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**“REACTIONS TO PROBLEMS IN LIFE”
A CASE STUDY OF THE AKANS OF GHANA**

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**THIS LONG ESSAY IS SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF PASTORAL
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STUDENT'S DECLARATION

“REACTIONS TO PROBLEMS IN LIFE” A CASE STUDY OF THE AKANS OF GHANA

BY

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I, the undersigned, hereby declare that the materials used in this long essay are obtained through my personal reading, research and critical reflections. It is submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Bachelor of Arts in Religious Studies. It has never been submitted to any other college or university for academic credit. All sources have been cited in full and acknowledge.

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DATE: 22/10/2004

This long essay has been submitted for examination with my approval as the college supervisor.

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**MRS EMMY M. GICHINGA, MA.
(SUPERVISOR)**

DATE: 22/10/2004

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my family, relations and friends whose continuous love and support have helped me to reach this far in my academic achievements.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I wish to express my sincere thanks and appreciation to my moderator Mrs Emmy M. Gichinga for her support and encouragement, which motivated me to persevere to the realization of this project. Despite her numerous engagements, she always found time to go through the work and make corrections and useful suggestions – with heartfelt appreciation I once more say ‘thank you’ to Mrs Emmy M. Gichinga.

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Many thanks to all relations and friends for their contribution to my education and formation. May God bless you all.

ABSTRACT

In today's world, Pastoral Counseling has become an important aspect of evangelization. Many Christians and would be Christians are faced with the negative effect of the secular world. This affects their worldview and the way they react to problems in life. Most Akans are stuck in the dilemma between good and bad cultural values, which is brought by the modern secular world. To understand how the Akans react to problems in their life, one has to understand the Akan universe, that is, their culture within the entire community.

This work is meant to help the new pastoral counselor among the Akans to learn the good cultural values of the people in order to be able to help them react to problems in their lives.

It is also meant to help the new Pastor/Priest among the Akans to learn how to spread the Good News of Christ without ignoring the strong, but good cultural values of the Akans.

It is also to draw the attention of the pastoral counselor that, the Bible is an indispensable source book in pastoral counseling. The pastoral Counselor is therefore advised to use the scripture in his/her counseling while keeping the culture of the people in mind.

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INTRODUCTION

“Traditionally, the African has a way of resolving life problems quite different from counseling in the western world. Pastoral counseling as practiced in the West is a new discipline in Africa.”¹ In this work, I intend to localise my research work on the Akan people of Ghana. Counseling in the view of the West, “is a professional service provided by a competent counselor, psychologist, or other mental health specialist that is intended to promote individual adaptability to changing life demands by helping clients develop or enhance a variety of personal-social, coping, and decision-making skills, or by helping clients to alter dysfunctional or undesired patterns of living.”² A more precise definition is given by Emmy M. Gichinga, which I think best fits the Akan understanding of counseling. “Basically counseling is a relationship. In this relationship, one person helps another to understand and solve their problems. So it has a Goal – it is a Helping Relationship.”³

To understand the Akan people and how they react to problems in their lives, one needs to have knowledge of the relationship of the individual to his own clan, tribe and family. It is indeed very difficult for a non-African to grasp the importance of the extended family system. Having knowledge of the symbolic Language, rituals and myths that is part of the Akan culture is necessary to understanding the experience of the Akan. Pastoral Counseling in Ghana, as in any part of the African continent, needs to be integrated within the context of the worldview of the culture of the people. To

¹ Wicks & Estadt, *Pastoral Counseling in a Global Church*, Orbis Books, N.Y., 1993, 82.

² Ronch, Judah & Co., *The Counseling Source Book*, Crossroad, N.Y., 1994, 175.

³ Emmy M. Gichinga, *Basic Counseling Skills*, Gem Counselling services, Nairobi, 1999, 2.

understand the Akans of Ghana therefore, one has to have knowledge of their history, their culture, and their world-view in order to be able to know how they react to problems in their lives.

In this research work, I intend to give a brief historical background of the Akan, their traditional system of government and that of their world-view. In chapter two, I shall discuss the Akan concept of causation of problems. This will be followed in chapter three by the role played by traditional people in counseling. In chapter four of this work, I shall give some theological application and recommendations on how Priests and Pastors can do pastoral counseling among the Akans by using both the Akan traditional values and the Christian values in helping people to react to problems in life. I shall give concluding remarks to end my work.

CHAPTER ONE

THE AKANS OF GHANA

Historical Background

The Akans are one of the main ethnic groups in West Africa inhabiting the forest zone of Ghana, namely Ashanti, Kwahu, Akwapin, Wassa, Akyem, Ahanta and Nzema. The rest are the Akwamu, Aowin, Brong, Sefwi, Denkyira and Dwira. Besides these, there are other Akan groups in Cote d'Ivoire, namely, the Agni, Baule and the Ajukuw.⁴ These groups occupy the area between Eastern Cote d'Ivoire, (between 80-400 km inland) and the Volta River.

The origin of the Akans is shrouded in unwritten myths and tales. It is believed that the ancestors of the Akans were among the people who fled from the medieval kingdom of Ghana in the Western Sudan to avoid accepting the Islamic faith when the Almoravids invaded the kingdom during the second half of the eleventh century. A lot of doubt has been raised about this. The extent of the flight in AD 1076 cannot be fully assessed. In actual fact, there is no written record or archaeological evidence backing the information except the oral tradition of the people.

Following the statement that the ancestors came from medieval Ghana, attempts have been made to draw attention to the similarities between the cultural practice in the medieval kingdom of Western Sudan and that of the Akan of today. For instance, T.A. Osei made reference "to the matrilineal inheritance among the inhabitants of both

⁴ From a paper delivered at Nkyidmo Festival on 1st October, 1975 by Nana Oduro Numapau II - Esumejahene (Chief of Esumeja - Ghana).

sides.”⁵ For him, it is not safe to jump to a conclusion from the apparent similarity of customs, since there are common traits of custom among the people of Western Africa in general. Hence, it may not be true that matrilineal inheritance was the rule in medieval Ghana. The reason is based on the statement in the account of medieval Ghana by the Arabic scholars Al-Berkri Viz “that the only persons allowed to wear tailored clothes in the medieval kingdom were the king and his heir precisely, that is to say, his sister’s son.”⁶

It is in the memory of every Akan that their ancestors after wandering from the North between the Black Volta and canoe rivers finally settled in the region of modern Takyiman, Banda and Gyaaman. It is from here that a group moved south into the forest and settled at the confluence of the Pra and Offin Rivers, where, it has been suggested, they developed the different Akan institutions and culture. Presumably the ancestors of the Akans entered modern Ghana around the twelfth or thirteenth century. They started their forest state around the sixteenth century or during the second half of the previous century. The Akans groupings organised themselves into various states. With their own system of inheritance, a number of governments emerged to rule their people. It is very interesting to note that almost all of Akans were having the same system of government.

⁵ Osei Nwabra, T.A., & Odunsi, F.T.O., *A Short History of West Africa: A.D. 1000 to the Present*, Hill & Wang, New York, 1973, 113-114

⁶ Vide Flora Shaw & Lady Lugard, *A Tropical Dependence*, copied from J.B. Danquah, *The Akan Doctrine of God*, Frank Case Co. Ltd., London, 1969, 198.

THE AKAN TRADITIONAL SYSTEMS OF GOVERNMENT

The Akan see the origin and the development of the universe as the handwork of Onyame (the Supreme Being), creator of all things in the universe. He first created man as his companion and later created other things to be with his wife 'Asaase Yaa' (the earth goddess).

The Supreme Being was closer to the earth but due to the disobedience of human beings, God created other spirits and brought them to the earth as his servants, with the primary aim of running errands for the Supreme Being and also to control the activities of human beings. The ancestors of the Akans also have some control on their people. These together are called 'Nananom' and they are the invisible leaders of the Akans. For the mere fact that the Nananom are spirits and cannot interact with the people naturally, there are institutions of human representatives who politically organise their people and rule them.

Politically, the Akan States are ruled by Kings who are regarded as sacred persons, and in each state the head of the hierarchical system is the 'Omanhene' or the paramount chief who is the final authority in the State affairs. Each paramount chief traces his lineage back to the leader of the 'clan' who is usually taken to be the first to settle in that particular area from Takyiman. It is interesting to know that the Akans believed that the movement of the clan to the present site was not by a chance, but an organized one. By this, is meant that the first clan to settle in an area acquired automatic leadership while others who joined later became the subjects of the first clan. Thus the first clan becomes the Royal clan. This mode of appointment to the kingship is by

selection from the same clan and it is done solely by the Queen Mother who is also from the same clan but considered as the mother of the king. The queen Mother is consulted on matrimonial affairs within the royal lineage. "She has her own stool, elders and spokesmen and she hears household cases and disputes between members of the royal household. She is a member of the chief court and receives her share of court fines and fees."⁷

In the installation rites of a Chief, the chief elect goes through liminal period of seven days in a secluded house to be taught the ethics and the culture of the palace.⁸ On the day of installation, he is gently lowered and raised three times over the blackened stool of the ancestors believed to be the founder of the lineage. By this ceremony, the chief is believed to have been imbued with the spirit of his ancestors. There and then, his person becomes sacred as it were, he is now been addressed as 'Nana' (Grand father or ancestor) by all irrespective of their age. The chief as the occupant of the stool represents all those who have occupied it before him. He becomes their representative before the ancestors, as well as the vicar of the ancestors among them. Coming down to the structure of the society is the family system with each family represented by the 'Abusua Payin' (the head of the family). Though with limited powers over the members of the family, he is the spokesman for the group and sometimes he is given a special function in the village palace as a member of the council of elders.

⁷ Peter Sarpong, *Girls Nubility Rites in Ashanti*, Ghana Publishing Corporation, Accra-Tema, 1997, 3.

⁸ **CHIEF**. Leaders of the Akan who are properly enstooled. That could be the paramount chief, divisional chief or sub chief.

In another development, “the Akan family system is a much wider circle of members than the word suggests in Europe or North America.”⁹ In Akan traditional society, ‘the family includes children, parents, grand parents, uncles, aunts, brothers, and sisters who may have their own children and other immediate relatives.’¹⁰ The family therefore, for the Akan, is equivalent to all descendants of one common ancestor. In this sense, a family may be made up of many members with many females who at marriage bring back home their children. The Akan extended family system is traceable to blood relation. According to Amponsah Kwabena, “the Akan family (Abusua) consists of people who can trace their genealogical connection to a common female ancestor.”¹¹ It also includes the departed relatives whom Mbiti refers to as the living-dead.

The Akan family and the matrilineal system of inheritance place the woman in a very respectable position in the family. In order to understand the religion and the forces that affect the mind of the traditional Akan, there is need to look at the Akan world – view.

THE AKAN WORLD – VIEW

The Akan like any other West African ethnic group is very religious to the extent that one cannot put any demarcation between secular life and religious life. In other words, as Kofi Asare Opoku put it, “it is no exaggeration, therefore, that in

⁹ Mbiti J.S., *African Religions and Philosophy*, Heinemann Educational Books Ltd., London, 1969, 106.

¹⁰ Kwabenah Amponsah, *Topics in West African Traditional Religion*, Vol. 1, Adwinsa Publishers Ltd., Accra, 1977, 47.

traditional African, religion is life and life is religion". He continues by saying that, Africans are engaged in religion in whatever they do, be it farming, fishing or hunting or simply eating, drinking or traveling. Religion gives meaning and significance to their life's both in this world and in the next. This assertion about the African is also true of the Akan.

The Akans have the idea of a Supreme Being who is the source of all that exist. Dennis M. Warren has this to say: "for the Akan, it is quite clear as history and cultural experience point out, that the concept of Supreme God was known long before the arrival of Christian missionaries."¹² Among the Akans, people answer greetings in reference to what the Supreme Being has done in their life. The Akan proverb *Obi nkyere abofra onyame* means: "Nobody teaches a child who God is." This shows that the people believe in the Supreme Being. An example of a typical greeting 'How are you?' is typically answered, 'by God's grace...' The Supreme Being is also seen as the helper of the helpless and the vindicator of the innocent. A person who feels unfairly treated would summon the oppressor with the words, "I give all to God" or "God will pay you back." An Akan proverb "it is God who scratches the body of an animal without a tail showing how He cares for the needy."¹³

Most people wear charms and amulets for protection and to show the presence of the gods. Normally, sacrifices are made to appease the gods, to ask for protection and

¹¹ Kofi Asare Opoku, *West African Traditional Religion*, FEP International Publishers Ltd., Accra, 1978, 1.

¹² Dennis Warren M., *The Akan of Ghana: An Overview of the Ethnographic Literature*, Pointer Ltd., Accra, 1986, 25.

¹³ See Wicks & Estadt, 84.

to help them solve their problems. Besides, there are many other spirits working around the universe.

In the Akan world, spirits are grouped into social and antisocial. The ancestors (Nananom Nsamafor) are social spirits who are still members of the extended family. They are the dead members of the family now in a place called "Asamando". These ancestors are highly venerated by the living and are also fed with food and drinks. Some of these social spirits are divinities (Abosom) who are specially created by God to mediate between the living and the dead. They inhabit the physical features like the rivers, lake, mountains, forest and the sea. While some are in towns, some are brought to the house to be a private divinity for a person or a family. They are consulted in times of troubles (sickness) and can change people's bad destiny to good by appealing to God. Divinities have their priests and shrines where they can be consulted. Fridays are mostly the days for consultation.

On the other hand, the antisocial spirits are those that are hostile to human beings. They threaten, inflict injuries, bring sickness or kill people when they come into contact with them. These spirits are not venerated or mentioned during invocation.

The personal spirit (Sunsum), according to archbishop Sarpong, accounts for a person's character, (Suban) give strength to the body combating opposing spirits and determines how brave a person is ...¹⁴ The spirit of the father (Ntoroo) protects the child from sickness and mishaps.

¹⁴ Peter Sarpong, Unpublished notes on West African Traditional Religions, 6.

The Akans believe that destiny (Nkrabea) is what controls the activities of the person. It gives the notion of predestination and character of a person. Name is given to a person according to the day in the week in which he/she was born but real names or proper names are the ones, which are given to persons during naming ceremony. These names are normally that of ancestors or grandparents or honorable members in the society. Such a person or ancestor is said to have influence on the adult life of the child to be initiated.

Though the ancestors are supposed to watch and protect the living, the Akans and for that matter "Ghanaians does not worship 'the' ancestors as Christians worship God or Moslems Allah. They venerates them, honour them and respect them, and this differential attitude occupies a big part of their religious life."¹⁵ The ancestors play a big role in the life of the Akans. The ancestors are able to provide children to the barren, assure a good harvest, reveal the cause of calamities, and provide cures and answers to problems.

This discussion so far about the historical background of the Akans, their traditional and political system, and their world – view, though brief, will serve as a stepping stone to help one understand the behaviour of the Akans and their reactions to problems in life. In chapter two, I shall discuss the concept of causation of problems among the Akans of Ghana.

CHAPTER TWO

THE CONCEPT OF CAUSATION OF PROBLEMS

The individual and his/her relationship with the community:

In the Akan traditional set up, an individual can only be known in relation to the whole community or clan. The “we” aspect is more emphasized than the “I” aspect in the community. According to Pobee, “Sociologists have long pointed out that while Descartes philosophized *cogito ergo sum*, i.e., I think, therefore, I am. The Akan society would rather argue *congnatus ergo sum*, i.e., I belong by blood relationship, therefore, I am.”¹⁶ In other words, in Akan society, a man fully realizes himself as a man belonging to a society. There is meaning and purpose to his life only because he belongs to a family, a clan and a tribe.

The Akans have the belief that human beings are made of the elements from Nyame, the Supreme Being, the mother, and the father. The Mogya or “blood from the mother,” makes the individual a biological being. From the father, the individual receives the sunsum (spirit). The sunsum is the aspect that gives an individual personality. There is no life without the seal of the Supreme Being, which is the okra (soul).

The Akan belong by birth to two distinct kinship groups. There are seven Mogya or ‘Blood’ clans known as Ebusua. Each individual belongs to one of these Ebusua groups, which is determined through the mother. It must be emphasized that the woman

¹⁵ Peter Sarpong, *Ghana In Retrospect*, Ghana Publishing Corporation, Tema, 1974, 42.

¹⁶Pobee, J S., *Towards an African Theology*, Abingdon Press, Nashville, Tennessee, 1979, 49

alone can transmit the mogya, which gives the individual the right to belong to a particular 'Ebusua.'

The 'Ebusua' is an extended family system in which all members see themselves as blood relations. One could travel from the south of Ghana Fanteland and go north to Asuantseland and still be considered a member of the Ebusua there and hold the same totem.

Through the father the individual belongs to the Ntoro group. This group is still maintained in places where they have Asofo groups. Asofo groups were military groups in the olden days.

Through the okra (soul), given by the Supreme Being, the individual receives his or her destiny. There is the belief that before the individual is born the Supreme Being gives the person the free will to choose his or her destiny. The destiny dictates the type of life that person wants to live. From birth, some are destined to be rich or poor, healthy or sick, chiefs or servants. Most Rev. Dr. Peter Sarpong, Catholic Archbishop of Kumasi has asserted that, "destiny to the Akan is a post-event invocation of the Akan. When everything goes on well, it is not destiny, but when events do not go as the Akan anticipates, it is destiny."¹⁷

The Akan sees his or her worth as an individual as he or she contributes to the well -- being of the extended family. Uncles and aunts are expected to take care not only of their children but of their nieces and nephews who continue to maintain the Ebusua lineage. Children have the responsibility to maintain uncles and aunts as well as their own parents. Everybody has the responsibility of maintaining the family, both Ebusua

and ntoro cults, rites, ceremonies, ties, secrets, and so on. One irresponsible family member could bring a curse to the lineage as a whole. All things belonging to one person are held in trust for the not yet born, the living, and the living-dead (ancestors). To strengthen the sense of belonging and community, all stages of the individual's life – birth, puberty, adolescence, marriage, death – are marked with communal celebrations.

Initiation Rites:

There are symbolic meaning attached to initiation rites. Through initiation rites, “the youth are ritually introduced to the art of communal living.”¹⁸ One great important aspect of this rite is to introduce the person into adult life: He or she is now allowed to share in the full privileges and duties of the community. The initiate is incorporated into the community.

1) **Birth:** It is belief that, birth rites start from the moment of conception. Many Africans who have been barren for a long time consult native doctors or religious priests, including Christian and native priests, to help them have children. When such children are born, they may be given a name from the shrine of the particular god who produced him or her or may even be given a circumstantial name. Parents and families of such children are required to perform certain rites periodically to appease the god. Failure to perform such rites may result in a lot of calamities for the individual or the whole family. There are instances when people who have traveled far from home go back to sacrifice to the gods to ward off bad luck.

¹⁷ See Wicks & Estadt, 86-87.

¹⁸ J.S. Mbiti, 121.

Children are normally named after ancestors. Prayers are said invoking the Supreme Being, the gods and ancestors to be present and shower their blessings on the child. Africans believe that people take up the characteristics of the person after whom they were named. With the Akans in Ghana, two glasses, one with water and the other with gin, are placed in the midst of the people gathered. Three drops of water and gin are dropped on the child's tongue with the saying, "if you say its water, let it be water; if it is gin, let it be gin." This symbolizes that the child's yes should be yes and no should be no. This prepares the person to be truthful and responsible in the community in which he/she has been incorporated.

2) Puberty/adulthood: The transition from infancy to adulthood may be considered both as physiological phenomenon (in which case we speak of puberty, properly so-called) and as a sociological fact. In the case of sociological adulthood, the distinction is also sometimes made between the access that one is given to sexual life, with its marital implications, and the social rights and duties one assumes as an adult in everyday life.

In initiation ceremonies, the neophyte may have to undergo such ordeals as circumcision and bodily operations which result in cicatrices on the face, stomach and other parts of the body; it is essential that whiles these operations are being performed the neophyte shows no sign of pain. One who screams while he or she is being operated upon may be hard put to it to find a wife or husband. Such a person has shown by his shameful reaction to the operation that he is still a child, not a man or woman and therefore not entitled to marry. For, the reason for these 'cruel' exercises is to find out

whether indeed the individual is prepared to assume all the responsibilities of an adult, which is not child's play. In the past the boy took to the trade or occupation of his father, even though the Akan society is matrilineal and he was likely to succeed his maternal uncle or inherit his property, and the girl that of her mother.

3) Sex and Marriage: The most important effect of initiation ceremonies is that they introduce one into sex and marriage life. In the Akan society, girls, and to a lesser extent, boys, who have not been initiated are not supposed to know anything by experience about sex. Boys and girls who married for the first time were said to have been taught how to perform the sex act.

A girl who indulged in sexual adventure prior to her initiation was severely punished, sometimes with death, particularly if she had not reached physiological puberty. Sex was for the adult. If then she wanted to explore the possibilities of sex, then she had first to inform the community that she was an adult. This she did through her initiation ceremonies. It is because of the close association between sex and marriage on the one hand and the initiation ceremonies on the other that the latter is sometimes referred to as nubility rites.

4) Death: Death is also seen as transitional and a continuation of life here on earth. To the African, and especially, the Akan, nothing happens without a cause. Death may have a physical cause, but the Akan will go beyond the physical to find spiritual causes. 'Death may come through the breaking of a taboo or oath or being cursed.'¹⁹ People also believe that an enemy may have used witchcraft, sorcery, or evil magic to cause death.

In the opinion of Mpolo and Kalu, the extended family structure provides mechanisms, which reduce stress and share whatever guilt feelings, might arise due to personal or intrafamilial conflicts. The existence of a set of rules which regulated individual behaviours and helped the individual to pass smoothly from one life cycle to another with a sense of emotional security²⁰

Akan Concept of Causation of Problems:

Many Africans see the individual as a psychosomatic whole comprising body, soul, and spirit. As mentioned earlier, every human being has a spirit – Ntoro – derived from the father, and this spirit is the life force of a person. The Akans believe that before a person is born into the world of the living, that person bargains with the Supreme Being about the type of kra (soul) he or she wants to be. Whatever happens to an individual happens because of the type of 'kra' the person has. For example, if a person is doing well in business, it may be attributed to his good kra. Conversely, if things go wrong it may be due to that person's bad kra.

The Akans, before undertaking major issues in life, often consult with diviners to find out what type of kra they possess. This determines the person's destiny, which can be changed through rituals, sacrifices, and purification. "Even though sickness, death, and natural catastrophes are inevitable parts of our existence, they are seen as intrusions in life and therefore unnatural. Attempts are made through divination to

¹⁹ Joseph Glunney, in Wicks & Estadt, 90.

²⁰ Mpolo M., & Kalu W., *The Risk of Growth*. Counseling and Pastoral Theology in the African Context, Uzima Press Ltd., Nairobi, Kenya, 1985, 105

understand them and find remedies for them.”²¹ Many Africans and especially the Akans of Ghana believe that God does not punish people in the hereafter. Punishment comes in the present life. This means that, “misfortunes may be interpreted as indicating that the sufferer has broken some moral or ritual conduct against God, the spirits, the elders or other members of his society.”²²

The Akans of Ghana like most African communities, differentiate between two kinds of sickness. Some sickness may be *soryarba* or “spiritual illness,” and cannot be treated without ritual purification’s and sacrifices. The other kind of sickness, which is seen as “natural illness,” may be treated with modern Western medicine, or traditional African medicine. The people usually consult with diviners to be certain there are no spiritual causes for the illness.

Many societies in Africa have communal or tribal taboos and moral and ethical laws. A breach of these may bring disequilibrium to the person who broke them and his or her family and perhaps the entire community. “The fathers may eat sour grapes and the children’s teeth may be set on edge.” People believe that the rewards and punishment of one generation may be passed on from generation to generation.

Joseph Ghunney in Wicks and Estadt gave the story that, A man committed incest against his stepchild at the seashore. That particular area was believed also to be the residence of a god. Unfortunately, during this time the fishermen of the vicinity were experiencing a bad harvest. The offender was not only reprimanded for breaking the taboo of the society but also for infuriating the gods. The punishment – the poor

²¹ See Wicks & Estadt, 91

²² See also J.S. Mbiti, 210

fishing harvest – affected the whole community. He was not the only one required to pacify the gods in order to neutralize the consequences of his action; the onus fell on the whole community. Akans believe that, the reaction of an individual to a serious problem is a reaction of the whole community.

The Akans believe that breaking of Oaths causes many problems for the individual, his/her family and the society at large. Many problems facing people may be due to the breaking of Oaths, not necessarily by the person affected, but probably by his parents, grandparents or great grandparents. As said earlier on, “the fathers may eat sour grapes and the children’s teeth may be set on edge.” There are customs, laws, regulations and taboos that govern conduct in society and a breach of the right conduct amounts to a moral evil and the consequence may be difficult to endure. These consequences may affect the whole of man’s life, his marriage life, his/her business, his/her health, and his relationship with the community. Among the Akan people of Ghana, nothing sorrowful happens by ‘accident’ or ‘chance’: it must all be ‘caused’ by some agent (either human or spiritual). In the next chapter, I shall discuss how these problems can be solve in the Akan universe.

CHAPTER THREE

COUNSELING AS A WAY OF PROBLEM SOLVING

The role of traditional counselors in problem solving:

Customarily, those who are seriously disturbed are counseled in different ways. Counseling among the Akans is not only done due to the fact that somebody has problems but is also done as a 'preventive counseling.' Individuals are counseled right from pregnancy through initiation rites of birth, puberty, marriage, and death. Individuals and groups are counseled in order to avoid calamities. A good example is when girls reached the age of puberty: they are confined in one place for almost a week so that they can be educated on how to become good sexual partners, housewives, parent's et cetera. Specialist are normally consulted in every stage of one's life.

A central aspect of counseling among the Akans is divination. Pobee says that, 'the Akan has a religious ontology.' For the Akan, any physical experience of the individual might have a religious aspect. Divination is therefore seen as a fundamental tool in diagnosing the supernatural causes of the problem and the cause of treatment.

Diviners are believed to have perceptions into the unknown including the spirit world, the unseen, and the future. They also have an understanding of the laws of nature that bring disequilibrium or equilibrium to individuals and the whole community.

After oracular diagnosis, the diviners now prescribe treatment. The treatment can simply be alms giving, taking ritual bath or wearing an amulet or communal sacrifice.

It is believed that a diviner is an agent and mouthpiece of spirits or gods. It is sometimes difficult to distinguish between priests, who serve the gods and diviners. Priests have symbolic authority because they are the go-betweens for humans and gods. Priests interpret the gods, so they are also consulted when there are problems that may be ascribed to the gods. They have a powerful role in the Akan universe. Priests may operate as diviners and also prescribe herbal medicines for curing disease. Priests/Pastors of the Christian Church therefore have the powerful role as counselors to the people they live with.

The Akan adage '*Opanyin nnyɛ wo fie a due,*' meaning, 'if you do not have any elder or older person in your house, you are in trouble,' is indicative of the responsibility of family elders to counsel people. Old age is always equated with wisdom, therefore people go to the elderly (senior citizens) for counsel. When any individual misbehaves in public or has a bad character, older relatives are blamed for it. People normally go to senior citizens, who are the receptors of wisdom, for advice. Giving advice is an essential ingredient in counseling with the Akan.

Every village and town in the Akan traditional area has a Chief. As mentioned in the first chapter of this work, a person is made a chief through hereditary succession. The chiefs are the people who first settled in the area. By right of birth and ancestry they 'own' the community and everything in the community. Chiefs have elders in different areas in the town or village who are heads of their own areas. They are accountable to the chief. Chiefs have their own councils, which include all the elders of the town or village and others who are put there by the chief. They also form a family

court or council to settle cases in the community. Busia and Forde summarize the role of the chief as follows:

“The most important aspect of Ashante Chieftaincy was undoubtedly the religious one. The Ashante Chief fulfilled a sacral role. His stool, the symbol of his office, was a sacral emblem. It represented the community, their solidarity, their permanence, and the continuity. The Chief was the link between the living and dead and his highest role was when he officiated in the public religious roles, which gave expression to the community values. He then acted as the representative of the community, whose members are believed to include those who are still to be born. The sacral aspect of the Chief’s role was a powerful sanction of the Chief’s authority.”²³

Most of the sacral roles of the Chief in the Ashante society who are also Akans, has been transferred as part of the pastoral authority of the pastor, priest, prophet, of the Christian church. With the advent of Christianity, the church has taken an important role in dealing with issues in life through its representatives. This pastoral authority includes the right to do pastoral counseling in the community.

The role of family council in resolving individual and community conflicts:

I have talked a lot about the place of the family and community in the life of the individual in the Akan traditional setting. “Life is only life in community.”²⁴ The family, I believe is the backbone of Akan lifestyle and ethics. It is, therefore, imperative at one point or the other to involve the family in therapy. As already said, a family member may not be a blood relative, but people who have been in *loco parentis* for the individual may sometimes be more than biological relatives.

²³ K.A. Busia, & D. Forde, eds., “*The Ashanti*,” *African Worlds*, Oxford University Press, London, 1970, 190.

²⁴ Appiah K., Kubi, & Tetteh, S., eds. *African Theology en Route*. Orbis Books, Maryknoll, New York, 1979, 70.

Anytime there is a problem to be solved, there are family councils. Members of such councils are people who are normally regarded as people with good morals and also wise.

People are vested with authority to be members of the family council due to their age and status. Those who are *ebusuapanyine* (heads of extended families) have a duty to perform as moderators in the family council.

The ancestors depend on these people as the mentor and restorer of order and peace in the family. Members of the family council are accountable to the ancestors, the living and the yet unborn for faithful use of this power given to them. A person who becomes a moderator of a family council can ask for neighbours, kinspeople to serve as jurors. "The jurors are not expected to find who is guilty or not guilty (even though this is part of their duties), but they are required to help settle differences and bring social equilibrium" (Joseph Ghunney).

The family council begins their function by pouring libation in order to invoke the presence of the ancestors, the yet unborn and the good spirits of the society, since they are the ultimate authorities in the family.

The client tells his or her story to the council. With insights gained at individual sessions, the counselor may come in and interject his or her observation. The client, after telling the story, leaves the group for a while to allow them to deliberate on what they have heard, to make observations, and to put forth recommendations.

The Akan finds healing and wholeness only in reconciliation with others and the spiritual world. "A society is in equilibrium when its customs are maintained, its goals

attained, and the spirit powers given regular and adequate recognition.”²⁵ Healing and wholeness of the individual in distress may involve some rituals recommended by the family council. Some of the rites are standard. There are some that may have alternatives. Depending on the individual’s beliefs, the counselor may lead the individual to bargain for alternatives.

The Language use in counseling:

Symbols and symbolic language are used by the Akans to express their experience in everyday life. In Ghana, one may see almost all-public transportation vehicles with statements written on them. These statements depict the innermost feelings of the persons who write them.

This symbolic language is an important tool in counseling among the Akans. The symbolic language may include myths, stories, proverbs, metaphors, music, and others. “Doing pastoral counseling means becoming aware of and, whenever appropriate, incorporating into the therapeutic process myths and symbols found in the assumptive and cultural world of the individual or group of individuals seeking counseling.”²⁶

In counseling, clients should be encouraged to tell stories about their lives and use their own metaphors and symbolic language to help them gain insights into their problems.

²⁵Dickson Kwesi, A., *Theology in Africa*, Orbis Books, Maryknoll, New York, 1984, 30.

²⁶ See Mpolo M., & Kalu W , 114.

The value of music in African therapy should be appreciated. The Akans, particularly the Ashantis, have different kinds of traditional music, which express different types of moods. For example, during funerals, the adowa music is played for the grieving families to dance to. Not quite ten years ago members of the methodist church in Ghana were banned from traditional drumming and dancing because the missionaries erroneously interpreted it as idolatry. Traditionally, it is used to help grieving persons express their feelings and to help them through the grieving process. I believe music and dance therapy is an important component of pastoral counseling with the Akan society.

One cannot overemphasize the importance of rites and rituals in Akan therapy. I cannot imagine any occasion in the Akan life that is without rites and rituals. The pastoral counselor should therefore use whatever is traditionally good and acceptable to help bring psychological and spiritual relief in the person.

In the Christian church, there are so many religious resources that can be used during counseling. These may include prayers, the sacraments, hymn singing, et cetera. My experience among the Akans shows that almost all clients expect counselors to use religious resource, particularly prayer, before or after each session. Most churches in Ghana are adopting a lot of these Christian rites to help the deeply troubled. Care must be taken not to hurt somebody who happened not to belong to the same faith as the counselor. As Emmy M. Gichinga clearly stated in her book, "whereas one might be eager to present (his or her) faith, there is need to be wise as the appropriate time to introduce your faith. When people are hurt, they initially require empathy and just a

listening ear.... You must respect what other people believe even though you may not agree with them. Learn before you teach."²⁷

In my research about counseling among the Akans, I was told that, the Winneba Methodist Church in Ghana has developed a rite for widows and widowers to help them go through the grieving process. Confirmation of adolescents in the church is now replacing puberty rites. Unfortunately, the moral lessons adolescents are taught in traditional puberty rites are lost in the church's confirmation service.

Clinebell sounds a note of warning about the use of religious resources in counseling. Accordingly, that:

- 1) they should be used sparingly, only after one is aware of the counselee's needs; 2) they should be used in such a way that they do not diminish the individual's sense of responsibility; 3) they should not be used in ways that create magical expectation or arouse guilt about them; 4) they should be used in supportive, crises, confrontational, and existential counseling, and less in insight counseling; 5) they should be used to deepen a relationship and not as a substitute for relating.²⁸

Pastoral counseling with the Akans is incomplete without moral or ethical counseling. In my discussion on causation of disease and problems in the last chapter, I asserted that the breaking of a taboo or social norm could be associated with disease or problems.

It is a fact that there are a lot of "do's" and "don'ts" in the Akan society, the breaking of which bring psychological distress to many people. It is my conviction that a lot of conversion disorders are due to the pain, guilt, and shame that accompany the breaking of social norms.

²⁷ See Emmy M., Gichinga, 35.

²⁸ Clinebell H., *Basic Types of Pastoral Counseling*, Abingdon Press, Nashville, Tennessee, '966, 66

The important task of the pastoral counselor is to help clients deal with the moral claims of the society and their own cognitive thoughts about it. The pastoral counselor should not in any way be judgmental but do his/her best to give assurance of grace as found in the love of God in Christ Jesus.

A comment made by Firet's in his book on the dynamics in pastoring best summarizes what I want to put across to the pastoral counselor, He says:

"Pastoral care is ... an address to an equal.... Perhaps this person has lost her way; she is flooded by a sense of inadequacy. But pastoral care means that she is addressed in the language of respect and dignity. However undignified and worthless she seems, pastoral care is primarily an acknowledgment of her in her dignity. However irresponsibly he may have lived, pastoral care is an acknowledgment of him in his freedom and responsibility, an acknowledgment which must often assume the form of helping him regain acceptance and the experience of that freedom and responsibility."²⁹

Pastoral care is a helping relationship. In this relationship, one person helps the other to understand and solve his/her problems. Since the Akans can only live in relation to the other, doing pastoral counseling with them should not pose serious problems. In the next chapter, I shall give recommendations on how the Christian Pastor, and for that matter a Catholic priest can do pastoral counseling among the Akans of Ghana, while taking into consideration the cultural influence of the people.

²⁹ G.M. Firet, *Dynamics in Pastoring*, Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1986, 267.

CHAPTER FOUR

THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The use of the Bible as a source book for counselors:

As a Christian pastoring the people of God, one cannot do pastoral counseling without the use of scripture no matter which culture one finds himself/herself. Inculturation can be done but the use of scripture to bring peace, peace of the risen Lord to the troubled heart cannot be ignored.

Non Christian professionals in the field of counseling may doubt the authenticity of the Bible in counseling or how the Bible can be meaningful to every human problem. Dr. Larry Crabb asked the following questions related to the Bible and its use in counseling: "Is the Bible a textbook for counseling – or isn't it? Does it provide authoritative help in thinking through the tough questions a counselor is forced to ask when he involves himself/herself in the messy details of life – or doesn't it? Can a counselor learn from studying scripture how to help someone overcome depression, or must he turn to other sources? Are there answers to questions such as 'How do I handle a counselee's resistance?' and what really causes bulimia? Or was the Bible never intended by God to provide answers to 'psychological questions?'"³⁰

Answers given by the Bible to such questions above may not be direct but it is always correct and accurate with some interpretations and application. Any answers given by scripture are to be authoritative since that is the word of God. In the third

³⁰ Larry Crabb, *Understanding People (Reaching deeper through biblical counseling)*, Marshall Pickering Publishers, London, 1987, 46

chapter of this work, I gave two common causes of problems among the Akans. For the Akans, physical/natural causes always have some hidden spiritual background. Also, moral causes have spiritual determiners. This therefore implies that the bible will be a good source book for counseling among the Akans of Ghana who are notoriously religious and spiritual.

Again, one may ask: is the bible a sufficient source for giving answers to every particular question that a counselor might face? Larry Crabb gave a useful response to the sufficiency of the bible – “Yes, the bible is sufficient because it provides either direct information or authoritative categories for answering all questions about how life should be lived on this earth and about how it can be lived according to an effective pattern. Whenever the Bible (does not give clear or direct answer to a particular problem) biblical categories provide a framework for thinking through an adequate response to that concern.”³¹ For Dr. Larry Crabb, counseling can be considered biblical “if it never violates clear biblical teaching about doctrine or ethics. The concern is not whether our ideas about counseling emerge from scripture, they simply must not contradict scripture.”³² It is very clear from this definition that the Bible give room for modern psychologists to help counsel people provided they don’t contradict the teaching of scripture and of the Catholic Church.

It is my personal conviction that, if scripture cannot solve some emotional problems, then, it is proper and right for the Church and for that matter the priest counselor’s concern to refer those affected to competent specialists who will not

³¹ Larry Crabb, 47

³² Ibid , 48

undermine biblical faith. This is because the Church has the responsibility to teach the message of the scripture and to promote good patterns of life, which reflect that message.

Freud who was a physician of some standing supported the biblical view that we should look beneath surface problems to hidden internal causes. The Bible describes the human heart as tortuous so much that we ourselves cannot understand our own motives (Jer 17:9). Our Lord Jesus rebuked the Scribes and the Pharisee who like to appear beautiful on the outside but the inside full of filth (Mt 23:23-28). Freud therefore insisted that for one to deal effectively with people in order to help them, one must have an understanding on the functions of human nature from the inside, where it is not at all possible to see directly. "The intention in the human heart is like water far below the surface, but the man of intelligence draws it forth" (Prov. 20:5).

Just like the scripture, Freud also thinks that for a person to know other people especially in reference to counseling, one needs to know himself/herself. "Why do you notice the splinter in your brother's eye, but do not perceive the wooden beam in your own eye? How can you say to your brother, 'Let me remove that splinter from your eye,' while the wooden beam is in your eye? (Mt 7:3-4). For this reason, students who want to be psychoanalysis must be analyzed first. Priests counselors may therefore tell their stories in life before listening to the counselee's.

From the above, it is obvious that the bible is essential and sufficient not just for counseling in general but also for the type of counseling which is referred as 'therapy.' It is clear that the Bible teaches principles that can serve as a guide to counsel people

with insight and affection. In the opinion of Larry Crabb, “every question a counselor or therapist needs to ask is answered by both the content of scripture and its implications. People who are struggling – whether they ‘go for counseling’ or ‘enter therapy’ – are having problems with living effectively as relational beings. Whether the problem began years ago with a rejecting mother or revolves around a current crisis with a rebellious child, the difficulty is finally with relationships.”³³

The opinion of Larry Crabb about biblical sufficiency fit in well with the worldview of the Akans who see the individual as a person and normal only in relation to the whole community. Relationship is at the center of the Akan religious beliefs. A break of relationship with the community, is a break of relationship with God. It is also the cause of many problems confronted by the individual and society at large.

According to Larry Crabb, “the helper who seeks to intervene according to biblical wisdom will always work to improve relationships by helping people to change from the inside out. That is the end point, first with God, then with others. And the Bible is a sufficient guide. It is a textbook for relational living.”³⁴

To understand this relational living in order to apply them in counseling, one needs to study the content of scripture. Scripture is indeed our starting point for any priest or ‘religious’ counselor. Since most priests and ‘religious’ are not biblical experts, they need to get insight from the biblical experts about the technically precise translation of scriptures. Most of the times, we often study the word of God and miss

³³ Cf. Larry Crabb, 62.

³⁴ Ibid.

the message of God, hence, our inability to apply it to our daily encountered problems in life.

As stated earlier in this chapter, unless the counselor is confronted with the truth of how sin is operating in his own life and learned how good it is to repent, he will have little or no power to transmit the information his counselees need to hear.

Priests/Pastors normally direct people who want to know whom God the Father is to God the Son. This is because, God the Son is the direct image of God the Father or the refulgence of his glory, the very imprint of his being (Heb. 1:3). Therefore, if counselees like to know the truths of scripture and how it can deepen their relationship with God and their neighbours, Pastors/Priests as counselors must invite them to look at how they function as 'lived truth' for emulation. If a Priest/Pastor does not know how the scripture message works in his own life, there is no kind of training in counseling technique that will ever help make him a biblical counselor and for that matter a Christian counselor. For, every Christian pastoral counselor is suppose to use the Bible as a source book, therefore, every Christian pastoral counselor is indeed a biblical counselor provided you don't contradict scripture. In the opinion of Larry Crabb, "content, categories, implications, and images – these four elements combine to give us an approach to scripture that demonstrates its sufficiency to equip us for the work of counseling."³⁵

Theological application:

A good definition of pastoral counseling by Lartey explains my own understanding of pastoral counseling among the Akans. He defines pastoral counseling as:

“A helping activity undertaken by people who recognize a spiritual or religious dimension to life, which by use of verbal or non-verbal, direct or indirect, literal or symbolic modes of communication, aims at preventing or reliving the anxieties of persons and fostering their growth as fully functioning human beings and the development of a society in which all persons can live a human life.”³⁶

In all pastoral relationships there is an encounter with the existential question, How can a person know God in such a way as to make sense of life? This existential question extends to our relations with the whole of creation, both physical and spiritual, and affects our inter-personal and intra-personal relationships. In the view of Karl Barth, “Christian theology fails to make visible the decisive dimension of God as the God of human beings. He suggests that it would be better to speak of God in ‘Theo-anthropology,’ that is, God as the God of the people.”³⁷ Firet pushed Barth’s position a bit further. He says:

“Theology is not only the study of the knowledge of God, it is also the study of the process of getting to know God, of the events which happen between God and human beings and between persons, with a view to the process of getting to know, and knowing God, functions of His revelation and his companionship with us as human beings, including the functioning of the faith community pastoral role fulfillment and pastoral communication.”³⁸

In my understanding, God’s self-revelation to people takes place through the

³⁵ See Larry Crabb, 72-73.

³⁶ E. Y. Lartey, *Pastoral Counseling in Inter-cultural Perspective*, Yeriag Peter Lang Publishers. Frankfurt, 1987, 115.

³⁷ Barth Karl, *Evangelical Theology: An Introduction*, Holt Rinehart & Winston, New York, 1963, 11.

³⁸ G. M. Firet, 12.

history of the people. God is concerned with people in their history and uses their modes of understanding to reveal God's own active interaction with them. These may include their myths, symbols, language, rites – in short, God uses their culture.

Christianity came to Africa in the garb of Western culture. Throughout the history of missions, it has long practiced a 'deculturization' control over African populations – forcing them brutally to sever their roots and lose their authenticity.

"The missionary enterprise among the Akan ... being Western in outlook and emphasis, felt bound to deny the Akan worldview, not only on the basis of what was essentially Christian belief, but on the ground of what was, in effect a European view."³⁹ For example, to be Christian was to have a western name. People with traditional names had their names changed when they were baptized, taking away the historical realities of the circumstances of their birth.

A theological foundation for pastoral counseling with the Akan must take into serious consideration the Akans' culture. I suggest that, whatsoever is noble in the Akan culture, whatsoever is right in the Akan culture, whatsoever is pure in the Akan culture, whatsoever is lovely in the Akan culture, if anything is excellent or praiseworthy in the Akan culture, think about such things and use them for the good of the Akan. (Philippians 4:8, with phrases in parenthesis mine.

My theological viewpoint is that in God's general revelation, God revealed God's self to the Akan, hence the Akan's belief in the Supreme Being who created the universe. However, pastoral counselors must interpret in concrete terms God's special

³⁹ G. Williamson Sydney. *Akan Religion and the Christian Faith*, Ghana University Press, Accra, 1974, 168.

revelation and covenant relation with all people and all creation in the 'incarnation event' of Jesus Christ, who brings salvation to all. Salvation for the Akan is Ahoto⁴⁰

There is more emphasis in the role of the Holy Spirit in the Church and the individual life in Africa. The African and more especially the Akan has more faith in spiritual guidance than psychological guidance. This is seen in the rise and growth of 'spiritual churches' in the Akan towns and in Africa in general. The spiritual churches, by emphasizing the power of the Holy Spirit in the struggles of life have brought new dimension to African Christianity.

The Holy Spirit is God at work in the world, creating, recreating, and unfolding the truth about the incarnation. The Holy Spirit bestows various gifts – prophecy, teaching, healing, preaching, and so on – but above all, love for the brokenhearted. Through the Holy Spirit, God in Jesus Christ has built a new community – the Church – to be God's presence in the world.

Pastoral counseling is therefore the participation in the ministry of Jesus Christ, who is the unique presence of God. Jesus Christ is the source and pattern of the Church's ministry. His life, death, and resurrection are a reconciling of God with the deeply troubled. "All ministry is Christ's ministry of faithfulness to the Father on behalf

⁴⁰ Salvation – carries with it the idea of empowerment as well as deliverance, rescue from powerlessness or helpless situation to one of potency or power, gained through purification rites ... Generally there are three major situations or forces by which the African seeks salvation and deliverance: (1) daily hardships, such as crop failure due to the weather, everyday conflicts, infant mortality, and female infertility; (2) evil spirits, forces and persons, such as witches and sorcerers; (3) lack of good relationship with ancestral spirits and divinities.

of the world. The sending of the Holy Spirit continues this ministry; it does not constitute the creation of another ministry.”⁴¹

Recommendations:

- (a) Pastoral counseling among the Akans is an activity undertaking by people. I recommend that for this activity to be successful, the people who undertake it should have some training about the worldview of the Akans.
- (b) Pastoral counseling recognizes a spiritual or religious dimension to life. The pastoral counselor should take into serious consideration the religious worldview of the client, no matter how trivial or stupid it might seem to the pastoral counselor. With the Akan society, the causation of disease or problem may have a religious ontology.
- (c) By the use of verbal or non-verbal, direct or indirect, literal or symbolic modes of communication, the pastoral counselor aims at preventing or relieving the anxieties of persons. An understanding of the symbolic language of clients and the community is important. This may include proverbs, myths, stories, dreams, rituals, and so forth.
- (d) Pastoral counseling fosters the clients' growth as fully functioning human beings and the development of a society in which all persons can live a human life. Being able to live in harmony with oneself is to be a part of the society. Akans find their humanness when they live in consonance with the morals of the society and live for

⁴¹ R. S. Anderson, ed., *Theological Foundations for Ministry*, Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1979, 20.

others. A departure from family and its norms may cause problems. It is the task of pastoral counseling to help people relate well to one another.

CONCLUSION

A reaction to problems in life is in the domain of pastoral counseling. Most of the times, counseling is done in order to solve problems in life, but for the Akans, Counseling is not only meant to solve problems in life, but to educate and prepare the person for future life. This is done through the various initiation rites in one's life. To know how the Akans react to problems in their life, one has to understand the Akan universe, that is, their culture within the entire community. One cannot know the problems of the Akans until you are able to learn their behaviour in their society. Also, one needs to have knowledge of the individual and his/her relationship with his/her clan, tribe and family. To know their culture one needs to know a bit of their history in order to be able to understand them.

The Akans have customs, laws, regulations and taboos that govern the conduct of the individual and community at large. A breach of the right conduct amounts to a moral evil and the consequence may be difficult to endure by the individual and sometimes by the whole community. For the Akans, nothing happens by 'chance'; it must all be 'caused' by some agent (either human or spiritual). For the Akan, every physical experience of a problem must have a spiritual/religious dimension. Divination is an aspect of counseling among the Akans. It is therefore seen as a fundamental tool in identifying the supernatural causes of the problem and the cause of treatment.

Many people take part in resolving problems when they arise. Chiefs, traditional counselors and family councils all take part in one way or the other in resolving individual and community problems. With the arrival of the Christian missionaries,

most of these roles have been taken over by the Priests/Pastors of the Christian Churches. For any successful pastoral counseling to take place among the Akans, the counselor should be able to learn the culture of the people and be able to use the symbolic language of the people in the counseling process.

This work for sure is not an exhaustive work to help the new pastoral counselor among the Akans of Ghana, but it gives the person a picture of what will be expected of him/her. It is my hope that any new pastoral counselor who is willing to work among the Akans of Ghana will find the information in this essay useful at least for a start.

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Appendix

“REACTIONS TO PROBLEMS IN LIFE” A CASE STUDY OF THE AKANS OF GHANA

I am ALPHONSUS BENI, C.S.Sp. a theology student of (Tangaza College) THE CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY OF EASTERN AFRICA, NAIROBI – KENYA. I would be grateful if you could answer the following questions on the above Topic to enable me complete my long essay. Thanks in advance.

QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Who are the Akans?.....
2. Where did they originate from?.....
3. What is the occupation of the Akans?.....
4. What is the Akans attitude towards religion (God)?.....
5. How do the Akans relate to God?.....
6. How do individuals relate to each other and the community at large?.....
7. How do the Akans perceive life?.....
8. What constitute a ‘problem’ to the Akans?.....
9. (a) How do the Akans handle – personal problems?.....
(b) Community problems?.....
(c) Natural problems?.....
10. What is the role of Akan traditional counselors?.....
11. What are the rituals or symbolic language used in counseling?.....
12. What role does the family play in counseling?.....
13. What is the Akan concept of causation of problems?.....
14. (a) Do the Akans needs Western form of counseling to solve their problems? - Yes or No?
(b) Give reasons for your answer.....