SECTION

10

RELIGIOUS COMMUNITIES

RELIGIOUS COMMUNITIES AND NATION BUILDING

Origin and Nature of Religious Communities

Introduction

The focus of this section is to help you deepen your knowledge of African Indigenous, Christian and Islamic religious communities and the roles they play in society.

At the end of this section, you will be able to:

- Explain the origins of the religious communities in Ghana
- Describe the characteristics of the three religious communities
- Examine the roles of the religious communities in society

Key Ideas

- Communities are a group of people living in the same place or having particular features in common.
- The origin of African Indigenous Religious communities is difficult to trace because they are mainly linked to tribal migration stories and adherents officially become members of a group of people defined by a "religious" devotion to something, known as cults.
- In the case of Christian religious communities established during the early missionary periods called Salems, converts from the indigenous religions were required to move out of their traditional homes and settle in the 'Christian quarters' ('Salems') on the outskirts of the community.
- Islamic religious communities are formed by circumstances such as trade, employment, etc. that bring people from different families together to form what are often called the zongos.

AIR COMMUNITIES

Meaning of Community

Each one of you will have a distinct background and will feel part of different communities at home, school or within your church or social groups. Community means, a group of people who share common interests, values, goals and a sense of identity. Some factors that are considered in defining community are geographical location, cultural background, religious beliefs, social conditions, etc. In the context of this focal area, communities will be considered as groups of people living in the same area, but it is worth noting that the concept of community has broadened over time and may not be limited by geography.

What are religious communities?

Religious communities are groups of people who share common beliefs, practices, and values centred around their faith. These communities can take various forms, including congregations, religious orders, and interfaith groups. They come together in communal worship, social support, and tend to share beliefs on perceived societal norms in terms of attitudes and behaviours.

AIR Communities

These are religious communities that are rooted in the indigenous spiritual beliefs such as belief in the Supreme Being, divinities, ancestors, and other spirit beings alongside the practice of magic and medicine. These religious communities are characterised by a strong connection to the environment, communal ethics, and a holistic view of the sacred that shapes the line between the spiritual world and the non-spiritual world (the mundane).

It is quite difficult to determine the origin of AIR communities because often the community is linked to the founding of the town or village where they are based. For example, the majority of Ghanaian villages and towns have what are commonly known as communal gods or the occult around which religious practice is centred. There are, nevertheless, certain gods or cults that require adherents to formally join through initiation or other ceremonies.

Examples of AIR communities include:

- Yeve of the Anlo Ewe in Volta Region. This community is believed to provide protection and assistance against evil or wicked forces.
- Bredi, near Nkoransa in Bono East. In this religious community activities and practices are centred around traditional healing and spirituality.
- Akwantifi Gyeabour of Medoma, a suburb of Kumasi. - It provides spiritual healing. community focus, and ethical conduct.
- Tongaab shrine (Nana Tongo/ Yaab Tongo) of the Tallensi, in Upper East Region-- It is a traditional homeland of the people of Tallensi. People go to the shrine to seek rain during drought, for solutions in times of trouble, for children by those who cannot have children, spiritual healing, protection, guidance, blessings and success in all endeavours among others.
- Akonedi of Larteh-Akuapem, in Eastern Region. – Here, believers seek favour and make sacrifices to appease the gods.

Fig. 10.1: Talensi ancestral shrine

Fig. 10.2: Gonja shrine

Fig. 10.3: Tongo (Nana Tongo/ Yaab Tongo) shrine at Tenzug in the Tallensi district

Characteristics of AIR Communities:

AIR religious communities can be identified and described using several common characteristics.

- In these communities, religion is the defining philosophy of life and will underpin most community practices. That is why, among the members, religion is seen as an integral part of their day to day lives; from birth to death and even beyond.

- In most indigenous communities, there is religious architecture such as shrines, deities and places where religious acts such as circumcision, libation and rituals are performed.

- Signs, symbols and sacred writings are evident in AIR communities. Signs and symbols are put there for cultural representation. For example, masks and totems can depict ancestral spirits and clan identity.

- All members obey taboos, customs, and beliefs. Taboos are seen as prohibitions put in place by the Supreme Being, ancestors and/or spirits for instance, to help maintain balance, or ensure that the environment remains healthy for future use.

- Offerings are made to the Supreme Being, the gods and ancestral spirits during events and celebrations such as Homowo, Aboakyir, Akwasidae, Feok festivals. These offerings are significant as they usually represent devotion, gratitude, and a connection with the divine. These offerings can take many forms, such as food, drink, or other valued items.

- Religious practices like dancing, ritual performances and sacrifices are learnt through socialisation. This is because in AIR, teachings and practices are often learned and transmitted through oral traditions, such as folktales, song, playing traditional games, etc.

- Members live a communal lifestyle. Their lifestyle is typified by shared beliefs, collective practices and a deep connection to the ancestry. Together this shapes their society and world view.

- Communities have common beliefs and teachings. All the adherents of AIR believe in the Supreme Being, the gods, ancestors and exhibition of spirituality in their daily lives. The daily lives of members of these communities are intrinsically linked with their religious activities.

There is a structure of leadership, and rules and conventions are strictly adhered to. Followers of AIR believe that the Supreme God created and controls the universe that there are selected forces of an earthly nature that deal with the affairs of mankind on earth and that the spirit of man lives on after death. There are also ancestral spirits who have power over those who remain on earth and must be remembered, appeased, honoured, and consulted by the living.

Christian Communities

Christian communities were established in Ghana as a result of the presence of the missionaries at the shores of Ghana. These communities have since become deeply rooted in Ghanaian culture and society, influencing its moral, social and economic life.

Christian religious communities established during the early missionary periods are commonly referred to as *Salems*. Other African independent churches also adopted the model of *salems* and established religious communities.

Examples of Christian religious communities include:

- Abokobi Salem in Accra. This community was established by the Basel Mission for new converts and their safety.

- Osu Salem in Accra: Osu Salem was also established by the Basel Mission for the same purpose as that of Abokobi

- Dome-Kwabenya in Accra, for Christ Reformed Church (Kristo Asafo): The Kristo Asafo Church, also known as Christ Reformed Church, has a significant presence in Ghana with 137 branches across the country. It was founded by Apostle Dr. Kwadwo Safo in Accra, the capital of Ghana, and has expanded to other countries as well. It was established to address the spiritual and social needs of the people.

- Mosano in the Central Region for Musama Disco Christo Church: The Musama Disco Christo Church (MDCC) is one of the oldest indigenous churches in West Africa, known for integrating traditional Akan religion and culture into its practices. The church's headquarters is located at Mosano in the Central Region of Ghana.

- Anyinam in the Eastern Region for African Faith Tabernacle Church, (AFTC): This is a prominent indigenous Christian denomination and was founded by prophet James Kwabena Nkansah in 1919.

- Osiem in the Eastern Region for Faith Church: The True Faith Church International was established in 1914 in a community in Sunyani and with another being found in Kwahu Praso.

Factors that caused for the establishment of Christian religious communities include the following

- Direct activities of foreign missionaries: Most Christian communities were established in Ghana as a result of missionaries work to spread their faith and promote formal education. Missionaries' enthusiasm to learn the language and familiarise themselves with the local people contributed to formation of these communities.

- Some community members created salems as a place of refuge from conflict or suffering e.g., Abokobi. Salems served as a community of comfort to those seeking a peaceful life and attracted movement to these communities.

- The desire to run away from the influence of indigenous African culture and practices such as human sacrifice and puberty rites. People who were no longer interested in their indigenous customs or those were persecuted sought safety at

the outskirt of their villages where the missionaries had established themselves in Christian communities.

- Seeking favourable environmental conditions, e.g., the origin and development of the Presbyterian Church in Akuapem and Kwahu. Missionaries, specifically the Basels, settled on the Akuapem and Kwahu mountains as these areas had favourable weather conditions that supported their health.

- Direct invitation of missionaries by local leaders. To understand the works of the missionaries, some traditional leaders invited them to their communities. The missionaries settled with the local people and transformed their society to that of Christianity.

- The rise of African Independent Churches (AICs) and the desire to create and maintain a distinct identity from missionary Christianity and keep aspects of the indigenous culture. These churches kept certain practices such as dancing singing, drumming, etc which aligned to the indigenous people. This made it easier for both groups to build a community.

Characteristics of Christian Communities

Christian communities are most often characterised by the following.

1. Members of Christian communities' lifestyles are defined by Biblical virtues, e.g. love, peace, holiness, kindness, unity and hard work (Acts 2:42, 2Corinthians 9:6-7, Malachi 3:10)

2. Christian communities are characterised by their dedication to listening to the teachings of Jesus. They share their meals and other resources with their fellow members in need. They participate in communal prayer, although individual prayer is also encouraged. Community members also partake in the communion fellowship.

Fig. 10.4: Members of the Sanctuary of Grace Bible Church being served communion

Fig. 10.4: Members of a Catholic church receiving communion

Fig. 10.5: A young evangelist sharing the word of God.

3. Another characteristic of a Christian community is that they embark on soul winning (evangelism) as a means of spreading the Christian gospel. In other words, the communities are identified by their acts of love, pursuit of peace and hard work.

4. Religious architecture is present – church buildings, religious relics, etc. Most Christian communities are identified by the presence of church buildings, sacred drawings and paintings. Buildings can take different forms but act as a gathering place for worship. Some examples are shown below.

Fig. 10.6: OLA cathedral, Tamale

Fig. 10.7: Our Lady of Seven Sorrows Minor Basilica at Navrongo, a mud structure that has survived for more than 120 years.

Fig. 10.8: A photo of Alabaster International Church

5.   Signs, symbols and sacred writings are evident in the community. Examples are the crucifix, the dove and the Bible and Mary the mother of Jesus.

Fig. 10.9: A crucifix, a dove, The Holy Bible and Mary the mother of Jesus.

6.   *Members obey the Christian commandments.* An example is the Ten Commandments - a set of religious and ethical directives in Exodus 20:2-17 that describe principles to underpin the life of a Christian. The Bible includes other directives or commandments, such as that Christians read the scriptures regularly (Matthew 6:9-13.)

7. Periodical events and celebrations are undertaken in the community. Significant dates in the Christian calendar are celebrated across the community and are a focus for communal worship. Examples include Christmas, Easter, Pentecost, All Saints' Day,

8. Members learn religious practices like singing, dancing and other rituals through socialisation. Below is a photo of one of the activities that characterises such an event in a Christian community.

Fig. 10.10: Christian religious community in a singing and dancing mood.

9. Members live a communal lifestyle. For instance, they share what they have and meet regularly to engage in activities such as morning devotion, worship, Bible studies, helping the needy, etc.

10. They have common beliefs and teachings. Christians share core tenants of the belief, for example the Apostles' Creed, Jesus Christ was God, church as a body of Christ (the Trinity), Second Coming, forgiveness of sins, etc.

11. There is a structure of leadership, and rules are strictly adhered to. Generally, the leadership in Christian communities is diverse. However, it reflects the theological context of the different denominations. For instance, the hierarchical structure of the Catholic Church and community is shown below
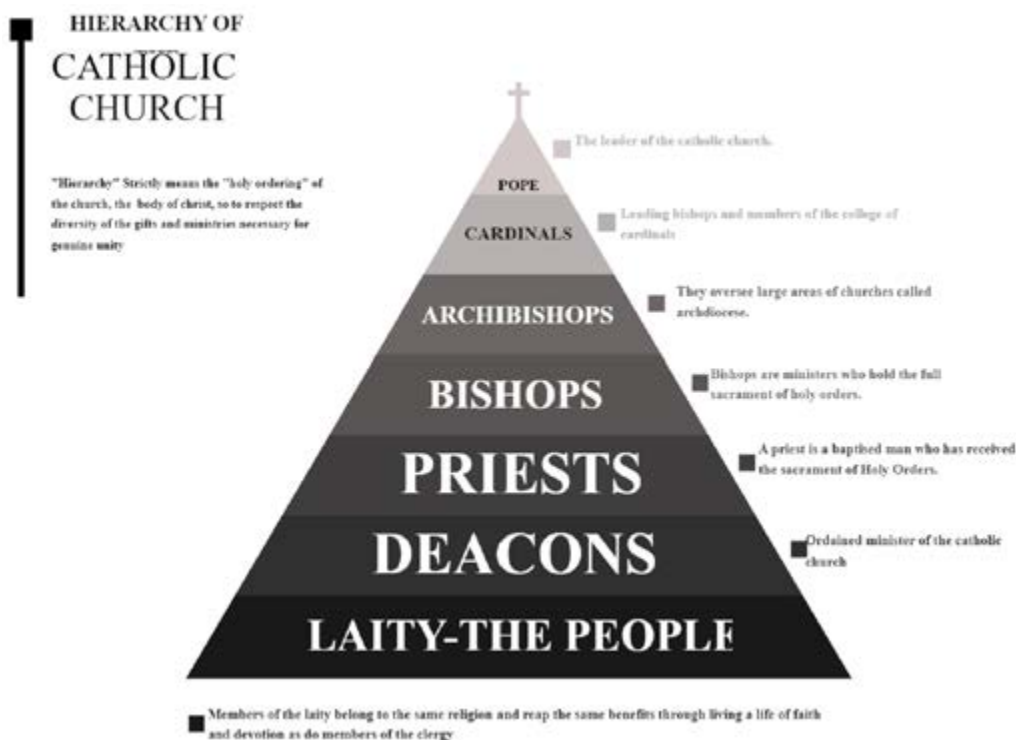
HIERARCHY OF

CATHOLIC CHURCH

"Hierarchy" Strictly means the "holy ordering" of the church, the body of christ, so to respect the diversity of the gifts and ministries necessary for genuine unity

POPE — The leader of the catholic church.

CARDINALS — Leading bishops and members of the college of cardinals

ARCHIBISHOPS — They oversee large areas of churches called archdiocese.

BISHOPS — Bishops are ministers who hold the full sacrament of holy orders.

PRIESTS — A priest is a baptised man who has received the sacrament of Holy Orders.

DEACONS — Ordained minister of the catholic church

LAITY-THE PEOPLE — Members of the laity belong to the same religion and reap the same benefits through living a life of faith and devotion as do members of the clergy

Fig. 10.11: The hierarchical structure of the Catholic Church

Activity 10.1

Form a group of five to six with your classmates. Try and ensure that across the group you have a range of religious backgrounds and different genders.

Using the internet, or any other reading materials, for information research the origins of an AIR or Christian community. You may choose a community to focus on, or your teacher may allocate you with a particular brief.

Take short notes to summarise your findings and be prepared to share what you have learned about your community as part of a class discussion.

Activity 10.2

Look for a person knowledgeable about religious communities or a member of a religious community and arrange to have a discussion with them on the origins and characteristics of religious communities.

Alternatively, your teacher may invite a lecturer of Religion, or a community leader or elder into class to lead a discussion.

Prior to the visit, prepare a set of questions to ask as part of the discussion.

Some examples have been provided in the following table.

Table 10.1: Questionnaire

S/N	Question	Response
1	What role does religion play in your community, and how does it impact daily life?	
2	How does your religious community support its members, and what benefits do they receive?	
3	How does your religious community approach social issues like poverty, education, or healthcare? etc.	

You could also consider asking the following questions:

a. What are the main beliefs and practices in African indigenous religions?
b. How do these communities perceive the concept of community?
c. What challenges do AIR face today?
d. How do AIR address social issues within their communities?
e. What defines a religious community within Christianity?
f. What are the key characters of reliable Christians communities?
g. How do Christian denomination vary in beliefs and practices?
h. What role does Christian community play in the spiritual growth of an individual?

Activity 10.3

Ask your teacher for examples or search online and watch videos of religious communities. Example;

• https://www.youtube.com/@faithministrytv

• African Faith Tabernacle: Praise and worship time indoor 1 (youtube.com)

• PROPHETIC PRAYERS,SABBATH CHURCH (TRUE FAITH CHURCH INTERNATIONAL) DAY 7 (youtube.com)

Write notes about what you have learnt and share your views with a teacher or a classmate.

Activity 10.4

In small groups, arrange to visit an accessible religious community to observe their practices and characteristics first-hand.

During the visit, record what you have observed in order to share this with your colleagues as part of a wider discussion when you return to class. You could do this in a number of ways such as;

    a. Taking photographs (make sure that you have sought permission)
    b. Note taking and recording
    c. Interviews with community members

Muslim communities

The formation of Muslim communities can be traced back to several circumstances, primarily during the early years of Islam in the 7th century CE following the death of Prophet Muhammad in 632 CE. In the early period different families and clans formed Muslim communities held together through joint religious beliefs, social ties, and economic interests. These early Muslim communities emphasised brotherhood and collective identity, which helped to solidify these bonds despite varying local customs and practices. Over time, leadership disputes and theological differences led to the emergence of distinct branches within Islam, such as Sunni and Shia, diversifying the Muslim community.

Muslim communities in Ghana have been formed by circumstances that have bought different people and families together through their shared religion. Examples of Muslim communities in Ghana include:

- Zongos across the country
- Nima in Accra
- Madina in Accra
- Asawase in Kumasi.

Factors responsible for the establishment of Muslim communities

1. Settlements of travelling traders from the Sahel regions grew to become Muslim religious communities. The settlements of traders from the Sahel region grew to become predominantly Muslim due to several interrelated factors. The Sahel has historically been a crossroads for trade between North Africa and sub-Saharan Africa. Trade routes led to the exchange of goods and ideas, including Islamic teachings. The name *Zongo* originates from the Hausa word "Zango", which means to stop over. This economic interaction often encouraged local populations to convert to Islam for better trade relationships and access to markets. Cultural exchange, social dynamics, historical context, and political factors are also factors that collectively contributed to the growth of Muslim communities.

2. The practices of Muslim leaders (Sheiks) who were offering spiritual solutions attracted people to settle around them. The offering of spiritual solutions by Muslim leaders observed as approachable and humble attracted followers to settle around them. Leaders who demonstrated humility and a genuine concern for their followers created an environment of trust and respect which encouraged individuals to seek guidance and support from them, fostering community bonds. These leaders also played a role in community building and conflict resolution, acting as role models to promote the development of vibrant Muslim communities.

3. Some Islamic clerics were employed as secretaries to the local chiefs and settlements grew around their residences. Islamic clerics who held the role as secretaries to local Chiefs needed to build good relationships with the people around them in order to fulfil their role. Muslim communities developed around some of these clerics as they were able to offer religious and administrative guidance to the local people who in turn were encouraged to settle around these residences and adopt this religion.

Characteristics of Muslim communities:

1. **The Islamic dress code.** Respect for the Islamic dress code is generally observed among Muslims and some non-Muslim due to several interrelated factors such as religious obligation. Islamic teachings emphasise modesty and the importance of conforming to a dress code as a demonstration of faith. Both men and women are required to wear clothing that covers their bodies appropriately, reflecting their commitment to Islamic principles. (Qur'an 33:59). In addition to that it portrays cultural identity, social respect and dignity.

2. **Common greetings and responses. E.g., Salam alaykum (peace be unto you).** In Islamic communities, Muslims use common greetings and responses that serve important purposes, such as establishing a connection between two individuals and maintaining the spirit of brotherhood and sisterhood in the Muslim community. An example is:

   Greeting: As-salamu alaykum (Peace be upon you)

   Response: Wa alaykumu as Salam (And upon you be peace)

   This greeting is derived from the Quran and Hadith, and it expresses the core Islamic value of peace. By greeting others with "peace be upon you," and to respond "And upon you be peace" it promotes peace, kindness, and respect in people's daily interactions.

3. **Visible presence of Mosques and places of worship.** The images below are mosques at Tamale Senior High School and the Central Mosque in Accra. Their presence indicates that there are Muslim communities in the area.

   Mosques, or masjid, are significant places of worship for Muslims. A mosque has several unique features that facilitate prayer and community engagement. One of these unique features is its position towards the Ka'abah. In addition to that it has a place where the Mu'adhin stand and call the Adhan and a place for ritual ablution (wudu) before prayer, etc. These features collectively enhance the mosque's role as a vital centre for spiritual and community life in Islam.

Figure 10.11: Tamasco central mosque, Tamale

Figure 10.12: Accra central mosque

4. **There is high respect and reverence for the Qur'an.** In Islam, the Qur'an is held in high respect because it represents the word of God as it was revealed to the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). The Qur'an is a book of reverence and because of this, Muslims are taught to handle the Qur'an with care, avoiding placing it on the ground and ensuring it is kept in a clean place.
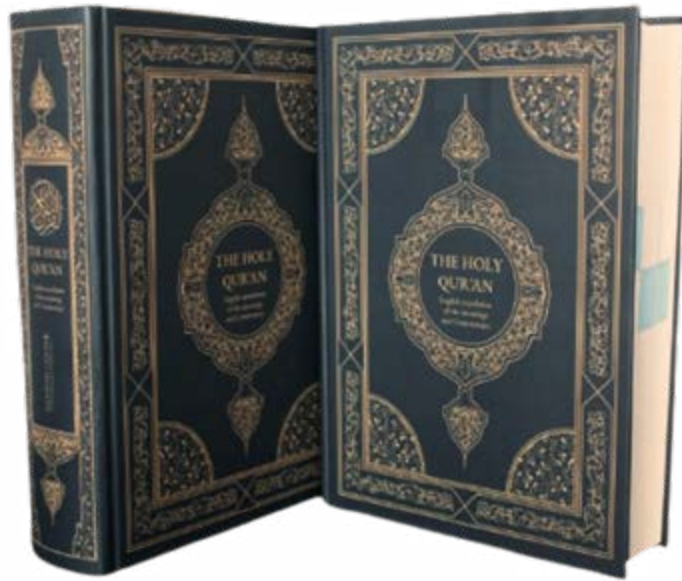
Fig. 10.13: The Holy Qur'an

The Qur'an is recited in its original language (Arabic), which is considered sacred. This practice highlights the importance of maintaining the integrity of the text. Recitation is often performed with a sense of reverence and meditation, with the aim of understanding and reflecting on its meanings. It serves as community education and holds spiritual significance.

5. **Prayer beads (tasbih) are very visible in the community.** Prayer beads, known as tasbih or misbaha in Arabic, are commonly used by Muslims during the remembrance of God (dhikr) and counting recitations of specific phrases like "Subhan Allah" (Glory be to God), "Alhamdulillah" (Praise be to God), and "Allahu Akbar" (God is the Greatest). It is not compulsory to use the prayer beads during dhikr.

Fig. 10.14: Muslim prayer beads (tasbih)

The visible presence of the prayer beads in the Muslim community are due to several reasons:

    i.   Tasbih are an integral part of Islamic spiritual practices. It helps Muslims to concentrate during dhikr and provide a tangible way to keep track of recitations. The act of holding and moving the beads can create a sense of calmness and connection with the divine.

   ii.   They are portable and convenient to be used. Tasbih are small and lightweight, making them easy to carry in a pocket, purse, or bag and be easily accessible. They can be taken anywhere, allowing for constant remembrance of God and spiritual connection.

They are simple to use and serve as a tangible aid in the remembrance of God and a symbol of Muslim identity.

6. **A lot of people bear Arabic names.** As Islam spread from Arabia Muslims often choose Arabic names for their children. They often choose names of prophets and important figures from Islamic history such as names of the four caliphs. As a Muslim, it is very important to consider the meaning of a name when choosing it. Names should have a positive meaning and reflect good qualities or attributes of Allah. Choosing a non-Arabic name with the right intention means that it can be considered a Muslim name due to the importance placed on intent and meaning. Ultimately, the name itself is less important than the intention behind it and the person's faith. Examples of Arabic names and their meanings include Rabiatu (virtue), Fatima (Abundance), Amina (Trusted), Musa (Necessity), Ibrahim (Exalted) and Abdul-Razak (Servant of the Provider).

7. **Common language is spoken.** Muslim communities in Ghana speak Hausa as a common language which can be attributed to several historical and cultural reasons based on the migration and settlement of the Hausa people, primarily originating from northern Nigeria, among various peoples in Ghana, particularly in the Northern, Ashanti, and Greater Accra regions. These migrants introduced Islam to those they settled with and established the Zongo communities in Ghana (settlements by Muslim communities). Zongos served as centres of trade, commerce, and Islamic education. Hausa scholars and Islamic teachers settled in these communities and established Qur'anic schools and Islamic centres, sharing Islamic knowledge and values with the younger generation. The historical migration and settlement of Hausa people, the establishment of Zongo communities, intermarriage, and the need for a common language for communication have all contributed to the widespread use of Hausa among Muslim communities in Ghana.

ROLE OF RELIGIOUS COMMUNITIES IN SOCIETY

Religious communities contribute to the spiritual, moral, and economic development of society. Below is a highlight of some of the roles these communities' play.

1. Religious communities provide social support networks. Religious communities provide mutual support to each other through so many ways such as emotional and spiritual support, through prayer and encouragement fostering a sense of belonging and interdependence within the community. Communities often organise outreach initiatives, such as food pantries and counselling services which provide practical help to those in need of it such as the elderly and children.

2. Religious communities provide economic support to each other. Religious communities provide economic support to their members by organising practical economic help through outreach initiatives like food pantries, job training, and establishing community-based financial institutions. They also provide economic support by helping needy students in their communities by paying their fees for them.

3. Communal lifestyle provides a safety net for the poor and needy. Religious communities provide a safety net for the poor and needy through various initiatives and support social services and systems such food pantries, homeless shelters, and community centres that offer important services to those in need regardless of their religious affiliation. They also provide financial support for example, faith-based organisations frequently provide financial assistance, including emergency funds for families facing crisis, helping them to cover basic needs like housing and healthcare.

4. Security is guaranteed for the members of the community. Religious communities provide security for their members and offering comfort in the form of shared beliefs, participation in religious rituals and sharing common beliefs. Through regular participation in religious activities, members develop close relationships which enhance their feelings of security and belonging. Some religious communities engage in community development projects, such as affordable housing and job training programmes, which aim to improve the living conditions and economic security of their members and the surrounding neighbourhood.

5. Religious communities strengthen the religious faith of members. Religious communities strengthen the faith of their members through collective worship and regular communal worship services, such as prayers, rituals, and ceremonies, reinforcing shared beliefs and values, and creating a strong commitment to the faith. There are other several ways that religious communities strengthen their members' faith such as fellowship, mentorship and guidance etc. Through these practices, religious communities create an environment that nurtures and strengthens the faith of their members.

6. Religious communities promote tolerance by embracing non-adherents to live peaceably with them. Religious communities promote tolerance and peaceful coexistence with non-adherents through acceptance of diversity. Many religious

groups actively embrace the concept of religious pluralism, recognising and legitimising the existence of diverse beliefs within society. This acceptance aids the environment where everyone feels safe to express their beliefs without fear of discrimination or hostility. By fostering acceptance, engaging in dialogue, promoting education, and advocating for rights, religious communities play a crucial role in promoting tolerance and encouraging peaceful coexistence among diverse groups.

7. Religious communities offer moral education to children and young people. Religious communities offer moral education both the formal and informal means. Many communities are involved in the development and running of schools to support formal education of children and young people in which religious and moral education is a feature of the curriculum. Communities also provide moral guidance in less formal ways such as through the advice and guidance provided by elders, worship and religious gatherings.

8. Religious communities provide public infrastructure. Many religious communities are involved in infrastructure projects such as the building of schools, hospitals or to facilitate access to water. These projects improve the living conditions and welfare of the community members and wider neighbouring communities.

Activity10.5

Form a small group of four or five of your classmates. Try to ensure that across the group you have different religious backgrounds and genders.

Using the internet, or any other reading materials for information, research the origins of a Muslim community. You may choose a community you know, or your teacher may allocate you with a particular brief

Take short notes to summarise your findings on the origin of your chosen community and be prepared to share your learning as part of a class discussion.

Activity 10.6

Look for a resource person with whom you can discuss Muslim communities This might be a member of a religious community or any other person with knowledge of the subject matter.

Alternatively, your teacher might invite a suitable person into class to lead a discussion. Before the visit, prepare some questions to ask during your discussion.

Example

Table 10.2: Questionnaire

1	How did Muslim communities emerge in Ghana?
2	
3	
4	
5	

Activity 10.7

Search online and watch videos of Muslim communities. The following links may be very helpful.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kJEClppWxFk	
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_G25aDO-KFo	

After watching the videos, answer the following questions.
  a. What religious practices can be identified in Muslim communities.
  b. What features or structures are visible that indicate these are Muslim communities?

Activity 10.8

Together with your friends visit an accessible Muslim community to observe first-hand religious practices such as worship, praying, naming, marriage, and funeral ceremonies in that community. Prepare for a discussion when you are back at school.

During the visit, you are to share the following tasks among yourselves:

  a. Photo taking (you may need to ask permission)
  b. Notes taking and recording
  c. Interviews with community members

Self-Assessment Question 10.1

Answer at least one of the following questions to review your learning from this focal area.

1. State three characteristics of religious communities.
2. Explain three characteristics that are common to different religious communities.
3. Contrast AIR religious communities to Christian communities.

Self-Assessment Question 10.2

Answer at least one of the following questions to review your learning in this section

1. Identify three characteristics and benefits of Muslim communities.
2. Explain three characteristics and benefits of Muslim communities.
3. Justify the need for Muslim communities

Review Questions

1. How do beliefs and practices vary among diverse African Indigenous Religious and Christian communities?

2. How did Muslim communities come about in Ghana?

Answers to Review Questions

1. Origins: African Traditional Religious communities, religion was born out of their ingenious reflections on the mysteries of life while Christian communities, were introduced by Western missionaries.

    Beliefs about God-African Indigenous Religious communities, members often have a more varied and less defined view about God (Supreme Being), but Christian communities offer are more comprehensive view with a focus on a Saviour, Jesus Christ.

    Practices: Many African communities merge indigenous beliefs with Christianity, maintaining traditional practices alongside Christian communities' practices.

    Note! Each of these points should be further explained with examples.

2. Answers should consider the following:
    *   Trade activities
    *   The activities of Muslim leaders
    *   The activities or reasons surrounding the employment of clerics etc.

Extended Readings

1. Genesis 14:18
2. Psalms 76:2
3. Hebrews 7:2
4. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salem_School,_Osu
5. https://www.facebook.com/kristoasafomissionofghana/
6. https://kristoasafomission.org/about-us/the-church/
7. AIR communities- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cQf9PNDb8-g
8. Charity or support of Islamic Religious Communities- Quran 2:110

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Glossary

WORDS	MEANING
Salem:	It means peace and completeness' within the Christian context, particularly through its association with Melchizedek and the holy city of Jerusalem
Supreme Being:	means God the Creator.
Mu'adhin:	A person who call the adhan.
Tasbih:	Prayer beads commonly used by Muslims during the remembrance of God (dhikr) and counting recitations of specific prayer phrases.
Community:	A group of people living in the same place or having particular features in common e.g. AIR, Christian and Islamic religious communities.

Acknowledgements