Management
2	Pastoral Ministry Research: Needs Assessment	2	Pastoral Ministry (a) Church and Society (b) Human Development (c) Community Health Programming	4	Business Communications
4	History of the Christian Church - I	2	Teaching Skills	2	Pastoral Ministry (a) Lay Leadership (b) Home and Family Life (c) African Religions (d) Church and Politics
16		16		16	

¹Seminars.

²Workshops.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Summary

The first objective of this study was to articulate a theology of Christocentric holistic ministry as a foundation for developing a curriculum for training a specialized ministry for Ghana. Two chapters surveyed Bible views on basic theological and cultural realities and Akan views on the same. The motivation for this aspect of the study was to seek points of convergence between the Akan and Biblical views as a possible bridge for deeper penetration of the gospel message. The issue here was the African penchant for limiting Christ to prescribed areas of their life and, under duress, pushing Christ aside and resorting to traditional practices. The pervasive nature of the Akan religious experience was explored and the link between traditional religion, the family, and the culture was seen to be the veneration of and dependence upon the ancestor-spirits. The components of this dependence included the mediation of lesser gods and the use of magical charms. An attempt was made to interpret traditional religious views and acts in terms of basic needs. The conclusion of this aspect of the study was that the similarities of the two realities were superficial and could not constitute genuine points of convergence, and that only intrusion by Christ through the

Biblical revelation of the gospel could bring about a saving point of convergence.

The second objective of this study involved the development of a curriculum design for ministerial education in Ghana. After reviewing related literature concerning curriculum for ministerial education, a theological application of Christocentric holism to the Akan situation was deemed essential before outlining a two-year curriculum model for ministerial education. The model that finally emerged reflects the call for a Christ-centered, Spirit-oriented, and church-and-world directed ministry informed by a thorough knowledge of the Scriptures integrated with basic educational disciplines. The concept of learning by doing is incorporated under the rubric of "pastoral ministry" where the student gains expertise in mobilizing the laity for its own ministry.

Conclusion

Inasmuch as the African ministerial student must not, and cannot, deny himself or the society within which he has been nurtured, it is incumbent upon educators to see to it that his academic experience provides opportunity for reflective interaction with his environment through concurrent field education.

The mental, spiritual, physical, and social dimensions of the institution must be geared to make a maximum wholistic impact on staff and student, church and society through challenging study, dynamic worship and proclamation, unselfish service, and revolutionary action.

Christocentric holism is a reality that will make Gospel ministry for the professional and the laity a service of joyous love for Him whose wholeness we receive and are privileged to share.

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