Summary Outline

- Nature of African Religion;
- Country religious profiles,
- Religion and development.
  - Fatalism & Concepts of Divine authorship.
- Witchcraft (magic & sorcery) & development
  - Implications for individual rights.
  - Implications for attitudes to contemporary business culture
Some Reading

Opoku O. 2001, ‘Deliverance as a way of Confronting Witchcraft in Modern Africa: Ghana as a Case History’ Cyberjournal for Pentecostal Charismatic Research. No. 10


Chapter Six in Culture and Development book.

See also Sakai for media and other e-material on religion &witchcraft.
Ghanaians are compulsively religious. ... ‘they are notoriously religious’. Religion is pervasive in Ghanaian society; it brushes the corridors of power including contemporary politics. Ghanaian political leaders and especially power seekers, play the religious card so often, they play it so openly to the extent that it becomes difficult to separate religion from politics in periods when they are competing for votes.

http://www.myjoyonline.com/features/200801/12946.asp
The Place of Religion in Life

It is said that African religion is fetishism; that Africans are **incurably religious**.

• The African is said to be **superstitious**.

• The Ghanaian is said to be **fatalistic**; his/her ways are governed by fatalism.

While there is some truth in all of this, **Africans are not identical in all respects**.

Just as some Africans may be incurably religious, superstitious & fatalistic, some are not.

• There are even **African agnostics** who do not believe in God, or spirits or in their power to influence or control events. They do not believe in the **after-life**.
The Power of African Religion for good and evil

• African Religion can prescribe ff:
  • What **work you do**, or don’t do;
  • When to **work, or relax**;
  • What to do with your **income and earnings**;
  • What **food/drinks** you eat or don’t eat - **taboos**;
  • How you **relate to your neighbour**;
  • How you **vote at elections** and for whom;

If all this is true, **then religion should be a powerful force for advancing development or holding back progress.**
Observations & Conclusions from the WIN-Gallup International

- Three (3) African countries among ten (10) most religious nations in the world. Ghana & Nigeria occupy top spot.

- No African country features among ten top-most atheistic nations of the world.

- Western Europeans: Italy, USA, Britain, usually labelled as ‘Christian’, do not feature much in the league of the most religious.

- France, Germany, Ireland, Iceland, nominally Christian, are among the most atheistic.

The poor are more religious than the rich. WHY?
Place of Religion in Africa
Agree with Mr. E. K. Dogbevi

• How pervasive is religion?
• Demographically?
• Attitudinally?
Top 10 Religious Nations

WIN-Gallup International "Religion and Atheism Index"

Data collected from 57 countries

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Religious Persons</th>
<th>Not Religious</th>
<th>Atheist</th>
<th>Don’t Know</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ghana</td>
<td>96%</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nigeria</td>
<td>93%</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Armenia</td>
<td>92%</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
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<td>Fiji</td>
<td>92%</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Macedonia</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Romania</td>
<td>89%</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iraq</td>
<td>88%</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kenya</td>
<td>88%</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peru</td>
<td>86%</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brazil</td>
<td>85%</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
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</table>
Which Nationalities Consider Religion Most Important?
% who say religion is very important in their lives (2015)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ethiopia</td>
<td>98%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senegal</td>
<td>97%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indonesia</td>
<td>95%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uganda</td>
<td>95%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pakistan</td>
<td>93%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burkina Faso</td>
<td>92%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tanzania</td>
<td>90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ghana</td>
<td>90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nigeria</td>
<td>88%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philippines</td>
<td>87%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kenya</td>
<td>86%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malaysia</td>
<td>84%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jordan</td>
<td>83%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>India</td>
<td>83%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Palestinian territories</td>
<td>74%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brazil</td>
<td>74%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Africa</td>
<td>67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peru</td>
<td>66%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

https://www.statista.com/chart/4189/which-nationalities-consider-religion-most-important/
## Top 10 Atheistic Nations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Countries</th>
<th>Religious</th>
<th>Not Religious</th>
<th>Atheist</th>
<th>Don’t Know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>China</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Czech Rep.</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Korea</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Netherlands</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Austria</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iceland</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ireland</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Trad. African Religion & Cosmology

• Supremacy of a creator God is acknowledged, Akan call God **Onyankopong**; The African God may be distant or near; may not be worshipped directly.

• The **earth** may be conceptualised as god/goddess – **Asaase Yaa**

• The **ancestors** are alive & are venerated, invoked by sacrifice and prayer; they play a role in life of the community life.

• A pantheon of **lesser gods** & spirits exist; they may be good or bad, or neutral;
African Traditional Religion II

- Spirits are unseen but have guises and some assume human form. Indeed not all men/women are persons; some are masquerades (a reason for some people being treated differently).

- Deities may control natural forces - thunder, rain, lightning, chicken pox, etc. (Ogun, Sampona) or live in environmental features (Bosomtwi, Tano, Korle).

- Man is mortal: with decaying body, spirit (kra) and soul (susum). Death results when spirit leaves body.

- Man has a destiny and there is life after death.
Deities sanction behaviour – punishing & rewarding. African ancestors – ‘the living dead’ - are close to humans & they sanction ethics & morality.

Divinities not only interested in social relations, they also check environmental abuses; it is their abode.

- The environment is not therefore to be exploited ruthlessly, i.e. by polluting, cutting trees, killing animals with abandon, excavating and digging. See MDG 7

- ATR blames environmental hazards on human activity.

Thus, ATR supports development.
In Africa there are countries that are predominantly Moslem (Senegal, Magreb, etc.), some are Christian (Ethiopia). Many are multi-religious

Islam: 16% of Ghanaians –majority Sunni, but Sufi and Ahmadiyya etc. exist. (N-Region: 56.1% are Moslem)

Christians: Christian 68.8% (Pentecostal/Charismatic 24.1%, Protestant 18.6%, Catholic 15.1%, other 11%)

Traditional Religion: about 8.5% (U-East Region: 46.4%); No religion - 6.1%; Others - 0.7%.

Mixed religious population: Question of coexistence.
## Religious Denominations: 2000~2010

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DENOMINATION</th>
<th>2000</th>
<th>2010</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Christian</td>
<td>68.8%</td>
<td>71.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pentecostal/Charismatic</td>
<td>24.1%</td>
<td>28.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protestant</td>
<td>18.6%</td>
<td>18.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catholic</td>
<td>15.1%</td>
<td>13.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Christian</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>11.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muslim</td>
<td>15.9%</td>
<td>17.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Traditional</td>
<td>8.5%</td>
<td>5.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>6.1%</td>
<td>5.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>0.7%</td>
<td>0.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Africa: a melting pot of religions.

Despite classifications: Christian, Moslem, Traditionalists etc. people are eclectic in religious orientations.

A Christian goes to church, but may partake of ancestral rituals or visit soothsayers and even Malams; Faiths may be *syncretic* – borrowing from each other.

Some people are tolerant of religious & doctrinal differences, but some are not. *Religious conflicts* can exist between faiths, and within denominations, accounting for wars, death & destruction in places like *Nigeria*, *Sudan*, *Somalia*, *Kenya* etc. setting back development. Cf: *Boko Haram* & *Al-Shabab*. 
Two years ago, Mr. X, founder and leader of Vision Charismatic Chapel, allegedly consulted Nana Kwaku Z at his shrine in Akomadan-Afrancho for a special juju to establish a church at Kato, his hometown. The prominent fetish priest, ..., obliged and prepared a special juju at the cost of GH¢550, out of which the pastor instantly paid GH¢100, promising to pay the remainder in a few days. Pastor X, after taking delivery of the juju, came back a few weeks later and paid an additional amount of GH¢100 to Nana Kwaku Z.


Daily Guide, April, 2008
Talking Conflict - Two Muslim sects clash over some teachings in Qur'an

From: Ghana|Myjoyonline.com|Joy News

Published: August 19, 2012

A number of people got injured when two Muslim sects in Tamale clashed at a radio station Sunday evening [August 2012).

The Tijaniya and the Al-Sunnah sects engaged in the violent confrontation at the Northern Star Radio, over the varied interpretation of some verses in the Qur'an. Property including motorbikes were also reported to have been destroyed.
Religion: Potential for Development

Religion goes with morality that prescribes honesty, love, charity, hope and diligence, respect for self and others, and for nature etc.

Out of fear of divine sanction or in expectation of immediate or eternal reward, people abide by laws, norms & basic morality. This should promote development.

But people also violate human rights for religious reasons – killings and wars in God’s name.

• Some religious taboos, eg taboo against farming, fishing on certain days can be unproductive.
CASE OF AFRIKANIA MISSION’S OBJECTIVES

Founder: Osofo-Okomfo Kwabena Damuah

.. liberate .. soul and body from all bondage of all kinds..

.. teach people .. self-reliance by organising them to provide for themselves basic needs of both soul and body

.. promote religious liberty and tolerance as fundamental human right as enshrined in the UN Charter;

.. help bring about proper understanding of moral and spiritual values for peace and progress in the world;
More about Afrikania Mission

.. set up schools and institutions to .. promote the best of Africa’s rich religious, moral and cultural heritage;

.. practice the teaching that religion is basically a life of righteousness and good works within the framework of one’s culture and that work done in the spirit of love and service to humankind is worship and prayer at the same time.

.. uphold and live by the principles that true service to mankind is service to God.

Paradoxically, Afrikania endorses and defends Trokosi
Double-edged Religion- Sofoline, Kumasi: Workers not working because of a curse!


“Striking workers of the Sofoline Interchange Project say they are not going back to work until their leaders reverse a curse invoked to bind them all to their demand for a salary increase by preventing them from returning to work prematurely. Union leaders invoked the Antoa Nyamaa deity to deal with anybody who goes against the group’s decision to strike.

But day after their employers, China GEO-Construction, agreed a 25% salary increase, the workers say they will return to work only under the condition that the curse is overturned.”
Illustration: River Tano & Goats

.. at Elubo, goats are, in effect, "out of bounds." No one can rear or slaughter goats there, or cross the River Tano with them. The punishment for flouting this unwritten order is death.

According to some of the .. people of the town, it has been a taboo from time immemorial for anyone to rear, eat or cross River Tano with a goat into the town.

... people who dared to bring the animal to Elubo "paid dearly for it" and the animals only lived for less than three hours and died.

The ‘Fama Nyame’ Philosophy of Life

Despite moments of doubt, there is ultimately, absolute trust in God: See African proverbs
- God knows best, God will decide, etc., so it is ok. to leave it all to God’s better judgement.

This is the religious philosophy, which in Akan best translates as Fama nyame (‘leave it God’): The statement may be Akan, but many African peoples have similar adages and attitudes.

• Fama nyame orders attitudes & behaviours at critical moments in people’s lives: misfortunes, injustices, disputes, etc.
Implications of ‘Fama Nyame’

This can mean controversies, conflicts, grievances are not settled by self-help and vengeance. This makes for peace and order.

But it also implies indolence - people become passive as they depend on Providence to protect them & provide for their needs.

In another sense, it results in exploitation: crooks exploit the public in God’s name. Thus while pastors become billionaires, their followers are impoverished. Religion can indeed become an opiate [Opium].
Imagine River Ankobra: Fish Haven Turned Gold-washing Bowl
Ghanaian Rivers Under Attack (the Pra)

The paramount chief of Kade ... warned against polluting the Birim River to avoid the wrath of God. Osabarima Agyare ... noted that if pollution of the river does not come to an end, greater calamity will befall the people living around it. The chief gave the warning in the wake of the current heavy flooding ...

**Reader’s Comments:** A whole community of intelligent people has been misled by uneducated fetish priestess. **Science or religion?**
African Religion Comes to the Rescue

The concern for river pollution by miners is expressed via religion. Chiefs and priests become allies of those who seek to protect the environment.

• African rivers are said to be gods and visit calamities on communities that do not protect the rivers. The same can be said for other forms of environmental degradation.
Some Outcomes of river Galamsey

• Rivers become silted and this can lead to floods when it rains;

• High concentrations of dangerous minerals and chemicals – mercury, etc., in water bodies.
  – Community sources of drinking water are affected;
  – Aquatic life endangered;
  – Illness when people consume riverine products.
African gods: Environment Protectors

‘Chiefs and fetish priests of the Akyem state in the Eastern Region and its environs have performed necessary rituals to appease the god of the Birim River.

The river god is believed to have been angry at the youth in the town who were engaging in illegal mining (galamsey) activities and polluting the river.’

[Adom News: July, 2011]

Note: As the elders try to appease River Birim, it follows that they would also try to persuade the youth to stop their galamsey on the river.
THANKS

Please take the tutorials seriously.