

SECTION

3

HISTORICAL/  
CONTEXTUAL  
BACKGROUND OF  
CHRISTIANITY



# STUDY OF RELIGIONS, GOD'S CREATION AND HUMANKIND

## Background to the Study of Religion

### Introduction

My dear learner, the focus of this third session is on the history of Christianity. You will learn about the origins of Christianity, the ministry of Jesus Christ and the Early Church before moving on to understand the events of the reformation and emergence of different Christian denominations and the spread of Christianity to Ghana, with particular focus on how these denominations emerged in the Ghanaian context. This section will therefore help you to understand that Christianity just like Islam is foreign to Ghana irrespective of its dominance in the religious space.

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

Describe the historical/contextual background of the three major religions in Ghana.

### Key ideas

- Judaism is the religion of the Jews which is characterised by a belief in one transcendent God who revealed himself to Abraham, Moses and the Hebrew prophets and by a religious life in accordance with scripture and rabbinic traditions.
- Apostles were the twelve chief disciples of Jesus Christ. Christianity evolved from Judaism and was a unitary church until the protestant Reformation.
- The Protestant Reformation led to the emergence of Christian denominations whose activities through their respective missionaries spread Christianity to other parts of the world including Ghana.

## HISTORY OF CHRISTIANITY: JESUS CHRIST AND THE EARLY CHURCH

**Christianity has origin in Judaism;** Christianity began as a movement within Judaism by Jesus of Nazareth in the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD. The religion originated among Jews in the Roman Province of Judea but spread rapidly throughout the Mediterranean region. Abraham as an Ancestor of faith in Judaism had his name changed from Abram to Abraham (Genesis 17:4-6). Jesus himself alluded that Abraham looked forward to his coming to perfect Judaism into Christianity (John 8:56; Matthew 5:17).

**The birth of Jesus Christ;** Joseph, a carpenter, brought his wife, Mary, to the town of Bethlehem to take part in a census. Mary was heavily pregnant and soon to miraculously give birth to Jesus Christ, the Son of God. Because all of the inns were full an inn owner told Joseph they could stay in his stable. Mary went into labour, and Jesus was born in the stable. The only place for the sleeping baby to rest was the animals' trough known as the manger. During this time, an angel appeared to shepherds who were watching over their flocks in the fields near Bethlehem to share with them the good news of the birth of the Saviour and Messiah, Jesus Christ. The shepherds immediately went to find baby Jesus whom the angel told they would find sleeping in the manger.



**Fig. 3.1:** Picture of the birth of Jesus

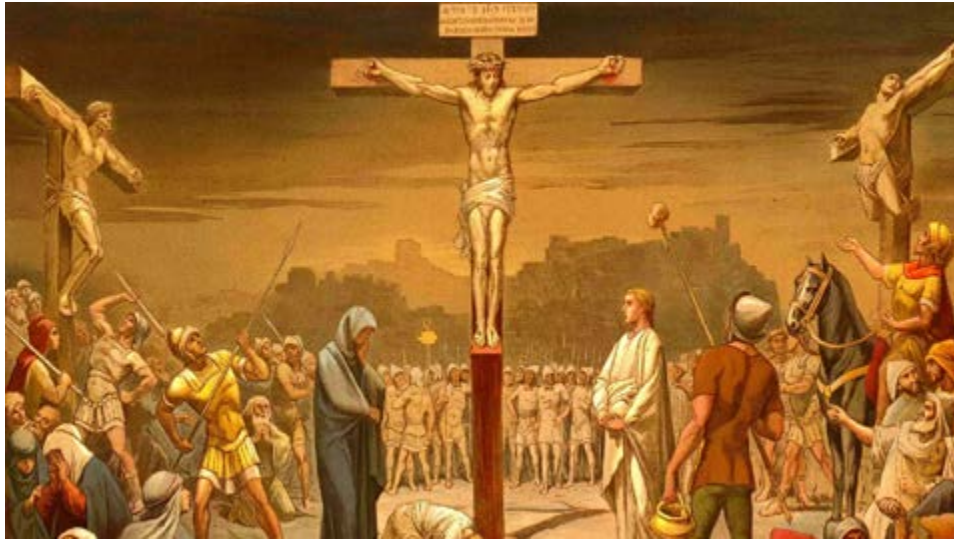
After some time, three wise men, also known as the **magi** saw the brilliant star in the sky that rested over where Jesus was born. The three wise men travelled from a distant eastern country to find the new King. During the wise men's trip, Herod the King of Judah met with the wise men. Herod told them to come back and let him know where the baby king was so that he could also go and worship him. The wise men continued to Bethlehem and found Jesus where the star pointed. They knelt down and worshiped the Saviour and gave gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh. They then travelled back home a different way, knowing that King Herod did not intend to worship Jesus but planned to kill the baby (Luke 2).

**The start of Jesus Christ's ministry;** The gospels present John the Baptist's ministry as the precursor to that of Jesus and the baptism of Jesus as marking the beginning of Jesus' ministry (Mark 1:9-11). In this account Jesus came down to Galilee from Nazareth and was baptised by John in the Jordan River. And straight away, coming out of the water, He saw the heavens opened and the Spirit coming down on Him as a dove and a voice came out of heaven saying "You are My beloved son, in You I am well pleased".

**The call of the Twelve Apostles;** (Matthew 4:18-24, 9:9-13; Mark 1:16-20, 2:13-17 and Luke 5:1-11, 27-32). Apostle means one who is sent. It is used to refer to Christian leaders who are sent to propagate the gospel. The Twelve Apostles were initially referred to as disciples because they were followers of Jesus. Disciple means follower, one who takes another as teacher and model. It was later in the ministry of Jesus Christ that they became Apostles because they were sent to witness. The Twelve Apostles who were chosen by Jesus among his disciples were; Peter, James, John, Andrew, Philip, Judas Iscariot, Matthew, Thomas, James the son of Alphaeus, Bartholomew, Judas, Thaddeus and Simon Zealots. These apostles were called at different times and from different vocations. For instance, Peter, James, John and Andrews were fishermen at the time of their call, Matthew was a tax collector. The mission of Jesus Christ to redeem all of God's children is known to many people today because of the apostles and their work.

**The Ministry of Jesus;** The ministry of Jesus refers to the teachings, actions and events that occurred during Jesus' public life and as such are recorded in the New Testament of the Bible. For instance, in the book of Matthew, chapters 8 to 9 contain record of Jesus' numerous miracles including healings, exorcisms and feeding the hungry: Teaching (Matthew 5-6) performing miracles (Mark 1:41; 8:16; Luke 8:22-25; John 11:1-4) and training (Mark 6:7; Luke 9:1-6)]

**The Death of Jesus** (Matthew 26:47-56; Matthew 27:1-2, 17-25; Luke 23:46-47); Jesus was arrested in the garden of Gethsemane following a hypocritical kiss by Judas Iscariot. He was taken to the Sanhedrin headed by a High Priest where he was charged with blasphemy and humiliated. The Sanhedrin later sent Jesus to Pilate. Pilate got to understand that Jesus was innocent and looked for ways of freeing him, but swayed by the civil unrest he gave Jesus up to be put to death on the cross in a place named Golgotha. It is documented that when Jesus was dying he cried out in his spoken language in Aramaic *Eli, Eli lema sabachthani* which means *My God, my God why have you forsaken me?* Jesus was quoting from Psalm 22 and it sounds as if he was in despair and feeling totally abandoned, even by God.



**Fig. 3.2:** Photo of the crucifixion and death of Jesus

**The start of Early Church in Jerusalem** (Matthew 28:1-7; Acts 1); In 33 AD, the first Christian church was founded in Jerusalem, immediately following the Resurrection and the Ascension of Jesus Christ. After his death, Jesus appeared bodily to His disciples, strengthening their faith and preaching to them about the kingdom of God. After the Pentecost experience during which the Holy Spirit descended and many among the audience converted to Christianity, faith in Christ was consolidated. The newly catechized, together with the Apostles, formed the first church of Jerusalem.

**The persecution of the Early Church and the dispersal of the disciples of Jesus outside Jerusalem (Acts 8)**; In the book of Acts, one of the first Christian martyrs was Stephen, a member of the early church who was brought before the Sanhedrin, the assembly of Jewish religious leaders, on charges of blasphemy. Stephen was subsequently stoned marking the beginning of a mass persecution of Christians led by Saul of Tarsus and resulting in the dispersal of Christians to other places like Damascus.



**Fig. 3.3:** the stoning of Stephen the first Christian Martyr

However, Saul, after claiming to have received a vision of Jesus Christ in the clouds on his way to Damascus to arrest Christians who had fled there in the wake of the persecution, changed his name to Paul and became a convert to Christianity. His new faith subjected him to various imprisonments and beatings, some of which are contained in the New Testament writings.

**The persecution of Christians in the Roman Empire, to Constantine making it the religion of the empire and the only Church until the Protestant Reformation;**

The persecution of Christians is well documented in both the New Testament and various Roman sources. The emperor Nero was notorious for his persecution of people who belonged to this religion. They were persecuted because of local prejudices, their refusal to worship Roman gods and in 64AD the blame by Nero that Christians were responsible for the Great Fire of Rome, although, it is speculated by some historians that Nero was responsible for setting the fire himself. Some Christians died as martyrs during the first two centuries of the Christian faith. Peter for instance was crucified with his head downwards.



**Fig. 3.4:** The crucifixion of Peter the apostle

But with time, as Christianity spread throughout Rome, it became more and more tolerated as more powerful and influential people adopted the faith. Finally, in the 4<sup>th</sup> Century the emperor Constantine officially decreed tolerance of Christians in the Edict of Milan (313 AD). Constantine himself became a Christian and was baptised on his deathbed. Constantine is esteemed as pivotal figure in the history of Christianity. It was during his rule that the official persecution of Christians ended within the empire. In 380 AD, Christianity was made the official religion of the Roman Empire by the emperor Theodosius. It was Roman missionaries who spread Christianity to other parts of Europe.

**Activity 3.1**

Using the Bible together with other sources, work in groups to discuss the question “Was Jesus Christ the founder of Christianity?”. Use the space below to record your notes. You may be asked to share your findings with the class.

**Activity 3.2**

Search online for information on the origins and growth of the early church and present your findings in a one-page report to your teacher. How will you apply the knowledge gained, in promoting church or religious tolerance in your community?

## **HISTORY OF CHRISTIANITY: THE PROTESTANT REFORMATION (1517) AND THE EMERGENCE OF MANY CHRISTIAN DENOMINATIONS WHICH SEPARATED FROM THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH**

The Reformation was a period of religious reform. It is an undeniable fact that Christianity was a unitary religion until the protestant reformation that took place in Europe in the 1500s. The reformation that started as an academic movement and eventually became a faith-based movement from which emerged new Christian denominations separated from the Roman Catholic Church. One of the key figures in the Reformation was Martin Luther, a German teacher theologian and monk who directly challenged the teachings of the Catholic Church. In this session you will learn the factors that led to the Reformation and some of its consequences.

## Factors that led to the Protestant Reformation

- a. **Practices:** The Roman Catholic Church used to generate money from its adherents, for instance through the sale of indulgences. Indulgences were letters of pardon from priests which guaranteed forgiveness of sins. During the time of Martin Luther, Pope Leo X was the head of the church, but as a result of his extravagance life style he drained the treasury only in eight years when at the time there was the need to rebuild St. Peter's Basilica. The Pope therefore offered indulgences in exchange for funds to finance the cathedral project. Luther saw this as a perversion of the gospel and reacted to it. Martin Luther challenged this practice by saying that forgiveness could not be bought. This was the starting point of his reforms. He questioned why the Pope used money from poor believers for his own projects (such as the rebuilding of St Peter's Basilica) instead of funds from the treasury of Rome. This led to his excommunication. The picture below illustrates Luther reaction to his excommunication.



Fig. 3.5: Picture of Martin Luther

- b. **Renaissance:** During this period, known as the “rebirth of learning”, there was a strong desire for people to study in order to acquire knowledge. This was facilitated by the printing press that published reading materials, such as bibles or prayer books, and made them more accessible.
- c. **The desire to read the Bible in people's own language rather than Latin:** During this time, translations of the Bible began to emerge and were spread by the advent of the printing press. People were eager to hear God speak to them in their



own language. Reading the Bible in their own language led people to question the Catholic Church as the sole interpreter of the scriptures.

- d. **Poor ministerial formation:** The church recruited untrained or poorly trained people to assume the roles of the clergy. The immoral lifestyle of these clergy, caused people to question the teachings of the Church.
- e. **Simony:** This is the act of selling clerical offices to unqualified bishops. The term was named after Simon Magus, who offered money to Jesus' disciples in exchange for spiritual powers. This was condemned by Peter in Acts 8:9-24. The Catholic Church was made a state religion in the Roman empire by Emperor Constantine in which Bishops assumed a status comparable with Ministers of State. Corrupt bishops accepted money from corrupt people in order to become priests of the church and enjoy privileges given to the church by the state. This caused anger among believers who lived righteous lives.
- f. **Immorality in the clergy:** Some priests broke the vow of celibacy and had illegal wives and fathered children.
- g. **The desire of some European rulers:** For example, Henry VIII of England, who wanted to separate from the Roman Catholic Church in order to divorce his first wife.

## Consequences of the Reformation

Now that you have come to a clear understanding about the issues that fueled the Protestant Reformation, turn your attention on the consequences of the Protestant Reformation.

### a. Schism in the church

This was a break in the unity of the church. Instead of addressing the issues that led people to question the authority of the Catholic Church, the Reformation resulted in the formation of new churches and denominations of the Christian religion. Summarised below are some of the activities of the leaders of protestant movements within the Reformation.

- i. **Martin Luther (Lutherans):** Luther was born on 10<sup>th</sup> November 1483 in Eisleben, Saxony in Germany. He was ordained into the catholic priesthood in 1507. He was a biblical professor at the University of Wittenberg. As a theologian, Martin Luther led the German protestant reformation that later became known as Lutheranism in the 16th-century. He was the author of the famous Ninety-Five theses, printed on 31<sup>st</sup> October 1517 which protested against the sale of indulgences to raise money to build St. Peter Basilica in Rome. For McGRATH (2001), the Lutheran reformation was initially an academic movement aimed at transforming the teaching of theology in the University. His ideas spread very fast because Johannes Gutenberg developed a moveable type of printing press that published and circulated his ideas, many of which were posted on the walls of the church of Wittengberg. Martin Luther was excommunicated (sent way)

from the Catholic Church by Pope Leo X in January 1521 at the Diet of Worms during the reign of the Roman Emperor Charles V. This action of the church had the indirect cause of spreading his ideas. Luther was regarded as a religious, social and political reformer. His ideas became the basis for Lutheranism. The Lutheran church is primarily based on the teachings and beliefs of Martin Luther. Some of these beliefs include; Trinity, Original Sin, Salvation by Grace through Faith, Christ Dual Nature. Priesthood of all Believers, Two Sacraments, rejection of Transubstantiation and Biblical Authority.

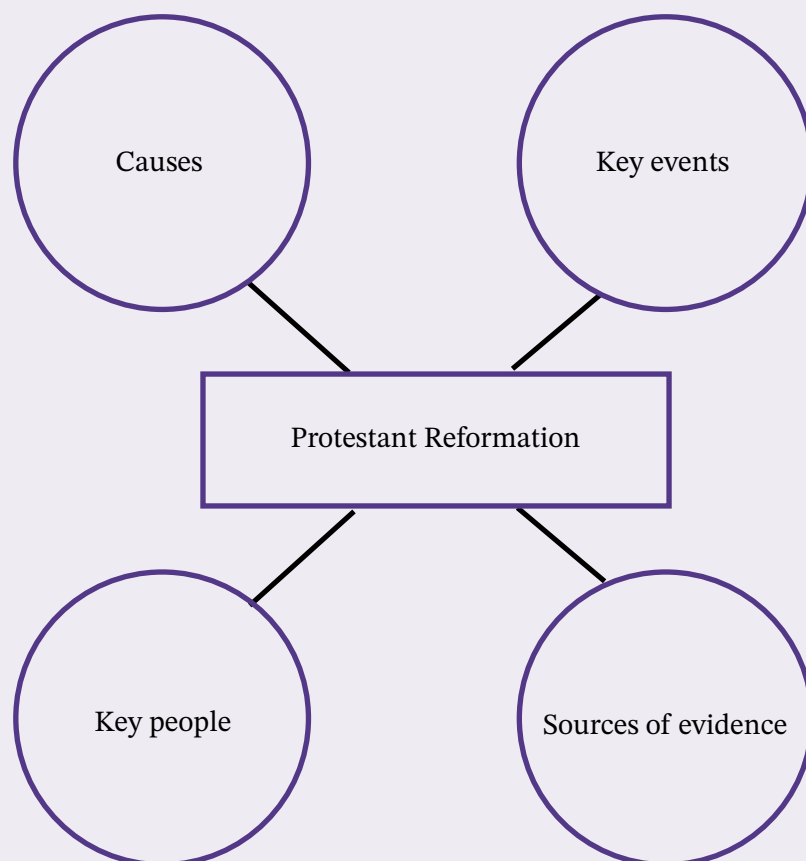
- ii. **John Calvin (Calvinist):** John Calvin was born in 1509 in Noyon France. He served as a pastor in Geneva, Switzerland in 1536 until his death. He was a Protestant theologian that placed much emphasis on the doctrine of predestination (God has already determined the fate of everyone) and made serious attempt to reform the morals of the church according to laid down biblical principles. Calvin's major teachings were on predestination, the sovereignty of God in the salvation of human soul from death and eternal damnation and the authority of scripture. He is regarded as a hero of the *reformed* the people.
  - iii. **John Knox (Scotland) (Presbyterian Church);** He was born around 1514 in Scotland and died on November 24 1572 at Edinburgh. He was influenced by John Calvin's teachings. He played a major role in the reformation of the Church of Scotland (Presbyterianism). He placed much emphasis on living a strict moral life.
  - iv. **King Henry VIII and the Anglican Church (1534):** King Henry spearheaded the formation of the Anglican Communion. Henry wanted to annul his marriage to his first wife Catherine of Aragon however, the Pope would not agree. As a result, the king passed the Act of Supremacy declaring himself the supreme head of the Church of England. He appointed the Archbishop of Canterbury to be the spiritual head of the Church. He declared that there should be only one nationalistic church in his land. The reformed Christian church rejected the authority of the Pope and his leaders. They however maintained the doctrines and mode of worship of the Catholic Church. (McMGRATH, 2001).
  - v. **John Wesley (England-Methodist Church):** *Methodism* was an 18th-century movement founded by John Wesley that sought to reform the Church of England from within. The movement, however, became separate from its parent body and developed into an autonomous church. The World Methodist Council (WMC), an association of churches in the Methodist tradition, comprises more than 40.5 million Methodists in 138 countries worldwide.
- b. Translation of the Bible into English, Germany and French; until the Reformation, the Vulgate, the Latin translation of the Old and New Testaments which dates back to 405 AD was the Bible of the church for centuries, but when the life of Luther was being sought after by emperor Charles V and during his protection by Duke Frederick of Saxony, he poured his energy into studying, writing and translating the New Testaments into German so that everyone could understand the Word of God. This set a precedent for the translation of the Bible into other languages as well.

- c. The Roman Catholic Counter Reformation; It addressed some of the issues raised by the Protestant Reformation and improved the training of Roman Catholic priests. Pope Paul III, the first Pope of the Counter Reformation and Catholic Church leaders met for three conferences of The Council of Trent to attempt their own reform during the 16th century. To do this, they responded to Protestant criticisms with clearly defined doctrines. Other results of the Council of Trent involved punishing corrupt clergy as well as setting regulations in place to avoid issues which had contributed to the Reformation such as clergy living in luxury, clergy settling family members in prestigious church roles and untrained clergy.

### Activities 3.3

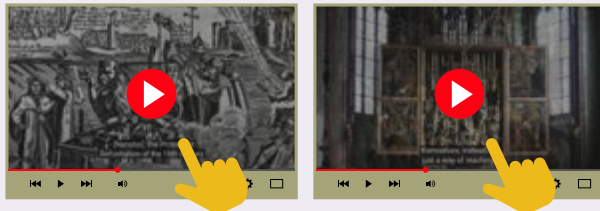
Working in groups, research for the causes and key events of the Protestant Reformation. Your teacher may provide you with specific questions to address or you may research the topic more broadly.

Record your findings and be prepared to present these back to the class for discussion. You may find it useful to record your notes as a concept map using the template below.



### Activity 3.4

Working in pairs or small groups, research on the link between the Protestant Reformation and the Roman Catholic Counter Reformation. The following videos may help you but you will find more information on the internet and in your reference books.



### Activity 3.5

Your teacher may invite an expert on the history of the Reformation to share their knowledge in class. Prepare a set of questions that you could ask them during class discussion.

**Table 1:** Questionnaire

1	<b>Example:</b> Please Madam, what role did Martin Luther play in the Protestant Reformation?
2	
3	
4	
5	

If it is not possible to interview someone in class, try to find someone outside of the lesson to pose your questions and find out about this period of the Church's history.

### Activity 3.6

Design a poster to illustrate the timeline of the Reformation OR design a flier or pamphlet for the Reformationist cause. How would you convince people that the Church needed to change?

## HISTORY OF CHRISTIANITY: THE COMING OF CHRISTIANITY TO GHANA

Dear learner, how did Christianity come into Ghana if indeed it is a foreign religion? A bit of patience is what you need. Kindly read on! Debrunner (1967) in tracing the history of Christianity in Africa had this to say; “*Wherever I went, I found that my Master (Jesus) had been there before me*”. Missionaries started to arrive in Africa following the divisions that appeared in the Church after the Reformation. It was through the efforts of these missionaries that Christianity was brought to Ghana (then known as the Gold Coast).

The information presented in this section covers a range of Christian denominations. In class it is likely that you will cover one from each of the following themes however, information has been presented on a broad range to provide context and further reading if this is a topic you are particularly interested in .

### The early Christian missionary activities in Ghana

- a. **Basel Missionary Society (1828):** Presbyterian Church of Ghana. This is the oldest, continuously existing, established church in Ghana that was started by the Basel missionaries on 18<sup>th</sup> December, 1828 from the Christiansborg Castle. The missionaries had been trained in Germany and Switzerland and arrived on the Gold Coast (Ghana) to spread Christianity. The work of the mission became stronger with the arrival of Moravian missionaries from the West Indies in 1843. In 1848, the Basel Mission church set up a seminary, now named as the Presbyterian College of Education in Akropong for the training of church workers to help in the missionary work. Ga and Twi languages were added as part of the doctrinal text used in the training of seminarians. In the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, the Presbyterian Church had its missions concentrated in the south-eastern part of Cape Coast and the Peri-urban Akan hinterland. By the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the church had expanded and founded churches among the Asante people who lived in the middle belt of Ghana as well as the Northern territories. Andreas Riis (1832 -1845) was a Danish minister and pioneer missionary who is widely regarded as the founder of the Gold Coast branch of the Basel Evangelical Missionary Society. He played a critical role in the recruitment of 24 West Missionaries from Jamaica and Antigua in 1843 to aid the work of the mission in formal education and Agriculture and the propagation of the gospel in colonial Ghana. As the Basel first missionary in Akropong in 1835, Riis laid the foundation for the first mission house, which eventually resulted in the founding of the first Christian church there. The Basel missionaries left the Gold Coast during the First World War in 1917. Their work was continued by missionaries from the Church of Scotland, the mother church of the Presbyterian denomination when the church became the Christ Presbyterian Church in Akropong.



**Fig. 3.6:** An image of Andreas Riis

- b. **Wesleyan Methodist Society (WMMS):** Rev. Joseph Rhodes Dunwell, the first Wesleyan Methodist missionary to work in the Gold Coast arrived in the country on 1<sup>st</sup> January, 1835. At the time of his arrival there were already pockets of Christians in the region due to the work of earlier missionaries which Rev. Dunwell exploited to expand the Methodist movement. Following the death of Rev. Dunwell, the WMMS replaced him with Rev. and Mrs. George Wrigley, to continue his work. Mrs. Wrigley started a girl's school (Wesley Girls' School), which later developed into the Wesley Girls' High School. Rev. Wrigley started building the Methodist Chapel at Cape Coast. He learnt the Fante dialect and translated the Ten Commandments, and opened stations at Elmina, Komenda, Dixcove, Anomabo, Egyaa and Abura dunkwa, Dominase and Winneba. As the work of the mission expanded, more missionaries were sent, however many dies within months of arrival. Thomas Birch Freeman, and Anglo-African missionary, completed and dedicated the Cape Coast chapel on 10<sup>th</sup> June, 1838 and in the same year he founded churches in Accra and Abaasa. On 1<sup>st</sup> April, 1829 he founded a church in Kumasi and opened fourteen more stations through the recruitment and initiative of local people, such as James Hayford, a Fante Methodist and British representative resident in Kumasi. The second Kumasi enterprise was beset with some challenges, as the detachment of troops Governor Hill had brought with him was interpreted by the Ashantis as an attempt to avenge the death of Governor McCarthy whom they killed in a war in 1842. This misunderstanding strained relations between the British and the Ashantis. This notwithstanding, Freeman made no less an effort after returning from civil duties having retired from missionary work by the middle of nineteenth century, and Methodist missionaries on the Cape Coast had opened twenty main stations from Cape Coast to Kumasi, and from Dixcove to Prampram. Increases in membership

were also recorded in the yearly report sent to the Methodist Missionary Society (MMS) London. Thus, throughout the 1860s the work of establishing congregations progressed and continued to grow in to the interior of the country.



**Fig. 3.7:** Rev. Joseph Rhodes Dunwell

- c. **Bremen Missionary Society:** The arrival of the North German Missionary Society, also known as the Bremen Mission, in the Volta Region of Ghana was of great significance as it marked the birth of the Evangelical Church and other developmental activities in Ghana. The first Bremen Missionaries settled at Peki Blengo (which at the time was not part of the Gold Coast) in 1847 under the leadership of Rev, Lorenz Wolf. After the death of three of Wolf's companions, two others were sent to help in 1851 but ill health forced him to return to Europe and the other two were not able to carry on the work. They returned to Keta in 1853. Three years later, they were able to open a station at Waya, and another at Ho in 1857. By 1881, they had established themselves in six outstations. On education, their activities were similar to that of the Basel Mission, focusing on the development of trade skills, particularly related to building. At the main mission stations there were schools. In 1980 the mission established a seminary at Amedzofu from which teacher catechists went out to open single-class village schools. By 1906 there were about 3,000 pupils attending Bremen schools, including some schools in Cape Coast.
- d. Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts (SPGFP) championed Anglicanism. The SPGFP was founded in 1701 as a missionary society to provide clergy from the Church of England to minister to the settlers and to convert nonbelievers in the colonies. Rev. Thomas Thompson established the Society's first mission outpost at Cape Coast in 1752. In 1754, Thompson arranged for three local students to travel to England to be trained as missionaries at the Society's

expense. One of these students, Philip Quaque, became the first African to receive ordination in the African Communion. The SPGFP established itself in the Gold Coast (Ghana) between 1820 and 1881 where the organisation opened elementary schools for boys and girls, a seminary and other educational institutions.

- e. **Roman Catholic Missionary (1880):** The Catholic Mission was the fourth to enter the country. They were originally the first missionaries to start work in the Gold Coast in 1482, when they came with the Portuguese merchants. However, their attempt failed after the Dutch forced them to leave in 1637. In May 1880, two French missionaries; Rev. Fr. Auguste Moreeau and Rev. Fr. Eugene Murrant arrived at Elmina where they met an African called John Ashanti, (later named at baptism as James Gorden Marshall) who acted as interpreter, Mass servant and later became one of the first Fante catechists at Elmina. Without him, the early Catholic missionaries could not have done much at the time. On the death of Rev. Fr. Murrat, Rev. Fr. Moreeau started a school with five pupils. The subjects taught were English, Writing, Arithmetic and Religion. In due course the Elmina school was moved into a new house under Rev. Fr. Pellat, a Frenchman who later asked some of the best pupils to be in charge of new schools that were opened at Agona, Shama, Breman Akyini and Adjina. On the suggestion of Rev. Fr. Moreeau, two sisters of Our Lady of the Apostles (OLA), Sister Ignatius, an Irish woman and Sister Potamienne from Switzerland, came to Elmina to take charge of the schools and dispensaries and to bring Christianity to African women. They started a girl's school in March, 1884 with 26 pupils. The Catholic mission also started the first kindergarten in the Gold Coast at Elmina. In Northern Ghana, the Catholic missionaries settled at Navrongo. Two of the missionaries who had arrived from Algiers met Governor Rodger at Nakong, in the Navrongo district in 1906 and negotiated for their stay in the North. They established missions and schools including St. Francis Girls' Secondary School for girls at Jirapa. Below are some of the images of the churches and schools built.



**Fig. 3.8:** Images of Our Lady of Seven Sorrows Basilica, on the mission grounds in Navrongo and first Girls Secondary school in the Northern part of the country, St. Francis of Assisi SHS, Jirapa



## Emergence of other Christian Denominations

- a. **Seventh Day Adventist (SDA) Church:** The first SDA missionaries, Edward I. Sanford and Karl G. Rudolph, arrived at Apam in 1894. Within five months of their arrival frequent attacks of malaria forced Sanford's departure; but Rudolph continued and moved to Cape Coast. On 3<sup>rd</sup> October, 1895, Cape Coast became the official headquarters of the SDA church in West Africa. as a team, headed by Dudley Upton. Hale of Texas who led a group of missionaries to Cape Coast the same year. Dudley U. Hale arrived with George and Eva Kerr (both nurses) and G. P. Riggs (a Colporteur). They met Rudolph, who had previously moved there from Apam. On 3<sup>rd</sup> June, 1897, Hale left for home. Before the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, a team of Adventist missionaries arrived at Apam, Ghana from the General Conference to begin what is now known as the Seven Day Adventist Church Ghana. They were Karl G. Rudolph and Edward Leroy Sanford. Sanford returned to America due to ill-health. In march, 1903 Hale returned to Ghana with his family and Mr and Mrs J. M. Hyatt. In February, 1907 was the beginning of SDA education as it was the year in which Christian Ackah of Kikam, who had identified himself with the Adventists in 1903 established the first school based on Adventist principles in Cape Coast.
- b. **Deeper Life Christian Ministry:** Deeper Life Bible Church. Part of the Deeper Christian Life Ministry, was started by William F. Kumuyi in 1973. It started as a Bible Study group with 15 students at the University of Lagos and spread across sub-saharan Africa, the United Kingdom, Western Europe. Russia, India and North America. Its core beliefs include the Holy Bible, Godhead, Virgin Birth of Jesus, total depravity etc,. The church has been led by Pastor Edward Kwaku Duodu since 2015.

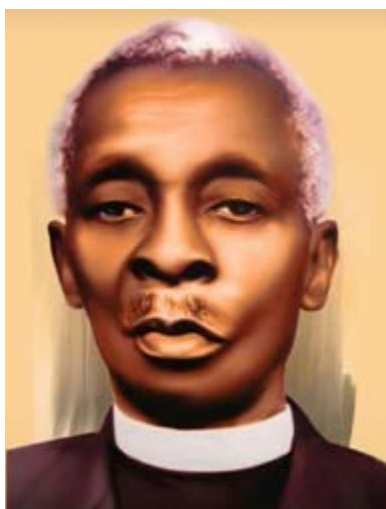


**Fig. 3.9:** William F. Kumuyi

- c. **Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints:** The church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saint (LDS Church) was introduced to Ghana in 1962 through a convert named Raphael Abraham Frank Mensah. It was officially organised in 1978, following announcement that men of any race would be accepted to be ordained as priests. In 1980, the Africa West Mission was organised with Ghana as part of it. Then, in 1985 Ghana was made into its own mission. Between 1989-1990, the government of Ghana banned the church's activities along with other religious organisations, due to political tensions and misconceptions. In 1990 the ban was lifted and the church resumed its activities. The Church president Gordon B. Hinckley in 1998 visited Ghana and announced the construction of a temple in Accra which was completed and dedicated in 2004.

### Pentecostalism

- a. **Apostle Peter Anim and the rise of Pentecostalism;** Apostle Anim was a Presbyterian who was interested in the teaching of the Faith Tabernacle Ministry, which was a Christian group which had strong emphasis on faith, healing and holiness. He was converted to the faith in 1920. His faith was deepened when he recovered from a chronic stomach trouble and guinea worm disease in 1921. With the recovery, he resigned from the Presbyterian Church and went to Asamankese in the Easter Region where he founded the Faith Tabernacle Church in 1922. In 1923, Anim received a Certificate of Ordination from Pastor Clark, the founder of Faith Tabernacle Ministry. Anim's evangelistic activities saw the rapid spread of the work and by 1924, churches were founded in several regions in Ghana. In 1926, Clark was excommunicated for alleged adultery and Anim began to seek a deeper religious experience. He discovered a Pentecostal movement based in Portland, Oregon and their teachings on the Holy Spirit resonated with him. He adopted the name *The Apostolic Faith* in 1930 and affiliated with the UK Apostolic Church in 1935. In 1937, the Bradford missionary headquarters of the Apostolic Church sent James McKeown as their first resident missionary to assist Anim in his work. Anim and McKeown later had different theological perspectives on divine healing which resulted in their separation in 1938.



**Fig. 3.10:** Image of Apostle Peter Newman Kwaku Anim

- b. **The Church of Pentecost:** Pentecost had a very humble beginning dating back to the ministry of pastor James McKeown which started in the Gold Coast in 1937. Pastor McKeown as a missionary from the UK Apostolic Church was tasked to nurture a group of believers of The Apostolic Faith at Asamankese who were led by Rev. Peter Newman Anim. In May 1937, Pastor McKeown had malaria and was taken to hospital, in Accra, where he spent 10 days. After he came back to Asamankese, the leadership of the church had a strong disagreement with him for having violated the rules and principles of the church by seeking for medical attention at a hospital instead of depending on faith healing. At the Christmas Convention held in 1938 at Asamankese, the issue was discussed at a special presbytery meeting but the leaders refused and condemned McKeown for lack of faith in prayers for divine healing. Due to the doctrinal differences, the group split in 1939 into the Christ Apostolic Church and the Apostolic Church, Gold Coast. The latter saw great expansion under McKeown. In 1953, a constitutional crisis led to the founding of the Gold Coast Apostolic Church led by McKeown. After independence of Ghana in 1957, the Gold Coast Apostolic Church was renamed Ghana Apostolic Church. The split in 1953 did not end the crisis. New conflicts compelled the then president of the Republic of Ghana, Dr. Kwame Nkrumah, to advise the leadership of the Ghana Apostolic Church, to adopt a new name. And on 1<sup>st</sup> August, 1962, the new name, the Church of Pentecost which was suggested by Apostle Alphonso Wood legally replaced the Ghana Apostolic Church.



**Fig. 3.11:** Image of Pastor James Mckeown, Founder of The Church of Pentecost

## Charismatic Churches

- a. **Christian Action Faith Ministries:** Nicholas Duncan-Williams, a disciple of Benson Idahosa, founded the Christian Action Faith Ministries (CAFM) and the Action Chapel International (ACI) church in 1979. The CAFM was the first Charismatic Church in Ghana. CAFM has its headquarters at Action Chapel International in Accra.



**Fig. 3.12:** Image of Nicholas Duncan-Williams

- b. **International Central Gospel Church (ICGC):** The ICGC was founded by a Ghanaian Theologian, Pastor Dr. Mensa Otabil and was officially inaugurated on 26<sup>th</sup> February, 1984 in Accra. It is the second Charismatic Church in Ghana. The first meeting was held in a small classroom with an initial membership of just about twenty people.
- c. **Lighthouse Chapel International:** Bishop Dag Heward-Mills founded the Lighthouse Chapel International in 1987 while still a medical student at the university of Ghana. He started the church with just a handful of members in a classroom at the Korle-Bu Teaching Hospital. As the church expanded it moved to larger venues like the Korle-Bu Teaching Hospital Canteen. In 1992 the church acquired an old cinema hall in Korle-Gonno and renovated it to become the Korle-Gonno Cathedral the first of several cathedrals built in Accra. By 2006, the church had commissioned the construction of one of the largest church complexes in Africa, the Qodesh headquarters in Ghana. Today, the Lighthouse Chapel International denomination has over 3000 churches in 80 countries.

### Activity 3.7: Discussing the history Christian denominations

In groups, discuss the history of three Christian denominations. These may be assigned to you by the teacher, or it could be that you choose to focus on the denominations of members of your group. In your discussion, think about the following:

- a. Key people, dates and places
- b. What events shaped the development of this denomination?
- c. How does the modern day experience of the church compare with that of the early missionaries?

Make notes from your discussion (you may choose to do this as a timeline) to share with the class.

### Activity 3.8: Research on early Christian missionary activities in Ghana

Using the internet and other relevant textbooks, research for the early Christian missionary activities in Ghana. Your teacher will provide you with a question to answer based on the denominations you have covered in class.

### Activity 3.9: Visitation

Visit a church historian or any religious leader who is well versed in the history of Ghana in your locality, or local site of historical significance, and find out how Christianity was brought into Ghana. Share your findings with a colleague or with your religious studies teacher.

Alternatively, your teacher may arrange for a historian or religious expert to come in and present to the class. Prepare questions that you may ask as part of the discussion.

1.	<b>Example:</b> Dear Madam, which Christian denomination was the first to arrive on the shores of Ghana?
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	

### Activity 3.10: Creative writing or art

Get creative! Based on your learning about the origins and development of Christianity in Ghana, put together a creative piece that tells the story of the history this movement and/or your response to it. This could take the form of a short piece of drama, song, poem or piece of art.

# Review Questions

1. With the help of the bible and other Christian sources describe to a friend in your locality the view that Christianity originated from Judaism?
  - a. List and explain at least three (3) factors that led to the Protestant Reformation
  - b. How did the Protestant Reformation impact the church?
2. Recount the history of how Christianity first came to the Gold Coast?

## Extended Readings

- Gen 17:4-6; Jn 8:56; Matt. 5:17 (Origin of Christianity in Judaism)
- Lk. 2 (Birth Jesus Christ)
- Mk. 1: 9-11 (Start of the Ministry of Jesus)
- Matt.4: 18-24,9:9-13; Mk. 1:16-20, 2:13-17 and Lk.5:1-11,27-32 (The call of the Apostles)
- Matt.5-6; MK. 1:14,8:16; Lk.8:22- 25; Jn. 11-1-4and Mk. 6:7; LK 9:1-6 (Ministry of Jesus)
- Matt. 28:1-7; Acts. 1; Acts 8 (Persecution in the early Church)
- Anglicanism - <https://www.anglicanhistory.net/?p=28>

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## Glossary

### WORDS

### MEANING

<b>Judaism:</b>	the religion of the Jews which is characterised by a belief in one transcendent God who revealed himself to Abraham, Moses and the Hebrew prophets and by a religious life in accordance with scripture and rabbinic traditions.
<b>Apostles:</b>	The twelve chief disciples of Jesus Christ.
<b>Persecution:</b>	Hostility and ill-treatment especially on the basis of religion.
<b>Denominations:</b>	A recognised autonomous branch of the Christian Church.
<b>Missionary:</b>	A person sent on a religious mission, especially one sent to promote Christianity in a foreign country.
<b>Renaissance:</b>	A revival of or renewed interest in something.
<b>Schism:</b>	The formal separation of a church into two or more churches
<b>Reformation:</b>	A 16 <sup>th</sup> century movement for the reform of abuses in the Roman Catholic Church ending in the establishment of the reformed and Protestant Churches.
<b>Formation:</b>	The training that is given to persons desiring to be clerics (i.e. Priest, Pastor)

## Acknowledgements



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