

Justice Anquandah Arthur
The Politics of Religious Sound

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Justice Anquandah Arthur

The Politics of Religious Sound

Conflict and the Negotiation of Religious Diversity
in Ghana

LIT

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Dedication

To Prof. Dr. Nicoletta Gatti, whose role modelling, friendship, and mentoring gave me the necessary ingredients to pursue my academic dream. My gratitude is boundless because you gave me hope, which helped me to carry on, even in the face of great obstacles.



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Preface

Accra, the national capital of Ghana is generally a noisy place. It is a place of every conceivable noise – from commerce, customary activities to religious worship. The city is a beleaguered environment of incessant clatter, chatter and roar. Amid this cacophony of sounds, the Pentecostal-Charismatic Christians have been accused of making noise with their loud around-the-clock church services and public evangelistic gatherings. While their sound practices generate some tension throughout the year - in and around the city - it is during the implementation of the ban on drumming and noisemaking by the Ga Traditional Council (GTC), as part of their annual *Hɔmɔwɔ* festival, that these conflicts reach violent proportions, as the churches fail to comply with the directives of the traditional authorities. This book explores the encounter between the Charismatic churches and Ga traditionalists by focusing on the *Hɔmɔwɔ* festival as an entry point to illustrate the nexus of religious diversity and conflict by attending to disputes over religious sound in Accra. To do this, I employed qualitative research methodology, a method that allows for a dialogue with the participants or actors in the field. It is based on over a year's ethnographic fieldwork conducted in the Greater Accra region. The data gathered was analysed using a synthesis of the boundary making theory and Azar's (1990) protracted social conflict (PSC) as my theoretical framework. The analysis showed that: (1) similarities in the conception of religion, sound and space; the contestation for media space; the complexities of the post-colonial Ghanaian state; the Ga becoming a minority in their 'homeland' and the assertion of traditional authority are factors that lead to the conflict. (2) the question of land acquisition in Accra; political interference; the role of ethnic identities; religious liberties in the context of legal pluralism and creative exchanges in religiously plural settings are aspects that help to describe the manifold dimensions of the conflict. (3) whereas conflicts about sound are usually about decibel measurements, they are also relative to the relationship between parties. (4) religious diversity is intertwined with other expressions of diversity such as ethnicity and language. Thus, I propose foremost, that conflicts are intrinsic to the negotiation of religious diversity in the context of nation-states where modern democratic structures coexist with contemporary traditional states. Furthermore, while the conflict is ostensibly, a religious one, a closer investigation reveals that it is multi-dimensional including socio-economic

factors, ethnic identities, as well as resource-based contestations, partisan politics and governance issues.

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Abbreviations

ACI	Action Chapel International
AMA	Accra Metropolitan Assembly
BSPG	Bible Study and Prayer Group
CAC	Christ Apostolic Church
CCG	Christian Council of Ghana
CCRG	Catholic Charismatic Renewal Group
CIC	Council of Indigenous Churches
CHRAJ	Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice
CPP	Convention Peoples Party
ECG	Electricity Company of Ghana
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency
FARC	Fuerzas Armados Revolucionaris de Colombia
FGC	Fountain Gate Chapel
GAPCRMC	Greater Accra Permanent Conflict Resolution and Management Committee
GARCC	Greater Accra Regional Coordinating Council
GBA	Ghana Bar Association
GBC	Ghana Broadcasting Corporation
GIR	Ga Indigenous Religion
GLIC	Gospel Light International Church
GPCC	Ghana Pentecostal and Charismatic Council
GPS	Ghana Police Service
GTC	Ga Traditional Council
IBHR	International Bill of Human Rights
ICCPR	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
ICESCR	International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
ICGC	International Central Gospel Church
IMF	International Monetary Fund
LCI	Lighthouse Chapel International
NACCC	National Association of Charismatic and Christian Churches
NCC	National Commission on Culture
NCCE	National Commission on Civic Education
NCS	National Catholic Secretariat
NDC	National Democratic Congress

NPP	New Patriotic Party
PCG	Presbyterian Church of Ghana
PCGC	Presbyterian Church of the Gold Coast
PMI	Powerhouse Ministries International
PNDC	Provisional National Defence Council
PSC	Protracted Social Conflict
RCC	Roman Catholic Church
RCI	Royalhouse Chapel International
SVD	The Society of the Divine Word
SMA	Society of African Missions
UDHR	Universal Declaration of Human Rights
VBC	Victory Bible Church
WHO	World Health Organisation

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Glossary of Ga Words

Note on Transliteration

Words in Ga are spelt according to current orthographic practice in the language. The following examples will aid in pronouncing Ga words that appear in this research:

ɔ - as in more ts – as in chair

ŋ – as in king dz – as in joe

Akoŋ	Ga religious tradition of Akan origin
Akutso (pl. Akutsei)	town or quarter
Akwashɔn	council of seven
Akwashɔntse	head of the Akwashɔn
Asafo (pl. Asafoi)	military company
Asafoatse (pl. Asafoatsemei)	captain of the military
Ataa-Naa Nyɔŋmo	supreme being, father-mother-God
Bii	children
Blafo	executioner
Dzaasetse	household of an office holder
Dzemawɔŋ (pl. Dzemawɔdzi)	tutelary deity
Faafɔ	funerary rites
Ga mashie	original Ga settlers
Ga kroŋ (Ganyo kroŋ)	the ‘true’ or ‘pure’ Ga
Gbatsu (pl. Gbatsui)	shrine
Gbohii adzeŋ	the world of the dead
Hɔmɔwɔ (Homowo)	annual <i>Kpele</i> festival
Korle	principal female deity
Kpele	Ga indigenous religion
Kpemɔ	puberty rites
Kpokpoi	festive food
Mankralo	town guardian
Mantse (pl. Mantsemei)	father of town, chief
Me	Ga religious tradition of Dangme origin
Nai	senior/principal deity (male)
Nmaadumɔ	planting of the sacred corn/millet
Ofe Nyɔŋmo	almighty God
Sakumɔ	principal deity (male)
Sisai	ancestral shade

We (pl. **Wei**)

Woyo (pl. **Woyei**)

Wulɔmɔ (pl. **Wulɔmei**)

family, house, lineage

spirit medium (usually a woman)

chief priests

Introduction

Encountering the bustling West-African city of Accra is an intense sonic experience. The metropolis is alive with sounds. Everywhere music is in the air, pulsating from portable radios, car speakers, and open-air drinking spots. Taxis honk their way through traffic jams; street hawkers market their wares; markets and transport hubs are cacophonies of voices: talking, shouting, hissing, bargaining, quarrelling, laughing, singing, preaching. Amidst the fullness of sounds in the city, religious sounds claim a prominent place, day and night. Roaming evangelists on street corners, markets and in buses try to persuade their audiences of the word of God with raucous voices or loudspeakers at full volume (de Witte, 2016, p. 133).

In a recent column in the Guardian newspaper titled, “In the age of noise, silence becomes a political issue,” an Anglican priest, Giles Fraser, opined that silence has been central to the spiritual life of the church for generations, being an essential platform for prayer in many religious traditions (Fraser, 2016). He argues that uninterrupted noise is an assault to the ear, as well as the soul.¹ Moreover, silence and noise as forms of sound are fundamental not only to religions, but also crucial to human health (Berglund & Lindvall, 1995). Indeed, Weiner (2014) argues that noise is the number one quality of life issue in many major cities (p. 19). Nevertheless, Ghana is generally a noisy country, particularly in the urban centres like Accra, the national capital. There are multiplicities of sounds within the urban soundscape of the city and its extended metropolitan area. It is a place of every conceivable type of noise. The city is a beleaguered environment of incessant clatter, chatter and roar. In fact, there often seems to be a competition among the producers of sound. Of the numerous sources of sound, three types dominate the cityscape; namely, sound from commercial activities, customary activities and religious sounds.

Commerce is a significant cause of loud sounds, as it is a common marketing strategy for traders to attract customers by playing loud music. At the Central Business District of Accra, the competition between the producers of noise is even keener. As closely packed music shops try to outdo one another by playing the loudest music for their patrons, street

¹ See: <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/belief/2016/nov/24/in-the-age-of-noise-silence-becomes-a-political-issue>. Accessed December 8th 2016. For more on sound and religion, see Hackett (2012).

hawkers shout to attract the dense crowd to their wares. Taxi drivers constantly honk their horns to get the attention of passengers as they meander through the traffic, while pubs and *chop bars* (traditional eateries) play loud Ghanaian hi-life music for the pleasure of their diners. On the other side of the road one can see the *trotro*² mates (or drivers' assistants) leaning out of their minibuses shouting 'Circle', 'Kanesh', or 'Legon-Madina', the travel routes or the destinations of the buses, while making hand signs and beating the sides of the buses as they approach a stop. On intercity buses, traditional doctors sell their 'all-powerful' medicines under the guise of loud Christian preaching. In the background, the FM radio plays highly charged political or sports discussions and commuters weigh in on these as they travel, sometimes leading to heated debates.

Besides commerce, customary activities, like funerals, marriages and naming ceremonies, are sources of noise in the city. In almost all the traditional areas within the city these activities are associated with loud music. Notably, funerary rites are held with loud dirges and wailing from the deceased families, as well as other sympathisers. Indeed, in contemporary times, bereaved families often hire professional wailers to cry at funerals. Furthermore, modern child naming and marriage ceremonies now often include a reception characterised by music and dance in addition to the traditional rituals.

But the most significant noise in the city is the 'sacred noise' coming from all of the different religious traditions. Accra's substantial Muslim community, and their many mosques call the *Azan* five times daily, while in the traditional areas, like Ga Mashie, there is almost always a daily ritual involving drumming and dancing. Noise blares out from church bells on the city's numerous Cathedrals. Street evangelists line up on almost every street corner and in markets preaching the Christian message or playing gospel music from loud public-address (PA) systems. Church services by Pentecostal-Charismatic groups are a common feature from dawn to dusk on a daily basis. Where there are no street preachers, the airwaves are filled with sermons from Pentecostal-Charismatic preachers.

As Fraser (2016) argues sound, noise, or the absence of it, has become more than a mere measurement of decibels: they are political issues in the sense that they are negotiated in social interactions. Sound is not neutral

² Trotros are inner-city minibuses that seat between 10 to 30 people. The word trotro comes from the initial fares charged for a trip on one of these buses. It describes the affordability of travelling on these buses for people from every economic bracket.

because the very “boundary between desirable sound and unwanted noise is very much a constructed, contingent and historically variable one” (Mody, 2005, p. 177). For instance, the Israeli Knesset is on the verge of passing a law that will ban the use of loudspeakers for the Muslim call to prayer due to claims of noise pollution. However, the same law has been designed not to affect the Jewish Shabbat sirens (Mckernan, 2016). Thus, some sounds are heard while others are ignored or permitted to reverberate without restrictions.

Most of all, it is religious sound that has become controversial in the city due to contestations from various circles. The politics of religious sound, which I define as the negotiation of sound, in all its forms, in social interaction between different groups, is very much evident in Accra, where Ga traditionalists clash with Pentecostal-Charismatic churches over their annual sacred silence, which is imposed on the city, as part of the celebration of *Hɔmɔwɔ*, their major festival. The Pentecostal-Charismatic Christians have been accused of making noise with their loud around-the-clock church services and public evangelistic gatherings. This group of churches uses powerful PA systems and musical equipment as a central part of their worship and experience of the divine. To them, God is experienced through the presence of the Holy Spirit in worship, or what Meyer (2013) refers to as personal and social experience “shaped through particular, religiously transmitted and embodied filters of perception” (p. 9). While their sound practices generate some tension throughout the year in and around the city, it is during the implementation of the ban on drumming and noisemaking by the Ga Traditional Council (GTC) that these conflicts reach violent proportions, as the churches fail to comply with the directives of the traditional authorities. These confrontations between the two groups reveal not only a tense relationship between them, but also highlight issues of religious tolerance and diversity in the pluralised Ghanaian setting.

It is against this backdrop that I explore the encounter between the Charismatic churches and the Ga traditionalists by focusing on the annual *Hɔmɔwɔ*³ festival of the Ga of Ghana. *Hɔmɔwɔ* can be considered as a microcosm of the encounters between these two groups. The festival provides a valuable lens by which to explore the nexus of religious diversity and conflict through the politics of religious sound in present-day Ghana. Specifically, I examine the dynamics of the conflict over the noise ban

³ *Hɔmɔwɔ*, literally translates as ‘hooting at hunger’. It is the most important celebration in the *Kpele* religion.

imposed by the GTC prior to the celebration of the *Hɔmɔwɔ*, which all communities in the city, including the Pentecostal-Charismatic churches, are compelled to comply with as a mark of respect for the Ga deities who have visited the city during a particular sacred period. First, by concentrating on the clashes over the noise ban, I seek to understand the dynamics of the conflict in all its diverse dimensions. By dynamics, I am referring to what Azar (1990) has termed the “process dynamics,” that is, those driving factors that trigger covert situations into overt conflicts such as the conflicting parties’ actions and strategies, perceptions formed by groups and how it influences their actions, as well as the actions and strategies of the state (p. 14). ‘Dimensions’ as used in this book implies that I take a holistic view of the conflict between the parties, namely, that the conflict is multidimensional in nature including such aspects as religious, socio-economic, political, legal, ethnic-based, among others. Second, I examine why the conflict has continued since it first came to a violent expression in 1998.

Religious diversity has been growing in Ghana with the increase in revitalised forms of Christianity, Islam and other indigenous religions. Indeed, increasing religious diversity across the globe has attracted considerable academic attention and debate (Suchocki, 2003; Wuthnow, 2005; Bouma, 2006; Amaladoss, 2009; Bouma, Ling, & Pratt, 2010; Schumm & Stoltzfus, 2011; Mckim, 2012; Cohen & Numbers, 2013; Spies, 2013; Sikka, Puri, & Beaman, 2016). Nonetheless, the existing literature has tended to avoid issues of conflict resulting from this diversity, preferring to show the phenomenon in a positive light by framing it in terms of an optimistic multiculturalism. Some studies within the ecumenical movement have even suggested that multicultural policies will prevent both competition and conflict (Fearon & Laitin, 1996; Suchocki, 2003; Bouma, 2007, p. 187; Hagopian, 2009; Mckim, 2012; Lippy, 2015). However, there are several studies that also show that within the context of multiculturalism, religious conflicts are inevitable. They argue that these conflicts happen in several forms and diverse intensities within different settings. (Azar, 1990; Huntington, 1996; Khatab & Bouma, 2007; Sikka, Puri, & Beaman, 2016). However, the literature on religious diversity has typically ignored indigenous religions, choosing rather to emphasise the so-called world religions. Also, the overwhelming majority of previous scholarly discussion has concentrated on Western contexts. So unlike the majority of the literature that portrays religious diversity only in a positive light, this research explores the relationship between religious

diversity, the politics of religious sound and conflict in contemporary Ghana. By considering both a strand of Christianity and an indigenous religion, based in a non-Western context, this research addresses a marked gap identified in prior studies and also provides a fresh perspective on the connection between religious diversity and conflict by showing how religious sound is politicised. Looking at non-Western contexts is important because it provides me the lens to look at diversity in its complexity through such entry points as religious diversity. My study brings fresh empirical material and perspective to enrich the global theoretical discussion on the modes of diversity and the contexts thereof. My main propositions are that: (1) conflicts are intrinsic to the negotiation of religious diversity in the context of nation-states⁴ where modern democratic structures coexist with contemporary traditional states. (2) ostensibly, the conflict appears entirely as a religious one but a closer investigation reveals that it is multi-dimensional including socio-economic, ethnic identities, resource-based, partisan politics and governance issues.

The Ban on Drumming and Noisemaking in Accra

Throughout southern and middle Ghana, several communities impose a general ban on drumming and all forms of noisemaking prior to the celebration of major traditional festivals. The Ahanta and Nzema people (Akan) in the Western Region impose a month-long ban on drumming and noisemaking prior to the celebration of *Kundum*, the festival to remember their ancestors, cleanse the community of misfortune and set goals for the subsequent year. Meanwhile, in the Volta Region, among the people of Anloga, there is a strict prohibition of drumming and noisemaking as part of the customary rites to renew the town's relationship with the deities they believe protect them and their community throughout the year (Greene, 1997). In the Ashanti Region, the people of Bepong in the Sekyere Central District also ban drumming and noisemaking for 40 days before the celebration of the yam festival (harvest festival). Indeed, in the same region, as part of the recent celebration of the king's 15th anniversary on the Golden Stool (the throne of Ashanti kings), a ban on all forms of noisemaking, including funerary activities, was imposed in the entire region. Also, among the Akyem people (Akan) of the Eastern Region, there is an

⁴ I am aware of the ongoing academic debate on the term nation-state (Delanty, 1996; Walby, 2003). However, in this work, I use it only to differentiate the Ghanaian state from traditional states such as the Ga state (or nation) or the Akyem state (or nation).

annual two-week prohibition on drumming, dancing and noisemaking leading up to the celebration of *Ohumkan* and *Ohumkyire*, the thanksgiving festivals for the Akyem nation.

Nonetheless, it is the annual ban in the Greater Accra region that is most widely known across the country and beyond. This renown has been generated as a result of the controversies it has generated and because it takes place in the national capital, which is considered a melting pot of different cultures, more than in other regions. This ban is imposed by the Ga Traditional Council (GTC) throughout the Ga traditional area in May-June every year, prior to the celebration of *Hɔmɔwɔ*, according to their traditional calendar. The festival is the most important of all the Ga festivals and it carries great religious and socio-cultural significance. Mbiti's assertion that people are very often ready to die for their culture describes the strength of feeling many Ga people have towards this festival (1994, p. 194).

As part of the rites related to the celebration of the *Hɔmɔwɔ* festival, there is a sowing of sacred millet or corn (*ηmaaduwor*) in sacred fields by the priests. This is central to the celebration of *Hɔmɔwɔ*. The period between the planting of the millet by the *Wulɔmei* (chief priests) and its germination is the period of the ban. According to the Ga *Wulɔmei*, the ban enables them to fast and pray for the peace, welfare and prosperity of the Ga State, the land and its inhabitants. It is also believed that during this period, the gods and ancestors come to live in the community to oversee the gestation of the planted crops and they require peace and quiet (Nuumo Akwaa Mensa II, personal communication, February 17, 2014). The planted seeds signify life in Ga cosmology, so the ban is considered very crucial among the traditionalists. When the plants sprout, and grow well, it represents an omen that there will be a bumper harvest in the year ahead, and it is considered a sign of blessing for the following year. However, when the crops fail, this is taken as an indication that a poor and calamitous year awaits. One of my informants even claimed that excessive noise can affect the growth of the plants (Nuumo Okai I, personal communication, October 24, 2015). Although there is no proven link between plant growth and noisemaking, this comment reveals the seriousness with which the traditionalists consider the noise ban.

Research Questions

The main aim of this research was to examine the dynamic interactions in the ongoing conflict between Charismatic churches and Ga traditionalists

in Accra, in order to understand the connection between the politics of sound, religious diversity and conflict in contemporary Ghana. My overarching question in this research is: What are the various sources and dimensions of the conflict between the Charismatic Christian groups and the Ga traditionalists? In order to answer this main question, I explore the following specific questions:

1. Why has the conflict been protracted?
2. What is the role of state actors in the dynamics of the conflict?
3. What are the legal implications of the noise ban on religious freedoms?
4. Why have there been minimal, or no, tensions between the Ga traditionalists and the mainline Christian denominations?

The answers to these questions will aid in understanding how the interplay between religious diversity and conflict are experienced and negotiated in the pluralised context of Ghana, through the politics of religious sound. Also, by answering the questions, I seek to make a contribution to the wider debate on religious diversity in the context of post-colonial nation-states.

Some Reflections on Terminologies

The following sections consider some of the key terminologies used in this study.

Religion

Several definitions have been given to religion by many different people, but none of them has been universally accepted. The meaning of the term has historically undergone radical changes, prompting Smith (1962) to state that “[we] have learned more about ‘the religions’, but this has made us perhaps less, rather than more, aware of what it is that we have tried to mean by ‘religion’” (p. 74). The diverse definitions show that there has always been attempts at definitions regardless of the difficulties in the study of religions, not least the multiplicity of religions as well as diversities within the religious groups themselves (Smith, 1962, p. 8, p. 43; Idinopulos, 1998, p. 367). Although some focussed on one dimension over another, all definitions consistently show that religion has both observable features, like rituals, religious communities, institutions, arts, architecture, and non-observable dimensions relating to the purpose and meaning of religion (Idinopulos, 1998, p. 366). The aspect that has been a matter of great

debate among scholars of religion is the transcendent dimension of religion, which some have sought to ignore with explanations, which, according to Smith (1962), have been persuasive, but “have proven mutually discordant” (p. 7). A typical example is Emile Durkheim, who stripped the phenomenon of any transcendent reference to religion by stating that religion concerns only the human being, which is itself a creation of society (Durkheim, 1995). Some scholars have also argued that religion is a social construction - a modern invention in the West that emerged after the Reformation (Balangangadhara, 1994; Smith, 1998; McCutcheon, 2001; Dubuisson, 2003; Asad, 2003; Fitzgerald, 2007)

Prominent definitions of religion in the study of religions include conceptions such as “the supernatural” (Tylor, 1871), the dichotomy of “sacred and profane” (Durkheim, 1912, p. 52; 1995, p. 34), the “ultimate concern” (Tillich, 1969), “a sense of numinous, the ‘wholly other’” (Otto, 1936, pp. 12-13) and “system of symbols” (Geertz, 1973, p. 90). The definitions undoubtedly clarify certain dimensions of religious expression, but they are hardly adequate to describe the full meaning of religion. For example, Geertz’s (1973) definition has been critiqued as failing to designate the key features that determine “what religion is and distinguishes it from what is not religion.” That is, his definition, as all others, cannot be considered as what religion is in all times and places, but a contextual-specific proposal regarding an aspect of religion that he considered as worthy of further enquiry (Comstock, 1984, p. 501, p. 502). Also, some of the definitions are functional, that is, showing what religion provides, including psychological, moral, social, aesthetic functions, among others. Others are substantive, stating what religion is (Crawford, 2002, p. 4). Furthermore, some of the definitions are so broad that they can accommodate things as remote as football as religion, which is considered an ultimate concern for some people. For instance, supporters of Liverpool Football Club refer to Robbie Fowler, a former footballer as ‘God’, denoting the religious ecstasy they gained in watching him play for their favourite team. Yet, other definitions are so narrow that they fail to describe some of the aspects of religion (Crawford, 2002, p. 6).

Religion, for me, involves the idea of divinity or transcendence, what Meyer (2008) has called “a sense of going beyond the ordinary” (p. 705). My emphasis in this study is on the immanent as the place where “the ‘beyond’ is invoked and approached through actual, empirically observable practices” (Meyer, 2013, p. 7). Orsi (2012) puts it simply, stating that “re-

ligion is the practice of making the invisible visible”, which requires various forms of media for “materializing the sacred” (p. 147). Orsi (2012) further argues that “once made material, the invisible can be negotiated and bargained with, touched and kissed, made to bear human anger and disappointment” (p. 147). That is, there is essential media needed in making the invisible or the divine manifest, which may include a spirit medium, a tree, rosary, tasbar, anointing oil, bones, stones, water, the internet, computers, horns, sound, sacred books or pictures, to name but a few. Also, for humans to make contact with the transcendence certain specific practices and actions, mainly experienced through the human senses, are required, as is also shown by Orsi (2012). Accordingly, in this study, I see religion as humans reaching out to a transcendent being through the practices of mediation, which are by themselves not extraordinary but involve specific mediums through which the transcendence somehow is made visible. With this view of religion as mediation, bodily practices such as mediumship, sights, hearing, tasting, touching, smelling and other material forms, such as texts, pictures, buildings and objects are, therefore, central in perceiving and generating the presence of the transcendence in the here and now (Meyer, 2009, pp. 11-12; Meyer, 2013, p. 9; Meyer, 2015, pp. 336-337). This view of religion helps me to explain the religious phenomena in both Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity and Ga indigenous religions, where sound and silence are respectively required as mediums through which contact with the divine is made. Also, this view shows that religious practices as forms of mediation to make the invisible visible is not subordinated to other mentalistic perspectives of religion, which see religion as beliefs, values and meaning, but it shows that these two viewpoints are intertwined and mutually constitutive. Thus, my view of religion involves both the belief and mental aspects, as well as lived religion that encapsulates religious practices (Meyer, 2015, p. 337). Moreover, my reference to religion as an academic category includes religious traditions or forms of organisations, religious actors (adherents), religious discourses and religious practices.

Culture

Like religion, there have been several attempts at defining culture. Below is one particular well-known definition, which I intend to apply in this study:

Culture consists of patterns, explicit and implicit, of and for behavior acquired and transmitted by symbols, constituting the distinctive achievement

of human groups, including their embodiment in artefacts; the essential core of culture consist of traditional (i.e. historically derived and selected) ideas and especially their attached values; culture systems may, on the one hand, be considered as products of action, on the other hand, as conditioning elements of further action (Kroeber & Kluckholm, 1952, p. 357).

From the above definition, we can argue that culture is:

1. a product of history that includes selective values, ideas and patterns
2. a shared pattern of behaviour by members of a social group
3. learned through a socialisation process
4. a social group identifier, or that which separates them from other social groups
5. something that older members of a group pass on to the next generation
6. morals, laws and values that shape the behaviour and conditions one's worldview

This understanding of culture helps me to explain clearly the concept as it relates to the Ga Traditional Council and also allows me to talk about the culture of the Charismatic churches. Nevertheless, the separation of culture and religion is not a clear-cut demarcation, especially according to the Ga traditionalists, who consider their culture as one and the same with their religion. This complexity is actually a debate in the study of religions, because one of the widely-accepted definitions of religion has come from Geertz (1973), who defined religion as a cultural system (p. 90). Some have even argued that religion is one of the most fundamental pillars of culture along with other basic institutions, such as family, education, economics and politics, among others (Udeani, 2007, p. xvi). However, it is not within the scope of this study to deal with culture in its complex and extensive ramifications. Accordingly, I follow an approach that sees religion and culture as two separate entities that are constantly interacting with each other (Tillich, 1959, 1969; Niebuhr, 2001; Finke & Harris, 2012).

Indigenous Religions

Indigenous religions in Africa have been described variously in literature as primal, primitive, pre-literate, ethnic, oral, community, traditional or indigenous religions. These terms have generally been used to distinguish them from book-based religions, or religions based on written authority, which are generally referred to as 'world religions', such as Christianity,

Islam, Judaism and the religions of India (ter Haar, 2000, p. 2). This distinction between the so-called ‘world religions’ and indigenous religions is grounded on the notion that most indigenous religions of Africa are transferred from one generation to another through oral tradition, while the ‘world religions’ draw their authority from written sources. However, this distinction is problematic in the sense that there are some indigenous religions going through transformation, such as the Yoruba religion, whose Ife divination has now been documented and fully developed into computer applications.⁵ It is clear that the concept of ‘world religions’ is highly contested and it remains problematic in the study of religion (Berner, 2013, p. 49). Masuzawa (2005) refers to ‘world religions’ as a European invention.

Scholars like Ulrich Berner and Gerrie ter Haar have also expressed reservations about the very notion of ‘world religions’. Ter Haar (2000) argues that while the concept was relevant in the 1960s, the distinction is no longer sustainable since notions such as inculturation and contextualisation have brought the so-called ‘world-religions’, like Christianity and Islam, closer to the indigenous religions. Additionally, ter Haar maintains that over the same period, some indigenous religions have migrated to other parts of the world, therefore, making the distinction between them and the religions of the book questionable (2000, p. 3). Berner (2013, p. 62) further argues that the idea of universality is something that is shared by both the ‘world religions’ and the indigenous religions. This claim, he asserts, is based on the premise that while indigenous religions involve universal norms, such as respect for parents and family relations, the ‘world religions’ make categorical claims to truth, which they pursue through missionisation in order to become universal. Indeed, the concept of distinguishing ‘world religions’ from indigenous religions is extraneous and immaterial in the study of religions, as it contributes to making religion itself a more questionable concept (*ibid.*).

Despite the opposition to the separation between ‘world religions’ and indigenous religions, there are those who subscribe extensively to this dichotomy. For instance, Cox (2013) asserts that the distinction is essential and necessary because for us to be able to engage in comparative studies, “we need such category precisely in order that we can make sense of particular entities that can be fitted into it (p. 17). Away from the universal-local debate, this study adopted the use of ‘indigenous religions’ instead

⁵ See: <http://www.bu.edu/bostonia/web/yoruba/>, Accessed January 23, 2014.

of the more popular ‘African Traditional Religions’ (ATR), as the term ‘traditional’ in ATR connotes the idea that African religions are static, having remained untouched over the years. Moreover, while terms like primal and primitive are archaic and Christian centred, words such as preliterate, oral, and community are both Eurocentric and restrictive. Therefore, for want of a better terminology and also in an attempt to avoid words that have derogatory connotations, I prefer to refer to indigenous religions, which, according to Berner (2013, p. 49), “seems to be free of any value judgement”. However, the use of the derivative ‘traditionalists’ in this study is not pejorative in anyway, but an unavoidable emic term in Ghana.

Furthermore, Cox’s (2007) definition, which sees indigenous religions as typically “being bound to a location” and “derives from a kinship-based world-view”, has been adopted in this study (p. 69). Although this definition that takes into consideration locality and kinship, has been challenged by Ulrich Berner drawing from historical examples in ancient Greek tragedy, Buddhism and Christianity, and also by Debele (2015), drawing from Waaqa religion in Ethiopia. Nonetheless, it best reflects the *Kpele religion* of the Ga people. In the *Kpele* religion, or Ga indigenous religion, participants are native to the Greater Accra Region and it is “organised around a system of lineage” (Berner, 2013, p. 69). In this religion, the ancestors are known and they communicate only with their living descendants. This makes Cox’s (2007) definition of indigenous religions the most suitable for this religion. Finally, in this study, Ga indigenous religion (GIR), indigenous religion and *Kpele* religion are used interchangeably to refer to the same reality, the religion of Ga people before the entry of Christianity and Islam in the region now called Ghana.

Charismatic Christianity

Like Christianity itself, Pentecostals are not a homogenous group, which makes their categorisation difficult. Some scholars consider all the groups together as ‘Pentecostal-type’ movements (Anderson, 2002) or ‘Pneumatic Christianity’ (Asamoah-Gyadu, 2013). Other scholars prefer the use of Pentecostal-Charismatic churches (PCC) (Meyer, 1998) or Charismatic churches (Ojo, 1988) to refer to all forms of Pentecostalism. Nevertheless, there are scholars who would rather categorise the various forms of Pentecostalism in order to show its diverse strands. For instance, Omenyo & Atiemo (2006) have discovered a number of Pentecostal groups present in Ghana. According to their typology, there are five distinct Pentecostal

groups: the Classical Pentecostals, like the Church of Pentecost and Assemblies of God; African Initiated/Independent/Indigenous churches (AICs), such as Musama Disco Christo Church and the Twelve Apostles Church; Neo-Pentecostal and Charismatic non-denominational fellowships, for example, the Scripture Union and Ghana Evangelical Students Fellowship; Charismatic Renewal groups in the Mainline Churches, like the Presbyterian Bible Study Group and the Catholic Charismatic Renewal Group; and independent Pentecostal/Charismatic churches, like the ICGC and LCI.

While this typology has generally tried to capture the various strands of Pentecostalism, it is problematic because most Pentecostal adherents and informants are uncomfortable with some aspects of it, for example, grouping Pentecostal churches with AICs. While some informants believed AICs belong to a completely different category due to obvious theological differences, others did not even recognise them as Christians. Moreover, the group that they refer to as neo-Pentecostal and Charismatic non-denominational fellowships, for example, cannot stand on its own because members of these fellowships normally belong to actual Pentecostal churches, albeit they join these fellowships in schools and universities.

As a result, this study follows a rather different course from that pursued by Omenyo and Atiemo (2006). The churches have here been put into two groups, namely, Pentecostal churches and neo-Pentecostal churches. Firstly, Pentecostal churches is used to denote classical Pentecostal groups, such as the Assemblies of God, Apostolic Church of Ghana, The Church of Pentecost and the Christ Apostolic Church. These are the churches that evolved in Ghana as a result of the revivalist movement in the first two decades of the twentieth century, led by Peter Anim's Faith Tabernacle Church and the introduction of groups such as the Assemblies of God (Larbi, 2001). Secondly, the neo-Pentecostal churches are here referred to as Charismatic churches, a term commonly used in Ghana to refer to Pentecostal churches that began in the late 1970s and early 1980s, such as the Christian Action Faith Ministries International (now Action Chapel International – ACI), International Central Gospel Church (ICGC), Fountain Gate Chapel (FGC), Lighthouse Chapel International (LCI) and Roy-alhouse Chapel International (RCI). This is the fastest growing strand of any Christian group and they are what Gifford refers to as Ghana's new Christianity, or the Charismatic sector (Gifford, 2004, p. 23). They are characterised by the use of English language as the primary means of communication and they are mainly composed of a vertically mobile, young

and midlife, educated, middle class in the country. These churches are defined in this study as:

Pentecostal churches that adopt the megachurch concept; embracing aggressive forms of evangelisation for church expansion; espousing the here-and-now prosperity gospel rather than emphasis on an eschatological worldview; intensely using media technologies such as the internet, radio and television; and usually built around a strong anointed charismatic leader.

Therefore, in this study Pentecostal-Charismatic churches or Pentecostal is used to refer to the entire Pentecostal movement in Ghana, while neo-Pentecostal churches will be used interchangeably with Charismatic churches.

Noise

In scientific sound studies, noise is commonly defined as “unwanted sound” (Berglund & Lindvall, 1995, p. 5; Berglund, Lindvall, & Schwela, 1999, p. 24). The distinction between sound and noise is, however, a difficult one to draw. Accordingly, noise is defined operationally and is not based on the physical parameters of sound. It is an “audible acoustic energy that adversely affects, or may affect, the physiological and psychological wellbeing of people” (Berglund, Lindvall, & Schwela, 1999, p. 24). This shows that while sound is the comprehensive term that is neutral, noise as a form of sound can be detrimental to humans as acoustic energy. Taking noise as an unwanted sound, opens it up for several interpretations. It is something that neighbours in a community cannot tolerate. For example, if someone is not religious, any religious sound, irrespective of the volume, can become a nuisance to this person. On the other hand, someone interested in religion will tolerate any level of religious sound, even if they are not the intended audience. This shows that the meaning of noise is indeterminate, as it is a subjective category (Weiner, 2013, p. 3). That is, “noise is never so much a question of the intensity of the sound as of the intensity of relationships” (Schartz, 2011, pp. 20-21). Although the complaints in Accra about noise are usually about decibel levels, it is just as much about who the noise producer is and in what context the noise is made, which I refer to as the politics of sound. That is, sound becomes political when it ceases to be about loudness or decibel levels when it essentially becomes the fulcrum around which social interactions between groups is negotiated. In this study, I consider noise as a measure of volume level, especially in relation to national environmental protection laws, but my primary operating definition of

noise is what historian Bailey (1998) described as “sound out of place” (p. 195). That is, sounds become noise “when they are heard as contravening an assumed social order, when they are heard as not belonging, when they are heard where they are not supposed to be” (Weiner, 2014, p. 4). Moreover, I use ‘loud sound’ and noise interchangeably in this study.

Organisation of the Chapters

This book is divided into two parts within which I have nine chapters including introduction and conclusion. Chapter one which is the introduction to the study is dedicated to introducing the entire study. Part 1 has three chapters which deal with situating the conflict within the context of religious diversity in Ghana. Chapter two presents the problem and situates the study theoretically and methodologically. Chapter three deals with an overview of the main actors in the conflict; the Pentecostal-Charismatic churches and the Ga traditionalists. Chapter four explores the history and chronology of the conflict. Part two has four chapters and is devoted to exploring and examining the various dimensions of the conflict. Chapter five is devoted to delineating the ‘religious’ dimensions of the conflict including the role of the religious authorities and the media. Chapter six looks at how resources, needs-based grievances, governance issues and identity-related aspects combine to show why the conflict has protracted. Chapter seven looks at the legal dimension of the conflict, including the implications of the conflict on both religious liberties and diversity. Chapter eight investigates why there is cooperation, rather than conflicts, between the mainline historical churches and the Ga traditionalists. By way of concluding, chapter nine brings together everything that was previously discussed. It highlights key themes and links the findings to the main research questions and drawing the implications and contributions the study brings in to the wider debate on religious diversity, conflict and the role sound plays in furthering our understanding of the situation.



Part One: Situating the Conflict



1. Methodological and Theoretical Baselines

As a way of situating this study, methodologically and theoretically, I provide what I consider as important in understanding the conflict. Foremost, I show the methodological decisions I made, how these reflected in the field and how the diverse data obtained were analysed. Next, I present a brief overview of the existing literature on the conflict. By so doing, I have stated what my contentions are with these studies, where and how I draw from them and where I fill the literature gap. Finally, I discuss the theoretical lens through which the ethnographic data was analysed.

Methodology and Methods

Every researcher undertaking an investigation in any field of study is obliged to make certain critical decisions. In many instances, the first decision a researcher must make in exploring a field or undertaking a piece of research is to decide whether to employ qualitative, quantitative or mixed-method methodologies. The choice of methodology is critical, because these approaches represent completely “different ends on a continuum,” reflecting varying research philosophies (Creswell, 2014, p. 3). Therefore, it is not a matter of one method being any superior or intrinsically better than another, but rather it is a case of determining which of the methods is most suitable for addressing your research’s focus. As the general objective of this book is to enhance the understanding of the dynamics at play in the annual conflict between Charismatic churches and the Ga traditionalists in Accra, I opted for a method for “exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem” (Creswell, 2007, p. 22). Thus, this approach allows for a dialogue with the participants or actors in the field. As a result, I employed a qualitative research methodology for pragmatic, as opposed to ideological, reasons. The strength of qualitative research lies in its use of words and images, its use of multiple sources of data, its inductive approach (where themes, patterns and categories are built from the bottom up), its embracing of the researcher as a key instrument in the data gathering, its capturing of the actors’ meanings and, finally, the fact that it is an emergent design and not fixed (Creswell, 2014, p. 185-186).

Of the many approaches to doing qualitative inquiries, I opted for ethnographic field research. This involves extended observations of a group,

mostly through participant observation, in which the researcher is immersed in the everyday lives of the people, and where they observe and interview participants in the group, as I did with the Christians and Ga traditionalists involved in this study. Moreover, ethnographers study the meaning of behaviour, language, beliefs, and interactions among members of a culture-sharing group. This group could be an entire ethnic group such as the Ga, or religious bodies like the Charismatic churches. So, the ethnographic approach was selected for this research because it is the most suitable design if the needs are to describe how, for example, religious groups function and also, “to explore the beliefs, language, behaviours and issues such as power, resistance, and dominance” (Cresswell, 2007, p. 68-69). Accordingly, this approach allowed me to interact with actors, such as pastors, *Wulomei*, state officials, and religious adherents in the field through observation, interviews and focus group interviews.

Positionality and Reflexivity

The positionality of the researcher has not only been a topical issue in qualitative research, but also in the study of religion since it emerged as an academic discipline separate from Theology. The question of whether a non-believing scholar can ever understand the experiences of a practitioner of a religion, or whether practitioners of religion can ever present their religious experiences with a high sense of objectivity, has always been an issue in the study of religions. This raises issues of the insider-outside perspectives, “the nature and limits of objectivity and subjectivity, ‘emic’ and ‘etic’ positions, ‘experience-near’ and ‘experience-distant’ concepts, empathy and critical analysis, the effect of personal standpoint, and the process of reflexivity” (Knott, 2005, p. 243).

The thrust of these debates is about the position of the researcher as it relates to the scientific study of religion. Owing to the centrality of the insider-outsider debate and the subjectivity of qualitative research, I adopted an approach that is based on reflexivity. This approach calls for the researcher to be adequately aware of his personal and intellectual perspectives, as they relate to others. Reflexivity demands that the researcher is aware of the idea that scholarship is dialogical in nature. Tweed (2002) actually insists that whether it is a historical or ethnographic study, reflexivity is “all the comfort available to interpreters” in the study of religion (p. 73).

It is important, therefore, to state that I have been conscious, both during the research and writing process, of my position as a Ghanaian, an

Akan and an ordained minister of a Charismatic church. This implies that I am an insider as far as Charismatic churches are concerned, but an outsider in respect of the churches mentioned in this study, since I do not belong to any of the denominations mentioned. Nonetheless, my belief, ministerial training and socio-cultural perspectives aligns me to the Pentecostal-Charismatic movement. I am an outsider to the Ga ethnic group and also the Ga indigenous religion, although as a resident of Accra, the setting of this study, I cannot claim to be a complete outsider.

While there were numerous advantages in being an insider to the churches, such as access to pastors, leaders and members, there were equally challenging aspects to my position. Some of the pastors and Christians interviewed expected me to represent their views and take a position at the expense of the Ga traditionalists. Therefore, it was important that I told them that this study was a scientific enquiry that required a greater level of impartiality. As the researcher's "background, history, context and prior understandings" cannot be separated from their interpretations, I have been conscious in limiting the influence of socio-cultural or religious affiliations on my analysis of the data, although like all researchers, I cannot claim complete objectivity in my analysis of events (Creswell, 2014, p. 20). Nonetheless, as far as I could, I did not allow my background to prevent me from reporting anything that required attention. The reflexive stance I took meant that this study was conducted with regard to my context, whether as an outsider or insider, depending on the continually shifting positions, always being as clear as possible about my "confused positions" (Tweed, 2002, p. 73).

The Research Area

Accra is a cosmopolitan city with diverse ethnic and religious groups. The city was originally inhabited by the Ga people, who settled the region in present-day southern Ghana, from the *Densu* river in the west to the *Laloi* lagoon in east (Field, 1937, pp. 1-3). Today, Accra – in contrast to other big cities, like Kumasi and Sekondi-Takoradi – has become the most ethnically heterogeneous city, and is a melting pot of different cultures, religions and lifestyles. It is a microcosm of the entire country, with almost all the country's ethnic groups represented there. According to the recent population census, the Akan are the dominant group in the Greater Accra region, followed by the Ga-Dangme who arrived first and so are indigenous to the region. Other significant Ghanaian ethnicities present in the city include the Ewe, Guan, Mole-Dagbani, Gurma, Grusi, Mande,

amongst others.⁶ There are also sizable populations of other West African natives, including Liberians, Sierra Leoneans, Gambians, Togolese, Burkina-be, Ivorian, Beninese, Nigeriens and significant numbers of Nigerians, especially from the large Yoruba and Igbo communities. Accra also has a big Asian and Middle Eastern community with the Indians, Chinese, Lebanese and the Syrians as the predominant groups. Then there is the expatriate community made up of mostly Europeans, North Americans and Australians (Nyarko, 2012).

Most of the groups who migrate to Accra bring their religion and diverse culture with them. For example, most of the ethnicities coming from the north of Ghana are adherents of Islam and are found in the Muslim-dominated communities within the city, popularly called *Zongos*,⁷ in places like Abossey Okai, Nima, New Town and Madina. The Akan and the Ewe people from southern and middle Ghana are mainly Christians, with some traditionalists among them. The Indian population are mostly Hindus, who worship in the city's main Hindu temple on the Odorkor-Kaneshie main road. Many of the Indians are members of the Hare Krishna or the Gaudiya Vaishnava Hindu sect. Although majority of the native Ga people are Christians, a significant number of them – especially those who live in the traditional coastal areas – are followers of *Kpele* religion (Attuquayefio, 2012). Therefore, the Greater Accra region is a multi-communal area containing residents from diverse ethnic and religious backgrounds.

Although the noise ban, which I discussed earlier, essentially affects the entire Greater Accra region, or the historical Ga lands, this study focussed on the areas of Accra and Tema Metropolises – designated *affected areas* (as shown below). These are areas that have recorded several clashes between the traditionalists and the churches over the years as a result of the ban.

⁶According to the 2010 Population and Housing Census, while the Akan make up 1,528,177, the Ga-Dangme constituted 1,056,158 of the population of the Greater Accra Region.

⁷Zongo is a Hausa word meaning a stop-over, transitory or a travellers' camp. These settlements are areas inhabited by settlers from Northern Ghana and non-Ghanaian immigrants from countries such as Nigeria, Niger, Burkina Faso, Benin, and so on. They use the Hausa language as a lingua franca. There are Zongos in almost every major city or town in Ghana, and these communities are bound together by the Islamic religion rather than a shared ethnicity.

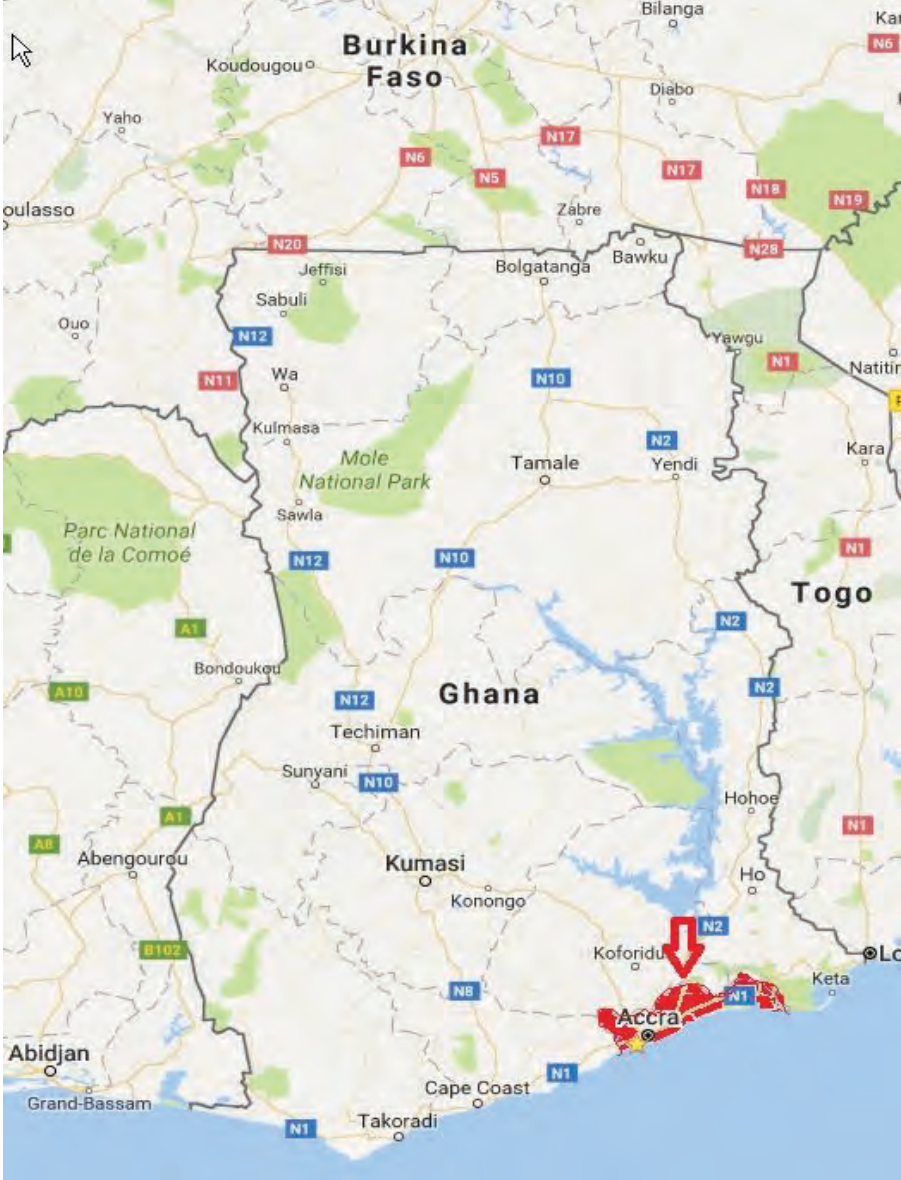


Figure 1: The Map of Ghana Showing the Greater Accra Region (Credit: Google Maps).



Figure: 2 Map of the Greater Accra Region Showing the Affected Areas of the Clashes over the Ban (Credit: CERSGIS, University of Ghana).

Data Collection

This study is based on over a year's ethnographic field research conducted in the Greater Accra Region of Ghana. Specifically, there were four phases of fieldwork: December 2013-June 2014, February 2015-June 2015 and August-October 2015 and May-July 2016. During these periods, I investigated the sources and dynamics of the conflict that ensues between Charismatic Christians and Ga traditionalists in Accra as part of the celebration of the Ga *Hɔmɔwɔ* festival and I collected both primary and secondary data. I employed a combination of instruments in gathering the primary data, namely, observation/participant observations, semi-structured in-depth interviews, focus group interviews, group interviews and document analysis. However, before I attempt to describe and explain how the data was gathered, it is important to outline how I got access to the field.

Preparation and entry into the field

Having spent most of my childhood school holidays in Accra, I always observed the *Hɔmɔwɔ* festival, which is held in August and September annually. During this period, I observed the celebrations and ate *Kpokpoi*,

the traditional *Hɔmɔwɔ* meal, from my grandmother's neighbours in Agege, a suburb of Accra. There were always many family gatherings, as many of the people in this compound house were people of Ga descent who had themselves travelled from various parts of the country for the traditional festival. As a boy, the aspects that caught my attention most were the annual eating and dancing competitions, durbar of chiefs, as well as the boxing bouts. These were my first encounters with the celebration of the festival. Secondly, as an adult, I saw first-hand several violent clashes between the Ga traditionalists and the Pentecostal-Charismatic churches, including some of the clashes recorded in this study. Also, having been a part of the Charismatic movement since 1990, I have been a participant and an observer of this community of churches, and it is an intrinsic part of my life. Therefore, I previously sided with the churches and condemned the Ga youth any time there were clashes between the two groups. Although these instances give some indication of my personal encounters with the Ga people, their traditional festival, and also the clashes with the churches, it is clear that I was not a trained observer at the time of these incidents.

Patton (2002) asserts that all forms of scientific investigation demand training and that careful preparation for entering the field is just as important in order to maintain the scientific observer's eye (p. 261). Thus, I undertook practical methodological training, as a result of which, I had less need to rely on my prior conceptualisations of the study's setting. In pursuance of successful fieldwork, I spent a few months conducting preliminary preparations, such as designing an interview guide for the semi-structured interviews and the focus group interviews, as well as practising observational skills, keeping field notes, and interview role plays with colleagues. Finally, I set off for Ghana where the fieldwork began on the 2nd of December 2013.

Since I had prior experience working with Charismatic churches (Arthur, 2011), it was relatively not difficult to make contact with key informants from the churches I had identified as key to the conflict. However, I needed a way to access the Ga traditionalists. Therefore, a *purposeful sampling* method was used to identify whom to contact on the side of the traditionalists. This method was necessary because there was a need to reach knowledgeable people from whom I could learn about the issues of key importance to the conflict. Creswell (2009, p. 213) defines *purposeful sampling* as selecting participants or sites who/which will best help the researcher to understand the research problems and the research questions.

Accordingly, contact with the traditionalists was made possible through one of my informants, who connected me with the *Nai Wulɔmɔ*, Nuumo Akwaa Mensa III, the Ga Chief Priest in Ga Mashie, Accra. After this first contact, I used the *snowball* approach to identify other potential participants, where current informants directed me towards others. *Snowball or chain sampling* is an approach for locating information-rich key informants (Patton, 2002, p. 237). This began by asking *Nai Wulɔmɔ*, a well-situated person, to talk to about past conflicts and ongoing negotiations from the perspective of the Ga traditionalists. He gave some recommendations of people I could speak to, who, in turn, suggested other information-rich informants, such as the *Korle Wulɔmɔ* and the *Sakumɔ Wulɔmɔ*. After several suggestions, some key names started to be mentioned repeatedly, thus narrowing the number of informants.

Observation/participant observation

In the field, observation was adopted to understand the context within which Ga people interact, because understanding the context, according to Patton (2002), is “essential to a holistic perspective” (p. 262). Most importantly, in the first fieldtrip, I observed first-hand the planting of the corn by the four major *Wulɔmei* (plural for *Wulɔmɔ*) in Ga Mashie and also the subsequent public declaration of the ban by the Ga Traditional Council. During the month-long ban, I observed how residents – especially those in Ga Mashie, Osu, La, Dansoman, Nyamekye, Korle-Gonno, Adjiringanor, Ashongman, Kaneshie and Abossey Okai – conducted their lives and also how the churches in these vicinities went about their services. In order to move beyond the selective perceptions of others, I also observed the *Oda-daa*, the traditional lifting of the ban, in 2014. Furthermore, the day-to-day lives of the ordinary Ga people in Accra and several other places (mentioned above) were observed, including attending several naming ceremonies, funeral ceremonies, and a twin-naming-ceremony at Teshie. In the third fieldtrip, I travelled to observe the *Hɔmɔwɔ* festivals as celebrated by Ga Mashie, Osu, La and Teshie.

Furthermore, I attended several church services on the Charismatic side in all four phases of the fieldwork. I attended Sunday services at the Lighthouse Chapel International (LCI) *Qodesh*; LCI, Korle-Gonno; International Central Gospel Church (ICGC), Christ Temple; ICGC, East Legon-Adjiringanor; Royalhouse Chapel International (RCI), Ahenfie; Powerhouse Ministries, Korle-Gonno and Victory Bible Church, Awoshie. Also, I attended Christmas and Easter Conventions, Prayer and Deliverance Meetings, all-night vigils, and social events such as Easter

Monday games. Aside all the fore-mentioned events, I also went to Pastors and Leaders conferences at the LCI, *Qodesh*; ICGC, Christ Temple; and Powerhouse Ministries, Korle-Gonno. These first-hand observations and experiences in the setting of the research enabled me to utilise personal knowledge during the analysis of the data.

Onlooker or participant or both? – Participant observations

To illustrate the various confused locations within the field, I draw from Knott's (2005) diagram below:

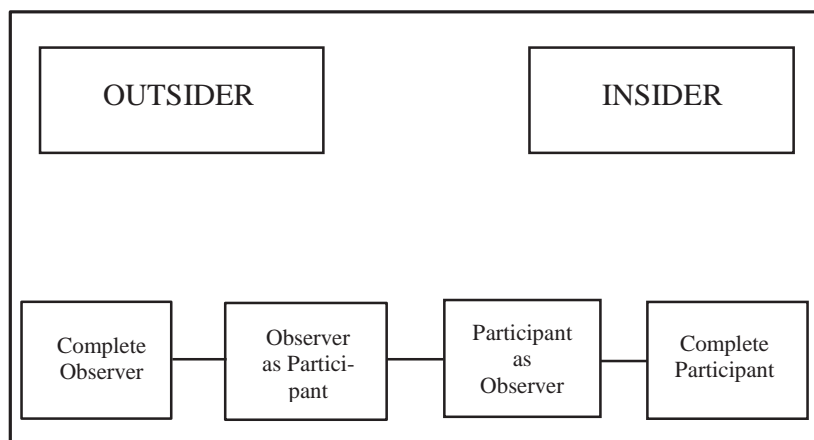


Figure 3: Knott's (2005) Outsider-Insider Diagram

In the field, my position was fluid, changing between the observer as a participant (an outsider) to participant as an observer (an insider) depending on the circumstances. With the Ga traditional group, I was a complete outsider observing activities like the *Odadaa* (planting of the corn) and the *Hɔmɔwɔ* festival. However, despite being an observer, I also found myself as a participant from time to time. For instance, the *Korle Wulɔmɔ* started to telephone me, which led to a little rapport between us, resulting in the *Wulɔmɔ* becoming a key informant in this study. On another occasion, there was an adjudication of a case at the *Nai We* (The house or Council of the Ga High Priest) and my opinion was sought. There were many instances in the field where I stopped taking notes and listened to the Ga informants because I was so engrossed in the activities trying to get their emic perspectives.

On the other hand, among the Charismatic churches, I was an insider studying my own religion as *participant as observer* (shown above on Knott's diagram). Nevertheless, there were times when I was a *complete*

participant, thus, completely participating in activities rather than observing with the eye of an inquirer. For example, during a visit to Christ Temple – ICGC one Tuesday evening, I forgot about the research and fully participated in the communion service. Another significant instance of *complete participation* was when I visited the ICGC-Adjiringanor branch for their 2014 Easter Sunday service. At the end of the service, I was invited to speak to the congregation and to give the closing prayer and benediction. This happened again at Powerhouse Ministries in Korle-Gonno, where Bernard Arde-Acquah, the pastor, introduced me to the congregation and asked me to present a short message to the members and also give the benediction. At these points, my experience switched between being a *participant as an observer* and a *complete participant*.

On the whole, my position towards the Charismatic churches throughout the fieldwork was that of a scholarly participant who adopted the role of observer in the midst of his own religious community, embracing a critical stance but also sharing in the “benefits of an insider’s knowledge of the beliefs and practices of the community” (Knott, 2005, p. 247). But with the Ga traditionalists, I started out as a *complete observer* but noticed that my position changed to that of an *observer as a participant*, where I was forced to dispense with all ideas of myself as an unengaged observer. On the whole, at every point in time in the field, I was somewhere on the continuum shown in the figure above.

Interviews

To bring together multiple perspectives, I conducted interviews and focus group interviews because “no single source of information can be trusted to provide a comprehensive perspective” on a research problem (Patton, 2002, p. 306). By using a combination of observations, interviews and document analyses, I was able to use different sources of data to verify and validate findings. This approach of using multiple sets or triangulation increases validity, as the strengths of one source compensates for the weaknesses in another (*ibid.*). Interviews allowed me to go beyond the external behaviour normally captured by observations to explore feelings and thoughts. Specifically, this study adopted semi-structured in-depth interviews to learn about individual and group histories with respect to the clashes between the Ga traditionalists and the Charismatic churches. In addition, the interviews sought more detailed information from the key actors in the field, including church pastors (mainline and Charismatic), ecu-

menical groups, government appointees, traditional priests, representatives of the Ga Traditional Council, Ga scholars, scholars of law, market women, fisher folk, and a representative of Afrikania Mission.

Furthermore, I used a combined interview approach, namely an informal conversational interviews strategy within the semi-structured guide approach. This is because the combined strategy afforded me the flexibility in going into a topical issue and determining when it is appropriate to investigate certain topics in greater depth, or even to pose questions about new areas of enquiry (Patton, 2002, p. 347). Depending on whom I spoke to, I started with either a conversation and then later followed up with the interview guide or vice versa. Specifically, I used the open-ended interview guide to get systematic information first and then adopted an informal conversation mid-way or towards the end to follow any topic of interest. As would be expected, I tended to have more conversational interviews with, for instance, the Ga youth at Korle-Gonno than with the experts. Moreover, I ensured that those selected for interviews were well informed about the issues pertaining to the conflict since 1998 to enable them to provide relevant information for this study.

The issue of how many qualitative interviews should be conducted during a research project is a perennial one, without any universally agreed number. This is because qualitative research is exploratory in nature and, therefore, researchers may not know in advance how many interviews they will need (Adler & Adler, 2012, p. 8). Ragin (2012) suggests that for a project of this scope at least 50 interviews are required, so I conducted a total of 55 interviews (with 12 key informants) for this study. I audiotaped all the interviews, which were later transcribed and reviewed. The transcriptions and notes taken enabled me to look into issues and to identify other areas of enquiry, which were further explored in focus group interviews.

Focus group interviews

Focus Group Interviews (FGI) were also conducted in order to complement the observations and semi-structured interviews. FGIs can be considered as interviews involving about 5-10 people, but unlike one-on-one interviews, participants in a focus group can hear each other's reactions and respond to these (Patton, 2002, p. 386). Additionally, in a FGI participants do not need to agree or even reach any kind of consensus, and it is equally not necessary for people to disagree on issues.

In this study, the FGIs were organized to obtain information on different dimensions of the conflict and why it has protracted. I used the opportunity to explore the experiences of the individual participants by providing them with this platform to discuss these very sensitive issues. Another reason for organising the FGIs was to corroborate my preliminary findings with the community members in a group setting.

Specifically, three FGIs were conducted for this study. The first one took place at *Nai We* in Ga Mashie on the 5th of April 2014 consisting of five participants, who were elders who sit in council with the *Nai Wulɔmɔ*, the Ga High Priest. This session was moderated by my research assistant and conducted in Ga, with some English from time to time. The reason for this code switching was to enable participants to express themselves in the language they were most comfortable in. Here all the participants were males with an average age of fifty, except the moderator who is a female. The second was held at ICGC-Open Heavens Temple in Adjiringanor (East Legon), Accra, after church service on Sunday 20th April 2014. The entire interview lasted for two hours with six participants from diverse backgrounds. There were two Ga people, three Akans, one Ewe person and my research assistant who is a Ga and served as the moderator, while I sat to digitally record the FGI and to make notes. There were three females and three males in total. The final FGI was held at the Powerhouse Ministries International at Korle-Gonno on the 11th of May 2014. In total, there were ten participants including six females and four males; five local Ga youth from Korle-Gonno and five church members (three Ga people and two Ga-speaking Akans). Once again, my research assistant was the moderator while I managed the research and note taking aspects of the FGI. This particular FGI lasted for three hours as there were so many participants and we had to give them all an equal chance to share their story and to contribute meaningfully.

Some of the precautionary measures taken in conducting the FGIs were: (1) I used a moderator instead of an interviewer, because, as Patton (2002) asserts, the term and function of a moderator highlights a specific aspect of the interview, which is “moderating or guiding the discussion” (p. 386). This was also to enable me to make notes. (2) I ensured that none of the FGIs were dominated by one or two people, as is normally the case in group interviews. I did this to ensure that introverted and naturally quiet participants were able to make their points as frequently as their louder colleagues. At the ICGC – Adjiringanor, for example, the research assis-

tant had to cut in on two occasions as it seemed two very educated participants had hijacked the discussion. (3) We also ensured that the FGIs were carefully planned and conducted in a non-threatening environment. All the venues were agreed with the participants and I assured them that the interview was for research purposes only. This was necessary because some of the participants raised concerns about a spate of 'secret tapes' in Ghana, where journalists secretly record discussions with politicians and celebrities to leak them to the media, leading to several people losing their jobs in recent times.

Besides the formal interviews and the FGIs, I also conducted informal conversational interviews with many Christians (Charismatic and Main-line) and ordinary Ga people in several parts of Accra, including Ga Mashie, Osu, La, Achimota, Ashongman, Abokobi, Adjiringanor. These discussions also provided me with greater flexibility to pursue information relevant to the study. As a result, there were no pre-planned questions for these interviews, as the researcher sought to pursue any leads that arose during the discussion. Although for most people (18), these discussions were held only once during the fieldwork phase of the study, for a significant number of participants (8) the discussions were held several times and built on previous discussions.

Document analysis

Document analysis is central in offering a description of the clashes between the groups discussed in this study and it provided insights into the historical development of the conflict from 1998 to 2016. These incidents have been well documented in sources, including newspaper reports obtained from the Newspaper Archival Repository of the University of Ghana, as well as letters and press releases from the Ecumenical Councils, Joint Religious Bodies Committee and Local Councils in Accra. The newspapers accessed were *The Daily Graphic*, *The Ghanaian Chronicle*, and *The Ghanaian Times*. These three papers were selected because they have a large national circulation and readership, and, in addition, they have covered the clashes extensively from 1998. The National Peace Council Plan document 2013-2017 was also used.

Furthermore, documentation from the various churches was also used in the study. These include the church constitutions of the ICGC, LCI, Powerhouse Ministries International (PMI), the Presbyterian Church of Ghana along with Vatican II documents and Policy documents for the Catholic Church. Church manuals, magazines, bulletins and brochures were obtained from the various Charismatic churches mentioned in the

study. Moreover, books written by church leaders such as Mensa Otabil of the ICGC, Dag Heward-Mills of LCI, Sam Korankye-Ankrah of RCI, Tackie Yarboi of VBC, Bernard Arde-Acquah of PMI in addition to books by influential pastors like Eric Xexemeku of the ICGC, EAT Sackey and Emmanuel Nterful both of the LCI were accessed. Besides these aforementioned documents, electronic sources such as the churches' websites and Government of Ghana websites were also accessed.

Finally, secondary sources of data, which included books on the history, language and religion of the Ga people, books and journal articles on Pentecostalism in Ghana, as well as journal articles and book chapters on the conflict were also collected and used in this study.

Data Processing and Analyses

Patton (2002) asserts that qualitative analysis transforms data into findings, although no fast rules exists for this process of transformation. Nevertheless, "in this complex and multifaceted analytical integration of disciplined Science, creative artistry and personal reflexivity, we mold interviews, observations, documents and field notes into findings" (p. 432). Thus, data analysis in qualitative research offers ways of identifying, examining, comparing and contrasting, in addition to interpreting recurring themes and patterns.

At the end of the data collection phase, the transcripts of field notes, interviews and FGIs were reviewed and some preliminary findings identified. All the transcriptions and documentation were content analysed and the major themes in relation to my research objective and questions highlighted. Firstly, the data was analysed manually by sorting out the transcripts and notes into broader topics and then the topics that emerged from the interviews were added. Finally, the data was edited and data coded for analysis.

This analysis brought together multiple perspectives by combining observations, interviews, FGIs and various documents. All four sources proved critical to my understanding of the relationship between adherents of the Ga indigenous religion and the Charismatic churches, along with the nature and sources of the perennial conflicts in Accra. Taken together, these diverse sources of data and information offered a detailed picture of the setting, actors and how they perceived each other. It was important that the data sources were combined in the analysis because each of them has limitations, which are greatly reduced by complementing one with another in the analysis. That is, observations offered an avenue to verify what was

reported in the interviews, whereas interviews (including FGIs) afforded us the opportunity to go beyond external behaviour and to explore thoughts and feelings of participants. Also, document analysis provided the researcher the platform from which they could reveal the right questions to ask (Patton, 2002, p. 307).

Review of Relevant Literature

Tensions between traditionalists and Christian churches have existed since the introduction of Christianity in the then Gold Coast. Conflicts, especially between the Pentecostal-Charismatic churches and the Ga traditional authorities, have been continuously reported in the Ghanaian media since the emergence of these evangelical-type church formations in the country. However, not much academic study has been done on these tensions, although there are many published works on the general interactions between traditionalists and Christians.

Dutch scholar Rijk van Dijk (2001) was perhaps the first to bring the conflict into academic discussions in his essay, "Contesting silence: The ban on drumming and noisemaking and the musical politics of Pentecostalism in Ghana." In this paper, he looks at the series of violent conflicts that broke out between the Ga traditionalists and the Pentecostal-Charismatic churches in Accra as a result of the ban on drumming and noisemaking imposed by the Ga Traditional Council between 1998 and 2001, and the political responses generated by the altercations. Specifically, he investigates the Pentecostals' idea of 'breaking with the past' by looking at the centrality of music and musical instruments in the Pentecostal churches' contestation of tradition and culture. He dwells particularly on the clash between the Lighthouse Chapel International (LCI) and Ga traditionalists at Korle-Gonno as a case study to argue that there are 'transnational' and 'transcultural' dimensions to the use of music in the Pentecostals' politics of time, which also has implications for the creation of a different cultural identity. He concludes that the growth of Pentecostalism in post 1992-Ghana has created a major emphasis on music as an international and cross-cultural avenue to the outside world. The musical politics of the Pentecostals, with its globalising intent to change Ghanaian society, he suggests, results in many local struggles, of which the contestation surrounding the annual ban on drumming and noisemaking is a typical example. Nonetheless, this study was limited to the musical representations of the Pentecostal churches and it is situated in an anthropological discourse of music, emotion and modernity. Indeed, van Dijk gives the impression

that the conflict between the two groups is over silence by minimising the religious aspects of the disputes or the issues of differing spiritualities, which is crucial to my research. Furthermore, van Dijk's data collected before 2000 is primarily based on a collection of reports from the private and state-owned newspapers in Ghana, whereas my research considers the entire period between 1998 and 2016. Significantly, he considers all the churches together and refers to them as Pentecostal churches, creating the impression of an existing uniformity between them, when even their ecumenical body is referred to as 'Ghana Pentecostal and Charismatic Council.' This is not my approach as I have sought to make that differentiation clearer in this research. However, I draw a lot from this work, especially van Dijk's view on the importance of music in Pentecostal-Charismatic religiosity and also the international perspective that he offers on how their music transcends the cultural and political boundaries of Ghana, the results of which is the contestation with the Ga traditionalists.

Next, Freda Brobbey's BA dissertation in 2003, which also featured as a chapter of a book edited by Steve Tonah (2007), was dedicated to exploring the dynamics involved in the disagreements between the Pentecostal-Charismatic churches and the GTC. She sets out to uncover the causes of the clashes, the reasons behind the perceived politicisation of the events, the widespread publicity generated by the 1998 clashes, and also the history of mediation efforts involving the various stakeholders. This study was limited to the Korle-Gonno and Osu areas of Central Accra and its data was obtained mainly through interviews and questionnaires. Although the work is rich in primary data, she uses a lot of secondary data, especially publications on the Ga people. Brobbey (2007) gives a vivid account of ban-related activities from May 1998 to May 2003, capturing the major clashes between the GTC and LCI as well as the incident between GTC and Christ Apostolic Church (CAC). She argues that the attacks on Pentecostal-Charismatic churches by the Ga youth was a way for them to vent their anger and frustration about the poor socio-economic conditions they live in. She also cites a lack of respect by the Pentecostal groups for Ga tradition and culture as a root cause of the persistent riots. In spite of the fact that Brobbey (2007) used rich primary data, the study is generally descriptive without any theoretical framework for analysis. Unlike Brobbey's approach of employing mixed methods (both qualitative and quantitative methods), I have favoured only the qualitative ethnographic approach because a detailed appreciation of the situation is needed, which can only be established by talking to people directly, going

to their workplaces (including churches and shrines) or homes, and allowing them to tell their stories without any impediments, as in a real-world setting. Nevertheless, Brobbey's work aided me in identifying some of the documents used in my research.

In "Identities, Inequalities and Conflicts in Ghana," a working paper for the University of Oxford's Centre for Research on Inequality, Human Security and Ethnicity, Tsikata and Seini (2004) recount the emergence of specific identities and inequalities and their role in aiding instability, violence and conflict. It examines various elements that promote or dissuade patterns of conflict and peaceful co-existence in Ghana's political economy. This study traces the history of the dynamics of identities in Ghana from the pre-colonial period to 2004 and discusses different violent conflicts in 1990s Ghana. Conflicts discussed in this paper include the Kokomba conflict and Dagbon chieftaincy dispute in northern Ghana, in addition to Alavanyo-Nkonya conflict and Ga State versus Christian churches conflict in the south. On the latter dispute, they focus on the GTC's clashes with LCI, CAC, Victory Bible Church (VBC) and Gospel Light International (GLI) to narrate the events leading up to the conflicts and to identify the underlying causes of the confrontations. The authors concluded that the hostilities between the GTC and Christian churches are essentially a conflict between tradition and Christianity, but with other ramifications, such as the constitutional issue of freedom of worship, as well as mutual respect and tolerance between communities. While this paper is a general study on different conflicts in Ghana, my research focusses only on the confrontations between GTC and Pentecostal-Charismatic. Furthermore, previous authors often summarise the events leading to the clashes while completely ignoring the religious aspects of the conflict, which is a central theme of investigation in my research. While Tsikata and Seini touch on the constitutional and legal aspects of the conflict, they do not elaborate on this. Meanwhile, in this research, I have dedicated a whole chapter to the legal issues and the implications of the constitutional claims by the conflicting parties on religious liberties in the country.

In another somewhat generalised, but related topic on human rights and religion, Atiemo (2006) discusses the future of chieftaincy in Ghana in the light of the increasingly pluralistic nature of Ghanaian communities and the associated awareness of the citizenry to their basic freedoms, including religious freedoms. In this study, he looks at the traditional councils across the country and their clashes with Christian groups, particularly

the Pentecostal-Charismatic strand and the role of the chieftaincy institution in these clashes. Atiemo (2006) raises two pertinent questions: (1) How does chieftaincy, which is seen as a religiously-based organisation, continue to wield influence in a multi-ethnic and multi-religious state in the face of international human rights and national laws? and (2) How may the fundamental freedoms of individuals and communities be ensured in the application of customary laws? He argues that in spite of the influence of the chieftaincy institution, its association with indigenous religions makes it difficult to embrace for citizens who practice other religions. He uses many examples, including how Ga chiefs, because of their alliance with indigenous religions, clash with Christian churches, even though many of these churches have a significant number of ethnic Ga in their congregations. This is not entirely the case because, unlike other ethnic groups in Ghana, chiefs are not the spiritual leaders among the Ga but rather the *Wulɔmei*, as my study will show. On the other hand, he asserts that the plural nature of the Ghanaian society contributes to, in his words, 'some fundamentalist groups' such as the Pentecostal-Charismatic churches staying away from community activities when they think it is contradictory to their beliefs, and this abstinence has implications for human rights. Accordingly, he infers that many of the conflicts have resulted as a direct consequence of the refusal of these Christians to participate in customary practices, such as pacification rights, traditional holidays and traditional festivals. Atiemo concludes that the threat to the institution of chieftaincy and the prospect of intensified conflicts caused by religious factors are obvious, but also the danger of the abuse of people's human rights through the indiscriminate implementation of customary laws, especially in rural areas. Finally, he proposed that because successive governments in the country have failed to deal with customary and religious issues that relate to human rights involving powerful ethnic and religious leaders, a human rights paradigm devoid of ethnicity or religion should be adopted. Although this work does not specifically deal with the clashes between the Ga traditionalists and the Charismatic Churches, Atiemo's insights on co-existence of traditional states and the modern democratic nation-state is invaluable in my research.

Next, de Witte (2008) in "Accra's Sounds and Sacred Spaces" examines "how religious sound practices create, occupy and compete for urban space" (p. 690). She does this by comparing the connection between religion, urban space and sound in Ga traditional religion and Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity. Employing ethnographic fieldwork, de Witte

sought to establish that the background of the clashes between Pentecostals and the Ga traditionalists is due to a difference in perceptions of space, but also a marked resemblance in the way sound is perceived in relation to religiosity in both religions. Additionally, she argues that the religious clashes should not only be seen as a competition for control of physical spaces, but also as a struggle over invisible transcendence present in Accra. De Witte uses the 1998 incident between LCI and the Ga traditionalists as a case study, but also refers to the other clashes between 1999 and 2001, which is the period I have referred to in my work as the first phase. She argues that even though the conflicts are mostly seen as religious in nature, there are other layers that indicate the inseparability of religion and politics in the context of Ghana. It also raises issues of diverse understandings about territory and citizenship between the indigenous Ga peoples and other ethnic groups in the city of Accra. Marleen de Witte then identified the centrality of sound in both Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity and in Ga indigenous religion, concluding that the annual ban on drumming and noisemaking, and its related clashes between the traditionalists and Christian churches, only serves as an avenue for the two groups to claim and sacralise urban space through “practices of sound and silence” (p. 705). Although this article acknowledges that there may be other attendant causes to the conflict, it infers that the conflict is essentially about a struggle for spiritual power in which sound and spaces are critical. This means that the author failed to employ a holistic view on the root causes of the conflict between the two groups, which is what this study intends to address. Nevertheless, de Witte’s paper was critical to my study, especially in the sections where I discuss how sound practices in both religions contribute to the annual clashes. Her views about how both groups employ sound to attract spiritual power but differ in their approach – spiritual mediation in the Pentecostal-Charismatic context is through touch, but through silence in the Ga indigenous religion – was invaluable to my analysis of the conflict.

Similarly, Amanor’s (2009) article also outlined the antagonism and commonalities between Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity and traditional cultures. He argued that shared features should be the basis for engagement between the two groups. This study is fundamentally a theological paper, which traces the history of the conflicts between Christianity and African cultures. Amanor (2009) equally uses the LCI- GTC clashes in 1998 as a case study and analyses the dynamics involved in the broader relationship between the Pentecostal groups and Ga traditionalists. He

maintains that the contextualisation of Christianity will be one of the key drivers to improving its relationship with indigenous cultures and religion. Amanor (2009) concludes that the demonisation of African cultures by Pentecostal-Charismatic churches should not occur since this strand of Christianity has mainly depended on traditional cultural worldviews to thrive. Although this paper discusses the issue of the conflict it is based on a theological study, while my research is in the study of religion. Therefore, I do not seek to propose any solutions, but only to understand the complexities of the conflict and to show how religious diversity in Ghana is experienced, negotiated and contested.

In a book contribution titled “African Traditional Religion, Pentecostalism and the Clash of Spiritualities,” Asamoah-Gyadu (2009) considers some spiritual implications of the annual clashes between “African Christianity” and “African Traditional Religions”. The author’s intention in this paper was to take a second look at the concept of fundamentalism as used in academic discourses. He, therefore, refers to both antagonistic groups as fundamentalists. He considers Charismatics as employing a fundamentalist approach to the gospel and argues that over time traditionalists have also, in their bid to preserve their ancestral cultural values, resorted to agitations, reactions and fights, which are the typical strategies fundamentalists adopt. He defines fundamentalism as the individual’s bid to defend their religion against the other. In this work, Asamoah-Gyadu (2009), like Amanor (2009), also adopts a one-sided approach because of his interest in the beliefs and spirituality of the parties to the neglect of other sociological factors. He argued that the main reason for the clashes is that Pentecostals do not want to be subjected to any customs they see as contradictory to their interpretation of the Bible. Asamoah-Gyadu uses the encounter between the GTC and Christ Apostolic Church (CAC), as well as a confrontation between Pentecostal groups and traditionalists in *Nzemaland* in the Western region of Ghana, as two cases to examine the relationship between the two groups. He asserts, like de Witte, that the conflict over the ban on drumming and noisemaking is both a clash of spiritualities and also a tension between tradition and ‘modernity’. He observes that religious beliefs are the main causes of the clashes between the two groups. Accordingly, he states that the challenge faced by Pentecostals with regard to culture is a theological one. Therefore, Asamoah-Gyadu presents the violent clashes resulting from the ban as only a competition of beliefs, and he neglects the political and socio-economic aspects of the conflict that I

have integrated into my study. But Asamoah-Gyadu's treatment of the historical conflicts between Christianity and indigenous religions in Ghana helped me to put the present clashes into perspective.

Furthermore, in a rather slightly related text, Klein (2010) begins by emphasising the need for a nexus of cultural history and scientific competences to bring together contextually inclined ethnomusicology and text-based music theory. He uses ethnographic field research, conducted in Accra, with an ethno-musical approach to study the conflict between the Ga traditionalists and Charismatic churches. He presents a brief history of the clashes beginning from the 1950s and focuses on the late 1990s when it intensified and became highly publicised. He mentions violent clashes between the GTC and LCI, CAC and VBC and argues that the conflict illustrates how tradition and modernity as constructs are gradually fading away. He contends that the conflicts actually show "an African mode of worship running up against another African custom" and not a battle between a foreign culture and an African tradition. He focusses on *Kpa* songs, which are intricately linked to *Hɔmɔwɔ*, and shows how these songs translate the tension between the traditionalists and Charismatics into music and performance practices. Although this paper is in ethnomusicology, its showing of music and performances as a way of engendering social cohesion was crucial in my analysis of the role of music and performance to both the Pentecostal-Charismatic groups and the traditionalists.

In "Ethnicity, Religion and Conflicts in Ghana," Asante (2011) explores the underlying causes of the annual conflict. He asserts that the tension is not only about religion or cultural differences, but that these are utilised as a gateway for expressing a deep-rooted feeling of marginalisation among the Ga people in their ancestral land. He argues that underneath the issue of the noise ban are issues of intense grievances, nurtured over time by the Ga people. Asante mainly used interviews and questionnaires (mixed method) in the Ga Mashie areas of Ngleshie (James' Town) and Kinka (Usher Town). Using the framework of 'horizontal inequalities', which concerns with inequalities between culturally defined groups, he concludes that socio-political and governance issues rather than religious that leads to the perennial conflicts resulting from the ban. Asante clearly downplays the centrality of religion in the conflict arguing only for political, social and economic factors. While I take a different approach methodologically and conceptually in this research, Asante's paper throws some light on the political aspects of the conflict which helped in my analysis of the situation. Nevertheless, beyond the political dimension, I look

at the conflict holistically integrating the aspects mentioned by Asante with the religious aspects.

Philip Attuquayefio has looked at the ongoing conflict between the groups, describing it as a conflict that is normally presented as cultural and religious in nature but which, in reality, reflects a confluence of governance issues and resource-based grievances. He also states that the hostilities unveil a conflict borne out of the friction created by the interaction between a rapidly evolving cosmopolitan society and age-long traditions, as well as issues regarding land tenure systems within the Ga traditional area. Attuquayefio (2012), restricted his study to areas including Korle-Gonno and La for Central Accra, and Achimota, Legon, and Dwowulu representing the outlying areas of the city of Accra. He employs globalisation theories to analyse primary data generated by the interactions between the two protagonists. Although he examines the particular case of GTC-LCI conflict in 1998, his interest is on peace-building and peace-making. Besides my study having a wider scope and a comprehensive approach to the conflict, my interest is in trying to understand the nexus of religious diversity and conflict in a post-colonial setting rather than to resolve it.

Nortey (2012) looks at the artistic and aesthetic side of the lifting of the ban on drumming and noisemaking called *Odadaa*. This paper is based on qualitative research in the Ga Mashie (Central Accra) area, with observations between 2005 and 2006. Nortey (2012) describes the rich regalia of priests and chiefs and the artistic circles in which prayers are said and libation is poured. He asserts that the artistic circles symbolise protection and it is meant to ward off malevolent spirits. He describes the special ornaments worn by the priests, including a variety of beads, some of which he states are for magico-religious purposes. He also describes the stylistic nature of the making of libation, drumming, singing, and dancing. He concludes that the celebration of *Odadaa* brings psychological well-being for the celebrants and breaks the monotony of the thirty-day ban on drumming and noisemaking. Although this is a study in the visual arts, some of his insights and the description of the performative aspects of *Hɔmɔwɔ* helped me to recognise some of the things I observed during my fieldtrips.

While some of the above works are descriptive, others adopt a one-sided approach; either it is a theological approach at the neglect of sociological factors or vice versa. Yet, others suffer lack of detailed information. All these can be described as methodological pitfalls, which I intend to

address in this study. Overall, this research differs in terms of methodological rigour as well as covering a wider scope in terms of years covered (1998-2016) and the research area covered (Ga Mashie, Osu, La, Adjiringanor, Ashongman, Abokobi, Nyamekye-Darkuman, Awoshie, Russia, Dansoman, Gbawe). Also, I bring new ethnographic data analysed with a different theoretical lens, a combination of Azar's (1991) PSC model and the boundary making theory.

Theoretical Framework

Conflicts of a violent nature within multi-religious and multi-ethnic societies are on the rise in the African continent (Stewart, 2008, p. 3). Although this leads to a great loss of life and property, Fearon and Laitin (1996) have argued that the majority of ethnically heterogeneous communities are not violent. But Huntington (1996) in his "Clash of Civilizations" disagrees and posits that there is an inevitable likelihood of violent clashes involving communities with multiple racial, ethnic and cultural differences. Indeed, Stewart (2008) queries why there is violent conflict in some religious or ethnically plural societies, when it is absent in the majority. In an attempt to address this, several theories have been proposed to study the causes of social conflicts in multi-ethnic settings in Africa. Three of the most prominent are Frances Stewart's 'Horizontal Inequalities,' Paul Collier's 'Concept of Greed' and I. William Zartman's 'Need, Creed and Greed'.

First of all, Stewart (2008) explains that the causes of these violent conflicts and wars are horizontal inequalities (HIs), which she defines as "inequalities in economic, social or political dimensions or cultural status between culturally defined groups" (p. 3). Accordingly, she argues for policies of affirmative actions against all forms of horizontal inequalities (political, social, cultural) between identity groups in a nation-state, because this will lessen the HIs and, consequently, the possibility of conflict. But to deal with HIs as independent variables is problematic because, as indicated by Brown and Langer (2010), identities themselves may be shaped by inequalities, becoming less prominent as inequality is reduced and vice versa. This theory has been used to study conflicts in Ghana and Nigeria in recent times (Langer & Ukiwo, 2008; Asante, 2011). Secondly, Collier's view is that 'greed' rather than 'grievance' leads to wars and other violent conflicts in multi-communal settings. In that sense, he is arguing that these conflicts take place when it is financially, or even militarily, rewarding – that is, his interest is in the economic aspects of civil wars and other internal conflicts. Collier gives examples of conflicts where greed

was the main factor, such as Sierra Leone, DR Congo, and Angola, where avidity over diamonds and other natural resource extraction in a multi-ethnic setting led to prolonged conflicts. Nevertheless, Collier, and other proponents of this theory such as Hoeffler and Rohner, entirely ignore or downplay the role of existing social grievances and other culturally-related topics, such language, religion and customs, as possible causes of conflicts (Collier & Hoeffler, 1998, 2002, 2004; Collier, Hoeffler & Rohner, 2009). Thirdly, following the 'greed' theory, Zartman (2008) and Zartman and Arnson (2005) show how the intersection of 'need, creed, greed' brings about violent intra-state conflicts. The need phase, he argues, could be poverty, discrimination, inequality or injustices, which leads to the creed phase, where ethnicity or other identity based factors, such as religion, becomes the main element that political figures exploit. This then gives rise to the greed factor, where the "temptation to turn the means into ends begins to rise" (p. 273). Therefore, it is more about how these different parameters come together to cause and sustain violent conflicts than any one individual factor. This theory has also been used in Angola, where UNITA exploited ethnic identities; Afghanistan, where the Taliban exploited religious identities; and in Colombia, where the FARC rebels exploited class and geography (Zartman, 2005).

The aforementioned theories have been applied in several African settings to examine how issues of inequality and identity results in conflicts, that is, identity-based conflicts. However, they have tended to focus primarily on overt resource-based violent conflicts. In this research, opted to combine the boundary making theory and Azar's (1990) protracted social conflict theory into a single coherent theoretical framework. Foremost, I will explain the two theories individually and then show how I have combined them into one theory.

Boundary making theory (BMT)

This framework also helps to show how boundaries are constructed and negotiated between the churches and the traditionalists, and also within the communities themselves in the context of the conflict. The boundary making framework originates in Fredrik Barth's, "Ethnic Groups and Boundaries: The Social Organisation of Cultural Differences." In this collection of ethnographic case studies, Barth (1969) broke away from the Herderian model and laid the foundation for what became known as the 'Constructivist' approach of ethnicity, where it is considered as a social process rather than a cultural given. The Herderian canon in anthropology states that "each ethnic group represented a historically grown uniquely shaped

flower in the garden of human cultures” (Wimmer, 2008, p. 971). The concept of boundaries has since been at the heart of comparative research in anthropology (Alba, 2000), sociology (Lovemann, 1999; Lamont & Molnár, 2002; Wimmer, 2008; Phalet, Maliepaard, Fleischmann, & Güngör, 2013), social psychology (Scheff, 1994), political science (Baubock, 1998; Wimmer & Min, 2006), history (Alba, 2005; Lamont & Molnár, 2002) and religious studies (Bouma, 2007). Lamont and Molnár (2002) define boundaries as evaluative distinctions between groups, such as social classes or races, which are anchored in societal institutions and enacted in daily practices and interactions. This definition clearly extends the concept beyond ethnicity proper and into other areas, such as cognition, social and collective identity, immigration, language, group rights, religion, and many others (p. 1). This is particularly relevant to this study because conflict in the case of the Ga traditionalists and the Charismatic churches raises issues of communal boundaries and exclusion at several levels, which this theory helps to unpack.

Since there are different types of boundaries and boundary-related changes, there is not a single set of process in terms of which to conceptualise the phenomenon. Baubock (1998) has identified three types of boundary relations: boundary crossing, blurring and shifting. For Lamont and Molnár (2002), boundaries are classified into symbolic and social boundaries. Symbolic boundaries are conceptual distinctions made by social actors to categorise objects, people, practices, and even time and space, while social boundaries are objectified forms of social differences manifested in unequal access to, and unequal distribution of, resources (material and non-material) and social opportunities (p. 2). Wimmer (2008) thinks of a boundary as displaying both a categorical dimension, seen as “acts of social classification and collective representation”, while the social dimension refers to the daily networks or relationships that result from individual acts of connecting or distancing. The categorical dimension, therefore, divides the social world into social groups – ‘us’ and ‘them’ – while the social examines how to deal with these individuals in different circumstances (p. 975).

Although I refer to a number of different authors on this subject, such as Wimmer (2008) and Baubock (1998), I draw most extensively on the ideas of Bouma (2007) on boundary making as it relates to religious competition and conflict between and within religious groups. Bouma (2007) states that revitalisation of religions, increased religious diversity and a rise in religious conflicts poses questions about the “nature, construction

and negotiation” of intra- and inter-religious boundaries. Religious resurgence and diversity does not only bring conflicts, but also competition among the various religious groups. However, unlike religious competition, conflicts seek to “overcome, eliminate or convert the other into extinction,” whereas competitors tend to recognise the legitimate existence of other groups and the right for the religious market to choose (Bouma, 2007, p. 190). Whether competition leads to conflict or not depends on how boundaries are defined and also how they are viewed by stakeholders. Conflict itself supposes that boundaries exist or it declares one, which requires knowing who the ‘other’ is – that is determining the enemy and declaring the boundary between ‘us’ and ‘them’ (p. 192).

It is also clear that both competition and conflict require the “drawing of lines, taking offence at someone or something, and declaring the other to be wrong, morally inferior or theologically in error” (p. 193). The definition and maintenance of boundaries within and between groups, as well as with the larger society, is helped by the construction of the ‘imagined other’, which involves stereotyping. Beyond the stereotypes is the creation of imagined communities of otherness. The use of the ‘imagined others’ in the definition of boundaries, according to Bouma (2007), is a product of the rhetoric used in competition and conflict. But often this has no basis in the actual interactions between the groups involved. Sometimes one may not have even encountered the other in any context, but their imaginations are stocked with ideas about what ‘they’ are like. This gives a picture of the religious actors within the current conflict, as, on the one hand, many of the Pentecostal-Charismatic pastors I encountered described the *Wulomei* in the same vein as ‘witch doctors’ or ‘medicine men’, without any real understanding of who they are. Indeed, they knew very little about the *Kpele* religion and they had minimal encounters with its actors, which, in my view, gave them an impression about the indigenous religion that was grounded only in imagination. Similarly, a greater part of the traditionalists’ opinion about Pentecostalism and its pastors were borne primarily from imagination. For example, they tended to frame Pentecostal-Charismatic churches as the religion of the Akan people, because several smaller churches use Twi, a dialect of the Akan language, as a means of communication. Therefore, it is possible to identify the role of imagination in boundary creation and maintenance as evident in the conflicts involving these Christian groups and the traditionalists in Accra, and that the process of ‘othering’ creation occurs on both sides. Thus, this idea of the ‘imagined

other' is used as a creation to fuel suspicion and animosity between the groups.

Regarding who defines the boundaries in conflict situations, Bouma (2007) asserts that some nation-states, in trying to control the amount of religious diversity, tend to draw boundaries on what is accepted and not within their borders, e.g. Germany, France and Switzerland. One typical example is that Scientology is not accepted as a religious community in Germany on the basis of the federal states' definition of what is considered an acceptable religion within their borders.⁸ On the other hand, in free market religious economies like Ghana or the United States, the boundaries tend to be defined by religious organisations themselves or social groups such as ethnicity as in the case of the GTC from time to time. The process of boundary definition and the creation of the 'imagined others' is often the same, albeit the groups involved may vary according to racial, ethnic or religious differences. Therefore, I employ the boundary-making framework to explore how the creation of otherness and identity demarcations have been used by adherents of the *Kpele* religion and the Charismatic churches to incite conflicts between them.

Protracted social conflict (PSC)

Although Azar's PSC theory touches on trigger factors to social conflicts, as the name of the theory suggests, it basically deals with why conflicts protract. Therefore, in this research I opted to combine the PSC model with the boundary making theory in order to show both the sources and dimensions of the conflict.

My choice of Azar's (1990) protracted social conflict (PSC) theory as an alternative framework to other conflict theories (horizontal inequalities, concept of Greed' and Need, Creed and Greed) is informed by three main reasons. First of all, the PSC was developed in the context of religious diversity in the Middle East by a Lebanese scholar who saw, first-hand, how conflict emerged in a non-Western multi-religious context. This is a similar context to this research focusing on a post-colonial state. Second, while the other theories mainly deal with resource-based conflicts, Azar's (1990) model is more comprehensive for examining both grievance and resource-based conflicts. This all-encompassing nature is important for

⁸ Scientology is not outlawed in the country but it does not have status of a church or a religious community, as it is not considered a *Körperschaft des öffentlichen Rechts* or a corporate body governed by public law.

considering a conflict that has both greed and grievance dimensions. Finally, the PSC aids in showing how international dimensions affects local dynamics in intra-state multi-communal conflicts and also provides an explanation of why such conflicts tend to endure for a long time.

The PSC was advanced by Azar in the field of conflict resolution and international relations as an initial analytical attempt to thoroughly analyse and explain the enduring nature of domestic and intra-state conflicts. These conflicts are 'hostile interactions' which last longer than usual, with periodic outbreaks of 'open warfare' fluctuating in intensity or frequency. In these kinds of conflicts, the stakes are very high because it involves whole societies and they also act as agents for defining national identity or social solidarity (Azar, Jureinidi & McLaurin, 1978, p. 50). For Azar, the central idea of the PSC is that it depicts "the prolonged and often violent struggle by communal groups for such basic needs as security, recognition and acceptance, fair access to political institutions and economic participation" (Azar, 1991, p. 93). As the name of the theory indicates, PSC proposes that the origins of these conflicts are primarily due to factors within and across a state, as opposed to between states.

Azar's approach to conflict studies in the 1970s was in stark contrast to the prevailing realist approaches at the time. Before Azar: (a) conflict studies tended to consider conflict through a fixed separation of internal and external aspects, (b) existing approaches for analysis were inclined towards the differentiation of conflict types or contributing psychological, economic, social, or political factors, and (c) there had been the propensity to emphasise overt and violent conflicts rather than covert and non-violent conflict (Ramsbotham, 2005, p. 117). However, Azar used data compiled in the 1970s and systematically developed and refined his understanding of the dynamics that generated violent and often long-lasting conflict of this nature (p.114). Azar's approach to studying conflict is a fusion of the realist and structuralist paradigms into a pluralist framework, suited to "explaining the prevalent patterns of conflict" (p.117).

PSCs are defined by several fundamental variables, that is a "set of conditions that are responsible for the transformation of non-conflictual situations into a conflictual one" (Azar, 1990, p. 7). They can be grouped into three separate stages: genesis, process dynamics and outcome analysis.

Genesis: Azar identifies four basic variables that serve as preconditions to violent conflicts, which are 'communal content,' 'human needs,' 'governance and state's role,' and 'international linkages.' Firstly, 'communal

content' indicates that at the heart of most PSCs is the notion of group identity formation. He argues that the "most useful unit of analysis in a protracted social conflict situation is the identity group – racial, religious, ethnic, cultural and others" (Azar, 1985, p. 61; (Ramsbotham, Woodhouse, & Miall, 2016, p. 117). Therefore, it is the reliance many people have on their social groups and the relationship between these different identity groups and the state that form the foundation of these enduring conflicts. Azar (1985) shows that even more crucial is how individual needs and interests (societal needs) within these social groups, namely "security, identity, recognition and others", are met or resolved (p. 61). He argues that there is a disconnect between the multi-communal society and the nation-states in developing countries, occasioned either by the divide-and-rule legacy of colonialism or historical rivalries that have resulted in the domination of certain identity (social) groups over the others. These dominant groups, he asserts, are "unresponsive to the needs of other groups in the society" and this, therefore, "retards the nation building process and strains the social fabric and eventually breeds fragmentation and protracted social conflict." (Azar, 1990, p. 7). Thus, individual needs come to be negotiated and expressed through the process of socialisation and group identity.

The second variable is the deprivation of human needs as a basic cause of a PSC. Azar asserts that "the most ontological need is individual and communal physical survival and well-being". Since individual and/or communal needs, unlike interests, are fundamental to existence, conflicts emanating from such sources are persistent and violent. As he goes on to explain, "grievances resulting from need deprivation are expressed collectively" and hence "failure to redress these grievances by the authority cultivates a niche for a protracted social conflict" (Azar, 1990, p. 10). Azar categorises such needs as security, development, political access, and identity in the form of cultural and religious expression. He argues that when these needs are not addressed groups tend to call for structural or organisational change, which normally ends up in a PSC. This categorisation leads to an understanding that if human needs are neglected this may give rise to conflict.

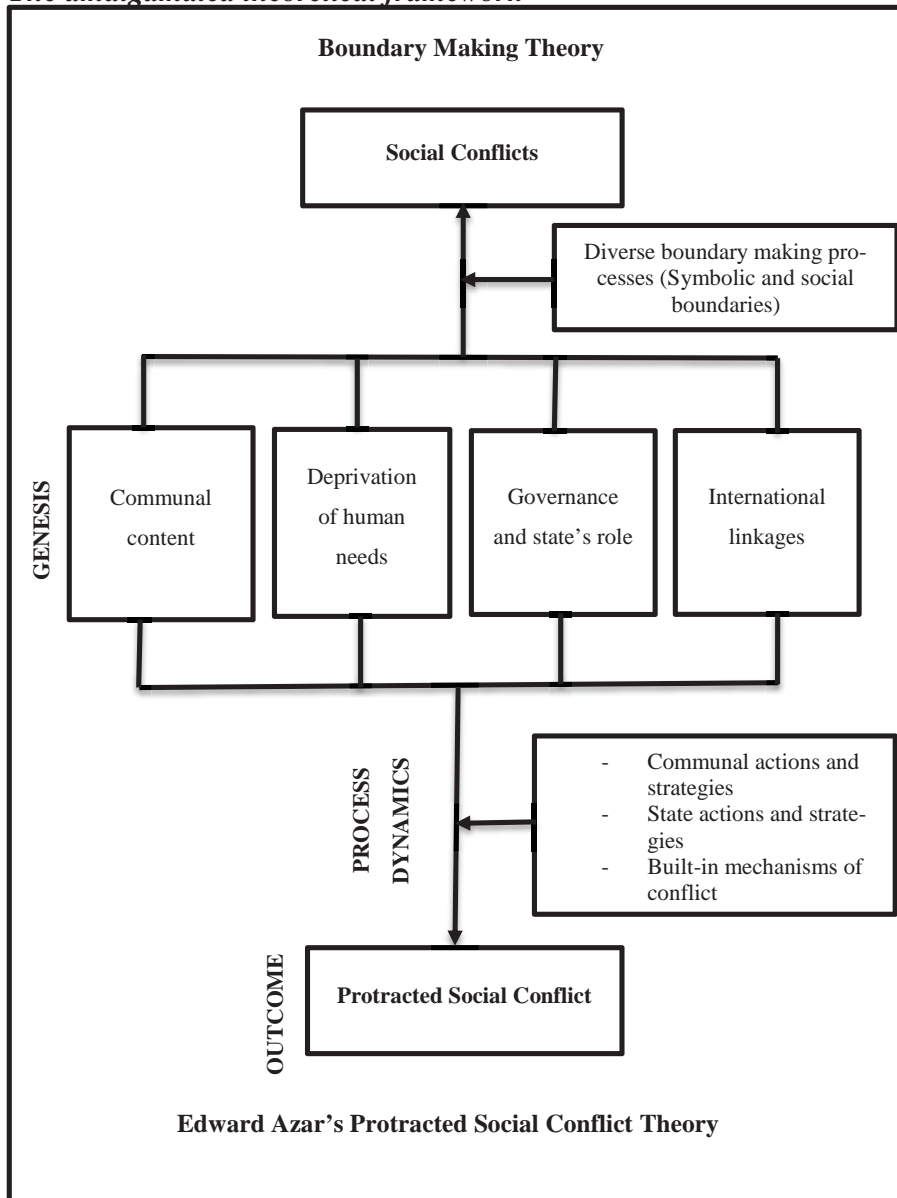
The third variable that instigates PSCs is the centrality of governance and the state's role in fulfilling or neglecting individual and collective identity needs. This occurs because the nation-state has been "endowed with authority to govern and use force where necessary to regulate society, to protect citizens, and to provide collective goods" (Azar, 1990, pp. 10-

11). However, he argues that most of the states that experience PSCs are characterised by “incompetent, parochial, fragile, and authoritarian governments that fail to satisfy basic human needs.” According to Ramsbotham (2005), these governments tend to be dominated by the most influential identity group or an alliance of powerful groups. It is the control of power by these dominant group(s) and their frustrating of other groups that Azar describes as a ‘crisis of legitimacy.’ Hence the type of regime and their level of legitimacy culminates in a critical variable between needs and PSC. These conflicts are very much prevalent in developing countries because they have the propensity to be restricted to a ‘political capacity’, which is usually “linked to a colonial legacy of weak participatory institutions, a hierarchical tradition of imposed bureaucratic rule from metropolitan centres” (Ramsbotham, 2005, p. 116). These structures prevent the nation-states from addressing and responding to the needs of all the various groupings or communities within their borders.

The fourth variable is termed ‘international linkages’, and it suggests that it is not only the role of governance and the nation-state that prevents individuals and identity groups from accessing basic human needs, but also external factors that impact the domestic scene. Azar affirms that international linkages can take the form of ‘economic dependency’, or dependence on the international economic system, and ‘client relationship’, such as military and political linkages. As a result of this dependency on the international economic system, the autonomy of such nation-states is reduced or weakened because they are dictated by the economic development policies of the international community. Therefore, “dependency often exacerbates denial of the access needs of communal groups, distorting the domestic political and economic systems through the realignment of subtle coalitions of international capital, domestic capital and the state” (Azar, 1990, p. 11). On client relationship, Azar states that for client states to show their loyalty, they usually have to sacrifice their independence and autonomy, and pursue domestic and foreign policies that are disconnected from the needs of their citizenry. Thus, the security and other needs of the nation-states are guaranteed at the expense of the needs of its constituent identity groups in the name of showing commitment to the international community. This also means that emergence of local social and political institutions and their influence on the role of the state are significantly impacted by patterns of linkage within the international community.

Process Dynamics: Azar argues that whether in any single case the forementioned preconditions to PSC will spark an overt conflict or not depends

on the 'process dynamics', which includes 'communal actions and strategies', 'state actions and strategies' and 'built-in mechanisms of conflict'. To begin with, Azar says that communal actions and strategies usually involve various triggers, significant or trivial, that accelerates covert conflicts into more violent ones. The extent to which this escalates is dependent on how the communities are able to form identity groups. Ramsbotham summarises this stage as involving "identity group formation, organisation and mobilization, the emergence and nature of leadership, the choice of political goals (access, autonomy, secession, revolutionary political programme) and tactics (civil disobedience, guerrilla war) and the scope and nature of external ties" (2005, p. 106). Next is the state actions and strategies, which Azar argues contributes significantly to whether a trigger factor escalates a covert conflict into a violent one. He maintains that the response of the state to communal grievances is critical in PSC. Normally the actions of the state/governments, especially the weaker ones, involves political accommodation on the one hand and 'coercive repression' or 'instrumental co-option' on the other. Azar argues that because of the winner-takes-all situation that prevails in many multi-communal societies, as well as economic implications, it is more likely that repression is adopted instead of accommodation, but "such a hard-line strategy invites equally militant responses from the repressed groups" (1990, p. 14). The final process is the 'built-in mechanisms of the conflict,' which relates to perceptions formed by groups against the other and how this influences the behaviour of the belligerent groups in prolonged conflicts. The perceptions or motivations of these groups, according to Azar, are informed by the "experiences, fears and belief systems of each communal group," and "the worst motivations tend to be attributed to the other side." This blame game, in turn, leads groups to "reciprocate negative images which perpetuate communal antagonism and solidify PSC" (Ramsbotham, 2005, p. 117).

The amalgamated theoretical framework**Figure 4: The combined theoretical framework**

As shown in the figure 4 below, the framework is an amalgamation of the two separate theories: the boundary making theory and the protracted social conflict theory. It shows that the same prerequisites (communal content, deprivation of human needs, states role, and international links) that

lead to protracted social conflicts in the presence of process dynamics, can also lead to social conflicts independently or collectively, in the presence of diverse boundary making processes. Both theories deal with social and collective identity, religion, group rights, international factors, language, social differences revealed in unequal access to social opportunities, material and non-material resources among others. Nevertheless, while the BMT, in this framework, is primarily concerned with the sources of the conflict, the PSC provides us with a comprehensive lens to look at the various dimensions of the conflict as well as reasons for its protraction. Thus, taking together, the framework helps me to approach the conflict in a holistic manner.



2. Introducing the Main Actors in Conflict: The Ga traditionalists and the charismatic churches in Ghana

An appreciation of the complexities of the conflict requires a clarification of the religious and cultural dynamics as well as the circumstances and backgrounds of the actors whose interactions result in the conflict. This chapter offers an overview of the two key parties in this study, namely the Ga traditionalists and the Charismatic churches. It focuses on the activities of two churches: The Lighthouse Chapel International (LCI) and International Central Gospel Church (ICGC).

First, we shall look at the fundamental tenets and practices of *Kpele* religion or Ga indigenous religion and culture. The consideration of both religion and culture is informed by the fact that in *Kpele* as in other indigenous religions in Ghana, there is no sharp line of division between what is religion and what is culture, as the latter becomes the conduit for the former. It is important to note that unlike the Ga traditionalists, the Ga Charismatic Christians, make a conscious effort to separate indigenous religions from what they term as their 'cultural heritage.' This chapter is an attempt to put forward an appreciation of the religiosity of the Ga traditionalists and also to provide an outline for the reader to understand the place and relevance of indigenous religions in a modern cosmopolitan city. While Olupona's (1991, p. 1) view that in many contemporary African societies, indigenous religion "continues to suffer from a lack of acceptance and inadequate understanding of its central tenets and essence," applies to *Kpele* religion, the Ga traditionalists have largely maintained their traditions and culture in the midst of total western influence and the domination of revitalised forms of Christianity, especially in Ghana's capital, Accra. In other words, despite the obvious decline and the continuously diminishing appeal of many other indigenous religious groups in Ghana, the GIR is by far the most vibrant indigenous religious group in Southern Ghana, although it has had to adapt due to both internal and external factors in the form of new religious groups and 'modernity'.⁹ Thus, I propose in this chapter that *Kpele* as the religion of the ancestors of the

⁹ Modernity refers to changes in the conditions and ways of life resulting from the impact of industrialisation, information and communication technology and western education.

Ga people, remains vibrant notwithstanding the degrees of changes they have had to undergo over time (Allman & Parker, 2005).

Secondly, I shall offer an overview of Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity in the Greater Accra region. This is to show the place of this movement in the ever-increasing multi-religious landscape in Accra, which I argue as a microcosm of the entire nation. Also, it is to show how its encounter with indigenous religions in particular plays out. Consequently, I have argued that, as well as being the most powerful and dominant religious group in Ghana, the Pentecostal-Charismatic churches are the least tolerant of indigenous religions because of their propensity to espouse a radical rupture from indigenous religious beliefs (Meyer, 1998). I also argue that, owing to the exponential growth experienced by the Charismatic churches in the last four decades, there has been a break in the collaboration between Christianity and indigenous religions which was brought about because of indigenous religions' tendency to accommodate and adapt alongside mainline historical Christianity's more tolerant approach to evangelisation. To begin with, I shall offer a brief profile of the Ga people.

Section I: Meeting the Ga

According to Carl Christian Reindorf, the first native Ga pastor of the Basel Missionaries and a historian who wrote extensively about the Gold Coast, Ga is derived from its reduplication, *gaga*, which refers to a dangerous species of black ants that stings severely and are a menace to the white ants. Similarly, the locals refer to themselves as *Loeiabii*, which translates into 'children of *Loeii*', a type of black ant that moves in large groups, completely destroying everything standing in its way. These ants are called *Nkran* by the neighbouring Fante, an Akan group, some of whom moved to the Ga homeland as traders and staff of the Portuguese merchants. Subsequently, the Portuguese corrupted *Nkran* to *Akra* because of the difficulty in pronunciation. *Akra* therefore became the name of the entire area occupied by the Ga people and was later spelt Accra by the British. Reindorf attributes the reference of *Loeii* to the powerful nature of the earlier Ga emigrants who conquered other groups and the aboriginal inhabitants of their land (Reindorf, 1895, p. 11, 12).¹⁰

¹⁰ http://archive.org/stream/historyofgoldcoa00rein/historyofgoldcoa00rein_djvu.txt accessed Jun 20th, 2016.

The Ga people belong to the wider Ga-Dangme ethnic group, who are mostly found in the Greater Accra region and some parts of the Eastern Region of Ghana. The Ga homeland is bounded to the south by the Gulf of Guinea, to the north by the Akan groups Akwapim, Kwahu, Akwamu and Akyem, to the west by the Fante (and Guans), and to the east by the Dangme, their relatives. The Ga-Dangme constitutes 7.4% (1,766,278) of the population of Ghana with the majority (1,056,158) living in Greater Accra, albeit with small migrant populations found all over the country (Nyarko, 2012). The Ga and the Dangme people are historically, culturally and linguistically related. Historically, the Ga, Dangme and other ethnic groups such as the Krobo, Ada and Ewe were believed to have migrated from a place east of the Volta (Henderson-Quartey, 2001, p. 51), and they belonged together in a larger kingdom (Reindorf, 1895, p. 3). Culturally, the Ga and Dangme people are depicted as having the same ancestry because of the centrality of priests in the socio-political structure, circumcision of male children, the special status occupied by twins, and a specific order of naming children. Linguistically, the Ga language is said to have separated from its prototype, Dangme, due to the influence of the multi-lingual context in which the Ga people found themselves, and they continue to exist in one today. Dangme is still the closest language to Ga language, although it has remained relatively conservative, with modern Dangme containing only a few modifications of the proto language (Kropp Dakubu, 1997, p. 5). The influence of the Akan groups on the north and west of the Ga homeland shows not only in linguistic terms but also in social organisation and religion. Furthermore, the multicultural setting of the Ga homeland is attributed to the arrival of the Portuguese since the latter part of the fifteenth century, first as merchants and then later as colonisers. All these encounters have contributed to shaping the contemporary Ga culture (Field, 1937; Kropp Dakubu, 1997).

Traditionally, the Ga have been fisher-folk and farmers. Those living along the coast from Kpone-Tema in the east to *Langma* (Cook's Loaf) in the south-west of Ghana mainly engage in fishing, while the inland people are farmers, cultivating a variety of vegetables. In contemporary times, several Ga traders deal in variety of wares in the major markets across Accra, such as Makola, Agbogbloshie and Kaneshie. Additionally, the Ga people have, since colonial times, worked as clerks and professionals in the civil and public services because of the proximity of the national capital, which meant that they were one of the earliest groups, along with the Fante, to benefit from the Castle Schools of the European missionaries

(Kilson, 1974). Today, Accra, the national capital of Ghana, which is also the ancient capital of the Ga people, has become the centre of commerce and education. As a result, it is difficult to attach the Ga people to any particular profession; they have diversified due to massive industrialisation of the Accra-Tema area.

Brief History of the Origin of the Ga

The earliest inhabitants of what became known as the Gold Coast, or a greater part of present-day Ghana, were Guans. Reindorf records that “the aboriginal race all along the sea-coast and inland...were nearly all Guan, Kyerepong, Le and Ahanta tribes speaking different dialects of Ahanta, Obutu, Kyerepong, Late (Le) and Kpeshie languages” (Reindorf, 1895, p. 7). Among the Ga, there are several accounts of their origins and the way in which they came to inhabit the Accra plains. These migration stories are mainly based on myths, legends, prayers, folklore and religious songs, barely supported by authenticating evidence, as is typical of many oral based cultures.¹¹ While almost all the narratives agree that the migration of the Ga people began from a location east of the river *Volta*, there are some that point to the exact locations from which they travelled.

First, Reindorf (1895) states that “the ancestors of the tribes of Akra, Late, Obutu and Mowure are said to have emigrated from the sea; they arrived on the coast one tribe after another” (p. 4). It is suggested that ‘from the sea’ denotes travelling along the coast (Henderson-Quartey, 2001). Second, Reindorf (1895) records another migration story that says, that “the Akras and the Adangmes emigrated together from Tetetutu, or, as some say, from Same, in the east between two large rivers” (p. 6). With this view, he locates them to the Benin kingdom in the present-day Republics of Nigeria, Benin and parts of Togo. The reason is that the “insignia of the kings of Accra were as those in use in Benin, and most of their religious ceremonies” (p. 3). The location of Tetetutu and other parts of Benin has been corroborated by Field (1937, p. 142) and Ward (1967, p. 57) as possible locations, from where they travelled along the coast to settle

¹¹ Some archaeological studies conducted in Great Accra (Ayawaso), Ladoku and other Ga settlements have unearthed pottery and villages that indicate a Ga presence in Accra dating back to about 1200-1400. For details, see, Ozanne, Paul, (1962), Notes on the Early Archaeology of Accra, *Transactions of the Historical Society of Ghana*, Vol. 6 & Ozanne, Paul, (1965). Ladoku: An Early Town Near Prampram, *Ghana Notes and Queries*, Vol. 7, pp. 6-7.

among the Kpeshie people in the Accra plains. Third, Henderson-Quartey (2001), however, traces the origins of the Ga people to Chad, arguing from the similarities between the Ga language and the language of the Junkun people in Chad (p. 54). Fourth, and most contentious, is that some historians and Ga *Wulɔmei* claim Semitic links, suggesting the Ga originated from places such as Israel, Egypt and Mesopotamia, travelling down to the Congo and then to Benin (Nigeria), Aneho (Togo) and then to the Accra plains. (Bruce-Myers, 1927, p. 70-72; Henderson-Quartey, 2001 p. 53; Amartey, 1985, p. 11-19). This version of the migration narratives is very popular among the priests and ordinary Ga people because it gives weight to their claim to a connection between “their religion and culture with the ancient Hebrews” (Henderson-Quartey, 2001, p. 53).

Whatever the origins of the Ga, it is clear that they travelled in groups from the East of the Volta to their present location by conquering and assimilating the Guan groups who inhabited the area. A considerable number of Ga-Dangme settlements can be found in Aneho in Togo, and in the Volta region of Ghana, who still maintain a relationship with their siblings in Accra, regularly inviting the *Korle Wulɔmɔ*, Nii Okai I to the celebration of their festival in Aneho (Nuumo Okai I, personal communication, December 28, 2009).

Socio-Political Organisation of the Ga

Unlike the neighbouring Akan tribes, the Ga people are patrilineal, and heredity is mainly through the male line. They have a common belief that a greater part of a person’s blood is inherited from the father. They believe that whether dead or alive, a person belongs to the father’s family and that it is this group that receives him/her into the world and are also responsible for the wellbeing of the individual during his lifetime. It is however clear, in the traditional areas, that they are not patrilineal in the strictest sense of the word because a Ga person may belong to two towns, two clans and two houses, one by virtue of his/her mother and the other through the father. In the specific case of the Ga *Mantse* in contemporary times, we have seen individuals accede to the position through both matrilineal and patrilineal affiliations. For instance, Ga *Mantse* Tackie Tawiah II, who was installed in 2007, acceded the Ga throne through his maternal links to the stool and, historically, Ofoli Kpakpo also became Ga *Mantse* through his matrilineal connection (Henderson-Quartey, 2001, p. 153). Nevertheless, Field (1940) asserts that the Ga take the patrilineal descent extremely seriously, to the extent that a child born of a mother who has not undergone puberty rites

(*Kpemɔ*) has no right to inheritance, but a child who has an unknown male progenitor can have rights to succession because they can be adopted by the mother's father to make him/her legitimate. Moreover, the Ga culture like many of the ethnic groups in Ghana, is polygamous. Accordingly, many of the households especially those in the traditional areas along the coast have family units consisting of a husband and several wives. The common practice is to build an extension to the house when the family unit expands. They continue this traditional practice, even in contemporary society, with the exception of some who become Christians and those who move out of the traditional areas as a result of work or changes in economic status.

Politically, the Ga people have a decentralised administration centred on seven major communities or towns, namely Ga Mashie (Central Accra), Osu, La, Teshie, Nungua, Tema and Kpone. The seven Ga towns or settlements have independent and distinct leadership but similar governance structure and customs. All these settlements can be found along the coast, but every town owns other settlements further inland, which come together with the coastal towns to form the present-day Accra. These inland suburbs used to be villages inhabited by Ga people who moved away from the coast to farm. In order to understand the social and political organisation of the Ga, we shall consider how the oldest settlement, Ga Mashie, normally referred to as Central Accra or Accra is structured.

Field (1937) reveals that Ga governments were "originally absolute theocracies," where the *Wulɔmei* were rulers (p. 3). There was no separation of chieftaincy and priesthood as the *Wulɔmei* served as priests and kings. She asserts that chieftaincy was a more recent introduction to the Ga towns due to influence from neighbouring Akan states. Over time, there has been a separation of powers and now the *Wulɔmei* are the spiritual leaders while the *Mantsemei* (chiefs or *smaller Wulɔmei*) provide secular leadership, including military responsibilities, and manage civil and more mundane matters (Field, 1940). Today, the *Mantsemei* also represent the traditional council in the state-instituted national and regional houses of chiefs. However, a person cannot become a *Mantse* until they have been confirmed and blessed by the *Wulɔmei*, who continually wield considerable power in contemporary Ga society.

Every Ga town is divided into several quarters or *Akutsei* with its own *Mantse*. Each *Akutse* is further divided into clans and each clan is subdivided into *Wei* or patrilineal family houses. The people that make up the *We* have closest ancestral links. Ga Mashie has seven *Akutsei* namely

Asere, Gbese, Sempe, Abola, Akumadze, Otublohu, and Ngleshie-Alata (James Town). Each of these *Akutsei* have separate *Mantsemei* who are equal in status. However, the Abola *Mantse* is the paramount chief or the King of the entire Ga State. Every *Mantse* has a specific role in the Ga Traditional Council, an association of all the Ga towns. The *Mantsemei* of all the *Akutsei* in Ga Mashie are helped in the execution of their duties by the *Dzaasetse*, *Mankralo* (town guardian), *Shikiteele*, *Akwashɔntse* (Council of Seven) and *Asafoatsemei*. The *Dzaasetse* is the head of the *Dzaase*, the body responsible for the election of the *Mantse*, while the *Asafoatse* is a military captain. The functions of other officers such as the *Mankralo*, *Shikiteele* and *Akwashɔn* vary from town to town, even under different names (Field, 1940). According to Field (1940), the creation of these offices and the implied lack of uniformity across the Ga towns may be explained by the fact that they were created in accordance with exigencies of the situation of the town at a particular time. Although these positions were created in the past, they have been maintained to date with varied functions that adapt to the times. For example, while the *Dzaasetse* is still involved in the selection and enstoolment of the *Mantsemei*, the *Asafoatse* (the military captain) and *Mankralo* (town guardian), in the absence of wars and provision of local security by the nation-state's security apparatus, have both become advisory positions.

Ga Traditional Council (GTC)

The GTC is the representative council and the highest decision-making body of the entire Ga state. It is composed of leaders from selected royal houses such as the *Wulɔmei* from *Nai We*, *Sakumɔ We*, *Korle We*, *Gua We* and *Mantsemei* from Gbese, Asere, Abola, Ngleshie-Alata, Sempe, Akumadze, Otublohu, Osu, La, Teshie, Nungua and Tema. The GTC has sub-traditional councils like the La traditional council, which are made up of royal houses within every particular Ga town. It is the most important body in terms of the planning and celebration of the *Hɔmɔwɔ* festival including the implementation of the noise ban. The GTC provides the youth groups with direction and storage space for seized instruments from the churches during the ban period.

The traditional council gives us uniforms, receipts and 7 patrol jeeps. We also have special phone lines to alert one another during patrols. We have directed that if the patrol team cannot be reached, the confiscated items should be sent to the nearest police station or complaints should be lodged

with them (Nuumo Charko II, personal communication, September 25, 2015).

In this study, the GTC is used in the same sense as the Ghana Pentecostal and Charismatic Council (or Pentecostal-Charismatic churches in Ghana) – that is, the representatives of a religion. Beyond being the representative council of the Ga state, which includes all native Ga people, members of the GTC are the custodians and the most important stakeholders of the *Kpele* religion, the religion of the Ga people before the introduction of Christianity. While the GTC represents indigenous religion in this research, I am also aware that not all Ga people are followers of indigenous religion. Accordingly, not all Ga are involved in these clashes with the churches because many of them are adherents of Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity. The use of the emic term Ga traditionalists is therefore, to separate the followers of *Kpele* religion from the Ga who subscribe to other religions.

The Ga Youth

Among the most prominent actors in this conflict is the Ga youth, a group of people who serve as the taskforce for the GTC in enforcing the noise ban. From 1998 to 2016 this group of well-built men have been actively involved in the clashes with the churches, seizing drums and other musical instruments. Members of the Ga youth groups are not necessarily youth, in the strictest sense of the word, as many of them are outside the age bracket defined by the national youth policy¹². The nation-state defines youth as “persons who are within the age bracket of fifteen (15) and thirty-five (35)” (National Youth Policy, 2010). So, the word youth can be understood as able-bodied people, usually men, who dedicate themselves to causes intended to preserve the Ga cultural heritage. These selected youths are at all times, during the implementation of the noise ban led by at least, a *Wulɔmɔ*. A leading *Wulɔmɔ* from the *Sakumɔ We* explains where these men are drawn from in the Ga Mashie area:

For the ban, every royal house contributes a number of people for the taskforce. We (Sakumɔ We) are very active, so we always contribute more people. Nai We normally give us 4 people, Gbese gives us 3, Korle We will give us 3, Gua provides 2, Naa-Ede We, 3. The Sakumɔ We contributes up to 12 people. Remember, this is Bukom - you know it - we are fighters and we really know how to do this taskforce business. So, what happens is that all

¹² Cf.: http://www.youthpolicy.org/national/Ghana_2010_National_Youth_Policy.pdf

these leaders are spread to the various teams as operation managers (Nuumo Charko II, personal communication, September 25, 2015).

In the above comment, the *Wulɔmɔ* shows how the Ga youth are officially constituted to help the priests to ensure the noise ban is vigorously implemented in Ga Mashie. According to him, the royal houses nominate these people who in turn serve as the core leadership of the various taskforces during the ban. Significantly, the *Sakumɔ We*, the custodians of the *Sakumɔ* deity, who is regarded as the warrior deity of the Ga people, contribute more people to the taskforce. This is perhaps due to the *Sakumɔ Wulɔmɔ*'s view of his divine responsibility to protect the Ga ethnic group. Alternatively, it could be as a result of the location of the priestly house, Bukom - a suburb of Ga Mashie, famous for boxers and tough men. Many local boxers in Bukom have gone on to either represent Ghana in international competitions or pursued professional careers in the sport. Since those selected from the royal houses serve as leaders, the general composition of these youth groups is drawn from the rest of the population in the Ga towns. It is also common that the youth in the various Ga towns collaborate to present a unified front to defend their cause. A typical example is, when youths from Ga Mashie joined with the group from Osu to confront the Christ Apostolic Church in Osu:

You know we have the same ban date as the people of Osu. So, our brothers called us for help because the CAC church was flouting the rule with impunity and they did not have the numbers to deal with them. So, we agreed knowing that they are our blood and one day we will also need their help (Nuumo Charko II, personal communication, September 25, 2015).

Nevertheless, from time to time, some youths not part of the taskforce, use the implementation of the noise ban as a money-making activity, by exploiting the churches through their own volition (Attuquayefio, 2012). Sometimes, even the officially recognised youths have used the opportunity to take monies from the churches:

It will surprise you to know that even this year (2015) we arrested them (LCI) for breaking the rules at Korle Gonno. Unfortunately, they gave the youth some money for them to leave the premises. I was seriously disappointed when I heard this news because we really wanted to teach them a lesson. They should have called us to inform us then we (*Wulɔmei*) would decide what to do. They didn't and they took the money off them. Our boys actually fell for their bribes instead of calling the elders or the police patrols (Nuumo Charko II, personal communication, September 25, 2015).

It is important to note that while the youth play a significant role in the vigorous application of the noise ban by the GTC, it is not the only activity

where their presence is felt. Some of them, especially the very educated ones, are involved in other causes such as advocating for the Ga language to be the sole Ghanaian language taught in schools in the Greater Accra region and also resisting successive Ghanaian governments from the appropriation of Ga lands.

Ga Indigenous Religion

Religion is very central in Ga culture, as it is the most distinguishing variation from other cultures in Ghana. Ga indigenous religion (*Kpele*) is the way of life of the Ga people since it permeates their everyday activities as well as their social lives, religious beliefs and cultural practices.¹³ As has been alluded to, the Ga traditionalists claim similarities between their religion and that of the Jews, and they use this to demonstrate their claim of having encountered the Jews during their migration from Egypt. The *Wulomei* and many ordinary Ga people I encountered during fieldwork are united in pointing out this version of the migration narratives to highlight the dissimilarities of their religion to that of the other neighbouring ethnic groups. Reindorf (1895) observed this difference and even the connection to pre-Christian Jewish religion and reported thus:

A close inspection of the priest in his officiating garb leads to the conviction that [their] worship must be of foreign origin. As there is no African nation or tribe ever known to have so advanced in their religious views as the Akras, one is inclined to suppose that the Jewish system of worship in the Old Testament style has been either introduced by or imitated from the people who first came to this coast (p. 6).

While Carl Reindorf, a Christian priest, observed the distinctiveness of *Kpele* religion and its level of development, he naturally concluded that they might have borrowed from European Catholic priests who had previously visited the shores of the Gulf of Guinea. Although the link to the Jews claimed by the *Wulomei* and some Ga cannot be verified, they draw parallels with Jewish religion to support their point. The *Nai Wulomɔ* asserts that the selection of the *Wulomei* from specific priesthood families, the priestly outfit of the *Wulomei*, *Kpɔdziemɔ*, the male circumcision culture of the Ga and the belief in one God are some of the similarities with

¹³ Most Ga Christians I encountered insisted that they share the same cultural heritage as the Ga traditionalists. However, they usually dissociated themselves from the indigenous religious beliefs of the traditionalists.

the religion of the Jews (Nuumo Akwaa Mensa II, personal communication, February 7, 2014). It is unclear whether the Ga people developed their own religion independently or if they were influenced by this migration story. What is clear in recent times, is that whereas many indigenous religions are, at best, banished to the periphery of modern Ghanaian society, the *Kpele* religion has waxed stronger because of renewed public interest as a result of the noise ban and the resurgence and resilience of its adherents.

Nevertheless, the Ga indigenous religion as we know today has had to adapt with the changing times and circumstances of the people. It is therefore instructive that Field (1937, p. 3), commenting on the religion of the Ga people, states that, because of the toleration and incorporation of other people's gods, the Ga indigenous religion has been greatly influenced away from monotheism towards its present polytheistic nature. There are four identifiable indigenous religious systems practiced by the Ga, namely *Kpele*, *Kpa*, *Otu* and *Akoŋ*, and *Me*. Of these four strands, only *Kpele* is believed to be the indigenous Ga religious system. The others are considered to have foreign origins. For example, *Me* is believed to be a Dangme strand; *Otu* and *Akoŋ* are Akan religions originating from Fante and Akuapem respectively, and *Kpa*, which is centred in La, was borrowed from Bonni in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria (Field, 1937, pp. 5-6; Kilsen, 1971, p. 13). When the mediums of these deities are possessed, they speak the language of the original home of their deities. Thus, *Kpele* mediums speak Ga, *Me* mediums speak Dangme, *Otu* mediums speak Fante and *Akoŋ* mediums speak Twi when they are possessed.

The *Wulɔmei* believe that *Kpele* religion is a revealed religion in the sense that it came into existence as their ancestors reflected on their experiences of the mystery of the universe and responded to their situations intuitively. In this study, I consider only *Kpele* religion¹⁴, which is regarded by the Ga *kroŋ*¹⁵ as the religion of their ancestors. There is a distinction between Ga *kroŋ* and other Ga as the latter are seen as descendants of non-Ga settlers who became accepted and assimilated into Ga culture. In the process of this assimilation, they brought their own indigenous reli-

¹⁴ It is also important to note that GIR, *Kpele* religion and *Kpele* worship have been used indiscriminately in this chapter.

¹⁵ Ga *kroŋ* is the term used by the Ga people to differentiate between original Ga people and the assimilated groups who have become Ga over time. The term means the true Ga people.

gions, which explains why some Ga traditionalists practice other indigenous religions alongside *Kpele*. Nevertheless, *Kpele* is universal among all Ga people regardless of whether they are assimilated or 'true Ga', and it is predominant in all the Ga towns today. *Kpele* is understood to mean 'all-encompassing' because not only does it involve rituals that are thought to be necessary to maintain the ordering of the universe but also such rites are carried out on behalf of the whole Ga community. Thus, the continuity and cohesion of Ga society is hinged on the performance of the rituals by the present generation (Kilson, 1971, p. 18). Accordingly, any impediment to the implementation of any *Kpele* ritual is considered not only to affect the Ga traditionalists but also the entire Ga population. *Kpele* represents the unique cultural heritage of the Ga people despite the obvious assimilation of ideas from neighbouring groups and an influx of western culture in Accra through colonialism, migration, territorial expansion and globalisation.

The sources of Kpele religion

Kpele religion, like many indigenous religions, has no scriptures to serve as a reference point for its teachings, doctrines and practices. Therefore, adherents adopt certain devices in order to safeguard and pass on the belief system and practices to successive generations. Central to the preservation and transmission of *Kpele* are oral traditions and various forms of art.

First of all, many of the doctrines, basic values and ways of life of *Kpele* religion are passed on from elders to successive generations of Ga by word of mouth, mainly through myths, stories, legends, proverbs, and dream stories. Myths and stories are mainly used indiscriminately in Ga thought. Parrinder (1982) sees myths as traditional stories that explain natural or social phenomenon, and typically involving supernatural beings – gods and ancestors as well as events. They talk about how some things have evolved and "most myths express serious beliefs in 'human being, eternity and God'" (p. 16). Myths are popular as methods of education and in communicating religious knowledge and morality among the Ga.

Secondly, varieties of art forms are rich sources of cultural expressions in *Kpele* religious tradition. Two categories of art are particularly striking in Accra: performance and visual art forms. Performance art in the form of prayer, songs, music and dance is coupled with visual art in the form of shrines (*gbatsu*), traditional cloth (*kwɔ*), and sculptures such as coffins and drums. These kinds of art do not only play a significant role in the Ga communities but they also enable outsiders to obtain an understanding of the *Kpele* religion.

The components of Kpele religion

Kpele as a religious belief system is based on the systematic conception of the organisation of the universe. At the heart of this cosmology is the understanding of the classification of beings consisting of the Supreme Being, divine beings or deities, human beings, animals and plants. The taxonomy of the hierarchy of beings according to Kilson (1970) is based on four distinctive characteristics specifically, “creative-created, immortal-mortal, rational-irrational, mobile-immobile” (p.47). Consequently, the creative powers of the Supreme Being distinguish it from other beings; the immortality of the deities separate them from other forms of life; the rationality of human beings set them apart from animals and plants; the mobility of animals differentiate them from plants. Kilson (1970) further suggests that in Ga thought there is no fusion of these components of being; these classes are always separate and distinct. Through these components, we are able to identify the institutionalised beliefs, practices and teachings of the *Kpele* religion. The components also address both the sacred and the practical aspects of Ga indigenous religion (pp. 46-47).

The supreme being

While Field (1937) completely ignored the prominence and even the existence of a Supreme Being in Ga cosmology in her ethnographic work, Kilson (1971, p.7) stresses the centrality of the Supreme Being in *Kpele* religion.¹⁶ At the top of *Kpele* is the Supreme Being or God who the Ga consider as an essential part of their worldview. They believe s/he created the world and all its aspects including the physical world, deities, animals, plants and humankind. S/he did not only create the world but also sustains it and remains the source of all forms of life in it. The idea of and belief in the Supreme Being is manifested in his/her name (s), attributes and activities. Generally, Ghanaians attach a great importance to names. In most ethnic groups, names function as marks of identification as well as connoting particular qualities in an individual, significant incidents or events in their parents' lives, or a defining characteristic of the bearer. A name among the Ga in particular denotes a person's character or rank in the family as well as the society; it also indicates identity, essence and power. It is likely that the Ga people's understanding of the nature and attributes of God is based on these assertions.

¹⁶ It is important to note that before Margaret Field's work "Religion and Medicine of the Ga People in 1937," Bruce-Myers had referred to the significance of the Supreme Being in Ga cosmology in "The Origin of the Gas" in 1927.

First of all, the Ga refer to the Supreme Being as *Ataa-Naa Nyonmo*. *Ataa* in daily usage means father; *Naa* refers to mother or grandmother, and *Nyonmo* means God. Thus, the Supreme Being has both masculine and feminine attributes being a mother and a father at the same time. In *Kpele* thought, the bisexual nature of the Supreme Being is acknowledged in the belief that s/he nurtures his/her creations through the provision of sustenance from the abundance of the earth. It is also reflected in the notion that the Ga people believe the Supreme Being is the one who is responsible for the perpetuation of all forms of life on earth. Although the name, *Ataa Naa Nyonmo* in Ga suggests a being who is relational in nature, the Ga believe that humans cannot achieve contact with or access to the Supreme Being by a direct route; instead, such a relationship is attained through the gods and ancestors (Kilson, 1969, p. 170).

Secondly, *Nii Boo Maawu* is a name the Ga people use generally to indicate that the Supreme Being is the creator of the universe, who is also responsible for its sustenance. The name literally means 'Grandfather Creator God'. *Maawu* is actually an adaptation of the Ewe name for the Supreme Being, *Mawu*. This name connotes the Ga belief that everything originates with God (Kilson, 1969).

Thirdly, the Supreme Being is known as *Ofe Nyonmo*, which literally translates as 'the one above all' or 'Almighty God.' This name strongly suggests the superiority of God over all other beings in Ga thought. It also shows the general belief among the Ga that the Supreme Being lives above, far away in the sky. During libation, the *Wulɔmei* point the drink to the sky as sign that God lives above. This also goes to show that in Ga traditional thought God transcends time, space and human understanding. While the Supreme Being is transcendent in the Ga worldview, the names of God are constantly invoked during libation and prayer. This is an indication that God is considered as both transcendent and immanent.

Finally, the Ga people use *Otwediapɔn* to refer to the sustaining role of God in human activity. This name translates as 'One on whom one leans' or 'The Dependable One' (Nuumo Akwaa Mensa II, personal communication, February 7, 2014). This name is likely influenced by the Akan alternative *Otwediampɔn*, which connotes the dependability and reliability of God.

Divine beings

The next category after the Supreme Being in this classification is the divine beings or deities. The deities serve as mediators between human beings and the Supreme Being for the protection, preservation and blessing

of the living Ga and future generations. As Kilson (1970) has noted, the central idea in *Kpele* religion is to keep an ordered relationship between the Supreme Being and human beings through the intermediaries, the deities and the ancestors (divine beings) (p. 48). Accordingly, the Ga appeal to God in prayer through the divine beings. These deities are referred to in Ga as *dzemawɔdzi*, which has its roots in the word *wɔɲ*, meaning ‘anything that works but cannot be seen.’ A *dzemawɔɲ* (singular) is a powerful intelligent type of *wɔɲ* that is essentially omniscient and omnipotent. They are also immortal and this attribute distinguishes them from the other types of beings (Field, 1937, p. 4).

Although the *dzemawɔdzi* are considered invisible, they are believed to take a variety of forms or incarnations, such as human and animal, for the purpose of practically helping the Ga people. The *Wulɔmɔ* of the Korle deity recounts how she helped the Ga to defeat the Ashanti by appearing as a beautiful woman, preparing *Kpokpoi*¹⁷ and selling it to the Ashantis the night before a battle. This gave them diarrhoea, which resulted in their defeat.¹⁸ Field (1937) also recounts a similar story about the *Sakumɔ* deity and how he came out of water in the form of a naked and gorgeous young lady, borrowed a skirt from some women around the precinct of the lagoon, and went straight into the tent of the leader of the Ashanti invading army, who were camped near Nungua. This beautiful lady enchanted the leader of the Ashanti army so much so that he ended up making love to her throughout the night in defiance of the protestations from his captains. This helped the Ga to regroup and attack the invading army, defeating them in the process (p.4). As well as manifesting themselves as humans and other bodies, the deities speak directly to men through mediums generally referred to as *woyei*¹⁹ or *wɔntsemei*.²⁰

The activities of the *dzemawɔdzi* are generally associated with certain topographies such as the sea, lagoons, lakes, rivers, groves and mountains. For example, many of the gods are affiliated to specific terrestrial bodies such as *Nai* (sea deity, Ga Mashie); *Klote* (lake, Osu); *Sakumɔ fio* (lagoon, Ga Mashie); *Sakumɔ nukpa* (river, Tema); *Korle* (lagoon, Ga Mashie); *Gbobu* (grove, Nungua); *Lakpa* (La) and *Oyeni* (sea, Ga Mashie). Of the three principal *Kpele* deities in Accra, namely *Nai*, *Sakumɔ fio* and *Korle*,

¹⁷ *Kpokpoi* is a Ga ceremonial food made from maize with the addition of palm oil and okra.

¹⁸ Nuumo Okai I, *Interview with Korle Wulɔmɔ by author*, Accra, Oct 24, 2015

¹⁹ Female mediums

²⁰ These can be used for male or female mediums

Nai remains the senior (Field, 1937; Kilson 1971). *Sakumɔ fio*, who is second in rank to *Nai*, is considered the warrior and defender of the Ga, while the *Korle* deity, the third ranking deity, is also said to be the allodia custodian of the majority of Accra lands. Since the rest of the Accra land is in the custody of the *Sakumɔ*, *Korle* and *Sakumɔ* are together called the landlords of Accra. The *Wulɔmɔ* of *Nai* deity is the highest Priest of the Ga people (Nuumo Blafo III, personal communication, January 20, 2014; B. Akwetey, personal communication, September 10, 2015). Despite near universal acceptance of the notion of the seniority of the *Nai Wulɔmɔ* among the Ga people, the current *Korle Wulɔmɔ* disputes this claim, arguing that the three principal priests of the Ga are equal in power and status (Nuumo Okai I, personal communication, October 24, 2015). It must be emphasised, however, that his claim is not popular among the Ga people I interviewed.

The *dzemawɔdzi* are believed to have a relational nature and are also described with gender-specific terms. For instance, the *Korle* deity regarded by the Ga as the goddess of peace is believed to be the daughter of *Nai* and the wife of *Sakumɔ fio*, the warrior god of the Ga people. Both *Sakumɔ* and *Korle* are believed to have many children (*bii*), whose priests participate in the rituals involving the *Sakumɔ* and *Korle* deities respectively (Kilson 1971, p.127). Additionally, both *Sakumɔ* and *Korle* are believed to be polygamous and polyandrous respectively. To give an example, *Korle* is said to be a wife of *Lakpa*, the senior deity of *La* while *Sakumɔ* is also said to be the husband of *Ogbede*, a goddess in *La* (Kropp-Dakubu, 1997; Kilson, 1971). Finally, *dzemawɔdzi* can be appeased with the blood of cattle, sheep, goat or fowl but never human blood. Unlike the neighbouring Akan groups and Ewe, the use of human blood was a taboo among the Ga. Consequently, there was never a place for the office of the executioner (*brafo*) in their political structure (Nuumo Akwaa Mensa II, personal communication, February 7, 2014).



**Photo 1: The Korle lagoon where the Korle deity is believed to reside
(Credit: Author).**

Ancestors

After the *dzemawɔdzi* are the ancestors or ancestral shades, which in Ga thought are perceived as “moral guardians of the conduct of the living” (Kilson, 1974, p. 52). While gods are the principal intermediaries between God and living men, ancestral shades may act as mediators between their descendants and other divine beings. The critical roles played by ancestors in Ga communities cannot be underestimated. Hollenweger’s (1993) assertion that “take the ancestors away from the Africans and you destroy their roots in the past, their culture, their dignity and their understanding of *communion sanctorium*” resonates with any attempt to do away with the ancestors from *Kpele* and Ga culture in general (p. x). The ancestors and the significance of their role in Ga society have been compared to Roman Catholic saints (Sarpong, 1996). It is even argued that the pivotal nature of their significance to the Ga far outweighs the centrality of saints to the

Catholic community (Nuumo Akwaa Mensa III, personal communication, February 17, 2014).

At physical death, the soul of a Ga person is said to live in the body for three days, after which it roams around until the final funeral rites (*faafo*) are performed a year or more later. After the funeral rites are performed, they are believed to 'cross the river' and achieve their ultimate social status as a *sisai* (ancestral shade). The place where the ancestors live is called *gbohii adzeɲ*, literally meaning 'the world of the dead'. It is not clear where the world of the shades is, but the Ga traditionalists believe that since the ancestors have finished their journeys on earth, they move to another life. They believe that, in *gbohii adzeɲ*, a person occupies the same social or professional status they had achieved before their death. For instance, a chief continues to be a chief, a fisherman remains a fisherman, and a priest stays as a priest in 'the world of the shades'. Therefore, specially crafted coffins ranging in form from beer bottles, cameras, cars, boats, and boots to palanquins are used in burying the dead. These coffins are generally designed to reflect the occupation, status or a special character trait of the departed. The cost of the 'designer' coffins are extremely high but the living Ga families feel they have to go to any extent to give the deceased a befitting funeral. Alternatively, since ancestors are believed to be more powerful than the living, the cost incurred in the funeral rites is not considered an issue because the ancestors will in turn help the living in many ways. This is an indication of a kind of continuity of relations between ancestral shades and the living (Kilson, 1974; Nuumo Akwaa Mensa II, personal communication, February 7, 2014; Nuumo Blafo III, personal communication, January 20, 2014).

Ancestors continue to be concerned about the living and, as moral guardians of the Ga, they are called upon through prayer and libation to observe and sanction the performance of all rites of passage. For example, the naming ceremony of the Ga people begins with the "symbolic calling of the ancestral shade to attend" (Kilson, 1974, p. 53). Additionally, men may call on ancestral shades to intercede with the gods or to act on their own right to intervene on behalf of their living family members. From time to time, families place food and water in places as a form of remembering the dead. I have observed in Osu how food vendors sprinkle some food around for the ancestors before they begin to sell to the general public. This was explained to me as an act of kindness to the ancestors so that they will in turn help the vendors with improved sales for the day. The *Wulɔmei*

occasionally invoke ancestral spirits on behalf the Ga towns or family elders on behalf of an individual or the entire family.

There are three basic classes of ancestors among the Ga people. To begin with, there are those who are remembered for their professions or expertise, such as priests, mediums, chief fishermen and craftsmen like Paa Willy of Teshie, an expert ‘designer’ coffin maker.²¹ Next, there are those who belong to specific families, houses or clans. Then there are ancestors who laid down their lives for the entire Ga community, either in battles or the preservation of the Ga culture like Okaikwei and Okaija, who became the leaders of the Ga groups (Tschumi, 2006, 2008; Nuumo Akwaa Mensa III, personal communication, February 17, 2014; Nuumo Okai I, personal communication, October 24, 2015; Nuumo Ogbamey III, personal communication, September 25, 2015).

Moreover, it is clear that not all the departed Ga are venerated as ancestral shades. First, since ancestors are ethical and moral guardians of the living, a person who has not lived an exemplary life cannot be classified as an ancestor by the Ga. The spirit of such a dead person is deemed a bad spirit that hovers around without rest. Secondly, a person who has not gone through puberty rites cannot become an ancestor. This is because the Ga consider puberty rites as a prerequisite to spiritual and social morality in adulthood. Thirdly, a dead person whose final funerary rites have not been performed cannot assume ancestral status because the funerary rites provide the platform to give them the right tools to cross the river and live in *gbohii adzey* (the land of the dead) (Nuumo Blafo III, personal communication, January 20, 2014). On the day prior to *Hɔmɔwɔ* celebrations, some rites are performed to mourn the ancestral spirits and to invite the good spirits to join in the celebration to ensure a good year ahead.

²¹ For more on the figurative coffins and ancestral shades among the Ga, see Tschumi (2006, 2008).

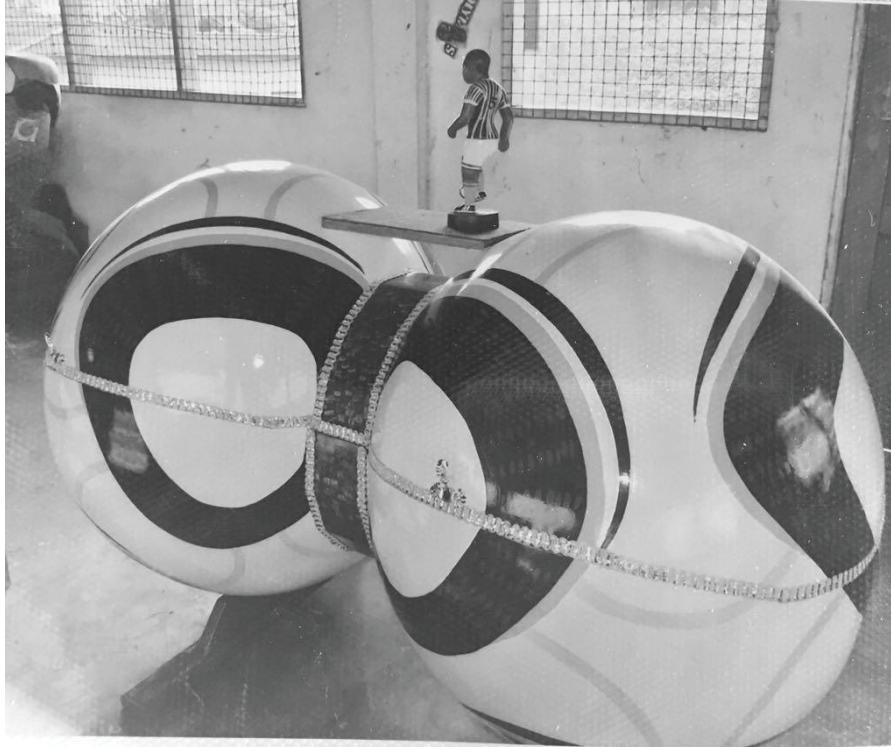


Photo 2: Football coffin designed in Teshie, Accra (Credit: Author).

Sacred specialists

The performance of the *Kpele* rituals of a particular *dzemawɔɲ* is the responsibility of a particular family or *We*. The performance of these rituals is assigned to sacred specialists, the *Wulɔmei* and the *Woyei*, the male priest and the female mediums respectively.

The Wulɔmɔ

The *Wulɔmɔ* has a special standing within the *Kpele* religious system and, consequently, the entire Ga political system. Although the *Wulɔmɔ* is nominally interpreted as a high priest, or as Field (1937) says, “the priest of the senior god of the town,” the name means more than that. It means a custodian or a representative and also has a connotation of a ruler. Aside from being the representatives of the deities, they are the custodians of Ga culture. Since they were originally the rulers, under the previously practiced theocratic system of governance, they still command a high level of respect and trust among the Ga, even today, which is something the *Mantse* cannot claim. Their views override that of the *Mantsemei* although not in relation to the Ghanaian state but amongst the Ga. The *Wulɔmɔ* is selected through

heredity by specific houses, passing from grandparents to grandchildren. The position is a full-time job and a lifetime occupation which can only change when he dies of natural circumstances or is killed by the deity for wrong doing. He can also be removed for moral deficiencies.

The *Wulɔmɔ* is a holy man and therefore wears entirely white priestly apparel with white headgear and no footwear. On ordinary days, he wears black and white beads around his neck, wrists and ankles. On ceremonial days, he wears *Kɔɔmi*, a long cord made of raffia and palm fronds, around his neck. I have witnessed a *Wulɔmɔ* who was dressed in multi-coloured clothes and wearing shoes, but after our discussion, he went inside to change into an all-white kaftan, headgear and necklace. It was later explained to me that he is able to go out in shoes and multi-coloured dresses because he is a subordinate *Wulɔmɔ*. The subordinate *Wulɔmei* can even take positions in civil and public service. For example, the public relations officer of the Accra Metropolitan Authority is a *Wulɔmɔ*, albeit, he goes to work dressed in his official priesthood dress.

The *Wulɔmɔ* lives in the priestly family house from where the *gbatsu* (shrine) of the deity is located. In Nai's *gbatsu*, I saw items such as a broom, *nyanyara* leaves, holy water (for cleansing) and a stool. He refers to the *gbatsu* as an altar and not a shrine because there are no items in the *gbatsu* that can be associated with shrines (Nuumo Akwaa Mensa III, personal communication, February 17, 2014). Typically, in Ghana, an indigenous religious shrine contains several effigies of the deities, but in *Kpele*, these items are absent from the *gbatsu* of the priest. There are several taboos regarding the office of the *Wulɔmɔ* and the precinct of the *gbatsu*. These include among other things that the *Wulɔmɔ* should not see the mortal remains of a person and that no dead body should be brought to the *gbatsu*. He is removed from the priestly home and from the *gbatsu* when he is about to die. Persons with dreadlocks, menstruating women and widows are not allowed near the *gbatsu* (Nuumo Ogbamey III, personal communication, September 25, 2015). In the case of widows, a special cleansing ritual can be performed for them to come close to the *gbatsu*. No one else can sit on the *Wulɔmɔ*'s stool except another senior priest. At the *Nai We*, I observed that as we spoke, the *Wulɔmɔ* took intermittent breaks and each time he got up, he turned his white stool towards the wall so that no one would even come close to sitting on it.

The religious duties of the *Wulɔmɔ* have not changed and have remained much as they were in the past. Today, he officiates at public ceremonies such as the weekly pouring of libation to the deities on their sacred

days. He settles disputes and has the final say in any controversy regarding right and wrong in the town. People can appeal to the *Wulɔmɔ* when the *Mantse* and the elders have been seen to be partial in judgments relating to disputes. He prays daily for the town and reverses curses. He is the father figure to the town, and the final authority for who becomes the *Mantse* in every Ga town lies with the *Wulɔmɔ*. Most importantly, they are the mouthpieces of the deities (Field, 1937).

Every Ga town from Ga Mashie to Kpone has a high priest, but Ga Mashie has three principal *Wulɔmei* who also serve as the three most important priests of the entire Ga population. These are the *Nai Wulɔmɔ*, *Sakumɔ Wulɔmɔ* and the *Korle Wulɔmɔ*. Beside these, Accra has other senior priests including *Naa Ede Oyeadu Wulɔmɔ*, *Dantu Wulɔmɔ* and *Gua Wulɔmɔ* and many subordinate *Wulɔmei*. Of these *Wulɔmei*, the three principal priests have a higher status and have universal respect among the Ga (Henderson-Quartey, 2002). They are very influential both in the religious and political spheres of Ga life today. They play essential roles in the Ga traditional council. Since the 1990s, the principal *Wulɔmei* have been actively participating in Ga socio-political life, in some respects claiming their original status as governors as well as priests.



Photo 3: Nuumo Akwaa Mensah III, Nai Wulɔmɔ (Credit: Author)

Woyei

As the *Wulomei* are never possessed, the *Woyei* are the mediums in *Kpele*. Every deity has at least one *Woyo* (singular) who, unlike the *Wulomɔ*, is not appointed based on kinship but by the deities themselves through possession. They are the ones who get possessed and pass on the messages of the deities to the *Wulomei*. The *Woyei* also perform some rituals alongside the *Wulomei* on the sacred days of their deities. One significant difference between the *Wulomɔ* and the *Woyo* is that while the former tends to mediate relations between the people and their deities, the latter, when possessed, mediate between the deities and the adherents.



Photo 4: Ga Woyei at a ceremony in Accra – June, 2015 (Credit: Author)

Hɔmɔwɔ

There are several *Kpele* celebrations among the Ga, such as the twin celebrations, naming ceremonies, puberty rites and burial rites, to mention a few. However, the most significant of all these celebrations is the *Hɔmɔwɔ* festival. *Hɔmɔwɔ* is the Ga word literally meaning ‘to hoot at hunger.’ It is a festival, celebrated to mark a historical event in which the deities helped the forefathers of the Ga to survive a severe famine that engulfed them while they were acclimatising to the arid ecological niche of the Accra plains. It is a thanksgiving celebration to the deities as it marks the beginning of a new year and an end to the previous one on the Ga traditional

calendar. Thanks, is offered for protection in the year ending and prayers for provision in the coming year. The *Hɔmɔwɔ* period is a time when all Ga people, home and abroad travel to their family homes in the coastal towns to share in a meal with both their living relatives and the ancestors.

Although the climax of the *Hɔmɔwɔ* is in August and September, depending on which Ga town, the celebration begins in May. The festival commences with the planting of the corn and millet (*Nmaadumɔ*) in a secluded field by the high priests beginning with the *Dantu Wulɔmɔ*, who is the reckoner of the Ga calendar year and selects the date for the celebration of *Hɔmɔwɔ*. The *Dantu Wulɔmɔ* is followed by the planting of the grain by all the principal *Wulɔmei*: *Sakumɔ*, *Korle*, *Gua*, *Naa Ede* and *Nai* in that order according to the days of their deity (Lokko, 1981). After this comes the thirty-day ban on drumming and noisemaking within the traditional area. It is a time of quietude when all the Ga deities are believed to visit the towns to watch over the gestation of the planted grains. All noise is forbidden but particularly noise coming from drums is deemed to interfere with the 'Ga universe' as it makes the deities unhappy and deprives them of the needed peace to bless the plants. The thirty-day ban is followed by the lifting of the ban from one town to another beginning with Ga-Mashie. The process of lifting the ban is called *Odadaa*, an elaborate, flamboyant celebration preceded by the playing of the sacred drums, *Obonu*, which are seen only once in a year. The *Obonu* is kept in a secret place because it is believed the drums have a spiritual significance to the *Kpele* deities. The *Odadaa* is a gathering of all the *Wulɔmei*, *Mantsemei* and the elders that takes place in a durbar ground on the JEA Mills high street near the *Nai* and *Sakumɔ* family houses. The lifting of the ban signifies the success of the planted grains and also marks the restoration of normalcy in the traditional area, that is, everyone is free to drum, whistle or clap.

The climax of the *Hɔmɔwɔ* festival coincides with the *Nmaaku*, the harvesting of the crops by the *Wulɔmei* in the same order as they were planted. From these harvested grains, a traditional meal, *Kpokpoi* is prepared which is served with palm-nut soup. The *Wulɔmei*, *Mantsemei* and elders go around specific places in town to sprinkle this festal food and pour libations to the deities and ancestors. Every family home then prepares the *Kpokpoi* in large quantities, as many family members share the meal. There is an unofficial open-door policy in all the family homes: anyone can enter a house to join in the celebration. There is great celebration in the towns amidst music, dance and other performances such as boxing bouts in Bukom, canoe racing and cultural troupe displays.

Besides the obvious religious significance, the essence of the *Hɔmɔwɔ* celebration is the social significance of the festival. It serves as platform for strengthening the union between members of the community and deepens the Ga ethnic 'identity' (Odotei, 2002). Furthermore, Odotei (2002) has disclosed how *Hɔmɔwɔ* is used to settle disagreements and disputes among kith and kin (p. 21). We also see how food is normally shared, with people usually eating from a common bowl as a sign of unity and stressing the point that they are from a common stock. Accordingly, anything that interrupts the celebration of the *Hɔmɔwɔ* festival is considered not only an imperil to the celebration but also as an affront to the Ga people as a whole, because it jeopardises social cohesion (Lokko, 1981; Nuumo Blafo III, personal communication, January 20, 2014). Although, it must be stated that most Ga Christians I interviewed did not agree with this assertion.



Photo 5: A Mantse pouring libation during *Hɔmɔwɔ* (Credit: Author).



Photo 6: A Mantse preparing the Kpokpoi to serve the deities during Hɔ̀mɔ̀wɔ̀ (Credit: Author).

Section II: The Pentecostal-Charismatic Group

Meeting the Charismatics

In the contemporary framework, Christianity in the form of the Pentecostal-Charismatic movement is by far the most widely practiced religion of many people in Ghana. Among the various strands of Pentecostalism in the country, the Charismatic churches are the most powerful and obviously the least tolerant of other religions, especially indigenous religions. The term 'Charismatic' churches or movement is here used to designate all Pentecostal-type expressions of Christianity that differ from the classical Pentecostals like the Assemblies of God and the Church of Pentecost in affiliation and/or some doctrines. These are churches referred to as 'neo-Pentecostals' because they are a direct result of the revitalisation of Pentecostal Christianity in the 1960s and 1970s through the formation of campus-based non-denominational groups such as the Ghana Evangelical Students Fellowship (GHAFES) and Scripture Union (SU); international interdenominational groups such as the Full Gospel Business Men's Fellowship and Women's Aglow; and other parachurch fellowships such as the Kanda Christian Fellowship and Ghana Evangelical Society (GES). These non-denominational fellowships were first converted to denominational churches in the late 1970s and early 1980s and they continue to spread today. These churches show characteristics of Western Pentecostal patterns as well as uniquely indigenous features. For example, the tendency to read the Bible communally as ordinary readers, rampant use of discourse markers (antiphonal responses) in their religious discourse, storytelling in their sermons and use of drums in worship (Arthur, 2011). Such structures as oral liturgy, narrative theology and witness, reconciliatory and participant community, inclusion of dreams and visions in worship, liturgical dance and understanding the relationship between body and mind revealed in healing by prayer which also feature predominantly in African culture are the reasons for the growth of Pentecostalism (Hollenweger, 1972, p. 34). While they have these local elements, they are also different from the AICs in terms of their theology, emphasis and style of worship (liturgy). These are the churches that Gifford (2004) refers as 'Ghana's new Christianity' including such churches as the Action Chapel International, ICGC, LCI, Victory Bible Church International, Perez Chapel, Royalhouse Chapel International, and Powerhouse Ministries International. Like all Pentecostals, they are characterised by the emphasis on the workings of the Holy Spirit with the spiritual gifts of 1 Corinthians

12:8-10, prophetism, healing and deliverance (Hocken, 2003, pp. 477, 478; Asamoah-Gyadu, 2013; Omenyo, 2002). In the following section, I offer a brief profile of two Charismatic churches that feature prominently in this study.

The Lighthouse Chapel International (LCI)

The Lighthouse Chapel International began as a fellowship of mainly medical and allied health students led by Dag Heward-Mills, then a trainee medical student at the University of Ghana Medical School in Korle-Bu, Accra. Before establishing the church, the Bishop, who has both Swiss and Ghanaian parentage had started a branch of Calvary Road Incorporated (CRI), a parachurch campus fellowship that used music and drama to undertake evangelistic campaigns. Heward-Mills left this fellowship to establish the LCI in September 1987 due to some differences in approach with the national executives of the CRI, namely the CRI's unwillingness to allow him to transform the fellowship into a church, due to internal constitutional issues (Heward-Mills, 2008; Heward-Mills, 2011).

Heward-Mills did not have any prior theological training before establishing the church. However, he has variously acknowledged the defining theological inputs from Methodism and most significantly from some global Charismatic mega-stars in his ministry. They include John Wesley, founder of Methodism, whom he credits as having influenced his style of church governance; David Yonggi Cho, a Korean Pentecostal pastor and pioneer of the church-growth-movement for church growth principles employed by the LCI; Reinhard Bonnke, a German evangelist and pioneer of mass crusade events; and Benny Hinn, an American televangelist and a controversial figure known for miracle healing, as having influenced him on his Healing Jesus Crusade, a evangelistic campaign by LCI (Heward-Mills, 2012, pp. 16, 17, 19). The last and the most significant influence according to Heward-Mills is the late Kenneth Hagin, an American Pentecostal word-of-faith televangelist, whom he believes shaped his understanding of biblical faith (Heward-Mills, 2008, p. 137). The impact of such theological inputs does not only push aside the locality inprint of *Kpele* religion but it also reveals the transnational network of the Pentecostal-Charismatic movement.

The LCI is known as *the church of the doctors* because of the setting in which the church began and the continuous attraction of medical and health personnel into its pastorate and membership. Since the mid-90s to date, the LCI has experienced enormous growth both in the number of established branches and in membership. Currently, the church claims to

have 1550 branches in 76 countries worldwide, with over 1000 of the churches being found in Ghana alone. They have presence in 40 African countries, 8 in Asia and Oceania, 14 European countries, 12 countries in Latin America and the Caribbean, as well as in Canada and the USA.²² Today, the LCI, is one of the most successful churches to have gained national significance, which makes it easily recognizable. With their yellow and black or yellow and red signboards scattered across the cities and districts of the country, it is easy to locate an LCI branch. Their signature church architectural designs show distinctly tall-storied buildings, decorated externally with quarry stones and with open spaces for the free flow of natural air. This means that in most LCI church buildings, there is no air-conditioning in the main halls, natural ventilation being made possible through the open spaces.

The reasons for the massive growth achieved by this church may be due in part to Heward-Mill's prolific writing skills. He has authored over hundred pastoral-level books, which have been translated into many different international languages. The books are in print and eBook versions accessible for online purchase and also in local church bookshops. These books have a wider distributorship making him a key figure in the Charismatic movement across Africa. Of the numerous books written, about a quarter of them deal with the subject of loyalty and disloyalty, which he continues to teach today and which has become a basic denominational doctrine by which every member of the LCI abides (Heward-Mills, 2005, pp. 1-6). The next possible reason for growth is the church's use of lay people as church planters and pastors. Of the many pastors and leaders in the church, only an insignificant percentage is in full-time ministry. The pastors mostly maintain their secular jobs in addition to volunteering for the church.

The mission of the church according to their current constitution is as follows:

To build 25000 churches; To have churches in 150 countries; To fight fiercely and relentlessly in all battles for the advancement of the churches and the gospel: To produce radical Christians who work for God; To go to heaven and hear Jesus say – "Well done, good and faithful servant" (LCI Church Constitution, 2012).

With this mission in perspective, the LCI has become one of the strongest opponents of indigenous religion and 'traditionalism' in the country. The

²² Statistics from the LCI Denominational Office, January 2015.

public preaching of their pastors strongly promotes an anti-tradition rhetoric and a confrontational style of evangelism they refer to as the ‘Anagkazo strategy’.²³

Finally, the LCI is known to put strong emphasis on church music because music in its elaborate form is a prime biographical and spiritual marker of the exclusiveness for Heward-Mills’ ministry. It is all the more important as his central tool in establishing a cultural hegemony and dominance over the public sphere – a subject I consider critical in the analysis of the drum wars in Accra.



Photo 7: LCI Korle-Gonno Cathedral showing the open space open window architecture (Credit: Author).

The International Central Gospel Church (ICGC)

The International Central Gospel Church was founded by Mensa Otabil in Accra on the 26th of February 1984 with an initial membership of 20, comprised mainly of the remnants of the Kanda Christian Fellowship, a parachurch group that was hitherto led by the pastor in the early 1980s. The founding of the church effectively meant the end of the inter-denominational fellowship, as a significant fraction of the members and most of the key personalities joined Otabil as the founding members of the ICGC. According to Otabil, he chose to call the church ‘Central Gospel’ having in

²³ Heward-Mills explains that the Anagkazo strategy was inspired by a biblical text in Luke 14: 23: “And the lord said unto the servant, ‘Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled.’”

mind the biblical text John 3:16²⁴ as the core of the gospel that best described what they set out to do. In other words, this biblical text serves as the centre of all that the church stands for. Significantly, it is one of the few Charismatic churches that started out with the word ‘international’ in its name. This, the pastor asserts, was based on the vision to reach a global audience with the gospel (Otabil, 2014).²⁵ As the first congregation, now called Christ Temple, grew enormously in the first ten years, the church embarked on an aggressive missionary expansion project in the regional and district capitals of Ghana as well as in cities across North America and Europe. However, unlike the LCI, a significant majority of the ICGC pastors are employed full-time by the church. Nevertheless, as in other Charismatic churches, volunteerism is common at different levels in the church. Currently, the church claims that two Sunday services at the Christ Temple attracts about 5000 people in attendance at each service, making it one of the largest churches in Ghana (ICGC, 2016).

The church touts itself as having the mission and vision to bring “leadership to our generation,” shape “the vision of our generation,” and “influence society with the principles of the kingdom of God.” The key words, *leadership*, *vision* and *influence* on society shows how the mission of the church goes beyond the boundaries of religion and into other facets of society such as culture, education, politics and commerce. These three words permeate everything the ICGC does including the resocialisation of its members and a sense of corporate social consciousness. For example, the ICGC has one of the largest non-governmental education scholarship schemes for needy students in Ghana that caters for their pre-tertiary education, regardless of their religious backgrounds. As well as community health and water projects for deprived communities in the Greater Accra Region, they also have the largest private university in the country (ICGC, 2016; Gifford, 2004).

The ICGC was known for strongly opposing not only traditionalism but also classical Pentecostal churches like the Assemblies of God and the Church of Pentecost. This is because Mensa Otabil was formerly very outspoken against them, referring to their seminaries at some point as cemeteries and their liturgy and theology as “carnal, dead and formal” (Larbi,

²⁴ “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life”- John 3: 16 KJV

²⁵ Sermon on the 30th Anniversary Celebration at the Accra Sports Stadium, Feb. 26th, 2014.

2001, p. 358). Otabil himself has since moved on from this standpoint, having confessed to being a little naive and judgmental in his bid to bring about another Christian reformation (ibid. p. 359). However, while the ICGC has the tendency to promote local culture in terms of food and clothing, spearheaded by Otabil's proclivity for Afro-centric and black empowerment sermons, they are clearly against indigenous religious practices and the implications thereof (Otabil, 1992).²⁶



**Photo 8: A section of the congregants at Christ Temple, ICGC
(Credit: E. Xexemeku).**

²⁶ For an in-depth reading on Otabil's teaching on black empowerment and the consequences of indigenous religious practices see: Otabil, Mensa (1992), *Beyond the Rivers of Ethiopia: A Biblical Revelation on God's Purpose for the Black Race*. Accra: Altar International.

Fundamental Characteristics of the Charismatic Churches in Ghana

While Hocken's (2003) view of some of the persistent characteristics of the global Charismatic ministry applies to a greater extent to the churches in this study (e.g. their focus on Jesus, praise, love of the Bible, evangelism, awareness of evil, spiritual gifts, spiritual power, eschatological expectation and belief that God speaks today), it is obvious that there are changing emphases and some uniqueness too (pp. 514-515). In what follows, I will describe some of the key characteristics of the Charismatic ministry in Ghana with examples predominantly from the LCI and the ICGC.

Passionate and energising liturgies

First of all, I shall have a look at the energetic and participatory nature of Charismatic church services. This will help to understand the culture and theological underpinning that is typical of these churches. In order to give a clear idea of their liturgy, I will offer an example from one of the services I attended at the LCI *Light of the World Cathedral* at Korle-Gonno in Accra.

On this particular day, the first Sunday of 2015, I walked in about a quarter of an hour before the beginning of the service and they had some Christian music playing in the background through the public-address system. The actual service dubbed 'love and faith service' started at exactly 9:30 am with a prayer session led by one of the pastors. This corporate prayer was energetic and spontaneous as the volume of the PA system was set so high that the microphones and speakers began to give feedback. There was a lot of distortion in the sound produced by the equipment, which was immediately attended to by the technicians. The leader raised one prayer topic after another and the congregation responded by praying vigorously with some keyboard tunes at the background. The prayer session, unlike in the mainline historical church settings where prayer is more of a quiet personal communication with God, was characterised by loud shouts to God both in English and in other tongues (*glossolalia*). To an onlooker or someone foreign to these settings, the words oozing out of the microphone would be likely to sound like gibberish and repetitive, and the level of sound was undeniably high. However, it was this approach of the prayer leader that got the congregation stirred up to fully participate in the ritual. Since it was the first Sunday of the year, a very significant day in the Pentecostal-Charismatic calendar in Ghana, I could see the congregation moving around the pews with 'frowning faces' and clapping their

hands as they prayed, urged on by the prayer leader to pray 'into the year ahead like never before'. Besides these Sunday prayer sessions, Charismatic churches in Ghana usually have a weekly prayer meeting where the church members and guests come to pray for all manner of requests and to seek solutions to their problems. Prominent among these prayer sessions are the *Solution Hour* of the ICGC, *Jericho Hour* of Action Chapel International and *Turning Point Clinic* and *Prayer Clinic* of the LCI. At these meetings, different types of prayer requests and topics are raised including prayer for jobs, children, visas to travel abroad, marriage partners, health and wealth, and so forth. In all of them, it is clear that, generally, prayer in Charismatic settings is vibrant and loud, involving a lot of bodily movement.

After the prayer period came the next segment, popularly referred to in Pentecostal liturgy as *praise and worship*. The order of service can vary from church to church. For example, at Christ Temple of the ICGC, the service starts with praise and worship before prayer, but the segments within the liturgy are the same. During this period, characterised by local and international gospel music and lively dancing, accompanied by highly amplified musical instruments such as keyboards and brass instruments, the members danced to the music and expressed emotions by kneeling, lifting or waving their hands, weeping, lying prostrate or showing other gestures (the praise and worship section will be expatiated later).

Following praise and worship there was ministry in song by the church's choir 'to prepare the way for the man of God.' The choir sang one danceable song, which was also used to take the offering for the day, and a second song followed, titled, "I surrender all." This song caught up with the congregation, who sang along amidst shouts of joy. The members of the choir became ecstatic and raised the pitch of the music against the backdrop of approval from the congregation, who could not sit down but gave a standing ovation to the choir. Some of them were crying, others clapped and some lifted their hands with their eyes closed as they sang along. The leader of the choir then announced, "The presence of the Lord is here, open up your spirit and yield to the Lord." After this announcement, only the musical instruments played for a while before the choir came back to repeat the chorus of the song several times and ended the session with a short prayer.

After the short prayer came the introduction of the preacher for the day, Bishop Emmanuel Nterful. As the preacher mounted the podium, there were shouts, whistling and a standing ovation from the congregation.

To this the pastor nodded in approval and responded by screaming, “give the Lord a shout,” and the congregation responded accordingly. The sermon took about 45 minutes filled with intermittent calls-and-responses initiated either by the preacher or spontaneously by the congregation. For example, from time to time, the pastor said, “God is good,” to which the congregation responded, “all the time.” Again, I could hear in the congregation, responses such as “you are talking to me,” “God bless you, Bishop,” “thank you,” “amen”, “preach it” in reply to things the preacher said. The pastor was very active, frequently moving from one side of the aisle to another. To crown the sermon, he raised a song at which the members of the choir immediately got up to support him by singing along. This was the period of ministry in which he prayed for people, beginning with an *altar call*, thus giving an opportunity for non-Christian attendees to become Christians by public confession of faith. In this particular service, about fifteen mainly young people responded to the altar. The next group of people to come to the platform to be prayed for were the sick and then all those “believing God for an uncommon miracle in the year 2015.” After the ministry, the pastor prayed a general prayer for all the congregation while the members stood with their hands raised and responded to every blessing with an ‘amen’. Before the notices for the week and the final benediction were given by a pastor and the Bishop Nterful respectively, there was a musical interlude and a mini fundraiser in aid of the next evangelistic crusade on the church’s calendar. The service came to a close at 12:30 pm and thereafter I observed the church members socializing and embracing one another.

While this is only an example of a Charismatic liturgy, it is important to point out that as one walks into any Charismatic church service in Ghana, these major segments of prayer, praise and worship, song ministry by a choir, offering, sermon, ministry and announcements are a consistent, albeit with degrees of variation. For example, in ICGC Christ Temple, there is always a hymn, led by the hymnal team and sung by the entire congregation or, from time to time, there are performances from the Accra Symphony Orchestra. Alternatively, at *The Qodesh* of the LCI, it is common to find that, in addition to these segments, there is also a presentation of choreography by the youth. In other churches, such as ICGC Adjiringanor and Adenta, where the pastors are known prophets, it is common to find that the ministry segment is specifically for prayer and prophetic declarations.

The centrality of experience in charismatic Christianity

It is clear that all the Pentecostal-Charismatic churches mentioned above place a primary emphasis on the experience of the Holy Spirit. Accordingly, while God is seen as a father figure in the historical traditions of Christianity, whose congregations come before him in humility and quiet devotion, in Charismatic churches, God is rather the powerful presence of the Holy Spirit in a service.²⁷ The Holy Spirit and the gifts of the spirit are fundamental to Charismatic worship, and this is understood in the light of religious experience and expressed in the liturgy. Charismatic worship is therefore a vibrant occasion involving a lot of physical movement and expressed emotions such as laughter and shedding tears. Significantly, it is during the praise and worship segment that the Holy Spirit is mostly experienced and the gifts of the spirit also find expression. The praise and worship, as we saw earlier, involves music and dance, a time of corporate singing and lively dancing against the background of sounds of the trumpet, drums, keyboards, tambourines, cymbals and saxophones. It is usually led by a team of singers and musicians who are sometimes professionals in their own right. The praise element is usually a thanksgiving, which involves danceable Ghanaian and international gospel music. It is common to find in these churches that praise and worship leaders begin with the phrase, “we praise God for what He has done for us” and “if you believe God has been good to you, dance like never before,” as I observed in the ICGC and LCI churches. The praise element is a time of dancing, expressing gratitude to God. The volume of the sound is always set so high that it can be deafening, and intermittently the lead singer will urge the congregation to either “give the Lord a dance” or “give God a shout.” Responding to this, the congregation usually become ecstatic and dances with greater energy. The worship comes after the praise although in some churches it is the other way round as I have indicated earlier. The basic difference between the two sections (praise and worship) is the variation in the tempo of the music: slow in the case of the worship, albeit the level of the sound remains the same. The essence of the worship session, apart from the emotional release that accompanies it, is found in common phrases used by many lead singers at the beginning of the session: “we worship God for

²⁷ The Charismatics have a Trinitarian view that is based on dispensationalism. That is, they believe God the father was in charge in the Old Testament, whereas God the son was in charge of the New Testament era but in the post-New Testament era or in the period of mission, it is God, the Holy Spirit who is in charge. Therefore, prayer is offered to God in the name of Jesus through the power of the Holy Spirit.

who He is” and “the Holy Ghost is here to take away burdens, give him your worship.” Accordingly, during the worship, adherents yield to the Holy Spirit and adore God through music. Sometimes it is the same singer who leads the congregation in both sessions and at other times, different musicians take turns.

What is constant in this ritual is that it is very intense, and it is also common to find members of the congregation in tears, 'slain in the spirit' or 'falling under the anointing'. These are terms used in Pentecostal-Charismatic circles to designate a kind of prostration resulting from religious experience. I once observed in the ICGC branch in Adjiringanor Accra how many of the congregants burst into uncontrollable laughter during worship, whereupon the pastor in charge, Eric Xexemeku began to prophesy. The pastor later explained to me that, “it is important to seize the opportunity during praise and worship to minister when the Spirit of God is moving.” Music and dance are therefore extremely important in Pentecostal-Charismatic churches not only because of the emotional release the members experience but also because it creates an atmosphere where the gifts of the Spirit find expression. Music through the praise and worship segment and throughout the service is a means of invoking the presence of the Holy Spirit. It is therefore not surprising that the Ghanaian music scene has been greatly influenced by the Pentecostal-Charismatic churches with Atiemo (2006) suggesting that 75% of all music recorded in Ghana is gospel music and that the enormous growth in the gospel music industry in the country actually coincided with the proliferation of Charismatic churches (p, 142).

It is evident that, for Charismatic churches, religion is more about experience than dogma. To put it another way, adherents see God as both a transcendent being and an immanent being in the form of the Holy Spirit. He is the overwhelming presence in a church service and not just an abstract theological thought. The role of the loud music and preaching is critical in creating the atmosphere to invoke the presence of the transcendent Holy Spirit in the service.

Every member is a potential shepherd: priesthood of all believers?

Allan Anderson observed that “the emphasis on a personal, heartfelt experience of God through the Spirit is offered to all people without precondition, enabling them to be ‘powerful’ and assertive in societies where they have been marginalized” (Asamoah-Gyadu, 2013, p. xv). This assertion emphasises the notion that in Charismatic churches every born-again adherent is seen as a priest and therefore has the potential to start or pastor a

church, irrespective of their theological or academic qualifications.²⁸ This means that, unlike the traditional mainline churches, where the gap between the clergy and the laity is wide, the Charismatic churches see every believer as being as close to 'priesthood' as possible. Therefore, the pastors do not have to be formally educated in church dogma in order to assume a position of leadership. This is evidenced in the fact that of the many first-generation Charismatic leaders in Ghana, only a few went through theological training, most of them having been trained in-house through campus fellowships and other interdenominational parachurch fellowships. For example, Dag Heward-Mills, a medical doctor by profession, never trained formally in church dogma, while Mensa Otabil by his own admission has done a lot of self-education. This situation has, however, changed in recent times, with churches setting up their own seminaries and Bible Colleges to train subsequent generations of leaders. Nevertheless, Bible College education is still not a prerequisite to becoming a pastor.

The idea of a priesthood of all believers helps to empower and groom people who were hitherto at the margins of society with a 'can-do' spirit to start branches of their denominations. It is a strategy adopted by churches like the LCI and ICGC to expand their wide network of branches locally and internationally. For instance, as part of the diaspora strategy of the LCI, they usually look out for Ghanaian migrants and expats in European and North American cities and encourage them to start branches of the church.

The strategy based on 'the priesthood of all believers', while it has the potential to promote schisms, helps increase the establishment of churches. Accordingly, Charismatic churches have proliferated cities and towns across the country, while the old Pentecostal churches have spread to the rural areas. For instance, as at the end of 2012, ICGC and LCI alone had 145 and 322 branch churches in the Greater Accra region alone (Nterful, 2012, p.175). These numbers are even dwarfed by hundreds of other independent Charismatic churches found within the suburbs of Accra. This means it is common to find Charismatic churches in relative proximity to one another, and sometimes as many as ten churches can aggregate in one area. This is the case in many public-school compounds such as that found in the Dansoman cluster of schools in Accra. In fact, outside of the school compounds, it is also commonplace to find many churches next to each

²⁸ Biblical texts used to support this view include 1 Peter 2: 9 (KJV) and Revelation 1: 6 (NIV).

other on the streets of the city. As many of these churches use modern public-address systems and musical instruments, it is easy to find a 'chaos' of sounds within a particular area because while one church is involved in praise and worship, the neighbouring church may be having intercessory prayer or preaching. There have been times when groups of churches met to strike a deal to synchronise the order of their liturgy. The Churches have proliferated, taking over old warehouses, hotel lobbies, school classrooms in residential areas and even industrial areas within the city. The magnitude and multiplication of Charismatic churches in places like Accra can be linked to their policies of using lay people for ministry. There is a predominance of volunteerism, by which people are motivated to work without being paid salaries. The spread of the Charismatic churches occasioned by the idea of volunteerism has contributed in no small way towards changing the soundscape in places like Accra, where apparent cacophony of sound is commonplace, because of their around-the-clock church services. This generates tensions between them and especially the Ga traditionalists during the noise ban.

Nevertheless, despite championing the priesthood of all believers and its corresponding church growth strategies, it is also common for Charismatic churches in Ghana to be built around the anointed leader or founder. The branches of the church, whether local or international, are built on the vision and charisma of leaders like Mensa Otabil, Dag Heward-Mills and Nicholas Duncan-Williams. The bishops become the public faces and the embodiment of these churches. In addition, it is usual to find people in Ghana who identify these leaders with the churches. They wield power to the extent that their interests, insights and directives shape church life and the general running of the churches. Therefore, people frequently refer to the ICGC as Otabil's church, the LCI as Dag Heward-Mills' church or the ACI as Duncan-William's church. Consequently, these founders have enormous influence not only within their denominations but also within the Charismatic movement and the nation at large. They are held in high esteem, and their views influence not only their flock but also political office holders and the nation in general. For example, Mensa Otabil has been voted as the most influential person in Ghana for two years running, and he has been in the top three of the most influential people in Ghana since the inception of the awards by e.TV Ghana in 2010.²⁹ This implies

²⁹ E.TV Ghana is a major international television station that has been awarding the most influential people in Ghana since 2010. The list has included past presidents and Kofi

that the role of the powerful, anointed and charismatic leaders cannot be underestimated because they give the whole movement significance and a voice. Owing to the immense political capital possessed by these Charismatic leaders, they are able to circumvent the traditional authorities to acquire lands for church expansion, even though land negotiations in the Greater Accra are still done with chiefs and family heads. This leads to some tension between the churches and the traditional authorities, as the latter feel a lack of recognition from the churches.

Communities of concerned and committed Christians

Charismatic churches, like many Pentecostal Churches, are structured in such a way as to keep a spirit of communitarianism. The churches are based on several small subdivisions, or cells, that enable them to offer pastoral support at every level. These subdivisions are called 'Bussells' in the LCI and 'Covenant Families' in the ICGC. For instance, in the LCI every church member is part of a 'service' and every service is constituted by several 'zones'. Every zone is then made from the smallest units or house churches, the Bussells.³⁰ The Bussells are the first point of contact for any member in need of support. Consequently, if the leader of a particular Bussell is unable to address an issue, it is escalated to the zonal pastor and then to the service pastor and finally to the Bishop. While these structures help Charismatic churches provide pastoral care to members at the grassroots, they also provide a platform for members to participate in church life and offers them the opportunity to exercise their gifts in a setting where they will be most comfortable. The Bussells or Covenant Families are places where new members make new, like-minded friends and build 'new families'. When people join the Charismatic churches, they go through a kind of resocialisation where the church becomes the centre of their lives. New believers find support there and form a new circle of contacts. It is therefore not surprising that many Charismatic churches have "Family Chapel" as part of their name, connoting the idea of the new believer being offered

Annan, the former UN Secretary General but Mensa Otabil especially and other Charismatic pastors such as Dag Heward-Mills and Duncan-Williams have always placed very highly on the list of the 100 most influential people. See: <http://www.ghanaweb.com/GhanaHomePage/NewsArchive/Otabil-named-most-influential-Ghanaian-438143>. Accessed July 13, 2016.

³⁰ There are four different church services on a Sunday, so every member permanently belongs to one of these services, and the zones and Bussells are based on the areas in which individuals live within the city.

a new family. The church then serves as a place they can call home and a family they can trust and share burdens and successes with.

The church also becomes a place where employment is gained as employers within the church have been known to seek recommendations from pastors about unemployed members. This might contribute to the Charismatic churches' attraction for youth and graduates. For example, an LCI pastor indicated that, "when there is a job vacancy in one of the member's company or even in the church, we look to the Bussells first and make recommendations before a general advert is run. Actually, some pastors even go to the extent of looking for jobs for members."³¹ He argued that once a member is gainfully employed it also inures to the benefit of the church, as they will go on to pay tithes and support the causes of the church.

Furthermore, members of the Charismatic churches are encouraged to marry from within their local churches. The pastors are passionate about this and go to the extent of establishing special counselling programmes for the unmarried. Both Mensa Otabil and Dag Heward-Mills are proponents of young Christians marrying within their denominations, as evidenced by the 'singles' programmes prominent in their churches. Couples receive considerable help for their weddings and anniversaries within their support groups, the Covenant Families. For instance, a staff member of the LCI recounted how the church gave him double his monthly salary on the month of his wedding and how he received support from members of his zone. Another member of staff at the ICGC narrated how the church paid for his honeymoon in an exclusive location outside of Accra for a week. These indicate the ways in which Charismatic churches offer a place for new members to become re-socialised. Many converts therefore tend to break with their extended biological families and sometimes cease attending family meetings and gatherings such as *Hɔmɔwɔ* as they see them as belonging to the past and not relevant to their born-again experience (Meyer, 1998). This posture by the Charismatic Christians has a direct correlation to the vigorous implementation of the noise ban by the Ga traditional authorities.

On the other hand, despite this spirit of communitarianism, there is also a lot of individualism in Charismatic Christianity. This is evidenced in the teaching of the 'prosperity gospel' and the development of an entrepreneurial spirit by many of its leaders, especially Mensa Otabil, Dag

³¹ Discussion with Pastor Jude Tetteh at LCI-Korle Gonno Accra, Jan 4th 2015.

Heward-Mills and Duncan-Williams. While a pastor like Duncan-Williams can be described as a 'word of faith prosperity preacher', Mensa Otobil emphasises the individual development of talents and entrepreneurial acumen. The Charismatic churches have generally received a lot of criticism on such issues as prosperity preaching is seen as an exploitative mechanism to enrich the pastors (Heuser, 2015). This continues to be debated in Ghanaian public fora, but some Charismatic pastors have left themselves open to such criticism by selling religious products like anointing oil and holy water and charging consultation fees before members can access them. A typical example is Daniel Obinim, a Charismatic pastor who has been in the news recently for his flamboyant lifestyle and controversial methods of administering the gifts of healing, such as praying for a pregnant woman by stamping on her stomach.³²

Incessant evangelism: conversion at all cost

The Charismatic churches in Ghana are noted for the persistent nature of their efforts at evangelisation as well as their church expansion strategies. This is seen as being in fulfilment of the 'Great Commission,' that is, Jesus' injunction for his disciples to disseminate his teachings to every nation in the world (Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15; Acts 1:8). For example, part of the LCI's mission statement says: "To establish 25,000 churches worldwide" and "To make available all resources for the advancement of the gospel and the fulfilment of the Great Commission" (LCI, Constitution, 2012). In actualising Christ's injunction, the LCI has put in an aggressive method of evangelism in order to reach its target of 25,000 churches, namely, the Anagkazo church planting strategy. Anagkazo is a Greek word meaning "to compel...to necessitate, to drive and to constrain" (Heward-Mills, 1998, p.1). The strategy devises diverse means to make the gospel message available to the unchurched (non born-again) and compel them, with a sense of urgency, to come to the saving knowledge of Jesus Christ. The reason to compel people to Christ, according to Heward-Mills is because they have increasingly become cynical in respect to the gospel (ibid, pp. 1-3). The means include door-to-door evangelism, bus evangelism, dawn preaching, televangelism, radio broadcasts, Christian books and leaflets and mass evangelism, popularly called 'crusades', in Pentecostal-Charismatic settings in Ghana.³³

³² <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mdbmOMXGG4U>. Accessed July 15, 2016.

³³ For more on Pentecostal crusading strategies cf. (Heuser, 2009).

More significant among the evangelistic strategies of the LCI is the mass evangelism approach called *The Healing Jesus Crusades*. These involve open-air preaching of the gospel by Heward-Mills and his team, which draws thousands of people in certain cities across Ghana and some major African cities. They are similar to the outdoor rallies of American evangelist Billy Graham. Besides the preaching of the gospel, attendants at the meetings are prayed for, and many receive healing and deliverance as well as an 'altar call' for any to accept Christ as their saviour or become Christians. In one such crusade, held at the University of Ghana in October 2015, I saw hundreds of people come forward during the altar call to receive prayer for diverse diseases and conditions, with even many more people becoming Christians. Many unchurched people are reached through the crusades with the message of the gospel, and they are encouraged to join the Charismatic communities. These new converts are required to fill in a profile card which the volunteer ushers compile and send to the church offices. The LCI, like many Charismatic churches, has a very well organised follow-up strategy: profile cards are distributed among church members, who consistently visit the new converts, sharing their Christian experiences and inviting them to church. Besides personal visits to the new converts, there are emails and telephone calls as well as meetings set up for the pastors to personally meet the new converts. Sometimes some of the new converts do not come back, but they are still pursued by follow up teams until they change their minds. This is how the *Anagkazo* system works: never giving up on a convert, but rather doing whatever it takes to bring them into fellowship. This strategy can sometimes be straight-to-the-face and rather aggressive, as a result of which, it often leads to conflicts (R.N.Y. Quaye, personal communication, October 24, 2015).

Charismatics in general use many other strategies to reach out to the unchurched and even to other Christians. Such strategies include providing community support to deprived communities in Ghana. For example, the ICGC has a borehole project providing clean water for many communities in the Greater Accra Region; health support for children with cancer at Ghana's foremost hospital, the Korle-Bu teaching hospital and running of Ghana's foremost orphanage, the Osu Children's Home in Accra. These social projects attract people to the church and therefore become an avenue for evangelism. Other sources of evangelism in the Charismatic churches include artistic shows, such as public gospel musical performances, theatre and choreography, and orchestral recitals. Thus, every possible resource

and available means is used to execute the Great Commission and membership naturally increases as events frequently end up with an *altar call* and a request for people to make Christian commitments. What these social projects do is that, in some ways, they serve as attraction for many people from the Ga traditional areas to join these churches and membership in these churches means breaking with indigenous religious practices.

Transnational orientation

Another characteristic of the Charismatic churches is their transnational self-representation (van Dijk, 2003, p. 41). The churches see themselves as belonging to a larger international family of Pentecostals, thus transcending any local culture or even the national boundaries of Ghana. First of all, this orientation is revealed in the churches' tendency to add 'international' to their names. Both the LCI and the ICGC are a testament to this widespread practice, which does not have any bearing on the size of the church. It is even common to find churches meeting in school classrooms but using the designation 'international' because it is not only fashionable, and sometimes interpreted as a vision for the future, but is also seen in the light of Christ's injunction for believers to reach out to the world. The following emic view captures the essence of this tendency to be 'international':

We are not here to serve only Ghana because Christ's instruction to the believer is a global one. Acts 1:8 says, [reading from the Bible] 'But ye shall receive power, after the Holy Ghost is come upon you and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the world.' So, you see we have a global assignment given to us by the Master himself. We are simply not restricted to Ghana – no! We are not (B. Arde-Acquah, personal communication, February 24, 2015).

With the exception of a few, many of the churches begin without the 'international' tag but it gets introduced later. For example, the LCI started as Lighthouse Chapel before it was renamed LCI in December 1989 to "reflect the intent of the church's founder to contribute to fulfilling the Great Commission of Jesus Christ by planting churches around the globe" (Nterful, 2012, p. 2).

Secondly, the international focus is plain from the Charismatic churches' policy of planting churches abroad in places such as Europe, North America and other African countries from their bases in Ghana. For instance, as at January 2016, the LCI had planted churches in North America, South America, Asia, Australia, Europe and many African countries

(LCI, Denomination Office, 2016). However, Okyerefo (2014) argues that this transnational tag is questionable because while these churches are spreading internationally, they have very little effect on the local communities, as their target is usually the immigrant communities; what is done on a Sunday at *The Qodesh* in Accra is likely to be replicated in an LCI branch in Dusseldorf. This replication of what is done in Accra is part of the ideal to spread influence and it is seen as a blessing from God (S. E. Bandoh, personal communication, March 10, 2015).³⁴

Thirdly, churches collaborate with like-minded Pentecostal-Charismatics across the globe by organising international conferences where overseas preachers meet with their Ghanaian counterparts to affirm their shared Pentecostal ethic. The ICGC has an annual conference dubbed Greater Works, which brings together a network of preachers from around the globe with similar theological inclinations to those of Otabil. In the August 2016 edition of the Greater Works, international speakers such as Tudor Bismarck (Zimbabwe), Mike Okwonkwo (Nigeria), Randy Morrison (USA) and Matthew Ashimolowo (London) were brought together for a week's convention. Furthermore, popular Charismatic gospel musicians like Joe Beecham, Joe Mettle and Moses OJ are regularly invited to minister in churches in Europe and the Americas, while their American counterparts such as Ron Kenoly, Fred Hammond, Cece Winans and the Brooklyn Tabernacle Choir have also been invited from time to time to minister to the churches in Ghana. All these collaborations point to the Charismatic churches' belief that they are a transnational phenomenon and not limited to any particular local culture. It also suggests they are a group whose primary purpose is to be seen as spreading their influence overseas against the imprint of Kpele religion and its actors.

Total rupture with the past and awareness of evil

Making a complete break with the past is a very popular concept within the Pentecostal-Charismatic movement in Ghana. The Charismatic churches emphasise the born-again experience with a focus on a radical rupture with the past. This position is "diametrically opposed" to the cultural policies of the Ghanaian state, which calls for the revitalisation of indigenous cultures, and also influences the behaviour of the born-again

³⁴ It must also be pointed out that a visit to the Ghana Catholic Mission churches in Hamburg and St. Michael's Church in Kreuzberg, Berlin, revealed a similar kind of liturgy to that observed at the Holy Spirit Cathedral in Accra. It was replicated in these German cities, as opposed to the more restrained German Catholic liturgy.

Christian to cease indulging in traditional celebrations such as the *Hɔmɔwɔ* (Meyer, 1998, p. 316). A break with the past therefore means a rupture from the ancestral past and the life of an individual before their 'born-again' experience. Allan Anderson has added that this position tends to attract many people who are disenchanted with the way of life of their parents and who want a better life for themselves (Asamoah-Gyadu, 2013, p. xv). Nevertheless, it also shows their dualistic view of the world in terms of 'God and the Devil,' 'us and them' as well as 'then and now' (i.e. 'tradition' and 'modernity') where the past represents tradition and the present stands for modernity (Meyer, 1998, p. 318). Indigenous religions are seen as representing the past while Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity corresponds to 'modernity'. The discourse of breaking with the past has the effect of making the Charismatic believer also extremely conscious of issues relating to the Devil and demons. This view has a direct link with the ongoing sound wars in Accra. Believers suppose that they are constantly at war with Satan and the demons, who wish their downfall, and the believer should wage this war through prayer and alertness since these malevolent spirits operate in the guise of tradition and culture. Anything that is related to the Devil, deities and ancestors are seen as sources of curses and anti-development. These views are expressed through prayer, testimonies, songs and sermons. At one prayer meeting I attended at the Royalhouse Chapel International, I recorded the following prayer in my field notebook:

Awurade e, ɔtanfo biara a ɔmma mennyɛ yie no, sɛ me bɔ me nsa mu bɔ mpae a apradaa ntete ngu wɔn so. Car mbɔ wɔn nku wɔn. Ma wɔn nyinaa ntete ngu.

Lord, when I clap my hands and pray, may the enemies (demons and human agents) who work against me be struck by thunder. May they get hit by a car. Let them all fall.

This type of prayer is common amongst Charismatics in Ghana, and it reveals their ruthless stand against Satan and any agent or event they perceive as a possible route for demons to enter into a person's life. Prayers such as the one above is employed to repel what is perceived as evil. This accords with Adogame's (2005) view regarding prayer in the Aladura churches that "through the performative force of ritual speech and action, benevolent forces are attracted while malevolent spirits are repelled" (p. 124).

Widespread use of mass media

The popularity of the Charismatic churches has variously been attributed to their extensive use of modern mass media to communicate their message (De Witte, 2002, 2003; Gifford, 2004; Asamoah-Gyadu, 2005b). Maxwell (1998) also observed that the growth, strength and the ardour are not the only significant features of African Pentecostalism but even so “its appropriation of electronic media to the point that this has almost become part of the Pentecostal self-definition” (p. 255). In Ghana, the Pentecostal-Charismatic churches have, since the liberalisation of the airwaves in 1991, taken advantage of various media such as TV, FM radio, films, the internet (especially social media), billboards and posters as well as books to communicate the Christian message. Thus, these churches have a very significant presence and enormous stakeholderhood in the Ghanaian mediascape.

Asamoah-Gyadu (2005b) argues that the Charismatic churches dominate the field of televised religious programmes to the extent that they make up 90% of all religious programming in Ghana (p. 5). Examples of such prominent programmes which usually air on multiple FM Radio and TV stations are Mensa Otabil’s *Living Word* and Heward-Mills’ *Healing Jesus TV*, which airs pre-recorded church services nationwide on weekly basis. It is common at any given moment of the day, to hear preaching or prayer sessions from Charismatic pastors on Accra’s numerous FM Radio stations. The peak periods during the week are 4am-6am; 10am-12pm; 7pm-12am or sometimes 7pm till 5am. Some churches, like International Godsway Church, have their own TV stations while throughout the day one can also hear LCI related advertising and preaching on *Sweet Melodies 94.3 FM*, almost as if the church owns the station. The ICGC and the LCI are very active on the internet as well, using live streaming to offer their global audience live church services and podcasts, for those who might miss the live programming.

The LCI and the ICGC are known to look out for different channels to transmit the gospel. Accordingly, these different forms of media such as TV, FM radio, internet and books have become the most widely used evangelistic tool. On Sunday mornings, many of the first-time visitors to the LCI or ICGC are people who have listened to or watched Heward-Mills or Mensa Otabil on radio, TV or the internet (E. Xexemeku, personal communication, April 20, 2014; E. Nterful, personal communication, January 4, 2015). Therefore, the media has become an important tool for church growth in the Charismatic churches to the extent that there are some

churches in Accra that have no meeting places of their own but constantly pay significant amounts to be on radio. The use of the media has, in turn, led to the creation of a new identity – one of more progressive modern group which separates them from such groups as the traditionalists³⁵ or even the mainline Christian groups.

Owing to its extensive use by Charismatic churches, electronic media (FM Radio, TV and the Internet) have become a contested space by younger generation, independent Charismatic church leaders with the more accomplished first-generation leaders like Mensa Otabil, Heward-Mills, Duncan-Williams, Korankye-Ankrah and Agyin Asare. Some of these young pastors have used the media to settle scores with other pastors or traditionalists about the authenticity and source of the ‘powers’ with which they operate. A typical case is the longstanding media feud between two popular second-generation pastors, Daniel Obinim, the leader of International Godsway Church and Ebenezer Adarkwa Yiadom of Ebenezer Miracle Worship Centre, with each trying to accuse the other of operating with powers from questionable sources.³⁶ More significantly, the electronic media has become a space where Charismatic churches, especially the independent ones, will attack any group they consider as ‘enemies.’ This is where the attack on the practices and beliefs of the traditionalists mainly take place. It has become a medium through which some religious battles have been fought between traditionalists such as Kweku Bomsam and many Charismatic pastors (Nrenzah, 2015). Therefore, the media feuds are not only internal Charismatic contests but also do contain inter-religious contests (Heuser, 2015).

Conclusion

This chapter was devoted to clarifying the circumstances and backgrounds of the key actors such as the *Wulomei*, Ga youth, and churches whose encounters result in the conflict. I have done this by showing the Ga socio-political structure and *Kpele* religion, which is relevant to this study because the traditional state as well as its structures are recognised by the

³⁵ Exceptions should be made here because in the early 80s and 90s Osofo Okomfo Damoah, the founder of Afrikania Mission appropriated the National Radio and TV to advance his neo-traditional movement, which sought to reform indigenous religions and simultaneously promote nationalism.

³⁶ See: <https://www.modernghana.com/news/253132/what-is-the-problem-between-rev-yiadom-bishop-obinim.html> and <http://edition.myjoyonline.com/pages/crime/201111/76819.php>, Accessed 2016.08.16

nation-state. This means that the Ga state and their customary laws exist side by side with the democratic structures of the nation-state. I have also described the two churches selected for this study and pointed out some characteristics of the Charismatic movement that have relevance to my study of the conflict.



3. Drum Wars: Toward charting an historical trajectory of ban-related clashes 1998-2016

This chapter is an account of the historical events related to the clashes that accompany the imposition of the ban by the GTC. This account arises from the evaluative result of the analysis of my data. It describes some of the violent confrontations that received national and international attention and describes the roles various actors have played in mitigating, resolving or inciting the conflict. It shows the changes the ban and clashes have undergone in terms of its enforcement and compliance or otherwise between 1998 and 2016. The period covered in this study is shown in three separate phases: 1998-2001, 2002-2008 and 2009-2016 in order to facilitate the study and to serve as a framework for our understanding of the different stages of the conflict.

The three phases are needed to describe how the conflict has developed over the years. This is because of fluctuations in the intensity of the confrontations, relating to which particular government has been in power, be it the National Democratic Congress (NDC) or the New Patriotic Party (NPP), the two political parties that have governed the country during the time. The first phase (1998-2001) saw the most intense confrontations, when the NDC was mostly in power, although the government changed hands towards the end of this period (2001). In the second phase (2002-2008) the intensity of the clashes subsided, perhaps due to the movement of the discourse away from the noise ban into broader noise pollution issues when the NPP was in power. In the final phase (2009-2016), the level and spread of violent clashes increased, albeit not at the same levels as during the first phase, when the NDC was back in government.

As a historical account, data was obtained from archival sources in the form of newspaper reports, radio news files, and documents from the files of the GPCC, NACCC and the Christian Council of Ghana. These archival materials were complemented with data obtained through observations, interviews and FGIs, especially in respect to the contemporary expressions of the clashes. This chapter is divided into four parts. First, I offer a background of the socio-political context in which religions exist in the religiously diverse landscape of Ghana. Second, I present the historical context of the encounters between Christianity and indigenous religions, and how this background shapes the context of confrontations in-

cluding actors, motives and resources. Third, I give a chronological account of the clashes between the Pentecostal-Charismatic groups and the GTC. Finally, based on the first three parts, I offer some concluding remarks.

The Socio-Political Context of Religions in Ghana

The 1992 Constitution of the Republic of Ghana promotes religious liberties to all its citizens as part of the chapter on fundamental human rights and freedom. Article (21) (1c) states, "All persons shall have the right to freedom to practise any religion and to manifest such practice." Furthermore, "Every person is entitled to enjoy, practise, profess, maintain and promote any culture, language, tradition or religion subject to the provisions of this Constitution." It is therefore evident that Ghana has no official state religion, and religious discrimination is prohibited. The separation of State and religion means that the country is, theoretically speaking, a secular state, albeit a religiously pluralistic society of citizens who practice various religions (Quashigah, 1999, p. 597). The state and religion are, however, not completely divorced from each other. For example, religion is an intrinsic part of the educational curriculum up to secondary school level. Religions in Ghana include but not limited to Christianity, Islam, Indigenous Religions, the Baha'i faith, Buddhism, Judaism, Hinduism, Shintoism, Hare Krishna, Eckankar, Rastafarianism, Church of Scientology, the Divine Light Mission and Zetaheal, a practice peculiar to Ghana that incorporates aspects of Christianity and Islam. Christianity, Islam and Indigenous Religions are the dominant religions in the country. While there are several Christian denominations, the strands of Islam present in Ghana include Sunni, the Qadiriyya and Tijaniyya orders of Sufism, Ahmadiyya and a small number of Shia. Indigenous Religions are organised around ethnic and kinship lines, mainly in the rural areas but very much alive in major cities like Accra, Kumasi and Sekondi-Takoradi.

The three major religious groups enjoy enormous support and recognition from the State. First of all, be they military or civilian regimes, governments since independence have recognised these religions in many ways. Successive governments in the fourth Republic (1992 - to date) have variously sought to bring religion into public discourse and have also offered practical support to the religious groups. For example, since 1992, various governments have officially subsidized Islamic pilgrimages to Mecca by building a *Hajj Village* in Accra (where all the pilgrims stay *en route* to Mecca), set up a National Hajj Committee based at the offices of

the presidency and liaised directly with Saudi Arabian officials regarding the issue of visas for pilgrims (Zainabu, 2013). Furthermore, the two major Islamic celebrations, *Eid-ul-Adha* and *Eid-al-Fitr* have been recognised as national holidays since the second Jerry Rawlings regime from 1996. While the Islamic community fought hard for these recognitions, the efforts by the various governments can be interpreted as a method of the political elite to gain more support from Muslim communities and thereby consolidate political capital.

Secondly, the traditionalists or adherents of indigenous religions have also benefitted greatly from the State, as governments since independence in 1957 have made considerable donations in support of traditional festivals and rituals. For instance, during the 2015 celebration of *Hɔmɔwɔ*, the incumbent National Democratic Congress (NDC) government paid a courtesy call on the Chiefs and people of Ga Mashie in Accra to donate money and drinks to the traditional leaders (Ghana News Agency, Jul 31, 2015).

Finally, it is also evident that Christianity has been the greatest beneficiary of State support, even before independence from the British. Christian holidays such as Christmas and Easter have always been national public holidays since the founding of the country in 1957. Recently, there was a heated debate in the Christian community when the State offered to sponsor some Christian leaders to undertake a pilgrimage to Jerusalem. Many of the key Christian churches and leaders declined the offer, citing the worsened economic situation in the country and the notion that pilgrimages were not pivotal to the Christian faith (Boateng, 2013). This gesture was by all intent to atone for government's continued involvement in supporting Hajj pilgrims.

Nevertheless, it is also important to state that, while these three religions receive special recognition by the state, indigenous religions clearly lag behind Islam and Christianity in terms of their visibility in state institutions. This could be explained by the fact that there are several indigenous religions across the country with no centralised regulating body. For example, while Islamic, indigenous religious and Christian prayers used to be offered at state functions, such as the Independence Day celebration, indigenous religious prayers were banned in 2009 by the then Christian president, the late John Evans Atta Mills. Moreover, in schools, universities and the military only Islamic and Christian Chaplaincies are found, with indigenous religions conspicuously missing.

According to the 2010 population and housing census conducted by the Ghana Statistical Service, 71.2% of the population is Christian while

17.6% and 5.2% of the citizens are professed Muslims and traditionalists respectively. Whereas other religions outside the 'big three' accounted for 0.8% of the population, 5.3% of the citizens claim to have no religious affiliation. It is therefore evident that Christianity is the most dominant religion in the country since many of the citizenry (71.2% of 24,658,823) are nominally Christian (Nyarko, 2012, p. 40). It is also clear from this report that, there is a significant amount of diversity in Ghanaian Christianity. The Christian traditions may or may not be compatible one to another. The differences in the various strands of Ghanaian Christianity can be observed in their history, organisational structure and praxis. First, there are the so-called 'Mainline Churches', which includes the Catholic and Protestant churches such as the Methodists, Anglicans, Presbyterians, Evangelical Lutherans, African Methodists, Episcopal Zionists, Mennonites, Society of Friends as well as the Seventh Day Adventists and Baptists (Lipton, 2002). These are categorised under their umbrella bodies: National Catholic Secretariat (NCS) and the Christian Council of Ghana (CCG) for the Catholics and Protestants respectively.

Second, there are the Pentecostals and African Initiated/Independent/Indigenous Churches (AICs). The Pentecostals come together to form two unifying member organisations called the Ghana Pentecostal and Charismatic Council (GPCC) and the National Association of Charismatic and Christian Churches (NACCC), while the AICs are grouped under the umbrella name, Council of Indigenous Churches (CIC). Since the religious market in Ghana is unregulated by the State, these ecumenical bodies keep a check on the various churches who belong to them and liaise with government on issues bordering religion and sometimes, governance (Pobee, 1991). It is also important to note that there are many independent churches that do not belong to any of the aforementioned umbrella organisations. The issue of the proliferation of churches that are not linked with any ecumenical council is taken up in Chapter four.

Christianity and Traditional Cultures in Ghana

Although Christianity is the principal religion, its failure to embrace the cultures of the various ethnic groups in Ghana is a longstanding topic of academic discussion among Ghanaian theologians and scholars of religion. Busia (1961) and Williamson (1965) highlighted that missionaries failed to make significant and lasting impact on the religious level mainly because they did not address the traditional worldview of the Ghanaian (Akan), with their belief in spirits. They argued that the missionary

churches were unable to provide responses to the basic legitimate questions that the Ghanaian Christian was asking against the background of his belief in the spirit world. Williamson (1965) in particular asserts that, after several years of missionary work among the Ghanaians, a large section of the Christian community was still attached to their cultural beliefs such as the fear of ghosts, belief in the sanctions of spirits (such as ancestors) and the potency of the fetish to support them in times of crises (p. 131). The challenge of Christianity and its relations with traditional culture in Ghana has therefore been well explored in theological circles since the 1960s (Oduyoye, 1986; Bediako, 1990).

However, with the emergence of the *Sunsum Sɔr or Sunsum Asɔre* (*Spiritual Churches*) or what are generally referred to as the African Indigenous/Initiated/Independent Churches (AICs), some scholars have begun to see them as Ghanaian Christianity's answer to the African's and, for that matter, the Ghanaian's belief in the spirit world. They have therefore referred to it as "the authentic African expression of Christianity" (Omenyo, 2002, p. 4). Thus, the AICs have taken up some challenges that the missionary churches failed to address, namely making Christianity more relevant in the African context. This has given the AICs a significant following in the country and, hence, space in theological scholarship (Baeta, 1962). Nevertheless, there has since been a shift in the study of AICs to Pentecostalism and neo-Pentecostalism in light of the potential they have for addressing the spiritual needs of the Ghanaian. Some have even argued that the Pentecostal-Charismatic churches have an advantage over the AICs because, while they emphasise elements such as drumming, dancing, clapping, divine healing and exorcism, they have also given meaning and momentum to the spirit-filled life, praise and worship, the centrality of Jesus in the Bible, anointing with oil and 'deliverance' (exorcism) (Omenyo, 2002, p. 4).

Furthermore, Allen Anderson has stated that Pentecostalism addresses the allegations of both the foreignness and the irrelevance of Christianity in African societies. He suggests that one of the main reasons for its growth has been "its ability to adapt itself to different cultures and societies and give contextualized expressions to Christianity" (Asamoah-Gyadu, 2013, p. xii-xiii). This is further supported by Anthropologist Joel Robbins (2004), who observes that Pentecostalism possesses cultural features and an "ability to adapt itself to the cultures into which it is introduced" (p. 117). The movement, he argues, has the capacity to preserve the traditional cultures of the societies with which it encounters. Robbins'

(2004) thinking on continuity involves two levels of process adaptation, namely explicit adaptation and implied, unconscious adaptation. However, the perspectives of these scholars regarding Pentecostalism and its harmonised relationship with traditional cultures are not entirely reflected in Ghana. Whereas Pentecostalism has been able to reproduce itself in canonical forms, it has been in constant friction with traditional authorities, the custodians of traditional culture, across the country wherever the two institutions encounter each other. One area of conflict is the topic of this study, namely the annual confrontation between the Ga Traditional Council and the Charismatic churches. Before we delve into the specifics, it is imperative to look at some of the recorded historical clashes between the adherents of indigenous religions and Christians in general.

Historical conflicts: some earlier encounters between Christians and traditionalists in Ghana

The earliest documented conflict between Christians and adherents of indigenous religions occurred in 1576, about a century after the arrival of the first European merchants, led by Portuguese Prince Henry, the navigator in 1471. This confrontation happened when the King of Effutu, his six children and his three nephews, along with the Kings of Abura and Komenda, were baptised into Catholicism. The local population protested their action, and it degenerated into a heated conflict which resulted in the death of all the missionaries in the area (now the Central Region of Ghana) except for one, Father Pedro da Garcia, who was away at the time of the incident. These missionaries were sent by the Portuguese Orders of the Hermits of Saint Augustine, Domingo de Santa Maria and Atanasio da Cruz, who arrived in Elmina between 1572 and 1573 (Obeng, 1996, p. 97). The locals revolted perhaps because they felt betrayed by their leaders, who were expected to be the keepers of their religion and culture, and felt the way to stop the conversion of many more people into Christianity, at the expense of their culture, was to attack the source – the Catholic missionaries. This incident halted the Catholic missionary efforts in what is now Ghana until modern missionary work was reinvigorated by the Society of African Missions in the 1880s (Obeng, 1996, p. 95).

Next, there was the 1842 case of the *Asantehene's* order that one of his sub-chiefs, Nana Korankye of Adansi Fomena, be buried alive for refusing to continue the customary ritual of sacrificing humans to go with deceased Ashanti royalty to the land of their ancestors. Apparently, Nana Korankye had been converted to Christianity, having encountered Freeman, one of the foremost Methodist missionaries to the Gold Coast. The

chief had refused to perform human sacrifice to accompany his dead sister, the Queen mother, to the grave, because he believed it was inconsistent with his Christian beliefs. This infuriated the *Asantehene*, the King of the Ashantis, who subsequently issued the decree to have him buried alive for not respecting the traditions of the Ashanti people (Bediako, 1999, p. 8). The Ashanti people, like the Ga, traditionally believe that when a person dies, he continues to live in the land of the spirits. This is why they provide individuals on their deathbed with water to drink, because it is believed it helps them to climb the hill to the land of their ancestors. It is also the reason behind sending people to the grave with pillows, bed sheets and work-related implements like cutlasses (for a person who was a farmer). Consequently, killing servants to accompany royalty is done so the servants continue to attend to them even in the land of the dead. This case clearly brings to the fore the notion that most of these conflicts are as a result of some incompatibilities between Christian beliefs and traditional practices.

Another significant clash is reported by Busia (1968) as taking place during the British colonial era in the Gold Coast. In September 1941, the Ashanti Confederacy Council reinstated through a decree a time-honoured custom prohibiting people from farming on Thursdays, as it was the natal day of Mother Earth, *Asaase Yaa*, believed by the Akan people to possess a special power.³⁷ However, the directive was rejected by the Christian community, who petitioned the *Asantehene*, Nana Sir Agyemang Prempeh, in October 1942 with a joint memorandum, which read in part:

In the first place, we wish to take this opportunity of placing on record our regret that so often in the past there has been a cleavage between Christians and non-Christians in this country, and our resolve to do all in our power to bring these two sections within the community. We must, however, state our conviction that in so far as some elements of the cleavage are due to difference of belief, the purpose of reconciliation cannot be furthered by any discussion which unduly minimizes these differences. We are forced to recognize that in some of its aspects Ancient Ashanti Religion asks an allegiance to certain spiritual powers which the worshippers of the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ cannot give...As regards the observance of Thursday: We feel that we cannot ask this of our members, in that to refrain from work on Thursday would be to them a confession of faith in *Asaase Yaa* and her

³⁷ It is common to describe the earth as a mother or grandmother who is imbued with exceptional power, although not as a goddess.

relation to harvest and famine and therefore a denial of the Fatherhood and providential care of God (Busia, 1968, pp. 135-136).

This shows a sharp division between the Christian groups and the Ashanti confederacy and raises questions of differences in beliefs as well as the religious freedoms of the Christian. These questions still linger in the relationship between these groups, as will be shown later. It is common for indigenous religions in Ghana to observe periods of break from the exploitation of natural resources within a particular community as part of their religious beliefs and practices. For example, in Central Accra, Cape Coast and many of the settlements along the coast, members of the community are prohibited from fishing either in the sea or in the rivers and lagoons on Tuesdays, for religious reasons. While it could be explained ecologically, as a sustainable use of natural resources, enabling fish stocks to replenish, for the traditionalists, this day of rest is always in honour of a water deity. This however, shows the disparity between the traditionalist and the Christian whose beliefs enjoins him not to honour any deity but God (Exodus 20:3-5; Exodus 34:14; Deuteronomy 5:7).

The GTC versus the Charismatics: a narrative of the clashes

Thus far, we have been dealing with conflict between the traditionalists and the wider Christian community. It is worth noting that the specific contention between the Pentecostal groups and the GTC has a long history, although it was not as violent as contemporary skirmishes between them have been. In respect to the earlier clashes between the two parties, Amanor (2009) lists two prominent ones in the 1940s and 50s. The first took place in August 1948 when a group of Ga youths rushed into the church service of the Apostolic Church in La, a suburb of Accra, to seize their drums, guitar and tambourines and assault the members of the church. Apparently, members of the church had been worshipping, singing and dancing to very loud music during the period of silence preceding the celebration of La *Hɔmɔwɔ*. The Pastor of the church was forced to report at the La chief's palace after the service to answer to charges for contravening the ban. Amanor reports that it was only when Lartey Adotey, the pastor of the church introduced himself to the chief as a native of La that he was pardoned and allowed to go free with his musical instruments, albeit with a strong verbal caution. Prior to this, there was news among the natives that some 'strangers' had angered their gods by intentionally flouting the prohibition of drumming and noisemaking. Then in 1953, a new branch of the Apostolic Church in Teshie, Accra, was also attacked by some Ga

traditionalists for drumming and dancing during the period of the ban prior to the Teshie *Hɔmɔwɔ* celebration. A few members of the church were injured and, as their tradition demands, the traditionalists seized the church's musical instruments, some communion utensils and destroyed several bible leaflets belonging to the church. In this instance, the church had to pay a fine to the elders of Teshie before the release of their property.

The cases above show that the clashes between Pentecostal-Charismatics and the Ga traditionalists existed before Ghana's independence in 1957. The clashes were not as rampant and as publicised as they have been from 1998 to date. Several reasons can be assigned to the persistent nature of the conflict between these two groups since 1998. First, it is evident that the classical Pentecostal groups like the Assemblies of God, Apostolic Church, Christ Apostolic Church and the Church of Pentecost have learned to cope with the demands of the traditionalists' as regards the ban, although with pockets of incidents from time to time. This suggests a more open-minded approach towards the traditionalists, among these classic Pentecostal churches, which have been in the country since 1917 (Larbi, 2001, p. 32). However, the neo-Pentecostal strand, the Charismatic churches that have grown rapidly, is overtaking the earlier Pentecostal churches in terms of spread. Their growth has brought profound changes in the church-scape of Accra, with the widespread acquisition of old cinemas and warehouses, which have been turned into worship places, even within residential areas. Their style of worship and approach to ministry has therefore been suggested by many as the cause of the conflict (van Dijk, 2001; De Witte, 2008; Attuquayefio, 2012). Second, the liberalisation of the airwaves in 1992, which brought hundreds of FM Radio Stations and opened up access to information, may have contributed to the spread of the news about clashes. With so many radio stations, information easily trickles down to every corner of the nation within a short period of time. Before 1992, only the national broadcaster, Ghana Broadcasting Corporation (GBC) and national newspapers, *The Daily Graphic*, *The Ghanaian Times*, *The Mirror* and *The Spectator* were mainly responsible for carrying news across the nation. There were a few private media houses in the form of newspaper publishers, but their circulation was restricted to only the major cities. Third is the resurgence of the Ga indigenous religion in relation to the resurgence in the Pentecostal movement, stimulating in the indigenous group a new religious consciousness and self-confidence. A fourth reason arises from the social situation of the groups: whereas the Charismatic groups are mostly highly educated and moving upward in terms of social mobility,

the opposite is true for traditionalists. Additionally, more than two parties are involved in this conflict, when state institutions are included. These reasons will be explored later in Chapter five.

Next, I consider the clashes that brought this conflict to national and, to a greater extent, international attention. I recount and reflect on the period between 1998 and 2016 with particular attention to the first phase, because this period highlights the dynamics of the conflict more than any other era within the period considered in this study.

The first phase: 1998-2001

While Ghana has been seen as a model of African democracy and, sometimes, an oasis of peace in an otherwise volatile region, plagued with various degrees of tension, there are certain enduring conflicts the country has had to cope with for years now. One such conflict is the GTC versus the Charismatics, which came to national attention on Sunday the 31st of May 1998. On this date, it was reported in the Ghanaian media that a group of Ga traditionalists, led by some *Wulɔmei*, had attacked the Lighthouse Chapel International headquarters at Korle-Gonno, Accra, wounding several worshippers and destroying property to the value of several millions of Cedis in the process.³⁸ The reports also said the church had been attacked by the traditionalists for showing gross disregard for the Ga indigenous religion and culture by drumming and making excessive noise in the period of silence prior to the celebration of *Hɔmɔwɔ*. Since the attack was carried live by many of the media houses, the Police in the area were able to intervene and disperse the crowd within an hour from the beginning of the clashes, but not before the traditionalists had confiscated the church's musical instruments, such as drums, keyboards and guitars. These instruments, according to an informant, were sent to the Police Station at Korle-Bu, rather than to the Ga *Mantse's* Palace, because of the heated nature of the incident. It was a bloody incident, as forty people with various degrees of injury were rushed to the nearby Korle-Bu Teaching Hospital – twelve of them in a state of unconsciousness. These were treated and discharged on the same day. It is significant to note however that the Police made no arrests on this occasion (Daily Graphic, Jun 1, 1998; E. Nterful, personal communication, January 20, 2014).

This date was a very important day in the church for two reasons. First, it was the day of the ordination of seven key personalities in the

³⁸ Cedi is the Ghanaian Currency, exchanging GHS 4.3 to 1 United States Dollars [USD] as at 10/02/2017.

church to the pastorate, which represented an important milestone in the growth of the budding Charismatic church. Most of these seven people have gone on to become bishops in the church. Secondly, it was the first day Dag Heward-Mills, the leader of the church was going to be dressed in a bishop's regalia. It therefore attracted many guests to the church, with an estimated 800 people in attendance. As a result, when the incident happened, it did not take long for several government ministers to come on the scene, after the media carried the news extensively. These included the then national security coordinator, Kofi Totobi Quakyi; interior minister, Nii Okaija Adamafo; Greater Accra regional minister, Joshua Alabi and the regional Police commander at the time, Emmanuel Agbele. For all these people, in-charge of keeping the peace in the nation and Greater Accra especially, to be present on the scene at the same time, shows the significance of the incident for national security.

Consequently, a day after the clashes, the Greater Accra regional minister established a 7-member committee headed by a commissioner of Police, Sam Awortwi, to look into the persistent nature of the clashes between the LCI and the Ga traditionalists in Korle-Gonno and to make recommendations for the resolution of the conflict. While the LCI showed their willingness to cooperate with the Awortwi Commission, the Ghana Pentecostal and Charismatic Council (GPCC), led by Rev. Dr. Simon Asore, held a press conference to state they were boycotting the commission because they did not believe it would deliver a fair judgement. Rev. Asore was at the time the head of the Assemblies of God Ghana as well as the Pentecostal ecumenical body. Contrary to Rev. Asore's position, Bishop Duncan-Williams (now Archbishop), who is generally considered in Ghana as the father of the Charismatic movement, accepted a place on the committee. This gave the committee a fair representation from both sides (Daily Graphic, Jun 2, 1998, p. 3).

Nevertheless, a week after the clashes, while the Awortwi Commission began sitting on the case, the minister of interior, Nii Okaija Adamafo issued a statement in support of the Ga traditionalists at a meet-the-press series in Accra. This produced a negative reaction from the Charismatic churches. He said,

It is wrong for certain people to assume that such practices, such as the ban on drumming, is fetish and therefore of no significance to society...what we should realise is that such practices, which have been bequeathed (sic) to us from generation to generation and which have served as rallying point for the people, cannot be discarded (Daily Graphic, Jun 9, 1998).

The Charismatic churches argued that, as a minister of state responsible for the internal security of the nation, and a qualified lawyer, he should not have been seen to take sides with the traditionalists. Accordingly, the GPCC released a press statement in response. Among other things, they noted that the minister was downplaying the religious nature of the ban and making it a societal norm. They also expressed the view that the ban was a violation of their religious liberties as enshrined in the fourth republican constitution of Ghana. They supported this by citing three instances where they felt “Christians have been tormented by people of other religious faith with officialdom looking and doing nothing about it.” First, was a case from the Western Region, where Christians were banished from the town of Ayiem for refusing to walk barefooted during the burial of the deceased chief of the town. Second, was the 1993 burning down of a Church of Pentecost building in Half-Assini for not adhering to the ban on drumming and noisemaking preceding the local *Kundum* festival. The GPCC also stated that they had filed a writ at the Supreme Court of Ghana seeking some relief, including the right to practice their Christian faith in the light of the national constitution. They stated, however, that five years after filing the writ, the case had never been called in court. Third, was a case from the Volta Region, in which the church building and a school building belonging to the Patmos Baptist Church at Azizakopey in the Volta Region were demolished by traditionalists, for refusing to contribute money to a fund raiser for the pacification of the local deity (GPCC, Press Statement, Jun 3, 1998).

From these cases, we can see that the GPCC interpreted the minister’s statement as the official government position and problematized it as a ‘government versus the churches’ issue. Although the minister of state is a Ga and was the Member of Parliament for the Odododiodio constituency, which includes Ga Mashie (Central Accra), to see his comment as the position of the government of the day was to read too much into his statement. It could be seen in the light of political expediency on the part of the MP. Thus, as a politician bent on winning elections and retaining his seat at the Ghanaian Parliament, his strategic political inclination was to side with his people at the expense of the churches. This posture of some of the political elite, showing ethnic loyalties to the Ga traditionalists, is equally a cause of the ongoing conflict. Some people believe that the statement made by this minister was uncalled for, because, given from a state platform, it could be easily interpreted as the official government position. It

was made at a meet-the-press session organised by his ministry, which covered many issues related to national security (Asamoah-Gyadu, 2009).

Despite the withdrawal and subsequent failure of the GPCC to collaborate with the committee, the Awortwi commission released its report after about two months of consultation with various actors in the conflict, including representatives of the Lighthouse Chapel International (LCI). Among other things, the report revealed that most of the residents in the Greater Accra Region, especially the non-Ga were oblivious to the ban on drumming and noisemaking, thus it was easy for them to flout the custom. Accordingly, they recommended that the GTC should, in future, widely announce the ban to the general public during the period of noise prohibition. Furthermore, they implored the general public including all Christian churches to respect the indigenous Ga communities by desisting from making excessive noise throughout the ban. The Awortwi Commission brought to light certain undercurrents that might have brought about the clashes. For example, the document cited an impasse on a parcel of land purchased by the church, which previously served as a community football field, as one of the main triggers of the altercations.

It is important, therefore, to trace some of the pre-1998 clashes between the LCI and the residents of Korle-Gonno in Accra. The land on which the then headquarters of the LCI is situated used to be an old dilapidated building, originally built as a cinema hall in the Korle-Gonno community. The church moved in to the locality in 1992 and signed an agreement with the Accra Metropolitan Assembly (the city council) in 1995 to purchase the adjoining plot of land next to their Cathedral, on which the community public toilet facility and a heap of rubbish had stood. As part of the contract, the LCI was to build a decent public toilet facility for the people in the area. However, rumours arose that the church was trying to acquire the whole area by the residents of the neighbourhood. It was alleged that the church was going to buy all the houses within a kilometre stretch, demolish and resettle them from what they considered their ancestral home. This rumour gathered momentum when the Electricity Company of Ghana (ECG) decided to site the community transformer on the premises of the church, citing that it was the best place to situate it in order to rectify the power fluctuation problems in the area. Locals saw this as a chance for the church to have complete ownership of the transformer. This heightened the tension between the two groups and the ECG was forced to relocate the transformer outside the walls of the church but still on the church's land. The leader of the local pressure group, however, apologised

to the church for the disagreement. This conflict relates to a politics of infrastructure in which being connected to the national electricity grid is portrayed as form of belonging. The politics of inclusion or exclusion suggests that a communal transformer could not be sited on a parcel of land owned by a Church group they consider as foreigners.

The next disagreement between the LCI and the locals happened in December 1996, and it related to the church's contract with the AMA to build a suitable public toilet facility for the area. The contractor working on the project relocated the communal waste disposal container to another location within the locality in order for the builders to do some ground works. A group of Korle-Gonno residents identifying as '*concerned citizens of the toilet area*' came together and hauled the chock-full waste container to bar the entrance of the cathedral on the night of 31st December 1996. This date is significant because, historically, the last day of the year is when church halls are filled to capacity with an overflow of members in the compound. As well as obstructing free entry to the church, they burned car tyres and blocked the main exit road leading to the Korle-Bu Teaching Hospital, which is about three hundred metres away. The bishop and some of his pastors and guests were pelted with rubbish. This action delayed the church service for about four hours until they were dispersed by the Korle-Bu police command.

Additionally, in March 1998 when the LCI decided to build a car park, in compliance with their initial arrangement with the Accra Metropolitan Assembly (AMA), another altercation ensued between the two groups. This meant that the wall demarcating the church building and the proposed car park was demolished in order for work to begin. Nonetheless, some angry residents objected, organised themselves and mobbed the AMA staff who were undertaking the demolition, injuring some of them in the process. The attack was so intense that the workers as well as church members rehearsing in the Cathedral fled for their lives, taking shelter in the basement of the building. The group, however, continued to pelt them with stones and bricks resulting in a considerable damage to the church building, especially to the Bishop's office. Unknown to the residents, there was a meeting of some leading Charismatic pastors in the country at the Bishop's office to plan for a major evangelistic crusade in Accra. Some of the visiting pastors were reported to have been attacked by the angry residents, including Eric Kwamong of the International Central Gospel Church

(ICGC).³⁹ The police were then called in, and three leaders of the local protesters were arrested. The arrests only intensified the protests throughout the night as rioters hurled stones and rocks at the church building resulting in extensive damage to the glass windows. The following day, the three leaders of the demonstration were granted bail and subsequently released from police cells.⁴⁰ The Greater Accra Minister, Joshua Alabi and the mayor of Accra, Nat Nunoo Amartefio visited the premises to find out the extent of the destruction and condemned the attack on the church.

Finally, as has already been alluded to, the GPCC boycotted the Awotwi commission because they suspected the AMA, which set up the commission, had connived with the local community to attack the LCI. This manifest mistrust was due to the fact that, three days before the attack on the church for flouting the ban, the AMA had demolished the outer walls of the church in contravention of an earlier agreement with the church. Although, the AMA promised to compensate the church for pulling down the walls, the church suspected deceit because the letter from the city council was delivered to them a night before the demolition, at a time when only the church's security man was present at the premises. The demolition was then carried out in the early hours of the next day amidst a heavy security presence. The LCI also argued that the tearing down of the exterior walls meant that they did not only lose sole access to the car park they had built in the face of resistance from the local community but the church premises was also easily exposed to external attacks, thus leading to the clashes on the 31st of May 1998. Overall, these cases support the view that the attack on the LCI by the Ga traditionalists for non-compliance of the ban was actually a culmination of several prior clashes between the two groups.

³⁹ This was a crusade by American Televangelist Billy Joe Daugherty. Most of the Pastors present, Rev. Markwei, Living Streams International Church; Rev. Steve Mensah, Charismatic Evangelistic Ministry and Sam Korankye-Ankrah of the Royalhouse Chapel International went on later to form the National Association of Charismatic and Christian Churches (NACCC) with Dag Heward-Mills of the LCI.

⁴⁰ LCI records purports that the three leaders of the demonstration were released by a minister of State who arrived in a state-registered SUV. They also name the three arrested Ga youth as Wisdom Dodoo, Amarh Attoh and Seth Quartey.



Photo 9: Picture showing the 1998 broken walls of LCI headquarters in Korle-Gonno (Credit: Marleen de Witte, 1998).

The 1999 clashes

In line with the Awortwi Commission's recommendations, the GTC wrote to inform the various stakeholders, namely the ecumenical councils, the Ghana Police Service, the Accra Metropolitan Assembly (AMA) and also the general public through radio announcements and newspaper advertisements. Specifically, they entreated the ecumenical councils to inform their member churches to desist from flouting the ban, in order to prevent a repeat of occurrences of the previous year's conflicts. Responding to the announcement, three ecumenical councils, the Catholic Bishops' Conference (now National Catholic Secretariat), the Christian Council of Ghana (CCG) and the Ghana Pentecostal Council (now Ghana Pentecostal and Charismatic Council) released a joint communique which acknowledged the ban as religious and cultural in nature and not peculiar to the Greater Accra Region. They called on all member churches therefore to seek peace by minimising noise levels and restricting drumming to their church compounds. Nevertheless, they wondered why the GTC had suddenly begun clamping down on churches perceived to be in breach of the noise ban, when the churches and the traditional council had coexisted for a long time. They stated thus:

We love our culture and our traditional leaders, but strongly believe that the statement from the Ga Traditional Council infringes on our basic human and constitutional rights... We are being asked to involve ourselves in traditional religious practices which we do not believe in... We are being forced to avoid something which our religion expects us to do, namely, to sing, drum and praise our God (Daily Graphic, Mar 7, 1999; GPCC file document).

The statement by the three ecumenical councils came after some churches had been attacked by representatives of the GTC and raises questions of religious liberties in a religiously plural nation-state. The ecumenical councils here cast the issue in terms of 'them' against 'us', a framing which will be explored later in this study. Despite the press release, the GTC did not hold back but continued to clamp down on churches who failed to comply with the ban. Their action generated a heated debate in the media, especially on the FM radio stations with the wider listenership, most of which happened to be Twi speaking.⁴¹ Many of the callers to phone-in sessions on local language radio stations tended to hurl insults at the Ga traditionalists and the Ga people in general, describing the ban as an archaic and anti-progressive custom. The comments provoked a furious backlash from the traditionalists and then it became clear that the conflict, which was otherwise seen as a religious one, began to assume ethnic dimensions too. It became not only about people not respecting the ban for religious reasons but also about a Ga versus Ashanti conflict. The pejorative remarks on radio increased the already tense atmosphere in the capital city. They caused the GTC, especially the Ga youth, to take a hard-line approach in enforcing the ban, particularly, in the traditional areas. The national ministry of communications intervened by publicly condemning the actions of unidentified serial callers and appealed for calm on the part of the GTC. Some ministers of state even went on to meet with the traditionalists, but it is obvious that their call was not heeded (Daily Graphic, May 7, 1999; The Independent, May 7, 1999).

Subsequently, on May 16th 1999, a week after the appeals by the ministers, there were numerous attacks in many suburbs of the Accra metropolis. Notable among them was the GTC's clash with the Living Light Min-

⁴¹ Twi is a dialect of the Akan language, one of the main languages in Ghana. It is spoken mainly by the Ashanti, Akyem, Kwahu, Denkyira and Akuapem sub-groups of the Akan. In the Akan-dominated FM radio stations in Accra especially, there is a daily morning show where the daily national newspapers are reviewed by a panel, which is usually followed by phone-ins where the public call in to contribute on topical issues.

istry at Darkuman, Christ Apostolic Church, in the same vicinity and Victory Bible Church in Awoshie, all in the north-west of Accra. At the Living Light Ministry, it was reported that a group of 12 Ga youth arrived at the church premises in Benz mini buses at about 11.30am when worship was ongoing, “wielding bottles and sticks to enforce the ban” because the music was too loud. These youths then confiscated the church’s loudspeakers and other musical instruments and packed them into a waiting vehicle, threatening to kill anyone who resisted them. The pastor of the church, accordingly, ordered his members to stay clear and allow the group to take whatever they wanted. The action of the pastor understandably prevented any casualties on the day. The seized items were later returned after lengthy consultations between the pastor and the GTC (The Independent, May 18th 1999, p. 3).

Furthermore, there was report on the same morning of Ga youth allegedly working for the GTC storming the premises of Victory Bible Church headquarters at Awoshie and attacking them during church service. It was later confirmed that it was the same group that had earlier attacked the Living Light Ministries and Christ Apostolic Church. At the Victory Bible Church, some of the members of the congregation stood up to the youth, who wielded knives, bottles, stones and sticks. The resistance led to a bloody confrontation between the two groups. This resulted in many casualties and destruction to the church’s property amounting to tens of thousands of dollars. In spite of the resistance, the Ga youth were still able to confiscate drums and other musical instruments from the church. A later attempt by the bishop of the church, Tackie Yarboi, to retrieve the church’s property from the *Sakumɔ We* (royal house of the Sakumɔ deity) resulted in even more brutalities. The bishop was physically assaulted by a group of women and youths, to the extent that he had to run for his life, leaving behind his car, which was also damaged. He also left behind the traditional cloth he was wearing on the day.⁴² The attacks continued on churches in Achimota, Abeka-Lapaz, Odorkor, Kaneshie, Dansoman and Alajo suburbs of Accra.

As the confrontations continued, Emile Short, the commissioner of the Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice (CHRAJ),

⁴² Tackie Yarboi is a Ga royal and was a potential Ga king. In fact, the Ga Mantse (King) at the time was from the bishop’s lineage. The traditionalists thought he should have known better as an indigene.

the institution in charge of investigating human rights abuses in the country, issued a statement condemning the actions of the traditionalists. He insisted that since the ban had no legal basis, the GTC should entreat the Christians to comply instead of forcing it on them. The commissioner's intervention rather served to strengthen the GTC's resolve to crack down on non-complying churches. As the churches raised issues of human rights abuses, the referee to settle the scores was CHRAJ but, due the commissioner's comment, the institution and its leader were seen by the GTC as siding with the Christians and therefore, unfit to mediate between them.

In another development, the GTC through its leader, Nii Adote Obuor II, warned the police to stay out of their bid to enforce the ban. As a result, the police did not make any arrests or charge anyone with crime throughout the 1999 clashes, arguing that pursuing the cases would aggravate the tensions. This prompted the United States' State Department to report, "the government does not always prosecute those responsible for religiously motivated attacks," citing the conflict between the churches and the Ga traditionalists as a typical example of the ambivalence of the police (Safo, 1999). This shows the conflict is not only local, national or even regional but has multinational dimensions too. Finally, it was reported on the 30th of May, two days before the lifting of the ban, that a mob of Ga traditionalists attacked members of the Apostolic Faith Ministry while they were worshipping on a Sunday morning, leaving five persons injured and one in a coma. They also confiscated the church's collection for the day and musical instruments. By this time, it became clear that a pattern was beginning to take shape, namely, the attacks and the confrontations were essentially targeted at the Pentecostal-Charismatic churches (Safo, 1999). This is because despite there being several other sources of noise, such as commercial activities and other religious groups, these were not attacked by the traditionalists for flouting the noise ban.

The 2000 clashes

The spate of attacks on the churches in 1999 meant the year 2000 was closely observed by all interested parties. Surprisingly, it was almost incident-free with only pockets of incidents of attacks on churches that were perceived to have defied the ban. This relative calm is attributed to the efforts of the Greater Accra Regional Coordinating Council (GARCC) to bring the various parties to the table. Prior to the announcement of the ban in May-June, the GARCC organised a weeklong workshop on managing religious conflicts in April 2000. The main purpose of this workshop was to find a common ground and thereby avert the spate of attacks that had

been seen in the previous year. At the end of the workshop, a carefully crafted joint declaration signed by several religious bodies including the National Catholic Secretariat (NCS), The Christian Council of Ghana (CCG), Ghana Pentecostal and Charismatic Council (GPCC), Council for Indigenous Churches (CIG), Office of the National Chief Imam, the Afrikania Mission, the Federation of Muslim Councils of Ghana, The Ahmadiyya Muslim Mission and the National Association of Charismatic and Christian Churches (NACCC), representatives of the GTC and state institutions was released in the media. The declaration, among other things, affirmed that all religious groups should respect each other's right to freedom of worship. It also required churches to subdue and confine all forms of noisemaking to their church compounds during the period of the ban. Significantly, the document called for the establishment of a 20-member standing committee to oversee and manage all customary and religious based conflicts in the Greater Accra region. Similarly, the joint committee was also to monitor drumming and noisemaking above the prescribed decibel levels enshrined in the AMA by-laws (GPCC file document, 2000).⁴³

The committee was inaugurated before the announcement of the ban by the GTC in 2000. The religious leaders, traditional leaders, and representatives of state institutions agreed to implement the declaration in every detail and to make adjustments in the way the ban-related activities were undertaken. However, one major incident which became a topical issue involved a group of Ga youth from Teshie, one of the traditional Ga suburbs, who attacked worshippers at the Open Heavens Mission International Church and confiscated their instruments, leaving six people injured (Lipton, 2002, p. 69).

The 2001 clashes

In 2001, the GTC announced the ban through a letter circulated to the various stakeholders on the 25th of April prior to its implementation from 7th May to 7th June. This was a particularly difficult year, with rampant clashes between the two groups in the Accra-Tema metropolises. The GTC decided to opt out of the 20-member joint committee, which had overseen the ban-related clashes the previous year, citing widespread violations of the agreement by some Charismatic churches. They argued that, since

⁴³ The 20-member committee was comprised of 4 representatives of the Regional Coordinating Council, 3 each from the GTC and AMA, 2 from the Ga-Dangme Society, 1 from Afrikania Missions and 1 each from the 7 Christian and Muslim councils. It was chaired by Mr. Fats Nartey of the RCC.

there was no equipment to measure sound, they could not guarantee that the churches would not flout the ban. They went on to declare the agreement null-and-void since, as per their interpretation, the joint declaration was to last for only a year. The statement they cited reads, “The joint committee shall after one (1) year present a permanent recommendation to the Regional Coordinating Council regarding lasting solutions to matters raised by the current controversy” (GPCC, file document, 2000). Although this declaration was only meant to be a target date to present the proposal, enroute to reaching a lasting solution to the conflict, it is implicit that the traditionalists understood it as a ceasefire agreement for a year. Led by the *Nai* and *Sakumɔ Wulɔmei*, the GTC therefore warned that they were going to enforce the ban in detail. In other words, it would be a complete ban on drumming and noisemaking.

Reacting to this, the Christian Council of Ghana under the leadership of Bishop Ofei Akrofi, organised a press conference to present a counter perspective. He stated that, “it is not true that the religious bodies showed bad faith through widespread violations as alleged by the GTC.” Furthermore, he questioned why the GTC’s letter on the total ban was circulated only to churches and no other noise-generating sources such as pubs and night clubs. This press conference led to the revival of the joint monitoring committee of the Forum of Religious Bodies that had worked with the GTC to ensure a relatively peaceful ban the previous year.⁴⁴ At this meeting, it was resolved by the religious groups to present a strong and united front against the traditionalists’ crackdown on the churches. They also decided to revive the joint monitoring committee and focus their education on member churches to minimise noisemaking and desist from any provocative activities such as all-night vigils. Moreover, they agreed to seek audience with the minister of the interior, Malik Alhassan Yakubu; Greater Accra Regional Minister, Ibrahim C. Quaye and Michael Ocuquaye,⁴⁵ the

⁴⁴ The emergency meeting of the religious bodies was attended by the Christian Council of Ghana, Muslim Theologians, National Catholic Secretariat, Ghana Pentecostal Council, National Association of Charismatic and Christian Churches, Council of Independent Churches, Ahmadiyya Muslim Mission, and Baffour D. Amoah of the Fellowship of Christian Councils and Churches in West Africa.

⁴⁵ This was a 5-member committee established in April 2001. It was chaired by Mike Ocuquaye (a political science professor at the University of Ghana), a lawyer, a Baptist church pastor and, most significantly, a Ga-Dangme. The other members were Justice Ivy Ashong Yakubu, a high court judge; Kofi Brapui Asante, head of Ga-Dangme Society;

chairman of the recently inaugurated Greater Accra Permanent Conflict Resolution and Management Committee (GAPCRMC). This commission had been established by the newly elected New Patriotic Party government, to deal with all forms of conflict in the Greater Accra Region, especially those bordering on chieftaincy, land, religion and customs.

In spite of the negotiations and the formation of a conflict management commission, El-Shaddai Charismatic Church and the Christ Apostolic Church (CAC)⁴⁶, a classical Pentecostal church became the first churches to be attacked by irate Ga youth for non-compliance of the ban on the 13th of May. It was reported variously that a group of Ga youth led by a *Wulɔmɔ* had walked into the church in the middle of a service and seized drums and other instruments. Coincidentally, on the day, there were forty (40) American guests attending the church who were affected by the incident. This prompted the pastor of the church to appeal to the government through the Ghana Pentecostal and Charismatic Council to intervene, since the actions had the potential to affect the budding tourism industry in Ghana. This particular incident, therefore, became a topical issue, which further brings out the international implications of the conflict. Similarly, the clash with the CAC became a national issue which lingered for a long time. It was captured vividly in the following newspaper report:

Militant youth stormed the CAC church building while service was going on and resorted to smashing up the place, destroying glass windows in the just rehabilitated multimillion-cedi Osu headquarters branch of the church...Dramatically, the assailants met with fierce resistance from the members of the church who refused to lie down and be trampled on. They returned the violent confrontation with equal zeal and a number of people sustained injuries (The Ghanaian Chronicle, May 14, 2001, p. 1).

This indicates that by this time, some Pentecostal-Charismatic churches had adopted a rather aggressive approach to dealing with the Ga *Wulɔmei* and youth enforcing the ban. This was in fact the second time a branch of the CAC had been attacked, the first attack having taken place in 1999 at the Darkuman-Awoshie branch in North-West Accra. While the 1999 attack involved no bloodshed, mainly because there was no resistance from the church members, this more recent one ended with many casualties. It

Dr. E.O.T Prempeh, an academic and a traditional ruler; George Isaac Amoo, a member of Parliament (GPCC, file document, 2001); Ghanaian Chronicle, April 5, 2001, p. 5.

⁴⁶ Generally, the churches under discussion here are neo-Pentecostal ones but the mention of CAC, which is a classical Pentecostal church is a conscious one because attacks on the church was a very significant one in the drum wars.

is therefore important to describe what happened on the morning of the clashes, to give us a picture of what actually ensued.

On the morning of 13th May 2001, a Ga *Wulomɔ* from Osu went to the premises of the CAC headquarters located in Osu to warn them to stop playing the drums and to reduce the noise levels in compliance with the ongoing ban. This personal appeal by the traditional priest was informed by the fact that earlier in the week, the then Chairman of the CAC, Apostle Annor Yeboah, had organised a press conference in which he condemned the previous agreement reached between the GTC and the churches as unconstitutional. He argued that such agreements strengthened the position of the GTC and denied the Christians of their constitutional right to freedom of worship. Therefore, he declared that the CAC was not going to comply with the dictates of the ban. This position was in direct contrast to the position of the GPCC, the ecumenical council to which they belonged. As a result, the leadership of the church did not give any ground to the Osu *Wulomɔ*'s requests and continued to worship normally. The *Wulomɔ*, having been ignored, went for reinforcements from Ga Mashie and returned to the church premises with more than fifty people to enforce the ban. The church put up a strong resistance, and a brawl ensued, which resulted in 15 people sustaining various degrees of injury. The altercations were so intense that it took a combined team of police and military personnel several hours to restore order. The police were subsequently accused of showing no enthusiasm to restrain the traditionalists, even though the church had earlier reported the intentions of the GTC to them.⁴⁷ However, as a result of the operation of the military and police, 15 Ga youths were arrested. Significantly, the GTC alleged that Apostle Annor Yeboah had pulled out a gun and threatened to shoot them because they trespassed on the church's property. These allegations and counter allegations between the church and the GTC as well as the volatile nature of the situation compelled the Inspector General of Police to order a complete closure of the church for about six days before regular meetings resumed (Ghanaian Chronicle, May 14, 2001; CAC file document; Daily Graphic, May 14, 2001).

⁴⁷ On May 9th 2001, four days before this incident, there was a disaster at the Accra Sports Stadium as a result of a stampede, where 127 football supporters died. The Ghana Police Service had come under immense pressure resulting from a public backlash over the unprofessional crowd control methods used by the men on duty.

In an attempt to address the conflict between the GTC and the Charismatic churches, a meeting was convened by the Greater Accra Regional Coordinating Council with other state officials in attendance. These included the national security advisor, General Joshua Hamidu; National Security Coordinator, Francis Poku and a representative from the office of the President, J. K. Mensah. On the one hand, at this meeting, the Ga *Wulɔmei* and *Mantsemei* refused to speak to the Charismatic clergy but rather demanded an unqualified apology from Apostle Annor Yeboah for showing utter disrespect for their culture and tradition. They also demanded the immediate release from police custody of the 15 Ga youth arrested during the riots at CAC. On the other hand, the incidents had made the CAC leadership defiant and unwilling to give in to the demands of the Ga traditionalists. Consequently, an agreement could not be reached because both parties assumed entrenched positions (Accra Mail, May 18, 2001).

On the 20th of May 2001, the Sunday after the clashes between the CAC and the traditionalists, the Ga *Wulɔmei* returned to the church premises with 300-strong battalion of Ga youth dressed in war regalia and chanting war songs. Fortunately, a repeat of the bloody clashes was averted due to the presence of the police. After they were prevented from entering the CAC compound, they left the vicinity and went to the nearby suburb of Cantonments to enforce the ban. They attacked several churches who were not complying with the ban, including the Prisons Church, a Baptist Church and the Assemblies of God, confiscating drums and other musical instruments and injuring one worshipper in the latter church. The police intervened by firing warning shots to disperse the crowd, arresting 11 Ga youth and a *Wulɔmɔ* in the process. The Ga youth who were arrested were subsequently released from police custody. Meanwhile, after several rounds of meetings with the joint religious bodies group, Apostle Annor Yeboah softened his position and apologised to the GTC for making offensive statements about them (Ghana News Agency, May 23, 2001).



Photo 10: CAC Headquarters, Osu. (Credit: Author).

The second phase: 2002-2008

As regards the conflict, its dynamics took a different turn from the first phase for two reasons. First, the period between 2002 and 2008 was relatively calm. There were very few violent confrontations in the Greater Accra Region due to the efforts of the Regional Coordinating Council (RCC) and the Greater Accra Permanent Conflict Resolution and Management Committee (GAPCRMC); however, the situation remained tense. Each year during this period, the RCC brought together the GAPCRMC, religious leaders and the GTC to deliberate on ways to encourage uneventful ban periods, especially to curtail the rampant use of derogatory and inflammatory language by both parties, which had come to characterise the conflict. This approach represented the State's method of intervening in the attacks and deescalating the relationship between the parties.

Second, the RCC's insistence on using the Joint Task Force on Nuisance Control, instead of the GTC to enforce the ban contributed significantly to the change. The Task force was comprised of the police, the officers of the AMA and the EPA, which was formed to enforce the Accra Metropolitan by-law on Abatement of Nuisance.⁴⁸ Unlike previous collab-

⁴⁸ The AMA by-law on Abatement of Nuisance (1995) permits noise levels of 55 decibels between 0600 and 2200 hours, which reduces to 48 decibels between 2200 and 0600 in

orations, this group excluded both the GTC and the religious bodies, therefore making it easier to employ an environmentalist discourse concerned with noise as a health hazard and a form of pollution. This approach was critical in offering a way out of the initial deadlock between the churches and the GTC. In order for the enforcement of the noise pollution law to be effective, special contact telephone numbers were provided for the public to report offenders to the task force, which would then attend the location equipped with noise-measuring instruments. Offenders were prosecuted at the local tribunals and usually they paid fines.

In 2002, a group of Ga youth went on a rampage to enforce the ban because they believed its violation had caused several disasters in the previous year including the May 9th Stadium disaster, the death of a *Wulɔmɔ* and the spate of floods in Accra. Nevertheless, the RCC was proactive in preventing an occurrence of the heated clashes. They arranged a meeting with the GTC and the Greater Accra Permanent Conflict Resolution and Management Committee (GAPCRMC) in April, prior to the announcement of the ban. At the end of the meeting, it was resolved that a permanent task force on noise control, comprised of the police, officers of the AMA and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) officers, would enforce the existing AMA by-laws on abatement of excessive noise. Consequently, the National Commission on Civic Education (NCCE), the EPA and the AMA were tasked to embark on a joint educational campaign before the enforcement of bye-laws the following month.

During the period of the ban, the task force went around the churches, pubs and night clubs with decibel measuring devices. They made sixty (60) arrests within the one-month period – 40 of them being Charismatic church pastors (Accra Metropolitan Assembly annual report document). Accordingly, the task force resolved to continue with the nuisance control beyond the ban duration. In the end, there were no violent conflicts in the year 2002; however, the situation remained tense in the Accra-Tema metropolises. Subsequently, the regional minister, Sheikh I.C. Quaye, organised a Christian thanksgiving service to thank God for the peaceful ban period and incident free celebration of *Hɔmɔwɔ*. This was particularly interesting because the minister is a Muslim cleric, who organised a Christian service

residential areas. In commercial and light industry areas, the permitted noise levels are 60 decibels and 55 decibels for day and night respectively. Finally, levels of 65 decibels in the day and 60 decibels at night are permitted in places of public assembly or entertainment.

for the traditionalists. While this study is particularly looking at the conflict between a Christian group and adherents of Ga indigenous religion, one can see, based on the action of the regional minister, how fluid religious belonging is in the country. It also shows how religions generally tolerate each other in the country, despite the intolerance we have observed between the Ga traditionalists and the Charismatic churches.

Although this period has been described as generally non-violent, as far as the conflict between the Charismatics and the GTC is concerned, there were occasional violent clashes between the groups. A typical example of these happened in May 2006, when Communion Church in Sakaman; Apostolic Church, Bubuashie; Lighthouse Chapel International, Abossey Okai and the Kaneshie branch of the Apostolic Church were attacked by a group of youth and some *Wulomei*. The usual modus operandi of the Ga youth was employed, that is, they went to the church premises in two buses when the churches were worshipping and seized their drums, other musical instruments and loudspeakers. However, in these specific instances, the churches claimed they were not even playing the drums (Asante, 2011, p. 96).

The third phase: 2009-2016

The year 2009 is significant because it marked a change in government with a new political party coming into power and this, in turn, changed the trajectory of the conflict between the GTC and the churches. The clashes intensified as new NDC government, moved away from the previous state intervention adopted by the NPP government during the second phase.

First of all, the Greater Accra Permanent Conflict Resolution and Management Committee, which had worked with the RCC in the previous period to manage the tensions, was abandoned. This effectively meant that the task force on nuisance control was also disbanded. As a result, the GTC put its own taskforce in place during the ban periods between 2009 and 2012. The GTC gave several reasons for engaging their own task force to enforce the rules of the ban. First, they argued that since the basic duty of the police was to maintain law and order, they were only interested in the absence of clashes and not the consequences of flouting the ban. They continued to maintain that the floods and market fires that engulfed the Greater Accra region, especially in the city of Accra, were as a result of non-compliance with the ban. Thus, in order to avert grave repercussions on the entire region, they had to step in and ensure the right thing was done. This means they gave a religious reason for assuming the responsibilities of the task force that had been put in place to maintain peace.

Second, the GTC took the view that the AMA personnel in the task-force had used the opportunity as an economic venture to collect monies from offenders while they (the traditionalists) bore the brunt of their actions. Although, the police did not completely withdraw from ensuring law and order during the ban, the use of a vigilante-style task force by the GTC led to widespread clashes between the traditionalists and the churches. For example, on Sunday 31st of May 2009, several churches in Ashongman, one of the suburbs of Accra, clashed with the Ga youth in the area. Notable among the violent confrontations was a report of three tough men (Ga youth) who entered the church hall of the Global Evangelical Church to enforce the ban. They went into the church during worship when there were loud jubilations from the congregation and confiscated the drums and other musical instruments, accusing them of not complying with the ban. This resulted in a scuffle with the members of the church which almost resulted in bloodshed. However, calm was restored when the leadership of the church intervened and promised to stop playing the drums and abide by the terms of the ban (Ghana News Agency, May 31, 2009).

Nevertheless, from 2013 to date, the Greater Accra Regional Coordinating Council has revived its leadership role in ensuring a peaceful ban period. Since then, every year the RCC has called for a meeting between the GTC and various religious bodies and reiterated the five-point agreement that has been the routine since the clashes between the groups assumed violent proportions in 1998. These are: (1) usual forms of worship should be confined to church premises; (2) noise levels should be minimised to prescribed levels; (3) the Christian community and the GTC must show respect to each other's religion; (4) they must restrain their members from making derogatory remarks about each other's beliefs and (5) loud-speakers must not be positioned outside the church, which seemed to be a common practice by some Charismatic churches (Daily Graphic, May 20, 2014; Nuumo Blafo III, personal communication, January 20, 2014).

Following the RCC's takeover of ban-related activities, a new task force has been put in place, which consists of the Ghana Police, personnel of the AMA and representatives of the GTC. As in the previous phase, contact numbers have been made available for the public either to report offenders or to seek clarifications on the ban. Nonetheless, it is clear from the composition of the taskforce that the GTC has replaced the personnel of the Environmental Protection Agency, who played a critical role in the previous phase. This new task force has enabled the GTC to take a leading role in enforcing the ban. This new position has also brought in resources

to the GTC in the form of patrol vans, uniforms and receipt books. The leaders of the traditionalists in the task force are hand-picked from the various royal homes in Ga Mashie, Osu, La, Teshie and Nungua, while ordinary members are drawn from willing Ga youth, mainly from Bukom, Korle-Gonno, James Town and Osu, among others (Nuumo Blafo III, personal communication, January 20, 2014; Nuumo Ogbamey III, personal communication, September 25, 2015).

Although the taskforce was put together to do joint patrols, very often the GTC representatives have initiated their own policing or joined mostly with the AMA guards while the Ghana police personnel go on separate patrols. From time to time, a police officer is assigned to each patrol team. The police are normally called in when an enforcement situation escalates. From 2013, all offending churches have been issued with the GTC's official receipts, detailing all the confiscated items, while the items and seized musical equipment have been stored in the traditional council's secretariat. Fines have to be paid to the GTC in order to retrieve the equipment, so that the *Wulɔmei* can perform rituals to atone before the gods. Nonetheless, this new arrangement has brought many questions with it and the clashes, which subsided in the previous period, have been invigorated, though not to the levels of violence that characterised the first phase (1998-2001).

Furthermore, this period has been affected by numerous inconsistencies within the GTC itself and between the state institutions. These may be signs of disintegration and internal control within the GTC itself in addition to a loss of significance by some of its leaders. There is confusion as to who announces the ban, as several bodies have arrogated this duty to themselves. For instance, in the past, it was solely the duty of the GTC to announce the impending ban to the public, but in 2014 and 2015 there were multiple press conferences from the RCC, AMA and GTC, as well as some local chieftains within the Greater Accra Region, making public announcements of the ban. One such sub-chieftain is the regent of Darkuman-Okaiman, who wrote to the churches in the suburb demanding a customary drink of GHS150 (45 USD) and forbade them even from clapping. This was contrary to the 2014 agreement between the RCC, the churches and the GTC that the churches would confine their usual worship to their church halls.

In addition to local chieftains flouting the directives of the RCC, there have been many occasions where groups of Ga youth have attacked churches in direct opposition to the RCC's directive to have only the task force enforcing the abatement of excessive noise. For example, in 2014, a

group of local Ga youth entered the Odorkor branch of the Full Gospel Church International and seized their musical equipment during worship, claiming that the church was flouting the ban. They demanded an amount of GHS500 (circa USD 145) as a fine before releasing the equipment, even though they were assigned neither by the GTC nor by the RCC (Daily Graphic, May 20, 2014). These extra parties have contributed to the worsening relationship between the GTC and the churches, as a result of which the situation remain tense and the clashes continue to take centre stage during the ban period in May-June annually. In 2015 for instance, these extra parties made enforcements mainly to extort monies from the offenders, as was the case when the LCI-Korle Gonno was stormed by a group of Ga youth for flouting the ban. By the time the official task force got to the scene, the youth had collected monies and absconded (Nuumo Okai I, personal communication, Oct 24, 2015).

Conclusion

In this chapter, I focused on the historical context of the encounters between Christianity and indigenous religions in order to understand the complexities and dynamics of the present conflict between the Charismatic churches and the Ga traditionalists. I especially looked at the historical trajectory of the noise-ban related clashes between the two parties. In the light of the analysis, I categorised the chronological history of the present conflict into three phases to show the cycles of intensity in the confrontations. The first phase (1998-2001) was highly intense and violent. It was deescalated but remained unresolved in the second phase (2002-2008). Then, in the third phase (2009-2016), the intensity escalated again, albeit not to the same level as that in the first phase. It was also clear that the fluctuations in the intensity of the conflict corresponded with changes in government. The situation escalated whenever the NDC government was in power, perhaps because the traditional Ga areas are their electoral strongholds.

Next, I showed that the reasons for the persistent nature of the conflict are the style of worship of the Charismatic churches, the public character or publicity of the conflict in the media, the new religious consciousness of the traditionalists vis-à-vis the identity self-confidence of the Charismatic churches, disparities in the socio-economic situations of the parties, and the multiplicity of actors involved in the conflict, including state institutions.

Finally, I showed through the historical analysis that the conflict has several aspects. The most significant of these are political, including loyalties to parties in the conflict by political actors; the politics of exclusion and inclusion adopted by the conflicting parties; underlying causes not directly related to the noise ban, such as ethnic dimensions, international dimensions and the deepening of boundaries between the two groups. This conflict deepens the boundaries between the two groups as they tend to take entrenched positions, breeding enmity between them and promoting 'us' against 'them' perceptions. This affirms Bouma's (2007) suggestion that conflicts of this nature clearly involves "drawing of lines, taking offence at someone or something, and declaring the other to be wrong" (p. 193).



Part Two: The Multiple Dimensions of the Conflict



4. 'Us' versus 'Them': The 'religious' dimensions of the conflict

This chapter offers a description and analysis of various dimensions of the confrontations. Using the concept of boundary making, I examine how religious boundaries between the conflicting parties are constructed, interpreted and negotiated, and how these demarcations instigate conflicts and lead to further entrenchment of the two religious groups while the conflicts, in turn, lead to further alienation of the parties involved. Conflict itself raises issues of boundaries as it presupposes the drawing of lines and the existence of boundaries between groups. Religious diversity also suggests the presence of diverse religions and with it differences in how religion is approached by different actors. Thus, when conflict arises in the context of pluralism, it requires parties to know who the 'other' is and consequently, draw the demarcation between themselves and the 'other', the identified 'enemy' (Bouma, 2007). My aim is to show how religion, in the form of religious practices, religious actors and religious discourses in the media, is used to build boundaries between groups that leads to conflict.

In this chapter, I consider how these borders are drawn, who draws them and why they draw them. I have divided the chapter into four parts. In the first section, I look at religious aspects such as religious resurgence, sound and sonic practices as well as religious music and performance within the two communities. In the second part, I discuss the roles of the religious specialists such as the Ga priests and the Charismatic pastors in the encounters between the two parties and the ensuing tensions. The third part is a discussion on the role of the media and how religious actors adopt the mass media to inflame the conflict. Fourth, I discuss the role of the neo-Charismatic groups and the internal Pentecostal ecumenical divisions that fuel the conflict. Finally, I offer some conclusions based on the analysis of the various aspects of the conflict. This chapter is based on data from historical and contemporary cases obtained through interviews, participant observations, group interviews and document analysis. It is an attempt to understand why the two parties clash annually during the period of the ban.

Religious Dimensions

My analysis of the various actors in the field reveals that religion is seen through different lenses, depending on where one stands: whether a traditionalist, a Pentecostal-Charismatic or an agent of the nation-state. The different conceptualisations of religion determine how each actor frames the conflict. Fundamentally, there are two views in the framing of the conflict. To the Ga traditionalists, there is no separation between religion and culture. They consider both to be the same concept, thus, separating the *Kpele* religion from other aspects of Ga culture is not possible according to the emic view of the traditionalists (Nuumo Okai I, personal communication, October 24, 2015). Moreover, the state also classifies religion as part of culture, especially in relation to indigenous religions and therefore, it draws no distinction between them. On the other hand, for the Pentecostal-Charismatic group, there is a strict demarcation between religion and culture as well as strict boundaries between the religions themselves. While I agree that religion and culture are significantly overlapping categories, for the sake of the analysis, I choose to separate them while bearing in mind that they constantly interact with each other. For example, in the *Kpele* religion, I see culture as the conduit through which religion is expressed.

This leads us to a description of the demarcations between the two main actors. In other words, identifying ways in which the parties in the conflict draw the boundary between themselves and the other. This brings into sharp focus the ongoing debate within Ghana as to whether the noise ban is a religious, cultural or just a political means through which the Ga *Wulɔmei* assert their traditional authority over the city of Accra. Some have even suggested that the ban can be described according all three of these categories (Attuquayefio, 2012). From the point of view of the Ga traditionalists, the conflict is not the result of an 'ordinary' silence imposed on the city of Accra but of one instituted in the name of the Ga deities (*Dzemawɔdzi*)— it is a central tenet of the *Kpele* religion. This is corroborated by a *Wulɔmɔ*:

The ban signifies a very important part of our culture. The whole Ga state is enjoined to obey and observe total silence so that our expectations for the coming year can be fulfilled. During this period, we call on our gods and ancestors for peace and prosperity of the Ga land. We pray for abundant harvest and also bumper fish season, so any noise disturbs our act of worship because it largely disturbs our gods and ancestors who come to live with us in the land. It also disturbs us the *Wulɔmei* because we need peace and quiet to communicate with the gods. This is why we insist on total silence so that

we can call on our gods for them to be merciful to us and grant us abundance in the coming year. This is how we have lived for so many years, we will not allow anyone to change our way of life (Nuumo Akwaa Mensa II, personal communication, February 17, 2014).

There are three common narratives to the celebration of the *Hɔmɔwɔ* festival by the Ga people. First of all, it is a thanksgiving event to the *Dzemawɔdzi* for the abundance of harvest in the previous year and the year ahead. It is also in celebration of the intervention of the gods in the historical past when their ancestors faced a severe famine in the arid ecological niche of Accra. Secondly, the 30-day noise ban is specifically observed to allow some quiet in the city in order not to disturb the deities who have visited to oversee the gestation period of the planted corn and millet. We can see from the above statement that it is also a period to allow the *Wulɔmei*, the representatives of the deities, to communicate with the *Dzemawɔdzi*. Thirdly, beyond the religious implications of the ban, the festival also serves as a time when many Ga people, irrespective of their religious affiliations return to the family or ancestral homes (*We*) in Accra to celebrate with their family members and to settle disputes among kith and kin. It is a period when family disputes are settled and ethnic solidarity is displayed, as described by Durkheim's (1995) notion of the integrative role of the traditional ritualistic gatherings. Therefore, beyond seeing the period of silence as a religious act, it is clear that the entire celebration has socio-cultural implications among the Ga people. There is a clear conflict of opinion because, while the *Wulɔmei* seem to emphasise the socio-cultural aspects, the Pentecostal-Charismatic group highlights the religious nature of the ban and, subsequently, frames the clashes as being religiously motivated.

The General Secretary of the GPCC, the Pentecostal-Charismatic ecumenical council stated thus:

I believe they are within their freedom to be able to worship the way they want. And that includes of course, the requirement within their religion to observe a period of silence. The only problem is when you want to infringe on another person's freedom to worship. By the way, I don't see the issue as cultural as some people would have you believe. It is definitely a religious conflict. Their religion requires them to observe the one-month silence, it is not the culture. I don't think anybody will fight over that if it were a cultural issue. It is because they believe that the gods mandate them to do that that is why they are so aggressive about enforcing the ban and extending it to everybody in society. It is definitely religious. That is exactly the source of the conflict. It then becomes religion against religion since they overstep their territory to someone else's. You might want to ask yourself why the ban is

always enforced by the *Wulomei* and not the traditional chiefs? Simple: because the *Wulomɔ* is the Priest of the gods, that is why from our point of view this is a purely religious conflict (Apostle Antwi, personal communication, January 30, 2015).

This statement indicates that the Pentecostal-Charismatic churches represented by the GPCC consider the thirty-day silence as religious in nature, concerning the way in which the *Kpele* religion is lived out. Accordingly, they also perceive the ban as not mere silence but a completely religious issue and, consequently, the conflict is also framed by the Charismatics as a battle of the gods for spiritual hegemony. This conception has very profound implications for the followers of *Kpele religion* and the Charismatic church members. It explains why the churches have difficulty observing the noise ban, since it is perceived as silence imposed in the name of the ancestors and gods they do not believe in, and more so, by indigenous religious authorities (*Wulomei*) they see as representatives of these gods. Although the Charismatic churches consider the ban as a clash of religions, the GTC, and particularly the *Wulomei*, see the noise ban as cultural, because even the religious aspects of the *Hɔmɔwɔ* festival are considered integral to their way of life – a cultural given, something that binds the Ga people together as a family unit. Furthermore, the Ghanaian state also categorises the noise ban as a cultural event that precedes the *Hɔmɔwɔ*, as the state considers all traditional festivals across the nation as cultural events. They are overseen and promoted by the National Commission on Culture, an authority set up to promote the various aspects of Ghanaian culture (Van Dijk, 2001).

Religious resurgence and conflict

For decades, communities in and around the Greater Accra Region either ignored or fully complied with the ban without any major conflicts, aside from pockets of incidents between the churches and the traditional authorities in the 1950s of which we have seen examples in the historical chapter. In most cases, the noise ban passed unnoticed by many people except those who lived within the traditional Ga localities in Accra. However, the situation changed and incidents of conflict became rampant due to what I refer to as Christian resurgence in the form of Pentecostal-Charismatic churches in the late 1970s and early 1980s, a period referred to in local discourses as the 'second Pentecostal wave' in Ghana (Larbi, 2001).

Several informants from the GTC gave a perspective linking the annual conflicts with the churches to the proliferation of Charismatic churches in the city. For example, one informant said, "Our fathers were

[and those of us who are old enough can attest] living peacefully with the Orthodox churches [mainline historical churches] before all these new generation churches started mushrooming in the 80s. Now they are everywhere, residential and industrial sites alike” (Bright Akwetey, personal communication, September 10, 2015).⁴⁹ This emic perspective on the sources of the conflict is critical because it does not only raise the issue of the relationship between the mainline churches and the GTC but it also gives an indication of the rapid spread of the Charismatic church in Ghana. Although the term ‘mushrooming’ is problematic and has a negative connotation, especially in Pentecostal-Charismatic circles, it best describes their growth in the space of about four decades. They can be found almost everywhere within the city, even in residential and industrial sections of Accra. LCI and ICGC, the two main churches in this study, have a combined number of over 500 branch churches in the Greater Accra Region alone (Nterful, 2013).

Much as the rate of spread can be seen to have aggravated the conflict by influencing the soundscape of Accra, it is their exclusivist theology and aggressive kind of Christianity that has tended to influence their boycott of the noise ban, which then leads to the clashes. Therefore, we shall first consider this theology and the way in which it informs the actions and practices of the Charismatics. First of all, the Charismatic churches are the most dominant Christian group in the country but also the least tolerant of all the Christian groups toward indigenous religions. These churches adopt a radical break from African indigenous beliefs and culture (Meyer, 1998). This posture has caused an interruption to the period of cooperation between Christian churches and indigenous religions, ushered in by the latter’s ability to accommodate other religions and the mainline churches’ flexible approach to evangelisation, namely, inculturation. Accordingly, the Pentecostal-Charismatics have the tendency to demonise traditional beliefs and culture in contrast to the traditionalist’s veneration of their cultural heritage. These two opposing positions fuel the strain between the Charismatics and the GTC, which comes to a climax during the celebration of *Hɔmɔwɔ*. An elder of ICGC puts it this way:

What I also see is that light and darkness no matter what you do can never cohabit. It is like the policeman and the armed robber; they can’t rent a single room. It is impossible. You know once upon a time we all believed in the

⁴⁹ ‘Orthodox churches’ is used in Ghana to refer to mainline churches such the Catholic Church and the Protestant Churches – Methodist, Anglican, and Presbyterian.

traditions of our fathers. Like some of the sacrifices that are done unto gods and idols until the grace of God found us. From then on, we came to know that we should not make sacrifices to smaller gods but it is rather the God most High who deserves our sacrifices. So, the church is coming from that background, let us not forget. We have tasted the archaic way of doing things and now we know that this way of doing things is not right. We have seen the light and that is the way forward. Do I have to tolerate you? When I know I have moved on from the curses of the past? (A. Abiew, *personal communication*, March 27, 2014).

Another Ga person who is a Charismatic Christian says:

It is a matter of light and darkness. Even though, we have to cohabit, we also have to know that the Bible says, 'Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers.' If you think along these lines, then as churches should we allow the traditional council to dictate to us? (Euphemia Armah, *personal communication*, Mar 27, 2014).⁵⁰

From the above, it is indicated that the Charismatic churches draw a strict line of demarcation between them and the Ga traditionalists. It is a boundary between 'our' religion and 'their' religion, which not only plays out theologically but also in respect to ethics and other religious practices. They refer to this relationship using terms like 'light' and 'darkness' and analogies like 'a policeman cannot live in the same residence as an armed robber'. This analogy paints a picture of the difficulty the Christian groups have in coexisting with the traditionalists, at least at the level of their beliefs, and it paints a picture of how the Charismatic churches perceive the adherents of indigenous religions. It is clear that they see many aspects of Ga tradition as retrogressive and a channel whereby ancestral curses entrap a new generation. As alluded to in the first statement (above), to the Charismatic Christians, everything about the past – especially the practices of their ancestors – has the potential to hold back a person's progress in life. They consider indigenous religions as anti-development, promoting practices that were born out of the 'ignorance' of their ancestors. They see rituals such as *Hɔmɔwɔ* as one of several avenues for demons to enter into a person's life or into the community as a whole. In other words, traditional rituals do not only bring negative consequences to individuals but also to entire communities such as a nation.

This negative posture is not a new phenomenon because, even in the early Christian missionary era in Ghana, becoming a Christian always meant renouncing indigenous religions and its associated belief in local

⁵⁰ Euphemia is a Ga and a member of the ICGC and the text she quotes is 2 Cor 6:14.

deities. The difference with the Charismatic churches is the aggressive demonization of both the local deities and adherents of indigenous religions. These churches see demons and deities as real and dangerous, whereas the mainline churches tend to define belief in these transcendental beings as superstition (Meyer, 1995). This demonization of indigenous religions comes up in their songs, sermons, testimonies, literature and even movies. Songs such as *Nkrɔfo a wɔsom abosom nyinara hwe ase* (Those who gave themselves to the worship of the deities have perished) and the following popular one is a means through which the Charismatics express their disdain for indigenous religious worship.

<i>Hɛn Nananom, Hɛn Nananom</i>	<i>Our forefathers, Our forefathers</i>
<i>Hɛn Nananom wɔsom abosom</i>	<i>Our forefathers worshipped idols</i>
<i>Na hɛn dze, na hɛn dze, na hɛn dze</i>	<i>But as for us 3x</i>
<i>Yɛ bɔsom Yehowa</i>	<i>We will worship Yahweh</i>

We see the demarcation that Charismatics draw between themselves and the indigenous religions, which also pictures them as a ‘modern’ group of people against a group (GTC) that is static and stuck in history. There is a sharp disparity drawn between the beliefs and activities of ‘our forefathers’ and ‘us’ in these songs and, by implication, indigenous religions are caught up in the activities of the ancestors while they have moved on to a relationship with a higher God. The songs therefore become one of the major ways by which the social boundaries are expressed and enforced by the Pentecostal Charismatic group.

During weekly prayer meetings, be they at the ‘Solution Centre’ of the ICGC, the ‘Prayer Clinic’ of the LCI or ‘Jericho Hour’ of Action Chapel International, testimonies abound of how many people were delivered from curses and demonic activities having dabbled in indigenous religious rituals. The pastors openly warn their members against such ritual practices as sharing in the *Hɔmɔwɔ* feast because they believe this can expose them to demonic attacks. The attitude of the Charismatic churches towards indigenous religions can actually be understood in terms of two of Helmut Richard Niebuhr’s (2001)⁵¹ five fundamental types of the rela-

⁵¹ In his book, Niebuhr lists five fundamental typologies for the way in which Christians generally relate to culture, namely, ‘Christ against culture’, in which representatives absolutize Christ and reject everything about culture; ‘Christ of Culture’, in which representatives do not see any great tension between the church and the world and therefore

tionship between the church and society. The Charismatic churches approach is mainly the "Christ against culture" type, which, according to Niebuhr, absolutizes Christ's authority and completely rejects culture, as they see it as negative and corrupting. This type further strengthens the point that the dichotomy between the notion of culture and religion is difficult to draw. On the basis of Niebuhr's "Christ against culture," I differentiate positions as "religion against religion" as the Charismatic churches embrace modern cultures, meaning they are essentially not against culture but rather certain elements within culture.

Besides publicly rejecting other religions, there are other aspects of the Charismatics' attitude towards indigenous religions which can be explained in the light of Niebuhr's fifth type which is "Christ the transformer of culture" approach. That is, they outright reject some aspects of culture especially regarding belief but in practice there are other areas in which they try to transform and Christianise. For example, in the whole Charismatic church ritual regarding the rites of passage such as birth, adulthood, marriage and death, we see conscious strategies by practitioners aimed at replacing cultural forms with Christianised ones. For instance, during a naming and dedication ceremony at the Adjiringanor branch of ICGC in Accra, the pastor applied drops of milk, honey and water on the baby's tongue to signify God's provision, health and sustenance respectively along with prayers for the new born baby. Similarly, in a traditional naming ceremony, also known as 'outdooring,' the elder will instead use drops of water and *akpeteshie* (locally distilled gin) and make the declaration, "*Nsu a nsu a; nsa a nsa a,*" meaning "let your ye be ye and your nay be nay." The declaration is to tell the baby to be truthful at all times in the land of the living. The Charismatic Christians actually see this ritual as prophetic in nature, therefore, if a baby is given alcohol at that tender age, s/he is likely to become an alcoholic in adult life because of exposure to evil spirits. This notion is similar to the Ga traditional notion that "the elder who names a child transfers his character to the baby" (Nuumo Blafo III, *personal communication*, January 20, 2014). Despite obvious similarities

accommodates the demands of culture; 'Christ above culture', which encourages a full disengagement between Christ and the world and 'act as a kind of a middle ground' between the first two; 'Christ and culture in paradox,' representatives of this type do not separate Christ and culture, they live them simultaneously and 'Christ the transformer of culture', whose representatives recognise culture as incompatible with Christianity but they do not reject it, they rather look for its transformation.

in the traditional naming ritual, Charismatics have sought to transform it using symbolic articles they believe will influence the baby positively.

In respect to 'Christ against culture', we see some members of the traditional council making statements that indicate their awareness of the negative perception of the churches about them.

You see they don't even respect our customs and culture. Meanwhile their churches are on our land. They treat us with utter disrespect and call us agents of the devil. Some have even said we practice witchcraft and that the ban is a witchcraft activity, when actually the festival is for all Ga people (Nuumo Ogbamey III, personal communication, September 25, 2015).

This approach by the churches, and its associated 'name calling', is seen by the traditionalists as an affront and disrespect to their culture and religion. To them, *Hɔmɔwɔ* also highlights the unity of all Ga people as a family - a common ancestry. It is actually a period when the Ga diaspora come back to their ancestral homes in Accra to share in a meal with their living family and their ancestors. Hence *Hɔmɔwɔ* is seen as a celebration for all Ga people, be they Christian, Muslim or traditionalists. Consequently, any form of disturbance to the celebration of the festival, such as flouting the ban, is interpreted as disastrous to the entire Ga ethnic group. On the one hand, the traditionalists treasure their cultural heritage and would also not want to incur the wrath of the deities. Accordingly, they do not let anything or anyone stand in the way of the celebration. On the other hand, the Charismatics see the ban and the celebration of the festival as avenues for demonic attacks. Therefore, the celebrations in a way becomes a battle of religions, and the traditionalists aggressively enforce the ban because they do not want the gods to visit evil on them.

The combative posture regarding the enforcement of the ban also shows an attempt on behalf of the traditionalists to retain and reinforce their authority and influence as a result of the stigmatisation of indigenous religions by the Charismatic churches. In the first division of phases adopted in this study, the clashes between the GTC and the LCI happened because Dag Heward-Mills had built a reputation as one of the strictest opponents of traditions with his teaching and numerous writings calling Christians to break away from traditional practices. Within Charismatic circles, he is still one of the fiercest critics of indigenous religions, which by implication makes the LCI a leading opponent of indigenous religions, resulting in several clashes with the traditionalists. For their part, the LCI viewed the attack on their church by the traditionalists as a spiritual attack, akin to Saul's persecution of the church, which they very much consider

as part of Christian evangelisation (E. Nterful, personal communication, January 4, 2015).⁵²

It is important to note that it is this same 'religion against religion' outlook on behalf of the churches, and the antagonistic nature of the enforcement of the ban by the GTC, that mostly contributed to the clashes between the Christ Apostolic Church International and the traditionalists. Rev. Annor Yeboah took an entrenched position of not complying with the ban because, in his view, compliance amounted to bowing to 'idolatry' and put his Christian credibility in doubt. He saw himself as being confronted by 'forces of darkness' contesting the power of God. For him, observing the noise ban was analogous to the biblical story of Nebuchadnezzar and the golden statue in Daniel 3:1-30, in which the king enjoined everyone to bow down to the golden image he had set up. In this biblical story, the three Hebrew boys Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego refused to bow down to the image, insisting they would only bow down to Yahweh, the Hebrew God. The import of the story is that the three Hebrew boys came out victorious because of their fortitude, despite having been cast into a furnace of blazing fire. Annor Yeboah equated the traditionalists to Nebuchadnezzar and the ban to the golden statue and vowed to resist the GTC and the ban regardless of the implications. The outcome of his resistance was the bloody clashes that ensued between them in 2001.

Furthermore, the attitude of rejection of the past on the side of the Charismatic churches has also led to an aggressive form of evangelisation and proselytization. The LCI, for example, has a church expansion strategy called the *Anagkazo*⁵³ church planting strategy. According to Heward-Mills (1998), this strategy is meant to adopt 'innovative and firm' strategies to compel 'lost souls' to come to Christ. By this they mean using every means possible to reach people with the gospel in order to ensure that as many branches of LCI as possible are opened locally and internationally. They do this through FM radio broadcasts, TV evangelisation, street evangelism, evangelism in public transport, dawn broadcasting at the various vicinities, door-to-door evangelism and the Healing Jesus Crusade

⁵² Bishop Nterful cited Acts 8:3 and Phil 1:29 to back his point of view, seeing the attacks on the church as a persecution.

⁵³ *Anagkazo*, as found in the biblical text Luke 14:23 is believed to mean, the church should adopt strategies to compel people to come to the saving knowledge of Jesus because the world is increasingly becoming cynical to the gospel.

(Heward-Mills, 1999, p. 5).⁵⁴ As alluded to earlier, within the span of two decades, the church has expanded into almost every major community within the Greater Accra Region. This drive to ‘compel’ people to church along with the message for members to break with traditional practices has not resonated with the GTC. A *Wulɔmɔ* commented on the spread of the church:

I am not against these churches springing up everywhere. My concern is the way they have brainwashed most people to the extent that many people don’t even believe in their own culture anymore. Many people don’t want to participate in the *Hɔmɔwɔ* rituals anymore. There are many people who have gone away and do not want to come back to their ancestral homes for fear of been exposed to the so-called demons because of what their pastors have told them (Nuumo Blafo III, personal communication, January 20, 2014).

While this *Wulɔmɔ*, a member of the GTC affirms he has no issue with the spread of churches like the LCI and ICGC, he found issue with the message of the church and then equated their evangelisation efforts to brainwashing of the Ga people. The disappointment of losing members to the churches is also evident in the priest’s view. Hence, the Ga leaders’ effort to enforce the noise ban can be understood in terms of a response to the aggressive strategy of the churches. Another *Wulɔmɔ* was even more explicit in his view:

You know because Accra is the capital if you are not strong, your tradition will just expire – it will be condemned to the abyss. Listen well! The churches have taken all our members, people who follow our traditions now find themselves in these Charismatic churches. They have brainwashed them to the extent that our children are disowning us. Even when you pour libation, you find people complaining that they are church goers and do not engage in that. Even your family members are not coming for family gatherings any longer because they claim they go to these Charismatic churches. So, if we don’t put our feet down all our children will run away from our gods and our customs. This is why we enforce the ban with all our energy. Otherwise, we could have left it to the police and the AMA to do the enforcement (Nuumo Charko, personal conversation, September 25, 2015).

One can see here the reference to competition for membership and an insistence on the preservation of cultural heritage by the Ga priests. It is clear that the resurgence and growth of the Pentecostal-Charismatic groups in

⁵⁴ The term ‘dawn broadcasting’ is a local terminology used for the Pentecostal practice of preaching the gospel at the early hours of the day (between 4am and 6am) in local communities, sometimes with megaphones.

Ghana has sparked a revival in the *Kpele* religion. That is, the resurgence cannot only be seen in Pentecostal-Charismatic circles but also in the Ga indigenous religion, which has been very resilient in the face of Christian revival in Ghana. One can actually link the spate of clashes since 1998 to the resurgence of the Charismatic churches. With the counter resurgence in the *Kpele* religion, the *Wulomei* are now bent on defending their traditions and maintaining the Ga people's interest in the *Kpele* religion. One way of keeping the vitality of the *Kpele* religion, according to this informant, is to crack down on churches they see violating the noise ban, which forms a critical part of the religion. Therefore, the enforcements are a way of reinvigorating the interest of the next generation of Ga people in indigenous religions.

This resonates with Bouma's (2007) argument that resurgence in religions brings about increasing competition and conflict. Competition and conflict between these religions then instigates the drawing of boundaries because both call for "drawing of lines, taking offence at someone or something, and declaring the other to be wrong, morally inferior or theologically in error" (p. 193). The relationship between the traditionalists and the Charismatic churches reveals a clear boundary drawn between the two as a result of the conflict that arises from the noise ban. The traditionalists see the Charismatic churches as a major threat to the growth and the very existence of *Kpele* religion in the Greater Accra region and, consequently, identify them as the 'other' – the enemy to 'our' religion. It is logical when the *Wulomei* draw these lines because their survival and continued relevance also depend on the continuous existence and significance of the *Kpele* religion. But this is expressed in collective terms by the leaders of the GTC so that the churches are now seen as the enemies of the Ga people. The noise ban is therefore used by the traditionalists as a means of drawing the lines between the churches and themselves by declaring the churches to be wrong in their response to the ban. On the other hand, the leaders of the Charismatic churches, by refusing to comply with the noise ban, also draw a line that is informed by their view that the traditionalists are religiously in error and inferior to Christianity. Accordingly, we see that the process of creation of 'otherness' happens on both sides, pitching one religion against the other and resulting in conflict.

Sound and sonic practices

As the confrontations are fundamentally about religious silence or the absence thereof, it is critical to look at how sound and sonic practices of the two parties have variously contributed to the tensions. Sound is central to

Charismatic Christianity and to Ga indigenous religion. First of all, public loudness is an essential part of the Pentecostal-Charismatic religious worldview in Ghana. Pentecostal-Charismatic sounds include handclapping, sounds of moans and groans in prayer, spoken and shouted words, and music, all at high volume. Weiner (2014) argues that the key contents of any religious doctrine such as its theological arguments and moral claims both constitute and are constituted by the ways in which its ideas are given full expression. Accordingly, he maintains that, for certain religious groups, public noise is a necessary exigency because it gives significance to the religious beliefs and doctrines, without which it would be lacking expressive forms. In other words, for these religious practitioners, "making noise was not merely incidental to the work but; it was their work" (p. 80). Schmidt (2000) commenting on the competing sound practices of North American religions explicitly states that evangelical Christians are noisy and "appallingly so" to their opponents (p. 66). Pentecostal-Charismatic churches are noted for perceivably exorbitant public displays of sonic religiosity. Wacker (2001) writing on early Pentecostals notes that critics of Pentecostal modes of worship have usually framed their opposition in terms of "hideous noise" and "writhing and groaning" (p.100). The aural boundaries of these churches clearly go beyond the confines of their church buildings and travel as far as possible. This spill over outside the walls of their churches is as a result of their proclivity for loud forms of worship, preaching, prayer and music. The loud aural practices are hinged on several biblical texts, but the frequently used ones are '*make a joyful noise unto the Lord*'⁵⁵ and '*...praise him with loud clashing cymbals*'.⁵⁶ This 'joyful noise', as an integral part of worship, is further enhanced by the use of powerful modern public-address (PA) systems which amplify the sounds even further beyond the churches. A standard church service in ICGC or LCI lasts for about two and half hours and typically includes a time of communal prayer, praise and worship, hymnals, preaching and a final prayer led mostly by the pastors. In all these activities, the public-address systems are set so high it becomes ear-piercing for those who are new to these environments. In a service that I attended at *The Qodesh* one Sunday, I wrote the following in my field notebook:

As I entered the auditorium I am met with extremely loud and head-splitting music of praise and worship, along with shouts of joy and brisk dancing. The

⁵⁵ Psalm 100: 1,4

⁵⁶ Psalm 150: 4-6

musicians are constantly asking the congregation to shout for joy and 'dance to the glory of God'. Just when I am about to settle into the service, I observe that three European visitors sitting next to me have ear plugs on, to enable them cope with the high sound levels. But the noise levels increase significantly anytime a new song is introduced by the musicians. The joyful noise is getting deafening with whistles and the sound of the trumpet.

While the PA systems are set at higher levels, one could also notice that generally, the prayer leaders, the musicians and the preachers shout a lot because in these churches the level of sound is equated to the level of 'anointing' in a church service. Shouting while preaching is also likened to anointed preaching. Adherents believe such high levels of sound are needed to evoke the presence of the Holy Spirit; as one pastor put it, "a silent church is a dead church." Furthermore, the churches are mostly found in residential areas⁵⁷ and the architectural styles of churches contribute to extending their acoustic boundaries into private homes. For example, the Qodesh and many of the LCI branches are designed as open spaces with open windows to allow for natural ventilation. Although this is conducive for the hot tropical weather and a cost saving strategy, as it is a way of avoiding any extra spending on air-conditioning, it also allows the 'shouts of joy' and 'joyful noises' to go beyond the limits of the church auditorium and into other people's homes. This is seen as a form of nuisance. One informant commented thus:

On a weekday when you have come back from work after a difficult day's job. What you want is to be able to take some rest but these churches will not let you be. There are services almost every day of the week. You wonder if the members go to work at all. What is even irritating, is, they won't even confine the noise to the church. It is all over the place. What is the use of these speakers they place there [pointing to a Charismatic church building nearby]? (B. Akwetey, personal communication, Sep 10, 2015).

Most churches have services at different times of the day. There are morning devotions, afternoon prayer meetings and weekday services. For LCI and ICGC, normally the whole congregation meet twice a week aside from other departmental meetings. However, for some other Charismatic churches, services are held almost every day of the week either during the day or in the evenings. There are revival meetings at least on a daily basis in most suburbs of the city, where local and international Pentecostal-

⁵⁷ The Qodesh and Christ Temple are obviously away from residential areas but many of the LCI and ICGC churches are found in deeply populated areas including Korle-Gonno where the incident took place in 1998.

Charismatic pastors come together to affirm the Pentecostal ethic and strengthen believers. Then there are mass gatherings, such as open-air crusades, across the city. For example, Dag Heward-Mills' *Healing Jesus Crusade* is held in many suburbs in Accra and across the nation several times annually to preach the gospel to the masses and to pray for the sick. Mensa Otobil also uses the Accra Sports Stadium and the Independence Square, two of Accra's mass gathering places, regularly, for church programmes. The loud sound emanating from these numerous services then transcends the private church space into the nearby homes. Neighbours in several communities have from time to time reported certain churches to the police for disturbing public peace.

Weiner (2009) argues that "sound crosses boundaries, blurring distinctions between subject and object, public and private, and self and other" (p. 904). It is evident from the discussion that sound becomes an important marker of difference between two groups, 'the self,' which is the churches and 'the other,' which is the public. While the sound produced in the Charismatic services is seen by the churches as having structure, it is ordinary noise to the 'other', the public. This does not only show a clash of opinions but also reveals communal boundaries and the collective identities of these separate groups. Again, it shows that the actual boundaries of the Charismatic churches are marked aurally rather than physically. This means that, for Charismatics, the intended audience goes beyond the congregation to as far afield as possible in order to reach other external inactive audiences, the outside community. Although, depending on where one stands, the loud sounds are heard with varied intensities, it is a means of evangelisation and also a way of staying attractive to the wider community. Significantly, the interpretation of the sound also becomes contingent on the position of the hearer. Whereas the Charismatic church worshippers consider the sound emanating from their services as a meaningful religious sound - a deeply spiritual issue - the external 'others' such as the Ga traditionalists, frame it as mere noise.

Similarly, in Ga indigenous religion, sacred sound is vital as a precursor for all major religious celebrations. It is employed in rituals such as libation where a call-and-response ritual is employed. Sounds are important also in spirit possession, as the talking drums become a means of evoking the spirits along with specific dance patterns. For example, before the ban is imposed, the *Obonu drums* (special sacred drums) are beaten as loud as possible to cleanse the Ga towns in preparation for the arrival of the gods. When the deities take residence in the communities they need

not be disturbed as they work on the harvest. While the sound emanating from such ceremonies can be relatively loud, it cannot be compared to the level of volume generated by the Charismatic churches because amplification is not usually used. Whereas Ga indigenous religion involves thunderous sounds, it is the annual 30-day hush, a contemplative period of silence associated with the *Hɔmɔwɔ* festival that is the most popular among the general public. It is this religious sound mode, the noise ban, which makes the loud sound emanating from the Charismatic church an offensive audible outburst to the traditionalists at a particular time of the year.

Obviously, the amplified sounds coming from Charismatic churches prompts the clashes with GTC members during the period of the noise ban as the sound serves as the difference marker between the two groups. On the one hand, the Charismatics need the loud sacred sound to invoke the Holy Spirit and, on the other hand, the traditionalists need silence for the deities and ancestors visiting the towns. Weiner (2011) argues that “responses to religious sounds, whether church bells or the *azan*, have always been shaped by attitudes toward sound-producers as much as the sounds themselves” (p.114). Therefore, while the ‘joyful noise’ is generally tolerated by the general public throughout the year, it becomes a source of contention between the traditionalists and the churches during the annual ban in the Accra and Tema metropolises. Whereas the loud forms of sound are central to Charismatic worship and a key tenet in their theology, the noise ban is also critical to the traditionalists’ way of worship. Accordingly, two extreme forms of sound, loudness and silence, required by two different communities set one against the other, triggering the clashes. The GTC sees the ‘joyful noise’ during the ban as a total disrespect on the part of the Charismatic churches towards their religion and culture, partly because these sounds are tolerated for eleven months of the year by the general public. Sound therefore, becomes another means by which the boundary between the Charismatics and the traditionalists is constructed and enforced.

However, it is also essential to point out that the Charismatic churches have from time to time accused the traditionalists for specifically targeting them for the enforcement of the noise ban, arguing that the ban on drumming and noisemaking is only selective on some kinds of noise, namely religious noise. One pastor succinctly states the following:

We are all aware that during these bans people still scream or shout to call others on the street, drivers still honk their horns and make a lot of noise, football is played in the stadium. Ambulances, fire brigade and hearses still move about in the city of Accra. The reality is, this modern cosmopolitan

city does not become dead silent during the ban. The city continues to be vibrant. I feel that the ban tends to target Charismatic churches for various reasons that only the Wulomei can tell (E. Xexemeku, personal communication, March 25, 2014).

The accusations from the churches seem to have prompted the GTC to extend the clamp down to other areas of noise-generating activity in recent times. In May 2015 for example, the GTC clashed with a group of Ghanaian celebrities determined to stage a vigil to register their displeasure over the state's handling of an acute power crisis that had affected the country. Prior to this event, the GTC had also demanded that the organisers of a boxing bout between two famous Ghanaian boxers in May 2014 call off the match, which was slated to take place at the Accra Sports Stadium, for fear of violating the ban. Unfortunately, these two events went ahead as planned, and the GTC claimed a fire and flood disaster that befell Accra after the celebrity vigil was a punishment from the gods for flouting the noise ban. Aside from the supposed implications of contravening the ban, we see that the traditionalists have from time to time clamped down on other types of noise, contrary to the views of the Charismatic churches. However, over the years, the position of the traditionalists has been shifting with respect to what kind of noise they consider as violating the ban. Field (1937) states that, historically, during the ban period, no one beat secular drums, played an instrument, beat a cooking pot with a spoon or whistled. There was no wailing for the dead, no private dance, shouting or celebration allowed within the traditional area (p. 89). However, in recent times this noise has tended to be concentrated only on sounds coming from the churches, such as sounds from "cymbals, guitars, microphones, keyboards and all forms of noise producing instruments" as affirmed by several informants during group interviews involving both traditionalists and adherents of Charismatic churches.

Moreover, the churches concern that they are being targeted by the GTC is further strengthened by the fact that loud sounds of the *azan* call emanating from mosques within the city evades the clamp down. This passive reaction to the Islamic groups may be due to that fact that there is a good relationship between the GTC and the leadership of the Islamic community in Accra. Indeed, it took an Islamic cleric to intervene and secure the GTC's release of instruments confiscated after the clashes with the Victory Bible Church in 1999, although the church is headed by a native Ga person, Bishop Tackie Yarboi (Nuumo Charko, personal communication, September 25, 2015). There are also very few mosques in the traditional

Ga areas, and the Muslim communities are mostly found in the peripheries of the city, in settlements.



Photo 11: The Qodesh highlighting the open space and the open windows architecture (Credit: Author)

Religious music and performance

Sound also plays a pivotal role in community building and enhancing solidarity in Ghanaian society. Music and performance have always been critical in fostering social cohesion among communities in the country. Music as a specific form of sound is an essential feature in the religiosity of both parties, providing an immensely conspicuous sense of legitimacy and perceptible means of sacredness. Actually, musical instruments and sound amplifying equipment like microphones and mixers are the first things most Charismatic pastors look to secure before they even consider looking for a meeting place. This is because they believe they are a way of attracting members to their fold. The megachurches like the LCI and ICGC even go to the extent of employing professional musicians to perform in their churches. This does not only bring people to church but also increases the finances of the church as a result of the increased numbers, according to Samuel Korankye-Ankrah, the Bishop of Royalhouse Chapel in Accra (S. Korankye-Ankrah, personal communication, Jan 16, 2012). Music is so important that most churches have specific pastors in charge of music who

oversee several choirs, praise and worship teams, musicians and choreography teams.

Music and performance are fundamental to Charismatic worship because of several factors. First of all, it is a central part of the Charismatic theology and it is backed up with several biblical texts.⁵⁸ Second, it is a way of identifying with the international Pentecostal-Charismatic community because music serves as a medium of exchange between local churches and the wider international Pentecostal community. For example, Christian musicians like Joshua Laryea of the ICGC travel to Europe and the Americas performing in Pentecostal and Evangelical churches, while American gospel musicians including Ron Kenoly, Fred Hammond and Israel Houghton have also performed in churches like the ICGC and Action Chapel. Third, music serves as a catalyst for evoking the power and presence of the Holy Spirit. The praise and worship section of Charismatic services is deemed very important to the way in which the whole service takes place. The presence of the Holy Spirit is said to be 'saturated' in the church hall when the music is good. As a result, pastors are constantly talking about a good preparation to usher in the presence of God in a service, that is, a good praise and worship time. Fourth, music and performance as, important parts of Charismatic church services, serve to bring into the churches larger numbers of people who would otherwise go to places like discotheques and dancehalls. Since the churches provide alternative music, dance and performance for their members, it goes on to strengthen the social bonds between them. The music and performances serve the purposes of community building as well as emotional release for the members.

On the other side of the conflict, music and performances are also essential in Ga indigenous religion. As well as providing social cohesion in the Ga communities, they are important in evoking the gods through the *Woyei* (Mediums). The deities of the *Kpele* religion are worshipped with singing and dancing, and each of the gods has special songs and performances reserved for them. Music and dance are essential in every major religious celebration including child naming, funerary rites, marriage and festivals. Field (1937) has described how the La people use performances like stamping and chanting and singing *Kpa* songs to publicly criticise social miscreants and misbehaving members of the community, even chiefs

⁵⁸ Biblical texts include Psalm 33:2; Psalm 149:3; Numbers 10:10 and 1 Chronicles 15:24-28

and unpopular political office holders (p. 48). One of the major reasons for the ban according to the *Wulɔmei* is to consciously 'deprive' the Ga communities of music and dance before the biggest and the most important celebration on their calendar in order to enhance a sense of release and climax. Accordingly, attending Pentecostal-Charismatic churches before the ban is lifted waters down the sense of climax that should be experienced at the end of the *Hɔmɔwɔ* festival. Despite the obvious similarities in the way music and other performances are viewed in both Charismatic Christianity and *Kpele* religion, it is clear that the similarity leads to conflict, due to the competition between the two groups to dominate the city's soundscape during a particular period of the year. It is also obvious that the ability of the indigenous religion to impose restrictions on the Pentecostal-Charismatic sound is a demonstration of the continuous influence of the traditional system. The *Kpele* religion is very active in the city, although one would have expected it to die out in the face of the growth and continuous leverage of the Charismatic churches. The resilience of the religion is perhaps the most conspicuous in all indigenous religions in Ghana.

Leading Actors: the role of religious specialists in the clashes

The next dimension that has been prominent in my data is the role of the leading actors, namely the *Wulɔmei* on the side of the traditionalists, the pastors of the Charismatic churches as well as the activities of the neo-Charismatic churches in the conflict. These actors are the main stakeholders, having enormous knowledge about the dynamics of the conflict and therefore formulating and defending group decisions. The term 'stakeholder' as used here refers thus to a person or a group "with an interest or concern" in the annual clashes in Accra (Ramirez, 1999, p.101). Accordingly, we are going to analyse how these key actors have contributed to further strengthen the demarcation between the conflicting parties. I argue here that different stakeholders have different objectives and these interests are normally pursued as a collective in order to highlight the 'otherness' of the other party.

The Wulɔmei and the clashes

As Bouma (2007) has argued, conflict reveals the existence and declaration of boundaries. We see from the clashes that the definition of boundaries between the parties is also connected with power dynamics. The leadership of both the Charismatic churches and the GTC especially the pastors and the *Wulɔmei* respectively are the people who define the boundaries

between the parties which ultimately leads to the annual clashes. The two separate religious leaders wield considerable power and have the capacity to influence their groups by stressing on the notion of 'us' against 'them'. This is evident in several of the clashes from 1998 and several reports of clashes mention either the *Wulɔmei* or the pastors as the lead instigators of the clashes. For example, the *Sakumɔ Wulɔmɔ* has been the prominent name in almost all the clashes from the first to the third phases, as the organiser-in-chief of the Ga youth in enforcing the noise ban while pastors like Dag Heward-Mills, Annor Yeboah and Tackie Yarboi have also been mentioned as the leaders instigating the resistance of the Christian groups.

First, it is important to interrogate why the Ga *Wulɔmei* are at the forefront of the clashes, mobilising the youth and leading the task forces to enforce the noise ban. The obvious factors will be that they are the priests to the gods and the custodians of Ga indigenous religion, but, beyond these apparent ones, I find other latent factors that show why they are integral in fomenting the clashes. Field (1937) reveals that the Ga society was "originally absolute theocracies" in which the *Wulɔmei* were the rulers (p. 3). This meant that the gods were the ultimate rulers and the *Wulɔmei* became both chief priests and kings at the same time, since they are the representatives of the deities. However, as time went on, when they began to go to wars, they had to separate the role of the *Wulɔmɔ* from that of a *Mantse* (king), where the king took on civil duties as well as military roles while the *Wulɔmɔ* concentrated on religious duties. This designation of the *Wulɔmei* as kings becomes even more obvious when one walks into the *Nai We*, where the inscription, "the King of Akra - 1733", boldly embossed on the walls, meets anyone entering the yard of the *Nai Wulɔmɔ's gbatsu* (shrine house). During my numerous visits to the *Nai We*, there was never a time when he failed to remind me of the position of the *Nai Wulɔmɔ* in the Ga society, historically and currently. Field (1937) actually reveals that the *Nai Wulɔmɔ* collected taxes from all the European traders who came to the shores of Accra to trade in gold and other goods in the sixteenth century (p. 87).

After the separation of the chieftaincy institution from the priesthood, the *Wulɔmei* nevertheless remained the custodians of all Ga lands and thus the leaders of the Ga people. They tended to concentrate on the more sacred aspects of governance while the civil and the more mundane aspects were left for the *Mantsemei*. This development meant that they took a backstage on the daily running of the Ga towns as the *Mantsemei* took charge of the day-to-day running of the towns. This implies that the chiefs

became the first point of call and the face of Ga traditional leadership, albeit the *Wulomei* technically remained at the top of the traditional hierarchy. This state of affairs within the Ga traditional set up has not been helped by further alienation of the *Wulomei* by the Ghanaian state. The 1992 Constitution, like all previous national constitutions have, recognised the institution of chieftaincy by the establishment of the regional and national houses of chiefs to help preserve the cultural heritage of the country and to serve as a forum where the chiefs can contribute to national affairs, since the constitution prevents them from political activism.⁵⁹ While the constitution recognises the traditional councils like the GTC, for which the *Wulomei* are an integral part, it is the chiefs or *Mantsemei*, who are recognised as representatives of the Ga traditional areas. This is because the constitution is based on consideration of the wider chieftaincies in the various parts of Ghana where the chiefs are on top of the traditional hierarchy, unlike in the Ga traditional areas, where the *Mantsemei* are subordinated to the *Wulomei*. As a result, the government is forced to recognise and deal with the *Mantsemei* in issues relating to the Ga traditional areas because it is the chiefs who represent them at the regional and national houses of chiefs. This clearly upsets the hierarchical structure of the Ga traditional government system. A notable example of the frustration of the *Wulomei* about the lack of appropriate recognition for their institution is found below:

For the Ga people the *Wulomei* used to be the kings and priests at the same time. For us this chieftaincy institution is a later addition in our culture borrowed from the Akan people. Even now the leaders of the Ga people are the *Wulomei* not the chiefs. When we (the *Wulomei*) talk, no one talks again or challenges our authority because without our approval there can be no chief. We install chiefs, we can sit on the seat of a chief but they cannot sit on ours. If they did that they must answer to the gods and ancestors. How can you then put them ahead of us when they are actually enstooled by us? (Nuumo Okai I, personal communication, October 24, 2015).

The breakdown of the Ga traditional hierarchy by the systems of state has led the *Wulomei* to need to prove their positions in the traditional system by taking hard-line stances from time to time. For instance, from 1998 to

⁵⁹Articles 270 to 277 of the 1992 Constitution of the 4th Republic of Ghana, are dedicated to the chieftaincy institution. These articles define who a chief is, spell out the roles of chiefs, and also the establishment and functions of the national and regional houses of chiefs. Article 270 (1) states, “*The institution of chieftaincy, together with its traditional councils as established by customary law and usage, is hereby guaranteed.*”

2001 during the first phase as defined in this research, when the clashes were at their most intense, the government of Ghana set up several commissions of enquiry to look into the clashes and to consider the way forward for both the churches and the GTC. The government dealt with the chiefs and other opinion leaders in the Ga communities, who then had to report back to the *Wulɔmei*. This led to a stalemate, as the *Wulɔmei* consistently rejected the positions that the *Mantsemei* agreed with the state, the churches and other religious bodies. This contributed in no small way to heightening the clashes in those years. I argue that the *Wulɔmei* assumed this entrenched position because as stakeholders they believed they were not given the recognition they thought they deserved from the state. Therefore, the antagonistic nature of the enforcement of the ban became an avenue to assert their authority on what, according to them, is their rightful position in the traditional areas.

The interruption of the Ga hierarchy in traditional affairs has also led to competition between the *Wulɔmei* themselves as to who is the head of all the priests. As we have discussed, every Ga town has its own chief *Wulɔmɔ*, but the three senior *Wulɔmei* of Ga Mashie are regarded as the chief priests of the Ga people. Although the *Nai Wulɔmɔ* is widely considered the most senior of all the *Wulɔmei*, followed by the *Sakumɔ Wulɔmɔ* and the *Korle Wulɔmɔ* in that order, the two latter *Wulɔmei* dispute this, with the *Korle Wulɔmɔ* claiming "we are all equal in status, there is no senior among us." The *Korle Wulɔmɔ* claims historical exploits of the *Korle* and *Sakumɔ* shrines in battles and the fact that the *Korle Wulɔmɔ* is the allodial custodian of most of the Ga lands as factors that put them at par with the *Nai Wulɔmɔ*. The bickering between these senior priests has economic dimensions as well as affecting status-based privileges: the distribution of royalties paid by the state to the traditional areas is shared according to the status of the priests and chiefs. Therefore, if they are presented as equal in status then the distribution of royalties will be done evenly. In the enforcement of the ban, the *Sakumɔ We* headed by the *Sakumɔ Wulɔmɔ* played a significant role as the defender of the Ga people. From 1998 to date the *Sakumɔ Wulɔmɔ* has led every major clash with the churches, prominent among them, the clashes between the Ga youth and LCI, Victory Bible Church and Christ Apostolic Church. This leading role in enforcing the ban is an indication that the *Sakumɔ Wulɔmɔ* wants to use the noise ban to stress the importance of the *Sakumɔ* shrine in defending the Ga state.

The competition between the *Wulɔmei* instigated by personal interests and the hierarchical breakdown of the Ga traditional areas by state institutions also indicate that boundaries are both defined within the Ga traditional set up and outside the group, including by the state and other social, political and economic stakeholders. For example, recently, there has been a competition among the senior *Wulɔmei* on who is responsible for performing the rituals to enstool *Mantsemei* as well as issues of jurisdiction, pitting the *Korle Wulɔmɔ* against the *Nai Wulɔmɔ* and *Sakumɔ Wulɔmɔ*. The following reveals the insider competition and conflicts:

Politics has interfered in our traditional affairs and this is a major cause of the problems we are facing now. Sometimes the fault is from us, the *Wulɔmei*. For instance, I have a lot of villages under my stool so it is my responsibility and duty to install and to destool a chief who is under my jurisdiction. I cannot get up and do just anything under the jurisdiction of say, the *Sakumɔ Wulɔmɔ*. But because of money and politics sometimes some of the *Wulɔmei* are installing chiefs who are not under their stool. Then another *Wulɔmɔ* will also go and install another chief in that same village. There are fights here and there. Like this Gbese chieftaincy issue, they went to the Supreme Court and the judgment went in favour of Okaija [one of the candidates]. Listen very carefully [sighs], *Sakumɔ Wulɔmɔ* was the person who installed Thomas Okine [the other candidate]. So, if I were him [*Sakumɔ Wulɔmɔ*], for peace to prevail, he is supposed to call Thomas Okine and advise him that the judgment went in favour of Okaija, so step down and let peace prevail. Or to say, it is the duty of the *Korle Wulɔmɔ* to confirm the Gbese Mantse so we are now waiting for him to confirm who the Gbese Mantse should be (Nuumo Okai I, personal communication, October 24, 2015).

This apparent fall out between the senior *Wulɔmei* regarding issues of jurisdiction, political influence and allegations of financial inducement indicates the extent to which internal conflicts between the *Wulɔmei* themselves led them to take some actions in order to assert their position and status in the Ga state. Accordingly, as I have alluded to, I argue that *Sakumɔ Wulɔmɔ* and the *Sakumɔ We* enhance their status by the aggressive manner in which they enforce the noise ban.

Furthermore, the obvious decline of the powers of the traditional authorities in present day Ghanaian society has in no small way contributed to traditional authorities having to usurp every opportunity to exert their authority. In precolonial times, chieftaincy institutions represented the fulcrum for the discharge of executive, legislative and judicial authority. However, from colonial times to date these functions have been bestowed on the state while the traditional authorities have a significantly reduced governance function, executed through the regional and national houses of

chiefs. Accordingly, Ghanaian theologian Akrong (2006) is accurate in stating that:

The encounter of the chieftaincy institution with the political structures of modernity did not only deprive traditional leadership of its authority but also set in motion a new modern society whose structures and norms of leadership continue to challenge the authority, status and functions of traditional leadership at every turn (p. 193).

This decline, coupled with the ban on indigenous religious prayers at national events from 2009, has become a source of concern for the traditionalists. Since independence in 1957, the government of Kwame Nkrumah introduced a practice where religious leaders from Ghana's three main religions, Christianity, Islam and indigenous religions prayed, in that order, before the commencement of every national event. For the indigenous religious group, it was always the Ga *Wulomei* who poured the libation because of proximity and also because they are the custodians of Accra, the national capital. However, in 2009, the Christian president John Evans Atta-Mills, a Methodist who identified Nigerian televangelist, T.B. Joshua as a spiritual advisor, banned indigenous religious prayers from national events without offering any public explanations for this. It was later explained by his aides using a popular Pentecostal-Charismatic rhetoric that such prayers bring curses on the nation and detract the progress of the state. Prior to the ban, Pentecostal-Charismatic churches in Ghana had been calling for an injunction on indigenous religious prayers citing the same reasons. Here I see the president of a secular country drawing the boundary between what is acceptable religious practice and what is not. Thus, bringing his personal beliefs into national discourse, which then put the aggrieved *Wulomei* in a position where they saw a lack of respect for their traditions, not only from the churches but also from the state, also instigated by the same Pentecostal-Charismatic teaching. The enforcement of the noise ban, therefore, became an area where they could have total control and seek respect and relevance. While I see religion and politics constantly at play in public space, I argue that the confrontations between the Charismatic churches and the GTC can be framed as the traditionalists' bid to retain their position in Ga society and by extension their political influence.

The charismatic leaders and the conflict

One of the major differences between Charismatic churches such as the LCI and classical Pentecostal Churches like the Assemblies of God is the

significant role of the founding leaders, generally referred to as the 'General Overseers' in the Ghanaian context, in shaping the identities of their ministries. These leaders are so influential to the extent that some informants referred to Charismatic churches as one-man-churches. Some churches like the Action Chapel International and Victory Bible Church refer to their founders as 'visioneers', an emic term for visionary leadership. The reason behind this is because the churches are typically built along the lines of the leaders' anointing and gifts: every facet of church life revolves around this strong charismatic leader and his/her vision. The pastors are basically the embodiment of the church because their personality, charisma and talents reflect heavily on the daily running of the churches (de Witte, 2008). For example, one of the things that will catch one's attention on a visit to the Christ Temple of the ICGC in Accra is how the decorations, paintings and furniture reveal Mensa Otabil's Afrocentric inclinations. He is actually involved in the planning and execution of the colourful artwork that serves as the platform on which he preaches. This artwork depicts Otabil's views on black empowerment and liberation theology. Next, we can also see at *The Qodesh* of the LCI that the architectural design from the main church auditorium to the prayer rooms reflects Dag Heward-Mill's love for simple open spaced designs, which are replicated in almost all of the LCI branches. This is to emphasise that the leaders are as much involved in the most minute and mundane aspects of church life as they are in the spiritual aspects.⁶⁰

Their influence is all the more felt in the spiritual aspects of church life. For instance, Dag Heward-Mills' prolific writing skills and literature on issues of Christian living has made him not only integral to shaping Ghanaian Charismatic theology on pastoral care but has also made him indispensable to his congregation. It is common practice for conversations with members of the LCI not to pass by without a quotation from their bishop's teachings. The other pastors of the LCI preach from his books while leaders (including pastors) write examinations on new books he publishes, perhaps as a way of establishing how they are imbibing the principles outlined in these books. The books he authors become the main textbooks of the Anagkazo Bible Seminary because Heward-Mills is a known

⁶⁰ Otabil was an artist before he became a full-time pastor while Dag Heward-Mills used to be a building contractor despite practicing medicine before full time ministry.

opponent of the academic study of theology calling it Eurocentric and lacking the power of God.⁶¹ The bishop's extensive teaching on 'loyalty and disloyalty' serves as a central dogma in the LCI, and makes questioning any part of his theology non-existent in the church.

As we have referred to earlier, the LCI is one of the stiffest opponents of indigenous religions, informed by Heward-Mills' strong opposition to tradition. His sermons often address the Christian fight against the 'ignorance', 'anti-development', and 'backwardness', which, according to him, result from indigenous religions. He regularly encourages the members to "fight fiercely and relentlessly for the advancement of the churches and the gospel."⁶² This admonition, which is also a central component of the mission of the church, is observed to the letter, as adherents do not want to be associated with disloyalty to their leader. Therefore, it is clear that the leader's interest was pursued when the church refused severally to abide by the directives of the GTC regarding the noise ban. His views are reflected in the actions of the church and here we observe how the definition of the boundary between the Charismatics and the traditionalists is linked up with power dynamics. It is the teaching of the bishop, obviously in a position of power, which enabled the members to defy the ban which, according to them, was imposed in the name of a 'backward' tradition they do not want to be associated with. This show of loyalty indicates a kind of pastor-client relationship in which there is mutual exchange. Essentially, Heward-Mills, as the leader of the LCI, is seen as someone with an enormous deposit of religious power through his close connection to God. The proof of this accumulation of symbolic capital is the loyalty he attracts from his followers. Thus, the actions of his followers become the benefit he gets for showing this religious power.

Furthermore, in 2001, we saw how the members of the Christ Apostolic Church were willing to carry out Apostle Annor Yeboah's bid to resist the Ga youth who attacked the church during the noise ban, in order to show that his God was bigger than the Ga deities. When he announced in the media and also in church, that the church was not going to abide by the noise ban imposed by the GTC, the church members obliged and consequently, resisted the attacks. This resistance was the first time a church had

⁶¹ See: <https://www.daghewardmills.org/dhm/index.php/lighthouse-chapel/2016-03-12-13-41-13?locale=en>

⁶² See: <https://www.daghewardmills.org/dhm/index.php/lighthouse-chapel/2016-03-12-13-41-13?locale=en>

put up such strong opposition to the traditionalists, and it was met with further reinforcement on the part of the Ga youth and attacks became even more violent, leading to several injuries on both sides and destruction to the church's property. As in the case of Heward-Mills' LCI above, we can see how members of the Charismatic churches are loyal to their leaders and the extent to which they will go to show their devotion.

Heward-Mills' tendency to show that the 'other,' that is, the traditionalists, only exist to be assimilated to 'our' group through church expansion and Annor-Yeboah's insistence on proving that 'our' God is more powerful than 'your' deities, inspired the members to act, resulting in clashes over the noise ban. Although, their intentions, basically, have to do with teachings on religious beliefs and the show of religious power, we cannot disconnect the personal motives of the pastors from their teachings. Despite the accumulation of religious power, which attracts loyalty from their followers, they are also human agents. Agency is here understood as "a relatively flexible wielding of means toward ends" (Kockelmann, 2007, p. 375). As human agents, they have the flexibility to use diverse tools to attain a particular aim or a particular tool to realise several goals. These tools are framed as goals, desires and beliefs. Flexibility in the context of the clashes may involve pastors having a range of options open to them or having more say in the conflict than the members of the church. The pastors therefore have more agency than the congregation, that is, they have more means and ends to choose from in this given environment (Kockelmann, 2007). Moreover, the more agency one has over a particular process, the more one can be held accountable "for its outcome and thereby be subject to praise or blame, reward or punishment, pride or shame" (Kockelmann, p. 375). Consequently, although the church members have agency as well, their options are narrow and they are influenced by the interests and charisma of the leaders.

The neo-Charismatic Groups and Internal Pentecostal Politics

Besides the Charismatic groups like the LCI and ICGC, we have encountered in this study, there are several hundreds of other independent Pentecostal groups widespread in Accra. These are neo-Charismatic groups that are led mostly by Akan-speaking charismatic leaders, sometimes not as educated as the leaders of the bigger Charismatic denominations. They are equally able to gather hundreds and sometime even thousands to their services. However, they are completely independent, as they do not subscribe to any of the Pentecostal ecumenical bodies recognised by the nation-state,

namely the Ghana Pentecostal and Charismatic Council (GPCC) and the National Association of Charismatic and Christian Churches (NACCC). This is so because there is no legislation in the country for churches to subscribe to the umbrella bodies.

Nevertheless, the actions of this group of Pentecostals tend to deepen misgivings between the churches and the GTC. Since these churches operate under no supervisory body, they have often created additional tension between the Charismatic churches and the GTC, as they do not abide by the directives of the Pentecostal ecumenical bodies. Consequently, in the heat of the clashes, it has been very difficult for both the GPCC and NACCC to communicate negotiated positions with the GTC and other stakeholders to these independent Charismatic churches. Not only is it difficult and near impossible to review the actions and activities of these churches in the context of the agreed positions, it is also an onerous task to ascertain reports of breach of agreements as reported by the GTC.

The problem is further complicated by the existence of two umbrella bodies for the Pentecostal-Charismatic churches. Initially, the GPCC was the only Pentecostal ecumenical body recognised by the state but the 1998 clashes between the LCI and the GTC brought about the NACCC, whereby some Charismatic churches came together to form a separate umbrella body. The NACCC came into being because some Charismatic churches led by the LCI and Dag Heward-Mills felt they did not get the representation they required from the GPCC in the aftermath of the 1998 clashes against the traditionalists. The GPCC boycotted the commission of enquiry set up by the state after the clashes, as they suspected the committee was not balanced enough. However, Archbishop Duncan-Williams, who is the current chairman of NACCC, defied the GPCC's position and joined the commission of enquiry set up by the state. Accordingly, the NACCC was formed by Dag Heward-Mills and other Charismatic leaders including Steve Mensah of Charismatic Evangelical Ministries after the 1998 clashes.

The GPCC is the larger and the older of the two groups, as it is the council representing majority of the Pentecostal and Charismatic churches on state agencies such as the National Media Commission, while the NACCC is an association of mainly Charismatic churches. With the two umbrella bodies operating separately from each other, it is difficult for all Pentecostal-Charismatic churches to present a common front, while other church traditions are represented by only one council during negotiations regarding the noise ban. Several attempts to merge these two groups have

proved futile due to individual leaders' interest and the tendency to express the demarcation between classical Pentecostal groups and Charismatic churches. This shows how boundaries are defined and maintained within religious groups themselves as well as between them and the larger society. The boundary between the GPCC and the NACCC, as well as the actions of the independent Charismatic groups, feed into the wider perception/narrative of chaos within the Pentecostal-Charismatic groups in Accra. My point in this section is that the formation of the NACCC at a time when the GPCC was the sole representative of all the Charismatic churches is an indication of some Charismatic church leaders' craving for recognition, which rather created and deepened the division between Pentecostal and Charismatic Christianity in Ghana. The formation of the NACCC can be seen as an internal competition for political space within the ecumenical movement. This has however, divided the front of the Pentecostal groups and has led to a kind of 'chaos' among neo-Charismatic churches. This is because it becomes very difficult to find which particular umbrella body a church belongs to. This, in turn, has fed into the confrontations with the GTC because the independent churches tend not to respect agreements reached by the GPCC with the other stakeholders.

Religion, Media and Conflict

In this section, I will outline the use of mass media by religious actors and its impact on the conflict including the framing of the conflict in the media space. One of the subjects that was recurrent in discussions on the noise ban from both groups, particularly the traditionalists during group interviews, is the role of the media in heightening sentiments during the noise ban, from 1998 to date. The way the clashes over the noise ban have been represented in the media has been a topical issue for discussion among informants. It is clear that the Ghanaian media has played an active role in constructing the discourse surrounding the noise ban and the subsequent clashes between the churches and the GTC. As an active participant, the media are not neutral actors and this is reflected in the way they represent the conflict. By and large, the conflict has been represented as clashes between 'tradition' and 'modernity' in which the GTC is seen as backward and stuck in the past, similar to the Charismatic Christians' framing of the conflict. On the other hand, the Pentecostal Charismatic churches are presented with images of dynamism and a forward-looking group. In the media, terms such as *Ga abosom som fo* (Ga idol worshippers) has been used for the GTC while *akɔmfo* (fetish priests) is used for the *Wulɔmei*, although

such a term would generally be used for traditionalists in the mode of Kweku Bonsam, what is generally referred to as medicine men. The Ga priests, however, dissociate themselves from anything fetish. Nevertheless, I agree with Klein (2010) that 'modernity' and 'tradition' are problematic terms that are losing their usefulness, especially in this conflict, and they must be treated as "constantly negotiable and dynamic entities rather than as clearly distinguishable antagonisms" (p. 265).

Since 1992, the law in Ghana has guaranteed freedom of the press and has frowned on censorship of the media. This has resulted in the proliferation of several media forms in which topical issues such as the noise ban are discussed and debated. These debates and opinions are expressed in old media forms such as television, newspapers, and radio as well as new media forms like the internet and social media platforms. Although the debate on the noise ban is widespread on all the aforementioned platforms, it is the FM radio debates that have tended to generate the most controversies. This is because, since Ghana's fourth republic came into being, there has been a massive spread of privately owned FM radio stations including international ones such as the BBC, Voice of America and Radio France, all broadcasting on Accra's airwaves. During the period of the noise ban, however, the tense environment generated by debates between the groups is usually fuelled especially by the many Twi (Akan) speaking FM radio stations. These have become the main medium for discussion on the relevance or otherwise of the noise ban in Accra, because even the publications by the print media are discussed and debated on the radio, and information trickles down easily throughout the hinterlands within a short time. For example, the discussions in the first phase defined by this study (1998-2001) at the height of the clashes generally degenerated into insults and attacks from both sides. Furthermore, the GTC has pointed to how the interactive phone-in discussions have been used by the Charismatic groups to hurl insults at them. They maintained that several unidentified callers into local language radio stations made unguarded and derogatory remarks about the Ga people. While these callers were unidentified, the clashes intensified during this period because the Ga *Wulomei* associated Twi speaking callers with Akan ethnicity and Charismatic Christianity. This therefore introduced an ethnic dimension into a conflict that had largely been perceived as religious. This does not only make the media practitioners an interest group but also reveals how conflicting parties declare lines between themselves and the 'enemy.' In so doing, the traditionalists created

an 'imagined other' based on the fact that callers into radio phone-in discussions were Akan and, by extension Charismatic Christians, who are perceived as the 'enemy'. This shifted the salience of the boundary between them from one of religious to one of ethnicity (Bouma, 2007, p. 193).

This phenomenon of using the radio as a medium for discussing the subject of the noise ban and the debates it generates, has continued to be a topical issue among the religious actors and the nation-state as well. One elder of the *Nai We* recently summarised the view of the GTC on this topic:

They hide behind the radio and insult us as if we don't know what we are doing. All these presenters have taken bribes and they allow all sorts of misconduct on radio. Are they saying they can't control the callers? Can they do that against the Asantehene? I think some of them have personal agendas (Nii Quaye, personal communication, February 20, 2014).

In the above comment, it is evident that this elder, like many of the traditionalists, classify the radio journalists as Akan by mentioning the 'Asantehene' – the king of the Ashantis (an Akan group). While it is fair to say that majority of Akan people are Christians, it is reductionist to see all Pentecostal-Charismatics as Akan simply based on language. Kropp-Dakubu (1997) has already revealed the complex nature of language in Accra. She argues that Akan remains the second language of many residents of Accra who are not Akan by ethnicity (p. ix). This, coupled with the fact that majority of Ga people are Christians and key Charismatic leaders like Dag Heward-Mills, Nii Tackie-Yarboi and Sam Korankye-Ankrah are from the Ga stock makes the correlation between the Akan language and Pentecostal Christianity much more complex. Next, it is clear also that it is the journalists who set the agenda for the discussions on radio, but to say they do it to favour the Charismatic group because they speak Twi and are predominantly Christian is equally simplistic on the part of the traditionalists, although we cannot completely rule out that there will be some who have their personal agendas and would want to use the conflict to drive it. This is because while the proliferation of media houses has helped consolidate press freedom in Ghana, there are widespread reports that many journalists working in private media houses are not sufficiently remunerated for their work. Accordingly, they are susceptible to collecting bribes in order to self-censor or promote the agenda of particular groups and individuals, including politicians. While the National Media Commission cracks down on derogatory and provocative comments in all forms of media in the country, the significant role of the various media

types in fomenting the conflict between the Charismatic churches and the traditionalists cannot be overemphasised.

As I have argued above, the media in Ghana are not neutral actors but play a very significant role in constructing the discourse on the noise ban in Accra. This shows that religion and media can no longer be viewed as distinct entities (de Witte, 2003; Meyer, 2008). According to the discussion above, they cannot function independently of one another: the media can shape religious discourses, while religion can equally set the agenda for public discussions in the media. Thus, the relationship between the media and religious actors involves links of mutual interest. The demarcation between the two entities is therefore not clearly defined: actors, such as journalists, at times, mix-up which side of the boundary they find themselves, because the lines are blurred. This also shows that the relationship between the media and religion in a context like Ghana is complex and journalists find it difficult to separate their personal religious views from their work. Consequently, Hoover (2002) has argued that "rather than being autonomous actors involved in institutionalized projects in relation to each other, religion and media are increasingly converging. They are meeting on a common turf: the everyday world of lived experience" (p. 2). Finally, the discussion also reveals clearly the connection between religion, media and conflict. The way the media represents some religious forms such as indigenous religions can further the creation of 'otherness', which discourse links together religion and conflict.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have attempted to address the multifaceted nature of the confrontations between the Charismatic churches and Ga traditionalists. By so doing, I have looked at the religious dimensions such as the way in which the boundaries between the conflicting parties are defined as well as competing religious meanings ascribed to sound, music and performance. I have also discussed the role of leading actors in fomenting the conflict as well as intra-Pentecostal ecumenical competition and the use of the media space by diverse actors to inflame the confrontations. Accordingly, I have drawn the following conclusions:

First, resurgence in *Kpele* religion and Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity has given rise to conflict between the parties. The conflict involves the drawing of lines between 'us' and 'them'. One practices their religion as if the 'other' does not exist. For example, the loud aural practices and evangelism drives of the Charismatic churches' gives the signal that the

traditionalists do not exist, and if they did, they were there only to be assimilated into Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity. On the other hand, the traditionalists also affirm 'their' absolute autochthony and indigeneity rights to which the 'other' ought to adapt. That is to say, the Charismatic groups have to adapt to the cultural specificity and primo occupancy in Accra which the Ga traditionalists see as a basis for their specific rights. Consequently, they each totally negate the legitimacy of the 'other', leading in turn to the annual clashes. This raises questions about religious diversities in the country and how religions themselves co-exist. In this case, the leaders of both groups have drawn boundaries to negate each other's legitimacy. Therefore, it shows that conflict is an integral part of religious diversity in a pluralised context.

Second, it is clear that there are similarities in the way mediation is perceived in both religions. In Charismatic Christianity, as in indigenous religions, I see that the invisible transcendence is always made visible through certain forms of media. For example, sound is needed in both religions for the transcendence to materialise. Whereas Pentecostal-Charismatic churches' worship is characterised by loud sounds, the indigenous religious group call for silence, another form of sound. These similarities further highlight the role of music and performances in both groups. Nevertheless, I argue that, despite the normative idea that similarities engender religious diversity and that differences rather lead to conflicts, we see that similarities in both religions have rather served as the platform for the clashes between them. Therefore, it is clear that it is not only differences that lead to conflict but sometimes, resemblances also.

5. The Drum Politics: An enduring conflict

In the last chapter, we looked at the religious dimensions of the conflict by considering how boundaries between the parties are constructed, interpreted and negotiated. Specifically, we delved into how religious practices, religious specialists and religious discourses in the media give rise to the conflict. In this chapter, my main argument is that despite the centrality of religion in the discourses around the conflict, by and large, it has protracted due to the convergence of other factors such as governance, ethnic identities, socio-economic and resource-based grievances.

Some of my informants argue that the real motivation behind the violent clashes is socio-economic and political rather than religious, because the majority of the Ga youth mainly involved in the violence are primarily not religious. Alternatively, others, especially Pentecostal-Charismatic informants, are of the view that religious motivations are at the forefront of these encounters because the *Wulomei* and the leaders of the GTC, who play a prominent role in the clashes, are essentially religious representatives. Nevertheless, it is clear that the posture of non-compliance and the challenging of the legitimacy of the noise ban by these churches have been the source of the intense confrontations between them and the traditionalists since 1998. The questions really are, why has this conflict lingered for almost two decades? And how do the factors mentioned by the informants, be they socio-economic, political or religious, contribute to the intractable nature of the conflict? To answer these questions, this chapter explores the factors that have contributed to the prolongation of the conflict as well as to show the nation-state's responses to the clashes.

The chapter is broadly divided into three parts. First, I will look at what Azar (1990) refers to as the genesis of the conflict, comprised of the multicommunal encounters, deprivation of needs, the role of the nation-state and international links. Second, I will consider the process dynamics and the outcome of the conflict. Third, I will draw some conclusions based on the discussions on the factors that prolong the conflict.

Genesis of the Conflict

Encounters with Diversity: Accra as a cosmopolitan city⁶³

As I have argued in the introductory chapter of this study, Accra as a cosmopolitan city has been built on several encounters including religion, multi-ethnicity and commerce. The composition of the city in contemporary times reveals a complex history of pre-colonial settlements, the influx of local rural-urban migrants, colonial and post-colonial administration, commerce and territorial expansion (Parker, 2000). This gives the city a unique composition of different identity groups namely religious, ethnic, racial and cultural groups compared to a city like Kumasi. The Greater Accra region is a multi-communal area with residents from diverse ethnic and religious backgrounds. The communal content of a society, whether it is multicultural or homogeneous, according to Azar (1990) is the most important unit of a protracted social conflict (PSC) because PSCs are likely to take place in a multi-communal society (1990, p.7). This means that while multi-communal societies may or may not be the actual cause of the conflict, they actually help to protract them, depending on several factors such as the history of the interactions between identity groups and colonial legacies, in the context of post-colonial states like Ghana. It is imperative therefore to look at the complex history that formed the multicultural nature of the city of Accra.

Historical background to the composition of Accra

The vibrant cosmopolitan city we see today, which serves as both the political and commercial capital of Ghana, used to be more of an ethnically homogeneous area until the British colonial government transferred its headquarters in the Gold Coast from Cape Coast to the city in 1877. Upon establishing the Gold Coast protectorate in 1874, the colonial government embarked on restructuring traditional institutions through an extensive

⁶³ Cosmopolitanism is a complex concept which could be a subject for more extensive discussion. While some scholars (Florida, 2002) define it as the level to which an urban area is ethnically diverse, other scholars (Appiah, 2006) broadly look at it as a commitment to universalistic values, mutual respect among groups, greater levels of freedom and egalitarianism. Although the use of the word cosmopolitan in this study is more in line with the former definition, that is, seeing it in terms of how many of the inhabitants are foreign born, or how ethnically diverse the city is, my operational definition is, a city that provides ethnic diversity, economic opportunities and freedom. For more on cosmopolitanism read: Sevincer, Kitayama, & Varnum (2015) in <http://journal.frontiersin.org/article/10.3389/fpsyg.2015.01459/full#B53>

range of ordinances, with the view to consolidating political hegemony and establishing a capitalist economy. Thus, the change in the status of Accra brought with it the relocation of several colonial institutions and major projects that dramatically transformed it into a city with an important port serving a greater part of the British West Africa. This commercial development redefined Accra's place in the sub-region, which in turn attracted many people from the other regions in the then Gold Coast and other parts of the neighbouring colonies, especially the Yoruba⁶⁴, Hausa and Igbo traders (Daily Graphic, November 20, 2013). As these groups moved to the area to trade, they began to settle among the Ga people and to build settlements beyond the initial boundaries of the city. This culminated in the area becoming increasingly multi-communal as people arrived from different areas and backgrounds (Boahen, 1975; Parker, 2000).

One significant change brought about as a result of this colonial shift was the redefinition of the Ga people's principal asset: land. Since the Accra plains, unlike other regions, have no known natural resources such as gold, manganese or bauxite, and because of the arid climate, which serves as a disincentive for the cultivation of cash crops like cocoa, coffee, oil palm, timber or rubber in commercial quantities, land has become a precious commodity for the Ga people. One of my informants described the significance of the land to the Ga people, succinctly: "Land for us, is the equivalence of the gold or cocoa in the Ashanti and Western Regions" (Nuumo Okai I, personal communication, October 24, 2015). Quarcoopome (1992) has observed that, "land is of basic importance in the identity, integrity, solidarity and culture of any group of African people" (p. 40). Thus, land has been central to most of the conflicts in Accra, be they related to chieftaincy or religious motives, including the present confrontations with the Pentecostal-Charismatic churches, because it is the Ga people's most treasured material asset, to the extent that it is even linked to their existence.

The Ga people traditionally believe that the land on which they live belong to the gods. For example, in Ga Mashie, lands are thought to belong to the *Nai*, *Sakumo* and *Korle* deities. However, allodia rights are entrusted to the *Wulomei*, clans and families (*We*). In pre-colonial times, the *Wulomei*, as representatives of the gods, allocated land to the various families

⁶⁴ In 2013, the Yoruba community in Ghana celebrated 200 years of their presence in the Area with Nigerian High Commissioner to Ghana in attendance.

who needed it to settle in or to cultivate crops. This was done through customary laws that encouraged communal ownership of the land by all Ga people. This collective tenure system also insisted on a usufructory system by which land could neither be alienated or the allodia rights transferred (Sackeyfio, 2012). Nevertheless, there was a shift in the land tenure system when the British colonial government moved its commercial and political capital to Accra. The system based on social norms and customary laws was abandoned by the colonialists who instead introduced European-style town and country planning legislation. This move was necessitated by the demand for land by the colonial government and its bid to encourage multi-communalism in the territory. The population of Accra had increased dramatically because of the increased exodus of people to the city.

According to Quarcoopome (1992), before moving the capital to Accra, the colonial government enacted a Public Lands Ordinance in 1876 in order to acquire lands in the Greater Accra Region and other parts of the Gold Coast colony. To begin with, this ordinance granted the government the right to give land permits on otherwise traditional Ga lands. It also implied that the central government ignored local customary notions of land tenure where land was collectively owned by families and clans. Moreover, families were obliged under this new law, to alienate their lands to the colonial government to be developed for the public good with the view to encouraging a multi-communal society.

Apart from losing land to the central government and statutory bodies like the town council through the land ordinance in 1876, there was also land alienation by lease, started by the same colonial government through another piece of legislation, The Public Lands Ordinance in 1951 (Sackeyfio, 2012, p. 296). Under the lease agreements, the government took a great deal of land from the Ga people for a number of years, normally 99, by paying a small compensation and annual rent to the landowners. The leasing of land was continued by the post-colonial government that came to power after independence in 1957 as lands were leased for industrial expansion, offices and residential areas for the budding state capital. While the first land legislation deprived many Ga families of their land, Quarcoopome (1992) argues that if it had not been for the second legislation in 1951, namely the alienation of lands through leases, the Ga people would

have lost complete ownership of their entire land because of the initial colonial land policy (p. 44).⁶⁵

As the local Ga population realised they were losing all their lands to the central government and the 'foreign' populations, they started forming pressure groups, notably, the *Ga Shifimo Kpee* or the Ga Steadfast Association, four months after independence, and later *Ga ekome feemo Kpee* or the Ga Unity Party. These organisations were formed by the Ga people led by the *Nai Wulɔmɔ*, to protect their interests, including lands, from the invasion of 'foreigners' who had migrated to Accra from other parts of the country. The slogans used by the Ga Steadfast Association included: *Ga shikpon*, *Ga mei Anoni* (Ga lands are for Ga people); *Ga mei abii, nye teashi* (People of Ga descent arise) and *Gboi mli gbewo* (We are being despoiled by strangers) (Quarcoopome, 1992).

This reveals that, although they were formed to defend the indiscriminate alienation of Ga lands, the main intention of the pressure groups was to incite Ga nationalistic sentiments against other groups they considered strangers, who had moved to Accra to 'grab' their lands. This also reveals different meanings of citizenship to different people: one can be a citizen of Ghana but a stranger in the Ga homeland of Accra because of one's ethnicity. In the view of these pressure groups, and to a greater extent the GTC, citizenship or belonging in the Greater Accra region is constituted by ethnicity and not by a national agenda advocated by the colonial government or the Ghanaian state. Moreover, the concept of ethnicity connotes the idea of belonging, which implies the building of boundaries between social groups. The issue of 'who belongs in Accra' has been of particular interest, and it is very much disputed because irrespective of whether one is born in Accra or has taken an extended period of residence, does not bestow Ga citizenship on an individual as long as they are not Ga by ethnicity. This relationship between ethnicity and local views of belonging and citizenship is however not exclusive to Accra but a widespread notion in the entire country. It is corroborated by the following statement by the estranged head of the traditionalists group, Afrikania:

You have to bear in mind that not all of us signed up for the Ghana project. We have been very quiet because we believe that the formation of Ghana is

⁶⁵ The GTC led by its lawyer Bright Akwetey have gone to court several times to argue for a return of most leased lands to the original families who owned them. But they have not been successful at getting the Supreme Court of Ghana to rule in their favour, after several attempts.

an artificial one. We are first Akan, Ga and Ewe before we are Ghanaians (N. Quarm, personal communication, September 10, 2015).⁶⁶

The idea of belonging based on ethnicity raises questions about the colonial nation's building strategies, in which ethnicity was used by the British as part of their divide-and-rule system of governance that exploited the citizen-settler discourse as well as the historical competition between ethnic groups (Boahen, 1975). The issue becomes even more complex when the GTC refers to adherents of Pentecostal-Charismatic churches as strangers because there are many people who are Ga natives who belong to these church groups. The 'stranger' tag obviously implies the categorisation of the Charismatics as Akan, which is problematic and can be read as existing in the imagination of the traditionalists, mainly to demarcate a boundary between them and the churches – a strategy of exclusion.

The Ga nationalist groups were later disbanded and dissolved by legislation, the Avoidance of Discrimination Act (1957), introduced by the Kwame Nkrumah government, which forbade the existence of parties formed along ethnic and religious lines (Boahen, 1975). The introduction of this legislation and subsequent banning of the *Ga Shifimo Kpee* group was because it had become a radical organisation which threatened the security and the multi-communal fabric of the capital of the young nation-state (Quarcoopome, 1992). Nevertheless, over the years new Ga nationalist organisations have replaced the *Ga Shifimo Kpee*, most notable among these, the Ga-Dangme Council and Ga-Dangme Youth Association, which are currently active and fighting for the cause of the Ga people and their lands. These groups have used the land discourse in the fourth republic (1992 to date) to advance other interests, and sometimes this has led to various conflicts within the Greater Accra region. They are clearly not as radical as the groups that emerged in the period immediately after independence, but they nevertheless account for some of the conflict that occur. They have fought several encounters with the Ghanaian government in court because they believe that successive governments since 1992 have refused to return lands alienated to the colonial government for 'public

⁶⁶ Nana Quarm is the leader of one faction of the Afrikania Mission, a group started by Osofo Okomfo Damoah, an ex-Catholic Priest, with the aim of modernizing indigenous religions. His comment is strange because Afrikania prides itself on not defending any particular ethnic group but fighting for the unity of all indigenous religions. Nana Quarm's direct succession to the leadership of the mission has been in dispute since the death of the founder of Afrikania Mission.

necessity' after the expiration of the lease. They have accused various governments of selling on these lands to rich and powerful 'strangers' for commercial purposes, which does not amount to the public's interest.⁶⁷ The implications of the land policies of the British colonial administration have obviously spilled over to affect the clashes over the noise ban.

Land issues, the noise ban and the clashes

While they fight the Ghanaian government in court, these groups also fight 'strangers' who they think have occupied their lands and continue to disrespect their culture. The agenda of the Ga-Dangme Council and the Ga-Dangme Youth Association clearly affects social cohesion and multi-communal integration in Accra. Although the land question is admittedly a delicate subject for the Ga traditionalists – people become inflamed with passion whenever it comes up in public discussions – the traditionalists have also used it as leverage in their dealings with other groups such as the churches. The following by a representative of the GTC reveals the position of the group as it relates to the conflict:

You should know that Accra might be a cosmopolitan city, but there are still indigenous people who have sacrificed over 95% of their land for others to join them and for the city to be built. If you buy our lands using any other means other than the prescribed means, then you are going to have to return it. These indigenous people are still here; they have not been removed. Accra is not like Abuja which was created from scratch. There you can say there are no indigenous people and so no custom to be obeyed. But everybody in Ghana comes from a place where there is a custom, tradition or convention to be obeyed. Strangely, we all religiously obey our local religious customs but when we come to Accra, we behave as if the people in Accra do not matter. If we respect their laws – especially the one-month ban, all of us will have peace. But if you do any noisy thing you are not only infringing on the rights of the traditionalists in Accra, you are also disturbing your neighbour. But it is the adamantness of some people who do not respect the traditions of the indigenous people that is worrying. They go to their hometowns or villages and they go to obey the customs there and come back to Accra and behave as if those of us here don't exist. It is something that we should cultivate to respect each other's personal rights and traditions (Bright Akwetey, personal communication, Accra, Sep 10, 2015).

⁶⁷ Bright Akwetey has taken the land issue to the Supreme Courts of Ghana on several occasions but each time, the ruling has not gone in the favour of the Ga group. He argues that the courts are not making reference to the original ordinances introduced by the colonial government, which ushered in the alienation of Ga lands.

As we have already stated, the Christian community remains the most dominant religious community in Ghana and among them, the Pentecostal-Charismatic strand is a powerful group, especially churches like the LCI, ICGC, Victory Bible Church, Royalhouse Chapel and Action Chapel International. These churches have mostly used their influence, wealth and connections within successive governments to acquire properties and lands in strategic areas within the city. Their aggressive expansion indicates that land acquisition remains an integral part of their evangelisation strategy. However, they tend to overlook bodies like the GTC and Ga chiefs in the acquisition of lands which were hitherto procured by the colonial and post-independent governments for public use. This is unpopular with the traditionalists as shown in the above statement by a representative of the GTC. Such disregard in land negotiations by the churches is interpreted not only in financial terms but also as disrespect for Ga customs, which has contributed to some of the more prominent clashes between the two parties.

First, the conflict between the Ga residents of Korle-Gonno and the LCI in 1998 was partly due to concerns over what they referred to as a communal parcel of land along with a suspicion that the church was going to acquire all the adjoining houses near its then headquarters, demolish the buildings and relocate the residents of the area. This suspicion was further fuelled by LCI's actions when it secured a lease from the Accra Metropolitan Assembly to build a car park on a nearby piece of land which had served as the community's playground and rubbish disposal area. We see here a typical case of a Charismatic church negotiating with the local government representatives without the involvement of the local chiefs in an area that is demarcated as a family land. The church's actions therefore provoked several attacks by the Ga youth on its property until it finally spilled over to the noise ban attack on the 31st of May 1998.

Second, the 2001 conflict between the GTC represented by the *Wulomei* and the Ga youth on the one side and the Christ Apostolic Church on the other side also centred on land issues. Apart from the fact that the church was attacked for flouting the noise ban, it later became known that the land on which the church's headquarters was situated was a mausoleum for the Osu royal family. These two incidents highlight that land is so important to the GTC that they will go far to defend it, even using it as a reason for the attacks on the churches. Again, we see that the traditionalists sometimes use the churches' refusal to abide by the noise ban to express their underlying disappointment over the land alienation policies pursued by the colonial and post-colonial administrations.

Another essential point to be drawn from the statement above, is the perception of the GTC that a section of the population does not comply with their customs. All three senior *Wulɔmei* have specifically picked out the Ashanti subgroup of Akan and pointed to their disregard for Ga traditions. One of them puts it this way:

There are particular practices people abide by in the Ashanti region. For example, when there is a funeral, you are expected to go without food. It is strange that they obey the Asantehene's directive over there in Kumasi but when the same people come to Accra they treat our directives with contempt. Unfortunately, any customary laws we pass are flouted with impunity by the Charismatics. They see our tradition and culture as backward, evil and anti-progress. That has been my greatest pain since I was made a *Wulɔmɔ* (Numo Okai I, *personal communication*, October 24, 2015).

While the traditionalists accept that Accra is a multi-communal city, they also want their customs to be respected by the diverse groups in the city. They believe the dominant Akan groups follow their traditional customs in the comparatively homogeneous Akan settlements like Kumasi. However, this comparison comes out of some historical contentions between the Ga people and the Akan people in general and the Ashantis in particular. Historically, the Ga people fought wars with the Akwamu and Ashanti (Akan) in pre-colonial times. In 1680, the Akwamus defeated the Ga people after war had broken out between them in 1677. This defeat led the Akwamu to rule over the Ga for the next fifty years until they were defeated by a coalition of Ga, Adangme and Akan groups, Akwapim and Akyem in 1730 (Odotei, 1991). Odotei (1991) asserts that the defeat of the Ga led to the influx of migrants from the neighbouring towns into the Ga dominated area along the coast. Thus, this could be seen as the beginning of the formation of a multi-ethnic society in the Accra plains though not on the same scale as we have today.

Furthermore, the Ga have a long-standing rivalry with the Ashanti, which led to war between the two groups in the pre-colonial times. The Ashantis ruled over the Ga people from 1742 after they defeated the Akyem, who previously had suzerainty over the Ga. The Ashanti hegemony over the Ga continued until 1826, when the Ga, with the help of the British and an alliance of coastal states, defeated the Ashanti in the war of Katamanso (Odotei, 1991). Accordingly, we see that there were historical rivalries between these ethnic groups as a result of which there was always suspicion and mistrust among them. The British colonial government capitalised on this distrust to build its Gold Coast protectorate using a divide-and-rule political strategy, which broke up the existing power structures of

the ethnic groups, instigated further rivalries and provoked discord among them so that it became difficult for them to unite in revolt against the British crown.

It is clear therefore that the effort by the British to build an integrated multi-communal society from these historical rivals may be a contributing factor in several conflicts including that between the Ga traditionalists and the Charismatic churches, which the GTC associates with the Ashanti (Akan). The tendency to refer to the Pentecostal-Charismatic groups as 'Akan' may be due to their perceived dominance and growing use of the Akan dialects as the lingua franca in the Greater Accra region.

Finally, as Azar (1990) states, the communal content of a society, such as multi-ethnic and multi-religious communities, have the potential to lead to a PSC. In this case, Accra's multi-communal status is affected by external factors like the colonial legacy of land alienation through the European-style land tenure system, which is foreign to the local notions of land usage and leads to communal anxieties within the city of Accra. Along with the internal dynamics and dominance of the Akan groups and a history of rivalries between the ethnic groups, this contributes significantly to the conflict between the Ga traditionalists and the Akan-dominated Charismatic church groups.

Deprivation of Human Needs

Azar (1990) has argued that deprivation of human needs is an underlying source of PSCs. For him, needs, unlike interests, are ontological and therefore non-negotiable; thus, they can lead to extreme, violent conflicts if not addressed. He particularly refers to acceptance needs (including cultural and religious expressions), access needs and security needs (pp. 7-9).

Access Needs: To begin with, we shall look at access needs defined by Azar (1990) as the need for recognition of a person's identity in terms of common cultural values and heritage. Identity is a complex concept. There are different ways of conceptualising it namely, primordial, instrumentalist and social constructionist notions (Brown and Langer, 2010). Different notions of identity play out among the parties in the present conflict but religion, ethnicity and the region people come from in Ghana have been of particular interest. Typically, when the Ga traditionalists talk about their identity it is usually in reference to ethnicity and religion in the primordial sense of the word, which is to say that their identities are linked to their ancestry or kinship. In other ways, it is used as a tool for mobilisation

in the sense of the instrumental notions of identity. Whereas the Charismatic group cannot be said to be entirely free from the assumption of the primordial character of ethnic identity, they tend rather to emphasise the born-again experience, which ultimately means a break from tradition and the past. Accordingly, they tend to use identity in the instrumentalist sense as they make use of their multiple identities (ethnicity, religion and region). This is because individuals carry different identities which are flexible and constructed through social processes. The Ga Charismatic Christians, for example, have the propensity to use their Ga identity as and when it is relevant. This can be illustrated with a case from 1999 in which the Victory Bible Church was attacked by Ga youth, and the church's bishop, Nii Tackie Yarboi used his identity as a Ga native to dialogue with the *Wulomei* (Nuumo Ogbamey III, personal communication, September 25, 2015; *The Independent*, May 18, 1999, p. 3). It is clear then, that at any given point in time one aspect of a person's or a group's identity can become more important to them than other features of it.

In this present conflict, one of the grievances expressed by the Ga traditionalists and the *Wulomei* is the issue of the decline in the use of the Ga language in the Greater Accra region. Several leaders of the GTC have recently bemoaned the loss of interest in the Ga language in the school system and the media. They have blamed it on lack of trained teachers to teach the younger generation their language in their homeland, while schools are forced to teach Twi, an Akan dialect, in schools in Accra. In the school system in Ghana, languages are taught based on the dominant language of a particular region. For example, in the Western and Central regions of Ghana, Fante, another Akan dialect, is used in schools and local media because these regions are predominantly Akan. It is only in the Greater Accra region that the Ghana Education Services allows for two concurrent languages to be taught in schools. A leading GTC voice has said that the lack of Ga teachers is "an excuse to weaken and annihilate any signs of our cultural heritage, which is basically our language and our land." Although the GTC may feel there has been a conscious effort by the various Akan-dominated ruling governments to relegate their language to the background, my observations revealed that the Ga language is very active in the mediascape of Accra (*Ghanaian Chronicle*, May 8, 2009; Nuumo Blafo III, personal communication, January 20, 2014). The national broadcaster, the GBC has set up a radio station and a television station called Obonu FM and Obonu TV respectively, solely for broadcasting Ga related content. Nevertheless, these are overshadowed by over 60 privately

owned Akan-speaking FM radio and television stations, and it is these private stations that fill the airwaves in Accra. The GTC's position is for the Ga language to assume the same prominence in Accra just as the Akan dialects or Ewe language dominates in predominantly Akan or Ewe regions. This position is critical considering Carmen (2006) argues that language becomes the main vehicle through which cultures, customs and religion are preserved. It is a key element, the means by which people point to and reproduce their nuanced identities. Therefore, neglecting a language could have serious ramifications on a group's culture (p. 20). The language question has been so prominent that, on the 26 April 2005, the Ga-Dangme Council, a Ga pressure group, organised a protest march and presented a petition to the national parliament and the office of the president on the need to restore the Ga language as the only indigenous language in basic schools in Accra.⁶⁸

On the other hand, the Charismatic churches use mainly English and Twi (Akan) for their services with very few exceptions, who use Ga and Ewe, mainly through a translator, even when the pastors are native speakers. Megachurches like the ICGC and LCI strictly use English, arguing that it is the unifying language in a multi-ethnic context. In addition to the issue of English language bringing people together, this is also a matter of the social class of most Charismatic churches whose membership tend to be youthful, upwardly mobile and educated. The use of English is also consistent with their tendency to remain international in outlook and to connect with the global Pentecostal movement. The Charismatic churches' reaction to the Ga traditionalists and the plight of their language can be summed up by this view expressed by a pastor:

I hear this argument of depriving people of their culture because of our use of the English language all the time. You can't make people conceptualise complex issues in a language that doesn't have any documentation. Language is not only for conversation. Unfortunately, many of our local languages have just been reduced into conversation languages, which for me is not what I should reduce people to. If I want to teach people concepts of management and economics, or science how do I bring it down to people in a language that is reduced to only conversation. If you talk about local languages like Swahili, Hausa or may be Afrikaans that is different. But where you have a language that probably has 600 words and not even one story

⁶⁸ Ghana News Agency, Tuesday Apr 26th 2005 and Ghanaian Times, Monday Apr 25th 2005. It must be noted that the GTC dissociated itself from this event, claiming its leadership was not consulted by the pressure group.

book is written on it, it becomes difficult. There is no text book in this Ga language. I don't know why I would want to teach my youth in such a language.

No problem for the older people but the youth who are going to be competing on the global stage have to be taught in a globalized world. When I changed the style of music [from local forms to international] in the church, the church improved. This is because music is not written in my local language. I don't know how I am going to explain the G-cliff and all that in my local language for them. So, for me, if there is a language that will bring development, I am all for it. So, I am not averse to local language – I am a son of the land, a Ga. I am not against any local language but I am saying don't reduce the language to only a cosmetic thing. You realise that most of all the people who advocate for local languages are Ga elite who went to Harvard, Oxford and all these European universities but they won't even start by writing story books. If I want to use a computer, there is no computer in the Ga language. Then it becomes a bit of a challenge. Therefore, anyone who really wants to be taught and preached to in Ga can go to the church next door. Some churches here in the vicinity conduct church services in Ga and I am not going to compete with them. The vision I carry and what I want to do I must do it with the best tools I have at hand. The truth is that I am not very proficient in the Ga language even though it is my first language (B. Arde-Acquah, personal communication, March 26, 2015).

The view above contains certain factual inaccuracies such as the number of words that constitute the language and the claim that there are no story books or textbooks because the Ga language can be studied up to PhD level and certainly there is a lot of reading material on the market.⁶⁹ Of course, the pace of the development of the Ga language can certainly not be compared to that of Swahili or Hausa, because these are international languages, crossing several borders. The position above is reiterated by many other Charismatic informants, which says more about the Charismatic churches and their penchant to internationalise than it does about the development of the Ga language. This reveals that the Charismatic churches have remained rather ambivalent, if not completely against the Ga traditionalists' push for a more vibrant policy decision on their language.

As this grievance is consistently presented by its advocates, the GTC, the *Wulomei* and the Ga elite collectively, it is imperative that the concerned stakeholders address it. Azar (1990) argues that, since grievances

⁶⁹ For more on Ga language and its development see: Kropp-Dakubu, M. E. (1997), *Korle Meets the Sea: A Sociolinguistic history of Accra*. New York: Oxford University Press.

resulting from need deprivation, and which are expressed jointly as a community, “cultivates a niche for a protracted social conflict” if not redressed by the appropriate authorities (p. 9). Although the GTC recognises that the Ga are no more the majority in Accra, they have put forward a collective case for their language, cultural practices and religion to remain vibrant in their traditional home. These are factors that trouble their identity as an ethnic group and they seem to be the main distinguishing elements between them and other groups in Ghana. What makes this language issue extremely sensitive is the fact that a few leaders of the GTC and the Ga-Dangme council with personal interests and power front it as the view of an entire community, and this has the potential to incite strong sentiments since it concerns the marginalisation of a group.

Another concern about access needs that has been expressed by members of the GTC is the sense that the Ga people are mostly at the margins of the Ghanaian political and decision-making institutions. This grievance started gathering momentum during the Kufuor regime, when the perceived Akan-dominated New Patriotic Party (NPP) assumed power from 2001-2009. At the time, members of the GTC complained about the conscious attempt by the government to exclude Ga people even in the Greater Accra region. The NPP government was accused of deliberately undermining even the few people of Ga descent who formed part of their government. The GTC argued that, even though these Ga politicians were part of the decision-making institutions as regards the government machinery, none of them was given critical portfolios that would make any serious input at the national or regional level. They mentioned, for example, the ministries of finance, foreign affairs, and the Attorney General’s department as some of the key ministries they expected Ga people to occupy (J. Yarboi, personal communication, January 23, 2014). The question begs to be asked of who determines what is an important portfolio in governance and what is not because, for example, a Ga native Peter Ala Adjetey was appointed the speaker of parliament and Mike Ocquaye, another Ga, held the ministries of Energy and Communications at various times. Additionally, B.J. da Rocha, Odoi Sykes, Peter Ala Adjetey and Jake Obetsebi Lamptey served as Chairmen of this perceived Akan-dominated party at different stages, although they were Ga by birth and upbringing.

This perception of discrimination of the Ga may be due to the nature of the multi-party democracy, adopted in 1992, in which only a simple majority is needed to win parliamentary, metropolitan, municipal and district-level elections. The process of simple majority means that numbers

are critical for election victories at every level. This is compounded by the fact that since the start of the fourth republic, Ghanaians have tended to vote along the lines of ethnicity and regionalism. For example, in the 2012 elections, out of 47 members of Parliament in the Ashanti Region, an Akan dominated area, all the MPs were Akan, with the exception of three who were of northern extraction but born and bred in the region and considered typical products of the area. Furthermore, 46 of them belonged to the NPP while the National Democratic Congress (NDC), perceived as being Ewe and northern dominated, had only one MP in the region. The same can be said of the Volta Region, where all 27 MPs are Ewe and also belong to the NDC.⁷⁰

As a result of voting taking place along ethnic lines, some politicians of Ga descent have suffered defeat at various levels because, as we alluded to earlier, they are no longer the majority in the Greater Accra and they feel the 'foreigners' have been taking control of the political space too. Nevertheless, a critical look at the 2012 election of MPs in the Greater Accra Region has revealed that out of the 34 seats in the Greater Accra Region, the majority 20, were of Ga-Dangme ethnicity despite the Greater Accra region being the most multi-communal society of all the regions in Ghana. All the metropolitan, municipal and district chief executives as well as the Regional Minister were found to be Ga-Dangme. Additionally, the recent suspension of Sammy Crabbe⁷¹ and Nyaho Nyaho Tamakloe, Ga natives on the NPP national executive council and council of elders, respectively, from office for breaching various party conventions has fed the perception of the political marginalisation of the Ga people. Indeed, Ga people are obviously as politically active as other ethnicities (Daily Guide, December 11, 2015). The concerns raised by the GTC over the years have been used by some politicians as a tool to amass political capital. This perception, whether true or false, is expressed collectively as a grievance by the GTC and so constitutes a niche for a PSC if not attended to.

Furthermore, the decline of the powers of the chiefs and *Wulɔmei* may have also contributed to deepening the Ga marginalisation discourse put

⁷⁰ See: <http://www.parliament.gh/parliamentarians>, Accessed April 15, 2016.

⁷¹ Sammy Crabbe served as one of the Vice Presidents of the NPP's national executive council, the only Ga on the 10-member committee. Nyaho Tamakloe is a founder member of the NPP.

forward by some members of the GTC. In the past, the chiefs and the *Wulɔmei* were the main leading voices in the Ga communities, and they had the final say on issues such as land allocation, conflict resolution, and traditional authority. However, since colonial times, their authority has been drastically reduced and replaced with governance structures in a modern state which questions the very existence of traditional authority (although the fourth republican constitution grants traditional authorities some autonomy through the establishment of the national houses of chiefs, an umbrella body for all traditional rulers in Ghana). The Ga chiefs and *Wulɔmei*, like all traditional rulers, are also given some privileges under the law to perform some adjudication and mediation of conflicts, especially when it does not border on criminality. I witnessed some alternative dispute resolution sessions at the *Nai We* and *Sakumɔ We*, where the priests mediated in some domestic conflicts successfully. However, it is obvious that their relevance has been reduced by the multi-communal society espoused by the national constitution. From the time of Ghana's independence, when the first President, Kwame Nkrumah introduced multi-faith prayers at national events, the *Wulɔmei* had been pouring libations as representatives of indigenous religions at these occasions until 2009 when the John Evans Mills led NDC government removed indigenous religious prayers from national functions, leaving only the Christian and Islamic prayers. This action fuelled the Ga marginalisation discourse and it has been one of the things the traditionalists point to when discussing the issue of political access by the Ga.

Security needs: With regard to security needs, Azar (1990) refers to material needs or infrastructural variables for physical security, nutrition, housing and so forth. One of the critical security needs in the Ga traditional areas arises from the lack of proper housing as a result of widespread poverty within these communities. On several visits to Ga Mashie or Central Accra, one of the sights that catch the attention of visitors is the number of people sleeping on mats on the shoulder of the access streets in the community during the night and early in the morning. This practice is pervasive mainly due to overcrowding in homes and poor housing conditions in the area. On one particular visit, I counted more than forty adults and children in a six-bedroom house. The conditions in which some people live is deplorable, with a bad sewage system and lack of proper waste management arrangement compared to that in the more affluent parts of the city. One of my Charismatic church informants, who is also a social worker,

links the conditions to increased levels of illiteracy and its attendant problems like prostitution, drug abuse and teenage pregnancy within the traditional areas. He argues that most of the educated people leave the traditional areas and move to other parts of the city with better conditions. With education, they are empowered and are able to participate effectively in the job market and move out of poverty. On the other hand, a key GTC informant disagrees, rather arguing that it is because their lands have been compulsorily taken away from them that they are unable to expand, resulting in overcrowding in the traditional areas. He argues further that successive governments have failed to create enough jobs, especially for the youth, and this is why he thinks the issue of poverty and bad housing conditions should be looked at as a national problem and not only restricted to Ga traditional areas (B. Arde-Acquah, personal communication, March 26, 2015; E. Sackey, personal communication, September 14, 2015). The situation in Accra is such that, while one group of individuals, especially those who live in the affluent sections of the city, enjoy the satisfaction of their needs in abundance, communities in the traditional areas do not. From the views of these informants, we see both sides recognise poverty as endemic in the area and, coupled with the deplorable housing conditions, we can frame it as need deprivation in the traditional area. Azar (1990) argues that individual or communal survival hinges on the satisfaction of material needs and the deprivation of one form of developmental need, be it access, acceptance or security need generally gives rise to problems in other areas (pp. 9-10).

Furthermore, it is important to note that most of the Ga youth involved in the annual fracas with the Charismatic churches are unemployed or lack economic opportunities and this contributes to the motive for attacking churches to extort money from them, even when they have not been sent out by the *Wulomei* or the traditional council. The ban period therefore becomes a 'harvest time' for the unemployed youth. The incidents involving private individuals and groups of Ga youth going around enforcing the ban and making money from it has in recent times assumed higher proportions, to the extent that the Accra Metropolitan Assembly has warned the public over the unauthorised noise ban task force (Ghana News Agency, April 28, 2016). Nonetheless, as long as youth unemployment, the housing deficit and other security needs are not met in the traditional areas, they will serve as the grounds for the Ga youth to foment the chaos that finally leads to a PSC. It must also be stated that, while the young men may fight for the cause of the Ga people, because they have few opportunities, are

unemployed and uneducated, they also generally fight out of loyalty to the Ga group and their cause.

The Role of the Nation-State

According to Azar (1990), state governance and the role of the state are fundamental factors in either frustrating or satisfying individual or identity group needs. In a PSC, a dominant social group's monopolisation of power restricts the ability of the state to meet the needs of all social groups. While the monopolisation of power by one particular social group might not apply to Ghana, it is significant here to look at how different Ghanaian governments have dealt with the grievances expressed by the Ga traditionalists. The role of the various Ghanaian governments in handling the grievances of the Ga people have so far been mixed.

Post-Independence Ghana: From independence in 1957, when Ga nationalist groups such as the Ga Steadfast Association (*Ga shifimo kpee*) was formed to protect the general interest of the Ga people on issues affecting land and to resist the monopolisation of power by the Akan majority group, the government of Kwame Nkrumah adopted several means to deal with them. First, since the group became xenophobic and also aligned themselves with the opposition parties, the government adopted legislation such as the Avoidance of Discrimination Act (1957), which forbade the formation of parties along regional, religious and ethnic lines; and the Preventive Detention Act (1958), which gave the government the right to detain anyone deemed a threat to national security for five years without trial. This legislation was introduced as a measure to control and coerce groups like the Ga nationalists, who were deemed as part of the opposition political party of the time (Quarcoopome, 1992, p. 49). Secondly, the Kwame Nkrumah led government also formed a counter Ga nationalist group, *Ga ekome feemo kpee* to neutralise the effect of the *Ga shifimo kpee* and to confront its violent strategies. Accordingly, the state apparatus in the first republic used coercive repression by introducing legislation that rendered the activities of the nationalist groups illegal and therefore went ahead to arrest and prosecute most of its members along with members of the opposition political parties. While the first post-colonial government repressed the nationalist groups, they simultaneously co-opted members of the group through the formation of the counter government supported Ga unity group (Botwe-Asamoah, 2005, p. 123). These actions by the state crippled the activism of the Ga groups and failed to address their concerns and grievances regarding Ga lands.

Fourth Republic: When Ghana returned to democratic rule in 1992 after several years of military rule, pressure groups such as the Ga-Dangme Council were also formed to advance the land issue and the general concerns of the Ga people. The first government in the fourth republic (1992-2000), led by Jerry Rawlings, saw the renewed Ga nationalism through the implementation of the noise ban by the GTC. Accordingly, the 1998 confrontations between the Lighthouse Chapel International and the traditionalists became the first major conflict outside the land disputes in Accra to confront the NDC government. While the government sought a resolution between the churches and the GTC, there were reports of the politicisation of ethnicity by state functionaries. First, the minister of interior, Nii Okaija Adamafo was accused by the Christian groups of siding with the Ga. Although I argue that the minister's statement: "It is wrong for certain people to assume that such practices, such as the ban on drumming, is fetish and therefore of no significance to society," made in the immediate aftermath of the 1998 clashes between the traditionalists and the LCI cannot be read as the government position at the time, certain actions by him and other government officials amounted to interference in the work of some state institutions (Daily Graphic, June 9, 1998). For example, none of the Ga youth arrested after clashes was prosecuted because, according to some informants, a group of state officials intervened and they were released from police custody without any charges being pursued against them (J. Bannerman, C. Vanderpuye & S. Lokko, personal communication, May 11, 2014). While Nii Okaija was the minister of interior, and therefore the person in charge of the inland security agencies like the police, immigration services and prisons services, he was also, a Ga native and a member of parliament for Odododiodio, one of the biggest constituencies in Accra.

These actions by the minister of state can be understood as those of a politician who was ready to do everything in his means to satisfy his constituents as elections were looming barely two years after the clashes. As we have suggested earlier, elections in Ghana are a game of numbers, and people tend to vote along ethnic lines. His decision to stand with the traditionalists was received as an example of the state taking sides in a conflict involving two communities for which it was supposed to be the unbiased referee. It was apparently a case of conflict of interest on the side of the minister. I argue here that the salience of a specific identity such as ethnicity is increased by political action on behalf of political leaders with the purpose of raising awareness about their own identity. Moreover, the Ghana Pentecostal Council boycotted the committee that was set up to try

and resolve the impasse between the LCI and traditionalists in the Korle-Gonno area because they believed the state was not an impartial arbiter, as it had sided with the Ga traditionalists in order to gain political capital (Daily Graphic, Jun 9, 1998; Ghana Pentecostal Council, Press Statement, June 3, 1998, p.1). This was a complex situation because, considering the 'numbers game' in the political situation, one would have expected the state to have taken the side of the Charismatic church group, but this is clearly a case of the minister of state's position and allegiance to his constituents being interpreted as the position of the state. The state's stance, despite forming a seemingly neutral Awortwi commission to deal with the issues, was not helped by the fact that there was no other official condemnation of the actions of the minister, which amounted to endorsing his decisions.

The issue of the politicisation of ethnicity in the fourth republic came to a full expression in the run up to the 2000 elections. According to my informants, there was news going round in Accra that a vote for the opposition New Patriotic Party (NPP) was a vote for the Ashantis to dominate the political landscape and establish a cultural hegemony over the other ethnic groups. Some leading members of the Ga Dangme Council used the perceived marginalisation of the Ga people to warn people against voting for the NPP. The NPP administration came under even more pressure when some aggrieved members of the Ga Dangme council, who were also leading members of the NDC, used the 2001 confrontations between the Charismatic churches and the GTC to incite the Ga people against other ethnic groups as a way of discrediting the NPP government (Asante, 2011). Therefore, the political elite have also used demonising propaganda, such as capitalising on the ban conflict, to politicise ethnicity at the expense of their opponents. However, the NPP government which ruled during the second phase of this study (2002-2008) shifted the focus of the conflict between the two parties from one of religion and ethnicity to one based on an environmentalist discourse in which noise was treated as an environmental hazard. This enabled the government to use a task force of officers from the Environmental Protection Agency, the Accra Metropolitan Assembly and the Police to enforce the existing by-laws on abatement of nuisance. This shift of focus by the state can be framed as a form of suppressive strategy to deal with the conflict as well as move away from the distrust shown by some members of the Ga community towards the predominantly Akan political party. This method of suppression ushered

in a relative calm within the second phase as far as the clashes are concerned but they were able to do so because their electoral fortunes in Accra did not lie in the traditional Ga areas.

When the NPP government lost political power to the National Democratic Congress (NDC) in 2008, there was a reconstitution of the noise nuisance task force (from 2009 to 2016). Whereas, in this period, the GTC have become the main task force, working with the help of the police in certain instances, the discourse has since shifted from the environmental one.

International Links

In this section, I will argue that the role of some external forces has a direct influence on this conflict. Edward Azar (1990) refers to the fourth cluster, international linkages, as the economic, political, and military relations that keep PSC laden states economically and/or politically dependent upon states that are richer and stronger than they are (p. 11). Ghana has, to a large extent, been economically dependent on the Bretton Woods institutions: The International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank for many years. The country has been on and off IMF programmes since the resumption of the multiparty democracy. As recently as April 2015, the country went back to the IMF for a three-year extended credit facility to stabilise its economy.⁷² These facilities usually come with conditions that are arguably harsh on the local economy because they normally include austerity measures meant to instil fiscal discipline. These measures have often led to high taxation and a freeze on employment, especially in the public sector. This further makes the country almost always dependent on the more powerful Europeans and North Americans who control the Bretton Woods institutions. This kind of dependence dictates what these institutions determine as priority areas for the country, which most often than not, are not areas of priority for the citizenry. On the contrary, the Bretton Woods programmes and donor dependence results in high unemployment levels and widespread poverty, the very things they are set out to arrest. The strategies of the Bretton Woods institutions and donor countries have been questioned from time to time. They have been perceived as overly concentrated on increasing investment within the education and health sectors and controlling spending within these sectors as a poverty reduction

⁷² See: <https://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/scr/2015/cr15103.pdf>, Accessed Apr 15, 2016

strategy. What is clear is that, although the budgetary allocations to these social sectors are increased, they do not result in improved poverty reduction because of poor monitoring of public expenditure and bad management of state resources through corruption (Toye & Jackson, 1996).

In addition to overdependence on the donor institutions, the aspect of international linkage relevant to our case, is the role played by the various Ga Associations in the diaspora, who instigate bodies like the GTC and pressure groups like Ga Dangme Council and Ga Youth Association to stand up for the right of the Ga people in Ghana. There are Ga migrant associations in the global north who constantly bring the land issues and the noise ban into public discussions by organising symposia and fundraisers aimed at citizen empowerment and developmental projects in the Greater Accra region. Three major international organisations that are based in the diaspora who champion the cause of the Ga people: the GaDangme Global Alliance, a think tank based in the USA that was formed to focus on the development needs of both the Ga and Dangme traditional areas; GaDangme International and GaDangme Europe, which are associations of Ga and Dangme people based in North America (USA and Canada) and Europe (Italy, Netherlands, Germany, the United Kingdom) respectively (Quaye, 2015). Over the years, these organisations have been active in the issues regarding the noise ban and the land through sponsoring leaders of the GTC and other Ga pressure groups and encouraging them to fight for the cause of the Ga people. These external forces incentivise the GTC and the Ga youth to clamp down on the churches they perceive as disrespecting Ga tradition and culture (Quaye, 2015). This dimension of international linkage as a contributory factor to PSCs is a logical point of departure from what Edward Azar's theoretical framework originally captured, that is, the state's dependence on richer, more prosperous nations for military and economic support. The theory is silent in respect to diaspora actors who can influence the outcome of an internal conflict through financial and other means. On the aspect of internationalisation, one of the characteristics of the Charismatic churches is their transnational self-representation. The churches see themselves as belonging to a larger international family of Pentecostals, thus, transcending any local culture or even the national boundaries of Ghana. This is one of the notions that informs their non-compliance with the noise ban, in turn leading to the clashes.

Process Dynamics of the Conflict

Edward Azar argues that for any one of the four clusters of preconditions for a PSC, that is, communal content, deprivation of human needs, role of government or state and international linkages, to start off overt conflicts, it will be dependent on the process dynamics. These are the communal action and strategies; state action and strategies and the built-in mechanisms of conflict (Ramsbotham, 2005, p. 116).

First, we look at the actions and, to some extent, the approach of the GTC and the Charismatic churches that has led to the present conflict. The two communities have taken entrenched positions, each appealing to the national constitution to justify their actions. Whereas the GTC insists that the churches should respect the time-honoured tradition of an annual noise ban, the Charismatic churches maintain their right to freedom of worship. One Charismatic pastor expresses their stance this way: “There is no constitutional provision that allows any religious group to impose their beliefs on another group. When we have our annual fasting and prayer here, do we impose it on everyone?” (E. Xexemeku, personal communication, April 20, 2014). Since the disagreement between the two groups is often perceived as a threat to their differing group identities, they are unwilling to meet each other halfway. The GTC led by the *Wulɔmei* enforce the noise ban by organising and mobilising the Ga youth, and inciting sentiments relating to religious and ethnic identities. Since the reasons for the rallying call is formed around such identity needs as belief systems and culture, they easily provoke passion which then results in a violent response on those who defy the noise ban. The actions of both parties then provide a fertile ground for conflict between them.

Secondly, the actions of the state in dealing with the conflict over the noise ban and generally the grievances of the Ga people have essentially revolved around coercive repression and instrumental co-option. To begin with, since the noise conflict assumed violent proportions in 1998, successive governments have taken several steps at mitigating it. They have done that by setting up various commissions of enquiry to ascertain the sources of the conflict. From 1998, the Awortwi Commission was established in the aftermath of the clashes between the LCI and the residents of Korle-Gonno, a suburb of Accra. Thereafter, there were parliamentary commissions as well as the formation of the Greater Accra Permanent Conflict Resolution and Management Committee (GAPCRMC) established to look into issues of land, chieftaincy, custom and religious-based conflicts in the region. However, it is abundantly clear that various governments have not

shown total commitment to implementing the findings of the commissions they set up. They have tended to put together committees at the height of the clashes and, once the tension subsides and the reports are out, they never get implemented until the following year, thus, going round in circles.

Furthermore, there is local government participation in the form of the Greater Accra Regional Coordinating Council (GARCC) and the Accra Metropolitan Assembly (AMA). But there seem to be conflict in the roles played by each of these groups. For example, while the GTC publicly announces the noise ban annually, there have been times that both the GARCC and the AMA have gone ahead with separate announcements and sometimes, conflicting ones. Therefore, there seems to be no coordination among the local government agencies. Although the AMA is one of the metropolitan assemblies under the GARCC, the confrontations mainly take place under its jurisdiction, but there seems to be a conflict over whether the GARCC or the AMA is directly responsible for the security of the area. Moreover, the Charismatic churches have from time to time accused the AMA of taking the side of the traditionalists, because most of its senior officers are Ga people with even a *Wulɔmɔ* as the public relations officer. This view can be challenged as there are equally Charismatic people who are Ga by ethnicity, who do not naturally agree with the GTC. So, there could be AMA senior staff who are Ga but it does not mean they all support the GTC in its method of clamping down on the offenders of the noise ban. This situation is further complicated by members of prominent Charismatic churches being senior staff in the AMA.

Additionally, some state institutions, like the Ghana Police Service, have not shown the interest required on their part in this conflict. It was revealed that, despite the clashes having occurred for several years now, the Police have refused to make arrests and, when they do, culprits are released without any charges being pressed. More often than not, the Police appear to be put under duress by senior government officials who intervene in these cases. According to one senior police officer at the Police headquarters, since this conflict is religious in nature, they do not want to be seen as partial and therefore, once the cases are reported they try to deal with it at the community level. As a result of this, although the conflict has lingered, they have no official records of incidents of the clashes (DCOP Ampah-Benin, personal communication, January 15, 2015). This creates an environment for impunity, where people take the law into their own hands

without any fear of being arrested and prosecuted in a court of competent jurisdiction.

Different governments have also adopted different strategies in dealing with the conflict since 1998. The first NDC government, led by Jerry Rawlings, which had a Ga native, Nii Okaija Adamafo, as the minister of interior politicised ethnicity to make political gains in the traditionally Ga dominated areas of Accra, such as Ga Mashie, Osu, La, Teshie and Nungua. This is a form of instrumental co-optation which worked for the Ga traditionalists as well as the NDC as a party. The *Korle Wulɔmɔ* puts the relationship between the GTC and the politicians thus:

Politics has interfered in our chieftaincy and traditional affairs and this is a major cause of the problems we are facing in Accra now. When it suits them [the politicians] they support the Charismatic people and then at times they promise us of their support. Each of them has their own agenda (Nuumo Okai I, personal communication, October 24, 2015).

Although the above statement by a Ga high priest suggests that the strategy of successive governments in the fourth republic has been to co-opt one or the other of the conflicting parties, it is clear from this study that, so far, it is the NDC that has adopted it in dealing with the conflict, and they have normally brought the GTC into their fold for political gains. This was the case during the first and third phases outlined in study, where we have observed the NDC in power and the GTC having total control on how to implement the noise ban and clamp down on offenders. The GTC are even offered logistical support by state institutions to patrol around the city during the period of the noise ban. Another prominent high priest noted:

The traditional council gives us uniforms, receipts and 7 patrol Jeeps. We also have special phone lines to alert one another during patrols. We have directed that if the patrol team cannot be reached, the confiscated items should be sent to the nearest police station or even complaints should be lodged with them. The name of the culprit church should then be recorded in the log book for reference purposes. This is what we did this year [2015]. I forgot to mention that the IGP also gives us Police patrol vehicles and men to assist the 7 patrol Jeeps provided by the GTC. In practice, every GTC patrol Jeep has a corresponding Ghana Police Patrol team to assist them. I have the numbers for all the patrol teams (Nuumo Charko III, personal communication, September 25, 2015).⁷³

⁷³ Nuumo Charko is one of the Wulɔmei who was a leading figure in all of the major attacks covered by this study including the GTC versus LCI, VBC and CAC. He now serves as one of the leading members of the GTC noise ban task force.

Although, prior to the implementation of the noise ban in 2015, the AMA and the GTC announced that a task force of AMA guards and the Police would monitor and enforce the ban in the traditional areas, it turned out later that it was the *Wulomei* and the Ga youth who were in charge, as indicated by the above statement (Daily Graphic, April 23, 2015). The Police provided logistical support for them to patrol around the city. It is obvious that the GTC tend to be in charge when the NDC is in power. The strategy of co-optation adopted by the NDC government seems to contribute specifically to the protracted nature of the conflict.

On the other hand, the John Kufuor led government, which ruled the country during the second phase of this study (2002-2008) shifted the emphasis of the noise ban from one of religious to environmental protection by employing civil servants as task force to abate nuisance in the entire city. This shifted the focus from the government to the local assembly by-laws and therefore, the government could not be accused of taking sides. However, because of the winner-takes-all political environment in Ghana, this change of focus away from government can be understood as a type of repression rather than an attempt to accommodate the conflicting parties. It shows that the NPP did not want to be seen as aiding one particular group. While the repressive approach by the NPP government ultimately led to a reduction in the clashes between 2002 and 2008, it is clear that the government simply wanted to stave off the conflict and not to help find a lasting solution. The suppression only lasted for the two terms they were in office, and the clashes revitalised immediately following their exit from power. Furthermore, we see that, despite managing to bring down the spate of attacks, the Ga land issue was aggravated, as members of the government were cited for acquiring properties on lands leased to the state in high-end areas of Accra at non-commercial rates (Daily Graphic, May 25, 2012).⁷⁴ On the issue of land sales to officials in government, one GTC representative responded thus:

If you want to buy land to build apartments for sale, you have to go to the open market don't use somebody's land which has been forcibly taken from them in the interest of the public. But if you give the lands out to private developers it amounts to killing the spirit of those who gave the lands out for use in the public interest. What successive governments of NDC and NPP are doing might ignite some fire one day and we will blame ourselves for that (B. Akwetey, personal communication, September 10, 2015).

⁷⁴ Of particular note is Jake Obetsebi-Lampsey, who bought an official government property he was living in while serving in the NPP government.

It is apparent from the above response that the NPP continued what the NDC started while they were in power from 1992 to 2000, that is, selling state owned properties to members of government. This has not been popular with the leaders of the GTC and the Ga youth, and they have reacted by staging mass protests against successive governments. Therefore, while the clashes between the churches and the traditionalists obviously subsided between 2002 and 2008 because of the NPP government's policy of suppression, the grievance over the land expressed collectively by the GTC and the Ga people actually worsened.

Finally, the experiences of the parties resulting from this conflict have led to mistrust between them. It has led to the creation of negative images on both sides about the 'other', which has then become a recipe for consolidating the PSC. There is often the tendency to ascribe the worst motivations to the other side. Considering the Charismatic group sees the Ga traditionalists as the aggressive other, the traditionalists also see the churches as the instigators of the clashes because of their perceived disrespect for the culture and religion of the Ga traditionalists. This blame game then leads to both forming negative images of each other and therefore, reducing the potential for a compromise since they both assume exclusivist stances (Azar, 1990). These mutually exclusive experiences and positions are not weakened by the propagandist agenda of state actors, which makes finding a political solution to this conflict especially difficult.

Conclusion

From the preceding discussions, we realise that there have been repeated periods during which the tensions were higher than others. Instead of a conflict that is disjointed over time, the "fluctuations in intensity" in this conflict tended to reflect tensions over a cluster of different interconnected issues over time, which is characteristic of PSCs (Azar, 1990, p. 13). From 1998 to 2001, the clashes reached a higher intensity, but when the state's approach to dealing with it changed between 2002 and 2008, the frequency of violence and attacks subsided. Then from 2009 to date, the clashes have been reinvigorated, albeit, the intensity is not as high relative to the first phase (1998-2001). I argue, therefore, that, beyond the issues of religion, which is at the heart of the confrontations, the conflict between the traditionalists and the Charismatic churches has some other sources that combine to protract it. First, the multi-communal content of Accra influenced by the history of colonialism and interethnic rivalries does not only invigorate the conflict but also prolongs it. Second, the need-based grievances

expressed collectively by the Ga people, such as their identity-related concerns, include the growing perception among them that their culture, religion and language are under threat. The state's inability to address the land question, poor housing conditions, youth unemployment and poverty in the traditionally Ga neighbourhoods of Accra provides another source. A third factor is the political elite's tendency to use the conflict for propaganda purposes, including the politicisation of ethnicity for political capital. Fourth, the presence of international links on the sides of both the Charismatic churches and the traditionalists feed into the conflict. It goes without saying then, that as long as the state actors do not work towards addressing the need-based grievances put forward by the GTC and other related bodies, as well as tackling the developmental needs of the traditionally Ga areas and showing the required commitment to resolving the conflict over the noise ban, it will continue to linger. Finally, I argue that, while the conflict is definitely religious in nature, it also reflects a convergence of governance, ethnic-identity issues and resource-based grievances, which all contribute to its protraction.

6. “Is Ghana governed by the Law of the Jungle?” - Religious liberties and diversity in contemporary Ghana⁷⁵

There is no provision in the constitution that allows any religious group to force their beliefs on another group. As a church, the ICGC also has a 31-day annual prayer and fasting in July but we do not impose our religious practice on people who do not share in our beliefs. Are we not a religious body too? The Ga state, as you know, is a subset of Ghana and the Constitution of Ghana surpasses any other traditional law. Although we are in Accra, which is within the jurisdiction of the Ga state, the nation overrides every other ethnic state. Therefore, it is wrong for the traditional council to go within the ambits or confines of churches to confiscate their property (E. Xexemeku, personal communication, March 25, 2014).

Despite often hinging their non-compliance of the noise ban on its incompatibility with their faith, the Pentecostal-Charismatic churches have often questioned the legitimacy of the ban by appealing to provisions on religious freedom enshrined in the national constitution. This position has been expressed by individuals, the churches and their ecumenical councils, the Ghana Pentecostal and Charismatic Council (GPCC), and the National Association of Charismatic and Christian Churches (NACCC) in the form of communiques, letters to state institutions and other mass media communications. For example, in 2001, the then General Secretary of the Christ Apostolic Church, Rev. Dr. Annor Yeboah went to the extent of referring to the ban as a “coup d’état to the 1992 republican constitution, the rule of law and above all the freedoms and liberties of Christians and their faith” (Atiemo, 2014, p. 236). Moreover, all the major Christian groups also held a press conference in which they described the attack on the churches as an abuse of their human rights. They stated, “...while we respect the indigenous religious beliefs in this plural-religious nation called Ghana, we cannot put aside or compromise on the fundamental hu-

⁷⁵ This was a question posed to me by one of the participants in a conference in Addis Ababa, where I presented part of my project in May 2016. Obviously, this person is not from Ghana and was wondering why the laws in the country could not be applied to bring an end to the conflict.

man rights, the freedoms of expression and of religion as well as the constitutional rights” (GPCC Document, 1997).⁷⁶ This is basically stating that the noise ban and the attacks on the churches flout every individual fundamental right enshrined in the constitution. On the other hand, the traditional council and the proponents of the ban, have also often countered the position of the Christian groups by citing the same constitution for providing them the right to express their cultural identity.

Moreover, public discussions on the ban have also mainly revolved around its constitutionality and relevance in contemporary times. While this view could be driven by the fact that public and social discourses in Ghana are very much influenced by Christianity, because it is the majority religion in the country, it is also clear that both groups wholly or partly legitimise their positions by invoking the same legal framework. This raises questions not only on the lucidity of the constitution but also on the legal implications of the ban on such issues as religious rights and freedoms of individual religious adherents as well as religious organisations in a nation-state that embraces religious diversity. In this chapter, I highlight the various positions in law assumed by the conflicting parties, and examine the impact of the ban on religious liberties and diversity. It is an attempt to understand the legal regime in Ghana and its implications in the current conflict between the Charismatic churches and the Ga traditionalists. I have obtained data for this chapter via expert interviews, document analysis, newspaper articles, and some secondary data from existing works on the subject. I have divided the chapter into four sections. Firstly, I will highlight how religious liberties have been legislated for in Ghana by illustrating the present constitutional and legal contexts in the country. Secondly, I will analyse the various legal positions taken by the two parties in the light of the constitutional provisions. Thirdly, I will present three case laws from three different jurisdictions, the United Kingdom, India and Ghana, to show how similar cases have been addressed through the court system, and how constitutionally guaranteed religious freedoms have been

⁷⁶ This Press release was signed by the heads of all the major Churches in Ghana including the Catholic Bishops Conference President, Archbishop Peter Turkson (now Cardinal); Secretary General of the National Catholic Secretariat, Monsignor Jonathan Ankrah; Accra Bishop of the Anglican Church of Ghana, Rev. Dr. Justice Akrofi; the General Secretary of the Christian Council of Ghana, Rev. Dr. Robert Aboagye-Mensah; the General Secretary of Ghana Pentecostal Council, Rev. E.B. Wood and Rev. Emmanuel Ansah, the general Secretary of the National Association of Charismatic and Christian Churches.

interpreted by the courts. Fourthly, I will show how the state and institutions of state have so far approached the legal issues by focusing on some critical state institutions, the Judiciary, Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice (CHRAJ), and Ghana Police and the Accra Metropolitan Assembly (AMA). Finally, I will draw some conclusions based on these discussions.

Constitutional and Legal Contexts⁷⁷

Whereas some scholars such as Marshall (1991, pp. 320-321) and Sehat (2011) have questioned why religion should be given a privileged position by being granted a special constitutional consideration, others such as Greenawalt (2008) argue to the contrary that religion deserves to be protected in constitutions because it is of utmost importance to so many people. Marshall (1991) and Sehat's (2011) views were premised on the notion that religion is not a primary identifier to many people especially in the West. Nonetheless, in Ghana the question about whether or not religious freedoms should be constitutionally protected is not a topical issue, because religion is so important to the people that there has always been consensus to legislate about it since independence.

As we discussed in chapter four, Ghana is constitutionally a secular state according to the fourth republican constitution that came into force in 1992 (Quashigah, 1999, p. 597). The word *secular* is only implicit as it is not precisely captured in the constitution. The use of *secular* does not imply a godless or atheistic state because the constitution itself begins with the following introduction:

In the name of the Almighty God, We the people of Ghana, in exercise of our natural and inalienable right to establish a framework of government which shall secure for ourselves and posterity the blessings of liberty, equality of opportunity and prosperity (Ghana Constitution, 1992).

This preamble shows that religion is deeply embedded in the social fabric of the nation-state and confirms the citizens' belief in God. The use of *secular*, therefore, is to enforce the separation of religion and state, and not

⁷⁷ The sources of law in Ghana in the 4th Republic are: (i) The Constitution (ii) Acts of Parliament (iii) Subsidiary Legislation (iv) Existing Laws (that is, all existing laws preceding the 1992 Constitution), (v) The Common Law of Ghana, namely the English Common Law, English Doctrines of Equity and Customary Law. Of all these sources, the 1992 Constitution takes precedence and it is the supreme law of Ghana.

to privilege a particular religion with the position of a state religion.⁷⁸ This division obviously does not mean that the nation-state is hostile to the existence of religions because, while they are officially separated, politics and religion are in practice very much interconnected in the country. The constitution itself enjoins religious people to participate actively in the nation building process. For example, Article 166 (1) (a) (iv) and (v) makes provision for representations of religious bodies on the National Media Commission, the body that is responsible for safeguarding the independence of the media as the *fourth estate of the realm*. Specifically, one member from the Christian groups chosen from the National Catholic Secretariat, Christian Council of Ghana or the Ghana Pentecostal and Charismatic Council and another member from the Muslim groups namely the Federation of Muslims Council and Ahmadiyya Muslim Mission. What is clear in this stipulation, however, is that despite the provision of religious diversity in the constitution, it is only the Christians and Muslims who are represented in such an important constitutional body. This is perhaps due to the numerical strength of their following, jointly making up over 95% of the entire population of Ghana (Ghana Statistical Service, 2012). Also, the National Peace Council (NPC), another body established by an act of parliament to help conflict prevention, management, and resolution at the national level is composed mainly of religious leaders from Christian ecumenical councils and Muslim councils but with some indigenous religious leaders as well.⁷⁹ Although there is clear evidence that religion is pervasive in the socio-political framework in the country, it is also important to note that despite the provisions for religious diversity in the legal framework, there is a limit to its implementation in practical terms.

As a signatory to the many international conventions on human rights, Ghana is bound by many provisions which deal with granting religious liberties to its citizens. First and foremost, as a member of the United Nations, the country has ratified the International Bill of Human Rights

⁷⁸ Article 56 of the 1992 Constitution states that “Parliament shall have no power to enact a law to establish or authorise the establishment of a body or movement with the right or power to impose on the people of Ghana a common programme or a set of objectives of a religious or political nature.

⁷⁹ The National Peace Council Act, 2011, Act 818. See: http://mint.gov.gh/peace/index_htm_files/NPC%20LAW.PDF, Accessed November 2, 2016. Of the thirteen members of the NPC as at November 2016 11 are religious leaders including 2 from indigenous religions.

(IBHR)⁸⁰, which comprises the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR)⁸¹, the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights (ICESCR),⁸² the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR)⁸³ and the Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR).⁸⁴ Article 18 of both the UDHR and ICCPR deal with the subject of religious liberty. For example, the Article 18 of the UDHR specifically states that,

Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance.

Secondly, as a member of the African Union, the country has also ratified the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights. Article 8 of this chapter states that, "Freedom of conscience, the profession and free practice of religion shall be guaranteed. No one may, subject to law and order, be submitted to measures restricting the exercise of these freedoms."⁸⁵

In line with the ratification of these fore-mentioned international commitments, the country is bound to abide by the guidelines therein laid. Accordingly, Article 21 (1) (c) of the 1992 constitution guarantees the right of every citizen to the freedom of religious belief and practice. It specifically states that, "All persons shall have the right to practice any religion and to manifest such practice." However, like the international conventions stated above, although the right to belief is completely guaranteed, the constitution also shows that in the pursuit of an individual's rights and freedoms, religious included, there are certain conditions or limitations, "which must be determined by law" mainly for the purpose of securing public safety (Article 29 & 30 UDHR). One such provision that serves to

⁸⁰ For a complete IBHR document: <http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Publications/Fact-Sheet2Rev.1en.pdf>, Accessed November 3, 2016.

⁸¹ See complete UDHR convention: http://www.ohchr.org/EN/UDHR/Documents/UDHR_Translations/eng.pdf, Accessed November 3, 2016.

⁸² See full ICESCR convention: <http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/ProfessionalInterest/cescr.pdf>, Accessed November 3, 2016.

⁸³ For a full ICCPR Document, see: <http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/ProfessionalInterest/ccpr.pdf>, Accessed November 3, 2016.

⁸⁴ See: <http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/ProfessionalInterest/ccpr-one.pdf>, Accessed November 3, 2016.

⁸⁵ See <http://www.achpr.org/instruments/achpr/#a8>, Accessed November 4, 2016.

restrain the practice of such rights and freedoms is Article 26, which deals with cultural rights and practices. It states,

Every person is entitled to enjoy, practise, profess, maintain and promote any culture, language, tradition, or religion subject to the provisions of this constitution. All customary practices which dehumanise or are injurious to the physical and mental well-being of a person are prohibited.

The clause 2 above is instructive in showing that while the people have their rights to religious and customary freedoms guaranteed, the mode of the manifestation of these rights is conditional on not infringing the rights and freedoms of other people. Thus, any customary or religious practice that does not meet the requirements of societal morality or public order is prohibited. For example, it is for this reason that customary practices like the *Trokosi*⁸⁶, a religious ritual servitude practised in south-eastern Ghana were forbidden by law because it is considered as subjecting young girls to dehumanising conditions (Criminal Code [Amendment] Act 1998, Act 554 [a][b]). Despite these ‘caution’ clauses in the constitution, it is evident that religious liberty is duly enshrined in the 1992 constitution. It is however, not clear in the constitution what ought to be done or what takes precedence when religious freedoms conflict with other freedoms. Nevertheless, it is imperative to note that along with Article 26 (1) (2) stated above, there is a provision in the same constitution which deals with ‘customary laws’ as part of the common law. “Customary law” is in this context defined as “the rules of law, which by custom are applicable to particular communities in Ghana” (Article 11(3) of 1992 Constitution). Accordingly, these are laws that recognise the traditions and customs exclusive to different traditional areas or states within the nation-state, such as the Ga state in the south or the Dagbon state in the north.

While religious liberties have always been guaranteed by every constitution since the first republic, there was a time when a law was passed to have religions regulated in the country, the PNDC Law 221. This law was introduced by the Jerry Rawlings led military government, the Provisional National Defence Council (PNDC).

⁸⁶ This is a practice where girls, normally virgins, are taken to shrines to atone for the wrongdoings of family members or as payment for services, in which case the priests of the shrines end up marrying these girls. It has since become a criminal offence in the country.

PNDC law 221: antithesis to religious liberty (Pre-1992)

Before the coming into being of the 1992 constitution which ushered in the fourth republic of Ghana, the closest attempt by any government to regulate religious activities and subsequently religious liberties through the legal system was the passage of the *Religious Bodies (Registration) Law* in 1989. Known as the PNDC Law 221, the law states, “Every religious body in Ghana shall be registered under this Law and no religious body in existence in Ghana shall after three months from the commencement of this Law operate as such unless it is registered under this Law.” The ‘religious body’ is defined as “any association of persons or body or organisation which professes adherence to or belief in any system of faith or worship; or which is established in pursuance of religious objective” (Section 20 PNDC Law 221). This piece of legislation required existing and new religious bodies to register with a regulatory body, *The Religious Affairs Committee* which was to work jointly with the National Commission on Culture (NCC) in scrutinising applications before the religious bodies qualified for a three-month provisional license to operate. Failure to obtain this provisional license was to result in the seizure of the religious body’s property and subsequent prosecution of the leader. Although in the words of Jerry Rawlings, the introduction of the law was to curb “the exploitative tendencies of some churches” and to “preserve the purity of religious teaching”, it was clear that the law was introduced to control and regulate religious activities in the country. For example, no one could use the title ‘Pastor’ if the church was not registered under this law. The law also provided the military government the opportunity to control the activities of their political opponents because, at the time, activities of political parties were banned and opposition figures could only use religious platforms to express dissent. While several Charismatic churches and the Islamic groups complied, the Christian Council of Ghana and the Catholic Bishops’ Conference (National Catholic Secretariat) put up a strong opposition, to the extent that the law died a natural death. Besides resistance from the major established churches at the time, the law had to be phased out for the introduction of the 1992 Constitution when Ghana returned to constitutional democracy. However, until then the law was used to suspend the activities of the Jehovah’s Witnesses and the Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter-Day Saints for a two-year period in the country. It is also important to point out here that it is generally believed in Ghana that for many

of the Charismatic churches, who adhered to the law, compliance was actually an opportunity to gain some recognition and credibility because at the time the movement had barely existed for a decade (Quashigah, 1999, p. 594-595).⁸⁷ The nature of the law meant that religious freedoms enshrined in international conventions could not be expressed under these conditions, but this was irrelevant because under the military dictatorship, Ghana did not ratify these conventions. What is relevant here is the kind of resistance some religious bodies put up when they felt that their religious freedoms were under siege, not even a military government's attempt to impose restrictions on religion succeeded. This goes to confirm how seriously religious liberties are taken by the various religious groups in the country. In addition, we see that religious diversity presents a multiplicity of opinions and approaches to dealing with issues that confront religious groups. These differences were conspicuous in the sense that all the religious traditions could not put up a collective front to resist a law that was enacted ultimately to control religious activities.

Although PNDC Law 221 became obsolete, religious bodies are still required under the current democratic dispensation, to register with the Registrar General's Office of the Ministry of Justice in pursuance of being recognised by the state, albeit there is no penalty or sanction for any religious body which fails to register. Thus, it is common to find many churches which have no registration and no link to any ecumenical body in operation, especially in larger cities. The requirements for registering a religious body includes filling in a form and paying a one-time fee, which are essentially the same conditions for non-governmental agencies (NGOs). Therefore, religious bodies are treated in the category of non-governmental charitable organisations, who are exempted from paying taxes unless there are proceeds from their business interests and for-profit activities such as schools and universities. However, except for the Afrikaania Mission, indigenous religions generally do not register with the governmental agency, obviously because they are not homogenised religions and are mostly organised along family and ethnic lines.

⁸⁷ See also Canada: Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, Freedom of Religion, 1 May 1991, available at: <http://www.refworld.org/docid/3ae6a7fc10.html>, Accessed 4 November 2016.

The Pentecostal-Charismatic Case: an analysis of the legal positions

As I alluded to earlier, the Pentecostal-Charismatic Christians have persistently brought up the issue of the abuse of their legal rights to worship as enshrined in Article 21 (1) (b) (c) and 26 as one of the main reasons why they would not comply with the noise ban. First, in the aftermath of the traditionalists' attacks on the LCI in 1998, the GPCC reacted to comments made by the then minister of the interior, Nii Okaija Adamafio⁸⁸ in a press conference as follows:

We are dismayed because Mr. Nii Okaija Adamafio is not only a Minister of Interior who is responsible for the internal harmony of the Ghanaian society, but also an accomplished lawyer who is supposed to understand perfectly all the provisions of the Fourth Republic Constitution of this country, especially Article 21 (1) (b) (c) and Article 26 which guarantee our inherent right to worship, profess, practice and manifest our Christian faith without any interference from any person or group of persons with regard to the mode and place of worship (Press Statement, GPCC File Document, 1998).

Second, in a writ filed at the Supreme Court by the same ecumenical body, they sought three reliefs grounded on the same provision in the constitution. The last of the reliefs states:

A declaration that any purported act or conduct of any traditional authority in Ghana or group of persons in any community in Ghana or others proscribing, preventing or interfering in the worship or in the enjoyment of any meal, dish or food by any member of the Churches belonging to the plaintiffs' council is a violation of or contravention of their constitutional right as enshrined in the 1992 constitution (Petition to Parliament, GPCC file document, 2000).

From the two quotations above, I see that the basic argument put forward by the Pentecostal-Charismatic churches is that the noise ban and particularly its enforcement by the traditionalists is a violation of their right to religious freedom. This contravention is seen predominantly as an infringement on the individual rights of the Christians as well as the rights of the organisations (churches) to practice their religion. This brings to the fore issues of human rights and what constitutes an abuse of one's rights

⁸⁸ The minister was reported by the Daily Graphic of June 9th, 1998 as stating that "it is wrong for some certain people to assume that such practices, such as the ban on drumming, is fetish and therefore of no significance to society. What we should all realise is that such practices, which have been bequeathed (sic) to us from generation to generation and which have served as a rallying point for the people, cannot be discarded" p.3.

and freedoms, considering Articles 21 and 26 generate significant debate among lawyers in Ghana, especially within the context of the noise ban and its associated attacks on the churches.

In the first place, it is clear from our earlier discussion on the constitutional and legal contexts, that the constitution forbids discrimination on the grounds of religion. Thus, everyone has religious rights and freedoms, although the articles are inexplicit, which opens them up for diverse interpretations. A Ghanaian human rights lawyer suggests that in order to establish whether the rights and freedoms of the Charismatic churches have been violated, we need to have a critical look at the impact of the noise ban and its enforcement on their religious freedoms. That is, in what ways do the noise ban and its implementation infringe on the rights and freedoms of the Charismatic churches? To answer that question, it is necessary to determine whether elevated sound levels are central to the worship of the churches. This is because, if it is an established part of their worship, then it becomes an issue of rights and freedoms for them, just as the key practices of other religious bodies also constitute their rights (Kwadwo Appiagyei-Atua, personal communication, November 26, 2015). As I have shown in chapter three, loud sound levels in the form of music, preaching, corporate prayer and ecstatic worship using modern public-address systems is conspicuously central to the liturgy of these churches. These are considered as tools and mediums through which the congregation come to experience God, who is present in a service in the form of the Holy Spirit. Since these expressions are fundamental in defining what Charismatic Christianity is, the Pentecostal-Charismatic churches argue that the insistence of the traditionalists for the Charismatics to comply with the noise ban amounts to an infringement of their rights to freedom of worship.

On the topic of the implementation of the ban, the counsel for the GTC and a native Ga puts it this way:

They [the Ga youth] must be empowered by law before they can enforce the ban. They should come and persuade the individual who is flouting the ban and not to attack them and seize their property because the drums and instruments are not for them [the Ga youth]. The youth cannot on their own accord take up arms to go to the churches and enforce the ban. Even if they have to do it they must use persuasion. If they go on their own volition and something bad happens, you have to go to the Police because that amounts to a criminal offence being committed. They should know that they are on the wrong side of the law if they try to enforce the ban themselves. Of course, some of the youth take up this issue arbitrarily or unilaterally to enforce the

ban because they feel that their pride is wounded by the Charismatic churches (B. Akwetey, personal communication, September 10, 2015).

While confirming that the physical attack on the churches amounts to an act of criminality due to a possible invasion of private property and assumption of the powers of the Police, he is also adding another dimension to the discussion, which is that the traditionalists should, rather than attacking the churches, persuade them to comply with the ban. However, the question begs to be asked as to whether persuasion to comply with a ban which they also see as incompatible with their beliefs is not equally an infringement on their right to freedom of worship. This is because one of the issues in the churches' non-compliance with the noise ban is the fact that they consider it as a form of worship to the Ga deities and consequently, irreconcilable with their Christian beliefs, which prohibits them from worshipping any other deity but God. In this sense, I see that even persuasion as a strategy to enforce the ban has the potential to contravene the rights of the Christian group. The situation however, is more complicated because, much as the Charismatics have the right to so determine whether another religion's beliefs are compatible with theirs or even view that religion as backward, it is imperative to point out that this right is only limited to the beliefs of their followers, as it cannot be extended to members of another religion.

It is obvious that the rights of the churches to religious freedom is affected by the actions of the traditionalists, but since both groups have rights and freedoms to practice and manifest their religions, where do we draw the boundary? The law, as we discussed earlier, provides certain restraints to the diverse rights and freedoms guaranteed in the 1992 Constitution. These limitations have been clearly articulated by the recent report on religious freedom in Ghana by the United States Department of State. It states, "These rights [religious freedoms] may be limited for stipulated reasons, which include 'restrictions that are reasonably required in the interest of defence, public safety, public health or the running of essential services, on the movement or residence within Ghana of any person or persons generally, or any class of persons.'" ⁸⁹ I argue therefore that whereas the Charismatic churches have the right to practise activities which make loud sounds, it is also instructive that the implications of their practices are detrimental to the traditionalists as well as the general public

⁸⁹ See: International Religious Freedom Report 2015 at <http://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/irf/religiousfreedom/index.htm?year=2015&dliid=256029>, Accessed November 10, 2016.

safety. That is, the extent of their religious freedom is dependent on whether or not it is harmful to the general public. One of my informants puts it succinctly, “if you make noise, you are not only infringing on the rights of the traditionalists in Accra, you are also disturbing your neighbour and causing health hazards” (E. Sackey, personal communication, April 30, 2016). What does not help their cause is the fact that their church buildings are also mostly located in residential areas, where noise levels enshrined in the AMA by-laws on noise nuisance have been legislated at 55dB during the day and 48dB from 22 hours (Section 54 of Local Government Act 462). This means that sounds louder than these prescribed levels break the law and also, poses health challenges to the public.

The harmful effects of loud sound levels have been the subject of a study by the World Health Organisation (WHO) in its International Programme of Chemical Safety (WHO, 1994).⁹⁰ In this document the health effects of noise are defined as “A change in the morphology and physiology of an organism that results in the impairment of functional capacity, or an impairment of capacity to compensate for additional stress, or increases the susceptibility of an organism to harmful effects of other environmental influences” (WHO, 1994, p. 39). Simply put, this definition affirms the adverse effects and dangers of noise as an environmental pollutant on the general well-being of people who are exposed to it. The implications of noise above prescribed levels according to the WHO are enormous and extensive including such dangers to the public as noise-induced hearing impairment, interference with speech communication, psychophysiological, disturbance of rest and sleep, mental health and performance effects, effects on residential behaviour and annoyance in addition to interference with intended activities (ibid).

While the extensive nature of the effects of noise presented by the WHO cannot be fully explored within the scope of this chapter, it is imperative to consider some critical aspects. First, noise pollution has the capacity to cause hearing impairment in individuals (Lutman, 2000, p. 274; WHO, 1994, p. 42). Second, psychologists have identified a correlation between noise and malformations of speech communication. Noise can result in impaired concentration, irritability, headache, fatigue, stress reactions, insecurity and lack of self-confidence (van Dijk, 1986, pp. 328,329; Lazarus & Cohen, 1997, p. 98). Third, noise pollution in the night deprives

⁹⁰ For further reading on the subject see: <http://www.who.int/docstore/peh/noise/Com-noise-3.pdf>, Accessed November 14, 2016.

people of sleep. The importance of sleep however, cannot be overemphasised. Researchers have found that sleep is not only essential for the human body but also to life itself “through its ability to regulate the flow of energy.” Furthermore, sleep promotes the mental and metabolic functions of the human body (Hobson, 1990, p. 371; Hobson, 1989; Barrett, 2001). Fourthly, environmental noise has been identified as having inimical effects on certain mental and physiological functions of people. (Berglund & Lindvall, 1995; Berglund, Lindvall, & Schwela, 1999).

It is clear, therefore, from the above, that exposure to loud sound is detrimental to the general health of people. Accordingly, this poses a challenge as to whether, in exercising their own religious freedoms, the Charismatic churches are also not in contravention of Article 26 (2) which states, “All customary practices which dehumanise or are injurious to the physical and mental well-being of a person are prohibited.” Although this can only be determined by a court of competent jurisdiction, I appreciate that limitations such as those in the interest of public safety and public health enshrined in the constitution clearly restrict the utilisation of the rights and freedoms of the citizenry to the detriment of other people’s rights. In the case of the Charismatic churches, it seems the only way to exercise total religious freedom would be to introduce mechanisms like sound-proofing that confines the sound produced during worship within the perimeters of their church buildings. This does not even address the question of what levels of sound the members of the churches themselves are exposed to and its long-term health effects on them. Admittedly, however, questions of religious beliefs and practices and scientific findings are not always compatible and it will be difficult to convince the churches to choose science over what they consider as their belief.

The Charismatic church case shows that the limitations of one’s freedoms could be more than the limits of the rights because it is amorphous and not well defined. That is, it is open to several interpretations depending on the context and the interpreter. As a result of this fluidity, one human rights lawyer argues that depending on the circumstances, a court can spell out a particular set of limitations in one case and a completely different set of limitations in another ruling (Kwadwo Appiagyei-Atua, personal communication, November 26, 2015). Consequently, in order to understand the argument of the Charismatic churches for their religious freedoms in the light of the noise ban, we need to take a critical look at the restrictions of these freedoms. The limitations that serve as safeguards for the misuse of religious freedoms rather complicate the concept of religious freedom

and shows that it cannot be completely granted. It shows that to enjoy total freedom of worship one must consider other people's freedoms as well as acknowledging that religious liberties are not guaranteed at the expense of other rights. Moreover, there is a kind of tension between pursuing religious liberties for one's own religion and seeking them for that of others, even though the term religious liberties is used for both. As Sharma (2011) has pointed out "the problem with the rationales of religious freedoms is that they usually have difficulty in extending that freedom equally to all religions" (p. 11).

The case of the Ga Traditionalists: an analysis of the legal positions

On the other side of the legal debate, the Ga traditionalists despite mainly using historical reasons such as their first-comer status and 'land owners' of Accra as the reason for which all residents must comply with the noise ban, have also partly put forward legal arguments to justify same. They have often cited Articles 26 (1) and 11 (3) as the basis for which the ban must be complied with by all. This legal argument is to counter the Charismatic churches argument of rights to religious freedom and to give credence to their own customary practices. In the first phase, 1998-2001 (the height of the clashes), it was the Afrikania Mission that fronted these arguments, but in contemporary times these have become the main legal basis for the GTC. First, we will have a look at both provisions and then we will attempt to analyse them within the context of religious pluralism and freedom. Article 26 (1) (2) grants every citizen cultural rights and the freedom to "enjoy, practice, profess, maintain and promote any culture, language or tradition" as long as these customary practices do not "dehumanise or are injurious" to other people. In effect, the GTC has the right to celebrate and promote their time-honoured festival of *Hɔmɔwɔ* and every rite associated with it provided it does not put other people in danger. This position is further strengthened by successive governments' attempts to revive and incorporate cultural traditions across the country into national life in order to build an integrated national cultural identity. Beginning with the Jerry Rawlings led PNDC Government, this notion of incorporating local cultures into the national agenda led to the formation of the National Commission on Culture (NCC) in 1990 by a legal instrument, the PNDC Law 238. Subsequently, the NCC was tasked with management, preservation, promotion and supervision of the national cultural agenda. Festivals such as *Hɔmɔwɔ* and traditional rites of passage have become a

major means through which the NCC seeks to promote its work. These festivals also attract many tourists to the country, therefore, contributing in no small way to the national economy. Tourism is actually the third largest foreign exchange contributor to the Ghanaian economy (Tsikata, 2007, p. 5). The efforts of the NCC culminated in the National Cultural Policy⁹¹ in 2004. Among other things, this policy states, “In the era of globalisation...our history, cultural values and our institutions must continue to exercise a deep influence on the nation’s governance and national life” (National Cultural Policy, p. 7).

Accordingly, there is a promotion of diverse Ghanaian cultures which gives the citizens the right to enjoy their culture and also sees cultural activities such as celebration of the *Hɔmɔwɔ* as indispensable tools for national development and integration. For example, Article 39⁹² which forms the basis of the cultural policy, encourages the integration of appropriate customary/traditional practices and cultural values into the life of the nation-state. As we can see, whenever the nation-state refers to culture, it indicates indigenous religions as Christianity is not seen as part of Ghanaian culture. Cultural studies in the educational system, encouraged by the same provision in the constitution, also helps to give credibility and legitimacy to traditional festivals such as *Hɔmɔwɔ*. In summary, I see that based on the Articles 26 and 39, and the national cultural policy, it is clear that the Ga traditionalists have their general rights to religion and promotion of their culture through the implementation of the noise ban guaranteed by the constitution. However, the question is whether this freedom to implement the ban can be extended to others who are not native Ga people but are residents of Accra. It perhaps lies with the courts to make a clear-cut

⁹¹ See: <http://www.s158663955.websitehome.co.uk/ghanaculture/privatecontent/File/CULTURAL.%20POLICY%20-%20FINAL.pdf>, Accessed November 16, 2016.

⁹² Subject to clause (2) of this Article, “the State shall take steps to encourage integration of appropriate customary values into the fabric of national life through formal and informal education and the conscious Introduction of cultural dimensions to the relevant aspect of national planning.

(2) The State shall ensure that appropriate customary and cultural values are adapted and developed as an integral part of the growing needs of the society as a whole; and in particular, that traditional practices which are injurious to the health and well-being of the person are abolished.

(3) The State shall foster the development of Ghanaian languages and pride in Ghanaian culture.

(4) The State shall endeavour to preserve and protect places of historical interest and artefacts.”

ruling on the issue, but in the absence of any such legal rulings the viability of the ban on the whole city has generated debates among lawyers across the country. First, the former Ghana Bar Association (GBA) President, Nene Amegatcher lamented in 2014 that it is illegal for traditional leaders to impose a noise ban on an entire city because not only does it affect economic activities in the country, it is also retrogressive because “society is dynamic and that the people are moving forward.” He stated explicitly, “I can tell you without any doubt in my mind, without a blink of my eye that all those bans, from that of the Asantehene on funerals to that of the Ga Traditional Council on noise-making...are all unconstitutional” (The Ghanaian Times, May 29, 2014). Although, as the president of the association of Ghanaian lawyers, Nene Amegatcher was expected to be as neutral as possible, his comment covers all noise bans across the country and his use of ‘retrogressive’ clearly reflects the position of the Charismatic churches in this conflict. Although he argued fundamentally along economic lines, he also acknowledged the difficulty in the lucidity of the legal provisions, stating that “There are Constitutional provisions that guarantee the rights of a citizen, the freedom to worship, the freedom to practice their religion...and the freedom of association” but “the traditionalists also say there is constitutional provision which says our traditions, customs, beliefs and practices should be preserved” (The Ghanaian Times, May 29, 2014). To this end, he sought to seek an interpretation at the Supreme Court of Ghana regarding the legality of the ban in order to bring finality to the issue, albeit, to date that has not materialised. This view to seek redress in the Superior Court of Justice is shared by the Ghana Pentecostal and Charismatic Council, whose leaders were in touch with the GBA during the tenure of Nene Amegatcher (Apostle Antwi, personal communication, January 30, 2015).

Furthermore, a traditional leader who also doubles as a lawyer, Nana Odeneho Kyeremanteng agreed with the position of the GBA and Nene Amegatcher regarding the illegality of the banning orders imposed by traditional leaders across the country. He also argued along similar economic lines and the non-static nature of culture stating that, “The bans affected economic activities” and that “culture was dynamic and should not be used to halt the forward march of the people” (The Daily Graphic, June 3,

2014).⁹³ The view expressed by this traditional leader is significant because in his capacity as a paramount chief, he is considered a custodian of traditional culture. Contrary to that label, he referred to the noise ban in Accra as illegal and went further to call on Christians, business people and civil society to join in the effort of the GBA to seek finality at the Supreme Court.

While the two aforementioned lawyers stressed the illegality of the noise ban, there are those who side with the traditionalists and subsequently, the noise ban. For example, a lawyer who is a native Ga opines that,

It is our law, our customary law which the constitution recognizes, just obey it because you are on our land. When I come to your place I will also obey your customary law but why is it that when you come to Accra you don't want to obey our laws? When we obey the customary laws, there will be no tension. That is why if you are in my town and you want to flout my rules, it means you don't respect the elders who announced the ban. And they will feel their pride is wounded and they have to defend their stand and that of their *Wulɔmɔ*. If you obey it, there will be no conflict (B. Akwetey, personal communication, September 10, 2015).

The statement above is derived from Article 11 (3) of the 1992 constitution which defines customary law as “rules of law which by custom are applicable to particular communities in Ghana.” In order to understand this provision, it is imperative to explain how Ghana as a nation is structured. The nation-state is a democracy with fully fledged democratic structures of governance. Like many African states, it also has traditional structures existing alongside the democratic institutions. Traditional systems that existed before the era of colonialism and the subsequent republic are still recognised and therefore create two systems of governance side by side, albeit the democratic nation-state is superior. The nation-state can therefore be described as a conglomeration of several sub-states including the Ga state. These traditional states have their own socio-political structures which are still recognised within the national framework. For example, in the Ga state, the *Wulɔmei* are the spiritual leaders while the *Mantsemei* are the civil leaders. Within these communities, every member is expected to

⁹³ See also <http://www.graphic.com.gh/news/general-news/traditional-leaders-can-t-ban-noise-making.html>, Accessed January 15, 2016; Nana Odeneho Kyeremanteng is the Omanhene (divisional chief) of Apenuase in the Ashanti Region of Ghana and the Chief Executive Officer of the Commet Group of Companies specialising in Real Estate and Legal Services.

have certain obligations which include respect for the local deity, although in addition people are free to worship other gods. Within this customary system, the separation between religious and civil duties is not clearly defined. Since this traditional system has not disappeared and is recognised by the nation-state, customary laws become the avenues through which traditional governments rule their areas. These laws which are location specific, have been protected and guaranteed in Article 11 of the constitution.

In addition, a consideration of Articles 26 and 39 also affirm that the GTC have the right to celebrate and promote their festival and all the customary laws that come with it. The question therefore is to what extent can customary laws be extended to people who do not subscribe to the indigenous religion of a particular traditional area? To what extent can the laws of the Ga state affect other ethnicities living in the capital of the nation-state, which coincidentally also happens to be the capital of the Ga state? This is not clearly defined in the constitution. These grey areas of the law contribute to the confusion between the two parties. Like the Charismatic churches' argument, it will take a court of competent jurisdiction to bring finality to these rather blurred boundaries in the constitutional provisions.

Even if the GTC can make a solid argument for their freedom to practice their religion (Article 26), preserve their culture (Article 39) and promote their customary laws (Article 11), there are still limitations to these freedoms found in Article 26 (2) that one's freedoms should not violate another person's rights. That is, the exercise of their freedoms should not be injurious to another group or detrimental to public safety. This clearly implies that the way and manner of the attacks on the churches, infringes on their religious rights as well as causes harm and injury to the members of the churches. It also seems to violate the boundaries to freedoms provided for in Article 26 (2). By acting as law enforcement officers, the GTC claimed for itself the role of the police, the only people empowered by the state to enforce laws. Moreover, the attacks on churches also caused bodily harm and destruction of other people's property which is an evident abuse of their rights, which amounts to some form of criminal offense under the criminal code of Ghana (Criminal Code (Amendment) Act 1998, Act 554).

Another major question that arises from the argument of the traditionalists is the place of customary laws and local assembly by-laws in relation to the national constitution. Apart from the customary laws of these sub-states, there is also the local government and decentralisation framework provided in Article 240 of the 1992 constitution, which stipulates that so

far as it is reasonably practicable, local government and administration should be decentralised. The implementation of this provision in the constitution led to the introduction of the Local Government Act, 1993, Act 462⁹⁴ which fundamentally deals with the transfer of functions and responsibilities of governance from the national to the community level. Sections 79-81 of this Act deal with by-laws which stipulate that “[a] District Assembly may make by-laws for the purpose of a function conferred on it by or under this Act or any enactment” (Section 79 (1) Act 462). The by-laws according to these sections are to give some specificity to how day to day governance is executed at the local level (Ahwoi, 2010, pp. 53-66). This gives us an indication of the levels of laws in the country and also reveals the multiplicity of laws in existence, which sometimes complement each other and at other times complicate the whole legal system. The diversity of laws gives rise to the concept of legal pluralism, which Davies (2010) has defined as the notion that there is more than one legal system in any one geographic space “defined by the conventional boundaries of a nation state.” Moreover, Davies (2010) highlights how prevalent this notion of legal pluralism is in postcolonial societies such as Ghana, where a legal system is imposed to “co-exist and interconnect with customary, indigenous and/or religious laws” (pp. 805-806).

Despite the complexities of the legal regime, understanding the way in which the laws relate to each other is imperative to understanding the claims of both the Charismatic churches and the GTC. The 1992 Constitution definitely takes precedence over all other laws. However, while it guarantees the general human rights and freedoms of every citizen, it does not specify for instance, the sort of things that one can do that will not amount to disturbing your neighbour. These are enshrined in the by-laws of the Metropolitan/Municipal/District Assembly for example, the Accra Metropolitan Assembly (AMA). It is these by-laws that the assemblies adopt for the smooth administration of local communities in order to mitigate against any disharmony in society. For example, in the case of this conflict over noise, one by-law that becomes pertinent is the AMA’s by-law on noise nuisance in Accra. While this by-law is clearly a by-product of Article 240 of the constitution transferring functions to the Metropolitan Assembly and therefore clearly hierarchically below the constitutional

⁹⁴ For details see Local Government Act 1993, Act 462: <https://s3.amazonaws.com/ndpc-static/pubication/Act+462+--+Local+Government+Act.pdf>, Accessed November 18, 2016.

provision, the place of customary laws relative to the by-laws is unclear. The customary laws of the Ga state, such as the noise ban, which exist side by side with the by-laws of the institutions of democracy are intended to work in harmony with each other. However, in the case at hand, sometimes these two are actually poles apart and in competition with each other. Although the AMA sees it as their responsibility and function to run the city at the community level including controlling noise pollution, the GTC from time to time especially during the period of the noise ban, assert their 'landlord' status and try to override the powers of local governance, all in the name of preserving their culture and religion as provided by the 1992 constitution. What makes the relationship between the customary laws and the by-laws in the city even more complicated is that nowadays the AMA mostly assumes the role of announcing the noise ban to the general public, something that is purely a customary law and belongs in the domain of the GTC. However, this is understandable considering the tension that the noise ban has generated among the residents of the city. It is however, not unusual that non-state normative systems like the GTC customary laws, which co-exist with state laws, like AMA by-laws sometimes compete with each other for authority over the citizens (Davies, 2010, p. 806). Since this case has not yet been heard at the Supreme Court, it is important to consider similar cases that essentially deal with the balance between religious freedoms, religious diversity, human rights and noise pollution.

Between Noise Pollution and Religious Liberties: case laws

According to Cross (2015) the purpose of protecting religious liberties should be connected to the way and manner in which such a constitutional provision is interpreted and applied (p. 2). That is, interpreting the rights and freedoms of citizens is as critical as the guarantee of such provisions in the constitution in the first place. Unfortunately, although there has been talk of seeking clarification at the Supreme Court by different parties such as the Christian groups and some civil society organisations, this has not materialised to date. It will be interesting to see how the apex court of Ghana will rule on this case, if ever the case is called. In the absence of such a ruling, we can only refer to precedents in the form of landmark cases and how the law was applied to bring finality to otherwise contentious issue of religious noise. I have selected three cases from three different jurisdictions namely, Ghana, England and India, to compare how cases

of this nature have been dealt with in three commonwealth countries, who subscribe to the English common law.⁹⁵

Case one

This case is the closest one that can give us an idea of how the Ghanaian courts went about the issue of balancing the religious freedoms of a Charismatic church and maintaining public peace. It is the case of *The Republic vs. The Pastor in Charge, Power Miracle Chapel International*,⁹⁶ where some aggrieved residents took a local Charismatic church to the magistrate's court for causing noise nuisance by using loudspeakers and modern public-address systems for church services. The court ordered the Environmental Protection Officers from the local authority office to enforce existing laws on noise pollution and ordered the church to install sound proof facilities in their building within a period of 14 months. Failure to comply with the directive, would lead the city authorities to close down the church. The church however refused to comply, which resulted in the city authorities doing just that.

This case did not involve the same level of conflict as the noise ban because it did not call for constitutional interpretations and hence it was handled at the district magistrate's court, the lowest court in the judiciary system of Ghana. Obviously, the case involved a particular church and residents of a community, whereas our case involves the entire traditional set up of the Ga people and the Pentecostal-Charismatic churches as a collective. However, case one shows that there is perhaps an alternative route to pursuing the conflict over the noise ban through the same court system not necessarily at the Supreme Court, which has often been advanced. But through individual residents of different localities taking specific cases of noise nuisance to the courts. Notwithstanding, the conflict over the noise ban as it stands now, can only be dealt with by the apex court since it involves human rights issues and constitutional interpretations, for which only the Supreme Court has competent jurisdiction. This is not to suggest that the ruling of the superior court will bring an end to the conflict but

⁹⁵ I am aware that an African sample of legal systems closer to the Ghanaian post-colonial dynamics such as Nigeria, Kenya and Zambia should suffice for a comparative perspective. Nevertheless, my selection of India and England is a conscious one, to compare completely different geographical areas.

⁹⁶ Republic v. The Pastor in Charge, Power Miracle Chapel International. Case no. B12/23/08 District Magistrates Court La, Accra.

clearly its interpretations will help clarify the legal positions taken by the parties.

Case two

In the multicultural and multi-religious⁹⁷ community of the London Borough of Hackney, the rabbi in charge of a synagogue and a Jewish School was prosecuted at a magistrate's court for noise pollution as a result of multiple activities during the Sabbath, Passover celebration, prayer at the Jewish school, and the induction ceremony of a new scroll. The latter event however had a Police escort as well as permission. The rabbi was given a two-year conditional charge and ordered to pay £4000 within half a year. Nevertheless, upon appeal to a higher court arguing, among other things, that the prosecution infringed on his rights to religious freedom, freedom of association and freedom of expression under the European Convention on Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (ECHR), after five Environmental Officers from the Hackney Council gave evidence, the court proceeded to annul all the counts against the rabbi. The court determined that under the national Environmental Protection Act 1990, Section 79 (1) (g), noise could not be considered a statutory nuisance. An appeal by the Hackney Council Environmental Officers to a divisional court was unsuccessful as it was dismissed on technical grounds. Although the judgement of the court was essentially based on the balance between religious freedom and public interest environmental protection, they also decided that the provision of Article 9 of the ECHR did not correspond to immunity from prosecution for religious groups and their adherents (Knights, 2008, p. 51-53).

Case three

The third case was heard at the Supreme Court of India involving a Pentecostal Church, *Church of God (Full Gospel) in India* as the petitioners vs. *K.K.R Majestic Colony Welfare Association and others*, as respondents.⁹⁸ This case involved loud music resulting from church activities in the petitioners' church auditorium which became noise pollution to the respondents, representatives of a local community. Prior to petitioning the Supreme Court, the case had been heard in a High Court in which the *Welfare*

⁹⁷ 2001 Statistics of the area indicate that of the 202, 824 people, 46.6% described themselves as Christians, 13.8% Muslim, 5.3% Jewish, 1.1 % Buddhist, 0.9% Sikh, 0.8% Hindu, 0.6% other religions, 12% not stating any religion and 19% no religion (Knights, 2008, p. 51).

⁹⁸ See <http://judis.nic.in/supremecourt/imgst.aspx?filename=17134> for details of the case. Accessed November 1, 2016.

Association had complained that use of musical equipment and loud public-address systems in the church's services disturbed the peace and tranquillity of the neighbourhood and contravened the local EPA Act 1986. The High Court ruled that the law enforcement officers (police) and the Pollution Control Board should take steps to bring down the noise to the permitted levels by taking action against noisy vehicles and ensuring that noise was moderated in the church. Nevertheless, the church, not happy with the ruling, appealed the judgement on the grounds that its members' right to freedom of worship was being infringed. Also, they submitted that the noise was actually due to vehicular traffic in the area and not the use of the loudspeakers. The Supreme Court of India however ruled first and foremost, that the right to practice, profess and propagate religion as enshrined in the constitution is definitely not an absolute right. They are subject to the restrictions of "public order, morality and health." That is, the enjoyment of one's rights must be in consonance with other people's rights. Secondly, religious activities like prayer and preaching that adversely affect the rights of the general population cannot be upheld in an organised society. Especially since no religious group teaches that loud public-address systems or the beating of drums should be used in the performance of their religious rituals. Thirdly, no right can be absolute in a civilised society. That is, particular rights cannot exist in isolation, they are dependent on other rights and they must coexist. Fourthly, although there is generally increased levels of noise in a city as a result of industrialisation and urbanisation, which exceed permitted noise levels under the environmental protection regulations, it is not enough grounds to allow others to increase the same by the beating of drums, use of voice amplifiers and musical instruments. Accordingly, the Supreme Court affirmed the earlier ruling from the High Court and dismissed the appeal.

These last two cases show how different courts, the High Court and the Supreme Court in two respective jurisdictions, England and India dealt with similar cases but they had different outcomes. The outcomes can be seen as informed by local dynamics such as the fact that England has a state church, the Church of England while India has no official state religion, although the dominance of Hinduism is pervasive being represented as "the religion of India" (Swamy, 2016, p. 99). Both countries grant religious freedoms to their citizens but England with an official state church and consequently, ecclesiastical laws, tends to favour one church (CoE) over other religious groups. Additionally, having a state church makes the

country generally more tolerant to religious noise (Watkin, 1996) than jurisdictions like India. Again, we see that the United Kingdom, as a member of the European Union is also bound by European Conventions on human rights while India does not share its sovereignty with any regional body. Like Ghana, both countries are multi-religious and adopt the English common law but unlike England, the other two countries through colonialism have had to adopt these legal frameworks and impose them on their multicomunal societies. This is not to suggest that a similar ruling in the Indian case could be followed by the courts in Ghana as the local dynamics are different.

Indifferent or Measured? - The approaches of state and its institutions toward the conflict

According to Azar (1990, p. 10) questions of governance and the role of the state are critical in either frustrating or satisfying the needs including rights and freedoms of individuals or identity groups. This means that there is a political side to religious freedoms and that political decisions can be made by the state at the expense of constitutional and legal provisions (Sullivan, Hurd, Mahmood, & Danchin, 2015). In this section, I will discuss the approach of the state towards the noise ban and its related legal issues by concentrating on four relevant state institutions, the Judiciary, the Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice (CHRAJ), the Ghana Police, and Accra Metropolitan Assembly (AMA).

Although laws might be fundamentally looked at as aspirational goals, eventually, the effect of the law is dependent on the way the courts interpret and enforce them. Moreover, if the law is taken as a “public, general and binding command enforceable through state coercion,” then its impact on this present conflict in a democratic state cannot be overemphasised (Smulovitz, 2010, p. 730). The nation state and its institutions especially the courts, therefore, have a critical role to play in bringing this protracted social conflict under control. Some scholars have indicated that courts and laws are being more and more employed for the advancement and realisation of civil and social rights (ibid, p. 730; Langford, 2008; Gauri & Brinks, 2008), although Rosenberg (1991) has described the capacity of the courts to bring about social change as rather limited. In the conflict between the traditionalists and the Charismatic churches, there have been several attempts by the GPCC, the ecumenical body of Pentecostal and Charismatic churches, to have the issue heard in court to bring a closure to the constitutional and legal debate relative to the noise ban and religious

liberties. They have also appealed to certain state institutions such as the Parliament of Ghana to intervene (GPCC Document, 1999). First, they filed a writ at the Supreme Court in Accra seeking three reliefs on March 9, 1994. The reliefs they sought include:

A declaration that by the Provisions of the 1992 Constitution and in particular Article 21 (1) (b) (c) and 26, the plaintiffs as well as other Christian Church groups have an inherent right to worship, profess, practice and manifest their Christian faith and belief. (2) A declaration that plaintiffs' right to hold and profess their faith as guaranteed by the Constitution does not permit any one to interfere with or disrupt the mode, time or place where such belief or worship is to be manifested, save as is proscribed by the Constitution. (3) A declaration that any purported act or conduct of any traditional authority in Ghana or group of persons in any community in Ghana or others in proscribing, preventing or interfering in the worship or the enjoyment of any meal, dish or food by any member of the Churches belonging to plaintiff's council is a violation or contravention of their constitutional right as enshrined in the 1992 constitution (GPCC file document, 2000).

Next, they also petitioned the Speaker of the Parliament of Ghana in June 1998 citing the same reliefs they sought in court and requested that parliament:

Tell the whole world whether it is right and constitutional to impose the mode of worship of one religious faith on all others. (2) Take appropriate steps to ensure that the perpetrators of these atrocious acts are brought to book. (3) Educate people of all faiths to respect one another's constitutional rights and co-exist in harmony... (5) Kindly ensure that the safety and security of the lives and properties of every individual who lives in this country is not toyed with by any person or group of persons. Continual harassment of the Church may compel us to react (GPCC Document, Letter to Parliament of Ghana).

This strongly worded request was sent to the Ghanaian parliament and copies were sent to the Chief Justice as well as the Vice President of the Republic, John Evans Atta-Mills, who later became the President. In all these attempts by the churches to seek redress from these important state institutions, the reaction of the state has been one of indifference or a somewhat measured approach to dealing with this conflict. A question is raised as to why the Supreme Court has never sought to address this issue to bring some clarity on the constitutional provisions both parties have sought to rely on. This is significant because like Langford (2008) and Smulovitz (2010) argue, the consequences of how the courts interpret and implement the laws have the capacity to bring about social change including transforming this social conflict.

It is understandable on the part of the central government that it has taken a careful approach to dealing with this issue because irrespective of the guilty party, the government in power is likely to lose electoral votes from that particular constituency. The Charismatic churches are too powerful and constitute a significant portion of the population of the country while the Greater Accra region has been a swing region in the electioneering since 1992. Therefore, to lose any of these two constituencies is detrimental to the electoral fortunes of the political party in power. The winner-takes-all political environment in the country informs various governments' approaches to dealing with the conflict. By trying to remain neutral, the central government and the Parliamentary groups have made a political decision at the expense of employing the law to ensure rights and liberties are respected. This sometimes appears as assuming a stature of indifference to the current conflict.

Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice (CHRAJ)

The CHRAJ is a state institution mandated to protect the universal human rights and freedoms as well as the fundamental rights and freedoms enshrined in the 1992 Constitution of Ghana. The mandate for the protection of these rights is specifically spelt out in Article 218 (a) (c) and (f)⁹⁹ and also a part of the Act of Parliament establishing the institution, precisely, Section 7 (1) (a) (c) (g)¹⁰⁰ which defines and prescribes the functions of the agency as it relates to promoting and protecting human rights in the country.¹⁰¹ First and foremost, CHRAJ has been the only government agency that has made a specific determination on the implications of the noise ban on religious and other fundamental freedoms of the Christians.

⁹⁹ The functions of the Commission shall include (a) to investigate complaints of violations of fundamental rights and freedoms, injustice, corruption, abuse of power and unfair treatment of any person by a public officer in the exercise of his official duties; (c) to investigate complaints concerning practices and actions by persons, private enterprises and other institutions where those complaints allege violations of fundamental rights and freedoms under the Constitution; (g) to educate the public as to human rights and freedoms by such means as the Commissioner may decide, including publications, lectures and symposia.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

¹⁰¹ The CHRAJ has a broader mandate besides the protection of human rights. The commission is also the State Ombudsman and the Anti-Corruption Agency tasked with helping to promote transparency and public accountability (Chapter 18 of the 1992 Constitution). For more on CHRAJ see: <http://www.refworld.org/docid/44bf7f804.html>, Accessed November 20, 2016.

In May 1999, during the first phase of our periodisation (1998-2001), the commission ruled that “While the ban on drumming is constitutionally protected, it does not extend to other groups, nor does it overrule the right of people practising different religions to exercise their own freedom of worship.” The commissioner at the time, Justice Emile Short further issued a statement after this declaration stating that the enforcement of the ban had no legal backing, therefore, instead of imposing it on the Christians, the traditionalists should rather appeal to the churches (Africa News, Issue 39, 1999). Obviously, the Ga traditionalists did not take kindly to the declaration by the Commission which sought to question the legality of the ban and threatened to continue to clamp down on Christians who violated the ban. This declaration should have brought some finality to the case but due to obvious limitations in the workings of CHRAJ, the ruling died a natural death after a few months. Although CHRAJ is a quasi-judicial body, its commissioner has the powers of an Appeals Court judge and the deputy commissioners, the powers of High Court judges according to Article 221. However, despite the powers of the commissioners, CHRAJ can only make recommendations to appropriate authorities such as ministers concerned in the issue under investigation or the best they can do after such investigations of violation of rights is to pursue the case in a regular law court. So, in this case, the recommendations were made to the central government after the determination. While the government failed to address CHRAJ’s ruling, the constitutional body itself also did not take steps to enforce their decision through a court action. Moreover, even the inability of the commission to pursue a case without recourse to the regular court system is an obvious limitation that did not help to bring finality to the conflict.



Photo 12: Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice, Accra
(Credit: Author).

The Ghana Police Service

From the initial outbreak of the clashes in 1998, the police have been measured in their approach towards the conflicting parties. The Christian groups have often complained of the lack of willingness by the Police to arrest and prosecute the traditionalists who perpetrate attacks on the churches during the period of the ban. This posture of the law enforcement officers has even attracted international attention, to the extent that the United States Department of State's reports on the global landscape of religious freedom has captured it thus:

The Government does not always prosecute those responsible for religiously motivated attacks. For example, none of those who attacked churches during the 1998 or 1999 annual ban on drumming were arrested or charged with an offense. Police authorities stated that pursuing the cases would exacerbate religious tensions.¹⁰²

¹⁰² See <http://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/irf/2001/5651.htm> for details. The International Religious Freedom Report is an annual report prepared by the US Department of State in accordance with Section 102(b) of the 1998 International Religious Freedom Act (IRFA). The Report supplements the most recent Human Rights Reports by providing additional detailed information with respect to matters involving international religious freedom.

Although the Police have not charged anyone for crimes linked to the attacks on the churches, they have from time to time arrested some of the traditionalists, especially the Ga youth but not the *Wulɔmei*. For instance, in 2001, at the height of clashes, many GTC members were arrested after the assault on the Christ Apostolic Church in Osu. Nevertheless, upon a demonstration to demand their release and threats to boycott all mediation processes, they were released without charge at the behest of central government (Accra Mail, May 18, 2001). Regarding another series of arrests by the Police in 2010, one of my informants from the GTC side stated,

About five years ago, our people went to arrest a church and the issue was reported to the Police at the Kaneshie Station. The Police arrested some of our people and so we went to the station to bail them but the Kaneshie Commander called the Regional Commander and reported that the *Wulɔmei* were coming to break the cells to release their people. So, they sent in reinforcement from other stations and they beat the *Wulɔmei* mercilessly, but some of us managed to escape. As a result of the beating of the *Wulɔmei*, the gods struck most of these police offices and some of them died while others suffered strange diseases. Some came back to us to perform some rituals for them to be spared (Nuumo Okai I, personal communication, October 24, 2015).

We see that much as the police used a level of brutal force to clamp down on the attacks on churches, they have also been extremely measured in their approach at law enforcement. Several factors could be attributed to the posture of the police. To begin with, they see the conflict between the parties as a religious one and argue that prosecuting people will only serve to aggravate the situation since what is at stake revolves around the religious beliefs of the two groups. A Police officer stationed at the James Town Station (Ga Mashie) opined that “doing a mass arrest and prosecuting them will not solve the problem. You have to know that although we are law enforcers and protectors of property, ultimately our aim is to make sure there is public peace and order.” She continued, “For this, we sometimes adopt different strategies to achieve it. Moreover, you have to know that on both sides we are dealing with religious leaders and some of them are reigning curses on us and others are praying against us” (Officer Linda, personal communication, May 12, 2014).¹⁰³ The aspect of praying against the officers is corroborated by the *Wulɔmei*'s quotation above, that is, some officers had experienced death and others, sickness, as a result of some heavy handedness towards the *Wulɔmei*. Since the enforcers of the law

¹⁰³ This is an anonymous name for the officer based on agreement with the author.

themselves consider the conflict as religious, police officers based in the communities are even afraid to arrest and prosecute perpetrators for fear of being visited with misfortune either by the actions of the *Wulɔmei* or even the pastors. Furthermore, a senior Police officer at the national headquarters in charge of operations also opined that, “These are two religious groups, arresting them amass will only lead to more chaos, so at the local station level we ask our men to deal with them tactfully and as much as possible dialogue with them” (DCOP Ampah-Benin, personal communication, February 19, 2014).¹⁰⁴ Here we can infer from the view of the senior police officer that while he also sees the conflict as religious, he is quick to trivialize it by confining resolution to local Police stations. What this shows is that, contrary to the wider impact of this conflict on the national capital, he sees it as not enough of a threat on the nation. Admittedly, the measured approach adopted by the police in the specific case of the noise ban, has largely worked in their favour. However, over time, it has also created a culture of impunity on both sides of the conflict, where actors seem to think they will not be arrested after all, even if they find themselves at the wrong side of the law.

Finally, we also see that anytime there have been arrests of the traditionalists, the political elite intervenes for fear of being punished in the electioneering. These actions reveal the undermining of the work of the Police by the politicians and also show how politicians can sometimes cross the boundary to interfere with the criminal justice system in Ghana.

The Accra Metropolitan Assembly (AMA)

The AMA is the local government authority in the city of Accra. In order to bring governance to the community level, the AMA has ten sub-metro offices from where local governance is executed. The AMA’s approach to the legal aspects of this conflict has been rather complicated. In the first place, the Chief Executive Officer of the AMA, who is the mayor of the city of Accra has since the beginning of 1992 been a native Ga person.¹⁰⁵ Coupled with this, in contemporary times (over 6 years) its Public Relations Officer (PRO) has been a *Wulɔmɔ*, Nuumo Blafo II. As a result, the city authorities are seen as bias arbiters by the Charismatic churches. This

¹⁰⁴At the time of the discussion he was the Director-General in charge of Public Affairs but he has since been appointed as the Director General in charge of Special Duties.

¹⁰⁵ The mayors have been native Ga people but all of them have also been Christians but of the mainline church extract. The current mayor of Accra, Dr Okoe Vanderpuye is a Ga and a Seventh - day Adventist.

became clear during the first phase (1998-2001) when the AMA was perceived to have connived with the GTC to break down the walls of the LCI Cathedral at Korle Gonno, which eventually exposed the church for an attack by the *Wulomei* and the Ga youth. Furthermore, in the last two phases (2002-2016) the AMA has taken upon itself the responsibility of announcing the ban, although as a government agency, they are by law supposed to be neutral. However, the PRO argues that their involvement has been as a result of the conflict that the noise ban has generated for some time now. He states further that it is also the responsibility of the city authorities to help keep the peace within its boundaries.

Regarding the law, the AMA which is responsible for enforcing its own by-laws on noise and nuisance for the purposes of environmental protection has not been consistent with its enforcement. Although existing laws on noise pollution are expected to be enforced throughout the year, the AMA only brings up this law during the period of the ban. During this time, they collaborate with the GTC and the police to form a taskforce to clamp down on noise within the city. Thus, throughout the year, churches, businesses and other religious bodies are allowed to emit loud levels of sound without any problems. This approach by the AMA feeds into the notion espoused by the Charismatic churches and their ecumenical councils that they are biased and only serve the interests of the GTC. However, the argument can be made that the lack of enforcement of by-laws for the rest of the year, outside the 30-day noise period, actually works in the favour of the churches.

Moreover, the local authorities do have in place legislation on zoning in their by-laws, but since these regulations are not enforced, several churches have mushroomed even in residential areas. Meanwhile, Charismatic churches are known for organising church services around-the-clock, which creates noise nuisance for residents of the areas they are sited. It is common in Accra to find multiple churches in the same residential vicinity having church services simultaneously. Even silence zones such as hospitals, courts, and educational institutions have nearby or resident churches. What complicates this phenomenon is that each of these churches has a different building permit provided by the same local authority empowered to enforce zoning laws. This could be due to the rapidly expanding city in which land or space is of the essence but more significantly, purported corrupt practices by local government officials. It is clear that until these zoning regulations are enforced it will be difficult to control

noise pollution in the city because private space will always collapse into public space as the boundaries are constantly shifting.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have attempted to show how the conflict between the Charismatic Churches, and the Ga traditionalists over the noise ban has generated different legal arguments among the parties and society in general, as well as the implications of the ban on the constitutionally guaranteed religious freedoms in the context of religious diversity. I have shown that religious diversity and freedoms are guaranteed by the nation-state and that direct state interference in religious groups is almost negligible or very minimal, although religion remains central in public and social life. Nevertheless, it is at the level of the relations between individual religious adherents and among religious groups such as the Charismatic churches and the Ga traditionalists that some amount of intolerance is apparent, which is clearly embodied in their actions and reactions towards the noise ban in Accra. The claims and counter claims to rights and freedoms under the constitution by both parties have contributed immensely to the levels of religious intolerance between them. For example, if the GTC claims they have religious and cultural rights because of the customary laws of the Ga traditional state, which they consider as sacred, then there is bound to be a counter claim by the Charismatic churches who also consider their style of worship as sacred and protected by the same constitution. The obvious outcome in this case is the contravention of each other's freedoms and rights since religious freedoms do not exist in isolation but in tandem with other freedoms.

The next question from the discussions in this chapter is, why has the legal route not been pursued by the state and if it was, could it bring finality to this conflict? To quote the view of one newspaper editorial regarding the noise ban conflict, “[f]or far too long, the institutions of law and order have remained static, stagnant and lethargic. Shouldn't we allow them to work since the law is greater than the churches, traditionalists and even the Executive [arm of government]?” (Ghanaian Chronicle, May 16, 2001).” To begin with, while it is imperative for the institutions of state to work by applying the law to find a resolution to the conflict, as advocated by this editorial, it is also clear that application of legislation alone is not in itself sufficient. Ter Haar, (2000) has argued that, “It is becoming clear that legal instruments are not enough if human rights are to be firmly grounded in different cultures, as people's understanding of human rights is informed

by their world views and cosmologies” (p. 3). Thus, constitutional provisions and legal regimes are not enough, in this context of confrontations over the noise ban, because it has underlying religious and cultural human rights factors central to it. It is easy to say that religious freedoms should be compromised when they conflict with other societal interests as proposed by Leiter (2008, 2010), at least, in Western democracies but the same cannot be said of the Ghanaian context, where democratic structures exist vis-à-vis the traditional structures of governance. The religious nature alone makes the conflict over the noise ban even more complicated.

Pobee (1991) has emphasised that “*Homo ghaniensis is homo radicaliter religiosus*,” that is, the Ghanaian is a radically religious being. Religion is of extreme importance and a key identity factor to both parties in the conflict (p. 11). Actually, it is the primary identifier of many in the country and as Laycock (1996) has contended, religion is “important enough to die for, to suffer for, to rebel for...to fight to control government for” (p. 317). This probably explains why religious freedom is given legal recognition in the country and it is also the reason why it will be difficult for only the legal jurisdiction to be employed to bring a lasting resolution to the conflict. This is in no way a suggestion that religious groups should be exempted from secular laws but rather to point out that because conflicts with religious undertones “may be more intractable, given the devoutness of believers,” they need to be approached differently (Cross, 2015, p. 8). Although “the human rights concept as expressed in the Universal Declaration is at root a secular idea. ...it seems that of all the cultural factors which affect views of humanity and human rights in different parts of the world, none is more important than religion” (p. 3). Accordingly, it is important that state institutions pursue the legal route along with the alternative dispute resolution methods, which will incorporate local worldviews and cosmologies of the parties involved – what Atiemo (2013) has referred to as the inculturation of rights and freedoms (p. 4). Perhaps these methods are most feasible for states with pluralistic legal systems like Ghana, in cases involving religious rights and freedoms.

Finally, for a system of law to be credible and beneficial to society, there must be clarity and certainty about it, which ingredients are missing in the aspect of the constitutional provision on customary laws, which constitutes the enduring legacies of the legal systems of traditional societies

(Braithwaite, 2002).¹⁰⁶ Therefore, the nation-state must perhaps find a way of balancing the democratic institutions and the traditional cultural ones such as the GTC in order to engender clarity in relation to the customary laws and practices of the traditional councils.

¹⁰⁶ D'Amato (2010) has argued that rather than becoming certain laws when left to normal processes of adjudication, adjustment and statutory change tends toward greater uncertainty (p. 4).

7. Dynamic and Creative Religious Exchanges: The relationship between the mainline historical churches and the Ga traditional council

I can say from the onset that the Catholic Church has a cordial relationship with the Ga Traditional Council and indeed all traditional councils around the country. We always invite them whenever we have a major programme or celebration. It is that respect we give to them that generates this kind of cordial relationship between us. We respect them for who they are and what they stand for (Very Rev. Father Francis Adoboli, personal communication, January 20, 2015).

Becoming a Christian in Ghana has always meant doing away with aspects of indigenous culture or making complete changes to one's way of life. There has often been a challenge to both the churches and their congregations as to whether or not to draw a line of demarcation between the two worlds and if so, where to draw this boundary. Accordingly, various Christian groups in Ghana have adopted different strategies to cope with this conundrum. Despite obvious challenges, some Christian traditions have had significant success, while others have not managed the same level of cooperation. A classic example of the latter group is the strained relationship between some Charismatic churches and the Ga traditionalists, the subject of this study.

Whereas we have basically been examining the relationship between the Charismatic churches and the GTC within the context of the noise ban, it is imperative to tease out why there is minimal or almost no confrontation between the GTC and the mainline historical churches. Accordingly, this chapter is an attempt to bring out some of the strategies the mainline churches have adopted over the course of time to cope with the noise ban in the Greater Accra Region. It is also to show how the relationship between these two groups has evolved from one of tension, in the earlier days, to one of cooperation in recent times, as alluded to in the above quotation.

The data for this chapter is primarily drawn from interviews, observations, document analysis, and archival material as well as some secondary

sources.¹⁰⁷ Examples are mainly drawn from but not exclusive to the Presbyterian Church of Ghana (PCG) and the Roman Catholic Church (RCC). Specifically, Abokobi Zimmerman Memorial Congregation, Osu Ebenezer Congregation, and Accra Central Resurrection Congregation of the Ga Presbytery, the Adabraka Holy Spirit Cathedral, Osu St. Peter's Parish, and Darby Avenue Sacred Heart Cathedral of the Archdiocese of Accra were selected from the PCG and the RCC respectively. The decision to choose these two churches to represent the mainline historical churches is informed by three factors. First, the PCG as the foremost Protestant Church in the Gold Coast and the Catholic Church with the largest spread of all mainline churches, respectively belong to different ecumenical groups, the Christian Council of Ghana (CCG), and the National Catholic Secretariat (NCS). This gives us the opportunity to see how a historically protestant denomination and the Catholic Church, with their different approaches to evangelisation relate to the traditionalists in Accra. Secondly, the PCG and the Catholic Church have been in the Greater Accra region for a long time, that is, almost two centuries (1828) and over a century (1893) respectively. This long association with the Ga people gives us an idea of the historical trajectory of their relationship with the Ga traditionalists. Thirdly, these two denominations have contributed immensely to the development of the country as a whole, being referred to by Miller (2003) as significant agents of social change in the entire country (p. 26). Finally, and more significantly, these two churches have had their own internal 'Pentecostal-Charismatic' presence, in the form of the Bible Study and Prayer Group (BSPG) in the PCG, and the Catholic Charismatic Renewal Group (CCRG), considered important arms of both churches. This makes the two churches obvious choices for a comparative case study that deals predominantly with Charismatic churches in Ghana such as this one.¹⁰⁸ In order to establish the dynamics accounting for the cooperation

¹⁰⁷ Of the vast literature, available on these two churches, I single out, Jon Miller's *Missionary Zeal and Institutional Control* (2003) and Noel Smith's, *The Presbyterian Church of Ghana 1835-1960* (1966) for the PCG and Pashington Obeng's, *Asante Catholicism* (1996) and Ralph Wiltgen's *Gold Coast Missionary History* (1956) for the Roman Catholic Church.

¹⁰⁸ The Pentecostal influence in the two churches in Ghana has been studied extensively by Cephas Omenyo in his 2002 publication, "'Pentecost outside Pentecostalism': A Study of the Development of Charismatic Renewal in the mainline Churches in Ghana." Omenyo, a Religious Studies Professor at the University of Ghana has since August 2016 been elected as the Moderator of the PCG.

between these groups, first, we shall explore historical factors such as modes of mission and evangelisation by the mainline churches. Next, we shall consider theological factors including liturgy and forms of religious engineering¹⁰⁹ - interreligious dialogue, inculturation and creativity for cooperation by the churches. Finally, we shall look at the antithesis to the cooperation between the parties. It is important, at this point, to offer a brief background history of the Catholic Church and the PCG in Ghana.

The Roman Catholic Church

The RCC was the first to bring the Christian message to the Gold Coast through the Portuguese chaplains on the merchant ships who reached Shama in the present day Western Region in 1471. However, this effort at evangelisation was intermittent and was later completely abandoned in 1640 due to a lack of personnel, health hazards, and what was termed as the unpreparedness of the natives to receive the Christian message (Osei-Bonsu, 1997, p. 7). As one missionary noted in 1630:

The contemporary generation of Christians in Mina [Elmina]...were Christians in name only, going to confession only under pressure, and then not knowing how to make good confession, or what to confess...the greatest good being accomplished in Mina was the baptism of infants who died before attainment of the use of reason (Wiltgen, 1956, p.29). Emphasis mine.

Wiltgen (1956) suggests that such reports of a lack of interest and impact on the local population might have contributed to the breakdown in the zeal of the missionaries to continue to evangelise. In addition, he attributes the fall of the Portuguese castle in Elmina to the Dutch in 1637 as the final straw that led to the interruption of the RCC missionary work in the Gold Coast.¹¹⁰

Nevertheless, during the period of suspension of the missionary work, the Protestants arrived and started opening mission centres across the country, which instigated a rather late re-entry to the field by another group of Catholic missionaries. Prior to the suspension of the missionary efforts, the work had been done mainly by French and Spanish Capuchins, Portuguese Augustinians, and Propaganda Fide (Evangelisation of Peoples) missionaries. But in 1879 the Propaganda Fide erected the prefecture of

¹⁰⁹ Refer to section p. 246 for explanation on religious engineering.

¹¹⁰ It is important to note that during the religious wars in Europe, the Dutch religious policy forbade Roman Catholic worship and churches outrightly, and tried to omit any traces of Catholicism on the West African coast.

the Gold Coast and entrusted it into the hands of the Society of African Missions (SMA), which led to the resumption of Catholic missionary activities in 1880. The SMA sent two missionary fathers, Moreau and Murat, who arrived in Elmina in May 1880 charged with the responsibility to give impetus to the evangelisation endeavour. These two priests are therefore, variously described as the founders of the RCC in the Gold Coast because they persisted despite bouts of malaria, exhaustion and a lack of adequate financial support (Van Brakel, 1992; Obeng, 1996, p. 104; Norbert Okoledah, 2005, pp. 66, 67). The Catholic missionaries, like others at the time, established schools and agricultural posts to help train their converts in land cultivation as well as translating the Catechism into Fante, the Akan dialect spoken by the local people in Elmina. As the number of converts increased in Elmina and Cape Coast, they began to spread into Accra and the Northern territories (Osei-Bonsu, 1997).

Catholicism in Accra

The first Catholic priests to come to Accra arrived in the 1570s when the Portuguese set up a trading post there, which lasted for only seven years, until it was destroyed by the indigenes. The next Catholic priest came to Accra in 1679 when the Portuguese bought the Osu Castle from the Danes and ran it for a three-year period. After this, the only time Accra saw Catholic priests were those travelling through while their ships unloaded cargo at the port. However, following the resumption of Catholic missionary work, the SMA missionaries officially started a Catholic mission in Accra in January 1893, thirteen years after the re-entry into the Gold Coast. The first church was established on Derby Avenue in present day Accra Central. The Accra mission was led by the SMA until 1931 when they transferred responsibility to another missionary group, The Society of the Divine Word (SVD). Accra became a prefecture in 1944 and a metropolitan See in 1992. Today, the Catholic Archdiocese of Accra has six deaneries covering the majority of the Greater Accra Region, with several pre-tertiary institutions, hospitals, a printing press, and several charities (Norbert Okoledah, 2005; Wiltgen, 1956).¹¹¹

The role of the RCC in the country cannot be underestimated having contributed immensely to the debate that returned Ghana from military dictatorship to a democracy in 1992, as well as to education, health care and other social services. With a total membership that constitutes 13% of

¹¹¹ See also Catholic Archdiocese of Accra, 120th Anniversary Brochure (Revised Edition), November 2013. Pp. 17-27.

the Ghanaian population, the RCC is the most widespread of any mainline historical church in Ghana (Ghana Statistical Service, 2012).

The Presbyterian Church of Ghana (PCG)

The PCG traces its formation to the Basel Evangelical Missionary Society founded in 1815 by reformed Swiss and Lutheran pietists in South West Germany, particularly from Württemberg. The Basel Mission, which was characterised by interdenominational composition and multinational networks including reformed Dutch, Lutheran Danes, the English Church Missionary Society and the Presbyterian Scots made “arguably [the] most spectacular advances in mission...on the West African Gold Coast” (Heuser, 2015a, p.1; Heuser, 2015b). This multinational dimension to the Basel Mission saw them invited by the Danish crown to begin a mission work in the Gold Coast, where they had a flourishing trade post.

The PCG, still commonly referred to in Ghana as the *Basel Mission Church*, was founded in December 1828 in Osu (Christiansburg) in Accra. It holds the designation of being the first mainline church, in historical continuity, to be established in the country (Jenkins, 1978, p. 3). As we referred to earlier, although the PCG takes this first established church position, it definitely does not imply that the Basel Missionaries were the first to work in the Gold Coast, that title belongs to the Portuguese Catholic fathers. Nevertheless, the Basel missionaries were considered the most persistent in the face of deaths, and financial and logistical constraints. Their missionary enterprise has continued unabated to date, only having a temporary break between 1914 and 1918 due to the outbreak of the First World War. This break was necessitated by the British colonial government’s suspicion of the mission as a pro-German organisation and therefore a threat to them. Consequently, their infrastructure including church buildings, schools and farms was transferred to the United Free Church of Scotland to continue the mission and evangelisation work. It was these Scottish Presbyterians who instigated the formation of the autonomous indigenous church, the Presbyterian Church of the Gold Coast (PCGC). However, in 1926, the Basel missionaries were allowed by the colonial government to return and take full charge of their missions, albeit under the Scottish authority (Miller, 2003). They have since then been ever present in the country, maintaining what the PCG calls today, a ‘partnership’ instead of ‘mission’ and pursuing various religious, educational, and technological projects together as well as transcultural exchanges. The independent indigenous church continues to fully identify its history with the

mission origins of the Basel Missions, which was confirmed by being co-celebrants of the 200th anniversary of the founding of the Basel Missions in 2015 (Heuser, 2015, p.1; Heuser, 2016).¹¹²

The PCG in Accra

Since 1828 when the Basel missionaries arrived in Osu, the Accra area has been a very important region in the annals of the church. The PCG is one of the few mainline historical churches that can trace its origins in the country to Accra, although they worked predominantly in the areas north of the Greater Accra Region by establishing many of their mission stations in the Akan areas in the present day Eastern Region of Ghana. Nevertheless, Osu, Central Accra (Makola) and Abokobi in Accra have been historically pivotal to the growth of the church and they continue to be important branches in contemporary times. Osu and Akropong were the first two stations which were followed by Abokobi, Aburi, Odumase-Krobo, Anum, Kyebi, Larteh and Ada (Agyemang, 1997, p. 2; Smith, 1966, p. 47). Today, the PCG has grown into a network of eighteen presbyteries in Ghana and some branches in Europe and the United States of America. But the centrality of the Greater Accra Region to the church cannot be overemphasised as the area plays host to the headquarters of the church, situated in Makola in Central Accra, albeit shortly to be relocated to Kuku Hill also in Accra.¹¹³ Additionally, the region alone has three presbyteries namely the Ga, Ga West and Adangme presbyteries.

Regarding the impact of the Basel Mission and its successor church on the sociocultural development of the country, Miller (2003) affirms that the marks left on Ghanaian culture “go as deep as the grain in the block of wood, capable of resisting every attempt to send them away” (p.17). Furthermore, in the colonial era, Sir John Harris, the English missionary and anti-slavery campaigner observed that,

The results of the Mission’s work can be seen all over the Colony; the polite native clerks, the managers of stores, the English-speaking planters, the coloured Government officials have nearly all of them received training at the Basel Mission school, and the Acting Governor...does not hesitate to recognise that his best officials have been produced by the mission. Testimony of this nature is unhappily seldom forthcoming from other colonies” (Smith, 1966, p. 62).

¹¹² See also: <http://www.pcg.pcgonline.io/brief-story-of-pcg/>, Accessed, August 30, 2016.

¹¹³ See: <http://www.pcgonline.org/index.php/presbyteries> , Accessed August 30, 2016.

The PCG has obviously been at the forefront of social development in Ghana, educating most of its leaders, providing healthcare services, agricultural ventures and most importantly promoting two important local languages – Ga and Twi. Today, it forms a significant part, along with its Protestant siblings such as the Methodist, Anglican, Baptist, Evangelical Presbyterian and Global Evangelical Church in constituting 18% of the national population (Ghana Statistical Service, 2012). Having offered a brief profile of the churches, we shall now explore the possible reasons that have contributed to the relationship of cooperation between them and the Ga traditionalists.

Accounting for Religious Cooperation

One of the striking statements about the level of cooperation between the traditionalists and the mainline churches was provided by one of my informants, a Catholic priest:

We [the mainline churches] have been living peacefully with them [Ga traditionalists]. No one has come to seize our instruments – we have not had any Ga youth disrupting our services during the ban on drumming and noise-making. They have never done that to us; even when they go round to inspect whether or not churches are complying with the ban, they spare us because of the cordial relationship we have with them (Very Rev. Fr. Francis Adoboli, personal communication, January 20, 2015).

While the above statement clearly gives us an indication of the extent of cordiality between the two parties, it is also worth noting that the mainline historical churches have not been completely free from the attacks of the traditionalists during the implementation of the noise ban by the GTC. Throughout the period covered by this study (1998-2016), there were some intermittent attacks on some of the churches as well, although not at the same level of intensity as confrontations with the Charismatic churches. The rarity of the occurrence of attacks informed Father Adoboli's view above that there has been no confrontations between them and the traditionalists. While that can be true for the Roman Catholics, there are other mainline churches who have been attacked by the traditionalists in recent times. For example, in 2009 it was reported that "three macho men" purported to be representing the GTC interrupted the church service at the

Global Evangelical Church to enforce the noise ban (GNA, 2009)¹¹⁴. Then there was another incident involving the *Saint John Methodist Church* in New Achimota, which was attacked in May 2013 by the Ga youth for contravening the noise ban (K. Asamoah-Gyadu, personal communication, February 12, 2014). The difference, however, is that in both cases the leadership of the churches managed to reach a compromise with the traditionalists, in order to avoid an escalation of the incident. For instance, in the case of the Global Evangelical Church, it was reported that the elders of the church promised to desist from using drums until the period of the noise ban had elapsed. More importantly, these examples of confrontations show that the historical churches have had their share of attacks from some of the elements of the GTC. The question therefore is, what informs this relative calm and cooperation between these two groups. Then, apart from the non-confrontational approach exhibited by the churches in the examples provided above, it is important to find out what other things they do differently from their Charismatic counterparts in their dealings with the GTC. In the following section, I argue that the contemporary relationship is shaped by various historical, theological and other innovative factors.

Modes of Missionary Evangelisation: historical precedents and recent events

Since the relationship cannot be fully understood without consideration of the historical connections, we shall first of all, consider the historical precedents and how they have informed contemporary relationships. Unlike the often very direct and aggressive evangelisation strategy of the first-generation Charismatic churches, the missionaries of both the Catholics and the Presbyterians took different approaches to evangelism. To begin with, the method of evangelisation employed by the Roman Catholic Church's missionaries can be categorised into three stages. First, upon arriving at a new place the missionary fathers spent the first year learning the language and the customs of the people including adjusting to the life styles of the people in such areas as food and dress.¹¹⁵ This stage was

¹¹⁴ See: http://www.ghananewsagency.org/social/ga-youth-interrupt-church-service-to-enforce-ban-on-noisemaking-6022?utm_source=gna&utm_medium=search&utm_campaign=sitesearch&utm_term=keywords&utm_content=

¹¹⁵ Unlike the Catholic and the Basel Missionaries, the Methodists strictly used English as the medium of instruction in their schools and their missionaries also used translators. See: Brokensha (1966, p. 25).

meant for them to understand the lives of the would-be converts. Secondly, they committed to a minimum of four years' pre-baptismal catechumenate in order to ensure converts had enough Christian knowledge before they were baptised. This was to allow the converts enough time to turn away from their indigenous worship. This method is still being employed by the Catholic Church in Ghana today where adherents still go through a long time of Catechism before they are confirmed as Catholics. Thirdly, the missionaries then took steps to establish local churches only after this length of time with the local populations (Osei-Bonsu, 1997; Norbert Okoledah, 2005, p. 41). This approach to evangelism meant that before a church was planted there was a longer time of field work, which is in sharp contrast to say, the Anagkazo Church Planting Strategy used by the LCI, where the local church is usually started immediately after the Healing Jesus Crusade by Dag Heward-Mills or any of his associates.

Correspondingly, the Basel Missionaries also adopted a three-pronged strategy namely, preaching the gospel in the local language, emphasis on education and a stress on the protestant work ethic and self-sustenance through the teaching of modern agricultural and craft skills (Smith, 1966, p. 54; Miller, 2003, pp. 15-17). First, the Basel Missionaries also adopted the missionary strategy of living with the indigenes before establishing their churches. Significantly, during this period they took a keen interest in and dedicated much time to the learning of Ga and Twi, local languages spoken in Osu and Akropong respectively, the two most important areas of their mission operations. Second, they also prioritised education as a valuable tool for converting the indigenes into Christianity. As a result, many schools were established and here too, instruction was mainly in a local language, although English was also taught during the colonial era (Smith, 1966, p. 16, Miller, 2003, p. 15). Third, in order to instil in the converts, the Protestant work ethic, they insisted and trained them in agriculture and modern husbandry techniques to help the converts achieve self-sufficiency. Apart from inculcating in these converts the need to grow crops and raise animals for subsistence in addition to growing cash crops for sale based on the agrarian expertise of South Germany, they also provided a lot of life skills training through apprenticeships in masonry, carpentry and dressmaking to the converts (Miller, 2003, p. 16). These three main areas became the strongest tools used by the Basel missionaries to win the indigenes into Christianity, which is also entirely different from the church planting strategies employed by many Charismatic churches where the gospel must be necessarily preached first and foremost.

The methods used by the missionaries have had an impact on how these churches operate today with regard to their relationships with the traditionalists and also other Christian churches. We see from both approaches, a conscious effort to connect with the local population before the gospel was preached. This helped them to usually target the conversion of chiefs, traditional priests and opinion leaders in specific communities. Consequently, the histories of the two churches are awash with the conversion stories of several chiefs and indigenous religious priests including those from the Ga traditional area. The strategy paid-off as these leaders then enjoined the whole community to open up to the Christian message, sometimes resulting in mass baptism for a whole town. For example, it is widely known that the Basel mission got a massive breakthrough in Abokobi when the chief and Mohenu,¹¹⁶ the powerful traditional priest converted, leading the whole community to Christianity (Agyemang, 1997, p. 17-19).

One of the significant implications of the conversion of chiefs and opinion leaders is the facilitation of land acquisitions in areas like Osu, Akropong, Accra Central and sometimes entire villages as in the case of Abokobi. Not only did the chiefs become members of the church but they also made enormous donations in the form of lands for the missions to be established (Smith, 1966, p. 269; Agyemang, 1997, p. 17). The case of Abokobi is unique in that the whole township now belongs to the church and the chief of the town is elected by the PCG from among its congregation but fully recognised by the National House of Chiefs. As one of my informants remarked, "The town of Abokobi is part of the church and the church is part of the town," revealing how this approach to evangelisation can connect a church to a whole community, to the extent of determining its lawmakers (E. Akrong Aryeetey, personal communication, October 10, 2016). Accordingly, although places like Abokobi are still part of the Ga lands, they are not affected by the noise ban because the traditionalists respect the fact that the town now belongs to the church.

Besides entire townships, the mainline churches acquired even more lands in Accra and its environs for several purposes including church buildings, schools and agricultural projects. In many cases, the big compounds accommodate the chapel, mission house, offices and schools all in one place. These massive tracts of land are normally found on the outskirts

¹¹⁶ Mohenu, the local juju man would later become a Catechist and an itinerant evangelist of the Presbyterian Church. The current chief of Abokobi is descendant of Mohenu.

of the towns and cities - away from the residential settlements.¹¹⁷ Accordingly, sound coming from the places of worship rarely crosses the boundaries of the church premises into peoples' homes, and consequently, is unlikely to cause any nuisance to the public. Also, these vast compounds are very often walled and gated to prevent any intrusion from groups like the Ga youth. Thus, it is unlikely for the traditionalists to go to the compounds to enforce the noise ban, even if they are in contravention. The location of the churches and security measures they put in place are thus critical factors that help most mainline churches from being attacked. Moreover, the majority of the lands were acquired before and during the colonial era, in the period before the subject of Ga lands became a topical issue in Accra (Agyemang, 1997, p. 11). This usufruct right held by the mainline churches is significant because it means that in recent times, unlike the new churches, they are not embroiled in any land conflict with the GTC or the Ga families to whom the allodia rights of the lands and first-comer status belong. As I have argued in chapter six, land issues in the Greater Accra Region constitute a crucial underlying factor in the clashes between the traditionalists and the Charismatic churches.

Furthermore, the subject of mission evangelisation and the conversion of chiefs into Christianity, is reflected in many Ga towns today, where some of the chiefs or *Mantsemei* and opinion leaders double up as prominent members of the mainline churches. For example, Nii Adotey Obuor II, the acting chairman of the GTC is a staunch Anglican church member; Nii Kojo Ababio IV, the paramount chief of James Town in Ga Mashie is a well-known Anglican and La Mantse, Nii Kpobi Tettey Tsuru III is a prominent Roman Catholic. Also, Robert Nii Yarlai Quaye, the Secretary to *Nai We*, the traditional priesthood family of Nai, is a retired Anglican Priest and the *Korle Wulomɔ* was a Methodist before he became the chief priest of the Korle deity. He asserts,

I have no problem with the mainline churches. I was born and baptised into [the] Methodist [church]. Even last Sunday I went to church because the singing band people invited me to their Easter singing festival. My father is a local preacher and I have two brothers who are ministers. When I wasn't a Wulomɔ, I always attended the Monday class at the Methodist church. My brothers respect what I am doing and I respect what they are also involved in (Nuumo Okai I, personal communication, October 24, 2015).

¹¹⁷ As Accra has expanded towards these vast church lands, some of the churches have become part of the inner city but are still generally situated away from residential areas.

The fact that these influential leaders in the Ga community, who play central roles in the GTC, are also prominent members of the mainline churches or at least have a proclivity towards them, works in the churches' favour, that is, it prevents them from being attacked by the Ga youth or the GTC taskforce. Admittedly, no one will give the directive to attack or crack-down on a church when they are aware that members of their own family worship there and this is certainly the situation in Accra. Again, this association with the chiefs and leaders of the GTC has its foundation in the evangelisation strategies of missionary Christianity in Ghana.

Additionally, the conscious use of local languages by both churches, implies that over time, they have built a strong affinity for Ga, Adangme and Twi vernaculars. This was a deliberate policy by the missionaries to enable their converts to read the Bible in the vernacular and led to two of Basel mission's foremost missionaries, Johannes Gottlieb Christaller and Johannes Zimmermann committing themselves solely to the development of written forms of Twi and Ga respectively. On his part, Christaller translated the entire Bible, produced the first ever Dictionary, Grammar and Encyclopaedia in Twi (Smith, 1966, p. 55). Similarly, Zimmermann also translated the entire Bible into Ga and developed the first ever Ga Dictionary, Grammar, and hymn book as well as establishing the first Ga-Dangme mission. In addition, Zimmermann produced Luther's Catechism, the Wurttemberg Confirmation book, catechism and bible stories in Adangmes, the prototype of the Ga language (Smith, 1966, p. 56). The emphasis on local languages has remained with the PCG to date as the church's printing press still produces many Bibles, Christian based resources, and other educational materials in Ga and Twi. The lack of the use of Ga language in schools and in the media in the Greater Accra Region, as we will point out in the next chapter, is one of the underlying factors for the clashes between the traditionalists and the churches. This is because the GTC and pressure groups like the Ga-Dangme Council see this lack of the use of Ga as a lack of respect for the Ga people and their culture. Nevertheless, the mainline churches like the PCG and the Catholic Church have been using and developing the Ga language since missionary times, when they vernacularised their liturgy and Catechism. The work of Johannes Zimmermann in the production of Ga and Adangme literature for both liturgical and educational purposes was ground breaking. Thus, almost every person learning to read Ga or the Adangme language is likely to have used PCG produced materials and most Ga Christians in the Greater Accra Region wanting to participate in Christian worship or rituals

conducted in their native tongue are equally likely to attend these mainline churches, where their native language takes precedence over any other. By these acts of vernacularisation, both churches have remained a critical part of the development of the languages to date. This missionary policy has helped put them in a position where they can effectively collaborate with the Ga traditionalists and even the Ga elite, who have been at the forefront of pushing the Ga language agenda. This collaboration coupled with the notion that many Ga Christians are members of the mainline churches such as the Anglican, Catholic and PCG in particular further helps prevent any such attacks from the traditionalists because they also appreciate the approach of the churches.

You see the Orthodox [mainline] churches have come to understand the traditions that are at stake and they try to live side by side with them. The Orthodox Churches are not deviants at all. They are very inclusive in their approach. There was a time I went to an Anglican church here in Accra and one of the pastors saw me entering and said in Ga, "People! These are the real prophets. For us we learnt the job, these are the priests who are called. So anytime we see them we should accord them that respect." Why would you want to put such a group in your bad books? They are very cooperative and respectful of our tradition (Nuumo Blafo III, personal communication, January 20, 2014).¹¹⁸

The question of whether the Anglican priest meant what he said or not is open for discussion, but what the comment above reveals is further confirmation of the generally positive image the mainline churches enjoy in the eyes of the traditionalists, which has been built over many years of co-existence in Accra. This image is further testament to the cooperation between these two groups.

Another critical area of missionary history that stood the mainline churches in a good stead over their Charismatic counterparts is the use of education as a tool for evangelisation. The two churches, the PCG and the Catholic Church along with their other protestant counterparts employed education of young people as one of the main methods of converting the indigenous people to Christianity (Brokensha, 1966, pp. 9-10). This resulted in the establishment of several pre-tertiary mission schools across the country, which continued through British colonial times to date. Mission schools have educated many of Ghana's leaders including Kwame

¹¹⁸ The historical mainline churches are popularly referred to as Orthodox churches in Ghana.

Nkrumah, the founding leader of present day Ghana, who was himself educated by the Catholic missionaries. Of the PCG Fred Agyemang, in his book, *We Presbyterians* asserted:

[W]e [Presbyterians] produced the first Speaker in the nation's parliament, five university vice-chancellors, one President of our Republic, one of the two first District Commissioners, the first government hospital nurse, the first scholarship awarded...for overseas study, the first two Ghanaian secretaries to the cabinet, the first Ghanaian commercial air pilot, the first woman lawyer and judge, two deans of the medical school, the first woman lawyer and judge, the first woman religious minister, the first commissioner of police, the first army officers, the first inspector-general of police, the first woman veterinary surgeon, [and] the first head student of the University of the Gold Coast (quoted in Miller, 2003, p. 29).

This extensive appraisal of the PCGs work is not only impressive, but they, along with the Catholics, continue to be significant stakeholders in the educational sector. It is also worth noting that the majority of the Ga leaders, be they from the GTC or the Ga youth, have gone through the mission schools and consequently, understand Christianity as taught in these schools. This is because to date, religion remains a vital part of the mission schools' education as the weekly worship services are compulsory for all students regardless of their professed religion and also, the role of chaplains in these schools is critical in the areas of counselling and spreading the Christian message. This mission school system and the training they offer therefore, plays a pivotal role in enhancing the cooperation between the two groups.

Theological Factors and Religious Engineering

Besides the historical factors and how they have influenced contemporary activities, I argue that church policies by the mainline churches have been instrumental in precipitating a harmonious relationship between them and the Ga traditionalists. These policies are in the form of church dogma, doctrine or innovations promulgated by the leadership of the local churches, which I have termed as theological factors. Also, religious engineering as used here refers to what Eva Spies and Paula Schrode refer to as the "active and conscious ways of working on the future shape of a given society (or the world)...also implies transformations of the religious culture and self-

understanding that go along with these activities.”¹¹⁹ Thus, religious engineering in the context of this study refers to religious innovations engineered by the mainline churches to address the nexus between Christian theology and cultural practices in order to ensure there is harmony between themselves and the traditionalists. There are two broad factors to be discussed here including the liturgy of the churches and forms of religious engineering - interreligious dialogue, inculturation and creativity for cooperation.

Liturgical worship

The liturgy or modes of worship in the mainline historical churches differs from one church to another. Whereas the administration of the sacraments is central in the Catholic Church, the PCG, as a reformed protestant church, places much emphasis on the use of the Bible and the hymn book. It is clear, nevertheless, that for both churches the liturgy serves as the focal point in which their beliefs and practices are expressed and interpreted. In the Catholic Church for instance, the celebration of the Holy Eucharist is pivotal because it shows the centrality of that sacrament in the Catholic faith. It is also clear that the role of silence in these churches, unlike the Pentecostal-Charismatic churches, is more prominent.

Liturgy in the RCC

First, we look specifically at the liturgical worship in the Catholic Church and how it has evolved with time. The liturgy is the pinnacle of Catholic spirituality and it is considered as a foretaste or a kind of rehearsal for what will be celebrated in heaven. It is therefore, a “sacred action surpassing all others; no other action of the church can equal its efficacy by the same title and to the same degree” (Vatican II document on Sacrosanctum Concilium, 1963, p. 7). This indicates that every item that goes into the liturgy is carefully considered and is seen as sacred. In the pre-Vatican II era (1880-1963), the regular Sunday mass as well as daily morning masses of the church in Ghana and other places like Germany, was based mainly on the European Latinized forms. Bishop Osei-Bonsu (1997) in *Instrumentum Laboris, Ecclesia in Ghana* observed:

¹¹⁹ This is rather a new concept which is still being explored by Eva Spies and Paula Schrode, Religious Studies professors at the Department for the Study of Religions, University of Bayreuth. See conference leaflet: Religious Engineering Workshop, September 28-30, 2016, Bayreuth, Germany.

For many years, the Church's liturgy was overwhelmingly regulated by rubrics that were universally relevant. Missionaries observed those meticulously as they had been taught in the devotional life and practice of their home Churches. The Fathers at Elmina administered the sacraments as they had been taught in Europe. The first generation of Catholics along the coast could sing *Tu es Petrus* at pontifical ceremonies in adulterated Latin. They may not have understood much of what they sang, but at least they were assured that they were doing something authentically Catholic. A commentator states an opinion on the issue of liturgy thus: "somehow the Catholic liturgy with its 'Mysterium tremendum et fascinosum', its tremendous and fascinating mystery and its often-colourful expression seemed to appeal to the people".¹²⁰ [Emphasis in original]. Pp.10-11.

Although Osei-Bonsu (1997) went further to appreciate the enormous work done by the missionary fathers, he did not mince words in pointing out that the use of Latin as a language for worship and the style of the celebration of the liturgy accounted for the weaknesses in the methods employed by the missionaries. This method was seen as lacking the participation of the local converts especially because it lacked an indigenous flavour that was relevant to the "people's religious and social traditions" (p.10). Significantly, there were no drums allowed in the church services and music was restricted to western choral forms even though these art forms along with energetic dance formed an inextricable part of the people's religious and social lives. The liturgy was therefore seen as rich but dull to the indigenous converts. The style of liturgy employed by the missionaries is further explained by Very Rev. Father John Louis of the Holy Spirit Cathedral of the Archdiocese of Accra:

Initially when the missionaries came to Ghana, they saw drumming and dancing as evil. The reason is that they got to know of the whole process of making a drum. The one who goes to the forest for the wood will traditionally pour libation because they believed the woods were inhabited by the gods. That is to say they were not there to offend the gods by cutting the trees. After that some rituals were done before the wood was used to carve the drums. This they saw and understood as traditional practices that involves paying allegiance to some fetish or some traditional gods. Therefore, it made them stay completely clear of drums and drumming. But later the churches realised, after the Europeans had left, that Ghanaians are quite exuberant in worship. We don't go for worship as Africans sitting there quietly. This drumming and dancing animates that exuberance in worship so we borrowed

¹²⁰ Osei-Bonsu quoted from Van Brakel (1992, p. 45).

it and thought about making the best out of it. However, the church encouraged members to make the drums so that there will be no sacrifices to the fetish etc.¹²¹

The view above indicates that the source of the wood used for the drums might have been the reason for the missionaries staying away from incorporating drums into the worship. This suspicion not only made them frown upon drumming but also made them prohibit dancing and other forms of expression of religious emotions in the liturgy of the Catholic Church in Ghana. The situation, according to the view above changed, after the missionaries left. Actually, the impetus for the introduction of drums and other instruments as well as dance into the liturgy is mainly from the Second Vatican Council and the rise of the Catholic Charismatics. The relevant document that changed the course of Catholic liturgy in Ghana states in part:

21...For the liturgy is made up of immutable elements divinely instituted, and of elements subject to change...30. To promote active participation, the people should be encouraged to take part by means of acclamations, responses, psalmody, antiphons, and songs, as well as by actions, gestures, and bodily attitudes. And at the proper times all should observe a reverent silence. 37. Even in the liturgy, the Church has no wish to impose a rigid uniformity in matters which do not implicate the faith or the good of the whole community; rather does she respect and foster the genius and talents of the various races and peoples. Anything in these peoples' way of life which is not indissolubly bound up with superstition and error she studies with sympathy and, if possible, preserves intact. Sometimes in fact she admits such things into the liturgy itself, so long as they harmonize with its true and authentic spirit. 40. In some places and circumstances, however, an even more radical adaptation of the liturgy is needed, and this entails greater difficulties (Sacrosanctum Concilium, 1963).¹²²

Since the release of the *Sacrosanctum Concilium* in 1963, along with the emergence of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal groups in the country, drums and dance have been incorporated into the Catholic liturgy as a means of promoting the lively participation of the Congregation. These have been fused into a liturgy that is mainly celebrated in local languages

¹²¹ Fr. Louis is an expert on Catholic inculturation policy at the Archdiocese of Accra and based at one of the biggest Cathedrals in Ghana, *The Holy Spirit Cathedral* in Adabraka, Accra.

¹²² See: http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19631204_sacrosanctum-concilium_en.html ,Accessed August 29, 2016.

with intermittent usage of Latin. Today, owing to the influence of the Pentecostal-Charismatic movement, the Catholic church has integrated even more expressive forms of worship, to the extent that apart from the introduction of drums, dance and local music into their ordinary Sunday morning mass, they also have what has been popularly called the 'Charismatic mass'. This is the mass organised for members of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal group after every major programme, which involves the integration of such things as spontaneous corporate prayer, use of local songs, and exuberant dancing.

Liturgy in the PCG

Secondly, the liturgy of the PCG is informed by its background in the reformed protestant theology, as introduced by the Basel Mission and the Scottish Presbyterians. This also included very little participation from the congregation with the exception of the hymns which were translated from English and German into local languages but sung in Western rhythms. Smith (1966) gives a good description of the service from 1835 to 1960:

The Sunday morning service begins with a hymn, followed by the Beatitudes said by the minister and congregation in vesicle form, thereafter is a long-written prayer of praise, confession, thanksgiving and intercession ending with the repetition of the Lord's Prayer. The long prayer is punctuated by five set responses and by singing of three hymn verses. From this point the service proceeds through the reading of the Scripture, the singing of hymns and the Sermon (p. 272).

Smith's (1966) description of the order of the service indicates a rather stiff and dull style of worship held in a rather sombre mood as inherited from the European missionaries. It shows how systematically structured the liturgy was with little concentration on religious experience. This orderliness fits the discipline inculcated into them by the Baslers.

However, like the Catholics, the proliferation of the AICs, and then later the Pentecostal-Charismatics influenced them to rethink their liturgy and edge towards reform, as they began to lose members to these new resurgent Christian communities. The need for reform was also given impetus by the emergence of the PCG's own charismatic group, *the Bible Study and Prayer Group* (BSPG). This group put pressure on the leaders to reform and make the Sunday worship culturally relevant, a little flexible, participatory and a celebration, without losing the centrality of the Bible in the liturgy. The pressure led to a consideration by the synod of the church to create an avenue for more exuberant forms of worship and incorporate local songs in their official Sunday morning services. The order

of service for Sunday worship prepared by the national worship committee of the church in 1997 has since integrated the singing of local choruses usually before the sermon into the liturgy. They have also introduced drums and a time of dancing into their Sunday morning services (Omenyo, 2002b).

While the liturgy has been altered to meet the demands of the times, it is still very much a reformed one today. The key components of the reformed tradition have been built into the service, namely, a call to prayer and worship, local choruses, exhortation, affirmation of faith, praise and adoration, scripture readings, sermon, intercessory prayer, offertory, thanksgiving and self-dedication, benediction, doxology and recessional hymn in that order (PCG, 2010, pp. 1-2). Besides this, the congregation is entreated to observe silence as a critical part of the service, which is referred to as *quiet meditation*. The biblical text Habakkuk 2:20, "*The Lord is in his holy temple; let all the earth be silent before him*" is the key text used every Sunday to call the congregation to worship and to exhort them on the need to give God, who is believed to be present in the service, honour and reverence. On a particular Sunday service, I attended at the Osu Ebenezer Presbyterian Church, the minister in charge took his time to enumerate the essence of silence in the service after reading Habakkuk 2:20. He stated among other things that, "we come before our God to speak to him and to allow him to speak to us. Observing silence affords us the chance to hear from God. It is an opportunity to reflect on our relationship with God as Christians." Although this passage of silence lasted for only two minutes, it shows a kind of meditational approach to God, reflecting and focusing also on the individual's relationship through prayer. Silence is therefore, a key component of the PCG liturgy which is considered not only as a sign of reverence to God but also as a means of communicating with him.

We realise, from both churches, that while there has been a conscious effort, over the years, to indigenise their liturgy due to the emergence of charismatic groups within their own ranks or the appeal of resurgent independent Pentecost-Charismatic church forms, the liturgies still rely heavily on their missionary roots. The revitalised liturgies only differ slightly from their Western counterparts by the incorporation of features such as drumming, dancing, corporate prayer, local music and also comparatively

higher volumes of sound.¹²³ It is clear however, that these elements are not such major aspects of the liturgies of either church as they are in the Pentecostal churches. For example, in the RCC we see that drumming and dancing constitute only one of at least ten elements in a normal morning mass, which is the period during the offertory, where the singing band group lead the church with danceable local tunes. The Catholic liturgy still leans heavily on the sacraments, which demands quiet reflection on the part of the congregation, while the PCG up to this time sticks to a strict order of worship in which they emphasise the centrality of the Bible and silence in worship. Since silence is pronounced in both liturgies in order to, as Father Louis puts it, 'listen to the still small voice of God', it is therefore unlikely that these churches will clash with the GTC over the noise ban regardless of the level of indigenisation they achieve in their liturgy. Their views on the essence of silence in the worship sit well with the notion of the noise ban advocated by the GTC.

Inter-religious dialogue

Another significant way in which the mainline historical churches cooperate widely with the traditionalists, is in the area of inter-religious dialogue, which is a form of religious engineering. Dialogue, according to Cornille (2013) is a term used to cover a variety of engagements involving different religious traditions as they relate to such issues as everyday interactions between adherents in one and the same community or locality (p. xii). She emphasises that while inter-religious engagements might be geared towards achieving multiple goals, including peaceful co-existence, the similarities in all forms of inter-religious dialogues are shared respect and responsiveness to the prospect of learning from each other. This effort at building bridges between religions is a critical tool and significant theological factor employed by the mainline churches such as the Catholic Church and the PCG.

¹²³ The sound produced in the mainline churches is comparatively louder than their counterparts in Europe but still very quiet relative to the sound emitted in Pentecostal-Charismatic churches. Andreas Heuser, a Professor at the Theology Faculty of the Basel University, with whom I did some fieldwork in Ghana shares this view that sounds emitted from mainline churches are equally loud. Prof. Heuser is also an ordained pastor with a Lutheran/Reformed background, with ample experience dealing with different kinds of Christian traditions in the global south.

Inter-religious dialogue in the RCC

First, we take the case of the Catholic Church and how it adopts this strategy in its relations with the traditionalists and other religions. Since the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965), the Catholic Church has adopted a positive approach to dealing with other religions including traditionalists, Muslims and other so-called world religions. While there are several documents on the topic, perhaps the most important document in this regard is the *Nostra Aetate*. This document provides the theological basis for inter-religious dialogue. It shows among other things that all human beings originated from God and they all have a common destiny which is God, whose providence and goodness extends to all men (*Nostra Aetate*, 1965, point 1). It shows the Catholic Church's willingness to deal with other religions and affirms its recognition of other religions by stating thus:

Likewise, other religions found everywhere try to counter the restlessness of the human heart, each in its own manner, by proposing "ways," comprising teachings, rules of life, and sacred rites. The Catholic Church rejects nothing that is true and holy in these religions. She regards with sincere reverence those ways of conduct and of life, those precepts and teachings which, though differing in many aspects from the ones she holds and sets forth, nonetheless often reflect a ray of that Truth which enlightens all men. Indeed, she proclaims, and ever must proclaim Christ "the way, the truth, and the life" (John 14:6), in whom men may find the fullness of religious life, in whom God has reconciled all things to Himself. (4) The Church, therefore, exhorts her sons, that through dialogue and collaboration with the followers of other religions, carried out with prudence and love and in witness to Christian faith and life, they recognize, preserve and promote the good things, spiritual and moral, as well as the socio-cultural values found among these men (*Nostra Aetate*, 1965, point 2).

Based on the *Nostra Aetate* and other documents related to inter-religious dialogue, the church established the Pontifical Council for Inter-Religious Dialogue (PCID), formerly the Secretariat for Non-Christians, based in the Vatican. The purpose is to promote inter-religious dialogue and encourage the study of other religions. However, the real work of inter-religious dialogue is carried out at the local church level, although with oversight from the PCID.¹²⁴ There are several ways the churches in the Archdiocese of Accra deal with other religions – but in the specific case of the GTC there

¹²⁴ See: http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/interelg/documents/rc_pc_interelg_pro_20051996_en.html, Accessed August 27, 2016.

have been several conscious collaborations made in order to keep a cordial relationship.

To begin with, the National Catholic Secretariat has, since Vatican II included inter-religious dialogue as a critical part of the training of its priests. It forms part of the curriculum in all the Catholic seminaries in Ghana and particularly at St. Paul's Seminary of the Archdiocese of Accra. Dialogue amongst religions is the focus of the course named "Diversity of Peoples and Cultures." This provides the priests with the foundation for their future dealings with other religions and the cultures in which they work. Accordingly, they graduate from the seminaries better prepared and equipped to deal with the communities they serve.¹²⁵ Moreover, there are conscious practical steps that the church has taken, in contemporary times, to ensure the cooperation with the traditional council and other religious groups. A classic example is that when the current Archbishop of Accra, Gabriel Palmer-Buckle was installed as the archbishop of the Metropolitan See in 2005, one of the first things he did was to embark on a visit to all major religious leaders in the city including Mensa Otabil, the Chief Imam of Ghana, the Amir of the Ahmadiyya Mission, the Ga *Mantse* and *Wulomei* as well as the Protestant Bishops such as the Methodist, Anglican and Presbyterian. One of the members of the entourage describes this trip:

We were welcomed courteously in all the places we visited. We spent quite some time there. For the traditional council, you could see two interfaces of religious groups. The common denominator was that we realised we are all children of God. This theme run through the Archbishop's discussion with the various leaders too. That is what we believe and that's what they also profess. They also realised that love should be the fundamental basis for our relation. Although the Ga *Mantse* was dead at the time of the visit, the *Wulomei*, the regent and the elders at the palace were very positive and cooperative. We all realised that the need to live in peace is paramount for both groups since the development of the nation can only materialize in the face of peace. We acknowledged that in disunity we could not project the God that we both worship (Very Rev. Fr. Francis Adoboli, personal communication, January 20, 2015).

From the comment above, we see in practical terms how priests in the Catholic Church recognised the Ga traditionalists and other religious leaders as co-workers in a wider religious field. They did this first and foremost, by finding a common ground and in this case, they emphasised a

¹²⁵ Course Structure for 2016/2017 at the Saint Paul's Catholic Seminary, Sowutuom, Accra.

common God they both worship and also the need to collaborate for the peace of society. This is a pattern that aligns with the propositions from the *Nostra Aetate*, which also shows that in inter-religious dialogues, there is always the need to set specific goals and find a common denominator which will aid in reaching that goal (Cornille, 2013).

Next, the Catholic Church and the GTC collaborate as far as events in both organisations are concerned. For example, on the 24th of November 2013, the church celebrated the 120th anniversary of its presence in Accra. This event took place at the Independence Square in Central Accra and among the guests of honour were the *Nai*, *Sakumɔ*, *Korle Wulɔmei* and many Ga *Mantsemei*. On this occasion, the traditionalists gave a message of support and made donations to the Catholic Church on their landmark celebration. Even before the climax of the anniversary programme, members of the traditional council also joined the Catholic church to celebrate a mass at the Darby Avenue Catholic Church, in Central Accra, the location of the first ever parish of the church in the city. Furthermore, in November 2014 when the Catholic Bishops' Conference, the association of all Catholic bishops in Ghana, met in Pokuase in Accra for their plenary meeting, among the special invited guests were the elders from the GTC, a *Wulɔmɔ* and two *Mantsemei*. As part of the programme of activities the representatives of the GTC gave a goodwill message on behalf of the council, wishing the Bishops well and a successful meeting. On the other hand, there has been a reciprocal honouring of invitations by the church too. For instance, the Catholic Church sent a high-powered delegation to the final funeral rites of the late Ga *Mantse*, Nii Tackie Tawiah III in January 2013 and in line with the demands of Ga customs, they made a substantial donation towards the occasion. Apart from this, they have also been making donations to the GTC during the annual *Hɔmɔwɔ* celebrations (Very Rev. Fr. Francis Adoboli, personal communication, January 20, 2015). These give-and-take transactions between the two groups definitely foster good neighbourliness and mutual respect. Moreover, with peaceful coexistence as the sign of the dialogue between them, the result is the absence of clashes during the annual period of the noise ban.

The PCG and inter-religious dialogue

The PCG also have an initiative for the promotion of inter-religious dialogue, a department under the Ecumenical and Social Relations Committee of the church. The primary aim of this department is the provision of resources and research to enable members to reach out and meaningfully relate to non-Christians (S. Atteh Odjelua, personal communication,

March 10, 2015). However, it is clear that inter-religious dialogue in the PCG, and most Protestant churches in Ghana, is usually channelled through their ecumenical body, the Christian Council of Ghana (CCG).¹²⁶ The PCG is one of the key founding members of the CCG and plays a central role in its activities.¹²⁷ They have been at the forefront of the activities of the CCG especially with regards to everyday interactions with other religions, including the traditionalists. The CCG has a whole department responsible for *interfaith and ecumenism*. Through this department, the protestant churches have collaborated with the National Catholic Secretariat (NCS), the Ghana Pentecostal and Charismatic Council (GPCC), the National Association of Charismatic and Christian Churches (NACCC), the Council of Independent Churches (CIC), the Office of the National Chief Imam, the Ahmadiyya Muslim Mission, and the traditional councils on several inter-religious projects, particularly on national peace campaigns. For example, the CCG in conjunction with the Muslim Council and the traditional councils recently organised, “The Inter-Faith Youth Sensitization Programme on Peace”, which sought to train about a hundred youth from different religious backgrounds on the need to uphold the peace in the country before, during and after the December 2016 elections (Christian Council of Ghana, communication document, September 15, 2016). The inter-religious engagements of the CCG also include issues of governance. The CCG has recently launched “The Ghana We Want” campaign, which is an awareness programme to engage government and civil society on the need to have long-term planning for the development of the country and to confront the political establishment on their adoption of short term strategies employed in nation building (Christian Council of Ghana, communication document, May 8, 2016). We see from the examples above that the inter-religious activities of the CCG are usually built around the common goal of good governance and interfaith peace-building

¹²⁶ Such inter-religious departments have been part of most of the ecumenical churches since the World Council of Churches (WCC) paved the way in the 1970s and the PCG is part of the WCC.

¹²⁷ The PCG is an important component of the CCG. The current General Secretary, Rev. Dr. Kwabena Opuni-Frimpong was before his appointment with the CCG, the chairperson of the Asante Presbytery of the PCG. As a part-time academic specialising in Christianity and culture, he has been pushing for more collaborations with other religions. Dr. Frimpong has actually done some work along these lines. Using oral traditions to redirect PCG policy on traditional kinship, he analysed the PCG’s relations with traditional authorities in Akuapem area of Ghana. See (Opuni-Frimpong, 2012)

activities in the interest of the state. It also shows how the religious leaders perceive a brighter peaceful future of the Ghanaian society and subsequently engineer religious products to realise it.

However, with regards to the everyday interactions of the member churches such as the PCG and the traditionalists in Accra, we see a variety of activities aimed at cooperation. I observed that, over the course of time, the CCG members have accepted in principle, that the *Hɔmɔwɔ* festival is a community event – something that brings people from different areas of society together. Therefore, they have sought different ways of generating a spirit of collective engagement with the traditionalists. For example, in 2015, the CCG joined the various Ga towns such as La, Osu, Teshie and Ga Mashie to celebrate the *Hɔmɔwɔ* festival. They collaborated with the traditional councils to organise such activities as a Bible Quiz, Current Affairs Quiz, Gospel Musical Show, Prayer Bazaar, and Thanksgiving Service. These activities were held in all Christian Council churches in the four towns and the climax, which was a thanksgiving service was held in Osu Ebenezer Presbyterian Church, one of the biggest and oldest PCG churches. Again, in September 2016, the climax of the *Hɔmɔwɔ* festival was a thanksgiving service held at the same venue. This shows the extent to which the PCG is at the forefront of the effort to collaborate with the traditionalists, and also how they have opened up to the celebration of *Hɔmɔwɔ* to enable its members of Ga descent to participate in the festival. Whereas dialogue is very often considered a verbal exchange between parties, we see here that the act of participating in the church services or the *Hɔmɔwɔ* celebration, whether by the Catholics, Presbyterians or the traditionalists - the very act of worshipping together - also constitutes a form of dialogue (Cornille, 2013, p. xiv). This kind of dialogue, therefore, serves as one of the key reasons why the traditionalists do not clash with the mainline churches.

Inculturation

There has been considerable literature on the interface between Christianity and cultures in which Christians and the church communities as a whole find themselves at specific times and in specific places (Tillich, 1959; Niebuhr, 2001; Ward, 2005; Sanneh, 2008). In the context of Ghana, the challenges faced by the churches in dealing with aspects of the various local cultures is equally well documented (Busia, 1961; Opoku, 1974; Williamson, 1974). The Catholic missionary fathers are believed to have adapted to local circumstances by learning the language and customs of the people including adjusting to the life situations of their converts when it came to

food and clothing. Notwithstanding this adaptation, it is also widely known that they struggled to relate to such local realities as polygamy especially in the north of the country (Osei-Bonsu, 1997, p. 17). The approach by the missionary fathers to indigenisation¹²⁸ of the Christian message was termed *Adaptation*, *Accommodation* or simply *Christianisation*. This included largely importing European Christian formats and imposing them on the converts. For example, African names were dropped and 'Christian' names were assigned to converts during baptism, names which turned out to be European such as George, Edward, Arthur, William and others (Udeani, 2007). Accordingly, the converts were 'forced' to adapt to a Eurocentric Christian message. The PCG or the Basel missionaries on the other hand, sought a radical rupture with traditional and cultural practices by creating separate Christian communities, which came to be known as *Salems* in which new group dynamics were promoted.¹²⁹ It is important to note, however, that the Basel missionaries despite favouring this separation between Christians and non-Christians, made a start with indigenisation of the church by also adopting local languages as the medium of communication in the church (Miller, 2003).

The mainline churches have, since the post-missionary era, sought various forms of integration between Ghanaian cultures and Christian theology and practices, and looked at how they can be applied in contemporary contexts. While the Catholics and other protestant churches like the Methodists have been successful at this integration process others like the PCG have generally struggled with the process of indigenisation. The Catholic church and many of the mainline churches have, since the Second Vatican Council and early 1960s respectively, adopted a new approach to indigenisation termed *inculturation*, what Udeani (2007) defines as "The concept for the penetration and taking roots of the Christian message and the springing up of a Christian life in a way that accepts the uniqueness of the particular culture" (p. 130). Inculturation is very different from adaptation because of the goals and approach but also similar in the sense that

¹²⁸ I use indigenisation here advisedly as an overarching term for all the processes of incorporating Christian spirituality and local culture. I am aware that some scholars have argued about the negative implications of the terminology. Sarpong (2002, p. 32) for example asserts that it gives the impression that culture is static whereas it is a dynamic process.

¹²⁹ This is an indication that 'complete break with the past' did not begin with the Pentecostal-Charismatic groups in Ghana as argued by scholars such as Birgit Meyer. The Salems will be discussed later in this chapter.

they both look at how Christians and church communities can relate to the culture in which they live. Inculturation, unlike *adaptation* is positive, usually considering how the Christian message should adapt to the cultures and not vice versa. It is a dynamic approach that sees specific cultures as unique. Since the PCG is not known for employing this mode of indigenisation, we will concentrate first and foremost, on the activities of the Catholic Church regarding inculturation and how that has helped them to relate to the Ga traditionalists.

Inculturation in the RCC

As referred to earlier, the Catholic Church's missionary activities received significant attention at the Second Vatican Council. This was considered by documents such as *Ad Gentes*¹³⁰ (A Decree on the Missionary Activity of the Church) and the *Sacrosantum Concilium*¹³¹ (The Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy). In the *Ad Gentes*, it is clear that the Catholic Church emphasised the need for renewal and called for change in the approach to evangelisation. It discusses their understanding of mission including the need to evangelise differently based on the external circumstances in which the church finds itself. It also sets out practical ways to achieve these the mission targets. Significantly, the two documents highlight the flexibility of the Catholic Church to adapt their style of mission to the setting and demands on the ground. There is also an emphasis on embracing and promoting unity in diversity. Accordingly, we see that the church does not only cooperate with other religions but also inculturate its doctrines in diverse cultures. Although, *inculturation* as a terminology does not appear in these documents as it only became an accepted term in 1997 as an adopted concept of indigenisation, it is what these Vatican II documents explain (Udeani, 2007, p. 130). Moreover, the execution of the inculturation process is left to the local church. The *Sacrosantum Concilium* states thus: "The competent territorial ecclesiastical authority mentioned... must, in this matter, carefully and prudently consider which elements from the traditions and culture of individual peoples might appropriately be admitted into divine worship" SC 40 (1). Thus, the policy is based on local contexts where the churches are faced with different cultural challenges, as result of which, practices have to be structured to meet them. Accordingly,

¹³⁰ http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_decree_19651207_ad-gentes_en.html, Accessed October 5, 2016.

¹³¹ See: http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19631204_sacrosantum-concilium_en.html, Accessed October 5, 2016.

we will look at how the inculturation process at the Archdiocese of Accra has been designed in relation to the Ga traditionalists. First, inculturation like interreligious dialogue is fundamental to the training of future priests in the Metropolitan See and this serves as the foundation that shapes how they relate to the traditionalists regarding matters of beliefs and practices. An informant opines:

If you take the situation in Accra for instance, we [priests] go through a seminary training and we are made to respect the faith of others. In this case, they have made a law which says by their tradition, they have to ban drumming and noise making in a particular time of the year. So, if there is a period where the traditional people who are not Catholics or Christians are celebrating their festival and they say we should observe the ban, we will not have any problems because we have been trained to respect people and their beliefs. We will abide by the directive because it does not infringe on our faith (Very Rev. Fr. John Louis, personal communication, January 14, 2015).

This indicates that the Catholic fathers, who are in charge of the various parishes in Accra have a rather positive attitude towards the noise ban and the *Hɔmɔwɔ* festival in general. The willingness to cooperate with the traditionalists is informed by among other factors, the exposure of the priests to how to relate to the local communities through their pastoral training. This kind of training makes them better prepared to deal with people of other faiths and cultures in general. Unlike many Charismatic pastors, who would rather interpret abiding by the noise ban as 'bowing to another god,' the Catholic priests do not see the noise ban or the celebration of the *Hɔmɔwɔ* as a contradiction to their Christian faith. Since the priests themselves comply with the directives of the GTC, naturally, they are able to instruct their parishioners to abide by the same. This openness to and toleration of the traditionalists is linked to their belief in and training in inculturation. Secondly, inculturation helps the Catholic Church to look at the positives in the cultural practices of the Ga people. Inculturation itself presupposes that there are good things in a culture and no culture is entirely filled up with errors. Accordingly, when the Christian message is introduced into a particular culture it is incarnated into that culture. Father John Louis argues that the principle underlying inculturation is the mystery of incarnation, which is Christ became flesh and took on not only human nature but he also made use of human culture, in terms of language, religion, values and norms. Thus, inculturation helps the church to look at for example, the culture of the Ga people and appreciate all the good things it contains as a tool for presenting the message of Christ. So basically, they do not condemn the cultural practices of the Ga people. This stature helps

them to avoid any aggressive stands towards the traditionalists, which in turn fosters cooperation. The fundamental difference between this approach and that of the Charismatic churches in Accra is quite conspicuous. Whereas both the Catholic Church and the Charismatic churches exhibit the notion of the superiority of Christianity over indigenous religions, the Catholics are much more accommodating as a result of the doctrine of inculturation. Additionally, for the Charismatics, to become a Christian does not only mean following a superior religion but it in turn makes the believer spiritually superior to a traditionalist and even Christians from other traditions. Thirdly, inculturation aids the Catholic Church in exploring and stressing the commonalities between their religion and the *Kpele* religion of the Ga. To demonstrate this, I will take an example from the parallels the church draws between silence in Christianity and the noise ban. Father John Louis argues that a clear similarity is drawn between the periods of lent (that is, 40 days before Easter) in the Catholic Church calendar and the noise ban, which comes after Easter. He asserts that in their own case, the church encouraged engagement in silent prayers and fasting from food, and the joyful aspects of worship such as the use of drums, organs and singing out loud. Accordingly, the church's ability to link silence as a means of communication with God to the noise ban imposed by the Ga traditionalists enables them to cope well with the GTC, although the focus of their silence is obviously the Christian God rather than the Ga deities.¹³² However, we see that the common denominator is that they both see silence as an act of worship, albeit with different religious lenses. Father Louis further explained that:

If we [the Catholics] observe silence, it is not because we are appeasing their [the traditionalists] gods but basically, because we respect them. We are settlers in their jurisdiction. More importantly, we are able to draw lessons from our experiences here in the Ga homeland. The good thing is that we both agree that there is the need for silence at some point in religious worship. So, for example, if I am talking to Gas in my church about the need for silence at some point in a man's life, I have a good example in the ban, that worship can still go on without noisemaking. Based on that I can then jump into the Scriptures, for example, Elijah's encounter with the Lord when he was running away from the sly queen, Jezebel in 1 Kings 19. When he went to the mountain that he was directed to, there was earthquake, storm and so on. But in each one of these events, we were told God was not in them. Then there was a whispering voice and that is where he heard God's voice. From this,

¹³² The same can be said of the PCG's observation of silence in prayer.

we know that there is the need for silence in encountering God. If you look at this encounter, we can then infer that to be able to hear God involves some silence on the part of believers. So, we need that. Coming to the New Testament, we realise that Jesus occasionally, went away from the crowds and spent some time with the father. That is a period of silence. This is the importance of silence in our own worship, although in our own worship the object of silence is Christ while theirs will be the traditional god (Very Rev. Fr. John Louis, personal communication, January 14, 2015).

The view expressed by the Catholic priest shows us how the church operates the inculturation policy by adopting examples from the Ga culture to teach biblical themes. It shows how they explore similarities between Christianity and indigenous religions in order to find a common ground for the two communities to coexist. This is all achieved through the policy of inculturation as a theological underpinning for evangelisation. This subsequently implies that bad blood between the two communities is avoided, ultimately preventing any clashes resulting from the noise ban.

Another area on which the Catholic Church in the country has engendered a discussion as far as inculturation of the Christian message is concerned, is the making of libation in indigenous religions. Archbishop (emeritus) Peter Kwasi Sarpong, a well-known social anthropologist, who was at the forefront of the inculturation of the Catholic liturgy in Ghana, has been a strong proponent of this aspect of indigenisation. He argues that libation in its current form is compatible with Christianity since it is a form of prayer to God offered through representatives such as ancestors and deities. He further emphasises that since ancestors and deities, as intermediaries are not worshipped, libation through them does not also amount to worship. It expresses the belief in God just as a Christian prayer does (Sarpong, 1996, p. 2). He argues that libation has both social and religious significance to the Ghanaian (Akan) (p. 1) since it is a symbolic way of recognising the departed members of a family. This view which is now widespread in the Catholic Church through the inculturation process, puts an otherwise controversial topic among Christians in Ghana, in a positive light, in contrast to the pervasive anti-development discourse around libation in Pentecostal-Charismatic circles.

It is also worth noting that while the Catholic church has been championing the inculturation doctrine as a means of effective evangelism, we also see on the side of the traditionalists, a conscious effort to draw on a perceived commonality in cosmology and practices with the Catholics. Parallels in terms of symbolism such as the use of images and saints in the Catholic Church and their equivalents in indigenous religions, are drawn

in order to foster cooperation between them. For example, the *Nai Wulɔmɔ* comments as follows:

You see ancestors to us are like the saints in the Roman [Catholic] Church. They play very important roles just as the saints are also central to the Roman Church. People consult them for directions and it will surprise you to know that they indeed come to our aid with answers from the land of afterlife. They direct us and bring exact solutions to issues we bring before them just like people will pray to the saints. You can also see statues like this [pointing to a traditional graven image] and look at the statues of Mary around the Catholic Church in Accra [Central]. What is the difference? Are we not similar? (Nuumo Akwaa Mensa III, personal communication, February 17, 2014).

The *Wulɔmɔ* is here emphasising some of the commonalities in cosmology, highlighting why there is an enhanced cooperation and mutual respect between them. This view by the traditional priest is equally in line with the Catholic approach to inculturation, which basically facilitates the harnessing of positives in Ga culture and adapting them to the gospel message. For instance, the idea of the ancestors as saints has been explored and corroborated by Sarpong (2002, pp. 98-99) and Osei-Bonsu J. (2005, p. 109), who also connect the role of ancestors to those of the Catholic saints. Ultimately, we see that the cooperation between the two parties is not a one-sided effort because the inculturation policy is complemented by the traditionalists' accommodation of other religions.

PCG and Inculturation: mixed reviews

At the Presbyterian Church in Osu and Abokobi, it was clear that unlike other protestant mainline churches, the PCG has no official systematic policy on inculturation. This does not in any way imply that there were no efforts to inculturate the Christian message by the church. Actually, music and vernacularisation were addressed by the Basel Missionaries as far back as the beginnings of the church. First, church music was indigenised by translating western hymnody into Twi and Ga, albeit maintaining their western style and metrical accuracy. On this Nketia (2009), an ethnomusicologist asserts that in contemporary times, the PCG would rather preserve its mission legacy for both nostalgic and ecumenical reasons than to completely indigenise its church music because western hymnody is a critical part of mainline church Christianity in Ghana (p. 4). Nketia (2009) hit the nail on the head with this assertion because the PCG to date shows no signs of complete inculturation, although it is worth noting that the recent versions of their Twi and Ga hymnals have several local choruses with no relationship to mission Christianity. Nevertheless, the mission influence

lingers because it is clear that for the PCG, inculturating church music has fundamentally been about accompanying western musical types with drums to make it danceable and make church services lively. Second, on the aspect of vernacularisation, which we explored earlier in the chapter, we observe that while the Basel Missionaries did not commence indigenisation of Christianity at the same scale as we know it today, at least they began with the languages, a tradition which has been followed by the PCG so far.¹³³

Besides vernacularisation and music, we see that there are several aspects of Ga cultural practices that are completely no-go areas for the PCG such as libation, sacrifices to deities and even funerary rites. It became evident to me after attending services, that in the PCG the demarcation between ‘us’ the members of the church and ‘them,’ those involved in indigenous religious practices tends to be more evident than in the Catholic church. Those involved in practices like libation are not considered Christians in good standing unlike the Catholic Church, which is open and more accommodating to such individuals. Rev. Samuel Atteh Odjelua explained that although he cannot make a blanket statement to the extent that none of the PCG members especially chiefs, do not make libations, he is very clear that the act is sacrilegious and those who engage in it are in contravention of the PCG’s rules (S. Atteh Odjelua, personal communication, March 10, 2015). Andreas Heuser also opined that in both historical and in contemporary times, the PCG has not been as good at the practice of inculturation as the other protestant churches; they still struggle with accommodating certain practices that others have managed to accommodate (A. Heuser, personal communication, August 27, 2016). Historically, two cases bring the PCG’s struggles with inculturation to the fore. First, the infamous case in 1933 of expelling Ephraim Amu¹³⁴ from the Presbyterian Teachers’ Training College in Akropong for not abiding by the church’s strict boundary between Christianity and cultural practices. Amu’s wrongdoing was that he preached wearing his native Kente cloth and also wrote songs for the church’s singing group using traditional musical idiom. The

¹³³ It must however be noted that the PCG were at the forefront of the post-colonial theologising which took central stage in theological circles in the 1950s (Heuser, 2015b).

¹³⁴ Ephraim Amu is a famous Ghanaian composer who composed *Yen ara asaase ni*, one of the national patriotic songs sung every school day in Ghanaian public schools and at national events. His work *Twenty-Five African Songs in Twi Language*, which also contained music earmarked for church use was published in 1932. His compositions mainly showed the nexus between African Christianity and culture.

second case is when the paramount chief of Akyem Abuakwa, Ofori Atta I petitioned the synod of the church in 1941 to considerably relax their rules on the Christian's participation in traditional practices. A negative response by a conservative group within the leadership ended any chance of dialogue (Agyemang, 1988, p. 90-91; Miller, 2003, pp. 204, 205). Paul Jenkins affirms that Christian Baeta, who served as the secretary to the conservative group, admitted later in life that the negative reply to King Ofori Atta's letter was a missed opportunity for the church to start a conversation on inculturation and to give impetus to what was happening at the grass-roots level (in Miller, 2003, p. 205). What these incidents show us is that the relationship between the traditionalists and the mainline churches has not always been as cordial, there are still areas of tension even up to this day. It also shows that there exist, still, differences between the various mainline churches and lumping them all together can sometimes be problematic. More importantly, despite this selective and at times not accommodating approach towards inculturation by the PCG, the church has managed to collaborate with the Ga traditionalists and therefore, have a good relationship with the GTC, obviously as a result of the other factors we discussed earlier. Accordingly, inculturation could also be understood as religious engineering just like interreligious dialogue.

Creativity for cooperation

The third factor is the creativity of some of the clergy of these churches to ensure that there is peaceful coexistence between their religion and indigenous religion. One obvious act of engineering, to ensure peace remains among the religious communities in Accra and the stability of the wider Ghanaian society, is the declaration of a period of prayer and fasting by some branches of the PCG, Methodist and Anglican churches during the annual noise ban in the city. This period of fasting by the churches ensures that during the period of the noise ban members of these churches engage in a time of prayer and meditation to self-reflect on their Christian life and also to think about their relationship with people of other religions – in this case the Ga traditionalists. What is significant about this act is that the ministers in charge normally try to change the calendar of the church to align with Ga traditional calendar as a way of creating harmony with them while simultaneously contributing to the spiritual growth of its members. This double-pronged approach is usually employed as a local initiative by the protestant churches located in the traditional areas. The creativity and compromise to cooperate with the traditionalists at the community level

obviously helps to prevent any animosity between them and in the long run, promotes peaceful coexistence.

The Downsides of the Relationship: antithesis to cooperation

Thus far, we have established that the relationship between the mainline churches and the Ga traditionalists has been one of cooperation, which has helped to prevent clashes between the two parties. However, as we pointed out in the area of inculturation, there are downsides to this relationship especially at the level of belief and ideology. First, the idea of polygamy and the Catholic communion has been a source of tension especially among adherents who are also actively involved in the Ga indigenous cultural practices. In pre-colonial missionary Christianity one of the challenges the Catholic fathers faced was to admit people in polygamous marriages to partake in communion. Today, despite the Catholic Church's success of inculturating the gospel message, we see that the notion of polygamy and the Catholic communion still remains a controversial one, with the Church arguing that "Polygamy is incompatible with the unity of marriage."¹³⁵ This view is not only a dilemma to the priests but a challenge, especially for the Ga *Mantsemei*, some of whom are faithful Catholic church-goers. Secondly, the so-called system of Salems, or mission quarters, established and promoted by the Basel missionaries still influences the wider relationship between the PCG and the traditional councils. The Salems were initially set out to be the missionaries' solution to living a Christian life in a non-Christian environment typified by "shameless heathen behaviour" (Smith, 1966, p. 49). The Salems became settlements within the same town, normally on the outskirts, that separated Christian converts from their non-Christian family members to give them an "organised, ordered, quiet and secure" space to live a Christian life (Smith, 1966, p. 49). This concept was extended to all the areas where the Baslers established missions in Ghana. Two prominent ones in the Greater Accra are the Osu and Abokobi Salems. On the one hand, the Salems have received positive reviews for creating an atmosphere that enabled converts to live the 'Christian way' devoid of noisy brawls or quarrels and the entrapments of tradition such as participation in sacrifices to the deities (Agyemang, 1997, p. 25). It has also been considered as a very practical response that suited the times as the skills training on offer resulted in converts being

¹³⁵ http://www.vatican.va/archive/ccc_css/archive/catechism/p2s2c3a7.htm, Accessed October 15, 2016.

gainfully employed and thus, socially mobile (Smith, 1966, p. 50; Miller, 2003, p. 187). On the other hand, there have been several criticisms of the Salem system including the fact that it forced converts to move away from their native towns and their families, leading to a deep cleavage in the life of the community. Some converts were even denied access to their non-believing relatives for fear of been contaminated (Brokensha, 1966, p. 19; Agyemang, 1997, p. 27). The Salem system also created a class structure, where the European educated socially mobile convert with a taste for European goods was considered civilised, whereas the non-believer was seen as uncivilised and 'barbarous' (Brokensha, 1966, p. 32). Therefore, Christianity became more than a religion but also a ladder for upward mobility in society, which is similar to some Pentecostal groups like the LCI and ICGC's appropriation of Christianity as a multi-pronged religion in Ghana today. Although the Salem concept is no more in operation, the continuing existence of the sites in Abokobi and Osu helps perpetuate this idea of superiority of the Christians over the traditionalists. For example, when I asked three members of the PCG in Abokobi about the noise ban they quickly dismissed it, saying such traditions have no recognition in the town. An elder of the church puts it concisely,

No, No, No! [Shaking the head] Abokobi is a Christian village, we don't engage in any fetish and traditional practices. The ban on drumming and noisemaking doesn't affect us in any way. Here we are free to play the drums anytime of the day because we are not under the jurisdiction of the traditional council. We have our own chief who doesn't pour libation and even libation is not allowed in the town because it is a holy place (E. Akrong Aryeetey, personal communication, October 10, 2016).

The view above indicates how members of the old Salem communities continue to build boundaries between their village and the wider community. It highlights the difference between 'us' and 'them' and the superiority of 'our religion' against 'their religion.' This is further strengthened by the fact that to this day, inhabitants of the community are generally Christians and particularly members of the PCG, which in my estimation amounts to keeping borders – that is, separating Christians from others. This tendency to exhibit exclusion however, is in contrast to the general notion of the cooperation the mainline churches enjoy with the traditionalists. It affirms that although the relationship is largely cordial, it is not always the case as there are drawbacks as well.



Photo 13: Osu Salem Primary Signboard (Credit: Author)

Conclusion

In this chapter, we set about to explore why there are minimal or no clashes between the mainline historical churches and the GTC, and also to examine the factors that contribute to the relationship of cooperation. We have seen that this relationship is enhanced by several factors: First, the length of their co-existence has been an essential contributing element in building the harmony between them. Over the years, this relationship has gone through some difficult periods but the two parties have learned to accommodate each other through mutual respect and compromises. Secondly, by employing the theology of inculturation and interreligious dialogue as a theological endeavour, the mainline churches have shown that they are open to new frontiers by reaching out to other religions. This is also evident in how the churches have treated the *Hɔmɔwɔ* festival by redefining it as cultural customs in order for native Ga members to celebrate with their family and friends. By treating the festival as a social event, they have not only sought to build bridges with the GTC but they have also gained credibility as partners in the planning process. Thirdly, despite the creativity of the mainline historical churches, the peaceful coexistence is very much dependent on the ability of indigenous religions to accommodate other religions and even borrow from them. This explains why the *Hɔmɔwɔ* thanksgiving services are held in mainline churches, although the festival itself is not a Christian celebration.

8. Understanding the Complexities of the Conflict: Toward some conclusions

Globally, there is an increasing religious resurgence with a corresponding growth in religious diversity. Several factors account for this, including migration, conversion, diasporic interconnections and transnational circulations (Bouma, 2006, p. 52; Bouma, 2007, p. 187; Knott, 2015, p. 91). Religious diversity has several dimensions when applied in particular settings. For example, religious diversity in the Ghanaian context has evolved to include the number of religions, various religious groups, as well as an array of divergences between and within these groups themselves. As I argued in chapter one, increasing religious diversity has come with a growth in academic attention on the subject. However, while there have been several well-known studies on religious diversity in North America and Europe, the ways in which post-colonial nation-states, like Ghana, are religiously diverse has not previously been explored in detail.

To address this omission, my research examined how a case of religious diversity is experienced, negotiated and contested in contemporary Ghana. I focused on the Ga *Hɔmɔwɔ* festival, which, I have argued, acts as a microcosm in the encounters between indigenous religions and Charismatic Christianity. Thus, this festival serves as an entry point to illustrate the relationship between indigenous religions and Christianity in general. Specifically, I set out to investigate the confrontations between the Ga traditionalists and Charismatic churches over the noise ban imposed on the city of Accra by the former group, which all communities within the city – including, Pentecostal-Charismatic groups – are obliged to comply with. This ban is imposed to respect the Ga deities who visit the towns to oversee the gestation of the crops planted as part of the implementation of the *Hɔmɔwɔ* festival. I have, first of all, sought to understand the dynamics of the conflict and its diverse dimensions. Secondly, I have examined why the conflict has protracted since it first became violent in 1998. Accordingly, I have proposed, first of all, that conflict is a part of the negotiation between diverse religions co-existing in post-colonial nation-states, where democracy and pre-colonial traditions exist concurrently. Second, I have shown that beside religious dimensions, the conflict is a culmination of several dimensions including socio-economic, ethnicity, land, partisan politics and governance issues, which contribute immensely to its protraction. To show the connection between the negotiation of religious diversity

and conflict through the politics of religious sound, I drew on my findings from a year of ethnographic fieldwork in the Greater Accra region of Ghana and employed a combination of the concept of boundary making (Bouma, 2007) and Azar's (1990) protracted social conflict (PSC) model as my theoretical framework.

In the current demographic distribution of Ghana, Christianity is the largest religion (71.2%). Within Christianity itself, the majority tradition is the Pentecostal-Charismatic strand, whose followers constitute 29.6% of the national population (Ghana Statistical Service, 2012). Pentecostal-Charismatic churches are found in most urban areas, but they are even more conspicuous in Accra, the capital city, where they are found on every street corner, in hotel lobbies, throughout the inner-city and even in industrial areas. Their dominance on the religious landscape has shifted the religious equilibrium that existed before the emergence of the Charismatic denominations in the late 1970s and early 1980s. Thus, whereas, for example, in the 1960 census only 2% of the population was categorised as Pentecostal and 25% were considered Protestants (Methodist, Anglican, and Presbyterian, among others), today the figure is 18.4% as against the Pentecostal's 29.6%. In that same period, the number of adherents of indigenous religions have reduced from 23% to 5.2%, despite the population growing from 6.7 million to over 25 million (Nyarko, 2012; Owusu Ansah, 1995, p. 73).

Indeed, the growth of Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity and the subsequent general decline of indigenous religions coincided with an increase in the number of confrontations between the two religions in places such as Accra. Prior to the introduction of the Charismatic churches, communities in and around Accra – including the mainline Christian churches – largely observed or ignored the noise ban with little or no confrontation. This period was characterised by cooperation between the mainline churches and the Ga traditionalists through the former's tolerant approaches to evangelisation, inculturation and interreligious dialogue, as well as the Ga indigenous religion's ability to accommodate and adapt to other religions (as is discussed further below).

The clashes between the resurgent Christian group, the Charismatic churches and the Ga traditionalists reached its most violent peak in 1998, when the headquarters of the LCI, a prominent megachurch, was attacked by Ga youth led by *Wulomei*. These attacks were mainly instigated by the Charismatic churches' style of worship and an aggressive theology that calls for a "complete break with the past," which makes them the least

receptive to indigenous religions (Meyer, 1998; van Dijk, 2001). Overall, I found that there is conflict between these two groups despite obvious similarities between them, and hence the encounters between them are complex and multifaceted. I outline below a summary of eight major findings, which show the complex nature of the encounters between the parties. The first five findings: *similarities as a source of conflict; contesting for media space; the complexities of the post-colonial Ghanaian state; becoming a minority in your 'homeland'* and *asserting traditional authority* aims at delineating the sources of the conflict - that is - the factors that lead to the conflict. The rest of the findings: *multifaceted nature of the conflict; religious liberties in the context of diversity and creative exchanges in religious diversity* are devoted to explaining the diverse dimensions of the conflict.

Similarities as a Source of Conflict

There are some simultaneous similarities and differences between the two main religious traditions considered in this research. Nevertheless, while some scholars emphasise the differences as the source of conflicts in a multi-communal setting (Huntington, 1996; Bouma, 2007), I found that similarities can also be the cause of conflicts. Although the Charismatic churches completely refute the notion of similarities with indigenous religions, both at the level of belief and practice, I argue, first of all, that their view of religion is very similar to that of the indigenous religions. One striking similarity, for instance, is that both groups consider religion as the mechanism for making of the invisible transcendent visible through the use of media, in a manner that resonates with Orsi's (2012, p. 147) view of religion. In this case, there are different transcendental beings, according to the respective emic perspectives, but the processes of making them both visible is the same – mediated. Religion, therefore, becomes a practice of mediation between adherents and their specific transcendent, which depends upon certain authorised forms of material media that render the transcendent concrete. Accordingly, in the Charismatic movement, God is seen as present when the Holy Spirit is experienced through worship. To have this experience, certain media forms are employed, including sound, touch, bodily experiences like *slaying in the spirit*, feet washing, and the use of certain objects such as the Bible, anointing oil, and Christian-themed necklaces. Similarly, in *Kpele* religion, transcendental beings are made manifest through media such as human mediums, ritualised performances such as libations, invocation songs, music and dance, as well as

through accompanying objects like drums, shrines and plants. Thus, religion is not only viewed in mentalistic terms as projected by western post-enlightenment scholarly thought, which gives precedence to beliefs, values and meanings internally located in the human self, but it is also critically regarded as manifested in the present through objects, practices and other forms. These beliefs and lived experiences are, therefore, seen as intertwined and “mutually constitutive” (Meyer, 2015, p. 337). In addition to the similarity in their understanding of religion, it is also clear that they also occupy the same urban space, share similar ideas about creating community through religious practice, share common ideas of family and sometimes, share the same ethnic identities.

In order to further illustrate the similarities between these two main religions, I offer the following empirically grounded examples.

Sound and Aural Practices:

The main cause of disagreement between the two parties in this conflict is related to how mediated religion is expressed in both religions. The liturgy of the Charismatic churches is characterised by loud sound practices, music and performances with the aid of modern musical instruments and public-address systems.¹³⁶ Referring to their church halls as ‘auditoriums’ is a clear suggestion by the Charismatic churches of the significance and place of sound and performances, such as music, dance and choreography, in their view of how religion is materialised. It also shows the centrality of experience in their liturgy. Similarly, sound in its various forms, whether as silence or noise, also plays a pivotal role in *Kpele* religion and the Ga society at large. While the confrontation is largely seen as illustrating the differences between the two groups, I see it as a conflict over the centrality of sound to both religions, albeit where one has a preference to higher volumes and the other for silence, to manifest the transcendent. Also, the boundary between what is considered acceptable sound and what is noise seemed to be at the discretion of the traditionalists. In this sense, noise becomes valuable in negotiating the boundaries between these two religions because its meaning is not fixed. One group’s religious practice is seen as a nuisance by the other group because it does not fit their view

¹³⁶ This is not to suggest that silence is completely absent in Charismatic Christianity; there are periods of silence and meditation, especially at the individual level, called *quiet time*, for personal bible study and prayer. This is just not prominent at the congregational level, where worship is vibrant.

during a particular sacred time. In effect, the traditionalists use the noise ban to demarcate outsiders from their community.

Music¹³⁷ and performance:

Music and performances have always been critical in building and bringing communities together in Ghana. Particularly among the Ga, music and performances, such as dance, are seen as fashioning a sense of belonging, fighting exclusion and even as a tool to expose social miscreants and reprimand misbehaving members of the community. Indeed, music and performances are used to ensure social cohesion among the Ga communities (Field, 1937, p. 48; Klein, 2010, p. 3). The noise ban partly serves as a way of denying the Ga communities of music and dance in preparation for the most significant celebration on the *Kpele* religious calendar, the *Hɔmɔwɔ* festival. This culminates in a sense of release when the festival gets underway. Likewise, in the Charismatic churches, music and performances also aid in communal cohesion and offer a sense of release to adherents. Due to the 'born-again' posture taken by the Charismatics, they encourage members to stay away from 'worldly music', night clubs and other sources of sound that are deemed secular. Accordingly, the music and dance offered in church serves as a substitute to these 'wordly' sources by providing the same sense of emotional release.

The drum as a sacred instrument:

Just as loud sounds are integral to Pentecostal-Charismatic worship, sound generated by beating drums is also a source of sacredness in the *Kpele* religion and it precedes every major religious celebration. For example, before the imposition of the ban, talking drums were played to usher the deities into the Ga towns in order to look after the gestation of the planted crops. The lifting of the noise ban (*Odadaa*) is also preceded by the sounds of the most sacred drums among the Ga, the *Obonu*, which are played only once each year. Subsequently, the *Obonu* is stored in a secret sacred place until the next *Odadaa* because its sounds are believed to set the Ga universe in order. The sounds from the Pentecostal-Charismatic churches are, therefore, considered by the traditionalists as an impediment over the Ga universe within the sacred period. Thus, the vigorous application of the noise ban can be interpreted as a resistance strategy by the traditionalists

¹³⁷ While music is a subset of sound, I treat it differently because of its unique role in building social cohesion among the two communities.

against the Pentecostal-Charismatic group being in their religious and cultural space. In the same fashion, the enforcement of the ban indicates the capacity of the indigenous religions to stop the sounds from the Pentecostal-Charismatic churches, and is a clear indication of the continuous clout of the traditional authorities. That is, the traditionalists' ability to determine who and what can be heard within the boundaries of Accra at a particular time shows they still have leverage within the city. Similarly, drums play a key role in Pentecostal-Charismatic music, to the extent that, even in churches where a complete set of musical instruments is absent, one is likely to see a set of drums. Drum appellations, a practice where the sound of the drum is used to invoke the presence of the Holy Spirit during Charismatic worship is common in Ghana.

Thus, it is clear that similarities in the role of sound, music, performances and drums are conspicuous in both communities, socially and religiously. Even the perceived differences between their use of sound are not necessarily as prominent as the actors would have us believe. I consider the centrality of sound in these religions on a continuum – at one end is silence and on the other end is noise. Therefore, although different types of sounds are involved in the conflict, ultimately, they serve the same purpose, as forms of media through which the transcendence materialises. Besides, similarities are normally considered as points where dialogue between groups can be pursued, while differences are usually considered the source of conflict between groups. However, in this case, it is not the differences between the parties that results in conflict, but rather the commonalities between them. Thus, regardless of the emphasis on differences as the source of conflict in multireligious contexts (Huntington, 1993), I argue that it is the similarities, rather than the differences, between the parties in this case that leads to the confrontations over the noise ban. This can be explained by the proclivity for the parties in the conflict to build boundaries instead of bridges. This finding reveals some of the sources of the conflict between the parties, one of the key questions I sought to answer.

Contesting for Media Space: use of modern mass media

The extensive use of modern mass communication media by the Pentecostal-Charismatic churches in Ghana has been widely reported (Meyer, 2008, 2013; Asamoah-Gyadu, 2008), to the extent that Maxwell (1998) has argued that the appropriation of electronic media is now part of the Pentecostal self-definition (p. 255). From the beginning of the conflicts in

1998, the media – specifically radio, television, and print in the first phase, and in addition, social media in the second and third phases – became a critical space where the churches' resistance to the ban was waged. These media forms became the space where Pentecostal-Charismatic hegemonic discourses and vilification of the Ga traditionalists was conducted. Of course, when encounters between two religious groups reaches a violent expression, the media networks ensure that the news is heard locally and internationally. In this case, people called the Twi (Akan)-speaking FM radio stations to denigrate the Ga traditionalists and indigenous religions in general, describing the noise ban as outmoded and the traditional authorities as backward. Through these media attacks, the conflict was inflamed and the discourse turned to ethnicity, because the traditionalists felt the Twi-speaking Akan people were disrespecting their customs in their 'own land.' Consequently, they intensified the clampdown on the offending churches and more vigorously implemented the ban.

Over time, the mass media space has become a contested space between these two groups. As a result of the tensions over the noise ban, I suggest that the Pentecostal-Charismatic groups have influenced the Ga traditionalists, and even other indigenous religious actors, to reform by adopting new media forms to present their counter-hegemonic discourse. At present, the *Wulomei* and some leaders of the Ga community have time slots on television and radio stations, during which they explain Ga customs and traditions, as well as the history of the Ga people. There is also evidence that some indigenous religious shrines are reinventing themselves by adopting modern media forms to be competitive in Ghana's religious landscape, which is leading to their ideas being exported to other parts of the world (Nrenzah, 2015). This appropriation of modern media to contest the legitimacy of the Charismatic churches, apart from showing the importance of mediation in both religions, also reveals how the two religions are constantly interacting and borrowing from each other, even when their relationship is largely informed by conflict and contestation. This finding, apart from being one of the factors that trigger the conflict shows how religions compete not only for physical urban space but also how the competition is extended to the mediascape. Each group competes for public presence through audio-visual representation in the mass media, seeking to control the religious sounds and sights within the city. This is an example of how religious diversity is experienced and negotiated through media soundscape. It also shows that religious diversity engenders both competition and conflict.

The Complexities of the post-Colonial Ghanaian State

The post-colonial nation-state of Ghana is characterised by a ‘two state’ system – what Ekeh (1975) has described as the problem of Africa’s “two public.” This means that the democratic state, with its inherited colonial structures, exists concurrently with traditional states. This instigates competition between the traditional states and the nation-state in terms of the loyalties of the people. Members of traditional societies such as the Ga state consider the traditional state and its customary laws as ‘sacred’, albeit this is not the case for many Ga Christians especially the adherents of Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity. Unlike the legal framework of the nation-state, which was inherited from the colonial government, the customary laws of the traditional states “incorporates the influential morals and religious beliefs of the people” (Ocran, 2006, p. 467). Also, although the national integrated legal system has incorporated customary laws, there is sometimes, contestations between these two laws, as the national legal system, imported from the colonial administration, insists on rights of individuals while the customary laws of the traditional societies emphasise communal good. These differences in the legal frameworks is only one aspect of the tension between the post-colonial nation-state and its constituent traditional states.

Moreover, the traditional state represents the collective identity of the people and so everything related to it becomes a sensitive issue, which the leaders of the nation-state would not want to offend because like the colonial governments, they also need the traditional authorities to ensure the stability of the entire nation. Therefore, they are very careful when dealing with the traditional authorities, because although the nation-state inherited all the instruments of statehood from colonialism, it did not come with the power of the colonial era (Englebert, 2000, p. 13). Accordingly, the nation-state and its democratic institutions such as CHRAJ, AMA and the Police have found it difficult to apply the law when dealing with the GTC and other institutions connected to the traditional state.

Also, the post-colonial nation-state is characterised by the resurgence of pre-colonial rivalries of its constituent traditional states. One such rivalry is between the Ga and the Ashanti, which has been revived because of the noise ban. The history of pre-colonial rivalries between the two groups coupled with the internal dynamics of the dominance of the Akan groups in the post-colonial nation-state has contributed immensely to the protraction of the conflict between the Ga traditionalists and the Akan dominated Charismatic church groups.

Becoming a Minority in your ‘Homeland’

With the recent demographic adjustments in the city of Accra, the Ga people have become a minority in their ‘own land’. This situation has hitherto become a source of this conflict. Historically, the city was a place of diverse ethnic and religious mix, built on a complex history of precolonial settlements from various ethnic groups, colonial administration of the British, postcolonial administration, influx of migration, commercial activities, and territorial expansion (Parker, 2000; de Witte, 2016, p. 3). Therefore, the city is a product of different encounters resulting from commerce, religion and ethnicity. In contemporary times, when people from various ethnicities and regions in the country migrate into the city, especially in search of economic opportunities, they do not feel obliged to respect the traditional practices of the host Ga communities.

Many of those who have moved into the city are Akan, to the extent that they now form the majority ethnicity in the Greater Accra region (Nyarko, 2012). However, many of these migrants come to the city with their own religion, or they rely on the support available from new religious groups, such as the Pentecostal-Charismatic churches, to help them settle in. By inference, the Akan population are predominantly adherents of Pentecostal-Charismatic churches, who are considered by the Ga traditionalists as a group who have been consistently heedless to the *Hɔmɔwɔ* celebration and other customary practices of the Ga. Therefore, this situation is the result of a complex interaction between ethnicity and religion. The animosity between the Akan (especially the Ashanti sub-group) and the Ga has its origins in the precolonial rivalries between the Ashanti¹³⁸ and the Ga people. This animosity feeds into the traditionalists’ perception of all the Charismatic churches as Akan, who are regarded as ‘strangers’ to their land. Also, the link between Akan and these churches, according to the Ga traditionalists, is informed by the fact that many of the independent prophet-led Charismatic churches use Twi, a variant of the Akan language, as the medium of communication in their services. Therefore, the assumption is that because they speak Twi, then they must be Ashanti and if they are, then it explains why they do not respect the *Kpele* religion. These issues are further complicated by the fact that the big Charismatic churches that I have described in this study have an international outlook, preferring

¹³⁸ The Ashanti are the largest Akan sub-group found predominantly in the Ashanti Region and the Brong-Ahafo Region of Ghana. There is also a significant number of them in the Greater Accra Region. They speak the Twi dialect of the Akan language.

to use English over any Ghanaian language. The reference to the churches as Akan, and hence 'strangers', is a strategy adopted by conflicting parties to create the 'imagined other' in conflict situations. This involves stereotypes, but also, beyond that, "it is the creation of imagined communities of otherness" which sometimes has no basis in the actual encounters between the conflicting parties (Bouma, 2007, p. 194). Clearly, I see that the traditionalists themselves do not know much about the Churches because there are equally Ga people who pastor some of the churches. It is also clear that the process of the creation of the imagined other happened on both sides, as most of the Charismatic pastors I spoke to did not even know much about the *Hɔmɔwɔ* festival and the *Kpele* religion, yet they had imagined stories about the Ga traditionalists and had drawn their own boundaries based on these.

Nevertheless, because of the use of the imagined other in the creation of the boundary, there is a shift in the salience of how the boundary is defined (Wimmer, 2008). Thus, the conflict can sometimes shift from a religious dispute to one that is defined by ethnicity. Using ethnicity as the defining factor makes them a minority in a place that is not only the national capital but also the historical centre of Ga nativity. Accordingly, there is concern that if they fail to enforce their customary laws, their traditions as an ethnic group will die out and this will lead to punishment by their deities. Therefore, the refusal of the Charismatic groups to observe the ban is seen as an assault on their cultural identity because the *Hɔmɔwɔ* festival is considered as critical in the formation of Ga ethnic identity. Therefore, the rigorous imposition and application of the noise ban can be read as an attempt by the traditionalists to affirm and maintain their cultural identity and, consequently, to challenge the authority of the Charismatic church leaders on their 'homeland'.

Asserting Traditional Authority

Leading Pentecostal-Charismatic pastors, such as Mensa Otabil, Dag Heward-Mills and Nicholas Duncan-Williams, are powerful and extremely well connected within Ghana's socio-political arena. Indeed, many of the leading business people and other influential Ghanaians are members of their congregations. Also, due to their high social mobility status, these leaders are themselves powerful political actors in the country. This enormous social and economic capital possessed by the Pentecostal-Charismatic pastors (Bourdieu, 1986), the popularity of the religion, together with the vilification of indigenous religions has led to a significant

break in the trust in traditional leaders, such as the *Wulɔmei* and *Mantsemei*. Therefore, the vigorous nature of the implementation of the noise ban by the traditional authorities is, in my view, to show their considerable political clout within the wider Ghanaian context. To be able to exert an influence in banning the Charismatic churches is a source of self-assertion and legitimation for the traditional leaders, who struggle to maintain their status and position of authority within the Ga socio-political structure and, consequently, their political influence within the wider nation-state. Linked to the assertion of traditional authority is the idea that non-compliance with the ban leads to a distortion of the Ga as an ethnic family unit.

Distortion of family unit:

One of the most important aspects of the *Hɔmɔwɔ* celebration is that it highlights the unity of the Ga people as a family unit. Similarly, Charismatic churches like the ICGC and LCI “function like surrogate extended families”, where members are readily offered support through the cell group system (Miller & Yamamori, 2007, p. 23). In this way, a family support system is established in these churches, where there is shared neighbourly love and close traditional family-type relationships within the church setting. These bonds are valued in these churches above those based on extended ethnic-based relationships. In fact, social relations are revised immediately after a person is ‘born-again’, as they go through a resocialisation process through the new members’ course. Within the cell groups, people help each other when they are bereaved, in financial need, hospitalised, getting married or give birth. This means that things previously sought from one’s own kith and kin are now being provided by the Charismatic churches. Although the majority of the Ga people are Christians today, there is no data available that shows whether the majority of them are Pentecostal-Charismatic Christians. However, as pneumatic churches represent the most popular religion in the Greater Accra region, I can infer that a sizable number of Ga Christians belong to these churches. This shifting of allegiances, from the extended family system to the church family, has resulted in many people losing interest in the traditional roles provided by celebrations like *Hɔmɔwɔ*. Accordingly, realising the potential of a breakdown in the traditional system, including the unity of the Ga people as an ethnic group and a family, the traditional authorities use their position as the custodians of the *Kpele* religion and defenders of the Ga community to try to avert this interruption. In other words, in the traditional set up, these leaders have the obligation to protect the Ga population from ‘harm’. In order to do this, there is a strict implementation of the

noise ban because they consider it as setting the stage for a good *Hɔmɔwɔ* celebration, which will lead to the strengthening of family bonds within the Ga population. The next aspect is also related to traditional authority, as it describes the recent prevalence of internal power struggles within the Ga traditional set-up.

Internal power struggle:

Within the context of the confrontations, there is another level of socio-political power struggle amongst the Ga; that is, the contest between the *Mantsemei* and *Wulɔmei* over who has the final say regarding issues of traditional authority. For example, at the height of the clashes between 1998-2001 (first phase), the mediation efforts initiated by the state were conducted with the chiefs as representatives of the traditionalists. This is because the nation-state works through the National and Regional Houses of Chiefs, which recognises the chiefs as the traditional representatives of the people. In contrast to the rest of the country, however, the *Wulɔmei* are at the apex of the Ga socio-political structure, above the chiefs, and a person cannot become a chief without the blessing of the priests. As a result of this, most of the agreements reached with the chiefs by the nation-state and other parties during negotiations were outrightly rejected by the *Wulɔmei*, because they were not consulted. This intensified the clashes in that period, because the Ga youth were willing to execute the directives of the *Wulɔmei* because of the significant trust they have in them, in comparison to the chieftaincy. While the chiefs are responsible for providing secular leadership in the traditional areas, issues regarding the *Hɔmɔwɔ* are considered within the ambit of the *Wulɔmei*. To the present day, the implementation of the noise ban has become an arena where this internal leadership contestation is expressed, to show who has greater socio-political capital. This internal competition within the Ga traditional leadership is in line with Bouma's (2010) view that in the context of religious diversity, there is not only a possibility of competition across religious traditions, but also between actors within the religions themselves (p. 232). These actors will compete for leadership positions, the support of adherents and, by extension, the capacity to define the direction of the religious organisation and its public perception (Bouma, 2007, p. 191). Overall, this section shows that, in the context of religious diversity, there is a likelihood of internal political struggles within the religious groups. Significantly, it shows that Ga traditional authorities recognise their agency and they assert it actively. Moreover, by asserting their traditional authority for the self-preservation of the Ga community, the *Wulɔmei* affirm my proposal that

the conflict is not only religious but has other dimensions such as ethnic identity and politics, in this case, internal politics of the GTC.

Multifaceted Nature of the Conflict

With the influx of people in search of opportunities in the capital, the issue of land being needed for various uses, including economic ventures and religious purposes, becomes more pertinent. As the city continues to expand beyond its original boundaries, land becomes ever more essential. As well as the state, commercial and real estate companies consider land as critical to their functioning, but none more so than the Pentecostal-Charismatic churches. With their constant drive to expand into various parts of the city, land has become an important commodity that aids this expansion into new frontiers. Meanwhile, land has been at the core of many conflicts within the city, both religious and chieftaincy based. The Ga traditionalists consider land an important natural resource, but it is also linked to their cosmology because they believe the lands belong to the gods, albeit allodial rights are entrusted to the *Wulomei* and the families (*We*). Quarcoopome (1992), a Ga himself, puts it thus, “land is of basic importance in the identity, integrity, solidarity and culture of any group of African people” (p. 40). To the Ga traditionalists, it is perhaps the most treasured material resource and their attachment to the Accra land is renowned in local discourses because land is considered as an identity category to them. This view of land, in addition to the expropriation of large tracts of land by the colonial and postcolonial governments from the Ga people, has made the issue even more complicated (Sackeyfio, 2012, p. 296). In the meantime, issues relating to land leasing in Accra are usually negotiated with the traditional authorities and family heads. However, the Pentecostal-Charismatic pastors, with their considerable links to state officials, usually bypass the traditionalists in their land acquisition negotiations. This practice is partly what led to the 1998 conflict between the traditionalists and the LCI, as the church circumvented them to secure land from the Accra Metropolitan Assembly to build a car park. I argue, therefore, that the strict implementation of the noise ban is a mark of remonstrance against the Charismatic churches for their blatant lack of recognition for the traditional authorities, the custodians of Ga lands. As has been previously noted, when conflicts happen communities feel their very existence to be threatened and they react with extreme measures (Azar, 1991; Bouma, 2007, p. 200).

Along with land matters, there are other underlying factors that have combined to contribute to the enduring nature of this conflict. First, there are the need-based grievances expressed collectively by the Ga people, including the growing perception among them that, with the arrival of many people from other regions and the dominance of Akan groups, their culture, religion and language – what Azar (1990) refers to as acceptance needs – are under threat. Also, the nation-state's inability to address security needs, such as distribution of land, poor housing conditions, youth unemployment and poverty in the traditionally Ga neighbourhoods of Accra have exacerbated the issue. Secondly, the political elites can often be seen using the conflict for propaganda purposes, including politicisation of ethnicity, for political capital. Furthermore, the Ga traditionalists' perception of the political marginalisation of the Ga in the wider national political framework contributes to the ongoing conflict and contestation. These issues raised have combined to prolong the conflict from 1998 to the present day. But while I initially considered this conflict as nominally religious-based throughout this study, it clearly reflects an intersection of identity issues, resource-based grievances, basic need deprivation, and governance issues. This results from the multifaceted nature of the conflict and it is this complex nature that has caused it to linger on for so long.

Religious Liberties in the Context of Diversity

In their attempt to question the legitimacy of the noise ban, the Charismatic churches have often advanced legal arguments based on the guarantee of religious freedoms and rights enshrined in the 1992 constitution of Ghana. Led by their ecumenical councils, the GPCC and the NACCC, they have argued that the ban is an infringement on their right to worship, which is a violation of their religious human right and freedom of association provided by Articles 21 (1) (b) (c) and 26,¹³⁹ as well as international conventions, such as the Article 18 of the Universal Declaration of Human

¹³⁹ Article 21 (1) (c) "All persons shall have the right to practice any religion and to manifest such practice."; Article 26: Every person is entitled to enjoy, practice, profess, maintain and promote any culture, language, tradition, or religion subject to the provisions of this constitution. All customary practices which dehumanise or are injurious to the physical and mental well-being of a person are prohibited."

Rights.¹⁴⁰ These arguments are countered with provisions in the same constitution by the Ga traditionalists, who argue that the celebration of *Hɔmɔwɔ* and all of its related customs, including the noise ban, are enshrined in Article 26, which guarantees them the right to practice their religion, tradition and culture, as well as Article 11 (2) (3),¹⁴¹ which recognises the Ga state and its customary laws. These arguments raise a legal debate not only on the lucidity of the provision, but also on the legal implications of the noise ban on religious rights and freedoms in the context of religious diversity. I argue, based on my reading of the constitutional provisions (Article 21 and 26) and the 1999 ruling of the Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice (CHRAJ) that the right of the Charismatic churches have been infringed upon by the traditionalists. This is because elevated sound practices have been proven to form an integral part of Pentecostal-Charismatic worship, which means that they have the right and freedom to participate fully in every aspect of their worship. Thus, any obstruction, such as the imposition and implementation of the noise ban, does not only interfere with individual rights and freedoms but also, collectively, with an entire religious community. On the other hand, the rights and freedoms of the Ga traditionalists to practice and promote their religion, tradition and culture, as guaranteed in the constitution, have been contravened by the Charismatic churches who distract the Ga universe with loud sounds during that sacred period. The Ga state, as one of the sub-states of Ghana, is recognised by the nation-state and its customary laws are protected by law, which means that they are within their rights to promote and celebrate their festival, while anything that prevents the implementation thereof is a breach of their rights.

However, while both parties cite Article 26 as granting them the right to religious freedom, it is obvious that they are both in contravention of the same provision. The reason is that while this provision grants them the rights and freedoms to practice their religion, it also places a limitation on

¹⁴⁰ Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance.

¹⁴¹ "The common law of Ghana shall comprise the rules of law generally known as the common law, the rules generally known as the doctrines of equity and the rules of customary law including those determined by the Superior Court of Judicature. For the purposes of this article, customary law means the rules of law, which by custom are applicable to particular communities in Ghana."

the extent to which these rights and freedoms can be exercised. That is, the extent of exercising one's rights is dependent on whether another person's right is being breached at the same time. In other words, the practice should not be detrimental to public health and safety. In line with this, the Charismatic churches are clearly infringing upon the rights of not only the traditionalists but also the general public, including their own members. This is because loud sound levels have been scientifically proven to have adverse effects on public health, such as lack of sleep, concentration issues, heart diseases, and mental health issues, among others (WHO, 1994; Berglund, Lindvall, & Schwela, 1999). On the other hand, the attacks on the churches and seizures of their musical instruments by the traditionalists is also a clear contravention of the limitations imposed by constitution, that the practice of one's right must not be injurious to the general public. By attacking the churches in breach of the noise ban, the traditionalists not only trespass on private property, but they also assume the position of law enforcement officers, a right which the constitution only assigns to the police and other security officers.

As both parties abuse each other's rights and religious freedoms, one would have expected the nation-state, through its institutions, to intervene, as it has been done in other jurisdictions such as England and India (Knights, 2008, p. 51-53). Nevertheless, these state actors and institutions have adopted measured and sometimes indifferent approaches to dealing with the conflict. First, the central government, run by political actors, has not been proactive because of the winner-takes-all syndrome that is prevalent in the country. Politicians cannot afford to lose any of the two constituencies because, since 1992, the Greater Accra region has been a swing region, deciding which of the two main political parties governs the country. Obviously, the sheer size of the Pentecostal-Charismatic following makes them significant political players as well. Whereas the politicians have not been able to use state authority to intervene in the conflict, the institutions of state have been equally restrained in their approach. The police have failed to charge anyone on ban-related attacks since 1998, and those they have arrested they had to release at the behest of the politicians. Furthermore, the police argue that they are restrained because the conflict has religious underpinnings, which cannot be resolved through mass arrests. Next, the AMA, the local government authority, does not enforce its own by-laws on noise pollution all-year-round. They also do not enforce the zoning laws and, therefore, churches are situated in residential areas and silence zones, albeit mostly with building permits having been granted

by the same city authority. The CHRAJ, a quasi-judicial body which in 1999 ruled that the noise ban was illegal, also did not follow it through to the courts to enforce their own ruling. The Supreme Court itself has never called a case in which the GPCC is seeking interpretation of Article 21 as regards to religious freedoms and diversity since 1994 (GPCC file document, 1999). Azar (1990) has argued that state actions have the potential to either mitigate or frustrate a social conflict, and, in that sense, the actions and inactions of the institutions of state have contributed to protracting this conflict.

On the whole, I conclude that whereas religious diversity, religious liberties, and religious human rights are guaranteed by the 1992 constitution and encouraged by the nation-state, it is at the level of practice that these provisions encounter challenges. It is clear that in terms of religious liberties and diversity, there is negligible or very minimal direct state interference within religious groups. Religion, however, remains central in almost every facet of public and social life in the country. While the state grants religious freedoms through legislation, it is at the level of relations between religious adherents and among religious groups like the Ga traditionalists and the Charismatic churches that there is a level of intolerance, which is typified by the confrontations over the noise ban in Accra. The claims and counter claims to rights and freedoms under the constitution by the parties have contributed immensely to the levels of religious intolerance between them. Therefore, I infer from this that it is not enough for religious freedoms to be guaranteed by nation-states, it is also up to the religious communities to tolerate each other in order to make these legislative provisions effective. This is because the communal contents, be they multi-religious or multi-ethnic, and their actions have the potential to set the stage for a protracted conflict.

Creative Exchanges in Religious Diversity

While I concentrated primarily on the encounters between the Pentecostal-Charismatic churches and the Ga traditionalists, in an attempt to understand the various dimensions of the conflict between them, it soon became clear that there were seldom confrontations over the noise ban between the traditionalists and the mainline historical churches during the period I considered (1998-2016). I found that the absence of conflicts between the traditionalists and churches such as the Catholic, Presbyterian, Anglican, and Methodist, to mention only a few, had its basis in the indigenous religion's

ability to accommodate other religions, the modes of missionary evangelisation, and theological factors such as inculturation, interreligious dialogue and the liturgy of the mainline churches. These factors have created a relationship of cooperation between the religious traditions, which reveals the other side of religious diversity that can exist, as well as conflicts and religious exclusion. It shows the blurring of both symbolic and social boundaries (Lamont & Molnár, 2002) and the building of bridges between religions, in what Baubock (1998) calls 'the boundary crossing'. Indeed, as Field (1937) has shown regarding the Ga, borrowing other people's gods was critical to the formation of the *Kpele* religion. People could borrow other people's gods, but they were expected to remain faithful to the communal deities, such as *Nai*, *Sakumɔ* and *Korle*. Thus, many of the Ga deities were originally from other indigenous religious groups, like the Akan and the Ewe. This idea of being able to bring in other deities, and yet remaining faithful to the *Kpele* deities simultaneously, illustrates how the indigenous religions, as host religions, received other 'foreign' religions, like Christianity and Islam. It is, therefore, common to find people in Accra today who attend churches and yet are heavily involved in *Kpele* religious practices. Prominent among them are some key Ga *Mantsemei* like Nii Adotey Obuor II, the acting chairman of the GTC and Nii Kojo Ababio IV, James Town *Mantse* are well known Anglicans while Nii Kpobi Tsuru III, the La *Mantse* is a staunch Catholic. I argue, therefore, that the ability of the *Kpele* religion to accommodate other religions makes cooperation between the traditionalists and the mainline churches possible. Consequently, because these respected members of the Ga community are also church members, although they may be amongst the enforcers of the noise ban in the city, it is unlikely that their churches will be attacked.

Nevertheless, this form of double belonging would not be possible without the cooperation of the mainline churches themselves. Their open-minded approach to evangelisation has contributed to maintaining this equilibrium between them and the traditionalists. Their mode of missionary evangelisation strategy includes vernacularisation, where the Ga language is used in the churches within the traditional areas of Accra. Furthermore, they provide education as part of their mission, which has resulted in most of the leaders of the GTC and the Ga youth having been trained in mission schools, which still play a key role in the delivery of education in the country. The mainline churches also provide social services, such as hospitals, as well as apprenticeship training as tools of evan-

gelism. These strategies have meant that there has been a longstanding encounter between the Ga community and the mainline churches, which has helped them to resolve their differences and coexist. It also means that many of the people trained in these church-based training institutions become conversant with Christianity as taught by the mainline churches and are able to live with them without confrontations. Moreover, one of the main grievances of the traditional authorities is the lack of the use of the Ga language in the Greater Accra region and the dominance of the Akan language over the Ga language in their 'homeland'. Therefore, the use of their language by the missionaries and in these churches, makes them natural partners, rather than opponents.

Secondly, theological factors such as the mainline churches' liturgy, policies of inculturation, and interreligious dialogue have been central in blurring the boundaries between themselves, the indigenous religions, and other religious traditions. Unlike the Pentecostal-Charismatic churches, where worship is characterised by loud sounds, noise plays no role in the liturgies of these churches. Therefore, they rarely make noise to the levels that would attract attacks from the traditionalists during the thirty-day period of the ban.

As I have indicated with regards to the ban in Accra, noise is not only based on the volume of sound, but it is also relational. This is affirmed by the fact that although there are several sources of noise within the city, including the church bells from the mainline historical churches and the Muslim *Azan*, it is the Pentecostal-Charismatic groups who clash with the traditionalists. Therefore, it is clear that the other critical points, including inculturation, the theological position that advocates "the springing up of a Christian life in a way that accepts the uniqueness of the particular culture", and dialogue with other religions are key in preventing clashes between the groups (Udeani, 2007, p. 130). These theological positions inform how these churches have treated the *Hɔmɔwɔ* festival as a community social event, in which their native Ga members are free to participate and celebrate with their family and friends. By treating the festival as a social event, they have not only sought to build bridges between themselves and the GTC but they have also gained the credibility as partners in the planning of the festival. Broadly speaking, these missionary strategies, theological underpinnings, and the long coexistence between the two parties have helped build and redefine the boundary between the two groups, which is a contributing factor to the cooperation between them today.

Nevertheless, the relationship between these groups was not always cordial, especially during the initial stages. There was a strict demarcation between the Christians and what they referred to at the time as the 'heathen'. This led to the creation of strict Christian communities that did not interact with even their unbelieving families. For example, the Presbyterians (Basel Mission) built *Salems*, communities meant to separate their adherents from their non-believing family members, for fear of them being contaminated by the practices of their indigenous religions. Christianity was seen as 'modern', while indigenous religions were considered 'uncivilised'. This system of exclusion divided families on the basis of religion, an antithesis to cooperation. But over the years, as I have shown, the cultural and religious boundaries have been blurred and people are now easily able to negotiate these new redefined boundaries between the religious traditions. This challenges Meyer's (1998) notion of 'make a complete break with the past' being a Pentecostal-Charismatic idea, as the Presbyterian *Salems* were intended to 'completely' break people from their traditions and separate adherents from their non-Christian family members. So, while the Pentecostal-Charismatic churches have popularised this idea of rupture with the past, it is not a new concept in Ghana. The phenomenon has only resurged in different forms and within a different Christian tradition. It could even be argued that the clashes between the traditionalists and the Pentecostal-Charismatic church are actually older disputes that have been rejuvenated, albeit with new Christian actors. This finding answers the question on why there have been minimal, or no, tensions between the Ga traditionalists and the mainline Christian denominations.

Conclusion

First of all, in this study, I have shown how sound becomes a religious issue which impacts the interplay between religious diversity and conflict in contemporary Ghana. I have shown how two strands of Christianity, the mainline historical churches and the Pentecostal-Charismatic churches, relate to the adherents of *Kpele* indigenous religion. The case has revealed that whereas religious diversity is nominally seen as the number of religious traditions and sometimes also, the divergences within religions represented in a particular setting, the concept is rather more complex than that. It is not simply the co-existence of manifold religious identities in a contemporary setting. It is intertwined with other expressions of diversity such as ethnicity and language especially when the GTC is considered as having both religious and ethnic facets. Divergences of religious nature

only come forward when religion comes up for discussion. Religious diversity in my case also shows how other concepts such as power and resistance come to play between diverse religious traditions. It highlights not only the conflict that can exist between different religious groups but also the creative ways in which they engage each other in a multicultural post-colonial context of Ghana.

Second, this study identifies the presence of conflict within the pluralised Ghanaian context, which differentiates it from the mainly theologically informed portrayals of diversity as something that is not prone to conflict. The research has revealed that even within the context of diversity, that is characterised by coexistence and tolerance there is conflict, be it inter-religious or within religions themselves. I propose that conflict can be caused by points of similarity between two or more religious groups, which differs from the normative assumption that similarities should be a common ground for dialogue and reconciliation. Thus, I make a two-fold input into the debate on religious diversity and conflict: foremost, I challenge the overly positive assumptions about religious diversity, and then, contradict the belief that conflict only arises when there are marked differences between religious groups.

Third, I have revealed that while conflicts about sound are usually about volumes and decibel measurements, in this case, it is also relative to the relationship between parties involved. It depends on what the neighbours of the sound producers are prepared to tolerate. This is because sound is heard and responded to differently by different individuals or communities. What constitutes religious sound to one group amounts to noise to the other group. For example, loud sounds emanating from Charismatic church halls are considered as core religious practice by the Christians while the Ga traditionalists consider same as noise, especially during the period of the noise ban. However, during this same period, sounds from the mainline churches, in the form of church services and hourly ringing of church bells are allowed to reverberate without any complaints because of the cordial relationship they have with the Ga traditionalists. Thus, the Charismatic church sounds are categorised as noisy and therefore, has to be stopped from resounding during the 30-day period of noise ban because of the tensed relationship they have with the traditionalists. It also shows that the context within which the sounds are produced, in this case the *Hɔmɔwɔ* period, is critical to the reaction of the audiences to the producers of sound. More significantly, the reaction of the traditionalists highlights

that sound is about the social identities of both the producers and the recipients. Clearly, religious sound in the context of the noise ban becomes an element for engendering inclusion and exclusion within communities. Thus, sound is used to build a demarcation between 'us' and 'them', the insiders to 'our' group from the outsiders. This social negotiation of sound between the groups is what I have referred to as the politics of religious sound.

Fourth, by taking the case of the *Hɔmɔwɔ* festival and its noise ban, I bring a new perspective to discourses surrounding indigenous religions, which usually consider them in the context of rural landscapes (Greene, 2002). These studies often give lengthy expose on how Pentecostalism as an urban phenomenon has gained prominence, while indigenous religious forms are presented as having lost their relevance and are consigned to a few old people in the villages. In this study, I show that right in the centre of the cosmopolitan city of Accra, the *Kpele* indigenous religion is resurging and with this new energy they are asserting their authority over the majority religion, Pentecostal-Charismatic churches. The ability for indigenous religions to stop Pentecostal-Charismatic sound is a clear indication of the continuous leverage of the traditional system.

Finally, I started out by describing the conflict over the noise ban as a religious one. Nevertheless, while religion is critical to these confrontations, especially as it used as a tool for mobilisation by the conflicting parties, there are other equally significant dimensions to this conflict. All these dimensions are interwoven, to the extent that it is near impossible to separate them. The question is, why do we even try to separate religion from say, ethnicity when the traditionalists themselves do not make such separations. Accordingly, the conflict cannot be described as a religious one but multifaceted and multi-dimensional in nature. Thus, I have come to two conclusions that (1) in post-colonial nation-states, where pre-colonial or contemporary traditions and democracy coexist, conflict is to be expected in the experience and negotiation of religious diversity. (2) ostensibly, the conflict appears entirely as a religious one but a closer assessment shows that it is multi-dimensional including socio-economic, ethnic identities, resource-based, partisan politics and governance issues.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: List of Individuals Interviewed

Name	Gender	Place of Interview	Biographical Data
Nuumo Akwa Mensa III	M	Accra	Ga Chief Priest (Nai)
Nuumo Ogbamey III	M	Accra	Ga Chief Priest (Sakumo)
Nuumo Okai I	M	Accra	Ga Chief Priest (Korle)
Nuumo Blafo II	M	Accra	Ga Blafo Priest (Asere)/Public Relations Officer, AMA
Nuumo Charko	M	Accra	Ga Priest (Sakumo)
Elvis Nii Yarboi Amugi	M	Accra	Elder (Nai We)
Nuumo Tumowulai Yartey III	M	Accra	Head of Family (Nai We)
Robert Nii Yartei Quaye	M	Accra	Elder (Nai We)
Okyeame Tawiah	M	Accra	Elder (Nai We)
Bright Akwetey	M	Accra	GTC lawyer/National Politician (Convention People's Party)
Emmanuel Sackey	M	Bayreuth	Ghana National Association of the Deaf/ Ga Activist (James Town)
Patricia Tagoe	F	Bayreuth	Ga Activist (Osu)
Judith Yarboi	F	Accra	Ga native (Korle-Gonno resident)
John Bannerman	M	Accra	Ga native (Korle-Gonno resident)
Juliet Ashong	F	Accra	Ga native (Laterbiorkorshie resident)

Clara Tsiquaye	F	Accra	Ga native (Osu resident)
Ishmael Quartey	M	Accra	Ga native (La resident)
Cleopatra Vanderpuye	F	Accra	Ga native (Osu resident)
Joyce Lokko	F	Accra	Ga native (La resident)
Nana Quarm	M	Accra	Head, Afrikania Mission
Rev Eric Xexemeku	M	Accra	Pastor, ICGC
Euphemia Armah	F	Accra	Member, ICGC
Benjamin Ato Abbiw	M	Accra	Elder, ICGC
Henry Ansah Akuffo	M	Accra	Elder, ICGC
Edem Sosu	M	Accra	Elder, ICGC
Edem Fiagbey	M	Accra	Pastor, ICGC
Bishop Emmanuel Nterful	M	Accra	Pastor, LCI
Rev S. E Bandoh	M	Accra	Pastor, LCI/Anagkazo Bible Seminary
Rev Crankson	M	Takoradi	Pastor, LCI
Pastor Christopher	M	Accra	Pastor, LCI/Anagkazo Bible Seminary
Rev Jude Orecca-Tetteh	M	Accra	Pastor, LCI
Rev Bernard Arde-Acquah	M	Accra	Pastor, Powerhouse Ministries Int. Chorkor-Korle Gonno
Grace Commey	F	Accra	Member, Powerhouse Ministries Int./Chorkor resident
Mary Ocquaye	F	Accra	Member, Powerhouse Ministries Int./La resident
Very Rev Fr Francis Adoboli	M	Accra	Vicar General, Catholic Archdiocese of Accra
Very Rev Fr Dr John Louis	M	Accra	Priest, Catholic Archdiocese of Accra/Academic

Prof Dr Nicoletta Gatti	F	Accra	Catholic/Expert
Rev Samuel Atteh Odjelua	M	Accra	PCG, Director of Ecumenical and Social Relations
Rev Andrews Odonkor	M	Accra	Minister, Ebenezer PCG, Osu
Dr Ebenezer Akrong Aryeetey	M	Accra	Catechist, Zimmerman PCG, Abokobi
Rt Rev Dr Nathan Samwini	M	Bayreuth	Academic/Christian Council of Ghana
Apostle Samuel Yaw Antwi	M	Accra	General Secretary, GPCC
Rev Samuel Korankye Ankrah	M	Accra	Vice Chairman, Ghana Pentecostal and Charismatic Council
Bishop Titi Ofei	M	Accra	General Secretary, National Association of Charismatic and Christian Churches
Rev Alex Quarshie	M	Accra	Pastor, RUN Missions
DCOP Ampah-Benin	M	Accra	Director General, Public Affairs, Ghana Police Service
Supt. Frank Hukporti	M	Accra	Ghana Police Service
Corporal Linda	F	Accra	Ghana Police Service
Dr Nii Dorte	M	Accra	Academic/IAS University of Ghana
Rev. Fr. Dr. Stephen Acheampong	M	Accra	Academic/IAS University of Ghana
Dr. Mercy Akrofi-Ansah	F	Accra	Academic/IAS University of Ghana
Rev Prof Kwabena Asamoah-Gyadu	M	Accra	Academic, Trinity Theological Institute
Dr Kwadwo Appiagyeyi-Atua	M	Bayreuth	Lawyer/ Academic, Faculty of Law, University of Ghana
George	M	Accra	Staff Member, ICGC Body Temple,

Appendix 2: Focus group interviews

Date	Venue	Participants
20 th April 2014	ICGC Open Heavens, Adjiringanor, Accra	Members of the ICGC and LCI
30 th April 2014	Nai We, Ga Mashie, Accra	Elders of the Nai We and members of the GTC
11 th May 2014	Powerhouse Ministries International, Chorkor, Accra	Members of the PMI and residents of Korle- Gonno and Chorkor

Appendix 3: Letter from traditional authorities to churches

THE OFFICE OF REGENT DARKUMAN (OKAIMAN)



Darkuman - Palace

Tel: 0285 2 55 741 / 0276 234 780

P. O. Box AN 11517
Accra - North

Your Ref: _____ Our Ref: ORPO/DE/04/03 Date 25th / 04 / 2014

THE PASTOR IN CHARGE

Dear Pastor

BAN ON DRUMMING AND NOISE MAKING

I have the pleasure to refer to the meeting held on Thursday 10th April, 2014 at Darkuman Palace in respect of the above subject matter.

I will seek your indulgence to announce the following rules to your members that

- a. Ban on drumming starts from Monday 12th May, 2014
- b. Lifting of ban on drumming will be Thursday 12th June, 2014 at 5:00pm
- c. No clapping, microphone, megaphone, organ, drumming funeral and out-dooring celebration with sound system and any form of noise making
- d. Each church will give customary drink of GHC150.00
- e. Rev. Isaac Nii Kwartei Owoo the chairman of Darkuman / Okaiman Town Development Council has been commission to collect churches customary drink and issue Darkuman / Okaiman Palace official receipt and account to it.
- f. The collection will start from Sunday 4th May, 2014


That any church who will go contrary to the above rules and shall be found will pay penalty of GHC200.00 to Darkuman Stool or the stool will advice himself.

The following are the Homowo celebrations of Ga-state

NIJINGUA	SATURDAY, 5 th JULY, 2014
DANTU	SATURDAY, 2 nd AUGUST, 2014
TEMA	FRIDAY, 8 th AUGUST, 2014
GA MASHIE	SATURDAY, 16 th AUGUST, 2014
OSU, LA, TESHIE, KPONE, PRAMPAM AND NINGO	TUESDAY, 26 th AUGUST, 2014

Thank you for your usual cooperation

Yours faithfully,


 NII OKANTA DIMSON
 Acting Chief



Appendix 4: Press statement by the GPCC (1998)

**PRESS STATEMENT BY THE GHANA PENTECOSTAL COUNCIL
-REACTION TO THE STATEMENT MADE BY THE HON. MINISTER
OF INTERIOR, NII OKAIJA ADAMAFIO AND THE LIGHTHOUSE
CHAPEL CASE**

Distinguished ladies and gentlemen of the press, we of the Ghana Pentecostal Council have invited you here to express our shock and dismay at the statement attributed to the Hon. Minister of the Interior and reported in the *Daily Graphic* of Wednesday June 3, 1998 which reads *"Respect Ban On Drumming"*. The Minister is reported to have said *"It is wrong for certain people to assume that such practices such as the ban on drumming is fetish and therefore of no significance to society"*.

We are shocked because the Honourable Minister is deliberately pretending to be ignorant of the fact that the ban on drumming is traditional religious ritual, and not a society norm, that is a serious violation of our faith as Christians. If we Christians are to be compelled to observe such rituals by any form of legislation, as the Honourable Minister suggests, then we might as well be asked to close down our churches and become traditional religionist.

We are also dismayed because Mr. Nii Okaija Adamafo is not only a Minister of Interior who is responsible for the internal harmony of the Ghanaian society, but also an accomplished lawyer who is supposed to understand perfectly all the provisions of the Fourth Republic Constitution of this country, especially Article 21 (1) (b) (c) and Article 26 which guarantee our inherent right to worship, profess, practice and manifest our Christian faith without any interference from any person or group of persons with regard to the mode and place of worship.

Brothers and sisters of the press, it is incumbent upon us to make it known that for the past seventeen years, there have been many subtle attempts to stifle Christianity in this country and when these attempts failed, the powers that be have chosen to ignore violations of the rights of Christians by individuals and groups of other religious persuasions.

The number of times Christians have been tormented by people of other religious faith will officialdom looking and doing nothing about it, are uncountable. I will therefore just cite a few of them, which were reported in some of our national newspapers.

The July 14-20, 1997 issue of the Public Agenda carried a news report under the *"Obey or vanish – Ayiem elders tell Christians"*. The report under this heading was that, the Christians at Ayiem, a town near Takoradi were being ejected from the town by the stool elders because they had refused to shave their hair and walk bare-footed for one week during the funeral and burial rites of Nana Amposah Payin III, Chief of Ayiem.

The Wednesday, December 29, 1993 issue of the Daily Graphic had the following headline

Headline: *"Mob destroy Church for refusing to pacify gods"*. Under this headline, the report was that the Church of Pentecost building at Half Asini was burnt down by the traditional authorities of the town because the Church had not complied with a ban on drumming during the celebration of a traditional festival as demanded by some gods. It is worthy to note that in this particular instance, the Ghana Pentecostal Council filed a writ at the Supreme Court seeking the following relief:

1. A declaration that by the Provisions of the 1992 Constitution and in particular Article 21 (1) (b) (c) and 26, the plaintiffs as well as other Christians Church groups have an inherent right to worship, profess, practice and manifest their Christian faith and belief.
2. A declaration that plaintiffs' right to hold and profess their faith as guaranteed by the Constitution does not permit any one to interfere with or disrupt the mode, time or place where such belief or worship is to be manifested, save as is proscribed by the Constitution.
3. A declaration that any purported act or conduct of any traditional authority in Ghana or group of persons in any community in Ghana or others in proscribing, preventing or interfering in the worship or the enjoyment of any meal, dish or food by any member of the Churches belonging to plaintiffs' council is a violation or contravention of their constitutional right as enshrined in the 1992 constitution.

Ladies and Gentlemen, this writ was filed at the Supreme Court in Accra, as far back as the 9th of March 1994. But up till date nothing has been done about it.

The Ghanaian Times of 23rd February 1994 has the headline "Fetish Cult Destroys Church for refusing to pacify gods". Under this headline was a report that a Church and school complex belonging to the Patmos Baptist Church at Azizakopey, an island near the Volta Estuary at Ada Foah, were razed down by members of a fetish cult because the members of the Church had refused to contribute money towards a pacification ceremony for the gods of the island. The claim was that because the Christians had failed to pay the money, the gods became angry and struck the fetish priest, Nene Wortey Toku, with diarrhoea.

Ladies and Gentlemen, could you believe that such primitive things are happening in modern Ghana, at the dawn of the twenty-first century? There are towns and villages in Ghana where our people are banned from eating certain types of foods, like fufu, during certain periods of the year. They are banned from going to their farms on certain days of the week, a violation of which can result in the burning down of their Churches.

There are serious issues that one would expect Minister of the Interior to think thoroughly about before making any relevant statement because such customs do not only contradict the Christian Faith, but are also inimical to economic productivity.

We brought our plight, as Christians, to the notice of the Commissioner for Human Rights and Administrative Justice. The Commissioner, therefore organized a meeting between Religious leaders and the National House of Chiefs about three months ago in Kumasi, to deliberate on the issues. At the end of the meeting, a communiqué was signed with the chiefs promising to educate their traditional authorities to respect our constitutional rights for peaceful co-existence.

It therefore comes as a shock to us that this time round, it was not even only the traditional authorities, but that a government outfit like the Accra Metropolitan Authority would also breach a contract that it had signed with the Lighthouse Chapel International, and pull down the wall around the Church under mysterious circumstances, to make the worshippers vulnerable to a rowdy mob who could easily gain access to the Church compound, spill the blood of members of the congregation, just because adherents of another faith had suspected that the Church members would beat drums in contravention with their custom. This was a matter of national disgrace because there were a few members of the Diplomatic Corp at the Church service on that day, and at least one of them had her car dented by the mob. We expected the Minister of Interior to come to apologize for what had happened rather than to rub salt into our wounds by requesting that District Assemblies must pass bylaws to compel Christians to observe rituals of another religion.

How come that on the day that the walls around the Lighthouse Church were pulled down, a letter to that effect was delivered to the watchman of the Church premises at 11:30pm, a time when there was no Church Official around, and at such ungodly hour as 4:30am, official bulldozers were already at work pulling down the walls? What was it that made such a demolition exercise so urgent? In a view of the fact that the Regional Minister, Mr. Joshua Alabi and the Metropolitan Chief Executive, Mr. Nunoo Amarteifio have publicly admitted that they gave the orders to pull down the walls, which eventually made a defenseless congregation vulnerable to the attacks of the mob, we are at a loss to fathom what other facts the minister is expecting his committee of Inquiry to find out?

Ladies and Gentlemen, we wish to state categorically that we reject the committee that was set up by the Regional Minister, Mr. Joshua Alabi, to look into the Lighthouse Chapel Church mob attack. The Regional Minister was the very man who breached the contract signed between the AMA and the Lighthouse Church and ordered the wall around the church to be pulled down. How can this same person set up a committee to probe the disturbances that have taken place and be fair? Is he not a player and a referee at the same time? We can not trust in the neutrality of the membership of the committee set up by the Regional Minister; hence, we reject that committee outright.

We call on the otherwise affable and respectable Minister of Interior to withdraw his unfortunate statement and apologize to the Christian Community whose rights have been infringed. We also call on the Greater Accra Minister, Honourable Joshua Alabi and the Chief Executive of AMA, Mr. Nunoo Amarteifio to publicly apologize to the Lighthouse Chapel International and redeem the good name of the Government, which has been soiled by their embarrassing act.

We Christians in Ghana, wish to point out to all, who care to listen, that we are not anticulture. We think that there are admirable elements in our Ghanaian culture, which deserve to be promoted. Our value system, respect for the aged, creativity and such values are intrinsically good.

We call on all Christians in the country to take note that at the appropriate time Christians shall stage a peaceful demonstration all over the country to demand the protection of our rights and present our petition and grievances to the parliament. When the time comes, we request all Christians to come out massively to stage this peaceful protest. Meanwhile, for one week - June 16 through June 23 - every Christian - should fast and pray in support of our cause.

Appendix 5: Joint declaration by religious groups in Ghana

**JOINT DECLARATION
ON THE ANNUAL BAN ON DRUMMING AND NOISE-
MAKING BY THE GA TRADITIONAL COUNCIL, THE
NATIONAL CATHOLIC SECRETARIAT, THE CHRISTIAN
COUNCIL OF GHANA, AFRIKANIA MISSION, GHANA
PENTECOSTAL COUNCIL, THE COUNCIL OF INDEPENDENT
CHURCHES, THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF
CHARISMATIC CHURCHES, OFFICE OF THE NATIONAL
CHIEF IMAM, THE FEDERATION OF MUSLIM
COUNCILS OF GHANA,
AND THE AHMADIYYA MUSLIM MISSION**

WE, the above-mentioned, profoundly aware of threats to peace and order posed by religious controversies;
MINDFUL of the need and benefits of dialogue in the resolution of such disputes;
CHERISHING tradition and culture as essential elements of Ghanaian society;
AWARE of the benefits and impact of Traditional Religion, Islam and Christianity;
AND DETERMINED to avoid the scourge of social conflict and find a lasting solution to perennial religious controversies, hereby declare and recommend as follows:

1. We recognise the freedom of worship.
2. We also recommend the formation of a Standing Committee to monitor and manage any misunderstandings arising out of the celebration or observance of customs, traditions, festivals and worship in the Greater Accra Region.
3. All churches have agreed to confine crusades, conventions and usual forms of worship to church buildings and avoid excessive noise during the period of the ban in the interest of peace and harmony.
4. Drumming and noise-making beyond the levels prescribed by the Abatement of Nuisance (1995) Bye-Law of the Accra Metropolitan Authority (AMA), shall be monitored by a Joint Committee comprising representatives of all the churches

(however defined), the Ga Traditional Council, the Muslims, AMA and the Regional Coordinating Council.

- 5. All reports of infractions and infringements of the prescribed noise levels during the stated period of the customary ban shall be referred to the Standing Committee which shall have powers of adjudication and compliance.
- 6. The Joint Committee shall after one (1) year present a permanent recommendation to the Regional Coordinating Council regarding lasting solutions to matters raised by the current controversy.
- 7. We recommend that this resolution should serve as an example for reaching a peaceful solution to similar issues elsewhere.
- 8. Other matters arising out of religious issues may be referred to the Joint Committee.
- 9. This Declaration shall take effect from 1st May 2000.

Dated in Accra this 13th day of April 2000.

The National Theatre.

SIGNED:

Adate Ohmor II
Joseph
Kyo Ababa
2 am
R. Ofori
John
...

WITNESS:

...
...
...
...
...

Appendix 6: Report on managing religious conflicts in Accra

Report on Managing Religious Conflicts in the Greater Accra Region

Introduction

1. As a result of the annual ban on drumming and noise making which preceded the celebration of the Ga Homowo Festival, and its attendant persistent clashes between the Ga Traditional Authority and some religious bodies, a two day workshop on Managing Religious Conflicts was organised jointly by the RCC and the AMA at the National Theatre on the 12 and 13 April 2000.

Outcome of Workshop

2. (I) A joint Declaration was duly signed by representatives of all the participating councils, authorities and religious bodies and issued on 13 April, 2000 to the effect from 1 May, 2000.
 - (II) Subsequently, a Standing Committee was set up and inaugurated on the 26 April, 2000 to monitor and manage any misunderstanding arising out of the celebration or observance of customs, traditions, festivals and worship in the Greater Accra Region during the period of the ban.
 - (iii) The workshop on Religion Conflicts Joint Declaration enabled Religious Bodies to explain the rationale of the workshop and need for peaceful co-existence to their numbers.

The Terms of Reference of the Standing Committee

3. (I) To receive and investigate complaints relating to infractions and infringements of the prescribed noise levels as contained in the AMA Abatement of Nuisance (1995) Bye Law during the stated period of the customary ban.
 - (ii) The Joint Committee shall carry out checks on the activities of all religious bodies with the view to ascertaining their compliance or non-compliance with the AMA 1995 Bye-Law on the Abatement of Nuisance and in pursuance of this shall have the power to enter into any place of worship to carry out its duties.
 - (iii) The Joint Committee may receive, investigate and arbitrate on other social conflicts arising out of a religious body's location or activities in the community that are likely to undermine peace and stability in the region.
 - (iv) The Joint Committee may receive, investigate and arbitrate on complaints from any individual(s), party(ies), entity (ies), who allege(s) that their rights have been infringed upon by the activities of a religious body or bodies.

(V) The Joint Committee shall present a recommendation to the RCC regarding lasting solutions to the matters raised by the current controversy within one year of its inception.

(vi) The Committee shall for the purpose of carrying out its functions have the power to summon any person or persons against whom a complaint has been lodged.

(vii) The Joint Committee shall within 3 months after the lifting of the ban on drumming and noise-making by the GTC submit a report on its activities to the Regional Minister.

(viii) The Joint Committee shall be under the chairmanship of the Regional Coordinating Director.

(ix) The Joint Committee work shall take effect from 1 May 2000.

4. Membership of the Joint Committee

- The GTC (3)
- African Missions (1)
- National Catholic Secretariat (1)
- Ghana Pentecostal Council (1)
- The Council of Independent Churches (1)
- The National Association of Charismatic and Christian Churches (1)
- The Federation of Muslim Representative Councils of Ghana (1)
- The Ahamadiyya Muslim Mission (1)
- The Accra Metropolitan Assembly (3)
- The Regional Coordinating Council (4)
- The Ga Adangme Council (2)

5. *Committee Meetings and Formation of a Task Force*

The Committee met as scheduled and had 11 sittings to deliberate and receive reports from a Special Task Force set up by the J.C. Task Force. This was made up of representatives of the Police, AMA Guards and Traditional Council assigned specifically to monitor the compliance of the one month ban drumming and noise-making.

6. In addition to the formation of the Task Force the Committee made public announcements through the media, soliciting public co-operation in the quest for co-existence and the need to avoid social conflict and find a lasting solution to the perennial religious controversies. Announcements were made to make the public aware of the existence of the Joint Monitoring Committee set up specially to monitor all infractions and infringements. All complaints were to be made to the office of the RRC. Hotlines (222690,227292) weekdays and 662441 weekends or nearest Police Station.
7. Some of the rounds made by the Task Force were in response to telephone calls.

Composition and Mode of Operation of the Special Task Force

8. The Special Task Force (STF) consisted of 30 men divided into 4 groups of 7 members in each group headed by 2 co-ordinating officers made up of 1 police officer and 1 AMA Guard. Each group is composed of:
 - 2 Police
 - 2 AMA Guards
 - 2 GTC Representatives
 - 1 Driver
9. Due to Logistic Constraints, the monitoring exercise was restricted to the Accra Metropolitan Area. The AMA was divided into 2 sectors: Northern and the Southern Sectors.

AREAS OF OPERATIONS

Northern Sector

- | | |
|--------------------|-----------------|
| 1. Kaneshie | 14. Kaneshie |
| 2. Laterbiorkoshie | 15. Bubuashie |
| 3. Abossey Okai | 16. Tesano |
| 4. Zongo | 17. Achimota |
| 5. Zamarama Line | 18. Nii Boiman |
| 6. Russia | 19. Santa Maria |
| 7. Mateheko | 20. Odorkor |
| 8. Darkuman | 21. Kwashieman |
| 9. Dansoman | 22. Tabora |
| 10. Abeka | 23. Nima |
| 11. Maamobi | 24. Kotobabi |
| 12. New Town | 25. Kokomlemle |
| 13. Kpehe | 26. Alajo etc |

Southern Sector

- | | |
|-----------------|----------------------|
| 1. Ga Mashie | 10. Chorkor |
| 2. James Town | 11. New/Old Mamprobi |
| 3. Korle Workon | 12. Dansoman |
| 4. Kantamanto | 13. Mpoasem – Agege |
| 5. Agbogbloshe | 14. Sakaman |
| 6. Adabraka | 15. Awoshie |
| 7. Odorna | 16. Banana Inn |
| 8. Circle | 17. Chemunaa |
| 9. Korle Gonno | 18. Shaibu etc |

Operational Time: The Special Task Force opened on a 2 Shift System Daily

1st Shift – 10:00am – 6:00pm

2nd Shift – 6:00 pm – 1:00am

Defaulters

10. Categories of defaulters summoned to appear before the appear before the committee ranged from churches, Freelance Preachers, other religious bodies, herbal sellers and other individuals performing at social functions.
11. The Special Task Force usually advised first offenders to minimize the noise level. Failure to heed advice resulted in the seizure of their musical instruments and the issuance of the summons to appear before the Standing Committee and made to sign an undertaking to abide by the AMA bye-laws at the AMA offices before their seized instruments were released to them. List of defaulters included:
 - A Gbawe Chief
 - Elim Pentecostal Church (Palladium)
 - Gbawe Churches
 - Gospel Faith Ministries
 - Mr. Darko (Agbobloshie)

Those who did not honour the summons to appear before the Committee still have their instruments in the custody of the AMA offices.

12. Committee's Reaction to Reports from Task Force

Pastors and leaders of defaulting churches and other groups who were summoned to appear before the Committee were reminded and cautioned to abide by the levels of noise prescribed by the Abatement of Nuisance (1995) Bye-Laws of the Accra Metropolitan Assembly and the need to respect the customs of others. Those whose musical instruments were seized by the Special Task Force were made to sign an undertaking at the Accra Metropolitan Assembly Offices before the instruments were released to them.

13. Constraints

Enforcement of the Declaration was difficult for the following reasons:

- (i) The Committee's inability to determine the level of noise-making beyond the levels prescribed by the Abatement of Nuisance (1995) Bye-Laws of the AMA due to the unavailability of a Sound Level Meter at AMA.
- (ii) Claims by some members of the public, and some churches and even a Traditional Chief that they were not aware of the Workshop held on Religious Conflicts and the announcements on abatement of noise.
- (iii) General apathy by some religious groups and sections of the public towards religious conflict resolution due to their individual beliefs.
- (iv) Lack of vehicles and logistics, especially communication equipment to enable the Committee to work effectively in all areas to which the ban relates.

Achievements

- (i) Amicable settlement reached with the defaulting individuals, groups and churches that appeared before the committee. In most cases the offending groups that appeared before the Committee were remorseful.

- (ii) The existence of the Joint Committee during this crucial period contributed greatly to peace and harmony and prevented conflict between the traditionalist and other religious bodies.
- (iii) Formation of the Task Force by the Committee and its operation prevented the churches from being attacked this year.
- (iv) The inclusion of representatives of the Ga Traditional Council on the Committee and the Task Force enabled the Council to contain the reactions of identifiable youth within the Ga Traditional Council.

Recommendations

The following are the recommendations of the Committee:

- (i) A follow up Workshop(s) should be held annually to sensitize all relevant bodies before the ban on drumming.
- (ii) Information dissemination should be revamped and enhanced by undertaking public education announcements and radio discussions etc., well in advance of the annual ban period.
- (iii) To achieve unity of purpose and ensure lasting peace special service of Thanksgiving by all the groups that participated in the workshop should be held at an appropriate place at the end of the Homowo celebrations.
- (iv) It is desirable for the GTC and other Traditional Councils in the country to endeavour to codify their customs and traditions to be enshrined under the 1992 Constitution.
- (v) The ban on drumming and noise-making should be extended to cover all sectors of society, including chop bars, dance halls and other official celebrations to be in consonance with the Abatement of Nuisance (1995) Bye-Laws of the AMA.
- (vi) The AMA should procure a couple of sound level meters to enable effective measurement of noise-making. This will ensure effective prosecution of recalcitrant groups and other offending bodies.

Submitted in August, 2000.

Appendix 7: Minutes of a meeting of all major religious bodies

MINUTES ON EMERGENCY MEETING OF THE RELIGIOUS BODIES ON THE BAN ON DRUMMING AT THE CHRISTIAN COUNCIL ON TUESDAY, 22ND MAY, 2001

ATTENDANCE

- | | |
|----------------------------|---|
| 1. REV. DR. ABOAGYE MENSAH | - CHRISTIAN COUNCIL |
| 2. RAB. K.. GUAR-GORMAN | - MUSLIM THEOLOGIAN |
| 3. BAFFOUR B. AMOA | - FECCIWA |
| 4. BEN B. ASSOROW | - CATHOLIC SECRETARIAT |
| 5. REV. E.A. AYISI | - GHANA PENT. COUNCIL |
| 6. REV. EMMANUEL ANSAH | - THE NATIONAL ASSOC.
OF CHARISMATIC
CHURCHES |
| 7. MR. PAA ACQUAH | |
| 8. REV. KWATENG SIAW | - NACC |
| 9. REV. ATADANA JOSEPH | - N.C.S. |
| 10. REV. E.B. WOOD | - GHANA PENT. COUNCIL |
| 11. REV. DANIEL SAFORO | “ “ |
| 12. SHEIK AHMED QUAINOO | - AHMADIYYA MISSION |
| 13. REV. S.Y. DOKU | - COUNCIL OF
INDEPENDENT CHURCHES |

The meeting started at 12.25 p.m. with prayer by Rev. E.B. Wood. The convenor of the meeting - Rev. Dr. Aboagye Mensah introduced the agenda as being the Ban on Drumming.

He was glad we are all together as a religious body and not as Muslims, Catholics, Pentecostals etc. He lamented that the Traditionalists were not at our last arranged meeting (18/5/2001) to foster peace and harmony. However, the concensus was to follow the agreement of last year with reduced noise in Church premises.

.....2/...

- 2 -

On 16/5/2001 the Traditionalist again told the press media they are no longer going with the agreement. They have since carried out their threats in attacking member churches. Their focus seem to major on noise making from Christian churches. We may not be able to predict the direction of the escalation of violence.

He next referred to the editorial at the Chronicle: Traditional Scare: Who Enforces The Law? The editorial warns that it took a seemingly harmless stance of vandalism to cause the Black Wednesday. The Traditionalists have been left to make the rules and enforce the law. They enter into church worship centres, rub, vandalise and get away with it. The Chronicle appeals to the Traditionalists to modify such practices that put a wedge of divisions among the Ghanaian public.

Rev. Dr. Aboagye Mensah further referred to Times to quote Nii Kojo Ahabio who says the ban is universal and that the Gas will enforce it. Mr. Ben Assorow observed that we must pursue the dialogue process. Meanwhile, we must follow up to court on those Traditionalist detained by the police.

Rev. E.B. Wood read parts of letter by El Shaddai sent to the General Secretary of GPC on uprovoked attacks made on them during Monday's Day Celebration on 13/5/2001 where over 40 foreign visitors were worshipping with them. They were appealing through the G.P.C. to reach the Government on the negative impact such acts can have on our Tourism Industry and the peace of the land.

The house after deliberations arrived at the following:

1. An audience with the President is premature. That should be our last resort.
2. So far we had limited our consultations with the Regional Minister's office. We must seek audience with the Minister for the Interior and the IGP to take steps so that people do not take the law into their own hands.3/....

- 3 -

3. Have a meeting with the Regional Minister to commend him and solicit his continued and consistent affirmation to the agreed declaration. This would promote confidence in the impartiality of his office.
4. The urgent need to have a monitoring team to enforce a peaceful compliance to the Joint Declaration rather than have the Traditionalists invade church premises. The consequences of such confrontations with the Traditionalist could not be predicted as occurred last Sunday 20/5/201.
5. More education to be focused on our members to minimise noise making and not to engage in any provocative activities during the period of the ban eg. loud all night sessions.
6. The need to get our church leaders to run a workshop to evolve our own self regulatory compliance to bye-laws on Abatement of Nuisance. (The church must be proactive in this regard and set the pace before councils like AMA become *obliged*).
7. Raise concerns on the proliferation Christian groups which register without any accreditation. The situation may lead to chaos when not timely addressed.
8. Strengthen our net working as religious bodies in a democratic dispensation. (taking clues from the present tension in Accra and other African nations like Nigeria).
9. Write up a Press Release which will among others contain
 - (a) our strong displeasure on the attacks on Christian premises by Youths from the Ga Traditional Council,.
 - (b) Express our condolences for those who were hurt on either sides.
 - (c) Raise concerns as to why only Christians seem to be the target of the Traditionalists who also seem to be active mainly on Sundays.

At this stage Mr. Ben Assorow led the house to write a press release. The meeting adjourned at 4.05 pm. ---4/...

- 4 -

The meeting reconvened on Wednesday 23/5/2001 at 10.55 am The attached press release was agreed upon and signed.

The group arranged to meet the following:

1. Professor Mike Ocquaye - Chairman - PCRMC
2. Hon. Sheik I.C. Quaye - Greater Accra Regional Minister
- 10.Hon. Alhaj Malik Al-Hassan Yakubu - The Minister for the Interior

RECORDED BY
REV. E.B. WOOD

CHAired BY
REV.DR. ABOAGYE MENSAH

Appendix 8: GPCC petition to the parliament of Ghana

Honourable Speaker of Parliament,

PETITION TO PARLIAMENT BY GHANA PENTECOSTAL COUNCIL IN CONJUNCTION WITH OTHER CHURCHES

Greetings in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

It is with great concern that we write to you to bring to your attention certain events that are really pressing and explosive in nature. Trusting that by your thoughtful deliberations and timely intervention, the peace, love and progress that both you and the Church stand for will not be disturbed.

MOST RECENT ATTACK

Our petition has been prompted by the recent attack on the Lighthouse Chapel International by a mob, which suspected that the church would play drums contrary to traditional pagan practices. This practice forbids the playing of drums at a particular season of the year. This attack was preceded by the arbitrary demolition of the walls around the church by the A.M.A. under dubious circumstances.

Several people were seriously hurt; somebody suffered a serious eye injury, another person lost consciousness due to excessive loss of blood. This attack is a culmination of a series of similar attacks that the Christian faith has had to endure over a long period of time in this country.

We will therefore just cite a few of them which were reported in some of the national newspapers.

SOME PREVIOUS ATTACKS

- I. The Wednesday, December 29, 1993 issue of the *Daily Graphic* has the banner headline "*Mob destroy Church for refusing to pacify gods*". Under this headline, the report was that the Church of Pentecost building at Half Asini was burnt down by the traditional authorities of the town because the church had not complied with a ban on drumming during the celebration of a traditional festival as demanded by some gods. It is worthy to note that at this particular instance, the Ghana Pentecostal Council, filed a writ at the Supreme Court seeking the following relief:
 - i. A declaration that by the Provisions of the 1992 Constitution and in particular Article 21 (1) (b) (c) and 26, the plaintiffs as well as other

Christian Church groups have an inherent right to worship, profess, practice and manifest their Christian faith and belief.

- ii. A declaration that plaintiffs right to hold and profess their faith as guaranteed by the Constitution does not permit anyone to interfere with or disrupt the mode, time or place where such belief or worship is to be manifested, save as is proscribed by the Constitution.
- iii. A declaration that any purported act or conduct of any traditional authority in Ghana or group of persons in any community in Ghana or others in proscribing, preventing or interfering in the worship or in the enjoyment of any meal, dish or food by any member of the Churches belonging to plaintiffs' council is a violation of or contravention of their constitutional right as enshrined in the 1992 constitution.

This writ was filed in the Superior Court of Judicature, the Supreme Court of Ghana as far back as March 9, 1994. Up to date, nothing has been done about it.

2. The *Ghanaian Times* of February 23, 1994 has the headline "*Fetish Cult Destroys Church for refusing to pacify gods*". Under this headline was a report that a church and school complex belonging to the Patmos Baptist Church at Azizakokey, an island near the Volta Estuary at Ada Foah, were razed down by members of a fetish cult because the members of the church had refused to contribute money towards a pacification ceremony for the gods of the island. The claim was that because the Christians had failed to pay the money, the gods became angry and struck the fetish priest, Nene Wortey Toku, with diarrhoea.
3. The July 14-20, 1997 issue of the *Public Agenda* has the following banner headline, "*Obey or vanish - Ayiem elders tell Christians*". The report under this heading was that, the Christians at Ayiem, a town near Takoradi were being ejected out of the town by the stool elders because they had refused to shave their hair and walk bare-footed for one week during the funeral and burial rites of Nana Amponsah Payin III, Chief of Ayiem.

Honourable Speaker, can you believe that such embarrassing things are happening in modern Ghana at the dawn of the 21st century? There are places where our people are banned from eating certain types of food, like fufu, during certain periods of the year. They are banned from going to their farms on certain days of the week a violation of which can result in the burning down of their churches.

We would be grateful if you would think thoroughly about these issues because such customs do not only contradict the Christian faith but are inimical to democratic governance and economic productivity.

We brought our plights as Christians to the notice of the Commissioner for Human Rights and Administrative Justice. The Commissioner therefore organised a meeting between religious leaders and the National House of Chiefs a couple of months ago at Kumasi to deliberate on the issues. At the end of the meeting, a communiqué was signed with the chiefs promising to educate their traditional authorities on our constitutional rights for peaceful co-existence.

We were extremely shocked and distressed by the report in the *Daily Graphic* of Wednesday June 3, 1998. The Minister of Interior, who is himself an accomplished lawyer and responsible for internal harmony of Ghanaian society, is reported to have said that District Assemblies must pass bylaws that would compel churches to observe such religious rituals like the ban on drumming.

OUR CONSTITUTIONAL RIGHT

Honourable Speaker, we wish to bring to your notice these dangerous realities that face us as Christians. Although over 60% of Ghanaians are Christians, we admit that Ghana is a secular country. Therefore, one should not use his religious beliefs to suppress others. Muslims do not insist that everybody should fast during their fasting season. Neither do Christians insist that everybody should take The Holy Communion.

We have our wives and children in our churches and it would be very irresponsible on our part to sit down whilst our defenceless loved ones are being maimed. Articles 21 (1) (b) (c) and 26 of the Fourth Republic Constitution guarantee our inherent right to worship, profess, practice and manifest our Christian faith without any interference from any person or group of persons with regard to the place or mode of worship.

Christian churches have been partners with the government in nation building since time immemorial. The numerous Christian schools, hospitals and clinics all over the country are pointers to this fact. We Ghanaian-Christians are very proud of our rich cultural heritage like respect for the aged and the proverbial Ghanaian hospitality. We will not do anything to undermine these cherished practices.

OUR REQUESTS

By this petition we are respectfully asking this Honourable House to:

1. Tell the whole world whether it is right and constitutional to impose the mode of worship of one religious faith on all others.
2. Take appropriate steps to ensure that the perpetrators of these atrocious acts are brought to book.
3. Educate people of all faiths to respect one another's constitutional rights and co-exist in harmony.

4. Ask the Minister of Interior to explain what he meant by that pronouncement; if he did really say what he was reported to have said or otherwise publicly refute it.
5. Kindly ensure that the safety and security of the lives and properties of every individual who lives in this country is not toyed with by any person or group of persons. Continual harassment of the Church may compel us to react.

Signed on behalf of Ghana Pentecostal Council
and other Christian churches.

CC: Vice-President of the Republic of Ghana
Chief Justice of the Supreme Court
Majority Leader in Parliament
Minority Leader in Parliament

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hrsg. vom Institut für Afrika-Studien der Universität Bayreuth

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