

**FIVE NARRATIVES OF RELIGIOUS ITINERARY FROM THE BOSOMEFI
AND ANOWA FAMILIES OF IDAN OGUAA IN FANTELAND, GHANA:
A THEOLOGICAL EXPLORATION OF THE AFFINITY BETWEEN THE
WORLD-VIEW OF THE CHRISTIAN SCRIPTURES AND THE AFRICAN
PRIMAL WORLD-VIEW**

By

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DECLARATION

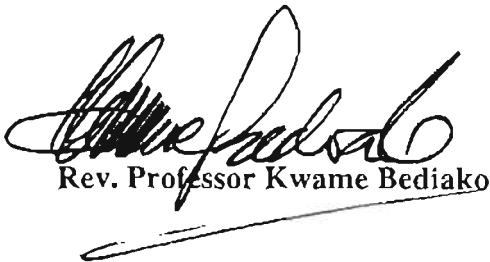
I declare that this work is my own, with the exception of acknowledged secondary sources and stories recorded, collected and edited from interviewees, or given as response to questionnaires or guidelines provided by me. It has not been submitted to any other university.

Signed



Alizon M Cleal

As supervisor, I have agreed that this dissertation be submitted for examination.



Rev. Professor Kwame Bediako

DEDICATION

To my son Henry John *Ekow Adusa* Abraham

*Abusua te se kwaee; wowo akyiri a, eye kusuu;
wopini ho a na wohunu se dua koro biara wo ne sibire.*

The family is like a forest – when you view it from afar it seems like one solid unit,
but from nearer up you see that each tree has its own individual identity.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

My sincere thanks to Professor Kwame Bediako from whom I have received every inspiration and help and who has sown the seed of all the key ideas in this work. Grateful thanks too to Dr. Philomena Mwaura who has patiently read early drafts and helped me establish some order. Thanks too to all at Akrofi-Christaller Memorial Centre and in the African Theological Fellowship in South Africa who looked after me when I was there.

Thanks to my family who have been very supportive. Most of all my thanks to the narrators of the five narrations that are the core of this study.

ABSTRACT

The purpose of the study is to show the presence of Christ in Fanteland by treating five Fante ancestral and current narratives as analogues of Genesis XIV and interpreting the resulting interpenetrating Scripture and Fante narratives *sensus plenior* in the manner of Hebrews VII for Fante Christians, revealing the hidden presence of Christ in them. This is made possible by a postulate of an affinity between the Hebrew world view and that of the Fante. What is considered right behaviour in Fanteland is also resonant with the ethics in Hebrews. A section on ethics arising out of the presence of Christ in the narrative follows in each case.

The first chapter is introductory giving the aim and objectives of the study the justification, scope and limitations. This is followed by the intellectual framework from secondary sources and the methodology used. In Chapter II there is a comparison of the world view of Hebrews and of Fanteland with a view to seeing their affinity. Chapters III –V give the literary and historical background to each narrative, the narratives themselves and a theological and ethical meditation.

In conclusion the fruit of these meditations is summarized and an evaluation is made.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Title Page	i
Declaration	ii
Dedication	iii
Acknowledgement	iv
Abstract	iv
Chapter I – Introduction: Study, Literature, Method	1
The task and its justification	1
Objectives	4
Scope	4
Academic foundation: Placing the research within existing literature	5
Fante world-view, oral discourse forms and history	6
Theology: narrative and transformational	9
Research: Design, scope and limitations, methodology and procedures	15
The Texts: narrations and interpretation	21
Biblical and Fante narratives as analogues	23
Chapter II – The Postulate of Affinity	24
General introduction	24
Fante world-view	24
God/Onyame: the origin of and help for order in the community	26
Place of <i>Nyame mma</i> in community	27
Stools	28
Ancestors	29
The individual's visible and invisible position within the community	30
Fear and the remedy	33
Authority in the community is spiritual	35
Contact with the world at large	40
Genesis XIV and the Epistle to the Hebrews: The biblical foundations	40
Hebrews XI.1 – XII:3: a chronology of a community's struggle	42
Melchizedek unites two communities in mutual respect	44
Faith in community	45
Analogical hermeneutics	47
The key assumptions and message of the Epistle to the Hebrews summarised	51
The world-view of the Fante set beside that of the Bible as seen in the chosen passages	51
Cultural and interpretative aids in communicating spiritual truth	53
Conclusion	54
Excursus: Introduction to the Families of Bosomfi (Nsona) and Anowa (Ekona), to the Narrators and to the Story seen as a whole	55
Maps, generational trees diagram and photographs	55

A summary of the story as a whole	59
Chapter III – Two God-Sends	65
Introduction	65
<i>Abokosem</i> : history, mystery and founder ancestors	66
Narrators	69
The bush cow saves the hunter	70
Theology: Exactly what or who is the <i>eko</i> ?	71
What does the story teach the clan of wisdom, respect and kindness?	73
The stool-carrier and his descendants	76
The narrator	77
The story	77
Who is this?	78
How can Christians think and act in order to be saved?	80
Right understanding and peace	80
Wisdom/ <i>nyansa</i>	81
Obedience/Respect/ <i>Bubu</i>	83
Unity depending on courtesy and faithfulness to the best so far seen, which is beyond both clans	84
Conclusion	88
Chapter IV – Two Nations and Two Roles: Nana Tutu Dadzie and an Overcomer in Life and Death, Rev. Mabel Abraham	89
Introduction to two family biographies	89
Literary genre of both accounts: biography	91
Nana Tutu Dadzie III and three members of the two families	92
Historical background	93
Nana Tutu Dadzie I (d.1934) and Bosomefi: the narrative`	95
Laments for Nana Tutu Dadzie I and for his wife Bosomefi	97
Who is this?	98
Who is my neighbour?	99
Respect	100
Community	101
Reverend/ <i>Osofo</i> Mabel Winifred Abraham – Musama Disco Christo Church:	
Army of the Cross of Christ	102
Literary genre	102
Anglican and MDCC Church history: the coup d’etat	103
The narratives, laments and tributes compiled – four life narratives	107
Tribute: the Akaboha’s Secretary, the late Rev. G.E. Osei	111
Opinions	111
Two death narratives	113
Second lament	113
Who did the prophecy come from? A spiritual reflection	114
The second choice	118
<i>Odupon Kese bi ebu</i> /The great tree has fallen	118
Obedience of faith and love	120
Conclusion`	120

Chapter V – Providence: The Narrative of Kodwo Mensah/William Emmanuel Edusa Abraham	122
Introduction	122
Fante and oral literary background	124
Literary genre	124
Historical background: The church and the First Republic	124
Narrative	126
Asafohen: a warning	126
The storm breaks	126
What must I do?	127
Who is Jesus Christ?	128
The Cross in light	129
Euphoria	131
Foreknowledge	131
A Catholic	132
Visions	133
The Bible	134
Blessing	134
Theology	134
Prevarication	135
Intellectual doubts	136
God	136
The Bible	139
Catholicism	140
Family ties	141
Fear and anger	141
The second blessing	142
<i>Pesher</i> – What must I do?	143
Repentance	143
Faith as understanding the real nature of reality	145
Faith as understanding	147
Faith as community and trust	147
Mother	148
Father	149
Love: the blessing	149
Conclusion	150
Chapter VI – Conclusion: Nsem nyinaa ne Nyame – The Foundation of Everything is in God	151
Introduction	151
The hunter: an ancestor who founded a community	152
Tekyiwa: an ancestor who was the mother of many in the community	153
Nana Tutu Dadzie I: an ancestor who achieved much for the community	154
Reverend Mabel Abraham: an ancestor who showed love for her community	155
An elder of the Bosomefi family: an ‘unfinished product’, William Kodwo Abraham	155

Overview	156
Bibliography	163
Appendices	168

Anowa and Abosumefi ancestral religious experience.

I am doing a piece of research on *African Christianity* and want to request *your* kind help. If you agree please go through the following questions with me or go away and fill in the answers and return them.

* 'record on tape' we will use the tape recorder, take notes, or write out on separate sheets.

Alizon

Name (Home) _____ (alias) _____

Place of Interview _____

Date and time of interview _____

Let us now praise famous women and our mothers that begat us

(Let us now praise famous men, and our father's that begat us).

I) What is your matri-clan, stool and totem?

Clan: Asona Kouna Other (specify) _____ Don't know _____

Stool Name _____ Totem _____

Meanings of the stool and totem; Stories connected with the stool and totem *(record on tape)

II) Do you belong to any other clan(s) in virtue of your father's marriage to your mother? Or other event? _____

III) How do you trace your membership of the matri-clan?

1) Mother _____

2) Grandmother _____

3) Great-grandmother _____

4) Great- Great- Grandmother (GGGM) _____

IV What do you know about the migrations of your ancestors from Cape Coast. Start as far back as you know, and give any event happening at the same time.

Pre-colonial _____

Colonial (before GGGM) _____

4) GGGM _____ to _____ Event _____

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION: STUDY, LITERATURE AND METHOD

1 The task and its justification

In this dissertation the writer seeks to explore five crucial and mainly chronologically consecutive narratives told within a traditional group that consists of two linked matriclans, descendants of Bosumefi and Anowa in Fanteland, Ghana. The aim is to set forth the narrative as a whole and elements within it which are significant from the Christian point of view. All the narrators are Christians, in good standing at the time of speaking or writing, and each is either an accepted representative member of the two matriclans, or has been chosen and trusted by such a member to trace part of the families' history. Each has used an oral or written literary form acceptable in traditional and modern Fante society and each is told from an African primal perspective which informs the narrators' self-understanding and their understanding of the converging and diverging spiritual itineraries of their two matriclans.

Gatumu, (2000) recommends 'the affinity' between the total world view of Scripture and that of African peoples as a postulate for theological exploration in Africa. Comparison of the Scripture with African cultural elements from this perspective, at any of his suggested points of departure, of which narrative and proverbs are two, should be relatively easy because of this affinity. He suggests that this could be a method to supplement and deepen historical-grammatical exegesis which is based on a Western scientific and secular world view remote from that of Scripture. The present work uses the postulate of affinity in seeing each of the five narratives of the families as analogues of the narrative of Melchisedek's meeting with Abraham in Genesis XIV. This opens the way to interpreting them, as has been done in Hebrews Chapter VII, not only as containing ethical guidance for African Christians in a memorable and culturally relevant form, but, even more vitally, as showing the very presence of Christ throughout the families' itinerary: at the core of sacred ancestral

myths, in contacts between Mamprusi and Fante, between church leaders and disciples, even in preventive detention. Just as surely, Christ will be found in future happenings. From this presence of the eternal *logos* within the families' core self-understanding, things of beauty and purity have flowed in the traditional past and with the introduction of Scripture and a recognition of who 'he' was, have flowed more freely, and now and in the future can continue to increase like a flood; for Christ is both King (and a fulfilment of the best in the tradition of rulers including the rulers of the Fante) and Priest of the Most High God, Mediator between God and Human beings, from whom the best in priestly functions, both inside and outside the church he founded, come (Chapter IV);. He is the initiator and fulfilment of all that is best in Gentile Greek and African cultures as well as in Hebrew culture. Cultures are a gift for every human being, one of the two ways in which Christ, Creator and human being, makes himself known. He makes himself known variously in our many cultures and he reveals himself uniquely through the events of his incarnation death, resurrection and ascension recorded in Scripture. But these two gifts are not unconnected. It is to Jesus that the best in our cultures points. To recognise living connection between the two is the way forward to understanding ourselves and Christ himself the infinitely translatable one more deeply and personally. The task, of which this dissertation is a small part, is to find a way of making this connection much clearer and more deeply meaningful to ourselves and others, so as to promote wholeness, Christian growth and Christ-like action among the individual members of our families, our own family groups and similar groups. This can happen as we all come to evaluate, recognise, appreciate, and live by what we have found of Jesus 'the way, the truth and the life' in the very elements which constitute the core of our cultures and of our own God-given identities.

Justification of the study

There are several ways of justifying this sort of work. A pastoral consideration is that through it Christ can be seen to be present at the 'grassroots' family level, not just during formal occasions in a church building. From the point of view of academic African Theology the work uses the tools of narrative and

transformational theology to complement each other. From the point of view of African hermeneutics it uses analogical hermeneutical methods that go right back to the type of interpretation used by first century Jewish scholars of the Hebrew sacred writings and by early African Church Fathers seeking to find a Greek Jesus. In the Eastern Orthodox and Ethiopian Churches today analogical exposition is the preferred method; while the Catholic Church has never rejected it, following St. Thomas Aquinas, and preachers across the denominational divides in Fanteland today use analogy both by means of narrative analogues and by proverbs at key points in Scriptural exposition, for humour, and to 'bring home' their message, supplementing the historical-grammatical methods which have been the hallmark of Reformation and Enlightenment scholarship.

Analogy will no doubt continue to be used widely for Scriptural exegesis in the pastoral context. There is also nothing new in using analogy to interpret other sacred narrative. The possibility of combining the two in Africa is seen to arise from the shared primal world view. The most fundamental wing of the evangelical church believes that Christ is to be found in every text of Old Testament Scripture however small; and while that can be a difficult, even stultifying programme to follow, the present assumptions are not dissimilar, but extend beyond the 'smallest text' to complete narratives and beyond the bounds of the Bible to events that have taken place on African soil. *Nsem nyinaa ne Nyame: Christ as Creator and Redeemer* is we believe in, through, above and the ground of everything.

The association with Scripture gives a public dimension to what are private narratives. The study is also given wider interest by linking it with the history of the Fante and taking a comparatively wide time span covering many generations and this widens the general interest of its somewhat narrow family focus. Finally, the memories and opinions recorded from the elderly Fante who helped with the study could also be seen as an impetus for a project encouraging Christian scholars working on Ghanaian Christian biography with the Akrofi Christaller Memorial Centre for Mission Research and Theology to include some homely narratives about ordinary unknown people such as the members of the Anowa and Bosumefi

families, (and Afua Kumah of Jesus of the Deep Forest) and find Christian inspiration in them.

Objectives

Assuming the foregoing to be our worthwhile aim, there are four objectives whose realisation will facilitate this task of connecting the five narratives that form the corpus with key Scripture, and bring it to completion as follows:

- i) Narrate the stories as received giving them a literary, historical and family context
- ii) See the narratives or elements in them as analogues of Genesis XIV realising the presence of Christ in each narrative employing the interpretive method used by the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews in Chapter VII (*sensus plenior*).
- iii) Examine ethical imperatives that arise by analogy in the manner of Hebrews Chapter XI (*peshet*)
- iv) Assemble the results for the different periods of the study to discern any recurring pattern over time, and evaluate these from theological and ethical perspectives

Scope

The first chapter places the research in its academic context and explains how the material was collected. The second gives a general overview of the Fante religio-cultural context and the relevant elements of Genesis XIV and the Epistle to the Hebrews. The affinities of primal world view between Scripture and Fante are made clear. Between Chapters II and III there is a short excursus on the families past and present, featuring the elders/*mpanyinfo*: the narrators in all cases but one. The two earliest narratives told by the descendants of Anowa are found in the third chapter. These describe the origin of the totem/*poma*/stick of the *Ekona* and the stool which unites the local branch of that clan descended from Anowa to the local branch of the *Nsona* descended from Bosumefi who is related to Anowa by common descent from Tekyiwa, and by adherence to it. Two biographies follow in

chapter four, one told by Nana Tutu Dadzie III (a descendant of the *Ahema* of Amanful) concerns Nana Tutu Dadzie I (d.1934), the Northerner who married Bosumefi. The second about MameEfuah Abraham is presented here as a compilation of a death narrative, laments and testimonies from the children of the deceased, her uterine brothers and her colleagues in the church. These representative individuals both died within living memory. An autobiographical extract from a letter by MameEfuah's brother Kodwo Abraham who was a former associate of Dr Kwame Nkrumah, dealing mainly with how he came to join the Catholic Church after the first Ghana coup d'état in 1966 is given in chapter five. Each narrative is preceded by a historical and literary context and followed by a theological discussion of its import and any ethical imperatives for Christians in Fanteland and beyond today. In Chapter VI the itinerary of all five narratives is treated as a unit to reveal any recurring patterns of theological and ethical interest.

The theological dialogue was usually developed from the comments of those who provided the core of the narrative.

2 Academic foundation: Placing the research within the existing literature

In this section the existing literature has been linked with the project.

A gap in research already done

The anthropology of the study is that of the family. However, though family studies have been central to African Anthropology and Sociology and have focused on kinship systems¹ in relation to socio-economic factors² and there has been work published on the family as a functioning unit in Ghana: Legon Family Research Papers³ and the family has been a target of both Catholic and Protestant pastoral

¹ Radcliffe -Brown A. R., and Daryll Forde eds, *African Systems of Kinship and Marriage*, OUP, 1950

Fox, Robin, *Kinship and Marriage*, Penguin Books, 1967

² Okali, Christine, *Cocoa and Kinship in Ghana, The Matrilineal Akan of Ghana*, Published for the International African Institute by Kegan Paul International, London, Boston and Melbourne, 1983, Penguin Books, 1967.

³ Lila E. Engberg, *Differentiation, Integration and Family Welfare*, Chapter 2 Legon Family Research Papers, Institute of African Studies, 1975.

and devotional studies, these have not been based on any research.⁴ To remedy this Pope John Paul II issued advice and set up the Pontifical Institute for Studies on Marriage and the Family in 1983. A Journal exists to publish its concerns in India but not yet in Africa.⁵ The Council of Churches in Ghana has separate departments for women's and children's affairs and all churchmen recognise the centrality of family to devotional and pastoral concerns. However the concern to research into the family shown by secular academics is only now being reflected in forth-coming African Protestant Theological research.⁶

Fante world view, oral discourse forms and history

The background to the study lies in the Fante world view and in the literary forms used by the Fante; and in the history of Oguaa and the surrounding area and of the whole Ghana nation. The Fante world view, like any other, can be split into five strands - ontology, regalia and sacred objects, special people, ethics and history. Relevant studies of Akan-Fante ontology can be found in the work of Rattray,⁷ Abraham,⁸ Danquah,⁹ and Adubofour.¹⁰ Sarpong¹¹ has written on the Sacred Stools of the Akan, and there has been a study of the form and meaning of linguists' sticks and totems by Ablade Glover of the College of Art, Kwame

⁴Price Thomas, *African Marriage*, SCM Research Pamphlets No 1, 1957 Benezeri Kisembo, Laurenti Magesa, Aylward Shorter, *Theological Reflection: African Christian Marriage*, Geoffrey Chapman 1977.

Biblical Foundation for a Christian Home, adapted from Moody Bible Institute Correspondence School Africa Christian Press

Report of the All Africa Seminar on the Christian Home and Family Life held at Mindolo Ecumenical Centre, Kitwe, 17th Feb- 10 April 1963, All Africa Church Conference, in collaboration with the World Council of Churches

⁵ *Apostolic Exhortation: Familiaris Consortia*, 1983.

⁶ This is no doubt because of the very private and sacred nature of the material, which it is the privilege of those who are members of families and no others to know. The knowledge that each Fante head of family/head of household has about the regalia and narratives associated with their ancestors defines both their own family membership and the corporate identity of their family group. It is shared with younger family members only as they are considered sufficiently mature; it cannot be shared with outsiders. If this taboo has in any way been lifted for the present writer it is only by the grace of God, and of the heads of family of descendants of Bosumefi and Anowa who have been more than gracious to her, trusting that to share these is in the will of Christ.

⁷ Rattray, Captain R.S. *Religion and Art in Ashanti*, Oxford at the Clarendon Press, 1937

⁸ Abraham W.E. *The Mind of Africa*, University of Chicago Press, 1962.

⁹ Danquah, J.B., *Akan Doctrine of God*, Dan and Coker, 1968

¹⁰ Adubofour, S.B., *Akan Cosmology*, unpublished PhD Thesis, Aberdeen, 1996

¹¹ Sarpong Peter, *The Sacred Stools of the Akan*, Ghana Publishing Corporation, 1971

Nkrumah University of Science and Technology. The outline of the training of an *Okomfo* (traditional priest) used here is taken from Rattray.¹² Ackah has written on Akan Ethics,¹³ Rattray on law and the constitution,¹⁴ Christaller has compiled proverbs with the main emphasis on the Akuapem dialect,¹⁵ and Peggy Appiah has recently published a compendious collection for the Asante dialect of Akan which has been used for many of the proverbs quoted in the work, which are therefore in the Asante dialect rather than the Mfantse.¹⁶ Fante-Akan customs connected with the Life Cycle (showing both the ontology and the ethics) have been illuminated by Rattray.¹⁷ There have been PhD theses, numerous articles in magazines and learned periodicals also.¹⁸ For a critical appraisal of the theory of blood relationship and 'race' as applied to the matrilineans, to the nation state, Pan Africanism and theories of Black identity the main source of inspiration has been Anthony Appiah's recent book: *In My Father's House*.¹⁹ The philosophy that enables us to perceive universal human issues behind the many different forms that socio-economic and religious life can assume can also be found in Abraham's *Mind of Africa*²⁰ from an African Christian point of view; the 'African' worldview for him is Akan. Gyekye's work on Akan Ethics discusses the ethical stance taken in Akan proverbs without linking this to cosmological considerations. He also makes the distinction between 'personhood' which is how the person's identity is related to his community and 'individual' which is how s/he is in herself or 'in isolation'.²¹ This distinction has been an assumption in what follows.

¹² Rattray, Captain R.S., *Religion and Art in Ashanti*, Oxford at the Clarendon Press, 1937

¹³ Kudadjie J.N, and. R.K.Aboagye-Mensah, *The Christian and Social Conduct*, Asempa, Accra 1992

¹⁴ Rattray, Captain R.S., *Ashanti Law and Constitution*, Oxford, 1929 50 Christaller, J.G., *Thousand Six*

Hundred Ghanaian Proverbs from the Asante and Fante languages, Translated: Kofi Ron Langer, The Edwin Meller Press, 2000

¹⁶ Appiah Peggy, Kwame Anthony Appiah, with Ivor Agyemang-Duah, *Bu Me Be, Akan Proverbs*, The Centre for Intellectual Renewal, 2001

¹⁷ Rattray, Captain R.S., *Religion and Art in Ashanti*, OUP 1955

¹⁸ e.g. *The Ghana Bulletin of Theology*

¹⁹ Appiah K. Anthony, *In my Father's House, Africa in the Philosophy of Culture*, OUP 1992

²⁰ Abraham, W. E. *The Mind of Africa*, University of Chicago Press, 1962.

²¹ Gyekye Kwame, *African Cultural Values An Introduction*, Sankofa, Accra, 1996 -*The Unexamined Life*, Philosophy in the African Experience, inaugural lecture delivered at the

History

The history is local, church and national only around the time of independence and the first coup d'état of 1966. The first two narratives are assumed to have the early migrations from the North as their background and the history of this period is taken from K. Nkansa Kyeremateng and Reverend C.C. Reindorf.²² The African caboceers and traders of the sixteenth century, seen as precursors of Nana Tutu Dadzie I and some information about the seventh *Asafo* company, rulers of Amanful and early history of the Methodist Society of Amanful has been gathered from Erskine's, *The History of Cape Coast: a short survey, dealing mainly with the history of the castle and town and giving lists of rulers and details of the Asafo companies.*,²³ The early history of Methodism in Ghana and *Oguaa* has been taken from the accounts of Debrunner,²⁴ Agbeti,²⁵ and Bartels,²⁶ while for the Christian history of Cape Coast and Elmina (which is closely adjacent), the life of Capitien, specifically, can be found in Kpobi's book *Mission in Chains*.²⁷ Understanding of Mabel's decision to join the Musama Disco Christo Church is given a background from Baeta²⁸ and Ayegboyin,²⁹ and from the church's own publications.³⁰ Her Church's and church leaders' records

University of Ghana, May 7th 1987, Ghana Universities Press Accra, 1988 : -*Tradition and modernity, Philosophical Reflections on the African Experience*, OUP, 1997.

²² Nkansa Kyeremateng, K., *The Akans of Ghana their History and Culture*, Sebewie, 1996 Reindorf, Reverend Carl Christian, *The History of the Gold Coast and Asante*, based on traditions and historical facts comprising a period of more than three centuries from about 1500 to 1860, Ghana University Press, Accra, 1966

²³ Graham J. Erskine, *Cape Coast in History*, Anglican Press, Cape Coast, 1994

²⁴ Debrunner, Hans W., *A History of Christianity in Ghana*, Waterville Publishing House, 1967

²⁵ Agbeti, J. Kofi, *Christian Missions and Church Foundation 1482-1919* Leiden, E.I. Brill, 1986 (in 2 Vols.).

²⁶ Bartels, F.L., *The Roots of Ghana Methodism*, Cambridge, 1965

²⁷ Kpobi, David Nii Anum, *Mission in Chains*, University of the Western Cape, 1953.

²⁸ Baeta, C G., *Prophetism in Ghana, A study of some 'spiritual' churches*, Charles and Sons Liverpool and London, 1962; reprinted by African Christian Press, Achimota, 2004.

²⁹ Ayegboyin Deji and S. Ademola Ishola, *African Indigenous Churches, A Historical Perspective*. Greater Heights Publications, Lagos, Nigeria, 1997. A Bamfo Atiemo, *The Rise of Independent Churches in Ghana*, Asempe Publishers, 1990

³⁰ (Prophet) Jehu Appiah, M.M., *The Musama Book of Rituals*, published at Mozano, 30/5/81 Miles, Kwasi, *Studies on Musama Church Reflections on Key Devotional Prayers Rituals(sic) of Musama Disco Church Vol.1* (undated) published at Mosano, PO Box 3, Gomoa Eshiem, via Swedru (etc.)

and documentation were also used. For a general discussion of church issues Barrett echoes the positive view of the proliferation of churches presented by Baeta.³¹

Details of the struggle for independence and the role of Dr Kwame Nkrumah in this and the subsequent history of the first Republic and the first coup are largely taken from the account by J. Pobee in *Kwame Nkrumah and the Church in Ghana 1949-1966* together with personal recollections and some corrections and additions from Professor W. Emmanuel Abraham in Chapter V. Kwame Bediako takes up the theme of servant leadership³² with an account of the life of 'Pa Willy' (who like Professor Abraham experienced the hand of God on his life for good in Preventive Detention).

Theology: Narrative, and transformational

The dissertation is concerned with exploring and evaluating five narrative texts as a way of theologizing, and so some reference to the literature on narrative theology is appropriate. Gatumu's work³³ on the importance of primal narrative has been mentioned (p1) but he does not give principles of procedure and what may be involved in details. Tracey and Ricoeur are both Western writers and yet their work seems very pertinent to African oral cultures.

Tracey says:³⁴

'There is something intrinsic in experience which demands narrative. In part, I suspect, narrative alone provides us with a fuller way to unify our actual lived experience.'

He points out that people's stories reveal their character and their potential. Just as the story of how someone lived and faced death may be more inspiring than philosophical reflections upon mortality, so another, showing pride leading to a fall

³¹ Barrett, David B., *Schism and Renewal in Africa*, An Analysis of 600 contemporary religious movements, OUP, 1968.

³² Bediako, Kwame, *Christianity in Africa, The Renewal of a Non-Western Religion*, Edinburgh University Press, 1995, pp 55ff.

³³ wa Gatumu, Kabiri, *Hermeneutics in Africa and the Primal World View*, MTh Thesis for the University of Natal, 2000

³⁴ David Tracey, *The Analogical Imagination, Christian Theology and the Culture of Pluralism*, SCM Press, 1980s p.275 in a section on narrative in the gospels

may have more deterrent effect than a discourse on ethics. A story depicting joy will move us more than a: 'description of an abstract Utopia.'³⁵ In an African setting these reactions may be through re-iterated choruses and solo songs that express the mood of the whole family audience.

The narrative, whatever its original purpose, has also the potential to be interpreted differently. If this was not so, stories might only have antiquarian interest or no interest at all. The narrative is raw material for theology but not just the stepping-stone to it. When an abstraction has been reached we do not abandon the detail from which it has been abstracted which is the pith of the process, Tracey suggests. By leaving in the detail too we make it possible for another person to approach the same story and derive a different message from it. In African story telling there may also be pauses to allow each person in the audience to absorb what has been said and form their own opinion.³⁶ Tracey is an encouragement to theological researchers to use the analogies the Biblical narratives can provide with other sacred narratives. He recommends seeking for affinities using what he calls 'classical' texts,³⁷ and to adopting the narrative style.³⁸ The texts here are only 'classical' in the sense of normative for the sub-culture, an argument is lacking to show that these methods are appropriate only to Western texts of proven value in a Western context.

The assembling of the narrative texts of the dissertation follows Ricoeur in treating 'myth' and 'history' as having a similar focus in the present situation of the

³⁵ David Tracey, op.cit.

³⁶ The one who sets out to write a work of fiction may be following a similar trajectory but without the limitations of an accurate record and chronology that circumscribe a work of history such as this dissertation sets out in part to be. Achebe, Chinua, *Things Fall Apart*, Heinemann, 1950 (and *No Longer at Ease*), Heinemann, 1950) follows the history of three generations of Okonkwo and his family (Igbo, Nigeria) showing the effect that the coming of the missionaries, Christianity, education and modern technology had upon traditional life over three generations. He was writing in 1950 but dealing with his grandfather's generation-and many of the same issues have arisen from similar situations in Fanteland.

³⁷ The writer is certainly extending his view of 'classical texts' beyond what he originally envisaged, since he requires a higher degree of public recognition than is obtained within a family.

³⁸ David Tracey. If we cut out the narrative from the Bible leaving only Theology in its pure abstract form we will be left with little but the Psalms and the epistles of Paul, which are very valuable and yet even they relate to the narratives in I and II Samuel and in Acts respectively. For an example of African autobiography see Appiah Joe, *The Autobiography of an African Patriot*, Asempa, 1996.

narrator and his/her audience. This is the Fante view too which sees each as a part of one category: *abakosem*. The interpretation of the texts follows Ricoeur and Fante custom both in emphasizing God's intervention, or the intervention of his 'children' (*abosom*) as a core inspiration from the past to noble deeds in the present; and also in exploring, analysing and evaluating choices made at crisis moments in the plot where the alternatives presented bring issues of present interest into focus.

The writer has included myth and history³⁹ in a continuous narrative as both types of religious narrative have theological meaning; the fiction getting to the essential heart more directly by leaving the so-called 'possible' behind. The Fante give one name to both: *abakosem*/words about ancestors or the past, and regard both with great respect.

The raconteur (preacher, story-teller or advertiser), whether of history or fiction, needs to have a purpose in the telling which is linked to present concerns if s/he is to prevent those not captive in the audience from being distracted and drifting away.⁴⁰ Both the early myths and the historical narratives of the dissertation have links with pressing present matters of concern to Christians in the family and beyond. However, the writer has exercised caution in treating the narratives from the past as 'heroic' stories about man's intrepidity. Rather than taking the 'heroes' as people whose specific heroic actions are to be imitated, Christians should imitate them in their reliance upon God who is the 'absolute initiative as to origin and content'.

Finally Ricoeur talks of God-given choice as the focus for testimony and for the sense of surprise that is always essential to a good story. Choice is: 'two-fold, it is an act of consciousness in itself, and an act of historical understanding based on the signs that the absolute gives of itself.'⁴¹ It is with this in mind that the writer has

³⁹Paul Ricoeur: *Hermeneutics and the Human Sciences*, ed.& trans. John B. Thompson CUP,1981, where he says: 'History opens us to the possible,...fiction, by opening us to the unreal leads us to what is essential.' He also says it is: 'Interest (that) orientates a cognitive activity.' pp 274-276

⁴⁰ He says it is: 'Interest (that) orientates a cognitive activity.' pp 274-276 op. cit.

⁴¹ 'Testimony proceeds from an absolute initiative as to the origin and content... The unfolding of the action implies alternatives, bifurcations, hence contingent connections which create the feeling of

focused on the choices faced by each of the human protagonists in the family narratives.

Transformational

Recognising the five narratives as entry points for theologizing in African Christianity, it is necessary to also to place our present work within recent developments in African Theology. Starting from the key doctrines of the Fall and the Incarnation, African Theologians have interpreted the interaction of Christ and culture differently. Enculturation theologians have recommended using African symbolism, drumming and dancing to enliven Christian worship and so make Christ's incarnation and saving work as African in Africa evident. The Very Reverend Kwasi Sarpong, Roman Catholic bishop of Kumasi, can be taken as an example among Akan theologians.⁴² He looks to the dances and artefacts of the Akan to make Christian worship more beautiful and the Akan ethical tradition as a local enhancement of Christian ethics. This has much value but it is not our approach. Indigenising African Theologians, on the other hand, focus on the religious meanings in traditional belief and practices and their closeness to the gospel of Christ. The focus is on African tradition. An example among Fante Akan Church leaders are the first two Akaboha of the Musama Disco Christo Church,⁴³ and in Nigeria, Professor E.B. Idowu of the Yoruba.⁴⁴ These all emphasize that Christ was already present in Africa before his name and the Bible narrative came to be known, but perhaps fail to fully grasp the depth of the change that commitment to him entails in the cultural beliefs and practices (though not in the world view)..

Like Bediako, I seek to avoid the danger of superficiality in enculturation theology and the danger of syncretism in indigenisation. I see Christ in the Scripture and the

surprise essential to the interest taken by the hearer or reader.' Paul Ricoeur, *Essays in Biblical Interpretation*, ed. & with Introduction by Louis S. Mudge, SPCK, London 1981 'The 'text' both gives the content to be interpreted and calls for an end to the infinite regress of reflection.'

⁴² Sarpong, Peter, *Ghana in Retrospect, Some Aspects of Ghanaian Culture*, and his *Sacred Stools of the Akan*, Ghana Publishing Corp., 1971&1977.

⁴³ They revived animal sacrifice as a practice of restricted access before their Peace festival.

⁴⁴ Idowu E.B., *Olodumare – God in Yoruba Belief*, Longman 1966

Sacraments as ultimately supreme; but in dialogue with the African traditional context, the two are methodological equals. I seek to arrive at a synthesis that does not accommodate the traditional at all cost (thus becoming syncretistic) nor see the mission Churches' projection of the Scriptures and Sacraments as unchangeable givens while the African waits to be transformed (thus assuming a cultural superiority) but regarding the two methodologically as both in a process of dialogue and change, the result of which will be a unique but recognisable form of Christianity.⁴⁵ I affirm that, though the ancient Hebrew writings are normative, Christ had already been recognisably present before he was named or believed in by Gentiles and among them Africans. His transforming power to rescue from evil and human malice is fully available through the Biblical witness to the cross⁴⁶ but prior to a knowledge of this, each gentile lineage, including that of the Amorite, Melchisedek, and that of the Mamprusi, J.H. Dadzie, has had its unique way of understanding God. So far I agree with Idowu. However it is Jesus who fully revealed God, and each culture, like that of the Jews of Jesus time, is part of the fallen world and needs transformation. This transformation may be instantaneous as individuals and groups are converted; and on-going as his disciples use their own culturally based understanding of Scripture.⁴⁷ Both culture and scripture are indispensable for a dynamic that is sustainable and both have their place in our present work. I agree with Zahniser,⁴⁸ who argues that the story of creation in Genesis 1 shows that human creativity in culture and language flows from the image of God in humans not from their fallen nature. God caused human diversity. Kwesi Dickson⁴⁹ says of the interpretation of the Tower narrative in Genesis XI: 'though human pride is deprecated, cultural development *per se* is not condemned.'

⁴⁵ Bediako, K., *Christianity in Africa, Chapter VII, Translatability and Cultural incarnations of the Faith*, Edinburgh University Press, 1995, p.109 ff.

⁴⁶ Nyamiti, Charles, *The Problem of Evil in African Traditional Cultures and Today's African Inculturation and Liberation Theologies*, Voices from the Third World, Vol. 19, reprinted from African Christian Studies Journal of the Catholic University of Eastern Africa, Nairobi, Kenya, 1993.

⁴⁷ Kwame Bediako, *Scripture in the hermeneutic of Culture and Tradition*, Journal of African Christian Thought, Vol 4 No 1, June 2001, pp 142

⁴⁸ A.H.M. Zahniser, *Symbol and Ceremony, Making Disciples across Cultures*, Innovations in Mission, California USA (after 1999)

⁴⁹ Dickson, K., *Theology in Africa*, Darton, Longman and Todd, 1995, on Genesis XI,

Christ has preceded the preaching⁵⁰ and 'pre-Christian religious memories underlie African Christians' identity today.' Religion in Africa has always related fully to everyday life, in contrast to 'European secular self-understanding' and I hope to see that African Christianity will continue to develop along this line.⁵¹

Yet the religious life could be seen from an African theological perspective as a long and continuous struggle, even from one generation to the next, as in a race or 'an itinerary'.⁵² Different spiritual itineraries might together make up a pattern of criss-crossing paths.⁵³ 'Transformation' could be seen as a change of direction in one of these paths or a change of level in the whole complex of criss-crossing paths through time that make up the past present and future of the community. The perspective of Andrew Walls⁵⁴ provides an alternative, preferred by this writer, to the view of Christian history as a story of continual global progress. Christian History is viewed through the Biblical perspective of 'remnant' theology as in constant change declining in one place and advancing in another. Africa has been seen as receiving from the West in the past, but now, (2004) as Christianity declines in the West and a remnant is left there in a largely secular environment, the converse is true in Africa where there is now a new Christian heartland. This makes the theological enterprise more exciting here. William Robertson Smith found many similarities between the Hebrew world view and that of the surrounding Semitic peoples of Old Testament times. He was a pioneer in researching the spirituality of primal cultures from a Christian view point. Numerous similarities are evident also between the Middle Eastern the Biblical and the African traditional world-views. These similarities lead us to classify all these

⁵⁰ John Mbiti, *Introduction to African Religion and Philosophy*, SPCK, 1989

⁵¹ Gillian Mary Bediako, *Primal Religion and the Bible, William Robertson Smith and his Heritage*, Sheffield Academic Press, 1997

⁵² Philippians, Chapter II. (Re-incarnation is not envisaged in Christian/Hebrew thought, so going 'round in circles' is an image for aimlessness and sin rather than immortality. A circle is said to be a symbol of perfection for the Akan but others say it is simply a basic Adinkra stamp design. In Hindu thought the cycle is a key image.

⁵³ Kwame Bediako personal communication

⁵⁴ Andrew Walls, *The Missionary Movement in Christian History*, Orbis Books, 1996

cultures as 'primal. Primal cultures contrast with post-Enlightenment Western culture and are said to be very open to the process of Christian transformation.⁵⁵

5 Research: design, scope and limitations and methodology and procedures

The academic research was designed within the framework of the chosen Bible passages. The analogical methods of *sensus plenior* and *peshet* were chosen as appropriate to the primal material from Scripture and from Akan oral discourse and these methods allowed the Biblical narrative source to throw light upon the Fante narratives and vice versa. The work built on the foundation of existing work in family studies, oral literature, culture and religion, history and theology as described in the previous section. The texts emanated from the two linked families, as defined by blood relationship through the mother's blood-line mainly, but also through those who married into the families and the father's semen/spirit/*ntoro* if this should seem relevant to the narrators.

It was only after working through the material for many months after it had been carefully recorded in the form of texts that I decided to treat the material that I had collected as texts rather than as data. There were three reasons for this decision. Firstly I was aware of the lack of corroborative evidence for the 'facts' of the study, so to treat the information as hard data seemed presumptuous. Secondly, my own opinions and the Biblical assessments of the final theological sections would in this way be kept methodologically separate from the stated opinions of interviewees which thus became the focus; and excessive confusion of the two would be avoided. Thirdly the texts could be the basis for a quite different analysis from that which is offered here.

⁵⁵ Bediako Gillian Mary, *Primal Religion and the Bible, William Robertson Smith and his Heritage*, Sheffield Academic Press, 1997 - also her lectures with Kwame Bediako on primal religion and the Bible at the School of Theology, University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg, 2003.

Limitations: theoretical and practical

The scope of the study was limited in two ways

a. Theoretical

World Views

The Fante cosmology and world view is given only in so far as it elucidates the family story and there is no attempt to match it with a corresponding overview of the traditional Mamprusi world view, which would certainly have informed the parents of Nana Tutu Dadzie I; nor has there been any attempt to trace the Muslim/Northern/traditional view from which the 'Kramo' of the last story comes, or the fishermen's world view so evident in the funeral rites for *Nsona* fishermen descended from Bosumefi. A major feature of Fante culture is its ability to absorb many different elements, yet the selected focus ruled out their study. Even the Fante traditional beliefs are given only the simplified treatment needed to make the narratives more understandable⁵⁶

Oral discourse types

There are many different types of Fante narratives including *anansesem*/spider stories which are about trickery and are in the nature of cautionary tales. The narrators chose to tell *abakosem/ amanee*, serious words about the past either distant remembered through oral tradition, from the ancestors, or personal memories of moral and spiritual worth focusing on their faith. The purpose of such tales is encouragement rather than warning which occurs in other contexts. The types covered are *abakosem*: aetiological myth, life before death oral and written narratives; 'laments' and tributes; and *amanee*/ traveller's tales (autobiography; literally 'woes'.

⁵⁶ The history and ethos of the Musama Disco Christo Church is given only as a framework for *Osofo Mabel's* decision to join the new church, her pastoral work in the various stations and her recent death, and is not intended to be a comprehensive balanced account of the church's history and structure. The political history of the nation of Ghana during the twentieth century provided here begins and ends with what is necessary to clarify the political and religious choices made by Professor W. E. Abraham and therefore starts with steps towards independence and ends with the first coup d'état. There is no attempt to provide a complete overview of the history of Ghana or her churches. Though the early history of Oguaa is broadly covered, recent lists of chiefs and discussion of issues are not dealt with other than those arising for in the narrative of Nana Tutu Dadzie I.

History

The five narratives are drawn from different generations of the history of the families, and an attempt has been made to combine these into a single coherent historical narrative. However there are severe limitations on the historical aspects of this enterprise which is in essence theological. In the archaic period, though there is some documentary and archaeological evidence for the migrations, there is none for the story of the totem: a myth, for which a search for evidence is inappropriate. There is corroborative evidence for the Asante wars but none for the arrival of the stool and Abosomdwowa's mysterious itinerary. The totem (which is public) and the stool, which cannot be viewed, constitute the visible present 'evidence'. The background of the third story after the defeat of Asante and prior to the Second World War is documented and a list of rulers, a tombstone, houses and a visible *Asafo* stool all exist to corroborate the oral testimony of the ninety year old narrator, Nana Tutu Dadzie III, who was an eye witness to what he recounts of what happened when he was a young man and whose memory extends to fine details; and to that of Nana's living descendants. However there is only inference to justify the relationships that are discussed here between the *Ahemaa* and Nana. Oral testimony used for the fourth narrative is from eye witnesses to events of the last few decades, adequately corroborated from other witnesses, from independent sources, from minutes, artefacts, written tributes and testimonies and photographs, but Mabel's conflict concerning her role is not. It is primarily through comparison with Scripture that these private narratives are given public significance. The fifth narrative is largely in the public domain, a written first person account additionally corroborated by sibling memories, by newspaper reports and secondary political and philosophical books, articles and interviews, yet the decision that was taken, the visions and the judgements are all 'private', though the results are not. The accounts seen as a whole seem both less and more than historical as we try to touch on the inner core of the meaning of external events. Because of the epistemology of the material, text analysis is an appropriate way of dealing with the five narratives on an equal footing. Though it takes the historical context seriously it makes assertions about the accuracy of historical facts secondary to the present

world view they evidence.⁵⁷ While every attempt has been made to give the 'itinerary' the interest of continuity the gaps and lack of balance reflect the careful selection by the narrators, and are also features of memory that is not facilitated by written evidence.

Hermeneutics

The theological interpretation of the Fante text is developed first by analogy of plot and then by analogy of theme with the chosen scriptures. On the basis of the assumption of affinity of world views this enables the use by transference of the biblical interpretative hermeneutic of *sensus plenior* and *peshet*. These are systems of interpretation based on analogy which were used by the early Church Fathers and are still used in the orthodox and African Egyptian Coptic churches. There is no extended historical-grammatical exegesis of Genesis XIV and Hebrews VII and XI or linguistic/grammatical analysis of the Mfantse Biblical or traditional texts. At times the range of biblical reference is extended, particularly in the sections using *peshet*. However a focus on the selected biblical texts is maintained throughout. I shall treat *sensus plenior* and *peshet* more fully later.

b. Practical

Language

Though the Fante number many intellectuals within the Western community using English as their medium of communication, for intimate family and traditional religious matters at home most use the mother tongue, Mfantse. This language and cultural barrier had to be overcome as the researcher's *Mfantse* is still rudimentary, and her knowledge of what is assumed to be known by all Fantes still has far too many *lacunae*. Some of those giving information though competent in English struggled at times with traditional concepts not normally rendered in English. Others gave their information and opinions in Fante, in most cases there was a

⁵⁷ There are gaps in the continuity of the story, viewed as the itinerary of two linked groups through time, between the early myth of the Akan *Ekona* and the Edina-Fante war and the stool brought to Idan by Tekyiwa, a gap between Tekyiwa, and the marriage of the headman of Amanful to one of her *Nsona* descendants, Bosumefi. The history of the second and third generations of the *Nsona* descendants of this marriage is only sketched out by way of an outline, while the *Ekona* side of the story is entirely omitted after the early myths, the first of which is *Ekona* (with no corresponding *Nsona*).

translator of sufficient competence to hand when needed. The original words as recorded by hand in English, or English translation, were used in the text wherever possible.

Privacy

The ancestors whose stories are remembered are, in the nature of the case, felt to be private and exclusive to their 'descendants.' If you are too young to be considered able to understand and to keep your mouth shut, or if you are an outsider, even an Akan of another clan married into this one (and there is a common practice of exogamy), you are not to be told. *Qhoho te se abofra* /a stranger is like a child, (ignorant of local laws and customs). Some *mpanyinfo*/elders may take some of the clan information with them to the grave, not having found a sufficiently reliable person to entrust the knowledge to. I asked if I could become an honorary member of either of the families to ease this situation. Though some *mpanyinfo* of the *Ekona* family, whose elder has the right to 'sit' on the stool, did not oppose the idea, the *Nsona* who guard the stool did not find it appropriate, and so the request was dropped. No outsider or young person in the two families would be permitted to visit the family stool room at Idan, the place of the stool guardian. Even more 'secret' (though their existence and format were common knowledge locally) were ceremonies in the *Omanhen*'s stool room: *Qhoho ani akese-akese!* the stranger has big eyes (that see nothing). I was not permitted to copy important documents of a delicate nature relating to Nana Tutu Dadzie I by the nephew and secretary of the present ruler-in-waiting, Nana Tutu Dadzie III, though I was privileged to view them. The first ruler to bear the title, though only acting as headman, was a still a member of the royal household of his own ancestors, and therefore to be accorded some respect, and with respect comes secrecy. The Musama Disco Christo Church is run on family lines: there is an *ebusuapanyin* (family ruler). Leaders at headquarters were as wary of giving information about a deceased member as they would have been for their own blood relative. Most Church leaders at Mozano (with the exception of the 'Akaboha' and his relatives who kept to the palace because of the court case pending) did not give information about Reverend Mabel

themselves, nor permit others to do so. None suggested that she herself had been anything other than 'too' generous ('too' here may simply mean 'very').

There were also the constraints of logistics and timing. Below is an account of the procedures I followed.

Procedures: preparatory, text and opinion gathering corroboration and analysis

To give me a general understanding of the issues involved I read the literature and participated in family and State activities. I lived with family members and participated in day to day events of family life and special occasions with research status recognised by all *mpanyinfo*/responsible elders for four months. I also attended events in the life of the communities of Oguaa and Abaka accompanied by assigned members of the families.⁵⁸ In August with a letter from Reverend Professor Kwame Bediako to the Oguaa Traditional House of Chiefs I was given an introduction to the Oguaa festival and to its participants by *Supi* Minah who was in charge of the arrangements.⁵⁹ I participated in the *Afahye* 2004.⁶⁰ We all took part in the memorial service, one year after the death of Mabel, at the Nkwantadu house (Chapter IV). I had been to Mozano for the *Asomdwee Afahye* (Peace festival) in August 2000; unfortunately it was cancelled in 2003.⁶¹ I was given emergency hospitality for the night twice by the local MDCC church leadership.⁶²

⁵⁸ I stayed in one of the family houses/*afiekessim* at Oguaa, and visited the family compound of the *ebusuapanyin* of the other family at Abaka at weekends (Friday, Saturday and Sunday, Friday was no-farming day). I stayed in *Osofo* Sam's room there in his absence. I was shown respect and there was some enthusiasm for the project in both situations.

⁵⁹ In particular he showed a video of the *Afahye* of a previous year and explained the rituals in answer to questions.

⁶⁰ I went down with the *Asafohen* /company leader living at Nkwantadu family house to the *Asafo* post a number of times, visited the *Omanhen* on his 'open day' during *Afahye* and I was taken to the *Okomfo*/ priest of the *oman*/ state of Oguaa on the same day. I witnessed the drumming and possession dancing and the various rituals including the preparations to slaughter a sheep at the Fosu lagoon shrine, and the preparations to slaughter a cow at Papratem.

⁶¹ However, I went along to the August meetings which continued for residents at Mozano, and addressed the Nathalomoa band under Rev G.E.Y. Gaisie, concerning my research interest in Mabel. I stayed at the house of Rev. Frimpong who was a tenant of Mabel's and still stays in her family house there. He is a lecturer and trainer of candidates for consecrated workers.

⁶² I also attended the Anglican church of Christ the King where the Abrahams: Samuel, Effie, Mabel and Kodwo with others living at Nkwantadu attended between 1945 and 1966, and beyond, interviewing the provost and the sides-person there. I attended St Francis Catholic Cathedral, Cape Coast, and the Catholic Church meeting in the Boys' School at Amanful, interviewing Father Asantey

I also attended the Methodist Church at Amanful which replaced the house of Nana Tutu Dadzie I as a meeting place for Methodists, and the Methodist Cathedral, where his son and his granddaughter had attended in the past and had taken leading roles.

The texts: narrations and interpretation

I obtained the texts from Christians of some seven denominations who were elderly respected leaders of the families of the study, or from those chosen by them as the best to tell the family stories because of their age, position and knowledge of a key figure in the families' history giving a recognisable authority. It was the narrators who selected those narratives that facilitated the task, as I explained it to them, of seeing the worth of their family traditions in a Christian context. These key narrations were recorded as exactly as possible by taking notes verbatim⁶³ and taken as representative.⁶⁴ I interviewed the *ebusuapanyin* at Abaka, the *efiepanyin* at Nkwantadu; *Osofo* now the Very Reverend Isaac K Sam and the immediate siblings and children of Mabel and Kodwo,⁶⁵ using the questions prepared as guidelines to a conversation and concentrating on the meaning of their oral narratives.⁶⁶ Only Professor W. Emmanuel Abraham, who lives in the United States of America, gave all his responses in written form. The prepared questions/guidelines sent to Professor W.E. Abraham have been annexed and his replies are extensively quoted in the main text.⁶⁷

who is a lecturer at St Peter's Seminary, as well as the Catholic priest at Amanful, going with him in the four-wheel-drive to deliver the host to the sick and elderly

⁶³ *Osofo*, now The Very Reverend K.Sam, nephew of the *ebusuapanyin* at Abaka gave two short interviews and one written response. In the first interview he told the story of the totem of the *Ekona*. Aunt AmoaEsiwah aged over 90 years at Abaka was translated and interpreted by *Opanyin* Kojo Amissah, John Hope, concerning the stool.

⁶⁴ Narrowing down the topic to manageable proportions has been on-going right up to the end.

⁶⁵ Through these contacts, which began many years ago but had previously been very distant, I was able to meet almost all the contributors to the work personally

⁶⁶ The compilation about Mabel was from interviews conversations and observations over years. During the four months of research I travelled around as many of her fourteen stations as was feasible including Mozano, talking to the present leaders and members about her pastorates. The main written sources were Mabel's yearly reports and the written Burial and Memorial Service Programme. There was a video recording made at her funeral including a speech by John/Kofi Ebo Abraham. Church and regional archives books and newspapers were also used

⁶⁷ Nanabanyin's autobiography (Appendix VII.1) was obtained at Nkwantadu where the writer also stayed for some months. Where somebody could not be available face to face, or was exceedingly

Corroboration of the facts and opinions

I confirmed the facts given orally and by E mail with documentation and artefacts wherever these were available. I spent some days looking at the records of births and marriages and the minutes of meetings (where permitted) in the various churches attended by the family members. I went to the regional archives also to get lists of rulers, to find out more about the fishermen, the caboceers and the *fiekessim* that was taken over.⁶⁸

To get some corroboration of the opinions given I also distributed 100 student questionnaires at St Peter's Catholic Seminary, Cape Coast, and at Christian Service College, Kumasi, where I had been teaching.⁶⁹

Analysis

An affinity between the Biblical world view and the Fante world view outlined in Chapter II is assumed and I share and use the doctrinal assumptions of the Epistle writer, namely that it is God who initiates change and comes to save us from sin, death and alienation, that the function of any representative of his who helps us in our itinerary must be to point us to look to Jesus the 'author and finisher' of our faith and that representative ancestors and persons inspiring to the present Fante Christian community, who have obeyed God and overcome obstacles in the struggle of life because of their faith in and obedience to God do this. I have provided a historical mega-story as a framework for the selected narratives just as the writer to the Hebrews has done and used the same analogical methods he applies to the sacred texts of his (presumed) people the Christian Hebrews, to make

busy, she had to send guidelines through the internet (Kodwo, Chapter V); or just hand over the printed questionnaire: (*Osofo* the Very Reverend Isaac K. Sam, Appendix VII 3). Where the interviewee, though seen face to face, had very limited time the questions were more briefly responded to (KofiEbo, Appendix VII. 2). Where the respondent had a theological training, as Very Reverend Isaac K. Sam does, the theological questions took precedence (Appendix VII.3).

⁶⁸ I had to take a much more active role in collecting the material for compilations than in the material for the myths since the rules of corroboration and coherence had to be met. Nanabanyin. Mabel and Kodwo's elder brother accompanied me, with his friend Nana's nephew, to interview the elderly Methodist Nana Tutu Dadzie III at his residence about his predecessor as Methodist and occupant of the stool of Amanful, Nana Tutu Dadzie I. His descendants at Nkwantadu also contributed their laments and tributes.

⁶⁹ However the responses, though interesting, and insightful, were few.

clear to us the sometimes hidden, perhaps at times unperceived, presence of Christ within the Fante narratives.

Biblical and Fante narratives as analogues

Before we present the Fante world-view and socio-religious organisation, and the world view and message of Hebrews, touching on the similarity of the two in Chapter II and proceeding to explore the latent meanings that can be discovered in our narratives in Chapter III-VI, perhaps it is important to underscore how seeing them as analogues of Biblical narrative can open the way to understanding them afresh in a Christian framework. In this work the five narratives are viewed as analogues of Genesis XIV in particular because the writer to the Hebrews has already discerned the Christological meaning (*sensus plenior*) latent in their ancient ancestral narrative. This insight is not to be set aside as an aberration as some Jewish rabbis of the first century and even Christians at that time concerned with establishing the canon were at times tempted to do, but is a vital part of inspired Scripture and pivotal in the epistle's message. It also opened the door for the first Jewish Christians to appropriate their ancient Hebrew narratives in a more profound way than Stephen's or Peter's oratory was able to do, as part of their self-understanding as Jewish Christians. As we see the Fante narratives as analogues of Genesis XIV we open up the possibility of seeking out latent Christological meanings (*sensus plenior*) in them also. Since Christ is truly present there, for he is Lord of all, the result is an illumination of their trajectories through the Biblical narrative. From this insight the ethical imperatives latent in the narratives can also flow (*peshet*) and in the process there will also come a new understanding of the Scripture passages and of their inexhaustible translatability.⁷⁰

In the process, our study will be confirming the insight regarding the peculiar appropriateness of the Epistle to the Hebrews to the African context.⁷¹

⁷⁰ Sanneh, Lamin, *Translating the Message - The Missionary Impact upon Culture*, Maryknoll, Orbis Books 1989

⁷¹ Bediako, Kwame, *Jesus in Africa - The Christian Gospel in African History and experience*, Akropong: Regnum Africa, 2000.

CHAPTER II

THE POSTULATE OF AFFINITY

General introduction

I now wish to present an overview of primal aspects of the world of Fanteland as illustrative of a primal world view from secondary sources supplemented by personal observations of the two families.¹ This is followed by the presentation of the gospel together with an interpretation of Genesis XIV through the eyes of the writer of the epistle to the Hebrews using standard commentaries. The features that they have in common are the basis for affirming an affinity of primal world views. This affinity enables a linkage between the Scripture and the Fante narratives, which establishes the postulate on a firmer basis. It also enlivens our own view of ordinary African experience and the Bible by focusing on the presence of Christ among the Fante in the past and now, and on his power to transform our society. In doing so I employ the analogical hermeneutic of *sensus plenior* (Hebrews Chapter VII with reference to Genesis XIV) and *peshet*.

Fante world view²

Introduction

The Fante people are one branch of the Akan nation; the other more sizeable branches being the Asante and the Akuapem. They are the most numerous among Ghanaian peoples and are located in the South.³ From the copious writing on the subject of the Akan/Fante world view⁴ and organisation I summarize aspects which are further elaborated in what follows:

We must bear in mind that the written accounts are systematised according to Western standards of scholarship. This makes everything cut and dried but seems to eliminate the strange and incomprehensible. Yet because the world

¹ These are usually footnoted, and can be understood by referring to the excursus which follows this chapter

² Turner's six aspects of African world views have been modified here.

³ For this consult the maps in the appendices

⁴ Busia, K.A. 'The Ashanti', in Daryll Forde (ed) *African Worlds, Studies in the Cosmological idea and Social Values of African Peoples*, published for the International African Institute by Oxford University Press, 1954 pp 190-209

of spirits is beyond our human apprehension every Akan knows that they can expect spiritual things to be surprising and paradoxical.⁵ There are basically four orders of spiritual beings: God, *abɔsom*, ancestors, and humans. Nyame/God as Creator of the world, which is both spiritual and physical at the same time, is to be revered by humans before and in everything in the world he has made. However humans should also respect the other spirits. Other spiritual beings are in three hierarchies (of which I discuss only two⁶): the *abɔsom*/Nyame *mma* which are mainly territorial but can have different locations for contact where necessary and the ancestors/*nananom asamanfo* whose interest and sphere of operation is their living family especially those who are in their ancestral location. The Fante world is a community of these spirits and human spirits all of which have a bodily location, the living human being is located in a human body, (although the spirit can travel out of the body, especially at night and in dreams). Every part of the living human and ancestral human society is interlinked with every other part and respect for those who have gone before and love for those who follow after is the value which maintains this spiritual unity. Each individual can be identified through their 'place' in the visible community to which they are linked through their double spiritual essence as well as through their geographical position within the village or town they belong to. *Okomfo* and leaders at the four levels of political authority all communicate with the *abɔsom* and the *nananom asamanfo* for the good of their subjects; their authority is from their position near to ancestors and also from the territorial spirits ruling in their area. The community is very welcoming to outsiders with a view to benefiting from them both spiritually and materially.

I now turn to elaborate on these aspects which are seen as aspects of a unified community which is both physical and spiritual.

⁵ Sasabonsam, chief of *mmoatia*/troublesome spirits found in forest and mountain, is believed to sleep hanging upside down like a bat!

⁶ The third the *mmoatia*elves or dwarfs which are forest spirits do not have rituals associated with them, they play tricks.

God/Nyame: the origin of and help for order in the community

The traditional *Fante* call on the one wise great Creator God/Ohen Nyankopon/Nyame in libation prayers. God is all knowing, very near to and within everyone, but often, because of his supremacy indirectly accessed through his 'children'/Nyame *mma* with ceremony and formalism.⁷ God is the unseen initiator and upholder of the Akan community. Some of the many names for this omniscient and omnipresent God are Nyame Nyansaboa (the sky God who is wise)⁸ and Obode Nyame (the sky God who created everything). Onyame⁹/sky God/ Creator is especially connected with the elements: with rain and wind, sea and earth, with birds and sea creatures and with a very powerful stool: the Golden Stool of the Asante which was reputed to have descended from the sky. All other stools, though brought by ancestors, ultimately get their authority from him. (He is always named first in libation prayers poured in the presence of stools and wherever there are prescribed rites for nature and ancestral spirits.

Nyame/God is at the apex of a complex of spiritual hierarchies. Below God with special status are the sea-mother and the earth-mother (Asaase Yaa), both spirits located in vast visible spaces that meet with the sky/*nyam* at the horizon, and Time, divided into days, weeks, months and years. Though time changes all other things it does not change Nyam.¹⁰ All human beings relate to God, to the spirits everywhere in the elements: earth, air and sea that he created, to their community members past, present and to come and to all others as human beings/Nyame *mma*; but also as above or below in various hierarchies of family and state¹¹

⁷ Ceremony and formalism are notable features of Akan-Fante culture.

⁸ *Boa* refers to God's helpfulness and does not show him to be an animal/*boa*! *Nyansa* means wisdom

⁹ The explanations and other names are elaborated by Danquah who mentions Christaller's suggestion that the sky where God is supposed to dwell is noted for its splendour or brightness (from the Twi root *nyam*/shining bright illustrious) and thus means the Shining One. Derived from this, Nyankopon means the shining one who alone is great. He also quotes a curious saying: 'God created death and death killed him'

¹⁰ Nyam is the Fante form; Nyame is used in the Asante and the Akuapem dialects.

¹¹ Fire is sacred but I am not clear it is considered as a place of spirits in this way. Asaase Yaa, whose sacred day is traditionally Thursday/ *Yawda* is associated with Friday in the area of Abaka where the Anowa *ebusua* live and on that day no farm work must be done for fear of angering her, while Tuesday is a sacred day in Idan, Oguaa by the sea, when fishermen stay at home to mend their nets.

Place of Nyame *mma* in community

God has children. One group are unseen spiritual beings and are called *abosom*: sometimes mistranslated gods or divinities. There are seventy seven *abosom* in *Oguaa* and this number is a mnemonic: new ones can be added at any time, others may become obsolete. All are considered to be children of God/ *abosom nyinaa ye Nyame mma*. These spirits arise from earth and sea in conjunction (not obviously sexual) with Onyame. Creatures/*aboa*, and physical phenomena or objects, some of which have a constant place while others can move themselves or be moved can all be spiritual or the location for one or more spirits which can become the place in space where human beings can establish a channel of communication with them. That communication with Nyame *mma* should exist is vital for the human community.

Nyame *mma*: territorial nature spirits and others

The numerous stones whose associated spirits are revered in Cape Coast remain in position on or near the coast line and are to be treated with great respect (no one should sit on them).¹² Some spirits come from the sea and drums of the *Asafo* have to be washed periodically in sea water to purify them.¹³ Ancient trees¹⁴, river spirits,¹⁵ Nana Fosu the female tutelary *obosom* of the lagoon and *Oguaa*,¹⁶ animal spirits such as the *eko* (bush cow) of the *Ekona* clan and the *twe* (antelope) of *Bosumtwe* of the *Asante*, all these are located on land but associated with water. Their power is from Nyame who gives rain and is good. Other *abosom* are associated with man-made objects. The household *obosom*, *Abam Kofi*, has two raffia bags for twins as the objects within the house or compound through which the *obosom* can be contacted and served. One person is designated the custodian for such objects while an *Okomfo*/priest or diviner or family head will be responsible for

¹² Carvings (for example *Oboroni Abaka*, a white-man in khaki and a solar-toppee) have been 'found' on the sea-shore or even, like the stool of the *Anowa* and *Bosumefi* families, reputedly brought from across the sea. The *Oboroni*/white-man 'came from the sea' and his spirit is respected, but to be appropriated at *Asafo* Number Seven post by various revered objects. Power originating from the sea is never under-estimated in traditional Fante thought.

¹³ A coffin shaped like a whale is used in the funeral of fishermen.

¹⁴ Like those at the *Asafo* posts

¹⁵ For example a group called *Tanoh* associated with the *Tanoh* river.

¹⁶ She lives in the depths of the *Fosu* lagoon by a tree root, and can multiply the fish in the lagoon by possessing her *Okomfo*, a male in 2004, when dancing to the *akom* drums.

serving the *obosom* by performing the customary seasonal rites.¹⁷ The spirit *obosom* possesses any person destined to be his/her future servant.¹⁸ Some other objects in the house can be the locus for ancestral spirits/*nananom nsamanfo*. The most important are the stools and the totems. The Akan had great respect for animals which they hunted in the past, such as the *eko* (bush cow/buffalo). The seven clan totems (*apoma*) have a painted wood carving on the head representing the bird or animal being *obosom*/Nyame *ba* to which the Akan wide clan or its local branch are spiritually linked.¹⁹ It will be kept in the house of the *ebusuapanyin*/family head and brought out on ceremonial occasions.

Stools

Sacred stools are family possessions, claimed by one descent line and sometimes held by another descent line in trust. The stool of honoured ancestors will be blackened. Such stools are a unique combination of some or all of the following: wood carved in a way which has symbolic meaning, but not, reputedly, by human hand²⁰; a narrative of origin which may connect the stool and founding ancestor with God through the sea or the sky, the description or name of the first owner and the first guardian, the history of occupants and guardians since the beginning, a link with the current occupant through the enstoolment process, a sacred place called a stool room usually in a family house called *fiekessim* and a claim to the land associated with their

¹⁷ Abam Kofi's sacred day is Friday/*Fida*, the person appointed to care for these bags, called Abam, at Nkwantadu is Aunty Panyin/Ama mother of the twins: Ama Attah Jonah and Theophilus/Kwame Attah Jonah.

¹⁸ The custodian for the twin bags at Nkwantadu is Aunty *Panyin*

¹⁹ The *Nsona* clan has a crow on its totem head, and the *Ekona* a bush cow (*eko*) with a small bird on top. Strips of cloths which belonged to dead members of the clan are fixed under the head. The clan system is older than the original migrations which led to the splitting up of the Akan language into different dialects. However they do not seem to require libation to be poured which might show that though their stories are ancient, the *poma* are less so. New ones can be carved at any time if the old is rotting. This is not so with the ancient stools which are preserved.

²⁰ Source an E mail from William Kodwo Abraham

²¹ Some of the less sacred ones are used in public at festivals and assemblies

²² They are a complete dramatic contrast to the gorgeous and colourful display made of the body at the funeral to celebrate the actual passing on of a valued family member into *asamando*/ world of the living-dead.

²³ The state stools at Akropong (also Akan) and probably in Oguaa too, have to be washed

arrival in the place ruled by *abosom* who operate in the same territory.²¹ Blackened stools are the focus of rituals of purification, libation pouring for the preservation of the safety and the promotion of the prosperity of the group they belong to, and feeding rituals; these rituals should be both on-going and also on special occasions such as a festival. Such stools are **never** on display.²² Children, foreigners or members of other clans are not permitted to enter the stool-room with blackened stools at any time.²³ It is not common to speak of the blackened stools in the presence of a child, outsider or member of another clan. It is through one such stool that an *ebusua panyin* (family head) rules

The sacred stools link respect for God and the territorial *abosom* to the ancestors whose central importance must now be explained.

Ancestors

The *nananom nsamanfo*/living-dead are believed to be around the on-earth-living members of the family, especially those in the family heartland, all the time, and to be concerned about their doings.²⁴ They are restricted in operation to their matrilineal clan descendants.²⁵ Virtuous living-dead/ancestors/*nananom asamanfo pa* are humans remembered for their good deeds when among the living, and the founders of clans. (Stories of the founders of clans are very important as they define the identity of all those people who tell/hear their story as clan members.²⁶) Not everyone who has lived and died since the time of the local family founders is considered to have become an ancestor on their death; they have to have displayed virtue,

annually, this is done after dark and a curfew imposed.

²⁴ One moment to pour libation to them is when a family member arrives after a journey. They have to be informed, and a recital of the events since the person departed is asked for. They must also be informed when someone has died so they prepare to welcome the person into their abode *asamando*/place of the dead.

²⁵ They do have a choice between good and bad, but they by no means always choose the immediate best for their family members.

²⁶ On the other hand, as the numbers included in the clan group grow larger membership becomes much less personal, some youngsters no longer know to which of the clans they belong. Some additional defining feature such as a recent matriarch has then to be added to define the group further. In the stories which follow, the one defining most people is the one concerned with the founding of the whole *Ekona* clan, something like one seventh of the whole of the Akan nation;

integrity and service in their life-time. As they helped the clan in the past their help is solicited for the present in libation prayers, when they are often listed by name.

Fante traditional 'respect'/love²⁷

Respect/*bubu* is a defining attitude for the Fante and the cement binding them together in a community which is hierarchical. Since Creator God existed first and is our ultimate place of origin and place of return when we die, he is at the apex of all hierarchies and is to be respected above all his creatures. Within each of us too there is a part that comes from and is directly of God's essence: the soul/*kra*, each and every one of us is to be respected because of it. Though each is to be respected there is a hierarchy within this concept which can only operate effectively through love. The young are to respect those older and all predecessors. As the saying goes: *Obi mfa ne nsa benkum nkyere ne papa akuraa kwan*/No-one points down the road to his father's village with his left hand.²⁸ Without parents we would have no place in community, they are to be respected and obeyed and an Akan child is trained from birth to do so; and that respect never diminishes. Our parents, elders and the ancestors have preceded us on the itinerary and their wishes are to be respected. All are part of a common heritage, and all are aiming for a common goal but each has their assigned place. Relationships are reciprocal and the child knows that if s/he shows respect she too will be shown special love by those who are older. Outsiders or foreigners too are to be respected and treated with special courtesy and hospitality but also with caution.²⁹ Your 'pearls', your real deep heart, are not to be too readily laid bare before them.

The individual's visible and invisible position within the community

Human beings need to know their place in this complex spiritual world and there are two ways by which they and others can know it and through their place and their identity.

²⁷ This word appears as the slogan on local buses and trucks, a sure sign that it is important to ordinary people.

²⁸ Using the left hand to point is not acceptable to the Fante since that hand is considered dirty. The meaning therefore is: It is not acceptable to show contempt for your origins and those who have gone before.

²⁹ Who knows what can be learnt from them of the wider world outside that will be of benefit to the Akan?

An individual's 'address' or how to find him/her

Coming from outside the community as a visitor we locate someone for whom we have a name and basic description, through the community s/he belongs to, and on the territory that belongs to her ancestors. Once you have arrived there you may ask of the *ebusua panyin*/elder of their matriclan and the place of his residence (usually called a *fiekessim*), you will by then probably have greeted the ruler/*omanhen/ohen/odikro* under whom they serve, known the *Asafo* company of the sub-area of the town or village they belong to, and may enquire of their stool and the property or land that they own, and follow them there if they are in residence but not at home.³⁰ For a more intimate knowledge of the individual the outsider needs to enquire of the mother and her descent from a particular remembered matriarch through several generations whose name with the prefix *nana*/revered ancestor/respected elder identifies her branch of the family³¹ Depending on the context of the meeting the stranger will get to know more of the person's names.³² An older person seeking to know another younger one may enquire about the profession or

³⁰ Living space and land to which claim is laid as a group through a stool or as individual members of a group, is central to any progressive traditional Akan family's self-understanding. Because land in popular areas is often scarce this pre-occupation may also define another group seeking to claim the same land as enemies. The Akan migrated from the North and the struggle of each family group to establish them selves on land is part of remembered history of totem and stool and aetiological myths of how the family lays claim to land. This is usually but not always inherited through the matrilineal line. For example the white house was a gift of J.H. Dadzie to his three daughters but from that point on was inherited through three matrilineal lines thus becoming split up. The 'white house' 122B Sam Rd. is in the area of Nkwantadu, part of Amanful: the wider area which has a ruler/*ohen* who is a member of the traditional 'House of Chiefs and is under the jurisdiction of *Asafo* Company number 7

³¹ The family trees are in the appendices and are discussed at the end of this chapter. They concentrate on the matrilineal clan. The males marrying into it are seen as subordinate (marked with a small letter). This has not always been a perspective easy to observe since males are much more public in their activities than most females (in Chapter IV Part I, on J.H. Dadzie, I struggle to preserve the female perspective)

³² They will have three or more names: the first is a day name given to every *Akanni*/Akan person depending on their sex and the day of the week on which they were born. That name identifies an Akan or one who would like to be thought of as Akan. The name is used by family members and those living in the same house or very close acquaintances of the same age. The second name is their individual family name chosen by their father as he sees his child relating in character or appearance to ancestors or living members of his own clan or sometimes to respected outsiders. This too can be used in the house among family members. The third, their patronymic, is the family name of their father through whom they are also members of an *ntoro*, this third name may be a name given to the father or his forebears on baptism into a church community or a traditional name from his forebears; often both are given. One of them will be randomly chosen to identify the person in their institution: school or work-place. All the Fante of the study also have a Biblical and/or a British name the use of which may be dropped when they leave mission institutions or those of Christian or Western origin or may be adhered too if the person remains in a Christian or Western context.

position of their father in the traditional or Western organisation of society.³³ Women especially can be recognised through their children and their father - her male partner/*kun*. Finally in the modern technological context one may enquire about the individual's education and accomplishments: his *Curriculum Vitae*. All these elements of the social Akan/Fante persona, except Western names and CV, are associated with their position in traditional society viewed as a complex of spiritual entities, and still have associated beliefs, responsibilities and rituals. All, except the *Curriculum Vitae*, have to do with relationships within their families and, through their families (including their ancestors and all living members of their mother's family, the dead and the yet unborn) with the wider community, regarded as complex of linked chains. Since these relationships are primarily spiritual, they exist even where they are not actually known to the individual who has them. Through his very inner, unseen constitution the individual relates to the wider community. I shall now explain how this can be.

The two invisible links that find a person's unseen 'place'

Spiritual belonging is a complex of two linking relationships: first to God, and then to the society that pre-existed the birth. The second consists of two complementary links, that through the mother's *mogya*/blood and that through the father's *ntoro*/spirit. The individual person is not simply the physical appearance and the name that presents to our eyes and ears. The new baby is primarily spiritual. The first part: *Kra*/soul comes with a destiny directly from God,³⁴ That destiny is to be fulfilled in the community during life, after which the *kra* will either return to *Nyame* the creator God again, or join those of the same lineage in *asamando*/home of ancestral spirits. *O-nyim-pa*/human person may mean the one who 'knows the good',³⁵. Only humans reflect *Onyame's* goodness in having a longing for good. This spiritual part of a human being makes consultation, which is the basis of the actual working of the *oman*/state possible and distinguishes a human being from an animal.

³³ This would be especially the case when the family migrated as a unit. Two generations of the descendants of Bosumefi migrated to Nigeria and their strong identification with their father, Samuel, especially the males, is very clear. This is true even of Nanabanyin who stayed with his mother in Nigeria and was her favourite, according to his own story.

³⁴ According to some authorities it is also immortal, and to it the *nkrabea* (destiny), which is the impact the individual will have on the community, is imparted by the creator God (*Nyame*) before it begins the journey to earth to receive a physical body on conception.

³⁵ Professor Abraham personal communication

The child's 'place' in his/her community is the second part. The spirit world is believed to be very active when two people are making love so that the resulting relationships for the individual child will be harmonious. The mother contributes *mogya* to the individual who shares it with all other members of her *ebusua*/family: with his/her maternal siblings, maternal aunts and uncles, grandparents and great grandparents back to the founding matriarch and all other *nananom nsamanfo* (living dead) and will share it with those yet to be born to the clan females.³⁶ This whole group, and through it its individual members, are also linked to the *Oman*/nation perceived as a political and economic unit. The *ebusua panyin* goes to council and through the stool the group lays claim to land. The father contributes *ntoro*. This constituent of a person's identity gives the individual, especially the male, his place in the working community seen as an economic, territorial and fighting unit, and in an *ntoro* group through the joint observance of taboos with other members.³⁷ The father also contributes other elements: *suban* /moral character, attitudes and preferences.³⁸ The saying "Se wo se"/be like your father (not like your uncle and certainly not like your mother) emphasizes the father's socialising and moral role particularly with male children.

Fear and the remedy

The economic and physical environment for the Fante is often difficult; hard work is needed to get a living. Bad ancestors/*Nananom nsamanfo bone* can also give trouble to their descendants becoming spiteful if they are neglected. Others are to be feared because they have had bitter life experiences: barrenness, divorce, premature death as babies, or death by accident or foul intent, or if they were negligent in their ritual duties during their life-time. Bitterness and jealousy of the more fortunate living can lead them to inflict childlessness, still birth or unwanted abortion, illness or death on the living.

³⁶ An adinkra symbol has the meaning: *nkonsonkonson*/link/chain: those who share common 'blood' relations, like a well-made chain, never break apart. The links of the chain, especially those which link the living to the living dead of the matriclan are not visible but they are all the stronger for that.

³⁷ It has physical concomitants and so a child's physical resemblance to his/her father, if any, is accounted for. The father is thought to give protection, sustenance and advice because of his spiritual maturity and an often dominant relationship with his partner/*yere*/wife. He should discipline, but the child's uncles and anyone in the community can also do it. The father provides for all his children and he will also need to introduce male children to work and their role in society.

³⁸

They share this terrifying potential with witches/*abayifo* among the living of the family. *Abayifo* appear as living humans, but their nature is partly spirit, and they have evil spiritual power. They are likewise very jealous particularly of fertility or any success, or wealth which they do not have themselves. Their powers are limited, in the same way as those of ancestors, to their immediate clan members: *obayifo ntumi mfa ntwa asuola* witch cannot cross water/leave their own family group.³⁹ The family may also have *abosom* attached to the stool to be placated. Some of these terrifying forces operate within the family which is therefore not always uniquely the haven of support and loving relationships that ideally it should be. Help may need to be brought in from outside and life even within the family is viewed as a constant battle of spiritual origin. However the ritual remedy is to hand. The spiritual intermediary (*okomfo* or ruler) must feed the stools (by placing mashed yam/*oto* on them) give sacrifices of a fowl or sheep, and the family should speak of them in conversation and in libation prayers so they do not become frustrated as they fade from living memory. The *abosom*, and *nananom* though powerful, must act as requested to relieve a situation if their prescribed ritual is correctly performed; whether the action is good or bad.

Since many of the required rituals can only be performed by special people, those who are qualified to perform them correctly and satisfy the spirits are of vital importance in traditional society. There are a number of specialists dealing with the spirits: the *ebusua panyin*, *Odikro*, *Qhen*, *Omanhen* are leader in the politico economic organisation of the *oman* but we turn first to the *Okomfo*, who receives special training.. (*Kramo* have a limited role in provision of remedies against illness caused by evil spirits.⁴⁰)

Okomfo

The title *Okomfo* is a title of great respect in indigenous society which is sometimes translated 'diviner' and sometimes 'priest'. Each reflects a different aspect of his/her role. S/he is called by the *obosom* s/he is to serve

³⁹ A diagram of relationships can be found in the appendices.

⁴⁰ They are Muslims/Northerners the Fante believe are able to protect them against dreaded witches operating in the house or family. They make incisions in an inconspicuous part of the body and rub in special potent powders. This is usually done when a child is quite young and initiated by the parents.

who will possess him/her unexpectedly.⁴¹ It is through his/her divination that the traditional heads of families, companies, states and nations receive guidance. Wrong doing can be indemnified by libation, sacrifice, other rituals and prayers.⁴² The *Okomfo* is bonded by different taboos or rules from that of the ordinary person. Each organisation, from family up to state ruler had a position for their own *Okomfo*.⁴³

Authority in the community is spiritual

All authority among the living human community/*nteasefo* comes from Nyame in three ways: through the land, the sea and the sky and spirits associated with them, through age proximity to ancestors and inheritance of land from them, and through individual character through the *ntoro*: ability and hard work.

***Abusua mpanyinfo*: respect for age, consultation and love**

The oldest male member among elders coming from the matrilineal/uterine line of a family is enstooled⁴⁴ on the family stool⁴⁵ providing there is no impediment.⁴⁶ (There will be a narrative concerning the right of the head of the *ebusua* to sit upon the stool.) An enstooled traditional *ebusupanyin* is expected to make sure that contact with God, the ancestors and any *obosom*

⁴¹ The chief *Okomfo* of Oguaa State was possessed when in school. His father was a Methodist minister. Nana Fosu is female so when her acolyte is dancing he will wear women's clothes and when possessed assume female characteristics. The *Okomfo* of the stone at the castle is a woman but her *abosom* is a male, when possessed she assumes a stiff masculine pose and marches like a soldier

⁴² A category which includes *asamanfo bone* /troublesome ancestors, some cantankerous or unreliable *abosom* and *mnoatia/dwarves* but as in the hierarchy of 'good' spirits in the Akan world view it is the spirits at the base of the hierarchy, the witches, who are most active. The *Okomfo* who knows how to manage them belongs in a special way to the spiritual world. It is in the third year of training that a neophyte learns how to hear the voices of trees and which creatures should be shown special respect. S/he learns how to divine by water gazing and how to make an object a vehicle of spiritual power/*suman*. R Rattray, *The Religion of the Asante*, Clarendon Press Oxford 1935.

⁴³ If none is called then there will be an interregnum.

⁴⁴ This was done by pouring libation, praying to the ancestors and lowering his buttocks onto the stool three times.

⁴⁵ Few students responded to the questionnaire (see above Chapter I on difficulties), however all those who did respond had a family stool or at least a family totem, and they were not all Akans- the phenomena is much wider than just the Akan tradition being found quite widely spread in Cameroon, Cote d'Ivoire and Togo and no doubt much more widely still. This topic may await further investigation across language barriers.

⁴⁶ Some churches will not allow those who have a traditional rulers' position to take communion.

connected with the stool⁴⁷ is kept constantly renewed for the good of the clan, by regular communication through the stool pouring libation, praying and passing on any instructions received from any of them to their subjects:⁴⁸

Opanyin ano ye b̄osom/ the family head speaks for the *ab̄osom*

However, the traditional *ebusua panyin* does not take any major initiative, or start any celebration or rites without consulting the *ebusua mpanyinfo/elders*.⁴⁹

After all these consultations the word of the *ebusuapanyin*, like that of all traditional rulers (who are also required to consult) has a considerable weight of authority.

The head has responsibility with the *mpanyinfo/elders* for the maintenance of family lands and property and allocation for farming or other use, and the maintenance of family honour.⁵⁰ *Opanyin kye a, edwo/ɪf* the elder cooks/settles it the case cools down. There is no 'welfare state' in Fanteland, so the availability of the family head to help where an individual or nuclear family group needs money or support is vital in everyone's daily life. The issues discussed at the meetings of the *ebusuapanyin* and the *ebusua mpanyinfo* will cover discipline and family ethos, health care and hospital fees, payment of school fees and money for business and travelling to those who have none..

The *ebusuapanyin* rules over his *ebusuafo/family* members. The core *ebusuafo* are those who are within easy contact of each other. They make a safe, responsible and flexible environment for children; jointly caring for and disciplining them all. As we say:⁵¹ *Abofra b̄o mmusuo nkoron a, ofa mu nsia*

⁴⁷ Some suggest that every stool also has some *ab̄osom* attached, and others deny it. For an *ab̄osom* to be attached to a stool the initial carrier of that stool would need to have been either an *Okomfo*, named after an *Okomfo* as attached to a shrine or born as the result of the intervention of an *ab̄osom* on behalf of a woman thought to be infertile. See note 38 above

⁴⁸ I am not aware of any ceremonies connected with the totem.

⁴⁹ These are usually the oldest male members of each separate descent-line traced back to the female children of the founding matriarch, (others may be honorary *mpanyinfo* in view of their achievements, maturity or wealth even though they are not the oldest of their lineage, or be opted for a particular discussion

⁵⁰ The *ebusua panyin* will be consulted if any members have a dispute with neighbours over land, or a family member has been mistreated or caused others to complain to the family head. After placating and consulting the spirits in the traditional family, there will be an attempt to settle the dispute by arbitration:

⁵¹ Observation at Nkwantadu, February to September where there were two very young children who were happy to play in the huge hall under the eye of several women of the third, fourth, fifth and sixth generations. At Abeka if there is a clear warm evening with a full moon the *ebusua panyin* will allow story telling. One elderly woman member is usually chosen to

de sane n'abusuafol if a child makes nine mistakes he takes six of them back to his family members. The members care for the frail elderly assigning a child to help them if they have none of their own because as we say: *Opanyin nyini, odane ne mmal* when you are elderly you turn to your children. They should not be taken for granted however: *Yede abasakonmu na esre akodaa adel* we hug the child we want to do something for us.

Family customs: courtesy celebrations finance

The *ebusuapanyin* also welcomes the returning travellers⁵² asking for the news/*amaneɛ* before they go to their own house.⁵³ The head of family and the *mpanyinfo* will coordinate celebration of the events in the life cycle. They still help to name a child born to a family member attending the naming ceremony/*dzinto* when informed by the parents, (though it is the father who gives his own family name and chooses the child's individual name in Fanteland). In the past the family head and elders officiated at the nubility rights called *abra*. The *ebusuapanyin* also officiates at marriages/*aware* and funerals/*ayie*.⁵⁴ The *ebusua panyin* allocates responsibilities for preparations. Usually the immediate family - siblings or their partners - prepare the food; the children of the deceased prepare the body. (While this is being done and when the body is displayed in the house and family and visitors are paying

tell the stories to all the children of the family. They can be *anasesem*/fables to make the children laugh, but may also include some that are much more serious: *abakosem*/history (things of the past) stories of creation, myths of family/clan origin such as the story of the family totem and of the family stool, and the history of the noble deeds of the family, the Fante and Fanteland, and the origin of *ammamere*/customs. There may be a time for children to ask questions and there are always choruses to the Anasesem which make them more enjoyable as everyone joins in with drumming and singing.

⁵² The visible functioning *ebusua* also includes adults and their families who have settled elsewhere through jobs or marriage, but still reside within travelling distance, the more distant of whom should come at least once a year. Ties can be still be maintained now(2005), if members are far too far away or unable to attend through sickness or employment, by phoning through to convey an opinion, sending a representative, or sending donations at funerals and at times for other needs. When a family member returns from a journey or for a celebration or funeral

⁵³ The traveller is asked to sit down and water is then brought to drink. The cup/glass is always sparkling clean. Some may be poured out for the ancestors or *abosom*. This can be done by any available *mpanyinfo*. The traveller is then asked for the story of his doings while away. He will tell the story. The family/family head will also tell the traveller what has happened to the family in his absence. After that *Akwaaba* /welcome is said. There can then be discussion of any matters arising from the *amaneɛ* /traveller's tale and home news together). There are usually a number of 'households' close together, so the returnee will visit them all subsequently.

⁵⁴ The funeral rites are, of all family occasions, the most expensive, and obligatory for all of the *ebusua* who can attend, and involve many outsiders. As they say: *Owu atwedie baako mmfo* /no one can avoid climbing the ladder of death so s/he is in a sense preparing for the celebration of her/his own final rites

their last respects and viewing it there will be singing of laments.⁵⁵) The family leaders also officiate at traditional marriages.⁵⁶

The *ebusuapanyin* should have money for any practical job on behalf of the family contributed by the members according to the local group's decision and people coming from a distance must also contribute.⁵⁷ Other Akan rulers⁵⁸, at whatever level in the hierarchy, are also traditionally considered to rule through the spiritual power of God and of the unseen world, through the ancestral stool

Other rulers: *Odikro, Ahemfo and Amanhen*

The traditional ruler of the state is called an *Omanhen*/paramount ruler under him are the *ahen*/rulers. Smaller areas would be headed by an *odikro*/sub-ruler and under the *odikro* were the heads of families the *abusua mpanyinfo*. Each ruler could summon those of the rank beneath him for consultation.

After being installed by being lowered three times onto the appropriate blackened stool a ruler at any level in the hierarchy has the power from them to perform the necessary saving rituals to placate the spirits on behalf of his/her subjects successfully. These powers are from God through the ancestral spirits/*nananom nsamanfo* through the stool which belongs to the sacred ruler who, like the *ebusuapanyin*, inherits through the stool from his own ancestors by the matrilineal line and comes under the authority of God, of

⁵⁵ Literate Christian families with money will produce a printed programme for a church service which will come at this point. It will contain eulogies from family and colleagues in praise of the achievements of the dead person, and also a written dirge or wail of grief at their loss from the immediate family members as well as readings from the bible and hymns. There will be a procession with the coffin to the burial place. While this is happening the coffin may lead the carriers to the person who has caused the death.

⁵⁶ If the parents of a young woman of the *ebusua* are approached by a suitor and they find him, after investigation of his background and behaviour, to be satisfactory they inform the *ebusuapanyin* who informs the *mpanyinfo* of the family and arranges for them to meet the *mpanyinfo* of the family of the husband-to-be. When libation has been poured and gifts have been brought, the couple are considered married.

⁵⁷ The *abusua panyin* Kojo Amissah has a book of dues paid. In each large household where there is more than one elder there is an *efie panyin*/household elder, normally the oldest member of the dominant family in the house, who might be male or female. The *efiepanyin* of the *fiekessim* /large house probably with a stool has a leading position, fulfilling many of the duties of the *ebusuapanyin* in emergencies for those of her family living in the house. S/he arranges for an *ebusua* representative to perform rituals and attend funerals taking place in his/her house. S/he is highly respected both inside the house and by visitors to it, whether family or outsiders though under his/her *ebusuapanyin*. As we say: *Opanyin wu, a efie abo*/if the house head dies the household is ruined

⁵⁸ Refer to Appendix IV for photographs of the *Omanhen* (the ruler of Oguaa and his *mpanyinfo* elders, at *Afahye* festival.

the ancestors/*nananom* and of any *abosom* associated with the land claimed through the stool.⁵⁹ The *Odikro*/subdivisional ruler, the *Ohen*/ruler or the *Omanhen*/paramount ruler must go through many rituals both public and private at an annual festival in addition to his/her regular ritual duties.⁶⁰ A group of the more important of the *Ahen* of Oguaa make up a Committee or Council of State, nowadays working in parallel with elected representatives of the ruling party.⁶¹

The *Asafo* companies

Asafo companies are territorial each occupying a sub-division of a town under an *Omanhen*. They were formerly sections of the army each under an *Qhen*. The seven *Asafo* companies of Oguaa are under the *Tufuhen* with a *supi* in charge of each company⁶² and *Safoahen*/captains under him. There is normally an *Okomfo*.⁶³

Each Company keep their *abosom*, drums, flags,⁶⁴ and stools at the grove/post.. The hut/store-room there is crowded with items, *abosom* objects

⁵⁹ Some suggest that every stool also has some *abosom* attached, and others deny it. For an *abosom* to be attached to a stool the initial carrier of that stool would need to have been either an *Okomfo*, named after an *Okomfo* or born as the result of the intervention of an *abosom* on behalf of a woman thought to be infertile. There is an accepted pattern for the installing of a new ruler. If there is no-one of suitable age and stature to sit on the ruler's stool or if there is a dispute, then a caretaker can be appointed who will do all the work of a ruler as regards the social, and organisational responsibilities but may not have the same source of spiritual power or the ability together with his/her *Okomfo* to perform rituals to save the town/district/village/family from disasters

⁵⁹ This festival is called *Afahye* in Oguaa and takes place in August each year. At *Afahye* the *Omanhen* is assisted by the *Ahemfo*/rulers over the divisions of the state, of which Amanful in Oguaa is one. All these rulers together make up the House of Rulers, the traditional authoritative body of Oguaa. (They will in turn send representatives to the 'Regional House of Chiefs.')

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⁶¹ The *Omanhen* is the chair of this group. Amanful traditionally had a position on the Council. These positions, as in all larger Akan political units, are named after the positions formerly taken up by the warriors of that division in time of war. Amanful's *Asafo* Company (number seven) would be on the left flank in time of war, so their ruler had the title *Benkumhen*/ruler of the left.

⁶² The *supi* of Number 2 company is in charge of organising the *Afahye* and has his office at the house of rulers.

⁶³ The hierarchy of the *Asafo* normally rally their people to support the ruler and help him carry out his plans for the town; but when he behaves in a way considered unsuitable they can also initiate his de-stoolment. The carrier of the company mascot of *Asafo* Company number VII was possessed and danced to the drum to invoke the spirits against the opposing spiritual forces of the enemy, for it was between these that the battle 'on the ground' would be decided.

⁶⁴ See photographs in the appendices; the Union Jack was required by law. One flag shows a woman whose protection prevents scorpions attacking; probably symbolic of protection in

and stools, collected over many decades.⁶⁵ The stools of the *Asafohen* are different from ancestral matrilineal stools as they can be inherited through the male line and conferred on an eminent citizen resident (or with their origin in) the area of the company. Having the guardianship of such a stool is a sign of prestige in the community at large as well as of some territorial spiritual authority.⁶⁶

Contact with the world at large

The Fante world has never been self-contained. The Fante have always been able to absorb foreign non-Fante elements: Kramo medicine against witches, Mamprusi hard-working servants, foreign languages: Danish, Dutch, as well as English, British education and organisation, German material goods and ways of trading, Hebrew and Greek Biblical stories in translation. The Fante have been conservative, however, in permitting such elements to transform their own self-understanding. Nevertheless, the transition from traditional belief to Christianity has been facilitated by the many similarities particularly in world view and narrative style. This is a view-point to which we are progressing gradually.

3 Genesis XIV and the Epistle to the Hebrews the Biblical foundations

Introduction

We now come to the Biblical representation of the world and the message of Christ conveyed in those terms. Perhaps we might expect that this world view, from a different geographical location and a different epoch to that just described, would be poles apart. However, though this may be so at a superficial level, looking more deeply we find there is an affinity between the two which makes it possible to relate chronology and narrative, Christology and interpretation, and central pastoral themes in Hebrews to the chronology and narrative, ontology, and ethics of the five narratives of the dissertation.

physical or spiritual war, but veiled as the British forbade anything inflammatory or boastful because of troubles between the different Companies (Correspondence of the Commissioner).

⁶⁵ A 'guard' of Number VII company now pours libation asking for forgiveness from the spirit of the stone *obosom*, under the sacred tree surrounded by an enclosure, for minor ritual 'sins' that are reported, so that the guilty person can go free of spiritual or physical punishment

⁶⁶ The *obosom* of the Number VII Company appear to be more important than the stools. The last two of these were brought to the post by the last *Okomfo* of the company from the sea-shore where they were dug up by members. They are a stone and a wood carving called *abaka oboroni*.

Before these three aspects are discussed in more detail in that order (which is the order in which they are used in the discussion in the following chapters) they are briefly sketched, in the different order in which they appear in the Epistle, below.

The epistle to the Hebrews has been called a sermon; the writer is not known but it is believed to have been sent to a congregation which was predominantly ethnic Hebrew and it aims to help that community see themselves as in a tradition that finds its fulfilment in Jesus. It is in three sections.

Priesthood

The first section deals with Christ's priesthood: his new covenant for the removal of sins, which is as superior to the old covenant as he is, as Son of God, to the angels who brought it, and, in the order of Melchizedek, to the priests who administered it. Under this covenant he is able to forgive/remove all sin 'once and for all' (Chapter VII.27). 'Once,' in that he will not have to repeat his sacrifice, as the priests under the old dispensation did; 'for all' in that it is effective at all times for all individuals and all groups who keep 'faith;' for he has opened up a new and living way 'through the curtain, that is his body' (Chapter X.20). In Chapter VII of this section the writer to the Hebrews gives a *sensus plenior* (fullest possible interpretation) of the meaning of Genesis Chapter XIV to illustrate the greatness of Christ's priesthood, his role as mediator between God and human beings, as foreshadowed by Melchizedek.

Faithful ancestors

The letter has a unique central section, (Chapter XI-XII.3) on some of the many 'faithful' Hebrew ancestors, ending with an image of the contemporary generation as runners following them in the race of life, while they stand as witnesses. They are characterised as those who had the understanding of God and the faith and trust to be obedient to his commands so that a community of believers could be built up.

The redeemed community

The final section is an exhortation using *peshet*. The author encourages the readers by envisaging them entering heaven pictured as God's city, a community where

Jesus 'the mediator of a new covenant' is present. 'Thousands upon thousands of angels in joyful assembly' and those whom he has redeemed by his blood that 'speaks a better word than the blood of Abel' are there also (Chapter XII.24). He also warns them for a second time not to apostatize, referring back (Chapter XII 25) and to earlier warnings (Chapter III. 7-19). The church members should believe, persevere in faithful obedience whatever the difficulty and rejection; for Jesus suffered rejection outside the city gate to make his people holy through his own blood.'(XII.13-17)

The way in which Hebrews has been used as a framework for the spiritual itinerary of the two families is reflected in the order of what follows.

Hebrews XI.1-XII.3: a chronology of a community's struggle

As with the 'meta-narrative' or itinerary through time/*abakosem*/history of the families of the dissertation, the narrative of the race past the stadium in the central section of the Epistle to the Hebrews is a 'meta-narrative,' the accumulation of a number of 'mini-narratives,' each one of which is capable of being expanded. The mini narratives are linked to the meta-narrative of creation and the fall (which are assumed), the incarnation, salvation and *Parousia* (Chapter XI.3 and XIII.22) by a continuous chronology and the themes of faith and struggle, obedience and community. They fall into four periods: Ante-diluvian: from Abel to Noah; the patriarchs: from Abraham to Jacob and his blessing; the Exodus: from Moses to Rahab; and finally the history of the monarchy, the prophets and the Maccabees are all put together. The contemporary generation are seen as following these ancestors in the race of life while they, the 'cloud' of their honoured predecessors, watch them. Both groups have a place in Heaven as their final goal. They depend on each other to get there. This picture is a metaphorical 'framework' into which the lives of any ancestors before the coming of an explicit knowledge of Christ considered as faithful in the struggle can be fitted, together with concepts of creation and fall, the lives of the still-living and the lives of the yet unborn.⁶⁷

⁶⁷ Philip Edgcumbe Hughes, *A Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews*, Eerdmans, Michigan, 1977. The brief historical-grammatical interpretation of Genesis XIV in Chapter II is based on standard commentaries. It follows Hughes in its interpretation in the Epistle to the Hebrews Chapter VII, the overview of the Hebrews religious itinerary by means of a list of worthy ancestors in Chapter XI-XII.3, and finally the discussion of the faith link between each and all of the worthy Hebrew ancestors.⁶⁷ Hughes comments extensively on Hebrews XI.1 on faith, the chronological list, and the image of the stadium XII 1-3.

Hebrews and non-Hebrews are both included in the list

The list in the Epistle includes Abel the first shepherd, Abraham descendant of Seth son of Adam, who set out from Haran, accompanied by his wife, Sarai,⁶⁸ and his nephew, Lot, household members and flocks of animals. God promised Abram that Canaan and beyond would belong to his numerous descendants.⁶⁹ After a time in Egypt Abram, later Abraham, and his nephew divided the land between them and Lot settled in Sodom.⁷⁰ When Lot was captured and taken away by four kings⁷¹ Abraham rescued him. Melchizedek priest of the most High God in Salem extended hospitality and blessed Abraham and Abraham gave him a tithe of the booty. Joseph, Abraham's great grandson was ruler in Egypt after being sold as a slave. Four hundred years later Moses led the people out of Egypt and back to the land of Canaan.

Rahab helped the 'spies' he sent ahead. Melchizedek (from Chapter VII) and Rahab are non-Hebrews who were blessed in blessing the Hebrews just as the stories of the *eko*, of Abosomdwowa and J H. Dadzie are stories of non-Fantes who brought blessing to the Fante. Jesus told the story of the Good Samaritan to encourage an appreciation of the claims to righteousness of children of God who were not of his own culture or race; and in including these non-Fantes the writer has done the same. The Christians in the families of Bosumefi and Anowa have many ancestors: Fante pre-Christian ancestors⁷²; as well as the Hebrew ancestors through the arch ancestor Jesus; ancestors, both European and Fante, founders and heroes of each of the various Fante churches they attend, other Christian ancestors (such as Nana Tutu Dadzie I)⁷³ who are not European and are members of other communities that have chosen to identify with the Fante, the itinerary also includes the still living, such as Kodwo(Chapter V) and the yet unborn - his sister's grandchildren and great grand children. The list of selected ancestors in this dissertation follows the structure of this section of the epistle to the Hebrews both in adopting a chronological order within a

⁶⁸ Genesis 11.29

⁶⁹ Genesis 12.1-3

⁷⁰ Genesis 13.6ff

⁷¹ Though the names of the four Eastern kings and Kedorlaomer cannot be found in the literature and inscriptions of the peoples in and surrounding ancient Palestine, they can be given plausible etymologies and the account of the campaigns they fought before Abram defeated them is consistent with what is known of the history of the area from non-biblical sources, and with local geography and ancient place names

⁷² Noting the mysterious origin of Abosomdwowa, (Chapter III part two) none of the five narratives is primarily focused on the character and deeds of a presumed 'pure' Fante.

⁷³ Chapter IV

context of world history, and in the criterion for selection: that they were 'faithful': understanding, obedient and creative of community.⁷⁴

Melchizedek unites two communities in mutual respect

In the interpretation of Genesis XIV and Psalm CX in Hebrews Chapter VII we have an interpretation that sees a reflection of Christ in events where he is not named and asserts that this is not only a possible but a true interpretation of the events. This is interpretation *sensus plenior* giving the fullest and most satisfying meaning by assuming an understanding of the doctrines of the omnipresence and omnipotence of Jesus.

It is argued by Wenham⁷⁵ on the grounds of style, that Genesis XIV is more ancient than the other source material available to the J redactor of the first book of the Pentateuch. It describes how Melchizedek, the priest and king of Salem, as mentioned already, blessed Abram, as follows: Abram was staying with an Amorite called Mamre and his brothers.⁷⁶ When he heard that his nephew Lot had been taken away by four kings, he took 318 'trained men from his household' and some allies with him and defeated them all in one night's fighting, bringing back his nephew and all the booty they had captured. Melchizedek, the priest-king of Salem,⁷⁷ with the titles 'king of righteousness' and 'king of peace', came out to meet Abram returning from the defeat of the kings, and gave him wine and bread and blessed him, receiving from him a tenth of the plunder. Though there are many Jewish and early Christian commentaries written about Melchizedek there is only one other reference to him in the Ancient Hebrew Scriptures. In Psalm 110 David refers to him as the originator of the priesthood the Lord had purposed to found.⁷⁸ *Sensus Plenior* is the hermeneutic used by the writer of the Epistle to explain the narrative in Genesis XIV. It is also used by other New Testament writers, for example by Matthew.⁷⁹ The writer to the Hebrews links Melchisedek to Christ

⁷⁴ Bediako, Kwame, *Christianity in Africa, The Renewal of a non-Western Religion*, Edinburgh University Press, 1995, Chapter 12

⁷⁵ Gordon J. Wenham, *Word Biblical Commentary, Genesis 1-15*, general eds. David A Hubbard and Glenn W. Barker; Old Testament ed. John D.W. Watts, Word Books, publisher Waco, Texas, 1987

⁷⁶ Genesis XIII.18

⁷⁷ Salem is used meaning Jerusalem in Psalm 76 and though expositors are not all agreed on the identification it is assumed here

⁷⁸ Joyce G. Baldwin, *The Message of Genesis 12-50 from Abraham to Joseph*, The Bible Speaks Today, Old Testament Editor J.A Motyer, IVP Leicester, England, Downer's Grove USA, 1986

⁷⁹ Matthew II.15 for example commenting or using Hosea XI.1

sensus plenior (this is discussed later). He is: 'without father or mother, without genealogy, without beginning of days or end of life and 'like the Son of God he remains priest for ever' (7.2, 3). He continues: 'Just think how great he was. Even the patriarch Abraham gave him tithes,' in this way he showed deference to a greater than himself. Abraham is the representative of the Hebrew line of descent that is to come, of the yet to be written Biblical tradition and of the Levitical priesthood. So the priestly order of Melchizedek was superior to that of Levi, for he was first and Abraham deferred to him. It is in this superior order of priesthood that Christ too stands, on the basis of an 'indestructible life' (7.16 and John 10.10b).

The writer can also comment that a vital glimpse is given of a religious tradition outside that of the ancient Hebrews but contemporary with their founding patriarch: 'He of whom these things are said belonged to a different tribe and no-one from that tribe has ever served at the altar' (7.13). Since God was already at work in Abram, Jesus' ancestor according to human descent, revealing his purpose for the future, blessing and directing, yet even Abram had to submit to Melchizedek, the African theologian can claim that God is obviously at work in other pre-Christian cultures, as a shadow of what is to come in Jesus, interpreted *sensus plenior*. This is the theology pivotal to the Christology of Hebrews and under-pinning the theological section of each Chapter of the dissertation.

Faith in community

The characteristic which links all in the list of selected heroes and heroines is 'faith' mentioned in Hebrews 11.1 and 2. Ellingworth gives two views of the meaning of *pistes*.⁸⁰ 'Subjective' and 'objective', these different meanings clarify the differences we see in translations. '*Hypostasis*'⁸¹ can mean something objective, which 'stands under' something else: the substantial essence, being, reality, which stands under or behind our hopes and is perhaps close to the *sensus plenior* we have just discussed. Another is that 'faith' is a feeling of inner assurance now that can be viewed as a sort of guarantee that, though the substantive thing is not actually visibly to hand at the moment, it will be in future. This is subjective and is connected with virtue and the interpretation called *peshet*. In fact both the subjective and the objective

⁸⁰ Paul Ellingworth, *Commentary on Hebrews*, New International Greek Testament Commentary, Eerdmans, Carlisle and Michigan, 1993

⁸¹ Hebrews 11.1

senses are required: Faith/trust/belief is the subjective attitude which brings us into contact with the realities of the spirit and these realities confirm our faith. It is by faith we: 'Understand/know/realise/find out/apprehend/recognise/ (subjective) that the world was fashioned by the word of God so that 'what is seen came into being out of what is unseen' (objective).' Denial of the reality of unseen spiritual reality: a materialistic world-view, is the opposite of faith.

This dual understanding of faith underlies the hermeneutics of *sensus plenior* where the subjective faith (a virtue) is suddenly confirmed by a paranormal experience which is objective and can even be measured.⁸² As Christians the author of the Epistle says (12. 1-3) we run the race focused not on the ancestors, or even on the ultimate origin and creator, but together we focus on Jesus the author and finisher of our faith, and we take the life stories of those who have preceded us as signs that his presence manifested to them in different experiences will be more than sufficient for us too, who know so much more than they did.⁸³ According to Barclay⁸⁴ the result of faith is joyful expectation: Christian hope has the same effect upon the body of Christian believers as absolute certainty, it makes them as happy as if they were already enjoying the object of their hope (Hebrews 13.14). They are energized to act rightly: this is the emotional aspect and the practical outcome of 'faith' which can be evidenced in the lives of good people and of Christians alike.

Both Barclay and Moffat interpret the 'faith' spoken of in Hebrews as practical in outcome. After thinking and feeling action follows.⁸⁵ This practical outcome as demonstrated in the list of virtuous ancestors is viewed by the writer to the Hebrews at times as the action of God in response to human faith: he took Enoch (5), enabled Abraham to become a father (11) and protected Rahab (31); but more often, as the direct result of man's action taken in faith that God would reward not only him/herself as an individual but

⁸² Chapter VII gives some of Kodwo's experiences of the paranormal

⁸³ As Ricoeur too says, we should not take human beings' doings as normative in themselves but rather look to the source of any goodness in God.

⁸⁴ Barclay, William, *The letter to the Hebrews revised edition, The Daily Study Bible Series*, Westminster, Louisville Kentucky, John Knox Press, 1976 p. 128

⁸⁵ Nevertheless there has been much comment on the meaning from this perspective, see Ellingworth, who attributes this perspective to the patristic controversies on the nature of the Trinity in the second century the word *hypostasis* in the Greek being the word here used in Hebrews and later utilised to indicate the 'substance' which constitutes the unity 'underlying' the three manifestations Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

his/her whole community through the action (17, 23, 29.). If we now believe (subjective) in the God of the future as real and as rewarding what we do (but not necessarily immediately), since this view is correct (objective) we set up a relationship of reciprocity with the Triune God. The question of whether the faith of we creatures of time precedes or follows God's action in rewarding/rescuing us might be immaterial but the two have been separated analytically and virtue is dealt with in the fifth section of each of the narratives in Chapters III, IV and V

With a *peshar* hermeneutic (more fully dealt with below), past heroes are used to inspire present faith as readers and listeners see themselves involved in analogous situations, the ancestor's belief and actions become models to be adapted by those who claim to follow the same God. This hermeneutic is also used by other New Testament writers: an example of its use is given in Acts 1 by Peter.⁸⁶ On the other hand those who responded with unbelief or 'hardness of heart' in the wilderness, (to contemporary dilemmas facing the church in the first century, and, again by analogy with issues in the Church in Fanteland today) were warned that they might not 'see the promised land'.⁸⁷ The fruit of right belief and joyful determination was right action, but the fruit of unbelief and despondency was sin and eventually, without repentance, a failure of the whole group involved in it. The writer to the Hebrews has used *peshar* to encourage his Hebrew readers but also to warn of the danger of a whole group apostatizing (Hebrews II 7-19; Hebrews XIII 25-27).

Analogical hermeneutics

The assumption that there are relevant readings for a believing community in a sacred text, in addition to the literal or surface meaning is very resonant with Akan thought. These readings can be found by careful thought, keeping in mind ultimate and current issues and fundamental doctrine and by the use of analogy. For the traditional Fante/Akan what is crucial in religion is mysterious and hardly to be spoken of baldly and directly, and analogy is preferred as leading to more profound thought. Yet religion is also expected to

⁸⁶ Acts I.20. 'It is written in the book of Psalms: "May his place be deserted...may another take his place of leadership."'

⁸⁷ A situation in Hebrew Scripture which ended badly can be used as a warning to contemporaries (Hebrews 3.7ff) while one which is seen to have a good outcome can be used to encourage.

be relevant to issues and decision making facing the community in the present. Here analogy is also needed to see the in-depth similarities between present circumstances and previous situations. The same fundamental assumptions are made by the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews in interpreting Genesis XIV, by numerous other exegetes of the early church, the past and present Eastern Orthodox Church, the present day Coptic Church of Egypt, the rapidly growing Pentecostal churches of sub-Saharan Africa, the Institute for the Study of the Bible, Pietermaritzburg, South Africa⁸⁸ and by Roman Catholic exegetes. Yet these two vital issues are not in focus when using historical-grammatical methods which are directed to finding out what the meaning was for the original receptor community and then moving on to universal truth. This may fail to impact particular communities' needs.

Sensus plenior (Latin) and *peshet* (Hebrew) are terms for two analogical methods of interpreting Hebrew and Jewish texts (and by analogy other pre-Christian texts) used by the Early Church including the Church Fathers to reveal in them a deeper (Christocentric) meaning and relevance for their then present Christian life-struggle. Used in a Fante context they aim to interpret text in such a way as to fulfil Fante expectations of a sacred text which should involve thought at a deep level and also their expectations of inspiration and direction. Both systems of interpretation rely on the affinities between the ancient Hebrew Scriptures, the Fante narratives and the New Testament story or message, and the use of analogy is facilitated by the fact that these texts all assume a primal world view. The first relates the pre-Christian text to Christ's presence, though he is not named; (though it can also be used for Christian text); and the second relates the pre-Christian text to Christ's promises to believers and his claims on their lives in their present situation; (though again it can also be used for Christian text). An original purpose was to enable the first Hebrew Christians to perceive the dynamic and relevance of their own sacred written narratives to their understanding of Jesus as pre-existent, and to their lives lived under his immediate authority. In this way sacred text written

⁸⁸ West Gerald O and Musa W.Dube, *The Bible in Africa, Transactions, Trajectories and Trends*, Brill, 2001. (Muslims Buddhists and Hindus also assume that sacred narratives peculiar to them have a meaning deeper than the surface meaning which it is the business of the believer to discover and perhaps expound and that this deeper meaning has immediate relevance to believers today. They fail to understand a Christian who does not take his/her sacred narratives seriously.)

before the knowledge of Christ came to the Hebrew people were still taken as valuable even normative, after Jesus had come. Jesus himself often seems to have taken them to be normative. By his example a Hebrew Christian identity was established. Justin Martyr followed his example to establish a Greek Christian identity.⁸⁹

Sensus plenior denotes 'fuller sense' or deeper sense, as perceived by rabbis in sacred Hebrew text, at the time of Jesus and after. This fuller sense is added to the surface or literal meaning, as established by historical-grammatical methods of interpretation: a *sensus plenior* relating the narrative to God (or to the *Logos* /Word of God) even if s/he is not named. For the Christian this God is the one who was manifested in Jesus' incarnation and in the Acts of the Holy Spirit.⁹⁰ We can relate African sacred story (even that written like the Hebrew before the knowledge of Christ) to him by the same procedure.⁹¹ Christ's own exposition to the couple on the road to Emmaus (Luke 24.27) is an encouragement to follow this method: 'Beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself,' the 'Scriptures' being the Hebrew sacred writings which preceded his incarnation. To expect a logically watertight demonstration or even a 'case-study' to uphold the truth of a 'hypothesis' that Christ is present in the same way in every culture's sacred/religious narratives would be to court disappointment. Instead, *if we believe that he is, and was present*,⁹² our belief can lead us to see the Fante as an analogue of the Hebrew. We are then free to interpret the Fante in the manner of Hebrews VII. When this 'works,' success can strengthen our already existing conviction. The literal/surface meaning is not ignored; it is treated seriously and the literary form is not by-passed in an age of Form-Criticism; but there is 'more:' a *sensus plenior* which relates to the presence of Christ.

⁸⁹ Shotwell, W.A., *The Biblical Exegesis of Justin Martyr*, SPCK 1965

Bediako, K., *Theology and Identity, The impact of culture upon Christian thought in the second century and in modern Africa*, Regnum Books 1991, Chapter IV

⁹⁰ Klein, Blomberg and Hubbard, *Introduction to Biblical Interpretation*, World Publishing Dallas, London Vancouver, Melbourne, 1993, with reference to Hosea 11.1 interpreted in Matthew 2.15, p.120

⁹¹ J. Penoukou has followed this way in interpreting the myths of his Ewe people, see his Christology in an African Village, in Schreiter, R., ed., *Faces of Jesus in Africa*, Mary Knoll, Orbis Books, 1991 pp 24-51

⁹² This could be assumed on the basis of the secondary strand in the Scripture as referred to by Kwasi Dickson in the preceding literature review.

Pesher is a less controversial method used to interpret Old Testament scripture by rabbis in the first century and Christians of the same period. Fante preachers now, as modern Bible readers, use *pesher* to help their congregations to see the relevance of the narratives in the Bible to their choices and life-style today. The method also assumes that the text has a double meaning the deeper of which is found by reading 'between the lines.' Theologically it follows *sensus plenior* as the fruit follows the seed. This is the reading for a believing community, experiencing the presence of Christ now. The perspective for a reading by Fante Christians therefore would be the situation and issues facing the Fante Church and Fante Christians at the time of reading in the light of Christ's presence among them.⁹³ We look at the same texts that have been interpreted *sensus plenior* with reference to the plot, through this other system of interpretation to find themes related to character and action that occur in the religious itinerary of the families and in the chosen Scripture, and are of relevance to the Fante families and their churches now.⁹⁴

⁹³ See West, Gerald, *Academy of the Poor*, Towards a dialogical reading of the Bible, Sheffield Academic Press, 1999, in a South African context.

⁹⁴ **Checks on interpretation**

The 'ordinary reader' finds it very natural to make analogies between one story and another. Whether the story is ancient Hebrew, African traditional/*abakosem* or everyday testimony/*amaneg* the ordinary reader/listener him/herself authenticates the interpretation as s/he finds it 'speaks' of the infinite God and addresses his/her condition. The inner witness of the Holy Spirit can give an independent assurance that God is speaking through his word of Scripture, or through oral or wordless communication for God is not the prisoner of a book. It is arguable that the interpretation of any sacred text for the benefit of the Christian community in which it is known should follow some guidelines to avoid error.

It should:

- i) 'express or conform to 'orthodox' Christian Theology'
- ii) 'correspond' to typical paradigms of God's truth or activity as clearly revealed in historically interpreted sections of the Bible
- iii) 'work' in the crucible of Christian experience-producing godliness with recognised Christian qualities, and advance God's kingdom
- iv) 'find confirmation' along the full spectrum of Christians within an 'orthodox' faith community (racial, sexual or socio-economic).

Hermeneutical methods for the discovery of secondary or 'deeper' meanings in Biblical text can apply to any religious or even secular text/experience/narrative. The same limitations as have been listed above apply to interpretations intended to contribute to Christian theology and life using texts other than the Bible. Orthodox theology and the opinion of the relevant faith communities remain essential checks on application.

The key assumptions and message of the Epistle to the Hebrews summarised

The epistle to the Hebrews brings to mind the two aspects relevant to this study listed below but before everything there are sacred mysteries beyond our understanding, where logic cannot help, and we need to simply worship.

1 There are hierarchies of spirits and a priesthood that is part of the living community and functions in the spiritual realm at the same time. Jesus is part and head of the order of Melchizedek and supreme above all spirits and priests. He is to be glimpsed in Melchizedek and his mysterious presence, *sensus plenior* honoured in narratives where he is not named.

2 A combination of God's initiative and our faith, as with Abraham and the other righteous ancestors, brings about righteous and effective action for the community of faith. They point us to Jesus who was there *sensus plenior* as he is with us also. We are together in the same picture, though the ancestors are spectators.

3 Through Jesus we belong to this community of faith and depend upon each other to achieve righteousness (*peshet*) and salvation

The world view of the Fante set beside that of the Bible as seen in the chosen passages

St Thomas Aquinas⁹⁵ argued that it is because of recurring patterns between the spiritual world and the physical world that we are able to speak analogically and be understood, and that the spiritual world is an analogue of the physical. The truth of this underlies our ability to use and understand metaphor and to apply connections between physical things to corresponding spiritual realities. We move from talking about a family being like a forest to saying that the members of the family are like the individual trees so the relationship of part to whole is transferred from the physical to the spiritual. When we say 'each' has its own individuality we might be thinking of trees or of people but the purpose is to hold both in the mind at once. Thinking along

⁹⁵ Thomas Aquinas, ed. Rev. Father M. D'Arcy, *Selected Writings*, Everyman Library, Dent and Sons, London Dutton and Co Inc., New York, 1940, p.152

the same lines, if we are able to see across a cultural divide that there are correspondences in chronology and narrative, ontology and interpretation and in ethical concerns we might conclude that we can take a chronology from one and see something similar in the other; we can take a narrative from one and see it as an analogue of an account from the other, we could even compare spiritual elements if the similarity is close enough, while it will be possible to discuss the same ethical issues in terms of either one or the other culture.

There are three ways in which the Hebrew and the Fante world views seem similar and can be called primal:

Firstly, in Hebrews with the interpretation of Melchizedek we have a writer who does not see existents in the world in terms of dichotomies. There is something mysterious about life which goes deeper than logic. Abosomdwowa, the mysterious being from the sea, like Christ himself and like the Trinity is evidence that there are workable world views in which things are not sharply defined by their so-called 'opposites'. A being could be both male and female or neither.⁹⁶ There could be individuals like Melchizedek who seem to have no beginning and no end. J.B.Danquah seems to have a flash of insight when he suggests we avoid seeing the world in terms of dichotomies such as light and darkness, heaven and hell, heroism and treachery, (past and present we might add from Hebrews). Such mutually exclusive classifications could lead to violence and are not part of Akan traditional thinking about humans and the world.⁹⁷ In the ambiguity of their natures Melchizedek and Abosomdwowa are pointers to Jesus whose nature is beyond human understanding but is numinous and enthralling. Then again in Chapter V of this dissertation we have the disorientation of forgetfulness – how could Kodwo forget his promise, so earnestly given? Such paradoxes, bypassing the intellect, can even make us laugh and so come closer to heaven.

Hierarchies and worlds too overlap. The epistle too is conceived overlapping hierarchies of spirits in which Jesus is in all and the highest of all: 'King of Kings and Lord of Lords but also High Priest as Abosomdwowa in Chapter III appears to be, though his nature is bafflingly ambiguous. Finally, in the last

⁹⁶ The Creator God is not female in Hebrew or Fante thought. However, is it certain from the use of a male pronoun in the Hebrew which does not exist in Akan, that God is thought of by the Hebrews as male?

⁹⁷ *The Akan doctrine of God, A Fragment of Gold Coast Ethics*, Frank Cass, (1944)

narrative we have many supernatural elements: visions, intuitions, and revelations some of which are like ‘waking dreams’ in which the spiritual and the physical overlap, even in a public way with a miraculous cross of light visible to all. Even the ethics is as much a matter of the action of God as of the striving of human beings, so personal responsibility is slightly out of focus. Kodwo/William simply forgot his promise to the Virgin Mary and yet it was fulfilled.

Secondly there is a concern with the past and the place of ancestors in the life of the living. The figures are not just mythological, they are a real part of what actually happened and they are felt to be part of the present struggles of their spiritual descendants.

Finally the strong emphasis on morals always there in Fante narrative is shared with the concerns of the writer to the Hebrews. He is writing a ‘pastoral letter’ with the welfare and the moral behaviour of his flock uppermost in his mind as with any Fante raconteur even of the amusing *Anansesem*.

I conclude that though the two world views are by no means identical there is sufficient isomorphism to justify seeking for analogies both in presupposition and approach in story outline and themes and to this method of interpretation and the procedures that have made it possible I now turn.

Cultural and interpretative aids in communicating spiritual truth

Fante proverbs also evidence a preference for indirect ways of conveying religious and other meaning where the literal meaning and the deeper meaning are not the same, though connected. Throughout the dissertation references are made to proverbs to illuminate the discussion and to remind us of this relevant fact about ways of thinking common to the Akan. This saying about families is a relevant example of indirect communication:

Abusua te se kwaeg wowo akyiri a, eye kusuu: wopini ho a, na wohunu se dua koro biara wo ne sibere. / Families are like a forest: if you are outside, it is dense; if you are inside you see that each tree has its own position/character.⁹⁸

⁹⁸ Most of the proverbs used in the thesis have been taken from Peggy Appiah *Bu Me Be*, where they can be found arranged in alphabetical order of the first letter of the first word in the Akan. I have not given a numerical reference for each, nor have I attempted to give a

This Mfantse saying indicates how a changed perspective changes our perceptions so that at different times and from different positions different peoples see the same texts, oral narratives and, even more obviously, symbols of families in a number of different related ways. All these ways are valuable, Symbols such as totems/ linguist's sticks and stools are not really circumscribed to an original meaning, it is accepted that they can have a range of interpretations and this fact makes discussion about their meanings very interesting, while none need to be considered canonical. Between this latitude of interpretation and the carefully circumscribed limits prescribed by Biblical hermeneutics we attempt to find a *modus vivendi* without losing sight of the 'original meaning' as theologians have attempted to establish it by historical-grammatical methods. For that we would need an authority equal to that of the original Hebrew and Greek narrators.

Conclusion

All the five family 'texts' are in no way extraordinary, every family in Fanteland will probably have similar narratives, but still they are felt to be 'sacred,' or at least of religious importance to some or all members of the two Christian Fante families whom they identify and who are also Christians in several different traditions, among them Methodist, Catholic, Musama Disco Christo, Anglican, Deeper Life Bible and Pentecostal/Harrist. A theological analysis which can link their stories with Scripture and illuminate both in the process is therefore of importance to their dual identity as African Christians and members of this group of two families.

EXCURSUS

Introduction to the families of Bosumefi (*Nsona*) and Anowa (*Ekona*) to the narrators and to their story seen as a whole

This section is intended to be used in conjunction with the relevant appendices to place the narrators showing the links between them, the living members of the two families including some children, and between them and their ancestors. An idea of the areas involved, the people, and their artefacts and the diagram of the Nkwantadu house of the Nsona can be found in the appendices also, together with documents from the Cape Coast archives and those of the Methodist and Catholic Churches, and personal certificates of birth and marriage.

1 Maps, generational trees diagram and photographs

In Appendix II, the first map shows the area of Akan settlement,⁹⁹ the second map the gulf of Guinea,¹⁰⁰ the third map shows Oguaa and includes Amanful stool land.¹⁰¹

⁹⁹ The map shows all the towns and villages there that are mentioned in the narratives, including Oguaa, centre for the Bosumefi (*Asona*) and the Anowa *Ekona*, Abeka, inland from Oguaa, where the Anowa (*Ekona*) *ebusua* live and the stations of Reverend Mabel *Asona* (Chapter V) only two of which (Lagos and Tamale) were outside the Akan settlement area. North of this map (and not shown) is the area where an *Ekona* hunter ancestor was led to water. At this early date the whole area of present Akan settlement shown here was thickly forested and therefore unlikely to be the home of an *ekɔ* or bush cow.

¹⁰⁰ The map shows the gulf of Guinea. Fanteland is central. To the West is Cote d'Ivoire, to the East: Togo and Nigeria. All these places feature in the narratives or the context of the narratives. Abosomdwowa *abɔsom* and patriarch of both the local *Asona* at Idan and Amanful and *Ekona* at Abeka arrived at Komenda a few kilometres East of Oguaa/Cape Coast 'from the sea.'

¹⁰¹ Oguaa, Idan (where Abosomdwowa's stool is now among *Asona* fishermen descendants of Tekyiwa and Bosumefi through Minakokode) is still 'home' to returnees to the *fiekessim* (mansion) there, from Cote d'Ivoire and Liberia to the West and Togo and Nigeria to the East. They come for *Afahye*, *Bakatue*/boat races and funerals. The member of the *Ekona* at Abeka who is to sit on the stool goes up to Idan from Abeka for the enstoolment. Amanful is central to this map. It is the vast land owned by Amanful stool, and stretches from Ghana National College to the sea at the Asafo Number 7 post. Nana Tutu Dadzie the III's modest bungalow above the Savoy hotel also overlooks the sea, and from the same cliffs can be seen far below the Amanful *Asafo* Company Number 7's post, the residence of Nana Afado (rival claimant to the Amanful stool), the Methodist church of Amanful and its present mission house some hundreds of yards further inland, and between these the Nkwantadu white house built by Nana Tutu Dadzie I. Adjacent, and to the West along the coast is Idan

Trees¹⁰²

The generational trees given in Appendix V, all start with the generation denominated 0. This generation preceded that of Bosumefi and Anowa who both traced their ancestry back to Tekyiwa and her husband. The numbering continues down to the seventh generation: currently pre-school or in school (2004).¹⁰³

i) The first tree shows the relationships of present and ancestral members of the two extended families (*abusua*) of the dissertation to the generation before Anowa and Bosumefi who traced their lineages back to Tekyiwa and her husband.¹⁰⁴

ii) The second tree shows the descendants of Anowa. It is from descendants of Anowa that incumbents of the stool at Idan are chosen from the *Ekona* clan at Abaka. The narrator of the first story of the *Ekona*, *Osofo* the Very Reverend Isaac Sam is to be

57 Conventions

- a) The relationships of polygamous marriage, monogamous marriage, polyandrous marriage, concubinage or unauthorised casual sex are all shown by 'm' where they have been followed by recognised issue/s. This respects the public reticence of family members on this matter (except in the case of disputed inheritance).
- b) The relatively greater importance of females in the determination of identity and property inheritance is reflected by the exclusion of males descended from their grandmother through the male line from the charts, though uterine males are included with their mother for the first generation. The relative importance of the male *ntoro* by other criteria such as spirituality, dynamism, innovation, creativity, intelligence, reliability and hard work is not reflected in the charts however, though these important human factors dominate the narratives.
- c) Descent matrilineal or patrilineal is shown by a vertical line according to convention,
- d) Adoption is shown by a dotted line.

Ancestors and present clan members, those affiliated to the clan by 'marriage' or recognised as of importance to it and those who have given their spiritual itineraries have their residence type, employment, migrations, denominations and denominational change and symbols of authority where appropriate, added to their name on the trees. The education and type of employment is given for some, where this is known. For these symbols please see the page entitled 'Key' in the appendices.

¹⁰³ Letters are affixed to distinguish the Bosumefi *ebusua* (B) from the Anowa *ebusua* (A); small letters refer to the family of males who have married into the clan as follows: s: Saa; k: Kwashie; etc while numbers refer to generations from the founding father/mother. These are given generation numbers corresponding to those of their spouses, to bring them into a time frame with the Bosumefi and Anowa matriclans.

¹⁰⁴ (The size of the whole group can be imagined if we think of them as being the great grandchildren of Tekyiwa and her husband, and date her time of flourishing as at the end of the eighteenth century. Since they/she had twenty seven children, if each woman of each generation had a few children the present size of the here-alive *Ekona* is beyond that of the town she founded, running into hundreds! While the 'sister' clan of the *Nsona* (probably formed by the descendants of those men of the *Ekona* who married *Nsona* women in their sister clan) would be of similar size.

found in the fifth generation of her descendants; while the narrators of the second story 'Aunt'/'Nana' AmoaEsiwah and *Ebusuapanyin* John Hope/Kodwo Amissah are to be found in the third and fourth generations respectively (Chapter III). Kodwo Amissah also spoke the dirge for the *fiekessim*/great house at Idan (Chapter IV).

iii) The third tree shows the descendants of Bosumefi of the *Nsona* clan in their four branches. It is from the descendants of her daughter, Minakokode that the guardians of the stool are chosen and *Ankobe* *Opanyin* Mensah of Idan is to be found in the fourth generation. The stool which links the two clans is in his house at Idan. Members of the *Ekona* family at Abaka go up to Idan to be enstooled in the stool-room there. It is his linguist/*Okomfo* Mr Bannerman who pours libation and prays at the start of any ceremony such as the twin-rite, or a funeral/remembrance service – whether of a Christian or a traditional believer at the White House, House 122B, Sam Road, Nkwantadu..

iv) The fourth tree shows the *Abakoko*/Anna branch of the descendants of Bosumefi. 'Aunt' Hannah/Adwoa Krasiwah Graham, is to be found in the third generation. She spoke the dirge for Bosumefi's husband, J.H. Dadzie at her home, the 'White House he built at Nkwantadu. (Chapter IV, Part I). She is his grand daughter. The dirge for Bosumefi herself was spoken by Elisabeth Fynn/Efua Egyirba, Hannah's daughter. She is *efie panyin* there, as the oldest capable descendant of Bosumefi in residence.

v) The fifth tree shows the Fanny AmaKessie branch of the descendants of Bosumefi. *Asafohen* Theophilus/KwameAttah Jonah can be found in the fifth generation. He is the present guardian of the *Asafo* stool at Nkwantadu which was his Uncle Kodwo William Abraham's after his enforced enstoolment in 1965 (Chapter V). He was a guide to information about that stool and the *Asafo* Company number seven at Amanful.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰⁵He also gave information about the twin rite which is celebrated annually for himself, his twin sister AmaAttah and his younger brother Tawiah by *Opanyin* Mensah and Mr Bannerman from Idan.

vi) The last shows the Marion/AmaDede branch of the descendants of Bosumefi. Marion married Mr Anaman, and her daughter, Efua Rebecca Anaman, married Samuel Abraham a clerk with the United Africa Company working in Lagos. They had seven children¹⁰⁶. Rose Ama told the writer of her mother Effie's life in Lagos.¹⁰⁷ Nanabanyin/Isaac Ekow and his friend Mr Hagan accompanied the writer, with Dorothy, a Secretary in the Regional House of Chiefs, to the bungalow of Nana Tutu Dadzie III, Mr Hagan's Uncle, who gave the account of Bosumefi's husband's life and death recorded in Chapter IV. As the senior representative of the line of Marion at Nkwantadu he was most courteous to me, always finding time to talk and making sure that I was well in the mornings.¹⁰⁸ Kodwo/William Emmanuel Edisa gave his own account of his life to the writer (see Chapter V and the appendix).¹⁰⁹ The account of the life of MameEfua/Mabel Winifred was given by her brothers Nanabanyin and KofiEbo and her children who are still in Fanteland: Alice Aba Kuofie, Joseph NanaEssilfie Thomson and Esi Thompson.¹¹⁰ KofiEbo the last born spoke about her death.¹¹¹

Because Mabel has the status of ancestor and to preserve the coherence given by discourse type, the account of Mabel has been put before that of Kodwo, even though, historically, the events the latter recounts preceded her decision to join the Musama Disco Church.

¹⁰⁶ Three of them have died in addition to Mabel. They are not listed.

¹⁰⁷ She returned to Cape Coast in 1945, was educated at Wesley Girls High School, worked in Takoradi, had two children with a Mr Davidson and one with Mr Kwashie - an Ewe from Lome with whom she lives in Accra New Town- and twelve grandchildren.

¹⁰⁸ He stayed with his mother in Lagos and was educated there. He worked for Ghana Airways, travelled to and fro to Burkina on government business, was in Britain and Germany as a student and businessman, was deported from Germany and held at Nsawam top security prison after the first coup and was eventually released with compensation. He now (2004) lives in an improvised flat at 122B Sam Road, Nkwantadu

¹⁰⁹ He was born in Lagos, educated at Adisadel Anglican College, the University of Ghana, Legon and Oxford and became a Philosophy lecturer at the University of Ghana Legon and an associate of Osagyefo Dr. Kwame Nkrumah. He was held in Preventive Detention after the first coup d'etat and now lives in the United States of America.

¹¹⁰ She was born in Lagos, schooled at Ghana National College, married a Fante working in the Cote d'Ivoire and went to and fro across the border trading cloth before her call to the ministry (See Chapter IV).

¹¹¹ He was born in Nigeria, and educated at Cape Coast. He trained as a priest, then as a teacher; then worked for the Atomic Energy Project as a technician. After the coup d'etat he was considered too 'vociferous' and was dismissed. He returned to Nigeria but could not get a teaching post. He came back again to teach in Ghana and is now (2004) working at a private Junior Secondary School in Achimota, a suburb of Accra. He is the present spokesman for the AmaDede branch of the descendants of Bosumefi in Fanteland.

A summary of the story as a whole

The whole story starts with the first aetiological myth. The first of the two in Chapter III is about the formation of one of the seven Akan clans. This could have been around or before the fourteenth century during the early migrations of the Akan peoples from the north to the coast through Mankessim. The second aetiological narrative gives an account of the origin of the stool which symbolises the ancestral link between the *Ekona* and the *Nsona* clans of Anafo, Idan in Oguaa, and Abaka in Abura. Tekyiwa, *Ekona*, is considered to have moved to Anafo with her *Nsona* husband bringing the stool sometime around the end of the eighteenth century and the beginning of the nineteenth century during the time of the wars with Asante when her father 'disappeared'.

One of Tekyiwa's descendants: Anowa (Bosumefi's 'sister' (A1) a member of the *Nsona* clan) was forced to move to Abura Obohen when the *Fiekessim*/great house at Anafo where she was living, was first put under guard, then taken over by the British, probably around the time of the last Asante war which ended in the subjection of Kumase. She went with her husband who had been a guard of the *Fiekessim*.¹¹² *Osofo* the Very Reverend Isaac K. Beesi Sam is her fifth generation descendant.¹¹³ He acknowledged the connection between the two families by giving me, a former wife/yere of an *Nsona* of Idan and Nkwantadu, the use of his room at Abaka while he was away at Berekum.

¹¹² The Anglican Cathedral was also taken over as a hospital during this war, as shown in the District Commissioner's correspondence. It is a matter for sound conjecture that the blackened stool of Abosomdwowa (Chapter III) moved secretly by night from Anafo to Idan and found a resting place at the house of Minakokode, the mother of the present guardian Opanyin Mensah, at the same time as Anowa was forced to move, and for the same reason. Minakokode would have been very young.

¹¹³ Her daughter was BentsiEfua, her grand daughter EsiAttah, wife of James Hope a Catholic, her great grand daughters were Aunt AmoaEsiwah (who told the story of the stool and gave the list of its occupants) and Esiadadziewa (Methodist), sister of Kodwo Amissah, (Catholic and *ebusuapanyin* 2004). EsiAdadziewa married a Methodist James Sam, and was the mother of *Osofo* the Very Reverend Isaac K. Baasi Sam (Methodist, who told the story of the totem, and gave interpretations, both *sensus plenior* and *peshor*

The 1870/80s is suggested for the beginning of the southward movement of the parents, probably Mamprusi (s0)¹¹⁴ of Yaw Abaka Saa/Joseph Herman Dadzie/Nana Tutu Dadzie I partner/husband of Bosumefi (Chapter IV).¹¹⁵ He became an *Asafohen* of Company Number VII, Amanful, and headman and caretaker of the Amanful stool after 1917. His story was told by his successor on the stool of Amanful, Nana Tutu Dadzie III.¹¹⁶ (Chapter IV). He was a Methodist preacher and his building programme included the Nkwantadu house which he gave to his three daughters¹¹⁷ by Bosumefi: Abakoko/Anna,¹¹⁸ Fanny/AmaKessie,¹¹⁹ and Marian/AmaDede.¹²⁰ Bosumefi had one other daughter whose child Minakokode, was the mother of *Ankobe* Mensah of Idan, the stool guardian.

Ama 's daughter, Efua/Rebecca Abraham nee Anaman (B3) went to Nigeria in the mid twenties with her husband Samuel (a3) who was working there for the United Africa Company, a British trading Company, as a short-hand typist/secretary. Their seven children were born there. Samuel retired in 1945, and returned to Oguaa where all but one of his children followed him. They came to stay at Sam Road, in their grandmother's part of the house where she was also living by then.¹²¹ The third son

¹¹⁴ The small letter indicates that the person is not a member of the matrilineal clan but an associate by membership of a household or through marriage.

¹¹⁵ His parents became members of the household of *Qhema* Amba Tekyiwa/Sarah Martin (m0) and he later became a member of the household of her daughter Hannah Martin/Aba Embirba (m1).

¹¹⁶ She was a 'sister' or more probably a 'cousin' of Anowa and a descendant of Tekyiwa. She was a member of the *Nsona* clan, who may also have lived at the *fiekessim* at Anafo.

¹¹⁷ Nanabanyin/Isaac Ekow Nana Tutu Dadzie's fourth generation descendant was also there.

¹¹⁸ He also preached in the Methodist Society at Amanful and had meetings of the Methodist Society in his hall.

¹¹⁹ Efua Egyirba is the *efie panyin* at Nkwantadu (2004); her mother Akosua Krasiwah (B3) granddaughter of Bosumefi and daughter of Anna, has stayed in the house throughout her life and Efua is there now (2004) looking after her. She acknowledged an ex wife/*yere* and mother and grandmother of descendants of Ama Dede in allocating me a room in Ama's part of the Nkwantadu house, as apportioned by Nana Tutu Dadzie.

¹²⁰ Around the second decade of the twentieth century Fanny Dadzie/AmaKessie (*Nsona* B2) went to Lagos, Fanny's daughter, Ama, (B3) was born there. She married Mr Amartey (a3) a Ga who was also working in Nigeria. Their son was called Josh Amartey, (B4) and their daughter, Jane Ama Amartey (B4).

¹²¹ AmaDede/Marian Anaman nee Dadzie (B2) went with her husband Mr Anaman (a2) to Zaria, Nigeria, where he worked for a British trading firm during the war (1914-1918). She is head over all the descendants of Bosumefi and J.H. Dadzie who are living in Oguaa, Nkwantadu but acknowledges *Opanyin* Mensah of Idan as *ebusua panyin*..

¹²² Thomas has built a bungalow there, while Kojo Amissah as *ebusuapanyin* now (2004) occupies some eight rooms in the *fiekessim*/traditional swish house there *Osofo* the Very Reverend Isaac K. Baasi Sam (A5) is his nephew.¹²¹ He is building his own house at Abeka but has the use of one of those rooms in the

Kodwo Mensah/William became an associate of Osagyefo Dr. Kwame Nkrumah and was put in preventive detention after the first coup d'état for seven months after which he became a Catholic and went to the United States of America. After the coup d'état also his sister Mabel was called to be a consecrated worker in the Musama Disco Christo Church, and she died at post at Mozano in 2002.

In the fourth generation, of the Ekona descendants of Anowa, Kodwo Amissah/John Hope (*Ekona* A4) and Ekow Bentsifi/Thomas Hope (A4), brothers, and sons of EsiAttah and Yao Hope (A3) have retired from government employment to Abaka. It is their nephew who is the inspirer and facilitator for much of this thesis.¹²² He said to the writer 'You are doing our work for us!'

Comment on employment, migration, denomination and clan loyalty¹²³

As seen already employment has been the major cause for Cape Coasters to move; followed by political change.¹²⁴ Those of the two clans who were born in Ghana who are working are building houses for themselves in Oguaa, Abaka or Accra or at least

meantime when in Abaka. That is where the researcher stayed at Abaka when he and his wife and children were at his station - Berekum. He is the younger brother of Esi and Adwoa Duraa, youngest son of EsiAdadziewa, and nephew of the *ebusua panyin*. He went to Trinity, Legon, for his first degree and became Superintendent Methodist minister at Berekum. He has just been awarded an M Phil in Theology (2004) and appointed Superintendent Minister of the Wesley Methodist Cathedral, Oguaa, with the title 'Very Reverend.'

¹²² His niece, Abena, (A6) daughter of EsiDuraa and granddaughter of EsiAttah went to Cote d'Ivoire with her husband Francis Turkson to farm (t6). They had to return as refugees, fleeing through the bush from government soldiers who had instructions to kill non-Ivorians on sight. Their son, Andrews, of the seventh generation (A7) remained with his grandmother during this time. He is in his final year at Ghana National College, Cape Coast, (and took some of the photos).

¹²³ These facts are not intended to be and are not, statistically significant, even for the two linked clans since both are much wider than can be put on the trees. A general impression can be obtained by studying the trees, and clues picked up as to what may be a changing pattern of migration and denomination over the seven generations and how the families can be expected to develop in future. Some suggestions have been sketched below.

¹²⁴ Unemployment in the fifth generation is high at Nkwantadu where all four young men, sons of AmaPanyin are trained electricians (B5) but only one has work elsewhere in Ghana, the others remain at home unemployed. Young men in Cape Coast, unlike those at Abaka which is small and rural, do not feel like taking up farming when they have had an education - it seems a retrograde step. Unemployment has spurred those who have gone to other parts of Ghana and abroad to leave, but those remaining seem unable to set up a new unit, which is part of the establishing of a marriage, with no money and no guarantee of succeeding. Negotiating a wedding or even customary marriage may not be easy when prospects seem increasingly so poor and it is noticeable that marriage has become unlikely for those - both men and women- left in Oguaa who may have had one or two children and some passing relationships, but have not established a home outside the original matriclan unit.

remitting to the matriclan to renovate what exists, and to help pay for funerals, emergencies and daily support. None have forgotten their roots. *Abusua-dua yentwa!* we don't fell the tree that is the family.¹²⁵

Conversion and denominational change

In the Anowa family I have assumed on the linguistic evidence of names and likelihood in view of the history of mission, that the hunter, Tekyiwa and their descendants before Anowa were traditional believers. None has spoken of the first convert to Methodism in the family, but EsiAttah (A3) was a Methodist. She married a Catholic Yao Hope (h3) who was one of the first converts to the Catholic faith after the return of Catholic missionaries in the first decade of the twentieth century.¹²⁶ She had ten children.¹²⁷ Her female children, of whom EsiAdadziwa (A4) was one, remained with her in the Methodist church, while the boys, Kojo Amissah (A4) and Ekow Bentsifi (A4) followed their father and have remained observant Catholics. EsiAdadziwa married a Methodist, James Sam, and their son *Osofo* Isaac K.Sam (A5) is now Very Reverend Superintendent Minister in the Wesley Methodist Cathedral at Oguaa.¹²⁸

While the descendants of Anowa have thus remained in the Catholic and Methodist Churches with one known exception and have successfully brought up their children to continue these traditions; the descendants of Bosumefi have made many denominational changes. Chapters IV and V go into some detail about the manner and reason for this in two instances, and what follows gives these accounts some context.

Bosumefi, Nana Tutu Dadzie I and all their three daughters were baptised as Methodists at the Methodist Society of Amanful (B1, 2). One of them or both may

¹²⁵ The situation may be different for second generation emigrants however, particularly those who have been born abroad, who have never known Ghana at all or only very briefly. These may vary in their interest between enthusiastic, 'polite,' or indifferent, (not hostile) but are all likely to see Ghana as a holiday resort rather than a commitment.

¹²⁶ Kojo Amissah, interview at Abaka, June, 2004.

¹²⁷ Their names are not on the tree but many of them are in the photograph of the clan with the totem in the appendices.

¹²⁸ Her daughter AdwoaDuraa (A 5) is a Methodist but married a Catholic, Charles Kessie. They had 10 children who have all been brought up Catholic; one was Abena (A6). She is at present a member of the Harrist Church but her son Andrews is an observant, but unbaptised Catholic.

have been a first generation convert in the house of the *Qhema* of Amanful.¹²⁹ 'Effie' their grand daughter was Anglican like her father and married an Anglican (B3) and all seven of their children were baptised as Anglicans in Lagos. Later¹³⁰ she attended the church of Bethel (Pentecostal) at Mamobi.¹³¹ Though all the children of Effie and Samuel (B4) changed denomination (Mabel (B4) left the Anglican Church¹³² and Kodwo joined the Catholic Church¹³³) none of this branch have discarded their commitment to Christ's Church in one form or another. The same is not evidently true for the descendants of Abakoko and Ama Kessie.¹³⁴

¹²⁹ As we have seen Ama Dede/Marian Dadzie (B2), married an Anglican Mr Anaman, and her child (Effie B3) was baptized Anglican like her father and married an Anglican, Samuel Abraham. Marriages where there is not a denominational divide might be seen as relatively stable, enabling events in the life cycle to be wholeheartedly and celebrated in the united Christian home as with NanaAba's baptism at 9 Bishop Street, Lagos

¹³⁰ She separated from her husband Samuel, probably initially because of her bakery business in Lagos, and he took another wife in Oguaa. When she eventually returned to Ghana, she stayed in Accra.

¹³¹ Probably to fortify herself against witches whom she had come to fear greatly. The Anglicans did not believe there was any such thing, so when attending there she had had no alternative but to find protection from them elsewhere.

¹³² She eventually left her husband also, becoming the wife of an Musama Disco Christo Church pastor and prophet briefly instead. Reverend Gaisie explained that, though they loved each other, it was impossible to combine marriage with pastoral responsibilities which took them to different stations. Three of Mabel's children both male and female, (B5) have followed her into Musama, leaving the Anglican church of their father, the youngest boy, Ntieku, had become a 'Buddhist' before migrating to Italy.

¹³³ He married a Catholic. All his children, except one, are Catholics.. Nanabanyin and KofiEbo joined the Deeper Life Bible Church (Pentecostal) and Rose the Church of the Lord Aladura.

¹³⁴ In the fifth generation of Ama Kessie/Fanny Dadzie (B5) Kwame Attah and AmaAttah retain the denominational label, 'Anglican', from their father Mr Jonah, and the documents to show that they have been baptized and confirmed.¹³⁴ Tawiah is baptised in the Methodist church where his mother attended for some time. They may sometimes attend a church of their choice if there is a special outreach. Ama Attah (B6) and Nana (B7) attend *Mpaebo*/prayer group when there is special need for protection, as when AmaAttah was pregnant (2003) and Nana was formerly an occasional attender at the Musama Disco Christo Church like her grandmother Jane Ama (B4). (Ama wears the Musama ring which protects and shows membership and Nana does not.

Abakoko (B2) married Mr Graham a Methodist, and brought up her daughter Hannah Graham/Akosua Krasiwah now aged 90 a Methodist, and she has remained in that denomination and still enjoys singing the hymns. She does not seem to be on the list for the distribution of communion, however. (She attended the Amanful Society first, but then changed to attend the Wesley Methodist Cathedral when the family were ostracised.) She married Mr Fynn, (f2) a Catholic and her daughter Efua Egyirba/ Elisabeth Fynn the *efiepanyin* at Nkwantadu, is baptised a Catholic, married a Catholic in Church and shows respect for the church, without the commitment of taking communion

The present situation: the influence of the churches on the traditional link

The link between the two matriclans is weakening, particularly as the stool has only a caretaker and not an occupant as the present claimant is a deacon in the Catholic Church which does not permit its officers to be enstooled; so the traditional link between the guardians (*Nsona*) and the incumbents (*Ekona*) has not been re-enforced. Pentecostals in the family (of Deeper Life Bible Church for example, which also takes a strong line against traditional beliefs and practices) may deny the link has ever had any value.

Diagram: Nkwantadu residents¹³⁵ photographs¹³⁶ and drawings¹³⁷

The diagram of the allocation of rooms in the White House Nkwantadu (Appendix II) is interesting because it shows that eighty years after the death of Nana Tutu Dadzie his wishes with regard to the allocation of rooms in the house are still being adhered to by his descendants. The photographs (Appendix IV) illustrate the Ekona as a complete family and the Nsona as individuals; others show the grove, and there are some shots of the *Afahye*/yearly Oguaa festival. The drawings show some unblackened state stools.

¹³⁵ a) Efua Egyirba great granddaughter of Bosumefi through her mother Adwoa Krasiwah and her grandmother, Abakoko/Anna Dadzie is *efiepanyin* (household head) at Nkwantadu.
b) Nanabanyin is the only one of Effie's children who lives there. He is the only descendant of Marion Dadzie (Ama Dede), others are in Abura Dunkwa, Kasoa, Accra, or abroad.
c) Descendants of Bosumefi through Fanny Dadzie/AmaKessie are many and are crowding their third of the house with Nana and her two children sharing her grandmother and Mr Jonah's room and the two young men still at home using the same room as their sitting room and relaxing place.
The narratives in Chapters IV part 2 and V are from the family branch traced through AmaDede and her daughter, Effie - the fourth generation.

¹³⁶ There are photographs of the *Kona ebusufo* at Abeka holding their totem; of the flags of the *Asafo* company number 7 showing proverbs, and the pouring of libation, at the *Asafo* number 7 post; photos of the celebrities and families at the final joint service at the *Afahye* 2003 and photos of Kojo and his wife and one son. MameEfua/Osofo Reverend Mabel Abraham, her granddaughter Elisabeth and Efua Egyirba are captured sharing a joke on the back of the Burial and Thanksgiving programme for Mabel

¹³⁷ There are drawings of various stools. All are in the appendices.

CHAPTER III

TWO GOD-SENDS:

THE MYSTERIOUS BUSH COW'

*'adanko se: "Obi gye obi nkwa"'*¹

The bush cow saves a hunter-ancestor'

THE STOOL-CARRIER AND HIS DESCENDANTS

*'kurobi mu dom nwui a kurobi so mbukya nsae'*²

The stool carrier dies but his descendants multiply

Introduction

This Chapter is in three parts. Part I deals with the stories as oral literature. The story-tellers are identified and their place within the Anowa family of the *Ekona* at Abura Abaka in Fanteland is given. The stories are identified as examples of the aetiological narratives of the Akan which give explanation for the fact of the stick/*poma* and the stool in the clan paraphernalia, and use and customs associated with the stool. Each narration is placed in its ancestral context using independently established data about the relevant historical periods and putting the narratives in chronological order as is done in the list in Hebrews, Chapters XI and XII.

Part II consists of an introduction to the stick narration and the narration itself. It is followed by a development of an aspect of the theology of the presence of Christ based on the narrative by analogy with the encounter of Abraham and Melchisedek as Melchisedek's person and actions are interpreted in Hebrews Chapter VII. Finally Christian ethics are derived from it based largely on comments by *Osofo* Sam on what he had told, in the light of aspects of the moral teaching in the Epistle to the Hebrews. Part III deals with the stool narration in the same way with an introduction preceding the narration. Theological and ethical meditations follow as before.

¹ Rabbit says: one saves another's life.

² When a town still has some inhabitants there will still be fire set there. (symbol of a three headed hearth; symbol of life and hope)

1.1 *Abakosem*/history mystery and founder ancestors

For the Akan the *abakosem* begin with God who together with the earth and the sea created many spiritual and physical entities including the *abosom*, other spirits, creatures and wo/mankind.

‘In the beginning this creator God /*Obode Nyame* used to be near to humans (though in the sky as his name *Nyame* tells you). He went up further away when an old woman kept hitting him with her pestle every evening when she pounded fufu.’³

When he went way from planet earth he continued to dwell in all sorts of special creatures living things and objects and to possess some humans through his children the *abosom*, so that you could hardly ever be quite sure whether you were dealing with him directly or not! Many *abakosem* deal with the sacred origin of particular customs. The Oxford English Dictionary says: ‘Aetiology is the assignment of the wherefore of a command.’ ‘Bush cow saves hunter’ and ‘Stool carrier dies but his descendants multiply’ have this function, explaining how two of the sacred artefacts the clans’ members are familiar with came to be as and where they are. No distinction is made in the genre between memory and imagination or scientific fact and myth. In the tradition, all are *abakosem* and to be revered in both the telling and in continuing to follow the commands as interpreted for the present. Central *abakosem* are concerned with the doings of God, with founder ancestors of the family group, with sacred/mysterious/powerful animals/*abosom*, and most especially among the Akan with the stools of numinous origin, and manufacture, blackened and kept in the seclusion of a stool room. None of these are thought of as independent of God/*Nyame* (their Father and Creator). *Nsem nyinaa ne Nyame*/Everything has its foundation in God, is a core Akan belief.⁴ Though every thing has its origin and continuance in God not everything is revealed; and those things that are revealed are revealed only to some: ‘We do not just tell this type (of narrative)

³ Quoted in W.E. Abraham, *The Mind of Africa*, University of Chicago, 1960

⁴ Gyekye, Kwame, *Essay on African Philosophical Thought, The Akan Conceptual Scheme*, Philosophia, Temple University Press, 19

anywhere, anyhow, to anyone’/Dem asem yi yenka no basabasa⁵/Do not cast your pearls before swine. The telling is in the nature of a sacred trust from the ancestors. The *abakosem* evoke a more reverential and profound response in the traditional believer than that normally accorded to scientific explanation.⁶ Esi Sutherland-Addy, a Fante, says of sacred animal stories (p21) ‘(they) explain the elevated position of particular animals and their representation in the... names (and) carvings...associated with particular groups.’⁷

Abakosem normally have a stylised beginning and end to set the appropriate serious and attentive attitude in the audience which is appropriate to sacred mysteries. There may be spiritual entities Nyame and *abosom* in the stories. They climax with a pause when the audience think carefully, or feel very sad about what they have heard. Questions are not usually allowed to interrupt the telling and (the writer feels instinctively) hardly allowed at all about the mysterious spiritual element in the stories; that aspect is allowed to touch emotions that are too deep for words and analysis.

There is also an emphasis in *abakosem* on the noble deeds of ancestors.⁸ The Akan split and some became known as Fante. Before this they had established seven or eight sacred clans. The *eko* (bush cow) of the earliest tale of the *Ekona* which follows and which gave its name to the *Ekona* clan was formerly found in the Northern part of present day Ghana and further north still in present day Burkina Faso, not in the thick forest which used to exist nearer to the coast.⁹ This is evidence for a migration. There is corroborating evidence for the migration in the remains of thirteenth and fourteenth century settlements along

⁵ Sutherland Addy, Esi ed. *Perspectives on Mythology*, Goethe Institute, Accra, 1999

⁶ Kojo Amissah regretted that at the death of his mother Esi Attah the second group of *Ekona* at Abaka had refused to pay their funeral dues and broke away; this forced him to form a new group.

⁷ *Anansesem/spider stories* are fables concerned with morals and not origins. Sutherland Addy, Esi ed. *Perspectives on Mythology*, Goethe Institute, Accra, 1999. p.21.

⁸ After the proliferation of mankind from the first couple they split up into different tribes and languages, scattering from their first homeland. In Africa the ‘Niger Congo’ split and some became ‘Volta-Comoe’, the ‘Volta Comoe’ split and some became ‘Akan,’

⁹ This was mentioned by Isaac Nanabanyin E. Abraham (*Nsona*) and Thomas Ekow Bentsifi (*Ekona*). There are still patches of forest preserved as tourist attractions in the Akan area of settlement. The cow/calf was brought from Egypt and worshipped by the Israelites in the desert. This fact is noted by Dr J.B. Danquah and used to substantiate his hypothesis of migration from Israel comparing the golden calf with the *eko* of the *Ekona*, (see also his book, *The Ghana Establishment*, editor K Adu Boahen, Ghana Universities Press, 1997) where he argued that the Akan seven day week had its origin in Mesopotamia.

a North-South route into Ghana.¹⁰ Dr J.B Danquah speculated that these migrations were a continuation of the dispersion from the Tower of Babel (Genesis XI).¹¹ However that may be, the first narrative is set outside Fanteland before the fifteenth/sixteenth century when the migrations were still incomplete. The first narrative unites the whole of the *Ekona* consisting of approximately one seventh¹² of the entire Akan people, and including the local Fante group of *Ekona* at Abaka (The other six clans have different *poma*/sticks/standards/totems/mascots and presumably other food laws also).

The second story about the carrier of the sacred stool is set after settlement on the coast when the threat to Fante monopoly of trade with the Europeans posed by the Edina-Asante alliance resulted in civil war. By the eighteenth century the Denkyira (another Akan group) had become a powerful kingdom to the North of Oguaa of the Fante; further north still were the Asante (also Akan).¹³ The Asante then formed a confederacy of rulers, under the leadership of the Kumasihene Osei Tutu (c 1693-c 1731) and Okomfo Anokye. A Golden Stool/*Sika Gwa* Kofi brought from heaven by the *Okomfo* to rest on the knees of Kumasihene Osei Tutu was submitted to by all the Asante rulers as the soul/*kra* of this new alliance and Osei Tutu received the title 'Asantehene'/Ruler of the Asante nation. After defeating the kingdom of Denkyira, the Asante Confederacy under the Asantehene Osei Bonsu (1800-1824) in alliance with the Dutch and the Edina people, began attacks on the coastal Fante, who were taking the profits of trade in slaves and gold between the Asante and the Europeans. These wars are the background to the second aetiological narrative which gives the origin of the stool at Idan.

Yet the spirits of the stool are believed to be timeless and the stool not fabricated and its carrier or invoker not fully human, so the distinction between so-called spiritual stories and ancestral ones is only a convenient tool or a

¹⁰ This is not universally agreed. J.D Fage, for example in *An Introduction to the History of West Africa*, Cambridge 1962 p.17ff, suggests that the negro people have always lived in the forest belt, south of the open area inhabited by the great Empires of Songhai and Ghana. However his description may fit the Guan only.

¹¹ The indigenous stories are often linked by the family with those from the Bible.

¹² K Nkansa Kyeremateng *The Akans of Ghana, their history and culture*, Sebewie, 1996, says that there are eight clans-because he adds one that others consider a sub clan.

¹³ See map I in the Appendices.

matter of emphasis, as with very early Hebrew stories; the two are inextricably mixed.¹⁴

1.2 Narrators

The stories were told by the immediate relatives of John Hope/Kodwo Amissah, *ebusua panyin*¹⁵ of the *Ekona* at Abura Abaka. The first story was told by *Osofo* the Very Reverend Isaac K. Baasi Sam of the Methodist Cathedral in Oguaa, who is his maternal nephew; and the second by NanaAmoaEsiwah his maternal cousin who at an age above ninety years is the oldest of NanaAnowa's descendents at Abaka.¹⁶ She cooked for Nana Yaw Abbam (died 1982) during the eight days of purification.¹⁷ The narrative was translated simultaneously by *Opanyin* Kodwo Amissah and checked by him after it had been typed up. He later supplied the following recitation of ancestors going back to NanaAnowa (descendant of NanaTekyiwa of Komenda). The recitation and genealogies make plain the credentials of the two narrators and their traditional right to tell the stories. Kodwo Amissah, a retired civil servant of seventy five and more, now a very hardworking farmer with his wife to help (but no one else) is a deacon of the Catholic Church. He often checked details of names and chronology with NanaAmoaEsiwah his elder cousin once removed. He is humorous at times but at times sad about glories of his family that he perceives as passing away. He said concerning his own family line and that of his 'cousin':

'NanaAnowa'¹⁸ was *Ekona*. 'The first member of the Anafo family'¹⁹ of Abura to be enstooled at Idan was Nana Yaw Attah who was NanaAnowa's son. After this no-one was enstooled, but Nana Attah

¹⁴ The actual wood may embarrassingly rot and have to be replaced, especially as the blackened stools are regularly purified by washing KwameAttah's ancient Asafostool (not blackened) was propped up behind its modern replacement

¹⁵ Please consult Chapter II and the genealogies in the appendices for details.

¹⁶ She told the story in Mfantse with immediate/simultaneous translation by Kojo Amissah, at her home, which is adjacent to his. The written form has been checked by Kojo Amissah.

¹⁷ Conversation and interview at his compound yard at Abaka. For more details of his position in the family consult the excursus and the genealogical trees in the appendices.

¹⁸ Nana is the respectful title to be used when speaking of a righteous ancestor because many of the people in the story are entitled to this prefix to their name we have used it the first time but not afterward.

¹⁹ Anafo is also the name of the market in Idan near the site of the *fiekessim*/great house his ancestors and those of the *Nsona* at Idan both called their home (see Chapter IV, Narration I)

Kakrah/Kofi James was a caretaker to assume the position of family head at festivals and funerals. He died at Abaka in 1952. He was followed by Braimah/Kwabena Arku who was a Muslim. After that Yaw Abam /Abban was enstooled until 1980. *Nana AmoaEsiwah cooked for him during the eight days of purification.* After this Yaw Amissah/Joseph Hope, my (Kodwo Amissah/John Hope's) father, was a caretaker until his death in 1982.²⁰ After this I was chosen *ebusua panyin*, and I am; but I have not gone to Idan to be enstooled.'

The first narrator *Osofo* the Very Reverend Kweku Baasi/Isaac Sam is *Opanyin* Kodwo Amissah's nephew and, though young, an honoured member of the *mpanyinfo* of the *Ekona* at Abaka in virtue of his wisdom and education. He is a very busy man and was commuting between Berekum where he was Superintendent Minister, Cape Coast University where he was studying for an MTh and his clan at Abaka.²¹ Though he had little time to explain it his thinking about the theology of the family *poma*/stick and its potential to promote right behaviour in the family is seminal to the theology and ethics of the thesis.

1.3 'The bush cow saves the hunter'

The *poma* (totem) at Abaka is a long staff about the height of a man, with a wooden carved *ekɔ* (buffalo/bush-cow) painted black and mounted on top. The *ekɔ* has a small black bird perched between the horns.²² The totem is visible to everyone and anyone, children went freely in and out of the room where it was stored,²³ and carried to meetings of the various *abusua mpanyinfo*/family heads and elders called by the *Odikro* of Abaka.

²⁰ The list stopped here, the writer presumes because the speaker took up his position as the eldest son when his father died.

²¹ See the tables of descent in the appendices.

²² It stands on a yellow platform with a yellow rectangular base supported by an inverted cone of the same colour that completes the head of the totem. Around the narrow end of this cone are tied roughly torn strips of the cloths which had been worn by those now 'living-dead'. There are some seven different strips, maybe going back less than ten years. There is a photo in the appendices. An *abusua poma* (totem) had to be made some ten years ago when there was a split within the *Ekona* clan groups at Abeka at the death of *EsiAttah* the present *abusua panyin*'s mother. The clan group that arrived first said that they would no longer share in the funeral expenses with the descendants of Anowa now headed by Kodwo Amissah. This present totem was made at *Obohen* Anowa's husband's town, by Attah Panyin's son, called Kweku Attah.

²³ This was Osofo Sam's room where I stayed in his absence.

The story was narrated by the Very Reverend Isaac K.Sam in Feb. 2003.²⁴ He omitted the customary opening and ending (he had me as a small audience of one) and as an *Osofo* of the Methodist Church he emphasized the Christological and moral teaching to be derived from the tale for the family of which he is a member: the *Ekona* (summarised in 1.5 below).

“Once, our ancestor was walking in the bush hunting for animals. He lost his way. He thought he might die of thirst. An *eko* bush-cow mysteriously appeared and she led him to water. He drank and this saved his life. He told his descendants that they must never hunt or eat the *eko*. Because they obeyed his instruction and have done so ever since they are called *Ekona*: people of the *eko*”.

‘If you look carefully at the totem too you will see there is a very small bird on the *eko*’s head. That bird, in eating the ticks from the *eko*’s head, satisfies its own hunger but also relieves the huge animal from an irritant it cannot get rid of for itself.

‘The representation of a small bird and a powerful animal helping each other on the totem symbolises the helpfulness family members should (but do not always) show to each other.’²⁵ The story shows the helpfulness of an animal to a man, and is an inspiration to family members to be hospitable to strangers.

‘The bird and the *eko* on the totem represent the substance and soul of the family.’

1.4 Theology: exactly what or who is the *eko*?

The *eko* is a powerful even dangerous wild creature and so its role as saviour and helper, like that of Melchizedek, is surprising. An Akan proverb says:

Ekose: esono nni man mu a, anka oye bopon/the bush cow says if the elephant is not around he is the greatest.

²⁴ He is (2004) Methodist Superintendent Minister at Wesley Cathedral in Oguaa. He was educated at Trinity College, Legon and holds a Masters Degree in Theology from Cape Coast University.

²⁵ This symbiotic relationship is found in many different ways in nature and shows it in a different light from the struggle for mastery which is the key notion in Darwin’s ‘Origin of the Species.’

Yet this massive *eko* 'forgave' the hunter his evil intention and meekly saved his life. Both came from the same creator God and both needed the water of an African stream, which brought them closer to each other, as the fight for existence brought the clan together and brought Abraham the migrant and Melchizedek the resident together to eat.²⁶

Nyame nnu na mawu If God dies I too will die (Adinkra symbol of a cross with rotational symmetry /eternal life. Anyone who has glimpsed a wild creature in their natural habitat will have wondered at their mysterious life - where they came from and where they went. The hunter is supposed to stalk and take the wild animal unawares to outwit and kill it, but the 'hunter' of the story cannot even look after his own needs. There is something remarkable and disorientating about this story of a wild bush cow that takes the initiative and leads a 'hunter' to water. Such disorientation is the response of the writer to the Hebrews at Melchizedek's appearance. His origin is unknown yet he has a priestly function and a kingly function. In Hebrews Chapter VII the writer interprets the story of Melchizedek's meeting with Abraham *sensus plenior* as pointing forward to Christ, exclaiming:²⁷ 'How great he is!'²⁸

The hunter now owed his life to the *eko* which constituted a reversal of roles. In gratitude, he honoured her, promising he and his descendants would never kill that particular animal's offspring again. A harmonious relationship was established between the animal spirit and the human descent line. The descendants took the name *Ekona* after the animal, and used the carved totem head as a reminder of the animal and a sign of respect to their ancestor. Carried on public occasions it would identify the leaders of the clan to outsiders.²⁹

Yet this does not exhaust the activity of God/Nyame in the story for did he not provide the water too as he provided the guide to it? The itinerary of the *eko*

²⁶ As the wine provided by Melchizedek must have brought fellowship between himself and Abram strong enough to have been remembered and recorded.

²⁷ He received tithes from Abram the great patriarch of the whole Jewish nation and the blessing he gave from the most High God extended to all Abram's descendents both physical and spiritual.

²⁸ His order of priesthood is established outside descent rules (which have yet to be established for the ancient Hebrew Levitical priesthood); indeed from outside the Hebrew race altogether. The city he comes from is beyond warring Abram's experience, a place called *Salem/peace*. He has no father or mother yet is possessed of an indestructible life. It seems the *eko* has something of that life too, for how could a dead animal continue to be the 'soul' of the clan? 'Souls' do not die.

²⁹ Abram gave tithes, not as payment for what he had been given but as recognition of a debt owed to a superior in virtue of a permanent relationship

Christians through his evil-defeating death on the cross is complete and its work cannot be undone.³⁸

The peaceable wisdom of Christ is needed to re-interpret tradition motivating African Christians to see their struggle for the good in relevant traditional terms for no-one is a *tabula rasa* on which the gospel is written as on a clean page. *Osofo* Sam the first narrator helps the *Ekona ebusua* of Abaka and his Methodist denomination to meet the challenge of confusion, disrespect and selfishness. He is *opanyin* in both in virtue of wisdom and not of age. For the *Ekona* Christians at Abaka under his guidance a positive Christian interpretation of their *poma* is transforming and enlivening their concept of the *ebusua*/family as they see the seeds of Christian qualities of wisdom, respect and generosity in their own tradition and subordinate clan loyalty to loyalty to Christ. As the proverb says: *Opanyin adwen na yede bu fielit* is the mature person's wisdom that helps to run the household.

Discussing the carving of the *poma* rather than the narration before us *Osofo* said: 'The little bird/*anoma ketewa* and the *ekg* on the *poma* represent 'the substance and soul of the clan.'³⁹ The bush cow of the *poma* looks much more important than the bird, yet the bird is at the top. Why? One should not rush to judge the 'meaning' of any situation by what seems obvious at first.⁴⁰ 'A very small bird on the eko's head' may have more wit than its host, and a child more wisdom than an elder. Proper discernment must also be based on knowledge.⁴¹ As one Asante proverb says: *Wokq kuro bi so na wohu se akodaa te akonnwa no so na opanyin te fam a, mma enye wo nwanwa o, na ebia na akodaa no ye*

³⁸ The *obosom* / 'immortal being' (subjective or objective, an incomplete reflection, of the forgiveness of God, and the unity that has been brought to believers in Christ) has a partial likeness and need not be seen as an opposite

³⁹ 'Faith is the substance of things hoped for; the evidence of things not seen: by faith we understand... that what is seen was not made out of what is visible.' Hebrews XI.1

⁴⁰ A related message is given in a flag (of Number Seven *Asafo* Company) which shows the tortoise and the snail, both of which take their time to react, controlling anger and other ill-considered instant responses, thus creating the possibility of peace. There might be no need for any guns if everyone followed their example. One of the beautiful flags of the *Asafo* Number VII Company shows six crocodiles all 'playing' around a pool - none is taking more than her/his share of the space available. The photograph of the flag is among those in the appendices.

⁴¹ These two principles should be the assumptions of the methodology of every researcher in Africa, where it is a principle to hide everything that is of vital importance in the traditional heritage under a veil of secrecy. 'Take your time' is a constant theme of Professor Kwame Bediako with his students.⁴¹

ho hen/if you go to a town and find a child sitting on a stool and an elder sitting on the ground don't let it surprise you, for perhaps the child is chief there.

Osofo Sam, as a respected Methodist pastor is using such peaceful wisdom of Christ in helping to heal the breach between the Musama Disco Christo Church and the Methodist Church from which it broke away in the 1930s.⁴² With a very careful approach, if the MDCC can recover from its present crisis,⁴³ there could be a lasting unity now even though they started off in schism.⁴⁴ Although he has such a high position in the Church and public life, within the clan he shows due respect to *Opanyin* Amisah as the elder.

Taking time can also give space for respect to be shown. 'The hunter told his family that they should never hunt or eat the *ekɔ*. The hunter's descendants, the *Ekɔna*, were to be identified by their respectful unquestioning obedience to this instruction as transmitted through the clan elders: *Asuo tware kwan, ɔkwan tware asuo, opanyin ne hwan? Yeboɔ kwan no kotoo asuo no, asuo firi tetel* the stream which was there from of old is senior to the road which man constructed. We cooperate using past and present, but the oldest has precedence.⁴⁵ This ethos is communal.⁴⁶ Christian instructions however are not restricted to one clan⁴⁷ and communication in the church depends on mutual respect of old for young as well

⁴² The writer could add that wisdom could include stopping the exploitation of natural life too, the killing of animals for food and the felling of trees for firewood both recognised in Fante tradition as sad necessities, requiring ritual restitution. The hunter's salvation was achieved through obedience to the animal/obosom giving the right to live to one group of animals as far as he himself and his own descendants are concerned, was a tiny beginning to what could become a Christian struggle to restore wild animal life and the natural habitat in West Africa and Fanteland. Actions that promote life such as care for water bodies and trees, knowledge of herbs and plants and their use to heal, even foretelling the weather⁴² are normative in an *Okomfo* and also expected in Christian *ebusua mpanyinfo* and *efie mpanyinfo* a both *Opanyin* Amisah and *Efua Egyirba* demonstrate. They pass on their knowledge to the young, the following advice is purely practical yet respect for the slow processes of nature underlies it

⁴³ See the final section of Chapter I on problems, and Chapter V on Osofo Mabel Abraham's life.

⁴⁴ He represented the Methodist church at the MDCC Peace Festival.

⁴⁵ The writer to the Hebrews says: 'We without them will not be made perfect.' (Hebrews Chapter XI.40)

⁴⁶ Communist Marxism is only superficially similar, subordinating the individual in order to engage more effectively in a class struggle, which may be why attempts to use communalism as a party watchword to get people to pay taxes is not effective.

⁴⁷ Joseph had left instructions about the disposition of his bones (22) and the Israelites had obeyed his instructions (Joshua, Chapter XXIV.32). In Israel too there was great respect for the instruction of God given through an ancestor. There were many laws about what could not be eaten handed down from Moses (Leviticus XI).⁴⁷ Jesus however placed the authority of his word above that of every other 'ancestor' and rules about eating weren't imposed upon gentiles joining the early church.

as young for old. The situation among the *Ekona* of Abaka is ideal for developing this new concept of respect, in that the *Ebusua panyin* is a Christian believer and his *Okomfo* is a Christian minister with whom matters of spiritual concern can safely be discussed. Another wise saying goes: *Yetie asem pa de ko akura/* we listen to good advice and spread the news. Jesus taught respect for what had been 'said of old time' and the Jewish law. He however explained to the expert in the law that at times such laws laid down by the ancestors, however time-honoured, even those of Moses himself, could be weighed with the 'law' of love and found wanting. The over-riding rule was quoted by Jesus from Deuteronomy: 'You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul and with all your strength and your neighbour as yourself.' *Boafo ye na*/helpers are rare. The *eko* is depicted in the myth as friendly and helpful. She is the one who is superior in her own domain. For the moment she makes the hunter at home in the bush, leading him to the water that saves his life. *Osofo* Sam made it clear that the myth was a re-enforcement of the Fante ethos of hospitality.⁴⁸ Christian hospitality is even more extensive than that of the Fante who say: *Obi ne wo ka a, na efiri dabi asem*/if someone likes you it is because they remember the past. But the Christian can go further than proverbial Fante wisdom, if along the same lines. S/he can and should initiate kindness and even return kindness for unkindness as our Lord did when he died for our redemption praying for those who were crucifying him. Perhaps the *eko* as a hunted creature faintly echoes this deeper truth.

2 The stool carrier and his descendants

The stool had a supernatural origin. As something not made with human hands, brought in a paranormal way perhaps from God himself, it remains an object of power to be cherished by the *Nsona*.⁴⁹ It has been blackened, hidden, revered, is regularly fed and washed, and is kept in the stool-room where children and foreigners are not permitted to go⁵⁰ and where libation is poured.

⁴⁸ Melchizedek comes out to meet Abram and his household satisfying the hungry and thirsty fighting men with wine and bread, making Abram at home in the area near Salem showing hospitality as is required in the culture of the Middle East.

⁴⁹ Similar reverence was given to the ark of the covenant which had its origin in the command of God and was related to the history of the Israelites in a way similar to the origin and the history of the stool.

⁵⁰ It leads to tourists having a skewed picture of what goes on at *Afahye* where no stool is mentioned in brochure or programme except as a synonym for a political position and no stool room ceremonies are videoed but explanation is restricted to what can be seen in public: boats racing, rulers walking about, trees being uprooted, all night dancing to bring in the fish and animal

Thus it provides a gateway, through these ceremonies and prayers spoken aloud, into the powerful spirit world of Nyame, of the *abosom* and of the *nananom nsamanfo*.⁵¹ It is onto this stool that a new *ebusua panyin* of the *Ekona* would traditionally be lowered by the *mpanyinfo* so that his buttocks would touch it three times and he would thus, with the approval and authority of God, of the associated *abosom* and the *nananom nsamanfo* become the ruler of one of the two *Ekona* clans of Abaka.

2.1 The narrator

Aunt AmoaEsiwah is the grand daughter of NanaAnowa the matriarch of the clan at Abaka. She is weak now and lives close to the *ebusua panyin*. She has her own young girl to look after her needs fetch and carry and cook.

2.2 The story

Aunt AmoaEsiwah was thin and was said to be bedridden for much of the time I was at Abaka, but for this telling she sat on a stool and her voice grew strong. She said:

‘Our stool was brought, mysteriously, from the sea (like the Golden Stool of the Asante dropped from the sky).⁵² It seems the being that brought it did not have any ancestors. He did not come by boat but ‘emerged’ from the sea. *AbosomAdwoa/Abosomdwowa* was his name.

It was at the time of the wars with Asante and the Edina (Elmina people) over trade. He first lived at old Ebo (Asebo).⁵³ Then he moved to Apiewosika (part of the Asebo traditional area). Then he settled at Nkusukrom, south of Yamoransa. He had the stool with him, and he was the first to settle there.

sacrifice. Supi Minnah is in charge of all such things.(August 2003) He is a leader of one of the *Asafo* Companies, so his role is quite far from the present centre of spiritual and religious power which must be the stools of the Omanhen.

⁵¹ Similar reverence was given to the ark of the covenant which had its origin in the command of God and was related to the history of the Israelites in a way similar to the origin and the history of the stool.

⁵² Kodwo Amisah/John Hope’s addition.

⁵³ Between Oguaa and Abeka

He had three sons and one daughter. The daughter's name was Tekyiwa⁵⁴. She bore twenty seven children and they named a town after her, 'Aka - Tekyiwa'. Abosomdwowa went with the three sons to fight against the Asante/Edina alliance; but before they went he asked the husband of his daughter Tekyiwa to 'hide' the stool. Her husband was a member of the *Nsona* clan⁵⁵. When none of the fighters came back from the war Tekyiwa's husband went to Oguaa and NanaTekyiwa followed him. He 'hid' the stool as her father had directed him to, but guardianship of the stool did not confer the right to 'sit' on it. Only we *Ekona* at Abaka the Anafo descendants of Anowa can do so'.

Opanyin Kodwo Amissah added

'The *Nsona Ankobea* at Idan Oguaa⁵⁶ is the official guardian of the stool, but the person to 'sit' on the stool must come from the *Ekona* clan here at Abaka. When someone has been chosen to 'sit' on the stool by the clan at Abaka we will inform the *Nsona* at Idan and Nkwantadu and they will give us their opinion.⁵⁷ However I have not yet been enstooled. 'They'⁵⁸ will not allow us to be ourselves.' (He looked askance) We also claim land at Nkusukrom, we have a map and there is a court case pending.'

3.2 Who is this?

The mystery of the stool relates directly to the mysterious nature and doings of its first carrier. He has an apparently dual nature and the power to emerge from under the sea or walk over the sea without a boat brought him and the stool ashore. The sea is an awesome element close to Nyame for it meets the sky at the horizon. To say he came from the sea could be a hint that he came from the Creator himself.

⁵⁴ Nana is an honorific prefix meaning that Tekyiwa is an ancestor; strictly speaking it should be used for all those who have died and are still remembered for their achievements.

⁵⁵ This part of the History may get some corroboration from the court archives as there have been disputes over the land at *Akatekyiwa*.

⁵⁶ The stool may have been at the *Fiekessim* at Idan which was taken over by the British before coming to its present resting place; thus breaking up the two clans' residence in the same house.

⁵⁷ There is a second *Ekona* stool at Abura Abaka and before the enstoolment of Nana Yekyi the two different parts of the clan used to celebrate funerals together but during his reign a split came so that now the two groups function separately.

⁵⁸ 'They' appears to be a reference to the Catholic hierarchy. *Opanyin Amissah* is an elder in the Catholic Church at Abura Abaka and if he were to be enstooled he would have to give up this position he has chosen to retain it but with bitterness because this has removed the traditional sanction of his authority within the clan from him.

To say he negotiated the element without a boat attributes one of the Creator's powers to him. We are told (in Genesis) the spirit of God 'moved upon the face of the waters'. After bringing the mystic stool he risked everything by leaving it behind when he went to fight for the Fante. (Without it perhaps his powers failed?). He and his sons not only 'didn't return', they vanished without trace. Were they killed in the war? Did they become slaves to the Asante to be sacrificed at Odwira? Their shocking departure as with his mysterious arrival conveys a feeling of disorientation and even fear which is the effect of the paranormal even on those for whom it is felt to be a matter of everyday.⁵⁹

Nevertheless the stool remained as a reminder of him, perhaps a way of accessing him in the spirit world and as a source of fertility and a claim to land.⁶⁰ He was opaque:⁶¹ difficult to categorise. He had no human parents like Melchizedek. Could this be a gentle nudge to the realisation that he is in some special way a 'son of God' though perhaps different from the *abosom*? Though Akans believe that every child comes from God, only the extraordinary would not end up its journey from the maker in a human womb. Both Melchizedek and Abosomdwowa were first in their lineage and apparently not only had their source of life outside and beyond the merely human, but their gestation was omitted. Melchizedek and Abosomdwowa both left the narrators of their stories wondering and their listeners speculating:⁶² If they were not born could they die? Why did Abraham hand over the sign of fealty: the tithe, to Melchizedek? Why did Tekyiwa's husband obey Abosomdwowa's commands without question? The writer to the Hebrews exclaimed of Melchizedek: 'How great he was!' The *ebusuapanyin* did not exclaim, but his wise and penetrating look discussing Abosomdwowa after the narration provoked thought concerning not only Abosomdwowa but the nature of what can exist.⁶³ Could he have had a clan perhaps *Nsona* like his son in law? Did he serve an

⁵⁹ Melchizedek too had a mysterious, evidently divine origin which was not revealed fully to Abram. Abram was not invited into Salem, city of Peace and Righteousness, but entertained outside. This was not because God had not called and blessed Abram.

⁶⁰ Sacred stools often are the divine sanction to land claims though they cannot be produced in a court of law

⁶¹ In these two remarkable men, Abram and Melchizedek, two sacred traditions met but they were opaque to each other. Melchizedek is opaque to those more simple characters he impacts: Abram and his 'household'/relatives and servants. His origin and person are superior, for Abram gives him a tenth of all the booty he has got through the war.

⁶² This is the way Kwame Bediako (a Fante) teaches.

⁶³ He leaves theology to his nephew *Osofo* Sam who was in Berekum at the time.

obosom as his name suggests? Why is the name of a female (Adwoa) a part of his name? He does not fit into any of the Akan categories of spirit we have so far listed.⁶⁴ Could he be an *Okomfo*, male but possessed by a female spirit? Could he have been a foreigner? The Fante migrate- in their fishing boats - as far as Liberia and Nigeria, and fishermen from those places do the same. Not everything that exists or that happens can be fully understood intellectually, and experience may cease to apply for we may meet a case that is unique. The one who does not know this is profoundly ignorant even though he has vast knowledge, and sometimes knowledge is combined with arrogance which impedes true understanding:

'Nim nim nnim!' 'know-all' knows nothing

Is there a faint shadow in Abosomdwowa, as in Melchizedek, of the one who asked 'Who do you say that I am?'

3.3 How can Christians think and act in order to be saved

There are conflicts within the thinking of the modern leaders of the two clans about what lies behind the narration, about what true understanding is, what constitutes right obedience, and how love and cooperation is to be shown in their communities.

Right understanding and peace

It is universal to exalt fighting men especially those who have died in battle yet does this not conflict with the gospel? The fratricidal wars between the Fante (with the British) and the Asante (with the Edina and the Dutch) could not be considered to be 'just wars'; their motive was to get the largest possible share of the profits from the coastal trade. The Fante of Oguaa and to the East had helped the British establish the monopolies that the Asante, the Dutch and the Edina wanted to break; they needed to defend themselves against attack; but though eventually with the help of the British they were victorious they seem not to glory in war as the Asante did.⁶⁵ In the traditional belief of the whole Akan, God had established harmony

⁶⁴ Chapter II.1

⁶⁵ With the British they were in the end victorious, and so could glory with justification but in describing Kwodwo Mbra IV as *Osabarima*/war hero his biographer hastens to say that he was really a man of peace.

before the carelessness of one wo/man forced him to withdraw. War and killing was against his/her plan and derives from people's wrongdoing, not from the High God.⁶⁶

Nyimpa nti na yebo afena/because of people the sword was forged.

The love which can unite all the different elements in a complex society harmoniously is also at times thought of as being especially effective when some are excluded from it, thus making clear the limit of one's obligations. The story seen as the germ of later Christian teaching can help to clarify some of these issues

Wisdom/nyansa⁶⁷

We have seen how Melchisedek who was not a Hebrew was able to forge an alliance with Abraham the Hebrew, in opposition to four kings; how the outsider *Okomfo* Anokye of the Akwamu was able to engineer the unity of the seven clans of the Asante against the Denkyira and how they forged an effective war confederacy together around a stool. Yet war was not considered a moral enterprise but a sad necessity. Among the many protective medicines hung about the warrior, and protective *abosom* stacked at the post of the Number VII *Asafo* Company some may have functioned as protection against the spirits of the clansmen and *abosom* of those who were to be, or had been killed and were outraged at the ultimate crime against them. To kill a fellow human is still seen as a great offence against the linked spirits from the perspective of an anthropocentric world view where vitality and dynamism are central values.⁶⁸ The *nananom asamanfo* the *abosom* and the *nnyimpa*, of the one killed would be affronted⁶⁹ Instinctively we feel that killing a human being would be more dangerous spiritually than felling a tree to make a drum, or killing an animal, for both of which preparatory rites are needed to placate the spirits.⁷⁰ It might seem that the Asante cared nothing for the lives of criminals and people of other races as these

⁶⁶ Melchizedek did not, as priest of the most high God, take part in fighting with the four kings though he blessed the fighters.

⁶⁷ Faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see.'(Hebrews 11.1) 'Turn from these worthless things to the living God.' (Paul at Lystra Acts 14.17)

⁶⁸ Charles Nyamiti, *The Problem of Evil in African Traditional Cultures*, Vol. 19 Voices from the Third World, 1993, p. 151

⁶⁹ Charles Nyamiti, *op.cit.* p.153

⁷⁰ The seriousness of this in Igbo culture is shown in Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*, Heinemann, by Okonkwo the hero taking Ikemefuna as restitution for the death of a man in the nearby village.

were sacrificed at *Odwira* to cleanse the *Oman*: but the Fante did not kill for sacrifice at this time, if ever, and there are proverbs to suggest a different view:⁷¹

Nnipa nyinaa ye Onyame mna, obiara nye Asaase ba all people are children of God none are children of the earth.

Abosomdwowa too was an outsider and yet, with power from *Obgade Nyame* he was able to bring just two local Fante branches of two of the clans *Nsona* and *Ekona* together around their common ancestors, male and female, his son-in-law and his daughter and around their common stool, not for war but for peace and fertility. Tekyiwa (and her husband) had numerous children: twenty seven children in one generation.⁷² There were so many that they founded a town named after her on the land where he had settled as a pioneer, which was claimed through the stool, by the *Ekona* and is still. (However given the confusion and the involvement of the *Nsona* as guardians of the stool, it is not surprising to find their claim disputed by those very *Nsona*.) This alone would make her a traditional, though hardly a modern, heroine, particularly as we are not told they suffered from poverty.

Wope awo a, wonsure nkukutoto if you like giving birth you don't fear buying of pots (you don't fear the expense of feeding them)

To interpret the story in a Christian context we may see in these African and Hebrew narratives a wider understanding of our calling to spiritual fruitfulness because of our common ancestry in Jesus as our founder head; and our knowledge of the story of his church which was founded on a basis of both Jews and Gentiles. The claim to land through the stool is because Abosomdwowa was the first to settle at Nkusukrom and the narrative of the stool is the evidence for it. Nevertheless the story and stool themselves are somewhat too 'spiritual' and therefore too ambiguous to give a clear answer on such a practical matter. Traditional wisdom is against going to court when it can be avoided: *Qpanyin hwere agyapade wo mansotwe mu* an elder can squander the family inheritance with litigation. What is more, in the light of Jesus' teaching about settling disputes it may not be wise to pursue the matter in court: Jesus too said: 'Settle with your opponent before you get to court.' (Matthew 5: 25-26)

⁷¹ Perhaps this is influenced by Christian teaching: and the Fante co-operation with Europeans in the slave trade cannot be ignored; many more proverbs exalt prowess in fighting.

⁷² Or possibly two generations: however this would not be remarkable enough to record.

Abosomdwowa's achievements through the stool, like those of Melchizedek are a distant reflection of Christ's, whose kingdom is not of this world, who did not marry, had only disciples to follow his way, and who did not fight to maintain what he had won but told his followers to put away their swords. (Matther 26: 52ff)

Obedience/Respect/bubu

Tekyiwa herself moved on with the stool following her husband (mistakenly as the present *ebusuapanyin* feared) yet in doing so she was demonstrating the unquestioning service which is traditionally expected of women towards the older generation of males in the immediate circle of the mother, and with the mother's tacit permission, whether maternal uncle or mother's husband and his older relatives. By the end of the eighteenth century Fanteland needed land, peace to farm it and fertility to people it.⁷³ Abosomdwowa seems to have seen this and come to help some of the people and his help was realised through the obedience of his daughter to his commands. There is also an element of sheer terror in the Fante traditional belief about stools.⁷⁴ Terror (as opposed to respect or awe) was the response to the terrible mountain of Sinai from which the law was delivered. This is said in Hebrews to be replaced by Mount Zion where there is joy in the presence of all the redeemed and of the angels.⁷⁵ Fear ruled the Pharisees who killed Jesus and it is not needed to keep people in order when there is love of God and neighbour. 'Perfect love casts out fear.' Again the remaining fear among the members of the two families is an unresolved matter for the families' *mpanyinfo* to think through and encourage the clan to regard it as a pointer to the needed 'fear' of the living God..

From a Christian point of view also there may be in the tradition as shown operating in the narrative a tendency to regard 'respect' as a one way thing from

⁷³ Rev S.O.Odoki of the Acholi of Northern Uganda suggests that sin is what affects the community or the life force and procreation adversely, Charles Nyamiti who quotes him Nyamiti, Charles, *The Problem of Evil in African Traditional Cultures and Today's African Inculturation and Liberation Theologies*, Voices from the Third World, Vol. 19, reprinted from African Christian Studies Journal of the Catholic University of Eastern Africa, Nairobi, Kenya, 1993 (p.158 op.cit.) extends the list of offences to include any offence against the ten commandments as they also affect the sacred. The sacredness of the human being who has in Akan belief, received a destiny from God, and is believed to return to him is evident and war and murder invade that sacredness, and degrade the humans who do so as is seen with Cain.

⁷⁴ The writer became aware of this when the traditional stools of the state of Akropong were washed when there was a curfew and a complete blackout from the central generator.

⁷⁵ Hebrews 12.22ff

younger to older people, and not from older to younger and to require that obedience should be unquestioning, thus making a division between those who think, who are likely to be elders and often males, and those who simply do as they are told. Questions arise as a result. What if the leaders have less understanding than the educated young? What if they are not Christians and the younger generation are? What if the woman understands better than the man? There is rather ambiguous proverbial wisdom on this, which seems to enjoin a meek humility: *Akoko nim adeeakye, nanso oma akokonini kyere no*/the hen knows when dawn breaks but she leaves it to the cock to announce it. Again from a Christian point of view awe/respect has been incorrectly transferred from God to the thing/s and people which is/are supposed to remind the people of him, and this is seen in the history of the Israelites angering God, for example in worshipping a golden calf in the wilderness and some Protestants would controversially add in the tendency of some Catholics to focus on sacred objects and symbols such as statues, rosaries and candles and in revering the intermediaries/the saints and Mary, rather than Christ who is the realisation and fulfilment to whom all these are merely pointers. The Catholic *ebusuapanyin* Kodwo sees no conflict in regarding Abosomdwowa's reputed control of the sea as a pointer to Jesus who demonstrated his control of the sea and with his Father is the origin of all that is in it and all that comes from it.⁷⁶ Before creation he 'brooded on the face of the deep.'⁷⁷ *Osofo* Sam was not there to interpret this story for me, and he may not see the story in the same light, but I have tried to follow his principles of interpretation and those of the early church using *peshor*. It remains for the families to solve any remaining conflicts with their loyalty to their past and to the Lord of the past, the present and the future.⁷⁸

Unity depending on courtesy and faithfulness to the best so far seen which is beyond both clans

The two clans, *Ekona* and *Nsona* are still co-operating: one guarding and one potentially 'sitting' on the stool. Neither is under the other's authority. The Fante

⁷⁶ Matthew 8.26.

⁷⁷ Genesis, Chapter 1

⁷⁸ Respect for that mystery of a 'son' of God (without capital) could remind the members of the two clans who are Christians of the respect they owe to Christ the Son of God (with a capital 'S') who was not born in the usual way: 'born of the virgin'...and also departed in an unusual way: 'on the third day rose again' (The Apostles' Creed).

are noted for their courtesy and the arrangement which had its origin in the command of Abosomdwowa and the marriage of his daughter has been a courteous one in the past. The information given and the responses that are still given no longer seem to be of absolute obligation. Kojo Amissah *ebusuapanyin* said:

‘When we have chosen a candidate to sit on the stool at Idan we will inform the *Nsona* at Idan and Nkwantadu and they will give us their opinion.’

Signs of the loosening of the bond are many. There is a mechanism for collecting dues; and there were joint meetings formerly, as he remembers, when he was a boy, but this no longer happens. There is no joint ‘whip round’ for the payment of these dues to the *Ekona ebusua panyin* at *Nsona* Nkwantadu. When there is a funeral, invitations are given to both families; but from the *Nsona* side at Nkwantadu only Efua Egyirba and Aunt Panyin of the fourth generation of Bosumefi contribute to expenses incurred by the *Ekona* and the *Ekona* contribute as any other invitee (as far as the writer is aware) when invited by the *Nsona*. More casual arrangements for Abaka children to help out at Oguaa Nkwantadu while receiving an education continue: *ebusua panyin* Kodwo Amissah stayed at Nkwantadu in the fifties and his great grandson Andrews Ekow stayed there within the last decade for the same reason.

Sofa Sam and *Opanyin* Kodwo are hopeful about the future, in spite of the sad present conflict with *Nsona* over the land⁷⁹ claimed through the stool. They have a common vision for the *Ekona* of Abaka, as leaders of the group which has a shared stick and traditional ethos, a territorial base, a political link with the *Odikro*, matrilineal links of six generations and most encouraging of all a developing Christian inter-denominational cooperation through the traditional structure of the regular family meetings. As Methodist minister and a Catholic deacon respectively, in a surprisingly homogenous group of Catholic and Methodist Christians they regard the existence of two denominations, and therefore of two

⁷⁹ The right of the Anowa-*Ekona/Anafo* family to occupy the land near Nkusukrom where Abosomdwowa settled and other lands south of Abura Abeka are based on the rights of the first comer and their claim to descent from him. Their right is now contended. There will be a battle in the courts to maintain ownership of the land; and legal expenses must be met which waste meagre resources. Maps and genealogies have been produced and prepared, and the narrative will be told in court.

shades of opinion in the *Ekona ebusua* as enriching:⁸⁰ 'Each denominational group brings its own contribution to family debates,' *Osofo Sam* says⁸¹. Because there is such an excellent understanding between himself and his uncle, together they have spiritual authority over a clan that is half Methodist and half Catholic. As he said, very modestly: 'Uncle John/Kojo Amissah (Catholic) leaves those things (that is religious matters) to me (Methodist) – I am the expert.' So a new structure is emerging here which will enable the traditional clan of *Ekona* to function in a admirably Christian way that rests upon its family traditions, the authority of an ordained Methodist minister and a Catholic senior deacon. Less clear is the role of the one member of the Church of the Twelve Apostles, *Osofo Sam's* niece, *Abena*.⁸² It is of interest that though she seems free to follow her husband's wishes in the choice of church, her eighteen year old son (though not her two daughters) has a strong Catholic commitment, though he is not yet baptised.⁸³ He is the young hopeful of the clan now finishing secondary school, and looks to his maternal great uncles, for spiritual guidance rather than to his father. Within the structure of the family meeting which *Kodwo Amissah* has the authority to call, any problems arising concerning the education, spiritual life or moral commitments of clan members can be solved by open debate and by the grace of God without division:

Ebusua dua yentwa/we do not destroy the family 'tree'⁸⁴

⁸⁰ As structure and link decline, other religious authority structures, Christian denominations, Methodist, Catholic, Twelve Apostles, The Latter Day Saints, Islam and Buddhism at *Abeka* and *Oguaa*, and many others, claim individual family member's allegiance. They may have leaders who compete with each other as well as with African traditions, undermining traditional loyalties and sense of community and unity.

⁸¹ Perhaps it is because he, as Methodist minister, has taken over the vacant role of the traditional *Okomfo* for the *Ekona* of *Abeka*.

⁸² The Twelve Apostles' Church to which she belongs started with Prophet Harris from Liberia in *Fanteland* in 1917. He ordered that many charms be burnt but not, as far as the writer is aware, stools; though if he had known about them he would have asked for that too. Her church is one that supports polygamy.

⁸³ The reason he gives for this is that the priest saved him from witches who were dipping him in boiling oil when he was very small and causing rashes on his legs.

⁸⁴ The structure of two linked families which depends upon the stool's origin from the sea, the *abosom* and the ancestors and that particular continuing link with the unseen world including the Creator God through the stool rituals are all being eroded bit by bit, and have been for more than half a century, yet the sacred object is still there.⁸⁴ *Osofo Sam* did not make any place for it; but the *Ekona ebusua panyin* regrets the past: 'They (the Catholic hierarchy?) will not allow us to be ourselves' he complained. At *Idan* one half of what is required to maintain the ritual respect due to the stool is still continuing.

⁸⁴ *Nanabanyin* is the most senior

However, in the absence of frequent meetings, and shared interest in inheritance which can provide a structure and motivation for unity, the spiritual link between the two *abusua* families seems to depend on the strength of traditional loyalty to the stool, to the ancestors and to the shared ancestral history of which it is the token. Some younger members of both clans and Pentecostals among the *Nsona* at Nkwantadu⁸⁵ feel no involvement, some may even mock, though not openly as this would be discourteous and dangerous. *Ankobe* Mensah of the *Nsona* at Idan and Mr Bannerman continue regular rituals for the stools including the joint stool, and libation pouring at Idan and at Nkwantadu by the invitation of Efuia Egyirba who is *efie panyin* there; but *Opanyin* Kodwo Amissah/John Hope could not be traditionally enstooled on Abosomdwowa's stool if he wanted to retain his authority as a deacon of his church. This too means that the traditional spiritual bond between the *Ekona* and the *Nsona* is being eroded. The challenge may be to see something of Christ in their joint history, for to abandon it as outmoded is to lose something of the soul/*kra* of their joint identity as Kodwo Amissah indicated. A challenge to be worked out by him and by *Osofo* Sam and the Christians in the two clans together is how/whether the activities of both guardian and occupant of the ancient stool at Idan can be seen as a pointer to Jesus, as the even more ancient and venerated *poma* of the *Ekona* has been seen to be; and what this could mean in transformation of Christian understanding and transformed Christian or traditional thinking and rituals. Until this is resolved Christian worship may be half-hearted among the traditionally minded of the two clans' leaders/members and disunity will result from the strong convictions of some of the Christians in the growing Pentecostal denominations. Until Jesus becomes the focus of tradition seen as a partial reflection of his nature, glory and power, as well as of church worship a break-through to the heart of those who give partial allegiance to both is not possible.

Conclusion

After describing the genre of the two stories within the oral literature of the Akan, the three story-tellers have been placed within the Anowa matri-clan of the *Ekona* at Abura Abaka in Fanteland. The narrations have been put in chronological order (Hebrews Chapters XI), and given a realistic historical context. After a description of the *poma* and the stool, each narration has been followed by theological perspective: using analogy to see the *eko*, and Abosomdwowa as faint pointers to Christ, like Melchisedek (Hebrews Chapter VII). Finally Christian thinking on present moral issues is developed in the light of the Epistle, from the practical comments of *Osofo* Sam and *Opanyin* Kodwo Amissah.,

CHAPTER IV
TWO NATIONS AND TWO ROLES; ¹ NANA TUTU DADZIE I
AND
AN OVERCOMER IN LIFE AND DEATH: REV.MABEL ABRAHAM
ODOMANKOMA NYANSABOA SE: TIKORO NNKO AGYINA²

A hand holding an egg is a carving for the top of a linguist's stick; don't hold power too tightly or too loosely; it is like an egg and may break in your fist, or break on the ground.

0 Introduction to two family biographies

In this chapter we present the two biographical texts about Nana Tutu Dadzie I of Amanful (died 1934) and Reverend Mabel Abraham of the Musama Disco Christo Church (died 2002) and include laments as is appropriate in Fanteland for those who have died within living memory. A list of the defining characteristics of lament and biography precedes both texts and a description of the different narrators and historical background precedes each text, while a theological and ethical discussion follows. Both accounts show an affinity with the story of Melchizedek and a reflection of the presence of Christ. They also show the value of discernment, respect and community. Odomankoma Nyansaboa se: *Ti korɔ nmkɔ agyina*.

After Nana Tutu Dadzie III has been identified as a descendant of the *Ahemaal/Queens* of Amanful in whose household Yaw Saa was a servant, and as successor to his royal title and the three families' members who contributed the laments named, the historical context of the caboceers is described, followed by a biography of Nana Tutu Dadzie I who was a servant, a Methodist, educated, a trader/cabocceer, *Safohen* and finally headman: bearing the title and fulfilling many of the duties of a ruler. He married Bosumefi 'sister' to Anowa, both descendants of

¹ The God of wisdom says: 'One head cannot go into counsel.' Two /three heads are better than one.

² A wooden carving, on one of the tables in the Akaboha III's reception room, shows three individuals in close conference, and could represent the Trinity or this Akan proverb.

Tekyiwa (Chapter III). In attempting to consolidate his position for the benefit of his descendants he became unpopular.

Theologically the presence of Christ may be reflected in the affinity of the generosity of the *Ahemaal/Queens* to Yaw Saa (later Nana Tutu Dadzie I) the Mamprusi to that of Melchisedek and so to that of Christ. They, as Christian Fante rulers, inherited the blessings of authority and wisdom, as occupants of the stool of Amanful, the traditional Fante believe, from their royal ancestors/*nananom nsamanfo* and associated *abosom*. They received these blessings as from the Almighty, Wise God (Odomankoma Nyansaboa) to be kept, and as a pointer to and indication of the blessings of Christ, to be shared. They are compared to Melchisedek (an indigene of Salem) who gave hospitality to Abraham (a Hebrew and outsider). As they provided for Yaw Saa and his parents' needs so Melchizedek provided for Abraham and his household's needs; while his own prosperity came from the 'Most High God' himself (Hebrews VII) and from the power of Christ as *Logos*, who in his life on earth was able to feed five thousand. Ethically, using *peshor*, Melchisedek and the *Ahemaal* showed the understanding and generosity expected of Church leaders today, while Abraham responded by showing due respect: giving tithes as is required of church members. Yaw Saa responded by contributing political and business acumen to serve the *Ahemaal*, and the whole community of Amanful. These relationships could be seen as one type for the relationship between church members and their leaders.

A listing of the oral narrators is followed in the second part of the chapter by the historical context of Mabel Abraham's life and the biographical compilation itself which also includes quotations from laments by the children and the Akaboha and from small biographies by two of her brothers, the Akaboha and a fellow pastor, all to be found in the programme for her burial and thanksgiving service.³ She was called to Christian ministry by a word of knowledge in the Anglican Cathedral and she subsequently gave inspiring service as a reverend minister (*Osofo*) in the Musama Disco Christo Church. When serving as treasurer for the National and International

³ Included in the appendices.

Church under Juba Molda Jehu Appiah in 2002 she became suddenly and inexplicably ill following a routine visit to the office of the Head of the Church, the Akaboha III. She did not speak at all during the few hours after the visit and before her death, to name anyone as responsible.

The presence of Christ is seen after her call to ministry in the church universal, as, with prayer and fasting and the support of her husband, she was enabled to surmount the four obstacles that seemed to be in the way of her answering the call. This is seen as analogous to God's direct enabling of Abraham and his household so they were able to defeat the four kings; while the confirmation of her decision by Metapoly the second Akaboha is compared with Melchisedek's confirmation of Abraham's victory (Genesis XIV). Using *pesher* Mabel's qualities for emulation by the church are a focus on Jesus, submission to his authority, courage, and love for her 'flock' and ability to handle assets and money efficiently and productively without any suspicion of selfishness or dishonesty.

0.1 Literary genre of both accounts: biography

The life story of a Fante of note will be spoken of at his/her funeral; and, in the case of an educated Christian today, written about as biography, illustrated and printed in the burial and thanksgiving programme distributed to mourners. Typically the biography is in the form of a tribute: it begins with showing the deceased's connection to the writers/speakers and continues with an account of his/her virtuous deeds. It may include, in cases of a tragic, sudden or unexpected death, a detailed account of the circumstances of death. It often ends with a lament an emotional poem or song which expresses grief at the loss.⁴ The programme includes texts for preaching, Bible readings and hymns, giving the death the wider context of ultimate victory in Christ.⁵ When the *ebusuafo* meet on the day after the whole public event is over to apportion responsibilities and inheritance there will

⁴ Traditionally laments will be sung as the body enters the house to lie in state and when it leaves the house for burial

⁵ The funeral is an impressive event as spectacular as the family can afford, it will be announced in the media, and information posted on houses.

be more informal discourse.⁶ The present biographies draw on written tributes and also on the verbal tributes formal and informal, laments and death accounts all of which can and should be delivered at any time that the deceased is again brought more forcibly than usual to the minds of those who knew him/her intimately. The oral texts were recorded during and after events, when formal and informal interviews and conversations with relatives, successors, church leaders, pastors and members became possible. The importance and formality of the burial and thanksgiving, so central to Fante social life and the coherence of the family structure, also seems to mould peoples' respectful discourse about honoured ancestors/*nananom asamanfo* even 70 years after their death.⁷

1.1 Nana Tutu Dadzie III and three members of the two families

The narrator of the story is Nana Tutu Dadzie III. He is over ninety years old. When he was very young he knew Nana Tutu Dadzie I as an honoured servant in his great grand mother Hannah Martin's house, negotiating for her and transacting her business and, later when she died, acting in her place in the absence of anyone old enough from the royal line. Though a devout communicant member of Amanful Methodist Church, he is now (2004) too weak to attend in person. Communion is brought to him in his bungalow which is part of the Savoy hotel complex, set high on the cliffs above Nkwantadu which look out over a stretch of what he claims as his family stool-land, still to be inherited through a line going back to Fante Efutu, through the *Qhema* Hannah and her mother Sarah. His nephew, Mr Hagan, has held a collection of papers for eighteen years relating to this dispute in which Nana is to confront the *Afado* clan claimant for the right to be the next ruler of Amanful. He has an place in the House of Rulers, *Oguaa*, but is no longer strong enough to attend meetings. The title *Benkumhen* was taken away from his line, as he explains, by the wish of the *Omanhen*. Meanwhile he lives a simple, devout but hospitable life with his wife children and grandchildren; praying

⁶ The final event is the family discussion concerning the future; the assumption of the responsibilities which the deceased had in life by a successor and disposal of assets and personal property according to the wishes of the deceased whether oral or written and is attended by the *mpanyinfo* of the immediate group of those who are expected by custom to inherit. These will be the children of a woman and the nephews of a male.

⁷ Inscriptions on grave stones would be an interesting topic for further investigation.

at twelve noon every day, which is the time that any interviews have to come to an end, and always speaking in a courteous and gentlemanly way as a true Fante of the Akan⁸ is expected to do. The first lament for the *fiekessim*/great house was spoken by Aunt AmoaEsiwah of the *Ekona* at Abaka. The second and third laments were spoken by Aunt Adwoa Krasiwah granddaughter of Bosumefi of the *Nsona*, and at more than ninety years old the oldest resident at Nkwantadu, and Aunt Efuwa Egyirba her daughter and *efiepanyin* there.⁹

1.2 Historical background

The church affiliation of Nana Tutu Dadzie and his wife Bosumefi was Methodist. The Methodists had been on the coast for more than fifty years when Yaw Saa was growing up. The *Ohemaa* Sarah of Amanful who employed his parents had one of the first Methodist societies at Cape Coast meeting at her residence. There was a link between one of the earliest government schools for boys at Oguaa and the foundation of the first Methodist Societies on the coast. William de Graft, a mulatto who had been educated there, sent a message through a sea-captain, a native of Devon, requesting Bibles and a missionary to help the small Bible study group of which he was a member to understand what they were reading. As a result Joseph Dunwell was sent in 1835 as the first missionary from the newly formed Methodist Missionary Society (MMS) to the Gold Coast. Thomas Birch Freeman, a mulatto with an English mother and Gold Coast father followed in 1838 and, with the help of re-captives and the British government, established Methodist stations and more schools in Oguaa.¹⁰ The policy of both church and state schools in the colony during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries was assimilation and acculturation of the Fante, but Fante rulers and their households, though becoming Christian, resisted acculturation, preferring to send their servants to absorb Western culture so that the servants could liaise with the Europeans and do business on their behalf. That is perhaps why Yaw Saa was sent to attend a government school to

⁸ *Akanfo* means person with good manners or Akan people.

⁹ See excursus before Chapter III.

¹⁰ Peter B. Clarke, *West Africa and Christianity, A study in Religious Development from the fifteenth to the twentieth century*, Edward Arnold, 1986, p.60

prepare him for this role on behalf of the *Ohemaa* Hannah, who was to succeed her mother Sarah as Queen of Amanful.

The Europeans had initiated trade in various ways. The Portuguese began a trade in human beings which continued for more than four hundred years involving rivalry between the Dutch, the French, the Danes and the British,¹¹ bringing religious and commercial rivalry to the Coast which often flared into local wars. The Portuguese built a castle at Elmina, the Danes at Amanful, and in the seventeenth century, the British built or re-built a castle at Idan, to provide a transit place for slaves traded from the interior, mainly for guns. Fante rulers became involved in trade indirectly often using Northerners as middlemen,¹² These 'servants' called 'caboceers,' after the Portuguese term, were often treated as family members of the royals provided they were honest and hardworking. In the seventeenth century some Northerners became so-called 'slaves' for European trading companies, while remaining loyal to their Fante owners too; others even became diplomats, representing their Fante employers and patrons in Denmark, Holland and Britain. When the slave trade was made illegal by the British Parliament at the beginning of the nineteenth century the same network of contacts continued and was used for 'legitimate trade'¹³ It was in this long tradition that Yaw Saa, a Northerner, traded in biscuits from Europe probably Germany, for the Fante *Ohemaa* Hannah of Amanful.

Bosumefi may have lived with Anowa in the large house *fiekessim* in Anafo (next to Amanful in Oguaa) before and during the First World War. At this time of crisis the British drew on resources from West Africa in personnel, primary products and buildings, without due regard to the welfare of the people for whom they had assumed the responsibilities of 'empire'. An example of this was the compulsory purchase of the *fiekessim* at Anafo. This mansion was between the castle¹⁴ and the market. There were seventy five to one hundred people living there in the one

¹¹ The Germans were late arriving, but powerful rivals to the British also, particularly in the East Gold Coast.

¹² The cannon still face out to sea.

¹³ This happened as Sir Thomas Fowell Buxton had envisaged in his book, *The African Slave Trade and its Remedy*, Frank Cass, London, 1840

¹⁴ The seat of the regional government.

complex.¹⁵ Unfortunately it was too near the castle. At first during the last wars with Asante/the First World War the castle employed two guards: a night guard and a day guard for it. Later, probably towards the end of the First World War, the British took it over by compulsory purchase, leaving all its inhabitants to find another place to live.

1.3 Nana Tutu Dadzie I (d 1934) and Bosumefi¹⁶ the narrative

Nana Tutu Dadzie III/Mr Andrew Abraham of ninety years of age was at home in his small bungalow in the grounds of the Savoy hotel, high up on the cliffs near Nkwantadu accessible by a steep tarmac road passing in front of the Catholic Boy's School, Amanful. His nephew Mr Hagan was with him and had the relevant papers in a plastic bag to show to the writer and a secretary from the Secretariat of the *Ahemfie* who accompanied her there. I asked him questions about the husband of Bosumefi, Yaw Abaka Saa/Joseph Herman/ Nana Tutu Dadzie I, whose title he had succeeded to, and who had been a servant in the house of his ancestors.¹⁷ In answer to questions he explained:

'He was probably born in the house of my great grandmother Amba Egyirba Tekyiwa/ Mrs Sarah Martin of the *Twidan* clan, *Ohemaa* of Amanful. Her claim to the title can be traced back six generations, to Effutu of the Fante.¹⁸ Yaw and his parents are listed as members of that household.¹⁹ His parents

¹⁵ It is not there as a private dwelling now.

¹⁶ Nana Tutu Dadzie III of Amanful at his residence praised his predecessor in the presence of Nanabanyin the great grandson, and his own nephew, Mr Hanson.

¹⁷ Information from Rev. Sekyi, Methodist Minister of Amanful.

¹⁸ A family tree held by the nephew of Nana Tutu Dadzie III shows the generations; these rulers were some of the earliest to contact the Europeans and gave land at Amanful to the Danes to build a fort. There is a church on the site now. The papers were shown to me but I was not allowed to copy them. (After I had talked to a key disputant on the *Afado* side Nana's nephew who was to have given them to me for that purpose became noticeably less friendly.)

¹⁹ This paper was shown but not made available; it is a taboo to point at someone's origins and one ruler is recorded as having been de-stooled for referring to another as descended from the domestic of his own ancestor Appendix II

The children the grandchildren didn't know what to say;

I kept quiet, avoiding others.

(Aunt Adwoa looked askance and put her finger to her lips)

Her granddaughter Efua Egyirba *efie panyin* at Nkwantadu was at Kasoa where her cousin's daughter's husband had died. She is seventy nine. She sat under the nim tree with her cousin's daughter Alice Aba's friends, most of whom were teachers from the local schools. She remembered Nana Bosumefi, (she might have had difficulties collecting dues to bring as a contribution to the funeral expenses) and said:

NanaBosumefi at home at Nkwantadu was kind

When she was efiepanyin No quarrelling, no accusations;

Just order and happiness

She has gone!!

*Now I am efiepanyin I face: quarrelling, accusations, impertinence
and disorder in an unhappy house*

I am alone.'

(Aunt Efua rose heavily and took her stick to go back to Oguaa again by bus)

1.5 Who is this?

Hannah Martin/Ama Embirba and her mother went much further in their kindness and delegation of power to their servant Yaw Saa than could be accounted for by self interest alone; this impressed young Abraham (later to be Nana Tutu Dadzie III). As negotiator and administrator he had freedom to exercise his own judgement.³⁷ With an education, an open Christian environment in which to grow, openings for service in the Christian Community, the Asafo company and the District of Amanful as a whole he had respect from the people of Amanful while he

³⁷ Freedom is one of the desired goal of African Traditionalists according to Nyamiti, Charles, *The Problem of Evil in African Traditional Cultures and Today's African Inculturation and Liberation Theologies*, Voices from the Third World, Vol. 19, reprinted From African Christian Studies Journal of the Catholic University of Eastern Africa, Nairobi, Kenya, 1993 He does not identify servitude with colonialism recognising that African rulers can be equally oppressive and that evil needs to be countered in the heart of man.

was a representative of their ruler. This borrowed glory was even bright enough to continue for a time as a basis for action after both of the women who had initiated and continued it had died; it is still spoken of with cordiality by the present Nana Tutu Dadzie III³⁸ more than seventy years after Nana Tutu Dadzie I's death. Efuia Egyirba, *efiepanyin* at Nkwantadu, bears the name 'Egyirba' which is one of the names of the first *Ohemaa*, a sign that his daughter Anna/Adwoa Krasiwah or her husband, Mr Graham recognised their special debt, as members of Nana Tutu Dadzie I's family, to the first *Ohemaa*.³⁹ Nana's brother Kodwo Koom's tomb at Bakaano (like Sarah's tomb at the cave of Machpelah) shows that Mamprusi people of his own family and generation were prosperous and respected by the Fante. The generosity of the two *Ahemaa* is reminiscent of the inexplicable generosity of Melchizedek: a faint echo of the generosity of the Creator Oboade Nyame source of goodness and salvation.

1.6 Who is my neighbour?

There are indications that Yaw Saa/Joseph Herman Dadzie, like Joseph, son of Jacob, did not forget his own people, but he did underestimate the opposition to Northern leadership on a permanent basis both outside and inside the Fante church. Outside the church his attempt to raise his status by claiming a place on the central council of the Oguaa Traditional House of Rulers created opposition,⁴⁰ while inside the church his preaching had the same effect. His readiness to confront might show human weakness, and not be held up as an example to posterity (as with the disobedience of the Children of Israel in the wilderness from the perspective of the epistle to the Hebrews) Abram met with Melchizedek on terms of mutual respect, though they were of different ethnic origins. He was not an equal of Melchizedek but neither was he a nonentity. He knew his place as an outsider trying to negotiate a permanent home. We are told that Abram was a humble man who even gave way to his own nephew. We may surmise that Nana too could have shown discretion by

³⁸ As David was to recognise a special relationship with the Jebusites/Amorites? when he moved into Jerusalem as capital.

³⁹ Melchizedek took tithes from Abram. In this way his superior status was shown and Abram acknowledged it by giving him a tenth of the booty he had taken from the four Kings. Genesis XIV and Hebrews VII.

taking a somewhat lower profile as acting headman, giving due respect to traditional authorities in the State and promoting others in the Church to preach after the death of his employer.

Respect

Nana Tutu Dadzie I, by all accounts, was always loyal to his employers during their life-time, and to their economic, political and religious interests; his public life was a devoted following of his employer's example and commands, as our narrator saw. He concentrated on his roles as businessman, *Asafohen*, ruler, and preacher in the Methodist Society in all of which roles he respected and followed the *Ahemaa*. Assuming that the *Ahemaa* were consulted when naming him, Yaw Saa's name 'Herman' may have been given as a sign of respect to the Germans with whom they were trading before the First World War. His title included the name '*Dadzie*'/iron, and perhaps symbolises the sort of forceful role that was expected of him as *Asafohen* and headman. Formal adherence to the religious practice of the heads of households was required of *efiefo* in a royal household and the *Ahemaa* were devout Methodists.⁴¹ His baptismal name, 'Joseph,' may show their view of his future religious and political role based on the story in the Bible; and possibly also their sympathy with his parents unfortunate history of forced migration from their Northern home. His marriage to Bosumefi must have been one of the first marriages in Amanful to have had a formal Christian dimension with a church blessing in addition to the traditional meeting of the *mpanyinfo* of the families of each partner according to local custom.⁴² He baptised each of his children in the Society too, and there is a record of these baptisms at Wesley Cathedral (the records of Amanful Methodist Society were then kept jointly with those of the Cathedral). He later

⁴¹ The descendant of the *Ahemaa* Nana Tutu Dadzie III is always has communion in the monthly distribution, is in contact with his Methodist pastor and prays daily at twelve noon (which is the time interviews have to end.) He gave the keys of the house at Nkwantadu, which all agree were forfeit to him by both native custom and English law to Bosumefi's granddaughter Effie when she returned from Nigeria, and so continued to reflect the generous love of Christ as his own blood relatives had done. Because of that generosity and love the descendants of Bosumefi and Joseph Heman are still living in the house he built for them today

⁴² It is not recorded in the books at Wesley Cathedral, the calling of banns book too does not mention it. It cannot have been a white wedding as Efua Egyirba remembered that the first white wedding in the family was that of Bosumefi's grand daughter Effie to Samuel Abraham yet Bosumefi claimed it had taken place in church in the court case about his property that followed Joseph Heman's death.

opened his 'spacious hall' for the meetings of the Society; and he also preached⁴³ to them when they met in his house after Hannah Embirba had died. Joseph Herman went far beyond what such non-threatening employers⁴⁴ could have exacted from him.⁴⁵ He was responding to and maintaining an overflow of outstanding generosity. The same kindness and a sweetness of disposition was the blessing received on visiting their descendant now Nana Tutu Dadzie III. He graciously made time in the morning before his daily prayers, and provided drinks.

Community

The ethos of leadership, as we have seen, even with the comparatively humble *ebusua panyin* is traditionally linked through symbolism, story and taboo, through totem and stool, with God, with *abosom* and with ancestors/*nananom asamanfo*. As someone outside the Fante system with different traditional *abosom* and *nananom asamanfo*, Joseph Herman/Yaw Saa/Nana Tutu Dadzie I would need guidance from competent elders, who could take the responsibility

for breaking the rules against revealing the relevant secrets of the stools to him. In his person as Mamprusi traditionally he could not qualify even to enter the stool-room.⁴⁶ Problems would arise for him at every turn as he attempted to assume the authority of the traditional Amanful stool when the *Ahemaa* were no longer there to authorise it. Those who still thought traditionally would wish that any change be implemented with the agreement of the elders: As they say: *ti koro nnko agyina*. The same applies to those who hope to innovate in the Fante churches; attempts to innovate without the agreement of the leadership will lead (and have often led, as with the Musama Disco Christo Church) to schism and eventually, perhaps, to disappointment with the Church as an institution.

⁴³ Malachi 3.10 Abram paid a tithe of his booty as an obligation, and we do not hear of his adding a 'freewill offering' as a sign of appreciation!

⁴⁴ Ephesians 6.9

⁴⁵ 2 Samuel 24.24; Ephesians 6.5ff

⁴⁶ Abram was an alien in contact with autochtones. He was not on his own territory, and he was not in control of the interaction. He was very careful to show due respect, as on other occasions, to those who were there before him and on their own territory. He was not invited into Salem.

2 Reverend/Osofo Mabel Winifred Abraham

Musama Disco Christo Church: Army of the cross of Christ

Odomankoma Nyansaboa se: 'Tikoro nnko agyina'/The God of wisdom says: 'One head cannot go into counsel'/Three heads are better than one.

A large wooden sculpture of this proverbial saying is found on the polished table of the Akaboha's reception room. His 'palace,' a simple bungalow, is at Mozano⁴⁷, the 'Jerusalem' of the Musama Disco Christo Church (MDCC), where Mabel spent the last years of her life. His title means King of Kings and Lord of Lords, but the three traditional wooden effigies symbolise and enjoin co-operation between equals. They have a Trinitarian appearance as they face inwards in mutual interdependence. Mabel had often been enjoined to leave the MDCC church; one reason given was the pay - they pay their *Asofo* only an honorarium which they are expected to supplement by gainful employment. Mabel remained faithful to her interpretation of her call by God as a call to serve in the MDCC's 'army' until she died.

2.1 Literary genre:

In addition to laments and tributes, which have already been discussed, and which are part of the primary text of both biographies, we have in the case of Mabel the formal death narrative. This needs to be delivered to all those coming to a funeral because of close ties with the deceased whether by blood, marriage or association. This is a circumstantial account of the last hours of the deceased and is particularly required where the death is felt to be untimely and tragic. It is usually delivered by one who was there with the deceased at the hour of death and during the preceding time of illness, if any; but it can later be repeated by others when asked. It includes the apparent causes of death both physical and spiritual, and the attempts made by the people around at that time, especially the speaker, to prevent the death. One of the purposes of the recital is to exonerate the speaker from any responsibility for causing the death whether by ill-will or by negligence. S/he is suspect because of

⁴⁷ Professor C.G. Baeta spells this 'Mazano'.

the scarcely diminished belief in wizards and witches who operate inside a family to destroy its members (and, possibly, could even destroy a church 'family' or community from within) because of jealousy.

2.2 Anglican and MDCC Church History; the coup d'etat:

(from secondary sources)

Mabel, the great granddaughter of Bosumefi, received her call to the Ministry of the Church Universal in the Anglican Cathedral in Oguaa in 1967, during the year following the coup d'etat that ended the First Republic and the rule of Kwame Nkrumah. That year saw two of her three elder brothers in preventive detention. Relatives formerly in secure employment: her elder sister's husband,⁴⁸ and her younger brother,⁴⁹ suddenly became redundant. It was another change in the course of the history of Ghana as dramatic as independence had been less than a decade earlier. Under colonial rule the Anglican Cathedral at Idan, Oguaa, like the Cathedral in Lagos Nigeria, had been a church for foreign soldiers, administrators, diplomats, visiting peers and government officials and traders in residence. It stands a stone's throw from the Castle's main, land-facing entrance. Fante, who worked for the British (in the United Africa Company for example) in Oguaa and Lagos before Independence, were expected to attend the Cathedral with their wives and children, and to send their children to the Anglican schools catering for them. In 1949 the Anglican Society for the Propagation of the Gospel (SPG) had already established a girls' school, St Monica's, in Oguaa; but there was no Anglican Secondary School for the girls⁵⁰ who had the option of going to the new, secular Ghana National College during the fifties, while boys went to the Anglican 'College', Adisadel.

⁴⁸. He is a war-veteran and was at that time a contractor.

⁴⁸ The Rev Thompson, an Englishman and member of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel (SPG), had arrived in 1751. Under his guidance the Society, (following the lead of the Danes) began to educate a few local people and Philip Quacooe became the first African on the West Coast to be ordained and return to minister in the Anglican Church of the Gold Coast⁴⁸ in 1766. Some Anglican Cape Coasters were baptised with the name 'Thompson' in his honour, including fourth generation Mabel Abraham's first husband.

⁴⁹ working at the Atomic Energy Project

⁵⁰ She went on to attend Ghana National College, a secular secondary school newly established by the initiative of Dr Nkrumah

The Musama Disco Christo Church (in which Mabel was to serve) had broken away from Methodism some fifty years earlier. Joseph William Egyanka Appiah,⁵¹ catechist and teacher in the Methodist Church, had started a prayer band at Gomoa Oguan in Fanteland in 1919.⁵² He had a following and did not submit to his Superintendent's discipline. He was then dismissed for alleged 'occult practices.'⁵³ He took different names as revealed to him when praying and fasting: the Jewish name Jehu, the 'heavenly name'⁵⁴ 'Jemisimiham' and the heavenly title 'Akaboha' (King of Kings and Lord of Lords). The name Musama Disco Christo Church/Army of the Cross of Christ (MDCC) was revealed⁵⁵ after he had instituted 'The Faith Society' *Egyedifo Kuw* at Fomena Gomoa. A local ruler gave them land near Gomoa Eshiem and they walked to their new home on the 17th October 1925.⁵⁶ There they built 'Mozano' (God's own city).⁵⁷ Through intense and prolonged prayer, the 'Akaboha' and many of his followers were reputedly able to heal, 'speak in tongues' and prophesy. A two-tier leadership system was set up: the pastoral (where Mabel was to be ordained) and the 'prophetic'⁵⁸ (for which candidates did not need literacy). Jemisimiham had a son Matapoly⁵⁹, by his second

⁵¹ G. Baeta, *Prophetism in Ghana, An account of some 'spiritual' churches*, Charles and Sons, Liverpool and London, 1962, reprint by Africa Christian Press. 2004.

⁵² G Baeta, *Prophetism in Ghana , An account of some 'spiritual' churches*, Charles and Sons, Liverpool & London, 1962

⁵³ NanaEssilfie, son of MameEfua. *Osofo Mabel*, (Chapter VI)

⁵⁴ 'Heavenly names and titles are bestowed by inspiration. Titles are always explained but heavenly names are not always explained, However the prophet Amoaforo's heavenly name 'Jenasman' has the meaning 'thunder' and was given him by the Akaboha I. No-one in the church at the present date is gifted with this particular form of inspiration and so the practice has lapsed, though those formerly given such names continue to use them.' M Naiandrina Streetor, interview on the third Saturday in January 2004. I do not know that *Osofo* Reverend Mabel ever had a heavenly name she did not seem to use it if she had one.

⁵⁵ The name of the church is inspired by military ideas; while the name 'Jehu' is Biblical with a strong military sense. The earliest followers carried symbolic spears, but stopped doing so after the Boso incident, where MDCC members were wrongfully accused of disturbing the peace and arrested.

⁵⁶ Ayegboyin Deji and S. Ademola Ishola, *African Indigenous Churches, An Historical Perspective*, Greater Heights Publications, Lagos, Nigeria, 1997

⁵⁷ The village, following the plan of the first Akaboha, has houses constructed in straight rows to an overall design, it is possible to stand anywhere in the village and see right to the end to the surrounding bush. This was pointed out by retired Prophetess Siltanina at Mosano

⁵⁸ Interview with Pastor and Prophet *Fuah*, August 19th 2003, at Mozano.

⁵⁹ This is the spelling used by Professor Baeta

wife the 'Akatitibi,' who inherited the leadership on his death, and was Akaboha in 1967. (He prayed and fasted with Mabel before she began training for ministry.)

The church's emphasis on enculturation of the gospel and eclecticism caught the imagination of many Fante seeking to free themselves from 'colonial mentality' and subservience to British ideas. It grew exponentially with branches founded among Fante expatriates in the North of Ghana, in Nigeria, in Britain and in the North of America, as well as in the Akan speaking homelands. The annual festival⁶⁰ was to become an occasion that attracted numbers of visitors⁶¹ including many from North America, from other churches in Africa and from the new African politicians, including Osagyefo, Dr Kwame Nkrumah. The Methodist Church of Ghana eventually sent observers, of whom *Osofo* Isaac K Beesi Sam (Chapter III) was one.

In 2003 however the festival was suspended. The 'Church Father', uterine brother of Matapoly, the second Akaboha, declared his successor, the third Akaboha, who was his nephew, no longer the legitimate head.⁶² The Akaboha however remained resident in the 'palace' at Mozano in defiance of his uncle.

The Osagyefo, who had led the Gold Coast to Independence, had early on discovered that he had an apparent affinity with the leaders of the MDCC which both sides wanted to promote. Before he even returned to Ghana from America, the first 'Akaboha' had 'seen' a flock of crows with one crow leading all the rest, and interpreted this to be a sign that Dr Nkrumah would lead the whole of 'black' Africa to independence from colonial rule.⁶³ The church leaders became much more circumspect and less aggressively political after the coup d'etat in 1966. At

⁶⁰ see Leviticus 16.27, and passim. They found the Old Testament an inspiration for indigenising the Christian faith. There would be animal sacrifice once a year with prayers for the forgiveness of sins and blessing during the week before the 'Peace Festival' as at the *Oguaa Afahye* and in the Bible on the Day of Atonement

⁶¹ Ayegboyin Deji and S. Ademola Ishola, *African Indigenous Churches, An Historical Perspective*, Greater Heights Publications, Lagos, Nigeria, 1997

⁶² As Akaboha of the third generation he had inherited from Metapoly patrilineally. In a church that boasts its faithfulness to roots in Fante family tradition this discrepancy with the matrilineal descent system has widened the division -

⁶³ This is reported by Professor Baeta. However, William Kodwo Mabel's brother suggested that the Osagyefo had 'made it up.'

Mehu,⁶⁴ ‘the Prophet Jenasman explained a wall-painting depicting the Akaboha III, Jesus, and the French and English flags in this way: “God ...will unite the Blackman represented here by Akaboha and the Whiteman represented by the two flags. This portrait of Jesus Christ who prayed ‘that all may be one’ has been painted near these flags. He will bring all races together.”

2.3 Narrators in the oral and written traditions

This account of Osofo Reverend Mabel Winifred Abraham’s life and death is a compilation from many different oral and written narrative sources.⁶⁵ The full text of all the written laments, narratives and tributes are to be found in the Burial and Thanksgiving Programme,⁶⁶ Direct quotes of any length from any of these sources are indented.

⁶⁴ Mehu is the healing camp and retreat centre at Senchi under the supervision of a prophet in the MDCC church called ‘Jenasman’ Kweku Amoaforo. Information concerning the camp and its unusual monuments is derived from a visit and conversation with M Naiandrina Streeter a worker at Mehu and formerly a librarian at the archives in Accra and a writer interviewed the third Saturday in January 2004, and their booklet offered to Mehu visitors entitled *Mehu and Musama Disco Christo Church* compiled by M Naiandrina Streeter, Hutahoba K. Agyei, and Suma Kupa Jehu-Appiah in 1996. The centre has been a focus of extensive research by Ghanaian, Kenyan, British, German and American scholars

⁶⁵ A written overview of her early life was given by two of her brothers, Isaac Nanabanyin Ekow Abraham retired, and John KofiEbo Abraham a teacher in a junior school at Achimota. Information about her ‘calling’ in the Anglican Cathedral and what followed was from her eldest son, Joseph NanaEssilfie Thompson, now (2004) a teacher at the Good Shepherd Anglican Primary School at Abura Dunkwa. He also gave access to his mother’s copy of minutes of meetings she had attended, including the meeting at Tamale at which she was withdrawn from serving there. Her daughters, Alice Aba Kuofie, nee Thompson, a teacher, and Esi, married to a farmer at Abura Dunkwa, told their memories of *Osofo* Mabel’s eventful career in the Musama Disco Christo Church (MDCC). Prophetess and Pastor Amo spoke of their training and service together in the MDCC. There was an informal tribute from her second husband, *Osofo* Reverend H.Y Gaisie, of the MDCC, whose last station was Agona Swedru, now retired (2005), who is also in both the Prophetic and the Pastoral orders. *Osofo* Reverend G Osei, the Akaboha’s Secretary gave the formal written tribute and oral tributes came from other church pastors, elders and members from the different stations in all the parts of Fanteland where *Osofo* Mabel worked, and from women in the consecrated preaching and prophetic ministries with whom she had been trained and who were her friends at Effiduase Asokore, Kumasi, Agona Swedru, Aburi and Pokrom. Her daughter Aba and her brother KofiEbo also told of how she died.

⁶⁶ The programme, from which extracts have been taken, is in the appendices

2.4 The narratives laments and tributes compiled

Four life-narratives

1 Nanabanyin and Kofi Ebo, two of Mabel's brothers wrote a short biography from which the following has been selected, and added to (in brackets)⁶⁷:

'MameEfua was born in Nigeria like all her siblings, (because her father, Samuel Abraham, worked there for the United Africa Company). She married early to Mr George Thompson, (a Fante with a business in the Ivory Coast, before she had finished her schooling at Ghana National College, Cape Coast.) She gave birth to his seven children and traded (between the Ivory Coast and Ghana. He had a stroke and had to return to Ghana. She continued to trade and to look after him and their children until she was called to the ministry). 'She had no time for gossiping and idleness. Her forthrightness created critics, as happened with our Lord Jesus Christ. '

'Mabel, Rest in Peace,
Mame, *Nyame mfa wo kra nsie*,
Mabel, *Da yie! Da yie! Da yie!*/Farewell.'

2 Joseph NanaEssilfie Thompson (her eldest son) leads an MDCC church choir and was travelling down from Mozano through Dunkwa to the coast for rehearsal:⁶⁸ He talked about his mother's call and said:

'When Aunty was in Oguaa she attended Christ Church, the Anglican Cathedral, where our grandmother Effie was an active member of the Good Shepherd Society.⁶⁹ It was at the Cathedral that a priest spoke a word of prophecy concerning Aunty. He said God was calling her to do special work

⁶⁷ Additions in brackets from information from Madam Felicia Osei Agyemang, friend and long-time associate of Efua Egyirba/Elizabeth Fynn and the family of Bosumefi.

⁶⁸ Interview given when travelling between Mozano and Abura Dunkwa, where he worked as a teacher in the Good Shepherd Anglican Primary School, (2004) and lives with his wife and children

⁶⁹ Aunt Adwoa Krasiwah alias Hannah Graham, Ama Dede's contemporary, then aged 100 (d. May 9th, 2005) and member of the Women's' Society of the Wesley Cathedral (Methodist) during the same period, confirmed this

for Him and she would become a religious leader. She fasted and prayed for a week and recollected that, although there was no ordained ministry for women in the Ghanaian Anglican church she was attending,⁷⁰ the Musama Disco Christo Church (MDCC) was opening up “consecrated ministry” to women. My father agreed to look after us three boys while Mother had the three girls. In 1969 she went to headquarters at ‘Mozano’ to meet the Akaboha II, ‘Matapoly’ Jehu Appiah, ruler of Mozano and head of the church⁷¹ and to ask if she could begin training. At the end of another week of prayer and fasting, dedicated to discovering the mind of God together, they both concluded it was right, and she offered herself⁷² and went to stay at ‘Mozano’ to undergo instruction for the pastoral ministry.’⁷³

Pastor Amo has a large family at Mozano; her courtyard has a cross at the centre and she spoke to the writer in the evening after conducting family prayers with hymn singing. She said of Mabel: ‘she was the second woman to become a consecrated worker in the pastoral hierarchy⁷⁴ of the MDCC following myself: *Osofo Amo.*’⁷⁵

3 The Akaboha III wrote of this early period of service:

‘She was consecrated Deaconess in 1974 and then as a supervising pastor in 1976. She answered a call to serve in Lagos in 1986. Her service as a

⁷⁰ The Anglican Church in other countries is ordaining women into the Anglican ministry but Ghana has still not taken the step of ordaining women (in 2005).

⁷¹ According to his nephew who has a PhD in Theology he was a holy man in his own right,

⁷² Confirmed in Tribute by the Akaboha: *A tribute to the late Rev. Mabel Abraham, Senior Minister and National Treasurer MDCC, Headquarters, Mozano, Burial and Thanksgiving Service*, printed at the Musama Disco Christo Church, General Head Office, Mozano for 17th May, 2002 (see Appendices) who also says she was thirty three and the date 1969.

⁷³ Confirmed in an Interview with lady Pastor Amo at Mozano, July 2003

⁷⁴ The MDCC church has two orders of consecrated workers: the prophetic order and the pastoral order. There were a number of women who had trained as prophetesses before MameEdua. There was no literacy requirement for these. However, for the consecrated pastoral ministry candidates had to be literate in English.

⁷⁵ NanaEssilfie had introduced me to a retired lady Pastor Amo at Mozano, July 2003, who was Mabel’s friend, in conversation in August, 2003; Prophetess ‘Siltanina’ claimed that she herself had been the first to be trained in the prophetic order, and that Mabel followed her (in the pastoral order).

Catechist, Deaconess and Supervising pastor was in the following Towns/Circuits/Districts: Nkawie, Sefwi Wiawso, Aburi Akuapem, Akim Tafo, Agona Swedru, Agona Nyakrom, Tamale, Otuam, Abura Dunkwa, Effiduase Asokore, Pokrom, Koforidua and the Head Office, Mozano'

He said of her when interviewed in his bungalow at Mosano: 'She took a special interest in projects wherever she worked' and referred specifically to a well she had had built at Otuam. 'She worked at headquarters as the national coordinator in charge of projects. She established national policies for projects and went round the stations encouraging the congregants to contribute effort and money so that the church buildings and mission houses could be well maintained and furnished, and the church had funds so they could set up a welfare fund and pay those who worked to help the church. One such project was the well at Otuam'⁷⁶

4 Alice Aba Kuofie, nee Thompson, *Osofo* Mabel Abraham's eldest daughter came to visit from Kasoa (near Accra) for *Afahye* staying with Nanabanyin her uncle and son of her grandmother Effie, at the family house at Nkwantadu. She came to the my room and talked to me about 'Aunty's'⁷⁷ experiences as *Osofo*:

'I was a student at Aggrey Memorial Secondary School when Aunty had her first posting. I stayed with her during holidays.⁷⁸ Aunty was two years at Mosano full time, and in 1971 she was posted to her first in-training job at Nkawie. She preached and evangelised and the congregation doubled in two years. When the Akaboha said that he wanted to transfer her, the people in that church appealed against it; but Aunty said they should leave it. When

⁷⁶ The pastor in residence at Otuam kindly showed me the well, but Otuam was going through a period of drought and the 'well,' which seemed more like a storage tank, had dried up a group meeting with elders and members of his family at his residence at Mozano on August 22nd 2003

⁷⁷ Aba is the daughter of *Osofo* Mabel but perhaps referred to her Mum as Aunty because she was thinking of other's relationship rather than her own.

⁷⁸ Much of the personal information concerning Mabel's career as *Osofo* in the MDCC church is based upon an interview with Aba Thompson, MameEfua eldest daughter, on Friday September 5th 2003, during *Afahye*: also contributing were NanaEssilfie and Esi; the youngest son Ntieku is in Italy.

she did go they gave her a great send-off. They brought cloths, food and other items to say goodbye to her.’⁷⁹

‘The *Omanhen* of Effiduase Asokore (in Asante) had asked the Akaboha to remove the old pastor there because he was ‘not doing the work properly’. He told the old pastor to pack ‘bag and baggage,’ and he did. The Akaboha sent Aunty there. The *Omanhen* told Aunty that if she couldn’t do the work properly she would also pack and go - he didn’t want a woman pastor anyway - he wanted a man. Aunty said he “shouldn’t worry.” She began a prayer meeting. A woman came for prayer because she couldn’t give birth to a baby at the due time. Aunty and the prayer group prayed for her and Aunty bathed her every evening for three evenings. After that they stopped the bathing and went on praying. After several months the woman gave birth to a girl and called her “Mabel”. ‘After that Aunty began to heal people. The *Omanhen* even asked for prayer himself because he had a wife who wanted to rule him. The group prayed and the wife left him. Later Aunty herself got ill and went to Okomfo Anokye hospital Kumase, and she got better. At another station they had no money in the church. Aunty helped them to have a ‘harvest’ every six months and they opened a bank account for the church. At Agona Swedru Aunty was able to settle a dispute that had divided the members so that they stopped attending. Then both sides to the dispute began to attend the church again. There were about two hundred of them so the membership went up.’

There was a dispute at Tamale. The church was to try to set up a diocese and the Akaboha sent *Osofo* Mabel there to calm the disputes (as she had done before) and to establish the church in the North of Ghana. She was there for five years up to 1995, but she was not able to settle the disputes. Instead the disputants turned against her. The Church elders petitioned head office to remove her. Eventually, in 1995, a meeting was held with them. The ‘Church Father and other officials

⁷⁹ Interview with Aba Thompson at the one year remembrance and thanksgiving: June 2003.

from headquarters travelled to Tamale and met the church elders.⁸⁰ The minutes of that meeting reveal that after some discussion the elders of the Tamale church were informed that she was to be recalled. The spokesman for Head Office explained that it was not the duty of the Church elders to remove any pastor from office, but that the responsibility for dismissal or transfer rested with the Akaboha. The Akaboha had full confidence in *Osofo* Mabel Abraham and had decided to post her elsewhere. The representatives from Head Office also said that Tamale was not yet ready for the formation of a diocese.

She finally became the national treasurer in charge of incoming money (under the supervision of Juba 'Molda' Jehu Appiah, a member of the founding family).⁸¹ She worked at Head Office most of the time. She would also be given special assignments, going to Koforidua, for example, to help establish the new diocesan system there.⁸²

Tribute: the Akaboha's secretary the late Rev.G.E.Osei

Reverend Osei wrote of this last period:

'Sofa Mabel was mother, teacher, pastor and advisor to most of us. Those of us who got nearer to her realised the deep love she had for her members and fellow workers and how she bothered to know how every staff member at the Head Office was faring when she was posted to head office... She was a woman of kindly disposition, a keen financial officer at the Head Office and a pastor who loved her flock. She was friendly, fearless and outspoken. She was outstandingly powerful and convincing as a preacher, hard working and serious in her administration...admired for her integrity and intellect she was often misunderstood and maligned...her children should take consolation in

⁸⁰ Further information is from the minutes of that meeting found in Aunty's personal copy of her file, which was kindly made available by her eldest son NanaEssilfie who has some documents and deeds in his possession the rest being with Esi. The eldest daughter has not received her share. .

⁸¹ Interview Rev. Frimpong August 24th 2003 He was responsible for training of consecrated workers at Mozano; confirmed by the Church Father.

⁸² Interview with the Pastor in Charge Rev. Sekyi, at the church office, Koforidua, November, 2003

her love for principles, (and) truth as fair play. May she rest in peace Amen.⁸³

Opinions

Mabel's sister Rose MameAma was sure her sister had been at the centre of a financial crisis in the church. She suggested:

'There had been a financial crisis at Mozano (in March and April 2002) as some of the stations had stopped sending money to headquarters and pensions could not be paid and pensioners were starving. (Mabel was not responsible for paying anyone, but only for receiving in-coming money.⁸⁴) Mabel had strong views about pensioners' rights but the office-holders' wages and the expenses of the Church's head also needed to be paid.⁸⁵

Reverend Frimpong also said: 'Mabel traded and farmed to earn enough to meet her personal expenses. She would always give something to those who came to her for help.' The writer noted, when visiting Mozano and *Osofo* Mabel at *Afahye* in August 2002 that her own reception room had only two hard-backed school chairs and a stool. She received her callers sitting on a mat on the floor. There was not even a radio.⁸⁶

Some *abusua mpanyinfo* both *Ekona* and *Nsona* felt aggrieved that the church had not allowed an autopsy, which is sometimes permitted if a death is sudden and unexplained.⁸⁷

⁸³ *Biographies of the late Rev. Mabel W. Abraham* Burial and Thanksgiving Service at the Musama Disco Christo Church General Head Office, Mozano for 17th May 2002

⁸⁴ Interview with the Akaboha, August 25th 2003

⁸⁵ Interview Rev. Frimpong, August 2003

⁸⁶ Personal observation 2001 peace festival; the festival of 2003 was cancelled on the instruction of the High Court at Swedru for fear of violence. The destoolment case had caused feelings on both sides to run high. One party alleged that there were aggressive body guards causing bodily harm to those on the other side.

⁸⁷ Interview, MameAma, Rose Abraham, elder sister June 2003, and Nanabanyin elder brother, also the *ebusuapanyin* at Abeka.

Two death narratives

Fasting had made her thin, but, as she had not been ill before her death, family members wondered why she had died. The Akaboha had been the last person she had spoken to; for when she came back home from his office she did not speak again.

1 The events that occurred between 6.00 p.m. on Thursday and the following morning were described by Alice Aba Mabel's eldest daughter, who was there.⁸⁸

'She came back from the office (on the Wednesday) with her hands laid on the top of her head and shaking her head from side to side.⁸⁹ She did not speak again. Late in the night she became unconscious. We rushed her to hospital at Agona Swedru. They were unable to revive her and she died.'

2 The Akaboha wrote a death narrative and a lament in the Burial and Thanksgiving programme:

'On Wednesday, 3rd April, 2002 we came to work together and worked diligently until 6.00 p.m. Then on Thursday, 4th April, 2002 in the morning we came to the office only to be told that Rev. Mabel as she was affectionately called was dead. The vacuum caused by her death will be hard to fill': He followed with this lament that ends with a farewell:

Second lament

'Wail, O Cypress for the cedar has fallen,
because the Mighty Trees are ruined,
Wail O oaks of Bashan for the thick forest has come down

⁸⁸ Conversation Alice Aba, August 2003

⁸⁹ This is a gesture of despair, indicating utter hopelessness and disaster-as KofiEbo pointed out. (Interview at his residence at Achimota, November, 2003)

Farewell Rev. Mabel. We wish you Godspeed and a safe return home!
Damirifa Due, Due, Due'.

In the presence of a large number of mourners including Pastors, Priests and elders of the MDCC and the 'Akaboha' himself,⁹⁰ KofiEbo who was acting as the spokesman for the two *abusua*, gave a funeral oration recorded on video tape.⁹¹ He said: 'The case is 'before the courts of the Lord'⁹² The family are not at all happy; the Lord will let the truth prevail. If (this death) was deliberately caused by someone, the Lord himself should judge the matter.'⁹³

When the Akaboha was de-stooled by his Uncle the following year (2003) some members of the family may have recollected these solemn words, and felt that God had answered their prayers for justice.

4 Who did the prophecy come from? –A spiritual reflection

The 'prophecy' in the Anglican Cathedral where her Mother Effie was a member of the Good Shepherd Women's Association for charitable works that she was to become a full time servant of God was indeed strange and Mabel must have wondered how it could ever be fulfilled. There were indeed many obstacles she might have seen herself or had pointed out to her when the idea was first

⁹⁰ Programme of the Burial and Thanksgiving Service at the Musama Disco Christo Church, General Head Office, Mozano for 17th May 2002

⁹¹ There was an unsubstantiated allegation by an unnamed informant that there had been voices raised at the Akaboha's house when *Osofo* Mabel went there for consultations on the afternoon that she died. The isolation of the Akaboha's residence/palace may encourage curiosity and spying.

⁹² The 'courts of the Lord' is an English translation for Hebrew meaning the temple precinct of Bible times where the worshippers stood, and is therefore a misunderstanding. The meaning meant is: the matter is subject to the judgement of God.

⁹³ The subsequent destoolment of the Akaboha was felt by some to be divine retribution for wrong done to Mabel. Those at Nkwantadu who formerly attended no longer do so; her children support the Church Father/*AsoreEgya* who de-stooled the Akaboha III. Of the twenty one clergy of the MDCC present at the Thanksgiving (p.2) two have died including the Reverend E.G. Osei, two remain loyal to the Akaboha, but the other sixteen have supported the de-stoolment. The Akaboha has resisted the de-stoolment, claiming before the High Court at Agona Swedru that the elders of the church had no constitutional power to de-stool him. The case is still *sub-judice* there (February, 2004).

presented.⁹⁴ We can see them as four *powerful spirits* with spiritual territory in Africa; these aggressive creatures feel threatened by the 'monstrous regiment of women': to prevent such they assert their territorial rights in four areas of African life: the creation; the church; the family and the mind. Is it surprising that women facing such spiritual opposition respond when called by God to serve: 'It is not right'; 'It is not done in my church'; 'It will harm others who depend on me'; - 'I am not qualified'. The first step for a woman entering into full time ministry is to overcome in these areas. 'It is right if God has asked me to do it'; 'It can be done even if it hasn't been done in the past'; 'God and my family helping me, the young can be looked after' and 'I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.' Mabel knew that the Anglican Church taught that women must not have authority over men, based on the creation order and the assertion that Christ followed a similar pattern in calling twelve male disciples). In attempting to be a church leader Mabel would be going against the order ordained by God when he created Adam *ex nihilo*, but Eve from the rib of Adam only to be his help-mate and companion. It was this very order to which Paul referred on the same subject (1 Timothy 2.9 ff.).

The answer to this that Mabel gave was 'God has called me.' The Anglican church of her mother and father did not ordain women. Were not the apostles all male? Was this not an indication that Jesus expected church leadership to be entirely male? Were not all the seminarians at St Nicholas⁹⁵ male? Had she ever heard of a female in church leadership? It was true that women were called to good works perhaps even outside their own family circle like Dorcas in Acts, but that should be done with and for women and children, so no woman would ever have authority over a grown man. The answer to this was to wait until the church changed or to find a church where this was not the case. How about the growing children? The extended family had already suffered some financial losses after the coup d'etat. Her two brothers were in preventive detention and would not be able to help her. Her father and mother were both retired and could not support her. Her husband

⁹⁴ There is a parallel here with Abram's position facing four kings in opposition to him.

⁹⁵ St Nicholas is the Anglican Seminary in Oguaa, from which Adisadel the Secondary School came.

had had a stroke and had had to take early retirement; this meant that the children were relying for their education on the income that she could bring in through her trading in cloth from Ivory Coast. It would be impossible to combine that trade with a job as a full time church worker. The family might fall into poverty. Many conservative Christians would also disapprove of her changing her priorities. As a wife and mother of six children she should make the upbringing of the children and looking after the needs of her husband her priority, if not her sole aim. This is how the wife of noble character in Proverbs 31 is described as organising her life, and it is taken to be a blue print for all women for all time. Jesus too said that man and wife were joined together by God, and no one should separate what God had joined. Would training as a full-time worker not involve separation? The answer to this seems to have been to get her husband's approval and co-operation to make it possible.

The final crushing doubt was whether she could make the grade. She had not completed her education; having left Ghana National College to get married as her father wished before she completed the course. Everyone knew that a full time servant of God had to be highly educated - hadn't the first priest in the Anglican Church, Philip Quacoe, had to go to England to qualify before coming back as a priest?

This apparently hopeless situation actually led to a double blessing for Mabel. The first stage⁹⁶ was to be a mental and spiritual victory against so much opposition. There was one argument to defeat all others: doctrine, church polity, situation, incomplete education. It was the same God who had ordained or allowed all these things who had also called her. Was God not the God of the future as well as of the

⁹⁶ The experiences of Abram with the kings and with Melchisedek can be seen as a double blessing or a blessing in two stages. Abram was under the trees at Mamre when it was reported to him that Kedorlaomer king of Elam with three kings allied to him Amraphel, Arioch and Tidal had taken his nephew Lot, and his 'possessions wives and other people' from Sodom. Abram took all the trained men born in his household. Dividing his troops in the night he routed all four enemies, and pursued them to north of Damascus. He recaptured his nephew Lot, his 'possessions, wives and all other people' and brought them back with him. This was the first stage of the blessing. We can see that there are four kings, all of whom were defeated in one single night attack; four objectives were actually achieved at the same time.

past, could God not initiate change? She fasted alone for one week to be assured that it truly was God who had called her. That this was true became clear to her.

Then each of the arguments against this course of action began to crumble.⁹⁷ If God had called her then God was the same God who had, up till that time worked mainly through men. In this new world of changes, economic, political, social, God might choose to work differently for God was sovereign. Was it beyond this sovereign God, to provide for her and her husband and family? Would God not enable her, through sheer hard work, to achieve what others with more complete education could not? Since the Anglican Church did not ordain women she must look to the Army of the Cross of Christ since their consecrated worker category would in future be opened to women. She went to her husband to tell him that she believed that God was calling her to the full time ministry.⁹⁸ To her surprise her husband agreed to look after the boys if she would look after the girls. So MameEfua had already overcome the four obstacles to her training when she went to Mozano to meet the prophet Metapoly, Akaboha II, King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

Mabel's call was renewed when Metapoly affirmed her victory like Melchizedek affirmed the victory of Abram over the four kings.⁹⁹ He said, after fasting with her for one week, that he too believed that God had called her to ministry in the Army of the Cross of Christ. She began training immediately and in two years, in 1969, she had her first posting and a 'flock' to whom to minister the grace of Christ, with humility, power and love as those who knew and loved her have testified.

⁹⁷ Just as the apparently invincible forces of Kedorlaomer and his three allies crumbled in one night

⁹⁸ As Abram was to establish his right to a new land; his call has always been taken as a key challenge to missionaries who go out: not knowing whither they are going.

⁹⁹ Now when Abram returned victorious from defeating the four kings, he was met by Melchisedek from *Salem* Peace. King of Peace and King of Righteousness who brought refreshment and blessed Abram and after this Abram's call was renewed and he was given a new name, which was also a title: 'Abraham' meaning 'father to many'. (Genesis XIV)

The second choice

At the end, after thirty three years service in the church, she was involved in another choice: a Hobson's choice with no right answer.¹⁰⁰ As national treasurer, Mabel was involved in receiving what money there was when headquarters was in deficit on several fronts and all responsibilities could not be met. Those who had worked all their lives for the Church had been encouraged to retire to Mozano and had been promised a pension. They were now dying of starvation. The allocation of any in-coming money depended on consultation with the top leadership including Juba Molda Jehu Appiah. If she gave to pensioners when she was not authorised to do so she would be acting unfaithfully to her superiors and her trust; but could she as God's shepherd leave her beloved flock to starve when she had the means to keep them alive?¹⁰¹ As a woman of principle and with a large heart she had a difficult choice; but we have no way of knowing with certainty what it was, for the subject is tabooed except to those who already know the answer.¹⁰² Yet her tenant described her as 'too generous,'¹⁰³ and the pensioners whom I addressed in a prayer group were not permitted by their leader, Mabel's brother-in law,¹⁰⁴ to speak to me individually. I have now no way of telling what God had told Mabel to do. She died without recrimination and in that as well as in her determination to seek justice and truth, she resembled her master, Jesus, for 'as a sheep before its shearers is dumb so he opened not his mouth.'(Isaiah 53.7)

Odupon k̄ese bi ebu/ the great tree has fallen

The Akaboha's poem, (given in English in the programme for the Burial and Thanksgiving of *Osofo* Mabel and quoted in full above,) laments the fall of a single

¹⁰⁰ We can compare this choice to that which faced Abraham when God told him to take his only son the child of promise and sacrifice him. There must have seemed to be no right answer to the terrible dilemma.(Genesis XXII)

¹⁰¹ Rev. G. O Osei said that she took the workers and pensioners at Mozano as a flock.

¹⁰² The writer travelled to Mozano and waited all day on two separate occasions for women of the prayer band led by Rev.G.E.Y.Gaisie to come and talk to her about Mabel; nobody came, though he had promised that they would and they lived all around. They were all pensioners.

¹⁰³ In Abraham's case God's will was made plain to him by direct communication. We cannot know what Mabel heard from God in quiet moments of despair.

¹⁰⁴ Rev Gaisie

tree, but then laments the destruction of an entire forest. The tragedy this represents is part of the primal world view. Its use shows his ability to understand the Christian in terms of his own primal context; to see that context transformed by the Christian message of hope and of life beyond death.

As has already been noted, for the traditional Fante, the felling of a tree was not to be done without propitiatory rites – it is an offence against the spirit/s of the tree for which some restitution must be made in advance. (With the advent of chain saws and high demand for timber for building this perspective has been lost). What if the whole forest should be lost?

Indeed, his poem goes on to lament that the whole forest has fallen. The effect is heightened by an echo of Biblical and Western eloquence¹⁰⁵ and is not merely hyperbole (the loss of the primal forest through unenlightened exploitation is evident everywhere in Fanteland). The Akaboha links the death/fall of Mabel to that of others.¹⁰⁶ Like the writer to the Hebrews, he sees her in a long line of witnesses to the faith who are now ancestors. Yet this does not exhaust the resonance of this comparison. It could be interpreted as a prophecy of his own ‘downfall’ together with that of his immediate family members and supporters: the collapse of the whole great international enterprise of MDCC. For within the year, he was to be de-stooled by his own paternal uncle, the *Asorepanyin*/Church Father.

If the Akaboha was speaking prophetically of his own end and the end of the era of faith which embraced Kwame Nkrumah and his own father and grandfather, Kofi Ebo’s eloquent peroration leaving vengeance in the ‘courts of the Lord’¹⁰⁷ also echoes a Biblical theme: ‘Vengeance is mine, I will repay says the Lord (Deuteronomy XXXII, 35).’¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁵ Oaks and cypresses are not found in Fanteland.

¹⁰⁶ That Mabel’s death should be seen as a fate met by the community of the living-dead and those yet to die has a biblical echo: David said of Saul and Jonathan: (Authorised version) ‘How are the mighty fallen,’ linking their death to that of those who had gone before, and giving a foretaste of the praises to his ‘mighty men’ given after his death.

¹⁰⁷ This is a misinterpretation of a phrase in the Authorised Version which refers to the temple courts

¹⁰⁸ Graffiti on the walls outside the Akaboha’s house echoed the same sentiments in the passionate wish that the Akaboha would accept resignation and not take his uncle and most of the church to court (the High Court at Swedru) on a constitutional technicality.

The Akaboha's de-stoolment might appear to be an act of God's vengeance to some, to others who had seen this event coming only in the newspapers; it might seem like just another sex scandal and such might hope to see the High Court at Agona Swedru give him a prolonged period of imprisonment. To yet others who had shared in the days of total commitment, as Mabel had, it might seem a tragic debacle indeed.

Obedience of faith and love

The Akaboha had also referred to Mabel's death as a journey back 'home' and this theme is also echoed in one of the hymns at the thanksgiving service, which is probably not a translation. '*Osor nye me fie...Osor nye M'Egya krom.*' Heaven is my house; heaven is my father's village/town/city.¹⁰⁹ In that glorious home there will be no bitterness.¹¹⁰ We have noted that Mabel (though she could get irascible) spoke no word of anger before she died, leaving all apportioning of blame for it to mere speculation.

This silence was attributed by the *Ekona ebusua panyin* to the effect of rituals performed by the Akaboha; (rituals are often performed by leaders of the Church for a spiritual purpose with the slaughtering of a chicken) but could it not also, or even instead, have been a blessing from God and a blessed relief to her families? At least no-one thought of blaming an immediate relative and member of the Bosumefi clan, and so the clan can live in peace among themselves with regard to her death, as she must earnestly have prayed that they would.

Conclusion

The two biographical texts about Nana Tutu Dadzie I of Amanful (died 1934) and Reverend Mabel Abraham of the Musama Disco Christo Church (died 2002) have both included laments as they died within living memory. Both accounts have affinity with the story of Melchizedek, reflecting the powerful presence of Christ.

¹⁰⁹ This is another biblical theme the mansion/ *fiekessim* where Jesus goes to prepare a room for us, the city where the blessed faithful meet with Jesus is our home-town place of return and place of retirement.

¹¹⁰ Revelation 7.17

The generosity of the *Ahemaal/Queens* resembles that of Melchisedek and so that of Christ himself who fed five thousand from a few loaves and fish. They had inherited the blessings of authority and wisdom, the traditional Fante believe, from their royal ancestors/*nananom nsamanfo* and associated *abosom*, and from the Almighty, Wise God (Odomankoma Nyansaboa). They showed the understanding and generosity expected of Church leaders today. Yaw Saa responded by contributing political and business acumen to serve them and the whole community of Amanful. Their relationship could be seen as a model for the relationship between church members and their leaders.

The presence of Christ is seen also after Mabel's call to ministry in the church, as, with prayer and fasting and the support of her husband, she was enabled to see her way forward to answering the call and this was confirmed by Matapoly Akaboha II. Her struggle with the total collapse at the centre of the authority of her church and her silence at her death both focus our attention on Jesus own struggle with betrayal and his silence in the judgement hall. Whatever she did, it appears she submitted to his authority, the true King of Kings and Lord of Lords, showing ability, courage and love for her 'flock' to the end.

CHAPTER V

PROVIDENCE: DA KORO YE SERE¹

The narrative of Kodwo Mensah/William Emmanuel Edusa Abraham

Introduction

In this chapter, after a brief statement about *amane*/oral discourse about one's experiences and some historical background to the coup d'etat of 1966 and how he came to find himself in preventive detention in 1966, we follow Kodwo Mensah/Professor William Emmanuel Edusa Abraham as he recounts the events leading up to this; his experiences in the Ussher Fort: a miraculous cross of light, a supernatural knowledge of his future release, the thoughts which led up to his joining the Catholic Church on his release and events which occurred immediately after.

I divide the last two sections into theology and ethics as before but modified because of the devotional nature of the material in which the presence and the effects of the presence of Christ are discussed directly.

In addition to my seeking to see an analogue of Genesis XIV in the overcoming of the four kings as with Mabel and to interpret it *sensus plenior*/with fuller meaning in his narrative (which has been half of the task of the whole dissertation) he himself speaks of his personal experiences of Christ so a 'type' of Christ in Melchizedek though it can be found is not needed in the paradigm. He himself has drawn near. He also speaks of him using *sensus plenior* himself as the real presence in the Sacraments. The priest, he says: 'brought Christ to us.' This direct way of speaking is that of Kwame Bediako who speaks of Christ in Africa. He recounts a number of direct revelations given to him and others. In addition too to the basic Scripture we have chosen for the dissertation in the Epistle to the Hebrews and Genesis, he himself finds analogy with his own life circumstances in Ussher Fort in the annunciation readings from Luke. The Scripture is interwoven with the story in exactly the way we have

¹ There is a day of rejoicing

tried to do in the preceding two chapters by interpreting their four stories as analogues. It is an intrinsic recognised part of his spiritual itinerary from the earliest age until now (2005)² As I have sought to interpret the story using *peshar* next, which is the second aim of the dissertation, for the edification of the family, the church and readers I have found that he also, without preaching, makes his own inferences about the effect that Christ's presence, seen or unseen, should have on his own striving for good. This clearly has in his mind much to do with overcoming fear and anger, with sympathy in a rapidly growing widespread family and community. This community includes his brothers and sisters nieces and nephews, daughters and sons in *diaspora* in the United States of America in Europe and in Ghana respect for his church members and for everyone he meets even other road users, commitment to follow church discipline and means of grace and to study the Bible, and finally in his academic work a recognition of the primal in concentrating on early Greek Philosophy. He finds that truth does not foreclose the supernatural which, while it has never been absent from his itinerary even during his most determined positivistic efforts to eliminate it, has come back into his life with Christ himself and with God who is in control of his circumstances, with Scripture which speaks of Christ, with Christ's mother Mary who bore him, with angelic beings who worship him and serve humans, with the Church as making his body available to all. The meaning of his home-coming is intensified with extraordinary clarity by revelations to those very senses which, according to the sceptical logical positivism he and Wiredu had talked and written about, are the arbiters of truth.

² In the fuller version of the story, which covers his childhood, he describes how he took the part of David in a school play or on occasion took a brown cloth as a cassock (like the Fathers) and led his friends through the Prayer Book service (based on Scripture) at Burutu. Now he spends much of his time studying scripture.

1 Fante oral literary background

1. Literary genre

Professor Kojo/William Emmanuel Edusa Abraham's letter³ as given here covers the experience of the 1966 coup d'etat and its immediate aftermath for him in some detail. It is supernatural and factual, humorous and gripping in the style of a personal letter or (in an oral context) of *amanee* /sufferings/news which are told among family members or friends after a separation. This is not a novel,⁴ yet Kojo's writing could be compared to Achebe's for Biblical resonance,⁵ humour and vivid evocation of the events and experiences that he is writing about.⁶

2 Historical background: The Churches and the First Republic

The early Portuguese Catholic efforts to evangelise the people of the coastlands of Ghana had left little trace, but by the 1890s a Catholic presence in the then Gold Coast had been re-established. Catholic missionary effort initially focused on the Northern Protectorate and East of the Volta and came to the South later where it spread rapidly. The priest who visited the detainees in the Ussher Fort, Accra, in 1966 when William Abraham was detained there was a Caucasian Catholic. The Anglican Church in Ghana on the other hand had appeared to remain the servant of the British abroad and their co-workers.

During the Second World War (1939-1945) the Abraham family were in Nigeria as Samuel was working with the United Africa Company. Shortly after the war Kwame Nkrumah came back to Ghana from the United States of America to be secretary to the United Gold Coast Convention (UGCC). Samuel Abraham,

³ Here, unfortunately, abridged as far as the most interesting details of early life in Nigeria is concerned,

⁴ *Amanee?* / trouble? is a question to which the answer can be *amanee bokoo* /not too many troubles

⁵ The story of Abraham and his son Isaac is used analogically as the spiritual core of '*Things Fall Apart*' his first and most powerful novel; in which the Hebrew narrative of Abraham and Isaac and the Igbo narrative are seen as having such close affinity that one can move easily between them.

⁶ Achebe views the conflict of values between the West and Africa through the eyes of his hero, Okonkwo, in *Things fall Apart* as tragic, Kojo from a personal viewpoint appears to have seen this difference as an intellectual challenge.

William's father William and others of his children had also returned to Oguaa on Samuel's retirement. Nkrumah began to mobilise the 'masses' for 'Socialism' and became leader of government business under the new constitution in February 1951.⁷ The politics of this time was electric. Nkrumah had plans to make the Gold Coast a leader in Africa and the world and many young people caught the vision. The first step was independence from the British which was achieved on March 6th 1957. Kodwo Mensah (third born son of Samuel) was then in Oxford studying for a BPhil in Philosophy after graduating from Adisadel and the University of Ghana, Legon. With the purpose of achieving the required rapid change, Ghana became a one party state with Dr. Nkrumah now Osagyefo/Saviour as President. William Abraham had become lecturer and acting Vice Chancellor at the University of Ghana, Legon, *Asafohen* for Amanful in Oguaa, Member of Parliament for Oguaa and had written two books; the second *Consciencism*, was with the purpose of explaining Nkrumahism to the intelligentsia (who had tended to shun Nkrumah's version of communalism).⁸ He had become Dr Nkrumah's chosen associate (though not a member of the Convention People's Party) and a member of the committee to act in the event of Nkrumah's incapacitation. Nevertheless by July 1965 with increasingly serious problems facing the government he said 'I believe I had a special inspiration. I seemed to be commanded to make a public denunciation, failing which there would be an upheaval at the end of six months'.

The media were glorifying President Nkrumah without restraint; for example his photo appeared in the *Evening News* in 'the wilderness' with a caption to suggest his mission to liberate Africa was 'Messianic' comparable with that of Christ or Christ up to date.⁹ William Abraham wrote an article against this 'unsober adulation.' Economic problems were damaging the government's long term prospects. There was increasing uncontrollable corruption in government and

⁷ Pobe J. *Kwame Nkrumah and the Church in Ghana, 1949-1966*, Asempa, 1988.

⁸ See in particular J.B. Danquah in *The Ghanaian Establishment*, edited by Albert Adu Boahen, Ghana Universities Press 1997 p. 172ff

⁹ The slogan of one party newspaper was global and powerfully Marxist interpreted not in terms of class struggle but of neo-colonialism: 'Peoples of the world unite; you have nothing to lose but your chains.'

business which, in addition to the over-spending involved in implementing Dr Nkrumah's ambitious plans, made it impossible to manage a budget. William Abraham said: 'I did not make the indicated denunciation', and instead 'chaired the Abraham Commission into Trade Malpractices.' The following is his description of what followed some months later. It starts with a flash back to an earlier event in Oguaa/Cape Coast which may have added to his apprehension or perhaps, with hindsight, was regarded as prophetic.

3 Narrative .

Asafohen: a warning

'Earlier I had been surprised at a festival at the old Victoria Park at Cape Coast, and was captured to be installed as *Asafohen*. I was borne aloft all the way in a parade from that park to the house at Amanful, Nkwantadu. There was a detour however via a hut at Amanful which was dedicated to some god or spirit. I refused to be taken in there, and repeated over and over again that they had caught the wind! Someone had alerted my father who lived even further away than the park, but had managed to catch up with us at the grove. I refused to sip the water they tried to bring to my lips; and I heard my father imploringly tell them not to take offence, as I was but a child. The leaders cautioned me that I was speaking like a child and that terrible things could visit contumacious attitudes. What shall I say?

'Early the following year, there was the first Ghana coup d'etat.

The storm breaks

'I had spent a long weekend at Cape Coast, and left early in the morning to drive back to Accra. Not far from the Regional Commissioner's where I had stayed there was a policeman who seemed interested in the fact that I was driving by, and appeared to jot something down. When I got to the Winneba junction, there was another policeman standing at the round-about. He peered at me and jotted down something. I had a premonition of something untoward. On reaching Legon, I

made sure that I read all the newspapers and mail which had been piling up while I was at Cape Coast. At about six o'clock the following morning, I heard sounds of cannon and rifle fire, and feared the worst. In the evening, there was an announcement asking various categories of persons to report at the nearest police station. I was then the MP for Cape Coast, and so decided to report to the Legon police station. My father had been visiting. When I told him what I was about to do, he asked me not to be afraid, and assured me that nothing would happen to me. The police were somewhat mystified, as they had received no instructions. They consequently called to Accra, and were told that an army officer would come for me. He did. I was taken to a collection point from which a number of us were driven to Ussher Fort, where I was to stay for nearly seven months.

'The whole thing was uneventful, and was harder for our families from whom we were kept incommunicado initially, and who heard various dastardly rumours about our allegedly terrible fate! A distant relation apparently told my mother that she herself had been present when I was shot! The agony of my poor mother!

What must I do?

'Life at Ussher Fort had its blessings. It was there that my journey towards the Catholic Church began. There was a man there who had been a Deputy Minister in some ministry and whose name I no longer remember. He regularly went to a particular cell to pray. This same man had in his youth been practically a servant to the Anglican ministry in his village in Ashanti. He also had a car on which he had been making payments, and had only a few months to go. Of course, he was in fear of losing the vehicle altogether if the payments were not kept up. He was convinced that all he needed to do was to write to the Anglican Bishop of Accra to have his office contact the Anglican Church in his village with a message to someone who could take care of matters for him. He got a postcard back saying that the Bishop of Accra was not able to help! That callous card filled me with revulsion, and before long I began to wonder about the basis of my continuing adherence to the Westminster Confession, especially given the circumstances of its schism from the Catholic Church. In my prison block, there was a man for whom I

conceived the greatest respect, J.H. Alassani. He played the organ at Catholic services, somewhere in greater Accra, I assume. He wrote out some Catholic Latin stuff for me. His manner was utterly honest and humble, and it was precisely that honesty that subsequently landed him in prison when he confessed to and admitted some minor malfeasance. This was at the same time as people suspected of gross fraudulent conversion were unhounded.

'There was one thing that I found very remarkable. There was no lack of condemnation of the folks in Ussher Fort. We saw and heard it on the TV which was initially provided. We did not hear a single word of condemnation from the Catholic Church. Instead, every Wednesday, the same Catholic priest came and said holy mass which many of us attended, even though we were not Catholic. I don't think the priest was particularly fond of us, but that did not stop him from bringing Christ to us. There before my eyes was something of the mettle of the Catholic Church.

Who is Jesus Christ?

'Being held in protective custody was a considerable shock to me, and confronted me with the uncertainties of life. As the Americans say, things such as this can teach a man religion. Of course, we all prayed a lot, beseeching our Maker for forgiveness and seeking his blessing. We engaged in a lot of discussions, the twenty or so in my block. Most of the discussions were theological or Biblical. I was surprised at the number of us who had spent time in various seminaries. We had all kinds of views relating to the nature of Jesus Christ. The one that distressed me most was the claim that Jesus and Lucifer had been equals, and that Lucifer had taken exception to his closeness to the Father. I believe some even thought that he was none other than the Archangel Michael! I was not very sure myself who he really was. Was he God himself as a Baptist assured me subsequently in Indiana? The Baptist minister who was preparing to go to Ghana assured me that Jesus was all we would ever see of the Father. He was the Father appearing.

'I knew the *Apostles' Creed* and the *Athanasian Creed*, and was very familiar with the *Quicumque Vult*. Even so I was gravely afraid of blasphemy by believing the

wrong thing. The Baptist was later to assure me that we would be judged on our theology!

'I too prayed constantly, and even promised the Virgin Mary that I would become a Catholic within nine months of my release, if I were able to return to my teaching position at Legon upon release. Indeed, during my confinement, I asked to be allowed to go and conduct my classes on days on which I taught, and be returned to prison after each class. I was particularly concerned about those of my students who would be taking their final examinations in a few months.

'I also prayed begging Jesus to show me how he had looked at his passion in the hope that the memory of that gruelling vision would help me to avoid future sin. In due course, I was granted a vision. At 4 pm, we were allowed 30 minutes of exercise in the courtyard, just a matter of walking around at one's own pace. On this occasion, I stayed behind. I often did in order to pray with emotion in privacy. Before I could work myself up, I saw a vision of a head full face, possessed by indescribable anguish. Then I asked to see Jesus as the King of Glory. Immediately I had a regal vision, and I remember remarking that he looked so serious, maybe even stern. Those were not my first visions, but my first waking ones. Once, when I lived in Burutu and was nine, I had a highly vivid dream. There was a huge man walking across the sky. He was stark naked. When he reached the noonday sun, he stepped directly under it, and began floating down. When he touched the ground where I had been craning my eyes upwards to gaze at him, he said that my mother and my friends may abandon me, but he would never abandon me. These, however, were personal and private visions

The cross in light

'I mentioned the Deputy Minister who had received a postcard from the Anglican Bishop of Accra, and the cell in which he said his prayers in private. He did this while others walked. One evening, he told us that the image of the cross in light had appeared on one of the walls of his prayer cell.

'That evening discipline broke down as we all crowded in turns into the cell to observe the phenomenon. Indeed it was as he had said. The vertical was a bar of

intense light lying against the wall, some 24 inches high and 3 inches wide. It was lowered some 20 inches from the ceiling. The cross bar consisted of evenly spaced piercing jewels of light, some 14 inches or so, symmetrically crossing the vertical, some eight inches from the top. We were awestruck. Naturally, at the same time, we wanted to know its origin. Just below the ceiling of the outside wall there were eight inch long iron bars, and through it we could see the moon. 'Across the courtyard we could also see in to another cell with an unshaded light bulb which was on. The question was whether the moon or the bulb had anything to do with the cross. I was lifted up by some on the shoulders of some of those present, and was able to block off part of the opening with a slipper. The cross of light disappeared. Each time I removed my slipper from the grill, the cross re-appeared. We thus established that it seemed to have something to do with the iron bar grill high in the room.

'Did the cross also have something to do with the light bulb or the moon? The configuration made it impossible without a cut-out on some sheet through which intense light was being shone. It was absurd to suppose that either the moon or the light bulb across the courtyard shone with the requisite intensity, and even more absurd to suppose that a cut-out was being dangled outside the prison cell high in the courtyard to work like a camera obscura!

'A few days later the prison authorities locked up that cell, since it had become the focus of a continual pilgrimage. It was the preferred centre of prayer. When we were ordered to return to our own cells we retorted that we were not going to allow anyone to come between us and our worship. Locking up that cell was an attempt to restore discipline. On the night of the day it was locked up, the Deputy Governor of the Prison and two warders came to my block after lights out, and asked me to come with them. I got out of bed and followed them not knowing what was in store.

'They took me to the room they had locked up. They explained that they had come to show me something about the appearance of the cross. The first thing the Deputy Governor did on entering the room was to take off his cap. The cross had changed.

Whereas before it had been several inches below the ceiling, now it had moved right up against the ceiling without being elongated! The Deputy Governor now had the bulb in the room across the courtyard unscrewed, and of course the cross disappeared. When he had the bulb screwed back into its socket, the cross reappeared. I told him we had ourselves established the same connection, and told him why we thought the bulb could not be responsible for the cross. Besides, the bulb had not moved, but the cross had. In that respect, it would be more sensible to ascribe it to the moon which was of course in a different position, except for the intrinsic absurdity of ascribing it to the moon in the first place. A warder said that he had been in that room at all hours as part of his duties for years and never had such a thing appeared, either there or indeed anywhere else in Ussher Fort prison.

Euphoria

'Word came to us that some religious people and others newly in civic authority dismissed the whole thing as a degenerate fabrication, as God would not show sinners like us a sign. For our part, we intensified our acts of devotion, holding daily morning and evening services in our block. It was impossible not to think of God and our response to Him practically all the time, day in day out. The common praying and singing and bible reading were in addition to private acts of worship. The whole place must have seemed to God like a fervent monastery. It certainly was not lacking in religious fervour and constancy. We were in turn overwhelmed by the favour God showed us in the manifestation of the cross of light. We were quite euphoric and from then on completely fearless

Foreknowledge

'I knew I was going to be released when the day came. For several weeks, I had felt strongly that when the story of the Annunciation as presented in Luke's Gospel had been read at mass three times, I would be released. The strong feeling about this that I had involved another element: each day that passage was read there was a cloud formation in the horizon dark like a mountain range. The third time it was read there was such a mountain range. I knew in my spirit that I would be released the following

morning. I had just started a game of chess with an army officer who was in prison with us when a Police Inspector flanked by prison warders came to our room, and invited me to come with him. With tears in my eyes, I said that I did not want to come with him. He was surprised and also seemed somewhat hurt. Some people there tried to reassure me, encouraged me not to feel bad about leaving them behind, and assured me that it was bound to be their turn to be released before long.

A Catholic

'Back at Legon, I tried to attend daily Catholic mass principally out of appreciation for what the Catholic priest had done for us in prison. I had of course completely forgotten about my promise to the Virgin Mary. But *she* had not forgotten!

'After months of attendance at mass, I informed the Catholic Chaplain that I wished to become a Roman Catholic...He had several discussions with me and told me that the date would be Saturday, March 25, 1967. I was therefore to confirm my desire to him no later than the preceding Wednesday. On the Monday I told him that I could not go through with it; but on Thursday, I drove to Cape Coast to tell my father that I was thinking of becoming a Roman Catholic. He warned me not to think that the Catholic Church alone was inspired: if I found, however, that affiliating with the Catholic Church would best enable me to be the sort of person God wanted me to be, I had his blessing. With that I drove back to Accra and informed the priest that I would like to be admitted after all.

'The ceremony was on Saturday the 25th of March, on Holy Saturday. Everything went smoothly until the point where I was to confess that the Pope was the plenipotentiary of Christ on earth. I had always thought in my rebellious days that because Christ did not need a plenipotentiary, the Pope could not be that. That, of course, did not follow at all. Everything connected with Christ is His free gift, by His grace; and it was by that free gift that He had entrusted to Peter and to the Church all the prerogatives which He bestowed. The Pope, as successor of Peter, was indeed a plenipotentiary of Christ. My hesitation was uncomfortable but did not last too long; I was granted the grace to overcome it, and I duly was admitted to the Catholic Church.

'Not long afterwards, I started wondering what I had done. Then it struck me. The 25th of March is a feast day of the Virgin Mary: it is The Feast of the Assumption! The Virgin Mary had recollected, and I was collected!

'(I had not made a secret of my desire to become a Catholic. In fact I told a religious leader at Legon what I was thinking of doing. He generously gave me a book describing the atrocities of the Catholics in Britain when they had the power to persecute other followers of Christ. That was one of the shameful passages in the history of the Church. The thing in the end was that I had no reason whatever to join in any schism from the Church of Christ which was headed by Peter. Apostolic succession was therefore crucial in my way of looking at things.)

Visions

'In fact while I was in protective custody, I developed the habit of reciting the rosary, and, after I was released, for months I was reciting it on the hour every waking hour. When the counter coup was attempted, I was terrified that the government might try to re-arrest those it had held in protective custody. I took to a feverish recital of the rosary. In the midst of it, a broadly smiling head suddenly appeared in the air in front of me. The head was smiling and shaking from side to side, and the words that came into my mind were: "Silly one, nothing will happen to you!"

'There were a few more manifestations, but they trailed off as I became disappointingly more foolish in my behaviour. I was capable of outrageous outbursts of temper, so extreme that I would actually be sputtering. I prayed that the archangel Raphael would heal me. One early morning, I was half awake and had the dream-like impression of an old man with pockmarked face treading towards my bed. I can't remember what he did or said, but a huge white snake seemed to emerge through my mouth, and I felt at peace.

'On another occasion, while I was still lying in bed at dawn, suddenly it was as if I heard a wind and felt a quake. Then there seemed to be a voice which announced: "Prepare to receive the sign of the Holy Ghost". Then a plaque seemed to appear on the wall in front of me with a variety of symbols on it. Finally, one night after I

had started slipping, a white patch of light appeared on the mosquito gauze in a window. It looked like a dove headed downwards with wings half outstretched. I told another person who was there that the dove was a symbol of the Holy Ghost, and that it would disappear in a matter of minutes. It did.

The Bible

'I remember many years ago in his retirement my father described himself as a Bible scholar. I now realise what he meant. Understanding the word of God in order to live it is the most important business of a human being on earth. It probably takes retirement for most people to come to realise this. In this I consider myself most fortunate.

Blessing

'I am most grateful for all the mercies which the Lord has shown me, and the mercies He has shown my loved ones, and, through Jesus Christ our Lord, I invoke the blessing of God Almighty on us all.'

4 Theology

In considering the theology in the narrative I shall view it first *sensus plenior*, like the narrative about Mabel in Chapter IV, as a decisive victory over four spiritual 'opponents.' The story will be seen as an analogue of that in Genesis XIV which gives an account of the victory that Abraham had had over the four kings. It is also viewed in two stages as with Mabel's narrative. The first stage being seen as ending with his release from the Ussher Fort and joining the Catholic Church and the second stage as his departure for the United States of America to take up a new life there. This follows his perception of the two events as providential. The obstacles which had stood in the way of a wholehearted commitment to Christ which can be seen in the account were four in our chosen interpretation. The first was his tendency to put his trust in the wrong people leading to prevarication as he found himself in inner conflict and perhaps with hidden doubts about his own self-worth in spite of his astonishing achievements. The second was intellectual doubts:

about the existence of God, about the Bible, about the adequacy of Church structures and doctrine to represent the gospel as seen in the Bible if true. The third was his commitment to his family, in particular to his father, who had brought him up and had him educated within the Anglican Communion, and the last was the fear and anger which had always been in him to be conquered but which was much intensified (though well controlled) by the experience of arrest and imprisonment, but which in departing eventually left the fruit of humility and a quiet mind.

Prevarication

There are two ways of looking at a very slow response (or a failure to respond at all) whether to the call of God or to any other challenge. One is to see it in a positive light as the fruit of carefulness and serious thought, and the other is to see it as a weakness, inability to make up one's mind (or perhaps even as the result of bad influences and spiritual darkness). William himself seems to have seen his failure to denounce features of the Nkrumah regime six months before the coup as a weakness, and we have interpreted his lukewarm response to the call of Christ on his life in the same way, regarding this also as a character trait linked to a philosophical cast of mind. This was the first and last of the difficulties to overcome before his life could be transformed by Christ; and it was Christ himself who overcame it by both miraculous revelations through a cross of light, visions, foreknowledge through the word of God and the sky concomitantly, and by a steady witness of those who had already made a commitment like the Departmental Minister and J.H. Alassani an organist, and the priest who visited. A disadvantage in philosophy is that its practice, as a way of thinking about life, lends itself to prevarication and lack of decisiveness in the name of examining all sides of a question. William was enabled by grace to act decisively

Intellectual doubts

The second and daunting obstacle to overcome was the obstacle of doubt. William had had doubts about every major assertion of the Christian faith which we can itemize as doubts about God, about the Bible, about the Church in this case the Catholic Church and the value of an individual's witness to the truth (strangely he never had doubts recorded here about guardian angels, but that may simply be an omission).

Doubt formed the first major hurdle in the way of his making a new Christian commitment.

God

William had had doubts about the existence and nature of God which were more than methodological (like Descartes). He was one of the few, with Kwasi Wiredu who dared to question in public and even in a devotional Christian context whether God existed at all; second he doubted whether the Bible could be true; and third he doubted whether the constitution and doctrines of the Catholic Church were right and well-founded.

The verification principle was a method by which logical positivists in Europe in the fifties aimed to show that metaphysical statements are meaningless.¹⁰ All statements, the principle goes, derive their meaning from a set of observation statements which can be verified. Any statement which has no set of verifiable observation statements is nonsensical. By these criteria the statement of the principle itself is nonsensical; but this was not realised immediately and iconoclasts including Kwasi Wiredu and his would-be Christian debating partner William Abraham had a field-day demolishing the supernatural world using the principle.¹¹

¹⁰ A J Ayer *Language, Truth and Logic*. London: Victor Gollancz Ltd., 1946.

¹¹ See a later book of Wiredu's *Philosophy in an African Culture, How not to compare African traditional thought with Western thought*, Cambridge University Press, 1980, in which he still maintains the principle. P.37ff.

Statements about the *abosom* and the *nananom* they found could not be verified. The next step was to say that they did not exist; and the step after that was to behave appropriately. 'Superstition' was overcome and with this new found scepticism William overcame his fears. However the philosophers in Europe: the Vienna Circle of Carnap and A. J. Ayer in England had an agenda to demolish everything supernatural. They wanted to ask: 'Can statements about God be verified?' If statements about him cannot be verified he either does not exist, or if he exists the fact is of no importance or interest. (From the point of view of this dissertation if God does not exist, or is of no importance there will be no point in looking for pointers to him which interpreted fully, *sensus plenior*, will reveal 'him' in unexpected places.) William jettisoned this way of thinking before going to Oxford. But the logical methods he preferred to adopt also made belief in God difficult.

William had not been able to understand the relationship Jesus had to God in his first year at Adisadel and had decided that 'God made Jesus and Jesus made the universe' and was responsible to help us back to righteousness when we went bad'. But who made God? He had speculated that 'as God was over us might there not be another god over our God and a series of gods *ad infinitum*? Could the hypothesis of God be logically contradictory as well as unverifiable? These doubts he systematised and presented the atheist's position in his Philosophy class at Legon, before a visiting Professor from the United Kingdom, in the University chapel, and abroad at a University in Bombay. When he went up to Oxford he still described himself (though semi-humorously) as of 'the School of Wiredu.' Dr Kwame Nkrumah who was William's acquaintance in London and associate when he returned to Ghana, seems to have considered any sort of supernaturalism as a tool to win the masses over (because they will believe and follow the marvellous rather than the ordinary so he used both Christian hymns and traditional religious rituals for the purpose). Religion was a tool box of political tricks, a means to an end. Not surprisingly he found Christ had departed from the hymns (his name had in any case been dropped in favour of his own), and all power for living a good life had gone from the traditional form religion (he could pour libation and keep

Kankan Nyame as an *Okomfo* but it was useless). The purity had also gone out of philosophy which is a search for truth; but what happens if it is subordinated to political ends? Furthermore in this debased form of 'philosophy' jargon can be used to put forward propositions which would seem unacceptable stated simply. The exercise is rather like that of the 'Emperor's new clothes': no one is prepared to admit that they cannot understand and the perpetrator can even convince himself that what he has said makes sense. William was a member of Nkrumah's 'Philosophy Circle' and ghosted his intellectual self-justification in a book '*Consciencism*' which appears to me to be obscure in this way. An example from the Bible of this sort of approach to religion is in Acts 8 where Simon the magician is called 'great.' A literary example from England of the Middle Ages is the Pardoner in Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*. Both of these subordinated religion to the love of money. Jesus said you cannot serve God and money. He could also have said you cannot serve God and power. Kwame Nkrumah came up against this fact and William too faced it six months before the coup d'etat.

So logical positivism and linguistic philosophy as taught at Oxford is like an acid to dissolve faith, complete logical consistency evades us, making religion into a tool for other purposes is also totally ineffective.¹²

However, by God's grace, William did not, in the end, follow either the path of Wiredu or that of (perhaps) Leibniz about whom he wrote a book, or that of Nkrumah. In the Ussher Fort everyone was interested in discussing who Jesus was. William found that he 'did not know' though perhaps he had thought more about it than the one who thought him to be the equal of Lucifer, or another who thought him to be the archangel Michael. His account of the supernatural events in the Ussher Fort which were by no means unique in his life but were crucial at this point is a balanced one of events which were supernatural, visible, and verifiable. Statements about the cross could be related to a set of statements about facts not

¹² These three 'by-pass meadows' (or paths leading nowhere) could also be viewed as analogues of the temptations the Israelites faced in the desert (Chapter III in Hebrews uses their fate as a warning to his Hebrew readers not to allow themselves to be distracted from their spiritual itinerary or race but to 'look to Jesus').

only available to the senses but also verifiable many times over since there were about a score of people in the block without counting the warders and soldiers. What happened in the prison was also Christ centred and with ethical consequences all at the same time, and events had their own inner symbolic connections, bypassing logic. As Hamlet said to Horatio: 'There is more in this world than is dreamt of in your philosophy.'. There was also a humble straightforwardness among the Catholics that he met which was evidence of a different and desirable life style. William was 'collected.'

The Bible

Another essential doctrine of the Church which William had challenged before God gave a 'sign' in the Ussher Fort; was the divine inspiration of the Bible. He had come across Biblical narrative from an early age taking part in a school play as David when he took the narrative completely literally and regarded it as the climax of the period of rehearsal that when they came to the actual performance, he should actually kill 'Goliath' with a well aimed stone and a real sword! At Adisadel the curriculum in religious studies covered the complete Bible and he had an excellent and exemplary teacher there. Nevertheless doubts did arise at the time of his closest friendship with Wiredu and others at Adisadel who seemed to have access to books on magic and theological speculation from Europe. How did Moses come to describe his own death in the last Chapter of the Pentateuch? Were the fierce and blood thirsty psalms fit for children to be singing? These doubts seem peripheral and had perhaps never affected William's view of the authority of the central gospel narratives about Jesus. At Ussher Fort He accepts the authority of Luke, of the Word of life for the believer. Accepting Scriptural authority is for him prior to accepting the authority of the Catholic Church and of the Pope. He argues his case for the authority of the Pope on the basis of Scripture (he hardly had this belief when he joined the Catholic Church but he had the 'grace' to affirm it nevertheless (he says) and that this was correct was confirmed for him later by considering Paul's doctrine of grace again in the context of the hierarchy of the church which is 'all of grace'). Scripture for him comes first and the narrative

element is primary. The Biblical narrative, which includes the message of Gabriel to Mary ('Hail Mary full of grace, the Lord is with Thee, blessed art thou, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb Jesus') has all the primal elements necessary to hold our attention: A celestial angel, a miraculous birth to a virgin, a recognition that the impossible from a scientific point of view is possible with God, a complete obedience (respect) to those above one in the hierarchy even where not fully understanding; all these elements show a clear link between the Bible presuppositions and the primal African World view. In the account too the primal element of the sky figures prominently, the sky/Nyam (or shining one, place of angels and messengers from God, place of cloud formations), together with the Bible story gives assurance of the date of his release – not before the presence of Jesus in the prison, as to Paul and Silas has given him life and hope.

Catholicism

William's doubts about the relative merits of the Protestant and the Catholic positions are less fundamental than the above two points for this dissertation. Since I take the view that even the account of an *abqsom* and a stool can point to Christ, there need be no cavilling about denominational divides. Providing it is every denomination's aim to point to Christ albeit from different perspectives or positions they can be accepted (on the basis of Hebrews Chapter XI). William's views of Catholicism before the experiences at the Ussher Fort, however, have clearly been coloured by Protestant anti-Catholic propaganda. There has been an anti-Catholic element in Protestantism, stemming from how it started in schism with the pinning of points on a church door at Wittenburg, which provokes a reaction and is still with us in Ghana unless modified by traditional African wisdom: an unacceptable face of the fragmented missionary enterprise in Africa. Of course a Protestant however open-minded can hardly recognise the Pope as plenipotentiary though they may have nothing but goodwill for the man who fills the role, but accusations of Mariolatry are based on a distortion of the Catholic position (sometimes nurtured by Catholics also) as William came to recognise.

Family ties

The fact that his father and mother had brought him up as Anglican and sent him to an Anglican school, and that in 1966 his father who seems in any case to have been more stable than Effie, was still a practising member must have loomed large in William's mind. He had never stood out against his father and his father had always supported him through thick and thin. Was he now with a new found enthusiasm for Christ to make disappointing his father his first action? This proved to be an imaginary obstacle. Samuel Abraham eirenicly told his son: 'If (he) found, that affiliating with the Catholic Church would best enable (him) to be the sort of person God wanted (him) to be, (he) had his blessing.' What is important for effective participation in the race (as in Hebrews XI) is that we are all looking to Jesus who is author and finisher of our faith, from our different places on the course of life. It is this that enables us to be our best selves because he is the one who made us and it was this that enabled Samuel to see the decision, which could have been a disappointment to him, as an opportunity for his son to grow more like Christ.

Fear and Anger

The Fante are trained from childhood to control their immediate reactions and to repress them, and this was what William had eventually learned to do after a somewhat turbulent time in Nigeria (He had refused to build a fence and been withdrawn from school; he had also refused to go into the house when his sister died and had to be sent to Burutu to stay with his father.) He showed complete self control when giving himself up, on entering the Ussher Fort and during his seven months of life there. He describes the closing off of the door of freedom, the cutting off of friends and family, the abuse and vilification in the media as 'uneventful' and no doubt presenting these events to himself in that way enabled him to bear them. However, the repressed fear and anger eventually surfaced after his release. He would get so angry that he 'stuttered' and became so frightened of being re-arrested, after an attempted counter coup d'etat which failed, that he hardly let go of his rosary and told the beads on the hour every hour. These are the

deepest and most hidden aspects of everyone's emotional life and anyone will relate to them, even though they may not have the grace which William has had to speak openly about it. These emotions are very destructive of the victorious Christian life yet they are part of being human and Jesus himself being fully human was not without them. (God too is said to be angry at our continual turning away from him). Since these are primal emotions it is true to our experience that they should be expressed through primal images drawn from the Bible and from African experience. The old man with a pock marked face may have been William's subconscious memory of the Yoruba man who had prophesied that he would be special when he was in the womb. The head of Jesus gently shaking in admonition is surely a memory of his father. The words he spoke were even his father's words directly also from Scripture 'Don't be afraid'. The snake is an image of evil in the Bible and of terror in Fanteland where the appearance of one leads to a stampede. William Kodwo was coming back home to his own people and to the Christian faith at one and the same time.

The second blessing

There is no doubt that William or Emmanuel as he now preferred to be called regarded his employment in the United States of America and his subsequent success in applying for a residence permit as providential in the same way as his early release from the Ussher Fort had been. Adopting this point of view we can see that the people who are mediators of God's grace to him are an American lecturer from Indiana and the Principal of Macalester University. With the understanding we can get from Melchizedek that Christ is on both sides of the ethnic divide we can see their role in getting him an established place in the United States of America has opened up the door to a new life for him where he has been able to be part of several different academic communities, and has built up quite an extensive family network with those who have also emigrated, those born to his wife Marya there and her own large Irish family.

Pesher What must I do?

'It is difficult to be an African,' William said (meaning an African from South of the Sahara). Yet to those God has chosen from among the multitude of ethnic groups that live there and those outside who pray for them, it is also tremendously exciting and challenging; though there is a struggle with the fear coming from the insecurity/uncertainty of wars, coups and counter coups, tottering authority structures and poverty; a struggle to act decisively and consistently with so many conflicting claims and few resources, each of these can be perceived through faith to be a doorway to the special blessing that God is pouring out on Africa. Since Kodwo has provided these themes himself what follows only relates these to the three aspects of faith developed throughout the Epistle to the Hebrews which has been our guide and theological frame both for a *sensus plenior* hermeneutic and now again for *pesher*: namely the application of our faith in the battle for wisdom; for respect and love to be shown and for community to be enhanced. However the most difficult lesson of all, which has not appeared before in this dissertation but is clearly presumed by the first part of Hebrews in the priestly function of Christ, is the need for repentance; genuine and deep repentance. There are many other features but I concentrate in addition to this on those which echo the pattern established by *Osofo* Sam when interpreting the *ekɔ* story that is the first of the five: namely the need for understanding, the need for respect/love, and the importance of community. We have seen this pattern in the four other stories and it remains to confirm its centrality in the last one without neglecting any other new additional elements.

Repentance

There can be no doubt that there was a mass movement of the spirit of God made possible by the deep repentance of the whole group in Ussher Fort. The need for repentance is not a matter of regretting failure of ritual observance and rushing to fulfil ritual obligations that have been neglected though that may be part of it, though a superficial part, in that attendance at mass is prescribed. It is turning

away from things that the spirit has revealed are obstacles in the way of a fulfilled Christian life. In William's case we have seen the four obstacles that were holding him back were indecisiveness and intellectual doubts, holding people's judgements about what he did to be more important than whether what he wanted to do was right or wrong and finally emotional hang-ups. All these things are common to human beings and are part of our fallen nature. They can hardly be dealt with at all at once, but by the help of the Holy Spirit where they are seen as sin and to be repented of, they can be dealt with some immediately, some after sometime, and perhaps some finally. So William made headway against all his difficulties. He became more decisive, particularly about his choice of the Catholic Church; he relied more upon grace where he could not immediately clear up his intellectual doubts; he showed respect and did not run from his father who might not have been very pleased with his decision; finally (and this was partial for he speaks much later of being 'more at peace') some of his deep anger, hurt and fear left him. What the causes of that anger and fear may have been we are not told directly but we may presume that one some or all of a long list were on his mind and could have included what had been destroyed of good in the First Republic from within and from without, the destruction of his family fortunes with both his brothers and his sister's husband unemployed, being treated as a foreigner on his brief return in his own land, the apparent loss of the honour that had formerly been freely accorded him even by the warders in the Fort and the loss of his very compatible student groups at Legon. Whatever caused him anger and fear after its symbolic departure he received comfort and strengthening from two more visions of Christ and of the Holy Spirit

William said 'Going into preventive detention was a considerable shock to me and confronted me with the uncertainties of life. As the Americans say, things such as this can teach a man religion.' The atmosphere of repentance in the Ussher Fort 'must have seemed to God like a fervent monastery.' There was a complete lack, at least in William of a need for self-justification. he did not feel that a column in the *Evening News* or his chairmanship of the commission set up to deal with corruption had exonerated him from every responsibility for what had gone wrong

earlier. Remarkably, as far as he is concerned, not one person in the whole group in Block 20 in the Ussher Fort felt like laying the blame on others. That was left to the churches, the new government and the subservient media. The coup d'etat had brought the detainees in Block 20 'to their senses'. The adulation of Nkrumah himself, the corruption of his government, the overspending, the fraudulent businesses, and the maltreatment even to murder that had been meted out to those who opposed the regime, the blame for this entire catastrophe fell on these few scapegoats and they seem to have accepted it meekly. Yet how could they be uniquely to blame? As Jesus said when the tower of Siloam fell, those who were killed were in no way more culpable than those who remained safe: 'Unless you repent you too will perish' (Luke 13.3&4) he said to his listeners whom he perceived attributed the fact that the tower had not fallen on them to their own righteousness! Everyone had given tacit assent to a regime which had made an onslaught on traditional primal values in Ghanaian society. These were the very values on which any community depends. Truth had been made the handmaid of political expediency, traditional rulers and the Asafo had been downgraded and the family attacked through the young pioneers who had been encouraged to give testimony against their own family members, even their own parents if they were not obeying Nkrumah's initiatives. In attacking the glue that pulled the society together he had created a situation in which he could not continue to govern. Following intense individual and corporate prayers of repentance, God came to meet the people who were being blamed for it all with open arms as in the story of the Prodigal Son (Luke 15).

Faith as understanding the real nature of reality

Christ revealed himself in a cross in light. It was measured and the environment examined. Its brilliance and source was not to be accounted for within the World view of scientific materialism though William attempted to do so with the help of others. There were other revelations but this was unique because it did not depend on faith, it built up faith. It was available for anyone to see who went to the cell where it was- warders and prisoners alike. Everyone was 'awestruck'. The warder took off his cap. The detainees crowded into the cell to see it and it inspired great

thankfulness, joy and self confidence. The brilliance and beauty of the light was 'intense': often in Scripture intense light is a 'sign' of God's presence. Jesus face as John saw it in Revelation (Chapter I) was bright 'as the sun shining with all its force'. A 'blazing' torch passed between the severed creatures while Abraham was in a deep sleep showed God's presence there as he renewed his covenant with Abraham (Genesis 15.17). The intensity of these experiences was reflected in the intensity of the blazing torch, of the brilliance of the cross in light, in the shining of Jesus face. It was a 'sign' of renewal of the strength of the covenant relationship, of God's all encompassing love and of the hope he was giving for a bright future in a time of darkness and despair. The cross in light was public, a part of history as we have seen, and it was supernatural at the same time, the two together, just as we have seen in the stories of the *ekq* and Abosomdwowa. For Kodwo William this was the beginning of a series of revelations. His other visions were his own, shared with one other only, and he did not think of measuring them as he did the small but incredibly beautiful cross, as if they too could be 'scientific' fact. Life was taking on a new spiritual direction and a total meaning. Church leaders outside thought they perceived a contradiction in revelations being offered to sinners, but this is not a Biblical stand. Christ walked with Peter on the shores of the Lake of Galilee after he had denied him three times, he forgave the woman who poured ointment on his feet and went to the house of Zacchaeus. These were the people who loved him most because he had forgiven them most, and he was able to commission them. William and all of them in Block 20 had had, like the Greek jailer (Acts 16), a specially compelling opportunity, not afforded to all, to repent and be saved. They had had a special opportunity to transform or renew their faith and some of them determined not to forget. William himself prayed to see Christ's sufferings and was given a vision but it was not a vision to boast about. He wanted to keep from sin and thought that this would remind him in a time of temptation. With repentance came a renewal of faith, a new understanding, a new love, a new sense of community.

Faith as understanding

William's knowledge of his release came with the reading of the Word of God together with his observation of a mountain range cloud formation in the sky. This conjunction of the primal Biblical (with an angel bringing the news, a mysterious virgin birth, an absolute obedience without question, a prophecy of what is to come), and the primal in the natural primal world outside the prison happened the third time and William knew that he would be released the following day. The primal in Scripture met with the primal in Africa and there was as one would expect from the previous analyses, a very powerful effect: in fact a transformation, no less. It was a personal assurance that came from the word of God speaking to the heart; and from the concomitant cloud formation in the heavens where Hebrews and Akan believe Nyame/the Eternal one symbolically dwells. William looked up and out: away from the immediate environment of the fort and noticed the cloud formation. Abraham too looked up and saw the stars, as numberless as his descendants would be, as his God reassured him of his love and a glorious future.

Faith as community and trust

The ordinary means of grace open to all Christians also seemed to assume a new importance in the Ussher Fort. Christ made himself known to them all in the Eucharist. The wine and bread of the Eucharistic feast brought by the Catholic priest to those in the Catholic family of Faith¹³ was open to all to be present but not all could partake. Its message of peace, like that of Melchizedek's feast, was in contrast to the unexpressed fear of a military presence around them.¹⁴ The fact that the Accra priest was an ethnic Caucasian who didn't seem to like them particularly did not vitiate Christ's gift of universal forgiveness, peace and love. Through his imperfect messenger and through his body and blood Christ's self offering was remembered week by week and his people were thankful and grew in love for each

¹³ As the feast Melchizedek offered was only for Abram's household.

¹⁴ Melchizedek too came from a place of peace to minister peace to those who had just gained a victory over four kings in war.

other.¹⁵ The need of the folks in the Ussher Fort was to know that God cared about the shock of their disappearance, cut off from friends and family by their fellow countrymen, suddenly stigmatised when formerly honoured and that he forgave them and would enable them with his help to make a fresh start. The priest being the only outsider admitted to the Fort brought a care and extended a hope far beyond his own capabilities; and that, together with a wise Catholic refraining from the general and indiscriminating abuse, showed something of 'the mettle of the Catholic Church' to them all. . In telling the story William never asks for pity, or thinks of revenge. He is aware that the community stretches outside the walls of the prison. Yet the experiences they had gone through together were joint experiences of blessing, creating a fellowship so deep within the prison walls . In telling the story he never asks for pity, or thinks of revenge. that tears flowed when it was to be broken by William Kodwo's early release.

Mother

*Abusua aye nkonsonkonson: nkwa mu a, etoa mu; owuo mu a, etoa mu*the family is like a chain it holds strong in both life and death

Christ also revealed himself through his mother Mary. Yet she has a humble part, (as William's own mother had had, protecting him from witches), trying to see he takes the right course, remembering what he has to do when he himself forgets). William could not even remember that he had made a promise to Jesus mother, Mary! He forgot but 'She did not forget,' he said. *She* had shown him the time of his release; *she* made sure he was 'collected;' and the date on which he was received into the church, the feast of the annunciation, in which the angel Gabriel so clearly point *sensus plenior* beyond Mary to the coming of Christ, Mary is remembered hourly when William, in a panic over an attempted counter coup d'etat and possible repercussions on former detainees, takes to saying the rosary

¹⁵ The outsider brings a blessing which is recognised as special: so it happened with the *eko*, *Abgsomdwowa* and even with Nana Tutu Dadzie. Mabel herself, being a woman, was also an outsider in the MDCC leadership: among the 50 odd consecrated workers ministering at her Burial and Thanksgiving Service there was only one woman apart from Mabel there in body.

every hour. Yet it is not Mary who appears to him to tell him not to worry; it is Christ.

Father

Respect for his father had been a stable feature in William's life as with all his brothers. This meant that moving out from the church of his father had not been a decision taken lightly, flawed though he thought the Anglican communion to be. He doubted whether it was for the best and delayed going down to Cape Coast, so he had to rush at the last minute to inform his father and to receive his blessing. That blessing once given is to be passed on, as in Genesis, from Abraham to Isaac from Isaac to Jacob and from Jacob to Joseph and that is what William Kodwo too has done he received the blessing from his father Samuel who did not offer to follow him though. This acceptance of difference while not allowing it to affect relationships is a feature from traditional wisdom which needs to be part of denominational church life today both in families and between the churches. William Kodwo passes the blessing on, but not just to his eldest son or to all those who are in the Catholic communion with him, but to all his loved ones. That he should wish to do so is a sign of the love that must bind any community together.

Love: The blessing

William/Kodwo ends his letter by invoking a blessing 'on us all' on the community of his loved ones. Like the libation prayer it is inclusive of the spirit world and the existing family but unlike the libation prayer it goes beyond that. He says: 'Through Jesus Christ our Lord I invoke the blessing of God Almighty, on us all'. Here is the ending appropriate to the loving Christian son, father, uncle, grandfather and husband that William/Kodwo has by the grace of God (and perhaps in part by the special revelations in the Ussher Fort) become now (2005) and it is appropriate in the Fante context and in that of Hebrews that we also remember the ancestors as those who have preceded us in the race because without us they cannot be made perfect and without them we would not know where to turn or who we are..

Abusua aye nkons_onkons_on, nkwa mu a etoa mu: owua mu a, etoa mu/

The family is like a strong chain, it does not break in life, nor does it break in death

We have seen the value of family, the full possibility of miracles, the importance of the natural world, however it is viewed, the value of community both that of the past and the present and those to come, mutual respect and love, all these values from an African upbringing asserted in full force with the presence of Christ who gave himself and, like Melchizedek to Abraham, brings assurance of freedom in the land, of new life, of support and friendship. What then should we do?

Conclusion

A summary of the main points of the chapter is followed by a brief account of the oral literary genre of *amaneɛ*/stories told by oneself about one's past experiences since the last meeting, on the occasion of a re-union. This is followed by some background to Kodwo's experiences at and immediately after the fall of the First Republic. His own account follows. In the theological meditation *sensus plenior* we follow his victory over four difficulties in his Christian itinerary and his release is seen in two stages. Using *peshar* we have shown a need for repentance to start a new life in Christ. The virtues of humility, love and respect and the value of community are seen as the values needed for Fanteland today.

CHAPTER VI CONCLUSION

NSEM NYINAA NE NYAME

The foundation of everything is in God

If I rise on the wings of the dawn and if I settle on the far side of the sea,
even there your hand will guide me. Your right hand will hold me fast.
(Psalm 139 NIV)

Writing this dissertation has been a long process of discovery for me; discovery of new truths from Scripture, discovery of much more of the Fante world view through books, through the narrators of the texts and others. I have had the steadying experience of finding that an academic hypothesis (that of the affinity of primal world view between the Bible and the Fante), can be seen to be true; that Christ has been present in Fanteland since the beginning. I have also had the enriching experience of finding a methodology: using analogy to find that fuller meaning, *sensus plenior* can work; and that *peshet* is a helpful analogical method of finding relevance today. I have found the Fante proverbs to lighten the task sometimes homely, sometimes beautiful and always insightful. These have been very good experiences for me. The writing of a dissertation has also been a process of self-discovery. I have begun to think of my own assumptions and life-style and to ask God that I too, like all those in the stories, may have more and deeper experience of the Jesus Christ who can transform my ordinary human life both as an individual and through me in my own community, by his radiance and power.

What follows is a summary of the main points along the itinerary of discovery. The Holy Spirit has blown into the sails and the boat is now coming into harbour. At such a moment it is appropriate to ask whether the objectives of the voyage have been met. Have I succeeded in justifying the study? Have I contributed to establishing the truth of the postulate of affinity? Have I succeeded in seeing each text as an analogue of Genesis XIV in which by *sensus plenior* the presence of Christ can be affirmed as with Melchizedek in Hebrew

Chapter VII? Have I succeeded in seeing relevance for individual Fante and communities of Fante today using *peshet*? Have I thrown light from Scripture on the Fante narratives? Have the Fante narratives given an enriching and refreshing look from the primal world view at texts which have been much worked over by using historical-grammatical methods of exegesis, adding to the findings while in no way replacing them? These questions must be answered by the reader and by the members of the families. What follows is a summary of the fruit of the theological and ethical analyses for each individual story bearing the three points of affinity mentioned in Chapter II in mind. I will then attempt to view the whole itinerary of the Bosumefi and Anowa families to see if there are any patterns or even inconsistencies to be drawn out.

The points of affinity have been expanded a little as a result of the work that has been done on the five narratives since it was written. I have postulated an affinity of chronology and narrative; of ontology and interpretation and an affinity in ethical concerns as follows:

In Hebrews with the interpretation given of Melchizedek we have a writer who sees through a primal imagination the seen and the unseen worlds as all part of a whole; the importance of the senses is minimized and the idea that all meaningful statements must have observable statements to verify them is completely absurd from this viewpoint. Reality is not a matter of our senses though they have an integral place; neither is it a matter of logic; though there is a form of consistency, it is not necessarily logical. There is a great emphasis on the importance of those who have preceded us, the living, in the race of life and their help to us, as we help them to reach our goals by running the race well: in understanding the numinous, in obeying what has been revealed, and loving and respecting those in our communities in order to build them up.

The hunter: an ancestor who founded a community

Narrative number one is a narrative of the beginning of one of the archaic Akan clans from many centuries back and I have found it can be treated as an analogue of the story of Abraham at the time of the foundation of the nation of Israel. The key figure of Melchizedek seen as a precursor to Jesus in the priesthood is seen in the analogue to correspond to the bush cow in its saving role. As Melchizedek

was a God-send to Abraham so the bush cow was a God-send to the hunter and the response to this was deep gratitude. Both Melchizedek and the bush cow are seen as pre-figuring Christ. Though they are perceived, it is for a moment, after which they disappear again; they appear to have had at the moment of meeting a special spiritual blessing to bestow. Speculation about their nature is inevitable. Who or what exactly were they? How do they fit into our concept of the universe? These questions were in the minds of the church of the first century. The hunter 'went on his way rejoicing' and laid down rules for his descendants which would bind them to the bush cow in reverence and to himself in obedience always. The community that this set up on the basis of faith should be respectful and loving. In the same way in Hebrews it is the contact with Jesus which enables those who are in the race of life to run it well showing themselves worthy of their great ancestors who preceded them and of Jesus who is the greatest of them all. At this point it is possible to go beyond the affinities to see that Jesus also enjoins self sacrifice and this is the element which can transform our life and our communities. He said: 'Take up your cross and follow me.'(see Luke IX.23)

Tekyiwa: an ancestor who was the mother of many in the community

In the second narrative we have a story giving the sacred origin of the relationship between the two families of Bosumefi and Anowa at the time of the Asante wars. The story tells of the origin of the stool of the Anafo family of Anowa of which the Nsona became guardians. The story is also the basis of a claim to land. Again it seems natural to find an analogue for this in the story of Melchizedek, a spiritual ally of Abraham, who was already established in the land at the time of the war that Abraham had to fight to establish himself. Like Melchizedek of mysterious origin, Abosomdwowa comes from the sea, helps the clan and then disappears again without physical trace. His essence is spiritual and yet he is human too: such a strange character and constitution is the clearest example so far of the primal world view in which different categories of being (human and *abosom*) might not be considered mutually exclusive. In the same way Jesus, who was God's Son, took on human flesh, an even greater miracle, for Jesus is God himself. Abosomdwowa (like Melchizedek) leaves a spiritual blessing with a material outcome: in this case, of offspring and land and his

departure having (perhaps) freed the land from war also is not a passage into oblivion. Tekyiwa is one of us: an ancestor to be remembered because of her descent from the supernatural, the paradoxical and the strange Abosomdwowa. She, like the Hebrew ancestors in the race of life is an example of one who obeys what she has seen of the spiritual world and of Onyame from whom his servant came. By her obedience she obtained a blessing but there our analogue is incomplete. The Hebrew ancestors received nothing but suffering, by endurance and through the efforts of the living they will have their reward in heaven. Jesus whose kingdom 'is not of this world' could be asking the two clans to go back to their united origin, to settle the dispute about land amicably by agreement rather than by going to court, and to follow him in love and kindness to each other.

Nana Tutu Dadzie I: an ancestor who achieved much for the community

The third narrative is from a time at the beginning of the twentieth century when Northerners were used as personal servants by the Fante rulers. Yaw Saa, a Mamprusi was baptised Joseph, and an analogy with Joseph of Scripture springs to mind. We have however maintained the paradigm of Genesis XIV for this story of one who was personally known to his grand-daughter, still alive (2005) and aged 100 years. The point of the analogue with Melchizedek is the *Ahemaa's* spiritual stature as rulers, in their case, through the *abqsom* of Amanful and the ancestors who themselves get their powers from God: this makes them comparable to Melchizedek who was Priest of the most High God and King of Righteousness. It is that role which has some resonance with that of Melchizedek and enables us to see their authority and that of rulers of Amanful as similar to his. They show their protégée extraordinary generosity as Melchizedek did to Abraham and in this they play a role which befits those of standing in a community with its foundation in the spiritual world. Yaw Saa, later Nana Tutu Dadzie I, showed respect to his superiors, love for the family and the community, ability and hard work. All these qualities make him a worthy ancestor. As the first one who is named as a Christian among the members and spouses of the Bosumefi family, he had the opportunity of looking to Jesus himself, not of always receiving at the hand of others. Nevertheless even though he struggled to break traditions concerning rulers, these were not easily broken because of their foundation in a spiritual world of which it is not

clear that he became a part. He could have adopted, like his master, a more detached attitude to worldly power. Jesus said: 'My kingdom is not of this world.' (John XVIII.36)

Reverend Mabel Abraham: an ancestor who showed love for her community

The narrative of Mabel comes from the period shortly after the first coup d'etat that ended the first Republic of Ghana. She had a call to ministry. The main point of the analogue in the case of Osofo Mabel is the role of the two church leaders in calling her to the ministry. This was a ministry in the Army of the Cross of Christ, so she believed, and never gave up her belief that it was Christ's call and that he was directing every step. We see the Anglican priest starting her off on her new role as *Osofo* by telling her of the inspiration he had received, her overcoming the spiritual opposition to her call through prayer and fasting and the help only of her husband, and the confirmation of her call by Matapoly Akaboha II. The extraordinary activity which followed and continued for thirty three years is an evidence of the powerful working of the Holy Spirit through her and a reflection of the light of Christ that had been shown to her. The main focus of the story of her life is the love she had for her flock, for her family viewed as extended, and for outsiders, including me, the writer. That love was shown in her life, but most movingly in the silence with which she met her death. She 'did not open her mouth.(see Isaiah LIII.7)

An elder of the Bosumefi family an 'unfinished product': William Kodwo Abraham

William Kodwo's itinerary resembled that of his ancestor in Christ, Abraham, at the point where, in the Ussher Fort he began to overcome the obstacles in the way of his total commitment to Christ. The impetus for this came from the revelations of a mystic cross in light visible to all, both detainees and warders, on the wall of his friend's cell. This had a tremendous impact on all those in Block 20 who saw it and there was an atmosphere of earnest repentance 'like a monastery' in which all participated. It was then he began to overcome, like Abraham, the obstacles to the will of God in his life. He had overcome his prevarication and most of his intellectual doubts by the time he was assured of

the day of his release through a conjunction of the Scripture in Luke concerning the Annunciation with a 'mountain range' of clouds in the sky. When this conjunction happened for the third time he knew the Virgin Mary would see he was released the following day. He had promised her to join the Catholic Church if he were released to go back to lecturing. When the time came for him to do so at the last minute he overcame his qualms about his father's reactions (the third obstacle or 'king'), received his blessing and joined the Catholic Church. He continued lecturing at Legon and it was there he overcame his natural fear and anger which the drastic political changes had brought (the last obstacle). After a sabbatical year in the United States of America and the extension of his temporary residence permit, the President of Macalister College applied for a permanent residence permit for him to settle in the United States and so his freedom from the dangers involved in the change of regime after the coup d'etat of 1966 was completed. However his spiritual journey continues and is an inspiration to his families. This narrative is the clearest independent corroboration of the fact that entering into the Scripture and interweaving it with one's ancestral and personal narrative is an African means of understanding and appropriating it. This is what the dissertation had set out to do, but the guidelines sent Kodwo did not reveal this to him. The conclusion must be that this can be an amazing source of blessing as the Fante make the Scripture their own through identifying themselves as actors within one itinerary with Scripture. This is possible because of a primal world view which William has not found it necessary to discard with all the highly academic education that he has received in just those areas where it clashes most violently with the materialism of the verification principle and the rationalism of the German School.

Overview

There are 'supernatural' events and spirits in focus in three of these stories. Three mystic bearers of the gift of life: the *eko* led to water that was life for the dying; Abosomdwowa brought life through the stool for the families' rulers, descendants and guardians, while the Virgin Mary brought a new life of freedom from imprisonment and a fresh enterprise of seeking holiness. The narratives are *abakosem*: serious stories opening a door into the spiritual world so much greater than what sometimes seems, in the modern technological world, to present itself

as 'normal'. Nevertheless the spiritual world is perceived through all the narratives and their contexts as breaking through all the time, even as a part of everyday experience.

In the narratives of the *Ahemaa* and Matapoly in Chapter IV the paranormal is present but often hidden, as it were, in parentheses; hidden in the Asafohen's stool room, even more in the stool room of the ruler which is not even mentioned, and in the healing procedures and restoration which follow prayer and fasting in the MDCC. I have still chosen to interpret these two narratives positively as revealing the numinous presence of Christ often through daily 'ordinary' routines, on the assumption that since Christ is in everything every event or person can be interpreted in that light as evidencing his presence, though at times we struggle to see it. The three stories that start and end the small collection have an intensity of life which makes perceiving the author of life, the Triune God as present and active in them especially easy, as if God had chosen to be known in those ways.

Osofo Sam, who is a Superintendent Methodist Minister, started with the *eko*, describing it as the 'spirit and soul' of the clan because a spiritual interpretation is clear to him, (and through him to the writer) both as evidencing the presence of Christ in the *Ekona ebusua* from its beginning (*sensus plenior*); and as showing the Christian virtues needed to face the situation in Fanteland today by his grace and power (*peshor*). The mystic *eko*, spirit and soul of the clan, appears from the bush and vanishes again. The resonance with Melchizedek who appeared without ancestry and vanished again is there for those who have 'ears to hear'.¹ The lessons for the clan in the need for right judgement/*nyansa* in the leaders; for respect/*bubu* for that leadership in the rest of the clan members; and for a sense of community among themselves and hospitality to others/*do* are also there in the totem as it has been carved with a bird on top. From these insights, I have attempted to use the same interpretations for the four other stories of the research. I asked these questions of each:

¹ Revelation II.7,11,17,29; and III.6,13 &22

How does this story too resonate with that of Melchizedek, thus showing the mysterious presence of Christ?

How does the story show and help to instil the complementary virtues of discernment, obedience and love in the clan members and the Fante Church?

Perhaps as I am a non-Fante, some of the answers I found may seem unnecessarily complicated; yet for all the stories there was a positive answer to both questions. Usually the narrators themselves provided visual and oral clues to the central meaning of their stories by use of voice, expression and gesture. For the strange stool not made with hands and Abosomdwowa who comes from the ocean and vanishes without trace, the key to a mysterious presence was given by Kodwo Amissah, *ebusua panyin*, who emphasized that Abosomdwowa who brought it had **no** ancestry and **no** boat to cross the sea. For the story of Mabel the emphasis on her call had come from her (when earlier asked to give up because the pay of an MDCC *Osofo* was too small); and was re-emphasized by her elder son a year after her death. In spite of the bitterness caused by the suspected manner of her death, her only sister was still able to see beauty in the 'shepherding' of her 'sheep' *nguan mma* with the money she had. This, she supposed, was the cause of death because of the greed or desperate need of others. Another clue to the meaning of her death was the Akaboha's lament. He linked her life and death to the growth and felling, first of a single tree, and then by association with the ancestors, to the growth and subsequent felling of a whole forest. This powerful prophetic image also implied his personal 'fall' and the tragic and continuing disintegration of the Church he led.

William Kodwo emphasized the role of the Virgin Mary simply by humorously pointing out that *she* did not forget (while he did.) She, like his mother and father before, 'providentially' protected him, as he knew he had been protected, naturally and supernaturally, since his birth. (Of course, the Virgin Mary knew the end from the beginning and so had none of the anxiety his parents had experienced. The humour lay in the fact that he did not realise what had happened until afterwards when the crucial reading turned up again!). Kodwo too had this supernatural gift of foreknowledge which did not begin in Ussher Fort and which has often given him an unusual serenity throughout his life.

The interpretation of Tutu Dadzie's life had the laments of the women of the families as the first clue; and the affectionate way his successor to the title spoke of his being a 'good servant' was the second; while his name, 'Joseph', too provided an obvious Biblical blue-print for the role the *Ahemaa* expected him to play. Nevertheless it was more difficult for me to see Christ's extraordinary presence in this story in the convincing way it comes through in the other four stories; perhaps because the biography as a genre has been adopted from Western sources and has its origin in the written word, (though now an indigenous form at funerals) and concentrates on facts rather than on the meanings to which the facts open the door. The educated Fante who gave information (as opposed to those who gave the name Joseph when he was baptised or who mourned the passing of the *fiekessim*) were very aware of the sort of factual detailed prose discourse normally required for history in Western style, as opposed to the *abakosem* of the Fante.

In comparison with interpreting the theology, I found the ethos suggested by the narratives was easier to unravel. Again it was *Osofo* Sam who set the agenda suggesting the three virtues of discernment (from the bird), of obedience or respect (crucial in the narration which he demonstrated rather than spoke of), and love for others including the outsider (from the bush cow's generosity). Since these are very close to the virtues which the commentators have seen in the concept of 'faith' in Hebrews, this made tying the two together much easier. The three traditional Fante virtues also relate quite closely to the three common features of the African World View listed by Turner; which encouraged me that *Osofo* Sam and I were on a well-beaten track in finding a real and not imagined affinity in these elements of the Scriptural world view and that of the Fante as seen in their narratives. The three virtues have universality, for their opposites: lying, pride, and greed appear in the medieval list of the seven deadly sins. They also correspond to the head (intellect), the heart (emotions), and the hand (action), all of which have to be sanctified through the presence of Christ and committed to his service. So I identified the gentleness of the hunter who followed instead of pursuing, of Tekyiwa who followed her husband leaving many of her children behind in devotion to the amazing stool; of Nana in serving the *Ahemaa*; of Mabel in following the call and submitting to Matapoly; and of

William Kodwo in asking his father before joining the Catholic Church. All these could say, like Paul, of the little light they had received: 'I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision.' (Acts XXVI. 19). The action which was to demonstrate the effect of the presence of the *Logos* in the obedience of the ancestors, and of Kodwo, to the illumination received was in following, in going, in serving, in training, and in joining in that order and this was straightforward. It was more difficult to identify the intellectual challenges faced. This seemed very simple for Mabel and for Kodwo, but did not seem to apply well to the hunter and to Tekyiwa; for Nana too, it was quite complex to reconstruct his intellectual dilemmas. There were other virtues which could have been drawn out from the material, the most obvious being hard-work which is clearly shown in the two biographies (in Chapter IV); but this virtue is extolled in the *anansesem* (because Ananse the spider-man is so lazy) rather than in the *abakosem*. When the task was finished and the three virtues were seen in each narrative, I was not sure whether I had imposed *Osofo* Sam's views about three of the Fante cardinal virtues on the material; or whether the themes had emerged from the material because they were already there. For this, the readers must make up their own minds.

Finally one may look to see if there are unique features separating the stories from each other, apart from the obvious one of genre, which has been the criterion for dividing them into three Chapters: myth (Chapter III) biography (Chapter IV) and personal account (Chapter V); and historical context which is unique to each. Perhaps the way the mysterious presence of Christ is perceived has differed from generation to generation, as in the Bible. Perhaps the interpretation of how the virtues are to be clothed in action has also changed with time, especially with the impact of Christianity. With the first story, the presence of Christ as Nyame Nyansaboa/wise helper is found when close to nature. Christ is seen as *ekɔ* in the 'bush', by the river, as it were behind the trees, far away, and yet very bright and clear: a light to be followed. The consequence of following that light is the establishment of a covenant between an ancestor and one group of animals of which the totem is the symbol. In the second the eternal *Logos* is felt to be beyond the sea which, though inhospitable, is calmed by the one who comes from Nyame the Sky God. The consequences of total obedience to the strange being of this epiphany are two. The first is that

the female establishes a covenant relationship between the two families, her own and that of her husband; the mystic stool being its emblem and power centre. The *Ekona* family dynasty to be enstooled on it is founded at the same time. In the third, the Eternal One seems to have been domesticated. Her/his presence is recognised in the *Ahemfie* where the Methodist Society meet, the stool room of the *Asafo*, and powerfully in the unmentioned stool room of the lineage of the Ahene of Amanful.² Only in death and in the graveyard at Bakaano is there an open indication of the numinous presence of Christ outside four walls; and this has, no doubt, an engraved message referring to the resurrection of the dead on it.

However this impression of domestication is a superficial one. Examine the content of the stool-rooms and ask for the meaning of the objects there and their vital contact with the spiritual world and with nature will be seen in their narratives. In the stool room of the *Asafo* Company Number 7 there are at least two *abosom*, in addition to stools, cannon balls and drums, brought from the sea, by the last *Okomfo* to serve the Company. There is also a whale. What is in the stool room of the Amanful State, or even its location, is not known to me. The consequence of the power of the objects in a stool-room to relate to the complex spiritual world of the Fante can be seen in the authority of the *Ahemaa* who gave their servant a name, lifted him up to be first *Asafohen* and then headman. The permanent result of that empowerment to be seen today was the building of some seven houses to replace what the foreigners had destroyed; one was at Nkwantadu to be occupied by his wife Bosumefi, his three daughters by her and their descendants. Another building that was eventually erected as a result (at least in part) of his efforts was the Methodist Church of Amanful. There as you enter you can see and hear the beating of the waves behind you, you can see the shore from which the *abosom* at the post were brought, the post itself is within a stone's throw, as are the broken down remains of one of Joseph Herman Dadzie's mansions, soon to be re-built.

In the fourth story the numinous presence of the Triune God is revealed in the Cathedral where the prophecy was given; then this presence is evident at

² It is not mentioned but its importance can be inferred from everything that has been written, based upon previous research and the present research, on the *Ekona*. In the same way where many foreign visitors are expected at *Afahye* there is no mention of any stool at all.

Mozano/Holy City of prayer and fasting. Then there is an explosion of activity. Mabel goes in the presence and power of Christ to fourteen stations in Fanteland and beyond, eventually returning to Mozano where the Eternal Nyame reveals love through Mabel in many ways. I have chosen to focus on her silence before her death; very different from the death of others in the family who have denounced witches when they died. Finally, Christ is found in the Ussher Fort prison in a mystic cross of light, a reading and a view of the Sky (Nyame). Then again at the bungalow at Legon, a dove was seen with the inscription against the window and the sky beyond it: 'Prepare to receive the Holy Spirit'. So from the earliest symbol of the bird on the Eko's head we come to the Christian symbol of the dove: bringer of peace, bringer of power, bringer of love. As in the Bible there is also an animal (the snake) symbolising the evil that destroyed the First Republic from within and without, leaving its trail of anger and despair which is seen to depart in a waking vision, but which may come again as Satan departed from Christ yet entered into Judas Iscariot who betrayed him. The dove is only one way in which the last narrative echoes the first two. The huge man from the sky echoes Abosomdwowa and his comforting words are Biblical 'I will never leave you' (Hebrews XIII.5) The author to the Hebrews could exclaim how great Melchizedek was, but his purpose was not to exalt Melchizedek but Christ, to whom he was the precursor and to whom he pointed as an early John the Baptist.

We too as followers of Christ have the same function; we lift up others in order to point to him, for from him, to him and in him are all things and he is 'the same yesterday and today and forever.' (Hebrews XIII.8).

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APPENDICES

I Language:

Glossary of Fante terms; Directory of Fante Place names and proper names;
Heavenly language of the MDCC

II Maps and Diagrams:

1. Mabel's Journeys and the Fante Area to show migration: 2 the Gulf of
Guinea, East and West of Cape Coast 3 The family heartland-place of
origin. 4 Nkwantadu House

III Archival Material

Government:

Native Customary Law and Succession to Property: various letters-concerning
'fetish', slavery and the Anglican Cathedral's connection with the government

Church:

Baptismal, Marriage and Death records

Family:

Burial and Thanksgiving Service for the late Rev. Mabel Abraham, aged 61, years at the Musama Disco Christo Church General Head Office, Friday 17th May 2002-Sunday 19th May 2002.

IV Photographs

Flags; *Afahye* joint service; Samuel Abraham and Effie, Kodwo Abraham his wife and fourth son; Mabel Abraham on right, Anowa clan with totem

V Questionnaires and Guidelines for students and family members

VI Family trees 1-4

VII Answers to questionnaires and guidelines for family members

1 Nanabanyin

APPENDIX I

LANGUAGE

Glossary of Fante terms

Directory of Fante place names and proper names

Heavenly language of the MDCC

GLOSSARY

The Alphabetical order of the Glossary and the Directory is that of the stem and not of the prefixes (which may be singular a- o- plural m-n- before the stem and are shown here, but not in the main work, by means of the hyphen). Suffixes are not indicated. Tone is marked only if necessary to distinguish meaning in context.

Benkumhen now a courtesy title but formerly an important position as chief in charge of those on the left flank of the army

o-bosom
pl abosom a being that was not born of human parentage with power to help or harm humans

A-bra nubility rites, these used to take place when a girl underwent her first period but have largely been discontinued in the *Bosomefi-Anowa* family, though there may be some celebration at *Abura* Usually mashed yam and egg will be provided, but the lengthy and public parts of the ceremony have been dropped as interfering with schooling.

Abusua

Pl mbusua people linked together through the maternal line by having the same *mogya* (blood) those attached to such a group by association- marriage, adoption, fostering, serving.

Fiekessim great house, mansion. The one in which *Bosomefi Anowa, Samho and Yeyiwa* were born (probably) was said to have seventy or more people living in it.

O-fie panyin

Pl m-fie m-panyinfo House head/s: they are usually the oldest person among the clan owning the house, male or female. Sometimes suitability may be taken into consideration: for example respect due to education intelligence or financial standing with people in the house through him/her.

Fufu an Akan dish prepared by pounding boiled yam or cassava and plantain with a long stick

o-gwa

pl ngwa

stool/s there are ordinary stools for sitting on in the house but special ones are associated with the ancestors, as the ones on which they sat in life-time. Communication with the ancestors is by means of calling them while pouring libation in their presence. They can, it is said, be heard to whisper. They also need food as their owners did in life and they are fed with *oto* mashed yam. Failure to meet their requirements will meet with some punishment such as death, lack of crops and fertility and lack of success in business.

Gwa sika Kofi the golden stool of the *Asante* was said to have been conjured from heaven by *Okomfo Anokye*

o-hen

pl a-hem/fo chief/s

a-kom possession, a dance that induces possession by spirits

o-komfo the priest of a shrine or grove who has been called by the spirit of the place or object, has been trained, and in virtue of this is able to communicate with spirits of all kinds

kra the part of the human being that comes from God the creator and returns to him on the dissolution of the body.

a-kuraa village

o-man people coming under one chief

o-manhen paramount chief: e.g. of *Oguaa* has a number of subchiefs under him

Mogyia blood (the physical red liquid) is also used to refer to the spiritual link between members of the same *abusua* (family, clan) through the mother and the mother's ancestral line. It is the basis of the Akan concept of family.

Nana Title of respect for the elderly

Pl Nananom

(LHL) ancestors, or the respected elders of the clan, dead or alive

Nananom

(LLH) grandchildren

nkrabea destiny

nsa benkum the left hand (as the one used when going to private) is thought of unclean. Its use is therefore prohibited when serving, shaking hands or pointing. To use it for any of these things will need a special permission or excuse or else will be regarded as an insult.

O-man people coming under one chief or head of state

panyin adj older

o-panyin.

Pl. m-panyinfo

elder/s, those who are either older in years, or who by virtue of experience, education and intelligence are thought to be worthy to join the elderly in deliberations concerning the policy and direction the clan should take, to adjudicate on disputes concerning land and personal relations, and to represent the interests of the clan in the wider *abusua* (family) and the *oman* (community)

o-ponko dwinso lit. 'horse's urine' - a red bead put into the pot for divination purposes. If the diviner's spoon picked it out then it meant sorrow for the one enquiring from the abosom' used in concoctions for the training of an *Okomfo*

o-sofo minister, in the Christian church

Supi title for the head of the *Asafo* Company.

N-toro the spiritual inheritance and group membership from the father; the character is inherited through this and its

existence is marked by the observance of taboos particularly in eating.

Sa war

O-sabarima warrior

A-safo group of warriors organized by the *Supi* and the *Tufuhen*

Saman the re- appearance/reality of a dead person

A-samando dwelling place of the departed ancestors, thought of as being similar to this world but yet spiritual.

a-samanpow bush of ghosts

n-samanfo ancestors or the dead

oso etie a listening ear (obedient heart)

suman charm or amulet worn in profusion by an *Okomfo*

a-ttaa (h) suffix to day name indicating that the individual is a twin:
e.g. *AmaAttah* twin born on Saturday

Pl. Mmoatia dwarves or fairies, they are mischievous spirits who inhabit the forest. Their feet point backwards.

Mpaebo literally 'prayer', also a proper name for a gathering of Christians where the main purpose is to pray for individual needs

Pl Ntaafo twins

Poma lit. stick. The standard which an *abusua* have, relating them to the seven clan system of the Akan and representing their spiritual and practical unity. See photo of the *Kona* clan at *Abaka*.

Tufuhen in charge of all the *Asafo* companies through their *Supi* and responsible to the *Omanhen*

- Afahye* festival for the seventy- seven *abosom* of *Oguaa* which takes the form of two ritual cycles. The purpose of the first was to cause the *abosom NanaFosu* (the spirit which is contacted through a stone at the bottom of the lagoon) to give a plentiful harvest of fish in the year to come. The vigil with the dancing of *Akom* (possession dancing) is followed the next day by slaughtering a sheep, casting a concoction into the lagoon, and pulling up the tree marking the spot where *NanaFosu's* stone is, in the presence of the *Omanhen* and the assembled chiefs. This completes the first cycle of rituals. After that fishing in the lagoon can recommence. The sacrifice of a cow at *Papratem* to the seventy seven *abosom* of *Oguaa* is for the cleansing of the *oman* (people) and follows a similar pattern.
- Amanful* The area between the present site of Ghana National College and the sea is all under the chieftaincy of *Amanful*
- Apiewosika* part of *Asebo*
- Asebo/u* A town not far south of *Abaka* (see map) with a similar story of origin from the sea to the one told here and stories of a giant who was a former chief there. (Story in a primary reader.)
- Berekum* town in Brong-Ahafo
- Bosumefi* coming from the *abosom* (with an extra 'e' this could be from the house of the god, either as a child born to a person resident at the shrine or more likely one who has stayed there before conception or in pregnancy to ask the *abosom* for the blessings of childbirth and child character, or easy child-birth.
- Burutu* an island in the middle of the Niger, rich in palm trees
- Dunkwa* The name of the *abosom* of the area whose shrine is in the chief town-*Abura Dunkwa*
- Ekow* boy born on Thursday
- Fante* The sub-group of Akan that migrated from the South Sudan as far as the coast through *Techiman* and *Mankessim* many of whom became fishermen; there may have been many movements of these people along the coast from the time of their arrival there; even as the fishermen today migrate in search of the best fishing grounds. (see Map number 2).
- M-fantse* The dialect of the Akan language spoken by the *Fante* people

<i>Nsona</i>	One of the seven clans of the Akan. The emblem is the pied crow.
<i>Obohen</i>	a town North West of <i>Abaka</i>
<i>Oguaa</i>	Cape Coast-the traditional <i>Fante</i> name
<i>Onyame, Nyame</i>	Creator God (no plural possible) the smaller spirits are 'his' sons and daughters
<i>Papratem</i>	the tree and the enclosed area under it through which the seventy seven <i>abosom</i> of <i>Oguaa</i> can be contacted and where the annual sacrifice of a cow on behalf of the whole community is made by the <i>Omanhen's abrafo</i>
<i>Philip Quaque</i>	first black Anglican priest on the coast of West Africa
<i>Quansah Sarah</i>	<i>the other baptismal names of Bosumefi</i>
<i>Samho</i>	sister to <i>Bosumefi, Anowa and Yeyiwa</i>
<i>Warri</i>	a town in the South of Iboland, Nigeria.
<i>Yeyiwa</i>	sister to <i>Bosumefi Anowa and Samho</i>

HEAVENLY LANGUAGE OF THE MOSANO DISCO CHRISTO CHURCH

Akaboha-	King of Kings the title for the leader of the church who inherits through paternal line from his father. There have been three
Akatitibi	title of the Akboha's wife retained as long as she lives and then inherited by the next Akaboha's wife.
Jemisimam	heavenly name of the church founder
Mosano Disco Christo Church-	The army of the Cross of Christ
Mozano	The headquarters of the church, north of Agona Eshiem, set up by the Akaboha I after the second migration
Nathalomoa Band	Group for women concerned with works of charity.

- O-komfo Anokye* the Okomfo who is believed to have master minded the Asante confederacy and who called down the Golden Stool *Gwa sika Kofi* from heaven to be its soul. He had many magic powers
- Kona* One of the seven clans of the Akan. The emblem is a bush cow with a small pied bird on its head
- Mina Kokode* *Bosomefi*'s daughter
- Kwesi Awotwe* *Mina kokode* 's eighth son, now *Ankobe Mensah*
- Kweku* boy born on Wednesday
- Nana Abakabroni* this spirit is contacted through a wooden carving of a whiteman in military uniform
- Nana Fosu* the *abosom* or spirit whose contact stone lies at the bottom of the *Fosu* lagoon, and who gives fish both in the lagoon and in the sea.
- Nana Tabir* This spirit is contacted through the stone in the castle. It is the power that defeated (with others) the white man and sent him packing out of the God given land of Ghana. This defeat is re-enacted in dance twice at each *Afahye* during the vigils
- Nana Tekyiwa* The daughter of *Abosomdwowa* who came from *Komenda* or *Akatekyiwa* to *Idan* with the mystic stool. She had twenty seven children.
- Nana Tutu Dadzie I* The title taken by *Yaw Abaka Saa*, alias *Joseph Dadzie* on assumption of the role of headman of *Amanful*.
- Nana Tutu Dadzie II* The successor to *Nana Tutu Dadzie I* of the line of *Aba Egyirba* (Hannah Martin)
- Nana Tutu Dadzie III* One of two claimants to the stool of *Amanful* and an important source for information about *Nana Tutu Dadzie I*.
- Nkwantadu* The crossroads: the white storey building at the crossroads built by *Joseph Dadzie*, and the area around it, part of *Amanful*

DIRECTORY OF PLACES AND PROPER NAMES

- Abaka* see map 3 This is the town, under *Abura Dunkwa* as paramountcy, where the *abusua panyin*, *Kojo Amisah* (John Hope) lives. It is about a Kilometre from *Edumfa*.
- Abam Kofi* the *abosom* (spirit) that gives twins
- Abosomdwowa* the mystic ancestor of the clan who came from the sea.
- Abusua* those primarily descended through uterine line from one founding mother, but may include those who have become attached through marriage primarily, but also through service, residence, adoption or fostering
- Afado* A clan laying claim to the stool of *Amanful*

HEAVENLY LANGUAGE OF THE MOSANO DISCO CHRISTO CHURCH

- Akaboha-** King of Kings the title for the leader of the church who inherits through paternal line from his father. There have been three
- Akatitibi** title of the Akboha's wife retained as long as she lives and then inherited by the next Akaboha's wife.
- Jemisimam** heavenly name of the church founder
- Mosano Disco Christo Church-** The army of the Cross of Christ
- Mozano** The headquarters of the church, north of Agona Eshiem, set up by the Akaboha I after the second migration
- Nathalomoa Band** Group for women concerned with works of charity.

APPENDIX II

MAPS AND DIAGRAMS

Mabel's journey and the Fante area to show migration.

The Gulf of Guinea, East and West of Cape Coast.

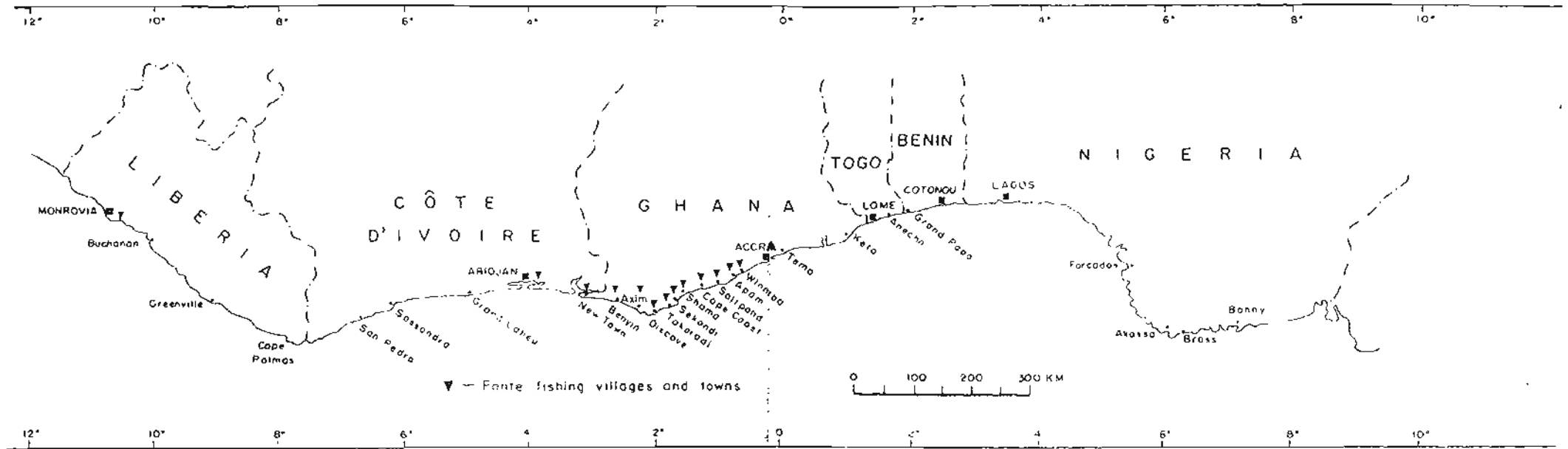
The family heartland – place of origin.

Nkwantadu's House.

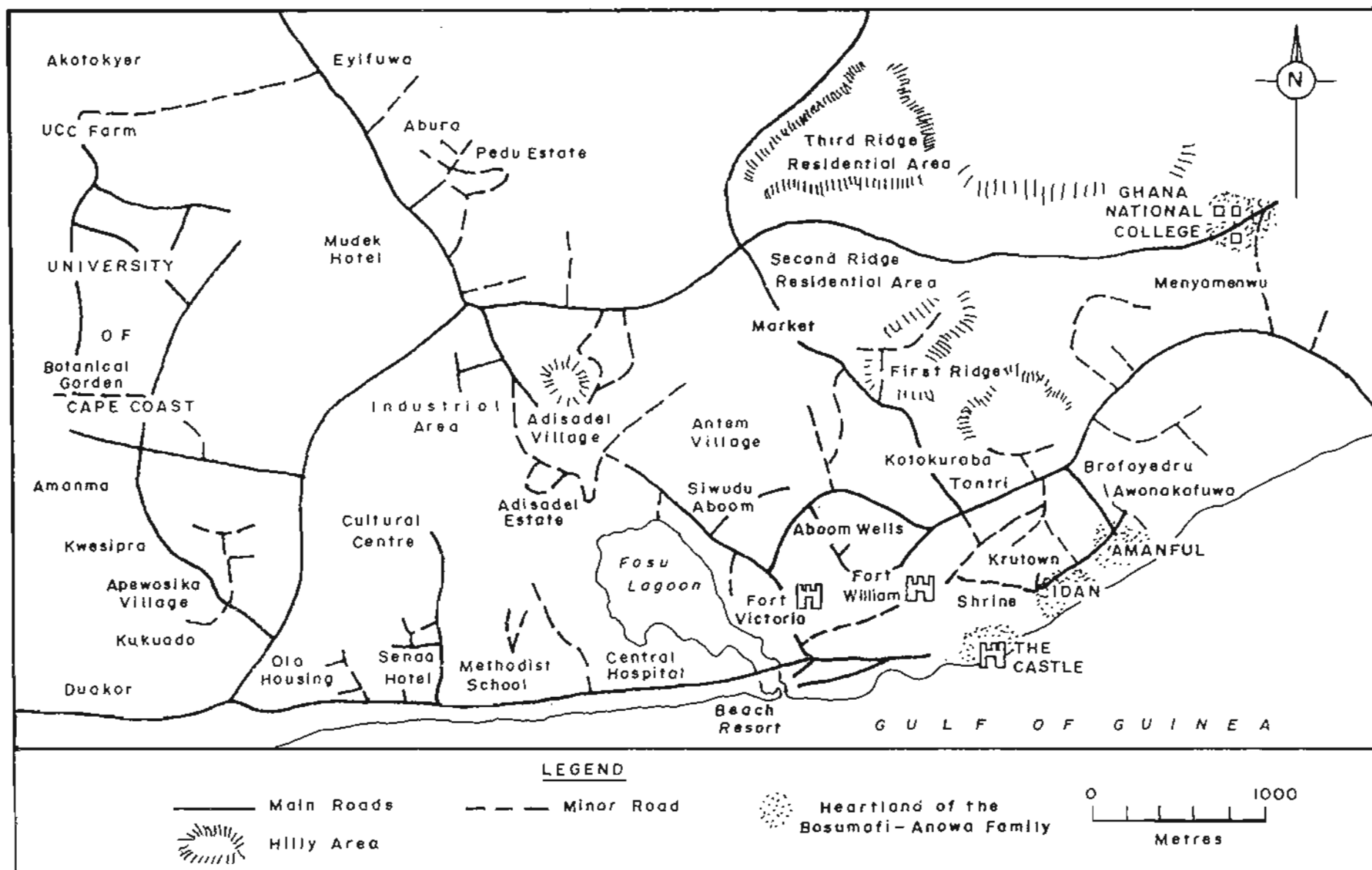
APPENDIX III. STATIONS WHERE OSOFO MABEL WORKED, 1969-2002



APPENDIX II : MIGRATION OF FANTE FISHERMEN ALONG THE WEST AFRICAN COAST



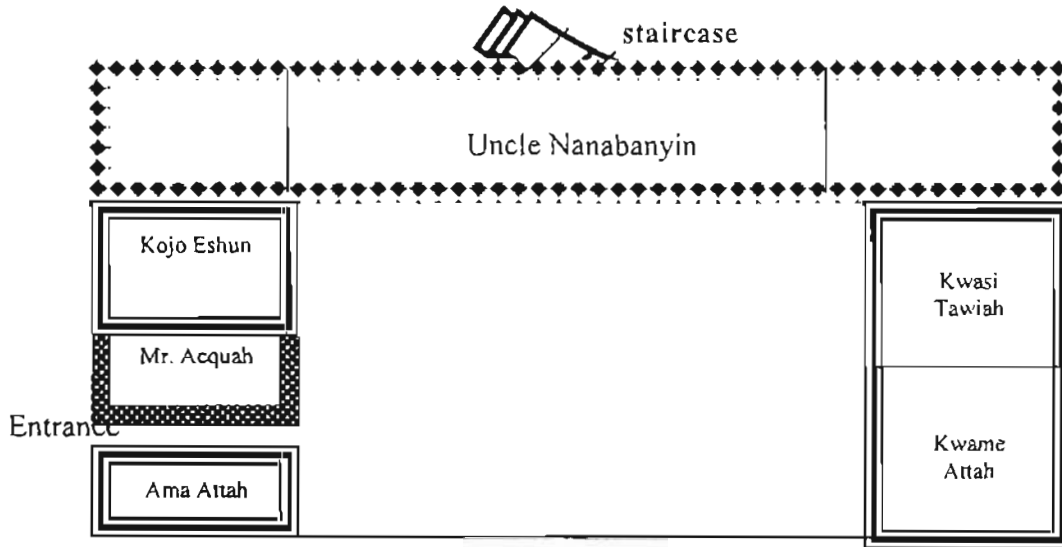
APPENDIX VII MAP OF OGUA A SHOWING AMANFUL, IDAN AND NKWANTADU,
THE HEARTLAND OF THE BOSUMAFI-ANOWA FAMILY.



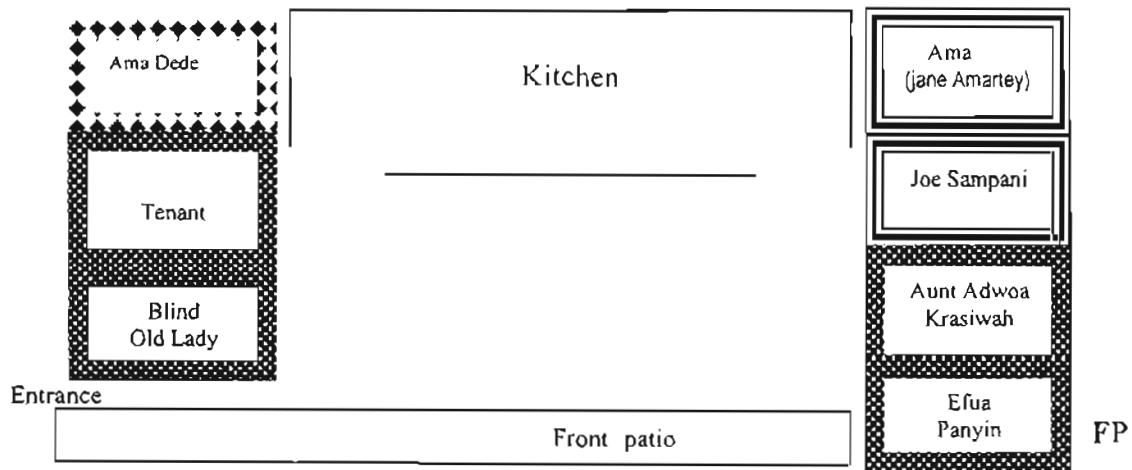
SOURCE: GHANA TOURIST BOARD CAPE COAST.

Nkwantadu family house

Upstairs



Ground floor



Araba



Ama Kessie (Fanny Dadzie)
 Ama Dede (Marian Dadzie)
 Abakoko (Anna Dadzie)

APPENDIX III

ARCHIVAL MATERIAL

Government – Native Customary Law and Succession to property

Various letters concerning “fetish”, slavery and the Anglican
Cathedral’s connection with the government.

Church: Baptismal, marriage and death records.

Family: Burial and Thanksgiving Service for the later Rev. Mabel
Abraham aged 61 years at the Musama Disco Christo Church General
Head Office, Friday 17th May 2002 – Sunday 19th May 2002.

Division of.....

Asaba

NATIVE CUSTOMARY LAW

OF

SUCCESSION TO PROPERTY

Other than Stool Property.

Name of Division.

1. Real Property (*i.e.* immoveable).

(a) *Acquired.*

1. To whom is the property held to descend ?
2. Failing him, who is the next heir ?
3. Failing him, state *in detail* how the property descends ; specifying in their order the heirs who might succeed.
4. If the deceased was a female, what is the order of succession ?

(b) *Inherited.*

1. To whom is the property held to descend ?
2. Failing him, who is the next heir ?
3. Failing him, state *in detail* how the property descends ; specifying in their order the heirs who might succeed.
4. If the deceased was a female, what is the order of succession ?

(Answers to be written on this page.)

- 1 Nephew or niece
- 2 Brother, sister or Cousin
- 3 Mother, Father Mother's sister
- 4 Her children, sister, Brother or Mother, Nephew or Niece

- 1 Brother sister Nephew or Niece
- 2 Cousin or Mother
- 3 The Family then appoints one who is next of Kin to succeed
- 4 Her children, sister, Brother or Mother Nephew or Niece

II. Personal Property (*i.e.* moveable).

(a) *Acquired.*

1. To whom is the property held to descend ?
2. Failing him, who is the next successor ?
3. Failing him, state *in detail* how the property descends ; specifying in their order the persons who might succeed.
4. If the deceased was a female, what is the order of succession ?

(b) *Inherited.*

1. To whom is the property held to descend ?
2. Failing him, who is the next successor ?
3. Failing him, state *in detail* how the property descends ; specifying in their order the persons who might succeed.
4. If the deceased was a female, what is the order of succession ?

- 1 Nephew or Niece
- 2 Brother or Sister
- 3 Mother, uncle, Cousin

4 Her children or Mother, Nephew or Niece

- 1 Nephew or Niece
- 2 Brother or Sister
- 3 Mother, uncle, Cousin

4 Her children Nephew or Niece

III Generally.

1. Can a woman inherit a man's property and *vice versa* ?
2. What rights has the village or tribal community over the property of the deceased ?
3. What are (a) the rights and (b) the duties of an heir ?
4. What are the liabilities of an heir with respect to the debts of the deceased ?
5. Out of what portion of the estate are debts paid ?
6. What property may a person dispose of (a) by Will or (b) by Gift *mortis causa* ?
7. Give any further information of interest.
8. State your authority for the answers given to the above questions.

1 Yes, as relatives

2 Where the deceased has no living relations the property becomes the owner of the family of the deceased in the Village who performed the funeral Custom's

3 His rights are those he is treated respectfully as such, and he can represent the deceased in all things
His duties are to discharge the duties the deceased left unfinished and conduct his business etc.

4 The heir pays all liabilities which he had notice thereof during the funeral Custom, by way of receiving notification drink

5 Acquired real and personal properties

6 Acquired real

8 According to native Customary law and institution

IASA 4

APPLICATION TO DRUM, ETC., UNDER THE CRIMINAL CODE
THE POLICE FORCE ORDINANCE, NATIVE CUSTOMS ORDINANCE
ETC., OR TO DISPLAY TRIBAL FLAGS OR EMBLEMS

No. 7 Amanful Asafo Company
No.

1. Kwaw Mensah, Supt of No. 7 Asafo Company
.....
General Contractor

- (1) Occupation of applicant (1) apply to
- (2) Nature of application. be allowed to (2) Perform Asafo Company display with
Flags, Dablans & Dancing Amanful Company Post
- (3) Place at (3)
from 7. a.m. to 6.30 p.m. from the
September, 1967 Observing the
- (4) Object of application yearly Burn-fire Festival of the Asafo Company and
feeding and bathing the Asafo Company "god".
(Burn-fire - 28/8/67)

Police Officer's remarks:-

Police Officer's Remarks:

Police are unable to
recommend this application.

Kwaw Mensah ^{his} _{Matic}

Signature of applicant or person
on his behalf.

Countersigned

.....
Paramount Chief.

..... Granted, as
from

.....
Government Agent

[Signature]
.....
Police Officer

Note:- Firing is ~~not~~ to be allowed, and permission to drum is to be
limited to the premises of the applicant.

GPD/WS9096/5000/9-50

fma

Witness & witness
to Matic.
Koppanyankallife
Secretary,
Matic.

Received 19 8 1926

T W I F U,
10TH AUGUST, 1926.

Registered No. 1059 Case No. A.47/08

THE FOSO AND BADUWA I. FETISHES.

FOSO. This Fetish is called "ANHWIRE" (not losing) and is said to act as a guardian Angel over FOSO village; it looks after the welfare of the vantage and makes the inhabitants rich. I do not think that this fetish has any other function and certainly has no bad influence over the people.

BADUWA I. This fetish is called "Gyemi" (Save me) It arose during the influenza epidemic of 1918 and is brought into being by a mixture of water and certain native herbs-it is used both as a medicine and as a lotion besides possessing phalasmic powers. There are three functions:-

- (a) If some of the "fetish" is put into a bottle and placed in a Cocoa farm, the fetish is said to assure a good crop of Cocoa. With regard to this function I should think that it is akin to the "Anhwire" fetish of FOSO.
- (b) The fetish mixture is used as it were, for baptising children, who then become immune from sickness. Women in travail are washed with it and are said to bring forth immediately; sores and abrasions are healed. A girl of BADUWA I. village came forward and showed me her leg which she said had been cured by the fetish (There certainly was a scar on her leg which suggested a quite recently healed wound). In the sacred-grove people bathe in the fetish; the men, if they have no shame, are naked, but the women never strip. While this takes place people stand round singing, but there is no dancing.
- (c) It is also taken as a drink. THOMAS KOFIE informed me that he was sick at ATONSU and sent for some of this "fetish". On its arrival and on drinking it, he felt very much better and soon recovered.

2. It is a well known fetish throughout the TWIFU Division. Both the Ohene of MORKWA and the Omanhene's sister have visited BADUWA I. in order to receive the benefits therefrom.

3. The people of BADUWA I. strongly deny that their "fetish" has anything in common with evil spirits or that it has power to drive out devils from witches.

THE DISTRICT COMMISSIONER,
CAPE COAST.

4. The fetish priests are the Odzime of BADUWA.I.,
Kobina Senku, and Kwamin Atiban.

5. I have made various inquiries and can find no
evidence that this fetish is having a bad influence on the
people, and should think that the presence of some of the
élite of the division would suggest that there was nothing
devilish in either the procedure or the influence. If
healing is accelerated, I should imagine the this would be
due rather to the faith in than the properties of the fetish.

Charles Jones

ASST. DISTRICT COMMISSIONER.

To
30th August 1894

His Excellency the Governor
Sir Frederick Gordon Guggisberg
K.C.B. K.C.M.G. Grand Commander in
Chief of the Gold Coast Colony.

It may please your Excellency,

I beg most respectfully to put this matter before your notice that since the time you stopped our Native Doctor that they should not use bad medicines as Kweku, Kwesi, Whemusun, Kondey, Inframma, Abrewa, etc. to charm any man in the District of the Gold Coast Colony, and also a regulations has been passed already that none one must use all this medicines in any part of the Gold Coast Colony. since last year. A certain man at Effutu 9½ miles from Cape Coast to there, is using the same medicine just to charm people for claiming unlawful money from them. The name of the Native Doctor who is doing all this cruelties Nebuchad-eyah Aikins. He says that you have granted him some licence with amount paid by him to use the charms for any Village. The wisdom of providing adequate regulation not to use a medicine like that in our Gold Coast is this, Illiterate men can poison any man without a mercy, even White Doctors from England who

P. T. O

has been pledged that he cannot use a person without unlawful reason, they use to do or manage unlawful poison to many people. For a man to use a Native medicine to charm people is not good either it is very dangerously. I beg to call your attention to trace all these cruelties from the time of Kanam Deathers God in the record of Commission Kruikshank, it is very bad for any Native Doctor to charge any body that is a devil whilst he cannot get a good proxy to identify it in court of investigation. also if any Native Doctor tells you that you are devil, you cannot be Holy, even your ancestors cannot get a good marry; sometime it induce people to commit a suicide. it is of no use to stay in this world. I am wonder how this man obtain his power to do all this cruelties; and also the man is making a money with this thing. sometime he received £ 50 to £ 60 a day; because if any body tell you that some devil will kill you today, you must spend all money in hand to defend ^{your} self out from danger whilst it is not true the threatment. This Native Doctor skins rendered to a certain married women is very bad, even in our Native law; 13 good strong men hold her, one on her neck, 3 men on her leg, 3 men on her other leg, 6 men also hold her hands, the woman issue (urethra) is opened on public for any man to look inside is

very bad, during the time they started
to do all this cruelties she cried
bitterly that they must left her
because is not a devil. the man who
is a Native Doctor told the people that
13 men must hold her strong until
he put some medicine in her urethra;
He did not bring anything from the
woman which it will show that the woman
is a devil, so all these cruelties made
the woman husband cried very hard
with her sons & daughters. Atkins revealed
8 good men & woman that they are devils
without any proof; first, he hypnotised
a certain woman with some ~~charms~~^{charms} x
but if the woman see your face and
she produce some signs to the men ~~and~~ then
you ought to be charged that you are a devil;
the party ought to fine £60.0 to £50.0 on
the condition that you are a devil; also
you must be loosen every clothe out
from you with naked until every
body see your private in the public
it is very disgrace and shameful for
any Christian to look all these things;
but Detectives who will go for this man
must use ordinary suit instead of
police suit to go to Effutu for general
inspection; first they must trace
out Kofi Jaywia for particular details
about that man Atkins; how he
managed his wife during the time he
produce his wife that is a devil.
and so money money that man has

P. T. O

claimed for his evil medicines, through
this craft they will get chance to
trace the man with his medicines.

I beg to remain Sir
your most obedient servant
J. F. Ogonay
Capt Coast Castle

Indian Street

Cape Coast Castle

22nd November 1807

Sir

I have the honour most respectfully
to apply to you for 3 female African
Children or freed Slaves under 16 years
age for the purpose of Educating and
training them for their future welfare.

2. I am a native of this place and
act as Agent for Messrs Mr. Nathan & Co
of Manchester.

3. I own houses and landed properties
and therefore have ample means to look after
them should my application be granted.

4. The Provincial Commissioners of
this place Mr. Grimshaw who having personally
known me will testify the truthness of the
above going Statement.

I have &c

(Sd) A R Forest Esq

To His Lordship

Cardonnet the Governor

London

Waltham

Wigton

PROVINCIAL COMMISSIONER'S OFFICE.
CAPE COAST CASTLE.
RECEIVED 12 SEP 1910
REGISTERED No. 97

53

Dist. Commr's Office
Christina
9th Sept 1910.

Page 7

N 1910

Sir

I have the honour to acknowledge receipt of your letter No 11706 dated 19th August 1910, and to inform you that I have seen both Mr J. Andoh a Clerk from the Northern Nigeria, and the freed slave boy with him, and from the latter I am satisfied that he is being properly treated.

I have instructed Mr Andoh to report with the boy to me either here or Cape Coast the day before sailing for Northern Nigeria.

I have the honour to be

Sir,
Your obedient servant
A. Nuttall.

Acting Dist. Commr

The Acting Commissioner
Central Province
Cape Coast Castle

St

636

(1)

Maintenance

BISHOPSBOURNE,
SECCONDER,
W. AFRICA.

to go to 5

April 18th., 1913.

To the District Commissioner,
Cape Coast Castle.

Sir,

At the request of the Vestry Committee of Christ Church,
Cape Coast, I have the honour to lay before you the follow-
ing application.

On the occasion of the Expedition conducted by the late
Sir Garnet Wolseley to Coomassie, the General asked the Church
authorities, according to the account I have received, to lend
the church to the Force for the purposes of a temporary Hos-
pital. This was assented to, and the slates were thereupon re-
moved from the roof in order to mitigate the intensity of the
heat, and replaced by some other material. The General under-
took on behalf of the Government to see that the Church was
restored to its original condition. It appears that in per-
suance of that guarantee the Government has from time to time
done some repairing work to the roof. Nevertheless, since that
time it has never been weather-proof. The rain came into the
church through the roof in one or two places very seriously on
one occasion during my recent stay in Cape Coast. The reply
of the Church Committee, when I asked them to have the roof
put right, was that I should prefer this request to you that
the Government might be urged to have the Church rendered

BISHOPSBOURNE.

SECONDEE.

W. AFRICA.

2.

water-tight as regards the roof in some final & really effective manner in accordance with the alleged undertaking of the late Sir Garnet Wolseley.

There is one member of the Committee who has a personal recollection of all the circumstances I have described, from their very beginning, but I understand that the written undertaking given by Sir Garnet Wolseley was taken home to England by one of the Colonial Chaplains serving in Cape Coast at the time, and never recovered. Application was made for it but without success.

I beg that these circumstances may be enquired into, & that the Government will do all that they equitably can in the matter.

I have the honour to be, Sir,

Your obedient servant,

M. S. O'Rourke,
Bishop of Accra.

10
December 7th 1915.

The Provincial Commissioner,
Cape Coast.

IIA 201-6

7
Registered ... 1/15

Dear Sir,

Now that the Public Works Department have finished the renovation of the exterior of Christ Church, I wish to express my gratitude to the Government for the same. The work seems to have been carried out in a thoroughly efficient and complete manner, and the picturesque character of the building has been much improved by the new colouring.

I am

yours very faithfully,

Robert Fisher

ROBERT FISHER,
CHRIST CHURCH HOUSE,
CAPE COAST.

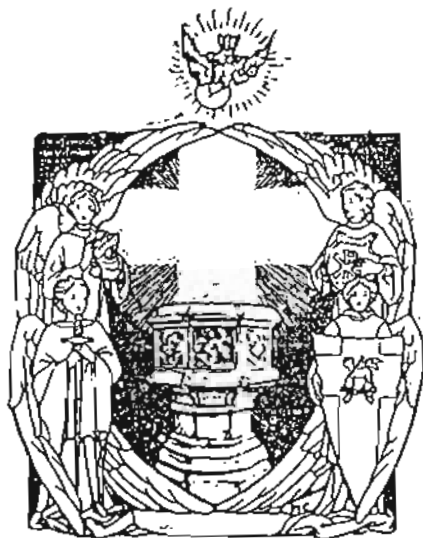
AMPLY

III C. 4
(298)

Baptism solemnized in the Parish of in the Diocese of Accra
in the Republic of Ghana in the Year One thousand nine hundred and

Alleged Date of Birth	When Baptised	Child's Christian Name	PARENTS' NAMES		Abode	Quality, Trade or Profession	God-Parents' Names	By whom the Sacrament was administered
			Christian	Surname				
3rd January 1988	10-3-88 3298 No.	Theophilus Jonah	Edward	Jonah	A112/2 Sam Road Cape Coast	Regional Hse of Chief	Frederick P. Annan Theophilus Hooper Blankson	Rev. Fr. J. N. A. Otoo
			Jane	Amartey		Trader	Rose Walker	
25th Dec 1985	23-3-84 289 No.	Adelaide Victoria Brew	Late Victor K.	Brew	DSY 4 Kaanopah Street Cape Coast	Storekeeper	Adelaide Williams Sophia Bentum Isaac Mensah	Rev. Fr. J. N. A. Otoo
			Late Marg	Sam		Trade		
11th May 1971	10-3-84 300 No.	Frankling Dawson Amaoah	John	Blankson Amaoah	Central Beyond House of Chief P.O. Box 139 E96/3 Cape Coast	Clerk	John Blankson Amaoah Ewurabena Brown Cecilia Dawson Amaoah	Rev. Fr. J. N. A. Otoo
24th June 1988	10-3-84 301 No.	Joseph Edward Sam	George-Edward	Sam	E72/1 Berekah Road Cape Coast	Businessman	Joseph Ofori-Davis Stephen Arowakpa Margaret Aidoo	Rev. Fr. J. N. A. Otoo
			Dorothy	Ofori-Davis		Trader		
23rd June 1988	10-5-1984 302 No.	Augustina Asare Otoo	Mr Asara	Otoo	A1/5 Intsin Street Cape Coast	Trader	G.C.B (Nant) Nana F. Kuy Elizabeth Quansah Henry Brew	Rev. Fr. J. H. H. Otoo
			Elizabeth	Quansah				
7th March 1983	1-1-84 303 No.	Robert Amissah- Asare	Michael	Amissah-Asare	Mails Office Cape Coast	Businessman	E. F. Josiah Diana Koomban Emma R. Koomban	Rev. Fr. C. Swayne Oti
			Rebecca	Tham-Mbiah		Businessman		
9th June 1981	24-9-84 304 No.	William K. Gorman	Kwesi	Gorman	P.O. Box 277 Cape Coast	Mechanic	Emmanuel Josiah Cobina E. Boffee Mary Victoria Abochum	Rev. Fr. J. N. A. Otoo
			Auntie Fsi	Adokwah		Trader		
4th Sept 1979	305-83 26-3-83 No.	Antoinette Newlove Eshun	Robert	Eshun Kingstley Eshun	B25/2 Idun Street Cape Coast	Typist	Robert Eshun Rebecca Eshun John Kwaku Arhin	Rev. Fr. J. N. A. Otoo
			Diana	Josiah		Trader		
1-7-83	14-1-84 306 No.	Evelyn Ffipie Williams	Emmanuel	Williams	E119/8 Abrom Walls Road Cape Coast	clerk	Adelaide Williams Agnes Sorkpafi C. D. Abaidoo	Rev. Fr. F. A. Koomban
			Joana	Henrietta Johnson		clerk		

AD
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675
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K 35 A
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15 O
264 S
174 S
1929
1949



HOLY BAPTISM

A member of Christ, the Child of God, and an inheritor of the Kingdom of Heaven

NAME THEOPHILUS JONAH
 BIRTH 3RD JANUARY, 1970
 was baptized

AT CHRIST CHURCH CATHEDRAL, CAPE COAST
 BY REV FR J. N. A. OTOO
 ON 10TH MARCH, 1984

GODPARENTS

MR FREDERICK SAHJ ANNAH

MR THEOPHILUS HOOPER-BLANKSON

MRS ROSE WALKER

SIGNED

M. A. A. A.
 DUTY OF PARENTS AND GODPARENTS

YE are to take care that this Child be brought to the Bishop to be confirmed by him, so soon as the Child can say the Creed, the Lord's Prayer and the Ten Commandments, and be further instructed in the Church Catechism set forth for that purpose.

Parents should themselves teach their children the faith of the Church, and should also take care to send them as soon as possible, to Church worship and to the Sunday School.

ANGLICAN CHURCH OF GHANA

(Church of the Province of West Africa)



CAPE COAST
 Diocese of Accra

THEOPHILUS JONAH
 Was Confirmed

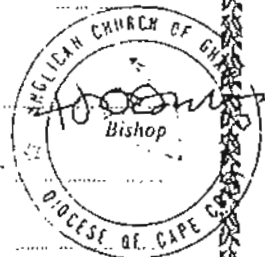
by THE RT. REV. JOHN A. ACKON

at CHRIST CHURCH CATHEDRAL, CAPE COAST

on 20TH MAY, 1984

And Received First Communion

on 20TH MAY, 1984

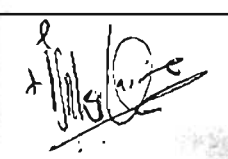



John A. Ackon
 Bishop
 Bishop Priest

Be Thou Faithful Unto Death

Burial in the Parish of Christ Church in the Diocese of Accra
and County of Cape Coast in the Year 1967

III C. 2
1338

NAME.	ABODE.	When Buried.	Age.	By whom the Ceremony was Performed.
George C. Mends No. 337	Cape Coast	9th July 1967	76	Rev. Fr. E. K. T. Ashin Rev. A. W. E. Appiah Canon C. H. Elliott Rev. Fr. B. Okine
Samuel Abraham No. 338	Cape Coast	9th July 1967	74	Rev. Fr. E. K. T. Ashin Rev. A. W. E. Appiah Canon C. H. Elliott Rev. Fr. R. O. Kine
Robert Edmond Davies No. 339	Cape Coast	16th July 1967	61	Rev. Fr. E. K. T. Ashin
Agnes Beatrice Quansah No. 340	Cape Coast	18th July 1967	49	Rev. Fr. E. K. T. Ashin Rev. Fr. S. R. S. Nicolas
Ms Agnes Mullen ^{alice} Agnes Moore No. 341	Accra	26th JULY 1967	67	 Rev. Fr. E. K. T. Ashin
Francis Christian Cape Coast No. 342	Cape Coast	11th August 1967	65	Rev. Fr. R. G. A. Okine
George S. Pobie No. 343	TAKORADI	12th AUG. 1967	58	 Rev. A. W. E. Appiah
Jephia Essie Dura No. 344	Cape Coast	17th Sept. 1967	110(?)	Rev. P. A. W. E. Appiah a T. A. Brient

OF
CAPE COAST



CATHOLIC TESTIMONIAL
AND VADE MECUM OF

Name Elizabeth Lynn
Efua Gyieba
Station/Parish Cape Coast
H657

Necessary testimonial and vade mecum for all those who
to receive the Sacrament while abroad or on their return
to their country.



MOST SACRED HEART OF JESUS

St. Francis Press Ltd. - TAKORADI

Date Sgd.

100000

Name Elizabeth Jynn
Efua Gyieba
Son/Daughter of Edward Jynn
and Hannah Graham
born at Cape Coast
on the 14th day of Feb, 1930
residing at Cape Coast

has been baptised at the church of
St. Francis at Cape Coast
on the 22nd day of Feb, 1930
by the Rev. Father J. Stebler
Godparent Elizabeth Abraham
N.L.B. H657

in the Church of St. Francis
at Cape Coast
Minister: Rev. Father Mgr. W. J. Porter
N.L.C. H.123 Sgd. Patterlin
in fide

CONFIRMATION

Date 24th May, 1942
In the Church of St. Francis
at Cape Coast
Minister: Bishop W. T. Porter
Godparent Mary Baffoe
N.L. Conf. 3502
Sgd. Patterlin
in fide

day of Nov, 1942
Elizabeth Jynn
contracted Holy Matrimony
at Cape Coast
with N. Matthew Piney - Amissee
Son/Daughter of George K. Amissee
and Sarah Williams
born at Tankwa on 15th June 1920
residing at Cape Coast

In the presence of Rev. Father Th. Van
Velgen
Witness Edward Jynn
J. S. B. Jynn, J. B. Amissee
Nature of Marriage Dispensation
Date of nuptial blessing 25-11-42
N.L.M. 241 Sgd. Patterlin
in fide

Acknowledgement

THE ENTIRE FAMILY AND THE CHURCH WISH TO TAKE THIS OPPORTUNITY TO EXPRESS HEARTFELT GRATITUDE TO ALL THOSE WHO DURING THE SAD DAYS SHOWED CONCERN WITH PRAYERS, EXPRESSIONS OF CONDOLENCE, VARIOUS SERVICES, FLOWERS, DONATIONS AND MANY OTHER MEANS ON THE DEATH

REV. MABEL ABRAHAM

MAY SHE REST
IN PERFECT PEACE

BURIAL & THANKSGIVING SERVICE FOR THE LATE



REV. MABEL ABRAHAM
AGED: 61 YEARS

AT THE
MUSAMA DISCO CHRISTO CHURCH
GENERAL HEAD OFFICE, MOZANO

WAKE-KEEPING:	FRIDAY, 17 TH MAY, 2002
BURIAL:	SATURDAY, 18 TH MAY 2002
FUNERAL RITES:	SATURDAY 18 TH MAY, 2002
THANKSGIVING SERVICE:	SUNDAY 19 TH MAY 2002

MAY SHE REST IN PEACE

OFFICIATING MINISTERS

- | | |
|------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1. Pro. Dr. M. J. H. Jehu-Appiah - | General Head Prophet |
| 2. Rev. J. K. Addae - | (SSM) General |
| 3. Rev. S. D. Koufie - | (SSM) General Secretary |
| 4. Rev. Juba-Molda Jehu-Appiah | Financial Controller |
| 5. Rev. G. E. Osei - | Secretary to Akaboha |
| 6. Rev. Adam M. Jehu-Appiah - | Ebusuapanyin |
| 7. Pro. S.B.A. Ankumah - | (SSP) General |
| 8. Pro. J.M.F.S. Abban - | (SSP) Spiritual Affairs |
| 9. Rev. J. Ansong Adu - | SEK/TAK. Diocesan Minister |
| 10. Rev. J.K.K. Begyina - | Accra Diocesan Minister |
| 11. Rev. S.M.K. Mills - | Cape Coast Diocesan Minister |
| 12. Rev. J.E.K. Mensah - | Mozano Diocesan Minister |
| 13. Rev. Isaac K. Begyina - | Koforidua Diocesan Minister |
| 14. Rev. J.K.K. Mensah - | Tema Diocesan Minister |
| 15. Rev. J.S.J. Amawudar - | Sunyani Diocesan Minister |
| 16. Rev. G.Y. Agyeman - | Volta/Togo Diocesan Minister |
| 17. Rev. P.Y. Nkrumah - | Northern Gha. Diocesan Minister |
| 18. Rev. T.K. Smith Tailor - | Sanpedro Diocesan Minister |
| 19. Rev. D.K. Mensah - | Abidjan Diocesan Minister |
| 20. Rev. Dr. Jere O. Jehu-Appiah - | London Diocesan Minister |
| 21. Rev. Jere O. Jehu-Appiah - | Church Father |



CAN 67 MAN 79

- Okò kесе nò-abò adzr
Afei hèn Sahen edzi nyim
Wònhye ehurusi ndwom n'ase
Alleluia.
3. Awerèhow ndaansa no etwam'
Dasoer konyim mu efi 'wum!
Enyimnyam nka hèn tseasefo n'
Alleluia.
- Owu hyehye no dom petsee
Na Christ abò hèn apetse
Wòmbò se ntow enyigye
ndwom'
Alleluia!
4. Ewuradze W'amandze hun. ntsi,
Gye wo nkowaa fi wu no bər mu
Ma yeenya nkwan, yaatow wo
ndwom:
Alleluia

MAN 220

1. Dasanyi kaa de adze nnkyer sa;
Kaa wo Bɔfo daa na som no yie
Ber na asorekye nntweɔn obiara
Fa ahɔɔhar som wo Bɔfo yie.
2. Adze rekye yi nna adze resa,
Hu de ber na ɔresen ko no,
Yi akwadwer fi wo bra mu,
Fa ahɔɔdzen ye N'edwuma.
3. Ma enyigye na dɛw nhye wo ma
Wo wo Nyame N'edwumaye mu
Dye; dzen, naaso mia W'enyi
Dnnkekyer na edzi konyim
4. Nyamesom pa ye dzen ampaara
Eso dye adehyesem kese
Koko na mbansa so wo mu,
Naaso w'akatua som bo pii.

BURIAL SERVICE FOR THE LATE

REV. MABEL ABRAHAM

ON SATURDAY, 18TH MAY, 2002

ORDER OF SERVICE

PART I

1. Opening Song 'Sunsum Kronkron - Mass Choir
2. Prayer - Pro. S.B.A. Ankumah (SSP)
3. Hymn Man 249 - Mass Choir
4. 1st Bible Reading - Psalm 49: 1- 20
English - Rev. Charles Ampofo
Akan - Rev. J.N. Jehu-Appiah
5. Hymn CAN 169 - Mass Choir
6. 2nd Bible Reading - II Cor. 5:1-10
English - Rev. J.J. Oppong
Akan - Rev. Opare Amoah
7. Biography/Tributes - Family/Church Rep.
8. Anthem - Selected Choir
9. Sermon - Akaboha III
10. Offering - Congregation
11. Special Candle light offering - Rev. Ohene Ansah
12. Burial Rituals - Part One - Rev. J.J.K. Dadzie
13. Procession to Cemetery - Rev. B.K. Sakyi

PART II

AT THE GRAVE SIDE

1. Entering Cemetery - Rev. B.K. Sakyi
2. Hymn MAN 246 - Mass Choir
3. Interment - Akaboha III
4. Burial Rituals Part Two - Rev. B.K. Sakyi
5. Hymn CAN 324 - Mass Choir
6. Burial Rituals Part Three - Rev. J.K. Addae (SSM)
7. Anthem - Selected Choir
8. Wreath Laying - Rev. J. Ansong Adu
9. Benediction - Pro. J.M.F.S. Abban

**THANKSGIVING SERVICE FOR THE LATE
REV. MABEL ABRAHAM
ON SUNDAY, 19TH MAY, 2002**

ORDER OF SERVICE

PART ONE

- | | | |
|----------------------------------|---|--------------------------|
| 1. High Mass / Low Mass | - | Rev. J.E.K. Mensah |
| 2. Hymn MAN 229 | - | Mass Choir |
| 3. 1 st Bible Reading | - | Psalm 90:1-17 |
| English | - | Rev. G.E. Osei |
| Akan | - | Rev. S.M.K. Mills |
| 4. Hymn MAN 79 | - | Mass Choir |
| 5. 2 nd Bible Reading | - | Phil. 4:2-9 |
| English | - | Rev. Thomas Adansi Fofie |
| Akan | - | Rev. P.K. Boamah |
| 6. Announcement | - | Church Secretary |
| 7. Anthem | - | Selected Choir |
| 8. Sermon | - | Akaboha III |
| 9. Offertory / Testimonies | - | Congregation |
| 10. Special Memorial Offertory | - | Rev. Ohene Ansah |
| 11. Blessing of Offertory | - | Pros. Sirisiana Asiredu |

PART TWO

- | | | |
|---|---|---------------------------|
| 1. Hymn MAN 220 | - | Mass Choir |
| 2. Prayer | - | Pro. J.M.F.S. Abban |
| 3. Anthem | - | Selected Choir |
| 4. Roll Call & Removal of Deceased Name | - | Akaboha III |
| 5. Observance of Silence /Lyrics | - | Congregation |
| 6. Short Prayer | - | Pro. S.B.A. Ankumah (SSP) |
| 7. Closing Hymn CAN 324 | - | Mass Choir |
| 8. Closing Prayer | - | Pro. H.E.Y. Gaisie |
| 9. Benediction | - | Akaboha III |

CAN 324

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1. Da yie, dofo fonafo
W'edwuma abo adze;
Ahomgye pa, siar mbordo
Na dew mapa nye wodze
Da yie, Da yie,
Nyame mfa w'nsie,
Adzesaa ahye sum, da yie! | 2. Twere Jesu N'abaw mu komm
Nyame do nkata wo do;
Sun w'Agyenkwa No bom sonn,
Mbre bon biara nnkehaw wo
Da yie! Da yie!
Nyame mfa w'nsie
Yebehiam afeboo, da yie! |
| 4. Kwantunyi berefo dofo
W'akwantu abo adze
Atsew esian nyina mu
Efi awereshow wiadze
Da yie, Da yie,
Nyame mfa wo nsie
Dzi fie kan kotweon hen, da yie! | |

MAN 229

- | | |
|---|---|
| Nyame Asomfo hom nsoer
Hom mma yengyina pintsinn
Hom mma yenka hen Hen
Christ do
Na yenye abonsam nko | 2. Sunsum ko ye dzen ampa;
Se enngyina dzen a ebepa
abaw
Na "oko-mbo!" wodze ma nyia
oko ewie edzi nyim |
| 3. Se atamfo soer hen do a,
Se akodzi ba hen do a,
Jesus Noara boko ama hen
Obedzi nyim ama hen | 4. Ber a yeka Christ do yi
Nsahwe nnkegyaa hen da
Na se yedze hye Jesus nsa a,
Ne nyina boko adze koraa |

HYMN MAN 246

1. Ew'radze ma munhu m'ewiei
Na me nda nsusui mbr̄e otse
Ma munhu mbr̄e mudua ȳe mberew
Ew'radze ma munhu m'ewiei
2. Ew'radze ma munhu m'ewiei
Wo aȳe me nda nsutseaba
Na me mfe nnye hwee w̄ w'enyim
Ew'radze ma munhu m'ewiei.
3. Ew'radze ma munhu m'ewiei
Nyimpa gyina petsee d̄en ara a,
Ampaara oȳe ehuhu koraa,
Ew'radze ma munhu m'ewiei.
4. Ew'radze ma munhu m'ewiei,
Ew'radze dab̄en na Monntwēn
M'egya m'enyidar w̄ wo mu
Ew'radze ma munhu m'ewiei

BIOGRAPHY OF THE LATE REV. MABEL W. ABRAHAM

We take consolation in what the Almighty God says in Eccl. 3:1, a time to be born and a time to die, a time to plant and a time to pluck what is planted.

Like all her siblings Rev. Mabel Winifred Abraham fondly call sister "Mame Efua" was born on the 13th day of January 1941 at Bishop Street No. 9 in the City of Lagos, Nigeria, where her father Mr. Samuel Abraham was a shorthand typist/Secretary at the UAC Ltd, Niger House and Mrs. Rebecca Effie Abraham both of blessed Memory.

The Late Rev. Mabel Abraham started schooling in Lagos until she and her younger brother were sent home in the then Gold Coast in 1949. After completing her elementary education in Saint Monica school at Cape Coast she gained admission into Ghana National College at Cape Coast to pursue her Secondary Education.

Sister Mame Efua later got married to the Late George Thompson at Cape Coast and the Almighty God blessed her marriage with seven children. Four of the children are still alive.

Mabel's sense of industry saw her trading between the then Ivory Coast and Ghana. She never forgot to render a faithful and diligent service unto her creator. Pursuant to this noble desire she joined the Musama Disco Christo Church in 1969. After completing her priesthood training with the church, she started her pastoral work with an enviable zest. Because of her vintage zeal, sincerity and honest for the service of the Lord, she was posted to various branches of the church in several regions within and outside Ghana.

Sister Mame Efua had no time for gossiping and idleness. Her forthrighteous created critics as it happened to our Lord Jesus Christ.

Mabel, the icy hand of the spirit of death has snatched you at a time of your imminent retirement from active pastoral work to have a good rest.

One truth we know is that the Lord allows the spirit of death to take the life of His servant only when the servant's work on earth has been completed.

Mabel, you have fought a good fight, you have served the church, and the good Lord faithfully to the end, and now a crown of righteousness and crown of victory awaits you.

Physically we miss you but spiritually we are consoled by the truth that you are with the good Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

Mabel, Rest in Peace
Mame, Nyame mfa wo kra nsie
Mabel, Da yiel Da yiel Da yiel

TRIBUTE BY THE CHILDREN

Woa Inyim me mbrawye nyinara
Woa w'enyiwa tum'hu m'akwan
Mosohwe dɔnhwer dzendzen mu
Ma me gyedzi so wu mu
Ma mitsitsim ma musuro da
Wo akwan sunsum a menam mu yi
Na kansa ɔye nsoe wowo mpo a
Ma me gyedzi so wu mu

A great vacuum has created and can never be filled, an irreparable loss which can never be found. A loving, caring and helpful mother has passed away.

Is it real? It sounds incredible, but it is true, Death has laid its icy hands on Auntie Mabel. Our beloved mother is gone.

Auntie Mabel was a mother of all. She was kind to all and sundry. She always played a role model of justice, truth and peace. Though a woman, but was courageous and just.

CAN 169

1. Meye hoho wo ha
Sor nye me fie
Asaase ye awerehow
Sor nye me fie
Mbusu nye awerehow
Etwā mo ho ehyia
Ɔsor nye m'Egya kurow'm
Sor nye me fie
2. Kaansa ehum rutu a,
Sor nye me fie
M'akwantu ɔye tsia
Sor nye me fie
Mber n'ehum nye n'awow
Ɔnnkyer na abɔ adze:
Na ewiei n' m'ɔkodu fie
Sor nye me fie
3. Dem ntsi minndzi nkombɔ
Sor nye me fie
Me kyepen tse den ara a,
Sor nye me fie
Mo Wura abanyimfa
Na m'begyina ampa,
Ɔsor nye m'Egya kurow
Sor nye me fie.

Really, the Late Rev. Mabel Abraham was admired for her integrity and intellect. Yes, Sofo Mabel, the woman who was often misunderstood and maligned by some people has gone beyond.

I have lost a good Pastor friend and I can hardly find a replacement. Her sterling qualities are no doubt known by those who were intimately connected with her.

To her children whom she loved and cherished her death is a grievous loss but they should take consolation in their mother's love for principles, truth as fair play, which endeared her to friends who share these qualities.

May she rest in peace. Amen.

HYMNS M A N : 249

1. Hom ntaa ndzinn, ehum kase etu;
Odupon kase bi ebu;
Okunyin kraban ato ase
Ne kra etu efi wiadze

4. Afei oewie ɔapon edwuma
Fonafo fata ahomgye pa
Nde ɔka sor mbapɔmba ho;
Ne tsenabew enyigye nko.

6. Oedu fie, ɔsor fie fɛɛfew
Mbre anokwafo bom' dzi daw;
Christ aye n'etuu rema n'mbo;
ɔsordom robɔ n'ehombo.

She devoted most of her life in serving Christ. No wonder she has left an indelible mark in the contemporary history of the Musama Disco Christo Church. A heroine whose name is written in gold.

The pain is like a stab in the stomach but God the Omniscient knows the best.

We are optimistic that you are resting comfortably in the Supreme Being until we meet again in Paradise.

Mama, Damirafa Duel
Mama, Hom asomdwee mu
Auntie Mabel, Nyame mfa wo nsie asomdwee mu.

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**A TRIBUTE TO THE LATE REV. MABEL ABRAHAM,
SENIOR MINISTER & NATIONAL TREASURER M.D.C.C.
HEADQUARTERS-MOZANO**

It was with profound shock and dismay that we received the news of the untimely death on Thursday 4th April, 2002 of Rev. Mabel Abraham, National treasurer and senior staff member at the Headquarters - MDCC Mozano.

Rev. Mabel Abraham began life as a trader until she offered herself into the consecration order in 1969 at the age of 33 to do the work of God in MDCC. She was ordained as a Deaconess in 1974 and then as a supervising Pastor in 1976.

She answered a call to serve in Lagos in 1986. Her service as a Catechist, Deaconess and a Supervising Pastor was in the following Towns/Circuits/Districts: Nkawie, Sefwi Wiawso, Aburi-Akwapim, Akim Tafo, Agona Swedru, Agona Nyakrom, Tamale, Otuam, Abura Dunkwa, Effiduase Asokore, Pokrom, Koforidua and the Head Office Mozano.

She took special interest in project work wherever she worked. She also distinguished herself as a devoted and practising Christian Service to the people, devotion to duty, and sincerity are some of the significant traits of character that she has left behind as she bids farewell to the world.

On Wednesday, 3rd April, 2002 we came to work together and worked diligently until 6.00 pm. Then on Thursday, 4th April, 2002 in the morning we came to the office only to be told that Rev. Mabel as she was affectionately called was dead.

The vacuum created by her death will be hard to fill.

Wail, O Cypress!

For the cedar has fallen,

Because the Mighty Trees are ruined.

Wail, O Oaks of Bashan for the thick forest has come down.

Farewell Rev. Mabel

We wish you Godspeed and a safe return home!

Damirifa Due, Due, Due.

**TRIBUTE TO THE LATE REV. MABEL ABRAHAM
BY REV. G. E. OSEI,
SECRETARY TO THE AKABOHA**

Indeed, the Bible said there is a time to be born and a time to die. "Oh death!!, where is thy victory? Says the Psalms.

William Shakespeare also said:

All the world is a stage

And all men and women were players;

They have their entrances and their exits.

And one man in his time plays many parts!!

Sofo Mabel, as she was affectionately called, also came unto this stage and played her part of the yet-to-end drama.

If we had our way we would have asked the Almighty to add more years to her life as it was done in the case of Hezekial, so as to, at least set eyes on this faithful National Treasurer of MDCC and say "thank you" to her for giving us a very devoted service.

Sofo Mabel, as we commonly called her, was a mother, teacher, Pastor, and Advisor to most of us, I knew her in the seventies, when she was a District Pastor at Agona Swedru, while I was a member at Swedru branch of the MDCC before I became a consecrated worker and was posted to Agona Kwanyako as a Circuit Pastor when I worked directly under her as my District Pastor. Those of us who got nearer to her realised the deep love she had for her members and fellow workers and how she bothered to know how every staff member at the Head Office was fairing, when she was posted to the Head Office.

Rev. Mabel as a Pastor was an excellent woman. She was a woman of kindly disposition, a keen financial Officer at the Head Office and a Pastor who loved her flock. She was friendly, fearless and outspoken. She was outstandingly powerful and convincing as a preacher, hardworking and serious in her administration.

APPENDIX IV

PHOTOGRAPHS

Flags

Afahye joint service pictures.

Samuel Abraham and Effie

Kodwo Abraham his wife and fourth son.

Mabel Abraham on right, Anowa Clan with totem.

Mabel Abraham and cousins in 1953.

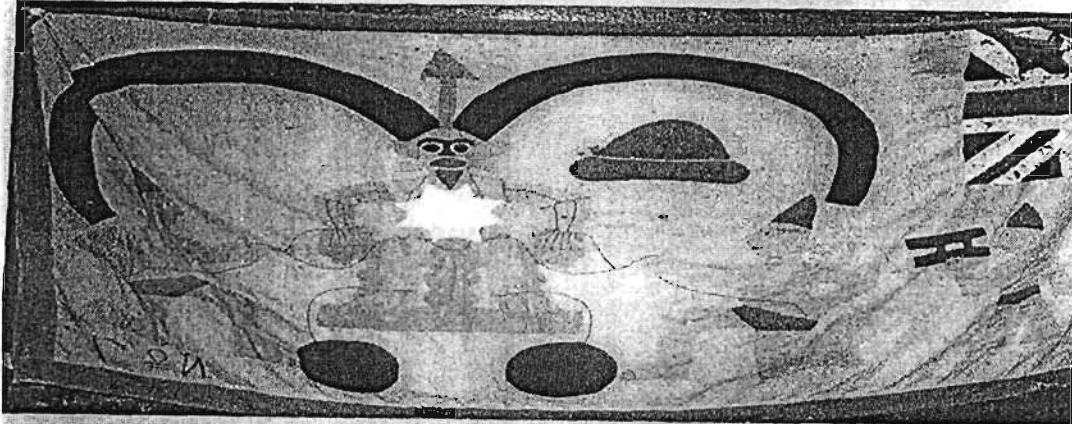
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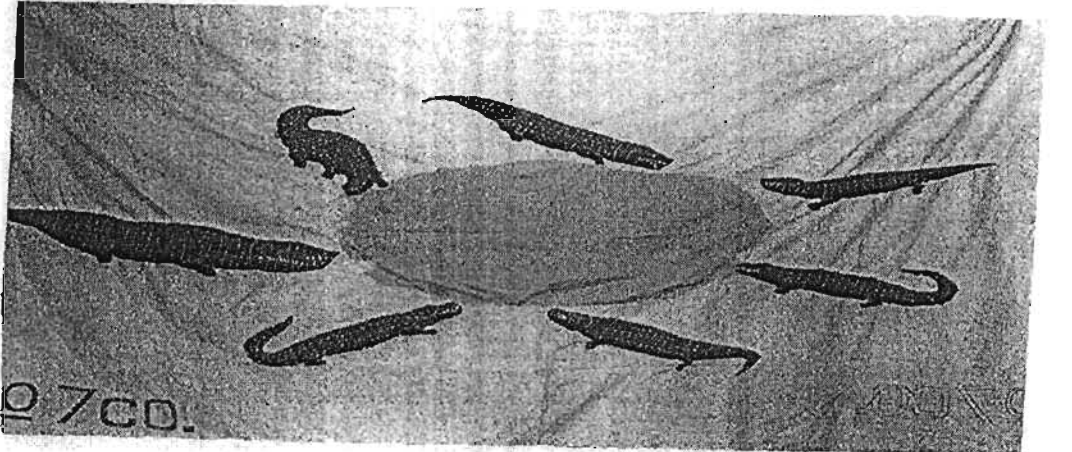
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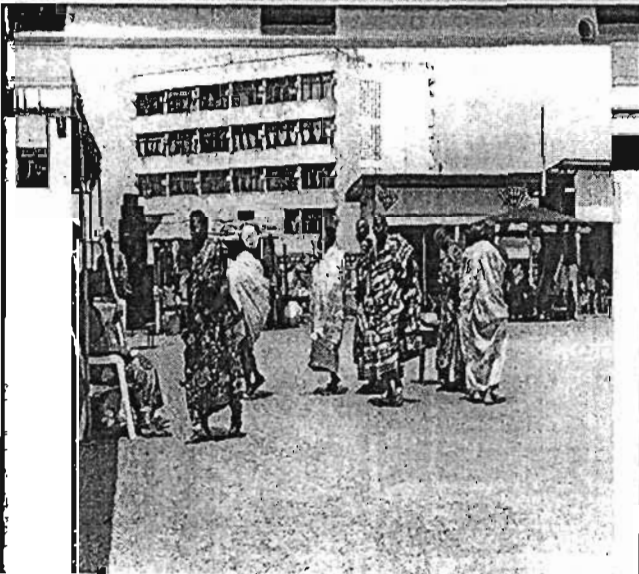
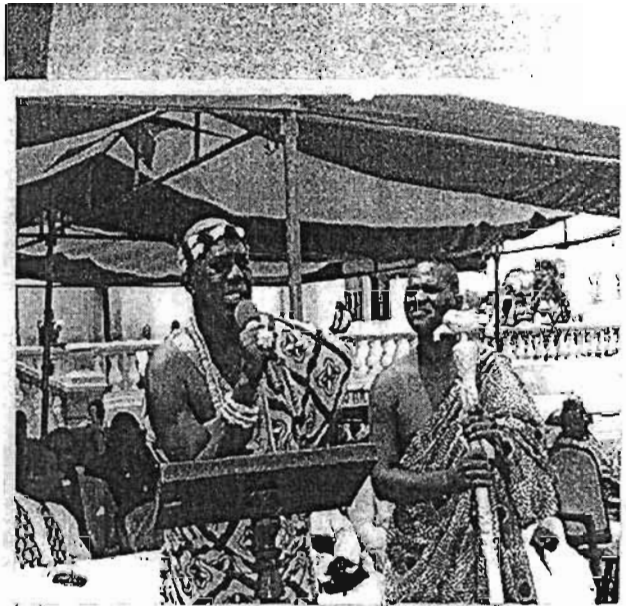


4



Asafo number 7 flags with proverbial meaning

Afahye Pictures



Tradition, Modernity and the Church at the joint service of the Afahye

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The Minnesota Abrahams



Left to right
Marya Abraham,
Abraham (Joel)

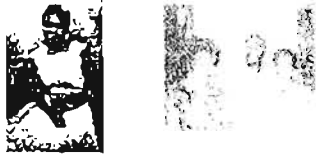
Kojo Abraham (William Emmanuel Abraham),

Kwabena (



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Mabel and Cousins in 1953

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Photo Info

Posted By: [Marya Abraham](#)

Date Posted: [May 24, 2000](#)

Description: Mabel Abraham, age 12 (on the right) is shown with her mother's cousin, Elizabeth Fynn, and an unidentified twin daughter of Fanny Dadzle, Mabel's great-aunt on her mother's side.

Date Taken: [December 1953](#)

Place Taken: [Ghana](#)

Owner: [Marya Abraham](#)

Album: [Abrahams in Ghana](#) , [Mabel Abraham Family](#)

Share Your Thoughts About This Photo:

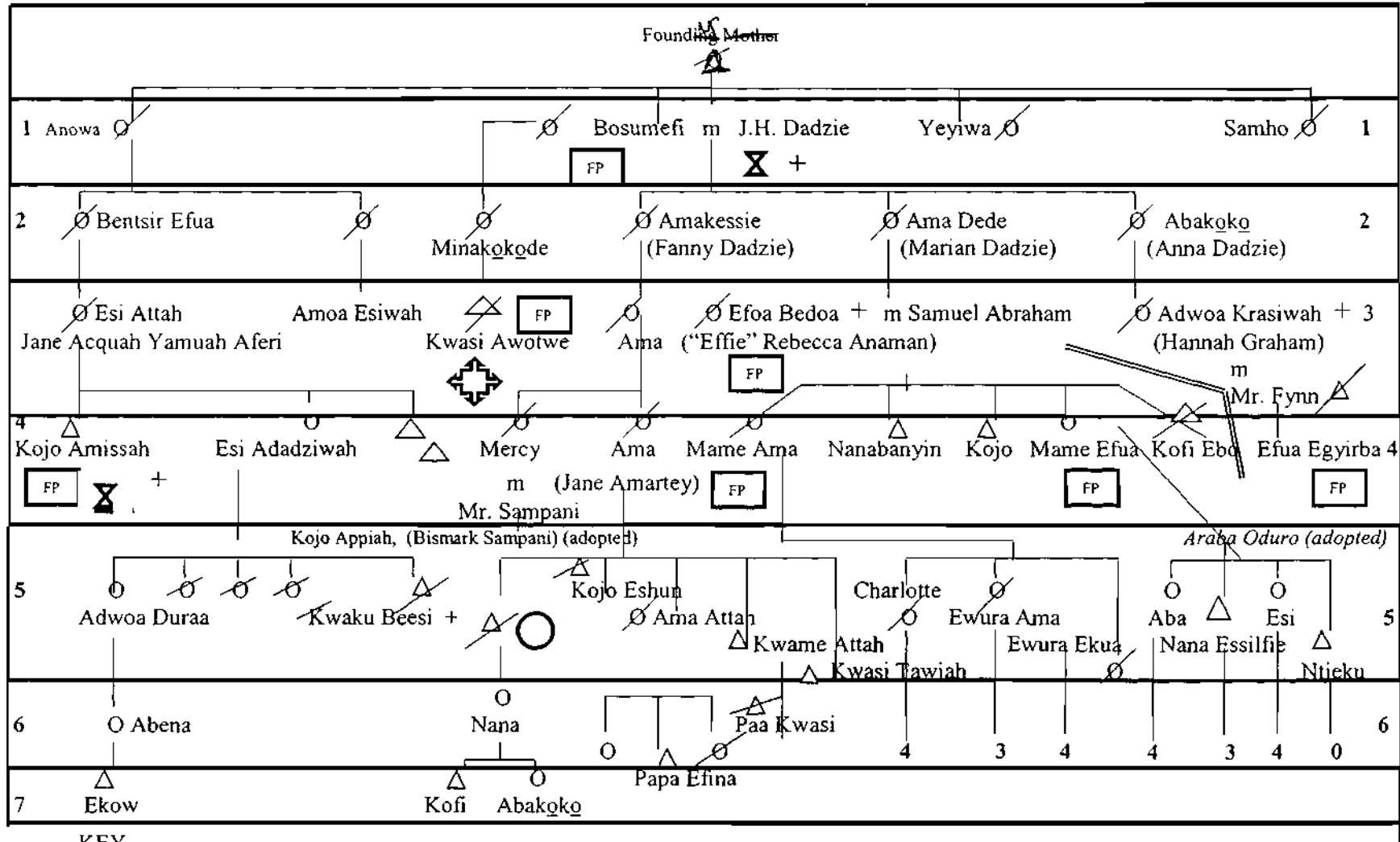
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APPENDIX V

FAMILY TREES

VI

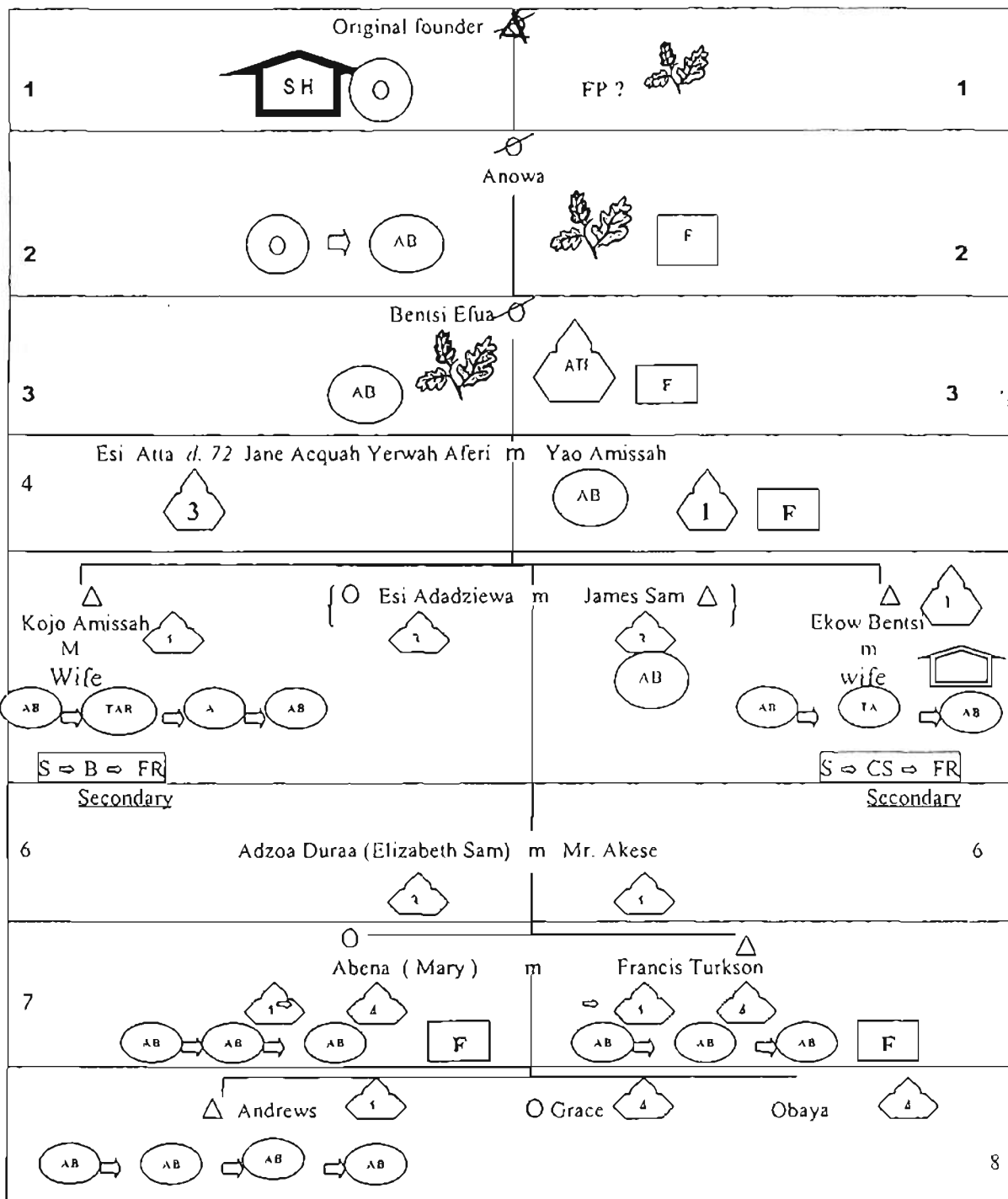
DIAGRAM OF THE 1/2 CLAN OF THE DESCENDANTS OF BOSUMEFI AND ANOWA
(FEMALE LINE ONLY) - 7 GENERATIONS



KEY

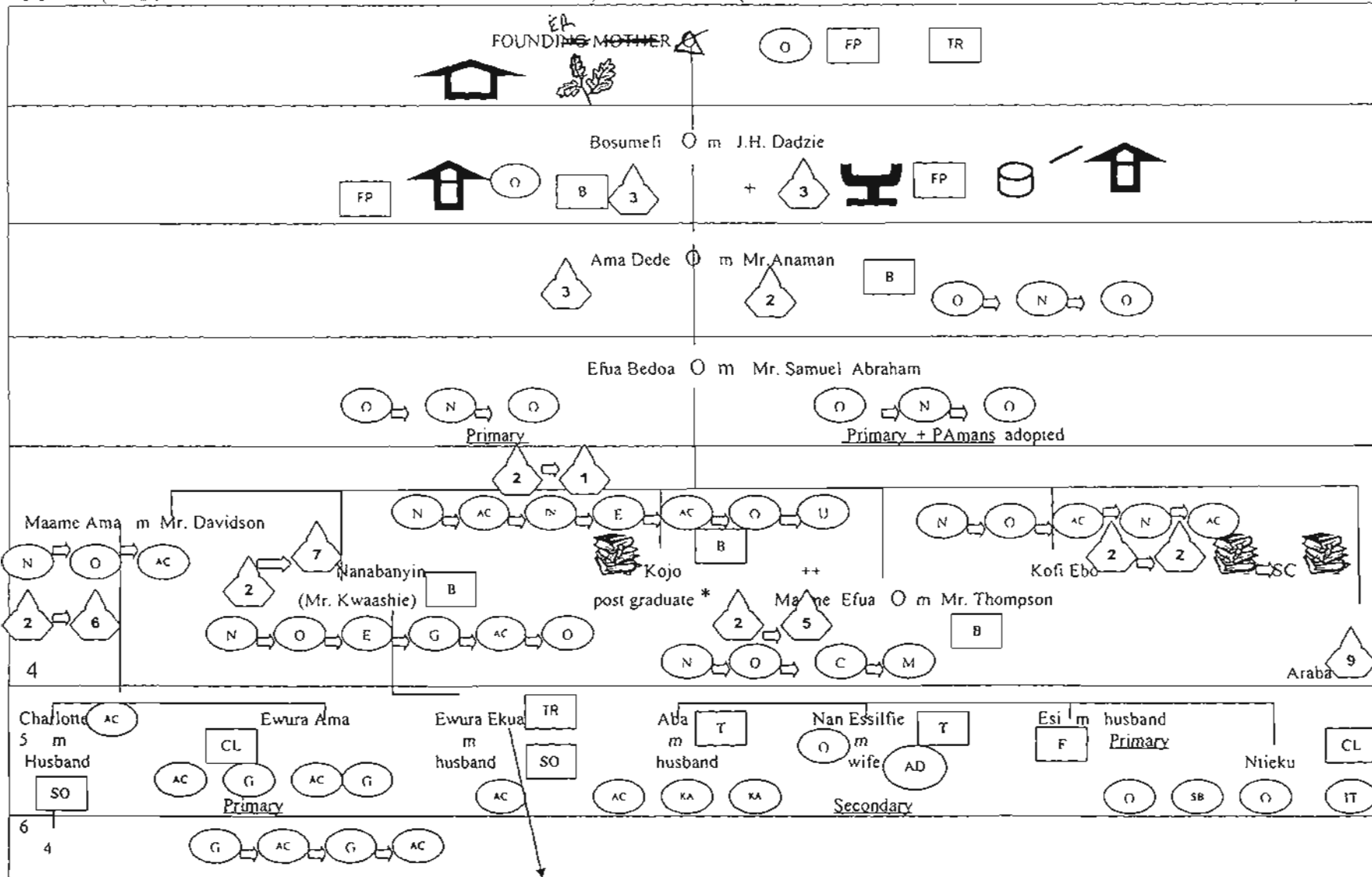
- + Christian Leadership
- △ Male
- △ Male deceased
- m Married
- FP House Head (Ofie Panyin)
- ⊗ Chief (Ohene)
- Female
- Female deceased
- Blood relative
- ⊕ Anko-bea

CHART OF RESIDENCE, MIGRATION WORK & CHURCH AFFILIATION OF THE ANOWA 1/2 CLAN



S Secondary

DIAGRAM OF THE DESCENDANTS OF BOSUMEFI AND JOSEPH DADZIE THROUGH AMA DEDE (MARION DADZIE) AND EFUA BEDOA (REBECCA ANAMAN AND SAMUEL ABRAHAM; MAME AMA (ROSE ABRAHAM & MAME EFUA MABEL ABRAHAM)



* see Man @ Osofo Mabel's station Aba and esi went round with Her

**DIAGRAM OF DESCENDANTS OF BOSUMEFI & JH DADZIE THROUGH
ABAKOKO AND ADWOA KRASIWAH**

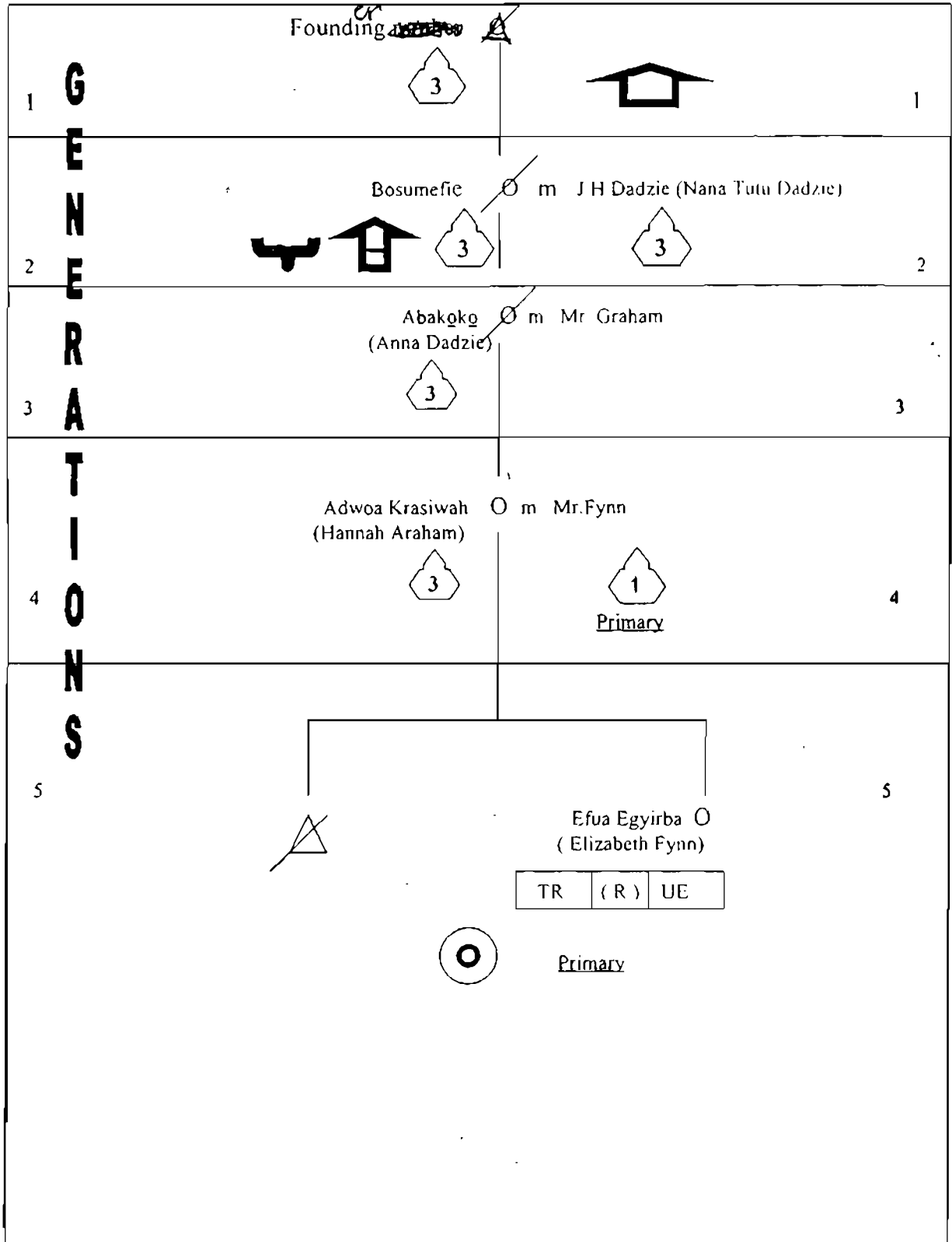
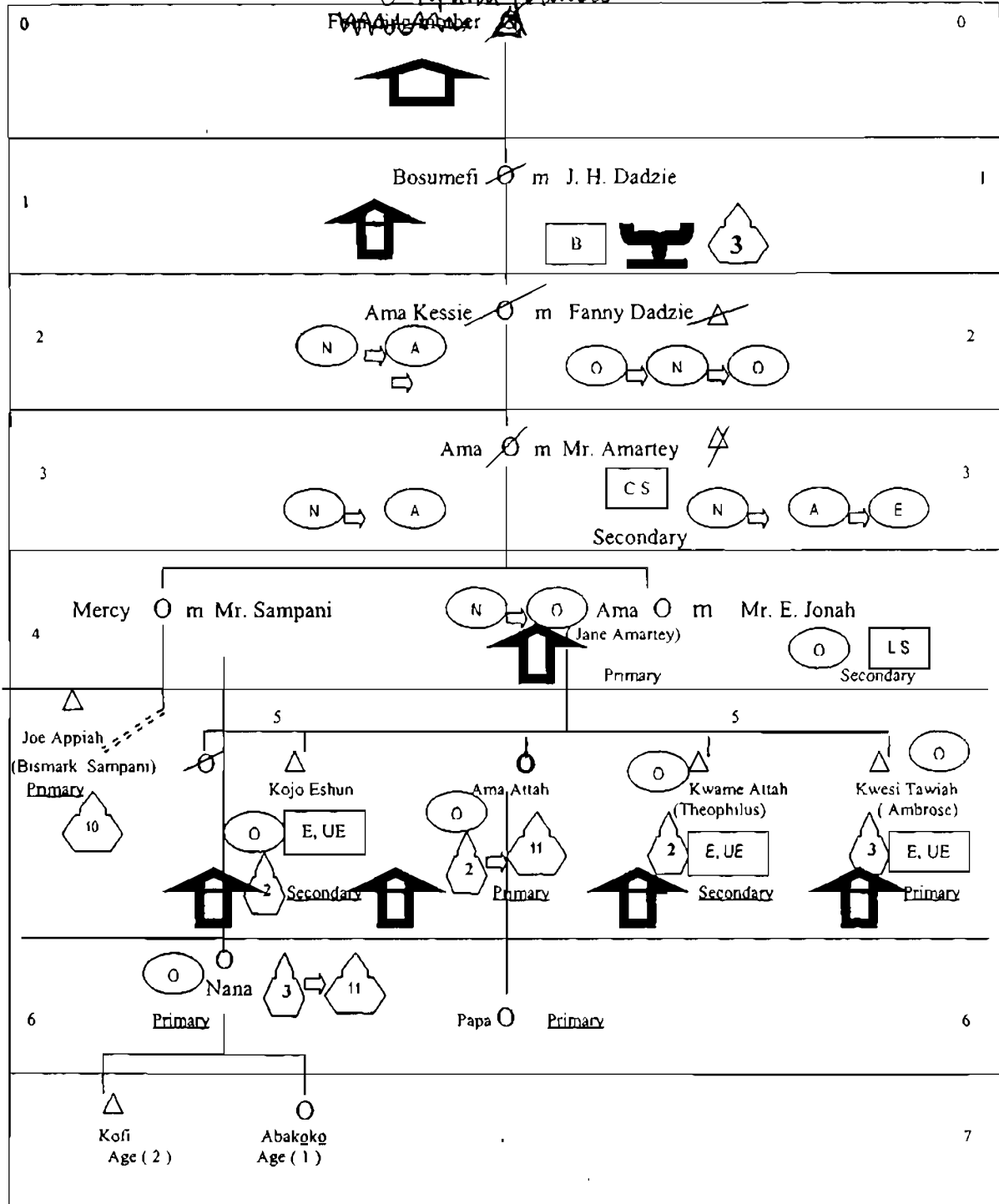


DIAGRAM OF THE DESCENDANTS OF BOSUMEFI AND J. H. DADZIE THROUGH

AMA KESSIE

original founder



m - MARRIED

APPENDIX VI

**QUESTIONNAIRES AND GUIDELINES FOR STUDENTS
AND FAMILY MEMBERS**

ANCESTRAL, PRESENT AND FUTURE RELIGIOUS ITINERARY/EXPERIENCE OF YOUR OWN FAMILY OR ONE YOU KNOW WELL

Names _____

(Home) _____ alias _____ Age _____ Sex M/F

Kindly write about your family's RELIGIOUS AND DENOMINATIONAL life as you can compile it from your memory, from observation and from interviewing some of the elders with retentive memory. Use the questions as a guide, but add anything you consider important which they do not cover. Omit anything irrelevant in your own context. Many thanks for your cooperation. I am doing a similar study myself, and your work will help give a context to my own case study.

Alizon (Cleal) MTh student:

Akrofi Christaller Memorial Centre Akropong June 2003.

I THE FAMILY

- a)-How do you trace your *membership* of the clan? Mother(M)/father (F);Grandmother (GM)/(GF);Great-grandmother (GGM)/(GGF);Great- Great- Grandmother (GGGM)/(GGGF) ^{patri}
 -Who told you what you know about your *matriclan*? Do you have (a) stools/ Yes/No b) a Totem? What is the history of the stools and or totem? Does the totem have a meaning? What are the stories connected with the stool and/or totem?
 -Write out any libation prayers you have used or heard used in the family with translation and commentary.
- b) How has your family adapted to the mainline Christian insistence on Monogamy: by:adopting monogamy/continuing polygamous/gradual change from polygamous to monogamous/concubinage-
 Tell any outstanding part of this story..
- c) What *common beliefs, practices and rituals* (in addition to the pouring of libation and the libation prayers), may have been part of your *family custom* since before the Christian church came to the fore-mothers/fathers? I.e. beliefs in God, man, creation, sin redemption, community, after life, spirits etc., rituals, festivals, ceremonies, proverbs; religious people, objects and places
- d) Which do you consider to be incompatible with the gospel? Which do you consider to be neutral:(neither helpful nor harmful?)

II YOURSELF

- a)What do you consider to be valuable aids from ATR in the spread of the gospel among the Fanti/ your own people? How have you prevented error, and spread the gospel among your own people? Have you or other members of the family who are Christian believers had any impact in the resolution of disputes (Internal to the family or external over land or property?) Financing of trips or migration abroad? 'Conversion' of other family members from ATR, Islam, secularism, or from another denomination? Give evidence for any answers
- b) Have you had, or heard of among the members of your own family, any experiences of the numinous that seem to you to be peculiarly African? Yes/No. If yes tell the story.
- c)Describe your spiritual, intellectual and practical educational experiences at school, (and University or training college) and any influence on your subsequent spiritual development.
 Were you affected by some or any of the following
 i) church or parachurch organizations? How? ii) the secularization and Westernisation policies of colonial and subsequent governments' iii) litigation iv) migrations to different places for study or work? DENOMINATION
 Which of these, if any has had importance in your family's spiritual itinerary?.

III FUTURE

From the research you have done, what do you think will be the future trends in your family life. What can be done to prevent negative trends; to encourage positive ones? To allow people to be themselves?

II YOURSELF

a) What do you consider to be valuable aids from ATR in the spread of the gospel among the Fanti/ your own people? How have you prevented error, and spread the gospel

among your own people? Have you or other members of the family who are Christian believers had any impact in the resolution of disputes (Internal to the family or external over land or property?) Financing of trips or migration abroad? Conversion of other family members from ATR, Islam, secularism, or from another denomination? Give evidence for any answer/s

b) Have you had, or heard of among the members of your own family, any experiences of the numinous that seem to you to be peculiarly African? Yes/No. If yes tell the story

c) Describe your spiritual, intellectual and practical educational experiences at school, (and University or training college) and any influence on your subsequent spiritual development.

Were you affected by some or any of the following

i) church or parachurch organizations? How? ii) the secularization and Westernisation policies of colonial and subsequent governments? iii) litigation? iv) migrations to different places for study or work?

Which of these, if any has had importance in your family's spiritual itinerary?.

III FUTURE

From the research you have done, what do you think will be the future trend in your family. What can be done to prevent negative trends; to encourage positive ones? To allow people to be themselves?

4. GUIDELINES FOR A BRIEF AUTOBIOGRAPHY BY SELECTED MEMBERS OF THE FAMILY**Your spiritual autobiography as part of the spiritual development of a family**

'Underneath are the everlasting arms' Deuteronomy 33.27 (but sometimes we may not be aware)

Tell the story of your life

As you do so divide it up and try to address the concerns mentioned below

A The ancestors and the spiritual beginning

- 1) Thinking of your family ancestors and history, what you remember and what you have been told, can you identify anything that has built you up spiritually? Care for others? Commitment to God in Christ? Adventurousness? Hard-work? Discipline? Love? Hope? Faith? Suffering and endurance? Competition with others? Co-operation with others? Church attendance? Home Bible Reading?

- 2) Thinking about your family ancestry and history again, can you identify anything from it that has caused you to have spiritual difficulties? (Maybe the opposite of the list in Question 1 or something completely different e.g. happenings that seem unfair?)
- 3) What was your first experience of the numinous or the spiritual world that you can remember?
- 4) Thinking about the period from the start of your (religious) life or pilgrimage until today, can you divide it into periods? (Maybe three or four?) Can you then use a few words to say something about your spiritual state and walk at each of the stages, starting with early childhood?-

B Begin your own life story

Early Childhood

Start with your early childhood and summarize it in a few words.

Now tell your story Try to answer some or any of these questions as you go along, telling your story in an interesting and connected way as you might to your grandchildren.

- 1) How did your childhood begin? (Documents)
as you grew up: What were the events in the world or West Africa Ghana or Cape Coast at the time? What were the positive and negative spiritual factors? Include such matters as baptism or dedication, who looked after you, potty trained and socialised you, played with you, told you stories, (what sort of stories) advised you, told you what to do, gave you medicine, beads, money, punished and rewarded you. What was God doing in your life when you were very young?
- 2) How did your child's life go on in the house? What were the events going on at the same time (see a) above) What were the positive and negative factors?(see a) above). also who were in your peer group- Good/Bad? What effect did they have on you? What did you do together; good? (Give examples) Bad ?(Give examples) Did you celebrate birthdays- with whom? How? What else did you celebrate at home? What was God doing in your life through your family and your peer group?
- 3) What were your church experiences? Did your parents/grandparents go with you? Did they have any role to play in the church such as sidesman? What did you enjoy? What did you dislike? What did you learn that you can remember through songs and memorising? Were you regular in attending? Did you have special good clothes for church? Can you remember any special church celebrations? What was God doing in your life through your church?
- 4) Describe your first day at school. What were the events going on at the time (see a) above) What were the positive and negative factors? (see a) and b) above). Did the church have any role in your first school? (Documents?)

- 5) Can you use one or two words to characterise each period/aspect of your early childhood?

C Carry on through the later periods

1) You have identified a few periods in your life:-perhaps three or four. If you are keeping up you will now have dealt with your ancestors and early childhood. Now that you have got the idea, please could you continue your account giving each period you have identified a short heading, and considering the spiritual factors positive and negative at each stage.

2) Can you say what you think God was doing in your life at each of these periods? At the beginning? In the middle? At the end? Who did he use? How did he make himself known? What were the stumbling blocks at each period? How were they overcome?

D Evaluation

1) Did any changes of place or country have any influence on your spiritual walk, for good or ill?

2) Did any changes of denomination take place at any point? How important was this in your spiritual walk with God.