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**INCULTURATION AS MEANS OF COMMUNICATION
FOR EVANGELIZATION**
(A Case Study Among The Dagaaba of Upper West Region Ghana)

Moderator

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of the Requirements for the Baccalaureate Degree in Theology

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DEDICATION

To all my relatives especially my late father George Aazine, my mother Theresa Aazine, my brothers and only sister Michael, Eric, and Regina.

For their prayer and support during my studies.

To all the Divine Word Missionaries in Ghana, Kenya Provinces and the entire Society for giving me all the opportunities, which helped me this far.

Finally to my Uncle Mr. Emmanuel Zume and Aunt Mrs. Mary Ziem for always standing by me in times of difficulties.

EPIGRAPH

Our mission today is realize through prophetic dialogue
with people who have no faith community and with faith-seekers:
with people who are poor and marginalized,
with people of different culture, and with people
of different tradition and secular ideologies
(SVD XVth General Chapter)

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“Give thanks to the Lord for He is good, for his love endures forever!”

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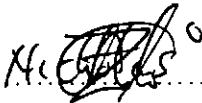
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Finally, my gratitude to all who have been dear and supportive to me throughout my journey to the Religious life: the Society of the Divine Word, my formators, my colleagues in CFC- Langata, Tamale and DRC, friends, Benefactors, my parish priest Fr. Konrad Dreyer, svd and the parishioners and parish priest of Gushiegu Fr. Dungdung, svd

May God bless you.

STUDENT'S DECLARATION

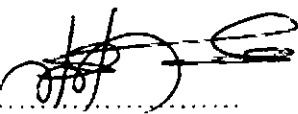
I, the undersigned, declare that this Long Essay is my original work achieved through my personal reading, and critical reflection. It is submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of Baccalaureate in Religious Studies. It has never been submitted to any other college or university for academic credit. All sources have been cited in full and acknowledged.

Signed 

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This Long Essay has been submitted for examination with my approval as the college supervisor.

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GENERAL INTRODUCTION

The Church down through her line of history has often encouraged the effective use of Mass Media to facilitate the spread of the Good News. Nevertheless, on the other hand, she has not ceased to emphasize Inculturation as another perfect model of communication in doing evangelization. Today, the most highlighted models or channels of communication used are radio, T.V., Internet, newspaper, magazine, and phones. Very little emphasis is made in the use of Inculturation.

Modern channels of communication would be voted by anyone as the best and fastest way of doing Evangelisation but the little defect one can quickly point out is the fact that it does not really touch the core of the human person. It only stays hanging but does not touch the real lives of the people. Needless to add that this piece of work is not in condemnation of modern models used in spreading the Good News. This paper is to point out this other effective model or channel, which has been abandon in the closet for some time now. Inculturation may sound arcane but believe it or not it one of the effective means through which Evangelisation is done.

As it is often emphasized these days, evangelization is not virtually by preaching with word of mouth, listening to the radio, watching T.V., but also preaching with one's life. Inculturation comes as means by which this aspect of the Good News is communicated. Inculturation actually reaches or touches the core of people's life vis a vis the Gospel.

This means of doing evangelization could only make sense to us if we all join in or accept it effectiveness. We all need to bring the Gospel message into our lives through our daily activities, cultures, and language so as to find a new Christ communicated to us. As already mentioned, other means of communication are not to

be under estimated but to find a true Christ born and living with us. We need also to give a stronger look at inculturation, which is a more practical means of communicating a Christ who is fully alive among us.

It is good to see the importance of these modern tools, which have so successfully wave their way through the modern mode of living, affecting and influencing our Christian lives. It is also the aspiration of everyone now to acquaint oneself with these modern means of communication. However, we should not loose sight of how to assimilate all these into the lives of people so that the Gospel message might make sense in the lives of the people.

The church may be accused of being slow in pushing forward this way (Inculturation) of doing evangelization, perhaps because of the risk of loosing the message in another sense. The few areas this means has been employed effectively, tremendous impact has been made in the lives of the people. Inculturation is slowly booming and a very old word in the churches history. Much has been written about it but very little has been done about it. Believe it or not it is one of the best ways and of course the best means of communication for everyone for the gospel values to be understood properly among the people, it must find place among them. This means that the gospel values must be rooted in the lives and culture of the people. As Pope John Paul rightly put it:

'Inculturation is a movement towards full evangelization. It seeks to dispose people to receive Jesus Christ in an integral manner. It touches them on the personal, culture, economic and political levels so that they can live a holy life in union with God the father; through the action of the Holy Spirit (...) it includes theology, liturgy, the Churches life and structures'¹

as already mentioned the main aim of this work is to awaken in people the use of

¹Pope John Paul II, Redemptoris Missio of the supreme pontive on the permanent validity of the church's Missionary Mandit (Pasay City: Daughters of St. Paul,) 54

inculturation as another model of communication for effective evangelization. In the same piece of work things are kind of narrowed down to one particular traditional area (the Dagaaba of Upper West Region Ghana). Here inculturation as a mean of communication has been used effectively for the spread of the Christian faith.

A. Background of Study

I was born and bred in a town near Tema in the Greater Accra Region called Ashaiman in Ghana. I'm quite abreast with the modern tools of technology and have seen a brief of it being used to bring down the gospel message.

I have equally heard much about inculturation; many talks have been given regarding that, I have also read many materials on that but I can not point out any practical importance of it in my parish. My knowledge was just book knowledge and nothing more. Of course, I know many people in my parish who do not even have the slightest idea what it is all about, let alone knowing that it can serve as an effect tool for evangelization

I only came to terms with inculturation when I made a visit to my home village in the Upper West Region of north Ghana. It was at this time I saw and felt the impact of inculturation. How inculturation has brought the Good News to the lives of my people.

If we take a concrete example like Ash Wednesday which I will emphasize more in one of the chapters, we shall see that it is well inculturated. Even people who are not Christian find it very necessary to attend. The message is still there, its significance is very glaring so the people identify themselves with it. This means Christ and his message have found place among these people (incarnation). Inculturation therefore is not just changing things i.e. the Good News or cultures but letting the two co-exist.

B. Objectives of Study

The aim of this paper is to throw more light on what others have written about inculturation, bringing out the fact that it is an effective tool or means of communication for evangelization. There are many other means by which the Gospel message is transmitted; nevertheless, in this paper it is my quest to emphasis more on inculturation as another mean. I will be using the people of northern Ghana a homogenous society as a comparative case study.

Finally it is also my aim to encourage the use of this medium of communication for evangelization as often emphasis by the church.

C. Importance of the Study

In view of mass medias influence and prominence, I would like to present in this paper the usefulness of inculturation as a means of communication for evangelization. It is my aim to create awareness about the effectiveness of the medium and its practicality of bringing down the Good News.

Another important aspect of this study is to let the local church in Africa appreciate that we can let Christ speak, and live with us in our cultures.

The other importance of this study is to equip crusades of inculturation to evangelization.

Finally it is also for academic purpose. It could serve as material for learning and for teaching so as to help people realize the value of inculturation as means of evangelization.

D. Methodology

The method I used in gathering materials for the long essay is library reading, group discussions, and one-to-one interview together with my own insights. Apart from this I also got some insights from my class notes from the following courses: - communication, evangelization and inculturation, mass media and society. The Internet is not left out as one of my sources.

E. Structure of Study

This paper is divided into three major parts. The fourth chapter is on Definition of some key terms. These are terms that will occur several times in the paper and therefore it is necessary to define them so that as you read along you will know what I mean.

The second chapter will deal with the Dagaaba in the West Region of Northern Ghana. It discusses their life before evangelization and evangelization as at now. The third chapter will elaborate on the relationship between faith and culture since these two are the core of our main studies and finally, why inculturation is a means of communication for evangelization. This will go along side with a case study, which is citing Reconciliation of Separated couples on Ash Wednesday

Finally in the last part of the paper is the Conclusion. It sums up the whole work and gives some recommendations for evangelization and future perspectives

CHAPTER ONE

DEFINITION OF SOME KEY TERMS

1. Evangelization

The Etymological meaning of the term evangelization comes from the Greek word "evarrnton", (evangelion) which means evangelism² or "evarrhisein" (evangelizein), which means evangelization.³ This term refers to a complex and a dynamic activity that cannot be equated simply to: (a) the first proclamation of the Gospel, (b) preaching, (c) catechesis and administration of baptism and other sacrament. Evangelization extends itself beyond these.⁴

Evangelization is at the service of "renewal of humanity, witness, explicit proclamation inner adherence entry into the community, acceptance of signs, apostolic initiative."⁵ In the New Testament it is the proclamation of the kingdom of God in the person and ministry of Jesus and "call to repentance and faith".⁶ It is a concerned with proclamation of the good news to the whole world.⁷

Pope Paul VI in his encyclical, *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, asserts that evangelization means the carrying forth of the good news to every sector of the human race, so that by its strength it may enter into the heart of men and women and renew the human race... in a word, the church may be truly said to evangelize when solely virtue of the news which

²Evangelism is an activity, which involves the spreading of the Gospel. It is the theological reflection of these activities of the proclamation (Cf. note in the class of Fr. Ireneo Barreto, SVD Missiology date Sept. 21, 2001.

³ Evangelization is the process of spreading the Gospel or the extent to which it has been spread. (Cf. notes in the class of Fr. Ireneo Barreto, SVD.)

⁴Pope Paul vi, *Evangelii Nutiandi*: Apostolic Exhortation on Evangelization in the modern world, Washington 1975, No. 17.

⁵ Ibid. 24

⁶ Mark 1:15, "This the time of fulfillment. The kingdom of God is at hand. Repeat and believe in the Gospel (The New American Bible).

⁷ M. Dhavamony (ed.), *Evangelization*, Roma 1975, 1 91.

she proclaims, she seeks to convert both the individual conscience of men and women and their collective conscience, or the activities which they are engaged and finally, their lives and the whole environments which surround them.⁸

He also added that, "evangelization has been defined as consisting in the proclamation of Christ our Lord to those who do not know him, in preaching, catechesis, baptism and administration of the other sacrament."⁹

This line of agreement is further commented in Vatican Council II, where it is expressed, "the Church appreciates that evangelization means the carrying forth of the good news to every sector of the human race so that by its strength it may enter into the heart of man and woman and renew the human race"¹⁰ Evangelization then is not limited to words alone. It is supposed to be a kind of "Witnessing" because the church is a living church". In the process of evangelization there are two groups of people involved: the pastoral agent (who is carrying the message) and the people (who are receiving the message). If we try to put it in the context of communication it is the communication and the recipient, the sender and the receiver. In evangelization, there are three steps: (1) Pre-evangelization (2) Evangelization proper (3) Post-evangelization.

1.1 Pre-Evangelisation

Just from the term itself pre-evangelization could imply some sort of preparation. It is, in fact that the preparation phase prior to full evangelization. If we want to build something it is just proper to fit sketch a design and do the necessary preliminaries before the actual putting up of a building. If one is going to a battle, it is

⁸ Pope Paul vi, *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, No. 18.

⁹ *Ibdi.* 17

¹⁰ A. Flanney (ed.), *Vatican Council II: More post conciliar Documents, in Evangelization of the modern world.* Vol II, Bandra 2002, No. 18.

proper to have the plans and the strategies mapped out first. One does not just go without enough material or adequate preparation.

It is also the same with evangelization. One has to establish a growing relationship with the people in order to enter into their lives and be welcomed. This is the initial move for evangelizing the people.

Some missionaries admit that this stage is the most difficult times, for it requires entering into the peoples culture, territory and language. Myriads of difficulties are to be expected, especially if one is working in a remote area and the culture is too tight or too closed. One had to undergo transformation yet; these are necessary ways of establishing relationship with the people. "Communication for pre-evangelization is concerned about creating a positive attitude and disposition towards Christian faith and life".¹¹ It means, "It prepares the ground and sets conditions for a deep mutual understanding even without the expensive desire for any conversion."¹²

1.2 Evangelisation Proper

This second stage of evangelization is the advanced stage of life. After preparing the community, it is now time to mention or to work on the goals of evangelization, which is to invite and invoke people to bear witness to the gospel value in their lives. It is now the conceptualization of what has been done in the pre-evangelization stage. It is "concerned about the actual presentation of the Christian faith, of Christ message and redemption to life through baptism and becoming member of the Church".¹³

From communication point of view after doing the necessary assessment on the

¹¹ F.J. Eilers *Communicating in ministry and mission: An introduction to pastoral and evangelizing communication*. Manila 2003, p.194

¹² *Ibdi.* 194

¹³ *Ibdi.* 195

program, it is time for implementation, for instance on radio broadcasting it is time of airing focused programs, which a selected group of listeners or target audience could relate to and through which people would be inspired and stirred to truly live out their faith.

1.3 Post Evangelisation

This is the follow-up stage to what has to be done in the first two stages of evangelization. After entering into the lives or culture of the people by interpreting the Christian faith, "... it is important to further deepen the faith experience and religious knowledge."¹⁴ "Faith needs ongoing nourishment."¹⁵ In every evangelization, proper guidance and direction is important, otherwise, people's faith and early waver backslide or even disappear.

These three steps of evangelization are necessary for they are the ladder that one has to climb towards growth and maturity in faith. Evangelization is a never-ending task. It is never finish once and for all by a people or a culture. It is a constant and a dynamic process, always in transition, always challenging people and re-challenging them.

2. Inculturation

The term inculturation is a theological word, method of evangelization, which implies the evangelizing, as a process of reliving the incarnation itself, demands the insertion of the Gospel within the very heart of a culture. It is by way of putting into one's life this Gospel message. Pope John Paul II described inculturation

¹⁴ F.J. Eilers, *Communicating in ministry and mission*, 195

¹⁵ *Ibdi.* 196

"as the intimate transformation of authentic cultural values through their integration in Christianity and the insertion of Christianity in the various human cultures".¹⁶

This statement meant that through the process of inculturation, interaction between two cultures is implied: culture of the one who transmitted the faith and the culture of the one who accepted the faith.

Here it is not only a simple encounter between faith and culture. It is a continuous dialogue. It is gradual; it is progressive wherein there is a continuous relationship between faith and culture(s). As shorter would put it, "it is an on-going dialogue between faith and cultures. More fully it is the creative and dynamic relationship between the Christian message and culture or cultures."¹⁷

By living the Gospel and Christian values, the Christians transformed cultures and societies of which they are part. This transformation is understood as a gift to the church and to the world. On the other hand inculturation demands that Christian, too, assume the values of their cultures or societies that are compatible with their Christian way of life. Father Pedro Armpe, S.J. said, inculturation is the incarnation of Christian life and Christian message in a particular cultural context, in such a way that this experience does not only finds expression through elements proper to the culture, just because a principle that animates, directs and unifies the culture, transforming it and making it so as to bring a new creation. It also suggests insertion of Christian message into a given culture.¹⁸

In addition to this, we shall also look at the communicational aspect of inculturation. As already noted it is a dialogue between two cultures, i.e. faith and culture itself. Besides this inculturation is also a process of exchange. If we say

¹⁶ Pope John Paul II, *Redemptoris Missio* of the supreme pontive on the permanent validity of the church's Missionary Mandit (Pasay City: Daughters of St. Paul,) 54

¹⁷ Aylward Shorter, *Toward a Theology of Inculturation*. 11

¹⁸ Pedro Armpe, *On fostering the task of inculturation of faith and Christian life*, decree No. 54

exchange, there are two ways of giving and receiving. These two ways we all know are the main elements that make up a good communication. To have only giving or receiving will mean monologue which of course is not proper communication in the word's sense.

In this way, there is much sense to the givers and the receivers. Each party feels belong and a meaningful progress is made in transmitting the good news.

If we put this into the context of our church, the church makes the gospel incarnate in different cultures and at the same time it introduces peoples together with their cultures into her community. She transmits to them her own values at the same time taking good elements that already exist in them and renewing them from within. Through inculturation, the church, for her part, becomes a more intelligible sign of what she is and a more effective instrument of mission. As pointed out already, it is very clear that there is the involvement of two parties: - faith and culture; people who will transmit the faith and those who will receive the faith.. It could not be possible if one party is not present.

Moreover, the entire process of inculturation is one of integration of both in the sense of the Christian faith and life in a culture and of the integration of a new expression of Christian experience in the life of universal church. This is why inculturation "needs to take place gradually, in such a way that it really is an expression of the community's Christian experience."¹⁹ Experts then cannot design Inculturation only but in effect. Inculturation is the by-product of an involvement with a people rather than the conscious target of a program of action.

This is something attained and not just stick into an idea. Inculturation, therefore, supposes an interaction between faith and culture, as the latter exists in a

¹⁹ John Paul II, *Redemptoris Missio*, No. 54

actual life, in its dynamic process, which integrates transition and change, fidelity to origins and new creations. Again, there is participation of faith and culture.

As Pope John Paul II would say, "Both faith and common culture create and build-up ecclesia communion."²⁰

This is the primary goal of inculturation it is the penetration of the Christian faith into, and its integration with the community's culture as a single system of belief, values and behavior, making this faith generative and creative with the culture. Its chief process is integration, the blending of this faith with rest of culture to the very roots of the nature, structure, the dynamic of cultures.

As its deepest level, inculturation is the integration of the values of our culture and the values of the kingdom a veritable process of conversion into the Christian life. Then, it is in this process that the Gospel will affect and upset the cultures "Criteria of judgment, determining values, points of interest, line of thought, sources of inspiration and models of life, which are in contrast with the word of God and the plan of salvation."²¹

3. Communication

Communication is a basic human need. Everybody needs to communicate, either verbally²² or non-verbally.²³ The word "communication" comes from the two Latin words: - **CUM** and **MUNUS**, meaning the "exchange of a gift."²⁴ In the oxford English dictionary communication is the "imparting, conveys, or signs."²⁵ Columbia

²⁰ Ibid No. 41

²¹ Pope Paul VI, *Evangelii Nuntiandi*: Apostolic Exhortation of his Holiness Pope Paul VI to the clergy and to all the faithful of the entire world on Evangelization in the Modern world Dasy City: Daughters of St. Paul. No. 19

²² In dialogue with Ward, SVD characteristic Dimension, Rome: SVD publication Generalate, Nr. 37.

²³ Ibid

²⁴ Cf. Notes of Sr. Paola Moggi, CMS in the class social communication dated 24/08/2001.

²⁵ W. Schramm – D.F. Roberts (eds.), *The process and effects of mass communication*, Chicago 12.

Encyclopedia defines it more as "the transfer of thoughts and messages, as contrasted with transportation, the transfer of goods and persons. The basic forms of communication are by sign (sight) and by sound (hearing)."²⁶ In terms of transferring or imparting messages and thoughts or even for evangelization, communication is necessary. It is also a way of clarifying some issues. Thus, communication is part and parcel of the life of the people.²⁷

In the beginning of our existence, communication has been part of our lives. Since our conception and our development in the womb, we have already been communicating with our mothers, though we were hardly aware of it. According to Franz-Joseph Eilers, "No human society can exist without communication".²⁸ He even added, "Communication or more such culture, the meeting of two or more such cultures is even more communicative happening."²⁹

This is to manifest that once communication is not there, confusion could set in, and relationship between two more cultures or relationship of individuals will collapse or break down. "Since communication is a very basic element in any human life and society, it cannot be exclusive to a scientific field only."³⁰ Rather, it is used in different dimensions of life. Communication services as people's management tool for making decisions and persuading and manipulating others.³¹ Going further, communication is God's unique gift to human kind, through which individuals and societies can become truly human. It is part of every aspect of life looking into the life of the Holy Trinity, as a model communication, the three divine person are bound to communicate to each

²⁶ Ibid. 12

²⁷ W. Schramm – D.F. Roberts (eds.), *The process and effects of mass communication*, Chicago 14

²⁸ F.J. Eilers, *communication between cultures: An introduction to inter-cultural communication*, Roma 21.

²⁹ Ibid. 24

³⁰ Ibid. 21

³¹ Social Communication Departments AMECEA and IMBISA, *communication, culture and community*, Vol. 2, Nairobi 123.

other. Though they have distinct roles in salvation history, communication is part and parcel in their oneness and unity. Such is true for us human beings. It is a challenge to pay attention, receiving a message and putting it into consideration. Conflict arises because of misunderstanding. Confusion arises out of inconsideration to differences on how we communicate. If utilized responsibly and taken in the right spirit, communication bridges gap, breaks down walls of division, connects and brings people closer together, stabilizes relationship and most of all enriches life.

3.1 Linear Communication

One of the purposes of communication is to transmit or convey messages or information. This model of communication is then in the service of injecting or importing messages or information. It is a one-way process, which Shannon and Weaver called "linear transmission."³² This communication model has no room for dialogue or discussion. It is one-sided and tainted with authoritarian tendencies. There is no engagement of sharing ideas or creating an atmosphere of interaction. "They do not sufficiently study what really happens between sender and receiver. They are mainly concerned about the effect of the message given by the communicator. The context of human communication is not taken seriously by this model."³³

3.2 Participatory Models

Communication is by definition, participatory. It is a two-way process. It is interactive because it shares meaning, establishes and maintains social relationships. "Human communication is an interaction - it is never a linear process. It is mutual

³² Cf. Notes of Sr. Paola Moggi, CMS in the class "Social Communication, 05/09/2001

³³ F. J. Eilers, *Communication between Cultures* p. 30

process of sharing information.³⁴ It is a "process in which the participants create and share information with one another in order to reach a mutual understanding."³⁵ In every relationship, there is a need for connection. People are dynamic, not wooden images, robot, or statues, which have no feelings or any word to say. God gave us body, mouth and facilities to use. This model of communication bestows every human individual a room sharing and interaction. As a human right, communication encompasses and gives beyond the traditional freedoms of expression, the right to seek, receive and import information.

Everyone needs dialogue in order for a relationship to prosper, not collapse or be distorted. There is always an intimate "link between the receiver and the sender, through which communication takes place."³⁶

3.3 Semiotic Approach

This model of communication stresses the use of symbols. This is very evident in a non-verbal communication. This is very common in a given situation where everybody would be able to understand the meaning of the signs³⁷ being convey or communicated, communication is not only a matter of sending messages. It is foremost a matter of exchanging or negotiating meanings among people so, this model of communication depends so much on the context, whenever the communication is being done. It needs a thorough attention, or else it can lead to the distortion of the message. This kind of communication depends so much on the context.

The last two models just defined fits very well with the process of inculturation. Both need to be applied to make inculturation a means of communication. One cannot

³⁴ Cf. Notes of Sr. Paola Moggi, CMS in the class "Social Communication, 012/09/2001

³⁵ F. J. Eilers, *Communication between Cultures* p. 32-33

³⁶ F. J. Eilers, *Communication between Cultures* p.33

³⁷ Notes of Sr. Paola Moggi, CMS in the class "Social Communication, 26/09/2001

exist without the other. By the combination of these two models in the process of inculturation the Gospel values are well communicated. For instance, if there is no room for dialogue or room for sharing as the participatory model stands for then the Gospel will not find place among the people. The Gospel that is being communicated to the people should be ready to "receive" just as it "gives" its message to the people. In the same vain the culture into which the gospel is being spread needs to be an open one so that both can be fitted together.

As the saying goes "actions speak louder than words." Every human culture is full of signs and symbols. This is obviously brings the last model to play.

Just as Gospel has its own signs and symbols so do the culture into which it is entering. These symbols and signs need to be properly blended so as to make meaning to the people whom these are being communicated. Lack of proper blending would rather create confusion. As already noted, these views to me once again say that inculturation is a means of communication and should not be taken for granted.

Culturally, a typical example is this; there are different expression, signs or sounds that can be understood differently by different people. The cry of a baby for instance has many connotations. It can be a demand for the mother's attention being hungry or thirsty or any need. Pope John Paul II, in his evangelical, ecclesia in Africa, reminds us that, the modern mass media are not only instruments for communication... He also says Every Christian should be concerned that the communications media are a vehicle of evangelization.

CHAPTER TWO

THE DAGAABA PEOPLE

1. Origin

The Dagaaba are said to have inhabited the voltaic Region, a vast expanse of land lying between the forest belt and the upper Niger in the West Africa. This region was initially composed of different ethnic groupings among them was the Mole-Dagomba people.³⁸ The Dagaaba found their place among this group.

There are varied opinions concerning the origin of the Dagaaba. However, among ethnologists concur on the Dagomba-origin hypothesis.³⁹ According to this hypothesis, the Mossi state-forming dynasties that had configured the Voltaic Region, subjected the locals to persecutions as a result of a land dispute. During the reign of Na Nyagse (1476-1492) this dispute got transformed into an armed conflict that saw the brutal massacre of local people and thus bringing about the breaking away of large numbers of Mole speaking Dagomba rebels. This rebellious group is said to have occupied an area around the Black Volta, between the earliest settlers, the Lobi on the West and the Sissala on the east. This explains why in principle the Dagaaba do not claim ownership of the land they actually occupy. It also accounts for the etymology of the name Dagaaba, meaning "rebellious man."

Let us look a bit more closely to the name and etymology of the name Dagaaba. There are a variety of names referring to the Dagaaba group. This may be due to

³⁸ 'Mole-Dagomba' is a compound expression to identify a large portion of the Voltaic people who come from the same ancestral stock

³⁹ Cf. Bekye, *Divine Revelation and Traditional Religion*, P. 104-106

It is however, worth noting that some groups such as the small Moslem community of the town Wa, the Guombo, Isuolo and Mon-yarla do not concur with this theory. The Moslem community traces its origin to the Mandigo and Hausa traders from Mali, the Guomba from the Konkomba in northeast of Ghana, the Isuolo from the Isala of Zini east of the Dagaaba and finally the Mon-yarla from Kong in Gonja land, south of the Dagomba. Despite the diversity in grouping and origin, all the groups unanimously claim the expression Dagaaba as a common ethnic entity.

differences in dialect or as a result of attempts by the colonial masters to identify this tribe. Names such as Dagara, Dagarti, Dagaati, Dagaare, Daga-Willi and Lo Daga, all designate the people without any particular reference to ethnic differentiation. In Ghana, the name commonly used to identify the Dagaaba is Daguati, whilst in Burkina Faso Dagara predominates. The etymology of Dagaaba comes from *dao* or *deb*, meaning "man" and *gaara*, which means "rebel." consequently, Dagaaba is translated as rebellious man."⁴⁰

1.1 Geographical Location

There are only two dialect group worth mentioning as far as settlement and members are concerned, the Dagaare in Ghana and the Lobri in Burkina Faso. The Black Volta River, running in a north-south direction between Ghana and Burkina Faso separates the two groups.⁴¹ However, settlement of the Dagaaba can also be found in the Ivory Coast but not as important as those in Burkina Faso and Ghana. In Burkina Faso, the Dagaaba occupies the Southwestern part and the Ivory Coast the Northwestern. The domain of the greater majority of the Dagaaba in Ghana is in the Northwestern part known as the Upper West Region.

My main area of concern will be limited to the Northwestern part of Ghana, the Upper West Region, which comprises of two dominant ethnic groups namely, the Sissala and the Dagaaba. The latter account for about seventy per cent of the total population covering smaller ethnic groups. The Dagaaba are group into villages. Occupants of the villages ranges between 200 and 4,000 inhabitants per village.

⁴⁰ Cf. Bekye, *Divine Revelation and Traditional Religion: with particular reference to the Dagaaba of West Africa*. P. 106

⁴¹ Tenga, Edward. *The Social Structure of the Dagaaba: The House and Matriclan of Axes of Dagaaba social organization*. The Victor, series3Tamale. P. 2

1.2 Social Structure

Dagaaba social organization is based on two basic principles: the *yir/yiilu* (father's house) and *bello* (the name of a child obtain from the mother. It could be referred to as the mother's house). Clans are found from both principles but the male is more dominant in terms of marriage and family arrangement and that is why the Dagaaba can be said to be bi-lineal.⁴² The male principle being dominant does not rule out the importance of the male principle in the Dagaaba social groupings and relationships.

The tradition identifies nine major clans from the male principle: The Bimbige, Bekuone, kpiele, Gbaane, Naayiile or Tiedeme, Nabegle, Birfuole, Metuole and Batane. And from the female principle are seven division: Some, Meda, Somda, Kpoda, Hien Kambire and Dabire. A clan, doglu (meaning "to give birth") takes the same meaning as yiilu (from the word yir meaning "house, house, or family"). It simply refers to clan members as a family or to the social structure into which one is born.

Strictly speaking, all who descend from a male common ancestor are said to be from the same clan (father's house). Clan/house formed out of the female principle only serve to define the identity of a child in the field of inheritance, roles, expectations and rights. It is from this perspective that the Dagaaba are often referred to as patrilineal in system. There are two significant types of relationships within the Dagaaba social structure namely clan relationship and the joking relationship. Clan relationships refer to the social web of relationships established by paternity and affiliation⁴³ whilst the joking relationships refer to the pairing of clans into joking partners.

⁴² Tenga, Edward. *The Social Structure of the Dagaaba: The House and Matriclan of Axes of Dagaaba social organization*. The Victor, series3Tamale. P. 4

⁴³ Tengan Edward, *House of God-As family from an African perspective* p.48

Clan relationships are based on the "*dume/ kyiiuru*" (a form of prohibition or food avoidance)⁴⁴ and the *yir-danu* (short song of praise particular to each clan). By identifying themselves as sharing the same "food avoidance"/ "praise songs" people of the same clan are in fact saying they are brothers and sisters in the real sense.

In social life, relationship is highly valued and that is why clans are also grouped into joking partnerships, *lonluore*. Joking partnerships assume a role that is much more understandable within the context of Baghr Tampello (ash-throwing rite of reconciliation). Joking partnership is a social mechanism for peace and reconciliation. Hence joking partners "throw-ash on " or "use ash to catch each other's knees to reconcile conflicting members. In matters concerning conflicts, clans never take each other to count. All conflicts are settled within the context of the joking relationships.

1.3 Occupation

The Dagaaba are grouped into villages associated mainly with land cultivation and rearing of animals. Most of them if not all have their livelihood depended on these two occupations. They cultivate produce such as millet, groundnuts, maize, and some few areas yam and rice. They rear animals such as cows, goats, sheep and some domestic birds. Cultivations and rearing are not done on large scale or with the sole intention of only selling on large scale but also with the primary aim of feeding on that as a family.

Most farmlands are not very far from the house. They are situated around the houses. They don't use sufficated farm implements for cultivation. They use simple tools such as hoes and cutlass. The few who can afford use the ass for ploughing but

⁴⁴ Cf. Tengan, Social Structure of the Dagara: The House and Matriclan as axes of Dagara Social organization. The Victor series No. 3 p.23
According to Edward Tengan, the "*dume/kyiiuru* is the "non- human member" of a given social house. The *Dume/kyiiuru* is unique to each clan. It

majority go into the *kotar* (this is a system where by a group of people go to plough for one man and then they move to another) Needless to add that this system of helping one's neighbor in the farm really promotes community building.

1.4 Political Organization

The bitter experience of the Dagaaba in their struggle against oppressive chiefs encouraged them to abandon the idea of chieftaincy as a means of organization. Chieftaincy was only a later institution imposed as a system of indirect rule by the colonial rule. Initially, the Dagaaba tribe was content with its social structure, having the clan as the focal point of all relationships. Authority was understood and exercised from this point of view. The elders of the clans were the authorities or governors of the day. They acted on behalf of the ancestors. Decisions especially, concerning marriage were taken only after discussion and informal consensus or upon unanimous agreement among elders. It was more a persuasive kind of authority rather than rigid adherence. Accompanying the elders in the exercise of authority was the *teng-gan sob*, literally meaning "owner of the earth." The *teng-gan sob* was the priest of a given parcel of land.⁴⁵ He was responsible for all matters concerning relationships between the earth and the people and all inter-personal relations for the common good. He exercised both administrative and religious authority.

Today, despite the changes initiated by the colonial rule with the introduction of the rule of chiefs, clan relationships still exist and remain a valuable asset for Dagaaba unity and solidarity.

⁴⁵ The Dagaaba attached great importance to the land. Since they depend on agriculture as their main source of income and livelihood. A whole set of beliefs and cultic activities developed closely associated with the earth

1.5 Life Before The Advent of Evangelisation

Dagaaba were and even today, some are still traditional worshippers. The traditional religion beliefs revolve around the notion of *Naangmen* (God) and other powers attributed to the different spiritual forms or nature spirits known as *tibe*. Their cultic attitude towards God and the nature spirits are considered *saakum bom`a thing of the grandfather`*. In other words, it is a religious belief preserved and transmitted faithfully from one generation to the next. It is a religious system, which strives to create a harmonious relationship between the supernatural and natural order, that of the living among themselves and finally between the living and the dead. In all these God has the final say. He is the one in charge.⁴⁶

There is no room for disbelief in God's existence as far as the Dagaaba is concerned. He (God) is the source of all realities, supernatural and natural. He is the one in charge of created order. He is the author of life and death, of all good things that the Dagaaba achieves and on whom they totally depend. In their relation with God the Dagaaba have to demonstrate reverence or fear, submission, obedience and total self-surrender in the Dagaaba every day life.

The best cultic attitude towards God is good moral living and behavior i.e. living with a sentiment of consent gratitude to God for his providential care. Consciously enough, the Dagaaba have no direct cult to God. As we shall see, all cultic life and preoccupation evolves instead around nature spirits. Spiritual forces/nature spirits for the Dagaaba are all creatures of God and not divinities. As creatures, they have human defects and are very much situated in the realm of human affairs. "Though the immediate destination of the people's offering and sacrifices appear to be the nature spirits, yet it is recognized that these offerings are God's prerogative"

⁴⁶ Bekye, Paul *Divine Revelation and Traditional Religion: with particular reference to the Dagaaba of West Africa*. P. 12

The nature spirit is any spiritual power or agency that has the potential of being localized in a shrine or in homes. They are mediators between humans and God. They are regarded as powers dominating the entire universe. Their presence is perceived and represented by either visible symbolic images or in the form of moldings, a heap of stones, sticks or a mound of earth.

1.6 Evangelization Among The Dagaaba

The first Catholic mission station was in the Northeast, at Naverongo in 1996, among the Kassena and Nankana people. In 1926, this mission under the jurisdiction of the Society of the missionaries of Africa got detached from the jurisdiction of Ouagadougou (Burkina Faso) with the creation of an apostolic prefecture of Naverongo.⁴⁷

The first attempt in 1905 at creating a mission between the Dagaaba and Sissala was fruitless. Initially the British administrator denied the catholic missionaries access to this area, since he had reserved it for the Anglican mission. It was not until 1926 that Fr. Oscar Morin, who had been appointed the Ordinary of this territory began negotiation with the colonial government in view of gaining access to the northwestern part of Ghana. In 1926, the Catholic Church was finally allowed to inaugurate a mission between the Dagaaba and sissala upon an invitation by Mr. Ayer Smith, the British District Commissioner of Lawra at that time.⁴⁸

Initially, the Dagaaba were very suspicious about the presence and mission of the missionaries. This was because their approach was foreign to them, while that of the British was familiar. However, gradually the local people began to appreciate their efforts especially in learning the language. The decisive event that resulted in a massive response to Christianity in what is known as the 'Rain Event.'

⁴⁷ McCoy, Remigius *Great Things Happen*. Montreal: The Society of the Missionary of Africa. P. 34

⁴⁸ McCoy, Remigius *Great Things Happen*. Montreal: The Society of the Missionary of Africa. P. 64

The 'rain event' refers to the period of drought that started in 1932. During this period sacrifices had been offered to appease the spirits but there was little effect. The minority who had developed some close affiliation with missionaries was blamed for this misfortune. As time passed by, 'many felt the threat of famine in the coming year was too real to let religious principles stand in the way of a possible solution.' A group of elders from Daffiama village took the courage to approach the missionaries for possible solution to this immanent threat. The missionaries accepted and led by Fr. McCoy the group offered prayer for rain. The result was that Daffiama village had abundant rains while the surrounding villages remained dry. Naturally, the surrounding villages followed the example of Daffiama and soon enjoyed the arrival of rain. Therefore, many delegations seeking rain flooded the mission. This marked the beginning of a mass movement towards the Christian faith. Out of the total population of about 400,000 inhabitants, it is estimated that the Catholic population is roughly 89,000; with Dagaaba accounting for 89%⁴⁹ Commentators suggest that Christianity has become part of the identity of the Dagaaba. Rt. Rev. Gregory E. Kpiebaya makes this remark, "Church life or evangelization is still largely in the hands of the Catechists and the Clergy.

The most significant area of concern in evangelization are on the level of religious beliefs and practices; ethnics especially in matters concerning marriage and the dignity of women, forgiveness, and finally communal responsibility.

Nevertheless, in spite of the fact that evangelization had given easy roots into the lives of the people with particularly reference to the "Rain Event" which brought most of them Christian faith. Some if not all still return to practicing the traditional religion along side Christianity. Many are of the view that "you cannot put all your

⁴⁹ McCoy, Remigius *Great Things Happen*. Montreal: The Society of the Missionary of Africa. P. 39

eggs in one basket". In other words, if one basket fails the other will still be there.

This was noticed very much by the missionaries through interactions with the people also observation. This however, also prompted the missionaries to start thinking of inculturation. The missionaries felt the best means through which the Good News could make meaning to the people was through inculturation. In other words, inculturation has become a means of communication for evangelization.

CHAPTER THREE

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN FAITH AND CULTURE

1. Faith and Culture

Faith and culture has become a field of crucial importance in recent years. Faith or Religion and culture are often seen as twin topics. For those who would rather avoid theological issues, religion is itself understood as a cultural system and there is the study of culture as expressing of spirituality. Culture is essentially another understanding of the world around us.

Within the Catholic Church, as will be seen, the concept has assumed enormous prominence in the years since the second Vatican Council, and more particularly as a result of what Pope John II has often described as a crucial area where our destiny is at stake. Within other Churches too the cultural dimension has come to the fore as a topic of crucial importance today: thus the World Council of Church is engaged in a long-term study of relation between the gospel and cultures.

In addition there is new centrality of culture within Church discourse, as different key words have come to prominence in Catechism in these recent decades. Thus, 'dialogue' and then 'justice' were the new words of the sixties and seventies, followed by 'new evangelization' and 'culture' during the eighties and nineties. At the same time the relations between faith and culture have become the object of intense debate, especially with regard to 'inculturation'.

Religion and culture have had a reciprocal relationship in every epoch of history until the recent centuries in the West.⁵⁰ That the Western Christian Churches represent a small minority of Christian believers in the world has been known for decades. Now this inevitable demographic shift from the richer world is being seen as a cultural phenomenon that will gradually change our sense of religious identity. Within all Christian Churches it is in non-Western countries that the liveliest languages of faith are being born. The phenomenon called culture is an exclusively human experience as a simple example can show. Unlike many animals, a new-born infant has little genetic programming to guide its behavior; instead of being able to survive on its own, the human baby needs others for considerable time before arriving at independence. "Culture is the human learning space, where the child develops its open-ended potentials for growth."⁵¹ And unlike the animal, this adventure of culture learning is not simply about behavior. It is also about ideas, involving patterns of meaning, embodied in symbols, and subject to considerable evolution and even conscious change.⁵²

Now, trying to define culture I find Edward Taylor's (a renowned British Anthropologist who published his pioneering work entitled primitive culture) definition more appropriate. He said, "Culture or civilization is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society".⁵³

Culture remains one of those words that can be exasperating in its inclusiveness.

⁵⁰ Michael P. Gallagher, *Clashing Symbols- An Introduction to Faith and Culture*, London, p.5

⁵¹ Michael P. Gallagher, *Clashing Symbols- An Introduction to Faith and Culture*, London, p.6

⁵² Matthew Arnold, *Culture and Anarchy*, ed., R.H. super (University of Michigan press), p. 95,112.

⁵³ Edward B. Taylor, *Primitive Culture* (John Murray, London) Vol. 1, p.1

It can seem to be a chameleon-term that changes its significance depending on the user. Culture can be viewed as involving a particular set of assumption about values and behaviors, and hence it contains certain normative elements that influence the life of a group. Some experts introduce a distinction between 'Culture' as referring to the way of life of all groups and 'a culture' as pointing to the specific modes of behavior that are accepted in a given society.

Trying to tackle the question of the genesis of culture, some people tend to stress that Culture is not simply an automatic inheritance between generations but a conscious human product, born of different form of human activities⁵⁴ Before trying to offer a different synthesis of the essential elements for our understanding of culture, one that conserves more specifically religious purpose of this piece of work, let us look at the definition offered by Clifford Geertz. He has a wide quotation: Culture for him denotes an historically transmitted pattern of meanings embodied in symbols, a system of inherited conceptions expressed in symbolic forms by means of which men communicate, perpetuate, and develop their knowledge about and attitudes toward life.⁵⁵

In his own words, he espouses a 'semiotic' concept of Culture, in the sense that he seeks to study the sign system underlying human behavior. He compares culture to "web of significance" that humanity has spun, and any analysis of culture will try to understand the complex meaning embodied in those social and symbolic webs. Geertz unlike other contemporaries of his gives prominence to the crucial role of

⁵⁴ Michael P. Gallagher, sj *Clashing Symbols- An Introduction to Faith and Culture*, London, p.15

⁵⁵ Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures* (Basic books, New York), p.89

symbols as carriers of culture, and this aspect seems of special relevance in reflecting on the relations of culture and religious faith. By placing symbolic communication at the core of his definition, he is also seeking to do justice to the informal logic of actual life, holding that society's forms are cultures substance.⁵⁶

The second Vatican Council initiated a whole wavelength for Roman Catholic understanding of Culture. In the early sessions of the Council, there was practically no attention to the modern World in itself and it was only when the Council has been underway for more than a year that the proposal was made to devote time and effort to discerning today's context of faith, the world 'ad extra' beyond the confines of Church. From this initiative, *Gaudium et Spes* came into being- a long document that can be viewed as essay in theological anthropology on contemporary Culture, and where one chapter, representing about a tenth of the whole text, is devoted to the topic of Culture. It is significant that this document begins by relating Culture to the nature of the human person arrives at authentic humanity.

Immediately two foundation stone of Catholic thinking on Culture become clear: that Culture is intimately linked with the dignity of the person and with the call of freedom to become more fully human. The document in paragraph 57 throws light on the theological understanding of the whole field of culture, and this paragraph situates the call of culture within the overall vocation of Christians. The final destiny of life with God should energize rather than diminish the engagement of believers in the humanization of this world. Hence Cultural activities are central to the Christian

⁵⁶ Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures* (Basic books, New York), p.5

calling. The text goes on to admit that the impact of science and technology can narrow one's sense of truth and produce a false self-sufficiency, but it immediately denies that such ills follow from contemporary culture itself.

Once again there is a deliberate effort to evaluate modern culture as a bearer of 'positive values', which can prepare people for the gospel message and even be grounded in divine love. Paragraph 58 begins evoking the cultural nature of revelation itself, where God's progressive self-communication adapted itself to the culture of different age. Against this background it unites two perspective concerning evangelization (without using that word which entered Catholic discourse from the mid-seventies on): that the gospel message transcends all cultures, purifying and transforming them, and yet the mission of the Church is to embody the gospel in different Cultures, enriching the Culture and being herself enriched in the process.

The revelation of God not being a magic power but a word entrusted to humanity needs constant communication in new situations and this naturally entails cultural sensitivity. This is a basis for what will later be called INCULTURATION. In addition, this paragraph contains an important assertion that the Church has no fixed relationship with any culture: This is the spirit of an eloquent speech of Cardinal Lercaro during the Council debate when he argued that the Church should embrace a certain cultural poverty, not clinging to the riches of the past even in systems or artistic expressions; while always rooted in scripture the Church should explore the language of contemporary culture and its emerging values. New credibility and religious force

would be found from such humility according to Lercaro.⁵⁷

It is sometimes claimed that *Evangelii nuntiandi* is the most important of post-conciliar documents and the one that has had the most lasting impact. Coming as it did exactly ten years after the end of the Council this 'apostolic exhortation is given in an unusual energetic style for such an official text. From the outset, it voices urgency about how the hidden energy of the Good News can find evangelization as the essential mission of the Church (No. 14) and the source of her identity.

It also asserts that the Church remains always in need of being evangelized by constant conversation and renewal, in order to evangelize the world with credibility' (No. 5). All this is the context within which Pope Paul arrives at the first major ecclesial statement concerning evangelization of culture. Just prior to paragraph 20 which is devoted entirely to this topic, evangelization itself is described as bringing the Good News into all the strata of humanity and through its influence transforming humanity from within' (No. 18).

Evangelization of cultures can be summed up in the following lines:

To transform cultures means going in the roots and not being content with surface appearances.

The gospel is independent of cultures but the kingdom it proclaims has to be lived by people within their cultural realities; hence the gospel is not incompatible with any culture in the sense of being able to enter in a culture without being subject to the culture.

⁵⁷ Michael P. Gallagher, sj *Clashing Symbols- An Introduction to Faith and Culture*, London, p.41. 42

.... Everyone lives according to some culture, which determines the mode of one's existence. Culture, as a human achievement, involves our capacity for self-creation, which in turn radiates into the world of products. A culture is materialization of the human spirit and at the same time a spiritualization of matter. It thus serves to render our world more human.⁵⁸

John Paul II continually insists that culture is "oriented to the realization of the person in all one's dimensions", but at the same time he stresses that culture belongs to a people: it is the particular way a people cultivates its relationship with nature, with others and with God.

2. Inculturation as Effective Tool of Communication for Evangelization

Inculturation according to Thomas Ohm can be understood at the following three levels: assimilation, accommodation and transformation. After Vatican II, these were translated to mean: accommodation (adapting oneself to a people), assimilation (taking over elements from the other) and transformation (enlightening or changing the form; giving a new name).⁵⁹

In its anthropological significance, inculturation is the process where by individuals, social groups and social categories are inserted into and imbued with the values, norms, patterns and models of their society.⁶⁰ Inculturation is where traditional cultural elements meet and agree with Christian elements of faith. It should, therefore penetrate all spheres of Christian life such as catechism. Liturgy, disciplines of church law, public piety and customs, language and poetry, art and architecture, morals and

⁵⁸ Avery Dulles, *The Prophetic Humanism of John Paul II*, (America, 1993), p.9

⁵⁹ Class Notes: Fr. Hamuongo - Inculturation, Evangelisation and communication, 2005

dogma. Fr. Shorter expresses similar ideas as follows:

Inculturation implies a continuous struggle with synchrisism and with elements of culture, which are incompatible with the Gospel. History proves that syncretism is a necessary evil in the church, and that evangelization is forced to desyncretization enters into the definition of inculturation itself. What is clear is that fear of syncretism should not be invoked as a reason for postponing inculturation and its contingent character must be acknowledged in practice.⁶¹

Inculturation is a relatively new term for something with long root in Christian history, even though that 'something' is lived with a different urgency and with more complex awareness in days St. Paul underwent a significant conversation of attitude in Athens, and took a sympathetic step towards the culture of a city that previously had left him disguised (Act 17). The very fact that Christians have four gospels and not one is a powerful symbol of how preaching the Good News was shaped from the beginning by the needs of different audience or culture. That the New Testament is written and comes down to us in Greek, and not in the language of Jesus himself, is an indication of a dramatic and painful discussion by the early Christians to reach out beyond Jewish circle to the huge culture of the Gentiles. Again one can point out different changing mediations that mirror many shift of sensibility through the centuries. The best chapter of Church history constitutes a long adventure of trying to make real, in new language and cultures the revelation of God's love in Jesus Christ.

Do not bring any pressure to bear on these people to change their manners, customs and practices, unless these are obviously contrary to religious and morality. There is nothing more absurd than to want to bring France to

⁶⁰ Lebulu L. J., Inculturation, AFER, August 1994, Vol. 36 No. 4, p. 212

⁶¹ Shorter A., MFr. Evangelisation and Inculturation, AFER, April 1995 Vol. 37 No. 2 p.95

China or to bring Spain or Italy or any part of Europe.
Carry none of that but rather faith, which neither despises
nor destroys the way of life and the customs of any
people, when these are not evil things. On the contrary,
faith desires that these traditions be conserved and
protected.⁶²

2.1 Attempts Towards Inculturation

There have been many significant contributions by Dagaaba scholars towards the inculturation of the Christian message in various areas of Dagaaba life. Attempts at inculturation can be summed up in three approaches. The first is research work conducted by some scholars on the traditions and cultures of the Dagaaba in view of establishing the true identity of this group. The second is purely theological reflections on various aspects of Dagaaba cultures and traditions. And finally, the third is the application of the previous, i.e. the most remarkable and significant contributions from the first two approaches. Scholars such as Edward Tengan,⁶³ Paul Bekye⁶⁴ and many others. Though their studies have paved way for new trends in the development of theology of inculturation in the Dagaaba world.

2.2 Reconciliation Among The Dagaaba

Among the Dagaaba a ritual is evitable for the effectiveness of reconciliation. A ritual is important because it offers the opportunity to relieve tension from which words

⁶² Collectanea S.C Propaganda Fide No. 135 P.42

⁶³ Edward Tengan published his book, *House of God: Church as Family*. His vision is that of an Inculturation Ecclesiology. He bases his reflection on his own experience of family life and friendship in the Dagaaba society and also the Dagaaba experience of the transcended reality of the Church, on the other hand, Tengan leads his readers into new insights about the Dagaaba Christianity and Church as a whole. In vision he envisages the transformation of the old traditional Dagaaba house/family into the new Christian house of God with the sacrificial role of Christ as central idea.

⁶⁴ Cf. Bekye, *Divine Revelation and Traditional Religion*. Bekye's main concern is how to bring about a Christian theological innovation that would consider the Africa socio-cultural situation. He focuses on the

can no longer release one.⁶⁵ In a reconciliation ritual, the Dagaaba aim at coming together as a community to recognize conflicts as shameful and evil. This evil is then symbolically cast out through verbal confessions and forgiveness for the restoration of 'coolness' i.e. health and balance to the individual and community. According to Malidoma Some, when such a community comes together to engage in a ritual, it aims at the transformation and restoration of the individual and ritual.

The ritual he says is an art, "an art that waves and dances with symbols and helping to create that art which rejuvenates participants.⁶⁶ However, behind the symbols is an underlying and deeply rooted theology that is understood as effect although from the externals it may appear superstitious and magical.

2.3 Dagaaba Theology of Reconciliation

The Dagaaba believe that there is a close and inseparable relationship between the visible reality and the invisible. This relationship is so real that whatever happens in the latter brings about instability or disturbance in the former. The Dagaaba also believe that there is a physical, psychological, social and spiritual separation between the community, God and the ancestors when one misbehaves. This disrupts the original established peace and harmony that should exist between the two worlds, visible and invisible. In order to correct abuses or wrong doings, the ancestors punish the transgressor by inflicting pain on them, sending illness, troubles or even death.

Christian revelation and the Dagaaba religious experience within the context of salvific plan of God with Christ as center

⁶⁵ Cf. Patrice M. Some, *The Healing Wisdom of Africa: Finding Life Purpose through Nature, Ritual and Community* (London: Thorsons, An Imprint of Harper Collins Publisher). P.161

⁶⁶ Cf. Patrice M. Some, *The Healing Wisdom of Africa: Finding Life Purpose through Nature, Ritual and Community* (London: Thorsons, An Imprint of Harper Collins Publisher). P.23

Reconciliation is therefore ritual to maintain good relations among members and ensure the providential care of the ancestors. When individuals offend each other there is separation. They can no longer sit together under the same tree, enter through the same door, or eat from the same pot or dish.⁶⁷ Such a separation is considered evil because peaceful co-existence no longer exists. It is not only the individuals who suffer as a result of a broken relationship but also the community as a whole. Reconciliation is often referred to as "keeping the house clean for others," i.e. to ensure that future generations do not inherit the consequences of individual acts. Unresolved conflicts are said to be "contagious."⁶⁸ They eventually affect surviving relatives and can be passed on to future generations.

In general, reconciliation celebrations embrace all behaviors considered a serious offense to God, the ancestors, and the community, e.g. quarrels, immoral behavior some abusing the name of God and of the ancestors. Each time a crisis occurs, it is resolved by a ritual in the presence of everyone.⁶⁹ The element of shame is not at stake. What is important is the demonstration of deep regret and humility on the part of the offenders who seek reconciliation. Shame is brought about only if offenders, in their prides refuse reconciliation. This results in self-destruction. It also means failure on the part of the community in its role as reconciler. Reconciliation ritual in the

⁶⁷ Eating together is an explicit manifestation of love and unity among participants. It is a sign of friendship and of mutual acceptance. 'sitting together,' 'entering through the same door' can be taken as symbol of peaceful co-existence.

⁶⁸ Cf. Patrice M. Some, *The Healing Wisdom of Africa: Finding Life Purpose through Nature, Ritual and Community* (London: Thorsons, An Imprint of Harper Collins Publisher). P.131

⁶⁹ Cf. Some, *The Healing Wisdom of Africa*, p.160

Resolving issues that arises between members is most adequately achieved through the ash ritual. Members use ashes to draw a line or mark a circle to show their quest for reconciliation and this marks the beginning of the ash ritual.

Dagaaba community offer individuals the opportunity to resolve their conflicts, to heal the wounds they have inflicted on each other, and to be re-integrated into the community.

The ritual is not just a simple colorful celebration loaded with symbols and meanings. For the Dagaaba, it is meant to be a healing, transforming and rejuvenating experience for all participants.

2.4 The Praxis of Reconciliation

For the Dagaaba, there are two levels of relationships in which reconciliation is vital. The vertical: between human, the ancestors and God and the horizontal between humans and their fellows. Experience has taught the Dagaaba that conflict is part of human relationships. Conflicts are said to be evil only if the element of separation does threatens the already established equilibrium.

There are two types of reconciliation expressed in the ritual act, 'Yir Tampello' (house ashes) and 'bagr tampello' (sacrifice of ashes). Yir tampello refers to daily interpersonal relationship, whilst bagr tampello is the use of ashes in the context of sacrifices and rituals within the household. As regards "house ashes, individuals use ashes to draw a line between them as a sign of the need for reconciliation. This put an end to any possibility of engaging in physical assault or form of continually hurting each other. The ash thrower is called upon to reconcile conflicting situations that get out of hand. Here, he comes in to "hold the knee" of those concerned. He plays a very important role in offering sacrifices of reparation in all spheres of life where distress or crisis prevails. His role takes prominence in the "sacrifice of ashes."

2.5 Basic Elements Used In The Ritual

Ashes: ashes are used in cases of sickness, default or death, etc. The choice of ashes is very significant because in Dagaaba thinking, anything that burns and turns into ashes no longer retains the heat that it originally had during its burning process. The process of cooling from fire-heat is an experience, which for the Dagaaba is very symbolic and thus evocative as well as laden with religious meaning.⁷⁰ From the Dagaaba understanding, there are cases in which the household or community is said to be 'hot', resulting from disharmony caused by a human fault sickness or death. This needs the intervention of the ancestors to restore harmony and coolness in the house or community.⁷¹ Anger is also referred to as heat. The throwing of ashes as a ritual is therefore meant to appease or cool down such situations that bring 'heat' to individual and their household. In the case of anger it is precisely meant to cool down the spirit of an angry person to pave a way for reconciliation. After reconciliation has been accomplished, all conflicts are said to have "cooled down, i.e. resolved".

A calabash of cool water: The calabash signifies life because it is a useful instrument to wash, heal and serve food for nourishment. Water is meant for cleansing in view of washing away the evil in a particular situation. It is also used to ask for peace and protection. In the sacrifice of ashes, water is used for washing the hands of the entire community, for sprinkling the ancestral shrine (Alta), to ask for peace (coolness), protection and success of reconciliation.

⁷⁰ Cf. Tengan, *Social Structure of the Dagaaba: The House and Matrilineal as axes of Dagaaba Social organization*. The Victor series No. 3 p.40

⁷¹ Cf. Tengan, *Social Structure of the Dagaaba: The House and Matrilineal as axes of Dagaaba Social organization*. The Victor series No. 3 p.43

Other materials: the traditional stool, the flywhisk⁷² is just a very practical instrument for chasing away all sorts of insects and flies. All sacrificial elements are placed on the skin (of cow) because it represents the ancestral shrine through which the community communicates with God.

2.6 Those Involved In The Ritual

Usually, in such celebration the people involved include the presider (principal celebrant), the head of the community, the ash-thrower who is a member of the joking clan, the offenders and the community members. The performers of the ritual itself are the elders of the household and the ash-thrower. The ash-thrower is seen as a sympathetic friend who intervenes in times of crisis or distress to help people live through difficult moments. He "throws ashes" to cool down the 'heat' of the offenders (culprit) and the offended (God and the ancestors).

The ritual ash-thrower has two main functions namely in daily life and in times of serious conflict. In situations of tension, where the whole community is involved, the community itself cannot achieve reparation on its own accord. The community needs the intermediary role of an outsider who can plead on their behalf to their ancestors. This is where the ritual ash thrower is called upon. Last but not least is the community as a whole. The celebration is public with the community witnessing and actively participating. Meinrad notes that during such celebration in most African societies,

The confession is public and all those present grant
pardon since all have been hurt and it is with all

⁷² it is very difficult to say if it takes other meanings other than its practical use

that the penitent has to be reconciled. Thus the power of absolving belongs at one and the same time, totally to God and the whole community of the living and dead.⁷³

Based on the African traditional worldview of sin as a communal event,⁷⁴ the community plays a very important role not only during such celebrations, but also in the individual's well-being and success. And in such celebrations, the community's aim is precisely that of physical and spiritual healing of the individual and the groups. All these take place in the mysterious powers of God and the ancestors.

2.7 The Celebration Itself

The celebration takes place under a big tree with all the totems of the different clans hanging on it, symbolizing the original harmony and unity that God intend for the community. The offenders usually come in front to confess. The community and the person they have the problem with respond to the confession as way of forgiveness. After this the ash-thrower deeps his palm in ashes, touches the shoulders of the confessors and say some prayers. This is followed by a little ritual or ceremony called 'using ashes to catch the knee of the offended ancestors'.

2.8 Theological Reflection

From all that we have seen so far, we can see the Church's understanding of sin and reconciliation as not so foreign to the Dagaaba Christian from the point of view of Dagaaba traditional concept of sin and reconciliation. Dagaaba reconciliation is imbued with rich symbolisms and meaning that have proven to be very effective in

⁷³ Meinrad Hebga , 'Reconciliation and Africa Culture' AFER 25 No. 6 p.351

with rich symbolisms and meaning that have proven to be very effective in reconciliation conflicting parties. However, the Christian faith demands that the Dagaaba transcends the traditional view to grasp the true meaning and consequences of sin in Christian life and the urgent necessity of reconciliation. Where does the Dagaaba find Christ in all this? How significant can the role the Church be perceived in all this? Sin from the biblical perspective (of Gen. 3; Mt. 25:31-46) brings about true alienation with God within oneself, with others and with the cosmos. Sin therefore distorts the original established equilibrium that God foresaw in the beginning of creation (cf. Genesis account in the light of God's creation as a reflection of peaceful co-existence). Sin is not just a shameful act as understood by the Dagaaba but a failure of human being as regards their true vocation and identity (i.e. image of God). It is experienced as humiliation. Individuals and the whole society suffer as a result of this.

It is in this regard that Vatican II talks about the social consequences of sin or what human solidarity in sin is all about i.e. individual's sin having repercussions on the entire human community.⁷⁵ This whole idea of solidarity in sin complements so well the Dagaaba notion of sin as a communal event.

God is God of peace. He love peace and that is why he desire reconciliation.⁷⁶ He desires that, human co-existence reflect that of the Trinity, the example per excellence of peaceful co-existence in love.⁷⁷ Therefore to draw all to himself, God

⁷⁴ Cf. Healy, Joseph, Donald Sybertz, *Towards an African Narrative Theology*, (New York: Orbis Books) p.117

⁷⁵ Cf. *Gaudium et Spes* 25

⁷⁶ Like the Prodigal Son's father, God waits eagerly for our return (Lk. 15. 11-32) God turns sad situation into joyful event (reconciliation)

⁷⁷ Cf. Last supper discourse in John's Gospel with particular reference to the prayer of Jesus (Lk. 17)

through Christ reconciles the world to himself and pleaded that we let ourselves be reconciled to him (cf. 2 Cor. 5:18-20). This plea resounds throughout history, from generation to generation and in every tribe and nation. This was the basis of Christ's ministry. Christ in his person and ministry did not only proclaim the Good News of God's mercy but exercised it.

CHAPTER FOUR

CASE STUDY: RECONCILIATION OF COUPLES ON ASH WEDNESDAY (AMONG THE DAGAABA)

1. Reconciliation

During the patristic age, with the ritual celebration of public penance with a liturgical celebration at the beginning of lent, it becomes evident that this practice tended to separate too much the penitents from the rest of the community. Slowly, the faithful lost the sense of their sinfulness. This reconciliation of separated couples on Ash Wednesday if not well integrated could also lead Dagaaba Christians to loose sight of their sinfulness. It should be well understood that the reconciliation of separated couples is only meant to be a sign for all who experience separation within themselves, with their neighbors and with God. And therefore, the separated couples should also see themselves as having a very important and privileged role to play on this day of reconciliation. Once they have been led by the community to get reconciled with each other, they in their turn must witness and convey the message of reconciliation in the community. To stress this ministry of reconciliation, it would be appropriate if provision were made for the separated couples to participate in the distribution of ashes to the community.

1.1 Dagaaba Traditional Marriage

Two terms express Dagaaba marriage, Pog-de (wife taking) for the man and sir-kulu (husband-homing) for the woman. For the man, marriage is considered a means of acquiring someone to render domestic services, the sole domain of woman. For the woman, marriage is seen as the initial step in starting her own home. Nevertheless, in

both cases, the main purpose of marriage is procreation and the legalization of offspring.

Dagaaba marriage can be defined as the union of a man and woman, having in mind the reciprocal services of domestic life and the procreation of children. This union is made possible through agreement between the kinship groups of the man and the woman. Dagaaba marriage requires that the woman leaves her home for that of the man, this allow for polygamy. Its makes also marks a change of status for them and establishes new relationships of consanguinity and affinity.

In the past, the explicit consent of the man and woman was not necessary however; a period of courting (pogebuobo) was foreseen for that purpose. Here, it was the man's responsibility to take the initiative and court the woman. The woman showed her consent by accepting cowries from the man's family. The woman's family received the bride wealth,⁷⁸ not as an outright purchase, but as a symbolic gift of cowries and parted with their daughter. The man's family on the other hand received the woman as a gift. This way of proceeding still prevails. But today, due to the scarcity in obtaining cowries, money is generally accepted. No age limit is stipulated as regards marriage except on the basis of one's physical and psychological development i.e. when one can be said to be ready for marriage. Some qualities to be looked out for in a boy or girl are: politeness, respectfulness, one who is not a thief, hardworking, good cooking, capable of looking after a family.

⁷⁸ Shorter, Africa Culture: An overview, 90

According to Shorter, most African Cultures bride wealth is understood as an indemnity to the bride's family for their expenses in bring her daughter up. It is also a compensation for losing a productive and

Marriage creates a new relationship between two clans. It gives exclusive sexual right to the individuals involved and legalizes the marriage and offspring. It also imposes on the individual's services and obligation to be rendered to the clans such as visiting sick members of their clans, attending funeral, just to mention a few.

To sum up, marriage is not only the individuals affairs but also communal. It is meant to establish a lasting relationship between the families/clans of the partners.

1.2 Divorce, Separation and Reconciliation

As already mentioned, Dagaaba traditional marriage is considered a life-long commitment. This however, does not exclude the possibility of separation and divorce. To mention but a few breakdown of marriages can occur in cases of bareness, witchcraft infidelity, stubborn refusal to comply to a grievous prohibition, utterance of curse against each other as regards the attendance of each other's funerals, in terms of responsibility adhere to the implications of marriage, in terms of responsibilities towards the respective clan of the partners as already mentioned above. Dagaaba say, "quarrels in marriage are as old as marriage itself" that is why attempts are always made to settle them. All marriages in principle should be successful and long lasting. But where there are grave difficulties, separation and not divorce is the norm. The return of bride wealth is quite rare in this but the going to call back the wife is the settling of the quarrel. Even where the case is beyond repair, you may reject your wife but you can never refuse her funeral.⁷⁹ To repair broken marriages, couples can be asked to provide

reproductive family member and a legal document, signifying that marriage has taken place and that the husband has conjugal rights.

⁷⁹ Tengan. 'The Institution of marriage among the Dagaaba,' in Edward, ed., *Dagaaba and Sissala Traditional marriage in the light of Christianity*. 30

some animals or birds and some produce from the field. This varies from case to case depending on the gravity of the issue at stake.

1.3 The Reconciliation of Separated couples on Ash Wednesday

Ash Wednesday and 'Baghr Tampello' (the sacrifice of Ashes). Lent begins with the imposition of ashes and the invitation to 'repent and believe in the Gospel'⁸⁰ (Mk. 1.15). This is the most appropriate time for the Church to awaken in all the faithful the urgent necessity of repentance and reconciliation. Initially the imposition of ashes was reserved to those guilty of serious sins.⁸¹ Upon recommendation of Pope Urban II, this role gradually became universal, embracing all the faithful. From Scripture, the use of ashes is a sign of repentance (cf. Gen. 18. 27; Job 42. 6, Mt. 11. 21). According to L'abbe Julien, by their nature, ashes are also a symbol of death and warning of the reduction to dust (cf. Gen. 3. 19) However, it is worth noting that in the bible 'dust' and 'ashes' are portrayed as related concepts and very often a mingled concept in usage which the Church has also inherited.⁸² For instance, on Ash Wednesday, the New Missal makes reference to ash as showing that we are dust. On the whole, dust/ash can be understood as symbol of dispersal, a symbol of pointing to the nothingness out of which we are created and the nothingness to which sin leads.

With the advent of Christ, ashes as expression of sorrow and repentance are 'not only a reminder of death but evitably a pledge of resurrection. The ashes of a Christian

⁸⁰ Beatrice M. 'Ash Wednesday: A Celebration of Values' Worship Vol. 6, 1992 96

⁸¹ Adam Adolf, *The Liturgical Year: History and its meaning after the reformation of the Liturgy*. The Liturgical press, 1990. 95

⁸² Adam Adolf, *The Liturgical Year: History and its meaning after the reformation of the Liturgy*. The Liturgical press, 1990. 98

are no longer mere ashes but a sign of Christ victory over death. Can this be said of the Dagaaba expression of ashes in the context of reconciliation?

The Dagaaba experience the 'sacrifice of ashes' as the 'coming down' of a conflict, rendering incapable of 'burning again' by means of a ritual. In other words, conflicts are called to 'die out' completely. When this understanding is confronted with the risen Lord, the story does not end there i.e. leaving the past in ashes because with the risen Lord, a new reality, a new life must spring out of death. In the same way, through the celebration of reconciliation, participants experience new life in Christ. Reconciliation must pave way for the creation of 'new hearts' for new relationships. With this understanding the 'sacrifice of ashes' within the context of Ash Wednesday will not result in a confusion of symbolism for the Dagaaba Christian but a renewal in understanding that it will demand new forms and approaches in reconciliation.

1.4 The Setting of The place

The reconciliation will be celebrated within the context of the Eucharistic celebration. It is foreseen in two parts namely: Eucharistic celebration (as a thanksgiving celebration). The first will be within the vicinity of the Church but outside the Church building, preferably under a tree whilst the second, takes place inside the Church building,. Under the tree, an icon, representing the House of God is placed right in front of the congregation. This way of proceeding is to mark the distance/separation between the community and God, and to show the necessity of reconciliation before approaching God's altar.

A calabash of cold water will be used to perform the reconciliation rituals. Before the water and the ashes are used they will be blessed so as to make them effective in bringing harmony and coolness. The ashes will be used for absolution. The Word of God will be placed on a traditional stool that symbolizes God's throne. The skin (that of a cow) represents the ancestral shrine through which the community will communicate with God. All sacrificial elements are placed on the skin.

1.5 Reconciliation Rite with Reference to Separation of Couples

In the coming pages we shall limit ourselves to the first part of the celebration. This will strictly touch on the "sacrifice of ashes" as inculturated rite on Ash Wednesday. Our case study will be that of separation of couples. The performers of the ritual itself are the elders of the community and the ash-thrower with the priest as the main celebrant. The rite can be adapted and used for all seasons to emphasize the necessity of reconciliation in a Christian's life. It can also be taken as a helpful means of reminding Christians that Christ's way demands constant conversion so as to be strengthened, renewed and ready to meet him when he comes.

I. Purpose of Gathering

The elder of the community will highlight the purpose of the ceremony.

Community elder: *Today is Ash Wednesday and we are gathered under this tree to respond to God's call for reconciliation in a special way. We shall do this by offering a sacrifice of ashes in our traditional way. This will enable us to be reconciled with God and the ancestors, and with one another.*

On this day, we also want to remember our separated couples in a special way. They

have been strangers in our midst by distancing themselves from each other. In this, they are wounded, likewise, each one of us as the proverb says, "the eye can not cry and the nose keep quiet". This means that the faults they have committed have an effect on all of us. We pray therefore that Jesus our 'dume'⁸³ many soften their heart so that they may forgive themselves and that we may once again rejoice with them. However, before we begin the "sacrifice of ashes", let us ask for the success of this celebration.

II. Peace Seeking Ritual

The community elder comes in front of the ancestral shrine with a calabash of cold water to call for peace, protection and the success of the celebration.

Community elder: *father, get cold water.*

He then puts some in his mouth and spurts it over the ancestral shrine three times.

The third time he says:

Community elder: *Take this cold water and give it to elders.*

This is followed by a hymn invoking God's presence.

III. Opening Prayer

Principal celebrant: *Lord, send us your spirit to cleanse us in the water of repentance so that our eyes, ears and hearts may be open to see and treasure your presence among us. May it change our attitude and actions towards one another and towards you, in our journey, so that whatever we do may be for the good of one another and your greater glory.*

All: *Amen*

⁸³ Tengan, House of God. 82

IV. Procession with The Word of God

The word of God is brought from the Church in a procession accompanied by a group of elders, one of them carrying the word of God riding on a horse.⁸⁴ One holds a fly-whisk (cow tail) to guard against flies touching it. Three people are in front with three lit candles. The ashes and calabash of cold water, that is to be used for libation and reconciliation, will also be brought at the same time and placed on the shrine whilst the congregation sin.

Upon reaching the shrine, the elder goes on his knee and places the word of God on the traditional stool. The celebrant now stands up and prays with outstretched arms invoking the spirit of God so that the word may be proclaimed in faith and love.

Principal celebrant: *God fill our minds, mouth and hearts with the power of your spirit so that your word may be proclaimed with faith and trust.*

After the proclamation of the word of God, the principal celebrant gives his homily covering the other topics:

- a) The importance of Ash Wednesday for the faithful at the beginning of lent: Repentance and reconciliation as an on going process in Christian life.
- b) The pursuit of reconciliation by all Christians as the only option to be united with Christ and with each other in love.
- c) Reconciliation as the mission of Christians in our world of today, a world wounded and scared by selfishness, war, conflict etc.

Tengan in his book suggested that for the Dagaaba the best analogy for Christ is that of Jesus Christ as 'dume.' He says this will enable the Dagaaba to reflect more on the salvific significance of Jesus

⁸⁴ This is a visible sign of kingship in most cases. During public celebration this is reserved to kings and chiefs.

d) The unity of meanings that reside in the symbolic use of ashes in Dagaaba and Christian context with emphasis on the novelty in meaning with the advent of Christ that is hope in the resurrection.

V. The Ritual of Ashes

The celebrant blesses the water and ashes. He then pours water libation, followed by a prayer with the congregation responding.

Principal celebrant: *Great elder, spirits of the earth and land, and all our ancestors, we your children have gathered here today to ask for your pardon, forgiveness and blessing we ask for your help to be able to forgive one another and ourselves.*

All: *Father we ask you to forgive and bless us.*

Principal celebrant: *We ask you to bless this water and ashes so that when they touch us they may be the sign of your cleansing and purifying power that frees us from the bondage of the evil one. May their touch give us renewed heart to repent and to forgive. May they also be the sign of your forgiving love, peace, hope and generosity.*

All: *Loving Father, purify our hearts and bless us.*

Principal celebrant: *Great Spirit, do not allow any evil to come to us through this water and Ashes rather peace, harmony and unity.*

All: *Our great elder are our strength.*

Principal celebrant: *May the use of this water and ashes remove from our hearts, and minds every stain of sin and evil, and reunite us with one another and with you great elder.*

All: *King of peace bring us back to you.*

He now calls the separate couples, each one by name to come forward. Each one answers when called, showing that they come willingly to repent and to reconcile.

He also calls the ash-thrower and the community elder to come and witness this. This ash-thrower dips his or her hand in cold water and uses that to hold the knee of the couples. He calls each by name saying:

Ash thrower: *(Name of wife/husband).... look, this was fire, now it is cold ashes - By these words, I have used God to hold you, I have used your ancestor to hold you.*

Response: *Amen*

The principal celebrant pours water libation as a sign of communication with God and the ancestors. He says:

Principal celebrant: *Our father, these are your people, this is your will, let us be at peace, let the souls of the people be cool; you our father, remove all evil from our path.*

He then sprinkles some on the couples and on the community saying:

May the touch of this cold water bring you peace.

Afterwards, he gives the calabash of water to the couples to rinse their mouths as a sign that they have forgiven each other.

Principal celebrant: *(Name)... take this calabash of water and rinse your mouth as a sign that you have truly forgiven each other.*

Each one takes the water and rinses his/her mouth and pours it out saying to her husband or his wife:

(Name)... this calabash of cold water that I use to rinse my mouth is a sign of my forgiveness of you. May we be reunited once again more strongly in love.

The community elder comes before the ancestral shrine and encircles the shrine with ashes. The congregation, including the couples, then squat before the shrine. The elder then say:

Community elder: *We have disobeyed your commands of love and sharing by quarreling. We have showed you with greed, which separates us from you. Forgive us your unwise children, our fault, for we are only children, may you accept us back Lord.*

Then letting the wind take the ash away, he continues to say:

Take these ashes, take these ashes, take these ashes and let this case be cool and do not get angry.

He turns to the couples and say:

Community elder: *May you be free from all that separated you from being in communion with one another, God and your ancestors. And may the peace and joy of Jesus our dume be with you.*

Couples: *Amen*

VI. Giving Peace

The couples embrace each other while the congregation sings. At this juncture, all welcome the couples to join the congregation in joy, ululating, giving one another the sign of peace and singing a thanksgiving song.

The presider in the company of one of the couples, chosen to represent the others, stands at the entrance of the Church and distribute ashes to the faithful.

The faithful, after reception of ashes proceed silently to the Church for the second part, a thanksgiving celebration inside the Church (Eucharist).

GENERAL CONCLUSION

From all that we have seen so far, one can infer that doing Evangelisation through Inculturation speaks louder and it's more close to the lives of people. As I have always pointed out, I am not in any ways playing down on 'modern' technology used in doing Evangelisation.

As you have read up to this stage, you could see that I began by pointing out some definitions of some key terms. Some may not apply directly but then they help in refreshing one's mind. In the same chapter I have discussed who the Dagaaba are since we shall be using them most often for our references. I chose this group of people because of the tremendous impact Inculturation has had on them and more importantly how Evangelisation has gain root in and among them.

Dagaaba are very simple and humble people who for now can be found in most part of Ghana. As earlier on noted they are predominately a farming community and it is through and out of this that they feed. The few you would find in other parts of the country are either government works or businessmen and women. They are not the affluent type you easily find in society, nevertheless, they are noted for their hard work and honesty. Initially, not very many had formal education until recent times. This last statement has no threat to inculturation and evangelization. In the same chapter I also outlined the notion of the Dagaaba religion before the advent of evangelization. Before evangelization they had their own form of worship, as it is typical of every African

society. Theirs was the ancestral worship. A kind that brought them in full union with God, the ancestor and one another. From history, the Dagaaba has never learnt to despise other people's religion as long as it has no threat to theirs. The ancestor is only a mediator between them and God. He was never placed higher than God. At the advent of Christianity, Catholicism was the dominant denomination until recent times. Islam caught some parts of the area but do not great influence. As at now other denominations are setting in.

The next chapter is the relationship between faith and culture. Faith and culture has always been perceived as two different entities. But as I have point out, faith and culture complement each other. They are not seen as opposing factors. Faith and culture can be likened to the nature of Christ himself that is his human and divine nature. This chapter seeks to set the margin for the next chapter, which is the core of our paper. It brings out the fact that if faith and culture can co-exist then it stands to regard that it is possible or better still inculturation can serve as a mean of communication for evangelization. As faith touches on our relationship with God, culture does the same on our inner most self. This should be an awareness for us all not to either despise faith as mere emotional display and culture as barbaric. Both faith and culture makes us come to terms with our true selves as humans and people created by a higher being who is God. The last two chapters as already mentioned, are the core of the paper and they deal with how inculturation can be a means of communication for evangelization. Inculturation is used in this paper as a tool for communicating the Gospel message. How is it a tool? As we have realized, faith and culture are not oppose to each other. They complement each

other. Inculturation comes in to serve as a means for bring out the values each of these (faith and culture) poss. Inculturation makes it clear that none dominate the other or none is inferior to the other. It is through inculturation that we come to realise what we (humans) have a lot to offer when it comes to our contribution to the divine plan of God.

I brought this whole idea to light with the case study I made from among the Dagaaba of Upper West Region of Ghana. I chose this community or group of people because of the deep-sited impact inculturation has made on them. In this case study I have only cited one cultural practice, which has been inculturated so well among the Dagaaba. There are many others that have similarly been inculturated. Believe me or not this brings the people close and united that even people who are not converted to Christianity yet find it appropriate and important to attend. As one village chief once remarked, 'this is our identity and we must not let it die out.' Well, others may come to the gathering with different feeling and probably notion but at the end of the day, its purpose is achieved.

Initially, inculturation sounded foreign to them and of course, something they thought could devour their system of beliefs and way of life. But as time when on, thanks to the early missionaries who out of patience schooled them gradually to come to the realization that the two can be one but still retaining their separate identity. Needless to add that there were some early missionaries too who thought the Gospel message can only exist without the people's culture. All that the people had, for them was evil and nothing good can come out of it. Those who took the pain to explore the two sides and

found a link between the two have done a great job. When we read the case study carefully we shall come to realise that certain notion that the Christian holds on to are either similar or somewhat similar to the Dagaaba traditional perception. In short there are a few things in common.

Finally I would like to give some pastoral recommendations as regards the subject. As many would feeling at home with modern technology when it comes to doing evangelization, it would be more appropriate to do evangelization also considering inculturation as another way. Parishes, formation houses and even Catholic schools and Small Christian Communities should bring out this method of doing evangelization more concretely in their Eucharistic celebrations and other practices.

Besides all these, first of all, people should be made to appreciate their culture and also see the need to live these cultural values along side Christian values.

Areas, for instance, parishes where there are several cultures living together (I mean a metropolitan dioceses) a 'strike and balance' system can be made to come out with a beautiful inculturated practice.

The whole beat of inculturation, as means of communication for evangelizations is the disposition of each of us to accept who we are and what we have as a community and what God wants of us.

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