

**TOWARDS A MODEL FOR CONTEXTUALISING CHRISTIANITY IN THE
NCHUMURU CULTURE IN GHANA: THE IMPACT OF MOTHER TONGUE
SCRIPTURES FROM 1989-2011**

by

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this thesis has been prepared by me, towards the Master of Theology (MTh) (Thesis Option) in Missiology and to the best of my knowledge this has not been presented to any university in any previous application for a degree that the work of which it is a record has been done by myself. Acknowledgement has been duly made for all citations and references in the text.

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DEDICATION

To Janet Asewie my beloved wife, Kennedy, Ephraim, Gillian and Courage our beloved children for their love and support and to all Christian workers among the Nchumuru.

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Having acknowledged the help of the various people, the author accepts personal responsibility for any excesses, misrepresentations or shortcomings that may be found in this work.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

- BM** – Basel Mission
PCG – Presbyterian Church of Ghana
RC – Roman Catholic Church
GILLBT – Ghana Institute of Linguistics, Literacy and Bible Translation
OT – Old Testament
MT – Mother Tongue
ATR – African Traditional Religion
NIV – New International Version
WEC – World Evangelisation for Christ
SAM – Society of African Missions
WBT – Wycliffe Bible Translators
USA – United States of America
UK – United Kingdom
SIL – Summer Institute of Linguistics
CTP – Chumburung Translation Project
SE – Scripture Engagement
LCC – Local Council of Churches
FCBH – Faith Comes By Hearing
JF – Jesus Film
GCMG – Great Commission Movement of Ghana
CGFCI – Campus Crusades for Christ International
ECG – Evangelical Church of Ghana
GS – God’s Story
SELT – Scripture Engagement and Leadership Training
NT – New Testament

SDA – Seventh Day Adventist
COP – Church of Pentecost
AOG – Assemblies of God
CAC – Christ Apostolic Church
GES – Ghana Education Service

ABSTRACT

This thesis, *Towards a Model of Contextualising Christianity in the Nchumuru Culture in Ghana: The impact of mother tongue Scriptures from 1989-2011*, is a study on the impact of mother tongue Scriptures on culture and also the engagement of the Gospel with the culture of the Nchumuru people of Northern and Volta Regions of Ghana. It examines the coming of Christianity to the people and the patterns of evangelisation among the Nchumuru with special reference to the medium used in the proclamation of the Gospel. It also addresses the issue of the birth of a Bible Translation ministry among the people and the subsequent birth of the Bible into that culture and how the Nchumuru have responded to the proclamation of the Gospel as well as the impact it has had on the lives of the Nchumuru. The writer contends that despite the challenges, indigenous Nchumuru Christianity is possible through the recognition of traditional or cultural categories as significant preparation for the reception of the Gospel. In this way the Christian faith can be articulated in the Nchumuru cultural context with the use of its thought forms and patterns in a relevant worship of God. The major finding of the research is that the proclamation of the Gospel in the mother tongue of the people has made significant strides in the growth of Christianity among the Nchumuru people. However the Gospel proclamation among the Nchumuru often produces different responses ranging from full embrace to partial embrace as well as conflictual or negative embrace depending on how the Gospel is proclaimed and how the people understand it. There is the need for the people to perceive and respond to the Gospel in ways that are meaningful to their own understanding and experience. The significance of the impact of the mother tongue Scriptures in contextualising Christianity in the Nchumuru culture and its contribution in the evangelistic task of the church is therefore very crucial.

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CHAPTER ONE

General Introduction (Background Information)

1.1 Introduction/ Background and Rationale

The Nchumuru are one of several people groups found in Ghana in West Africa. Linguistically, the Nchumuru originated in the Guan cradle which is located in the Densu Valley. They belong to the Kwa family of the Guan (North) sub-group of the Volta Camoe of the Niger-Congo group of languages. They speak a language called Chumburung. They occupy the area that lies between Latitude 7° 50° North and Longitude 0° 20° and 0° 30° west of Ghana. Originally they lived on either side of the Volta River, west, north and east of Kete Krachi. Today they are largely located on their lands in neighbouring parts of three of Ghana's Regions: i.e., Krachi West, East and Nchumuru Districts in the Volta Region, in Kpandai District of the Northern Region, and in the Pru and Sene Districts, which comprises of Yeji-Prang - Kwame Danso-Bassa triangle of the Brong-Ahafo Region. This covers an area of about 220 sq km (Barker 1986:265). In addition, small but organised clusters of migrant Nchumuru work in such urban centres like Kumasi, Accra and Tamale. The Nchumuru are also a Guan-speaking ethnic group. The total population quoted by the 2010 Ghana population census put the figure of the Nchumuru in Ghana at 155,668 (one hundred and fifty-five thousand six hundred and sixty-eight).¹

The Ghana Institute of Linguistics, Literacy and Bible Translation (GILLBT)² started work on the translation of the Chumburung Bible in partnership with overseas friends from Wycliffe Bible Translators. They began studying Chumburung sounds, grammar, and vocabulary, as a preparation for translating the Scriptures into the language in 1972. It must be noted that these overseas friends demonstrated a special love for the Nchumuru people and most especially in the community in which they worked. They provided care for the people in several ways including but not limited to providing first aid to the sick in the community. They adapted to the

¹ Ghana Statistical Services 2010 Population and Housing Census, preliminary results.

² GILLBT grew out of work started in Ghana in 1962 as a branch of [SIL International](#). It was set up to provide alphabets, grammars and reading materials in Ghanaian languages and promote mother tongue literacy in language communities. In 1980, GILLBT came under Ghanaian leadership and is now a Member Organisation of [Wycliffe Bible Translators International \(WBTI\)](#). This means that, as well as being active in Ghanaian language programmes, the Institute has a responsibility to recruit qualified Ghanaians who will serve in other African countries in translation and other related activities. It also seeks to partner with Ghanaian Churches to pray and raise financial assistance for the workers who will serve in other countries as well as in Ghana. For details, see website <http://www.gillbt.org>.

communal lifestyle of the local people and gave to the needy. This way they demonstrated the love of Christ as espoused by the Scriptures which they translated. The New Testament was dedicated in 1989 and the complete Bible in 2010.

This research is being undertaken following carefully, the observation made by many Christian workers that Christian impact has been very minimal on the lives of the people, after several years of the coming of Christianity into Nchumuru culture. The first approach to the Nchumuru by Christian missionaries was in 1907, when the Basel Mission of Switzerland sent three African pastors to do a survey of the Krachi, Nchumuru, and Salaga area (Berinyuu 1997:3). The reasons given are that the medium of communicating the Gospel message among the people was in a different language, mostly Ashanti Twi, one of the predominant languages of Ghana. Secondly, also was the lack of interest on the part of some non-Nchumuru pastors and priests working among the people in learning the Chumburung language and using it in church for teaching or preaching.³ The Chumburung Christian, most often than not, hears the Gospel being preached or taught in another language of which he or she lacks good understanding. The effect is that certain basic truths about the Christian faith and practice are not well communicated to the target audience (Sanneh 2007:2).

This research takes a point of view, and argues for the mother tongue Scriptures having made great impact on the lives of the Nchumuru people, following the coming of those Scriptures into their culture and context. Secondly also the rationale for writing on the topic has largely been of the writer's personal involvement in the translation of the Bible into the Nchumuru language, more specifically the Old Testament (OT) and currently a Scripture Engagement consultant trainee with the Ghana Institute of Linguistics, Literacy and Bible Translation (GILLBT), a Wycliffe member organisation in Ghana.⁴

The study is to discover by exploring how the Scriptures coming within Nchumuru culture have made a positive impact on Nchumuru Christianity and helped to contextualise Christianity among the people. This brings forth the various attempts being made at contextualising Christianity among the people and how that is evident by the growth of the Church among the people. The various authors reviewed on the

³ Interview with Bernard Aborkugyah on the 7th January 2012. Aborkugyah is the Scripture Engagement coordinator of the Chumburung Translation Project

⁴ See GILLBT website: <http://www.gillbt.org>. Accessed on 25th March 2012

impact of mother tongue Scriptures on African culture made no specific reference to the Nchumuru of Ghana. Nonetheless the field of study of the impact of mother tongue Scriptures in contextualising Christianity among any given people, and even so, the Nchumuru in Ghana, is not in doubt, as clearly represented by the authors reviewed and exploring this among the Nchumuru is worth pursuing.

It is also to provide a reference for all those (non-Nchumuru people) who are presently preaching the Gospel in the traditional area and others like them, who are seeking to present the Gospel to other cultures either than their own, to give prime attention to the use of the mother tongue in their various congregations within and among the people. The motivation to undertake this study is also a personal desire to know more about the writer's own people (the Nchumuru).

The study also contributes to the discussion on the general theme of mother tongue Scripture impact on Christianity's encounter with African culture narrowing in specifically on the Nchumuru situation. The mother tongue Scriptures in the Chumburung language have prepared the grounds for the Gospel to meet with Nchumuru culture. The Scriptures translated into the mother tongue is no longer alien to the Nchumuru culture. It has become part of the culture because it uses categories from that very culture.

1.2 Statement of the Problem and Research Question

There was one main problem (question) and other sub-problems (sub-questions) on the study: "Towards a model for contextualising Christianity in the Nchumuru culture in Ghana: The impact of mother tongue Scriptures from 1989-2011."

What Impact did the mother tongue Scriptures coming within Nchumuru culture make in contextualising Christianity among the Nchumuru in Ghana from 1989 to 2011?

With the following sub-problems or questions: (a) what are the traditional, religious and cultural beliefs of the Nchumuru people; where did they originate from?

(b) What strategies are used by the Chumburung Translation Project and the Church in the Nchumuru area in contextualising Christianity among the people?

(c) What have been the results so far in the use of these strategies for contextualisation of the Christian faith among the people?

1.3 Purpose/Objective(s)

The purpose of this research is to discover by exploring how the mother tongue Scriptures coming within Nchumuru culture have made an impact on Nchumuru Christianity. A conceptual model that explains the coming of Christianity and the impact that the mother tongue Scriptures have made in contextualising Christianity within Nchumuru culture was developed. The thesis was focused on the main problem or question: What has been the impact of the mother tongue Scriptures in contextualising Christianity in the Nchumuru culture in Ghana from 1989 to 2011? The impact of the mother tongue Scriptures on the people within their culture were described and examined.

The main objective of the study is to discover, by exploring, the impact the mother tongue Scriptures have made and continue to make within Nchumuru culture and how this has helped in contextualising Christianity among the Nchumuru in Ghana from 1989-2011, and how this has affected the lives of the people within that same period.

It is the writer's hope that in resolving this problem the research will help shed some light on the extent to which the mother tongue Scriptures have impacted and will continue to influence the contextualisation of Christianity among the Nchumuru of Ghana and how this has affected their lives positively.

Bible translation has allowed the transmission of Christianity in cross-cultural situations. A very serious challenge confronted the Nchumuru to make the Scriptures accessible to their people in the language of their birth. This culminated in the translation of the Bible into the mother tongue of the people. It was the challenge of responding to the Gospel in terms of rooted cultural identity and commitment. Because it's only through the translated Scriptures in the Chumburung language that the Nchumuru people can hear and respond to the Gospel meaningfully (Sanneh 2007:4).

1.4 Scope/ Limitation of Study

The research is centred basically on the Nchumuru of the Northern (Kpandai District) and Volta (Krachi East, West and Nchumuru-Krachi Districts) in the Volta Region. This brings to focus the area from Jachani and Chonko streams near Salaga in the

North West to and beyond Dambai on the Oti River in the East and South East. The Krachi form a wedge between the Northern Nchumuru and Tokroano (the Southern most town of the Nchumuru) (Brukum 1979:1). See appendix B and C, for the Nchumuru area covered in this work. The population of the Nchumuru covered in this study is about sixty-nine thousand (69,000) according to the 2004 ethnologue estimates.

The reason for giving attention to the Nchumuru in these two regions is the fact that this is the operational area of the Chumburung Translation Project. This is the spot where the Word of God is being incarnated into Nchumuru culture and frantic efforts are being made in contextualising Christianity among the people. This work has not looked at the mother tongue Scripture's impact on the Nchumuru people in the Brong Ahafo Region, because that could have broaden the scope of the research, for which the writer hadn't the resources to conduct the field interviews. However the Nchumuru in this region of Ghana have benefited from the use of the Chumburung Bible and also from Akan Christianity which has the use of the Twi Bible, because of their proximity to that area.

1.5 Significance of the Study

The thesis is significant in that it will establish that the mother tongue Scriptures have impacted Nchumuru Christianity and culture very positively. This invariably had led to changes in the religious beliefs and practices and traditional morality of the Nchumuru people. The writer will do this by exploring the impact the mother tongue Scriptures have made on Nchumuru culture, and how this has helped in contextualising Christianity among the Nchumuru in Ghana from 1989-2011. The mother tongue Scriptures give Africans and by extension the Nchumuru, the freedom to interpret the Scriptures from their own worldview. They prepare the grounds for the Gospel to meet with Nchumuru culture. For when the Scripture is translated into a mother tongue, it is no longer alien to that culture. It becomes part of the culture because translators use categories from that very culture. This has become evident in a number of language groups in Ghana including the Nchumuru.

Kwame Bediako in a lecture in 2007 at Akropong-Akuapem Ghana compared the mother tongue Scriptures to a gun in hand.⁵ So long as it is not triggered, the holder has control over the bullets. As soon as it is triggered, the holder loses control and cannot prevent it from doing what it intends to do. So is the mother tongue Scriptures in the hands of Africans. No one can underestimate what the Holy Spirit can do and is doing, with mother tongue Scriptures in many African languages. "... So is my word that goes out from my mouth: It will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purposes for which I sent it" (Isa 55:11, NIV).⁶

Here we turn to another story of a Christian writer of the 2nd century AD: Justin Martyr. Having read the translated Bible (Septuagint) in his native Greek had this to say:

"But straightway a flame was kindled in my soul; and a love of the prophets, and of those men who are friends of Christ, possessed me; and while revolving his words in my mind, I found this philosophy alone to be safe and profitable. Thus, and for this reason, I am a philosopher. Moreover, I would wish that all, making a resolution similar to my own, do not keep themselves away from the words of the Saviour. For they possess a terrible power in themselves, and are sufficient to inspire those who turn aside from the path of rectitude with awe; while the sweetest rest is afforded those who make a diligent practice of them. If, then, you have any concern for yourself, and if you are eagerly looking for salvation, and if you believe in God, you may since you are not indifferent to the matter become acquainted with the Christ of God, and, after being initiated, live a happy life" (Walls 2007:6).

In fact it was in the course of reading the mother tongue Scriptures that Justin became a Christian. His new faith in Christ was not without his past, rather he confirmed the Word of God to be the true logos (reason) in Greek philosophy.

Secondly, also it will be a model for non-mother tongue pastors and priests working among any group of people whose languages they do not speak, to endeavour to use the mother tongue in the church for teaching or preaching. Most Christians in Africa often hear the Gospel being preached or taught in another language of which they often lack good understanding. "There are undoubtedly many languages in the world," the apostle Paul observes, "and none is without meaning; but if I don't know

⁵ Professor Bediako shared this in a lecture on 'Bible in African Christianity' in 2007 at Akropong-Akuapem Ghana for SIL and graduate students in the Master of Theology (MTh) and Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) programmes. He was the late Rector of the Akrofi-Christaller Institute of Theology, Mission and Culture (ACI), Akropong-Akuapem, Ghana.

⁶ Unless otherwise indicated, all Scripture quotations are from the New International Version (NIV).

the meaning of the language, I shall be a foreigner to the speaker and the speaker a foreigner to me” (1 Cor 14:10-11). Sanneh once remarked at one of the Andrew Walls lectures at Wycliffe Centre in Horsleys Green in the United Kingdom: “Jesus was born in translation and destined for cross-cultural adoption. Now, what can be more available than to deliver God’s book unto his people in a tongue that they can understand. God’s intention is not that we misunderstand God’s Word for us” (2007:4).

By translating the Bible into any culture, it becomes that culture’s book while at the same time remaining essentially the original. Translation into any culture (even the Nchumuru culture) entailed a certain transformation, enculturation or indegenisation of biblical culture. This means that biblical culture and its dominant ideas assumed a Chumburung garb that made sense within that context and within the Nchumuru cultural and linguistic grid (Mojola 2002:1). This gives impetus to the need for contextualisation.

Each one person is a product of his or her own culture and culture in essence is a people’s way of life. The cultural background of a person is bound to affect the way the person perceives and interprets the Gospel. Walls (1996:51) affirms this when he said: “Christ in redeeming humanity brings, by the process of discipleship, all the richness of humanity’s infinitude of cultures and subcultures into the variegated splendour of the Full Grown Humanity to which the apostolic literature points (Eph. 4:8-13). This means that the influence of Christ is brought to bear on the points of reference in each group. The points of reference are the things by which people know their identity and know where, and to whom, they belong” (1996:51).

Sanneh in assessing the important role the mother tongue (language) plays, in Christianity’s encounters with different cultures have this to say: “Christianity has invested itself in the idioms and cultures that have existed for purposes other than for Christianity. For many the mother tongue became the crucible of their encounter with the Gospel with its distinctive message of grace. Christianity has invested itself in the particulars of diverse and varied humanity, not in spite of it. From this point, no culture is impermeable or alien, just as none is ultimately indispensable. To be grounded in one’s culture and to be a faithful Christian are complimentary” (2007:1).

The Gospel presented in the mother tongue of the people and with the aid of the Holy Spirit illumines the minds of God’s people in every culture to perceive the truth (of God’s revelation) freshly through their own eyes. The Word became flesh, thus

the appearance of the divine on the human scene. Therefore until the general Nchumuru worldview has been stripped of its myths, if that were possible, communication of the Gospel in any other terms except in the mother tongue (language) which they understand and know best, then any other form of communication of God's word, will not satisfy or meet their existential needs.

1.6 Research Design and Methodology

Van Manen's 1990 study (cited in Angellil-Carter 1995:33) defines the term, "methodology", as referring to the "philosophical framework, the fundamental assumptions and characteristics of a human science perspective." Guba and Lincoln (1989:183) regard methodology as ... the overall strategy for resolving the complete set of choices or options available to the inquirer. Far from being merely a matter of making selections among methods, methodology involves the writer completely - from unconscious worldview to enactment of that worldview via the inquiry process.

This study falls within the field of practical theology. Practical theology seeks to build the bridge between Biblical revelation and human contexts. It seeks to bridge the gap between orthodoxy and orthopraxy, between truth, love and obedience (Tienou and Hiebert 2005:6). The research is premised on the hypothesis that, the translated mother tongue (MT) Scriptures have impacted Chumburung Christianity and helped to contextualise Christianity among the Nchumuru people and has also given them the opportunity to interpret the Scriptures from their own worldview.

The task of this research has been to explore how the Scriptures coming within the language and culture of the Nchumuru, in the particularity of their lives has helped in transforming them, their society and their culture into what God intends for them to be through the process of contextualisation. The study contains both literary and empirical components.

In gathering information, and data for this thesis, this writer used the qualitative methods involving participant observation, interviewing, administration of structured and unstructured questionnaires and case studies to collect quality data from two hundred and fifty individuals for analysis. The writer collected large amounts of information from various respondents, mostly Christians, on the use of the mother tongue Scriptures in the churches and how that has helped in transforming the lives of the people. On another level he gathered information on how the mother tongue

Scriptures have affected the culture of the people since its introduction into that culture from traditional society, for example chiefs and traditional priests. (MacMillan and Schumacher 1993:14) observed that this method of data collection and description helps the researcher understand a social or cultural phenomenon.

As earlier on mentioned, the writer used interviews of structured, semi-structured and unstructured questions for the purpose of eliciting information for this thesis. All the respondents, including educated and uneducated people, were asked similar questions which were tape-recorded and hand written and later analysed. The interview is considered to be a research data technique carried out with the definite purpose of gathering data by means of the spoken word through the use of a planned series of questions. A special feature of the interview was the face-to-face talk with some prominent Christians, clan heads, some pioneer Bible translation project staff, chiefs and a host of other Nchumuru people. The writer interviewed a wide range of respondents from various Nchumuru communities as well as a hundred (100) different local congregation leaders and fifty (50) priests and pastors, in the traditional area who are associated with these local congregations (churches). In addition the writer interviewed also some fifty (50) traditional leaders who are conversant with Nchumuru religious and socio-cultural practices. The choice of qualitative research for this study is the result of a reflection on the nature of the problem. Face-to-face interview methods were, therefore, preferred to quantitative methods as they give intricate details of the qualitative phenomena. The writer used mostly the semi-structured interviews, seen as the richer and most useful option to collect data, reflecting on what Mouton said: "... emphasize the relativism of culture, the active participation of the interviewer, and the importance of giving the interviewee voice" (2000:196). Most of the respondents willingly shared information, since the interviews were carried out in calm environments.

The writer also used Osmer's model of doing research in Practical theology. Osmer (2006:328–330) proposes the four interrelated forms of research in Practical theology: 'descriptive-empirical', 'interpretive', 'normative' and 'pragmatic'. In using this model; descriptive-empirical research explored what is currently happening in relation to the impact of mother tongue Scriptures on African culture with specific emphasis on Christianity in Nchumuru culture and how it engages this culture. Again the writer interpreted what has been discovered. In using the normative process the writer offered guidance that is explicitly theological, drawn from the sources of

Christian truth such as Scripture, tradition, experience and reason. With the pragmatic process I constructed a model of Christian practice and 'rules of art'. The emphasis has been on the model of contextualising Christianity within the culture of the Nchumuru people of Ghana.

Practical theology should be based on a critical reflection on the church's dialogue with Christian sources and other communities of experience and interpretation with the aim of guiding its action toward social and individual transformation (Browning 1991:36). The writer devised a conceptual framework and hypotheses for further research. Then, data from existing repositories were collected and analysed.

The writer also used Dr. Michael Lim's model of research called Case Study. This is an empirical inquiry that investigated the impact of mother tongue Scriptures in Nchumuru Culture through the process of contextualising Christianity among the people, within the period of 1989 to 2011. A case study involves the development of detailed, intensive knowledge about a single "case", or a small number of related "cases." The data collection methods the writer used in the case study included interviews, observations, documentary analysis and questionnaires. The thesis is exploring a case of mother tongue Scripture impact on Nchumuru culture, through the process of contextualising Christianity among the people, hence the case study is a suitable model to use for exploratory research or challenge of existing theory.

The writer did use the focus group interviews. Schurink defines focus groups as a "purposive discussion of a topic or related topics taking place between nine to twelve people with similar background and common interests" (1998:2). It is also a method that encompasses verbal and nonverbal means of communication and the interplay of perceptions and opinions of the participants. According to Schurink (1998:2), it further enables the writer to develop new concepts and theories. Focus groups are effective in eliciting data on the cultural norms of a group and in generating broad overviews of issues of concern to the cultural groups or subgroups represented.

All data sampling took place in a friendly environment because the people were happy that they were dealing with an insider, and therefore could volunteer information without fear. This the writer think agrees with what Cresswell (1998:110) observed, sampling is the process of finding people or places to study; to gain access to study; and to establish a rapport so that participants provide relevant data. During the process of sampling, the aim is to get a sample that is as representative as possible of the target population (Mouton 1996:110). The writer took great care in

selecting participants both Christians and non-Christians so as to arrive at the best results. In qualitative research, participants are carefully selected for inclusion on the basis of the possibility that each participant will expand the variability of the sample (Maykut and Morehouse 1945:45). The writer in doing qualitative research set out to build a sample that includes a selection of people with different goals in mind. This research involved purposeful sampling which - according to Macmillan and Schumacher (1993:379) – is selecting rich cases for in-depth study.

The writer used the inductive qualitative techniques to analyse the data. Analysis consisted of multiple readings of the interview transcripts, field notes, and documentation, and the identification of activities and issues that are related to mother tongue Scripture impact on Nchumuru culture and the model of contextualisation of Christianity among the people within the period under investigation. Initial results suggest a host of elements- strategic, historical, socio-political, religious and cultural, that contribute to the impact of mother tongue Scripture on culture and in this case, Nchumuru culture.

Relevant literature on the subject under investigation has been critically consulted to determine what has already been written about the problem at stake. The literature search helped to a further refinement of the research question. The writer dwelt on the approach to research as in the field of practical theology which engaged in reflective, critical, communicative, interpretive, hermeneutical and correlational dialogue to achieve the purpose of bringing new meanings and horizons to specific contexts, especially so in this case concerning the Nchumuru of Ghana. The writer explored the current situation of mother tongue Scripture impact on culture using the available literature on the subject and how authentic that literature is, on this particular field of research, with the tested and proven methods of enquiry.

Consequently also, the data concerning the Nchumuru which the writer presents in this thesis have been collected in the course of both formal study of Nchumuru culture and through casual observation, over the ten year period the writer had lived and worked among them; but the writer regards himself a learner. This paper aims to show some of the assumptions about the transmission of Scripture, which can limit or hinder its communication in a given culture, and to examine mother tongue Scripture impact on culture with a view to demonstrating how effectively Christianity can be contextualised in that culture.

Analysing data gathered in interviews conducted and empirical evidence observed helped to give the writer a good idea of the real issue. The writer was careful to observe what Browning said: “Practical theology should be based on a critical reflection on the church’s dialogue with Christian sources and other communities of experience and interpretation with the aim of guiding its action toward social and individual transformation”(1991:36). The aim was to seek the preferred scenario of the issue at stake.

The research ended with practical suggestions for improving or assessing the situation, in this case mother tongue Scriptures’ impact on Nchumuru culture through the process of contextualisation of Christianity in that context and culture. Some issues needed some reforming, especially syncretism in Nchumuru Christianity, this had to do with interpreting the contemporary situation. The study sought to develop a theory of action to transform or improve the situation under investigation. Not all sources are equally valuable; not all opinions are of the same weight.

Finally, after the data had been gathered and the evidence examined, the writer drew conclusions regarding the solution to the problem. The research findings are as a result of such efforts and the writer is convinced this helped to give a clear view of the problem, of the information gathered, and of the solution reached. Vyhmeister (2001:2) noted that in research the writer needs to come up with and execute a transparent and straight forward method.

There is little written material available on the Nchumuru of Ghana, especially so on steps 1 and 2, so I gathered these data through empirical means. The writer also used the literary approach, analysing selected texts that have relevance to the impact of the mother tongue Scriptures on Christianity’s encounter with any given culture and more specifically on Nchumuru culture and the process of contextualisation of the Christian faith, and its implication for ministry among the people.

The writer has also been concerned here with reporting on some personal reflections; since the writer has been personally involved in the translation of the Scriptures into the Nchumuru language and also had been physically involved in engaging the Gospel with Nchumuru culture. Administration of the questionnaires

was both structured and unstructured and case studies to collect quality data. See appendix A for a sample interview guide.⁷

The field interviews were conducted within a time span of six months beginning October 2011 to March 2012, spending one week each month in the language (tribal) location. Relevant literature on the subject under investigation has been critically consulted and examined for the purpose of this research, as evidenced in the bibliography and appendices.

There were some problems that the writer came across in the cause of the study, and these included the following: collecting data has been expensive because it involved a lot of travelling. There are about 45 or more Nchumuru communities where this research has covered and going about this involved time and finances. Nonetheless, the writer persisted to gather the data to support his assertions in this thesis. Another difficulty had to do with the gathering of information, because in some areas some people returned questionnaires given to them uncompleted, citing some personal reasons whilst others gave no reasons at all. This difficulty notwithstanding, the writer is satisfied that a lot of valuable information was gathered, critically examined and analysed for the purpose of this research.

Solving the main problem will require four major steps (Smith 2008:155). First, the study will describe the significance of the study. Next, it will discuss Nchumuru Traditional Religious Beliefs and Practices: Nchumuru Primal Worldview. Then it will focus on the impact of mother tongue Scriptures on Christianity's encounter with Nchumuru culture within the period 1989-2011 through the various attempts at contextualisation of the Christian faith. The focus will be on the various attempts that have been made in the past and present by the Chumburung Translation Project and the Christian churches in the traditional area at contextualising Christianity among the people. Then, it will examine the need for churches in the Nchumuru traditional area to use the translated mother tongue Scriptures, as well as the significance of this practice to the church's mission there.

Again the study will explore changes in Traditional Religious Beliefs and Practices and Traditional Morality of the Nchumuru people through Christianity, with special reference to the impact of mother tongue scriptures. Next to be discussed is Christianity and Nchumuru Culture: A Model for contextualising Christianity in the

⁷ See appendix A for sample interview guide.

Nchumuru culture in Ghana. Finally, it will conclude with closing remarks, summary and recommendations on the way forward for priests, pastors and Christian workers to consider in contextualising Christianity among the people.

The thesis is composed of six chapters. Here is a proposed outline with intended dates of completion: (1) Introduction (May 2012). The introduction presents the background and rationale for the thesis, the problem statement and research questions, objectives of the study, significance of the study, scope/limitation of the study, research design and methodology, hypotheses, definition of terms and overview of procedure-divisions of chapters/structure of contents. (2) The Literature review which is grouped under appropriate headings and summary forms the second chapter. This contains the main sections of the study (July 2012). The study begins with an understanding of the challenge of ministering in the Nchumuru culture.

In (3) the research discusses Nchumuru Traditional Religious Beliefs and Practices: Nchumuru Primal Worldview with some aspects of the culture discussed, and their implications to preaching the Gospel among the people (September 2012). The next logical step is to document and evaluate current approaches to the challenge. (4) Transmission of Christian faith: Changes in religious beliefs and practices and traditional morality of the Nchumuru people in Ghana through Christianity, with special reference to the impact of mother tongue Scriptures form the focus of this section. Here the study focuses on the various attempts being made at contextualizing Christianity among the Nchumuru within their culture (October 2012). Thereafter, a detailed analysis of the impact of mother tongue Scriptures on Nchumuru culture in relation to preaching the Gospel is needed. (5) Christianity and Nchumuru culture: A Model for contextualising Christianity in Nchumuru culture in Ghana, forms the core of this chapter (December 2012). In the light of the data presented in chapters 2-4, the writer attempted to develop a model for engaging the Gospel with Nchumuru culture. (6) Conclusion (February 2013). The final chapter summarises the research and make suggested recommendations for pastors and church workers in Nchumuru land on how to use the mother tongue Scriptures in communicating the Gospel, so as to contextualise Christianity among the people.

1.7 Hypotheses

The translated mother tongue Scriptures will have an impact on Chumburung Christianity and this will give the Nchumuru people the opportunity to interpret the Scriptures from their own worldview.

The mother tongue Scriptures will help contextualise Christianity in the Nchumuru culture in Ghana and this will lead to the reformation of some of the traditional and cultural practices of the people.

1.8 Definitions of Terms

The operational definitions for key concepts in this study are as follows:

Mother Tongue

The general usage of the term 'mother tongue' denotes not only the language one learns from one's mother, but also the speaker's dominant and home language, that is not only the first language according to the time of acquisition, but the first with regard to its importance and the speaker's ability to master its linguistic and communicative aspects.

Mother tongue as used here in this thesis refers to the language that one first learns to speak as a child, the native or what others describe as the heart language of a person and in this study the Chumburung language. The mother tongue is not the same as a vernacular, the common language of a region or group, no matter how naturally such a language and its usage may come. Rather the mother tongue is a person's own native or indigenous language, very much intertwined with a person's identity. It is the language that confirms and affirms who a person is, where they have come from and their sense of self-worth. It is the translation of the Bible into such languages and indeed all languages (since every language is somebody's mother tongue) that I refer to as mother tongue Scriptures.

Sanneh in explaining this further had this to say: "There is no such thing as a church or a people without a language or without the Scriptures. In spite of barriers of natural and cultural separation among us, God remains a neighbour to us – a safeguard of ethical solidarity. God wooed us in the tones and actions that rocked us on our mothers' knees" (2007:3).

Christianity

Christian faith confesses Jesus Christ to be sole mediator between God and mankind (1 Tim 2:5; John 14:6). This confession has traditionally implied that there is no saving knowledge of God in non-Christian religions such as Buddhism, Islam and African traditional religion (ATR). Christianity therefore is the religion of followers of Jesus Christ who confesses Him Lord and Saviour. The word Christianity was derived from the word Christian given to the disciples in Antioch (Pisidian) (Acts 11:26). Christianity as used in this study represents the Christian faith with its message of the Gospel.

Therefore in talking about Christianity and contextualising it among the Nchumuru, the writer is referring to the contextualising of the Gospel of Jesus Christ among the Nchumuru, because Christianity is Christ as much as Christ is Christianity. On attempting a definition for the term Christianity, DF Wright contributing to the New Dictionary of Theology says: Christian faith confesses Jesus Christ to be sole mediator between God and mankind (1 Tim 2:5) (1998:135). Bray also says that Christianity is Jesus Christ in a way which is unique. There is no doubt He occupies a central place in the faith quite different from that given to the founders of other religions (1998:137).

The word Gospel in relation to Christianity as used in this thesis, in the New Testament, describes the heart of the Old Testament promises of Salvation. Secondly, it is used of the saving event of Jesus of Nazareth as the grounds of Salvation for all who believe. Thirdly, it designates the proclamation of the saving event as the means by which people are confronted with the truth about Christ. The specific content of the Gospel in the Old Testament is as the preaching of Jesus indicates (Mark 1:15), the Gospel of the coming of the Kingdom of God. The link with the Old Testament places the Gospel squarely into the realm of history: it emerges as an event, and as the proclamation of that event. Paul's references to Abraham in Galatians 3 and Romans 4 also show that the Gospel of the Kingdom comes through acts of God in the history of his people. There are two significant perspectives in the Old Testament; re-creation of a fallen world and redemption of the people of God from judgment and death. Because the Gospel concerns the work of the historical Jesus Christ as the one who fulfils the Old Testament promises (Desmond and Brain 2000: 524).

African Christianity

Ezeogu (2000) proposes that there is an African Christianity that was and there is an African Christianity that is. The former flourished geographically in the northern part of Africa in the first seven centuries of the Christian era and produced such Christian giants as Clement, Justin Martyr, Origen, Athanasius, Tertullian, St Monica and her renowned son, St Augustine. That Christianity all but disappeared in the face of the Islamic expansionism of the 7th century C.E. leaving only a remnant in the Egyptian Coptic and Ethiopian Orthodox churches. Present-day African Christianity, however, is geographically prominent within the southern two thirds continents of the world with the continent of Africa being very prominent, and is only between one and two centuries old. Mbiti identifies four different strands of African Christianity, and these are:

(1) Ancient Christianity, with a history dating back to the earliest era of Christianity, today represented by the Coptic Orthodox Church in Egypt and the Ethiopian Orthodox Church, (2) Missionary Christianity, founded between the 18th and 20th centuries by European and later American missionaries, now largely indigenous, comprising all mainline Catholic, Protestant and Evangelical confessions, (3) Independent Christianity, founded by Africans who had benefitted from, but were unsatisfied by, the teachings and practices of missionary Christianity, and who have no allegiance to any mother Christian churches outside Africa; (4) Immigrant Christianity, founded by European immigrants with no missionary interest, no interest in native African membership, but only in sustaining the vested interests of European immigrants, exemplified by the Dutch Reformed Church (1986:14).

The terrain of African Christianity is, therefore, a vast one, and it would be almost impossible to do justice to all the variety in African Christianity within the scope of this paper. This thesis will therefore turn its focus, on the strand of missionary Christianity to which I belong and on the strand of independent Christianity which is a non-negligible factor in today's African religious scenario. The growth of Christianity in Africa has been very spectacular. Africa is on record as the continent with the highest numerical Christian growth rate in the world (Barret 1982:136).

It can be seen that, the phrase 'African Christianity' does not lend itself to an easy definition. In an attempt to explain what the writer calls African Christianity the writer

wishes to say that the existence of God, who is pre-existent, omnipotent, omnipresent and omniscient is recognised by all African societies, who worship him in various ways through various intermediaries. African Christianity will therefore insist on acknowledging the basic awareness of Africans that the Almighty God exists, and that they have a legitimate concern to seek to worship him, but God has revealed how he may be more fully known and more acceptably worshipped.

This God, whom Africans worship without fully knowing, is to be revealed as the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, existing in three personalities (Father, Son and the Holy Spirit). He sent his Son Jesus Christ to die for the sins of the world, and to be the only acceptable Mediator between God and man. The death of Jesus on a cross is the only sacrifice acceptable to God and that only through faith in Him that one can genuinely become a Christian. African Christianity can be seen to formulate theological concepts in the languages of Africa. But theology itself in its essence must be left alone as revealed in Scripture.

African Christianity must apply the message of Jesus Christ to the realities of the here and now in the context of the African situation. The expression of this Christianity must not necessarily reflect that of a European or an American brand of Christianity. This brand of Christianity must be contextualised to benefit the African. Onaiyekan (2001:5) declares: "the burden of the African exegete would be to examine the word of God and apply its message to the realities of the here and now." The aim is not to change the essence of theology, but to contextualise it to benefit Africans. An authentic African Christianity will clearly show how the Christian faith can be effectively lived in Africa, expressing the faith by using categories familiar to Africans, acknowledging and affirming that which is good in the sight of God in African tradition, while condemning and advocating a change from that which is reprehensible in African culture and tradition, in favour of biblical lifestyles.

Culture

Culture is one word that we need to define carefully as much as possible if we have to prevent misunderstanding. Anthropologists and ethnologists, the experts in this field, hardly agree on a single definition. Therefore how can we researching in theology make ourselves understood when we use the term culture? One will find a number of different proposals as to how culture may be defined. One example of a

definition is that by Grunlan and Meyers: “We may define culture as learned and shared attitudes, values, and ways of behaving” (1988:39).

John Mbiti, in his lecture on ‘Christianity and African Culture’ given to the Pan African Christian Leadership Assembly in 1976, proposed the following definition:

Culture ... [is the] human pattern of life in response to man’s environment. The pattern is expressed in physical forms (such as agriculture, the arts, technology, etc) in inter-human relations (such as institutions, customs, etc), and in form of reflection on the total reality of life (such as language, philosophy, religion, spiritual values, world view, the riddle of life—birth--death, etc) (1978:273).

The 1978 consultation on Gospel and Culture held in Willowbank Bermuda by the Lausanne Committee on World Evangelism, after realising that culture is not very susceptible to a definition, had this to say:

Culture holds people together over a span of time. It is received from the past, but not by any process of natural inheritance. It has to be learned afresh by each generation. This takes place broadly by a process of absorption from the social environment, especially in the home. Culture is closely bound up with language, and is expressed in proverbs, myths, folk tales, and various art forms, which become part of the mental furniture of all members of the group. It governs actions undertaken in community—acts of worship or of general welfare; laws and the administration of law; social activities such as dances and games; smaller units of action such as clubs and societies, associations for an immense variety of common purposes.⁸

Pope John Paul II giving an address to the Members of the Pontifical Biblical Commission (26.4.79) in Paul Beauchamp et al. had this to say about culture:

...,formation of a system of contact, of a code of understanding, that is of a language; (ii) solutions given to the very first needs for humankind's survival, concerning shelter and maintenance, that is, developing of an elementary technical skill and economics; (iii) regulation of the living together of the basic human unity, man-woman, for the perpetuation of the human species; (iv) organization of a clan, race, nation, which means a regulation of social relations; (v) definition of what is good or bad, in other words, making social rules; (vi) artistic expressions of the beliefs and problematics of the individual and of society; and (vii) experience of the "Holy," of what is beyond everyday reality, through a form of religious beliefs.⁹

⁸ See <http://www.lausanne.org/en/documents/lops/73-lop-2.html>. Accessed 30th April 2012

⁹ “Address of Pope John Paul II to the Members of the Pontifical Biblical Commission (26.4.79)” in Paul Beauchamp et al., *Bible and Inculturation* (Inculturation: Working Papers on Living Faith and Cultures III) Rome: Pontifical Gregorian University, 1983, p. 143

In the Didasko files of the Lausanne Covenant of 2009 (page 44), culture is said to be: "... likened to a tapestry, intricate and often beautiful, which is woven by society to express its corporate identity. The colours and patterns are the beliefs and customs, inherited from the past, enriched by contemporary art and binding the community together."

Culture is the secondary environment men superimpose over their natural environment. Culture is the ways of thinking, willing, feeling, speaking and acting shared by a particular people group; culture is man-made, learned, integrated, and constantly changing, and is important to all considerations having to do with an understanding and communication of truth, especially of divine truth revealed in Holy Scripture. Culture is created by human beings and that all cultures reflect both the image of God inherent in mankind and the sinfulness involved in Adam's fall.

Culture as used in this thesis and by the various definitions put together, one is brought to the realisation that culture, may simply mean the collective way a people group or community responds to the multiple challenges of living.

Language

Language is basically a system for communicating information between ourselves and others. Language as used in this research is represented by what Sanneh observes:

Language was not merely a tool fashioned to achieve limited and temporary goals. It was also a dynamic cultural resource, reflecting the spirit of the people and illuminating their sense of value" (1989:165). Clement Akrofi, a Ghanaian linguist and translator also sees language as "an indispensable factor of national life; it provides the most adequate means of expressing what a people feel, thinks, and wills (Akrofi 1937: vii).

Devitt and Sterelny (1987:4) say it is also used for non-informational and social interactions. Whenever people claim to have heard God speaking to them, it has always been through a language. This presupposes that God speaks to them in known and comprehensible tongues. Language, therefore, plays a cardinal role in

communicating the Gospel. Sanneh says, "... Languages have intrinsic merit for communicating the divine message. They are worthy of God's attention" (2003:100). Languages make translation feasible and primarily serve as a vehicle for the consolidation of the *missio Dei* in a given culture. As Wright says, "There is one God at work in the universe and in human history, and ... this God has a goal, a purpose, a mission that will ultimately be accomplished by the power of God's Word and for the glory of God's name. This is the mission of the biblical God" (2006:64). *Missio Dei* here means, how the mission of God is the centerpiece of all of history, but also at how human beings are invited to participate with God on that mission.

Contextualisation

It is important to define what is meant by 'contextualisation' and how it is different from 'indigenisation'. Nicholls (1979:20-21) traces the development of contextualisation from an emphasis on the clothing of the Gospel in traditional cultural elements which facilitates its communication in a relevant way (indigenisation), to an attempt to allow the whole context, including the social and political dimensions of a culture, to influence the way in which the Gospel is expressed. Contextualisation therefore is a more radical form of indigenisation.

More radical approaches to contextualisation have theological implications which go beyond issues of culture. All practical theology is contextual theology because it involves the communication of the Gospel truth by someone with a particular context to someone else in a different context. Bevans (1994:10) notes: "Contextualisation is not something on the fringes of the theological enterprise. It is at the very center of what it means to do theology in today's world. Contextualisation, in other words, is a theological imperative."

Every context provides a lens through which human beings view reality and truth, and it thereby influences the way different people understand the Gospel as well as the way in which they express their faith. This was as true for the writers of the Gospel themselves as it is for us today. Every theology in history has been rooted in a particular context and has reflected the concerns of that context. That doesn't necessarily make it any less an expression of truth, but it does challenge us to accept that there is no privileged interpretation of the Gospel which is the exclusive possession of any one culture or Christian tradition. Hopefully the understanding of the truth will be stretched and enriched as Christians listen to other contexts.

Whiteman (1997:4) said: "Contextualisation forces us to have a wider loyalty that corresponds to an enlarged and more adequate view of God as the God of all persons, male and female, and as a God who especially hears the cry of the poor. God can no longer simply be the God of myself, my family, my community alone."

"Contextualisation" is a new term imported into theology to express a deeper concept than indigenisation does. In using it in this study, what the writer understand it to mean is making concepts or ideas relevant to Christian practices; it is an effort to express the never changing word of God in ever changing modes for relevance. Since the Gospel message is inspired but the mode of its expression is not, contextualisation of the modes of expression is not only right but necessary. The New Testament has given humanity the pattern for cultural adaptations. The incarnation itself is a form of contextualisation.

The Son of God condescended to pitch his tent among mankind so it is possible for mankind to be redeemed (John 1:14). The unapproachable Yahweh, whom no man has ever seen and lived with, has become the object of sight and touch through the incarnation (John 14:19; 1 John 1:1). The moving hymn on the humiliation and exaltation of Jesus Christ the Lord (Phil. 2:5-8) was evidently an incentive to the apostle Paul in his understanding of the Ministry to become 'all things to all men'. This in turn should motivate Christians to make the Gospel relevant in every situation everywhere, without compromising it (Kato 1985:24).

1.9 Overview of Procedure – Divisions of Chapters/ Structure of Contents

The core areas to be covered in this study include; Introduction. The introduction presents the background and rationale for the research, purpose of the study, significance of the study, research problem or question, objective of the study, scope/limitation of the study, the research methodology, hypotheses, definition of terms used in the study and overview of procedure- divisions of chapters. The Literature review contains the main sections of the study and issues discussed in the research and available literature consulted for that purpose and their relevance to the study.

Chapter three discusses Nchumuru traditional religious beliefs and practices thus Nchumuru Primal Worldview. Some aspects of the traditional religious beliefs and practices like; the concept of God, of death, of the ancestors and festivals are

discussed. The next logical step is a documentation and evaluation of current approaches to the challenge. Chapter four investigates the coming of Christianity into Nchumuru culture and the changes it brings in the religious beliefs and practices and traditional morality of the Nchumuru people in Ghana through Christianity, with special reference to the impact of mother tongue Scriptures. This chapter explores Nchumuru traditional and religious morality, the coming of Christianity into Nchumuru culture, the story of the Chumburung Translation Project, the Scripture-Engagement programme and its underlying activities and attempts at contextualisation of Christianity among the people. Here the focus of the study is on the various attempts being made at contextualising Christianity among the Nchumuru within their culture. Chapter five looks at Christianity and Nchumuru Culture: A model for contextualising Christianity in Nchumuru culture in Ghana. This chapter deals with elements of culture which the people who have become Christians may still hold onto even though may not be helpful to their Christian faith, and how Christian faith answers to these issues. The chapter discusses how Christianity is being contextualised for the positive reformation of Nchumuru culture. The position of Jesus Christ as Lord is also looked at within Nchumuru culture. This chapter in essence deals seriously with issues of engagement, and how the Nchumuru Christian develops a new identity as a Chumburung and also as a Christian, devoid of any conflicts between Christianity and culture. The future of Christianity among the Nchumuru is also discussed. This is to afford the Nchumuru Christian the opportunity to appreciate his or her culture and also how Christian faith answers to that culture through the mother tongue Scriptures.

Finally chapter six forms the conclusion: thus concluding remarks, summary and recommendations; a summary of the research and suggested recommendations for pastors and church workers in Nchumuru land on the need to contextualise Christianity among the people by exploring the impact of the mother tongue scriptures. Thus, making the Christian faith feel at home and belong well within the culture of the Nchumuru, as illuminator and interpreter of Nchumuru culture and also on how to use the mother tongue Scriptures in communicating the Gospel.

1.10 Conclusion

In conclusion the writer submits that the importance of the Pentecost events of Acts chapter 2 has more to do than just the resolution to the confusion of Babel. Bediako

says: “The significance of Pentecost therefore has to do with more than answering to the chaos of Babel and restoring harmony between God and humanity and between human beings. Its deepest significance is that God speaks to men and women always in the vernacular.¹⁰ Divine communication is never in a sacred, esoteric, hermetic language; rather it is such that all of us hear ... in our own languages ... the wonders of God!” (1995:60). Bediako’s observation gives impetus to the fact that God has always spoken to people in the languages they understand and know best. Therefore the mother tongue Scriptures are significant tools in the transmission of Christian faith and its appropriation.

Christianity unlike Islam rejects the notion of a special, sacred language for its Scriptures; accordingly, the Christian faith is translatable in any and every given culture because Christ was translated into humanity in the incarnation. The important impact of the translated mother tongue Scriptures is overwhelmingly evident in African Christianity. The role of these mother tongue translations of the Christian Scriptures in the growth of organized Christianity in African is clearly evident and significant. The mother tongue Scriptures have helped in the planting of Christianity in Africa at different stages, they have direct connection to the expansion of Christianity in a number of places in Africa. These Scriptures are responsible for the strong and mature churches which are now visible in most parts of the continent. In Africa, the continent of language and languages, the significance of this has been far reaching. The important place of Scripture translation and its priority in missionary work is an indication that God does not despise the African and that he speaks their languages. This means that African cultures including their languages are resources God uses to reveal himself to the people. This shows that the God of the Bible came ahead of the missionaries to the mission fields.

It is hoped that with this modest beginning, future researchers on the state of Christianity among the Nchumuru and the impact of mother tongue Scriptures in contextualising Christianity among the Nchumuru in Ghana will get a foundation to build on. The next chapter reviews the various literature consulted for the purpose of this research.

¹⁰ The vernacular language is the mother tongue language of any people, otherwise known as the native language of a person.

Chapter Two

Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

NJK Brukum, a Ghanaian historian is one of the earliest Nchumuru to produce a history of the people in Ghana. His work, "A Brief History of the Nchumuru people" (1979) is informative, though has nothing to say on Scripture impact on culture, especially on mother tongue Scripture impact on culture. For instance, Lumsden (1979) in his study "Some Reflections on Restudying the Nchumuru of Krachi District," provides us with invaluable insight by situating the Nchumuru people in the political and social history of Ghana. In a similar vein EK Agorsah's *Internal Spatial Organisation of Traditional Houses of the Northern Volta Basin of Ghana* (1986) is a study that shed light on the traditional institutions of the Nchumuru and others in the northern Volta basin of Ghana and how their traditional chieftaincies are organised. These earlier works cited above ignore the contribution of the impact of mother tongue Scriptures to Christian mission among the Nchumuru in Ghana and rather concentrate on other social-cultural issues.

However their works motivate one, to look at how this people with such rich, complex, and highly developed culture encountered Christianity and even accepted it. A significant work on the contribution of Bible translation in African Christian mission to the transformation of African societies is that of Sanneh, a renowned church historian and the D. Willis James Professor of Missions and World Christianity at Yale Divinity School. Writing on the topic, "Gospel and Culture: Ramifying Effects of Scripture Translation" (1990:16-17), Sanneh noted that vernacular translations of the Bible began with the adoption of indigenous terms, concepts, customs and idioms for the central categories of Christianity. Scripture in the mother tongue seems to have had some ramifying effects on the spiritual and socio-cultural lives of the Nchumuru people. Sanneh's observations and conclusions are applied to this study in examining the impact of the mother tongue Scriptures in contextualising Christianity among the Nchumuru of Ghana and the effects that has had on the people. Bediako (1995:60) expresses aptly that the ability for one to hear the Gospel in one's mother tongue and to respond to it in one's own mother tongue should be at the focus of the Gospel preaching to all people of varied cultures. This means that the Gospel message is best understood by individuals in their native

tongues. This is usually the case because God has always chosen to let the people he has created himself understand his divine purpose for them, through his self revelation in Christ Jesus.

Peter Baker's *Peoples, Languages and Religion in Northern Ghana*, (1986) is the earliest attempt to acknowledge the impact Christianity had on the Nchumuru people. This work has helped somewhat to fill the wide gap in knowledge of the contribution of religion to the making of societies. The work is basically a survey of all the peoples of Northern Ghana. Consequently it does not deal comprehensively with all aspects of Nchumuru society including the impact of mother tongue Scriptures on the lives of the people.

Apart from the above a lot of literature on the impact of mother tongue Scriptures in contextualising Christianity in African culture was retrieved from books, theses, journals, online sources and other times from libraries. The following materials have been useful: (Walls 1996:25-45; 2002:29), (Bediako 2000:51, 81-82; 1995:60), (Quarshie 2002:4), (Mojola 2002:1-6), (Sanneh 1983:166; 1989:34; 2009:60, 97-99), (Harriet 2006:2), (Shaw 2000:125) and (Egbunu 2008:25-46). Their research focus was quite general and made no single submission on the Nchumuru of Ghana. This thesis captures not only a general introduction to Scripture impact on African culture. It also looks at how the mother tongue Scriptures coming within Nchumuru culture has helped to transform the lives of the people to the glory of God and how in contextualising the Gospel within this culture the people's lives would be further enhanced. The review proceeds in looking immediately to the main question of this research. This question is, what impact did the mother tongue Scriptures coming within Nchumuru culture make in contextualising Christianity among the Nchumuru in Ghana from 1989 to 2011? This approach seems necessary because very little studies were found that address issues specifically related to Scripture impact on the Nchumuru culture in Ghana. Available literature in this area is quite negligible.

With the general growth of works on Scripture impact on culture in the field of academic theology, it is hardly surprising that the relationship between Scripture and culture has attracted considerable attention in recent years. In an attempt to explore the impact of mother tongue Scripture in Nchumuru culture, assumptions about how it is difficult for people of primal religious background to come to faith in Christ, must give way for adequate research into the contribution of primal religions to Christian faith. While adequate research has focused on Scripture impact on culture, others

have focused only on the impact of Bible translation on culture. However not much has been written on the subject of the mother tongue Scriptures' impact on culture, especially on a particular Ghanaian, this the writer intends to research among the Nchumuru in Ghana.

2.2 Christianity Defined

Christianity starts with God's initiative in revealing himself to humans, his own estranged creatures, with a view to establishing a reconciled relationship with as many as would respond appropriately to his overtures. Christianity is essentially relational. It leads to community. The community of the godhead draws into itself appropriately transformed humans who enter into relationship, not only with the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, but also with one another. As this community works out its response to the many challenges of living, what that looks like will be shaped by the characteristics of this community. If culture is a community's response to the many challenges of living, then the divine dimension inevitably modifies or transforms the way "born again" people respond.

The word as used in this study represents the worship of a person who is Jesus Christ. Bray says that Jesus occupies a central place in the faith quite different from that given to the founders of other religions (1998:137). It is in Christianity that mankind has the message concerning Christ, also called the Gospel. On attempting a definition for the term Gospel, DF Wright contributing to the New Dictionary of Theology says: Christianity confesses Jesus Christ to be sole mediator between God and mankind (1 Tim 2:5; John 14:6). Alexander and Rosner (2000:524) note thus:

The specific content of the Gospel, in the Old Testament, is as the preaching of Jesus indicates (Mark 1:15), the Gospel of the coming of the Kingdom of God. The link with the Old Testament places the Gospel squarely into the realm of history: it emerges as an event, and as the proclamation of that event. Paul's references to Abraham in Galatians 3 and Romans 4 also show that the Gospel of the Kingdom comes through acts of God in the history of his people. There are two significant perspectives in the Old Testament; re-creation of a fallen world and redemption of the people of God from judgment and death. Because the Gospel concerns the work of the historical Jesus Christ as the one who fulfils the Old Testament promises.

The word Gospel in relation to Christianity is used in the New Testament to describe the heart of the Old Testament promises of Salvation. Secondly, it is used of the saving event of Jesus of Nazareth as the grounds of Salvation for all who believe. Thirdly, it designates the proclamation of the saving event as the means by which people are confronted with the truth about Christ. Finally, it is the name applied by the early church to the distinct literary genre, found in the New Testament by which the story of Jesus is told and preserved for posterity. For the purpose of this research, the writer's attention is focused on the first two explanations given to the word Gospel as it relates to Christianity as used in this study.

2.3 Traditional Religious Beliefs and Practices: Nchumuru Primal Worldview

Whiteman in his work: "Bible Translation and Social and Cultural Development," in Stine, Philip C. (ed.), page 120 takes a cue from words like 'primordial', 'primeval' and 'primary' and suggests that the term 'primal' can be an acceptable description of pre-Christian religious traditions of people. According to him, the word 'primal' suggests two ideas. Firstly, these religious systems are in fact the most basic or fundamental religious forms in the overall religious history of humanity. Secondly, they have preceded and contributed to the other great religious systems. They are both primary and prior and represent a common religious heritage of humanity. Turner (1977:27) has drawn attention to the religions of the so-called 'primitive' societies that were hitherto forgotten and has noted that paradoxically; the adherents of these religions have rather made the greatest response to Christianity.

Gillian Bediako writing on "Primal Religion and Christian Faith" in the *Journal of African Christian Thought* volume 3 number 1 of June 2000 on page 12 also uses 'primal' as a positive term that denotes anteriority. Parrinder (1961:7) however draws attention to his studies in the religious thoughts and practices of various West African peoples, especially of Ghana and Nigeria. Parrinder qualifies West African polytheism by noting the concept of a single principal deity. This spirit, however, is considered remote. This deity is not usually approached directly. Instead, prayers and offerings are directed to lesser gods who are seen to be powerful spirits. The concepts and practices considered by Parrinder offer fascinating insights into West African theology. Parrinder explains in his main thesis to his research on "West

African Religion” that the term 'primitive' as applied to the religion of the Africans is most inaccurate. He adds that 'primitive religion' means either religion as it appeared in its earliest forms among mankind or religion that has remained in the lowliest stages even in the modern times. He says; “Neither of these is true of the West African groups that we have selected for study.”

Primal religions are prior to all other religious traditions and underlie them. Primal also means basal or elemental, the fundamental substratum to all subsequent religious experience, continuing to varying degrees in all later religious traditions. Primal means, therefore, universal, basic elements of human understanding of the Transcendent and the world, essential and valid religious insights that may be built upon or suppressed, but not superseded? The term, 'primal' has therefore been used in this study to describe the pre-Christian religious beliefs and practices of the Nchumuru people.

2.4 Transmission of Christian Faith: Changes in religious beliefs and practices and traditional morality of the Nchumuru people in Ghana through Christianity, with special reference to the impact of mother tongue Scriptures

For many years the Nchumuru people heard God's word not in their own language but in Asante-Twi, which had become the 'Latin' of the Church for them. Through the translation of the Bible, first the New Testament and finally the complete Bible, they are now hearing and responding to God's word in their own mother tongue. This thesis aims to test the comments that Bediako (1995:62) has made about the religious impact of mother tongue Scripture and ascertain how far the mother tongue Scriptures has helped the Nchumuru to experience such authentic religious encounter.

Writing on the theme, "The Translation Principle in Christian History," Walls (2000:29) locates the theological significance of mother tongue Bible translation in the incarnation of Jesus. He sees incarnation as translation because God in Jesus Christ became man. This is the one activity in Scripture when divinity was translated into humanity, as if humanity were a receptor language. He explains further that the incarnation took place in the terms of a specific context, so translation uses the terms and relationships of a specific context.

Mother tongue Bible translation aims at releasing the Word about Christ so that it can reach all aspects of a specific linguistic and cultural context, in the persons of his followers as thoroughly at home as he once did in the culture of first century Jewish Palestine. It is over two decades now, the New Testament has been used in churches and communities by the Nchumuru people and the complete Bible two years ago and more than ten thousand Nchumuru have joined the membership of churches in the traditional area.¹¹ Programmes in Scripture Engagement in both print and non-print media are going on to encourage the use of the Chumburung Bible. How have all these developments impacted the socio-cultural and spiritual lives of the Nchumuru? Has the presence of Christ been felt in Nchumuru land? This research seeks to find answers to these and other questions.

Bediako, writing in Stinton (2010:13) on the topic: Biblical Exegesis in Africa: the significance of the translated Scriptures noted about the mother tongue Scriptures thus: He explains that the importance of that first encounter for Christianity lies in the fact that it was that process of propagating the message about God and his mission for the world that the Christian Scriptures were produced. Although Christianity emerged out of Judaism, early Christians first read and studied the Scriptures in the Greek language, in what is known as the Septuagint that is the Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible. Theology of the early Church was developed base on the Septuagint.

Walls (1996:35) in agreeing with Bediako points out that the effect of the Septuagint, as the first pre-Christian translation, was crucial for the development of indigenous Hellenistic Christianity and its impact on the people in providing direction for many of them in their encounter with the Christian faith. This calls for a careful consideration of the relevant use of the translated Scriptures in the mother tongue. The writer will explore how the Scriptures in the mother tongue is being used in the churches in the Nchumuru area in all its available forms and how this has affected the lives of the people.

Hill (2006:2) contributing an article on the theme: "The Vernacular Treasure: a century of mother-tongue Bible translation" in the *International Bulletin of Missionary Research*, volume 30, number 2, page 2 submits that the need for people to have God's word in their mother tongue has been recognised throughout church history.

¹¹ Information provided by the Chumburung Jesus Film Project team leader, Evans Demuyakor based on statistics of Nchumuru converts to Christianity, as a result of watching the film in various Nchumuru communities.

However it must be noted that times of increased emphasis on mother tongue Scriptures, such as the Reformation, often correlate with times of church growth. Times when the mother tongue Scriptures were neglected in the communication of the Gospel, such as the early Middle Ages in Europe, often correlate with times of spiritual stagnation. Churches that experienced persecution and isolation from the rest of the Christian world, such as those in Madagascar and China, have often endured and even multiplied if they had Scriptures in local languages. In contrast, churches without Scripture in local languages, even those at centres of Christianity like Alexandria, have disappeared from the map. This, the writer intends to discover among the Nchumuru.

Sanneh (2009) in this revised, compelling, and thought-provoking study of Christian missions and biblical translation (1st ed., 1989) propounds the thesis that Christianity, in keeping with its Jewish roots by proclaiming a universal God, nevertheless understood the need to embrace cultural specificity in each historical manifestation of the religion. He provides a myriad of examples throughout the history of Christian missions, with Africa as the main focus. As it shed its Jewish framework and encountered Gentile cultures, Christianity realised (often grudgingly) that cultural bias (chauvinism) was a hindrance to the Christian mission and that success was predicated on translatability into the vernacular of recipient cultures. Sanneh indicates that missionary promotion of the vernacular played a vital role in preserving the languages and cultures of many of the people groups encountered, allowing the Gospel to take root and be transformed within its particular context. The resulting indigenisation of the Gospel was central for the establishment of independent, self-propagating churches and the awakening of ethnic nationalism. This thesis aims to explore the claims of Sanneh and how his claims affect the Church in Nchumuru land with the Scriptures in the people's language and culture.

Bediako (2000) in agreeing with Sanneh (1983:166) argues that in relation to Africa, Scripture translation made vernacular¹² languages divine vehicles in transmitting God's word to peoples of varied cultures in more meaningful ways. Sanneh, citing Rhodes and Lupas (1997:34) and making reference to the translators of the King James Bible, noted that the translators wrote at the preface thus: "...the apostle Paul intended to include all languages and to accept none, not Hebrew the ancient text,

¹² Vernacular as used in this work means the standard native language of a locality or the language native to a region, country or place.

not Greek the most copious, not Latin the finest.” They might all be wonderful languages, but no man is superior to another. So they say to the Zulu, “your language is as worthy of God’s attention as any other languages of the world.” This empowers people.

Walls (2002:29) elucidates this further by noting the important place of Scripture translation and the impact that the translated Scriptures bring to bear on culture. He said Christian faith as it is will necessarily go on being translated into different world cultures just as Christ was translated from divinity into humanity. If this fails to happen Christianity stands the danger of withering away. By this it is clear that if the Scriptures will have any impact on a given culture, those who live in that culture must have the word of God in their native language. It is through this process that the Scriptures will impact that culture positively and bring about transformation. Quarshie (2002:4) however citing Pobee, says the logos (Word) of God (John1:1-18), into any culture may happen without the Bible, but whether Jesus will be welcome, feel at home and stay or remain in the culture, will depend upon whether the Bible is also introduced, is also born into that culture, and this means the translation of the Bible into the language of the culture, of which it is an embodiment. What this means is that the Scriptures in the mother tongue make the recipient culture see Christianity and the Scriptures as theirs, something that belongs to them, which they can call their own.

Gilles Gravelle (2010:14) observed that the ultimate goal of mission is to make Christ live in new languages and cultures. He thinks this is possible only through Bible translation. However the writer wishes to state that this is only an activity that helps achieve that aim. Quarshie’s (2002:8) however submits that Africans, who studied the Scriptures that were produced in the mother tongues during the missionary era, were emboldened to evaluate Christian ideas for themselves. Knowledge of the Scriptures in the mother tongue made it possible for those Africans to question or reject some ‘views’ of missionaries which were not biblical. The mother tongue Scriptures has the ability to transform the mother tongue learner who takes a key interest in studying it, that the use of those Scriptures becomes fully located in the consciousness of the native language and is, through that means, given effect and made relevant. After this the writer observes that the next stage in this process is contextualisation when the people come face to face with the implications of being a true Christian and living your Christian life in culturally relevant ways. Here one

discovers that Christ is the one who holds the universe in balance, providing ultimate peace and delivering people from evil. As the writer has argued, this will become possible, if only they (people) have access to the Scriptures in their mother tongue. It is at this point that it seems, the Gospel has completed its migration into a nation of people or people group. Hence the impact of the mother tongue Scriptures on Nchumuru culture in Ghana is a project worth undertaking.

Kato (1985:12) in throwing light on this said that Africans need to formulate theological concepts in the languages of Africa without doing injury to theology. In agreement, Onaiyekan declares (2001:5) that the African exegete need to examine the word of God and apply its message to cultural relevant situations. The aim is not to change the essence of theology, but to contextualise it to benefit Africans. This means that the Gospel preacher needs to understand the African context in seeking to preach it in Africa for maximum impact. This clearly shows the marked impact of the Scriptures in the mother tongue on those individuals. This study therefore will investigate that.

2.5 Christianity and Culture: A model for contextualising Christianity in the Nchumuru culture in Ghana

Gillian Bediako (1997) explored the legacy of Robertson Smith and his heritage. This important study of the published and unpublished writings of Scotland's most brilliant and controversial nineteenth-century theologian focuses on his concern to situate biblical religion within the context of the primal religions of Israel's neighbours. The book explores the implications of the relationship between Christian faith and primal religion. Robertson Smith has still a contribution to make to contemporary discussion of the phenomenology of the Christian faith and Christian responses to religious pluralism. Bediako (1997:15-16) concluded there are positive affinities between primal religion and Christianity.

She also notes that John V. Taylor explored these affinities from the perspective of how Christianity may be shown to answer directly to the religious needs and aspirations of the people of primal religious backgrounds and how this interaction produces fresh insights into the meaning of Christianity. However Bediako (2000)

citing Turner (1977:37) on the other hand, said that Turner observed that people of primal religions have made the greatest response' to Christianity. According to him there seem to be affinities between Christianity and primal traditions, an affinity that sometimes appears in the common reactions when Christian missions first arrived in Africa. Christianity and its possible affinities with primal religions could have vital importance to our understanding of the nature of Christianity itself. This observation by Turner challenges Christians and the Church in Nchumuru land to make Christianity more relevant to the people by contextualising it in the culture of the people. These claims are what this writer will try to explore.

In reflecting on the important place of language which invariably is part of culture, the late Ghanaian theologian Bediako (2002:1-6) questions, "How can we minister the Gospel effectively if we are not equipped to reflect theologically in the languages in which we pray and dream?" This presupposes that theological reflection must be done in the language and culture of the people we seek to evangelise. The Peruvian missiologist Escobar (2003:21) however premises his research on the assumption that genuine appropriation of the Christian Gospel must be done keeping the context of the Bible and that of the target audience in mind. He said that Scripture has meaning sufficiently only in the context of the original audience and how that is applied to the receptor culture. This is the only way that the eternal message of the Scriptures will have meaning in the receptor culture.

Kato (1985:29) remarks in his book *Biblical Christianity in African Perspective* thus:

Christianity stands to judge every culture, destroying elements that are incompatible with the Word of God, employing compatible modes of expression for its advance, and bringing new life to its adherents, the qualitative life that begins at the moment of conversion and culminate eternally with the imminent return of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Kato's submission is quite lucid and helps to see why it is necessary to contextualise the Gospel in any given culture because Christianity itself was born in culture and in more specific terms within Jewish culture. Looking at Kato's submission, this thesis will also explore how Christianity will offer judgment to Nchumuru culture by way of transforming it to the glory of God.

Bediako (2000:51) again affirmed through his research, the important role the African's past play in her present manifestation of the Christian faith by saying:

For theological consciousness presupposes religious tradition, and tradition requires memory, and memory is integral to identity: without memory we have no past, and if we have no past, we lose our identity.

It is clear from the foregoing that the African cultural past has a role to play now that majority of African people have submitted their lives to Christ. In researching this situation among the Nchumuru people of Ghana, it will require that the people preaching the Gospel may need to have the right mindset towards contextualising the message within the culture of the people. The writer wishes to submit following the above that a complete break with the past of the people will create a Christianity which will be cultureless and unauthentic, and the people will suffer identity crisis. After all Jesus was born in culture and responded to that culture during his earthly ministry. Contextualising appropriately the Gospel of Jesus Christ in any given culture will ultimately lead to true Christian confession and lifestyle by the people in that culture.

Idowu (1962:5) in his work noted about the Yoruba, which is also true of the Nchumuru, he said: "In all things they are religious." This raises great possibilities for communicating the Gospel to the African because Christianity which has the Bible as its Scriptures appeals in many ways to the African worldview, especially the Old Testament, which in many addresses what is implied in the African concept of God (1962:5). This means that at many points the Christian concept of God agrees with the African concept, such as in the idea of God's sovereignty and omnipresence. This blends well with the Nchumuru situation and a positive element in the contextualisation efforts of the Gospel with Nchumuru culture. However Bediako (1999:269) in reviewing Idowu's theological prepositions observed that for Idowu (1965:433) he discovered one serious error of the Church's communication of the Gospel in Africa when he said:

It was a serious mistake that the Church took no account of the indigenous beliefs and customs of Africa when she began her work of evangelisation. It is now obvious that by a misguided purpose, a completely new God who had had nothing to do with the past of Africa was introduced to her peoples. Thus there was no proper foundation laid for the Gospel message in the heart of people and no bridge built between the old and new; the Church has in consequence been speaking to Africans in strange tongues because there was no adequate communication (Idowu 1965:433).

This in the writer's understanding presupposes the important place of culture in communicating the Gospel. The writer wishes to submit that there is the need for the Gospel preachers to give proper attention to the traditional practices and customs of any people group, especially using the indigenous languages, in the communication of the Gospel. This will in the long run affect the culture positively and in the end Christianity will grow and take shape in that culture, but which neglect will lead otherwise. This the writer will explore among the Nchumuru.

Walls (1978:11-13) contributing further, makes a very important assertion concerning the contribution of primal religions to the receptability and sustainability of the Gospel within a culture. He remarks that throughout the history of the Church so far, the overwhelming majority of new Christians have come from primal religions. Christianity is also a generational process, an ongoing dialogue with cultures. Sanneh (2009:106) on the other hand in submitting his claims on the important place of African culture to the process of contextualising Christianity mentioned that Christianity has invested itself in the idioms and cultures that have existed for purposes other than for Christianity. Sanneh (2009:56-57) continuing, identified how translation contributed to the contextualisation efforts of the Gospel in any given culture. He said:

Translatability gives pluralism a concrete indigenous expression. ... That Christians undertook translation of their Scriptures had important implications for cultural equality and diversity. The study of mission and of the institutional church would be pointless without the cultural appropriation Bible translation made possible.

The writer cannot agree more to this for it is clear that contextualisation becomes the more possible when the Scriptures are translated into the receptor culture. When the Scriptures are born into any culture, the process of contextualisation has begun. It is from this point that the process needs to be firmed up. This reflection gives this study a tacit endorsement and it is worth pursuing.

Walls (1996:47) affirms the importance of the mother tongue Scriptures when he said the Word of God can be spoken in any language under heaven. The divine Son did not become humanity in general, but specific man in a specific place and culture; so Jesus is made as it were flesh again from one culture to another as Jesus is received by faith. So also with the Scriptures; there is no such thing as language in

general for its communication. The message must be delivered in a particular language, the language the people know best and speak; as Sanneh puts it the language that 'rocks us on our mother's knees.' Therefore for the process of translation of the Word of God into human life which constitutes Christian living, there is no generalised human condition and therefore no single Christian expression. The Word has to be translated in terms of specific segments of social reality. Christianity, then according to Walls thrives on the truth that God in Christ translated himself into humanity and this gives tacit endorsement to successive acts of translation into the varied cultures and social experiences and relationships of the world's cultures (1996:47). The place of language and culture in contextualising Christianity among any given group of people is very relevant, because it is in that language and culture the people rally around. Edwin Smith once spoke of 'the shrine of a people's soul' (Smith 1929). He was thinking especially of language, and language is undeniably a major factor in what belongs to a people. But the shrine of a people's soul contains more than language, considered simply as verbal communication. Within the shrine lie that people's history, its traditions, and its corpus of recognised literature (oral or written) (Walls 1996:51). By translating the Bible into the mother tongue of a people what it means is that, that people group have been opened up for discipleship, this, Walls (1996:51) calls the commanding heights of a nation's or people's life. These have been opened to the influence of Christ; for Christ has been introduced to those people for the sole aim of redeeming them in their entire existence to Himself.

Conversion to Christ does not isolate the individual from his or her community but rather begins the conversion of that community and invariably the culture of the people. This will mean that the influence of Christ is brought to bear on the points of reference of the people; the points of reference are the things by which the people know their identity and know where, and to whom, they belong. Christ enters into that culture's thought, patterns of relationship within the culture, the way the society hangs together and the way decisions are made.

Sanneh's (2009:110) study provides an understanding of fact that the Bible as translated Scripture endowed Christianity with its special intercultural mission. The critical relationship between the Gospel and the language of primary identity confronted people in sixteenth century England with the challenge to make the Bible accessible; this same challenge confronted the Nchumuru people in Ghana forty

years ago when they sought to have the word of God in their native tongue. It was the challenge of responding to the Gospel in terms of rooted cultural identity and commitment. It's only through familiar idiom that people can hear and respond to the Gospel. This study therefore becomes very relevant and necessary. The mother tongue Scriptures can bring a change to any people and their culture by the influence it exerts on the people by making the message of the Saviour so comprehensible that they can understand him and accept him as Lord and Saviour of their lives, in the midst of their culture. Having the word of God in the mother tongue of any people group begins the process of contextualisation.

Nigerian theologian Egbunu (2008:25-46) observes the important role the Scriptures in the mother tongue play in the Gospel's encounter with African culture in contextualising the former in its engagement with that culture, when he said:

"The indigenizing principle ensures that each community recognizes in Scripture that God is speaking to its own situation" (2008:26).

This engagement produces fresh insights into an understanding of the Christian faith and what God in Christ intends for His people. In writing the introduction to Bishop John V Taylor's book *Christian Presence and African Religion*, Dr Mugambi of the University of Nairobi (Kenya) highlights a challenge posed by a senior Christian medical practitioner which reads: He pleaded for a kind of Christianity which takes on the African worldview and deal with constructively, as a strong foundation for an authentically African Christian ethic (Taylor 2001: xix). This challenge can be met if only the Church engages with local cultures head on and this will call for contextualising the Gospel message. Thus the Gospel will address the issues of culture relevantly and in their right perspective. The Scriptures in the mother tongue will serve adequately in this situation. The writer hopes to discover how the Gospel has addressed issues of culture relevantly among the Nchumuru people in Ghana.

Diane (2011:5) in *African Theology on the Way* has observed that the necessity of contextualisation of the Gospel message will call for the notion of the incarnation: 'the Word became flesh and dwelt among us' (John 1:14). What this means is that for theology to be authentic, no aspect of our humanity may be excluded from the focus of its reflection. The Scriptures show a variety of ways by which people encounter God. The Scriptures in the mother tongue will give people the needed space to engage with it, and this will call for contextualising of the living Word with local cultures.

Hesselgrave (1991:115) submits the very important nature of the need for one to study and acquire knowledge of a given culture before communicating the Gospel in that culture when he said:

It's important therefore, that they have a biblical view not only of Christ but also of culture. They must recognise that every culture has some elements of divine order and satanic rebellion; each has potential for the revelation of God's truth and its concealment or mutilation.

Hesselgrave's findings challenge earlier views of some Westerner anthropologists who saw everything in African religion as demonic. What is obvious is that there are some positives in African culture and in essence, all world cultures have some positives to contribute to the process of contextualising Christianity in any culture that the Gospel confronts.

Hesselgrave (1991:117) continues that as a result of the fall every human culture got corrupted, therefore cultures must receive the light of Christ if they are to reform in ways that are pleasing to the Lord. He says:

The Fall did not result in the eradication of the Imago Dei in the creature nor in the countermanding of all cultural prerogatives. But it did interpose another and a false authority over mankind and it did mar humans and their productions. Only under Christ can man be redeemed and our cultures renewed.

On the other hand Mbiti (1979:90) observes the important place of the Bible in any Gospel encounter with culture when he said:

Nothing can substitute for the Bible. However much African cultural-religious background may be close to the biblical world we have to guard against references like 'the hitherto unwritten African Old Testament' or sentiments that may see final revelation of God in the African religious heritage.

This presupposes that all cultures are corrupted, including Nchumuru culture, hence the need to engage the Gospel of Christ with Nchumuru culture.

The Scriptures in the people's language becomes useful resources in that dimension, hence the need to contextualise appropriately within the culture. It is the Word of God in the heart language of any people that can communicate the message about Christ relevantly to them with maximum impact. It follows from the above that the Scriptures alone gives mankind a clear definition of who they are, because the Bible alone tells us how we were created and who created us. The

Scriptures existed before any world culture. Therefore in this encounter it is the Scriptures which become the reference point. This study will explore how the Nchumuru people view the Scriptures in relation to the above submission.

By this observation it is clear that contextualisation is an important and valuable process, necessary to the communication of the Gospel. But culturally, contextualised Christianity is always a reflection of a much deeper universal reality. The word of God coming alive in Nchumuru language and culture brings God's salvation history home to the people in their context and situation so they can see him, feel him, touch him and become his people. This also the writer intends to explore.

2.6 Conclusion

This study, "Towards a Model of Contextualising Christianity in the Nchumuru Culture in Ghana: The impact of mother tongue Scriptures from 1989-2011," provides a concrete context to assess the important place of this thesis. The literature search suggests that the information available on Scripture impact on culture abound but not a single article on Scripture impact on Nchumuru culture was found. However, there is a wealth of personal experiences of people regarding Scripture impact on their lives in the Nchumuru area, which this study will examine. This study will contribute to the research discussion on the general theme of Scripture impact on African culture, but specifically focused on the mother tongue Scriptures' impact in Nchumuru culture in Ghana.

The next chapter will explore the traditional religious beliefs and practices of the people, thus Nchumuru Primal Worldview. This is necessary because we cannot adequately understand the Nchumuru people apart of their religious and social-cultural background.

CHAPTER THREE

Traditional Religious Beliefs and Practices: Nchumuru primal worldview

3.1 Introduction

Religion is a fundamental, perhaps the most important, influence in the life of most Africans; yet its essential principles are too often unknown to foreigners who thus make themselves constantly liable to misunderstand the 'African beliefs and practices.' Religion enters into every aspect of the life of the African and it cannot be studied in isolation. Its study has to go hand-in-hand with the study of the people who practise the religion.

When we speak of Nchumuru Traditional Religion, we mean the indigenous religious beliefs and practices of the Nchumuru people. It is the religion which resulted from the sustaining faith held by the forebears of the present Nchumuru, and which is being practised today in various forms and various shades and intensities by a number of Nchumuru, including even sometimes individuals who claim to be Christians. This is a religion that is based mainly on oral transmission. It is not written on paper but in peoples' hearts, minds, oral history, rituals, shrines and religious functions (Awolalu 1976:2). According to Idowu (1973:87) before Africa had foreign investigators to give the world an idea of what the religious beliefs of the Africans looked like, there were theorists who have never been in Africa but who regarded it as the "Dark Continent" where people had no idea of God and where the Devil in all his abysmal, grotesque and forbidden features, armed to the teeth and with horns, held complete sway over the people.

We need to explain the word "traditional". According to Awolalu (1976:1) the word 'traditional' means indigenous, that which is foundational, handed down from generation to generation, upheld and practised by most Africans. This is a heritage from the past, but treated not as a thing of the past but as that which connects the past with the present and the present with eternity. This is not a dead religion. It is a religion that is practised by living men and women. According to Nana Obrimpong Kanya II; through modern changes, and the coming of Christianity to the Nchumuru people, the traditional religion cannot remain intact but it is by no means extinct. The declared adherents of the indigenous religion are very passionate about their faith.

They cherish their tradition; they worship with sincerity because their worship is quite meaningful to them; they hold tenaciously to their covenant that binds them together. The sense of community and humane living are highly cherished values of Nchumuru traditional religious life.¹³ For the traditional Nchumuru, the community is basically sacred, rather than secular, and surrounded by several religious forms and symbols. A visitor to Nchumuru land will soon discover by the frequent use of the first person plural 'we' and 'ours' in everyday speech.

The Nchumuru believe in the existence of a High God, whom they call *Wuribware*. The name *Wuribware* as used by the Nchumuru; Nana Otchere says is associated with goodness which literally translates 'good Chief'.¹⁴ He is the creator of the world and everything in it. Life for the Nchumuru is defined by the supernatural. Schmidt, for example, in affirming the African's knowledge of God in Pritchard (1965:103), before the advent of Christianity maintains:

...the belief in, and worship of, one supreme deity is universal among all really primitive peoples—the high God is found among them all, not indeed everywhere in the same form or with the same vigour, but still everywhere prominently enough to make his dominant position indubitable. He is by no means a late development or traceable to Christian missionary influences (Pritchard 1965:103).

To avoid disorders, Nana Ndese I, observed that the Nchumuru make attempts to maintain harmonious relationship with the spiritual realm. This is done through the deities, which are believed to be intermediaries between man and God. This belief is reflected in the celebration of festivals and observance of the various rites of passage. These rites bind man to the unseen cosmic powers and the ancestors. This makes religion a concern of the community and therefore underlies social fellowship.¹⁵ Even after some have become Christians, it is not easy for them to discard their cultural past; areas of struggle include beliefs concerning death, ancestors, the deities and festivals.

According to Nana Awaase, harmonious living is clearly a pivotal value in Nchumuru traditional religion. African traditional religions, which have been rightly referred to as the 'womb of the people's culture', play a key role in the realisation of this all-

¹³ Interview with Nana Kanya, Paramount Chief of Begyamose Traditional Area on 24th March 2012 at Chinderi.

¹⁴ Interview with Nana Otchere, Odikro of Wiae on 26th March 2012 at Wiae.

¹⁵ Interview with Nana Ndese late Owure (Chief) of Kumdi, on the 20th March 2006 at his palace.

important value among every traditional Nchumuru group. Religion is central in inculcating in the promotion and realisation of harmonious inter-relationship among individuals and the community.¹⁶ In the traditional Nchumuru background, religion is a most important aspect of life. It pervades and permeates all aspects of life and infuses the social, economic and political with meaning and significance.

The Rev. John Fordjour a Nchumuru minister living and working in the traditional area noted that the Nchumuru Christian struggles with the question of what he should do with his ancestors. This question, most often than not, is not sorted out in his mind, hence this is seen in the participation of Christians in festivals celebrated in honour of the departed or the deities.¹⁷ The questions to ask therefore are: What does the Nchumuru Christian do with his ancestors? Why is it that some Nchumuru Christians still consult the deities? These and many other questions are issues that confront the Nchumuru Christian as he or she tries to live the Christian life in the midst of his religious primal worldview. This study will try to answer these questions.

In the succeeding subsections, the writer will look at the origins of the Nchumuru, political and social organisation, Nchumuru socio-cultural and religious situation which includes the primal worldview with the concepts of *Wuribware* (the High God), '*lowi*' (death), *Nana-ana Akyeɲanppɔ* (the ancestors) and also festivals.

3.2 Origins

Ghana's over sixty ethnic groups, dominated at various times by the larger groups, have frequently been forced to migrate. There are two main theories regarding the origin of the Nchumuru exist, but the Nchumuru themselves claim that they came from the south of what is now southern Ghana. One of the two theories of the origin of the Nchumuru was that narrated to me by Nana Kwadjo Bonyiɲi II, paramount chief of the Nchumuru Traditional Area. He said the people were from the Fante area in the Central Region and passed through the Brong Ahafo Region, to what is now Yapei. Here they met the Gonja who asked them to lead as war captains in their

¹⁶ Interview with Nana Awaase, Clan head of Bonbare, on the 23rd March 2006 at Bonbare.

¹⁷ Interview with Rev. John Fordjour, resident minister of the Evangelical Church of Ghana at Borae No.2 on the 20th August 2012 at Borae No.2.

wars of conquest.¹⁸ Lumsden (1974:77) in citing Gonja tradition said that in the mid seventeenth century two sections of Nchumuru people namely *Banda* and *Chinkee* went east with them in their wars of conquest.

The other theory of the origins of the Nchumuru, consistent with that of other Guang languages of which they belong is that they came from the area of Larteh in the Eastern Region, which is also a Guang language and moved across the Afram plains (Mair 1983). Lumsden cites Bassa traditions that when they (Bassa) arrived there in the late seventeenth century, the Nchumuru were already there having their capital first at Kumpu, west of Atebubu. When the Nchumuru demanded too much tribute from Bassa, the ensuing fight caused the Nchumuru to cross the Volta to their present location (1973:6). Lumsden (1973:10) citing Reindorf (1961) said that when Bassa and Nchumuru people killed Asante and Hausa traders arriving there, the Juabeng under the orders of the Asantehene around 1740 drove the Nchumuru to flee across the Volta to their present location.

The available archaeological evidence shows that a group of the Nchumuru has lived in the Begyamose area, of Krachi District for some 300 or 400 years (thus being there before the "Krachi Lartehs" arrived). The "ultimate" origins of the Nchumuru are tied up with the origins of the Guang-speaking peoples as a whole. Thus there are two theories of the migratory origins of the Nchumuru, and it is even possible that both are true because before the arrival of the Fante to their current location the place was occupied by a section of the Guang whose descendants are present-day Effutu (Winneba, Senya Beraku, etc). See map 2, appendix D for the migratory routes of the Nchumuru.¹⁹

3.2.1 Political and Social Organisation

Nchumuru history and social organisation reflect close ties with the history of such peoples as the Gonja, the Bassa, and, not least, the Dwaben Asante (Lumsden 1974:75-91). Lumsden (1974:77) again observes that in addition to local migrations,

¹⁸ Interview with Nana Kwadjo Bonyinji 11, *Nangyuro Owure* on January 20th 2012.

¹⁹ Map adopted from Gillian Hansford from her 1990 work on the Chumburung.

conflicts (for example, Asante conquest, Gonja' attack) and other inter-ethnic "bargaining" situations, present-day Nchumuru social organisation also reflects the colonial period's impact; after all, a significant part of Nchumuru territory is located between what became two market-places of major concern to rival colonial powers, the famous markets of Salaga and Kete-Krachi. British and German administrative decisions, the post-colonial state's retention and modification of district boundaries, and, of course, the creative coping responses of the Nchumuru membership to a host of such historical stresses, are among the factors which have produced present day Nchumuru "ethnicity", and their fascinating social organisation.

Lumsden (1974:76-78) notes that as a result of historical and administrative changes, there are two separate Paramount Chiefs who are recognised and functioning for the present-day Nchumuru ethnic group - one in each of the two regions mentioned. These Chiefs are (i) the Nangyuro *Owure* (chief), located at the snail and undistinguished village of Nangyuro in the Northern Region; an important symbol and a court-of-appeal for Krachi District (now Krachi East and West Districts) in the Volta Region (V.R.) Nchumuru; he has the fullest legal rights with respect to the Eastern Gonja District now Kpandai District in the Northern Region (N.R.), and (ii) the Begyamose *Owure* (chief) associated with the town of Begyamose but now often residing at the more accessible market town of Chinderi is Paramount for the Krachi District now Krachi-Nchumuru District in the Volta Region. His "Divisional Chiefs" are located at the towns of Banda-Burjweesi, Papatia, Borae No.2, and Akaniem-- that Begyamose's head was a "Chief" (as compared to Akaniem's being but a "village headman") was noted by Captain Lonsdale in his well-known 1882 report²⁰ to the colonial administration. A legal, traditional "State Council" does not yet exist for these Nchumuru.

According to Brukum (1979:15-16), the whole ethnic group is structured into five *nsuro* (*kasuro*, singular) or phratries; in alphabetical order these are; *Banda*, *Chachae*, *Chinkee*, *Kpanteneae* and *Sungwae*. Begyamose is part of *Banda* section (*kasuro*). Each *kasuro* has its own special name, a male Chief (Sungwae currently has two, one in both the Volta Region and the Northern Region), and named Stool (whose name most members do not know); each consists not of clans, but of a number of related villages, each of these having its own male head and protective

²⁰ Lonsdale's report on his mission to Asante and Gyaman, April to July 1882

deity. Of course, villages are important units of political and social action; but, they are not large units. The "essential core" of each village consists of one or more patrilineal clans (*mbuno*). Nana Ndese observes that each *kabuno* has its special name, its male head, its own residential area, its "secrets" and properties (land, streams, et cetera). Inheritance is by homogeneous transmission (male to next oldest male, female to the next oldest female), occurs within the *kabuno*, and can over-ride (and so helps to obviate) any patrilineal sub-unit or lineage that may form or may begin to become salient within the *kabuno*. It is important to note that the *kabuno* is not an exogamous unit. Along with one's village identification, one's *kabuno* is the single most salient, talked about and omnipresent social unit. Each *kabuno* possesses of but one ancestral shrine²¹.

Agorsah (1986:110) confirms Lumsden's (1974:78-79) description of Nchumuru social organisation by saying that Nchumuru villages belong to one of its major family groupings or phratries. Agorsah further observes that those groupings as mentioned are traditionally referred to as *nsuro* (*kasuro*, singular) each of which has one of its constituent villages as the head village. Apart from some beliefs, customs, interests, a common language, similar social institutions, and in some cases a common ancestry which links the "*nsuro*", these divisions have no cohesive force welding them into one state. The union is one of loose confederation of independent states, each with a measure of self-sufficiency and complete autonomy. Each "*kasuro*" has its own chief, stool, registered drum cry, lands and waters, whilst its boundaries are usually marked by streams and well known paths dividing various "*nsuro*".

Nana Fofie of Kojobone noted that villages are made up of patrilineal clans called "*mbuno*". Each "*kabuno*" has a male head called "*kabuno ɔbresɛ*", residential area, ancestral shrine called "*akyɛŋaŋpɔ kaaba*", secrets, properties, relationship with other villages, rules governing membership and other diacritical signs setting each apart from similar units. The "*akyɛŋaŋpɔ Kaaba*" is often the controlling factor within the "*kabuno*". The "*kaaba*" is located in the home of the "*kabuno ɔbresɛ*." The "*mbuno*" comprise of a number of homesteads. If the villages in a particular "*kasuro*" have a

²¹ Nana Ndese I, op. cit.

common origin, they would have a common shrine for their ancestors and a common protective deity.²²

3.2.2 Nchumuru Primal Worldview

O' Donavan (1996:3) defines the word 'worldview' in these words:

The view which a person has of his world. It is the way he understands and interprets the things which happens to him and to other people. It is a person's belief about what is real and what is not real.

Fowler (1998) defines the term 'worldview' as,

a construct about the make up of life as it struggles with the questions of reality, truth, ethics and history. It is a construct that provides a point of departure, a sense of direction, a locus of destination, and a strategy of unity for human thought, life and action.

At the core of every person's being lies the worldview that constitutes what Kraft (2005:44) describes as the "control box". Worldview therefore is the "control box" of culture that determines thinking, acting or doing, and determining values. Worldview, therefore, exerts a strong, shaping influence and power on a person's life.

The word, primal comes from the word - primitive. The word primitive means belonging to very early times or being old fashioned. For so many centuries some Western scholars have always classified the African ideas about his universe and that of his religion as being primitive. They have thought and others continue to think that the African's view about the world is nothing to be considered civilized. Geoffrey Parrinder in his book; "West African Religion" thinks the term 'primitive' as applied to the religion of the Africans is most inaccurate. He says 'primitive religion' means either religion as it appeared in its earliest forms among mankind or religion that has remained in the lowliest stages even in the modern times. Parrinder (1961:7) went on to say that some of the older anthropologists were in the habit of collecting material from all over the world and putting it all together as "primitive religion" and "savage". This he said was unscientific and all serious modern writers have abandoned this method. Primal religion as practiced by the Nchumuru could simply stand for what has been known and practiced by the people since the earliest times

²² Interview with Nana Fofie *Okyeebrese* of Kojobone, on 30 July 2012.

of their existence, before they came into contact with Christianity or any other religion for that matter. This does not necessarily make it look 'savage' or 'primitive' in relation to civilisation, that will be derogatory to the conscience of the people and modern studies of religion does not allow that.

The primal worldview of the Nchumuru is seen to conform to the worldview of other African peoples. While the traditional Nchumuru believes in a supreme God, they also believe that this God lives far from those who are alive. In order to access Him, his power, and all his other benefits, the living have to go through intermediaries who are between those on the level of human existence and the supreme God Himself. Individuals should benefit from God if they recognise the entities of power in their descending order down through the elders and other specialists.

The Nchumuru have a strong sense of being an Nchumuru than belonging to a particular area or another. The Nchumuru places emphasis on life in community with their identity and meaning through being part of their extended family and clan. The extended family system is the model. According to Ejizu (2003:1-2)²³ the molecular family pattern is alien and believed to be inimical to the traditional value of community. The extended family structure is held up to the people as a model, one in which parents, grand-parents, uncles, aunts, nephews and nieces live together and are cared for by their children, grand-children and other relatives in mutual love and respect. There is strong feeling of common participation in life, a common history and a common destiny. This observation by Ejizu perfectly agrees with the Nchumuru situation. The reality about the worldview of the Nchumuru may be described with the statement of Mbiti:

In traditional life, the individual does not and cannot exist alone except corporately. He owes his existence to other people, including those of past generations and his contemporaries. He is simply part of the whole. The community therefore makes, create or produce the individual; for the individual depends on the corporate group (1969:108-109).

He goes further to state that whatever happens to the individual happens to the group and whatever happens to the group happens to the individual hence the individual can only say: "I am, because we are; and since we are, therefore I am"

²³ Accessed online on <http://www.afrikaworld.net/afrel/community.htm> on 25th August, 2012.

(1969:109). This is a cardinal point in the understanding of the Nchumuru worldview of man.

The Nchumuru also see life as a link between the living and the departed (those who have died). Belonging to the Nchumuru community is a person's relationship to those who have gone before. The Nchumuru as a result, like other African peoples, have very important beliefs about their relationships to the spirits of their ancestors.²⁴ The Nchumuru hold the view that there is a spirit world and a physical world and to this they say there is a relationship between the two. In his heart, every Nchumuru knows there is God. He believes there is a world of spirits around him. The sense of relationship between the physical world and the spirit world is very strong among traditional Nchumuru people.

The traditional Nchumuru have intriguing sacred stories or myths that tell how the world, human beings and important institutions came into being. Such sacred stories generally also underscore the involvement of ancestors and mythical beings in the life and affairs of the community of the living. They also try to explain the significance of different rituals for human beings and their important life-interests. They grasp the cosmos as a three-tiered structure, consisting of the heaven above, the physical world and the world beneath. Each of these is inhabited by different categories of beings. The Creator (*Wuribware*) and a host of spirit beings, including arch-divinities inhabit the heaven above, other divinities, ancestors, and myriads of unnamed spirits dwell in the world beneath, while human beings occupy the physical earth.

Human beings may be less powerful, but their world is the centre and the focus of attention.²⁵ Ejizu (2003:5-6) notes that it belongs to them as sensible beings to maintain the delicate balance in the universe. This is what assures the happiness and prosperity of individuals and the community. For the traditional Nchumuru, the community is a social grouping of people bound together by reasons of natural origin and/or deep common interests and values. It is both a society as well as a unity of the visible and invisible worlds; the world of the living on the one hand, and that of the ancestors, divinities and souls of children yet to be born to individual kin-groups. In a wider sense, Nchumuru traditional community understand the totality of the

²⁴ Nana Akwesi Ndese 1, op.cit.

²⁵ Interview with Okisipo Apowii (Traditional Priest), on 20th November 2011 at Kumdi.

world of Nchumuru experience including the physical environment, as well as all spirit beings acknowledged by a given group.

Families and members of kin-groups from minimal to maximal lineages generally live together and form community. The Nchumuru share life intensely in common. Magesa (1997:64) stresses this fact about the importance of community: "We cannot understand persons, indeed we cannot have personal identity without reference to others persons." "Bondedness," Magesa adds, "is the key to the understanding that 'what falls on one, falls on all.'" There are communal farmland, economic trees, streams, barns, and markets. There are also communal shrines, squares, ritual objects and festivals for recreational activity, social, economic and religious purposes.

Members of the same clan could distinguish themselves by their proficiency in a particular trade, skill or professions. Several myths relate the founding of community as well as shed light on certain symbolic objects and forms that feature prominently in the ritual network of the people. These relevant ritual forms and symbols are employed by the Nchumuru to enhance the ideal of community. There are also certain punitive sacred sanctions like ostracisation, which is not in use today, to help curb deviance, and indirectly advance the cause of harmonious communal life.

According to Nana Bonyinji, the Nchumuru primal worldview places a higher priority on people and human relationship than on technology and material things. This is clearly demonstrated in the hospitality the Nchumuru would accord a visitor who finds his way into the former's home. The Nchumuru generally have a holistic view on life. Their belief is that the path of life fit together into one piece like the woven design of a piece of cloth. Life is not divided into separate and unrelated parts. All the parts together form a beautiful picture called life. The Nchumuru places emphasis on the events of life more than an emphasis on schedules and time as found among Western societies.²⁶

Isaac Demuyakor has noted that the difficulty lies in attempting to break ties that bind the individual to these hierarchies and entities of power. To break away from this system or to be "converted" to another system in the past meant that one gets cut

²⁶ Interview with Nana Bonyinji 11, Nangyuro Owure (Paramount Chief) of Nchumuru Traditional Area on 20th June, 2012 at Kumdi.

from the connections that make life complete, meaningful, and safe.²⁷ In this vein therefore, the writer submits that this kind of worldview should be taken seriously when traditional Nchumuru are being evangelised and disciplined. Some scholars refer to aspects of this type of traditional Nchumuru worldview as the religio-cultural heritage of the Nchumuru that must be addressed, or the person who claims to have been converted to Christianity has only a veneer of Christianity. The writer noticed during his stay and work in the traditional area that many Nchumuru Christians become hijacked in their spiritual journey. Sometimes it becomes difficult for the individuals who have accepted the Gospel to live a truly Christian life and to disengage from their community, because they still hold onto the Nchumuru worldview in its entirety.

Razafiarivony aptly describes the situation, when he said that membership of a traditional society requires commitment and loyalty. A member who disobeyed the laid down rules and regulations governing the group loses every privilege that comes as a result of being a member. This therefore calls for mutual trust among members. Many traditional society members who become Christians will most often than not try to live both lives and this breeds syncretism in Christianity.²⁸ Mbiti (1978:273) describes the vacillations between Christianity and traditional African customs among Christians as “religious concubinage” because some professed Christians seem to find satisfaction in African traditional practices that has not been met in Christian living and practice. What we see as aberrations in Christian formation among many African Christians indicates to us that something has been amiss in the discipling process among many African Christians.

In the same manner, the traditional Nchumuru worldview has a strong influence and shaping power on the Nchumuru in that it unifies the Nchumuru’s thoughts and life. It defines the good life that must be pursued, preserved, and protected; and it guides the thinking, choices, and actions. The traditional Nchumuru worldview often hinders the internalization of the Christian message and practice among many Nchumuru Christians. Thus, the traditional Nchumuru worldview throws a serious challenge before the Church as she seeks to “make disciples of all nations,” as the Lord

²⁷ Interview with Isaac Demuyakor, pioneer Bible Translator with the Chumburung Translation Project at Kumdi on the 12th July, 2012.

²⁸ Davidson Razafiarivony, “Ancestor Worship in Madagascar: An Adventist Perspective” (Paper presented at Faith and Learning Seminar at the University of Eastern Africa, Baraton, Kenya, November 22–December 2, 1998).

mandated (Matt 28:19). Those who seek to disciple men and women in Chumburung country, as the Gospel requires, will find that the people who are being disciplined frequently regress or revert to unChristian practices.

Ejizu (2003:6) observes that since some individuals may not approach God directly and present their case, it becomes difficult for them to break ties with the system. Those who seek to make it on their own without this established hierarchy do not have a chance in most cases. In a similar vein, the writer haven interacted with many Christians and non-Christians in the traditional area, by way of interviews, noticed that a strong sense of community in the mind and heart of the traditional Nchumuru also exerts pressure with a strong pull to remain tied to the system, even if this negates a newfound faith in Christ that compels them to engage in unChristian practices from time to time. However most respondents, mainly Christians submitted that with the advent of Christianity and following the impact the mother tongue Scriptures is making since its introduction into Nchumuru culture, this worldview is undergoing a tremendous transformation for Christ.

In one instance, while the writer was with the Chumburung Translation Project, working on the translation of the Nchumuru Bible, had an opportunity to witness how Adventist Christians in his village were being persecuted by traditional leaders for flouting regulations concerning a sacrifice to the traditional deity *Dente* for rain. *Dente* according to 'Apowii' is the deity who is shared by the Nchumuru and Krachi people and is known to be very powerful in times of disaster or famine. He submitted that the deity is recognised as the giver of blessings to the people.²⁹ On this occasion every member of the community was required to pay a fee to buy a cow for sacrifice to the deity for rain. The Adventist believers refused to comply and were threatened with banishment from the community by the traditional leaders, so the church asked for help from their Conference leadership. To the local chiefs and elders it made sense to have these "enemies of the people," who violated orders from God through the established mediators, to get out of the way so that others who comply and cooperate do not have to suffer. While this issue raged on, there was a heavy down pour and the sacrifice never took place and the Adventists won a victory for the church in the village, because other Christians did not have to pay this fee

²⁹ Interview with Okisipo Apowii (Traditional Priest), on the 1st August, 2012 at Kumdi.

towards a sacrifice to a deity who was not God almighty. Such is how a worldview of a people can affect the practice of Christianity in a given culture.

The idea and structure of human society for traditional Nchumuru people according Nana Kanya, are essentially part of a world-view that is fundamentally holistic, sacred and highly integrated. Among the people, human community, therefore, has its full meaning and significance within the transcendental centre of ultimate meaning. Hence, the belief in ancestors and the supernatural order, in addition to its inherent religious import, provides traditional Nchumuru groups a useful over-arching system that helps them organise reality and impose divine authority and sanction to their life.³⁰

3.2.3 The Nchumuru Concept of *Wuribware* (God)

The Nchumuru believe in the existence of a high God who is male, a creator known as *Wuribware*. As the name implies, he is connected with and related to the concept of goodness. According to Nana Awaase, *Wuribware* is recognised as the creator of the world and all that is in it. He sees all that occurs yet he is remote from mankind.³¹ The Nchumuru express their knowledge of God through songs, short statements, proverbs and so forth. Their knowledge of God can be identified with Mbiti's said that Africans generally express their knowledge of God in several ways and forms, for example in proverbs, short statements, songs, prayers, names, myths, stories and religious ceremonies (Mbiti 1969:29). Berkhof (1990:31) also observes:

Missionaries and students of comparative religion inform us that never a tribe was found without religion. The import of this is that the idea of God cannot be eradicated from the human soul.

Berkhof's submission makes a case of the knowledge of God universal to all people's of the earth. It follows that the knowledge of God in African culture and even in the Nchumuru culture has not been lost on the people.

³⁰ Nana Kanya, op. cit.

³¹ Nana Awaase, op.cit.

According to Nana Ndese, *Wuribware* is not directly concerned with the toil and tribulation of everyday life. This duty, they say, he has delegated to the charge of the *ikisi* (deities or divinities and lesser gods). These *ikisi* include *Dente* (a god with other names which the Nchumuru share with the Krachi people). Others are *Tigare*, *Brुकun*, and *Soᅅko*. To them, he is essentially spirit and there are no images or visible (physical) representations of him. He is omnipotent but strictly speaking he is functionally absent from the day to day activities of man. However, he plays an important role in the life and destiny of the individual. Nothing happens behind him.³² This explains why the Nchumuru person thinks he cannot do anything to alter his destiny. Everything has been predetermined; they also say all souls return to *Wuribware*, after death. He is the final judge of all. *Wuribware* is believed to have a consort called *Osweere*.³³

Apowii mentioned that *Wuribware* may be likened to the Overlord of Society and the affix *Wure* (chief) confirms this. There are no special priesthood, temple, or feast days specifically dedicated to *Wuribware*. However he has an important role to play in the life of every individual. Before being born into the world each “soul” is summoned into the presence of *Wuribware* and there makes certain requests and promises as to “what one wishes to be” in the forthcoming new life. This the Nchumuru call *kakra* or destiny. It is to *Wuribware* that all should return at death, and then he is the judge of all the living and dead.³⁴ The most noticeable attitude to God is that whenever you are in trouble, people will say, whether they are Christian or not, “*Wuribware bᅅ-rᅅ*” meaning God is there (and implying he will surely help you).³⁵

Nana Bonyinji did submit that most traditional Nchumuru say that the lesser gods were made by God, and, just as an Nchumuru person would not speak to a chief except through his linguist, so one speaks to God through the lesser gods. Whenever these gods are addressed, God’s name starts the list, that is, as if the prayer is addressed to him, followed by Earth, who is often described as his wife; and then named gods.³⁶ Other names for God include ‘*Nyinᅅpen-kyᅅᅅ-ᅅkema-Bware*’ (Knows all pass everyone God thus Almighty God). There is no traditional

³² Nana Awaase, op. cit.

³³ Nana Ndese, op.cit.

³⁴ Okisipo Apowii (Traditional Priest), op.cit.

³⁵ Nana Fofie, op. cit.

³⁶ Nana Bonyinji, op. cit.

god unique to the Nchumuru. But the prominent gods in the traditional area are 'Nana Osweere' (the Earth), is named *Yawa* (Thursday-born); she is not regarded as a goddess as such but sacrifices are made to her. No shrines are dedicated to her, though every year before the planting season a sacrifice is made to her for purification from any 'mbuseŋ' or sinister event which may have happened during the year. There is *Nana Brukuŋ*, *Dente* (*Nana Kakyeraŋtɛ*) and *Nana Koswee*.³⁷

The *ikisi* (lesser gods) are represented by objects or carvings. Each has a priest and a shrine, and sacrifices are offered to them. They protect against witches, and give good health, good harvests, children, and so forth. Some specialise in treatment of particular problems or ailments. In addition to these minor deities most people also have personal visible, man-made, objects of power or "*asibeŋ*" such as charms and amulets.³⁸

3.2.4 The Nchumuru concept of Death (*Lowi*) and the Ancestors (*Nana-ana-Akyeŋaŋpo*)

Mbiti (1969:149) has observed appropriately that death is something that concerns everybody. The reason is that whatever the case may be everyone individual person will die someday and when it happens there grief and pain in families and communities. What this means is that among the Nchumuru death is a natural phenomenon that affects everyone. The Nchumuru according Nana Ndese, see death as the most disrupting phenomenon of all in society. It is seen as an intruder of things in a society and therefore disturbs the equilibrium of nature hence terminates relationships. However, it is not seen as the end to the process of life but a transition from this earthly life into another (higher) level of existence.³⁹ Like many African peoples, the Nchumuru attribute every death to one of several causes ranging from witchcraft, the ancestors and the deities. The Nchumuru will usually ask "who killed him?" and not "what killed him?" Mbiti (1969:156) submits further that the issue of natural death is almost unthinkable among the people. This means that although death is acknowledged as having come into the world and remained

³⁷ Interview with Nana Otchere, Odikro of Wiae 12th June 2011.

³⁸ Nana Fofie, op. cit.

³⁹ Nana Ndese I, op. cit.

here ever since it is unnatural and preventable on the personal level because it is always caused by another agent. If that agent did not cause it the individual would not die.

Death is categorised into good (normal) or bad (abnormal). Bad death comes from contagious diseases such as leprosy and tuberculosis and also death through swelling, suicide, drowning, thunder strike, childbirth and a falling tree. The type of funeral rites accorded a person depends on the circumstances surrounding or leading to death, the age of the person and his or her social status.

Traditionally, funerals last between three to eight days. When a person dies, the head of the clan sends emissaries with liquor (a bottle each) to inform the *Odikro* (chief) of the village and other heads of clan.⁴⁰ This in reality is not a practise today. The emissaries are sent all right but no more with liquor as it used to be in the past. When all (including sometimes, relatives from other villages) have gathered, the head of clan with other members outline any arrangements toward burial and funeral.

Before burial, the body is washed, dressed up and laid in state in the case of a normal death. Washing of the body is done by close relatives. A new sponge, towel, soap and calabash are used. In the event of a bad death, the body is buried shortly after it has been washed and dressed up by the Priest of the *Gyabuni* cult or his accredited representative. Nseakyure (1999:29) says such people are normally buried on the incinerator (refuse dump), after which herbal concoctions are prepared for cleansing of the family and village.

Children who die before any issue come after them are treated much in the same way as bad death except that they are buried near their parent's home. The use of coffin depends on a number of factors - availability and or affordability, the status of the person and the type of death.

In an interview with Nana Fofie, she said that while the body is being prepared for burial, there is drumming and dancing. For a head of clan, it is the *Sokodaye* dance that is performed.⁴¹ A sheep is slaughtered at the feet of the person and the meat used to prepare a pepper-free meal of *fufu*.⁴² Burial of adults usually takes place in the evening. She continued by saying that the grave is dug by the nephews

⁴⁰ Nana Ndese I, op. cit.

⁴¹ The *Sokodaye* is a dance which belongs to the Nchumuru people.

⁴² *Fufu* is a meal prepared from pounded yam and mostly a staple of the Nchumuru people.

(*adepugyi*) of the deceased. According to her Hunters, Chiefs and Traditional Priests have their own rites and are usually buried in the night. During the burial, children of the deceased are assembled at the graveside. They are made to face homeward with their backs turned to the grave and hands stretched backwards with open palms. One after the other, beginning with the oldest, some soil from the grave is placed in their hand and they are asked to throw it back into the grave without turning to look upon, even as they go home. This act symbolises the children's participation in the burial of their parents; libation is poured before burial takes place.⁴³

Isaac Demuyakor in an interview said guns are fired to indicate that the physical separation of the deceased is now complete. The firing of guns is immediately accompanied by wailing and weeping of the relatives and friends as they move from the graveside to the house. Customarily, each son-in-law of the deceased presents a hen which the Nchumuru call *kesaakyanyi*, meaning in-laws hen. This hen is meant to be sacrificed on the grave.⁴⁴ Nseakyure (1999:30) records that failure on the part of any son-in-law to perform this rite may lead to dissolution of marriage or a temporary re-call of his wife by the family.

Nana Omankuminte II, mentioned that traditionally, the funeral celebration ends on either the third, fourth or eighth day for men, women and chiefs or clan heads respectively with a hair shaving rite called *kale kisee* (shaving of the funeral). Children, spouses and relatives are shaved and their hair placed on the grave.⁴⁵ In the past, the funeral would have ended after this rite. However, presently there is the *nsawa*⁴⁶, (donations) made by friends and well-wishers to help off-set any funeral debt, incurred by the bereaved family. Nana Kwame Kagyiingyii mentioned that, the Nchumuru believe in the hereafter. This belief is inferred from the treatment of the corpse, giving food and other gifts to the deceased. It is believed that the journey to the next world is a long, tortuous one and so one needs money, food and water for it. They believe that the hereafter is but a continuation of life more or less as it is into its human form, the location of which new life is with *Wuribware* (God) in the heavens.

⁴³ Nana Fofie, op. cit.

⁴⁴ Isaac Demuyakor, op. cit.

⁴⁵ Interview with Nana Omankuminte II, Banda Owure (Chief) of Tekpanj Division of *Banda Kasuro* (Section) of the Nchumuru, on 2nd May 2012.

⁴⁶ The *nsawa* could be an influence of the Akan culture. There is usually a wake-keeping on the eve of the *nsawa* accompanied by drumming and dancing.

He continued by saying that, the belief in the continued existence and influence of departed fathers and mothers in families, clans and the sections of the language is very strong among the Nchumuru of Ghana. The invisible members, especially ancestors regarded as spiritual beings are powerful and by far superior to human beings. Their reality and presence in the community are duly acknowledged and honoured among various Nchumuru groups. Neglect could spell disaster for them and the community.⁴⁷ The ancestors who the Nchumuru call “*akyenjanpo*” (meaning the dead or ghosts), according to Nana Awaase, are the souls of the departed heroes and heroines of the Nchumuru. Among the Nchumuru the ancestors are powerful and by far superior to human beings. They may also be recalled in personal names given to children, especially in cases where particular ancestors are held to have reincarnated in individual children. The presence of the ancestors is particularly felt in the Nchumuru traditional community. They are believed to be benevolent and powerful representatives of the community in the ‘*akyenjanpo aye*’ (spirit/ghost home or land).⁴⁸

Nana Otchere mentioned that, from early childhood through adolescence to full adulthood, the traditional Nchumuru is formed to hold tenaciously to the belief in the ancestors, to reverence them as powerful and benevolent members of the community, although not in a physical but rather mystical sense. Ancestors are held up as models to be copied in the effort to strictly adhere, preserve and transmit the traditions and norms of the community.⁴⁹ The Nchumuru is psychologically, fully equipped and motivated to promote the delicate balance and equilibrium believed to exist in the universe through ensuring harmony in his relationship with the invisible world and among members of the community.

Their reality and presence in the community, Nana Ndese mentioned are duly acknowledged and honoured among various Nchumuru groups. Neglect could spell disaster for them and the community. They become *akyenjanpo* immediately after burial.⁵⁰ He said belief in the ancestors among the Nchumuru is based on the general notion that life continues after death, and that communication is possible

⁴⁷ Interview with Nana Kwame Kagyingyii, late Odikro of Bankamba on 27th November, 2010.

⁴⁸ Nana Awaase, op. cit.

⁴⁹ Interview with Nana Otchere, Odikro of Wiae on 10th June 2011.

⁵⁰ Nana Ndese I, op.cit.

between the living and the dead. The Nchumuru believe that the ancestors have powers to influence the affairs of the living for better or for worse. Therefore one needs to propitiate them, for which the Nchumuru say you *lɔŋŋɔ* or repair them. The ancestors, *nana-ana akyeŋaŋpɔ* become *akyeŋaŋpɔ* (ghosts) immediately after burial. Certain taboos hold: certain trees cannot be cut for firewood, pots cannot be washed in a river, or the land or river becomes unclean.

According to Nana Kanya, the belief in ancestors is an important element of Nchumuru traditional religion. The belief occupies an important place in the understanding of the role of the traditional religion in inculcating the ideal of harmonious living among Nchumuru people. One needs however, to know the content of the belief to be better able to appreciate how it helps the people to realise the community ideal of harmonious living. With the completion of prescribed funeral rites, a deceased person is believed to transform into an ancestor. The funeral rites in this case, serve as some kind of '*rites du passage*.' The disembodied spirit joins the esteemed ranks of fully achieved ancestors in the spirit world.⁵¹

The ancestors, or the living-dead, as Mbiti refers to them, are believed to be disembodied spirits of Nchumuru people who lived upright lives here on earth, died 'good' and natural death, at ripe old age, and received the acknowledged funeral rites. They could be men or women. Among the Nchumuru the deceased has to be an adult for people to propitiate him or her. Those who have unclean diseases such as leprosy, epilepsy, madness, tuberculosis, a swollen body and so forth cannot be made household heads or chiefs of a village. When they die, they are not honoured with elaborate burials and funeral rites. If one dies on the battlefield, in defence of the community, this enhances one's reputation.

Nana Kwame Bongya mentioned, that their perceived contribution to the welfare of the community, places our ancestors in the category of holy people as seen in other religions. The role of the ancestors in the life of the family and the wider community cannot be underestimated. They are the guardians of the tribal traditions and history, hence the secrecy, professed ignorance, or obvious falsification of the tradition which sometimes confront inquirers into local history.⁵² People wonder if the ancestors will not be angered if traditional affairs are revealed. The ancestors are believed to be

⁵¹ Nana Kanya, *op. cit.*

⁵² Interview with Nana Kwame Bongya, Chinkee Owure (Chief), of the *Chinkee kasuro* (section) of the Nchumuru at Borae No. on 20th August, 2012.

the custodians of the laws and customs of the people. Offences that go against these are ultimately offences against the ancestors. In this regard, the ancestors act as an invisible police force for Nchumuru families and clans. They are the unseen presidents at family meetings. They are the spiritual superintendents of earthly families of which they are still members although they are no longer alive.⁵³

Nana Amaadan of Bankamba mentioned, that traditional Nchumurus hold the ancestors as the closest link that the living have with the spirit world.⁵⁴ Mbiti (1990: 82) notes:

The living-dead are bilingual; they speak the language of men, with whom they lived until 'recently', and they speak the language of the spirits and of God ...They are the 'spirits' with which African peoples are most concerned: it is through the living-dead that the spirit world becomes personal to men. They are still part of their human families, and people have personal memories of them.

This means that in African worldview when people die they still live but in a different world and their relations still relate to them. This explains why several African societies including the Nchumuru have elaborate rites in honour of the dead. Parrinder (1961:115) observes they send sickness or misfortune to punish those who infringe these laws and customs. The land of the Nchumuru belongs to the ancestors, because they owned it and worked on it. Each household head, each clan head and each village chief has his own stool to sit on, and the chief's stool represents his chieftaincy. Parrinder continued, that when it is said that the land belongs to the stool, or that the land belongs to the chief, what is really meant is that the land is looked after by the ancestors. The ancestors are also a link between the living and the spiritual world. Through them the spiritual world becomes real to the people. The ancestors are part of a chain of intermediaries between people and God. People direct their requests to the ancestors through the gods. Parrinder (1961:115) further submits that for many West Africans (Nchumuru) inclusive, especially the older people who will soon join the ancestors, the invisible is almost as real as the visible, and they cherish memories of the dead. People say they have seen or communicated with the departed. The sick and dying have visions of those who have gone before them and these 'phantasms of the dying' are very common.

⁵³ Interview with Nana Kwame Kaggingyii, late *Odikro* of Bankamba on 29th January, 20011.

⁵⁴ Interview with Nana Amaadan, at Bankamba on 20th October, 2010.

Parrinder (1961:116) notes appropriately that because of these beliefs associated with the ancestors, the Nchumuru like their fellow West Africans take great care in the burial and mourning ceremonies for the dead. Often, great expense is incurred and debts are accumulated by this expression of feeling. Sickness and misfortune are often believed to be due to some neglect in fulfilling the last rites of a deceased family member. Family life therefore is strengthened by emphasis on performing duties for the dead. Old men and women and parents are especially honoured. The most important ancestral custom of the Nchumuru is performed at the period of new yams, around July. This is performed first by the section and only then can it be done in each village.

Nana Ndese observed that in the Nchumuru six-day week, one of the days, *Kepowe*, is special and no farm work can be done on that day. This six-day cycle intersects with the Western seven-day cycle, in which Friday is also special. Hence this festival takes place on the Friday that is also *Kepowe* at the shrine of the god Dente. The chief, stripped to the waist in respect, takes a handful of mashed yam mixed with palm oil and puts it on the 'oldest' stool. In a village, the oldest stool will belong to the chief, but within the tribal section, the oldest stool will belong to the section chief. The presiding chief says: "God and his wife Earth and our grandparents *akyeŋŋpo*, today is Friday *Kepowe*, come and receive this mashed yam and eat. Let this town prosper and permit the bearers of children to bear children, and may all the people who are on this land get riches and have abundant farm produce."⁵⁵ The remainder of the mashed yam is scattered on the ground throughout the town, for the spirits of the dead chiefs that the stool is said to carry. Clans venerate their family ancestors through the performance of other rites.

The clan head is the custodian of a clan ancestral cult called '*akyeŋŋpo kaaba*' (ghosts' bowl). He makes regular offerings of gifts, food and drinks to the ancestors. Other times too, he offer prayers, and sacrifices on certain good days to the ancestors at this bowl set in his courtyard, for the clan's prosperity and wellbeing. At a village level, ancestral spirits are invoked during the arbitration of cases at the chief's palace, and also at marriage ceremonies, building new houses, installing market centres, and so on, through pouring libation (Asewie 2004:18).

⁵⁵ Nana Ndese I, op. cit.

From the above, it follows then that the Nchumuru have a firm belief in ancestors and it forms part of their traditional religious belief systems.

3.2.5 Festivals (*Agyibee*)

Festivals are communal celebrations of life in which the members of a society participate at different levels, in a number of structured and unstructured but significant events. They are vehicles of communicating or affirming the values of a society and for strengthening the bonds that bind its members together. African religion is deeply celebrational. The Nchumuru like any other language group in Africa have festivals which serve as rites of intensification. According to Nketia (1976:33-44) Africans and by extension the Nchumuru celebrate these festive occasions to express their belief in life after death and in the nearness of the living-dead (ancestors) to their living descendants, and remembering their good deeds. It is also a time of thanksgiving in honour of the gods for their help and protection.

Adegbite (2009:46) also describes a festival as an event, usually and ordinarily staged by a local community that centres on some unique events in the community's life. A festival can also be seen as a series of performance involving music, plays, dances, etc., usually organised annually or as agreed upon, where people of a particular community come together to dine and wine; in order to celebrate and share common tradition.

Nana Ndese says that the yam festival, now associated with "feeding of the gods," was formerly meant to be a remembrance day for the ancestors.⁵⁶ The *Koswee* festival, celebrated annually (usually between mid-December and early January), is a time of thanksgiving to the deity called *Koswee*. This attracts people from all the Nchumuru area and beyond. Nseakyure (1999:33-34) says the *Sɔŋkɔ* festival is celebrated by the people of Begyamose and Wiae.⁵⁷ It is said that one Amankrado Saprpa I of the Worengya clan of Begyamose discovered the *Sɔŋkɔ* shrine from a captive in his custody, during one of his wars. It was later seen to be helpful to him during war and was also used to apprehend witches and wizards, as well as for farming, fishing and hunting. Being a war god according to Nseakyure (1999:34), it is

⁵⁶ Nana Ndese I, op.cit.

⁵⁷ These are sub-groups of the Banda division of the Nchumuru people.

very aggressive. This is seen during the peak of the celebration which is a time for people to settle old scores. Fights or quarrels between individuals, groups or clans do not attract fines or sanctions during the festival. It is celebrated in the fourth or fifth month after Christmas.

Nana Otchere of Wiae says during the celebration of *Sɔŋko*, people are drawn from all walks of life, Christians and non-Christians. The entire Nchumuru community gets involved. It is amazing to know that the people of Begyamose and Wiae give more reverence to this celebration than the Western yuletide (Christmas, New Year) and Easter. Begyamose and Wiae citizens far and near spend Christmas, New Year and Easter at their stations but make it an article of faith to join in the celebration of *Sɔŋko* at home.⁵⁸ The *Nta Kowee* festival, Nana Awaase says is the indigenous festival of the Nchumuru which is now almost becoming a thing of the past. This was done every ten years.⁵⁹ It's a time for hunters to show their marksmanship and prowess in remembrance of their departed colleagues and forbearers. A hunting expedition is undertaken shortly after the festivities. People who are born during these festivals are given names such as *Owensa*, *Pensa* or *Gyinta*.

Mbiti (1969:162-163) observed that African communities and even so the Nchumuru Communities are concerned with maintaining harmonious social and mystical relations among persons in the community, between the community and the ancestors, and by extension, between the community and the Supreme God, creator and sustainer of life upon whom the continuation of the community's well-being is held to depend. However in recent times another dimension that is launching of development projects has been added to the celebration of the festivals. These festivals and others are therefore celebrated to thank God, the ancestors and the deities for past favours and to solicit their help for the now and future. But above all, since religion permeates the whole of life in many if not all Nchumuru communities, aspects of religion are found in practically all festivals.

In summing up, the writer wishes to say that one most important role of festivals in Africa and even among the Nchumuru is therefore the affirmation of the spiritual values that give people inspiration to their way of life. Values that influence people in their relationship with one another and with the spiritual world, or between man and his environment. This will determine the level, practice and content and intensity of

⁵⁸ Interview with Nana Otchere, Odikro of Wiae on the 20th January, 2005.

⁵⁹ Nana Awaase op. cit.

one's religious behaviour. However the writer wishes to submit that if festivals are to be celebrated in any African society, Nchumuru society inclusive, the religious and spiritual dimension of it should be addressed to God the Creator of mankind through His Son Jesus. It is true that every language group in the world owns some allegiance to some spiritual entities or the other but ultimate appreciation should be given to God through His Son Jesus, because He is the creator of all things and deserves such. This, the writer thinks, must be the focus of these festivals.

3.3 Conclusion

In this chapter, the writer has looked at the Nchumuru primal worldview, in his attempt at exploring the impact that the mother tongue Scriptures have made and is making in contextualising Christianity among the people within the context of their culture. The writer also outlined the origins, political and social organisation of the people and also explored their religious and cultural context in detail in an attempt to appreciate how the mother tongue Scriptures coming into such a context has impacted and continue to impact the lives of the people. The next chapter will focus on the transmission of Christian faith: Changes in religious beliefs and practices and traditional morality of the Nchumuru people in Ghana through Christianity, with special reference to the impact of mother tongue Scriptures.

CHAPTER FOUR

Transmission of Christian Faith: Changes in religious beliefs and practices and traditional morality of the Nchumuru people in Ghana through Christianity, with special reference to the impact of mother tongue Scriptures

4.1 Introduction

Bediako (1995:62) observes that the existence of mother tongue Bibles help communities who speak those languages to use them. The Bible in the mother tongue of the people also creates the likelihood that the hearers of the word in their own language will make their own response to it and on their own terms. Probably no where else has this taken place quite significantly except in the history of the expansion of Christianity in modern Africa.

This chapter explores Nchumuru traditional and religious morality and how Christianity came into Nchumuru culture. It also explores the birth of a Bible translation ministry among the people and how this has led to the production of the mother tongue Scriptures. The chapter also explores the various attempts at contextualising Christianity in the culture and how these Scriptures have impacted the lives of the people. The mother tongue of a person is that person's native language, the language that one is born into, as it were, and grows up with. It is a person's first language as compared with other languages one might learn later in life, for example at school.

The impact of the mother tongue Scriptures in contextualising Christianity in any given culture is of significant importance. This will help in the preaching and teaching of the Gospel message in the African context, so that he becomes a real response to the problems of Africans. In effect, Christ becomes good news to Africans and for that matter the Nchumuru own context.

4.2 Nchumuru Traditional and Religious Morality

Gyekye (2010:1) observes that the ethics of a society is embedded in the ideas and beliefs about what is right or wrong, what is a good or bad character; it is also

embedded in the conceptions of satisfactory social relations and attitudes held by the members of the society; it is embedded, furthermore, in the forms or patterns of behaviour that are considered by the members of the society to bring about social harmony and cooperative living, justice, and fairness. Morality may be understood as a set of social rules, principles, norms that guide or are intended to guide the conduct of people in a society, and as beliefs about right and wrong conduct as well as good or bad character. Even though morality is the subject matter of ethics, it is most often used interchangeably with 'ethics'.

The ideas and beliefs about moral conduct are articulated, analysed, and interpreted by the moral thinkers of the society. Nchumuru society, as organised and functioning human communities, has undoubtedly come up with ethical systems, values, principles, rules that are intended to guide social and moral behaviour. Moral principles and rules may emerge from or evolved by a particular human society; even so, they are principles that can and do apply to all human societies inasmuch as they respond to basic human needs, interests, and purposes. According to Gyekye (2010:2-3) when the Akan moralist maintains, for example, that 'To possess virtue is better than gold,' or 'When virtue founds a town, the town thrives and abides,' what that moralist is simply saying is that virtue is better than riches. To this Akan moralist that statement made is a moral principle that transcends his own community and applies not only to other towns in his nation but, indeed, to all human societies.

Krige and Krige in Forde (1954:78) observe that right conduct is relative always to the human situation and morality is oriented not from any absolute standards of honesty or truth but from the social good in each situation. Conduct that promotes smooth relationships, that upholds the social structure, is good; conduct that runs counter to smooth social relationships is bad. Nana Akpamanj II, chief of Kabeese remarks that the greatest happiness and good of any Nchumuru community was the end and aim of each member of the language community. This was the standard of goodness, and in harmony with, and conformity to, this end must the moral conduct be moulded.⁶⁰

⁶⁰ Interview with Nana Akpamanj, Kabeese Owure (chief) on 5th August, 2012 at Kabeese.

Nana Ndese observes that among the Nchumuru and in other African moral systems, a moral failure would be put down to the lack of a good character (*daa timaa*). In other words, the ability to act in accordance with the moral principles and rules of the Nchumuru society requires the possession of a good character. Thus, in the context of the activities of the moral life, in the decisions to obey moral rules, in the struggle to do the right thing and to avoid the wrong conduct, in one's intention to carry out a moral duty, the quality of a person's character is of ultimate consequence. It is from a person's character that all his or her actions good or bad radiate: the performance of good or bad acts depends on the state of one's character. Wrongdoing is put down to a person's bad character.⁶¹

Mbiti (1982:1) and many other authors have said that the African is “incurably religious.” Because God is held by the Nchumuru people not only to be the overlord of the human society but also to have a superbly moral character, and because the ancestors are also supposed to be interested in the welfare of the society, including the moral life of the individual, religion constitutes part of the sanctions that are in play in matters of moral practice. Thus, religion cannot be totally banished from the domain of moral practice. But central or basic to the Nchumuru morality is character, for the success of the moral life is held to be a function of the quality of an individual's personal life.

According to Nana Awaase a moral conception of personhood is held in Nchumuru ethical life, the conception that there are certain basic moral norms and ideals to which the conduct of the individual human being, if he is a person, ought to conform.⁶² The recognition in the (African) and by extension Nchumuru ethical traditions of all human beings as brothers and sisters by reason of the common humanity is indeed a lofty moral ideal that must be cherished and made a vital or robust feature of global ethics in this contemporary world. It is a bulwark against developing bigoted attitudes toward peoples of different cultures or skin colours who are, also, members of the universal human family called race, who all are created by God and in his likeness and image (Gen 1:27).

⁶¹ Interview with Nana Ndese 1, late Owure (chief) of Kumdi on 20th January, 2009 at Kumdi.

⁶² Interview with Nana Awaase, Clan head and an Elder of Kumdi SDA Church at Bonbare on 25th January, 2005.

In traditional Nchumuru society there were no atheists. This is because religion, in the indigenous Nchumuru culture, was not an independent institution. It is an integral and inseparable part of the entire culture. Religion in the African sense was practical. One's entire action is reflective of one's religious concepts and practices as is seen in the ordering of society. This is because social morality is dependent on religion, and what Idowu (1962:146) says of the Yoruba can pass for many African people including the Nchumuru. He says:

With the Yoruba, morality is certainly the fruit of religion. They do not make any attempt to separate the two; and it is impossible, for them to do so without disastrous consequences.

What Idowu affirms is the fact that African religion produces African morality. According to Nana Ndese I, the traditional Nchumuru culture fashions moral and religious attitudes to life. All were interrelated in reality. The result of inseparability of religion from morality thus becomes difficult. There are laid down moral principles and determined code of conduct. Custom laid down the code of law which established the nature of right doings and custom established penalties and taboos against malefactors. Moral sanctions were mainly religious sanctions, and these sanctions were truly effective.⁶³

Christian morality has its foundation in the Bible from which Christian theology is derived. Therefore the writer agrees with Sayers (1949:28) when she said:

It ... useless for Christians to talk about the importance of Christian morality, unless they are prepared to take their stand upon the fundamentals of Christian theology... It is fatal to let people suppose that Christianity is only a mode of feeling; it is virtually necessary to insist that it is first and foremost a rational explanation of the universe.

This statement by Sayers has meaning in the fact there can be no mention of Christian morality without talking about talking Christianity. The two are intertwined and inseparable. Christian theology is the foundation of Christian morality. There are many questions and issues that concern the Nchumuru Christian and the church in Nchumuru land. The problems associated with Nchumuru Christian morality are a part and parcel of Nchumuru Christianity in its entirety. Nchumuru morality

⁶³ Interview with Nana Ndese I, late Owure (chief) of Kumdi on 20th January, 2009

significantly mirrors its worldview, beliefs and values. Questions of right and wrong are answered by the theological concepts of ontology, spirituality, anthropology, and etcetera.

As this study develops further and explores the coming of Christianity into Nchumuru culture, the birth of a Bible translation ministry, the subsequent production of a complete Bible, the various Scripture impact interventions and the several converts made for the Church in Nchumuru land as a result, the question to ask is; How does the Nchumuru Christian moral experience square with the requirements of biblical Christian morality?

4.3 The Coming of Christianity into Nchumuru Culture

The earliest known contacts between the Nchumuru and missionaries dates as far back as 1876, when the Basel Mission directed attention to Salaga. There was however no direct contact by the Basel Mission with Nchumuru people.

Berinyuu (1997:3) reports of Rev. Otto Rytz's trip to the area south of Tamale, east and west of Salaga in 1948. He was impressed by the missionary possibilities in that vast area. The Worldwide Evangelisation for Christ (WEC) Mission also had a station (Leprosarium) at Kpandai. Rev. Otto Rytz is said to have settled at Salaga. He regularly went to the neighbouring village Kpembu to gather a number of older pupils of the Government School for teaching, where a number of these pupils were Nchumuru attending school there. He visited Lonto for the first time in 1949 an Nchumuru town and one Papa Nayo an Nchumuru is reported to have been the first to put his name on the list of candidates for baptism.

On the Volta side, Lumsden (1973:140) reports that the Roman Catholic Mission (Society of African Missions - SAM) reportedly had to "force" its way into the Krachi area in 1925, because outside influence from Church and school were controlled by the colonial government. Roman Catholic priests started visiting the Nchumuru area of the Krachi District in the first quarter of the 20th century. They established a small catechist school at Krachi in 1925. They started catechism classes at Begyamose in 1932 and at Akaniem in 1935 and 1937 respectively, all Nchumuru communities. Nseakyure (1999:39) reports that Father Sheltinga paid occasional visits to the

Gbedes in 1958.⁶⁴ The Protestants had opened a school years before at the old town of Boafore. Other Churches began work among the Nchumuru at a later stage of the period. The WEC Mission operated in the area from 1940, while the Seventh Day Adventist (SDA) entered into Kpandai in 1960 and established their first church in the north at Kumdi the same year.⁶⁵

According to Nseakyure (1999:40) across the Volta River there was a Methodist presence at Yeji in 1939, a request by the Presbyterians and Methodists to open a united school at Yeji was refused by government. The churches wanted to open schools to be staffed by Christian teachers, but the government's policy seemed to be in favour of a purely secular system of education in the North. A Methodist church was begun in Yeji in 1940.

Several other churches continued work among the Nchumuru at the later stages of the period. It is observed from the brief overview of the transmission of Christian faith into Nchumuru culture or the first contact between Nchumuru people and missionaries that it was not an impressive story. It is indeed a chequered story.

At the time of the dedication of the Chumburung New Testament in August 1989 there were about seventy (70) churches within the Nchumuru area of the Northern and Volta Regions. However as at August 1999 there had been an additional number of forty (40) churches. This brings the number of Roman Catholic, Mainline Protestant and Pentecostal and Charismatic churches to about one hundred and fourteen (114) churches in the whole of the traditional area. By 2003 a few more churches had joined this number bringing the updated number of churches in 2003 to one hundred and forty (140) in all. However following the dedication of the complete Bible in November 2010, Evans Demuyakor reports that the number has more than doubled.⁶⁶ He further submits that following the showing of the Chumburung Jesus film across several Nchumuru towns and villages the church's scope has significantly improved. Details of this will be discussed in the succeeding subsections.

⁶⁴ The Gbedes are an Nchumuru community that had been in Dahomey (modern Benin) for the previous 150 years. They returned home under their chief Anyiname III, and made a new settlement at Anyinamaye, near Boafore now on the shores of the Volta Lake in the 1950's. An Nchumuru community still remains in Benin, speaking the Chumburung language and maintaining links with the homeland by travel to and fro.

⁶⁵ Nana Awaase, *op. cit.*

⁶⁶ Interview with Evans Demuyakor on 5th September, 2012 at Kumdi. He is the Chumburung Jesus Film Project team leader.

See Appendix E, table 1 for update information on the state of the church in Nchumuru land with figures of Roman Catholic, Mainline Protestant and Pentecostal and Charismatic churches from 1960 to 2011.

NB: It should be noted from table 1, Appendix E that between 1960 and 1988 there were just a few churches in the entire Nchumuru area. However, following the dedication of the Chumburung New Testament in August 1989 and subsequently the dedication of the whole Bible in November 2010 several more churches have found themselves within the traditional area.⁶⁷ Hence the impact of mother tongue Scriptures in contextualising Christianity among the Nchumuru cannot be overemphasised. It must be noted however that the Scriptures in the Chumburung language as a book is not the only factor which brought about the transformation the Nchumuru people have witnessed in their Christianity, but as people learn to read and write the Chumburung language through literacy classes, they soon showed an interest in reading the Scriptures in their mother tongue. Apart from literacy there are several other interventions like the Scripture engagement activities in print, audio and video forms which helped to bring about this transformation as seen in section 4.5 of this work.

4.4 The Story of the Chumburung Translation Project

The Chumburung Translation Project, the seed of a community-based people oriented ministry sown in Chumburung land in 1972, has blossomed and expanded and born fruit. Previously, the Chumburung language was unwritten, people could not read and write except those educated in English. But in 1989 a complete New Testament was dedicated, and in 2010 the complete Chumburung Bible was dedicated. Many small books have been published, stories, histories, legends and proverbs and some on practical issues, as well as primers to teach people to read and write their own language. A two-way dictionary was also published. Literacy classes have been an ongoing feature of the programme from 1977 to the present day. God's word is having effect on the people in their daily lives.

⁶⁷ List of churches in the Nchumuru area compiled by Bernard Aborkugyah, the Chumburung Project Scripture Engagement coordinator.

Sanneh (2009:202) in recollecting what Professor Nyembezi noted in his critical survey of the history of Zulu literature, mentioned that the latter paid due recognition to the missionaries and their local agents' efforts in language development in Africa when he said: "It was not simply that missionaries concerned themselves primarily with grammars, dictionaries and the translation of the Scriptures, some of them recorded folk-lore, proverbs and valuable historical materials" (Nyembezi 1961:3). This observation perfectly represents what took place among the Nchumuru of Ghana.

The translation of the Chumburung Bible did not follow the usual pattern for translation work in a particular language project. By 'usual' the writer means one team doing all the various aspects of the work. In 1972, Norman and Barbara Price members of Wycliffe - USA, seconded to the Ghana Institute of Linguistics, Literacy and Bible Translation (GILLBT) came to Kumdi in Chumburung land to begin linguistic, literacy and Bible translation work among the people. They soon recruited a language helper in the person of Stephen Okoni Afari. A little later Norman Price was made Director of GILLBT, and so the project remained without help, until Keir and Gillian Hansford succeeded them in 1976; they were from Wycliffe, UK, also on secondment to GILLBT. They soon settled down and with the help of a language helper in the person of Isaac Kumah Demuyakor got to work straight away in learning and analysing the language and developing a suitable alphabet for Chumburung. From this Gillian Hansford developed literacy materials and began the programme of literacy classes, with help of Johnson Anemamuri as the first facilitator, and local people as teachers. These classes have continued to the present day. Keir Hansford analysed and wrote up a grammar of the language, which was later used as a foundation for his Ph.D.

The translation of the New Testament started with this team and soon Evans Demuyakor, a cousin of Isaac Demuyakor was recruited as the second translator. Barker (1986:266) reports that by 1983 as a result of the Translation Project among the people, Chumburung was taught in middle schools for the first time in Nchumuru land. When the first draft of the NT was complete and partly consultant checked, the Hansfords returned to the UK in 1982, but continued to work towards the completion and publication of the NT, based in UK, but with frequent long visits. During that time Keith and Ruth Snider from Wycliffe Canada supervised the checking and the literacy programme. Keith's interest was in phonology and comparative Guang, and

later became a Phonology consultant. As can be seen, the translation programme for the Chumburung New Testament was carried out by several teams. The Chumburung New Testament, translated by Isaac and Evans Demuyakor with exegetical assistance from the Hansfords was dedicated in August 1989 at Banda, also a Chumburung town.

After this period the focus was turned to literacy development and later on Scripture Engagement, i.e. the promotion of the use of the translated Scriptures in the churches within the communities.

By February, 1999 the need for the Old Testament was felt, and the Hansfords were again asked to be the exegetes and supervisors of the translation, under the umbrella of GILLBT. The first translator recruited was Bernard Asewie, an alumnus of the Christian Service University College, and later the two older translators Isaac Demuyakor and Evans Demuyakor. The Hansfords remained based in the UK with annual visits to work with the translators, till the OT was translated and checked and the NT was revised. The complete Bible was typeset by Dr. Steve Pillinger with the Hansfords' assistance, was printed in South Korea, and was dedicated at Kumdi in November 2010 with great celebrations.

The work is ongoing, funds are raised, literacy classes are held, books are printed, the Scriptures in the mother tongue both in print and non-print media (audio and video) are being promoted, churches flourish, and workers join the task. God has carried the work through times of financial difficulty and slow progress. He has provided joy and fellowship for those involved. He has touched many people's lives calling them to his work and giving them the gifts to help with the Scripture Engagement work. The project currently has three main areas: literacy, Scripture Engagement and gender and development.

According to Sanneh (2009:191) missionaries were more anticipated in Scripture translation than any other field. The missionaries prepared well enough in the use of tools of language, just as in worship and conduct as well as and in the practices of their forbears. This is evident in all of Africa and in most parts of the world as testimony of their longsuffering. God is the ground of existence, the one in whom "we live, and move, and have our being" (Acts 17:28). Throughout the centuries the great missionaries embraced this truth of the Gospel and this rekindled their spirits into living flames into the business of Bible translation. It was this light that preceded the

missionaries and their efforts in that ministry of bringing God's word to the people in their heart languages, including the Chumburung language.

On the other hand Elwood (1980:75) points out:

Asian theology cannot afford to be purely academic and philosophical, but rather it is valid only if it is produced not primarily in between piles of books, but in the "field" where it is put to the test every day.

This is also true of African theology even as it engages with the cultures of the people, with the aim of transforming those cultures for Christ and this means theology must not only exist in books but put into practice in a real human context. For example in communities, markets, homes, hospitals and etcetera.

The question arises, how do practical theologians do theology, and how is this different from other ways of doing theology? Their central question is: "What is God's Word to humans in their particular situations?" Practical theologians assume that God is a missionary God, that mission is the central theme in God's acts on earth, and that all Christians are to be a part of this mission. They also assume that all humans live in different historical and socio-cultural settings, and that the Gospel must be made known to them in the particularity of these contexts. Peterson (1997:185) writes: "This is the Gospel focus: you are the man; you are the woman. The gospel is never about everybody else; it is always about you, about me. The gospel is never truth in general; it's always a truth in specific. The Gospel is never a commentary on ideas or culture or conditions; it's always about actual persons, actual pains, actual troubles, actual sin; you, me; who you are and what you've done; whom I am and what I've done." This means that the Gospel of Christ is about real people, people who are in existence and not about some abstract things.

The task of the practical theologian is to translate and communicate the Gospel in the language and culture of real people in the particularity of their lives so that it may transform them, their societies and their cultures into what God intends for them to be.

4.5 The Scripture Engagement (SE) Programme

Translation of the word of God into the Chumburung language brings the Bible into Nchumuru culture in order to redirect and reclaim the culture for its original purpose

by opening it up to Christ. This begins the conversion of Nchumuru culture. The writer argue further that in fact it's Christianity that seems at one time to be utterly opposed to Nchumuru culture, completely at loggerheads with it, because it communicated the Gospel in a foreign language. Big things happen once the Gospel gets going in society. Hence the importance of the Scripture Engagement programmes.

This programme was an initiative of the Ghana Institute of Linguistics, Literacy and Bible Translation (GILLBT) for evangelism and teaching. This programme became part of the Chumburung Translation Project in the 1980's. The Chumburung Translation Project promotes the use of Scripture, especially the mother tongue Bible, through print and non-print media. Gospel and culture workshops on pertinent issues like witchcraft, and traditional festivals are held for church and community leaders. Bible study outlines in the mother tongues are produced for churches and the New Testament has been recorded onto audio cassettes. Listening groups are organised in communities and churches for people to listen, interpret and make relevant application to their needs. Traditional singers are trained to compose Scripture songs in indigenous tunes and instruments. The music serves as a point of contact to the elderly traditional Nchumuru people by Christians, to evangelise them. Mother tongue Scripture memorisation is encouraged in the churches. Workshops are held for Church leaders in biblical interpretation and application. The translation project and the Church in Nchumuru land have come to realise over the years that the translation of the Bible into the Chumburung language alone is not enough. Deliberate efforts should be made to encourage churches and individual Christians, especially within the traditional area, to use them. This is necessary because of the nature of the Church today.

The Scripture Engagement programme also encourages churches within the traditional area towards unity in their operational area. This normally leads on to the formation of local council of churches (LCC). This unity of the churches inevitably affects the communities in which these churches operate positively. This role of the Scripture Engagement programme can be seen in what William Barclay in Kato (1985:22-23) has rightly stated:

It is not Jesus' purpose that we should turn all men into one nation, but that there should be Christian Indians and Christian Africans, whose unity lies in

their Christianity. The oneness in Christ is in Christ and not in any external change. The unity in Christ produces Christians whose Christianity transcends all local and racial differences; it produces men who are friends with each other because they are friends with God; it produces men who are one, because they meet in the presence of God whom they have access.

It also encourages them to translate and sponsor the translation of Scripture materials into Chumburung. The fact that Christianity has taken deep roots in the Southern Ghanaian society is due mainly to the translation of the Scriptures into the mother tongue. Literacy classes are organised to encourage the use of the translated Scriptures. How can the Scriptures be used if the people are not literate in the mother tongue. Nseakyure (1999:69) observed that pioneers like Johannes G. Christaller, Clement Anderson Akrofi, Johannes Zimmermann and others did not only help Ghanaian languages to receive their first breath of life in written form, but they also saw literacy work as an essential part of Christian mission. The writer who himself was one time Scripture Engagement coordinator and Project manager of the Chumburung Translation Project, observed during some of his visits to churches on the programme that people listened with enthusiasm and understanding as he read and preached from the Chumburung Bible.

Printing of portions of Scripture in the form of newsletters is being encouraged. This will help improve the skills of reading of the people. Research into some cultural issues where people are having problems with their Christian lives is ongoing and Bible Study materials and outlines are being produced for use by churches in the traditional area. According to Akorsah (2005:4) whenever the appropriate indigenous cultural categories and idioms are used in mother tongue Scriptures, they become a powerful tool for indigenous interpretations and theologies. Theology is not done in a vacuum; it arises out of a result of addressing or answering people's pertinent questions concerning life and its meaning.

The impact of the mother tongue Scriptures in contextualising Christianity in the Nchumuru culture in Ghana would be explored more clearly in the succeeding sub-sections, comprising the programme of activities under the Scripture Engagement programme. When the Bible is translated into African languages, then an avenue is created for indigenous African wisdom to integrate with Christian theologies. For example, early missionaries among the Nchumuru in Ghana told them that it is not right for Christians to be drunk. Even though some were not happy about this

teaching, they tried to cope with it without question. Then they got the whole Bible in 2010 and started reading the Old Testament stories. For the first time, the community understood why they cannot afford to be drunk as Christians, reading the stories of some biblical characters like Noah and Lot and how the state of drunkenness affected them.⁶⁸

4.5.1 Gospel and Culture Workshops

These workshops are organised around various cultural themes. Some of these themes include widowhood rites, polygyny (polygamy), witchcraft, ancestral spirits, death and the hereafter, and other ethical and moral issues like respect, doing good, protection and etcetera. The main objective is to learn to study traditional rituals, looking at underlying beliefs as well as practices. Try to compare one specific ritual that is practiced today among the Nchumuru or for that matter any other African people in the light of Scripture, seeing which parts of the ritual are compatible with Scripture, which parts need modifying, and which parts are incompatible with Christian belief. Opportunity should be given for discussions on how churches can develop and use new rituals which will help their members to contextualise their Christianity as an integrated part of life.

Most often than not, these issues are issues of engagement. By studying the various cultural themes by the leaders of the various churches and comparing their teachings to the Bible, the groups are able to come out with the issues within culture that do impinge on Christian faith and practice. This exercise is able to help offer scriptural interpretation to issues of culture, because the bottom line is the centrality of Scripture in researching into issues of Gospel and culture. In doing these workshops, the concern is to practically pass culture through Scripture for its light and shade to be discerned.

Through these workshops, the Bible study materials in the mother tongue, produced on various cultural themes are made available for use by the churches. This is very

⁶⁸ Story confirmed by Elder Evans Demuyakor, a mother tongue translator of the Chumburung Bible.

helpful in handling questions of people in the churches who are often faced with some cultural issues which they are unable to address or solve. If people know the real meaning behind the rites of widowhood or beliefs associated with ancestral spirits and the position of Scripture on such beliefs and practices, the myths surrounding such beliefs and practices are removed and their fears overcome. Hence they would be in a position to live their Christian lives relevantly within such a culture or cultures. It is hoped that as new areas of the engagement of Gospel and culture are explored, Christianity would take root in Nchumuru culture and become eventually a religion of the people. They would own and live it.

According to Bediako (2001:2) the engagement of Gospel and culture is about the conversion of cultures; the turning to Christ and the turning over to Christ of all that is there in the African culture (more specifically in this case Nchumuru culture), including the people who live within that culture. This engagement as per this study is about the Nchumuru and everything that is around them within their culture which has shaped them as a people when Jesus meets them, so that the elements of their cultural identity are brought within the orbit of discipleship. The discipleship of any people's group is to Christ who is Lord over them and everyone else.

The centrality of Scripture again Bediako (2001:2) notes that it means more than the importance of texts of the Bible and also more than the importance of certain verses and chapters that one may quote as proof text to support a particular position one holds because of one's denominational or traditional background. The centrality of Scripture is more fundamental and its significance much larger. Scripture is more comprehensive and more over-arching than just the sum of passages of Scripture. Clearly Scripture is the hermeneutic or the interpreter of who humanity is in the specific concrete sense of what humanity is in all human cultures and traditions.

4.5.2 The Faith Comes By Hearing (FCBH) Project

The FCBH is a joint programme between Theovision International and the Chumburung Translation Project through GILLBT. This has to do with the recording of the Chumburung New Testament on cassette. The Chumburung Translation Project in conjunction with Theovision International recorded the Chumburung New Testament on cassette in March, 2002 at Kumdi. The programme was launched in August, 2005 at Banda also an Nchumuru community in the Volta Region.

This is not just a recording of Scripture read chapter by chapter or verse-by-verse; it is a recording which has been programmed in a more creative way. The following presentations are adapted to make Scripture come alive. These include multiple voices/modified drama, thematic readings or topics, sectional readings followed by questions and answers, verses set to music, especially new melodies composed within the indigenous (or locally created) musical system. The cassettes produced have been put to the charge of the Scripture Engagement team who have formed listening groups in the churches and within the communities to listen to the cassettes at appointed times and places within each week. This programme has helped to teach non literate Nchumuru people the word of God. It has been a great resource to those who will never be literate. Because many tribal people make decisions in community, an important time of discussion follows each listening session. The trained facilitators conduct follow-ups session, ensuring accountability and programme effectiveness.

Pastors and leaders are asked to commit to listen through the New Testament with their people for at least 30 minutes a week. It also promotes interest in mother tongue Scriptures and also supports and fosters the use of those Scriptures. This has helped the Church to reach out to non-readers with the Gospel and it has also boosted literacy among the people. It could be seen from the above that the FCBH programme which is being duly patronised and well coordinated with the various listening groups in place, the Gospel is making the necessary impact on the lives of the people in Nchumuru culture. Bernard Aborkugyah recounts on numerous occasions how the FCBH programme has caused tremendous changes in the lives of many Nchumurus in the traditional area, making them turn to faith in Christ.⁶⁹

Current estimates indicate that two-thirds of the world's population is oral communicators. The majority of people living in underdeveloped countries transmit beliefs, heritage, value, and other important information by means of stories, proverbs, poetry, chants, music, dances, and ceremonies. Ironically, an estimated 90% of the world's Christian workers presenting the Gospel use highly literate communication styles. This makes it difficult, if not impossible, for oral people to hear and understand the message and communicate it to others.⁷⁰

⁶⁹ Interview with Bernard Aborkugyah, the SE coordinator of the Chumburung Project at Dambai on 2nd September, 2012.

⁷⁰ Accessed online at www.faithcomebyhearing.com on 12th September, 2012.

The Faith Comes By Hearing (FCBH) programme is introduced to churches and communities through the Scripture Engagement (SE) workers of the Chumburung Translation Project with support from FCBH facilitators who are indigenous church workers who know the culture and language of the people. They oversee FCBH listening groups within the Nchumuru communities and churches in both the Northern and Volta regions of Ghana. Participants in the listening groups listen to the pure Word of God in their heart language, most for the first time in their lives. According Aborkugyah, after hearing Scripture in the mother tongue, participants often exclaim, “God speaks our language!”⁷¹ By listening through the entire New Testament and participating in discussion groups, those involved with the programme begin to internalise God’s truth. By offering God’s word in an oral form and in the heart language, disciples of Christ are made.

Culturally appropriate categories and idioms serve as connecting cords to the hearts of mother tongue speakers. Translation therefore, has great influence on biblical interpretation and theologies. A blind man listened through the Chumburung audio New Testament and what struck him was the fact that Jesus also had ancestors. This was after he had listened to the genealogy of Jesus. He got convinced that Jesus has existed on earth because his ancestors have been listed and so he decided to believe in him.⁷² Ancestors are very important in Nchumuru primal worldview and because an indigenous category was used in the translation, he did not have to go too far to walk on familiar ground. This is a clear demonstration that the sort of indigenous categories and idioms used in translation impact indigenous biblical interpretation, theologies and even conversion.

4.5.3 The Jesus Film Project

Based on the Gospel of Luke, the "JESUS" film was translated into the Chumburung language in 2004 by the Great Commission Movement of Ghana (GCMG), a chapter of Campus Crusades for Christ International (CGFCI). Since October 2009 when the film was launched in Kumdi in Nchumuru country, it has been shown in over forty

⁷¹ Bernard Aborkugyah, *op. cit.*

⁷² Interview with Sampson on 1st December 2010 at Chakori.

Nchumuru communities in the two regions of Ghana, thus the Northern and Volta Regions. This allows God's Word to speak to the people in the language they know and understand. Evans Demuyakor mentioned that as a result of the film and through the Lord's grace an unprecedented spiritual harvest is being reaped beyond measure.⁷³

Not only is the "JESUS" film one of effective evangelism, but also a powerful tool for expanding the church worldwide. Hundreds of churches, missions groups and denominational agencies, both indigenous and global, are also seeing this tool ignite the launch and growth of thousands of new churches. One denominational leader, whose ministry has benefited from the Chumburung "JESUS" film for more than three years, has said that its value in accelerating their church-planting efforts is equivalent to "fishing with dynamite!"⁷⁴ God is using this film in powerful ways to reach people and build His church in Nchumuru country. And yet, a lot more people remain in spiritual darkness. Many more have never had the opportunity to hear God's message of salvation and say "yes" to Christ. As these efforts continue and Jesus is shown in the remaining communities Nchumuru people will come face to face with him, because he communicates to them in their heart language and they will be able to relate to him.

The Jesus film in Chumburung have made such great impact on an elder in the Evangelical Church of Ghana (ECG) at Chakori, an Nchumuru community that he mentioned that for Jesus to speak the Chumburung language, is enough proof that he loves the Nchumuru people and because of that he stands resolute in his faith barring all life's challenges. He remarked: "I'm even prepared to die for him if I had the opportunity and nothing can separate me from his love. I will serve him till the end of time."⁷⁵ This means that the Scriptures in the mother tongue can cause people to draw closer to their maker and take pride in the fact that their language is worthy of God's attention.

Two members of the Chumburung Jesus film team began work among a people group in Bankamba, an Nchumuru community by showing the film to an audience.

⁷³ Evans Demuyakor op. cit.

⁷⁴ Interview with Rev. Jonathan Sapeh, resident minister of the Christian Church, Kumdi on 6th September, 2012.

⁷⁵ Interview with Elder Ishmael at Chakori on 10th August, 2012.

As they showed "JESUS" to the local community, they watched the crowd grow excited about the miracles Jesus performed. Following the film, most of the people came to faith in Christ and surrendered themselves to his Lordship.⁷⁶

On another occasion Evans, the leader of the Chumburung Jesus film along with 3 of his colleagues travelled to one of the Nchumuru villages in the Volta region called Anyinamaye to show the film. Contextualised for Nchumurus, because it is in their mother tongue, after the film the people were taught on how to grow in their relationship with Christ and on how to be equipped to become fruitful members of the body of Christ. Although Evans sensed that many villagers desired to know more about Christ, they feared being stigmatised if they became Christians. Evans and his team showed the film to more than 105 residents and noted that the crowd became very quiet as the movie proceeded. Afterward, 90 people indicated decisions to accept Christ and several renewed their commitments to Him. Encouraged by this response, Evans spent many days going from house to house sharing the Gospel. "I thank God so much," he exclaimed, "for this movie which is making my evangelism to the rural folks very easy and enjoyable"⁷⁷

A number of mission experts have acclaimed the film as one of the greatest evangelistic tools of all time. Since 1979 more than 200 million men, women and children worldwide have indicated decisions to follow Jesus after viewing the film. In addition, through hundreds of partners an estimated 10+ million decisions have been made as the film "JESUS" is used extensively by the Body of Christ worldwide.⁷⁸

4.5.4 The God's Story Project

The Bible is basically and overall a narrative, an immense, sprawling, capacious narrative. Stories hold pride of place in revealing God and God's way to mankind. It follows that storytellers in any Christian community carry a major responsibility for keeping listeners alert to these stories and the way they work. The best storytellers

⁷⁶ Interview with Isaac Demuyakor at Kumdi on 5th September, 2012.

⁷⁷ Evans Demuyakor, op. cit.

⁷⁸ Accessed online on 10th August 2012 at www.jesusfilm.org.

learn their craft from Jesus, famous for using story to involve his listeners in recognising and dealing with God in their lives. In both the Old and New Testaments of the Christian Scriptures, story is the primary means of bringing God's Word to people. People of the Nchumuru community can be most grateful, for story is the most accessible form of speech. In that culture young and old love stories. Literate and illiterate alike tell and listen to stories. Neither stupidity nor sophistication puts anyone in that culture outside the magnetic field of story. The only serious rival to story in terms of accessibility and attraction is song, and there are plenty of those in the Bible too.

The God's story project was launched in Nchumuru land at Kumdi in October 2011. The appropriateness of a story is that it is a major means of bringing people God's Word. Story doesn't just tell the audience something and leave it there; story invites their participation. A good storyteller gathers the audience into the story. The audience feel the emotions, get caught up in the drama, identify with the characters, see into nooks and crannies of life that they had overlooked, realise there is more to this business of being human than they had yet explored. If the storyteller is good, doors and windows open. Our biblical storytellers were good, in both the moral and aesthetic sense of them. Isaac reports that groups are formed in the churches and communities in the Nchumuru traditional area, God's story in the Chumburung language from creation to eternity is listened to on tapes and CD players.⁷⁹ This has become a useful tool for evangelism among the people, bringing God's message of hope and redemption to non-literate members of the communities. It calls them to faith in Christ and gives them hope for tomorrow in the Lord.

The Reverend Sam Jobo observed that the God's Story project in Chumburung as well as in any other language creates honest stories based on the Bible from Genesis to Revelation and respect the audience freedom; they don't manipulate them, don't force them, and don't distract them from life. They show the audience a spacious world in which God creates and saves and blesses. First through their imaginations and then through their faith, they offer them a place in the story, the audience are invited into this large story that takes place under the broad skies of God's purposes in contrast to the gossipy anecdotes that they cook up in the stuffy closets of the self. Reverend Sam observes further that stories invite the audience

⁷⁹ Interview with Isaac Demuyakor on 20th August, 2012 at Kumdi.

in as participants in something larger than their sin-defined needs, in something truer than their culture-stunted ambitions.⁸⁰ One enters these stories and recognises oneself as a participant, whether one is willing or unwilling, in the life of God.

According to Dinkins:

...The biblical way is to tell a story and invite us, 'live into this, this is what it looks like to be human in this God-made and God-ruled world; this is what is involved in becoming and maturing as a human being.' We don't have to fit into prefabricated moral and mental or religious boxes before we are admitted into the company of God.⁸¹

God takes every human being as seriously just as one is and given a place in his story, for it is, after all, God's story. No one is the leading character in the story of his life, God is. God is the larger context and plot in which all human stories find themselves.

4.5.5 The Scripture Engagement and Leadership Training Programme

The Scripture Engagement and Leadership Training (SELT) has been developed by the GILLBT Scripture Engagement Department and adapted by the Chumburung Translation Project since 2000, aimed at exposing and training especially rural Church leaders who usually do not have opportunities for any such training because of their location. It must be noted that the Nchumuru traditional area is located in rural Ghana. This is a sustained series of training given out to the church leadership in the area to help address leadership deficiencies in the churches and also expose them to the Scripture Engagement tools available for use. This has afforded the churches the opportunity to effectively use the mother tongue Scriptures to provide a solid and sustained understanding of the word of God in the native tongue of the people. The essence of this programme is mainly threefold, namely to train in relevant Christian leadership principles, expose church leaders in the Nchumuru area to relevant and suitable Scripture Engagement tools and lastly to assess and monitor the use of already introduced tools and the translated Scriptures.

⁸⁰ Interview with Rev. Sam Jobo, Nchumburung OT Translation Project member at Borae No.2, on 3rd September, 2012.

⁸¹ Statement attributed to Larry Dinkins as indicated by information accessed online at <http://www.simplythestory> on 12th September, 2012. Larry Dinkins is Overseas Missionary Fellowship Missionary to Thailand.

The SELT Training Programme on the whole has been extremely helpful to the churches in the Nchumuru area and the Translation Project as well. Also, SELT has the great potential of reaching out to the large traditional communities in Nchumuru who are desirous to hear the word of God through the use of oral Bible Storying and drama techniques, for example the Jesus film. Aborkugyah reports that one church leader by name Ɔse-egye-ato of Dambai remarked after attending a SELT workshop thus: "The workshop is marvelous; it has given me new ideas on how to make the mother tongue Scriptures more meaningful to my congregation."⁸²

4.5.6 Attempts at contextualisation of Christianity in the Nchumuru culture of Ghana

"Contextualisation" is a new term imported into theology to express a deeper concept than indigenisation does. The term is understood to mean making concepts or ideas relevant to Christian practices; it is an effort to express the never changing word of God in ever changing modes for relevance.

The New Testament has shown the pattern for cultural adaptations. The incarnation itself is a form of contextualisation. The Son of God condescended to pitch his tent among us so it is possible for us to be redeemed (John 1:14). Kato (1985:24) observed that the unapproachable Yahweh whom no man has ever seen and lived with, has become the object of sight and touch through the incarnation (John 14:19; I John 1:1). The moving hymn on the humiliation and exaltation of Jesus Christ the Lord (Phil. 2:5-8) was evidently an incentive to the Apostle Paul in his understanding of the Ministry to become 'all things to all men'. This in turn should motivate the Gospel preachers and teachers to make the Gospel relevant in every situation everywhere, without compromising it.

God speaks the world's languages; he comes into every home, sings the tunes of people's music, and above all brings healing to everyone and every culture that is willing and ready to receive him. This is the very nature of Christianity and its ability to express itself in the local language and culture and by so doing reflects the cultural and linguistic identity of all peoples of the world. However for a very long time the church has ignored its cultural and linguistic diversity. It has not come to

⁸² Bernard Aborkugyah, *op. cit.*

terms adequately with the theological and practical implications of the diversity of languages and cultures in God's plan. The Chumburung Translation Project and the Church's efforts at contextualising the Gospel message among the Nchumuru people through the use of the mother tongue Scriptures is geared at encouraging the people to communicate with God in their own language, integrate the Christian and cultural identities so that their worldview is transformed to reflect the values of the kingdom of God. The writer has outlined and discussed the various Scripture impact activities that have resulted from the translation of the Bible into the Chumburung language. The translation of the Bible into mother tongues and the appropriate use of those Scriptures enhance biblical interpretation and mutually impact the church in Africa today.

Following the dedication of the Chumburung New Testament in August 1989, and subsequently the dedication of the entire Bible in November, 2010 the Chumburung Translation Project through its ongoing literacy and Scripture Engagement programmes in conjunction with the church has carried out and is still making attempts at contextualising the Gospel message among the people. One area of concern has to do with the language, the medium of communicating the message in the local language which is the mother tongue. Encouragement has been given to pastors and priests who are non-Nchumuru to give priority to the preaching or teaching of the word in the local language and Nchumuru pastors and church leaders working within the traditional area have been encouraged to do same. The message is not only to be preached or taught in the language best understood by the congregation, but the terminology of theology should be expressed the way common people can understand. Nevertheless, theological meaning is not to be compromised for the sake of comprehension. Instead of employing terms that would water down the Gospel, the congregation is taught the original meaning of biblical terms. See appendix G for a sample of key terms from the Chumburung Bible for easy comprehension.⁸³ The Chumburung Translation Project Scripture Engagement programme in consultation with the churches in the area organises various Scripture impact activities for the church and its leadership. There is also the composition of music based on Scripture passages adapted to local traditional music styles for use by churches. There is also drama and story telling. The New Testament has been

⁸³ A Sample of key terms from [A Dictionary of Key terms from Chumburung New Testament](#), by Hansford K. L., Demuyakor I.A.K. and Demuyakor E. A. K. N. (Tamale: GILLBT, 1997).

recorded on cassette, which is being used for the Faith Comes by Hearing Programme. The Jesus film has already been dubbed in Chumburung and the film is being shown in many Nchumuru communities. The results have been fantastic as seen already. The church in Nchumuru country is undergoing growth and progress and many join its fold as the days roll on. Nobody can under estimate the power of God's word in the mother tongue. Sanneh (2009:61) observed:

If Christ could be at home in Greek philosophy and thereby reinvigorate the ideas and values of a pagan order, there could be no bar to his performing a comparable role among other peoples in other time.

This presupposes that Christ eternal significance as Saviour of the world is more vividly manifest in the Scriptures, through which the incarnate Christ pitches his tent among humans and so the latter are able to communicate with him in more familiar idioms. Christ in revealing himself to the Nchumuru people through the Scriptures in the mother tongue has made the Nchumuru culture his dwelling presence hence the unapproachable God could now be felt, touched and seen. The people to whom this God has made himself known are now beginning to make their own responses to him on their own terms.

From the foregoing, one can see vividly the impact the mother tongue Scriptures are making in contextualising the Gospel message among the Nchumuru people of Ghana. While the content of God's word remains what it is, the expression of it in teaching, preaching and singing is made relevant. This is exactly what is happening now among the Nchumuru of Ghana through the Bible Translation ministry.

When the Bible was published in his language, Evans Demuyakor wished that it would be read in his church but it did not happen. All attempts to get it read failed with the explanation that every Nchumuru speaks and understands Asante-Twi, a predominant language in Ghana. However, he discovered that he understood the Chumburung Scriptures better than the Twi Scriptures. Demuyakor and other Nchumuru in his community therefore decided to start another church where the Scriptures will be read in their mother tongue. Interpreting Revelation 7:9 Elder Demuyakor says when Christ returns he will speak to each person in his mother tongue. He will speak Chumburung to the Nchumuru. He explains further that the angels that God has assigned to attend to each individual Christian usually speak the mother tongues of those individuals and so one should be interested in ones

mother tongue Scriptures.⁸⁴ Maame Anko of the same church testified that the Chumburung Scripture has helped her to participate meaningfully in Bible study discussions.⁸⁵ Another member added:

It has helped my children as well. In my former church where the Scriptures were read in Twi, they used to ask me what they meant but now they do not ask such questions again.⁸⁶

4.6 Conclusion

The history of the coming of Christianity into Nchumuru culture is not an impressive one. However, following the establishment of the Chumburung Translation Project in 1972, the word of God has become accessible to the people in the mother tongue. This situation has helped and continues to help the Church's mission in Nchumuru land and culture.

Chumburung literacy programmes have brought a greater sense of personal dignity, improved skills in solving problems and raised people's lifestyles and won the respect of others who view the illiterate as ignorant. Some of them can now participate in the political affairs of the community. Those who have the flair for writing began to write about their own culture, folktales, legends and histories. They have a heritage to share with their children and the nation.

On translation of the Bible into the Chumburung language, a door has been opened for the people who believed that God did not speak their language. For a people who had not been able to read it for themselves in time past, it is like a drink of water. Church groups have begun as a result of Scripture being used and established churches have been strengthened. A chief remarked: "This is the greatest gift you have given us, God's word,"⁸⁷ when presented with a Bible in his mother tongue.

The Scripture translated into the mother tongue can be shared with key church leaders who in turn are encouraged to use them within the community. Hearing carefully selected Scriptures often causes hearers to wonder what else the Bible

⁸⁴ Evans Demuyakor, op. cit.

⁸⁵ Interview with Maame Anko on 5th August, 2012 at Kumdi.

⁸⁶ Interview with Abena Bour on 8th August 2012 at Kumdi.

⁸⁷ Remark made by Nana Omankuminte II, Banda Tekpan Owure, during the dedication of the Chumburung Bible at Kumdi, on 25th November 2010.

teaches. This can lead to a desire to learn to read the Scriptures for themselves. Recorded Scriptures often significantly contribute to the translation checking process. It can expose awkward grammar, confusing phrases and inaccurate tone marks. The divine saving activity can be understood in terms of translation. The word of God translated into any language or culture becomes a part of the culture. Hence its transcendental impact becomes felt among that group of people. This has led to the various programmes which have sprung up following the production of the New Testament and subsequently the complete Bible in the Chumburung language aimed at bringing its impact on Christianity among the people.

As all these programmes take shape and are implemented fully, divine communication among the Nchumuru, borrowing Bediako's (1995:60) words; would no longer be in a sacred, esoteric, hermetic language, rather it becomes the language of the Chumburung, such that all of us hear ... in our own languages ... the wonders of God. The Christian faith in the light of the above becomes in the words of Andrew Walls, "culturally infinitely translatable." The Bible having been introduced into Nchumuru culture has invariably welcomed Jesus into that culture to feel at home and stay. Hence the future of Christianity in Nchumuru culture holds a lot of prospects.

In the succeeding chapter, the writer looks at Christianity and Nchumuru Culture: A model for contextualising Christianity in Nchumuru culture in Ghana. The chapter explores the elements of culture which the people who have become Christians may still hold onto even though may not be helpful to their Christian faith, and how Christian faith answers to these issues. It discusses how Christianity is being contextualised for the positive reformation of Nchumuru culture. The position of Jesus Christ as Lord is looked at within Nchumuru culture. This chapter in essence explores seriously the issues of Gospel and culture engagement, and how the Nchumuru Christian develops a new identity as an Nchumuru and also as a Christian, devoid of any conflicts between Christianity and culture. The future of Christianity among the Nchumuru is also discussed.

CHAPTER FIVE

Christianity and Nchumuru Culture: A Model for contextualising Christianity in Nchumuru Culture in Ghana

5.1 Introduction

The essence of the Gospel of Christ is that God accepts mankind, as mankind is, on the ground of Christ work alone, not on the ground of what mankind has become or is trying to become.⁸⁸ Reading the Scriptures in John 3:16 the point is clearly made that God's love for mankind was the only reason why God sent his one and only Son into the world that sinful mankind can again have access to his Creator. In Romans 5:8 the Scriptures again record that while all of mankind were deep in sin Christ died for (mankind). Hence the Gospel of Christ comes to mankind and accepts man when man makes a decision for Christ not because of what man has become or has done in man's own merit.

It is virtually impossible to separate culture from philosophy, religion and spiritual values. If it were not for modern secularisation, no one will think that such a separation is possible for, as Paul Tillich in (Casterman 1967:10) puts it, "Religion is the substance of culture and culture is the form of religion." Our attitude to culture will, therefore, determine our attitude to religion. What this means is that since every human being is a product of a given culture, it presupposes that human attitude to culture must be positive to allow for reflection on what is right from what is wrong within that culture. This should be the same attitude to religion and especially so the Christian faith. A positive attitude to the Christian faith allows for a positive reflection on the tenets of Christianity.

Mbiti (1978:4) observes:

It is African religion which generated a spirituality that finds fulfillment in the Gospel.... The Christian faith comes, therefore, to enrich, to fulfill, to crown and to say 'yes' to African religion and not to destroy it. The Gospel of Jesus Christ both judges and saves or sanctifies many elements in African religion. But, however rich African religiosity has been, it could not and did not produce

⁸⁸ Statement made by the Reverend Professor Kwame Bediako in August 2007 in a lecture on 'Bible in African Christianity' for SIL, MTh and PhD students at Akropong-Akuapem, Ghana.

that which the Gospel now offers to African peoples. Yet, it tutored the African in religious life, so that they could find in the Gospel that to which this religiosity pointed within the framework of its own revelation of God.

What Mbiti seeks to affirm is that the African's desire to serve God is manifested in the worship of the various gods by the people. They sought for this God fruitlessly in their own religiosity until Christianity opened their eyes to the one true God in Christ. The African situation is very much akin to that which the apostle Paul observes in Athens in Acts 17:22-27. However it must be made plain that God's revelation in Christ is incomparable, supreme, and final, and that the Christian's glorious duty is to proclaim salvation through Christ alone to the peoples of Africa including the Nchumuru. In dealing with the Nchumuru traditionalists however the Gospel-transmitter must show humility and respect, including respect for their religious heritage. It is the Gospel that shows mankind the way to God.

This chapter discusses Christianity and Nchumuru culture, focusing on the elements of culture which the people who have become Christians may still hold onto even though may not be helpful to their Christian faith, and how Christian faith answers to these issues of culture which impinge on Christianity. These cultural issues are; what does one do with ones cultural past which include ancestral veneration, participation in festivals in honour of the dead, consulting of shrines for help, partaking in the worship of these shrines or deities and etcetera. The chapter also gives attention to how Christianity is being contextualised for the positive reformation of Nchumuru culture. The position of Jesus Christ as Lord is also looked at within Nchumuru culture. This chapter in essence deals seriously with issues of the Gospel and culture engagement, and how the Nchumuru Christian develops a new identity as an Nchumuru and also as a Christian, devoid of any conflicts between Christianity and culture. The issues involved are portrayed in the statement of Bishop John V. Taylor which says:

Christ has been presented as the answer to questions a white man would ask, the solution to the needs that western man would feel, the Saviour of the world of the European worldwide, the object of the adoration and prayer of historic Christendom. But if Christ were to appear as the answer to the questions that Africans are asking, what would he look like? (Taylor 1963:16)

Taylor concludes that Christianity was accepted in Europe as a religion of the people. They owned it and lived it. Their culture was subsumed into the Christian

faith and it appeared to have answered the questions within that culture. However it is very clear now that there wasn't a serious engagement of the Gospel with that culture because the current scope of the Church in Europe attest to the fact that all is not well with the Church there. Will Christianity among the Nchumuru answer the questions the Nchumuru people are asking? This will depend to a large extent the approach the Gospel-transmitters will adapt in the preaching of the Gospel.

How does the Nchumuru respond to Christ and the Christian Gospel? The above telling commentary on Jesus Christ in Africa and for that matter among the Nchumuru was made by one of the most perceptive missionaries to Africa of our time and describes the general character of western missionary preaching and teaching in Africa since the arrival of missionaries on our continent during the 19th Century (Bediako 2000:20). It raises a question that must be faced by African churches and African Christians today who are convinced that Jesus Christ, as universal saviour is the saviour of the African world. In an interview with the Reverend John Fordjour he observes that many Nchumuru Christians feel that the teaching that they have so far received is inadequate, this may seem to be the case with many African Christians.⁸⁹ This is seen in the way some Nchumuru Christians easily revert to non Christian lifestyles when they are confronted with serious problems in life. Nana Awaase thinks that Christian preachers and teachers among the Nchumuru should themselves be grounded thoroughly well in the Scriptures and should communicate same effectively.⁹⁰

What has been the influence of Christianity on the Nchumuru people since its advent over a century ago, and in the midst of the various attempts at contextualisation? What position is ascribed to Jesus Christ in that culture? What is the relationship between the Nchumuru and their ancestors and the deities? These are questions the writer will be considering in this chapter. The chapter also discusses syncretistic tendencies in Nchumuru Christianity as a result of that culture's encounter with the Gospel. The relevance of the Gospel to the people's worldview and the search for new identity by the Nchumuru Christian would be discussed.

⁸⁹ Interview with the Rev. John Fordjour, resident minister with the Evangelical Church of Ghana at Borae No. 2 on the 20th August 2012.

⁹⁰ Interview with Nana Awaase, elder of SDA Church at Kumdi and clan head at Bonbare on the 20th March 2010.

5.2 The Nchumuru Encounter with Christianity

The Lausanne Consultation on World Evangelisation Mini-Consultation in Pattaya, Thailand from 16-27 June 1980 observes thus: "Because man is God's creature, some of his culture is rich in beauty and goodness. Because he is fallen, all of it is tainted with sin and some of it is demonic" (Lausanne Covenant, paragraph 10). The position of man after the fall as the consultation has noted has led to the fact that all human cultures are sinful and therefore need redemption. It must be noted that there are some good elements in African Traditional Religion. Not everything in it is the work of the devil. This fact must be recognised. Tiénou (1990:25-26) makes the underlying submissions that Scripture does address itself to the question of the multiplicity of religions in the world, both in the Old and New Testaments.

According to Tiénou (1990:26) the exegesis of New Testament (NT) texts like Acts 14:15-17 and Romans chapter 1 and 2 leads to the following observations:

Non-Christian religions show that all human beings seek God and have certain knowledge of him (Acts 17:26-27; Rom 1:21). The seeking of non-Christian religions is at the same time a deformation of the knowledge of God, for humans like to domesticate God and control him (Rom 1:18, 23). This underlies the ambiguity of non-Christian religiosity; it seeks God but suppresses knowledge of him at the same time. No non-Christian religion gives a true knowledge of God, for without the light of Christ all human beings are without God (Eph. 2:12). All human religions, as good as they may be, have no lasting transforming power. Ultimately, they succeed only in exposing the precarious human condition - all are without excuse (Rom 2:1).

It must be noted however that God speaks in many ways. Christians (we) depend primarily upon how God has spoken in a uniquely fixed and supremely authoritative way in Scripture. We also trust that he is speaking through us as we live and preach. But we also need to recognise, in practical ways, that he has also spoken within the traditional culture and that the Holy Spirit is already speaking among the people even as they encounter the Gospel. However if by way of people being blinded by their culture they fail to see that God is already at work around them, they miss the foundations God has already laid for evangelism. Jesus Christ remains the only way to God any other means of getting to God without Christ lacks redemptive ends.

Most of the elders in Nchumuru society think conversion to Christ is a matter for the youth. Many of them, who are mostly the custodians of clan deities and ancestral

shrines, therefore do not see the need to abandon the worship of the gods and the ancestors bequeathed to them by their departed parents for Christianity. They would often say: “The young ones can go to church but we will keep the traditions of our elders gone before us.”⁹¹ Hence the church among the Nchumuru has a large youth membership.

Hesselgrave (1999:23) observes that in the context of a tribal worldview, power encounter takes precedence over truth encounter. The writer having lived in the Nchumuru area much of his life has also observed that in life, the traditional Nchumuru person learns to fear, trust and reverence a legion of cosmological powers (both local and foreign). As such, the power or force issue is uppermost in his mind. Allegiance to Christ, after one has become a Christian, therefore, means that the person must change his power constellation. This change is expected to affect the whole of the person’s being and become the very basis of his existence.

Reverend Jonathan Sapeh observes appropriately that among the people, the level of change experienced by the Nchumuru Christian is quite instantaneous. Rituals such as those associated with the ancestral cult, power dynamics and beliefs based on myths are some of the areas where change could be instantaneous. The new believer also goes through a gradual process of change. It is often seen that this experience of the new believer eventually leads to true conversion and acceptance of Jesus as Saviour.⁹²

It must be noted that Christianity does not deculturalise the Christian. However much the Nchumuru Christians feel they need to renounce for the sake of Christ, they are still the same people with the same heritage and the same family. Christianity does not unmake, rather it remakes. Walls (1996:7) observes that the impossibility of separating an individual from his social relationships and thus from his society leads to one unvarying feature of Christian history: the desire to “indigenise”, to live as a Christian and yet as a member of one’s own society, to make the church as it were a place to fell at home.

⁹¹ Interview with Brese Kwadjo Bonyimodon, clan head of Labonai Clan of Kumdi on 23rd August 2012 at Kumdi.

⁹² Interview with Reverend Jonathan Sapeh at Kumdi on the 23rd August, 2012.

Bishop Lesslie Newbigin⁹³ recounts his own experience in South India where he was a missionary. He mentions his encounter with Hinduism and how that enabled him to become self-critical of his own appropriation of the Gospel in terms of English culture and heritage. Newbigin (1989:3) observes:

It was only slowly, through many experiences, that I began to see that something of this domestication had taken place in my own Christianity that I too had been more ready to seek a 'reasonable Christianity', a Christianity that could be defended on the terms of my whole intellectual formation as a twentieth-century Englishman, rather than something which placed my whole intellectual formation under a new and critical light. I, too, had been guilty of domesticating the Gospel.

Bishop Newbigin held fast to the English Scriptures and did not explore how that would be relevant to the culture in which he preached the Gospel. This follows that Christian preachers must endeavour to present the Gospel to people always in culturally appropriate ways, so that it may touch the hearts of the people. According to Nana Awaase some traditional Nchumuru people see Christianity as treachery to one's own cultural origins.⁹⁴ The reason is that when one becomes a Christian one no longer participates in the rituals that go with the old religion. Where possible Nchumuru Christians should seek to, or be encouraged to identify with the joys, hopes, pains and struggles of their culture. To what extent should Christians be involved in the celebration of festivals, participating in the rites associated with the ancestors, visiting the shrines for assistance and protection and other such practices and still maintain their commitment to Christ? These are questions that often come up as people convert from the old religion to the new which is Christianity. These questions are questions of the engagement between the Gospel and culture. This will therefore call for the application of the Scriptures to cultural issues in any given culture, for the Scriptures to shed their light on culture for the latter's positive reformation.

⁹³ James Edward Leslie Newbigin, missionary and minister of the church: born in Newcastle upon Tyne on 8th December 1909; ordained 1936; Bishop in Madura and Ramnad, Church of South India 1947-59; Bishop in Madras 1965-74; CBE 1974; Lecturer in Theology, Selly Oak Colleges, Birmingham 1974-79; minister, United Reformed Church.

⁹⁴ Interview with Nana Awaase, an elder in the SDA Church at Kumdi and clan head of Bonbare on 20th March, 2010 at Bonbare.

This application of Scripture to Nchumuru culture according to Bediako (2001:2) is not a matter of applying so called 'principles' from Scripture, on one hand, to issues of culture on the other. Rather, it is a process of the coming together, pulling together of life with life, life touching life. Therefore Nchumuru cultural particularity and concreteness are brought into a meeting with the activity of God in history; the building up of a community of God's people throughout history which now includes the Nchumuru and their particular tradition, history, culture and so on. Thus they may see how they come to share in that family likeness which is measured, not by ethnic particularity: but by nothing less than Christ himself. In Ephesians 4:13 God's activity through human cultures by Christ is to bring the body of Christ which is the Church to full maturity and likeness to Christ. There could be no other mission of the church than this.

The Good News however is that God encounters people in Christ and that Christian mission, above all other concerns, ought to be about acknowledging the presence and integrity of others, as Christ always did in his public ministry.

5.3 The Lordship of Jesus in Nchumuru Cosmology

According to Nana Awaase, *Wuribware*⁹⁵ in Nchumuru cosmology is God the creator. He is believed to be essentially a spirit and no images or visible (physical) representations are made of him.⁹⁶ The Nchumuru affirm several of the teachings of Scripture about God. The Nchumuru believe the lesser gods are children of *Wuribware*, and hence the intermediaries between him and humanity.

Nana Ndese observes that the belief in ancestors is very central to (Nchumuru) cosmology.⁹⁷ This belief is epitomised in the *Kaaba*, a shared earthen crust shrine dedicated to the ancestors of each *Kabuno*. According to Pobee (1979:48) whereas the gods may be treated with contempt if they fail to deliver the goods expected of them the ancestors are held in reverence or even worshipped. This observation

⁹⁵ *Wuribware* literally means good Chief.

⁹⁶ Interview with Nana Awaase, elder in Kumdi SDA and clan head at Bonbare on 20th March 2010 at Bonbare.

⁹⁷ Interview with Nana Akwesi Ndese 1, Kumdi Owure on 29th February 2009 at Kumdi.

originally made by Professor Busia and cited by Pobee concerning Akan⁹⁸ gods is the same with Nchumuru gods. By virtue of being part of the clan gone ahead to the house of God, they are believed to be powerful in the sense that they influence the course of life here and now for good or evil. Bediako (2000:23) notes thus:

“They ...provide the sanctions for the moral life of the nation and accordingly punish, exonerate or reward the living as the case may be.”

What this means for Nchumuru traditional society is that the ancestors are responsible for the moral sanctions of the Nchumuru community. Rules for morality in that community are provided and determined by them and moral sanctions or exoneration from punishment or otherwise of a breach of the moral code depends on them.

In Nchumuru cosmology; the ancestors are essentially clan or lineage ancestors. In this way, the religious functions and duties that relate to the ancestors become binding on all members of the particular group who share common ancestors. Since the ancestors have such an important part in the wellbeing (or otherwise) of individuals and communities, the crucial question is about the Nchumuru's relationship to Jesus, which Nana Ndese asks; “why should the Nchumuru relate to Jesus of Nazareth who does not belong to his clan, family, language or nation?”⁹⁹

According to Rev John Fordjour up to now, the churches in Nchumuru land have tended to avoid the question and have presented the Gospel as though it was concerned with an entirely different compartment of life unrelated to the traditional religious piety.¹⁰⁰ As a result, many Nchumuru people are uncertain about how the Jesus preached by the church saves them from the terrors and fears that they experience in their traditional worldview. This shows how important it is for the Christian to gain an understanding of traditional experience of the role of ancestors. The writer therefore submits that the Nchumuru need to meet God in the Lord Jesus Christ, as speaking immediately to them in their particular circumstances in a way that assures them that they can be authentic Nchumuru and true Christians.

As to the question of the Lordship of Jesus in Nchumuru religious world, the scenario can be represented by what Bediako (2000:27) says:

⁹⁸ The Akan people are a historically important ethnic grouping in West Africa with over 20 million people. They are the largest ethnic group in Ghana with about 49.1% of Ghana's total population. They speak Kwa languages which are part of the larger Niger-Congo language family.

⁹⁹ Nana Ndese, op. cit.

¹⁰⁰ Rev. Fordjour, op. cit.

Jesus is the Son of God, said the Christian evangelist.

My shrine-spirit is a child of God: said the traditionalist

The above scenario represents the issues involving the plurality of spirit powers that are within the Nchumuru worldview. How do they come to accept the Lordship of Jesus Christ in relation to ancestors and deities? According to Bediako (2000:38) the apostle Paul in I Corinthians 8:5-6, affirms the Lordship and uniqueness of Jesus Christ to other lords, when he said that there is only one Lord, Jesus Christ, and this affirmation was made in relation to the Graeco-Roman gods. The Nchumuru have often relied on their deities and the ancestors for protection, good health and prosperity, however with the introduction of Christianity into the traditional area there has been a shift from depending on the deities and ancestors to Christ.

Reverend Nakoja working among the Nchumuru submits that with the presence of some deliverance ministries in the area people have come to see the demonstration of Christ's power in the healing of the sick. The use of the blood of Jesus in casting out demons and setting people free from oppression and afflictions is another area of the uniqueness of Christ.¹⁰¹ Among the Nchumuru blood plays a very significant role in the performance of rituals in relation to healing and cleansing.

Presently, even non Christian Nchumuru carry their sick to the prayer camps of churches to seek Christ's power through his blood to heal their sick and dying. In an interview with Nana Kwadjo Bonyinji II , the Nangyuro Owure (chief), he mentions that he personally went and solicited the help of a faith healer by name Prophet Elijah on behalf of his community to come and help heal the sick in that community.¹⁰² Prophet Elijah operates a Christian Prayer Healing Ministry, a member of the African Independent Church (AIC) Movement in Ghana at Dambai one of the Nchumuru communities. It should be noted that Nana Bonyinji is not a Christian but a traditional leader of the Nchumuru people. This clearly demonstrates the acceptance of the Lordship of Jesus in a culture where the people sometime ago would have readily turned to the deities and the ancestors for such help. In an interview with Reverend Kumah of the Presbyterian Church of Ghana in

¹⁰¹ Interview with Rev. Nakoja, resident minister of the Assemblies of God at Kumdi on the 23rd August 2012 at Kumdi.

¹⁰² Interview with Nana Kwadjo Bonyinji II, Nangyuro Owure and Paramount Chief of Nchumuru Traditional Area, on 20th August, 2012 at his residence at Kumdi.

Gyamboaye, an Nchumuru community he submits that due to the reading of the mother tongue Bible by a number of the Nchumuru in his community many of the people are now able to identify easily with Jesus as Lord of their lives and majority run to the Bible in the when faced with challenges that bother on traditional beliefs and practices of the Nchumuru people. Practices which infringe on their Christian faith. According to him this used not to be the practice in the past.¹⁰³

The demonstration of Christ's power through his blood and the accompanying signs of healing and deliverance testify clearly to the Lordship of Jesus above other lords. This demonstration of Christ's power recently in some churches like the church of Pentecost in the Nchumuru area has led to mass conversions. Hence Professor Walls' statement is relevantly made which said: "It is not Christianity that saves but Christ" (Walls 1996:66). The writer sampling views from various respondents who were mostly Christians discovered that it is as a result of the Nchumuru encounter with the word of God in their native tongue that the people now have a better and clearer awareness of God and are able to acknowledge him as their saviour and Lord.

The resurrection is another area of significance. In Nchumuru cosmology it is unthinkable for one to rise from the dead, hence Christ's action of rising from the dead as the Christian Scriptures indicate is one area the Nchumuru accepts the Lordship of Jesus. There is a local Chumburung adage which reads, '*nse ya wu kee*,' and translates literally into English thus; 'who has died and seen'. This presupposes that with the Nchumuru it is impossible for one to rise from the dead.

If it is granted that the Christian affirmation about the unique status of Jesus Christ is accepted in the midst of Nchumuru religious worldview. Then the task of Christians in that culture is to demonstrate how the scriptural witness to the life and ministry of Christ, illuminated by the Holy Spirit, is the clue to the yearnings and quests in the religious lives of the Nchumuru people. As Bishop Kenneth Cragg remarks (1977:116), the critical question for the Christian is, 'how to have the meanings of Christ become operative in human hearts.' He suggests three aspects of Christian affirmation about Christ, which readily stands out for consideration. The first is the incarnation, namely the affirmation that in Christ, God humbled himself and identified with humankind in Christ's birth as a human boy born of a woman and endured the

¹⁰³ Interview with Rev. Kumah, resident minister of the Presbyterian Church of Ghana at Gyamboaye on 25th August 2012 at Gyamboaye

conditions of normal human existence. In other words the incarnation is supremely the unique sign and demonstration of divine vulnerability in history.

The second aspect according to Bediako (2000:42) relates to the Christian affirmation about the cross of Christ, showing that the will to suffer forgivingly and redemptively is the very expression of the divine mind and the logic of the divine Lord. Accordingly all other attempts to achieve redemptive ends, apart from the way of the cross are shown to be partial and inadequate. The third aspect, Bediako (ibid) relates to the communication of the Lord's Table, in which the invitation is given to all who are united to Christ in faith to partake of the holy elements of bread and wine. Symbols of Jesus Christ's redemptive achievement through his body and blood. This demonstrates the uniqueness of the making of one people out of the many of humankind, including the Nchumuru.

Nana Kanya submits that the resurrection is one area where the uniqueness of Christ as Lord is clearly demonstrated. By his rising from the dead he has proved himself to be Saviour not only of Christians but the entire world¹⁰⁴ because the event of the resurrection is the first and only one to have taken place in history. The centurion and others with him on guard at the foot of the Cross on which Christ was crucified attest to the fact of Jesus being the Son of God, when they remarked: "Surely this man was the Son of God" (Matt 27:54). Any other related incidence can best be described as resuscitation. After Jesus Christ no other human being has been able to rise from the dead. What therefore confront people when Christ meets them in their respective cultures are clues that points them to the divine self disclosure and guides them to the real challenge of discipleship to Christ in whose incarnate life that disclosure has been given.

Bediako (2000:43) affirming the above and commenting on Cragg's submission observes that the Christian affirmation about the unique status of Christ in the midst of the plurality of religions does not come about, because of some theological prepositions or creedal formulations, or even of the statement of faith Christians make. Jesus' unique status arises as a result of the recognition of the divine nature of Christ expressed in actual historical existence. Cragg (1977:56) is therefore right to observe:

¹⁰⁴ Interview with Nana Obrempong Kanya, Paramount chief of Begyamose Traditional Area on the 25th August 2012 at Chinderi. Nana Kanya is a confirmed and baptised member of the Roman Catholic Church at Chinderi, the capital of the new Nchumuru-Krachi District in the Volta Region of Ghana.

[Our Lord's] Sonship, then, before it becomes a term in creeds, is a reality in deeds... Sonship in that immediate, existential sense was the context of his doing. Therefore we take it also as the secret of his being. If Jesus is 'Son of God' in the music of the Te Deum and the confessions of Nicea and Chalcedon, it is because he was the Son of God beneath the olive branches of Gethsemane and in the darkness of Golgotha.

What remains important is for Christians to realise that the focus of the Christian affirmation is not the assertion of a formula, but the recognition of an achievement in actual history. This in turn provides clues to the source of those deeds. Scripture expresses the same thought, when it reads: "Although he was a son, he learned obedience from what he suffered and once made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him" (Heb 5:8-9).

In talking about the Lordship of Jesus Christ in Nchumuru primal worldview the following are of significant importance. The first has to do with the ability of Jesus Christ to heal and deliver people from all manner of sicknesses and diseases. The narrative accounts of the miracles of Jesus in the Gospels demonstrate the power of Jesus over nature, disease, death, principalities and powers. Jesus has power over Satan and the demonic powers. Turaki (2006:18) remarks: "The power of Jesus is derived from His deity, His being God-Man. This is Christ creative power in action through His created order, the world."

Secondly, according to Nana Kanya, the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead is seen by the Nchumuru as one event which God alone can perform, hence Christ's ability to rise from the dead makes him Lord above all other lords. He submits further that in Nchumuru cosmology there was never a time as far he could remember when a person died, was buried and rose from the dead after some days.¹⁰⁵

The basis of Christ's Lordship was clearly stated by the apostle Peter on the Day of Pentecost in Jerusalem. He declared that Jesus the Messiah was delivered to the people by God's own purposes and design, and him they crucified. However he rose from the dead on the third because it was not possible for him to be held by death (Acts 2:23-24). God has made this Jesus whom they crucified both Lord and Christ (Acts 2:36). It is evident that Christ's lordship and messiahship, his exaltation and glorification, took root in his twin actions of death and resurrection. Jesus the messiah after the cross became, indeed both Lord and Saviour.

¹⁰⁵ Nana Kanya, *op. cit.*

However it must be noted that all mankind has fallen and all our work is accompanied by sweat and struggle (Gen. 3:17-19), and is disfigured by selfishness. So none of our cultures is perfect in truth, beauty or goodness. At the heart of every culture, Nchumuru culture inclusive, Bediako notes is an element of self-centredness, of man's worship of himself. Therefore a culture cannot be brought under the Lordship of Christ without a radical change of allegiance.¹⁰⁶ This change in allegiance of all peoples and their respective cultures in response to the Gospel of Christ, the writer thinks must be for Christ who is Lord over believers and everybody else.

5.4 Syncretism in Nchumuru Christianity

John Stott in Kato (1985:25) described syncretism as “a fruit cocktail of religions.” Eric Sharpe also in Kato (ibid) defines it as “any form of religion in which elements from more than one original religious tradition are combined.” Syncretism to the writer's understanding is a religious practice where worshippers are involved in the service of more than one religion. This type of religious practice breeds apathy in Christianity and lack of commitment on the part of the worshippers.

The Nchumuru worldview is more amenable to syncretism. The simple reason is that new deities can easily be introduced into a pantheon where they find complementary places among their predecessors. According to Hesselgrave (1991:282) where there are myriads of gods, a few more can only enhance the system. The more the better. The Christian communicator among the Nchumuru then should be prepared to deal with such a worldview if syncretism is to be done away with.

The Christian faith has made giant strides in Nchumuru land, with numerous churches on the increase virtually on a yearly basis. However, concerns are frequently being expressed by many Christian workers that the explosive growth of the Christian church does not seem to be having the kind of effect Jesus envisioned for the church when he gave the Great Commission (Matt. 28:18-20). For example, while Anderson (2001:275) points out that denominationalism by the missionaries, literal interpretations of the Bible by Africans, the lack of relevance of missionary

¹⁰⁶ Submission made by the Reverend Professor Kwame Bediako in a lecture on Bible in African Christianity for SIL, MTh and PhD students in August 2007 at Akropong in Akuapem, Ghana.

theology, and reaction to Western colonialism have helped to cause proliferation of various types of churches in Africa. Tiénou (2001:156) observes that such church growth “seems to have minimal effect on African societies.”

During an interview the writer had with Nana Awaase, clan head of Bonbare and an elder of the Seventh-Day Adventist (SDA) Church at Kumdi, on the state of Christianity among the Nchumuru in the traditional area, especially on how Christians conduct themselves around, the latter laments that there are some syncretistic tendencies among many adherents of the Christian faith. He said he knows of many Christians who consult the deities and ancestral shrines for help when they are in some kind of trouble.¹⁰⁷

The Nchumuru have come into contact with Christianity for well over a century now (Berinyuu 1997:3). Just as syncretism plagued the church in the days of the apologists, so it challenges the Christian faith among the Nchumuru today. Among the Nchumuru several reasons account for syncretism in their Christianity:

First, with the advent of Christianity, there has been disruption in the power of the ancestors. The new Christian fears the anger of the ancestors if they do not perform the proper rituals and give them the proper attention. The church sometime ignores or merely dismisses the people’s belief in the departed members of the clan or family. However following the coming of the Bible into the language and culture of the Nchumuru these fears, according to Reverend Isaac Anyonebosere are giving way to faith and trust in God through his son Jesus Christ. He further submits that haven interacted with many Christians in the traditional area he is convinced the mother tongue scriptures have helped significantly in the transformation of the views of most Nchumuru Christians and have helped them overcome the fears of their past, which is their traditional religious beliefs which infringe on their Christian faith.¹⁰⁸

Tiénou (1990:22) notes: “We have learned to think of our customs as pagan, but we have rarely provided appropriate substitutes for the cultural elements we ask people to discard. The consequences of this are much horrifying.” Christian preachers and missionaries working among the Nchumuru need to have the right attitude towards the culture of the people and have a sympathetic understanding of it, so as to help

¹⁰⁷ Interview with Nana Awaase, clan head, Bonbare, 25th January 2005.

¹⁰⁸ Interview with Rev. Isaac Anyonebosere on the 26th January 2012 at Bora No. 2. He is an ordained minister with the Evangelical Church of Ghana.

Christians in that culture come out of this dangerous syncretistic way of living their Christian lives. Practical syncretism according to Tiéno (ibid) “will weaken Christianity even if our official theology is good.” The reason is that in discipling converts to Christ if the cultural past is not dealt with the converts will stay in church all right but will still participate in cultural ceremonies and practices which impinge on their Christian faith.

In the Church’s preaching and teaching therefore, she needs to let the people know what the Bible says about the dead and Christ’s relation to them. By this they will know God speaks to them in what they already know.

Secondly also the writer submits that inadequate biblical teaching has left the average Nchumuru Christian with an inability in ‘rightly handling the Word of truth.’ Syncretistic teachers bring their views, and even Christian leaders fail to discern what is right according to the teaching of God’s Word. In living and working among the Nchumuru for quite some years the writer has come to discover that most leaders of the church in Nchumuru land lack adequate theological training, hence it becomes difficult for many to discern false teaching in their midst.

This situation makes most confessing Christians among the Nchumuru unable to stand the test of time when faced with some difficulties and hence they easily slip back into idolatry or syncretism. Adequate biblical teachings concerning the power and protection of God will make them put their trust in him in times of difficulties.

Third, most of the respondents interviewed by the writer did mention that the Nchumuru loves to get along with everybody they therefore are not inclined to offend their neighbour by letting them know what the Bible says about non Christian religions. This attitude allows for syncretism in Nchumuru Christianity.

Finally the writer did observe among the people that some Nchumuru Christians think that the power of Christ alone is not sufficient for protection and therefore may seek help elsewhere for further protection. The writer recollects an incident in which the queen mother of the town in which the translation project is located told him to try and find some alternative source of power to protect himself from bad people since Christ alone cannot give him all the protection he needs.¹⁰⁹ Even though the writer never heeded the counsel because it was ill fated, this posture breeds syncretism.

¹⁰⁹ Comment made by Nana Okose, Queen mother of Kumdi, on the 2nd December, 2011 at Kumdi.

It is in the matter of traditional religion that many Nchumuru Christians wallow in deep syncretism and spiritual bondage, because they refuse to renounce the beliefs and practices of their traditional religion, especially in times of personal crisis. The ‘foothold’ of traditional beliefs and practices according to O’Donovan (2000:235) is one reason why so many African Christians cannot break free from the sin of tribalism and other sinful bondage, including syncretism.

The issue of syncretism must be addressed in Nchumuru Christianity if the Gospel is to make any meaningful impact on the Nchumuru people. The question Nseakyure (1999:78) asks is “How can we eat the sacrifices (of Christ) and participate in the altars of the deities (gods), if there should be hope for the future?” According to him, in the early 1980’s, when the Akua Tia and Sonyo Kipo deities were introduced to Borae II, many so-called Christians flocked there for help.

When Nchumuru Christians continue in pre-Christian religious practices, they do so for the same reason that the Israelites turned to Baal. They do so because they think that the God whom the Christians proclaim does not have power in certain areas of life. They will perform rites in relation to the deities in connection to such things as fertility, their relation to the ancestors, their fear of witchcraft, and the celebration of traditional festivals.¹¹⁰ This is so because the church has ignored or belittled the people’s beliefs in these matters. It needs to give the people an understanding of the Bible that addresses these issues instead of ignoring them.

This has been the focus of the Chumburung Translation Project, Scripture Engagement programme and the church among the people. The Chumburung Translation Project is continuously collaborating with the Church in Nchumuru to vigorously encourage the use of the translated mother tongue scriptures in the churches within the traditional area in all the available forms, both print and non-print media. These programmes and their impact on the Nchumuru church were fully discussed in chapter four section 4.5 of this research.

5.5 Making the Gospel Relevant in Nchumuru Primal Worldview

In talking with several respondents who are involved in the work of the Gospel among the Nchumuru, a lot of issues came up that clearly demonstrate that the

¹¹⁰ Interview with Mr. Matthew Kwesi Addo an Educationist and an elder in the Central Assemblies of God Church in Atebubu, Ghana on 5th August, 2012 at Atebubu. Matthew Addo is an Nchumuru Christian leader.

Gospel has affected the primal worldview of the Nchumuru people. Reverend Sam Jobo submits that indeed God has not left himself without a witness among the people.¹¹¹ Most of the people interviewed testified to the fact that lives have been affected, yet they are divided on the scope of impact. Some think the impact has been negative; others think that the impact has been positive. Those who see the impact as negative say that Christianity has eroded some of their traditional values like respect for elders and the sense of belonging. They say that the emphasis on individual responsibility in preaching the Gospel does not go well with their traditional worldview. The traditional religion is communal.

It must be stated however that the Gospel makes a personal as well as corporate appeal. Even though the individual Christian has a personal identity, his or her growth and wellbeing depends on the corporate life of the body of Christ. Neglect of the gods is one area that is blamed on Christianity. Some of the people see Christianity as an intruder into their religious heritage. According to the Chumburung Literacy project coordinator the literacy programme among the Nchumuru is one area which has helped in the advance of Christianity among the people.¹¹²

The establishment of functional literacy: Reading primer and primer series are prepared and published, with supplementary literacy materials and teacher's guide and aids. Post-primer literature to maintain and develop people's interest in reading is published, local writers including literacy teachers and supervisors are trained.

The significance of literacy to Nchumuru Christianity cannot be overemphasised. In the dominantly oral culture of Nchumuru people where public reading of Scripture in church is what many were used to, the literacy drive which makes the people literate in the mother tongue affords them a tool to do private reading of the Scriptures in the mother tongue. This is a significant development in Nchumuru Christianity. Through literacy, there is a promotion of a move from "oral relationship with Scripture to literary relationship with Scripture" (Adubofuor 1999:122). This opportunity thus created through the literacy drive has led to a situation well represented in the words of Adubofuor (ibid):

¹¹¹ Interview with the Rev. Sam Jobo, resident minister of Bora Christian Church on the 27th August, 2012 at Bora No. 2.

¹¹² Interview with Paul Kanyaebwee, Chumburung Project Literacy coordinator at Bankamba on 20th June, 2012.

“Lay Christians started reading the Scriptures for themselves as individuals, and Scripture spoke to them as individuals, deepening their personal relationships with God and one another.”

Literacy then has made a worthy contribution to making the Gospel relevant among the Nchumuru.

The publication and subsequent dedication of the Chumburung Bible has also brought God’s salvation history within Nchumuru history and culture. Scripture engagement activities are ongoing. The language has been affected; the culture has been redefined in the light of the mother tongue Scriptures. Indeed the Gospel has made an inroad into Nchumuru primal worldview.

The church of Jesus Christ among the Nchumuru is a new community of believers found upon the redemptive work of Christ on the cross. Turaki (2006:89) observes:

“It is a new humanity redeemed and recreated in Christ Jesus. The church of Christ has a purpose in this world and she lives under Christ commission in both her mission and message. For this reason, the church, within the context of the non-Christian religions and cultures, must live under the terms of Christ’s mission and message.”

Therefore the prime reason for the existence of the church of Christ in Nchumuru country is to proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ for salvation to the non-Christians in that culture and also to bear witness to the Lordship of Jesus to the whole community of the Nchumuru.

Preaching and teaching the Gospel among the Nchumuru in the mother tongue is the preferred medium or means of communicating the message of God to the people. That is why Olowola (1996:21) says, “each theologian is bound to communicate the truth so that people can understand it.” It is when teaching and learning take place in the native tongue of any group of people that they can be said to have understood the truth of God’s word. In Africa, as well as among the Nchumuru this requires that the African worldview, rooted in African culture, be taken into consideration in communicating theological truth. Further more, it entails, as Bowers (2002:123) puts it, “the theological reflection required by the life of the contemporary African (Nchumuru) Christian community, as that community seeks to fulfill its calling under God within its context.” The old and the new, the past and the present must be encompassed in a theology that is authentically African.

The church need to study Nchumuru culture and the cultures of the biblical world. To be a good Christian in Nchumuru culture will require that one is competent and committed to his Christian beliefs and practices. Missionaries and Pastors need to study Nchumuru culture closely to see elements which are compatible and those which are incompatible with the Gospel message. This trend is nothing new in the history of the Christian movement and it is no more dangerous today than it was in ages past.

It must be noted that Walls (1996:50) citing Edwin Smith (1929) spoke of the “shrine of a people’s soul.” This had to do with the language, and language is undoubtedly a major factor in what belongs to a people. Walls however, think that the shrine of a people’s soul has more in it than language. The word of God coming into the language of a people, in the words of Walls (1996:51), affects their history, traditions, and their corpus of organised literature (oral or written). The Gospel coming alive in the people’s language has opened them up for evangelism; hence the publication of the Bible in the Chumburung language, its subsequent dedication and use has set the stage for Christianity to become an indigenous religion of the people.

In Scripture God’s unchanging truth presented by his spokesmen is to have a remarkable relevance to the background and needs of the respondents. The same is required by communicators of God’s revealed word to the Nchumuru people if the Gospel is to be relevant to their situation in any and every way. James Tonkoayuri, one of the men showing the Chumburung Jesus Film mentions that the team always follow-up the converts that are made during the showing of the film in the various Nchumuru communities to make sure they are worshipping in Bible believing churches were they are being nurture into maturity in their Christian faith.¹¹³

5.6 The Search for New Identity for the Nchumuru Christian

Nchumuru Christians are not the first people to face a religious identity crisis. Kato (1985:25) observes appropriately that Gentile Christians in the New Testament had precisely the same problem to face. Nana Kanya notes that careful analysis of Nchumuru cosmology reveals that traditional religion is not primarily for the individual

¹¹³ Interview with James Tonkoayuri on the 15th August, 2012 at Banda Bunweesi.

but for his community of which he is a part. This is the reason why people are regarded misfits in the community when they become Christians because they no longer join the community in the traditional religious celebrations.¹¹⁴ For the Christian to be able to keep his balance in his own religious society, and religious culture which will appeal to the Gospel, the Christian needs to know where he is destined to. Nchumuru Christians have to find satisfactory answers to such questions as what does Scripture say about our pre-Christian religious heritage and where does one draw the line between the past and the present. Bediako (1999:16) appropriately observes, “Just as Christians in the Graeco-Roman culture realised that they could not achieve any real measure of valid and settled identity, unless they came to terms with various facets of that culture from which they themselves emerged.” In a similar vein, Nchumuru Christians as well as those non-Nchumuru reaching out to them need to understand the religious frame of reference of their audience. The Nchumuru Christians and the church need to ask the following questions concerning the issue of identity:

(a) To what extent can the church incorporate some traditional African cultural practices into Christianity without affecting the faith of her members or diluting the essence of Christian belief?

(b) To what extent would the church go in combining elements from African culture and that of the Christian without affecting how the outsider sees Christianity?

These issues the writer submits call for an open-minded and level-headed appraisal, and above all a systematic and sustained teaching by the church. The church in doing this must take care to teach the converts simply and clearly so that they can easily translate teaching into living and doing in order not to create an identity problem for themselves, by showing sympathies for the pre-Christian religious heritage as in the Nchumuru experience. When this is done, the church will become for the Nchumuru in the words of Bediako (2000:130), “a community in which their corporate aspirations are not destroyed but fulfilled and intensified, in which tribal foundations are not simply shaken and replaced with a vacuum, but are made more secure in Christ.”

General revelation should be a starting point for Africans to learn what God has done for them in Christ. Nevertheless (Olowola 1965:25) observes that, “the African

¹¹⁴ Nana Kanya, *op. cit.*

Christian has much to learn from the practices of African traditional religionists as they serve the spirits.” They can emulate the zeal of the traditionalists in the way they go about the Christian faith. This means that Christian preachers and teachers among the Nchumurus need to understand the Nchumuru context in seeking to teach them the message of the Gospel for it to sink deep into them.

5.7 The Future of Christianity among the Nchumuru

According Barret (1982:136-138) the growth of Christianity in Africa has been very spectacular. Africa is on record as the continent with the highest numerical Christian growth rate in the world. He posited that by the year 2000 there could be between 330 million to 350 million Christians in Africa. Africa has half a billion Christians now and, within a generation or two, it will have more Christians than any other cultural block, surpassing Latin America and the Caribbean, due to fertility rates.¹¹⁵

Mbiti (1986:12) in affirming the above submission observes that the Bible has been identified as "a major contributor" to this rapid growth of Christianity in Africa. The Bible is certainly very much valued and used by African Christians. This is seen in the many translations of the Bible across the length and breadth of the continent and how these translated Bibles have been dubbed into video and audio forms by Christian missions and churches for use by the local people. Given the oral tradition that forms the background of these African Christians and the literary tradition that the Bible represents, the question of the relationship between the Bible and culture in African Christianity becomes a difficult one. It must be noted however that the majority of the people who may not be literate today may now have access to the Bible through the many video and audio forms the Bible has taken through the deliberate efforts of Christian missions and churches across the continent in translating the Bible into the many languages of the people, as with the Nchumuru of Ghana. Literacy programmes as seen in the Nchumuru situation also provide access

¹¹⁵ These statistics come from Terence Ranger, ed., *Evangelical Christianity and Democracy in Africa* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), p. x, but they are rooted in David Barrett and Todd Johnson's World Christian Database.

for the use of the translated mother tongue Bibles by the local people. This situation of African Christianity in general fits perfectly the Nchumuru situation.

However it must be noted that whatever gain Christianity has made and is making in Africa and among the Nchumuru should not make anyone feel satisfied, as various ways are explored at contextualising Christianity among the people. There is the need to maintain and consolidate these gains and also look for opportunities to breaking into new grounds as the future is envisaged.

There are several issues regarding the church's life that should engage the attention of all those reaching out to the Nchumuru people with the word of God. The promotion of the use of the mother tongue Scriptures must be considered seriously by the churches in Nchumuru land in every way practicable to deepen the roots of Christianity among the people. The writer thinks that the African needs to be reached with the Gospel just as he is in his culture. His life embodies all that his culture has bequeathed to him and it is only when he comes into contact with the word of God that Scripture begins to deal with those elements of his cultural heritage. Mbiti in CG Baeta (1965:337) says:

If we want him (the African) "saved" then he must be allowed to bring with him into the Body of Christ all his many relatives. African traditional religions are not compartmentalised areas of life; they are incorporated into the whole life of the people. If the ultimate goal of preaching and accepting the Gospel is to transpose allegiance from tribal religions to the Lord Jesus Christ then the process of transposition should be entire and not partial, radical and not casual.

In other words, the proclamation of the Gospel must create community comparable to the old, even if the basis of allegiance is different. The important thing is seen to answer to the longings implied in the "old". The church as a community of the redeemed, especially in its sacramental life supersedes the "old" kinship group, not by way of obliteration, but rather by way of fulfilment. Bediako (1999:310) citing Mbiti says:

We must therefore seek to make the church the centre of existence from which African peoples may derive the fulfilment of their life's aspiration whether in time of need or in time of feasting and where they may experience a communal life which has a vaster scope and meaning than tribal life without Christ could ever provide ... the Church will become for the (Nchumuru) a

community in which their corporate aspirations are not destroyed but fulfilled and intensified, in which tribal foundations are not simply shaken and replaced with a vacuum but made more secure in Christ. The God who made man and provides him with children, life and rain will now become man's light and man will have fellowship with his creator.

In this way Jesus Christ will so confront the peoples of Africa and in particular the Nchumuru, that in him and through him they will find access to God whom they already acknowledge in their traditional ideas to be the creator of all things, as the one who strengthens kinship between man and man, and the one who established kinship between man and God.

In this manner, this eternal Gospel of the incarnation will begin to accommodate itself in the African environment, making its challenges felt and its promises realised.

Bediako (1999:311) again citing Mbiti says:

We cannot effectively carry out mission in a foreign language. Just as missionaries from overseas had to learn our languages ... so must we put mission in a language which makes sense to those whom we missionise? In other words, we have to sing the Gospel in our tunes, set to our music, played on our instruments ... we must drum it out with our great drums, on our tom-toms, on our waist-shaped drums; for only these can vibrate and awaken entire villages: the violin is too feeble to awaken the sleeping pagans of our society."

In anticipating the future of Christianity among the Nchumuru it must be noted that all is not yet well, there is the need for more conscious effort to reach the desired destination. Taylor (2001:xv) observes thus: "Christianity is reported to be growing in terms of numerical strength. Yet the same vices which are condemned in sermons on Sunday after Sunday are the ones which have crippled social institutions and national governance in tropical Africa. Churches as institutions and Christians as individuals are often entangled and implicated in some of the mess, both in Africa ... What went wrong?"

In reviewing Taylor's observation what is clear is that for Christianity to grow and take root sustainably in any African culture, there must be a conscious and direct effort at emphasising the important role culture plays in the transmission of the Gospel message to any people group. It must be noted that respect for African cultural and religious heritage by Christian preachers and teachers can help immensely the cause of Christianity's advancement in any culture. This does not

mean that the Gospel must be compromised. After all contextualisation according to Hesselgrave (1991:133) is reconsideration of culture-sensitive theologising and communication. It is a real encounter between the Gospel and culture in terms of the culture's own forms and thought patterns (beliefs and practices). In this sense contextualisation is a living dialogue between the church and its environment.

In the preaching and teaching of the Gospel if the culture of any people is left untouched there could be dire consequences as observed by Bishop Taylor. Hence the future of Christianity among the Nchumuru would be determined on the basis of whether the Gospel of Christ has taken on Nchumuru culture head on or not. Tiénou (1990:49) notes: "Africa has the fastest growing church in the world; it may also have the fastest declining church!" What this means is that numerical growth far outpaces spiritual depth and maturity in African Christianity. If care is not taken to deal with the spiritual chill in time, a decline in numerical growth will be seen, and may even be observable now.

In summing up, the writer wishes to submit that Christianity has made some strides among the Nchumuru, but it must be noted this is just the beginning in the task of building the church among the people. Church membership has increased, a lot more congregations have sprang up but a lot more needs to be done to strengthen Christianity among the people if the problem of syncretism is to be overcome. The writer agrees with this description of African Christianity in which Nchumuru Christianity appears as a replica. As the churches in Nchumuru land look into the future they must work toward ways of shaking off the frost from Nchumuru Christianity. The task is enormous, but our Lord Jesus Christ encourages us to labour on, remembering his words to the apostle Peter, "... and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it" (Matt 16:18). There is light at the end of the tunnel. In an interview with the current Scripture Engagement coordinator of the Chumburung Translation Project, he was emphatic that with the Scriptures in the mother tongue, the future of Christianity among the Nchumuru holds promise.¹¹⁶

¹¹⁶ Interview with Bernard Aborkugya, Scripture Engagement Coordinator, Chumburung Translation Project at Kumdi, 25th January, 2011.

5.8 Conclusion

In this chapter the writer's attention has been focused on how Christianity has fared in Nchumuru culture. The position of Jesus as Lord in the midst of traditional religious considerations of Nchumuru people has been explored. The challenge of syncretism, the relevance or level of influence of the Gospel on the people's worldview and its impact on them and also the identity problem Nchumuru Christians face in their new faith in Christ has been discussed. The writer has also made an effort to discuss the future of Christianity among the Nchumuru. This offers a good model for contextualising Christianity in Nchumuru culture in Ghana.

Lastly also, the writer explored how Jesus Christ confronted the Nchumuru people that in him and through him they found access to God whom they already acknowledge in their traditional worldview to be the creator of all things. There are challenges in the way the people who have become Christians related to their ancestors. Their involvement in the rites associated with worship at the shrines and their participation in the celebration of festivals. How these would be resolved forms part of the concluding chapter which also has the suggested recommendations and conclusion.

CHAPTER SIX

Summary, Recommendations and Conclusion

6.1 Introduction

This chapter concludes the study. It deals with the summary of findings of the study, issues emerging out of the study and some recommendations.

6.2 Summary of Findings of the Study

The study commenced on the following research questions: What Impact did the mother tongue Scriptures coming within Nchumuru culture make in contextualising Christianity among the Nchumuru in Ghana from 1989 to 2011? What strategies are being used by the Chumburung Translation project and the church in the Nchumuru area in contextualising Christianity among the people? What have been the results so far in the use of these strategies for contextualisation of the Christian faith among the people?

On the basis of these research questions, the writer planned to interview about 150 personalities, the clergy and traditional leaders inclusive, but was only able to interview 105, due to time, financial and other constraints.

Based on these research questions, the writer came up with the following findings. Evangelisation of the Nchumuru took many forms by various Christian missionary agencies like the Roman Catholics, the Basel (Presbyterian) mission and later several other missions and local or the independent Church movement. On the Volta side the Catholic Church played a major role in the early days of Christianity among the people but on the Northern side the Protestant Movement represented by the Presbyterian Church and later the World Evangelisation for Christ (WEC) Missionaries played a vital role. Following them is the Adventist Mission. The missionary strategies of the church included the formal school system which targeted the children of the natives. The curriculum for the education of the natives involved religious instruction which was meant to inculcate Christian teachings to the pupils.

The pioneer missionaries also adopted the night school or informal school system in reaching the natives.

It also came out of the study that spontaneous evangelisation among the Nchumuru resulted from the arrival of the Pentecostal and neo-Pentecostal or Charismatic Movement, represented by the Church of Pentecost, Assemblies of God Church, Christ Apostolic Church, and the Independent African Church Movement. Their evangelistic strategies included open air meetings otherwise referred to as crusades. They also undertook house-to-house visitation to interact with families.

The study discovered that the Ghana Institute of Linguistics, Literacy and Bible Translation (GILLBT), entered into the Nchumuru area in 1972 and by the 1980s had began collaboration with the churches to introduce literacy classes or night schools which enabled many to become literate in their mother tongue and this helped to open doors for the conversion of many to the Christian faith. The study further discovered that the most effective of all the strategies used in evangelising the people was that by GILLBT through the church which has led to the Bible being born into the culture of the people. This is helping in contextualising Christianity among the people.

The study also discovered that the church in Nchumuru land had slow growth between the 1930s and 1989. Things naturally sometimes start slowly but among the Nchumuru the writer discovered through investigation that there were several definite reasons why growth was not faster in these years. The pastors and priests of the various churches were not themselves Nchumuru, and they did not learn the language or use it for preaching or teaching. They spoke about God's word, the Bible, but the only copies available were in English or Twi, and even those who could read saw these as foreign languages. Somehow the words did not speak to their hearts as only their own mother tongue could do. The mother tongue Scriptures coming into the culture of the people from 1989 therefore made the difference. This goes to support what Mandela once said "If you speak to a person in a language he understands it goes to his head but if you speak to him in his language it goes to his heart."¹¹⁷

The study brought out the fact that when people understand the Bible in a second language, the truth often loses its impact because hearers perceive God as distant

¹¹⁷ Statement attributed to Nelson Mandela, first democratically elected President of post-apartheid South Africa.

and Christian faith as of little relevance to their daily lives. The Bible in the Chumburung language has brought about transformation to some aspects of Nchumuru culture, rather than just the Bible in English or the Twi language used in the local area for the period before the Bible was born into the culture of the people. Good Christian living is about interpersonal relations, about emotion, about the deep springs of human life. Dye (2009:3) submits that teaching that is all in the second language of any audience suggests that Christian living is only for one's public persona, and internal spiritual growth is seriously hindered. Unfortunately, many people learn their Christian faith through a language of wider communication, while traditional folk religion is in their local language. The vitality of Christian faith depends on the Bible being understood and its teaching brought into daily life. Both are hindered when only a language of wider communication is used with people who are most at home in their local language. This hindrance can be tragic, because when the Word of God does get into their lives, people are transformed.

As historian Mark Noll has observed:

The study also showed that over the course of the last century, Christian penetration of local cultures has accelerated as never before. The great vehicle of that acceleration has been translation, primarily translations of the Bible into local languages . . . In a word; the world Christian situation is marked by multiplicity because of how deeply the Christian message, translated into local languages, has become part of local cultures (2005).

The study also established the fact that modern scholars recognise the power of the Scriptures in one's own language. For example Yale University Professor Lamin Sanneh attributes the dramatic expansion of the African church to the translation of the Scriptures into the local languages of the people (1989:123–125). The Scriptures themselves, as well as cultural factors, illuminate why it was the Bible in local languages that has brought this transformation, rather than just the Bible in some other language used in the local area. This perfectly fit into what took place on the Day of Pentecost as recorded in Acts chapter two.

McGavran observes:

Hundreds of millions live in two worlds. The first, of great importance to them, is that of intimates who speak the same language; the second, of relatively slight importance, is that world of a strange tongue in which we trade and

work with outsiders. In the first, the medium of communication is the language of the heart; in the second, the language of confusion is a trade language or standard language, good enough for buying and selling, taking orders and finding one's way, but pitifully inadequate for the things that really matter. People fight, make love, and mourn in their mother tongue" (1990:159–160).

By this observation it is clear the mother tongue plays a unique role in communicating God's message for effective comprehension.

The study also discovered that Christians worship a God who wants a very intimate relationship with each person. Jesus taught us to pray to our "Father," as Paul puts it in Romans 8:15. Jesus said we are loved and he wants us to love him with every part of our being. This kind of love requires the engagement of our minds. As Paul said: "This is my prayer: that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight, so that you may be able to discern what is best and may be pure and blameless until the day of Christ" (Phil. 1:9–10). Jesus spoke of repentance as the natural result of understanding. When Philip met the Ethiopian official, he did not ask whether the man was really committed or whether he had actually gone to the temple. He first asked, "Do you understand what you are reading?" Understanding is an Old Testament emphasis as well; more than fifty passages speak of understanding as a basic requirement of faith. Understanding the Scriptures well, the writer thinks is best achieved through appropriating the Scriptures in all media both (print and non-print) in the mother tongue.

The study also brought out diverse responses of the Nchumuru to the proclamation of the Gospel. It is significant to note that the proclamation of the Gospel centred on *Yeesuu* (Jesus) who was presented as the embodiment of true freedom and salvation. In response to this proclamation, some responded positively to the Gospel message and became converted with the reason that they had become convicted of their sinful ways and desired freedom and right standing with God.

The proclamation of the Gospel also brought conflicts in the lives of other people, who otherwise were called upon to abandon their traditional ways and to accept salvation in *Yeesuu* (Jesus). It is worth noting that the people are used to worshipping many gods, and the proclamation of Jesus as the only Lord and Saviour was bound to bring conflicts. In this sense, those who identified with the church were viewed by the die hard traditionalists as useless people because of the denial of their

traditional ways. Others were subjected to open humiliation, including exclusion from families and clans as well as physical assaults and insults.

Others considered conversion to the Christian faith as a risky adventure and therefore did not commit themselves. To them, they saw no reason to abandon their ancestral ties which had been their backbone from infancy. However, there were other people who committed themselves to the Christian faith but did not abandon their traditional religious beliefs and practices. They considered Christianity insufficient to meet all their needs and therefore needed more power in order to ward off spiritual attacks on their lives. It was realised that this situation had resulted probably from a lack of understanding of the tenets of the Christian faith by the converts. For them, to abandon the ancestral ties was a risky adventure, which they were not prepared to take, hence the presence of syncretism in Nchumuru Christianity.

It was also discovered that some people who claim to be Christians sometimes resort to the consultation of shrines and other powers for protection and fortification. This goes to show that a lot more needs to be done in encouraging the use of the translated mother tongue scriptures in the Nchumuru churches so as to help the Nchumuru come face to face with the truths of God's word revealed in Scripture. It is the submission of the writer that all churches in the Nchumuru area will encourage and intensify the use of the local scriptures in their teaching and preaching, so as to enable Nchumuru Christians come to the acceptance that Christ is all and in all. The writer holds the view that Jesus Christ has ultimate power over all creation and his protection is complete for the believer. Some readers may disagree with this position, but that is the Gospel truth, expressed in faith and it is without malice or ill-feeling. It is the hope of the writer that one day, these people who claim to serve God in the Nchumuru community will embrace Christianity whole heartedly as attempts are still being made at contextualising Christianity among the people, that the sons and daughters of Ishmael and Isaac will embrace one another with humility and Christian love. What this means is that converts to Christianity from non-Christian religions will embrace their Christian brethren in the Nchumuru community with love and a commitment to live together in peace and harmony.

Religion in the Nchumuru society is given expression in the totality of living. Every member of the community is obligated to live in such a way as to protect the peace and tranquility of the society. Mbiti (1979: 108-9) remarks: "I am because we are;

and since we are therefore I am,” this reiterates the point that behaviour patterns, social life and patterns of morality are to be conducted in such a way as to include the welfare of all in the community. If Christians in that society will make Mbiti’s philosophy a part of their life, then each one in the society will be his or her brother’s or sister’s keeper.

The study also brought out the fact that the proclamation of the Gospel in the mother tongue among the Nchumuru had resulted in some form of transformation in many ways. Individual lives as well as communities had been impacted positively resulting in social advancement in literacy, health, education and agriculture as well as the preservation of Nchumuru culture resulting from Bible translation and an improvement in marriage and family life.

6.3 Issues Emerging out of the Study

The study came up with some key issues which are worth noting. First, the positive impact the mother tongue Scriptures have made on Nchumuru Christianity within the culture. This invariably had led to changes in the religious beliefs and practices and traditional morality of the Nchumuru people.

Secondly, the Bible in the Chumburung language means that biblical culture and its dominant ideas adapt the language and culture of the Nchumuru and in this context contextualisation of the Gospel message is made relevant.

Thirdly, in relation to the social organisation of the Nchumuru, the concept of *Kokowebeε* (brotherhood) should be seen in the context of the church as the extended family of God. Issues such as the sense of belonging, existing in relation to others and positive involvement of each member of the community can be addressed in the light of the church’s fellowship (*koinonia*).

Fourthly, the culture of the Nchumuru is simply in essence the way of life of the people. Their cultural background is bound to affect the way they perceive and interpret the Gospel. The Gospel of Jesus comes to them for the sole purpose of discipling them for Christ. The Scripture engagement activities of the Chumburung Translation Project in collaboration with the churches have shown faith in discipling

the people for Christ, by the many impact activities outlined in chapter four of the study.

Lastly, there is a need for a new understanding of Christ and his relationship with humans. Christ should be seen as a living person and not one who is far from our reach, as God is portrayed in the traditional religion of the people. Scholars such as Bediako, Nyamiti and Mbiti have championed the position of Christ being our ancestor. Christ as an ancestor can be true for the Nchumuru or Akan (understood as nana). The truth of the resurrection of Christ is an incentive to Nchumuru believers of the potency of the after life and the assurance that Christ followers will also rise at the end of life into eternal bliss of joy and life everlasting.

6.4 Recommendations

Two critical problems characterise the evangelisation of the Nchumuru, like all other traditional societies in Africa. There is the evidence of a theological crisis and also an identity crisis. The crucial questions then are: how can the church make Christ real to the indigenous Nchumuru? Can the Nchumuru remain true to his cultural identity and be a true disciple of Christ? The following recommendations are made to the church and Christian community so as to meet these challenges.

6.4.1 Training in hermeneutical and exegetical principles in mother tongue Scriptures

The churches must be encouraged to give priority to the training in exegetical principles in mother tongue Scriptures. It has been established that for the Christian faith to be rooted in any culture including Nchumuru culture, it has to be made relevant to the indigenous beliefs and practices of the people. Training quality Christian leaders and in appropriate numbers on how to use and interpret the translated mother tongue Scriptures could lead to the proper understanding of the word of God by their own people. In connection with this, indigenous Christian converts who show signs of maturity should be encouraged to undergo courses in hermeneutical and exegetical principles in mother tongue Scriptures in recognised and accredited theological institutions. Scholarships should be provided for such

people by the churches to undertake the training as they seem to come from poorly resourced backgrounds.

Pastors and trained Christian workers can also develop their own training programmes for their people. They should discard any spirit of competition and deploy their promising leaders in right areas in order to help them maximise their gifts and potentials. The curriculum of theological institutions should be made to include biblical hermeneutics and exegetical courses in mother tongue Scriptures and also the Gospel and culture courses so as to intensify the study of mother tongue Scripture impact on culture and traditional religious thought forms which are necessary for the proclamation of the Gospel in cultural situations such as the Nchumuru. Also periodic workshops on mother tongue Scripture interpretation and impact and also the Gospel and culture should be organised for church leaders working among the Nchumuru so as to put them in a better situation to understand the Nchumuru context and how best to adapt to it.

6.4.2 The study of local languages and cultures by Pastors and Christian workers

Attention must be given to the study of local languages and cultures by all pastors and Christian workers who live and work among people other than their own. Resources should be made available by churches for this training. It should form a priority in the churches budgetary allocation should the desired impact be achieved. When this is done the pastors and other Christian workers involved in the communication of the Gospel of Christ to other people and language groups will realise that there is a link to what they say to what the people hear, because it will be in their mother tongue. Orwell citing Maddocks (1971:36-37) points out that sloppy language leads to sloppy thoughts. This means that language is of utmost importance in communicating God's message to people. Hesselgrave (1991:345) observes: "When we first meet people in the Bible, they have the power of speech. It was an integral part of their entire experience. They received the commands of God, they communed with God, and they were sought out by God-all by means of language." Here it is seen that God in his self revelation lived among humans and in all the instances we have in Scripture especially in the Old Testament God spoke directly to his prophets. God himself was the one who sought for his created beings

(mankind) so he can have fellowship with them. The writer wishes to submit from the above that God used the language that people he dealt with could understand. Therefore since Christian growth depends on understanding, faithful church members who don't understand the language of wider communication would not be able to grow in their faith, if that language is used in church against the use of the mother tongue.

It is clear from the above that communication of any message is best achieved in one's mother tongue hence the need for the churches to give this a priority. When pastors begin to communicate the word of God to their audience in the latter's mother tongue, then and only then that the people will consider their mission relevant and will give them their attention and respond positively to the Gospel they preach. Language learning and use in the communication of the Gospel can lead to Christian conversions in any given cultural context and this calls for a pastoral approach which is very crucial for the sustainability of the faith of Christians and new converts in any culture.

All church and Christian workers living and working in any culture must also make efforts at learning the culture of the people so as to be able to understand their frame of reference so as to minister relevantly to them. This will help very much in the process of contextualising the Gospel message in any given culture with maximum impact on the people's lives.

Indigenous language use can also be encouraged through serious study of the Bible in those languages and this must be promoted by the churches and their clergy. This must be done by the use of the Bible in the mother tongue to afford their members deep understanding of the word of God. This in a way can help address the problem of syncretism and make the people live their Christian lives relevantly in their respective cultures.

Churches must encourage their members to create songs which are theologically sound and biblically based in the local languages in order to understand theology. This will help address the problem of Christian identity crisis because individual Christians would have the opportunity to understand their Christian faith better through the songs they create.

6.4.3 Mother Tongue Literacy Development

The significance of literacy in the understanding and appropriation of Christian truths cannot be over emphasised. Literacy is a tool that can facilitate the understanding of the Scriptures, especially Scriptures in the mother tongue, which will also influence the lives of people positively in such areas as, education, health, sanitation and agriculture. Therefore the call for literacy promotion and development is of prime significance.

Even though some literacy classes or night schools are organised in some areas, their number as well as their effectiveness is not good enough. This therefore calls for the training of more facilitators and the development of more primers to enhance the mother tongue literacy work. Furthermore, the Ghana Education Service (GES) should as a matter of urgency sanction the teaching of the Chumburung language and even make it examinable in schools. The churches should as a matter of priority encourage and support literacy classes for their members. Churches in supporting the literacy drive must endeavour to make an effort towards helping produce mother tongue Bibles in the cultures where this has not yet been done.

6.5 General Conclusion

All acts of transmitting the Gospel are contextual in nature, and this makes the context of the Christian missionary or preacher an important factor in his thinking and writing. It must be noted that the vitality of the Christian faith depends on the Bible being understood and its teaching brought into daily life. It is along these lines that the role of the indigenous languages of Africa, in spreading the Gospel in the African context has been explored, especially among the Nchumuru of Ghana. In matters of Christianity, the mother tongue speaks to the heart, mind and inner-most feelings than any other language. The achievement of Christianity with regard to this all-important place of language in religion is truly unique. For Christianity is, among all religions, the most culturally translatable, hence the most truly universal, being able to be at home in every cultural context without injury to its essential character.

There is little doubt that Christianity would never have moved beyond its Palestinian confines if the early church had not taken up the challenge of the relationship of culture to faith in a positive way. The story of the growth of the early Christian community is the story of communities responding positively to that challenge through creative adaptations of the Gospel of Jesus Christ to their various backgrounds. It has been recognised from the discussion that the encounter of Nchumuru culture with Christianity is one of mutual engagement; it enriches Christianity and is also enriched by Christianity. The question of the impact of mother tongue Scriptures in contextualising Christianity in the Nchumuru culture in Ghana is very crucial to the success of Christian evangelisation. Therefore an awareness of the significance of the mother tongue Scriptures in the expression of the Christian faith in any given culture is of great necessity for the Christian community.

People do not need to stop being members of their language groups in order to be Christians. Rather they should establish a relationship with God through Jesus Christ and appropriate that relationship to all others within the human realm and the entire supernatural arena. As people become Christians they need to be encouraged to integrate their beliefs and practices into a relevant worship of God. It is evident that the engagement of the Gospel and culture is a reality much as the significance of culture in the propagation of the Gospel cannot be compromised.

There is therefore the need for the Nchumuru to perceive and respond to Jesus in ways that are meaningful to their own understanding and experience. Such an encounter is crucial for the people to name Jesus by themselves and to embrace him in their own socio-cultural and religious environment. Nchumuru Christians may take seriously the biblical text which is in their native tongue and their cultural context, and let God's Spirit do his work by explaining the Scriptures to their understanding; this is the only guarantee against syncretism. A contextual approach to reading the Scriptures makes the words of the Willowbank Report of the 1978 consultation on Gospel and Culture held in Willowbank, Bermuda most appropriate.

The Report observes:

Today's readers cannot come to the text in a personal vacuum, and should not try to. Instead, they should come with an awareness of concerns stemming from their cultural background, personal situation and responsibility to others. These concerns will influence the questions which are put to the Scriptures... As we address Scripture, Scripture addresses us. We find that

our culturally conditioned presuppositions are being challenged and our questions corrected.

What this means is that the discussions about Christianity and Nchumuru culture should be about how to make Christianity more relevant to the Nchumuru cultural situation, without diluting the Gospel message.

At this point it is worth noting that this study does not lay claim to have addressed all the issues relating to the mother tongue Scriptures' impact in contextualising Christianity in the Nchumuru culture in Ghana. However it is the hope of the writer that churches as well as Christian workers who are already working, and those who might be considering to work in some cultures other than their own, may do well to consider these recommendations if the Gospel they preach and teach is to make any impact on the people among whom they work. Nonetheless there are still issues involved in other research domains concerning the Nchumuru which may come up for further research in the not too distant future.

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APPENDIX A
SAMPLE INTERVIEW GUIDE

Personal Information/Data

1. Name:
- Gender: Male [] Female []
2. Date: Time...
3. Church type:
4. Denomination and location:
5. Age.....
6. Educational level: Primary [] JHS [] SHS [] College/University []
7. Marital status: Single Married Widowed Divorced no. of wives
8. Ethnicity of spouse Same Other
9. Number of languages spoken Mother tongue Others
10. Leadership role in community.....
11. Profession/Occupation.....
12. Religion Traditional Religion Christian Islamic Others
13. Position in church. Pastor Elder/Deacon Others
14. Christian conversion experience. When? and How?

Church Background Information

1. Can you tell me how Christianity came to your area?
2. Who were the early preachers of the Gospel in Nchumuru area?
3. How many churches are in your area?
4. Do you think there are some problems that preachers who come to your area face in the preaching of God's word?
5. Name any and why?
6. Do you think the churches in your area are making some impact on the people? Can you tell me some of them?
7. Which language/languages are used in the church worship services?
8. Has the Bible been translated in your language? If so which one?

9. Do you have a copy of the Bible in your language?
10. How often do you read the Bible?
11. Do you read the Bible in any other language apart from yours?
If yes, in what other language?
12. Do you think it is worth translating the Bible into your language?

About The Nchumuru People

1. Can you tell me the meaning of —Nchumuru?
2. Where did the people originate from?
3. Traditionally, how do the people call themselves?
4. Can you tell me the various dialects of the Nchumuru people and their major towns?
5. Do you think there is some cultural uniqueness of your people as compared to others in Ghana? If so, what are they?
6. Which religion do your people claim as theirs?
7. What language is used in the communication of the Gospel in your church?
8. Which church in your area has most of your people as members?
9. Why do you think that this church has more members?
10. What are the main occupations of your people?
11. Can you tell me some customs and traditions of your people which make it difficult for people to become Christians?
12. Do you think some of your people who have become Christians sometimes face some problems with traditional society?
13. Do you think there are some customs and practices of your people which are good for Christians? If yes, what are they?
14. Are there others too which infringe on Christian faith and practice? If yes, what are they?

Cultural Issues

What can you say about?

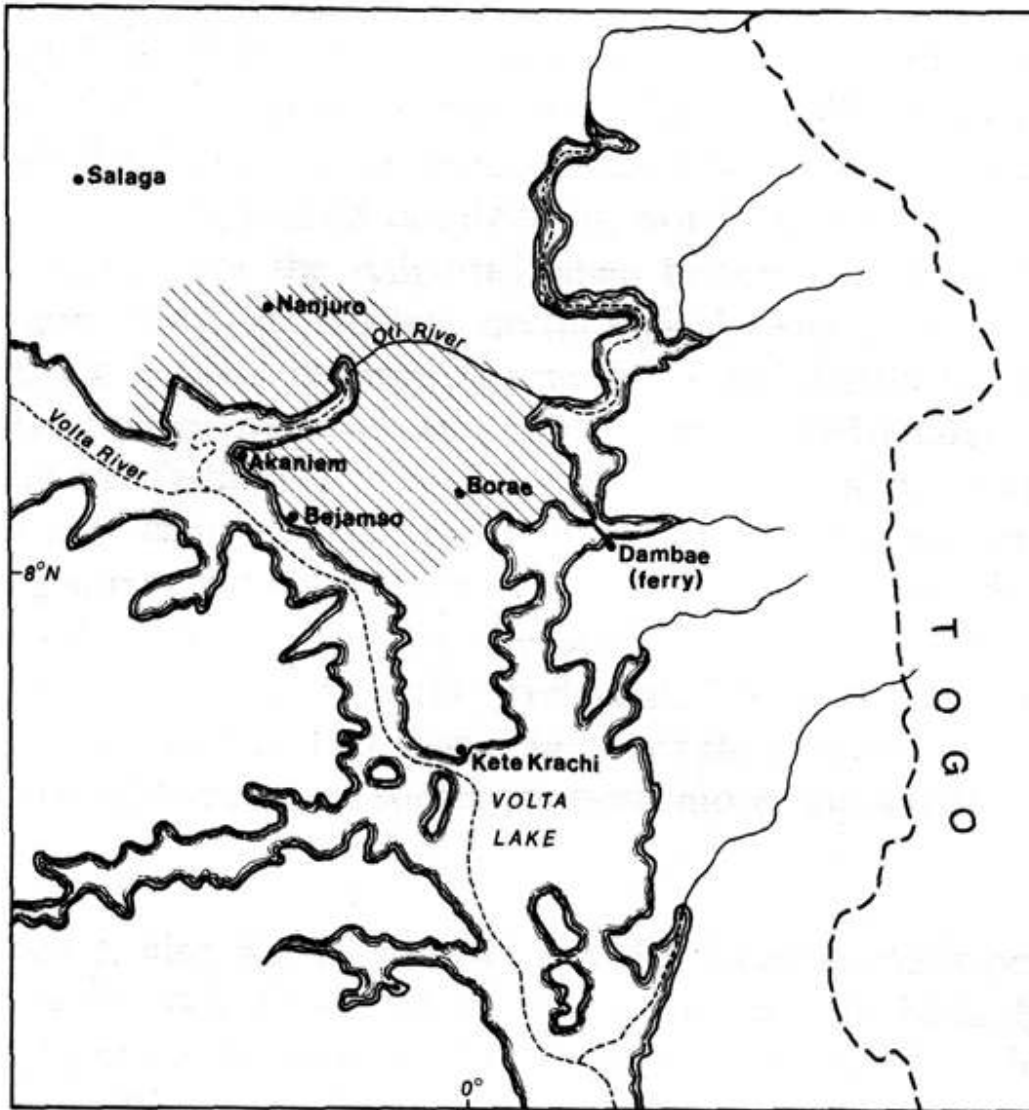
1. Marriage/polygamy (polygyny)
2. Death, Burial and Funeral rites/Festivals
3. Ancestors
4. Family heads in ancestral sacrifices.
5. Spirits, Shrines and Witchcraft and their effect on the Nchumuru society.
6. The stand of the church on ancestral sacrifices.

Impact of the Mother Tongue Scriptures on Nchumuru Christianity

1. In what ways has the Bible in the mother tongue affected Christianity in the Nchumuru area?
2. What has been the mother tongue Scriptures' impact on the culture of the people?
3. Will you say the impact has been positive/ negative? Explain how?
4. How has this affected the church's landscape in the area?
5. How will you evaluate Christianity's influence on the way and life of the people?
6. What of aspects of Nchumuru culture has been most significantly affected positively following the mother tongue Scripture's contact with the culture? Name them...

APPENDIX B

Map showing the Nchumuru Area covered in this work, adapted from Drid Williams in her 1971 work: *Sokodae: A West African Dance*

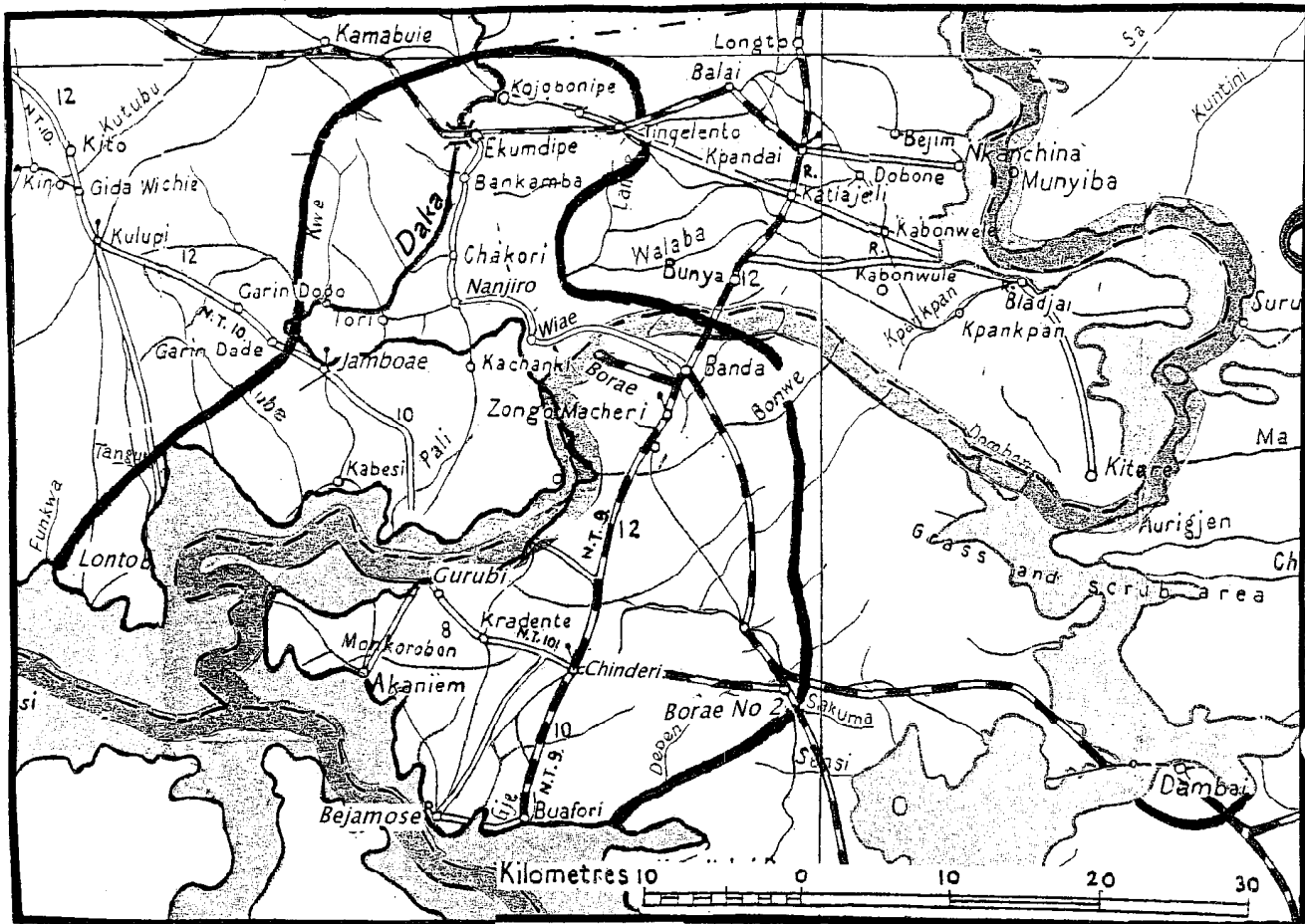


SHADING INDICATES NTWUMURU TERRITORY

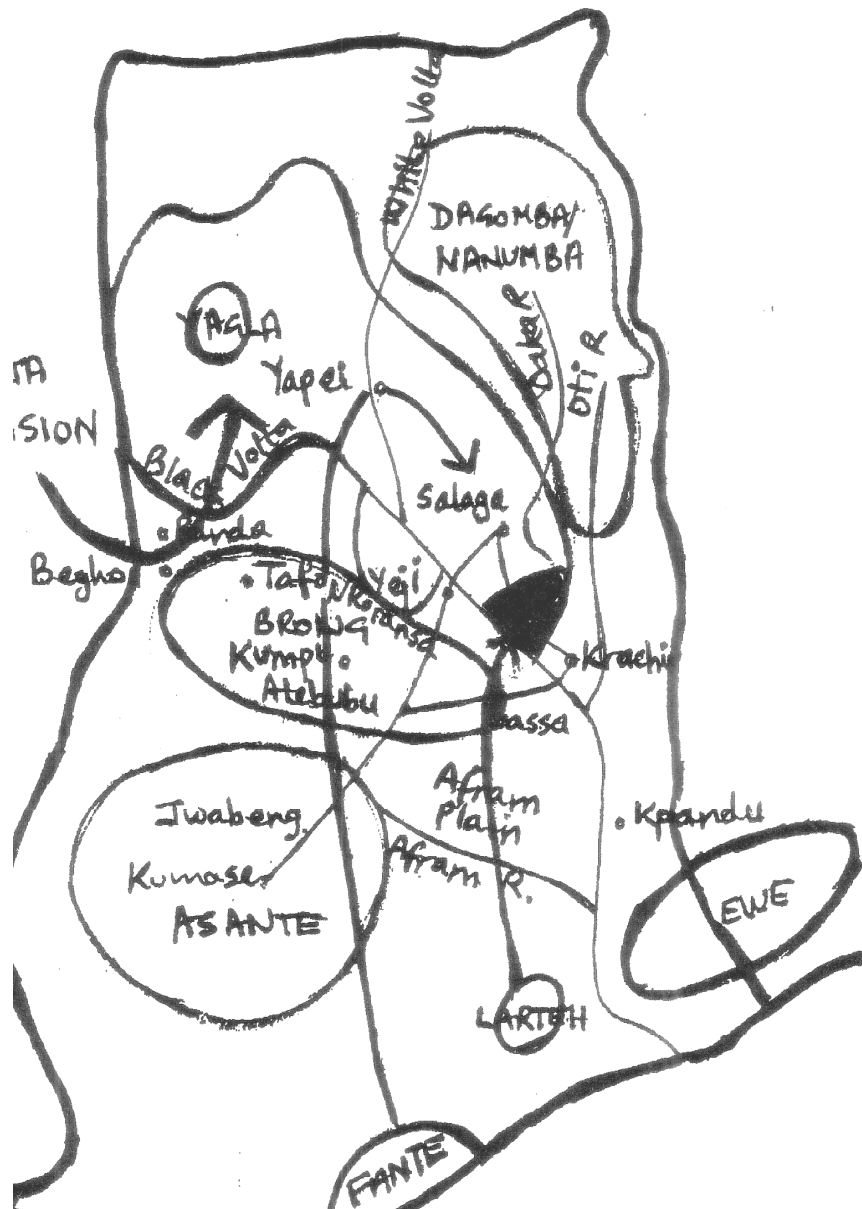
APPENDIX C

Map showing the Nchumuru Area covered by this work with named towns and villages.

Map adapted from Gillian Hansford's 1990 work on the Chumburung



APPENDIX D, A map of Ghana showing the migratory routes of the Nchumuru people, adapted from Gillian Hansford's 1990 work on the Chumburung



APPENDIX E

Update Information on the state of the Church among the Nchumuru in the Northern and Volta Regions of Ghana

Name of town/village	Name of Church	Year of establishment
Aberewanko	Roman Catholic	1999
	Church of Pentecost	1999
Anyinamaye	Roman Catholic	1989
	Church of Pentecost	1999
Banda Bunweesi	Roman Catholic	1989
	Presbyterian Church of Ghana	2003
	Evangelical Church of Ghana	1989
	Church of Pentecost	1989
	Seventh-Day Adventist Church	1989
	Musama Disco Christo Church	1989
Banka	Roman Catholic	1989
	Church of Pentecost	2003
Bankamba	Roman Catholic	1989
	Church of Pentecost	1999
	Evangelical Church of Ghana	2003
	Christian Church	1999
Boafore	Roman Catholic	1999
	Evangelical Presbyterian Church	1989
	Church of Pentecost	1989

	Seventh-Day Adventist Church	1989
Begyamose	Roman Catholic	1949
	Evangelical Presbyterian	2004
	Church of Pentecost	1989
	Seventh-Day Adventist	
	Bethel Prayer Ministry Int.	1989
		2002
Borae Lakεε-ռ	Roman Catholic	1989
	Church of Pentecost	1999
Borae Nkwanta	Roman Catholic	1989
	Church of Pentecost	1989
Borae No.2	Roman Catholic	1989
	Evangelical Presbyterian	
	Evangelical Church of Ghana	1989
	Church of Pentecost	1989
	Seventh-Day Adventist	1989
	Christian Church	
	Deeper Life Bible Church	1989
	Cherubim and Seraphim	1999
	Apostolic Church	
	Apostle Revelation Society	1992
	Bethel Prayer Ministry Int.	1989
		1992
		1992
		1992

Dambae	Roman Catholic	1999
	Presbyterian Church	1999
	Evangelical Church of Ghana	1999
	Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Pentecost	1989
	Seventh-Day Adventist Christian Church	1989
	Deeper Life Bible Church	1989
	Cherubim and Seraphim New Apostolic Church	2003
	Apostolic Church	2003
	Apostles Revelation Society	2003
	Bethel Prayer Ministry	
	Assemblies of God	2003
	Musama Disco Christo Church	2003
	Divine Healers	2000
		2001
		2000
		2003
	2001	
Diṅdɔɔ	Roman Catholic	1999
	Church of Pentecost	1989
Gyambɔyɛ	Roman Catholic	1989
	Presbyterian Church	1989
	Church of Pentecost	1999
	Christian Church	1999

Kabeegyisi	Church of Pentecost	2003
Kabeese	Roman Catholic	1989
	Presbyterian Church	1989
	Church of Pentecost	1999
Kakyonkee	Presbyterian Church	1989
	Evangelical Church of Ghana	1987
Kakwose	Evangelical Presbyterian	
	Church of Pentecost	1999 1999
Kpagyiaye	Roman Catholic	1989
	Presbyterian Church	1989
	Church of Pentecost	1989
	Seventh-Day Adventist	
		198
Grubi	Roman Catholic	1989
	Presbyterian Church	1999
	Evangelical Presbyterian	
	Evangelical Church of Ghana	1989
	Seventh-Day Adventist	1997
	Church of Pentecost	
	Assemblies of God	1999
		1989 1989
Kumdi	Roman Catholic Church	1989
	Evangelical Church of Ghana	1982
	Seventh-Day Adventist	
	Christian Church	1969
	Church of Christ	1999

	Church of Pentecost Assemblies of God Lighthouse Chapel International	1999 2008 2012
<u>Kumonisi Kwatase</u>	Roman Catholic Presbyterian Church of Ghana Church of Pentecost	1989 2003 1999
Kojobone	Roman Catholic Presbyterian Church Church of Pentecost Christian Church Church of Christ Assemblies of God	1989 1989 2003 2003 2003 2006
Chakori	Presbyterian Church Evangelical Church of Ghana	2003 1989
<u>Kyondeere</u>	Roman Catholic Presbyterian Church Evangelical Presbyterian Evangelical Church of Ghana Seventh-Day Adventist Church of Pentecost Church of the Lord	1989 1989 1989 1989 1989 1989 1992
Lonto	Roman Catholic Presbyterian Church Church of Pentecost	1989 1989 1989
Nanjuro	Roman Catholic	1999

	Christian Church Church of Pentecost	1999 2003
Akaniem	Roman Catholic Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Pentecost	1989 1989 1989
Zongo Macheri	Roman Catholic Evangelical Presbyterian Evangelical Church of Ghana Church of Pentecost Musama Disco Christo Church	1989 1999 1999 1989 1989
Sunjuaye	Roman Catholic Presbyterian Church Church of Pentecost	1999 1989 1999
Taafosweere	Roman Catholic Church of Pentecost	2002 1999
Tokoroano	Roman Catholic Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Pentecost	1989 1999 1989
Wankan̄ Yawo	Church of Pentecost	2003
Worengya	Roman Catholic Church of Pentecost	1989 1999
Woregyapomaayo	Roman Catholic Church of Pentecost	1999 1999
Wiae	Roman Catholic Evangelical Church of Ghana	1979 1999

	Church of Pentecost	1999
	Church of Christ	2003

APPENDIX F

Peter Baker in his revised work in 2012 on northern Ghanaian people of 1986 give the following estimates of the expansion of Christianity among the Nchumuru in a period of 26 years between 1986 and 2012 as follows in the table below:

<i>estimated %age</i>	<i>Traditional Religion</i>	<i>Islam</i>	<i>Christianity</i>	<i>No religion</i>
1986	92	under 1	4	-
2012	20	under 1	75	-

APPENDIX G

A Sample of Key Terms from the Chumburung Bible

A

Adultery	kakye <u>ek</u> pa, kanyare <u>k</u> pa. Kine Wuribware <u>re</u> (figurative).
Adulterer	ɔkye <u>ek</u> papo <u>.</u>
Altar (for sacrifice)	Lɔŋɔkpa.
Altar of idols	mfeŋ ne ba suŋ bamo ikisi-o.
Almighty God	Bo- <u>e</u> leŋ-ɔ-kyoŋ-ɔkema <u>a</u> -Bware <u>re</u>

B

Baptise (by water)	bo asuu.
Baptise with suffering	gyi awore <u>f</u> ɔɔ, ŋu ase <u>ŋ</u> .
Baptise with the Holy Spirit	ɔ sa a Wuribware Kufwi <u>i</u> ŋe Timaa-o ywee mo <u>n</u> e se na mo <u>n</u> nya keyaale <u>ŋ</u> feye <u>de</u> ekpa-ɔ.
Believe	kɔɔ <u>re</u> gyi.
Bishop	ɔbresɛ.

C

Christ (as a name)	Kristoo.
Christ (as title)	Kristoo ne Wuribware <u>re</u> ye o suŋ a ɔ bo kyoŋwe <u>re</u> ane-ɔ.
Comforter	ɔkyarɔ <u>po</u> .

D

Deacon	asoree ɔkyarɔ <u>po</u> .
Demon	ibrisi.
Disciple	ɔgyase <u>po</u> .

E

Eternal life	ŋkpa na kukyure <u>re</u> ne a mo <u>n</u> de keɛ-ɔ.
--------------	--

F

Faith	kɔkɔ <u>re</u> gyi.
Fellowship	kano koŋko <u>.</u>

G

Eternal life

ηkpa na kukyure ne a mon de κεε-ο

Generation

kakowe ηkyase.

Gospel

asen timaa bo lee Yeesuu Kristoo

kayowore se.

Grace

nyure.

H

Hell

aworefoo deekpa-ro.

Holy One (God)

Boye-ko-mon-te-mo-se-Bware

Hope

temaa.

High priest

Wuribware olonhoro bresε.

I

Idol

kisi.

Iniquity

boye, eboye.

J

Justify

Wuribware e tee oko feye sesε timaa.

K

Kingdom of God

Wuribware a kuwure-o-ro.

Kingdom of heaven

Wuribware se a kuwure-o-ro

L

Law (Jewish)

Wuribware mbraa.

(Other)

mbraa.

Levite

Leewii-nyi.

M

Mediator

mbonts-ro oyerepo.

Z

Zealot

Searotii-nyi, kaase e kaapo feye.

omankpapo

APPENDIX H

Writer in an interview with a respondent at the Nchumuru Area

