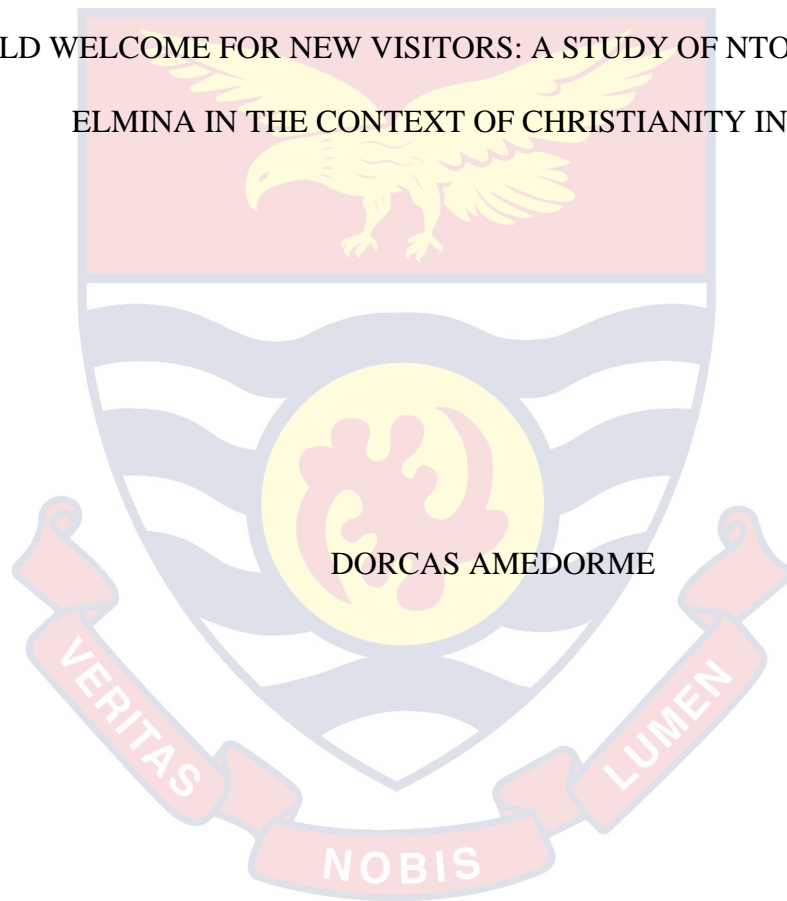UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST

OLD WELCOME FOR NEW VISITORS: A STUDY OF NTONA SHRINE OF

ELMINA IN THE CONTEXT OF CHRISTIANITY IN AFRICA

DORCAS AMEDORME

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ELMINA IN THE CONTEXT OF CHRISTIANITY IN AFRICA

BY

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Thesis submitted to the Department of Religion and Human Values of the Faculty

of Arts, College of Humanities and Legal Studies, University of Cape Coast, in

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degree in Religion and Human Values.

JULY 2018

DECLARATION

Candidate's Declaration

I hereby declare that this thesis is the result of my own original work and that no part of it has been presented for another degree in this university or elsewhere.

Candidate's Signature: …………………………. Date: …..………………….

 Name: …………………………………………………………………………..

Supervisors' Declaration

We hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of the thesis were supervised in accordance with the guidelines on supervision of thesis laid down by the University of Cape Coast.

 Principal Supervisor's Signature:………………….. Date: ……….………...

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Co-Supervisor's Signature: …………… Date: 12/09/2019

Name: Rev. Dr. Confidence Worlanyo Bansah

ABSTRACT

The study sought to investigate the concept of African Christianity and tried to relate it to the Ntona shrine. The study also aimed at explaining the nature of the Ntona shrine and the historical circumstances that accounted for its development. In doing this, the qualitative research approach was employed. The historical and phenomenological methods were used, since the phenomenon studied was based more on historical narratives. Also, the phenomenological method was used in order to establish how the people of the Ntona shrine experience the phenomenon. The target population of the study constituted the custodians of the shrine and some indigenes of Elmina. The purposive and snowball sampling procedures were used to select respondents for the study. Research tools such as interviews and participant observation were used. The data collected was analysed using thematic analysis. The study found out that despite people's view on the Ntona as a Traditional African shrine, the adherents claim otherwise. To them it is a Christian grotto. The study points out that scholars in the study of African culture and African Christianity pay close attention to this phenomenon of the fusing of Africanity and the Christian gospel, hence the need for the study.

KEY WORDS

African Christianity

African Traditional Religion

Inculturation

Nana Ntona

Ntona shrine

St. Anthony of Padua

Syncretism

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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my parents, Mr and Mrs Amedorme and to my husband,

Mr. Yaw Kesse Owusu.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Background to the Study

Scholars have not ceased to be fascinated by the cultural implications of the introduction of missionary Christianity to Africa. Studying the arrival and presence of missionary Christianity has been the focus of the history of the Church in Africa.

The concept of African Christianity is an area of study that tries to account for the various initiatives and resultant manifestations in Africanising missionary Christianity or making mission Christianity African (Mbiti, 2016). Before the concept of African Christianity came to stand, terms such as inculturation, africanization and contextualization were used to describe the phenomenon. Despite the importance of these concepts, scholars found weaknesses when they are used to describe the whole phenomenon of the contact and dialogue between Christianity and the African culture. For example, Crollius (1978, p.723), is of the view that the terms were felt as expressing more of an extrinsic contact between the Christian message and a given culture. With time, scholars began to distinguish between the histories of the church in Africa from the experiences of Christian faith by Africans. Thus, the expression, "African church history", today, is an area of study dedicated to the specific forms and events of African Christianity.

In this area of study, one of the most important topics is on the classification of these various manifestations of African Christianity. In some

cases, one sees the expression "African Christianities" because of the varieties. Under this topic, scholars explain the nature of African Christianity, the historical, cultural, political and religious reasons for its emergence and especially interpret the meaning of African Christianity for measuring the value of African culture in terms of its religious tenacity.

In classifying the various manifestations of African Christianity in Ghana, scholars seem to have left out a phenomenon which predates nearly all movements that are studied under the concept of African Christianity. This phenomenon is the Ntona shrine (the St. Anthony's shrine) which can be found in Bantoma, a suburb of Elmina, in the Central Region of Ghana.

The Ntona shrine is a result of an interface between early Catholicism of the 16th and 17th centuries, and African Traditional Religion. The Ntona shrine houses the statue of St. Anthony of Padua, and this statue is believed to have been brought to Elmina by Pedro Mascarenez in 1632 (Wiltgen, 1956). The statue of St. Anthony gained prominence in Elmina when a mentally afflicted man claimed to have been made sane miraculously through the intervention of St. Anthony.

This went to the extent that even after the Portuguese had left the shores of Elmina, St Anthony was evoked by the indigenes of Elmina before going to wars. According to the chief custodian of the Ntona shrine, St Anthony led them to victory during most of their wars. The Ekuna Nsona family of Elmina currently is the custodian of the statue of St Anthony, or "Ntona" which is the name by which St Anthony is known to the people of Elmina. This word, "Ntona" is a corruption of the name "Anthony". The belief of the people in the powers of the statue

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culminates in its continuous worship, and the people of Elmina have adopted the statue into the pantheon of Elmina. Before a chief is installed, it is mandatory for the "would be" chief to pay homage to the statue and once every year the statue is brought out to purify the land. This particular ceremony or ritual is known as "Kotobunkese" (Wiltgen, 1956).   The people of Elmina strongly believe that the statue contains the soul of Elmina and this makes them cherish it so much and go all lengths to protect the statue. The people of Elmina still believe in the spiritual powers of the statue.

"We are Christians". This claim of the adherents of the Ntona shrine during my initial visit ignited my interest to find out which category of Christianity the adherents of the Ntona shrine belong to, and how their claim to Christianity raises critical questions about the models that have been used to classify African Christianity so far.

Statement of the Problem

The fusing or blending of aspects of Christianity and African Traditional Religion has been theorized by notable African Christian Scholars in Ghana, such as; Bediako, Sarpong, Dzobo and Martey. Prominent is the theory of "Inculturation". The term "Inculturation" refers to a theological reflection that describes the way in which Christianity interacts with other religions or a particular culture (Bansah 2013). But in contemporary Africa Church History, inculturation is giving way to the broader concept of African Christianity. The concept generally purports among other things, to account for and categorize the

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types of Christianity in Africa as expressions of resilience, continuity and dynamism of traditional African culture and religions. Yet, theories of inculturation and African Christianity seem to converge on the point that in the blending of Christianity and African culture and religions, Christianity superimposes on African Traditional Religion. However, in the case of Ntona shrine, the reverse is the case. African Traditional Religion rather superimposes on Christianity. The 'Ntona' phenomenon is little known and predates nearly all movements that are treated under the concept of African Christianity in Africa. Besides, by its nature, it is likely to be quickly assigned to syncretism and so deliberately or inadvertently disregarded in theorizing about African Christianities. Therefore, the problem for this study is how to interpret the models of classification of African Christianity in the face of the phenomenon of the Ntona shrine. The study proposes that a critical study of the Ntona shrine can help sharpen the theories of African Christianity, and so improve their general applicability.

Objectives of the Study

1. To explain the nature of the Ntona shrine and its historical circumstances.

2. To investigate the concepts of inculturation and African Christianities from the insider perspective of the Ntona shrine.

3. To propose a more inclusive model for theorizing about African Christianities.

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Research Questions

1. What is the nature of the Ntona shrine and which historical circumstances account for its development?

2. What is the concept of African Christianities?

3. How does the Ntona shrine relate to the concept of African Christianities?

4. How can the perspectives in African Christianities expand into a more inclusive model that account for phenomena such as the Ntona shrine?

Significance of the Study

The study is to interrogate existing classifications of African Christianity, given that the phenomenon of the Ntona shrine reveals certain inadequacies of existing classifications of African Christianity. The significance of the study lies in the discoveries it makes about the Ntona shrine when studied from the emic (insider's) perspective. The main contribution of the study however lies in the extent to which it raises critical questions for sharpening the focus of existing classification models in the study of African Christianities. In this regard, the study is significant for academic circles interested in advancing research in Africa Church history and African culture.

Methodology

This research employed the qualitative research approach. According to Creswell, this type of research is an enquiry process of understanding solidly based on distinct methodological traditions of enquiry that explores a social or human problem (Creswell, 2014).

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Two methods are employed in this study; the historical method and the phenomenological method.

The Historical Method: The historical method approach deals with people and events in the past. This type of research is done in such a way that the researcher may have a better understanding of events that happened in the past. The historical study approach focuses on people narratives either about themselves or about a set of events. The historical study approach also concentrates on sequential unfolding of events. Not only does the historical study approach seek to discover the events of the past but relate these past happenings to the present and the future (Creswell, 2014). The usefulness of this method to the study is principally to ascertain the historical background of the Ntona Shrine and the historical circumstances surrounding its development.

The Phenomenological Method: The phenomenological approach is a type of qualitative research in which the researcher attempts to understand how one or more individuals experience a phenomenon (Husserl, 1931 as cited in Cox 2006). The phenomenological method used in this study is based on Husserl's phenomenological principles of Epoche and Eidetic reflections. Epoche calls for the suspension of premature judgment and allows a phenomenon to speak for itself. The Eidetic reflection demands the researcher to name objects based on what the believers tell him or her (Chryssides and Geaves, 2014). The Eidetic vision further beckons on the researcher to empathize the phenomenon that the researcher observes; that is the observer has to 'enter into' or 'put himself in the shoes' of the believers.

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The danger in using this approach, especially the principles outlined by Husserl is that there may be inconsistencies in the information given to the researcher by the participants; that is the question of whether information given by the believers faithfully represents the phenomenon under study. Also, it is difficult to detach one's self from a phenomenon as (Chryssides and Geaves 2014) put it. Another critique of this approach by (Ekeke and Ekeopara, 2010 as cited by Awuah-Nyamekye,2013) is that 'the approach is purely descriptive but phenomenologists have been seen in many in literatures as crossing the boundary from description to evaluation…so when phenomenology claims to be purely descriptive methodology is totally unacceptable.' Awuah-Nyamekye (2013, p. 16) however, is of the view that rather defining phenomenological approach as descriptive, the method should be seen as a kind of descriptive-analysis technique used to study a phenomenon. This, according to Awuah-Nyamekye brings about a better understanding of the subject matter. The main purpose of the phenomenological method in this research is to gain personal experience and insight into the activities of Ntona Shrine in order to give a comprehensive analysis of data of that will be collected from the field on subject matter.

Sampling Procedure

The purposive sampling technique was used in this study. This technique involves the process whereby a sample is selected in a conscious and non-random manner for the purposes of achieving a specific goal. Put differently, the

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researcher preferentially enlists subjects whom she considers to have the best knowledge and experience in an area (Babbie, 1992, p.41).

Sample Population

The target population for the study is made up of the Abusuapayin of the Ekuna Nsona family of Elmina, who happens to be the chief custodian of the Ntona shrine, three members of the Ntona shrine and an informed member of the Catholic Church in Elmina. This selected group showed a deep sense of knowledge of the Ntona shrine. Other inhabitants of the town were also interviewed. In addition, there were other randomly selected participants from Elmina and a focus group discussion.

Data Collection Methods and Instruments

The main methods for data collection used in the study were interviews and observation. By interview, reference is made to the kind of interaction whereby the interviewer solicits answers from the interviewees without strict adherence to some written down questions. Thus, the interview guide used involved an extended and open-ended interaction between an interviewer and interviewees (Cohen, 2006). This instrument was appropriate for this study because of the flexibility it gave the researcher to engage the respondents in a conversation on the topic under study. Conversations were recorded with an audio recorder as well as field notes.

The type of observation used was the participant observation process mentioned here as part of the research instruments was informed by the type of

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methodology for the study which was phenomenological. In this method, the researcher employed Edmund Husserl's principles of epoché and eidetic visions. Whereas the principle of epoché kept the possible biases of the researcher in check, eidetic vision required the researcher to participate in their worship. With these as the working tools, the researcher became intimate with the phenomenon under study (Kumekpor, 2002).

Data Collection Procedure

Once the respondents gave the permission to be interviewed, the researcher introduced the purpose of the interview and established the time, the date, the venue and time of the interview with the subjects. Interviews were conducted on the agreed dates time and venue. All participants were interviewed by the researcher for between an hour and thirty minutes to two hours. All interviews were recorded with the permission of the interviewees. The recordings were transcribed into a written document. Care was taken by the researcher to assure respondents that they and their ideas will not be identifiable in any subsequent report. After the interviews, both the audio recordings and transcribed information were sent back to respondents so they could affirm that what was recorded adequately represented their own views or opinions with regards to the queries the researcher had, this was to take care of issues of reflexivity.

Data Analysis

Considering that this study relies entirely on qualitative data, the study used descriptive and analytic tools for analysing data based on inference. In this

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regard, the study described, explained and compared ideas where necessary. It must be noted that the analysis was based on themes crafted from the data collected from the field. To preserve the anonymity of interviewees, the researcher will attach pseudonyms to each quotation which will be used to support findings.

Literature Review

The aim of literature review is to place the study in the context of existing scholarship. I show the path of prior studies and how the current study is linked to such critical studies on issues that are pertinent to the research. It points out areas where preceding studies agree, where they disagree, and where major questions remain. The review is organised around the following themes, Catholic Christianity in Ghana, Syncretism and African Diaspora Religions

Catholic Christianity in Ghana

The coming of the Portuguese explorers to Gold Coast in 1471 and later in 1482 are known events in the history of Ghana. The Portuguese presence on the shores of the Gold Coast (Ghana) brought the introduction of Catholic Christianity.

Agbeti's (1986) work, *"West African Church History"* gives a history on how Christianity was introduced in West Africa. His work pays particular attention to both Eastern Europe and Americans missions in West Africa. Agbeti stated in his work that traditionally Christianity was introduced on 20th January, 1482, when Diego d' Azambuja and his team of 600 men landed on the shores of

Elmina. It is worth noting that the kind of Christianity introduced to West Africa by the Portuguese was Catholicism.

*"*Mission in Ghana: An Ecumenical Heritage*"*, a book written by Kpobi (2008) affirms the claim of Agbeti (1986) that Catholicism was the first form of Christianity introduced in West Africa. According to Kpobi (2008), although there was the Portuguese presence in 1471, the year 1482 marked the official introduction of Christianity in West Africa. This was done by the setting up of an altar and performing the Eucharistic rites which they believed would be the foundation of a great church.

Both Agbeti (1986) and Kpobi (2008) agrees with Debrunner (1967) in his book, "A History of Christianity in Ghana", that Catholicism, introduced by the Portuguese was the first form of Christianity in West Africa. For Debrunner, Catholic presence was felt in the Gold Coast since it was the place the Portuguese first settled and started propagating the gospel.

Amanor (n.d.) believes that the fruits of Roman Catholicism which is seen in Ghana today is as a result of the seeds sowed by the second Roman Catholic Church's attempt at evangelization by two products of the Society of Africa Missions (SMA), Father Eugene Murat and Augustus Moreau who arrived in Elmina in 1880 (Wiltgen, 1956). An earlier first attempt in the 15th century by chaplains who accompanied the Portuguese explorers had very little to show in terms of natives evangelized for about four centuries. According to Wiltgen, The only signs of Roman Catholicism that survived the Portuguese era were a small group of Efutus (tribe along the coast) and their chief, probably converted by

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Augustinian Fathers in 1572, and an unrecognizable stump of a statue of St. Anthony of Padua in Elmina. It is this stump of statue of St. Anthony of Padua that Amanor (n.d.) talks about that this study mainly hinges on.

Syncretism

According to Van Rheenen (1997), syncretism is the blending of Christian beliefs and practices with those of the dominant culture so that Christianity drops its distinct nature and speaks with a voice reflective of its culture. Talking from the social sciences and missiological background, Mullins (2001, p. 809-810) defines syncretism as a combination of elements from two or more religious traditions, ideologies, or value systems. In the social sciences, this is a neutral and objective term that is used to describe the mixing of religions as a result of culture contact. In theological and missiological circles, however, it is generally used as a pejorative term to designate movements that are regarded as heretical or sub-Christian. For Schreiter (1996), the etymological meaning of the word, syncretism suggests the mixing of elements of two religious systems to the point where at least one, if not both, of the systems loses basic structure and identity. Syncretism is also used in a broader sense to describe the process of borrowing elements by one religion from another in such a way as not to change the basic character of the receiving religion. It is questionable, however, whether such a broad definition is helpful, since it makes every religion syncretistic to some extent (Hughes 1988, p. 670).

In giving a brief history of the term syncretism, Sanou (2013, p. 132-133) quotes Droogers and Greenfield as follows:

Syncretism was first used by Plutarch to describe the temporary coming together of the quarrelling inhabitants of Crete in the face of a common enemy. . . . The Greek word from which the English "syncretism" is derived refers to people joining together, in this case in battle. Erasmus later employed it metaphorically to refer to an agreement between people with seemingly disparate opinions. The new reference centred on ideas and beliefs. Seventeenth-century theologians then gave it a negative connotation by using it for what to them was the undesirable reconciliation of Christian theological differences. Syncretism for them became a threat to "true" religion. To this negative judgment a more neutral view was added in the second half of the nineteen century when students of the history of religions began to use the word to acknowledge the mixing of religious elements from diverse sources, including Christianity that had occurred and continue to take place.

In dealing with issue of syncretism, Schreiter (1996) give three kinds of the phenomenon. In the first instance Schreiter is of the view that this kind of syncretism is between Christianity and West African Religions of the former slaves. According to him, Christian deities and saints are amalgamated into the Yoruba or Ibo pantheons and communicated along the lines of African ritual. This amalgamation which to Schreiter is a kind of syncretism lead to the formation of systems that claim thousands of adherents. Prominent of this kind of syncretism are Haitian Voodoo, Candomble, Santeria, Macumba and Batuque. The second type of syncretism Schreiter talks about blends Christian and non- Christian elements, but uses the framework of Christianity for its organisations. Schreiter is

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of the view that Independent Churches in Africa and groups such as the Rastafarians in Jamaica lend themselves to this type of syncretism. The third kind of syncretism given by Schreiter is the kind where the religious system is highly selective in its appropriation of Christian elements. With this, he gives an example of some New Religions in Japan that have a great veneration for Jesus.

A careful look at these three types of syncretism given by Schreiter suggests that in the first instance when Christianity and another religion comes together, a new reality or system is formed. This system however has the other religion providing the basic framework. In the second instance, it is Christianity that provides the framework for the amalgamation. And finally in the third instance, elements of Christianity are selected and incorporated into another system. In relating these types of syncretism to the Ntona shrine, one is likely to place the phenomenon of Ntona shrine under the first type of syncretism given by Schreiter.

African Diaspora Religions

Native peoples who have had long contact with Catholicism have the tendency to achieve a syncretism between their aboriginal religious beliefs and the doctrines and rituals of the Church, has received notice in the case of various folk. Best known in this connection are the Indians of Central America, Mexico, and the south-western part of the United States, where the phenomenon has been emphasized in literature. The somewhat more thoroughgoing assimilation of Christian and pagan beliefs which has taken place among New World Negroes

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has, however, gone in large measure unrecognized (Herskovits, 1937). In Mexico and among some Indian tribes, adaptation has generally taken the form of the survival of aboriginal custom in a system of belief and ritual practices the outer forms of which are predominantly Catholic. In the case of the New World Negroes who live under Catholic influence in Brazil, Cuba and Haiti, however, the exchange has been less one-sided, and the elements ancestral to the present-day organization of worship have been reserved in immediately recognizable form (Herskovits, 1937). This phenomenon has been studied with care in Cuba and Brazil and somewhat less systematically in Haiti (Parsons, 1928). In all three countries it is marked by a number of characteristics. First, the Negroes profess nominal Catholicism while at the same time they belong to "fetish cults" which are under the direction of priests whose functions are essentially African and whose training follows more or less well recognized channels of instruction and initiation. Secondly, the ceremonialism and ideology of these "fetish cults" exhibit Catholic elements more or less prominently. Finally, everywhere specific identifications are made between African gods and Catholic Saints (Herskovits, 1937).

The historical background of the phenomenon is obvious, since efforts were made everywhere in the New World to convert the slaves to Christianity, and in Haiti, at least, baptism into the Catholic Church was required for all those who were unloaded from the holds of the slave ships (Parsons, 1928). In Cuba and Brazil, as in Haiti, the course of history has enabled Catholicism to continue to play a major role in the life of the people as their official religion . It is this fact,

together with the present day vestiges of the fear, constantly present in the minds of the Europeans during the time of slavery, that the African cults offered a focus for revolt, that explains the inferior social position held by these "fetish cults" wherever they are found. It is here also that explanation may be sought for the conditions under which African rituals are carried on, since at best they obtain but passive acquiescence on the part of the authorities and, more often, must be conducted under the greatest secrecy (Herskovits, 1937).

In the case of these African religious systems, handicapped by social scorn and official disapprobation, the followers are almost inevitably split into local groups, each of which is dominated by the personality of the priest/priestess whose individual powers furnish the principal drive toward any outer organization the cult-group under his/her charge may achieve. This in turn makes it difficult to maintain anything more than a local hierarchy of priests, and is reflected in a resulting confusion of theological concept. Hence in all these countries a general frame of reference concerning the supernatural has been handed down from Africa, and within this a variety of beliefs and modes of worship exist (Herskovits, 1937).

In the Haitian vodun cult, this takes the form of differences of opinion not alone from region to region, but within a given region even between members of the same group concerning such details of cult belief and practice as the names of deities, modes of ritual procedure, or the genealogies of the gods, to say nothing of concepts regarding the powers and attributes of the African spirits in their relation to one another and to the total pantheon. As a case in point, there may be

cited the three separate lists of names of deities which were collected in Haiti from a single valley in the interior, the valley of Mirebalais. When these three lists were compared with each other and with the published roster of names of vodun deities given by Dorsainvil, it was seen that while certain designations were found in all lists, there were extreme divergences as well. Some names were present in all of them, it is true, and these represented the more important deities worshipped over the whole of Haiti, being gods derived from Dahomey and, to a lesser extent, from Nigeria and those other cultures of West Africa which have predominated in determining the form and functions of Haitian vodun worship. But the differences between these lists were much greater than the resemblances; and since this had to do only with names of gods, it is not strange that in identifying deities with Catholic saints, an even greater divergence of opinion was found (Herskovits, 1937).

More specifically, Legba, the god who in Dahomey guards crossroads and entrances to temples, compounds, and villages, is widely worshipped in Haiti where, as in Dahomey, he must "open the path" for all other supernatural powers and hence is given the first offering in any Haitian vodun ceremony. Legba is believed by most persons to be the same as St. Anthony, for the reason that St. Anthony is represented on the images as an old man, poorly dressed, carrying a wand which supports him as he walks. Some hold that Legba is St. Peter, on the basis of the eminently logical reason that St. Peter, like Legba, is the keeper of keys and opens the door. (Herskovits, 1937).

Damballa, the Dahomean rainbow-serpent deity, is one of the most widely worshipped and important Haitian vodun gods. The question of the active existence of the serpent cult in Haiti is one which cannot be considered in this place, but to the extent that it does exist either in actuality or in the sacredness with which serpents are regarded, their worship is undoubtedly associated with this god Damballa, who also retains his aboriginal character of being the rainbow. The saint identified with Dam- balla is St. Patrick, on whose image serpents are depicted. Following this logic further, Moses is held to be the "father of Damballa" because of the miracle he performed before Pharoah when he threw down his staff on the ground and turned it into a serpent (Herskovits, 1937).

The Ogun loa include several gods who are generally regarded as brothers. Ogun Ferraille is held to be St. James, while Ogun Balandjo, a deity who gives "remedies" to cure the sick, is identified with St. Joseph because the picture of this saint shows him holding a child, his hand raised in the blessing which heals. The Dahomean sea god, who has retained his aboriginal function in Haiti, is equated with St. Expeditius. The marassa, spirits of twins, are believed to be the twin saints Cosmas and Damien, and St. Nicholas, because of the figures of children on his repre- sentations, is regarded as the "protector of the marassa." Simbi, who unlike the deities of predominantly Dahomean origin already mentioned is a Kongo god, is believed by some to be St. Andrew. One special member of the Simbi group, Simbien DeuxEaux, is believed to be the equivalent of St. Anthony the Hermit. Similarly two of the kings who figure in the image that depicts the Adoration of the Christ Child, Balthazar and Gaspar, are also held to

be wodua deities. La Sirbe, a character derived from European mythology, is believed to be a water goddess and is identified with Notre Dame de Grace, while the loa Kpanyol, or Spanish Zoa, is equated with Notre Dame d'Alta Gracia. St. John the Baptist is a powerful nature spirit worshipped as the loa St. Jean Baptiste, and is believed to control the thunder and lightning. The chromolithograph depicts this saint as a sweet-faced child holding a lamb, in striking contrast to the great power he is supposed to wield, and the irresponsibility that characterises his actions (Herskovits, 1937).

From the discussions, it can be seen that the possibility of African gods identified with Catholic saints may have resulted from contacts between slaves subsequent to their arrival in the New World, and thus represented a diffusion from one country to another. As it is, there can be little question that these syncretizations have developed independently in each region where they are found. A similar phenomenon is found in Elmina, as a Catholic saint has evolved into an African Traditional Deity. Unlike the diaspora religions, this phenomenon did not need to hide under any cover to operate. Details of it will be discussed in the chapters that follow.

Ethical Consideration

In conducting the study, the consent of respondents was sought prior to interviews and group discussion. That is to say, that the researcher introduced herself and explained to the respondents the rationale and motivation of the study.

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These were done prior to interviews and discussions. Participants were assured of confidentiality of their identity and any information provided.

Organisation to the Study

The study is organised into five chapters. Chapter one is the introduction to the work which includes the background to the study, statement of problem, the purpose of the study, objectives of the study, research questions, significance of the study, methodology, literature review and ethical consideration. Chapter two focuses on African Christianity and its classifications. Chapter three deals with a history of St. Anthony of Padua, the Antonian movement in Kongo and the Ntona shrine in Elmina. Chapter four concerned itself with the presentation of research data, discussion and analysis of results.

Finally, chapter five presents the summary of the work, the finding of the study, the conclusions drawn from the study, and the necessary recommendations made out of the study.

CHAPTER TWO

THE CONCEPT OF AFRICAN CHRISTIANTY

Introduction

This chapter deals with the concept of African Christianity. The chapter begins by looking at what inculturation is, and then move on to treat the concept of African Christianity and also have a discussion on the classification for the various manifestations of African Christianity. This chapter is necessary to the study because the adherents of the Ntona shrine claim to be Christians. For them, whatever they have is nothing but a way of trying to express the Christian faith.

The Search for a Main Line Theology for the Old Welcome to Christianity in Africa

In church history, theology has been experienced as a reflection on past religious experiences and their implication for understanding current understanding of the practice of faith. Thus by the beginning of the 20th century, theologies of the African nature to Christianity will develop. But such theologies were linked to main line churches (mission Christianity) for different reasons. For example such churches were coming under pressure to define their identity and uniqueness in the light of the rapid growth of the African Indigenous Churches (AICs). Another reason was the need for mission churches to account theologically for their own need and initiative of 'Africanising' mission Christianity in their faith. This led to the beginning of concepts such as Africanization, Contextualisation, Black theology, Indigenisation and

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Inculturation among others. These theologies in as far as they remained within mission churches developed in parallel lines with Pentecostal and charismatic theologies. The subsection that follows takes up a brief discussion of the mission churches concept of an African welcome for Christianity in the form of inculturation theology. This discussion helps to obtain a fuller view of the generality of African Christianity.

The discourse on culture interactions has been an on-going exercise for quite some time now. Scholars, especially, in anthropological sciences have studied phenomena where cultures interact and influence one another. Terms or words like acculturation and enculturation have been used for these phenomena. Acculturation according to Crollius (1978) denotes the contact between cultures and the ensuing changes. As Shorter (1995) would put it, "this is perhaps the principal cause of cultural change". Another term or word is enculturation, and enculturation according to Shorter (1995) refers to the cultural learning process of the individual, the process by which a person is inserted into his or her culture.

These terms and what they mean found their way into theological discourse, however they could not be used to satisfy the explanation given to the interaction between the Christian message and a given culture. Words such as adaptation and accommodation, and contextualization and indigenization were used instead. These also, however were rejected because the terms were felt as expressive more of an extrinsic contact between the Christian message and a given culture. (Crollius, 1978, p. 723).

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What is Inculturation?

In the words of Arrupe, inculturation is the incarnation of the Christian life and Christian message in a particular cultural context, in such a way that this experience not only find expression through elements proper to the culture in question but becomes a principle that animates, directs and unify the culture, transforming and remaking it so as to bring about a new creation. (Schineller, 1990)

In commenting on Arrupe's definition of Inculturation, Appiah (2000), says that the definition tries to capture generally and essentially what inculturation is about. This is because to Appiah, Arrupe's definition implies that the Christian life is appropriated into a given culture and this appropriation of the Christian life gives the culture concerned a specific orientation and effects in the long run a renewal and transformation of the culture. Appiah thus gives a definition of inculturation as the process involved in bringing about the actualization of a religion by a group of people. So, to him, inculturation can be said to be 'a basic Christian religious experience'.

Schineller (1990), also suggests that the definition given by Arrupe as to what inculturation is, takes one back into time, to the incarnation of Jesus Christ, when 'the word became flesh'. This is to be expounded later in the paragraph where the bases or foundations of inculturation will be discussed.

Shorter (1995) defines inculturation as the on-going dialogue between faith and culture or cultures. According to him, it is also the creative and dynamic relationship between the Christian message and a culture or cultures. Crollius,

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(1978), also define inculturation as the process by which the church becomes inserted into a given culture.

The necessity of inculturation can be seen for two reasons. These reasons, Schineller gives as mission and cultural diversity respectively. This is what he says concerning mission; "I think it is because today more than ever we are in an age of mission, with tremendous challenge to and activity on the part of the church". (Schineller, 1990, p.6). The second reason he gives is due to the fact that we live in the period of global awareness of which cultural diversity is not excluded. He states that this kind of diversity is seen both within one nation and also seen when comparing one nation to the other. He goes further to explain how people from different backgrounds are likely to receive the Christian message.

History of Inculturation

The term *inculturation* is said to have developed due the concerns of Churches in 'mission countries', especially, Africa. The main focus of getting the term was to translate Western Theology in African cultural concepts. In finding a suitable term for it, words like *indigenization, contextualization, localization, adaptation and Africanization* came into the seen.

The term *adaptation* was widely recognized by the Catholics and the term *indigenization* was mostly emphasized among Protestant thinkers. In the mid-1970s however, the African theologians were not satisfied with the adaptation model. To them, this model was a western missionary invention and it did not allow theology in Africa go beyond a certain level such as liturgical hymns and dress.

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Later in 1974 at the Synod of Bishops in Rome, the bishops of Africa and Madagascar rejected adaptation and adopted the *theology of incarnation*. There came the need to get a new term since adaptation, which was introduced by the Catholics was rejected by the African bishops and theologians. The terms indigenization and theology of incarnation was also not welcomed by the Catholics. This new term should be able to adequately express the shift in theological awareness, self-understanding and Christian religious experience of Africans. These characteristics found satisfaction in the term *inculturation* which gained popularity by the end of the 1970s.

Inadequate Terms

Adaptation

The term *adaptation* refers to a creative method of pastoral activity by which there is an attempt to adapt the message shared and the liturgy celebrated in the customs among the people the missionaries worked (Schineller, 1990). According to Schineller, the missionaries were trying to find ways to present their message so that it was more appealing to the customs and practices of the native people. The term however did not stand the test of time because it was seen as having western thought superiority as well as not truly taking the local culture seriously. (Schineller, 1990)

Contextualisation

The term *contextualisation* literally means a "weaving together", thus an interweaving of the gospel with every particular situation (Schineller, 1990, p.

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19). According to Schineller, the problem with the term is that it focuses on the context of the interaction rather than the culture. What contextualisation fails to achieve is that instead of speaking of a particular culture, it speaks of contexts or situations into which the gospel must be inserted. (Schineller, 1990)

Indigenisation

To be indigenous, according to Schineller (1990), means to be a native, one who is born into a particular context or culture. For Schineller, indigenisation of theology means that the local community, with its own indigenous leadership, has the primary responsibility and task of developing the teaching, the liturgy and practices of that local church. With indigenisation, majority of work is done by the local church as it develops its own identity based on its own cultural heritage and situation (Schineller, 1990). In doing this however, the local church does not cut ties with the universal church. The danger that lies in indigenisation in the view of Schineller is that the term is static, in that it focuses on the culture of contact, not recognising that the group that brought the message transported it through their culture. The term also fails because it do not recognise the dynamism of culture.

Instances of Inculturation

According to Appiah (2000), with the incarnation of Jesus, inculturation could be said to be first and foremost the initiative of God. Thus, God came into the world in human form (Jesus), and into a particular culture (Jewish). As the birth of Jesus was not a dramatic one, it is in a similar way that "inculturation

based on the paradigm of incarnation can only be founded on the same principle of non- militancy- less drama, more reality" (Appiah, 2000, p.17)

From the perspective of incarnation," inculturation thus becomes a process that plies the pattern of the 'Word made-flesh', which would involve the gospel taking life and flesh in the beliefs of people who welcome Christ and the values of the gospel. Just as Christ became man so as to win salvation for all, the gospel must become 'culture' so as to win the heart of 'local people'."(Anthony, 2012, p. 237) He goes on to say that at the end of the day, inculturation is a deliberate attempt to help the African people be converted down to the very roots of their culture. "As its prospect, it strives at attaining a confluence between the conversion of mind and the conversion of the way of life, so that African Christians would be able to live their faith in all its depth and be to give it expression in their own way" (p. 237). What in my view this means is that there should be a meeting point for the Christian faith and the African culture. The question, however, is that is it always the case that the Christian faith and the African culture have a meeting point where the two reciprocally influence one another? In talking about what inculturation should be, Schineller (1990), has this to say:

> As a general rule, we are asserting that inculturation
> should occur naturally and spontaneously, wherever the
> gospel is lived and shared. It should not be something
> added on, something optional, something for the classroom
> or laboratory, but rather the ever-present attitude in all
> Christian life and mission. In the final analysis, therefore,

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inculturation refers to the correct way of living and sharing
one's Christian faith in a particular context or culture.

Another example of an instance of inculturation is the speech of Paul in Athens at the Areopagus (Schineller, 1990). According to Schineller, Paul relates his perception of the good news of Jesus Christ to the Greek philosophies and religion of his day. This is seen in Acts 17, when Paul encountered certain Epicureans and Stoic philosophers. In the view of Schineller, Paul's missionary activities to the gentiles was a test case for inculturation for the early Christian community, which is a case of great significance for the process of inculturation today.

African Christianity

African Christianity is the amalgamation of Christianity and African Traditional Religion (Mokhoathi, 2017). It is a form of Christianity that draws from both the Christian faith and African Traditional Religion for some ethico-spiritual principles. According to Mokhoathi, it is evidenced by the reverting of Christians back to African traditional practices and the consultation of traditional healers.

Although Christianity is perceived to have declined elsewhere in the world, it remains a strong religion in Africa, and the church in its various forms is rooted in African society (Oladipo, 2016). Before the Christian faith got so much rooted in the African society, it was first of all introduced to Africa by European missionaries in the 15th century. In 1471, Portuguese seafarers are said to have made appearance somewhere on the coasts of West Africa, specifically, Gold

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Coast, at Shamah. Subsequently in 1482, there was another appearance, and this time it was in Elmina. January 20th of this very year saw what is said to be the very first mass ever, to have been celebrated in Gold Coast. This event, some scholars claim marked the beginning of catholic Christianity in West Africa. The attempt to plant Christianity and for that matter Catholicism in this part of the continent did not yield much success (Onyinah, 2007).

Despite the failure to plant Christianity in Africa in the earlier centuries, it steadily gained strong roots in the 19th century through some missionary activities of organizations such as the Basel mission, the Wesleyan mission and the Bremen mission. It must however, be acknowledge that missionary Christianity contributed extensively to the improvement of the African society. The major inputs included "the establishment of schools, the introduction of Western medical systems, and social advancement of African society, such as the abolition of capital punishment and slavery. In addition, the missionaries were responsible for promoting translation, including the creation of vernacular alphabets and production of grammars and dictionaries" for African languages (Onyinah 2007:306). For example the Rev. Johann Zimmermann produced a Ga grammar, a dictionary of 1158 pages and translated into Ga the four gospels and by 1866, the entire Bible was written in Ga. In 1853, Rev. Johann Gottlieb Christaller did same for the Twi language (Wiltgen, 1956).

By the time the Christian mission resurfaced in Africa, it came in tandem with cultural domination, slavery and eventually colonialism. During this time, a convert of the Christian faith was cut off from his people and his or her way of

life as an African. Thus, for instance, the way the person dresses, and his or her mannerisms is largely influenced by European culture. This type of Christian mission and all it demanded from its converts is vividly portrayed in Kwaw Ansah's film, Heritage Africa. The results of this type of Christianity was also characterised by the Salem system.

As if by design, the history and development of the church in Africa will continue to be experienced and expressed through the cultural and political prism of the missionaries. By the time Africans were ready to fight for independence, it was clear that religion could not be left out of the struggle. The socio-political circumstances enforced a binary experience: For the colonial missionary, true Christianity was keeping to the characteristics of western Christianity. For Africans in view of their desire for cultural and political emancipation and resurgence, true Christianity needed to be at the service of African liberation from European political oppression and an expression of cultural authenticity. It is out of this struggle for social and political liberation that we have the kind of Christianity in Africa now.

In the view of Oladipo (2016), whereas missionaries have always been interested in Christianizing Africans, converts in Africa have equally wanted to Africanize Christianity. Thus, once it had been Africanized and crafted in indigenous idioms, Christianity grew in significance across sub-Saharan Africa. The biblical stories of Christianity became African stories, so too its myths, histories, songs, rituals, and symbols. The process by which Christianity has

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become one of Africa's traditional religions and is now rooted in indigenous African idioms and cultures is long and multidirectional. (Oladipo, 2016)

The expressions of the experiences of Christians in Africa on how they have come to understand the Christian God, and the Christian faith within their own context, is their culture and everything that comes with it. So instead of expressing Christianity the 'western' way, it is expressed in the form of African spirituality. Thus in talking about African Christianity, there has been a shift from what Dirk (2016) would term *Christianizing Africa* to *Africanizing Christianity.*

So, by the mid-20th century, what would come to be known as African Independent Churches (AICs), had already began. Among the very first and most famous of these movements are Kimbanguism and Ethiopianism. Concerning AICs, this is what Akinade (n.d) has to say:

> *"African Independent Churches are widespread in Africa. In South Africa, there are more than four thousand Independent Churches among the Bantu group alone. In Zaire, about four hundred churches of the African Independent Church type could be found with the largest of them all being the Simon Kimbanguist Church movement. In East Africa, there are the society of the One Almighty God, and the chosen Evangelical Revival, both in Uganda. Similar churches are found in Mozambique, Rwanda and Kenya. In West Africa, the Harrist movement after Prophet William Wade Harris began early in the 20th century, first in Ivory Coast and then in Ghana. Later the Church of the*

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> *Twelve Apostles was founded by John Nackabar, a follower of Prophet Harris."*

Kimbanguism as a movement was founded by Simon Kimbangu who is seen to be a prominent figure in the formation of African Independent Churches in Kongo. Kimbangu was a former lay evangelist for the Baptist church. He was very successful in his preaching and healing ministry. Kimbangu's church is one of the largest AICs in Africa. He did not concentrate on healing alone, but also, preaching the Word of God. Among some of the things preached, he preached against the belief in 'fetishes'. He also preached to people to have faith in one true God, and that He (God) alone is to be trusted and worshipped. Kimbangu did not tolerate polygamy. He also condemned all acts of immoral and non-Christian dances which led to debauchery and lewdness (Martey, 2006).

Kimbangu was arrested on the allegation of bringing threat to the Belgian government and the Roman Catholic Church. He was condemned to one hundred and twenty lashes and was also condemned to death by a court with no counsel to represent him legally and his trial had no witnesses (Martey, 2006). In 1935, the governor of Katanga and the prison authorities made an attempt to release him. But the Roman Catholic archbishop advised the government not to do so. In 1951, Kimbangu died in prison and the government persecuted his followers. Later in the year 1959, the movement came to be known as Jesus Christ on Earth through the Prophet Simon Kimbangu:

> *Ethiopianism according to Kruss (1985, p.81), "is a religio-cultural response of an emerging class of educated Christian professionals, craftsmen and wealthy peasant*

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farmers, arising out of the contradiction between their position in the pre-capitalist modes of production and their position in the mercantile capitalist social formation within which blacks were being incorporated to varying degrees following violent conquest. The call for the Africans embodied a struggle against being incorporated into capitalist social relations on an unequal basis. Ethiopians, in the face of their inequality even after- they had appropriated Western religious and cultural forms - Christianity and civilization - were protesting their exclusion on all levels, and asserting that Africans could be equal to Europeans. The African leadership reacted to the erosion of African political power, its economic well-being and its social stability by establishing independent bodies exclusively for Africans".

In the view of Kalu (2005), Ethiopianism was a movement with many strands and was rooted in the Bible, specifically in the passage in psalm 68:31 which prophesied "Princes shall come out of Egypt; Ethiopia shall soon stretch out her hands unto God." This movement Kalu says, called for freeing Africans from the religious and political tutelage of Europeans. The core concerns included a quest for a place of their own, for identity, self-respect, and an opportunity to nurse Africa back to its old glory. The Ethiopian churches, Oladipo (2016), says are often nationalist or tribal in character and were formed by evangelists, preachers, teachers, and lay members of mainstream churches, and they tend to maintain the doctrine of their mother churches in an unreformed state.

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In South Africa, Africans were not happy with the way the whites who were mostly Christians treated them because of the policy of the apartheid system. This happening resulted in a protest that led to the formation of AICs. Some of the churches founded which were Ethiopian in nature were, the 'Ethiopian Church' founded by Mangane Mokone in 1892 and the 'Tembu National Church' founded by Nehemiah Tile in 1884 (Jumbe, n.d).

Zionist churches which also sprang up in South Africa saw 'The Nazareth Church' of Isaiah Shembe as one of its kind. Zionist churches according to Clarke (1998), who cites Sundkler (1961) are independent churches that are evangelistic, charismatic, and practice healing.

Isaiah Shembe regarded himself as the servant of the Lord who had come to wipe away the tears of the people. He claimed to be the Moses of his time and also called himself 'the king of the Nazarenes', as Jesus was called the king of the Jews. After sometime, his followers began to see him as the black Christ and after his death, Shembe was buried in a big mausoleum and was worshipped as a saint. (Clarke, 1998)

In West Africa, these movements, that is AICs were represented by Prophet Wade Harris, John Swatson, and Samson Oppong. Harris was a Kru man born into the Grebo tribe of Liberia. He was educated in a school of the American Episcopal Church and later became a catechist in that church (Debrunner, 1967). Later in his life, he landed himself a prison sentence when he protested against the repressive policies by the Afro- Americans in his country. Things changed for Harris while serving his prison term. He is said to have had a vision in which God

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instructed him to preach his Word. After he was released from prison, he set out to do what he had been instructed. He tried to preach in his home country, Liberia, where he had little success. He then proceeded to Ivory Coast and then to the Gold Coast. In these areas, he is said to have made great impact. He preached a monotheistic religion that abhorred the use of charms and amulets. He encouraged the people to believe in Jesus and also encouraged them to destroy all forms of idolatry. Harris did not establish any church. However, through his evangelistic ministry, he helped expand and spread the missionary churches. Harris walked about wearing a white robe and carried a rattle gourd. He also carried a wooden cross and a bowl for baptism. And also had a Bible.

According to Amanor (n.d), Harris seemed to have succeeded in areas where the missionary Churches had difficulty because he did not only preach about a God far away but brought him near to his audience through the signs and wonders he performed in the Name of God. He was able to tap into the thought patterns, perception of reality, and the concepts of identity and community, which prevail within the Primal worldview of African Societies. Amanor gives an example that in areas where the people believed in the potency of a herbal preparation after the blessing of the fetish, Harris introduced them to the "Higher God" and blessed the preparation in the Name of God before administration. He allowed his converts to sing traditional songs in praise of God's Name. By so doing, he made Christianity more attractive to the indigenous people than what was presented by the historic Churches. People could now become true Christians while maintaining their African cultural and traditional identity.

Opoku (1990), makes us understand that Harris made many converts to Christianity; over 100,000 in la Cote d'Ivoire alone until he was expelled from the country for fear of his mass appeal becoming a threat to the French Colonial Administration. Many of these converts joined the existing missionary Churches. In Apollonia and surrounding villages alone, Harris is believed to have made over 8,000 converts many of whom had burnt their fetishes in response to the message preached by the prophet.

Two of his followers, Grace Tani and John Nackabah did not join any of the missionary churches but established their own church which resulted into the Twelve Apostles Church, popularly known as Nackabah.

According to Dirk (2016), it is evident that African Christianity has grown extensively to become the principal religion in most countries south of the Sahara. Pentecostalism dominated African Christianity and a need for an own African Christian theology (identity) started to emerge.

What precipitated the founding of these independent churches according to Clarke (1998), is the racial segregation experienced by the blacks of South Africa with the support of white Christians. Thus, the Zionist and Ethiopian type of African churches have both spiritual and political aspects of liberation from the oppressive presence of their foreign masters (Clarke, 1998).

Writing in the Ghanaian context, Clarke (2006) is of the view that the inability of western missions to appropriate Christ particularly and Christianity generally into a Ghanaian context in a way that was meaningful and affirmative of Ghanaians, constituted a major reason why western Christianity was resisted.

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Barrett (1969), believes that the reaction to European missions was the common cause for the emergence of AICs across the continent. He adds that western missions had exhibited a 'failure in love' in their attitude toward African people. Not only did their insensitivity to Ghanaian cause this apparent reaction to their message, but it was also the inadequacy of the message and its efficacy for an African cosmological outlook. An example of this was the church's attitude towards witchcraft and evil spirits, which was usually dismissive as opposed to recognising that, for the African, they constituted a real and immanent threat against which one needed to be protected (Machida, as cited by Clarke).

Also, the quest for self-expression and freedom from western tutelage can be seen as cause for the formation of AICs in African. The cruel reaction to missionary Christianity and their racial attitudes towards Africans in part precipitated a number of secessions from western mission churches in Ghana. These churches, to varying degrees, were characterised by a desire for African self-expression and freedom from missionary control (Clarke, 2006).

Classification of African Christianities

The expressions of Christianity by the African, has brought about different manifestations of African Christianities; Christianities because of the various forms in which African Christianity is being manifested. These various forms of manifestations have been classified by scholars, and Paul Kollman in his article, Classifying African Christianities; Past, Present and the Future, dealt with these classifications dwelling solely on Sundkler and Kalu's classifications.

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African Christianity in the past has been classified into four groups. The first is African Christianity as orthodox or heretical. According to Kollman (2010), Christians in Africa were evaluated very early according to their perceived consistency with beliefs and practices of other Christians. On the other hand, African Christianity was accused of being heretical. An example of this group seen as heretical is Dona Beatriz Vita Kimpa and the Antonian Movement.

The second classification saw African Christianity as loyal or separatist. The group or category includes movements that arose among a variety of Protestant bodies in which Africans wrestled control of their churches for themselves. (Kollman, 2010 p.7). It is out of this group that the acronym, AIC which has various formulations; some of which are African Independent Church, African Instituted Church, and African Initiated Church was formed. It must be noted that in classifying this group, Sundkler (1961) used the term 'Ethiopian' to avoid repeating the South African government's label Native Separatist Churches.

The third classification of African Christianity was identified as being Culturally Distinctive. This third register of classification according to Kollman, identifies another type of AIC that he called Zionist which deviated from the missionary churches the Ethiopian supposedly emulated Sundkler's use of the term 'Zionist points toward a third register of the classification, cultural distinctiveness.

> *"Thus, if both Ethiopians and Zionist were independent*
> *from the missionary control in the political sense both were*
> *AIC, if the 'I' stands for 'independent' – the latter also*
> *drew significantly on African cultural resources in their*

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way of being Christian. Here, the 'I' in AIC could stand for initiated, instituted and especially indigenous, as well as independent. Due to its origins this criterion was not applied to non-AIC's, the assumption being that they were less African than AICs" (Kollman, 2010, p.8.)

The fourth classification was based on political lines. Thus, African Christianity was classified as politically engaged or not. According to Kollman (2010, p.8), this criterion links politically active African Christian movements with other political actors, religious and non-religious, underscoring the role of Christianity in anticolonial resistance and mobilization toward independence and more recent political activism. This category was born out of research on new religious movements.

These classifications of African Christianities have been done from etic perspective; that is instead of describing phenomena based on what the various practitioners or insiders have to say, scholars describe the phenomena based on what they see. This brings a lot of distortions in describing the phenomena in question. In avoiding these mishaps, Kollman has this to say;

"Indeed, a persistent challenge in classifying Christianity in Africa lies in balancing the analytic perspective of the outside investigator-or the etic perspective- with an appropriate attention to insiders' self- perception, or the emic perspective" (Kollman, 2010, p.9).

Sundkler's Classification

Sundkler used the terms 'Ethiopian Churches and Zionist to classify' African Christianity. Before sundkler used these terms, the breakaway or shift of

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African Christians from the Protestant missionaries to be independent brought about derogatory words such as 'separatist', schismatic' and 'native'. In trying to avoid using these derogatory words, Sundkler opted for 'Ethiopian churches' and later 'Zionist'. According to Kollman, Sundkler's decision to avoid repeating the South African government's label 'Native Separatist Churches', laid the basis for the normative term 'AIC' (Kollman, 2010).

Sundkler later identified another type of AIC that he called 'Zionist'. He used the term Zionist because this group was classified based on cultural distinctiveness. This classification also came out of the fact the African Christians sought to break away from Protestant missionaries. It drew significantly on African cultural resources in their ways of being Christian.

One important influence of Sundkler's classification has been the acknowledgement of the emic perspectives of believers. This means that Sundkler's label came from designations African Christians gave themselves.

"He deployed 'Ethiopian' following those who used the term to refer to themselves, often relying on Psalm 68:3 ('Ethiopia will stretch out her hands to God') to express a desire for self-rule due to perceptions that Ethiopia enjoyed both an ancient Christian culture and freedom from European rule. 'Zionist', too, arose from self-descriptions of southern African Christians. As Adrian Hastings wrote appreciatively in 2000, Sundkler's Bantu Prophets 'was the great initiator, not so much in terms of a specific typology, but as the first large, well-researched and thoroughly stimulating work almost wholly focused on the ideas, hopes and achievements of African Christians' (2000, p. 44). Ever since, serious

classifications of African religious phenomena have taken into account the perspectives of adherents." (Kollman, 2010, p.9)

Kalu's Classification

According to Kollman (2010), as in the earlier classifications, Kalu do not accept considering African Christian revivals of the past or more recent Pentecostal Charismatic as schismatic separation. Kalu is of the view that the most important thing is that African Christianity should always be seen as building on pre-existing African cultural realities, so that there are organic connections between today's Pentecostal Charismatics, older AICs and the earliest days of Christianity in sub-Saharan Africa rooted in a primal world-view (Kalu,2007). Thus Kalu stresses for a continuity between Pentecostal Charismatics and earlier forms of African Christianities.

Kalu is not the only scholar who advocates for this continuity. Hock (2005), also traces charismatic revivalism to traditional sub-Saharan African religiosity, emphasizing what he calls an 'appropriated vibrancy' or 'immediacy' that represents a formative element in African theologies.

Haar (2009), writes to support Kalu's view when he stated African Christianity reflects a strong element of continuity with the continent's original religious traditions. In particular, African understandings of Christianity are marked by the belief in a dynamic spiritual universe. One can even say that Christianity is not a radical departure or a break from the traditional African religious beliefs but its extension (Oladipo, 2016).

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For Kollman, Kalu's assertion of continuity in African Christianity has value in at least three ways. First of all, it contests default assumptions refuse any comparative enterprise. The second is that it discourages historicizations that rely overmuch on externally derived chronological assumptions and the third, he documents like no other single researcher, the variety ways that Christianity has appealed to Africans (2010, p.18).

In assessing Kalu, Kollman is of the view that Kalu's presumption of continuity between African primal religions and revivalistic Christianity contradicts. He proceeded to give an example of the convictions of many Pentecostal Charismatic converts about their new religious identity. Kalu like other scholars categorized African Christianities from an etic perspective that is not always acknowledged by the believers themselves (2010).

Another difficulty with Kalu's classification is that he overlooks African Christians who participate neither in AICs nor Pentecostal Charismatic. Kollman argues that "Despite P/c growth, non-P/c, non-AIC Christians probably make up the majority—and certainly a significant plurality—of Africa's Christians. Moreover, many such Christian communities embody the vitality Kalu identifies. Large-scale conversions to missionary-founded churches deserve inclusion in any African Christian trail of ferment. In addition, such churches have been sources of important social action on behalf of justice and peace in much of Africa, a sign of religious vitality. " (2010, p.20)

CHAPTER THREE

ST. ANTHONY OF PADUA, ANTONIANISM IN KONGO AND

ANTONIANISM IN GHANA

Introduction

This chapter begins with a discussion on the history of St. Anthony of Padua. This is necessary because the study revolves around this saint. The chapter goes on to discuss Antonianism in the Kongo and in Ghana, and ended by comparing the two movements.

Saint Antony of Padua

St Anthony of Padua was born on 15th August, 1195 at Lisbon in Portugal to Martin Boullon and Theresa Tevera. Both parents were of noble blood. He was given the name Fernando at christening. Ward (1898) has it that at age 7, Fernando was sent to the Cathedral school where he studied the Holy Scripture, grammar, the element of rhetoric and logic and probably plain chant.

As a young man, Fernando asked to join the Canons Regular of St Augustine (priests living in a community under the rule of St Augustine) in Lisbon. As he requested, he was received with open arms into the Canons Regular of St Augustine. A short while after Fernando joined the Canons Regular, he resolved to depart from Lisbon to Coimbra because of the regular visits from family and friends (Ward, 1898).

In the year 1216, while Fernando was still in the Canons Regular of St Augustine, St Francis of Assisi sent to Portugal some friars (members of Roman

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Catholic religious order for men whose duty is to study and teach about Christianity) to Coimbra. These friars settled at a small hermitage outside Coimbra, dedicated to St Anthony the Great. Fernando was attracted to the simple lifestyle of these friars and in heart, wished he was one of them. When news arrived that five Franciscans have been martyred in Morocco, and upon hearing the history of these martyrs, he was inspired by their example. Thus, he sought permission from the Church authorities to leave the Augustinian Canon and join that of the Franciscan. At the point of taking his vow as a Franciscan, Fernando adopted the name Anthony, in honour of the holy priest to whom the convent in Portugal was dedicated.

Since he still looked weak and sickly and gave no evidence of his scholarship, no one paid any attention to the stranger until Father Gratian, the Provincial of friars living in the region of Romagna (Italy), had compassion on him and sent him to the quiet little convent near Forli (also in Italy). There St. Anthony remained nine months as chaplain to the hermits, occupied in the lowliest duties of the kitchen and convent, and to his heart's content he practised interior as well as exterior mortification.

For the occasion of a ceremony of ordination some of the hermits along with Anthony were sent to the town of Forli. Before the ceremony was to begin, however, it was announced that the priest who was to give the sermon had fallen sick. The local superior, to avert the embarrassment of the moment, quickly asked the friars in attendance to volunteer. Each excused himself, saying that he was not prepared, until finally, St. Anthony was asked to give it. When he too, excused

himself in a most humble manner, his superior ordered him by virtue of the vow of obedience to give the sermon. Anthony spoke with such eloquence, and learning that everybody was fairly amazed.

When St. Francis was informed of the event, he gave Anthony the mission to preach throughout Italy. At the request of the brethren, Anthony was later commissioned also to teach theology. Anthony himself placed greater value on the salvation of souls than on learning. For that reason, he never ceased to exercise his office as preacher despite his work of teaching. He was later appointed the provincial superior of northern Italy and he chose Padua as his location.

The number of those who came to hear him was sometimes so great that no church was large enough to accommodate the people and so he had to preach in the open air. Frequently Anthony wrought veritable miracles of conversion. Deadly enemies were reconciled. Thieves and usurers made restitution. Calumniators and detractors recanted and apologized. He was so energetic in defending the truths of the Catholic Faith that many heretics returned to the Church. This occasioned the epitaph given him by Pope Gregory IX "the ark of the covenant." (Ward, 1898)

The last days of Anthony was spent at Campietro, a small village located three leagues from Padua. On the thirteenth day of June 1231, Anthony felt himself fainting away and asked his companions to take him back to Padua, to the monastery of the Minors to die there. His wish was however not fulfilled since

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they made a stop at the monastery at Arcella where Anthony finally passed on. Anthony died at the age of 36.

Pope Gregory IX enrolled him among the saints in the very next year. At Padua, a magnificent basilica was built in his honour, his holy relics were entombed there in 1263. From the time of his death up to the present day, countless miracles have occurred through St. Anthony's intercession, so that he is known as the Wonder-Worker. St. Anthony was declared a Doctor of the Church by Pope Pius XII in 1946 (Ryan, n.d).

According to Ryan (n.d p. 6), "Immediately after his death, Anthony became the object of an extraordinary devotion, and miracle followed miracle as the prayers of the sick and the afflicted were answered by sudden cures and wonders". Due to this, a shrine was built in his honour at Padua which attracted enthusiastic devotions and endless flow of devotees and sightseers from all parts of the world. Ryan goes on to say that the devotion to St. Anthony became popular to the extent that there are many shrines of St. Anthony in the churches of the Catholic world. St. Anthony is seen as the patron saint for lost items. Also, in Portugal, France, Italy and Spain, St. Anthony is the patron saint of sailors and fishermen and for travellers who travel the sea. Thus wherever, especially, Portuguese seafarers found themselves, one is sure to see some form of devotion to St. Anthony.

Based on the above, it will be revealed that the devotion to St. Anthony grew stronger to the extent that in some parts of Africa, like the Kongo and Ghana, movements were formed around the saint. These movements are normally

called 'the Antonian movements' or is given the term 'Antonianism'. In the lines that follow, I will be discussing Antonianism in the Kongo and in Ghana, and try to bring out some differences in the two.

Antonianism

Antonianism is a term generally used for the movement that existed in 18th century Kongo. This movement was led by a woman known as Dona Beatriz Kimpa Vita. The movement revolved around St. Anthony of Padua. The term has however been used to describe movements that revolve around St. Anthony.

Antonianism in Kongo

Eighteenth century Kongo comes to mind anytime Antonianism is mentioned. The Antonian movement that existed in Kongo from 1704 and 1706 is often seen as a syncretic new religious movement, whose founder, Donna Beatriz Kimpa Vita was believed to have been possessed by Saint Anthony of Padua (Langer and Stearns, 2001). According to Okome (2008), during this time, the Kongo was a place of grave insecurity. The Kongolese peasantry was constantly faced with the threat of being caught in the mortal cross fire of the wars raging between the Kongo's nobility combined with the threat of being shipped across the Atlantic in the equally deadly slave trade. It was a period of constant civil wars.

These happenings made the Kongolese peasants desire peace. In 1703, their prayers were answered. A new religious ideology was developed. This

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ideology combined traditional Kongolese culture with an adapted Christian message (Okome, 2008). Soon history was re-interpreted. A new political system was needed to replace the old one under which so much turmoil occurred.

Before the birth of Beatriz, the kingdom of Kongo had been Catholic for two centuries. Catholicism had been introduced to Sub-Saharan Africa in the 15th century and had attracted a wide following in Kongo. However, the religious stability of Kongo was to be interrupted at the birth of the Antonian movement.

In 1703, Donna Beatriz was said to have been afflicted with some strange illness which almost took her life. After recovering from this illness, she is said to claim to have been possessed by St Anthony of Padua and began to preach. It must be noted that as a child Donna Beatriz had 'gifts'; she constantly saw visions and dreamt of playing with angels. Due to her innate spirituality, Kimpa Vita was trained as an Nganga Marinda, that is, an individual who consults the supernatural world to solve problems within the community (Thornton, 1998).

She concerned herself with the political and spiritual restoration of the Kongo Kingdom. Kimpa Vita's religious ideology came as an answer to the prayers of many Kongolese people. In her message she combined traditional Kongolese beliefs with Catholicism, Creating her own Christian movement which has come to be known as known as Antonianism. She wanted a religious system that was set firmly within Kongo history and geography. From her visions she believed Kongo must reunite under a new king and to her, the movement she has created (Antonianism) was a way of doing this. Much to the dismay of the Catholic Church, Kimpa Vita quickly attracted a large following of common

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people, as well as some nobility who were locked to the city, which Kimpa identified as the biblical Bethlehem.

She preached that Kongo was the Holy Land described in the Bible and also the Kongolese capital, Mbanza Kongo (also known as Sao Salvador) was the real site of Bethlehem . Furthermore, she claimed that Jesus was born in Mbanza Kongo and baptized not at Nazareth but in the northern province of Nsundi, and thus Jesus Christ and the other saints were black Africans. According to her Mary was a slave of a Kongo marquis and then, not only is heaven for the white man, but heaven was also for Africans. A strong element of her teaching was the fact that she attacked the European, church saying that it was not beneficial to Kongolese (Thornton, 1998).

Here, we see contradiction between religious separation and the sentiments of political and emancipation from colonial domination. As explained in chapter two of this study, this religious emancipation as an instrument of political liberation has been one of the characteristics strongly considered in earlier models for defining African Christianity. This and other reasons make Antonianism relevant in studying the history and the classification of African Christianity.

On the political front, her aims were to end the civil wars that had plagued the kingdom since the arrival of the Portuguese. Donna Beatriz' political influence was a threat to Pedro IV and the Portuguese administration that supported him. In 1706, Pedro IV had Donna Beatriz arrested and burned at the stake for heresy, under the urging of Portuguese Capuchin monks (Thornton, 1998). The

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movement did not immediately die when she did and in 1708 twenty thousand Antonians marched on King Pedro IV, who eventually defeated them and restored his kingdom.

Antonianism in Ghana: The Ntona Shrine of Elmina

Since the Ntona shrine revolves around the statue of St. Anthony, it will be proper to start writing the history of the shrine from the time the statue landed on the shores of Ghana, the then Gold Coast. The statue of St. Anthony of Padua together with that of the blessed virgin Mary and St. Francis of Assisi were brought into the Sao Jorge d' Mina from Lisbon by Pedro Mascarenez who had been appointed as governor of the city of Sao Jorge da Mina (Elmina) in 1632 (Wiltgen, 1956). According to Debrunner (1967), these statues were brought purposely for the church in Elmina.

The statue of St. Anthony became prominent and revered by the people of Elmina because of a miracle that is said to have happened. Records have it that a man who went insane and became violent was miraculously healed by St. Anthony. This came to bear when the now sane man rushed to the Sao Jorge church in Elmina and asked to be baptized. The surprised priest asked the man how he re-gained his sanity. In narrating his story, the man, pointing to the statue of St. Anthony said "that is the one who made me well, that is the one who ordered me to become a Christian. And it's a Christian I will be! I beg for baptism; I want to be baptised." (Wiltgen, 1956, p. 49). According to Wiltgen, this incident brought a lot of excitement to the church in Elmina.

Five years later in August 1637, the Portuguese were forced to surrender the fort 'Sao Jorge' and the keys thereof to the Dutch (Wartemberg, 1951). What this means is that the Dutch defeated the Portuguese in a battle and took over the castle and also the affairs of the day, which was the trade in gold. The defeat of the Portuguese did not have just political implications. There were some religious implications as well. Wiltgen (1956) believes that prior to the war between the Portuguese and the Dutch that led to the defeat of the Portuguese, the Edina or Elmina Christians had been warned that the invading troops (Dutch) were not only hostile to the Portuguese but to the catholic religion as well. Thus, "whatever is left in the church, the vicar must have said, will surely be destroyed especially the statues because Calvinists are avowed iconoclasts (people who attack or destroy images, especially those set up for religious veneration).   With the favour of apostolic Christians those of Elmina until now (the time of his writing) very lax suddenly came to realise their religious worth. One after the other they took something into custody, the missal, the vestments, the candle sticks, the statues and even sacred vessels." For Wiltgen, the Elminian Christians were cautioned about the Dutch who would not tolerate anything that is Catholic. Thus it made the people go for the items in the church before the Dutch laid their hands on them.

The religion of the Portuguese (Catholicism) died out during the era of the Dutch publicly. However, it thrived among the folks of Elmina in a different way. Years after the Dutch had taken over from the Portuguese in Elmina, there were some discoveries which suggested that Catholicism lived among the Elminians in

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a different way. This came to light when in May 1880, two priests (Frs. Auguste Moreau and Eugene Murat) of the Society of African Missions reached the shores of Gold Coast, and were amazed at what they discovered. These two priests found traces of Catholicism among some practices of the Elminians. The first thing they saw was a group known as the 'Santa Mariafo', described by Wiltgen to be;

> *The members of the Santa Mariafo' of course were pagans and on Fridays they went about the village dressed in long white gowns, carrying candles and chanting something over and over again. The only intelligible words they uttered were 'Santa Maria'. Santa Maria'. For this reason, Elminians will tell you they were named Santa Mariafo'. 'Fo' means 'people' or 'group'. (p.142-143)*

Another discovery that overwhelmed Frs. Moreau and Murat was the very strong devotion they found among the pagans of Elmina to St. Anthony of Padua. According to Wiltgen (1956), the devotion was centred around a pagan temple called 'Ntona Buw'. 'Buw' means 'temple' and 'Ntona' is the corrupted form of the Portuguese name 'Antonio'. Debrunner (1967, p.34) describes the Ntona Buw or shrine as "a pagan shrine which is said to contain the statue of St. Anthony of Padua and present certain Christian features, and it is quite possible that some elements of Catholicism were thus absorbed into the pagan religion". The devotees of the Ntona Buw or shrine were known as the 'Santomafo' or 'Antonifo'

One would ask, how was this possible? Wiltgen (1956) is of the view that the possibility of this phenomenon could be traced to the period when the St. George's castle fell to the Dutch. According to Wiltgen this event made the Portuguese evacuate the castle. Nonetheless before leaving the shores of Elmina, the Portuguese entrusted the goods in the castle- candles, vestments, statues, missal and chalices to the Edina Catholics. In narrating this very event, the custodian of the Ntona shrine said it that these goods mentioned were actually rescued from the Dutch.

Among the things taken from the castle, the St. Anthony's statue was cherished most by the Edina Catholics. How special the statue of St. Anthony was to the people, Wiltgen tells that

> *How often had they seen it carried in procession! How often had the prayers of the catholic priest been answered when he begged God for rain through the intercession of this saint. And what numberless wonders had the saint performed, like the time he appeared in the woods to one of the Edina elite, cured him of his madness, told him to forsake his idols and go to the church of Mina and there ask the priest for baptism. Instinctive reverence for the sacred and powerful made the Edina Catholics treat this particular statue entrusted to them with special care. (Wiltgen, 1956, p.148)*

The survival of the Ntona shrine

The survival of the Ntona shrine was made possible by some reasons. This section tried to outline these reasons.

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First of all in order to honour the saint at the blind spot of the Dutch who were initially believed to oppose anything concerning the catholic tradition, the Edina Catholics gave the saint a shrine of his own. Contrary to the expectation of the people of Elmina, the Dutch were tolerant of the local religious practices (Wiltgen, 1956). In the view of Wiltgen, this move is one of the reasons why the Ntona shrine and the devotion to St. Anthony of Padua had survived in Elmina to this day.

Another reason for the survival of the Ntona shrine and its devotion could be due to the fact that there was no catholic priest to oversee the affairs of the devotion to St. Anthony of Padua for a long time. As a result of this vacuum, and given the people could not worship as during the days of the Portuguese. The only means available to the people was to imitate the Portuguese priests. To one of the interviewees, what happened was that the people of Elmina tried to imitate what they saw the Portuguese do during worship because they saw a great deal of similarities of how worship was done locally and the veneration of the saint. For instance the people thought that the way of venerating the statue of St. Anthony was not different from what they did in their traditional shrines.

Also, the striking similarities between the catholic faith and that of the religion of the African could have supported the survival of the shrine till date.

In the view of Wiltgen (1956, p.151), "the origin of the Ntona cult probably lie in the strong devotion toward the saint which the Elminians of old noticed in the Portuguese, and the repeated striking ways in which the Elminians had seen prayers of the Portuguese to the saint as well as their own, answered".

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Saint Anthony as a Deity?

The classical position about the transformation of St. Anthony into an African god is that it was a process of 'paganization' of a catholic Christian devotion. This view is supported by scholars such as Wiltgen (1956), Agbeti (1986), Debrunner (1967) and others is what this research calls the etic position or perspective. From this etic perspective, there is nothing Christian about the Ntona shrine. It represents a 'deterioration' or even perversion of a Christian devotion. Wartemberg (1951) calls it idolatry and Wiltgen believes that 'as the years and generations passed, the veneration paid to the saint degenerated more and more, and once the zealous confraternity slipped back into the pagan religious system of their countrymen who had never been baptised. Scholars like Agbeti and Debrunner hold the same view.

Another perspective is however presented by the custodians of the shrine. This is considered the emic (insider) perspective in this research. The custodians claim, contrary to the etic perspective, that what they do is still Christian and that their faith is in St. Anthony, the one and same saint that Catholics accept and venerate.

According to Wiltgen the Santomafo elected one of their own to take charge of the statue. This event led to a new type of priesthood in the Elmina. Very soon 'Nana Ntona' took over Benya as the prominent deity of the town. Wartemberg (1951) states also that no priest who was possessed could approach the Ntona shrine or he was supposed to be instantly dispossessed. This indicated that all other deities were subordinate to Ntona. As such Nana Ntona came to will

some power in the Elmina Township, and this is still seen today. One major importance of Ntona then and now is that without Ntona a chief cannot be enthroned. According to Wiltgen, the annual procession held in honour of St. Anthony of Padua became an annual pagan festival called 'Kotobun Kese'. This festival is celebrated prior to that of Benya.

During this festival, 'the statue of St. Anthony was "taken out and cleansed. The water used for cleansing the statue was disposed of in the night, with ceremony, by a carrier with whom no person may come into contact and for this reason Dawur (gong-gong) warned the public. The carrier sprinkled the water at important points in the act of cleansing the town or scaring away evil spirits." (p.153)

With the enthronement of a chief, "the Ntona shrine is the last and final sacred place the chief visited for God's blessings. A traditional priest performs a special ritual and as the new chief comes out of the temple he is cheered by the people and steps directly into a waiting palanquin. A procession through the town then follows." (Wiltgen, 1956, p. 149) These rituals continue to be part of the enstoolment of a chief in present day Elmina.

According to Wiltgen, succeeding generations had similar experiences to keep alive the traditions of Ntona's powers. This still seems to be the case in present day Elmina as the adherents of the shrine told me that the Catholic Church has always wanted to have possession of Ntona. But the church will not be given the chance to be in possession of the statue. When asked why, the custodian of the shrine made me aware that it is a heritage that has been handed down to their

generation. So if their forefathers did not give it out, they are not going to be the ones to do that in their time. The custodian added that they will do whatever it takes to protect Ntona.

What then is Nona? Is it the statue or St. Anthony of Padua himself? Wiltgen posits that it is not the statue they trusted, nor was it St. Anthony of Padua as present in heaven do they trust in and directed their prayers to. Wiltgen continues that they do not see the statue as a reminder of the saint nor as a direct object of worship. The direct object of worship Wiltgen explains was and is still the deified personality called Ntona who is believed to reside in and be confined by the statue of the saint.

Although the statue is broken, the broken pieces can be found in a big calabash covered with white cloth. There is however another statue of the saint that seems to have been white-washed over the years that sits somewhere in the shrine. It is prohibited according to the adherents of the Ntona shrine, to take pictures of the statue because the people have come to believe that the soul of Ntona might leave the statue when pictures are taken. It is on this statue that libation prayers are made. The question to be asked here is how the people acquired this statue, could it have been given to them by missionaries or the statue was bought in order to replace it with the broken one as one respondent suggested? His explanation was that most homes in Elmina have at least the statue of St. Anthony. He even attested to the fact that he has one in his home. This is because St. Anthony of Padua is the second patron saint of Elmina.

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Antonianism in Kongo and Antonianism in Ghana compared

This section looks at the two movements in view of the classification of African Christianity. Earlier on in this chapter, I discussed the Antonian movement that existed in Kongo in the eighteenth century. The discussion on the Antonian movement made it clear that this movement did not stand the test of time as it did in the then Gold Coast. This is because the Antonian movement in Kongo was seen as heretical. According to Kollman (2010), African Christianity was labelled as heretical when Europeans faced the result of their own missionary activities. That is, the people held contrary views on the teachings of the Europeans. Kollman gave an example to be the Antonian movement of Dona Beatriz Vita Kimpa of Kong.

On the contrary, the movement in the God Coast was not faced with such fate. What could have led to its success, given that it seems to have been side lined in the classification of African Christianity? Could it be that the Ntona shrine does not fit into any of the category of the classification discussed in chapter two? The table below outlines the characteristics of the two movements and in doing so, try to compare the two.

	Antonianism in the Kongo	Antonianism in Gold Coast (Ghana)
Founder	Dona Beatriz Vita Kimpa	The people of Elmina
Claims	• The founder is said to have claimed to be possessed by St. Anthony of Padua. • Sao Salvador was the real site for Bethlehem. • Jesus and other saints are black Africans • Claimed the catholic church was non beneficial to the Kongolese	• Claims that the statue of St. Anthony is possessed with supernatural powers, capable of healing the sick, the barren, giving rains to the land during drought and giving victory during wars.
Historical Circumstances	• Centred around spirit possession of St. Anthony of Padua • Presence of the Portuguese. Who were able to see to it that what had begun in the name of spirit possession came to a standstill, in order for the religion of the Portuguese suffice. • Both the founder and her followers were seen as heretics • The founder was burnt at stake and that was the end of the movement • Political underpinnings; a form of trying to resist colonial rule	• Centred around the statue of St. Anthony of Padua • No Portuguese presence at the time to oversee the affairs of the statue. Thus there were no trained priests present and the people tried to mimic what they saw the Portuguese do • The Dutch were not interested in the statue • The people of Elmina made it their own • The people did not have to fight or resit colonial rule. In other words they were free to express themselves

The table above shows some differences and similarities between Antonianism in Kongo and that of Ghana. As can be seen from earlier discussions of both movements that they came as a result of trying to Africanise the Christian faith brought down to them. In trying to welcome the Christian faith into the African culture, both movements seem to have ended up radically. This takes us

back to chapter two on the discussion of the classifications of African Christianity. These movements can be classified as forms of African Christianities because as the AICs, Pentecostals and charismatics, these movements took the initiative to welcome the Christian faith into the African culture.

The point here is these movements, especially the Ntona shrine which is my focus have not been considered among the categorisations of African Christianities. I think that the principles being used to categorise African christianities so far are incomplete because they cannot account for what took place in the Ntona shrine to the extent that the people of the Ntona shrine continue to claim that they are a Christian group.
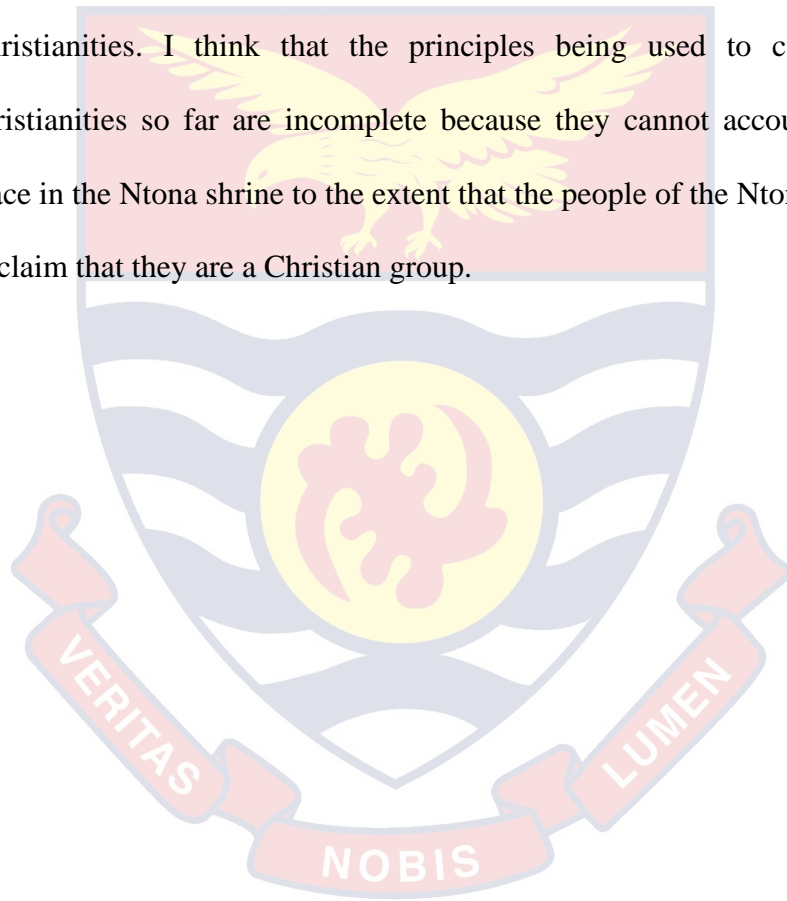
Plate 1: A photograph of the Ntona shrine.

Source: A photograph taken by the researcher at Bantama, Elmina

Plate 2: A photograph of the statue of St. Anthony of Padua

Source: Catholic museum, Elmina.

As mentioned earlier on, the researcher was not allowed to take a photograph of the statue in the shrine. This picture shown is a statue of St. Anthony of Padua found in the Catholic museum in Elmina.

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CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION OF DATA AND ANALYSIS

Introduction

This chapter presents and analyses data gathered. It is however preceded by a recap of what the study set out to do in chapter one. The study was motivated by the fact that adherents of what seems to be an African Traditional Shrine claim to be Christians. What the study sought out to do was to interrogate the existing classification of African Christianity by considering the phenomenon of the Ntona shrine of Elmina.

Data Production Procedure

The historical and phenomenological approaches to the study of religion as described in the initial chapter were used. While the historical approach was helpful in collecting data pertaining to the history of the Ntona shrine and circumstances surrounding its development, the phenomenological approach as a scientific approach to the study of the Ntona shrine allowed the researcher to study the observable aspects of what goes on in the shrine (Creswell, 2014). In doing this, I employed the principles of epoche and eidetic vision, which demand that I bracket my faith and put myself in the position of the adherents of the shrine particularly because of my desire to emphasize the insider perspective of the Ntona phenomenon.

The techniques used for sampling were the purposive and random sampling. In using the purposive sampling technique, the researcher selects a

sample in a conscious manner for the purpose of achieving required data (Creswell, 2014). For example, in the case of the Ntona shrine, I preferentially enlisted respondents considered to have knowledge about the shrine to contribute to the study. Such respondents included the custodian of the shrine, the priest and linguist of the shrine. A catholic priest and a member of the Catholic Church in Elmina were also purposively selected. Then using the snowball technique, five people from the town of Elmina were selected to participate in the research.

The instruments used in the data collection were unstructured interviews, participant observation and focus group discussion. The interview enabled interactions which allowed the researcher to collect information from the interviewees without restriction. There was therefore enough flexibility on the part of the researcher in the questions as well as follow-up questions that were used to collect data. The participant observation gave the researcher ample opportunity for a critical observation of what goes on in the shrine.

The researcher had a focus group discussion at the Faculty of Arts Conference Room of the University of Cape Coast on the 28th of March, 2018. The group was made up of two adherents of the Ntona shrine, five lecturers and seven post graduate students from the Department of Religion and Human Values. The purpose of the focus group discussion was to interrogate previously received data, using the academic expertise of members of faculty and colleague students in the study of religion. This was done in order to validate the information and improve the researcher's understanding of the phenomenon based on the outcome of the focus group discussion.

Apart from the focus group discussion, eleven people were interviewed, and they include; the custodian of the shrine, the priest, the linguist and an elderly woman who they referred to as 'aberewa' which means old woman.

After studying the raw data they were categorised under the following themes that emerged.

A. Popularity of the Ntona shrine

B. Historical circumstances of the development of the Ntona shrine

C. Ntona shrine as an expression of African Christianity

D. St. Anthony, an African deity or a saint?

A. Popularity of the Ntona shrine

Under this theme the data assessed how popular the Ntona shrine is, especially, among the people of Elmina. Data from this theme was collected mainly from indigenes of Elmina, the chief custodian of the shrine and from some existing church historical records and literature.

1) Indigenes of Elmina

Apart from a handful of catholic faithful, most people who are indigenes of Elmina seem to be ignorant about the existence of the Ntona shrine. While a few of the indigenes claim to have heard something about the shrine, many did not have any idea of its existence. For example when the lady at the catholic museum was posed with this question, her response was that "actually, I have heard of Nana Ntona and am told that it has the statue of St. Anthony but I have never been

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there or even seen it before. That is all I know about the shrine." (Personal Communication, 11th December, 2017)

From the catholic museum, I went to the Elmina castle and met one tour guide who was willing to participate in the research. This participant had been chosen per recommendation by another participant for his good knowledge of Elmina history. It turned out that he did not have any knowledge of the existence of a shrine that houses the statue of St. Anthony of Padua. "My dear, this is my first time of hearing about this thing. Where is it located? Is it here in Elmina?" (Personal Communication, 11th December, 2017)

It is a popular belief that taxi drivers are a good source of information about their environment. It was just opportune that the public means of transport from the castle to Bantoma, home of the Ntona shrine, is mainly by taxi. I took advantage to engage my taxi driver in a conversation on the Ntona shrine. He too, like the tour guide, had no idea of the existence of the shrine.

My next interview concerning this issue was with a catholic priest from the St. Joseph minor basilica at Elmina. The priest knew of the Ntona shrine, as he claimed, "I am much aware of the Ntona shrine and the statue of St. Anthony but what goes on there is nothing but idolatry and the Catholic Church has nothing to do with it." (Personal Communication, 11th December, 2017). The next person to respond to this question was a catholic Christian, one of my special participants. He, just as the priest had an idea of the Ntona shrine. He told me that as a hobby, he researches on the shrine and whatever goes on there.

2) Custodians of the shrine

In responding to questions about the popularity of the Ntona shrine, the chief custodian who also doubles as the family head of the Ekuna Nsona family showed much knowledge of the Ntona shrine.

He told me that Bantoma in Elmina has a link with Bantama in Kumasi. According to him, Bantoma in Elmina traces its ancestry to Bantama in Kumasi. "Some years ago the people of the now Elmina travelled with the Ashantis and settled in Bantama. So when Kwaw Mankwa discovered the settlement now known as Elmina, he decided to name the place 'Bantoma' in memory of the place they had journeyed from in Kumasi. Actually, Bantoma was the initial name of Elmina before the appearance of the Portuguese." He went on to tell me they used to be around the castle but moved to their present location when Elmina was bombarded by the British.

3) Literature

Knowledge of the existence of the Ntona shrine can be found in some scholarly writings. In talking about the history of Christianity in Ghana or European presence on the shores of the country, the Ntona is mentioned either in passing or it is talked about in details.

Some scholars like Agbeti (1986) and Debrunner (1967) talk about the Ntona shrine. In describing the shrine, Debrunner writes that "A pagan shrine at Elmina is said to contain the statue of St. Anthony and to present certain Christian features and it is quite possible that elements of Catholicism were absorbed into the pagan religion" (p. 34).

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In the words of Agbeti, "it was a hut which contained the crumbled pieces of an old statue probably that of St. Anthony, left at Elmina by the Portuguese. The worshippers at the shrine call themselves *Santomafo*. The cultic ceremonies celebrated in connection with the shrine were very reminiscent of certain catholic rituals" (p. 104)

Wartemberg (1951), writing earlier than Agbeti and Debrunner describes it as "the statue of St. Anthony was said to be possessed by a deity Ntona (corrupt form) and served by a fetish priest" (p.152).

Wiltgen (1956), talks about Ntona as a very strong devotion found among the pagans of Elmina to St. Anthony of Padua. Wiltgen however gives a detailed information about the shrine and its devotion to St. Anthony of Padua.

B. Historical circumstances of the development of the Ntona shrine

Data categorised under this theme give information about the history of the shrine as well as the circumstances that necessitated its development.

1. Custodians

According to the custodians, during the era of the Portuguese, the statue of St. Anthony was venerated. The Portuguese did not worship alone but worshipped with the local folks who had been converted to Christianity. After the Portuguese left the shores of Elmina, the indigenous people, the forefathers of the present custodians took the statue from St. Jargo where it initially was and brought it down to where they were and housed it. It was housed because the statue needed to be protected. The spokesperson said this happened at the time their forbearers lived around the castle, but after the bombardment of Elmina, they moved to their

current location in Bantoma. After the statue came to their possession, the people tried to imitate what they saw the Portuguese do during worship. However, because there was no priest to oversee things pertaining to the veneration of the statue, the local folks developed their own ritual based on the little memory they had of the Portuguese practice and their own traditional religion. This is because of the striking similarities of how worship is done locally and the Portuguese veneration of St. Anthony. The spokesman recalled that before the appearance of the Portuguese, they knew that God is the Supreme Being and cannot be approached directly unless through mediums. Hence all what the Portuguese did was to introduce them to St. Anthony as a medium by which a person could reach God.

Regarding the question about who the "Santonafo" are, the chief custodian replied that the Santonafo were the descendants of Ntona that is the Ekuna Nsona family. According to him, anything pertaining to Nana Ntona is a family affair, the more reason why it is not known to many people in Elmina now. When the question about possessing the statue was asked, the linguist of the shrine told me that the statue was rescued by their forefathers so it is theirs. The chief custodian on his part, was of the opinion that "santi", which is in the Fanti language means 'line'. Therefore, Santonafo means people from the line of Ntona. "That is why Ntona is peculiar to us alone. Although it is recognised by the chief and his people, it is a family affair." (Personal Communication, 15th December, 2017). This is narrative in my view is one but a poor version of the tradition, because the

meaning the custodians give to Santonafo is totally different from what exist in literature.

The custodians believe that the people of Elmina were able to imitate the Portuguese because the catholic faith was still new to them and they felt they had the liberty to continue from where the Portuguese left off. Speaking in English, the chief custodian observed:

> You see, most of our great ancestors were fetish and had natural powers given to them by the gods. And so when St. Anthony was brought and miracles were performed by St. Anthony, they became in tune with it. The faith (catholic faith) and that of my ancestors were converging somewhere. They were almost the same. So when the Portuguese left and we got possession of the statue more miracles happened. When there was no rain in the town, they would go to the shrine and pray and perform some traditional ceremonies and in no time the rains will come down. Before a king is enthroned, it is demanded of him to come see us, otherwise he would never be king. That is the last stop where he will be cleansed. Then the powers are given to you to climb the palanquin. Even Nana Kondua who is the paramount chief of Elmina was here to be cleansed and then mounted the palanquin afterwards. We have a lot of powers you know. The Europeans themselves recorded that "Benya Komfo" is under "Ntona Komfo." (Chief custodian, Personal Communication, 15th December, 2017)

From the custodians, the genesis of what would be known as the Ntona shrine started when the Portuguese left the shores of Elmina and the Dutch took over:

> *There was no father (priest) again who will oversee the worship, so it came to our ancestors. And as I said earlier on, because the people saw some similarities between their own faith and that of Christianity they did not hesitate to make St. Anthony their own. They gave St. Anthony a shrine and started to worship. They simply had nobody to lead them.*

The follow up question to this submission was obvious, "will your people have had possession of St Anthony and develop the worship of St. Anthony in the way it is today if the Portuguese priests had stayed on?" When this question was asked the answer of the custodians was no. They were convinced something different might have happened. If the Portuguese had stayed, they strongly believe that their family could not have become the custodians of the St. Anthony's shrine. This is because the Portuguese would have Christianised them and would have led them in the right direction.

2. Member of the Catholic Church in Elmina (Key Informant)

In narrating the history of the Ntona shrine, the member of Catholic Church who has devoted many years to studying the history of the Ntona shrine began by talking about the first arrival of the Portuguese in 1471. According to him, in 1471 when the Portuguese made their first appearance on the shores of the Gold Coast in Shamah, there may have been Catholic Masses said at the time that

were not recorded. And so the first recorded Mass will be on the 19th January, 1482. This was when the Portuguese settled on the shores of Elmina.

In his view, the Portuguese did not come to meet the African faithless. They had their own way of doing things, many of which coincided with Christian principles, for example, the people knew that stealing was wrong, they also knew adultery was not good, and honouring your parents was a virtue. The only thing was that the name Christian was not attached to these principles. Through evangelisation, about a thousand people had been baptised into Christianity (Catholicism). The Catholic Church had established itself then, but what we call African Traditional Religion was so strong that it was not to be cast away that easily.

He continued with his narration by saying that in 1637, the Dutch defeated the Portuguese and dislodged them from the castle. It was when the Portuguese were leaving the castle that items that were used in the Catholic Church were given out and one of such items was the statue of St. Anthony of Padua. Because the Dutch were Calvinists, they did not even use the Portuguese church. According to him, the Catholic Church is such that it must be led by a trained priest. There were no priests at the time, so those who had been Christianised mimic what they saw the priests do during their worship. Three groups emerged out of these mimicking. One was the St. Anthony's cult, or the Ntonafo. Then there was the Santa Mariafo, who were devotees of the Blessed Virgin Mary and the third was the Nkoduafo. Ntona was the St. Anthony's statue, and the people did not know how to worship with it, so they made it a deity.

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The Catholic Christian or the member of the Catholic Church was convinced that the circumstance that led to development of the Ntona shrine was that there was no priest. The genesis on how it would become a shrine is that there was no trained priest, so they tried to mimic what they saw the priests do. They saw the priest doing asperges which is a reminder of our baptism as Catholics. In mimicking there is this festival that has been going on till date. It is called Kotobunkese and it is done in the night. They go to the shrine with candles, water etc. after whatever ritual is done, the water is used to sprinkle the whole town and nobody should be awake at that time of the night.

Like the custodians, the catholic faithful believes that the Ntona shrine would not have come into existence if the Portuguese were still around.

2. Literature

Thus far, the suggestions made in chapter 3 of this research that the history and development of the Ntona shrine would start after the Portuguese had left the shores of Elmina has been corroborated by participants, Wiltgen gives the following hypothesis that seems to best fit the circumstances surrounding the origin and development of the shrine. In the first instance

> *When St. George castle fell to the Dutch, the priests being Portuguese had to evacuate the castle with the rest of the garrison and were transported on the Dutch ships to the island of Sao Thome. Confident, no doubt that they would be back, the priests had entrusted all the goods in St. George church- candles, vestments, statues, missal, and chalices- to the Edina Catholics when they foresaw that the fort would fall. In the minds of the Edina Catholics the*

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principal object of all was the statue of St. Anthony of Padua. How often had they seen it carried in processions! How often had the prayers of the catholic priests being answered when he begged God for rain through the intercession of this saint? And what numberless wonders had the saint performed, like the time he appeared in the woods to one of the Edina elite, cured him of his madness, told him to forsake his idols and go to the church of mina and there ask the priest for baptism. Instinctive reverence for the sacred and powerful made the Edina Catholics treat this particular statue entrusted to them with special care. (Wiltgen, 1956, p.147-148)

The second hypothesis given by Wiltgen (1956) is that there was no quarrels as to who is to take care of the St. Anthony statue. According to Wiltgen, it was clear that the Santonafo had control over the statue. This is because like the Santa Mariafo, the Santonafo had had the privilege of carrying the statue in a frequent annual procession.

The third hypothesis given by Wiltgen is that the people gave the saint a shrine of his own where devotion to the saint could continue. According to Wiltgen, this has to be done in secret in case the Dutch opposed the devotion to St. Anthony. Wiltgen goes on to say that the once enthusiastic confraternity slipped back to the pagan religious system of their fellow Elminians who had never been baptised. This happened gradually as generations and years passed. In no time, Benya who was the most important deity in the town, gave way to Nana Ntona in both popularity and importance.

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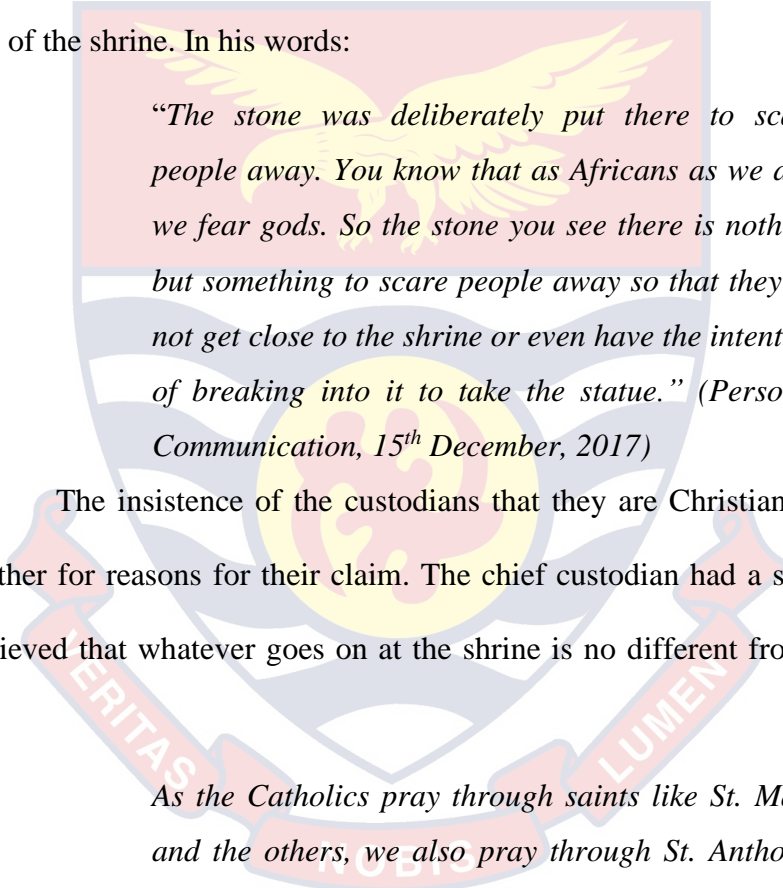### C.   Ntona Shrine as an expression of African Christianity.

The importance of this theme is its centrality to the focus of the research. To what extent does the phenomenon of Ntona and others like it implode existing classificatory models of African Christianity? It is from this perspective that it was necessary to consider the fact that the custodians, adherents and practitioners call themselves Christians.

1.   Custodians

From the responses given by the custodians of the shrine, the nature of the shrine is such that it has some peculiar features. The first thing is that, the shrine houses the statue of St. Anthony of Padua which is a very rare thing. It was revealed that unlike other shrines, this shrine does not use hard liquor, soft drinks are used instead. Anyone who enters the shrine should at least be in some form of white clothes, nothing black is allowed there. Also there are no blood sacrifices made at the shrine because it is believed that St. Anthony is holy and for that matter nothing bloody should be associated with him. Women in their menses are prohibited from entering the shrine. In the event of the death of a member of the family, the ceremony which is done in the quest to cleanse the whole town from evil is withheld. Another peculiar thing about the nature of the shrine is that it is not always open to the public. According to the chief custodian, it opens to the public during the Easter festivities when the statue is cleansed and the water used to cleanse the town or there is something urgent that seriously needs the attention of Nana Ntona. In my case, I was granted exception from most of the rules and allowed to go into

the shrine although it was not the designated time. The custodians allowed me entry because it was for the purpose of research.

The most unique claim, however, is the fact that the custodians of the shrine claim it is a Christian shrine and for that matter they are Christians and not pagans as other people think. The priest of the shrine added his voice by saying that people think it is a pagan shrine because of a small stone in front of the shrine. In his words:

> *"The stone was deliberately put there to scare people away. You know that as Africans as we are, we fear gods. So the stone you see there is nothing but something to scare people away so that they do not get close to the shrine or even have the intention of breaking into it to take the statue." (Personal Communication, 15th December, 2017)*

The insistence of the custodians that they are Christians made me probe further for reasons for their claim. The chief custodian had a simple answer. He believed that whatever goes on at the shrine is no different from what Catholics do:

> *As the Catholics pray through saints like St. Mary and the others, we also pray through St. Anthony. The Catholics use candles and incense during worship. We also use these items. So my dear, it is not a pagan shrine. Which pagan shrine will have all these things? You can take a tour to the rest of the shrine in Elmina alone, not to talk of the whole country and you will see what I am talking about. (Personal Communication, 15th December, 2017)*

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Still trying to justify the Christianity of the shrine, the linguist of the shrine made it known that the procession and cleansing of the land is done not on any other day or time than during the Easter festivities. The custodians revealed that apart from being the custodians of the Ntona shrine, they are all members of churches. The chief custodian said he used to be a catholic, but is now an ordained minister of the Baptist church. The priest of the shrine told me that he is a member of the Muzama Disco Christo Church, and the linguist is a member of the Odifo Nkansah Church. The Muzama and Odifo Nkansah churches are well known AICs in Ghana. They will qualify generally to be part of African Christianity, though they too are known to incorporate aspects of Ghanaian Traditional beliefs and religious practices into their doctrine and worship.

The question that followed sought to know the kind of people who visit the shrine. From their submission, people from all works of life visit the shrine, mainly for the purpose of prayers and research. According to them some catholic faithful and people from other religious backgrounds come to the shrine to seek the face of God on various issues. The chief custodian confirmed that when one comes there with a genuine need, prayers are said. Barren women come to the shrine and they have children. Sick people come and they get healed. Some students come for knowledge in order to succeed in school.

According to the priest of the shrine, a number of people have visited to seek the face of Nana Ntona. Some come for knowledge in order to succeed in school, while others come to seek help to restore lost items. For example, the priest of the shrine recalled the case of a woman who lost her child. When she

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brought her petition and prayers were offered to St. Anthony, her child was found. "We do not charge any fees here; however, as it is done in church, one brings a free will offering to thank St. Anthony for answering his or her request", he added. In narrating some of their experiences, they told me that they have had people coming to them to give testimony about their encounter with St. Anthony (Nana Ntona).

Finally, the chief custodian emphasised the Christian identity of the shrine by claiming that the Catholic Church in Elmina has sought on different occasions to reclaim the St. Anthony statue, but was denied. "Would they have asked for the statue if it was not Christian" he asked rhetorically.

2. Others

To the outside world, whatever goes on in the Ntona shrine is nothing but pagan worship. Speaking to the Catholic priest, he explained that from the perspective of the church, the purpose of the statue of St. Anthony of Padua has lost its essence at the Ntona shrine. According to him, instead of venerating the saint as a means to an end, it is now approached as an end in it- self. In explaining further he quoted a portion of the Bible saying that the Lord instructs believers not to make any images and bow to them. He quoted Exodus 20:3-5 to support his view.

> *You shall have no other gods before Me. You shall not*
> *make for yourself a carved image or any likeness that is in*
> *heaven above, or any likeness that is in the earth beneath*
> *or that is in the water under the earth; You shall not bow*

down to them or serve them. (Personal Communication,
15th January, 2018)

He went on to say that he is aware of the fact that people accuse the Catholic Church of faulting this particular commandment. According to him what they do with the statues is not to worship them or bow down to them. He gave an example from the Bible saying that when the Israelites were in the wilderness, they spoke against God and God punished them by sending serpents to bite them. When the Israelites showed remorse for what they had done, the Lord instructed Moses to make a serpent and set it on a pole that anyone who is bitten by a serpent and looked up at the image of the serpent would live. He interpreted this to mean that the serpent Moses made was not what spared the lives of the people, but rather it was used as a means to being save from dying.

The member of the Catholic Church in Elmina I spoke to, rejected the claim made by the custodians of the shrine that it is a Christian shrine. To him, it cannot be Christian because the rituals performed in the shrine cannot be compared to what goes on in the Catholic Church. He continued to say that catholic rituals are performed by trained priests and not lay people, not even catechists are allowed to do so. So, what is being done in the shrine is not Christian as the custodians claim.

According to him, catholic Christianity is structured and that one does not just do anything in the name of rituals. "They do not even have a liturgy they strictly follow", he said. He continued to say that if it is catholic devotion they claim to be doing, why is it that they have refused to hand over the statue to the

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Catholic Church? He considered that given the fact that the Ntona phenomenon is said to have developed due to lack of priests, why would the custodians now refuse to give the statue out to the Catholic Church to do things the proper way, since priests are available to offer guidance?

In his view, he does not recognise the Ntona shrine and all that comes with it as a religious group but rather a sect. Although he claimed the Ntona shrine has certain elements of African Traditional Religions, he will not place it under African Traditional Religion. He also said that until they develop a visible structure and a system for the training of their priests, one can only regard them as sect or as a cohort. When he was asked the name he would give to the shrine and its people, he said that he would call them "A break away Christian mimicking group or an opportunistic Christian mimicking group". 'Opportunistic' because according to him the people took the opportunity of the Portuguese absence and took into custody, the one thing they deemed important, the statue of St. Anthony of Padua, made it their own and turned it into a deity.

3. Focus Group Discussion

One of the leading points of the discussion was about the Christian identity of Nana Ntona and its adherents. The chief custodian responded to this answer by saying that the Ntona shrine is a Christian shrine and for that matter they are Christians. When asked how come they are Christians, his response was that as the Catholics pray through saints and they are Christians, it is the way same way they are also Christians. To them, whatever is practised in the shrine is Christianity because they believe that is what the Portuguese introduced to them.

According to the chief custodian, there is no difference between Ntona and St. Anthony; it is just that Ntona is the corrupt form of the name "Anthony".

The group further asked if the religion given to them by the Portuguese is what they still practise. In answering the question, he said that there have been some changes, in the sense that what the Portuguese priests did were imitated by the people and as the years went by, what was introduced by the Portuguese ended up in what is seen now at the shrine. For him, their ancestors already knew God and reached God through various mediums. All that the Portuguese did was to show them other mediums through which they could reach God, and these mediums were the saints brought by the Portuguese. According to him, they had the same practices with the Portuguese. The only thing the Portuguese did was to teach their ancestors that what they had introduced was called Christianity. He added that the Portuguese made the people aware that it was only saints who could send ones messages to God.

Another issue raised during the focus group discussion was about the stone in front of the shrine. The custodians made the group aware that the stone is not Ntona but the protector of Ntona. Because if had not been where it is, people would have gone to steal Ntona from the shrine. He mentioned the name of the stone to be 'Brafo'. According to them, sacrifices are performed at the point where the stone is including blood sacrifices. But no blood is allowed in the shrine itself. And if there is any death in the family, 'Brafo', that is the stone is pacified. So it means the stone is Ntona's body guard, this question came from the group, and the answer given by the chief custodian was, 'exactly'.

The custodians, especially the chief custodian accepted the fact that the kind of Christianity introduced by the Portuguese was received by the people of Elmina. However in trying to embrace it something happened. What happened was that the people of Elmina, in trying to express Christianity in their own way ended up with what they have now, and that it has been given an African expression. Thus whatever happened and is happening now is the African way of expressing the Christian faith which was introduced by the Portuguese in the 16th and 17th centuries.

D. St. Anthony, an African deity or a saint

The main focus of this theme was to find out if the statue of St. Anthony has been idolised or not. In getting answers, I consulted the custodians of the shrine, others who are not functionaries of the shrine and some literature.

1. Custodians

The question posed was, how come St. Anthony, being a catholic saint is counted among the pantheon of Elmina and you claim it is not a deity. In answering this question, the chief custodian said that at Ntona shrine there is no form of blood shedding. Also it is Nana Ntona who sanctifies all the other gods of the land. He claims that it is due to the lack of education their forefathers had is why people describe it as a deity. It is however part of the pantheon because whichever group rescued the statue is part of a community, so by defect it as well became a community thing. St. Anthony is believed to be a protector of the whole Elmina. So although not the first of the pantheon, Nana Ntona is believed to be the greatest. They added also that when it comes to popularity, Nana Ntona is not

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known among the people of Elmina as Benya is but then Ntona is the greatest in the land. According to the custodians, their forefathers refused to hand St. Anthony over to anybody because as at the time, the belief of the people was that the soul of Elmina resides in the statue. The main reason why photographs are not allowed in the shrine. "You should know that we are not pagans, we are Christians", they told me. According to them, their forefathers prayed to St. Anthony before embarking on wars and there were victories at the end of the day. What went wrong it that there was nobody to guide the people on the proper ways to pray to St. Anthony.

'It is not a deity or a god', they cried out.

2. Others

To people outside the shrine, the Ntona, which is the statue of St. Anthony is a deity. In speaking to the catholic priest, the Catholic Church do not want to have anything to do with the statue of St. Anthony because it has been idolised. In his view, the statue of St. Anthony is approached as an end and not a means to some end. To him Ntona is nothing, but a deity because its intended use is not being materialised.

The member of the Catholic Church in Elmina had the same view as the catholic priest that Ntona is a deity. He added that although not popular among the folks of Elmina, it wills some power in the land. According to him, the shrine has got some political, cultural, religious, social, and economic importance to the extent that politically and culturally, a chief cannot be enthroned without Ntona. He went on to say that during the time of enthronement of a chief, the Ntona

shrine is the last place the chief visits before he is declared as the chief of the land. He goes to the shrine for God's blessing.

The social importance of the Ntona shrine according to the catholic christian is that the whole issue about the shrine has been extended from a small group of curators to a family which were not necessarily curators. He said that it has now become a family affair, that it why whoever is the family head becomes the chief custodian of the shrine. In his view, the people have assimilated into the larger family.

On the economic side, the catholic faithful made it known that the people are now trying to put value on the things they do in the shrine, because the custodians demand money and other things from people who visit the shrine.

3. Focus Group Discussion

During the focus group discussion, the custodians stood by their position that St. Anthony or Ntona is not a deity. The chief custodian re-emphasised the fact that most people are of the view that it is a deity because of the stone placed in front of the shrine. According to him, the only reason the stone is placed there is to ward off people from getting closer to the shrine. In his view they might have lost possession of Ntona, if the stone had not been placed there.

He continued to say that the stone in front of the shrine serves as the protector of Ntona. For sacrifices and even blood sacrificed are performed where the stone is but not in the shrine. He also accepted the fact that it is the stone that can be called a deity and not Ntona.

Analysis of Data

Using analytic and descriptive tools, the discussion is based fundamentally on inference from the data gathered. As the data presentation, the discussion will be based on themes.

A. Popularity of the Ntona shrine

From the data collected it seems to be the case that the Ntona shrine is not popular among the people of Elmina. During my initial visit to the shrine, I had a very tough time locating the shrine because most people I asked for direction to the place had no idea of its existence. Even in Bantoma where the shrine is located, people did not have any idea about it.

Although the Ntona is not popular among the people of Elmina, it however plays a prominent role in the town. (Wartemberg, 1951, p.98) Without Ntona a chief cannot be enthroned. This is because after all ceremonial baths, the last point of call is the Ntona shrine. The catholic Christian explained that it is the final place the chief visited for God's blessing. Wartemberg gives a vivid description of this practice:

> *The Omanhene would then be conducted into the Ntona Buw where the statue of St. Anthony, a Portuguese relic had been kept and idolised as a fetish. The religious ceremony was concluded by the priest who was attended by a few privileged sect. The crowd moved from Dapatam and gathered within the precincts of the Ntona Buw. The Asafo equipped with their relics, war trophies, fiddles, horns, bugles, etc, are in readiness for processional march. The state drums, Mpintsin, Mbombaa, Apirade, and Kokogyina,*

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> *accompanied by the horn blowers played a dignified part while each Asafo was led by their standard and talking drum by which the Kyerema exchanged greetings. The Omanhene came out of the Ntona Buw and stepped directly into the palanquin; he was mounted and presented the second time to the populace who acclaimed him as Omanahene (Wartemberg, 1951, p.98).*

The practice naturally ascribes great importance to the Ntona shrine in endorsing the legitimacy of a newly enstooled chief in Elmina. It is, therefore, not surprising for the custodians to claim that Ntona is one of the most powerful shrines in Elmina today. But this claim only increases the paradox of the seeming invisibility of such a significant god in view of the political structure of Elmina. A possible explanation to this paradox may be the fact that many traditional practices surrounding the making of a chief are shrouded in secrecy. The average person is most likely to have scanty information about the process of enstoolment.

B. Historical circumstances of the development of the Ntona shrine.

All the responses on this theme had the same story to tell. It was the area of greatest consensus and the field data corroborated what exists in literature. From the data presented, it can be said that the history of the Ntona shrine can be traced to the departure of the Portuguese from the shores of the Elmina. Wiltgen (1956) contends that before their departure the priests entrusted items of the church including statues to the Elmina Christians. Among these things the most important was the statue of St. Anthony. Why the statue of St. Anthony? Prominence was

placed on the statue of St. Anthony because of the wonders the people ascribed to him.

> *How often had they seen it carried in procession! How often had the prayers of the catholic priest been answered when he begged God for rain through the intercession of this saint? And what numberless wonders had the saint performed, like the time he appeared in the woods to one of the Edina elite, cured him of his madness, told him to forsake his idols and go to the church of Mina and there ask the priest for baptism. Instinctive reverence for the sacred and powerful made the Edina Catholics treat this particular statue entrusted to them with special care. (Wiltgen, 1956, p.148)*

A careful study of the reasons for the development of the shrine reveals that first of all the people got possession of the statue. The next thing was to find a place of abode for the statue and the other thing also was to try to worship with the statue as they saw the Portuguese do. This however ended up in an unexpected way. It must be noted that the number one factor for the development of the Ntona was the absence of priests. According to the custodians of the shrine the reason why the shrine and its cult was able to develop was that there was no priest then to guide the people on how to use the statue for worship.

> *You see, most of our great ancestors were fetish and had natural powers given to them by the gods. And so when St. Anthony was brought and miracles were performed by St. Anthony, they became in tune with it. The faith (catholic faith) and that of my ancestors were converging*

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somewhere. They were almost the same. So when the Portuguese left and we got possession of the statue more miracles happened. When there was no rain in the town, they would go to the shrine and pray and perform some traditional ceremonies and in no time the rains will come down. Before a king is enthroned, it is demanded of him to come see us, otherwise he would never be king. That is the last stop where he will be cleansed. Then the powers are given to you to climb the palanquin. Even Nana Kondua who is the paramount chief of Elmina was here to be cleansed and then mounted the palanquin afterwards. We have a lot of powers you know. (Chief custodian of the Ntona shrine, personal Communication, 15th December, 2017)

The other thing was that the Dutch who were by then overlords of the land were not interested in anything Catholic and therefore ignored whatever went on. The Catholic Christian interviewed attested to this fact. According to him, 'because the Dutch were Calvinists, they did not use the Catholic tradition nor were they interested in anything Catholic. So they built their own church' apart from not being interested Wiltgen makes us aware of the fact that the Dutch used the situation to their advantage. 'Contrary to expectation the Dutch considered it to their advantage to be tolerant of the local religious practices. In fact, they even went so far as to support the fetish priests. (Wiltgen, 1956, p. 148)

One important argument that came up during the data presentation was that if the Portuguese were to have been present, the Ntona shrine would not have come into existence in the first place. The custodians together with the Catholic

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Christian agreed on this issue. An interaction with the custodians that proves this is shown below.

Question: What made Ntona shrine survive to this day?

It all started when the Portuguese left the shores of Elmina and the Dutch took over.

Question: So when the Portuguese left there was no European presence?

Not that. There was no father (priest) again who will oversee the worship, so it came to our ancestors. And as I said earlier on, because the people saw some similarities between their own faith and that of Christianity they did not hesitate to make St. Anthony their own. They gave St. Anthony a shrine and started to worship. They had no leader.

Question: Will your people have had possession of St Anthony and develop the worship of St. Anthony in the way it is today if the Portuguese priest had stayed on?

That is no!

Question: No? Something would have been different then?

Yes, because they were more enlightened and they knew why they brought the statue. Our worship was different, except that we know that before you reach the supreme you should go through someone. That is what our ancestors were doing to St. Anthony.

Question: it means that if the Portuguese had stayed, your family couldn't have become the custodian of the St. Anthony?

That is true.

Question: it also implies that your family would not have developed the type of worship of St. Anthony that you have today?

Yes.

In comparing this to what happened in Kongo, it can be established that but for the presence of the Portuguese, the Antonian movement in Kongo would have a different trajectory. It was able to die out because Portuguese of the influence. The Portuguese felt that the teachings of Dona Beatriz was not in line with theirs and she was also seen as a political threat.

C. Ntona shrine as an expression of African Christianity

Data presented on the nature of the Ntona shrine as African Christianity reveals two things. On the one hand, people who talk from outside the shrine (etic perspective) see the shrine as a pagan shrine. On the other hand, the custodians of the shrine or the insiders (emic perspective) see it as a Christian shrine.

From the etic perspective, the shrine is nothing other than a pagan shrine. Talking to the catholic faithful, he dismisses the claim of the custodians of the shrine as being a Christian shrine and whatever is being practised there is Christian. In his view these things do not make the shrine and what is being practised there Christian. The first one is that what is done in the shrine has no structure. In his view Catholicism is structured and therefore if the custodians of the shrine claim they have certain similarities with practices of the Catholic Church, he would not agree with them. He also says that there is no liturgy being

followed in the shrine. According to him rituals are not performed by just anybody, not even catechists. Moreover he does not see any system where by the priest are trained to take up a position in leading rituals in the shrine.

For him, although the Ntona shrine exhibits certain elements of African Traditional Religion, he would not classify them as such. In classifying the Ntona shrine the following ensued between the researcher and the interviewee.

Question; under which category of religion will you put the Ntona shrine?

An adulterated Christian sect.

Question: so you wouldn't term it as African Traditional Religion?

It's a sect.

Question: that means it wouldn't pass as African Traditional Religion

I wouldn't place it strictly there, although it has some elements of it. If the people will be forthcoming with who leads them, and the kind of training the person gets in leading the rituals in the Ntona shrine. Also they should be able to say how priesthood is passed on from one person to the other, and finally, what do they do there. For example what rituals do they perform to make water become holy? So if any religion has not got a strong structure, it is not a religion. It is a club or cohort.

Question: so for these reasons you would prefer to call it a sect?

Even a sect has got structure. I will prefer to call them a breakaway Christian mimicking group or an opportunistic Christian mimicking group. Because they took the opportunity of the absence of the Portuguese, and took into

custody, the one thing they deemed important, the statue of St. Anthony of Padua, made it their own and turned it into a deity.

Contrary to what is being said by others about the nature of the shrine, the custodians have a different view on it. To them the shrine is a Christian shrine and they are also Christians. From the data gathered it seems that what makes it a Christian shrine and makes the custodians Christians lies in the fact of Catholics being seen as Christians. According to them, what makes them Christians and the shrine a Christian shrine is that things done in the Ntona shrine is different from what goes on in other shrines. For instance, it is prohibited to perform blood sacrifices in the shrine. Also, in pouring libation, soft drinks are used and one should at least be in a white apparel before making entry into the shrine.

During my first visit to the shrine, some items were requested from me included a crate of soft drinks, a bottle of schnap, a box of white candles, a box of incense and a bottle of florida water. As stated earlier the soft drinks are used for libation prayers. The 'florida water' is also used for pouring libation. During prayers or worship, the candles and incense are placed at some points in the shrine. For the schnap, what I observed was that it was used for libation on the stone in front of the shrine before entry was made.

As any other shrine, it is expected of one to take off his or her footwear before going into the shrine. Upon entering the shrine, one will notice that it has been divided into two; the outer room and the inner room. In the outer room, what one sees are pots, and an old chalice lying in one corner of the room, with a dried animal skin hanging in the room. The inner room is where the statue of St.

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Anthony is kept. In the inner room there is a white cloth hanging in a corner. It is on this cloth that libation is poured. Behind the cloth is the statue of St. Anthony which is believed to be locally made. On the floor of the same room is a big gourd with white cloth covering it. The gourd is believed to contain the broken pieces of the initial statue of St. Anthony brought during the era of the Portuguese. Finally, there is a dug out portion in the shrine. Soil from it is mixed with water, moulded and given to some of the people who come to the shrine with issues to be solved. Directions are given to these people on how to use it.

Because the shrine has special days for entry to be made, some prayers were said to appease Nana Ntona (St. Anthony) for entering the shrine although it was not time to do so. This was during my first visit. The prayer was said by the priest of the shrine. After that the priest brings out the 'florida water', hands it over to me and asked me to pray for anything I need. He took the bottle from me and headed towards the statue of St. Anthony. Pouring the 'florida water' on the statue as he prayed, the priest asked Nana Ntona to grant whatever my heart desires.

The nature of the shrine is such that viewing it from an etic perspective (outsider's view), it exhibit to a large extent elements of African Traditional Religion. However the custodians claim they are Christians and the shrine, a Christian shrine. The basis for this claim from data gathered is that if Catholics are Christians, nothing prevents them from also being Christian. Thus from the perspective of the custodians (emic perspective), although it exhibits elements of African Traditional Religion, it is a Christian shrine. To the custodians of the

shrine, all that is going on is an African way of expressing Christianity brought to them some centuries ago. This issue is what Kollman (2010) talks about, that in classifying African Christianities, the insiders' self-perspective or the emic perspective should be considered.

The nature of the Ntona shrine will not allow it to fit into any of the classifications of African Christianities. In making reference to Kollman (2010), the first group is where African Christians were evaluated and seen as heretical. An example given by Kollman is Dona Beatriz Vita Kimpa and the Antonian movement. In the case of the Ntona shrine, the people were not seen as heretics because they were neither preaching against anybody or doctrine nor did they pose as a threat politically or religiously.

The second group included movements that arose from a variety of protestant bodies in which Africans wrestled control of their churches for themselves (Kollman, 2010). Out of this group sprang up the AICs. From the discussions so far, it is clear that the people of Elmina did not have to fight or struggle for self- governance for their newly found faith.

The third classification has to do with cultural distinctiveness, which of course was not the business of the people of Elmina in terms of the Ntona shrine.

In the fourth classification, Kollman makes us understand that it was based on political engagement or non-engagement, most of which ended up as New Religious Movements. This category, Kollman tells us links politically active African Christian movements with other political actors, religious and non-religious underscoring the role of Christianity in anticolonial resistance and

mobilization toward independence and more recent political activism. The Ntona will not fit into this category because it did not need to fight against colonialism for freedom.

Another classification is that of Ogbu Kalu. Kalu (2007) views African Christianity as building on pre-existing African cultural realities, so that there are organic connections between today's Pentecostal Charismatics, older AICs and earliest days of Christianity in sub- Saharan Africa rooted in a primal world view.

Per the claim of the custodians of the Ntona shrine, when a careful attention is given to the nature of the shrine, one will notice that it fails to fall under any of these categories stated above. Where then will be the place of the Ntona shrine? Would it probably fall under what Kollman (2010) argues that Kalu's classification overlooks African Christians who participate neither in AICs or Pentecostal Charismatics?

D. St. Anthony, an African deity or a saint

The study reveals that apart from the custodians of the shrine, other people believe that the statue of St. Anthony of Padua has been deified. Wiltgen (1956) contends that what the people believe in and pray to, is not St. Anthony of Padua but rather a deified personality called Ntona:

> *It was not the statue, a piece of wood, they trusted in. Nor again was it Saint Anthony as present in heaven to whom their prayers were directed. For they considered the statue neither a reminder of the saint nor the direct object of worship. The direct object of worship was and is today the deified personality called Ntona who was thought to reside*

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in and be confined by the statue of the saint. (Wiltgen, 1956, p. 151)

Apart from Wiltgen, two of the respondents who are not members of the shrine say that the statue of St. Anthony of Padua has been deified. For the catholic priest, the statue has become an end in itself instead of a means to some end. According to him the statue has been substituted in the place of God and for that matter it is not being venerated.

Conclusion

What is known as the Ntona shrine as stated earlier on in chapter one is the end result of the interaction between Portuguese Catholicism and the African culture and religion. What led to this, in my view was nothing but the historical circumstance. St. Anthony was received into a certain environment, an environment of as it were gods, spirits, etc. By virtue of the miracles that they saw with St. Anthony, the people immediately got in tune with it. The people who had by then received the new faith need not to be associated with any of the characteristics of classifying African Christianity. They did not need to fight against colonialism. They also did not need to rebel against any cultural domination or superiority. The Ntona shrine was made possible because the people had free space to develop.

The insistence of the custodians that the Ntona shrine is a Christian shrine despite contrary views from outsiders proves that in their attempt to Africanise Christianity, it became a complete africanization and so the form of Christianity developed has more elements of African Traditional Religion than Christianity.

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This phenomenon has been made possible because, in my view, I suspect that wherever Christianity and African Traditional Religion are left in an open field, provided the interaction take place on some African soil, and with African religiosity, the highest likelihood is that the end result will not be Pentecostal or charismatic, but some form of African Traditional Religion.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

This chapter presents a summary of the research process and main findings, draws conclusions from the main findings and gives recommendations based on the findings and conclusions drawn.

Summary

The study examines the nature of the Ntona shrine of Elmina in Ghana, exploring its nature and historical circumstances that accounted for its development. The goal of the study was to interrogate the models of classification of African Christianity. The research found that while the custodians and adherents of the Ntona shrine consider themselves to be Christian, everyone else thinks they are a "pagan" indigenous traditional religious sect. Of particular significance is the fact that while the Ntona phenomenon shows many of the elements of African Christianity, there are challenges in applying any of the classifications to grant Ntona inclusion in the classifications African Christianity.

The qualitative research approach was employed for the research. The historical and phenomenological methods were used, since the phenomenon studied was based more on historical narratives. Also the phenomenological method was used in order to know how the people of the Ntona shrine experience the phenomenon. The target population of the study constituted the custodians and adherents of the shrine and some indigenes of Elmina. The purposive and snowball sampling procedures were used to select respondents for the study.

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Research tools such as interviews and participant observation were used for data collection. The data collected was analysed according to themes.

Summary of Chapters

Chapter one provided an introduction to the study. In the background, I established that the subject on the classification of African Christianity cannot be said to have reached completion. This is because it excludes some experiences of initial interaction between Christianity and the African religion and culture like the Ntona shrine, especially when the adherents of the shrine claim to be Christians. I outlined three objectives and in order to realise these objectives I relied on four guiding questions. The purpose of the study was also highlighted.

I went on to discuss the methodology that was used to embark on the study. In this section, I relied on the views of scholars like Creswell (1998) and Kumekpor (2002) to use the qualitative design since it is appropriate for this study. The purposive sampling method was used to select my respondents from a population made of shrine custodians, and indigenes of the community within which the shrine is located. Observation and interviews were used as instruments to collect data. The chapter ended with the review of related literature. In the literature review, I looked at studies on Catholicism in West Africa, the concept of sainthood, veneration of saints, African Christianity and syncretism. I ended the chapter with organisation of the study and provided a summary of the chapter.

Chapter two addressed the concept of African Christianity. It paid attention to the beginnings of what has come be known as African Christianity and reasons for its occurrence. In this chapter it was revealed that the whole idea

of African Christianity is the African way of expressing Christianity brought into Africa by European missionaries. The chapter went on to discuss inculturation as one of the ways of addressing the issue of cultural interactions. The chapter ended by looking at classifications of African Christianity, making particular references to Kalu and Sundkler.

The third chapter focused on Antonianism in Kongo and in Ghana. In Kongo, the spot light was on Dona Beatriz Vita Kimpa and her Antonian movement. Antonianism in Ghana was discussed in light of the Ntona shrine of Elmina. The chapter began with a brief history of St. Anthony of Padua because it is the devotion to this saint that brought about Antonianism in the first place. The chapter went on to look at the history of the Ntona shrine and the historical circumstances that necessitated its survival. Also, this section discussed the issue of St. Anthony as a deity. I chapter ended by looking at the differences between Antonianism in Kongo and that of Ghana and drew inferences from these two Antonian movements.

In the fourth chapter, I focused on the analysis and discussion of the data. I organized my analysis along themes carved out of the research questions. Thus, the questions asked were grouped and responses provided by respondents have been transcribed. The questions were asked around the following themes; Popularity of the Ntona shrine, historical circumstances of the development of the Ntona shrine, the nature of Ntona shrine as African Christianity and St. Anthony as an African deity.

In the analysis, I analysed the responses of the respondents and summarized the results and discussions as presented in this chapter. One important issue from the analysis is that although the shrine is not popular among the people of Elmina, it plays a very important role in the life of the people. This is because without the Ntona shrine no chief can be made in the town. I summarized other findings and discussions and ended the chapter with a general conclusion.

Findings

The findings of the study were categorised into four main themes as follows:

A. Popularity of the Ntona shrine

B. Historical circumstances of the development of the Ntona shrine

C. Ntona shrine as an African Christianity

D. St. Anthony, an African deity or a saint

A. Popularity of the Ntona shrine

From the responses gathered, it was revealed that not many people in the township of Elmina know about the existence of the shrine. This means that the Ntona shrine is not very popular among the people of Elmina. Despite its unpopularity, the shrine plays a very important role in Elmina. Without the shrine, it will be very difficult, if not impossible to make a chief. It was also revealed that although the Benya deity is seen as the most popular of the land, Ntona surpasses it in terms of greatness.

Apart from its popularity, it was also revealed that Bantoma, where the shrine is actually located has a connection with Bantama in Kumasi. The people of Elmina traces their ancestry to the Bantama.

B. Historical circumstances for the development of the Ntona shrine

On the issue of the historical circumstances for the development of the Ntona shrine, it was realised that the first that led to the development of the shrine was the departure of the Portuguese from the shores of Elmina. Another factor was that after the Portuguese has left, the people of Elmina came into possession of items in the church which included the statue of St. Anthony of Padua. The statue of the saint gained some level of importance because of previous miracles associated to it. Furthermore the people, not having anyone to guide, then started imitating the Portuguese priests on how to worship with the statue of the saint and this gradually led to the shrine as we have it present day.

C. Ntona shrine as an expression of African Christianity

Data collected on the nature of the Ntona shrine revealed that the shrine is viewed form two perspectives; the etic perspective and the emic perspective. From the etic perspective, the Ntona shrine is nothing but a pagan shrine because it exhibit elements of African Traditional Religion. From the emic perspective, the shrine is a Christian shrine, although it exhibit tendencies of African Traditional Religion.to the adherents, they are also Christians. It was also discovered in this section that in their (the people of Elmina) attempt to Africanise Christianity, it became a complete africanization and so the form of Christianity

developed has more elements of African Traditional Religion than Christianity. It was also revealed that unlike other forms of African Christianity, the Ntona shrine did not fight for liberation from a superior power to manage its own affairs.

D. St. Anthony as an African deity

Although people outside the shrine say the statue of St. Anthony has been deified, the custodians of the shrine hold a different view. To the custodians, the statue is a medium through which they reach God. They say this because according to them, whatever is done for St. Anthony is not different from what the Catholics do to their saints.

Conclusion

Despite the fact that outsiders claim that the Ntona shrine is not a Christian shrine, the adherents insist that it is. They gave reasons to buttress the claim. According to them, during worship, candles and incense are used. Also as the Catholics pray through saints, they also pray through St. Anthony. In view of this claim, the study sought out to not only study the phenomenon from an emic perspective but also study it through the lenses of the classifications of African Christianity.

The development of the Ntona shrine began after the departure of the Portuguese from Elmina. Apart from the departure of the Portuguese from Elmina, the following chain of events led to the development of the shrine; the people taking possession of items in the church which included the statue of St. Anthony, the people's attempt to imitate the Portuguese priests, the people

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housing the statue to protect it; and also the Dutch not interfering in their religious life.

One peculiar thing that came up during the course of study was that the Ntona shrine plays a pivotal role in the lives of the Elminians. One is obliged to visit the Ntona shrine for God's blessing before being installed as a chief of the town. Thus, without the Ntona shrine there would be no chief in the town. Apart from this, the affairs of the shrine are steered by the Ekuna Nsona family. The one who takes care of the shrine in present time is the Abusuapayin of the family, who also doubles as the chief custodian of the shrine

The Ntona shrine is not recognised as a form of African Christianity and has therefore not been considered in the classification of African Christianity. This is because the Ntona phenomenon is one of the very first attempts made by Africans to Africanise the Christian faith brought down to them by the Europeans. This can be said to pre-date the new forms of African Christianity. I think it is about time scholars of African Christianity expand their horizon when dealing with classifications of African Christianity to include phenomena such as the Ntona shrine.

Recommendations

Since the Ntona shrine is not well known among the local folks of Elmina and yet it enshrines some of the history of Elmina and its political structure, it is recommended that the custodians should welcome many more researchers to study the shrine and to make their findings available to the public.

Furthermore, in classifying African Christianity, the study suggests that there is still more to be accounted for by scholars through research. Scholars need to consider a classificatory system that makes room for exploring initial or earliest initiatives to bid Western Christianity an African welcome. This was symbolically expressed in the title of this research as "Old Welcome".

The strongest recommendation from this research, therefore is the need to increase studies on how exactly to classify African Christianity. A more integrative approach can broaden the subject matter and relevance of African church history towards the discovery of African religiosity and cultural identity.
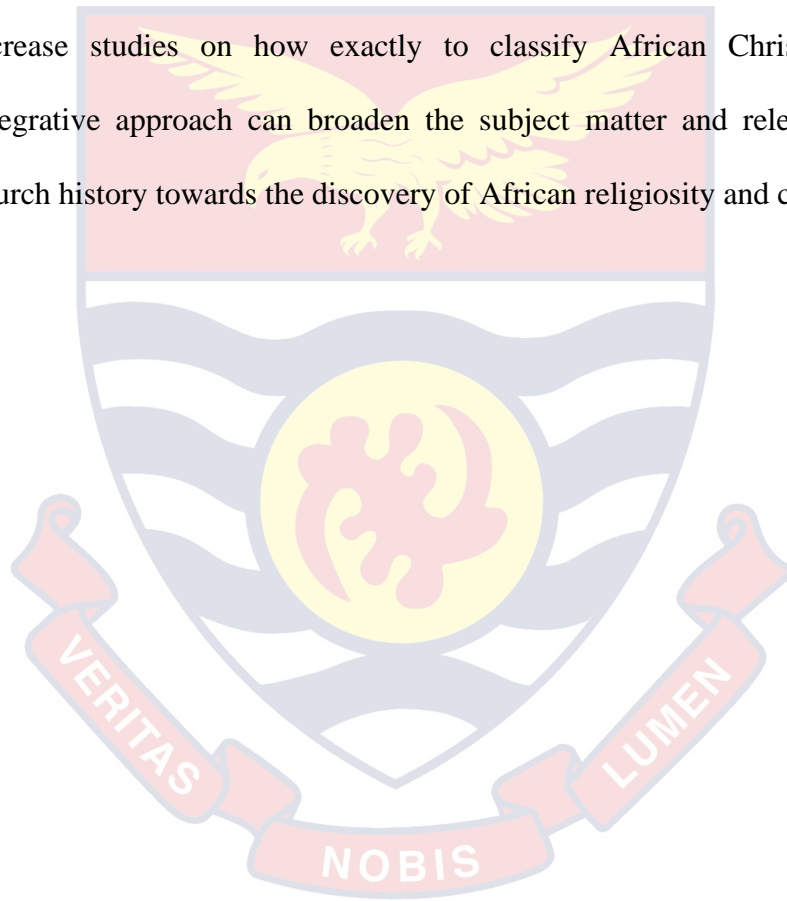
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APPENDIX A

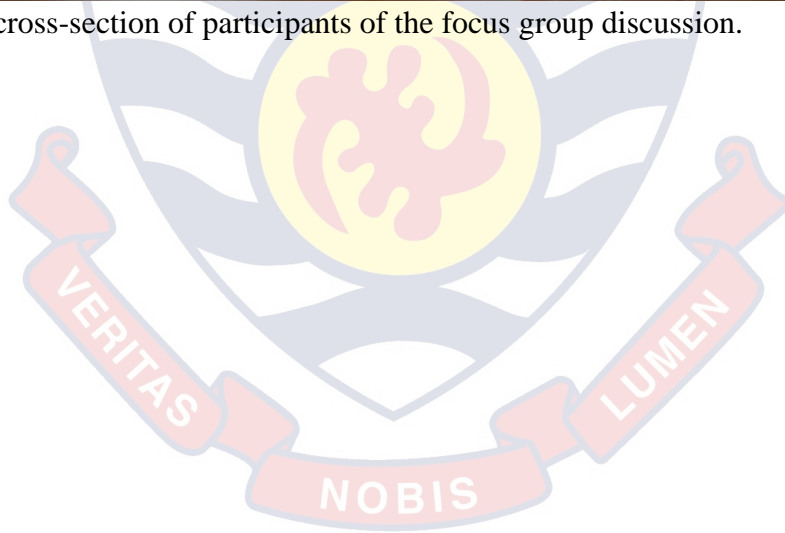The researcher with some of the custodians of the shrine.

Some custodians of the Ntona shrine

The 'god' in front of the Ntona shrine believed to be the protector of the Ntona.

A cross-section of participants of the focus group discussion.

APPENDIX B

FIELDWORK TRANSCRIPT SAMPLE

Interview with a member of the Catholic Church in Elmina

There may have been catholic masses said when the Portuguese arrived and traded in Shaman, nine years ago from 1482, but they were not recorded. And so the first recorded mass will be on the 19th of January, 1482. When Don Diago d'Azambuja arrived with 600 men to start the construction of the Elmina castle. So at the spot where the Elmina castle is now, was a tree and the first mass was celebrated under the shades of the tree. The Elminaians who will later on join in such masses will call the tree, "the tree of life (Nkwa-dua. Nkwa means life and Dua means tree)". So the first catholic actually call themselves "Nkwaduafo". Worshippers under the tree. And the word has been corrupted to "Kondua". So will see that the chief of Elmina is called "Kondua". So people having that……so that was on the 19th of January. It was on the feast of St. Fabian. So that was the first mass celebrated in Elmina.

Four years after the castle was built, it was declared a Portuguese city. So people of Elmina couldn't go there. Now on the spot where the tree was becoming the first catholic church, St. George's church. And so it is incorporated in the castle. But Elminaians couldn't go there and because of the agreement with the pope, the king of Portugal, Alhinso and the rest, wanted the people to be evangelized. And so they even paid for priest to come and evangelize to the people of Elmina. But then if also resulted in the coming of false priests because they were given gold. Etc.

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And further missionary activities were attempted by the Capuchins and the Augustinian fathers. It didn't go well because the Portuguese were primarily not here to evangelize. They came here to trade in Gold. So the evangelization was on low side.

They didn't come to meet the Africans faithless. They had their own way of doing things. Many of which coincided with the Christianity. They knew stealing is not good, they knew adultery is not good, they knew disrespect was not good. So all these principles were there, and they were strict and enforced. In all these communities, only the name was not attached to it as Christianity. But more so or having a deviation from the Christianity was them believes in smaller gods and their ancestors. They knew that there was the Almighty God that they called Kwame, Kwame means Saturday, and that they had to rest on the Sabbath. And then there were other gods who would act as ministers, intermediaries, or if you are a catholic you say Sainte. And then they were ancestors who were to guard the morals and you know in Elmina or everywhere, to become an ancestor means you would have lived quite an age over 60 and you would have lived a good life of which your name is harvested to be given to a new born person to emulate. So there were these moral things there, but the name was not Christianity.

The Portuguese were in Elmina from 1482…. At that time Elmina has become very important in the socio- economic life of Ghana. And by that time other European countries have also arrived in Ghana. There were the Dutch in Moree, the Dutch in Axim. So, they had spread all over the place but to get to Elmina was the problem. So the Dutch had made several attempts and on the fourth attempt in

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163, they succeeded in taking the castle (St. George's castle) in Elmina. They had asked the governor of Brazil, Nasar to give them the ships and those ships were used ad decoys, pretending to attack the castle from the sea but the real force came from Fort Nasar, in Moree by the land route and took it. So the governor at that time was Hayes and the incoming was…………. At that time the Christianity was to a certain level in Elmina. In fact, in 1503, about a 1000 people had been baptized on the St. James hill (Jargoltill). And on the spot, they had built St. James church. Apart from that, during the Portuguese era, there was St. Nicholas of …. Monastery. So the catholic church was here but was called the African Traditional Religion, it was so strong that it has not been cast away.

So 163 the Dutch defeated the Portuguese and dislodged them from the castle.

Now it was when they were going, that things or items that were used in the catholic church were given out and one of them was the St. Anthony's statue. Because the Dutch were not Catholics, they were Calvinists. And so they dint even used the Portuguese church. They made their own church on top of the female dungeon in Elmina. There you go and they say "Zion is the resting place of the lord". Just above the female dungeon where the governor can come and pick a woman for bed. If she agreed fine, or destruction if she disagreed. And the church was just there.

So when the Dutch had defeated the Portuguese, then the catholic church is such that it may be led by a trained priest. There was no trained priest so everybody in Elmina tried to mimic what the priest did in their worship. So three groups of the catholic church came up when the Portuguese left. One was the St. Anthony's

cult, or the Ntonafo. Then the other was the Santa Mariafo, these were devotees of the blessed virgin Mary. They walk through the town every Friday. Reciting the rosary "Santa Maria…., virgin Mary pray for us. Then the third was the Nkoduafo.

Now let us focus on Ntona because that is where your thrust is. Ntona was the St. Anthony statue, and the people did not know to worship with it, so they made it a deity. Now Elmina supposedly has got 77gods but the St. Anthony statue is not counted as one of the gods. for all other gods you pour libation, you give food etc. but for St. Anthony, you do not pour libation, you can only go to the shrine with white clothes, white candles and water. And it is the place that the priestesses and the priest of the smaller gods don't go because you lose your magical powers. So they don't go there.

Now the ritual for St. Anthony is water, white clothing and candles. And it is a place that the chiefs go for God's blessing before you can step into a palanquin. Any new chief would be sent to all the 76 gods but before you become a chief, we have to take you to St. Anthony's shrine for blessing.

So for that matter Elmina has got one hidden festival that people do not know. Everybody know of Bakatue, they have Bronya, bur there is one hidden called "kotobun kese", that is celebrated in the night, a week before the Bakatue. Because St. Anthony's ritual is not part of the fetish, it is done in the night with the water. After that everybody in the town must sleep, then they will sprinkle the town with the water from the ritual in St. Anthony's shrine. It is called "Kotobunkese". So I don't know if you are a catholic or not.

No, I am a Presbyterian

if you go to the catholic church on every Sunday, they renew their baptism. You will see them sprinkling water. It is called "a spurge". They purify themselves and it is this that the people also do. So after the rituals they also sprinkle the water all over the town to cleanse the town from evil. So this town has become a group of people in Elmina, Bantoma.

I went in to the shrine one day and it appears that…. And so I had the opportunity to go there. You will not see the statue. The statue must have fallen down and broken into pieces and they have collected all the pieces and put them into a goral

Like a big calabash

A big calabash with a lid. So you would not see the statue. It is in a big calabash on the table and there they do the rituals.

Sir please let me come in. Somewhere last month I was there and I was allowed entry apart from what you just described, I saw a statue of St. Anthony, it was all white washed; a white washed statue of St. Anthony like the one in the Basilica. The one in Basilica looks bigger than what is in the shrine

Then when I went in I did not see it.

May be they did not allow you to see it.

No. I would have been allowed to see it may be they had remade one. Because what is there in the calabash which is "Kalico", hope you saw it

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Yes

But then I will tell you, because there is the legend that a certain mad man who was in the bush near Elmina saw the man and the man asked the person to go to the castle and when he goes there he will be healed. He actually went there and when he described the man, they thought he had meet st. Anthony. So the believe in st. Anthony is very strong in Elmina. And so many homes have got statues of st. Anthony.

I see

Many homes have got the statue of st. Anthony. In fact, ….Eshun, when he died his statue was brought to me. It is in the museum. Because of the strong believe that is why the second patron of Elmina is St. Anthony, you understand if you look at the alter properly you will see St. Anthony effigies carries the baby Jesus. Is that right but there are two tablet there? One is St. Anthony travelling from morocco to Italy and the sea is rough and he calms the sea. And you know Elmina's are fishermen and the sea cane be rough at any time so they can probably pray to St. Anthony for intercession.

The second tablet is St. Anthony carrying the holy Eucharist and a donkey. So that is St. Anthony alter. Now on the right side you will find a Marian alter and that alter depicts Mary, star of the sea. you will see the sea underneath it is rough. So many homes have got St. Anthony statue. I am called Anthony myself and in the church, the first church society which was formed is the St. Anthony society. So I did not see the statue when I went there.

But now there is one there and they don't allow pictures to be taken. According to them, it contains the soul.

No, then what you saw was the gourd.

I know that is the broken pieces of the initial one from the bombardment.

It is not from the bombardment; it is from what the Portuguese left. so if there is an effigies of St. Anthony, I am inclined to think that it is a modern one. Did you look at it?

Yes, sir, if I had the features of St. Anthony with the baby Jesus and then you will see something like a bible beneath its Jesus. But then it has been white washed. So it is not like the one I saw at the museum.

Yes, because in Europe, sculpture is very nicely done. It is not any rural art and the way it is done the painting, etc. I think that is one of these statues of which a lot of them abound in town.

What circumstance would have led to the development of the shrine?

The circumstance was that there was no priest. the genesis on how it would become a shrine is that there was no ordained priest, so they tried to mimic what they saw the priest do, and everything was in Latin until Vatican II. The priest doing aspurgies which is a reminder of our baptism, so there is a festival in Elmina called "Kotobunkese" and it is done in the night. So you go to the shrine with candles and water. After that the water is used to sprinkle the whole town and nobody should be awake.

Our interest is in Africanizing Christianity and we are making a very bizarre academic non-faith related hypothesis. We are saying that normally in the

orthodox sense when we talk about Africanizing Christianity we identified the Christian elements directly when you go there, to the extent that they have seen but we have a different result, the result we have is that you go and you don't recognize Christianity, you recognize it like a Ghanaian traditional religion. Do you see that same picture?

Yes, I just discussed with her that the custodians of the shrine seem to have mixed their own clan demands into the attention of the place so the rule is, you go there with white cloth, candle and water. No drink. Now when you go there they demand soft drinks, schnapps etc.

Before you become a chief you have to go for God's blessing from Nana Ntona.

Why would they not take the chief to any of the established churches for Gods blessings?

In fact, all the chiefs of Elmina are technically Catholics because they are all "Konduas". The thing is they are not able to divorce this from the faith that they accepted.

Will it not be the case that anywhere Christianity will be introduced to the people who;

1. have no contact with western education,

2. they're not literates in their own way, cannot read, cannot write, where they will just take on Christianity by virtues of what they are able to understand in their own way. Is it not possible that the kind of Christianity that will come out could be this type of mixture that we have in the Ntona shrine?

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I tried to paint a scenario to her that they are many values which coincide with that of Christianity. Mimicking does not give the name Christianity. It is adulterated.

Would they have had the opportunity to do the things they did if there had been some western authority in Elmina at the time. Would Ntona shrine ever had come into existence?

The Ntona shrine would not have come into existence but even with western authority, the traditional things still went on.

What you are looking at is either or…. Either Christianity or traditional religion would have persisted. Now in this case, I like your word mimic. They mimicked and their mimickery developed somehow, I am wondering, was it able to develop because there was nobody available to say well no, this is not the way?

I do not think so; I think I have read baron. He would have given an account of the experiencing Ghana and Frs. Murat and Moreau have to talk of fetish and even when I look at my pariah dairies now.

Except that these ones much as they show the strengths of African believes, do not usually come as organized forms of faith as you will find in St. Anthony. Now this is what makes st. Anthony an interesting phenomenon. So what you have described is very important for us despite the presence of priests, you have Catholics who still practice their faith but they know this one would not be accepted by the priest. So they will wait for the priest to go and they will do theirs separately. And they never institute it or give it a

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name. You have given us a broader understanding of Africanization and its even taking place now and it is not as if what taking place at St. Anthony shrine is new or has stopped. The difference is that what is going on is some form of an aside. It does not find its way into the mainline. Now my feeling is that Ntona shrine is possible because of the absence of the priests. African things would have gone on but would not have had a shrine in the name of st. Anthony.

They wanted to keep the statue, do as was being done when the priests were here, but they did not know how and the other thing was that, at that time things were magical. Using Latin was magical. There are people in the church now in Elmina. For them Latin carries power because I have been a chorister for the past years. Latin looks like words which have been conjured. Many elderly people find fante masses ordinary.

As father was saying, the under current African rituals were there. It was not an organized thing like these three (3) groups can come up to say we are Ntona people, Konduafo, etc.

Are the Santa Mariafo and the Nkonfuafo still around?

There are some but unlike the Ntona they didn't get the Marian statue, so they don't have a place of congregation

So you would not accept that whatever goes in there is Christian?

No. It cannot be Christian. It mimics what they saw but it is not Christian.

Catholic rituals are done by the priests not by lay people, not even catechists. So what is being some there is mimickery.

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They say whatever they do, they have some similarities with the Catholicism because they use candles, water for sprinkling and all that.

Catholicism is structured. You just don't do anything in the name of rituals.

I am academically interested in the shrine because what it teaches about resilience in cultural elements of expressing in religion. So, as you have rightfully pointed out those things that tend to stick with people what they have come to believe, how difficult is it to turn from the curve. This is a much systematized phenomenon in the Ntona shrine. At least I am attempted to see the tenacity of the culture and religion being expressed at one point, making use of a religious artefact from Christianity, expressing a mimickery of Christianity.

I think so.

Father I think that the shrine has got a social. Economic, cultural, religious and political importance. This is because the Ntona people consider themselves so powerful and without them there cannot be a chief. Because it is there that you can become a choief with Gods blessings. So now they use political power for installations of chief.

Now the social side is that it has extended from a small group of curators to a family which were not necessarily curators. They are curators in a family. Now it has become a whole family. So it has got a social connotation.

Now the economic things are that they are trying to put value on what goes on there. They ask of money and other things.

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These people have assimilated the curators into the larger family. If it is catholic devotion they claim to be doing, why don't they give the statue to the Catholic Church? Why do they cling to it? The argument is, there were no priests. Now there are priests why do not you let them take over and do things properly.

Is that not what precisely leads to the so called AICs?

I have a different view. The different view started with the religions that I said existed before Judaism and Christianity. The Catholic Church came here, but when it became dominant between 1637 and 1880, for 200 years until James Marshak and co drew attention to it. There have been Presbyterians, Wesleyans, etc. the off-shoots of Christian religion did not start in Africa, it started in Europe. Pentecostalism in my view is people's inability to make interpretation of what God have given them to succeed and work with it. Rather than the making of miracles to give them financial hopes. Then peoples indigenous way of ascribing problem to spiritual circumstances for solution. Then this is taking advantage on the people who think they parade as if by their prayer of intercession people can have spiritual solution. Because these off shoots do not have liturgy. It is singing, clapping, read a verse and somebody who is a gifted creator trying to make homily. It is like a motivational talk so the people are going to these churches with their problems to be solved

A quest for miraculous solutions to problems and people taking advantage to be rich.

If we talk about AICS, can we also talk about European independent churches?

I think so

Which category of religion will you put Ntona shrine?

An Adulterated Christian sect.

So you would not term it ATR?

It is a sect

So it would not pass for ATR?

No. I would not place it strictly there. It has parts of it. If the people will be forth coming with

1. Who leads them

2. And what training dues the person gets in leading the rituals in the Ntona shrine.

3. How is it passed over to one priest to the other?

4. When they go in what is the liturgy there

5. What they do there. For example, what rituals do they do that makes water become holy water for sprinkling.

So if any religion I think which has not got a strong structure and training and all of that you would prefer to put them under the categories of a sect. even sect has got structures.

A BREAKWAY CHRISTIAN MIMICKING GROUP

An opportunistic Christian mimicking group. They took the opportunity, that the Portuguese wen, took the things and did not know how to go about it. They mimicked what they did.

Would you say that at its initial stages, the people thought they were doing something wrong?

No

So they probably did not think they were doing something wrong. Can we suspect that they knew, were they just trying to continue what they thought should be done?

They were trying to preserve what they accept as a faith. Trying to preserve some form of new faith.

Sir so does it mean that if the Portuguese were to be present to oversee things done with these relics and st. Anthony especially, we wouldn't have had the result we are having now?

I think so. Otherwise it would have happened when the Portuguese were here.

So the Portuguese would have had some form of correction, putting them in place, checking them as to how worship should be done?

Yes

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APPENDIX C

Interview Guide for non- practitioners of the Ntona shrine (Catholics)

1 a. Could you please tell me what you know about the Ntona shrine?

   b. The adherents of the Ntona shrine claim they are Christians, what do you say about their claim?

2 In an interview with the adherents of the Ntona shrine, they also claim that what they do at the shrine is not different from what Catholics do. Do you agree, why?

3 Has the Catholic Church shown the desire to take possession of the statue in the shrine? What do you think are the church's reasons for such a move?

4 Why will you honour or not honour an invitation to participate in or lead the devotions practiced at the Ntona shrine?

5 a. To which religion will you say Ntona shrine belong?

   b. Which characteristics make you categorise Ntona under that religion?
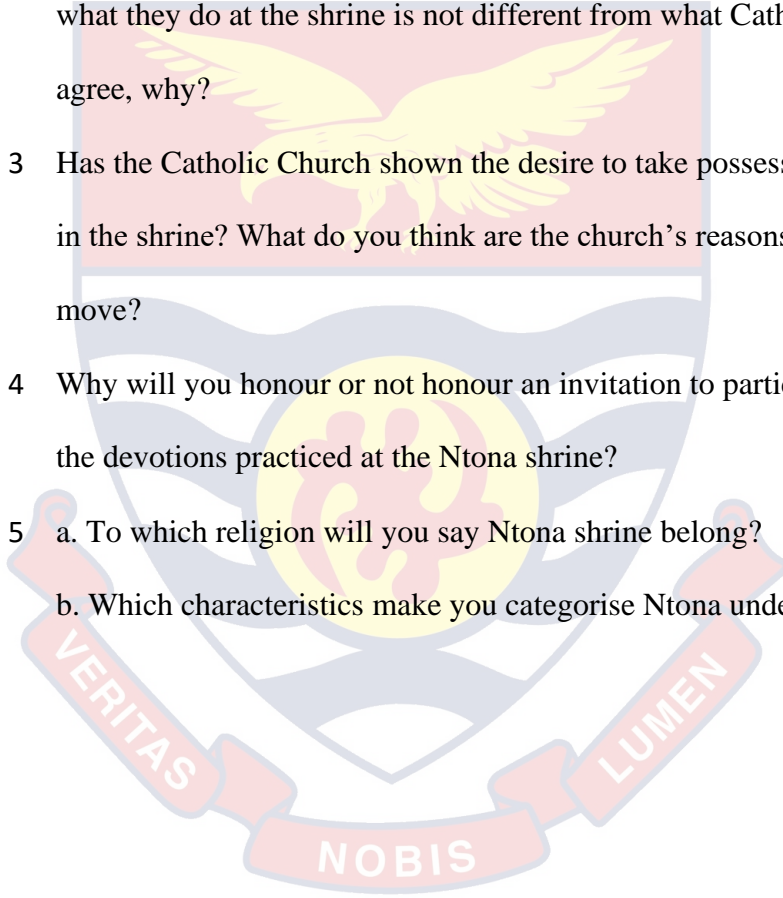
APPENDIX D

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR INTERVIEWS WITH CUSTODIANS OF THE NTONA SHRINE

1. Did you say the cult of Ntona began after the Portuguese left? What memories/ traditions/ stories were passed on to you about that time? (Eg. What was going on in the community regarding economics, health, security, culture, etc?)

2. How do Catholics Christians behave towards Ntona?

3. How do non-Catholics behave towards the Ntona shrine?

4. How would a traditional priest know that Ntona shrine is part of catholic Christianity?

5. In our last conversation, I understood that you consider yourselves to be Christian. How is that?

6. What do you think? How will the catholic priest react to you if you were to invite him to lead one of your ceremonies?

7. How will pastors of other churches respond to your invitation? Why?

8. Please tell me how you experience Christianity.

APPENDIX E

INTRODUCTORY LETTER

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Our Ref: RHV/R/1

5th April, 2018

Your Ref:

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

INTRODUCTORY LETTER: MISS DORCAS AMEDORME

The bearer of this letter is a student from the Department of Religion and Human Values, University of Cape Coast.

She is writing a thesis on the topic: *"Old welcome for New visitors: the Ntona shrine and African Christianity"*

The student will need information from your outfit.

I would therefore be grateful if you could offer her the needed assistance to enable her carry out the project.

Thanks for your cooperation.

Mabel Gaisie
Administrative Assistant
For: Supervisor

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