



**MINISTRY OF EDUCATION  
GHANA ASSOCIATION OF  
RELIGIOUS EDUCATORS**



# **Christian Religious Studies**

## **for Senior High Schools**

**Year 1**



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**Francis Normanyo**

**Martin Akpedonu**

**MINISTRY OF EDUCATION  
GHANA ASSOCIATION OF  
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**CHRISTIAN RELIGIOUS  
STUDIES**

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**Ghana Education  
Service (GES)**





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# FOREWORD

Ghana's new Senior High School Curriculum aims to ensure that all learners achieve their potential by equipping them with 21<sup>st</sup> Century skills, knowledge, character qualities and shared Ghanaian values. This will prepare learners to live a responsible adult life, progress to further studies and enter the world of work. This is the first time that Ghana has developed a Senior High School Curriculum which focuses on national values, attempting to educate a generation of Ghanaian youth who are proud of our country and can contribute effectively to its development.

The Ministry of Education is proud to have overseen the production of these Learner Materials which can be used in class and for self-study and revision. These materials have been developed through a partnership between the Ghana Education Service, teacher unions (Ghana National Association of Teachers- GNAT, National Association of Graduate Teacher -NAGRAT and the Pre-Tertiary Teachers Association of Ghana- PRETAG) and National Subject Associations. These materials are informative and of high quality because they have been written by teachers for teachers with the expert backing of each subject association.

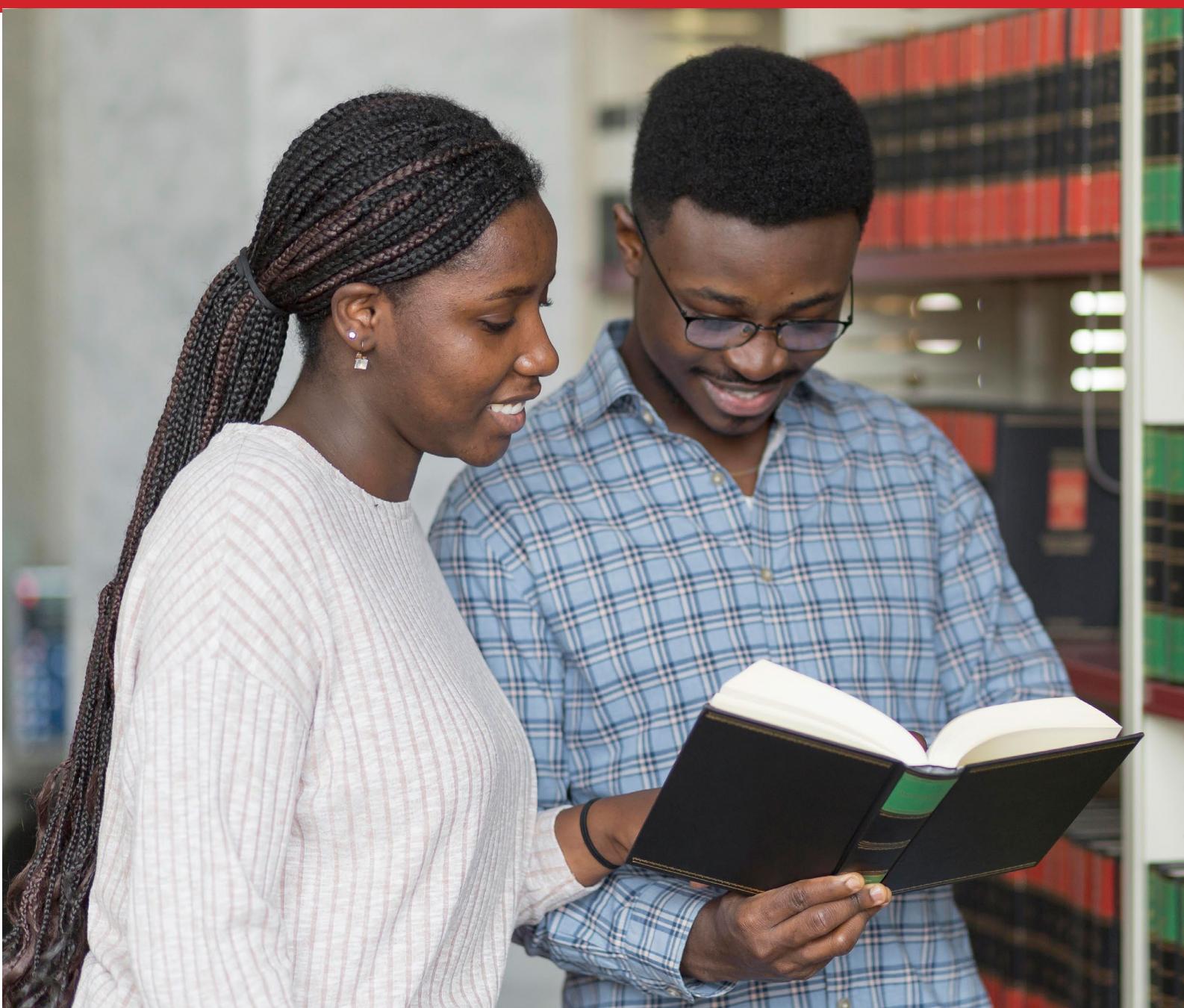
I believe that, if used appropriately, these materials will go a long way to transforming our Senior High Schools and developing Ghana so that we become a proud, prosperous and values-driven nation where our people are our greatest national asset.

**Haruna Iddrisu MP**  
*Minister for Education*

SECTION

1

# MEANING AND RATIONALE FOR THE STUDY OF RELIGION



# INTRODUCTION

Religion plays an important role in our lives. It affects the way we think, act, and relate to others. Religion can be seen as a set of beliefs, practices, and values that connect human beings to God or something sacred. At the SHS level, learning about religion is important. It helps us build good character, understand different cultures, and live peacefully with others. In a country like Ghana, where many religions exist, studying religion helps us respect other people's beliefs and work together for the good of the nation. It also helps us grow as individuals and understand the society we live in. The first part of this section will enable you to consider what we mean by the term religion. You will begin by considering your own ideas before moving on to look at classical definitions and what they might reveal about the nature of religion. You will then explore and consider what are the key characteristics of religions.

The final part of this section will allow you to address misconceptions that people might have about studying religion, guiding you to explore the many reasons that the study of religion is so important, both for society and us as individuals. You will have the opportunity to explore career avenues which the study of religion supports.

## KEY IDEAS

- Different people can understand the term religion in different ways.
- Classical definitions of religion can be theological, moral, psychological and sociological.
- Sometimes secular activities can share similar characteristics with religious activities.
- Religious activities share certain characteristics which distinguish them from non-religious activities.
- Misconceptions about the study of religion are unfounded and unhelpful.
- There are many career pathways which are actively supported by the study of religion.

# DEFINING RELIGION

Religion plays an important role in our lives. It affects the way we think, act, and relate to others. Religion can be seen as a set of beliefs, practices and values that connect human beings to God or something sacred. However, there are many ways people define religion because it looks different in different cultures and societies; definitions may arise through theology (study of God), philosophy (thinking about life), sociology (study of society), and psychology (study of the mind). At the SHS level, learning about religion is important. It helps us build good character, understand different cultures, and live peacefully with others. In a country like Ghana, where many religions exist, studying religion helps us respect other people's beliefs and work together for the good of the nation. It also helps us grow as individuals and understand the society we live in. While there are many definitions of religion, we might argue that no one definition is fully satisfactory on its own. Religion is a complex and deep concept, so

it has been defined in many different ways by scholars, religious leaders, and ordinary people. Some people focus on beliefs in God or gods, while others look at the practices, rituals, or way of life. Because of this, no single definition can capture everything about religion, and so different people and cultures may understand the term differently.

### Activity 1.1 Defining religion

1. Organise yourselves into groups of 3-5 and begin by discussing how you might define religion. Remember that there is no 'right or wrong' answer and that everyone's opinions are equally valuable. Try to justify your answers to one another, practising explaining your ideas.
2. Having explored a range of ideas, work as a group to create a definition of religion, identifying the reasons you have chosen this. Write the definition out to display to the class (this could be as a poster or on a PowerPoint slide) and prepare to deliver a short speech to the class, explaining your decision.
3. Compare your definition with those of other groups and consider the following as a class:
  - a. Are the definitions the same or different? Can you highlight the similarities and differences where they occur?
  - b. If there are differences in the definitions, which of them do you think is best? Why?
  - c. Why do you think it is more difficult for people to agree on a single definition of religion?
4. After completing this activity, ask yourself the following questions.
  - a. What new thing did I learn today?
  - b. How did I contribute to the group's work?
5. When your group is finished, use the internet, books and any other resources provided by your teacher to research the following.
  - a. The meaning of religion
  - b. The importance of learning about religion
  - c. Write down the findings of the research and discuss among yourselves

## CLASSICAL DEFINITIONS OF RELIGION

Classical definitions of religion can be classified under various fields such as *sociological*, *psychological*, *theological* and *ethical*, as scholars look at religion from different perspectives. Below, these are discussed briefly.

1. **Sociological definitions** focus on how religion affects society and relationships between people.
  - a. *Religion is the opium of the masses (Karl Marx)*.
  - b. *A religion is a unified system of beliefs and practices relative to sacred things, that*

*is to say, things set apart and forbidden – beliefs and practices which unite into one single community called a church, all those who adhere to them (Emile Durkheim).*

- c. *Religion is a human strategy for establishing lasting, co-operative social groups.*

**Simple Explanation:** This view suggests that shared religious rules, rituals, and myths helped early human societies grow larger and stick together by creating common goals and trust among strangers.

- 2. **Psychological definitions** explore how religion affects the mind and emotions of individuals.

- a. *Religion is mass madness (Sigmund Freud).*
- b. *Religion is the result of seeking comfort in a world which, dispassionately considered, is a terrifying wilderness (Bertrand Russell).*
- c. *Religion is an attempt to make sense of the universe and provide meaning for life.*

**Simple Explanation:** This perspective suggests that the main role of religion is to answer the big questions people have (Why are we here? What happens when we die?) to provide a stable sense of purpose and comfort in their personal lives.

- 3. **Theological definitions** come from religious teachings and explore the nature of God and spiritual matters.

- a. *Religion is the belief in spiritual beings (E. B. Tylor).*
- b. *Religion denotes properly a relation to God (St Augustine).*
- c. *Religion is the lived connection between human beings and what they consider to be holy, divine, or ultimate reality.* **Simple Explanation:** This definition moves beyond just "belief" to include practice (like praying or worshipping). It sees religion as the real-life way a person connects with something they believe is greater, sacred, or ultimately true (whether they call it God, Brahman, or something else).

- 4. **Ethical definitions** focus on the moral rules and values that religions teach.

- a. *Religion is the recognition of all our duties as divine commands." (Immanuel Kant)*
- b. *Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this: to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep oneself unspotted from the world (James 1:27)*
- c. *Religion is an attempt to make sense of the universe and provide meaning for life.* **Simple Explanation:** This perspective suggests that the main role of religion is to answer the big questions people have (Why are we here? What happens when we die?) to provide a stable sense of purpose and comfort in their personal lives.

## Activity 1.2 Classical definitions of religion

1. Organise yourselves into groups of no more than 5 and prepare to become an expert group for one category of religious definitions (theological, moral, psychological or sociological).

2. Using the sources that you have been provided, prepare a short presentation which explains your allocated category. You will each join a different group to share your expertise.
3. One member of each group should join to form a new group. Present your findings to your new group and allow time for them to ask questions.
4. As a class, discuss your findings. You might consider which definitions you find most successful, or those which you feel are insufficient. You should give reasons for your answers and show respect for the opinions and ideas of others.
5. When your group is finished, you can complete the following extension activity: using all of the definitions you have looked at, including your own, could you now create a definition which encompasses all of the aspects you have identified as being most significant and important?

## CHARACTERISTICS OF RELIGION

### Religious And Non-Religious Activities

In our communities, we see both religious and non-religious activities. Understanding the differences can help us to better understand what we mean by the term religion.

#### Religious Activities

Religious activities include attending church or mosque, praying, fasting, giving offerings, and celebrating festivals like Eid or Christmas.



**Figure 1.1:** Examples of religious activities

## Non-Religious Activities

Non-religious activities include going to school, playing football, selling goods in the market, or attending political meetings. Even though not all activities are religious, religion often influences how people behave in everyday life.



**Figure 1.2:** Examples of non-religious activities

### Activity 1.3 Understanding Religious and Non-religious Activity

1. Watch the videos in the links below

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m4kyLpQ0m5U>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZoPN7eTl49o>

2. Look at the pictures below



3. Work in a pair to discuss the video and the pictures, considering the following questions:
  - a. What activities can you identify in the videos and pictures?
  - b. How can you identify which ones are religious activities and which ones are not?
  - c. What similarities and differences can you identify between religious and non-religious activities?
  - d. What makes the activities religious or non-religious?
4. Present your findings to the class for feedback and discussion.

## Activity 1.4 Characteristics of religious and non-religious activity

1. Read the scenarios below

### Scenario 1

*On a sunny Sunday afternoon, the stadium roared with excitement as fans gathered to watch the clash between Accra Hearts of Oak and Kumasi Asante Kotoko. Dressed in red and blue, some waved flags, others beat drums, chanting team songs with passion. Kofi, a die-hard Hearts fan, jumped with joy after a stunning goal. Nearby, Ama, cheering for Kotoko, shouted back, “We’ll equalise soon!” The match was tense, but laughter, cheers, and friendly teasing filled the air. Though rivals in the game, the fans shared a love for football that united them beyond the ninety minutes on the pitch.*

### Scenario 2

*On Sunday morning, the church was filled with joyful singing as the choir led worship. Elderly women in white danced gently, while children clapped and sang along. Pastor Mensah stepped to the pulpit and preached about love and forgiveness. Kwame bowed his head in prayer, asking God for guidance in school. When the offering time came, everyone gave cheerfully. The church echoed with “Amen” as the service ended with a blessing. Smiling faces filled the compound as members greeted one another warmly. Though the service had ended, the feeling of peace and unity remained in their hearts.*

2. Copy the table given below in your notebooks and fill in observations and examples from the two scenarios.

Characteristics	Football support	Church service
Emotional expressions		
Rituals		
Songs		
God/sacred objects		
Community/people		

3. With a partner, discuss your ideas and add any points which you hadn't identified.
4. Reflect on the chart and ask yourself the following questions. Be prepared to discuss your ideas with the class.
  - a. What are the characteristics of religious activities?
  - b. What are the characteristics of non-religious activities?
  - c. What are the similarities and differences between the characteristics of religious and non-religious activities? How would I identify whether an activity was religious or non-religious?
  - d. What conclusions can I draw from this activity?

## KEY FEATURES/ELEMENTS USED TO DISTINGUISH RELIGIOUS ACTIVITIES FROM NON-RELIGIOUS ACTIVITIES

1. **Belief System:** Religions are based on certain beliefs or teachings about life, death, and the spiritual world.
2. **Object(s) of worship:** This can be God, gods, spirits, ancestors, or other sacred beings.
3. **Rituals:** These are special activities like prayer, fasting, or festivals done regularly by followers.
4. **Sacred and profane:** Religions separate holy things (sacred) from ordinary things (profane). For example, a church or mosque is sacred, while a market is profane.
5. **Community:** Religion often brings people together to form a group or congregation that shares the same faith.

### Activity 1.5 Characteristics of religions

1. Organise yourselves into groups of 3 to 5 members and discuss what examples you can think of to illustrate the key features above. Use the internet to search for these and further examples found in Christian worship. Create a visual display to share with your class on PowerPoint. You may include short video clips as well as images and keywords.
2. Create flashcards with key terms you have learnt in this section. Flashcards have a keyword on one side and a definition on the other side. Use these flashcards together to test each other, so that you can learn important key terms.
3. As a class, identify what you think are the key characteristics of religion and explore both the similarities and differences between religious and non-religious activities.

# MISCONCEPTIONS ABOUT THE STUDY OF RELIGION

Some people have misconceptions about the study of religion as an academic discipline and it's important that we understand what these misconceptions are, and where they come from, so that we can address them.

## Activity 1.6 Misconceptions about studying religion at SHS

1. Working in pairs with the person next to you, share your thoughts about studying religion in SHS, thinking about what you want to learn and gain from the subject.
2. Share what you have heard from others about studying religion in school, focusing on some of the misconceptions you might have come across. Make a list of these misconceptions and discuss why you think that they might exist.
3. As a class, share some of your ideas and create a list of common misconceptions before reading the list provided below.

### Misconceptions about the Study of Religion

- a. The study of religion seeks to make learners worship God or the gods
- b. *The study of religion aims to convert students to a particular faith*
- c. *The study of religion is preparation to become a priest/imam (religious leader)*
- d. *The study of religion seeks to find out which religion is the best in the world*
- e. *In the study of religion, an attempt is made to condemn religion in totality or faith traditions.*
- f. *Learning religion will make you irreligious.*

## Activity 1.7 Addressing misconceptions

1. Pair up with a classmate, take each misconception in turn and consider what you might say to someone who holds this belief.
2. Role-play these discussions. Be prepared to discuss your responses with the class.
3. Having discussed your own responses, read the arguments below. Did you include all of them?
  - a. The study of religion in SHS is non-confessional. It is not meant to convert or make people devote to their religions.
  - b. The practice of worship is not a technique in the study of religion. Although learners may be invited to demonstrate practices of religion, it is purely for academic purposes.
  - c. Studying to become a religious leader involves the study of theology.

Studying religion will not make one a religious leader. There are several career avenues for people who study religion. We shall return to this subject in subsequent lessons.

- d. The focus of studying religion is not to promote or demote a particular religion. No religion can be described as best or worst. Studying religion helps to understand each religion from its own perspective.
- e. The choice of people to be irreligious has nothing to do with the study of religion. It is a personal choice. The study of religion is not concerned with the religiosity of learners.

## REASONS FOR THE STUDY OF RELIGION AT THE SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL

As we have seen so far, there are misconceptions regarding the study of religion which we need to address. It is also important that we understand why the study of religion is so relevant for 21st-century students.

### Activity 1.8 Benefits of studying religion

Arrange yourselves into small groups of 3-5 people. Discuss and make a note of all the ways that studying religion can benefit people. You might want to think about the ways it can benefit the student as well as the ways in which it can benefit society. Be prepared to share your ideas with the rest of the class.

## Significance of Religion to Human Life

Religion is one of the oldest and most significant aspects of human life. It has shaped societies, influenced laws, guided morals, and inspired great movements across history. In the modern educational system, religion is more than a set of beliefs or rituals—it is a field of study that helps learners develop a deep understanding of themselves and others. Studying religion equips learners with knowledge and skills that are relevant both academically and socially. Below are key reasons why the study of religion is vital.

### 1. Religion is a Field of study which helps us to understand human behaviour

Religion, like science or literature, is a field of academic inquiry. It involves the critical study of religious beliefs, practices, institutions, and their impact on human life. Through studying religion, we explore how different cultures explain life, death, suffering, justice, and the divine. This knowledge gives learners the tools to understand human motivations, behaviours, and actions. For instance, learning about how fasting in Islam or Lent in Christianity shapes behaviour helps us to appreciate why people make certain lifestyle choices. Religion also explains how values like compassion, honesty, or forgiveness influence relationships and community living.

## 2. The Study of Religion Helps Cultivate Tolerance in a World of Plural Values

In today's world, people hold different beliefs, traditions, and worldviews. Religious pluralism is a reality in Ghana and beyond. The study of religion introduces students to various faiths—Christianity, Islam, Traditional African Religion, and others—and shows the similarities and differences among them. By learning about the religious values of others, we develop respect for diversity. This helps reduce prejudice and discrimination. For example, understanding that both Christians and Muslims value peace can bridge gaps between groups. In this way, religious education promotes tolerance, peace, and unity in the classroom, in communities, and in the nation at large.

## 3. The Study of Religion Stimulates Critical and Analytical Thinking

Studying religion is not about memorising facts or blindly accepting teachings. It involves questioning, comparing, analysing and interpreting religious ideas. We are encouraged to ask deep questions such as: "What is the meaning of life?" or "Why do people suffer?" These questions do not have simple answers, so we must think deeply and reflect critically. Studying religion also encourages us to compare religious viewpoints on social and moral issues, such as abortion, corruption, or war. This process strengthens our ability to reason logically, analyse arguments, and make independent judgments—skills that are important in all areas of life.

## 4. Studying Religion Helps Develop Communication and Literacy Skills

The study of religion involves reading sacred texts, writing essays, making oral presentations, and engaging in class discussions. As learners we must express our ideas clearly and work hard to understand the views of others. This helps to improve reading comprehension, vocabulary, and writing abilities. Whether reading a Bible passage or writing about a festival like Eid-ul-Fitr, students learn to interpret meaning and convey understanding effectively. Communication and literacy skills gained through religious studies are not only useful in the classroom but also in future academic and professional life.

## 5. The Study of Religion Leads to the Development of Interpersonal Skills

In religious education classes, we often work in pairs or groups, sharing opinions, debating issues and listening to others. These activities help build teamwork, empathy, cooperation, and leadership skills. Religion also teaches moral values such as patience, kindness, and humility - qualities that are essential for healthy relationships. For example, when students reflect on the parable of the Good Samaritan or the concept of Ubuntu in African religion, they learn the importance of helping others regardless of differences. These interpersonal skills are important not only for school life but also for building peaceful and respectful communities.

## 6. Studying Religion Provides Opportunities for Careers in Human Services

Many career paths are available to those who study religion. These include professions in education, counselling, social work, chaplaincy, law, and community development. People who work in these fields often serve others, deal with ethical issues, and provide support during crises. Religious education prepares learners to be compassionate, ethical, and effective communicators—qualities that are important in any human-centred profession. For example, a religion student may later become a teacher who promotes moral education, or a counsellor who helps others deal with grief or conflict.

## 7. Studying Religion is a Step Towards Preparation for Tertiary Education

At the tertiary level, students may choose to pursue religious studies, theology, philosophy, or other humanities-related fields. The foundational knowledge gained in SHS gives them an academic background to succeed in such programmes. Moreover, the thinking, writing, and analytical skills developed through religious studies are transferable to various university courses, including law, history, and political science. Religious education thus opens academic pathways and broadens learners' future study options.

### Activity 1.9 The importance of studying religion

1. Organise yourselves into small groups of no more than 4 and discuss the reasons given above. Which do you think are the most important reasons? Which do you think are the least important reasons? Try to rank these in order, with the most important at the top. As you discuss, make sure that you can justify your reasons. Be prepared to discuss your ideas and reasons with the class.
2. Design a flier to convince other students that the study of religion is of great value in the SHS curriculum in the 21st century.
  - a. Divide overall responsibility for parts of the task according to your skills and the strengths of your group members
  - b. Make sure that each member of your group is engaged throughout the process.
  - c. Think about your target audience and ensure your flier is concise, factual and engaging.

Watch how to design a flyer using the link below: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KglO4C412DA>

## CAREER AVENUES IN THE STUDY OF RELIGION

As you have seen already, the study of religion allows you to develop many key skills which are of great benefit in a working environment. The following list introduces you to just some of the possible career avenues you might explore.

1. **Religious Educator (Teacher or Lecturer)** – Teaching religion in schools, colleges, or seminaries.
2. **Clergy or Religious Leader** – Becoming a pastor, imam, priest, or spiritual leader in a faith community.
3. **Chaplain** – Providing spiritual care in institutions like hospitals, schools, prisons, or the military.
4. **Counsellor or Psychotherapist** – Offering faith-based or general counselling to individuals and families.
5. **Social Worker** – Supporting vulnerable individuals and communities, often informed by moral and ethical training.
6. **Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO) Worker** – Working in development, peacebuilding, or humanitarian work.

7. **Ethicist or Policy Advisor** – Contributing to ethical decision-making in public institutions, media, or health care.
8. **Religious Journalist or Writer** – Reporting or writing about religion and society in newspapers, magazines, or online platforms.
9. **Cultural or Interfaith Relations Officer** – Promoting religious tolerance and dialogue across different belief systems.
10. **Archivist or Museum Curator** – Working with religious texts, artifacts, and cultural heritage in libraries or museums.

### Activity 1.10 Religion and career

In preparation for a conversation with a visiting professional who studied religion, prepare questions that you might ask them to find out about how their studies have helped them in their professional career.

### Activity 1.11 Religion as a requirement for further studies

1. Use the internet to search for admission requirements which suggest or encourage the study of religions as a requirement for admission. Examine the information on the flyers or on the admission forms and make notes of your findings.
2. Share your findings with the class. What have you learnt from this activity? How has this activity been helpful to you?

### Activity 1.12 Personal reflections on studying religion

Reflect on what you have learnt while considering the importance of studying religion, answering the following questions:

1. What do you see as the main benefits to you as you study the subject?
2. How might the subject benefit you in your career objectives?
3. How would you persuade someone of the value of studying this subject?

## EXTENDED READING

- <https://study.com/academy/lesson/religion-key-concepts-and-definitions.html>
- [https://faculty.smcm.edu/ccraney/restricted/PDF/Basic\\_Characteristics\\_Relig.pdf](https://faculty.smcm.edu/ccraney/restricted/PDF/Basic_Characteristics_Relig.pdf)
- <https://www.beloit.edu/live/news/1345-misconceptions-and-new-directions-for-religious>
- <https://ocrs.online/2018/12/20/common-misunderstandings-about-religious-studies>
- <https://religiousstudies.stanford.edu/undergraduate/why-study-religion>
- <https://www.religiousstudies.pitt.edu/undergraduate/career-paths>

# REVIEW QUESTIONS 1

1. Define the term religion.
2. List four characteristics of religion
3. Explain four reasons why religion is studied in SHS.
4. Identify and describe two jobs one can pursue after studying religion. Explain how studying religion can help with these jobs.
5. Compare religious and non-religious activities, giving two differences and two similarities.
6. Discuss one way that studying religion at the SHS level can help reduce conflicts in society.
7. Examine one way that any of the characteristics of religion is expressed in our community.
8. Write an essay on how religion as a subject in SHS can prepare students for national development. Use examples from Ghana.
9. Design a career guidance session for SHS students that highlights how studying religion can lead to job opportunities. Include at least three job roles and how religion relates to them.

SECTION

2

## HISTORICAL AND CONTEXTUAL BACKGROUND OF CHRISTIANITY



# INTRODUCTION

In this section, you will discover the exciting story of how Christianity began. We start with the life and ministry of Jesus Christ—the central figure of the Christian faith. You will learn about His birth, teachings, miracles, His death on the cross, and His resurrection, as recorded in the Gospels. As you study these key moments, you will also look at the world Jesus lived in—its history, religion, and politics—so you can understand why His message was so powerful and how it changed lives. You will then move on to learn about the first group of Christians in Jerusalem. Who were they? What challenges did they face? What kind of leadership held them together? You will find answers to these questions as you explore the early Christian community. Next, you will meet one of the most important figures in Christian history—Paul the Apostle. You will follow his missionary journeys, read about his letters (called epistles), and discover how he helped spread Christianity far and wide. By the end of this section, you will not just know what happened, you will understand why these events still matter today. Get ready to build your knowledge of history, deepen your understanding of the Bible, and appreciate the legacy of the early Christians.

## KEY IDEAS

- **Life and Ministry of Jesus:** Central events include His birth in humble circumstances, baptism, teachings (e.g., the Sermon on the Mount), miracles (healing, raising Lazarus, calming storms), the calling of the apostles, His death on the cross, and His resurrection, which became the foundation of Christian faith.
- **The Early Church and Persecution:** The Church grew rapidly through the power of the Holy Spirit and missionary efforts despite persecution, beginning with the martyrdom of Stephen and the scattering of believers. This suffering helped spread Christianity beyond Jerusalem.
- **Expansion through Key Leaders:** Peter and Paul were pivotal. Peter established the Jerusalem Church and later ministered in Rome, while Paul's missionary journeys and epistles shaped Christian doctrine and opened the faith to Gentiles.
- **Christianity and the Roman Empire:** Initially persecuted under emperors like Nero and Diocletian, Christianity gained legal status with Constantine's Edict of Milan (313 CE) and eventually became the official religion under Theodosius I (380 CE). Councils such as Nicaea (325 CE) and Chalcedon (451 CE) defined core doctrines.
- **Reformation and Denominations:** In the 16th century, the Protestant Reformation challenged Catholic abuses (e.g., indulgences, simony, poor clergy formation), leading to new denominations (Lutheran, Calvinist, Presbyterian, Anglican, Methodist). The Catholic Counter-Reformation (Council of Trent, Jesuits) reaffirmed doctrine and reformed practices, shaping modern Christianity's diversity.

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

## Christianity's Origin in Judaism

**Key Scriptures:** Genesis 17:4–6, John 8:56, Matthew 5:17

Christianity did not begin as a brand-new religion. It grew out of Judaism, the ancient faith of the Israelites. To understand where Christianity comes from, we need to start with the Old Testament and God's covenant with Abraham. In **Genesis 17:4–6**, God tells Abraham, “*You will be the father of many nations.*” This was a promise that Abraham's descendants would become great people. Christians believe this promise was fulfilled not just through the Jewish people, but also spiritually through Jesus Christ. Jesus is seen as a descendant of Abraham and the one through whom God's blessings reach all nations.

Jesus Himself acknowledged this connection. In **John 8:56**, He says, “*Your father Abraham rejoiced at the thought of seeing my day; he saw it and was glad.*” Here, Jesus is telling the Jewish leaders that Abraham, their ancestor, foresaw the coming of the Messiah — and that Messiah is Jesus. Jesus did not come to destroy Judaism but to fulfil it. In **Matthew 5:17**, He says, “*Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfil them.*” This shows that Christianity builds upon Jewish teachings. Jesus brought deeper meaning to the laws given to Moses and fulfilled the prophecies found in the Old Testament.

So, Christianity has its roots in Judaism. The Old Testament forms the foundation, and the life of Jesus fulfils many of its teachings and promises. By understanding Judaism, we better understand the message of Jesus and the early Christian movement.

## The Birth of Jesus Christ

**Key Scripture:** Luke 2

The story of Jesus' birth, also called the Nativity, is found in **Luke 2**. This moment is central to Christianity because it marks the coming of God's Son into the world in human form. Christians celebrate this event every year at Christmas.



Figure 2.1: Jesus was born in a manger

In **Luke 2:1–7**, we read about how Mary and Joseph travelled to Bethlehem due to a government census. There, Mary gave birth to Jesus in a humble stable because there was no room in the inn. She laid Him in a manger — a feeding trough for animals — showing the humble beginnings of the Saviour. Meanwhile, in the nearby fields, shepherds were watching their flocks. Suddenly, an angel appeared and told them the good news: “*Today in the town of David a Saviour has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord*” (**Luke 2:11**). A host of angels then appeared, singing “*Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests*” (**Luke 2:14**).

The shepherds hurried to see the baby and spread the news of what the angels had told them. This moment shows that Jesus’ birth was not only miraculous, but it was also meant for all people — rich or poor, great or small.

This story teaches important lessons. First, God keeps His promises, as Jesus’ birth fulfilled many prophecies. Second, God chooses humility and love over power and pride. Finally, Jesus’ birth brings hope to the world — a hope that still shines today.

## Jesus’ Ministry

### Key Scripture: Mark 1:9–11

Jesus began His public ministry around the age of 30. It all started with His baptism, which marked the beginning of His mission to preach, heal, and save. In **Mark 1:9–11**, we learn that Jesus came from Nazareth to be baptised by John the Baptist in the Jordan River. As soon as Jesus was baptised, something incredible happened. The heavens opened, and the Spirit of God came down on Him like a dove. A voice from heaven said, “*You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased.*”



**Figure 2.2:** Baptism of Jesus

This moment is very important for several reasons:

1. **It confirmed Jesus’ identity** as the Son of God.
2. **It marked the beginning of His mission** to save humanity.
3. **It revealed the Holy Trinity:** God the Father (the voice), God the Son (Jesus), and God the Holy Spirit (the dove).

After His baptism, Jesus went into the wilderness for 40 days, where He fasted and overcame temptations from Satan. This prepared Him spiritually for the work ahead.

Jesus’ ministry officially began with teaching, healing the sick, and calling people to repent and believe the good news. He travelled from town to town, sharing God’s love and challenging people to live righteously. His teachings were full of wisdom, parables, and lessons that connected deeply with ordinary people.

## Call of the 12 Apostles

**Key Scriptures:** Matthew 4:18–24, 9:9–13; Mark 1:16–20, 2:13–17; Luke 5:1–11, 27–32

Jesus did not do His work alone. One of the first things He did in His ministry was to call disciples—ordinary people—to follow Him. In Matthew 4:18–22, Jesus sees two brothers, Peter and Andrew, fishing. He says, “*Come, follow me, and I will send you out to fish for people.*” They immediately leave their nets and follow Him. He then calls James and John, the sons of Zebedee, who also follow without hesitation.

In Mark 2:13–17 and Matthew 9:9–13, we read about Jesus calling Matthew (also called Levi), a tax collector. This surprised many people because tax collectors were seen as sinners and traitors. But Jesus said, “*I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners.*” This showed that His message was for everyone, not just the religious elite.

Luke 5:1–11 gives more detail about Peter’s call. After a miraculous catch of fish, Peter is overwhelmed and tells Jesus he is unworthy, but Jesus tells him not to be afraid and invites him to become a “fisher of men.”

In all, twelve men were appointed as Jesus’ disciples: Peter, James, John, Andrew, Philip, Bartholomew, Matthew, Thomas, James (son of Alphaeus), Thaddeus, Simon the Zealot, and Judas Iscariot. These twelve later became known as the Twelve Apostles. The word apostle means ‘person sent’ - the twelve were sent out to spread the word.

Each of these men came from different backgrounds; some were fishermen, one was a tax collector, and others were political activists, et Jesus chose them to carry His message to the world.

The calling of the apostles teaches us that God can use anyone, no matter their past. It also shows the importance of obedience, faith, and service in following Jesus.



Figure 2.3: Jesus and his disciples

## Teaching, Miracles, and Training

Jesus Christ’s public ministry, which lasted about three years, was marked by powerful teachings, life-changing miracles, and the training of the disciples. These ministries served to reveal His identity as the Son of God, spread the good news of God’s kingdom, and prepare His followers to continue His mission after His death and resurrection.

### Teaching Ministry of Jesus (Matthew 5–6)

Jesus was called “Rabbi” or teacher by His followers because He taught with authority and wisdom. His teachings were not just about rules; they touched people’s hearts and guided them to live in relationship with God and others. The Sermon on the Mount (Matthew chapters 5–7) is one of His most famous teachings.

## The Beatitudes – Kingdom Values (Matthew 5:1–12)



**Figure 2.4:** Image of Jesus teaching his disciples

Jesus began His teaching by blessing certain groups of people – the poor in spirit, the meek, the merciful, and those who suffer for doing right. These are called **the Beatitudes**. They reflect the values of God’s kingdom, which are often the opposite of worldly success. Instead of praising the rich and powerful, Jesus honoured those who are humble and seek righteousness.

## Teaching on the Law and Righteousness (Matthew 5:17–20)

Jesus made it clear that He did not come to abolish the Jewish Law but to fulfil it. He called His followers to go beyond the letter of the law to its deeper meaning — for example, not just avoiding murder but avoiding hatred, not just avoiding adultery but controlling lustful thoughts. He emphasised that righteousness must come from the heart.

## Teaching on Prayer and Worship (Matthew 6:1–18)

Jesus taught that religious acts like giving, praying and fasting should not be done for show. Instead, they must come from a sincere heart. He gave the **Lord’s Prayer** as a model — a short, simple but deep prayer that honours God and asks for daily needs, forgiveness, and protection.

## Teaching on Trust in God (Matthew 6:25–34)

Jesus told His listeners not to worry about what to eat or wear. He reminded them that God takes care of the birds and the flowers, and He would surely care for His people. He encouraged them to “*seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness.*”

## Parables

Jesus taught using parables, which are simple stories that illustrate moral or spiritual lessons. The people of the time would have been used to hearing parables. These stories encouraged people to listen and think deeply about the meaning behind them, helping them to understand and appreciate the message for themselves. Examples include the Parable of the Sower (Matthew 13:1–23), the Parable of the Lost Sheep (Matthew 18:10–

14) and the Parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37).

## Performing Miracles

Jesus performed many miracles that touched every area of human life — health, nature, food, life and death. These miracles demonstrated God's power and compassion, confirming that Jesus was the Messiah sent from God.

### Healing the Leper – Power to Cleanse (Mark 1:40-42)

A man with leprosy approached Jesus, breaking social rules since lepers were considered unclean and were isolated from society. Jesus **touched him**, which was shocking to the people watching. With love, Jesus healed him instantly.

### Healing Many People – Mercy for the Crowds (Matthew 8:16)

Jesus was often surrounded by crowds seeking healing. In one evening, He healed **all** who were brought to Him and cast out many evil spirits. His healing ministry showed that He cared deeply about the pain and suffering of ordinary people.

### Calming the Storm – Authority Over Nature (Luke 8:22-25)

When a fierce storm struck the boat Jesus and His disciples were in, the disciples panicked. Jesus calmly *rebuked the wind and waves*, and the storm stopped immediately. His disciples were amazed and asked, “*Who is this, that even the wind and sea obey Him?*”

### Raising Lazarus – Power Over Death (John 11:1-44)

Lazarus, a close friend of Jesus, had been dead for four days when Jesus arrived. Despite others' doubts, Jesus called Lazarus out of the tomb, and he came back to life. This miracle revealed Jesus as the *Resurrection and the Life*, giving hope that even death is not the end for those who believe.

## Training His Disciples

Jesus didn't do all the ministry work by Himself. He *trained His disciples* — ordinary men — to preach, heal, and serve others. He used every opportunity to teach them through experience.

### Sending the Twelve Disciples (Mark 6:7-13)

Jesus sent out the twelve apostles in pairs to preach and heal. He told them to take little with them and to trust God for their needs. They cast out demons and healed the sick, putting into practice what Jesus had shown them.

### Empowering Disciples to Preach (Luke 9:1-6)

In another account, Jesus gave the disciples power and authority over all demons and diseases. He sent them to *proclaim the kingdom of God* and heal the sick. They were to depend on hospitality and avoid distractions, focusing on the mission.

## **The Death of Jesus Christ (Matthew 26:47–56; Matthew 27:1–2, 17–25; Luke 23:46–47)**

Jesus' death took place during the Passover festival, a major Jewish celebration that remembered God's deliverance of the Israelites from slavery in Egypt. During this time, Jerusalem was filled with people, including Jewish leaders who were concerned about Jesus' growing popularity.

Jesus had predicted His death several times (Matthew 16:21; Mark 10:33–34). He knew that His mission on earth was to offer Himself as a sacrifice for the sins of the world.

### **The Betrayal and Arrest (Matthew 26:47–56)**

While praying in the Garden of Gethsemane with His disciples, Jesus was betrayed by Judas Iscariot, who arrived with soldiers and religious leaders. The betrayal was confirmed by a kiss—an act normally symbolising friendship. One disciple tried to defend Jesus with a sword, but Jesus healed the wounded man and said, “All who draw the sword will die by the sword.” He willingly surrendered, showing that His death was not forced but chosen. Jesus' arrest fulfils prophecy and also teaches us about obedience and surrender to God's will.

### **Trial Before Pilate (Matthew 27:1–2, 17–25)**

After being tried by the Sanhedrin (Jewish council), Jesus was taken to Pontius Pilate, the Roman governor, since only the Romans could execute someone. Pilate found no fault in Jesus, but the Jewish leaders stirred the crowd to demand His crucifixion. It was the custom at that time for Roman governors to pardon a prisoner at the time of the Passover festival, but when Pilate asked the crowd, they chose Barabbas, a known rebel and criminal, to be released instead.

In a symbolic act, Pilate washed his hands, claiming he was not responsible. The crowd shouted, “His blood be on us and our children!” (v. 25), taking responsibility for Jesus' death.

### **The Crucifixion and Death (Luke 23:46–47)**

Jesus was mocked, beaten, and forced to carry His cross to Golgotha. He was nailed to the cross between two criminals. While suffering, He showed forgiveness (“Father, forgive them...”), compassion (“Today you will be with me in paradise...”), and trust (“Into your hands I commit my spirit.”).

The temple curtain tore in two, symbolising open access to God. The earth quaked, and darkness covered the land. A Roman centurion exclaimed, “Surely this man was the Son of God.”

### **The Resurrection of Jesus (Matthew 28:1–7)**

Early on Sunday morning, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary visited Jesus' tomb and found it empty. An angel appeared and said, “He is not here; He has risen, just as He said.”

This moment confirmed Jesus' victory over death. The resurrection is the foundation of Christian faith (1 Corinthians 15:14). It turned fearful disciples into bold witnesses and gave birth to the Church.

Over the next forty days, Jesus appeared to His disciples, proving He was alive.

1. He walked with them
2. He ate with them
3. He continued teaching about the Kingdom of God

These appearances restored the faith of the disciples, especially Peter, who had denied Him. Jesus also gave them a mission: "Go and make disciples of all nations..." (Matthew 28:19).

### **The Ascension and Promise of the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:1-11)**

Jesus gathered His disciples at the Mount of Olives and told them to wait in Jerusalem until they received the Holy Spirit, who would give them power. He said, "You will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." (Acts 1:8). Then, He ascended into heaven, and two angels appeared to tell the disciples He would one day return the same way.

### **Replacing Judas Iscariot (Acts 1:12-26)**

While waiting in the upper room, Peter led the group to select a replacement for Judas. They chose Matthias, keeping the apostolic number at twelve — symbolising the twelve tribes of Israel. This gives insight into the leadership style of the early Church members, who took decisions seriously and prayed before acting.

## **THE EARLY CHURCH FOLLOWERS**

With the coming of the Holy Spirit in Acts 2, the Church grew rapidly.

Peter's sermon on the day of Pentecost led to 3,000 conversions in one day, and numbers continued to grow as the apostles performed miracles and continued to speak about Jesus' life, death and ministry. Believers shared all that they had, meeting daily to pray together and to listen to the apostles' teachings.

This growth alarmed the religious leaders. They arrested Peter and John, warned them not to preach, and later had Stephen, one of the first deacons, arrested and tried.

### **The Martyrdom of Stephen (Acts 7:54-60)**

Stephen gave a powerful speech recounting Israel's history and accusing the Jewish leaders of rejecting the Messiah. Enraged, they stoned him to death, making him the first Christian martyr. As he died, Stephen echoed Jesus' words: "Lord, do not hold this sin against them."

### **The Great Persecution (Acts 8:1-3)**

Saul (later Paul) began dragging believers from their homes and imprisoning them. The Church was scattered throughout Judea and Samaria. Despite the hardship, Christians continued preaching wherever they went.

**Growth through Suffering:** Persecution became a tool for mission, spreading Christianity beyond Jerusalem.

Philip, another deacon, went to Samaria, a region often looked down upon by Jews. There, he preached the Gospel and performed miracles. Many people believed and were baptised, including Simon the Sorcerer, a local figure of power. This showed that the Gospel was for all people, not just Jews, and that God's power is greater than all human or magical powers.

### Evangelising an Ethiopian (Acts 8:26–40)

Philip was later led by the Holy Spirit to meet an Ethiopian official reading Isaiah. Philip explained the passage, preached Jesus, and baptised the man. This encounter marks one of the first steps in taking the Gospel to Africa. The Church was now truly global in scope, fulfilling Jesus' command to reach "the ends of the earth."

#### Activity 2.1 Jesus' life and ministry

1. Join with the person next to you to discuss what you understand about the relationship between Judaism and Christianity, including the concept of the Messiah. Be prepared to discuss your ideas with the class.
2. Organise yourselves into small groups and prepare a presentation for the class about one key aspect of Jesus's life and ministry.
  - a. Use a range of resources, including different Gospel accounts, to research your given area.
  - b. Your presentation should be thorough but concise.
  - c. You may find it easier to present using PowerPoint, including pictures and including only key information on your slides.
3. As each group presents, use their presentation to create a chronological account of Jesus' life and ministry for your own notes. Record key points only, to practise your note-making skills.
4. Organise yourselves into different groups with 4 members in each group.
  - a. Discuss what you think might be the significance of some of these key events for Christians in today's world.
  - b. Make notes on your timeline to add your thoughts.
  - c. Be prepared to share your ideas with the rest of the class.

#### Activity 2.2 The Early Church Followers

1. Using the Bible, look at stories of the early Christians in Acts 1–7. Make brief notes about the key events.
2. With the person next to you, discuss the following:
  - a. How do you think the early believers might have felt around this time?
  - b. What is the importance of these events for Christians in the 21<sup>st</sup> century?

# HISTORY OF CHRISTIANITY: FROM THE EARLY CHURCH TO THE MEDIEVAL PERIOD

## The Early Church

As we have seen, Christianity began in the 1st century CE as a small sect within Judaism, in the Roman province of Judea. Its founder, Jesus of Nazareth, was a Jewish teacher and healer who preached about the coming of the Kingdom of God. After His crucifixion under Roman authority, His followers claimed He had risen from the dead. This belief became the foundation of Christian faith and led to the formation of the early Church.

The early Christians, who were mostly Jews, gathered in homes for worship, prayer, and the sharing of bread and wine in memory of Jesus. At first, they continued observing Jewish customs and laws. However, as more non-Jews (Gentiles) began to join the movement, disagreements arose over whether Gentile converts needed to follow Jewish laws. This issue was settled at the Council of Jerusalem around 50 CE, where it was agreed that Gentiles did not have to fully follow Jewish customs to become Christians.

## Peter and Paul

Key figures in the spread and development of the early Church include the twelve apostles, especially Peter, and also Paul. Peter, one of Jesus' closest disciples, is often considered the leader of the early Church in Jerusalem. He preached boldly and performed miracles, helping to convert many to Christianity, including Jews. According to tradition, he later travelled to Rome, where he was eventually martyred.

Paul, formerly known as Saul of Tarsus, was a Jewish Pharisee who initially persecuted Christians. However, after a dramatic conversion experience on the road to Damascus, he became a devoted follower of Christ. The story of his conversion can be found in Acts 9. Paul's missionary journeys took him across the Roman Empire—to Asia Minor, Greece, and eventually to Rome. He wrote many letters (epistles) to early Christian communities, which are now part of the New Testament. Paul's teachings helped shape Christian doctrine and opened the faith to Gentiles.

## Persecution

Despite rapid growth, the early Church faced significant persecution. Christians were misunderstood, accused of being disloyal to the Roman gods, and at times blamed for disasters like fires or plagues. Roman authorities saw them as a threat to unity and order, since Christians refused to worship the emperor or take part in state religious festivals. Many were imprisoned, tortured, or executed for their faith.

Yet, persecution often led to stronger unity and growth. Christians supported one another, shared resources, and lived out the teachings of love and forgiveness. Their moral integrity and care for the poor attracted many converts. By the early 4th century, Christianity had spread widely and was eventually legalised by Emperor Constantine in 313 CE through the Edict of Milan.

The early Church laid the foundation for the global Christian faith, with a strong sense of mission, community, and resilience in the face of hardship. Its story is one of faith, courage, and transformation that continues to inspire believers today.

## Persecution of the Early Church and the Dispersal of the Disciples (Acts 8)

After the resurrection and ascension of Jesus, the early Christian community grew rapidly in Jerusalem. Thousands of Jews believed in Jesus as the Messiah and joined the Church. However, this growth was not welcomed by the Jewish religious leaders, who saw Christianity as a dangerous threat to traditional Jewish beliefs and authority. As a result, persecution against the followers of Jesus began to increase.

One of the first major incidents of persecution was the stoning of Stephen, one of the seven deacons chosen to assist the apostles (Acts 6). Stephen was accused of blasphemy and speaking against the Temple and the Law of Moses. After boldly defending his faith before the Sanhedrin (Jewish council), he was dragged out of the city and stoned to death. This marked the beginning of open and violent persecution of the early Church.

Acts records "on that day a great persecution broke out against the church in Jerusalem, and all except the apostles were scattered throughout Judea and Samaria." This forced many believers to flee for safety. Although it seemed like a tragedy at the time, this event played a key role in spreading the message of Jesus beyond Jerusalem. The persecution, therefore, became a turning point in the expansion of Christianity.

Among the prominent figures during this time was Saul of Tarsus, who actively supported the persecution of Christians. He went from house to house arresting believers and sending them to prison (Acts 8:3). However, unknown to many at the time, Saul would later have a dramatic encounter with Jesus and become the great apostle Paul.

Although the disciples were scattered, they did not keep silent. Instead, they preached the gospel wherever they went. One example is Philip, another of the seven deacons, who went to Samaria and preached with great success. Many Samaritans believed in Jesus and were baptised, and even a local sorcerer named Simon was converted (Acts 8:4–13). Philip later led an Ethiopian official to Christ, who then carried the message back to Africa (Acts 8:26–40).

The persecution and dispersal of the disciples showed that the gospel could not be contained. What was intended to stop the Church caused it to grow and spread more rapidly. This movement laid the foundation for the global mission of Christianity and demonstrated the resilience and faith of the early believers in the face of danger.

## Persecution of Christians in the Roman Empire Until the Protestant Reformation

Christians refused to participate in emperor worship, pagan festivals, or sacrifices to Roman gods. This led Roman authorities to view them as rebellious, atheistic, and dangerous to social order. Christians gathered secretly in homes or catacombs and used symbols like the fish (Ichthys) to identify each other.

## Waves of Persecution

Persecution was not constant but occurred in waves depending on the political climate and emperor. Some major periods include the following:

1. **Nero (64 CE)**: Blamed Christians for the Great Fire of Rome. Executions included crucifixions, burning, and feeding wild animals.
2. **Domitian (81–96 CE)**: Persecuted Christians who refused to worship him as “Lord and God.”
3. **Trajan (98–117 CE)**: Ordered Christians to be punished only if they refused to recant (to announce that their past beliefs were wrong).
4. **Decius (249–251 CE)**: Instituted the first **empire-wide** persecution by demanding that everyone sacrifice to Roman gods.
5. **Diocletian and Galerius (303–311 CE)**: Launched the **Great Persecution**, destroying churches, burning scriptures, and imprisoning clergy.
6. Despite the fear and danger, Christianity continued to spread. Martyrs like Polycarp, Perpetua, and Felicity became symbols of faith and endurance.

## Constantine and the Triumph of Christianity (4th Century CE)

In 312 CE, Constantine, while preparing for battle at the Milvian Bridge, reportedly saw a vision of a cross with the words, “*In hoc signo vinces*” (In this sign, you will conquer). He ordered his soldiers to paint the Christian symbol (Chi-Rho) on their shields. He won the battle and attributed his victory to the Christian God.



Figure 2.5: The Christian Symbol (Chi-Rho)

In 313 CE, Constantine and co-emperor Licinius issued the Edict of Milan, granting full religious freedom to Christians and restoring church property.

## Constantine’s Role in the Rise of Christianity

1. Built important churches like the **Church of the Holy Sepulchre** in Jerusalem.
2. Supported the clergy with gifts and privileges.
3. Encouraged the Church’s involvement in imperial matters.
4. Convened the Council of Nicaea to resolve doctrinal disputes.

Though Constantine himself was baptised only on his deathbed (337 CE), he considered himself a Christian and actively promoted the faith.

## Christianity Becomes the Official Religion

By the late 4th century, **Emperor Theodosius I** issued the **Edict of Thessalonica** (380 CE), which:

1. Made **Nicene Christianity** the **official religion** of the Roman Empire.
2. Declared heretical teachings (Arianism, paganism) illegal.
3. Prohibited pagan worship and shut down temples.

The Church now had imperial backing, and bishops became powerful political figures. The state began enforcing orthodoxy and persecuting heresies.

## The Church as the Only Religious Institution (5th–16th Century)

For over 1,000 years, from Theodosius I to the **Protestant Reformation** (16th century), the Roman Catholic Church remained the only institutional Church in Western Europe. It became intertwined with the empire and later with European kingdoms, playing roles in governance, education, law, and culture. The pope emerged as a central figure of spiritual and political authority. Church councils shaped doctrine and unity. Monasteries preserved knowledge and nurtured spiritual life.

## Church Councils and Doctrine Formation: The Councils of Nicaea (325 CE) and Chalcedon (451 CE)

As Christianity grew, theological disagreements arose about key doctrines, especially concerning Jesus Christ's nature and the Trinity. These disputes threatened Church unity, prompting emperors to call ecumenical councils to settle them.

### Council of Nicaea (325 CE)

A major controversy arose due to **Arius**, a priest from Alexandria, who taught that **Jesus was** created by God and was not fully divine. According to Arius, there was a time when the Son did not exist.

**Constantine**, concerned about unity in the empire, convened a council in **Nicæa** (modern-day Turkey) with over **300 bishops** from across the empire to resolve the problem.



## Main Issues

1. Is Jesus Christ truly God, equal with the Father?
2. What is the proper understanding of the Trinity?

## Decisions and Outcomes

1. The Council condemned Arianism as heresy.
2. Declared that Jesus is "begotten, not made, of one substance with the Father."
3. Produced the Nicene Creed, a statement of faith still used today in many churches.
4. Set a precedent for imperial involvement in Church matters.

While Nicaea affirmed Christ's divinity, new debates arose over how His divine and human natures were united. Some claimed Jesus had only one nature, either divine or a blend of both.

The Council of Chalcedon was called by Emperor Marcian to resolve this as well.

## Main Issues

1. How are the divine and human natures of Christ related?
2. Can Jesus be both fully God and fully man?

## Decisions and Outcomes

1. Affirmed the doctrine of the hypostatic union: Jesus is one person in two distinct but united natures, divine and human.
2. Rejected the one nature of Christ as heresy.
3. Confirmed and expanded the Nicene Creed.
4. Elevated the patriarch of Constantinople to second in authority after the Bishop of Rome.

## Importance of These Councils

These councils established the foundation for orthodox Christian doctrine, which helped:

1. Unite the Church under clear teachings.
2. Provide theological clarity for worship and catechism.
3. Counter heresies and divisions.
4. Strengthening the Church's authority across regions,
5. They also reinforced the concept of creeds as tools for teaching and affirming faith.

## The Rise of the Papacy and the Role of the Bishop of Rome

In the early centuries of Christianity, the Church was led by bishops who oversaw Christian communities in major cities. Among them, the Bishop of Rome gradually gained special recognition due to:

1. Rome's importance as the capital of the empire.
2. The martyrdom of Peter and Paul in Rome, linking the city to apostolic authority.

3. The belief that Peter, one of Jesus' closest disciples, was the first bishop of Rome, and that his spiritual authority was passed down (known as apostolic succession).
4. This led to the idea that the Bishop of Rome—later called the Pope—was the spiritual head of the universal Church.

## Growth of Papal Authority

Over time, especially in the Western Church, the pope's role expanded. Several historical factors contributed.

1. The Decline of the Western Roman Empire: As civil government weakened, the pope stepped in to provide leadership and stability.
2. Pope Leo I (440–461 CE): Asserted the doctrine of Petrine supremacy, claiming the pope had inherited Peter's unique authority. He negotiated with invading forces like Attila the Hun, further enhancing the papacy's prestige.
3. Pope Gregory the Great (590–604 CE): Reorganised church administration, sent missionaries (like Augustine to England), and strengthened the Church's influence in Europe.
4. Political Alliances: Popes made strategic partnerships with kings, such as the coronation of Charlemagne as "Holy Roman Emperor" by Pope Leo III in 800 CE, linking the Church to political power.

By the 11th century, the pope had become the supreme religious leader of the Western (Roman Catholic) Church, with authority over bishops, doctrine, and Church practices.

## MONASTICISM AND CHRISTIAN SPIRITUALITY

### Origins of Monasticism

Monasticism began in the 3rd century as a spiritual response to worldliness and moral decline. Early monks, like Anthony of Egypt, withdrew to the desert to live in prayer, fasting, and solitude. These early monks believed that true Christian discipleship involved self-denial, silence, and total devotion to God.

### Development of Monastic Communities

Over time, individual hermits began forming communities under common rules of life. This gave rise to communal monasticism. The most influential of these communities was founded by St. Benedict of Nursia in the 6th century. His Rule of St. Benedict became the standard for monastic life in the West. It emphasised balance: prayer, study, manual labour, and communal living. Monks lived by vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience. Monastic orders such as the Benedictines, Cistercians, and Franciscans spread across Europe.

### Contributions of Monasticism

Monasteries played a central role in shaping Christian spirituality and European culture

1. **Preservation of Learning:** Monks copied and preserved ancient manuscripts, including the Bible, classical literature, and scientific texts.

2. **Evangelisation:** Monks and nuns became missionaries, spreading Christianity to rural and pagan areas (e.g., Ireland, Germany, Britain).
3. **Social Services:** Monasteries offered education, medical care, hospitality, and support for the poor.
4. **Spiritual Discipline:** Monastic life promoted deep spiritual practices such as contemplation, meditation, silence, and humility.

Monasticism became the **heart of Christian spirituality** during the Middle Ages and greatly influenced religious life.

## Divisions within the Church: The East–West Schism (1054 CE)

For centuries, the Christian Church had existed as one body, but with growing differences between the Western Church (Rome) and the Eastern Church (Constantinople). These differences were:

1. **Cultural and Linguistic:** Latin was used in the West, Greek in the East.
2. **Theological Emphases:** The West focused more on legal structures and original sin, while the East emphasised mystery and divine light.
3. **Liturgical Practices:** Differences in fasting, the type of bread used in communion, and clerical celibacy.
4. **Authority Disputes:** The West increasingly emphasised the supremacy of the pope, while the East insisted on a collegial model of leadership, where the Bishop of Rome was "first among equals."

## The Filioque Controversy

A key theological disagreement involved the **Nicene Creed**, which originally stated that the Holy Spirit proceeds from "the Father." The Western Church later added "and the Son" (filioque, a Latin word) to the creed.

The East objected, saying the addition was made without an ecumenical council and changed the original doctrine. The West defended the addition as reflecting the equality of the Son with the Father. This dispute became a symbol of the deeper divide between East and West.

## The Formal Split of 1054

In 1054, Pope Leo IX sent a delegation to Constantinople to demand submission from the Eastern Church. When Patriarch Michael Cerularius refused, the pope's envoy excommunicated him. The Patriarch, in turn, excommunicated the pope's representatives. This mutual communication marked the formal split, or Great Schism, between:

1. **The Roman Catholic Church (West)**
2. **The Eastern Orthodox Church (East)**

Though efforts at reconciliation have been made over the centuries, the schism has never been fully healed.

## Consequences of the Schism

1. The schism created two distinct traditions in Christianity, each with its own theology, liturgy, and leadership. This led to centuries of hostility and misunderstanding between East and West and weakened Christian unity, especially during the Crusades when Latin Christians sacked Constantinople (1204), deepening the divide.
2. Today, both churches share the same roots but maintain different identities, with ongoing dialogue seeking eventual reconciliation.

### Activity 2.3 Events in the Early Church

1. Organise yourselves into groups of no more than 5 people. Your group will take responsibility for one of the key events in the history of Christianity and become the 'experts', feeding back your findings to the rest of the class.
2. Use a range of sources, including online sources, books and any other sources your teacher provides or suggests.
3. Present your findings to the rest of the class, including key details of the event(s) and explaining the significance.
4. As each group presents, use the information you are given to produce a timeline of these key events.
  - a. Early Christian life, including the martyrdom of Stephen
  - b. The Council of Nicaea
  - c. The development of the papacy
  - d. The rise of Constantinople as a religious centre
  - e. The East-West Schism

### Activity 2.4 Exploring key figures in Christian history

1. Organise yourselves into groups of no more than 5. Select a key event in the history of the Church to focus on.
2. Each person should take on the role of a character in the event, exploring both the event itself but also what happened before and after.
3. Consider how people felt and the reasons they had for acting as they did, as well as the significance of this event in Christian history.
4. Explore major events in the church. Use the following links to explore key events in further detail.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9LRYoS1ZqSI>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Jb6h9mH8dj8>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=onHIpArMENU>

Take note of events such as:

- i. What new ideas or practices emerged in the Church?
- ii. What tensions or debates were discussed in the videos?

## HISTORY OF CHRISTIANITY: THE PROTESTANT REFORMATION (1517) AND THE PROLIFERATION OF MANY CHRISTIAN DENOMINATIONS

### Martin Luther

Martin Luther, a German teacher, theologian and monk, brought about the Protestant Reformation when he challenged the Catholic Church's teachings in the early part of the 16<sup>th</sup> century.



**Figure 2.6:** Sketch of Martin Luther as a Monk

Prior to this, reformers like John Huss and John Wycliffe had made some attempts to introduce some reforms into Christianity. The Protestant Reformation was a religious reform movement that swept through Europe in the 1500s. There were some factors that led to the Reformation, which resulted in the springing up of Christian denominations which separated from the Roman Catholic church.

The Protestant Reformation was one of the most significant religious revolutions in Christian history. It marked a split from the Roman Catholic Church and led to the formation of several Protestant denominations. Although Martin Luther's actions in 1517, particularly his *Ninety-Five Theses*, are often cited as the beginning of the Reformation, the movement had been long in the making. Multiple factors contributed to the widespread call for reform. These factors include religious abuses, intellectual developments, political ambitions, and social demands, as outlined below.

## Unbiblical Church Practices – The Sale of Indulgences

One of the most immediate causes of the Reformation was the sale of indulgences. Indulgences were certificates sold by the Roman Catholic Church that claimed to reduce the time a soul would spend in purgatory. While initially intended to encourage repentance, they soon became a money-making scheme. Church leaders used the proceeds to fund projects such as the construction of St. Peter's Basilica in Rome.



**Figure 2.7:** Image of St Peter's Basilica

In Germany, the Dominican monk Johann Tetzel aggressively marketed indulgences, famously saying, “As soon as the coin in the coffer rings, the soul from purgatory springs.” This practice outraged many, including Martin Luther, who believed that forgiveness could only come through genuine repentance and faith in Jesus Christ—not through financial transactions.

## The Renaissance – A Revival of Learning and Technology

The Renaissance, which began in Italy in the 14th century and spread across Europe, encouraged critical thinking, education, and the rediscovery of classical knowledge. Renaissance scholars promoted humanism, which emphasised the value of human reason and the study of ancient texts in their original languages. As people began to question traditional authority, they also started questioning the authority of the Church.

The invention of the printing press by Johannes Gutenberg in the mid-15th century revolutionised the spread of ideas. It allowed the Bible and reformist writings to be reproduced and distributed quickly and widely. Luther's works, for example, spread throughout Europe in a matter of weeks. The printing press played a critical role in informing and educating the public, empowering people to question Church teachings and demand reform.

## Desire to Read the Bible in the Local Language

During the Middle Ages, the Bible was only available in Latin, a language that most common people could not understand. Church services were also conducted in Latin, which limited the laity's direct access to God's Word. This kept the Church in control of biblical interpretation and teaching.

With the help of the Renaissance spirit and the printing press, calls grew louder for the Bible to be translated into local languages. Reformers like John Wycliffe in England and Jan Hus in Bohemia made early efforts to translate and distribute the Bible, although they were often persecuted for it. Martin Luther later translated the Bible into German, allowing ordinary people to read the Scriptures for themselves and engage personally with their faith. This greatly weakened the Church's control and contributed to the Reformation.

## Poor Ministerial Formation

Another major cause of discontent was the poor quality of spiritual leadership within the clergy. Many priests and bishops were untrained, and their appointments were often politically motivated rather than based on spiritual calling or theological competence. In many cases, sons of noble families were appointed as priests or bishops purely for status and income, even if they had no religious training.

These clergy members could not preach effectively or provide meaningful pastoral care, leading to widespread spiritual ignorance and dissatisfaction among the people. The absence of strong moral leadership left many Christians disillusioned with the Church, and reformers demanded that clergy be properly trained and morally upright.

## Simony – The Sale of Church Offices

The practice of simony, or the buying and selling of Church offices (positions), was another serious abuse. Wealthy individuals could pay to become bishops or cardinals, often without any spiritual qualifications or interest in the Christian ministry. These positions gave access to large incomes and social power, which led to widespread corruption.

Simony undermined the spiritual integrity of the Church, turning it into a business institution rather than a sacred community. Reformers criticised this strongly, insisting that Church leadership should be based on calling, education, and faith—not on wealth or political connections.

## Immorality Among the Clergy

There was also significant concern about the moral failings of the clergy, especially regarding celibacy and sexual misconduct. Priests, bishops, and even popes were found guilty of breaking their vow of celibacy, living with concubines, and fathering children. The common practice of clerical concubinage—priests keeping mistresses—was seen as a scandal and a betrayal of Christian principles.

This moral decay further discredited the Church's spiritual authority. The hypocrisy of preaching purity while practising immorality caused many believers to lose respect for Church leaders. Reformers called for a return to biblical ethics and for leaders to set good examples in their behaviour.

## Political Ambitions – Kings and Rulers Seeking Freedom from Church Control

Lastly, the desire of political leaders to free themselves from the authority of the pope played a critical role in the Reformation. In many parts of Europe, especially Germany, England, and Switzerland, rulers were frustrated with the Church's interference in national affairs, such as taxation, land ownership, and the appointment of officials.

A major example is King Henry VIII of England, who broke away from the Roman Catholic Church after the pope refused to annul his marriage to Catherine of Aragon. In response, Henry established the Church of England and made himself its head, giving him full control over religious and political matters in his realm. Similarly, German princes supported Luther not only for religious reasons but also to gain independence from papal authority and to seize Church lands.

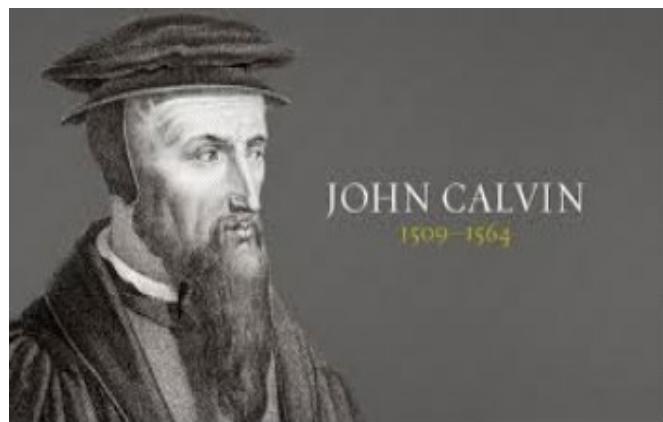
## Consequences of the Reformation

One of the most significant consequences of the Reformation was the schism in the Christian Church, breaking the religious unity of Western Christendom. Several new Christian denominations emerged as reformers challenged the authority and practices of the Roman Catholic Church.

### 1. Martin Luther – The Lutheran Church

Martin Luther emphasised salvation by faith alone, the authority of Scripture, and the priesthood of all believers. His teachings led to the formation of the Lutheran Church, especially dominant in Germany and Scandinavia.

### 2. John Calvin – The Calvinist Church



**Figure 2.8:** Image of John Calvin

John Calvin, a French theologian based in Geneva, advanced Luther's ideas with his own teachings on predestination and a strict moral code. Calvinism spread widely across Europe—particularly in Switzerland, France, the Netherlands, and parts of Scotland—forming the basis of Reformed churches.

### 3. John Knox – The Presbyterian Church in Scotland

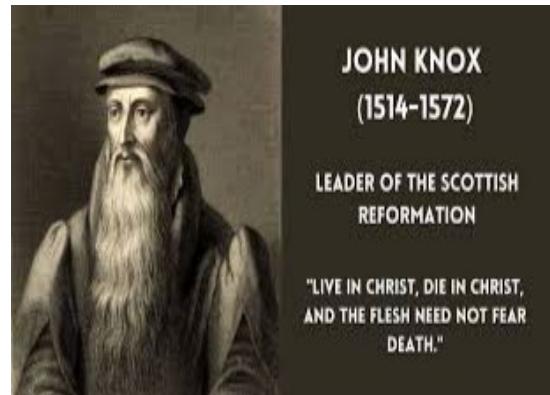


Figure 2.9: John Knox

John Knox, influenced by Calvin, led the Scottish Reformation. He established the Presbyterian Church, emphasising a church governed by elders (presbyters) rather than bishops. This marked a shift from hierarchical to more congregational forms of governance in Christianity.

### 4. King Henry VIII – The Anglican Church (1534)

In England, the Reformation took a political turn. King Henry VIII separated from the Roman Catholic Church after the Pope refused to annul his marriage to Catherine of Aragon. In 1534, he passed the Act of Supremacy, making himself the Supreme Head of the Church of England (Anglican Church). Though initially similar in doctrine to Catholicism, the Anglican Church gradually adopted Protestant reforms.

### 5. John Wesley – The Methodist Church

John Wesley, an Anglican priest in the 18th century, led a revival movement that emphasized personal faith, holiness, and social service. Though he did not intend to create a new denomination, his followers eventually formed the Methodist Church, which became influential in Britain and the Americas.

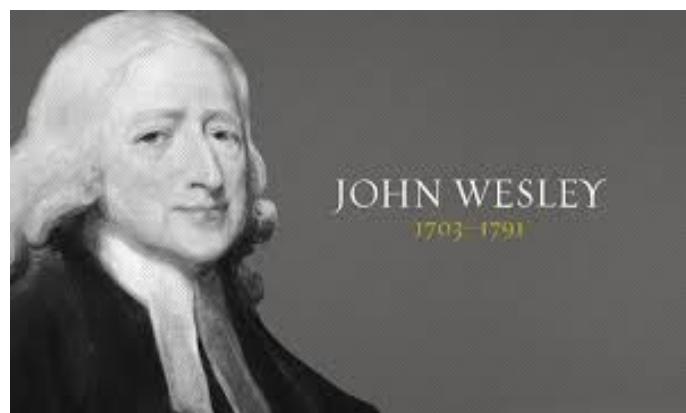


Figure 2.10: John Wesley

Another consequence of the Reformation was the translation of the Bible into vernacular languages. Before the Reformation, the Bible was largely available only in Latin, limiting access to clergy and the educated elite. Reformers like Luther and others believed that every believer should read the Bible in their own language.

- a. Martin Luther translated the Bible into German (1522–1534).
- b. The English Bible was translated by William Tyndale and later, the King James Version (1611).
- c. The French Bible was translated by Olivetan (1535), supported by his cousin, Calvin, and others.

This movement democratised religious knowledge and contributed to higher literacy rates, personal Bible study, and the growth of national languages and identities.

## The Roman Catholic Counter-Reformation

In response to the growing Protestant challenge, the Catholic Church launched its own Counter-Reformation, aimed at internal renewal and defending its doctrines.

### Key Elements of the Counter-Reformation

1. Council of Trent (1545–1563): Reaffirmed Catholic doctrines such as the authority of the Pope, the seven sacraments, and the importance of faith and good works. It condemned Protestant beliefs and reformed clerical abuses.
2. Formation of new religious orders: Most notably, the Jesuits (Society of Jesus) were founded by Ignatius of Loyola. The Jesuits focused on education, missionary work, and loyalty to the Pope. They played a crucial role in revitalising Catholicism globally.
3. Index of Forbidden Books: A list of publications banned by the Catholic Church to prevent the spread of Protestant ideas.

Roman Inquisition: Reinforced orthodoxy and punished heresy, often through court trials. The Counter-Reformation successfully revitalised Catholic faith in Southern Europe and parts of Eastern Europe, halting the Protestant expansion in many areas.

### Activity 2.5 The Reformation – Causes and Consequences

1. Organise yourselves into small groups of 3-5 people. Help each other to create a timeline of key events of the Reformation. Include dates, places and key people.
2. Using the internet and other sources, research the causes and consequences of the Protestant Reformation in greater detail.
3. Create a diagram adding your causes and consequences, including at least 3 of each. Link the causes to the consequences. Use images, keywords and symbols to record your information and ideas.
4. Be prepared to share your work and discuss what you have learnt from this activity.

## Activity 2.6 Comparing the Reformation and the Counter-Reformation

1. Working in a pair with the person sitting next to you, design a table to help you compare the Reformation and the Counter-Reformation.
2. Join with the pair next to you and conduct research, using both online sources and written sources. Add your findings to your table and be prepared to share with the rest of the class.

## Activity 2.7 The Reformation – exploring the issues raised

Organise yourselves into small groups of no more than 4 and discuss the following questions:

1. What values were the reformers promoting?
2. In your opinion, were the Protests justified?
3. Which issue do you think was the most significant?
4. How do you think these events influence the church or society today?
5. What values or lessons can be observed that we can apply in our own lives?

Remember to justify your answers and listen carefully to others' ideas and opinions.

## Activity 2.8 Christian Denominations

1. Organise yourselves to form a group of not more than four. Use a range of sources to gather basic information about some of the various Christian denominations. Each member of your group should look for information on at least one denomination. Look for information under the following headings:
  - a. Who started it?
  - b. When and where did it start?
  - c. Why did it start?
2. In your groups, share the information you have found and discuss what you think are the benefits of having different denominations and also the potential complications of having different denominations. Be prepared to discuss your ideas with the class.

## EXTENDED READING

- <https://bibleodyssey.org>
- <https://christianhistoryinstitute.org>
- <https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/subjects/zb48q6f>
- <https://schoolhistory.co.uk>
- <https://www.biblegateway.com/resources>

## REVIEW QUESTIONS 2

1. Where was Jesus born, and who were His earthly parents according to the Gospel of Luke?
2. Name any four of the original twelve disciples called by Jesus.
3. Explain two significant ways the birth of Jesus demonstrated humility and divine purpose.
4. Summarise the key aspects of Jesus' ministry and how He trained His disciples.
5. Identify two ways the early Christians responded to persecution in Jerusalem, based on Acts 8.
6. Compare the persecution of Christians under Emperor Nero with the later legalisation of Christianity by Constantine.
7. What does this contrast reveal about the changing role of Christianity in the Roman Empire?
8. Analyse the purpose and impact of the Council of Nicaea on Christian doctrine and unity.
9. Discuss two reasons why the authority of the pope became dominant in Western Christianity during the medieval period.
10. Evaluate the long-term effects of the East–West Schism on the unity and global mission of the Christian Church. How did theological and political differences contribute to the split?
11. Imagine you are an early Christian preacher during a time of persecution. Write a motivational message to your fellow believers, drawing from the teachings and life of Jesus and the experiences of the early disciples.
12. Think about the following: References to **Jesus' teachings** (forgiveness, boldness, hope)
  - a. Mention of **Stephen, Philip**, or other early martyrs
  - b. The tone you and values you want to convey
  - c. The Holy Spirit
13. Who initiated the Protestant Reformation in 1517?
14. What were indulgences in the Roman Catholic Church?
15. Name one early reformer before Martin Luther.
16. What technological inventions helped spread Reformation ideas rapidly?
17. In which language was the Bible mostly written before the Reformation?
18. What year did Martin Luther post his Ninety-Five Theses?

- 19.** Name one Protestant denomination that emerged from the Reformation.
- 20.** What is the name of the Catholic response movement to the Protestant Reformation?
- 21.** Describe two unbiblical practices of the Catholic Church that reformers opposed.
- 22.** Summarise Martin Luther's major argument against the sale of indulgences.
- 23.** Explain how the Renaissance contributed to the Reformation.
- 24.** Describe the role of simony in weakening the Church's authority.
- 25.** Identify two moral issues among the clergy that led to discontent.
- 26.** Outline the main beliefs of John Calvin that shaped Calvinism.
- 27.** Explain the importance of translating the Bible into vernacular languages during the Reformation.
- 28.** Compare and contrast the Protestant Reformation with the Catholic Counter-Reformation in terms of objectives and methods.
- 29.** Analyse the political motives behind King Henry VIII's break from the Catholic Church.
- 30.** Assess the impact of the Reformation on the unity of Christianity in Europe.
- 31.** Discuss how the printing press changed the religious landscape of Europe.
- 32.** Evaluate the long-term effects of the Protestant Reformation on religious leadership and education.
- 33.** Imagine you are a political advisor in 16th-century Germany. Based on the abuses of the Catholic Church and the rise of reformist ideas, design a comprehensive reform strategy for your prince that balances religious conviction with political stability.
- 34.** What steps would you propose, and why?
- 35.** You are organising a national education curriculum in a post-Reformation society. Using insights from the Reformation, propose how religious education should be restructured to reflect Protestant values such as personal Bible reading, faith, and moral leadership. Justify your curriculum design.

SECTION

3

# HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF CHRISTIANITY IN GHANA



# INTRODUCTION

In this section, you will explore how Christianity took root and grew in Ghana. You will begin by stepping back in time to see what the religious scene looked like long before the first missionaries arrived. You will dive into the rich and meaningful traditions of African Indigenous Religion (AIR), learning how beliefs in a Supreme Being, respect for ancestors, sacred rituals, and moral values shaped the spiritual lives of our forebears. You will then consider how influential AIR was before Christianity came on the scene, exploring its core practices and seeing how deep it runs in our culture, even today.

The spotlight then moves to how Christianity entered the Gold Coast. You will discover how different missionary groups—like the *Basel, Methodist, Bremen, and Catholic* missions—brought their message, built churches, and laid the foundation for today's many Christian denominations, including the Pentecostal and Charismatic movements.

By the end of this section, you will understand how Ghana's religious history is a blend of African traditions and Christian faith. This will help you appreciate our religious diversity, respect different beliefs, and see how history still shapes what we believe today.

## KEY IDEAS

- **Belief in a Supreme Being:** Ghanaians recognised and worshipped one Supreme God as the creator and sustainer of life, even before Christianity arrived.
- **Role of Ancestors:** Ancestors were highly revered as spiritual intermediaries who maintained a link between the living and the divine, ensuring harmony and moral order.
- **Spirits and Lesser Deities:** People believed in various spirits and lesser gods who managed different aspects of nature and human affairs, serving under the Supreme Being.
- **Sacred Rituals and Worship Practices:** Rituals, sacrifices, libations, and festivals were central to religious life, expressing gratitude, seeking blessings, and maintaining balance with the spiritual world.
- **Moral and Social Values:** Religion guided ethics and social conduct, promoting virtues such as respect, honesty, community cooperation, and justice.
- **Continuity of Indigenous Beliefs:** Despite the introduction of Christianity, many traditional religious practices and values remain deeply rooted in Ghanaian culture and continue to influence daily life.

## NATURE AND CHARACTERISTICS OF AFRICAN INDIGENOUS RELIGION

African Indigenous Religion (AIR) refers to the traditional religious beliefs and practices of the various ethnic groups in Africa, including those in Ghana. It is not a single, uniform religion, but rather a collection of related beliefs and systems rooted in African culture and passed down through generations. This religion is practical, communal, and deeply connected to everyday life and is characterised by the features below.

## Oral Tradition (Not Scriptural)

African Indigenous Religion (AIR) is not written down in holy books. Instead, knowledge is transmitted orally—from elders, priests, priestesses, and spiritual leaders to the younger generation. This is done through:

1. Folktales, proverbs, and songs
2. Drumming and dancing
3. Use of symbols
4. Initiation rites and festivals

This oral nature makes AIR adaptable and dynamic, allowing it to evolve with changing cultural settings.

## Belief in a Supreme Being

Every ethnic group believes in one all-powerful, ever-present Supreme God who created the universe and everything in it. This Supreme Being is known by different names and characteristics depending on the group. Examples of these include: **Nyame** (Akan), **Mawu** (Ewe), **Odomankoma**, **Chi** (Igbo) and **Olodumare** (Yoruba).

According to the various beliefs, this Supreme Being is:

- a. *Transcendent (above all things) but also immanent (present in daily life)*
- b. *Not worshipped directly, in most cases, but approached through intermediaries (spirits or ancestors).*

## Ancestor Veneration

Ancestors are believed to live on in the spirit world and continue to influence the lives of the living. They are not worshipped as gods but are respected and honoured because they serve as guardians and mediators between the living and the spirit world. Offerings and libations are made to them to seek their blessings, guidance or protection. They are remembered through festivals, shrines, graveside rituals and naming ceremonies.

## Belief in Spirits and Divinities

In AIR, the world is full of unseen spiritual beings, both good and bad. These include:

1. **Divinities or lesser gods:** Created by the Supreme Being to control elements of nature or aspects of life (e.g., fertility, rain, war, wisdom).
2. **Nature spirits:** Associated with sacred rivers, forests, rocks, or trees
3. **Witches and evil spirits:** Believed to bring misfortune, sickness or even death if not controlled through rituals

## Rituals and Worship Practices

AIR involves elaborate rituals that serve different purposes, including thanksgiving, purification, healing or seeking favour. These rituals include:

1. Offering libation to call spirits or ancestors
2. Sacrifices (especially animal sacrifice, e.g., goats, fowls, sheep) to honour spirits or gods
3. Drumming, dancing, and chanting to invoke spiritual presence

Healing ceremonies by traditional priests or herbalists. Worship is usually done in shrines, sacred groves or family compounds, rather than in formal buildings like churches or mosques.

## Moral and Ethical Teachings

AIR teaches strong moral values and sets expectations for how individuals must behave in society. These include:

1. Respect for elders and authority
2. Honesty, integrity, and justice
3. Hospitality and kindness
4. Loyalty to family and community
5. Responsibility and hard work.

Wrongdoing is punished not just by the community but also believed to attract spiritual consequences (e.g., sickness, curses, misfortune).

## Sacred Spaces, Symbols, and Objects

Certain natural places and objects are considered sacred and treated with great respect. These include:

1. Sacred groves, rivers, rocks, and trees where spirits dwell
2. Totems representing clans or spiritual forces
3. Symbols like the Akan *Adinkra*, which carry moral or spiritual messages
4. Objects like staffs, stools, charms and amulets used for rituals or protection

## Practical and Holistic

AIR does not separate the spiritual from the physical. Health, misfortune, success and social issues are all seen as connected to the spiritual realm. For instance:

1. Sickness may be seen as spiritual punishment
2. Dreams are considered messages from ancestors or spirits
3. A person's name, birth order, or day of birth may have spiritual significance

## Communal and Inclusive Nature

AIR is community-oriented, not individualistic. Everyone has a role in religious life, from elders to children. Religion is practised during:

1. Naming, puberty, marriage, and funeral rites
2. Farming seasons and harvest festivals (e.g., Homowo, Aboakyir, Hogbetsotso)
3. Conflict resolution and peace-making rituals

## Religion in Daily Life in African Indigenous Religion

African Indigenous Religion is not confined to temples or specific days of worship. Instead, it influences every aspect of life—from governance to farming, from moral conduct to health, and even how people celebrate and solve problems. Religion is deeply woven into everyday life in a number of ways.

## 1. Governance and Leadership

Religion is central to traditional political systems. Leaders do not rule by mere popularity or election—they rule with spiritual authority. Chieftaincy and kinship are seen as sacred duties. A chief is regarded not just as a political leader but also as a spiritual representative of the ancestors and the community's guardian. During enstoolment or enskinment, the chief goes through rituals and oaths, invoking deities and ancestral spirits for protection, wisdom, and legitimacy. Sacred items such as the stool, sword, or regalia are spiritually empowered and symbolise the soul of the people. Chiefs consult diviners and traditional priests before major decisions, reinforcing the idea that governance is guided by the spirit world.

## 2. Morality and Social Order

AIR strongly influences moral behaviour and social harmony. Ethics are not separated from religion, and wrongdoing is both a spiritual and communal offence. Taboos (forbidden actions) help maintain purity, order and respect for nature and the community. Breaking a taboo can bring misfortune or even death. People are taught that ancestors watch over the living and can reward good deeds or punish misbehaviour. Concepts like truthfulness, respect for elders, loyalty, hospitality, and communal support are sacred duties, not just personal values. Sanctions and rituals of cleansing or atonement are performed to restore harmony when taboos are broken.

## 3. Health and Healing

In AIR, health is seen as a balance between physical, emotional and spiritual well-being. Illness is often believed to have both natural and supernatural causes. It could be caused by breaking a taboo, offending a spirit, or ancestral displeasure. Traditional healers (herbalists, spiritualists, diviners) are highly respected. They use:

- Herbs and roots for physical treatment
- Divination to determine spiritual causes
- Rituals and sacrifices to cleanse or drive out evil spirits
- Spiritual purification, fasting and prayer

## 4. Agriculture and the Environment

Farming is not only an economic activity, it is also a spiritual duty closely tied to the gods and ancestors. Before planting, rituals are performed to seek blessings from the earth god and ask for rainfall, soil fertility and protection against pests. Harvest festivals such as Homowo and the Yam Festival( give thanks to the gods and ancestors for a bountiful yield. Specific days are sacred rest days when farming or entering the bush is forbidden to show respect to the land spirits.

Environmental care is also religious; sacred groves, rivers and forests are preserved because they are the homes of spirits.

## 5. Festivals and Communal Celebrations

Festivals in AIR are not just cultural events, they are religious ceremonies that reconnect the living with the spiritual world. They mark important seasons and events such as harvests, ancestral remembrance, rites of passage or historical victories. Activities that can be observed at these celebrations will include the

offering of libation to ancestors, drumming, dancing, storytelling, masquerades, sacrifices and feasting. Festivals strengthen community unity, pass on history and values, and reaffirm the people's spiritual identity. Examples in Ghana include Aboakyir, Damba, Homowo, Asafotufiam, and Hogbetsotso.

## 6. Spiritual Worldview

The spiritual worldview in African Indigenous Religion is a unique and profound understanding of how the universe works. It shapes how African communities relate to God, nature, ancestors, spirits, and one another. This worldview is holistic—it doesn't separate the spiritual from the physical, or the sacred from the secular. Instead, everything is interconnected.

## 7. A Layered Universe: Three Interconnected Realms

AIR teaches that the universe is composed of three overlapping worlds, all deeply connected.

a. **The Physical (Visible) World:** This is the world of humans, animals, plants, rivers, mountains, and all that can be seen. It is where people live their daily lives—farming, marrying, working, building families, and communities.

### b. The Spirit World

This invisible realm is inhabited by:

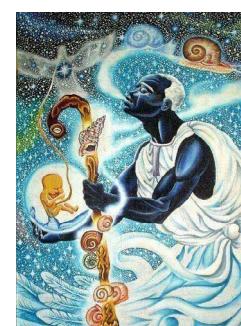
- i. Spirits of ancestors (who protect and guide the living).
- ii. Deities or divinities (who control aspects of nature and life)
- iii. Nature spirits (living in rivers, trees, rocks, or forests)
- iv. Malevolent spirits (who can cause misfortune or illness).

The spirit world is always interacting with the physical world, influencing what happens in people's lives.

### c. The Supreme Being

Above all is the Supreme God, the creator and sustainer of everything. Though He is sometimes distant and not directly worshipped, He is present in everything. The lesser spirits and ancestors act as mediators between humans and the Supreme Being.

This worldview teaches that what happens in one realm (e.g., physical sickness or misfortune) often has causes in another realm (e.g., spiritual offence or ancestral displeasure).



a. The Physical (Visible) World

b. The Spirit World

c. The Supreme Being

Figure 3.1:A Layered Universe: Three Interconnected Realms

## The Sacred and the Secular Are Inseparable

AIR does not separate religion from daily life. In this worldview, every action has spiritual consequences—whether it is farming, giving birth, making decisions, or settling disputes. Waking up, praying, eating, greeting, bathing, and working—all are done with a sense of spiritual awareness. There is no such thing as a “non-religious” part of life. Activities like naming a child, building a house, or starting a business require spiritual consultation and ritual. This means that religion is not practised only on certain days or in sacred places—it is a way of life, guiding choices, shaping culture and influencing values.

## Communal Wellbeing over Individualism

The AIR worldview emphasises that the community is more important than the individual. What benefits the group is considered more sacred than personal desires. Identity is tied to family, clan, tribe, and ancestors, not personal achievements.

Individuals are expected to:

1. Obey communal customs and taboos.
2. Participate in festivals, rituals, and family duties.
3. Support one another in times of need (e.g., birth, funerals, harvests)

Moral behaviour is not just a personal duty but a responsibility to the community and ancestors. If one person breaks a taboo, the entire community may suffer (e.g., crop failure, disease, spiritual attack).

Elders, priests, and chiefs work to maintain harmony and balance in the community by consulting the spirit world when things go wrong.

## Harmony, Balance, and Cosmic Order

A central idea in the spiritual worldview of AIR is the need to maintain balance and harmony between:

1. Humans and nature
2. Humans and ancestors
3. Humans and deities
4. Physical and spiritual realms

Rituals, sacrifices, prayers and moral living are all ways to maintain or restore this balance. Disturbance in this balance (due to sin, disrespect, or disobedience) brings misfortune until harmony is restored.

## Life is Cyclical and Eternal

Time and life are viewed as cyclical, not linear. People are born, live, die, and are remembered or even reincarnated. The dead are not “gone” but continue to live in the spirit world, watching over the living.

Rites of passage mark transitions in life—birth, puberty, marriage, death. Life is seen as a journey, with the community helping individuals at every stage to live in harmony with the cosmos and spirits.

## Activity 3.1 African Indigenous practices

1. Organise yourselves into groups of no more than four. Use the internet to find videos and/or pictures which show traditional Ghanaian religious practices such as libation, naming ceremonies and purification rituals.
2. As you look at each source, discuss how the ceremony
  - a. Shapes moral values
  - b. Strengthens community bonds

Make a note of your thoughts and be prepared to feed back to the class with your observations.

3. Your group will now investigate how one area of Ghanaian life is influenced by AIR, expanding on the information above. You will then present your findings to the class for discussion and feedback.
  - a. Use a range of sources to help you research, including online sources and written material. Make notes as you research and then come together as a group to discuss what you have found.
  - b. Consider how best to present your information. This might involve using charts or diagrams, or it could involve demonstrating ideas through skits and role plays.

The areas your class will research are as follows:

- i. Governance
- ii. Agriculture
- iii. Health
- iv. Festivals
- v. Morality.

4. As a group, discuss the following statement: “In traditional Ghanaian societies, there was no distinction between the sacred and the secular.”
  - a. Encourage each other to use specific examples from your own research and observations, as well as those which were provided by other groups.
  - b. Consider how far you agree or disagree with the statement.
  - c. Be prepared to provide feedback on your ideas to the class.
5. Create a concept map titled ‘AIR in Ghanaian Life’ which reflects your learning from this section, including a range of aspects of life such as leadership, health, family and morality. Having recorded information, consider where you can make links between your points.

# HISTORY OF CHRISTIANITY: THE COMING OF CHRISTIANITY TO GHANA

After the big split in the Christian Church in Europe—known as the Protestant Reformation—a significant and exciting development occurred: missionaries from different churches began travelling far and wide to spread Christianity.

Christian missionary work in Ghana began during the colonial era and played a vital role in spreading the Christian faith, establishing schools and promoting literacy. The following examples show some of the key missionary societies that contributed to the growth of Christianity in Ghana.

## **Basel Missionary Society (1828) – Presbyterian Church of Ghana**

The Basel Missionary Society from Switzerland was among the first to bring Christianity to the Gold Coast (now Ghana). Their mission began in 1828 at Christiansborg Castle (Osu).

Andreas Riis, a key Basel missionary, arrived in 1835. However, his early efforts failed because the locals believed Christianity was a religion for white people only. In response, Riis returned to Jamaica and recruited 24 Jamaican Christian freed slaves (called West Indian Missionaries) in 1843. Their presence helped break racial barriers, showing that Africans, too, could be Christians and missionaries.

Together, they established churches and schools and trained teachers. This work laid the foundation for what would later become the Presbyterian Church of Ghana. They focused on education, translating the Bible into local languages like Twi, and introducing vocational skills.

## **Wesleyan Methodist Society (1835) – Methodist Church Ghana**

The Methodist mission began at Anomabu in 1835 and then spread to Cape Coast. The mission was led by Joseph Rhodes Dunwell, the first Methodist missionary to arrive in the Gold Coast. Unfortunately, he died just six months later due to illness. After Dunwell's death, Rev. Thomas Birch Freeman arrived in 1838. He played a huge role in strengthening the Methodist mission by travelling across the country to preach the gospel and establish new churches.

Freeman was of mixed heritage (he had an African father and a European mother), which helped him connect with both Europeans and Africans. The Methodist Church emphasised education and established many schools, including Mfantsipim School.

## **Bremen Missionary Society / North German Missionary Society (1847) – (Evangelical Presbyterian Church)**

The Bremen Missionary Society, later known as the North German Missionary Society, arrived in 1847 and began work in the Volta Region, especially at Peki. Their mission

led to the establishment of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church, Ghana (E.P. Church). The missionaries translated the Bible into Ewe and helped develop a strong Christian presence in the Volta Region. Like other missions, they also built schools and health facilities, contributing to social development in the area.

## **Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts (SPGFP) – (Anglican Church)**

The SPGFP was an English missionary society that promoted Anglicanism in the Gold Coast. It operated mostly in the coastal areas, with a focus on education, pastoral care, and church planting. The Anglican Church also worked closely with the colonial administration and played a role in moral and religious instruction in schools.

## **Roman Catholic Missionaries (1880)**

The Roman Catholic Church first attempted to establish a mission in 1482 at Elmina, but this failed due to a lack of support and hostile conditions. A major revival occurred in 1880, when Governor Sir James Marshall, a British Catholic convert, requested Catholic missionaries for the Gold Coast. This led to the creation of the Apostolic Prefecture of the Gold Coast. The first priests to arrive were Fr. Auguste Moreau and Fr. Eugene Murat. They re-established the mission at Elmina, building schools and churches. The Sisters of Our Lady of Apostles (OLA Sisters) arrived later and contributed immensely to girls' education and healthcare. Their efforts helped promote women's involvement in the Church and society.

These missionary societies not only spread Christianity but also laid the foundation for modern education, health services, and cultural transformation in Ghana. Their legacies remain strong in the churches, schools, and communities they helped shape.

## **Emergence of Other Christian Denominations in Ghana**

As Christianity continued to grow in Ghana beyond the 19th century, several other Christian denominations emerged. These were often different in style, doctrine, and organisation from the earlier missionary-founded churches. The following denominations have played important roles in Ghana's religious landscape:

### **1. Seventh-day Adventist Church (SDA)**

The Seventh-day Adventist Church is a Protestant Christian denomination known for keeping the Sabbath on Saturday (the seventh day of the week), rather than Sunday like most other Christians.

The SDA Church arrived in Ghana in 1888 through the efforts of Francis Dolphijn, a Ghanaian trader who had encountered Adventist teachings while living in Sierra Leone. He returned to the Gold Coast with Adventist literature and began sharing the faith.

The first official missionary, William H. Anderson, came from the United States in 1894, and settled at Begoro in the Eastern Region, then moved to Koforidua and later Agona in Ashanti.

The SDA Church emphasises, among other things:

- a. Healthy living and a healthy diet (members are often vegetarian)
- b. Education – they have built many schools and universities, including Valley View University (the first chartered private university in Ghana).
- c. Healthcare – they run several hospitals and clinics across the country.

Today, the SDA Church is a well-established denomination in Ghana, particularly in the Eastern, Ashanti, and Northern Regions.

## 2. Deeper Life Bible Church

The Deeper Life Bible Church, often known as Deeper Life, is a Pentecostal and Holiness movement that emphasises strict Christian living, personal holiness, and deep Bible study. It was founded in Nigeria in 1973 by Pastor William F. Kumuyi, a former mathematics lecturer who started a Bible study group that grew into a full church. Deeper Life was introduced to Ghana in the early 1980s through Nigerian missionaries and Ghanaian returnees who had encountered the movement abroad.

### **Key beliefs and practices include the following.**

- a. Bible-centred preaching with a strong emphasis on personal salvation.
- b. Moral purity, modest dressing, and avoidance of worldly entertainment.
- c. Evangelism – members are encouraged to win souls through personal outreach and public crusades.
- d. House fellowships, where small groups meet during the week in homes for Bible study and prayer.

The church has grown rapidly and established branches in many parts of Ghana, especially in urban centres like Accra, Kumasi, and Tamale.

## 3. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS /Mormon Church)

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, often called the LDS Church or Mormon Church, is a Christian restorationist church founded in the United States in 1830 by Joseph Smith. The LDS Church believes in the Bible and The Book of Mormon, which they consider another testament of Jesus Christ.

The church officially arrived in Ghana in 1978, after a long period during which many Ghanaians had been independently studying LDS teachings without formal missionaries. A key turning point was the 1978 revelation by LDS leaders in the U.S., which allowed all worthy male members, regardless of race, to hold the priesthood. This opened the way for formal missionary work in Africa.

The first official LDS missionaries arrived in Ghana in 1978, and in 1989, the first stake (a group of congregations) was organised in Accra.

### **Key practices and values of the LDS Church include**

- a. Family and marriage – these are considered eternal and central to their faith.
- b. Missionary work – young men and women serve as full-time missionaries across the world.
- c. Self-reliance and community service – members are encouraged to be financially responsible and serve others.

- d. Tithing and fast offerings – members contribute financially to support the church and the poor.

The LDS Church has built temples, schools, and humanitarian projects in Ghana. Its members are active in both rural and urban communities.

#### 4. **Pentecostalism and the Church of the Pentecost**

Pentecostalism is one of the most influential and fastest-growing movements in Ghanaian Christianity. It is characterised by vibrant worship, speaking in tongues, healing, prophecy and strong emphasis on the Holy Spirit's power. Pentecostalism in Ghana began in the early 20th century and has continued to grow into one of the most dominant expressions of Christianity in the country today.

##### a. **Apostle Peter Anim and the Rise of Pentecostalism**

The story of Pentecostalism in Ghana cannot be told without Apostle Peter Newman Anim, widely recognised as the pioneer of classical Pentecostalism in Ghana. Peter Anim was born in 1890 in Boso, Eastern Region. He grew up in a Presbyterian family but suffered from a chronic illness (a stomach ulcer and other complications) for many years. In 1917, while searching for healing, he came across a Christian magazine called "The Sword of the Spirit", published by the Faith Tabernacle Church in the USA. This publication emphasised divine healing through faith without medicine.

Inspired by the teachings, Anim began praying and trusting God for healing—and he was miraculously healed! This experience transformed his faith and led him to begin preaching divine healings.

##### b. **Birth of the Pentecostal Movement in Ghana**

Peter Anim began Faith Tabernacle Church in Asamankese in the 1920s, which became a platform for healing and charismatic revival. In 1931, he connected with Apostolic Church missionaries from the UK, who introduced deeper Pentecostal experiences, including baptism of the Holy Spirit (evidenced by speaking in tongues). This partnership led to the formation of the Apostolic Church Gold Coast.

##### c. **Conflict and Formation of The Church of Pentecost**

As the movement grew, conflicts arose between the local leadership led by Peter Anim and the British missionaries, mainly over issues of leadership control, cultural sensitivity, and healing practices. As a result of the split in 1939, Peter Anim withdrew with his followers and formed the Christ Apostolic Church (CAC).

Meanwhile, another key figure, James McKeown, a missionary from the UK who had joined the Apostolic Church Ghana in 1937, also faced tensions with some leaders over his use of medical treatment during an illness. These disputes eventually led to the formation of The Church of Pentecost in 1962, with James McKeown as its first Chairman.

Today, the Church of Pentecost is one of the largest and most influential Pentecostal denominations in Ghana and globally.

*Key Features include;*

- *Emphasis on the Holy Spirit:* Worship services are filled with singing, clapping, dancing, prayer, and spiritual gifts like prophecy and healing.
- *Church Leadership:* The church is governed by a presbytery system, with elders, deacons, apostles, prophets, and evangelists.
- *Strong Youth and Evangelism Focus:* It runs a vibrant youth ministry and outreach programs that target schools, communities, and institutions.
- *Social Services and Nation Building:* The Church of Pentecost is known for its involvement in community development – building schools, clinics, prisons, and sanitation projects. In 2021, it launched the Environmental Care Campaign to clean cities and promote discipline in public spaces.
- *Training and Education:* It runs the Pentecost University and the School of Theology and Missions to train pastors and Christian workers.
- *Global Reach:* From humble beginnings, The Church of Pentecost now operates in over 150 countries, with millions of members worldwide.

**d. Legacy of Peter Anim and Pentecostalism**

Apostle Peter Anim passed away in 1984, but his legacy continues through the numerous Pentecostal and Charismatic churches that trace their roots to his ministry. Pentecostalism has transformed the face of Ghanaian Christianity by:

- i. Encouraging personal spiritual experiences
- ii. Promoting faith healing
- iii. Inspiring youth involvement
- iv. Introducing indigenous leadership and African expressions of worship

## Charismatic Churches in Ghana

Charismatic Churches form a branch of modern Pentecostalism that began to rise in Ghana during the late 1970s and 1980s. These churches are often led by charismatic individuals (usually called “Pastors,” “Prophets,” or “Bishops”) and are characterised by strong preaching, healing and prophetic ministries. Their worship is lively, their theology often focuses on prosperity, faith, deliverance and miracles, and they tend to use modern media and technology to reach large audiences.

The following are three of the most prominent charismatic churches in Ghana.

**Table 3.1:** The characteristics of prominent charismatic churches in Ghana.

Charismatic Church	Year Founded	Founded	Background & Growth	Key Teachings, Influence & Legacy
<b>Christian Action Faith Ministries (CAFM)</b>	1979	Archbishop Nicholas Duncan-Williams	Archbishop Duncan-Williams is considered one of the pioneers of the Charismatic Movement in Ghana. He founded Christian Action Faith Ministries (CAFM) and its main church, Action Chapel International, in Accra. It was the first charismatic church in Ghana. He began his ministry with a small prayer group that rapidly grew due to his reputation for powerful prayer, healing, and prophetic declarations.	Emphasis on faith, spiritual warfare, deliverance from demonic oppression and prosperity through God's blessings.  Introduced many Ghanaians to anointed prayer and midnight prayer services  Archbishop Duncan-Williams became known internationally and has mentored many charismatic pastors across Africa and beyond.  CAFM runs Dominion University, a Bible school, and several social initiatives. Action Chapel remains a major influence in Ghana's Christian landscape.
<b>International Central Gospel Church (ICGC)</b>	1984	Dr. Mensa Otabil	Dr Otabil started ICGC with a small group of believers in Accra, focused on teaching the Word of God with clarity and wisdom. The church quickly grew into a movement that attracted the urban middle class and professionals, especially young, educated Ghanaians.	ICGC emphasises:  Empowerment through the Word of God  Leadership, entrepreneurship, and self-development  A positive mindset and faith in God's purpose for individuals  Otabil is known for blending biblical teachings with intellectual and motivational speaking.  ICGC established Central University, which has grown into one of Ghana's top private universities. The church also runs social intervention programmes and is active in national discussions on values, governance, and education. Otabil is considered one of the most respected Christian thinkers in Africa.

<b>Lighthouse Chapel International (LCI)</b>  (now known as United Denominations Originating from the Lighthouse Group of Churches)	1987	Bishop Dag Heward-Mills	<p>Bishop Dag Heward-Mills started Lighthouse Chapel as a small fellowship while he was a medical student at the University of Ghana, Legon. His passionate evangelism and dynamic preaching style drew many followers, especially among university students and youth. The church expanded rapidly, focusing heavily on missions and church planting.</p>	<p>Loyalty and faithfulness Church growth and missions Prosperity, healing, and salvation</p> <p>Known for developing a strong leadership structure, the church trains thousands of pastors and lay ministers. LCI has planted over 3,000 churches in more than 90 countries, making it one of Ghana's largest international charismatic churches.</p> <p>Bishop Dag is a prolific author, known for books like "Loyalty and Disloyalty" and "The Mega Church", which are used in pastoral training globally.</p> <p>The church runs Anagkazo Bible and Ministry Training Centre to train pastors and evangelists. It also engages in medical missions, education, and social welfare projects.</p>
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## General Impact of Charismatic Churches in Ghana

Charismatic churches have transformed worship styles, making them more participatory, vibrant, and emotionally expressive. They have empowered young people, urban dwellers and professionals by giving them a sense of purpose and leadership opportunities. Their messages on faith, prosperity and healing resonate with many people facing economic and personal challenges. These churches also use media and technology (TV, radio, internet) to expand their influence far beyond their church buildings.

### Activity 3.2 The history of selected denominations in Ghana

1. Organise yourselves into a group of 3-5 people. Make sure to form groups with individuals who belong to different denominations than your own.
2. Spend an agreed time preparing notes on the history of your church in Ghana. If you do not belong to a church, choose one which is not represented by anyone in your group. Use the information provided in this document as a starting point and then explore more widely, using other sources, including the Internet.

3. Create a basic table to be able to record some of the key information for each denomination. This could include the following:
  - a. Who started it
  - b. When, where and why it started,
  - c. significant events in the history of the denomination..

As members of your group discuss their denomination, fill in the table, practising making key notes only.

4. Discuss your findings as a group, considering the following questions:
  - a. What do you think are the similarities between how and why these groups were founded?
  - b. Are there any which are more similar to each other? Are there any which are significantly different?
  - c. Share what you particularly enjoy about being a member of your congregation.

### Activity 3.3 Significant events of early missionary activities in Ghana

1. Using a range of sources, conduct research into early Christian missionary activities in Ghana. Record your notes in a suitable format, such as a timeline of key bullet points.
2. Work with the person next to you to compare your findings and add any information which you learn from them.

### Activity 3.4 Christian history in Ghana

1. Watch a documentary about the history of Christianity in Ghana, as suggested by your teacher.
2. Working with the person next to you, use this as a starting point for discussion.
  - a. Did you learn anything new from the documentary?
  - b. What have you learnt about the history of Christianity in Ghana?
  - c. Is there anything that you have found particularly interesting or surprising?

## HOW CHRISTIANITY WAS FIRMLY ESTABLISHED IN GHANA

Having gained an overview of how Christianity came to Ghana, you will now have the chance to explore in more detail the brave efforts of foreign missionaries who crossed seas to share the Christian faith. You will also expand upon the role of indigenous agents, like Philip Quaque, the first African ordained Anglican priest, who worked right here in Ghana.

You will also see how mission schools and churches were not just places of worship but also centres of learning and cultural change. These institutions helped shape modern education and values, playing a huge part in how Christian beliefs took root in our society. You will go on to discover how Christianity did not just replace local traditions but often interacted with them. As faith spread to different communities, it took on new forms, making it feel local and meaningful to different groups of people. So, get ready to discover how faith, culture, and history came together to shape the Ghana we know today.

## Early Christian Settlements and Institutions

When European missionaries first arrived in the coastal areas of Ghana (then the Gold Coast), they established Christian settlements that often included churches, schools, and mission houses. These were not only places of worship but also centres of education and moral instruction. Early settlements were often built near trading posts or forts, such as Cape Coast, Elmina, and Accra.

## Construction of Churches and Schools

Churches served as spaces for worship, religious teaching and community gatherings. Schools were introduced as part of the missionaries' strategy to educate the youth in reading, writing, and religious knowledge, especially using the Bible. These schools became instrumental in training future local leaders, catechists, and teachers.

## Challenges Faced by Missionaries

Many missionaries struggled with harsh tropical diseases such as malaria and yellow fever, leading to high mortality rates. Language barriers posed serious communication problems, as the missionaries could not initially speak local languages. There was also resistance from some traditional authorities and communities who feared the erosion of their culture, religion, and political structures.

## Role of Indigenous Agents

### Philip Quaque: Pioneer African Clergyman

Philip Quaque, a Ghanaian educated in England, became the first African Anglican priest in the 18th century. He returned to the Gold Coast to serve as a missionary and educator. He played a significant role in teaching local children, translating Christian texts, and bridging cultural gaps between Europeans and Ghanaians. Despite difficulties, including cultural misunderstandings and a lack of full support from colonial authorities, Quaque left a legacy.

### Local Converts and Evangelists

Indigenous converts were vital in the missionary effort. As locals who understood the culture, language, and customs of their people, they were better positioned to explain Christian teachings in relatable terms. These African agents included catechists, teachers, and lay preachers who travelled to rural areas to spread the Gospel, often facing opposition and persecution.

## Cultural Interpretation of Christianity

Indigenous agents did not merely repeat missionary teachings but often reinterpreted them through African lenses, blending Christian values with local customs. This helped make Christianity more relevant and acceptable to African communities.

## Spread and Localisation of Christianity

### Mission Schools as Conversion Tools

Education was one of the most effective tools used by missionaries to promote Christianity. Children who attended mission schools were taught in both European and local languages, learning the Bible, Western history, and moral teachings. As these students grew into influential adults—teachers, civil servants, and clergy—they helped spread Christianity further inland.

### Translation of Christian Texts

To make the Christian message accessible, missionaries translated the Bible, catechisms, and hymns into local languages such as Twi, Ewe, and Ga. This not only aided evangelism but also contributed to the development of written forms of these languages, fostering literacy and preserving local dialects.

### African Leadership and Contextualised Worship

As African Christians grew in number, there was a gradual rise of African-led churches and religious movements that combined Christian doctrines with African cultural expressions. Worship styles incorporated African music, dance, and proverbs, while sermons addressed local concerns. Independent churches like the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church and the Twelve Apostles Church emerged, giving African Christians greater freedom and cultural identity.

### Activity 3.5 The role of Indigenous Agents

1. Using a range of source materials, such as biographies, letters or primary accounts, research the role of one indigenous agent (such as Philip Quaque) in more detail. As you explore sources, take note of the following:
  - a. Their life story
  - b. How they became a Christian
  - c. Their education
  - d. How they helped to bridge Christianity and African cultures
  - e. The challenges they faced
  - f. Their achievements amid the challenges
2. Form a pair with someone who you are sitting near, ideally someone who has looked at a different person. Discuss the following:
  - a. What did you learn about their contributions to the establishment of Christianity in Ghana? What do you think were their most significant contributions?
  - b. What do you think were the most difficult challenges they faced? Why do you think this?

- c. How important do you think people such as Philip Quaque were to the spread of Christianity in Ghana?
- d. What do you think we can learn from the experiences of these key figures in the 21<sup>st</sup> century?

### Activity 3.6 Andreas Riis and the Basel missionary

1. Use a range of source materials to research Andreas Riss and the Basel Missionary Society in Ghana. Make notes under the following headings, in preparation for a class discussion:
  - a. The formation and origin of the Basel Mission Society
  - b. Why Andreas Riss was sent to the Gold Coast
  - c. What led to his journey from Accra to Akropong
  - d. the challenges he faced and his achievements.
2. Join with the person sitting next to you and recount the story, taking turns to add information to help you commit the story to memory.
3. Join with another pair and discuss the following:
  - a. What do you believe were the most significant contributions of the missionaries to Ghanaian society?
  - b. What do you think was most influential in ensuring Christianity became established in Ghana?

## THE INFLUENCE OF THE ARRIVAL OF CHRISTIANITY ON AFRICAN INDIGENOUS RELIGION (AIR)

### The Influence of the Arrival of Christianity on African Indigenous Religion (AIR)

The arrival of Christianity in Africa marked a profound and complex meeting between two distinct spiritual systems. This interaction was defined by both convergence and conflict. Some beliefs, such as the idea of a Supreme Being who created the world and the importance of ethical living, seemed familiar and allowed for a smooth blending of ideas. However, many core practices, like the worship of ancestors or the consultation of smaller deities, stood in direct opposition to the Christian demand for exclusive belief in one God, leading to deep tension and spiritual clash.

As a result, there was a significant impact on AIR beliefs and practices, particularly because Christianity often arrived hand-in-hand with colonial powers and new systems of education. Many traditional ceremonies and rituals related to life events, such as naming rites or traditional weddings, were gradually replaced or overshadowed by Christian ones. Traditional priests and healers sometimes lost influence as people turned to Christian churches for education, medical care, and social status, leading to the public decline or outright suppression of many indigenous religious practices.

Despite these pressures, AIR had to find ways to adapt to continue, as people's spiritual needs did not vanish overnight. Rather than disappearing completely, many traditional practices simply went underground or became more closely linked to general cultural customs rather than explicit religion. This subtle shift allowed core indigenous values—like the strong reverence for ancestors, land, and community—to persist, often disguised within the new social and religious structures imposed by the outside world.

This dynamic led to what is often described as a dual religious identity for many Africans today. A person may be a devout and committed Christian, actively participating in church life and following Christian doctrine, while at the same time holding quiet respect for ancestral customs or traditional spiritual safeguards. This spiritual blending means that two sets of beliefs often coexist within the individual and the community, proving that neither the ancient indigenous religion nor the newer faith eliminated the other.

**In summary, the influence of the arrival of Christianity on AIR includes;**

1. **Suppression:** Traditional priests and priestesses lost authority and followers as missionary Christianity spread. Some religious roles became stigmatised.
2. Public rituals such as communal libation, rainmaking, and ancestral communication declined under colonial and Christian pressure.
3. **Transformation:** Some AIR elements were redefined within Christian thought. For instance, Traditional beliefs in curses and spiritual attacks were reinterpreted through the Christian lens of "deliverance" and "spiritual warfare."
4. Sacred trees and places were renamed as "prayer camps" or "mountains of God."
5. Traditional music and drumming styles were sometimes adapted into Christian worship, especially in Pentecostal and Charismatic churches.
6. Despite opposition, many AIR practices continue
  - a. Naming ceremonies still include symbolic meanings and ancestral connections.
  - b. Drumming and dancing are still central in both AIR and many Christian worship services.
  - c. Festivals such as Homowo and Aboakyir retain their religious and cultural importance, often with new Christian elements fused in.

### Activity 3.7 Exploring tension between Christianity and AIR

**Consider the following scenario: "A community's traditional festival is criticised by some Christians as demonic."**

1. Begin by discussing this scenario with the person you are sitting next to. Share your initial thoughts about this scenario, including any similar experiences you may be aware of in your own community. Consider why people might respond in this way. Remember that you may have very different ideas and experiences from others in your class.

2. Join pairs to form groups of four. Your group will take one area for further investigation and discussion, preparing a short presentation for the rest of the class to illustrate your ideas.

Group number	Issue to investigate
Group 1	What is the traditional festival really about? What's its history and meaning?
Group 2	Why might some Christians call the festival “demonic”? Would all Christians be against it? What are their reasons?
Group 3	How do traditional believers see the festival? Why is it important to them?
Group 4	What bad things happen when people fight over religion? Share real stories of conflict.
Group 5	Can we live together peacefully? What are some good examples of peaceful religious coexistence?

3. After each group presents their ideas, discuss them as a class. You might add further points or ask questions for clarification.

4. Produce a written reflection on the scenario given, exploring each of the issues in the table in a paragraph.

### Activity 3.8 Structured debate

1. You are going to be participating in a formal debate around the following motion: '*Christianity has enriched rather than destroyed African Indigenous Religion.*'
2. In preparation for this debate, explore online resources which explain how formal debates work.
3. You will be allocated one side of the debate by your teacher. As a team, prepare for the debate by doing the following:
  - a. Clearly understand the topic and your assigned side. Write your entire argument down as a single, powerful debate statement.
  - b. Find three distinct arguments to support your debate and collect strong facts, statistics, and examples for each. Simultaneously, identify the opposition's strongest points for rebuttal.
  - c. Assign roles (Opener, Main, Closer) and structure the speeches: Introduction (define, state thesis), Body (state point, explain, evidence, link back), and Conclusion (refute, summarise, final appeal).
  - d. Rehearse the speeches to ensure you meet time limits, speak with clarity and conviction, and have sharp, short questions ready for the opposing team.

### Activity 3.9 The influence of Christianity on religious leaders

1. Organise yourselves into small groups of no more than four people and consider possible answers to the following question: **"Some traditional priests became Christian pastors — why?"**
2. Write your answers down in speech bubbles, leaving space below each one for you to add further points. Share your ideas as a class and add any other responses to your page that you find interesting.
3. In your group, choose at least three of the possible answers to explore in more detail, using the '5 Whys' routine to dig deeper into the reason.

#### Example

**Q1:** Why did traditional priests become pastors?

*Answer: Because Christianity was spreading in their community.*

**Q2:** Why was it spreading?

*Answer: Because missionaries were building schools and churches.*

**Q3:** Why did people attend the schools?

*Answer: Because they wanted to learn to read and get jobs...*

*(And so on)*

4. Working on your own, consider which of the ideas you most agree with and answer the following question: "In your view, what was the main reason some traditional priests became Christian pastors? Do you think it was voluntary or forced? Why?"
5. Discuss your thoughts with your group before sharing ideas as a class.

### Activity 3.10 The impact of Christianity on AIR

Organise yourselves into a group of no more than five people to discuss and assess how Christianity has influenced one of the following aspects of AIR:

- Leadership
- Rituals
- Worldview
- Moral teachings

Begin by discussing your own thoughts before using other sources to add to your ideas.

1. Create a short presentation to share with the class, assessing to what extent Christianity has impacted that aspect or domain within AIR.
2. After each group has shared their ideas, record your own thoughts using the following prompts:

- a. To what extent has Christianity helped our AIR system?
- b. What is the future of AIR in the current phase of Christianity?
- c. What have I learnt from this activity?

## EXTENDED READING

- <https://www.britannica.com/place/Ghana/Religion>
- [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/336639545\\_African Traditional Religion in Contemporary Africa The Case of Ghana](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/336639545_African Traditional Religion in Contemporary Africa The Case of Ghana)
- [https://indianapublications.com/articles/IJHSS\\_3\(10\)\\_6269\\_637f642a8df733.08316494.pdf](https://indianapublications.com/articles/IJHSS_3(10)_6269_637f642a8df733.08316494.pdf)
- <https://www.mdpi.com/2077-1444/14/9/1174>
- [https://www.scielo.org.za/scielo.php?pid=S101704992013000200016&script=sci\\_arttext](https://www.scielo.org.za/scielo.php?pid=S101704992013000200016&script=sci_arttext)
- <https://noyam.org/erats20241043>

# REVIEW QUESTIONS 3

1. What is African Indigenous Religion (AIR)?
2. Name two Christian denominations that were among the first to come to Ghana.
3. Explain two roles of ancestors in African Traditional Religion.
4. Describe how mission schools contributed to the spread of denominational Christianity in Ghana.
5. Explain two ways Christianity changed religious practices in traditional African communities.
6. Compare the worship practices in African Indigenous Religion with those in Christianity.
7. Analyse the role of indigenous agents like Philip Quaque in the spread of Christianity in Ghana.
8. Interpret how the coexistence of Christianity and AIR has influenced moral values in Ghanaian society.
9. Evaluate the long-term impact of Christianity on the survival and transformation of AIR in Ghana.
10. Design a community dialogue activity that could promote mutual respect between Christians and African Traditionalists.

SECTION

4

## CONTRIBUTION OF CHRISTIANITY TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF GHANA



# INTRODUCTION

In this section, you will develop your understanding of the role Christianity has played in building and shaping your community and your country. You will see how Christian values, churches and individuals have helped to improve your schools, hospitals, leadership, moral values and social support systems.

You will begin by exploring the concept of development, considering how this can be different depending on context and considering the different forms development can take.

You will discover inspiring stories of Christian missionaries, churches and faith-based groups that have made a difference in your nation's history and in the lives of people around you today. As you go through this section, you will also learn how Christian values support things like peace, equality between men and women, protecting the environment and keeping your country united.

By the end of this section, you will understand that Christianity is not just something personal—it also has the power to help you and others build a fair, caring and inclusive society.

## KEY IDEAS

- The concept of development, including how it might be measured and how it can be promoted.
- How Christianity has contributed to the development of Ghana, in areas such as education, healthcare and welfare provision.

## UNDERSTANDING THE CONCEPT OF DEVELOPMENT

### Meaning of Development

When you hear the word *development*, it can mean many different things depending on the situation. For example:

1. In terms of health, development could mean better hospitals or cleaner water.
2. In the context of education, it could mean building more schools or improving teaching methods.
3. In your personal life, it might mean growing in confidence, learning new skills, or making better choices.
4. Development is not limited to just one area; it's a broad term that covers many aspects of life.

## Growth and Positive Change

Generally, development means moving forward, improving things. It's the process of growth, progress, or transformation that brings positive results. This can happen in many forms as mentioned below.

1. **Physical development:** Building roads, schools, hospitals, or homes.
2. **Economic development:** Creating more jobs, improving farming, or increasing trade and income levels.
3. **Environmental development:** Protecting forests, planting trees, or managing waste properly.
4. **Moral and social development:** Promoting honesty, justice, peace, and respect among people.

So, development is not only about what you can see (for example, buildings) but also what you **feel and experience** (such as fairness, peace, and wellbeing).

## National Development

When we talk about national development, we mean the overall progress of an entire country. It's about how a nation works to improve the lives of its people. This includes;

1. Ensuring that everyone has access to basic needs like clean water, education, healthcare and shelter.
2. Making sure that laws and policies protect the rights of all citizens.
3. Creating opportunities for young people to learn skills and get jobs.
4. Building a society where everyone is treated fairly, regardless of their background.

In simple terms, national development is about helping every citizen live a better, safer and more meaningful life. It's a shared responsibility involving the government, religious groups, communities, and even you as an individual.

## Indicators of National Development

National development is measured using certain indicators. These are signs or tools that help us check how well a country is doing. These indicators cover different areas such as the economy, health, education, and the environment.

### 1. Economic Indicators

Economic indicators measure the financial health of a country and how wealth is shared among its people.

- a. *Gross National Income (GNI):* This is the total money earned by a country's people and businesses, including income from abroad. A high GNI usually means that the economy is strong.
- b. *Poverty Rate:* This shows how many people in the country live below the poverty line (unable to afford basic needs like food, shelter, and clothing). A low poverty rate indicates good development.
- c. *Economic Inequality:* This looks at the gap between the rich and the poor. In a developed nation, wealth is shared more fairly, and people have equal

opportunities. As an example, if a country's economy is growing but only a few people are getting richer while the rest stay poor, that is not good national development.

## 2. Social Indicators

Social Indicators measure the quality of life and well-being of people in the country. These include things such as the following:

- a. *Health Services*: the availability of hospitals, clinics, doctors, and access to medicines. A well-developed country has good health care for all.
- b. *Life Expectancy*: This shows the average number of years people live. In developed countries, people live longer due to better health care and living conditions.
- c. *Happiness and Wellbeing*: This is about how satisfied and secure people feel in their lives, physically, emotionally and socially. If people are healthy, feel safe, and are generally happy, it's a sign the country is doing well socially.

## 3. Environmental Indicators

Environmental indicators measure how well a country is taking care of its natural environment, which is essential for long-term development.

- a. *Clean Water and Air*: A developed country ensures that people have access to clean drinking water and unpolluted air.
- b. *Waste Management*: Proper systems to dispose of and recycle waste help keep communities healthy.
- c. *Sustainable Use of Resources*: This means using natural resources like trees, water, and land wisely without destroying them.
- d. *Climate Action*: Countries working to reduce pollution and combat climate change are seen as more responsible and developed. A country with green parks, clean rivers, and a low level of pollution is showing strong environmental development.

## 4. Education Indicators (Including Moral Education)

Education indicators (including moral education) are one of the strongest signs of national development. Education prepares people to contribute meaningfully to society. Indicators include the following.

- a. *Literacy Rate*: The percentage of people who can read and write. A high literacy rate shows strong progress.
- b. *Access to Quality Education*: The availability of good schools, trained teachers, learning materials, and equal chances for boys and girls.
- c. *Skill Development*: Training in technical, vocational, and digital skills helps young people get jobs and contribute to the economy.
- d. *Moral and Civic Education*: Development of positive values such as honesty, patriotism, respect, and responsibility helps create a peaceful and just society.
- e. A country that invests in its people's education, both academic and moral, lays the foundation for lasting national development.

## Steps Nations Can Use to Promote National Development

To grow as a nation and improve the lives of citizens, governments and communities must take strategic and practical steps. Below are key actions that can help drive national development

Steps nations can use	Rationale	Example in Ghanaian Society
<b>Promoting Values such as Peace and Justice</b>	When there is peace and fairness, people can live and work without fear. Justice ensures that everyone is treated equally under the law.	Ghana's peace during elections has allowed businesses, schools, and communities to grow steadily without conflict.
<b>Promoting Education</b>	Education equips citizens with knowledge and skills to contribute to national growth.	Free Senior High School (SHS) in Ghana increases access to education, especially in rural areas.
<b>Empowering Women</b>	When women have equal rights, education, and job opportunities, the whole nation benefits.	Training women in agriculture or entrepreneurship helps reduce poverty and supports family welfare.
<b>Negotiating Strategic Political Relations</b>	Friendly relationships with other countries can lead to trade, support, and peace agreements.	Ghana's partnership with the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) opens trade opportunities.
<b>Reforming Systems of Food and Aid Distribution</b>	Efficient distribution ensures that food and resources reach people in need, especially during emergencies.	Digital food voucher systems can prevent corruption and provide direct help to poor families.
<b>Developing Rural Areas</b>	National development must reach all corners of the country, not just cities.	Building roads, clinics, and schools in rural communities reduces rural-urban migration and improves livelihoods.
<b>Increasing Agricultural Outputs</b>	Agriculture provides food, jobs, and raw materials. Supporting farmers boosts the economy.	Supplying farmers with improved seeds and modern tools can increase harvests and reduce hunger.
<b>Enlarging Economic Knowledge</b>	Citizens who understand how the economy works can make informed decisions and support growth.	Teaching financial literacy in schools helps students learn how to save, invest, and start businesses.

<b>Handling Growth in Urban Areas</b>	Cities grow fast, so planning for housing, transport, and sanitation is essential.	Expanding public transport systems and affordable housing in Accra reduces traffic and slum development.
<b>Eradicating Poverty</b>	A country cannot grow if many of its citizens are poor and lack basic needs.	Social intervention programs like LEAP (Livelihood Empowerment Against Poverty) provide financial help to the vulnerable.
<b>Eradication of Environmental Degradation</b>	Protecting the environment ensures long-term health and resources for future generations.	Banning illegal mining (galamsey) and reforestation projects help restore the land and water bodies.
<b>Collaboration with All Actors Including Faith-Based Bodies (e.g., AIR, Christianity, Islam)</b>	Religious groups influence values and behaviour. Working with them promotes unity, ethics, and development.	Churches running schools and hospitals, or Islamic groups helping with charity and moral education, directly support national progress.

### Activity 4.1 Understanding development

1. Join with the person next to you to form a pair. Using this document and other sources, create an infographic to explain the following concepts concisely:

- the meaning of development
- indicators of national development
- steps to promote national development

Be prepared to share your infographic with the rest of the class for feedback.

- Using the Internet, search for articles, documentaries and pictures of developed countries and underdeveloped countries.
- Write out the characteristics of developed countries and underdeveloped countries and use them to compare the two.

2. Join your pair with another to form a group of four. Discuss the following questions:

- Does religion have a part to play in national development?
- What contributions does religion make in national development?
- What steps can religion take to further promote national development?

## Activity 4.2 Ask the expert: Exploring national development

1. You will have the opportunity to discuss national development with an expert in the field, in order to develop your understanding further. Before this occurs, consider what questions you would like them to answer and write these down.
2. As the speaker addresses your class, listen carefully and make short notes to remind you of the key points they make. Use the opportunity to ask further questions if you would like to clarify your understanding or explore the topic in more detail.
3. After the talk, produce a summary of what you have learnt about national development.

# CONTRIBUTIONS OF CHRISTIANITY TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF GHANA

Christianity has played a major role in shaping Ghana's social, moral, and physical development since its introduction. Through its churches, schools, hospitals, and various faith-based organisations, Christianity has contributed to nation-building in the following ways.

## General Education and Skills Development

### 1. Formal Education at All Levels

Christian churches were among the first to establish formal schools in Ghana, beginning as early as the 18th century. These schools provided education from the basic to tertiary level.

- a. Mission schools (e.g. Wesley Girls', Presbyterian Boys' SHS, Holy Child, St. Augustine's, Aburi Girls', etc.)
- b. Universities and seminaries (e.g. Catholic University College, Presbyterian University, Trinity Theological Seminary)
- c. These institutions continue to produce highly educated Ghanaians who serve in fields such as medicine, law, politics, and business.

### 2. Technical, Agricultural, and Vocational Education

Christian organisations have built technical and vocational schools to equip youth with hands-on skills in carpentry, dressmaking, masonry, ICT, and farming. Examples include Don Bosco Technical Institute (Catholic), and Methodist Vocational Training Centres.

### 3. Socialisation through Church Activities

Christian youth groups, Sunday schools, choirs, and Bible study sessions help in developing discipline, teamwork, leadership, and respect for others. These church-based activities promote responsible citizenship and civic participation.

#### 4. Moral Education

*Moral Training in Schools:* Mission schools integrate

Christian Religious Education (CRE) is being introduced into their curriculum to provide moral education. Teachers and chaplains encourage values such as honesty, discipline, self-control, hard work, and respect for life.

*Moral Conscience of the Nation:* Through sermons, teachings and media platforms, Christian leaders often speak on ethical and national issues. They influence public morality and help shape public opinion on political corruption, injustice, and human rights. In doing this, they serve as a moral conscience for the nation.

#### 5. Contribution to National Dialogue

Churches regularly contribute to national dialogue through the release of pastoral letters, communiqués and position papers on national concerns. As an example, the Ghana Catholic Bishops' Conference, the Christian Council of Ghana, and the Pentecostal and Charismatic Council engage the government and the public on matters of peace, justice, elections, education, and national unity.

#### 6. Health Care Provision

*Establishment of Hospitals and Clinics:* Many well-known health institutions were built by Christian groups, such as St. Joseph's Hospital, Koforidua (Catholic), Agogo Presbyterian Hospital, Bator Catholic Hospital, Adventist Hospital, and Techiman. These facilities provide affordable and accessible health care across the country.

*Health Campaigns and Free Services:* Churches organise free health screenings, blood donation drives, and vaccination campaigns. Some run **mobile clinics** that reach remote communities with basic health services.

#### 7. Provision of Social and Welfare Services

*Christian NGOs and Relief Services:* Many Christian bodies have established local and international relief agencies that respond to emergencies and support vulnerable populations. Examples include:

- ADRA (Adventist Development and Relief Agency)
- Catholic Relief Services (CRS)
- World Vision International

#### 8. Provision of Infrastructure

Churches contribute to building schools, boreholes, KVIP toilets, orphanages, libraries and even prison chapels and rehabilitation centres. One example of this is the Church of Pentecost's prisons reform project, which includes the construction of a fully equipped prison camp.

#### 9. Scholarships and Financial Support

Many churches provide scholarships, school fees and hospital bills for underprivileged children and families. Special attention is given to orphans, the elderly, the disabled and disaster victims.

#### 10. Counselling and Motivation

Churches offer marriage, family, youth and grief counselling. Pastors and church leaders provide motivation and hope through sermons, radio/TV programs and outreach activities, especially during times of personal or national crisis (e.g. during COVID-19).

## 11. Conservation of the Environment

*Tree Planting and Reafforestation Initiatives:* Churches help to care for the environment through tree planting and clean-up exercises. The Roman Catholic Church celebrates Arbor Week, encouraging tree planting among congregants. The Seventh-day Adventist Church and Church of Pentecost engage in reforestation projects and community education on environmental care.

*Education on Creation Care:* Christian teachings emphasise that humans are stewards of God's creation. Sermons and Sunday school classes teach members to avoid littering, protect water bodies and avoid harmful environmental practices like galamsey (illegal mining).

### Activity 4.3 A visit to a Church project site

1. Create a small group with people in your class in order to plan a visit to an institution or project site established by a Christian church. Alternatively, you might research institutions or projects using the Internet.
2. When you conduct your visit or research, you should consider the questions below, to be able to feed back to your findings to the class.
  - a. How and when was this founded, and by whom?
  - b. What was the reason for founding this? (Explore the historical background.)
  - c. How does the institution or project benefit people in the community?
  - d. If you are conducting a visit, ask permission to take pictures to illustrate your findings, to share these.
3. Use your research to produce a presentation to share with your classmates.

### Activity 4.4 Ask the expert: Christianity and development

1. You will have the opportunity to hear about Christianity's impact on Ghana's development from a guest speaker, to develop your understanding further. Before this occurs, consider what questions you would like them to answer and write these down.
2. As the speaker addresses your class, listen carefully and make short notes to remind you of the key points they make. Use the opportunity to ask further questions if you would like to clarify your understanding or explore the topic in more detail.
3. After listening to the speaker, consider the following questions in preparation for a class discussion:
  - a. What have I learnt from listening to this speaker?
  - b. If I became a religious leader in the future, how could I contribute to development of my community?

- c. Is the church today helping to develop my community? What examples am I aware of?

### Activity 4.5 Debate the issue

1. You are going to be taking part in an organised debate, as you did for the previous section. The debate will centre around the following motion:  
**“Christianity has shown more commitment to Ghana’s development than the state.”**
2. You might want to remind yourself how formal debates work, using the resources you used previously.
3. You will be allocated one side of the debate by your teacher. As a team, prepare for the debate by doing the following:

Use the debate motion to create a written argument on the topic.

- a. Begin by making a list of points for either side of the debate.
- b. Write up the arguments as an essay, using examples to illustrate your ideas.
- c. Include a conclusion, giving reasons for your opinion.

## EXTENDED READING

- <https://www.graphic.com.gh/features/features/religion-tool-to-foster-economic-growth-development.html>
- <https://developmentreport.online/christianity-in-ghana-overcoming-challenges-unleashing-potential-for-nation-building>
- <https://noyam.org/erats2023922>
- <https://citineWSroom.com/2018/09/religion-and-economic-prosperity-evidence-from-ghana-article>

## REVIEW QUESTIONS 4

1. What is meant by development in a national context?
2. Name two areas in which Christianity has contributed to Ghana's development.
3. Describe two characteristics of development that go beyond physical infrastructure.
4. Explain how Christian education contributes to national development.
5. Identify and briefly describe two Christian organisations involved in social welfare in Ghana.
6. Compare economic indicators with social indicators in measuring national development.
7. Analyse the impact of moral teachings from the church on youth behaviour in Ghana.
8. Discuss how Christian values such as peace and justice support national development.
9. Evaluate the long-term effects of Christian health and education services on rural communities in Ghana.

SECTION

5

# MAJOR BELIEFS OF CHRISTIANITY



# INTRODUCTION

Get ready to dive into what Christians truly believe and why it matters in everyday life. In this section, you will explore the key beliefs and teachings that shape Christian identity and the way Christians see the world, and you will discover how these beliefs guide their worship, morals and the choices they make in daily life.

You will start with the doctrine of the Trinity, the belief in one God revealed as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Then, you will consider the major events in the life of Jesus Christ—His birth, life, death, and resurrection—and see what these mean to Christian ideas about salvation, grace, judgment, and eternal life.

As you go through this section, you will notice that many Christian groups share common beliefs, but they sometimes interpret them differently. This will help you appreciate both the unity and the variety within Christianity. You will also get the chance to compare these Christian beliefs with those from other religions, helping you think critically and respectfully about different faiths.

## KEY IDEAS

- **Belief in One God (The Trinity):** Christians believe in one God who exists in three persons—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—united in essence but distinct in function.
- **Jesus Christ as the Saviour:** The birth, teachings, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ are central to the Christian faith, symbolising God's love and the path to salvation.
- **Salvation and Grace:** Christians believe that salvation is a gift from God, received through faith in Jesus Christ, not by human effort but by divine grace.
- **The Bible as the Word of God:** The Holy Bible is regarded as the inspired Word of God, serving as a moral guide and the foundation for Christian faith and practice.
- **Judgement and Eternal Life:** Christians believe that all people will face God's judgement after death, leading either to eternal life with God or separation from Him.
- **Love and Moral Living:** Christian faith emphasises love for God and neighbour, forgiveness, humility, and righteous living as evidence of true belief and discipleship.

## THE ONENESS OF GOD AND THE TRINITY

The belief that there is only one true God is central to Christianity as a monotheistic religion. In Deuteronomy 6:4 we are told, “*Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one.*” Jesus reaffirms this in Mark 12:29, when he speaks about it being the greatest commandment.

Christians also believe that He is revealed in three distinct persons—God the Father, God the Son (Jesus Christ) and God the Holy Spirit. This idea, known as the **Trinity**, might seem mysterious at first, but it's central to the Christian faith. In Matthew 3:16–17 we see all three persons of the Trinity present at Jesus' baptism—Jesus in the water, the Spirit descending like a dove and the Father speaking from heaven.

## Jesus as God Incarnate

Christians believe Jesus is not just a prophet or a good teacher—He is God in human form; this is known as the Incarnation. According to John 1:4, “In Him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind.” That means Jesus is both fully divine and fully human, sent into the world to save people from sin and bring them back into a relationship with God. Understanding who Jesus is helps you see why Christians worship Him and try to follow His teachings closely.

## Second Coming of Christ

Have you ever wondered what Christians believe about the future? One of the major teachings is the Second Coming of Jesus. Christians believe that Jesus will return again—not as a baby, but in glory—to complete God’s plan to save the world. In John 14:1–3, Jesus promises His followers that He is preparing a place for them and will return to take them there. This belief gives hope and motivation to live faithfully today while looking forward to a future with God.

## Resurrection and Judgement

Another core Christian belief is that **life does not end at death**. Christians believe in the **bodily resurrection of the dead** and that **everyone will be judged by God**. Your actions, words and faith will all be considered. In **Matthew 12:36–37**, Jesus teaches that people will give an account for every careless word spoken, and that words can either justify or condemn. This belief encourages Christians to **live responsibly, honestly, and faithfully**, knowing that their lives have eternal significance.

## Authority of Scripture

The Bible is seen by Christians as **God-inspired and authoritative**. In other words, it’s like a spiritual guidebook for how to live, think and believe. In **2 Timothy 3:16–17**, it says, “*All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness.*” As a student, you’ll explore how the Bible is used in worship, preaching, personal study, and decision-making. Understanding this helps you appreciate why Christians treat the Bible with such respect and devotion.

## Significance of key doctrines

When you think about God in Christianity, you are not just thinking of one form or one role. The doctrine of the Trinity teaches that God exists as three persons—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—but remains one God. This is a mystery that no one fully understands, but it helps Christians relate to God in different ways.

1. God the Father is seen as the Creator and provider.
2. Jesus the Son is the Savior, who came to live among us.
3. The Holy Spirit is God’s presence in your daily life, helping, guiding and comforting you.

The Trinity shapes how Christians pray (often addressing the Father through the Son, by the power of the Holy Spirit), and how they worship and understand God’s love. It teaches that God is relational by nature and invites people into a relationship with Him too.

## Resurrection

The resurrection of Jesus Christ is at the heart of Christian belief. It's not just an event in history—it's a source of hope. Christians believe that Jesus didn't stay dead, but rose again, proving His power over sin and death.

Christians believe that this is especially important because:

1. It means death is not the end—there is eternal life for those who believe.
2. It gives them the courage to face suffering, knowing there's victory at the end.
3. It proves that Jesus is truly divine, just as He claimed to be.

Because of the resurrection, Christians live with faith in God's promises and look forward to a future where all things will be made new.

## Forgiveness of Sins

Everyone makes mistakes, but the Christian message is that forgiveness is always possible. Christians believe that through Jesus' death on the cross, your sins can be forgiven if you repent and believe. This is more than just a spiritual truth—it changes how Christians live.

1. It gives you a clean slate and restores your relationship with God.
2. It encourages you to forgive others, just as God forgives you.
3. It promotes a life of humility, kindness, and peace, because you no longer carry guilt or shame.

Forgiveness is the foundation for reconciliation, healing, and moral growth. It reminds you that no one is beyond redemption, and every day is a new chance to live better.

### Activity 5.1 Exploring key Christian beliefs

1. Turn to the person you are sitting next to and discuss what you know and understand about key Christian beliefs.
  - a. Listen to each other carefully and highlight areas where you are unsure of the answer.
  - b. You might consider which you believe to be most significantly different from those found in other religions.
2. Join together as a class to explore Christian beliefs, answering questions posed by your teacher. Use the opportunity to ask questions to clarify your understanding.

### Activity 5.2 Researching core Christian beliefs

1. Organise yourselves into small groups of no more than five to research one of the core Christian beliefs in detail.

2. You will prepare a presentation for the class, including the following:
  - a. An explanation of the belief
  - b. Its biblical foundation
  - c. The significance of this belief to Christians in their daily lives
 Include visual aids where possible to engage your audience.
3. Present your findings to the class and encourage questions from your classmates to help you all develop your understanding.

### Activity 5.3 Mapping the Core Beliefs of Christianity

*Use the following instructions to help you complete this activity.*

**Step 1:** In the middle of a large piece of paper, write “**Core Beliefs of Christianity**” and draw a large circle or box around it. This will be your main concept. Everything else will branch from this point.

**Step 2:** Add key beliefs (such as Trinity) around the edge of the paper and draw ‘branches’ from your main concept to each belief.

**Step 3:** Add a brief, clear definition to each key belief. Use colours to help these stand out.

**Step 4:** Add one or more Bible verses to illustrate the belief (you might just add the Bible reference, such as John 1:4, or you might also write the verse).

**Step 5:** Relevance to Daily Life - for each belief, ask yourself: “Why does this matter today?”

**Step 6:** Trinity – Helps Christians understand God’s nature and how to relate to Him in prayer.

**Step 7: Connect Ideas (Optional)**

1. Use dotted lines or arrows to show connections between beliefs. For instance:
2. The Resurrection connects to Forgiveness of Sins, because Jesus’ resurrection proves that sin and death are conquered.
3. The Authority of Scripture supports all other beliefs because it is where Christians learn about them.

**Step 8: Review and Present**

In your group, be ready to share your work and explain one or two branches to the class.

# THE EXPRESSION OF THE MAIN CHRISTIAN BELIEFS IN RELIGIOUS LIFE

You may already be familiar with the **Apostles' Creed** as a way Christians express their core beliefs. However, Christian beliefs are not only spoken, but they are also actively lived out. These beliefs shape how Christian's worship, make decisions, treat others and respond to challenges in daily life.

In this lesson, you will explore the different aspects of Christian life where these beliefs are clearly seen. You will learn that faith is not just about words; it is about living according to what one believes.

## Worship

Christians manifest their beliefs through worship. Christian worship may be individual or communal. In most Christian homes, worship is undertaken either in the morning or evening. Individuals may also have their quiet times of worship at secluded places like the top of mountains, monasteries and other quiet places closer to home. Communal worship happens in religious buildings such as temples or cathedrals, in auditoriums or in the open air. Some Christian denominations may meet weekly (on a Saturday or Sunday), while others may meet on other days in the week when they have Bible studies, group meetings and prayer sessions.

## Christian beliefs expressed in songs

Another way Christian beliefs are expressed is through songs. Traditionally Christian music existed as hymns. Catholics and many Protestant denominations have collections of hymns contained in hymnals. Examples of popular hymns include:

1. Abide with me, Anglican Hymn 783
2. To God be the glory, Methodist Hymn Book 313,
3. God will take care of you, SDA Hymn 99.
4. Resurrection of the dead Presbyterian Hymn 313
5. Amazing Grace Catholic Book of Worship 480

Besides hymns, Catholics and other Protestants sing *canticles*, *Kyries* and *Mass*. During worship and other meetings, the whole congregation may sing, or the choir and other singing groups may sing hymns.

*Christians sing other songs besides hymns. Such songs may be choral compositions.*

Examples.

1. Yesu ka wo ho – Osei Boateng
2. Oye - James Varrick Armah
3. Sankudwom – Sam Asare Bediako
4. Grace and Mercy – Newlove Annan

*There are other Christian highlife songs, and popular Christian folk songs, such as:*

1. Da no ase (Composer unknown)

2. Yesu ye nkwa abodoo – Koda featuring Nacee
3. Adom – Diana Hamilton
4. Something new in my life – Elder Collins Amponsah
5. Bo noo ni – Joe Mettle
6. Agbelolo – Celestine Donkor

All these Christian songs contain lyrics that manifest Christian beliefs.

## Prayers

Another way Christian beliefs are expressed is through prayer. Christians have a model prayer, which was given by Jesus in Matthew 6:9-13, called the Lord's prayer. Besides this recitational prayer, Christians pray in different forms, including meditative prayer, congregational prayer, speaking in tongues, etc. During prayers, Christians may kneel, stand, sit or prostrate.

## Evangelism

Christians also express their beliefs through evangelism, the process of preaching and witnessing the Christian message to others. Christian evangelism follows the command of Jesus to go to the world and preach to all people (Matthew 28: 19-20). Christian evangelism may happen in the church house or through open-air crusades, electronic media and Christian literature. Notably, one-on-one witnessing is also evident with some Christian groups.

## Giving

Christians also manifest their beliefs through giving. The Bible encourages Christians to give to the poor (2 Corinthians 9:6-7) and to the church through tithes and offerings (Malachi 3: 10). Some Christian denominations have formalised the act of giving by mobilising resources from members and donating to people in need through Christian NGOs such as Catholic Relief Services, Adventist Development and Relief Agency, World Vision International, etc.

### Activity 5.4 Visit to a Christian Site

1. Organise yourselves into small groups to visit a place of worship, where you are going to observe Christians expressing their beliefs in worship activities.  
*Alternatively, if you are unable to visit a place of worship, you may watch videos and documentaries of worship instead.*
2. In preparation for your visit, consider what you are going to be looking for, considering the following;
  - a. What different activities do you observe? (for instance, prayer, communion)
  - b. What key Christian beliefs are reflected in each of these activities?
3. Remember that if you are visiting a place of worship, your behaviour should be respectful. It may not be appropriate to make notes whilst you are there,

so you must be prepared to be observant and record notes as soon as possible afterwards.

4. After your visit, prepare a presentation for your class which details your observations, focusing on what activities you observed and what key beliefs were reflected.

### Activity 5.5 Expressions of Christian beliefs

1. Working with one other person, use the internet to find examples of Christians expressing beliefs through prayer, music, dance and other creative mediums. Save video clips, audio clips or images to illustrate your findings.
2. For each example, identify the beliefs which are being expressed.
3. Consider why they are choosing this medium to express their beliefs.

### Activity 5.6 Interview a Christian Leader

1. You will have the opportunity to engage with a Christian leader who will talk about the following:
  - a. How Christian beliefs are expressed in both worship and daily lives
  - b. How Christian beliefs *influence* daily lives
  - c. How beliefs can *help* Christians in their daily lives
2. *Before* their visit, prepare questions that you would like to ask to develop your knowledge and understanding.
3. *During* their visit, make the most of the opportunity to learn from them, asking questions and listening carefully.
4. *After* their visit, produce a written reflection detailing what you have learnt about the following:
  - a. how Christians express their beliefs in their daily lives
  - b. How Christian beliefs influence daily lives
  - c. How these beliefs can help with everyday activities

### Activity 5.7 Bringing Beliefs to Life

1. Organise yourselves into groups of three or four.
2. Choose a Christian belief and script a short scene that shows how it might influence everyday life.
3. Rehearse and then perform your scene for the class.
4. After the drama, ask the audience if they can identify the religious belief you had focused on.

# DENOMINATIONAL DIFFERENCES IN INTERPRETATION OF CHRISTIAN BELIEFS

## Overview of Christian Denominations

Christianity is not one single group but a family of denominations. Each denomination has its own unique traditions and practices; however, all share a belief in Jesus Christ as the Son of God. The three main branches of Christianity are discussed below.

### Catholicism

The largest Christian group, with the Pope as its spiritual leader. It emphasises tradition, sacraments, and church authority.

1. **Orthodoxy:** Mostly found in Eastern Europe and parts of the Middle East. It maintains ancient traditions, beautiful liturgies, and strong community life.
2. **Protestantism:** Emerged during the Reformation in the 16th century, placing emphasis on the Bible as the sole authority for faith and practice.

Within **Protestantism**, there are an abundance of denominations, with a recent study from the Centre for the Study of Global Christianity estimating over 40,000! Some of the largest and perhaps best-known denominations include the following.

Denomination	Key/Distinguishing Features
<b>Methodist</b>	Focus on social justice, holiness, and structured worship.
<b>Presbyterian</b>	Governed by elders, with a focus on education and order.
<b>Pentecostal</b>	Emphasise the Holy Spirit, speaking in tongues, healing, and lively worship.
<b>Baptist</b>	Practise adult baptism and stress personal faith and independence of churches.
<b>Charismatic</b>	Similar to Pentecostals but found across various denominations, bringing in Spirit-filled worship and healing ministries.

## Areas of Theological Differences

As already explained, different denominations understand and practice their faith in different ways. The following are some of the many examples of these differences:

### 1. Baptism

Catholics, Methodists, and Orthodox Christians often baptise infants, believing baptism brings the child into the Christian community from an early age. Baptists and Pentecostals practice adult or believer's baptism, usually by full immersion in water, after someone chooses to follow Christ personally.

## 2. Tithing

In Pentecostal churches, giving 10% of your income (a tithe) is often taught as a biblical command. Presbyterians and Methodists may teach tithing as a spiritual principle, but voluntary, not forced. Some liberal denominations focus more on giving from the heart than on a fixed percentage.

## 3. Gifts of the Holy Spirit

Pentecostals and Charismatics believe spiritual gifts like speaking in tongues, prophecy, and healing are still active today. Other churches, such as Presbyterians or some Anglicans, may view these gifts as symbolic or not necessary for every believer today.

## 4. Sabbath Observance

Most Christian groups worship on Sunday, believing it celebrates Christ's resurrection. Seventh-Day Adventists and similar groups observe Saturday (the original Sabbath) as their holy day, based on the Ten Commandments.

## 5. Life After Death

All Christians believe in heaven and hell. Catholics also believe in purgatory, a place where souls are purified before entering heaven. Some Protestant groups, like Seventh Day Adventists, believe in soul sleep, where the dead remain unconscious until the final resurrection.

## 6. The Role of Women

Methodists, some Presbyterians, and Anglicans allow women to be fully ordained as pastors and bishops. Many Evangelical or Pentecostal churches allow women to teach or lead in certain roles, but some restrict leadership positions to men. In Catholicism and Orthodoxy, women cannot be priests, though they can hold other important roles in church life.

## 7. Unity in Diversity

Even with all these differences, Christians around the world are united by a shared faith. All denominations believe in:

- a. *The divinity of Jesus Christ – that He is the Son of God and Saviour of the world.*
- b. *The authority of the Bible – as the inspired Word of God and guide for life.*
- c. *The importance of moral living – showing love, kindness, and justice in daily actions.*
- d. *The call to evangelism – sharing the message of Jesus with others and serving the world.*

This diversity makes Christianity rich and dynamic, showing how people in different cultures and traditions can still follow the same Lord in unique ways.

### Activity 5.8 Compare Denominational Beliefs

1. Organise yourselves into small groups to complete a research task on one of the following topic areas:
  - a. Baptism

- b. Sabbath
- c. Tithing

2. Investigate how three denominations (e.g., Catholic, Methodist, Pentecostal) interpret and practise that belief. Work together to prepare a presentation which includes the following:

- a. both the similarities and differences
- b. appropriate teachings from the Bible, where available.
- c. an explanation of why the denomination interprets it in this way

Present your findings to the class and prepare to answer questions from your classmates.

### Activity 5.9 Denominational differences in beliefs

1. Choose a denomination to represent as a member of the clergy or an active member of the church. You are going to be representing this denomination in a panel discussion..
2. Research your denomination's view on a selected issue, such as Sabbath or tithing. Your teacher will help with allocating this.
3. During the panel discussion, you will take turns in explaining your denomination's position. You may have to answer questions from your classmates to clarify your position, so your research will need to be thorough.
4. After taking part in the panel discussion, reflect on how this experience has helped you to understand and respect other Christian views.

### Activity 5.10 Mapping Beliefs Across Denominations

1. Create a table such as the one below, with **beliefs as columns** (e.g., life after death, gifts of the Spirit) and **denominations as rows**.

Denominations	Life after death	Gifts of the Spirit	XXX
Catholic			
Orthodox			
Pentecostal			
XXX			

2. Fill in information to show how each denomination views the belief.
3. Use colour codes, symbols or notes to show:

- a. Beliefs that overlap
- b. Beliefs that differ
4. Share your map with the person you are sitting next to and discuss the following question before sharing your thoughts with the class:
5. *What does this chart teach you about unity and diversity in Christianity?*

### Activity 5.11 Do differences help or harm Christianity?

1. Consider the following question on your own, making a note of your initial thoughts:
2. Do denominational differences strengthen or weaken Christianity in Ghana?
3. Pair up with someone who sits near you and share your thoughts, listening carefully to each other's point of view..
4. Join another pair to form a group of four and again, share your ideas.
5. Prepare to present your thoughts to the rest of the class. As a group, you may agree on a shared answer or present a mix of views.
6. After presenting your ideas to the class and listening carefully to those of others, reflect on your final thoughts and produce a written response to the question. You might use the following structure to guide your response.
  - a. Ways in which denominational differences can strengthen Christianity
  - b. Ways in which they can be seen to weaken Christianity
  - c. Your own thoughts and whether they have changed (and why)

## MISINTERPRETATION OF CHRISTIAN BELIEFS

Biblical teachings are foundational to Christian living, but when misunderstood or taken out of context, they can lead to harmful beliefs and behaviours. Below are some commonly misapplied scriptures and their correct interpretations.

### 1. “God will provide” (Philippians 4:19; Matthew 6:31–32)

This promise assures believers that God cares for their needs, encouraging trust and contentment. However, some misapply it to justify idleness or lack of initiative, expecting blessings without effort. In reality, the Bible also teaches diligence and responsibility (2 Thess. 3:10: *“If anyone is not willing to work, let him not eat.”*). Divine provision should inspire faith-driven action, not passivity.

### 2. “Generational curses” (Exodus 34:7)

While the Old Testament references consequences of sin affecting generations, this is not a blanket curse over families. The Bible also teaches individual responsibility (Ezek. 18:20: *“The soul who sins shall die”*). Misuse of this concept can lead to blame-shifting, avoidance of responsibility, or even stigmatisation of individuals and families. True biblical teaching points to freedom in Christ and accountability for one's own choices.

### 3. “New Earth” (Isaiah 65:17–19; Revelation 21:1)

These scriptures speak of a renewed creation and God’s future kingdom, intended to offer hope and assurance. However, some misinterpret them to devalue the present world, discouraging care for the environment or engagement in social development. Proper understanding calls believers to act as stewards of creation, reflecting God’s love and order in today’s world (Genesis 2:15).

### 4. Role of Women in the Church and Society

Verses on submission and silence (e.g., 1 Corinthians 14:34–35; Ephesians 5:22) are often cited out of cultural and contextual understanding, leading to gender exclusion in leadership, education, or service. However, the Bible also highlights female leaders (e.g., Deborah, Priscilla, Lydia), affirming the equal value and spiritual gifts of both men and women (Galatians 3:28). Misinterpretation here fuels gender bias, while sound exegesis supports inclusivity and empowerment.

### 5. Peace and War

Though some Old Testament passages describe war, the overall message of Jesus centres on peace, reconciliation, and nonviolence (Matthew 5:9; Romans 12:18). Misusing Scripture to justify conflict, tribalism or political violence undermines the Gospel’s call to peace-making and justice. The correct approach emphasises active pursuit of peace and forgiveness.

### 6. God’s Judgment

While judgment is a biblical reality, some misuse it to instil fear, control behaviour, or promote doom-focused teachings. This creates anxiety rather than transformation. The biblical message of judgment is primarily a call to repentance, moral living, and hope in God’s mercy (John 3:17). God’s judgment is ultimately tied to His love and justice, not terror.

## Effects of Misinterpretation

Misreading or distorting biblical teachings can lead to several negative consequences at personal, social, environmental and theological levels:

### 1. Social Effects

- Promotes laziness when people avoid work under the guise of trusting God.
- Leads to oppression of women and exclusion from decision-making roles.
- Encourages stigmatisation of individuals seen as “cursed” or under divine punishment.
- Fuels superstition, unhealthy dependency on spiritual leaders, or manipulation in the name of religion.

### 2. Environmental Effects

- It encourages disregard for creation, seeing it as temporary or unimportant.
- Neglect of environmental stewardship contributes to pollution, deforestation, and climate issues.
- Hinders participation in ecological advocacy, especially by faith communities.

### 3. Personal Effects

- a. Fosters fatalism, where individuals believe nothing can change their situation.
- b. Leads to moral irresponsibility, with people excusing wrongdoing as God's will or blaming spirits.
- c. Produces shallow spirituality, focusing on ritual rather than personal growth and ethical living.
- d. Diminishes critical thinking, encouraging a blind faith approach.

### 4. Theological Effects

- a. Results in poor understanding of core Christian doctrines such as grace, salvation, justice and love.
- b. Promotes selective reading of the Bible rather than holistic interpretation.
- c. Breeds doctrinal confusion, division among Christians and vulnerability to false teachings.
- d. Undermines the credibility of Christian witness in society.

### Activity 5.12 Misinterpretation of Christian belief and scripture

1. Organise yourselves into a group of no more than five people. Your group will receive a selection of real-life scenarios, such as:
  - a. A youth refuses to work, saying, 'God will provide.'
  - b. A family blames alcoholism on a generational curse.
  - c. 'A community avoids planting trees, believing the Earth will be replaced.'
  - d. A woman is denied a leadership position in the church because of her gender.
2. As you discuss the following questions in your group, use the table below to record your key points.
  - a. What belief is being expressed?
  - b. What belief or scripture is being misinterpreted? How is it being misinterpreted?
  - c. What are the real-life consequences of such thinking?
3. Use the Bible to find correct or alternative interpretations. Your teacher will guide you to helpful verses, or you can use the internet to look up teachings on specific issues, such as equality or the environment.
4. Be prepared to share your work with the rest of the class.

Scenario	Misinterpretation	Effects of misinterpretation	Corresponding Bible passages	Correct Interpretation

### Activity 5.13 Investigating scripture and addressing misinterpretation

1. Join with another person to form a pair for this activity.
2. You will be given a passage from the Bible which is often misinterpreted. Examples might include those such as 'Do not judge' or 'God will provide all your needs.'
3. Complete the following tasks and be prepared to discuss your ideas with the class:
  - a. Find out the original context of the verse
  - b. Explain what it really means, sharing the correct interpretation
  - c. Compare it with how people often misuse it
4. Explain why context matters
5. Give a real-life example of applying the verse properly

### Activity 5.14 Misinterpretation of beliefs



1. Join your pair with another to form a small group. Look at a cartoon showing a belief statement like:
  - a. "my family is cursed: I cannot change!"

- b. “We don’t need to work, God will provide.”
- 2. Use the “5 Whys” strategy to analyse the thinking behind this comment.
  - Ask: “Why do they believe this?”
  - Then: “Why does that reason make sense to them?”
  - Keep asking “Why?” until you reach the root issue.
- 3. Once you find the root, open your Bible and find verses that correct the belief respectfully..
- 4. Share with the class
  - a. What was the root misunderstanding?
  - b. What is the scriptural truth?
- 5. Rewrite this activity in essay form and keep it in your portfolio.

## THE INFLUENCE OF AFRICAN INDIGENOUS RELIGION ON CHRISTIANITY

Let us explore how African Indigenous Religion (AIR) has shaped Christianity in Africa. The impact is deep and widespread, especially in areas such as culture, spirituality, and religious practices. When Christianity first came to Africa—beginning with early contact in North Africa and expanding further during the colonial period—it did not enter an empty space. It met strong traditional beliefs and customs that had been part of African life for generations. Rather than completely removing these indigenous practices, Christianity often adjusted and included some of their element.

- 1. As you think about this, ask yourself:
- 2. What are some ways Christianity in your community may reflect African traditions rituals?
- 3. Can you identify any Christian practices that feel similar to traditional African rituals?
- 4. Why do you think Christians chose to adapt instead of rejecting these beliefs completely?
- 5. Reflect on how this blending of faiths may have helped Christianity grow across the continent.

## Areas of Influence of African Indigenous Religion on Christianity

### 1. Worship Style and Music

Worship in many African Christian churches is far from silent or rigid—it is full of life, rhythm, and joy. This vibrancy is deeply influenced by African Indigenous Religion (AIR). Traditional elements such as drumming, clapping, dancing and singing in a call-and-response style are commonly found in churches, especially among Pentecostal, Charismatic and African Independent Churches (AICs).

Instruments like the atumpan (talking drum), djembe and gongon are used, just as they are in cultural ceremonies of ethnic groups like the Akan, Ewe, Ga, and Dagomba.

Worship is often communal and emotionally expressive, encouraging participation, not just observation. Music is not only entertainment; it is seen as a spiritual tool—a way to connect with God, just like in traditional worship.

**Think about this:** Have you attended a church service that used traditional drums or dancing? How did it make you feel compared to more formal styles of worship?

## 2. Spiritual Mediators and Saints

In AIR, people often speak of **ancestors** and spirit-beings as go-betweens between humans and the Supreme Being. This concept finds a parallel in Christianity. In some denominations (especially Catholic and Orthodox), saints serve as intercessors, just like ancestral spirits in AIR.

The Holy Spirit and angels are sometimes understood by African Christians in ways that reflect traditional beliefs in benevolent spirits. Even though Christianity does not encourage ancestor worship, many Ghanaian Christians still honour ancestors, especially through elaborate funerals and memorial events. These practices blend traditional respect with Christian rituals.

**Think about this:** Why do you think many families still honour their ancestors, even after converting to Christianity?

## 3. Healing and Deliverance

Traditional religion gave a central role to healers, herbalists and diviners. This idea has strongly influenced Christian healing ministries. Churches today often host prayer camps, healing crusades, and deliverance services, which respond to spiritual causes of illness.

Practices such as anointing with oil, laying on of hands, and prophetic declarations mirror older rituals by traditional healers (like the *akomfo* among the Akan). Churches like The Church of Pentecost, ICGC, and Action Chapel hold healing events that reflect belief in spiritual causation—a core idea in AIR.

**Ask yourself:** Why is it important for some Christians to seek spiritual solutions to physical or emotional problems?

## 4. Community and Moral Order

AIR has always stressed values like respect for elders, communal harmony and moral behaviour. These values are very much alive in African Christianity today. Many churches act as moral guardians of the community, promoting good character and social responsibility. Like traditional festivals, Christian events such as Easter conventions, harvests or all-night vigils serve social, economic, and spiritual functions.

**Reflect on this:** How do these churches maintain their African identity while preaching the message of Christ?

## 5. Syncretism and Theology

Over time, African Christianity has developed unique theological expressions by merging biblical teachings with African worldviews—a process known as syncretism. Some Christians continue revering ancestors privately or using traditional charms, even while attending church.

African theologians have developed African Christian theology, which interprets the Bible using African culture and stories. Spiritual concepts such as: Witchcraft, Spiritual warfare, Curses, and Destiny helpers are explained using both the Bible and African cosmology.

Pastors preach about how unseen spiritual forces affect health, marriage, business, or failure—ideas very familiar in traditional religion.

Indigenous-founded churches such as the Musama Disco Christo Church, African Faith Tabernacle Church and Twelve Apostles Church combine Christian teachings with traditional symbols such as holy water for cleansing, prayer flags and ritual baths, resembling traditional rites.

Their prophets operate similarly to traditional diviners, offering advice and visions from the spiritual realm.

**Think about this:** Does blending traditional beliefs with Christianity make faith more relatable, or does it risk confusing people about biblical truth?

## 6. Rites of Passage

Rites of passage are **major life events**—birth, initiation, marriage, and death—and AIR had ceremonies for all these stages. Christianity in Africa has preserved and adapted many of these customs.

Naming ceremonies are now held in churches but still include cultural elements such as day names (e.g., Kofi, Ama), libation pouring (which is sometimes done privately) and elders' blessings.

Marriage ceremonies mix Christian liturgy with traditional engagement rites, bride price negotiations and wearing of Kente or traditional attire.

Funerals are major events—spanning several days, with drumming, dirges and sometimes symbolic dances—preserving African traditions even in Christian contexts.

**Now ask yourself:** Can you think of a recent wedding or funeral you attended that combined Christian and traditional elements? What did that say about your community's beliefs?

**Reflection:** Christianity in Africa is not just a foreign religion that came to replace traditional ways. Instead, it has adapted, blended, and grown within African cultures, giving rise to a faith expression that is uniquely African and truly Christian.

### Activity 5.15 Observing Indigenous Influences in Worship

- Organise yourselves into small groups to visit an African Independent Church in the community (e.g., Musama Disco Christo, Twelve Apostles). You are

going to observe worship activities and consider how Christian beliefs and practices have been shaped by AIR..

*Alternatively, if you are unable to visit a place of worship, you may watch videos and documentaries of worship instead.*

2. In preparation for your visit, think about what you are going to be looking for, including music, dancing, healing, symbols, dress, language and prayers.
3. Remember that if you are visiting a place of worship, your behaviour should be respectful. It may not be appropriate to make notes whilst you are there, so you must be prepared to be observant and record notes as soon as possible afterwards.
4. After your visit, discuss your observations, focusing on what activities you observed and what links between Christianity and AIR were reflected. Be prepared to share your thoughts with the class.
5. Create a short poster, slide show, or blog post titled: “*How African Culture Shapes Our Christian Worship.*”

### Activity 5.16 Questioning a Guest Expert

1. You will have the opportunity to hear from a guest speaker who will discuss how AIR’s beliefs have influenced Christian worship and theology. This will give you chance to develop your understanding further. Before this occurs, consider what questions you would like them to answer and write these down.
2. As the speaker addresses your class, listen carefully and make short notes to remind you of the key points they make. Use the opportunity to ask further questions if you would like to clarify your understanding or explore the topic in more detail.
3. After listening to the speaker, consider how this has helped to develop or clarify your thoughts and what you found particularly helpful or interesting. Identify any new learning which has occurred. Discuss this with the person sitting next to you before discussing as a class.

# REVIEW QUESTIONS 5

1. Define the term “core Christian beliefs.”
2. State three core beliefs common to all Christian denominations.
3. Explain how the belief in the Trinity shapes Christian worship.
4. Compare the Christian belief in salvation with the belief in judgement.
5. Analyse how the resurrection of Jesus influences the daily lives of Christians.
6. Examine how the Christian understanding of God as loving and just affects attitudes toward suffering.
7. Develop a short reflection or dialogue showing how two different core beliefs (e.g., forgiveness and eternal life) guide Christian moral choices in real life.
8. Name two Christian denominations and one belief they interpret differently.
9. Identify the denominational group that practices adult baptism instead of infant baptism.
10. Describe how Catholic and Pentecostal Christians differ in their understanding of the Eucharist.
11. Illustrate how denominational differences influence the style of worship in churches.
12. Analyse why different Christian denominations interpret the Bible differently.
13. Evaluate the impact of denominational differences on Christian unity.
14. Design a comparative chart showing how three denominations interpret the concept of the Holy Spirit, with supporting examples from their practices.
15. What is meant by “misinterpretation of Christian beliefs”?
16. Identify one common misinterpretation of the belief in “faith and prosperity.”
17. Explain why the belief “God will provide” can be misused to avoid responsibility.
18. Examine the dangers of misapplying the concept of “generational curses” in Christian communities.
19. Explain how African Indigenous music and drumming have shaped Christian worship in Ghana.
20. Write a critical essay discussing both the positive and negative effects of African Indigenous religious beliefs on Christian teachings and practices in Ghana.

SECTION

6

# RELIGIOUS COMMUNITIES



# INTRODUCTION

You are about to begin a deep and exciting exploration of Christian religious communities in Ghana. In this section, you will uncover where these communities come from, what makes them unique, how their roles have evolved, and how they now work with other religions—especially African Indigenous Religion (AIR)—to shape society.

Tracing the roots of Christian communities in Ghana, you will examine how they began through the work of early missionaries, the efforts of local believers, and the birth of African Independent Churches (AICs). As you do this, you will also identify key features of these communities, such as their lively worship, strong sense of fellowship and their ability to blend Christian faith with Ghanaian culture. You will also compare these features with those found in AIR communities to see both contrasts and connections.

Your focus will shift to how Christian communities have changed over time. You will explore how their role has expanded from purely spiritual matters to include politics, technology, education, and national development. You will think critically about how Christian voices now influence public decisions, support women's participation, engage young people, and contribute to building the nation.

You will examine the relationship between Christianity and African Indigenous Religion. You will look at how early conflict between the two has given way to growing understanding and cooperation. You will discover how both traditions now share values, artistic expressions, language, and morals, and how this has created a uniquely African style of Christianity that respects both faith and cultural heritage.

By the end of this section, you will not only understand the religious landscape better, but you will also grow in religious literacy, interfaith respect, and a stronger sense of civic responsibility. You are encouraged to ask questions, share ideas, and think deeply about how religion affects social change, identity, and peaceful living in Ghana today.

## KEY IDEAS

- **Origins of Christian Communities in Ghana:** Christian communities emerged through the efforts of early missionaries, local converts, and the rise of African Independent Churches (AICs) that adapted Christianity to local traditions.
- **Cultural Adaptation and Identity:** Many Christian groups in Ghana blend biblical teachings with Ghanaian cultural expressions—such as music, dance, symbols, and language—creating a distinct African form of Christianity.
- **Fellowship and Worship Practices:** Christian communities are marked by vibrant worship, strong fellowship, and communal support systems that promote unity and mutual care.
- **Evolving Roles in Society:** Over time, Christian communities have expanded their influence beyond religion to include contributions to education, health, politics, technology, and national development.
- **Interfaith Relations and Cooperation:** The historical tension between Christianity and

African Indigenous Religion has evolved into dialogue and collaboration, highlighting shared moral values and respect for cultural heritage.

- **Religion and Social Transformation:** Christian communities continue to play key roles in promoting peace, social justice, youth empowerment, gender equality, and civic responsibility in Ghana's modern society.

## ORIGIN OF CHRISTIAN COMMUNITIES

### Christian Religious Communities in Ghana – Understanding Their Origin, Nature, and Role

Christian religious communities form a fascinating part of Ghana's Christian history. They are much more than just places of worship - they are strongholds of faith, culture, and social development. These communities in Ghana began with the introduction of Christianity by missionaries during the colonial period. Some of the earliest Christian communities established by these missionaries are known as Salem. A Salem was more than a church—it was a self-contained Christian village with homes, schools, and chapels, where Christian teachings guided every part of daily life.

You may find it surprising to know that even **African Independent Churches (AICs)** later adopted the idea of Salem. They created their own religious communities that blended Christian beliefs with African traditions, giving birth to uniquely African expressions of Christianity.

Some of the most well-known examples of Christian religious communities in Ghana include the following:

1. **Abokobi Salem** in Accra, which was founded as a mission settlement by the Basel Mission after the exile from Osu.
2. **Osu Salem** in Accra – one of the earliest established by the Presbyterian Church.
3. **Dome-Kwabenya** in Accra – the headquarters of the **Christ Reformed Church (Kristo Asafo)**.
4. **Mosano** in the Central Region, which is the home of the **Mosama Disco Christo Church**.
5. **Anyinam** in the Eastern Region – the religious centre for the **African Faith Tabernacle Church**.
6. **Osiem** in the Eastern Region, headquarters of the **Faith Church**.

### Why Were These Communities Formed?

You might wonder why Christian religious communities developed in the first place. Several important factors led to their establishment, with social, spiritual and even environmental reasons playing a part:

1. **Missionary Activity:** Foreign missionaries deliberately created Christian settlements like Salems to serve as centres for Christian teaching, worship, and education.

2. **Refuge from Crisis:** Some communities were formed as safe havens for Christians escaping war, conflict, or other crises—for example, **Abokobi Salem** was formed by refugees fleeing Osu after a conflict.
3. **Escape from Traditional Beliefs:** Many early Christians wanted to separate themselves from African traditional religious practices, so they created Christian-only settlements where they could live by biblical principles without interference.
4. **Environmental Reasons:** Some Christian communities were formed in places with better climate, land, or health conditions, such as the Presbyterian missions in Akuapem and Kwahu.
5. **Local Leadership Support:** In many cases, **local chiefs or leaders invited missionaries** to establish Christian centres in their communities.
6. **Rise of AICs:** African Independent Churches wanted to create religious communities that reflected African identity while maintaining their Christian beliefs. These communities allowed them to practice a form of Christianity that embraced local culture.

## Roles of Christian Religious Communities in Society

These religious communities are not just spiritual centres. They serve many purposes that improve both the lives of their members and the development of the larger society. The **key roles** that these communities play can be summarised as follows:

1. **Spiritual Support:** They help members grow in faith by providing consistent worship, fellowship, and moral guidance.
2. **Social Support:** They act like extended families. Members support one another during times of need, such as sickness, funerals or weddings.
3. **Economic Support:** Members often help one another with jobs, food or small loans. Some churches even form co-operatives and credit unions.
4. **Communal Lifestyle:** The way of living together creates a safety net for the poor, the sick, and the elderly, ensuring no one is left alone in hard times.
5. **Security:** Living in a community of like-minded believers often means that everyone looks out for one another, which reduces crime and promotes peace.
6. **Moral Education:** Young people are taught good behaviour, honesty, respect, and hard work, not only through church sermons but also through daily community life.
7. **Promoting Tolerance:** These communities teach members to live peacefully with people of different beliefs, helping to create a more harmonious society.
8. **Development of Infrastructure:** Many religious communities provide basic amenities like schools, clinics, water systems, roads and markets, which benefit both members and outsiders.

As you study Christian religious communities, you will develop further understanding of how religion is not only about personal belief but also about building strong societies,

preserving cultural identity and responding to human needs. Christians have adapted their faith to fit the Ghanaian context, and these communities continue to shape the future of the country through service, education, and unity.

You are encouraged to **ask questions, research examples in your area, and reflect on how religion shapes your own community**. You will find that understanding these communities helps you appreciate how faith and culture can work together for the good of all.

### Activity 6.1 Exploring Christian Communities

1. Form a pair with a friend to research Christian communities. Use a range of sources, including the internet, to search for information on at least three Christian religious communities in Ghana.
2. Use the following table to help direct your research and record your findings

Religious Community	Location	Founding Church	Year Established	Roles in the Community
(Community 1)				

3. Share your findings with the class and discuss anything you found particularly interesting.

### Activity 6.2 Importance of Christian communities in Ghana

1. Organise yourselves into a group of four, joining your pair with another. Discuss what you have learnt about Christian religious communities, using the following as a structure for discussion:
  - a. Have you found any similarities in the religious communities you have researched? This might be to do with their origins or the part they play in their community.
  - b. Have you found any particular differences between the communities?
  - c. How important do you think Christian religious communities are in Ghana? Explain your reasons for your answers.
2. Summarise your findings and thoughts in an individual written response.

# CHARACTERISTICS OF RELIGIOUS COMMUNITIES IN GHANA

## 1. Strong Community and Fellowship

Ghanaian Christian communities emphasise unity, mutual care and shared identity. Churches act as extended families, especially in difficult times, offering prayer, emotional support, food, or financial help. Members often feel a strong sense of belonging and accountability to one another.

## 2. Vibrant Worship and Music

Worship services are lively, joyful, and deeply emotional, reflecting African cultural expressions. Common features include:

- a. Drumming and dancing to express joy and praise
- b. Gospel music and choral singing in both English and local languages
- c. Call-and-response patterns that involve the whole congregation
3. Music and praise are seen as spiritual tools to connect with God.

## 4. Diverse Denominations

Christianity in Ghana includes many denominations, each with unique doctrines and practices.

- a. **Roman Catholics** – known for liturgy and global church traditions
- b. **Methodists and Presbyterians** – emphasise order, education, and community service
- c. **Pentecostals/Charismatics** – known for spontaneous worship and spiritual gifts
- d. **Evangelicals** – emphasise personal salvation and Bible teaching
- e. **African Independent Churches** – often combine Christianity with African traditions (e.g., The Apostolic Church, Church of Pentecost)

## 5. Role of the Holy Spirit and Prophecy

Especially strong in Pentecostal and Charismatic churches. Belief in **spiritual gifts** such as:

- a. Speaking in tongues
- b. Healing
- c. Deliverance from demonic influences
- d. Prophecy and Visions
6. Many attend church for spiritual solutions to life problems (e.g., unemployment, sickness).
7. **Indigenous Cultural Integration**

Christian practices often blend with Ghanaian culture and traditions. Elements include:

- a. Use of local languages during preaching and singing

- b. Traditional dress worn to church services
- c. Storytelling and proverbs are used to explain the Bible

Some African Independent Churches retain ancestral reverence in modified forms.

#### 8. **Active Evangelism and Revivalism**

Evangelism is a central practice in most Christian communities. Activities include:

- a. Street preaching and gospel tracts
- b. Radio/TV programs and social media campaigns
- c. Open-air crusades and all-night prayer services

Revival meetings often aim at spiritual renewal, healing, and conversions.

#### 9. **Moral and Social Influence**

Churches strongly influence societal values and behaviour. Clergy often speak publicly about:

- a. Moral issues (honesty, sexual purity, family life)
- b. Social problems (corruption, injustice, abuse of power)

Some churches promote discipline and modest living, while others focus on prosperity.

#### 10. **Education and Social Services**

Christian communities contribute significantly to national development through:

- a. **Schools and universities** (e.g., Presbyterian Boys', Central University)
- b. **Hospitals and clinics** (e.g., SDA Hospital, Catholic hospitals)
- c. **NGOs and charitable outreach** to help the poor, sick, and needy

These services are often rooted in the Christian belief in service and compassion.

#### 11. **Leadership and Authority**

Most churches have structured leadership, often hierarchical. Pentecostal and Charismatic churches are usually led by **strong, charismatic founders or prophets**.

- a. Leaders often command great respect and influence in both church and public life.
- b. In many cases, leadership is seen as a spiritual calling, not just an administrative role.

#### Activity 6.3 Research Characteristics of a Christian Religious Community

1. Organise yourselves into groups of no more than five people.
2. You may be allocated a specific religious community to focus on by your teacher; if not, choose one. Use a range of sources, including videos and documentaries where available, to research its characteristics.
3. You might start by looking at

- worship style
- leadership structure
- key beliefs and traditions (including denomination)
- specific contributions to the community

Aim to explore the aspects which make this community different to others.

- Prepare a presentation to share your findings with the class, using images and keywords to emphasise your points.
- As people share their findings, you might find it helpful to record notes in a table such as this one.

Religious Community	Key characteristics
e.g. Abokobi	

### Activity 6.4 Learn from an expert

- If you can, speak to an expert in this field, such as a pastor or member of a religious community, or a teacher in Religious Studies. This will enable you to discuss the importance of Christian communities and allow them to address any misconceptions or misinterpretations.
  - Before your visit, make a note of any questions you would like to have answered.
  - During their visit, pay careful attention to what they say and make the most of opportunities to ask questions and extend your learning. You might find it helpful to make brief notes to help you remember key learning points.
  - After the visit, reflect on what you have learned from the experience and be prepared to share your thoughts with the class.

*You should also add any new learning to the notes you made on key characteristics of religious communities.*

- In pairs, return to the question you discussed previously: How important do you think religious communities are in Ghana?
- Discuss your thoughts before sharing with the class.

### Activity 6.5 Observe a Christian Religious Community Firsthand

Organise yourselves into small groups in order to visit a place of worship, where you are going to observe the practices of a Christian religious community.

Alternatively, if you are unable to visit a Christian religious community, you may watch videos and documentaries instead.

The following link may provide a starting point: [Faith Ministry TV](#)

1. In preparation for your visit, think about what you are going to be looking for, considering the following:
  - a. What different worship activities do you observe? (you may see things to do with dress, music styles or people's roles, for example)
  - b. What do you discover about their values and beliefs?
  - c. What do you notice about leadership?
  - d. What do you note about community life?
2. Remember that if you are visiting a religious community where worship is taking place, your behaviour should be respectful. Take note of these:
  - a. It may not be appropriate to make notes whilst you are there, so you must be prepared to be observant and record notes as soon as possible afterwards.
  - b. You *may* be able to take photos with permission, which you can use to illustrate your findings. You may also have the opportunity to interview members of the community.
3. After your visit, prepare a presentation for your class which details your observations. This might be a report, PowerPoint presentation or other format.

## CHANGING ROLES OF CHRISTIAN RELIGIOUS COMMUNITIES

### Concept Of Changing Roles In Religious Communities

#### 1. From Solely Spiritual to Socio-Political Engagement

Churches focused mainly on spiritual matters—preaching salvation, moral teaching, and preparing souls for the afterlife. Churches now speak out on national and political issues such as corruption, peace, governance, and elections.

**Example:** The *Christian Council of Ghana*, the *Catholic Bishops Conference*, and other ecumenical groups regularly issue public statements, hold prayer campaigns for peaceful elections, and serve as mediators during political conflicts or unrest.

#### 2. From Missionary Dependence to Indigenous Leadership

Early church leadership was dominated by foreign missionaries from Europe and North America who introduced Christian teachings. Indigenous pastors and theologians now lead most churches, shaping doctrine and worship to reflect African values and realities.

**Example:** Churches such as the *Church of Pentecost*, *Action Chapel*, and *Lighthouse Chapel International* are led by Ghanaians and have developed their own Bible schools and church governance models.

### 3. From Church-Based Education to National Educational Influence

Missionaries started with small mission schools teaching reading, writing and the Bible. Churches now run large educational institutions at all levels and influence national education policies.

**Example:** Universities like *Central University* (Presbyterian), *Valley View University* (SDA), and many mission-founded senior high schools (e.g., Mfantsipim, Holy Child) are among the best in the country.

### 4. From Limited Social Impact to Major Development Partners

Church activities were limited to community welfare—helping the needy with what little was available. Churches are now major actors in development—partnering with government and NGOs in health care, disaster response, youth development, and entrepreneurship.

**Example:** *Presbyterian Health Services*, *Catholic hospitals*, and *SDA clinics* are vital parts of Ghana's healthcare system.

### 5. From Conservative Gender Roles to Increasing Women's Participation

Women mostly served behind the scenes—in hospitality, singing and cleaning roles. Leadership roles were male-dominated. There is now wider acceptance of women in pastoral, teaching, and executive leadership roles, especially in Pentecostal and Evangelical circles.

**Example:** Some churches now ordain women as pastors, while others have women leading large prayer ministries and outreach programs.

### 6. From Traditional Worship to Modern Media and Technology Use

Worship was in-person only, with limited tools—often hymnbooks and traditional instruments. Churches embrace digital platforms like YouTube, Facebook Live, TikTok, and Zoom for virtual services, sermons, and outreach.

**Example:** *Perez Chapel* and *ICGC* livestream services; churches also use mobile apps for Bible studies and mobile money for offerings.

### 7. From Solely Urban Presence to Nationwide and Global Reach

Early mission churches were concentrated in urban coastal towns like Cape Coast, Accra, and Kumasi. Churches have expanded into rural areas, unreached communities, and have even established branches abroad.

**Example:** The *Church of Pentecost* has branches in Europe, North America, and Asia, with a strong global following.

### 8. From Dogmatic Authority to Youth-Centred Reforms

Church rules were strict and unquestioned; sermons rarely addressed the practical concerns of the youth. Churches now tailor programs for young people—addressing topics like career planning, emotional health, social media, relationships, and academic success.

**Example:** Many churches now have youth-focused services, mentorship clubs, and mental health awareness campaigns within their programs.

## Activity 6.6 Christian Religious Communities in Ghana: Past vs. Present

- Organise yourselves into small groups of no more than four people to complete this research task. You will compare the roles and characteristics of religious communities from the past to the present day.
- Use the information above as a starting point and explore other sources such as internet sites. The following examples might provide useful:
  - [www.graphic.com.gh](http://www.graphic.com.gh) (search "church social roles")
  - YouTube channels like *FaithMinistryTV*
- If there is an opportunity to, consider discussing this topic with an elder or other member of a religious community, to hear about their experiences and views.
- Complete the following table, adding the information that you find. An example has been started for you.
  - You will highlight some of the differences between the characteristics and roles of religious communities in the past and the present day.
  - You will need to conduct detailed research to find references to what religious communities were like in the past.
- Share your findings with the class and use the opportunity to add other examples that people have found.

Aspect	Past	Present
<b>Spiritual vs. Social Role</b>	Focused mainly on salvation, prayer and moral teaching.	Actively involved in socio-political issues—speaking on corruption, elections and peacebuilding.
<b>Leadership Structure</b>		
<b>Role in Education</b>		
<b>Social Services</b>		
<b>Gender Roles</b>		
<b>Worship Methods including technology</b>		
<b>Geographical Presence</b>		
<b>Youth Engagement</b>		

- Discuss the following questions and be prepared to share your ideas with the rest of the class

- a. Having looked at *how* religious communities in Ghana are changing, discuss *why* you think they have changed. You might look at each of the examples from the table in turn.
- b. What do you think have been the most significant changes? Why? Consider how these have impacted the community.
- c. How do you think that they might continue to develop? Do you think there are areas where religious communities could or should develop further? How do you see the role of the church changing in Ghana in the future?

## CHRISTIANITY AND INTER-RELIGIOUS RELATIONSHIPS IN GHANA

### Understanding Christianity and Inter-Religious Relationships in Ghana

You live in a country where many people follow different religions. Some of your classmates may be Christians, Muslims, or followers of African Traditional Religion. You may have seen Christians attending traditional festivals, or Muslims and Christians living peacefully in the same community.

In this lesson, you are going to explore how Christianity relates to other religions in Ghana. You will learn how people from different faiths interact, support each other, and sometimes face challenges. This topic will help you understand why peaceful living, respect, and cooperation between religions are very important in your community.

Get ready to share your own experiences, ask bold questions, and think about what it means to live in a religiously diverse country like Ghana.

### Historical and Social Encounters

Religion in Ghana has grown through centuries of interaction, movement, and dialogue.

1. **African Indigenous Religion (AIR)** is the earliest form of religion practiced by many ethnic groups in Ghana. It is deeply woven into traditional customs, family life, festivals, and moral teachings. It shaped how communities functioned long before the arrival of other religions.
2. **Islam** was the first foreign religion to arrive in Ghana. It came in the 11th century through trans-Saharan trade routes from North Africa. Muslim traders brought not only goods but also Arabic education, law, and religious values, especially in the northern parts of Ghana.
3. **Christianity** came later, beginning in the 15th century through contact with European traders and missionaries. Over time, churches, schools, and hospitals became tools for spreading the Christian faith, especially in southern Ghana.

These religions have developed side by side, often interacting in both peaceful and challenging ways as they shaped Ghanaian society.

## Areas of Interaction

Religions in Ghana do not exist in isolation. They often influence, challenge, and adapt to one another in various ways.

### 1. Mutual Influence

All three major religious traditions share communal values, such as respect for elders, hospitality, and communal celebrations. Religious leaders across faiths often take part in public events and sometimes in each other's ceremonies. You might see a Christian attending a Muslim wedding or a Muslim attending a traditional festival with religious roots.

### 2. Accommodation

Many churches now include African cultural elements like kente cloth, local languages, drums, and traditional music in worship. Similarly, some Islamic practices in Ghana, such as naming ceremonies and funeral customs, reflect local culture and AIR influence.

### 3. Conflict

Some Christian groups reject certain traditional practices like libation, drumming, and ancestral veneration, which they may view as un-Christian or even demonic.

There is also competition for followers, especially between newer charismatic churches, Islam, and traditional religions.

## Importance of Interfaith Understanding

Living peacefully in a multi-religious country like Ghana requires respect and cooperation. The following should be considered when looking at interfaith matters.

1. *Respect and Tolerance*: Understanding and appreciating other people's religious beliefs helps you to avoid judging, insulting, or hurting others. It creates a more peaceful and accepting environment, especially in schools and communities.
2. *National Development*: When religious groups work together on social projects such as fighting poverty, promoting education, or ensuring peaceful elections, the entire country benefits.
3. *Shared Moral Values*: Despite their differences, all major religions in Ghana teach values such as honesty, kindness, peace, and love. These shared values can form a strong foundation for building unity and cooperation among different faith groups.

### Activity 6.7 Your Turn to Decide!

Do you think a Ghanaian can be both Christian and still follow traditional practices?

1. Walk to the sign in the room that shows how you feel.  
 Strongly Agree |  Agree |  Disagree |  Strongly Disagree
2. In your corner, talk to others: Why do you feel that way?
3. Share your corner's ideas with the class and listen carefully to others' views.

- After listening, has anything changed your mind? Can you explain why or why not?
- Produce a written response to summarise your argument, reflecting others' points of view. Use specific examples (such as naming ceremonies or libation) to illustrate your points.

### Activity 6.8 Observing interfaith activity

- Think of one moment you saw African Traditional Religion and Christianity or Islam mixing. (e.g., drums at church, traditional symbols at a mosque)
- Write your example on a small sticky note and then pair up with the person sitting next to you to share your experiences.
- Join your pairs to form a group of four and share your points. Can you see any similarities in your examples?
- As a class, create an 'idea wall' - stick your examples along a wall and give time to allow everyone to look at others' examples.
- As a class, discuss what you observe. Can you see any common themes emerging? Are there areas where this overlap is more obvious? (For instance, does it occur more frequently in the music heard, or the symbols which are used?) Can you offer suggestions as to why this might be?

### Activity 6.9 Respecting others' beliefs

- Watch the video clip (by searching on the internet) or reflect on a cultural event you know (e.g., the Aboakyer Festival or a traditional Christian funeral).
- Make a note of how the religions are seen to mix and/or ways in which religions may potentially come into conflict.
- With the person sitting next to you, share your observations and discuss the following question: *'How do people show respect to both beliefs?'*

### Activity 6.10 Time to Compare Religions!

- Organise yourselves into groups of four and discuss how you could compare and contrast religions. For example, symbols, key beliefs, and rites of passage can all be compared and contrasted.
- Make a note of these and begin to discuss examples of each from the three religions – Christianity, Islam, and African Indigenous Religion

3. Create a chart with three columns, as shown below.

	Christianity	Islam	African Indigenous Religion)
Key beliefs			
Rites of passage			

4. Add as many examples as you can and then use colour to highlight
  - a. Shared practices
  - b. Differences
  - c. Common values
5. Share your work with the rest of the class and then discuss with your group what you have discovered whilst completing this activity.
  - a. Has anything surprised you?
  - b. What do you think are the most obvious similarities and differences?
  - c. Do you think there are more ways that religious groups can promote peace and understanding? How might they go about this?

SECTION

7

# RELIGION AND ENVIRONMENT



# INTRODUCTION

In this section, you will take a deep dive into how Christianity views the environment and your role in protecting it. You will explore the rich theological, moral, and ethical foundations that guide you as a Christian to care for God's creation. You will discover how deeply connected you are to the environment; just like the trees need the rain and the soil needs the sun, you, too, rely on the Earth, and the Earth relies on you. This mutual relationship is what helps life to flourish and remain in balance.

As you move forward, you will examine the real-life effects of human actions on the environment. You will look closely at both the good and the bad, such as how careless mining, deforestation, and improper waste disposal can damage the world you live in. Through this, you will see how your everyday decisions can either harm or heal the planet. Christian teachings will guide you to live responsibly, treat the Earth with respect, and speak up for those who suffer the most from environmental damage—especially the poor and vulnerable.

In the final part of this journey, you will discover how the values of Christianity and African Indigenous Religion can work hand in hand to promote environmental care. You will see how these two traditions, when brought together, offer powerful wisdom and practical solutions for protecting the environment in Ghana. By the end of this section, you will not only understand your role in caring for the Earth, but you will also be inspired to take action in your community.

## KEY IDEAS

- **Christian Stewardship of Creation:** Christianity teaches that humans are caretakers of God's creation, called to protect and sustain the environment as an act of obedience and love for God.
- **Interdependence of Humans and Nature:** Human life is deeply connected to nature—what affects the land, water, and air also affects human well-being and future generations.
- **Environmental Degradation and Human Responsibility:** Activities such as deforestation, illegal mining, pollution, and waste mismanagement harm the environment, and Christians are urged to act responsibly to reverse these effects.
- **Moral and Ethical Duty to Protect the Earth:** Caring for the environment is a moral obligation rooted in biblical teachings about justice, compassion, and respect for all forms of life.
- **Partnership between Christianity and African Indigenous Religion:** Both faith traditions share values of respect for nature, gratitude for creation, and responsible use of natural resources, offering complementary insights for environmental care.
- **Faith in Action for a Sustainable Future:** Christians are encouraged to translate their faith into practical steps—community clean-ups, tree planting, conservation, and advocacy—to restore and preserve the environment.

# INTERDEPENDENCE AMONG MEMBERS OF THE ENVIRONMENT

You are part of a world where everything is connected. All living things, plants, animals, and humans, depend on one another to survive. For example, you breathe in oxygen that trees produce, and they need the carbon dioxide you breathe out. This mutual support, or reliance, is called interdependence. It exists between you and every other living organism in the environment. You are not separate from nature—you are a part of it. This means your survival depends on the wellbeing of plants, animals, and other organisms, just as their survival often depends on your actions. These relationships are not simple; they form complex networks of support and exchange that keep life going on Earth. Without this balance, the entire system could break down. By understanding these relationships, you will see why it is important to care for every part of the environment, because when one part suffers, the rest are affected too.

## How You Depend on the Environment

The environment provides for almost every need you have. Here are some key ways you rely on it:

1. **Food** – You get your nourishment from the environment. This includes fruits, vegetables, grains, meat, fish, and other protein sources that all come from natural systems.
2. **Resources** – The environment supplies the raw materials you use for development and comfort, such as minerals, oil, timber, sand, and clay.
3. **Medicine** – Many healing plants grow in the wild. Traditional and modern medicines often come from roots, leaves, bark, and other plant parts.
4. **Habitation** – Your homes and shelters are built using materials like wood, stone, and clay that come directly from the environment.
5. **Aesthetics** – Nature adds beauty to your surroundings. Trees, flowers, green grasses, and flowing water all contribute to peace of mind and emotional wellbeing.
6. **Use of Animals** – You rely on animals for different purposes: they help with farming, provide transport, offer companionship and recreation, and even help in security (like guard dogs).
7. **Wealth and Livelihood** – Owning land, animals, or farming produce is a source of income and economic value. The environment makes this possible.

## How the Environment Depends on You

You are not just a user of the environment you are also a caretaker. The environment needs your protection and wise actions to remain healthy and productive. Here is how:

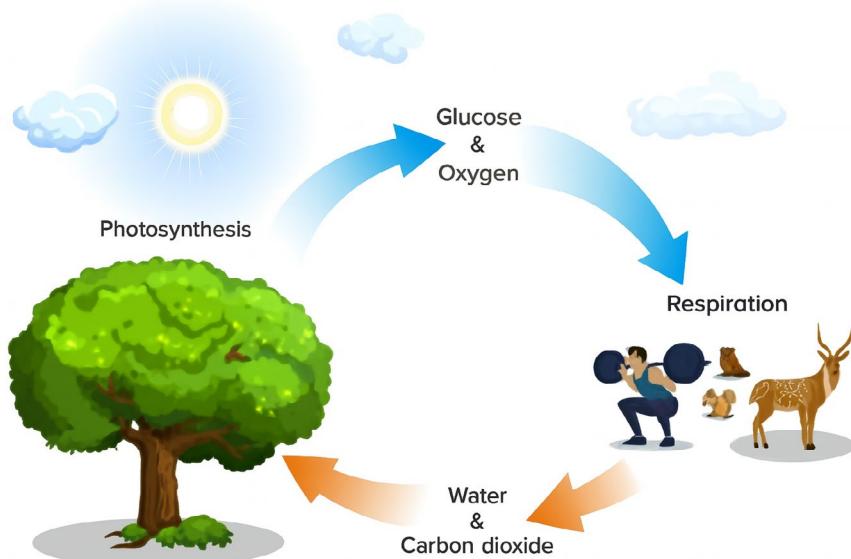
1. **Carbon Dioxide for Plants** – When you breathe out, you release carbon dioxide, which plants need for photosynthesis. In return, they give you oxygen.
2. **Nurture** – You help plants grow by applying manure and fertiliser, irrigating dry land, and removing harmful weeds.
3. **Reafforestation** – By planting trees where forests have been cut down, you help

restore balance in nature and prevent environmental damage like erosion and drought.

4. **Protection** – You protect the environment when you avoid littering, illegal mining, bush burning, and other harmful practices. Your care helps ecosystems survive.
5. **Spreading Life** – Through your farming, trade, and travel, you help spread plants and animals to new areas, assisting in pollination, reproduction, and growth in different regions.

## Symbiotic Relationship

The relationship between you and the environment is symbiotic. This means both sides benefit. When you care for the environment, it gives back to you in even greater measure. But if you neglect or destroy it, both you and future generations will suffer. Recognising this balance helps you make better choices that protect the planet and ensure survival for all forms of life.



**Figure 7.1: Symbiotic Relationship**

### Activity 7.1 Interdependence

1. Go on a nature walk around your school compound or a nearby natural area
2. During the walk, carefully observe your surroundings and identify objects and organisms (such as trees, insects, birds, soil, water sources, flowers, domestic animals, etc.) that show a symbiotic or interdependent relationship with humans.
3. Make notes and take pictures or short videos of what you observe.

4. Record how each object or organism contributes to human life and how humans affect or support it in return.
5. Return to class and organise yourselves into small groups in order to take part in a group discussion where you share and reflect on your findings. Consider the following questions
  - a. What examples of living or non-living things did you see that help humans survive?
  - b. How do you also support or affect those things you observed?
  - c. Imagine the world you observed without humans—how would the environment you explored be different? To what extent?
6. Using the internet, search for images or short video clips which document the interdependence between humans and the environment.
7. Produce a written response which explains the concept of interdependence, using the images you have collected to illustrate your points. Include your thoughts on how different the environment around you would be if humans were absent.

## Consequences of Human Activities on the Environment

Every action you take, whether big or small, leaves a mark on the environment. Human activities can both help and harm the world around you; while people rely on the environment for survival, they sometimes carry out actions like illegal mining, deforestation, pollution, and poor waste disposal that damage the very systems that support life.

These harmful actions lead to serious problems such as climate change, water shortages, extinction of species, and poor health. At the same time, some humans carry out positive actions—like tree planting, recycling, and environmental education—that help to heal and protect nature.

You have the power to shape the environment. Your choices matter. What you do today can either destroy or sustain the Earth for future generations.

## Positive Consequences of Human Activities on the Environment

Human beings can engage in actions that help protect, restore, and enhance the environment. Some of these include:

### 1. Regeneration of Plants / Reforestation

When you plant new trees to replace those that have been cut down, you help to restore forests, prevent soil erosion, and improve air quality. Reforestation also provides shelter and food for animals and helps maintain the water cycle.

## 2. Provision of Resources – Carbon Dioxide and Manure for Plants

Through respiration, you release carbon dioxide which is essential for plant photosynthesis. In addition, organic waste such as animal droppings and compost from human activities enrich the soil and promote healthy plant growth.

## 3. Protection of Organisms Through Religious Restrictions and Taboos

In many cultures, certain animals, rivers, or forests are considered sacred and are protected by taboos or religious beliefs. These practices help preserve biodiversity and prevent overexploitation of species or ecosystems.

## 4. Landscaping and Beautification

Planting flowers, grass, and trees in homes, schools, and communities not only improves the appearance of the environment but also reduces heat, purifies the air, and provides habitats for birds and insects.

# Negative Consequences of Human Activities on the Environment

Unfortunately, many human activities harm the environment, leading to long-term damage to ecosystems and human health. These include:

1. **Bad Agricultural Practices:** Practices like overuse of chemical fertilisers and pesticides, slash-and-burn farming, and over-cultivation lead to soil degradation, water pollution, and loss of soil fertility. This reduces crop yields and destroys soil life.
2. **Irresponsible Mining:** Unregulated mining destroys vegetation, pollutes water bodies with harmful chemicals like mercury, and leaves open pits that are dangerous to both humans and animals. It also contributes to land degradation and displacement of communities.
3. **Improper Waste Disposal:** Throwing waste into drains, rivers, or open spaces causes pollution, spreads disease, and creates breeding grounds for mosquitoes and rodents. Plastic waste, in particular, takes hundreds of years to decompose and harms wildlife.
4. **Irresponsible Hunting and Fishing Practices:** Overhunting and overfishing reduce animal populations and disrupt food chains. Using harmful methods like dynamite or poison in fishing destroys aquatic life and pollutes water bodies.
5. **Modernisation – Buildings, Roads, and Other Infrastructure:** While development is necessary, the uncontrolled expansion of cities leads to deforestation, loss of wetlands, and fragmentation of habitats. It can also increase flooding and reduce green spaces needed for healthy living.
6. **Overexploitation of Natural Resources:** When you extract more resources—like timber, fish, or minerals—than the environment can replace, you cause depletion. This threatens the survival of future generations and endangers many plant and animal species.



**Figure 7.2: Galamsey**

### Activity 7.2 Observing how humans destroy the environment

1. You may have the opportunity to participate in a field trip to a local site (e.g., illegal mining area, refuse dump, or sand-winning site). This is your chance to observe firsthand how human activities affect the environment. While you are there:
  - a. Take clear photographs of the site, focusing on evidence of environmental damage (e.g., polluted water, tree stumps, piles of waste).
  - b. Make detailed notes or record voice memos describing what you observe, smell, hear, and feel at the site.
  - c. If possible, interview at least one community member to gather insights into how the activities have affected the area and the people.
2. When you return, share your findings with the class, considering the following questions:
  - a. What signs of environmental damage did you observe?
  - b. How are people in the area affected by these activities?
  - c. What do you feel are the most pressing environmental issues at the site?
  - d. What actions could help improve the situation?
3. Record your findings for your own notes.

### Activity 7.3 Examples of environmental concerns

1. Organise yourselves into a group of four and use the internet to find examples of human activities which are harming the environment. These examples could be videos, articles, news reports or other types of media.
2. Look for examples in Ghana and also in another country such as Kenya or India.
3. Prepare a presentation of your findings, highlighting:
  - a. what the activities are
  - b. what the consequences are for the environment
  - c. how people are responding (solutions or actions)
  - d. How these actions are having an impact
4. Present your findings to the class.

### Activity 7.4 Learn from an expert

You will have the opportunity to meet someone involved in this field, (e.g., someone from the Environmental Protection Agency or a local environmental activist). This person will speak to you about the consequences of human activities on the environment, especially in Ghana.

1. Before their visit, prepare questions that you would like them to answer.
  - a. What are the most harmful human activities in Ghana today?
  - b. How do such activities affect the health of people and animals?
  - c. What role can young people like you play in protecting the environment?
2. During the Session ask your questions, take notes, and listen carefully to the answers.
3. After their visit, discuss what you have learnt with the person sat next to you. Did anything surprise you? What are the key things you will take away from their presentation?
4. Record your reflections in written form.

## TEACHINGS OF CHRISTIANITY ON THE ENVIRONMENT

This section invites you on a meaningful journey to explore how Christianity teaches us to care for the Earth—our common home. You'll uncover how the Bible speaks about nature, the role of human beings as caretakers, and what it truly means to be responsible stewards of God's creation. Through real-life examples, biblical insights, and practical actions, you will gain not just knowledge, but also inspiration to live out your faith in ways that protect and preserve the environment.

Let's dive into the key Christian teachings that shape how believers understand and respond to environmental issues.

## Creation is Good and Comes from God

In the beginning, the Bible tells us, God created the world—and everything in it. Genesis chapters 1 and 2 describe the universe not as a random accident, but as a beautiful and purposeful creation, made by God and declared “very good” (Genesis 1:31). Humans were given a special role—to reflect God's image and care for His creation. Genesis 2:15 tells us we were placed in the Garden of Eden “to till it and keep it.” This means we are to nurture, protect, and work in harmony with nature, not destroy or abuse it.

## Stewardship Means Responsibility, Not Domination

Some people have misunderstood Genesis 1:28—“Have dominion over the fish... birds... and every living thing”—as permission to exploit nature. But Christianity teaches that “dominion” means stewardship, not domination. Psalm 24:1 reminds us: “The Earth is the Lord's, and everything in it.” That means the world does not belong to us—we are caretakers, trusted to manage it wisely and responsibly.

## Everything in Creation is Connected

Christianity sees nature as a vast, interconnected web of life. Nothing stands alone. In Romans 8:19–22, creation is described as “groaning” alongside humanity, longing for renewal. Colossians 1:16–17 teaches that all things were made through Christ and are held together in Him. This shows that everything—from oceans to animals to humans—is spiritually connected through Christ.

## Nature Reflects God's Glory

Have you ever watched a sunrise or listened to birdsong and felt a sense of wonder? Psalm 19:1 declares, “The heavens declare the glory of God.” Nature reveals God's beauty, power, and order. So when we care for the environment, we are not just being responsible citizens—we are honouring the Creator. Respecting nature becomes an act of worship and reverence.

## Environmental Harm is a Result of Sin

Christian theology teaches that environmental destruction is not just a physical problem—it's a spiritual one too. Human greed, selfishness, and neglect lead to pollution, deforestation, and climate change. In Jeremiah 2:7, God rebukes His people: “I brought you into a fertile land... but you defiled my land.” This shows that turning away from God's guidance has real consequences for the Earth.

## Environmental Justice and Care for the Poor

Environmental issues often hurt the most vulnerable people the hardest—those who depend directly on the land, air, and water for survival. Proverbs 14:31 warns that “whoever oppresses the poor shows contempt for their

Maker.” Christian teachings, especially Catholic Social Teaching, link ecological care with social justice. Caring for creation means standing with the poor.

## Sabbath Teaches Us to Rest and Respect Limits

In the Bible, even the land is given rest. Exodus 23:10–11 and Leviticus 25 introduce the idea of the Sabbath for the land, where fields lie fallow every seventh year. This principle teaches that endless exploitation of resources is wrong. Just as humans need rest, the Earth needs time to recover. Practicing restraint is part of God’s wisdom.

## A New Creation is Coming

Christian hope includes not just the redemption of people but of the whole world. Revelation 21:1 speaks of “a new heaven and a new earth.” This powerful vision affirms that God has not given up on creation. Nature has eternal value in God’s plan—and we are called to work toward its renewal, not its destruction.

## What Christians Can Do Today

Living out Christian beliefs means taking practical steps to care for the planet. Some of these include:

1. **Sustainable Living:** Reduce waste, recycle, use resources wisely, and choose eco-friendly habits.
2. **Advocacy:** Speak out and support environmental laws and policies that protect ecosystems and vulnerable communities.
3. **Spiritual Practices:** Include themes of creation and care for the environment in prayer, worship, and Christian education.
4. **Community Action:** Start or join clean-up projects, plant trees, create green church spaces, and promote eco-theology in your church.

## Christian Environmental Initiatives in Ghana

Across the country, many churches and Christian organizations are already making a difference:

1. **Environmental Education & Awareness:** Many churches teach about caring for creation during youth fellowships, sermons, and Bible studies.
2. **Tree Planting Campaigns**
  - a. *Arbor Week* initiatives encourage schools and churches to plant trees.
  - b. *Laudato Si' Action Programmed* by the Catholic Church promotes ecological awareness.
  - c. *Church of Pentecost's Environmental Care Campaign* includes tree planting and environmental cleanups.
  - d. *ADRA Ghana* (supported by the Seventh-day Adventist Church) leads nationwide reforestation projects.
3. **Clean-Up Exercises:** Churches organise regular sanitation campaigns in communities to demonstrate love for neighbour and creation.

## Activity 7.5 Christians working to protect the environment

Organise yourselves into groups of four for this activity. Work with different people to those you last worked with. You are going to research ways in which Christians are working to protect the environment.

1. There may be opportunity to visit a Christian-led environmental activity (like a tree planting or clean-up) in your local area. Otherwise, you can use the internet to research examples (look for articles, interviews, documentaries or other sources of information).
2. Make a note of the following:
  - a. What the people are doing to help the environment
  - b. Are their actions being taken to address an immediate need in the environment?
  - c. Are they sharing their faith with others as they do this? (For example, are they displaying Christian symbols?)
  - d. Can you find out why they feel it is important for them to do this? Is their faith guiding them to this activity?
  - e. Do they mention any specific teachings from the Bible or Christian values which lead them to act in this way?
3. Produce a presentation to share your findings with the rest of the class.

## Activity 7.6 Interview a Christian Leader – Learn from Their Faith

You will have the opportunity to listen to a Christian talk about teachings which highlight the importance of looking after the environment.

1. Consider what you would like to find out more about and note down questions you would like to ask them. You might want to ask how their church works to protect the environment, putting these teachings into action.
2. After you have spoken with them, create short article, blog post or voice note summarising what you have learnt, titled “Faith and the Environment: Lessons from a Christian Leader.”

## Activity 7.7 Discovering What the Bible Says About the Environment

You are going to work in pairs, with the person sat next to you, to explore Bible teachings in more detail. You will take each of these verses in turn, reading it carefully to yourself, and then discuss the questions below. Make notes on your ideas.

- Genesis 2:15
- Psalm 24:1
- Romans 8:22
- Revelation 21:1

1. What is God telling humans about the Earth in this verse?
2. Hope might this help Christians

**Reflect on the following questions.**

- What is God telling humans about the Earth in this verse?
- How does this help Christians make better choices for the environment?
3. Show what you have learned by creating a Bible verse poster, poem, or short reflection titled: **“God’s Message for the Earth.”**
4. Past this poster in the classroom or at a place where all can see.

## CHRISTIAN VALUES REGARDING THE ENVIRONMENT

You are part of a world that is beautiful, rich, and full of life. According to the Christian faith, this world is not here by accident. God created the earth and everything in it with care and purpose. As human beings, we have been given a special role—not to destroy or misuse creation, but to protect and care for it.

Christian values teach that caring for the environment is more than a duty—it is an act of love and respect for God and for others. When you plant a tree, clean your surroundings, or avoid wasting resources, you are living out the values of stewardship, responsibility, and justice.

As you explore these Christian teachings, think about how your actions affect the world around you. Ask yourself: How can I help protect creation? What does my faith say about pollution, climate change, and the destruction of nature? Through this topic, you will discover how your daily choices connect to your spiritual beliefs and how you can make a positive difference in the world. Christians have values that shape its perspective on the environment. These values are derived from scripture, theology, and centuries of ethical reflection. Some of these values are as follows:

### Stewardship – a Caretaker, Not an Owner

God has placed humans in charge of the earth—not to misuse it, but to take care of it. We are stewards, caretakers of God’s creation. In *Genesis 1:26–28*, God gives humans “dominion” over creation, but this means responsible care, not destruction. In *Genesis 2:15*, God puts Adam in the Garden “to work it and take care of it” and this is seen as everyone’s role in today’s world.

### Examples of stewardship

1. conserving water, energy, and other natural resources
2. reducing waste and avoiding polluting the environment
3. supporting activities that preserve wildlife and promote sustainable living.

## Creation Is Sacred – Nature Has Worth Because God Made It

Nature is not just useful—it is holy, because it was made by God. Every plant, animal, and natural element has value. In *Psalm 24:1* says, “The earth is the Lord’s, and everything in it.” *Genesis 1* reminds us repeatedly that “God saw that it was good.” *Colossians 1:16–17* shows that everything was created through and for Christ.

Christians take this to mean that we should treat all nature with respect and avoid actions that harm God’s creation, including exploiting the earth’s resources.

## Interconnectedness of all life

Christians see all life as deeply connected, meaning that humans are not independent of the natural world around them. What happens to the environment affects every human life. *Romans 8:19–22* shows that creation suffers because of human sin, while *Job 12:7–10* teaches that nature reveals God’s power, wisdom and care. Christians are compelled to understand that destroying nature harms people, animals, and future generations. They should choose actions that promote balance and harmony in the natural world and demonstrate respect for the role of every living thing in God’s creation.

## Justice and Equity

Environmental problems often hurt the poor and vulnerable the most and so Christians are called to speak up and act for justice. *Proverbs 31:8–9* says to “speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves.” *Micah 6:8* calls believers to “act justly, love mercy, and walk humbly.” Christians take this to mean that they should:

- be concerned about poor communities suffering from pollution and resource loss
- support policies that protect clean water, air, and food for all
- Think about how our choices affect others around the world.

## Gratitude and Simplicity

Instead of chasing after more and more, Christian values call us all to live simply and gratefully.<sup>1</sup> *Timothy 6:6–8* says, “Godliness with contentment is great gain. “*Matthew 6:19–21* warns not to store up treasures on earth. Ways in which humans can show gratitude include saying “thank you” to God by wasting less and sharing more avoiding habits of overconsumption and materialism choosing eco-friendly products and lifestyles that care for the earth.

## Hope and Renewal – Belief That the Earth Can Be Restored

The Bible does not teach that the earth will be destroyed—it teaches that it will be renewed, offering hope to all.. *Revelation 21:1–5* describes a new heaven and a new earth, while *Romans 8:21* says creation will be set free from decay. **In practice, this means that we should:** not give up on the environment—there is still hope be part of efforts that clean, restore, and renew natural spaces care for the environment to reflect belief in God’s promise of renewal.

## Responsibility and Redemption

1. The Bible shows that human sin damages creation, but through repentance and action, healing is possible. *Hosea 4:1–3* links human sin to environmental destruction. *2 Chronicles 7:14* says God will heal the land when people turn back to Him.
2. **Christianity teaches that we should:** acknowledge how human actions (including our own) harm the earth turn away from careless or greedy habits take active steps to restore the land, plant trees, reduce waste, and speak up for change.
3. As you reflect on these values, ask yourself: *What kind of world do I want to leave behind? How can my Christian faith guide my choices for the environment?* You have a vital role in protecting God's creation. Let your actions reflect your faith.

### Activity 7.8 Field Trip – See How Christians Care for the Earth

1. Create a small group with people in your class in order to plan a visit to a Christian environmental project site. Examples might include tree planting, clean-up exercises, or awareness campaigns led by Christian groups or churches.
2. Alternatively, you might research projects using the Internet.
3. When you conduct your visit or research you should do the following, in order to be able to feed back to your findings to the class.
  - a. Collect pictures to show the environmental action taking place.
  - b. Investigate how this action started, who started it and why.
  - c. Ask questions to understand why the people have become involved in this project, thinking about their faith in particular. You might ask question such as *How does your Christian faith influence your view of the environment?*
  - d. Use your findings to prepare a presentation for the class, to explain what you have discovered about this environmental project.

### Activity 7.9 Interview a Christian Leader

1. Organise yourselves into small groups of no more than five and arrange to meet with a Christian resource person (e.g., church leader or Christian NGO worker) to discuss his/her view about Christian values related to the environment.
2. Before your meeting decide on the questions you want to ask. For example:
  - a. *What do Christian teachings say about protecting nature?*
  - b. *Why is the environment important in your faith?*
3. During the conversation do the following.

- a. Ask your questions politely and listen carefully.
- b. Write down the key points of the answers or record (if permitted).
4. After the meeting with the expert think about what you heard.
  - a. What surprised or impressed you?
  - b. What Christian values were mentioned (e.g., stewardship, care, justice)?
5. Create a short summary to share in class.

### Activity 7.10 What Does the Bible Say About the Environment?

1. You will use the following Bible verses about the environment to complete this task.
  - a. Genesis 2:15
  - b. Psalm 24:1
  - c. Romans 8:22
  - d. Revelation 21:1
2. Read each verse in turn and complete the following.
  - a. Copy the verse and add the Bible reference.
  - b. Explain what you think it means in your own words.
  - c. Consider questions you might have about this verse, in readiness for a class discussion.
  - d. Create a poster, using the verse and the message it is telling us.

## CHRISTIAN AND AIR VALUES ON THE PROTECTION OF THE ENVIRONMENT

Both Christianity and African Indigenous Religion (AIR) guide people to protect the environment. These two faiths may come from different roots, but they share common values such as respect for nature, living in harmony with the earth, and caring for future generations. In this lesson, you will discover how each tradition teaches that the environment is sacred and must be protected—not just for human benefit, but because it reflects something greater. As you learn, reflect on how these values can guide your actions in caring for the world around you.

### What Christianity Teaches About the Environment

You have read the creation story of Genesis, which teaches that God created the world and saw that it was good. This tells us that humans are not just part of this creation, they are called to care for it. In Genesis 2:15, humans are placed in the garden “to tend and keep it.” That means they are a caretaker or steward, not the owner.

When we pollute or waste resources, it is not only bad for nature, but also a moral and spiritual problem. As a Christian, you are expected to act with love, justice, and

moderation. Think of your daily actions—do they reflect care for the world God made? When you recycle, plant trees, or reduce plastic use, you are living out your faith. Remember, the Bible also speaks of God restoring creation (Romans 8:21), so your efforts matter.

## What AIR Teaches About the Environment

In African Indigenous Religion, humans are connected to the environment not just physically but spiritually. You may have heard elders talk about sacred rivers, groves, or mountains. These are not just places—they are home to spirits and ancestors. So, when you enter such places, you are expected to show deep respect.

AIR teaches us to live in harmony with nature through taboos and traditions. For example, some days are set aside where no farming or fishing is allowed, giving nature time to rest. You may have also seen rituals, like libation, used to honour the spirits of the land. In AIR, if you harm the environment, it is believed that you offend the spirits, which brings spiritual consequences for the whole community.

## What Christianity and AIR Have in Common

You may be surprised at how much both religions agree on when it comes to nature. Both traditions teach us to.

1. Respect nature as something sacred or given by a higher power.
2. Take communal responsibility, working together rather than as individuals to care for the earth.
3. Use rituals and celebrations (like Christian harvest festivals or AIR libations) to give thanks for the gifts of nature.
4. Believe that moral living affects how nature responds.

As you learn more, think about how these shared values can help solve today's environmental problems.

## How They Differ

Even though Christianity and AIR agree on many things, there are some key differences you should understand.

1. Who owns nature? In Christianity, God owns it, and you are the caretaker. In AIR, nature is spiritually alive and linked to ancestors and deities.
2. How teachings are passed on: Christianity uses the Bible, while AIR uses oral traditions—stories, proverbs, and rituals.
3. What happens when you harm nature? In AIR, you may face ancestral wrath; in Christianity, you are called to repent and seek God's forgiveness.
4. Knowing these differences helps you appreciate both traditions and how they shape people's attitudes toward the earth.

## Why This Matters in Ghana Today

Look around you illegal mining (galamsey), deforestation, plastic waste, and polluted rivers are serious problems in Ghana. These are not just environmental issues, they are also moral and cultural challenges. What role can you play?

Both Christianity and AIR offer you a moral compass. They can guide you to take care of nature, speak out against harm, and influence others to do the same. Religious leaders in Ghana are already working together to fight environmental destruction. When you understand and apply the teachings from both traditions, you become part of the solution.

You live in a country with rich spiritual heritage—use it to protect your future and your environment.

### Activity 7.11 Compare Religious Views on Nature

1. Organise yourselves into small groups to discuss your understanding of how Christianity and AIR view nature and the environment.
2. Think about ways in which they are similar
3. Think about ways in which they are different
4. Try to use key terms, values and teachings in your contributions.
5. Listen carefully to each other's ideas and be prepared to share your group's ideas with the class.

### Activity 7.12 Mapping Environmental Values and teachings in Christianity and AIR

1. Take a sheet of paper or open a digital tool and draw two large columns—label one “Christianity” and the other “AIR.”
2. In each column, write key environmental values and teachings (e.g., stewardship, sacredness, moderation). Add examples to illustrate your points.
3. Draw arrows or lines connecting similar values between the two religions.
4. Try to include at least 3 unique values under each religion that do not connect.
5. Share your map with the person next to you and discuss what you found most surprising.

### Activity 7.13 What Do Sacred Texts Say About Nature?

1. Read a set of short Christian and AIR quotations (provided by your teacher or textbook).

2. Underline any key words that show how the religion views the environment (e.g., "good", "sacred", "respect", "dominion").
3. Working with the person next to you, take turns explaining what you think each quotation means in your own words.
4. Compare the message of a Christian quotation with one from AIR—are they saying something similar?
5. Write down two values that appear in both sets of quotes.

### Activity 7.14 Applying teachings to a specific environmental issue

Organise yourselves into small groups of 3 or 4 and choose one specific environmental issue to focus on (for example, water conservation or land use).

1. Using the teachings you used in the previous task, write down each teaching and make notes about how it can be applied to the issue. Use at least three from each religion.
2. Use the Internet to research further teachings if you have time, making notes to record your findings.
3. Discuss as a group and compare similarities and differences.
4. Prepare a simple class presentation to explain your findings. Be prepared to answer questions on your work.

### Activity 7.15 Which Values Matter Most for Ghana's Environment?

1. Join to form a group of not more than 5.
2. In your group, look at a list of 5 environmental values from Christianity and AIR (e.g., reverence for nature, community use of land, living simply, etc.).
3. Together, discuss what each value means and how it applies to life in Ghana today.
4. Rank the values from 1 (most important) to 5 (least important) based on your group's opinion.
5. Prepare a short explanation for why you ranked the top 3 where you did.
6. Share your rankings with the class and listen to the ideas of other groups.
7. Reflect individually: Which value would *you personally* rank highest, and why?

## Activity 7.16 Learning from Videos: Faith and the Environment

1. Use the internet to search for short videos on religious views on the environment (Christianity and AIR).
2. Watch at least one video each on Christian and AIR perspectives of the environment.
3. After watching the videos, write down key teachings or quotes that stand out to you.
4. Summarise the main message of each video in 3–4 sentences.
5. Join a class discussion and share what you learned from the videos.
6. Reflect on one action you could take, based on a value you learned from the videos.

## EXTENDED READING

- [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4Qp\\_Um1bWsc](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4Qp_Um1bWsc)
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RoIpCJwX7-M>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5NctlCOcGRM>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KgXbKzjieZQ>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b3eeFGtsscc>
- [Presby Church Clean-up campaign in Techiman](#)
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Kjg-DWNq-1k>

# REVIEW QUESTIONS 7

1. What is interdependence in the environment?
2. Mention two human activities that can harm the environment.
3. Explain how plants and animals depend on each other to survive. Describe one way that deforestation can affect water bodies.
4. Why do Christians believe they must care for the environment?
5. Compare how Christianity and African Indigenous Religion (AIR) teach people to protect the environment.
6. How can the Christian value of “stewardship” guide people to live in an eco-friendly way?
7. Create a short message to your community encouraging people to stop polluting the environment using Christian teachings.
8. Design a simple action plan for your class to protect the school environment using lessons from Christianity and AIR.
9. Analyse how illegal mining affects the environment and how religious teaching.

SECTION

8

# RELIGION, SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY AND THE ENVIRONMENT



# INTRODUCTION

Have you ever thought about how your actions affect the world around you? Every time you throw away plastic, plant a tree, or even use your mobile phone, you play a part in shaping the environment. You live in a world where religion, science, and technology are all connected to the way you treat nature.

In this topic, you will explore how your beliefs about God and creation (religion), your understanding of nature (science), and the tools you use every day (technology) all influence the environment. You will learn how to care for the earth not just because it is right, but because your faith, your knowledge, and your choices all demand it.

As you study, you will be challenged to think deeply about your daily habits. You will compare how religion and science offer different but sometimes similar ways of protecting the environment. You will discover how technology can help solve problems or create new ones, depending on how you use it.

By the end of this unit, you will not only gain knowledge—you will be ready to act. You will be able to make decisions that protect the earth and reflect both your values and your understanding of the world.

Are you ready to explore how your faith, your mind, and your actions come together to shape a better environment?

## KEY IDEAS

- **Religious View of Creation and Stewardship:** Religion teaches that God created the earth and humans have a sacred duty to care for and protect it as stewards of creation.
- **Scientific Understanding of Nature:** Science helps explain how natural systems work and provides evidence-based knowledge for solving environmental problems like pollution, deforestation, and climate change.
- **Technology's Dual Impact:** Technology can either harm the environment through waste and exploitation or help preserve it through innovations like renewable energy and recycling systems.
- **Harmony between Faith and Science:** Both religion and science can work together to promote environmental sustainability. Faith motivates moral responsibility while science provides practical solutions.
- **Human Responsibility and Ethical Choices:** Every individual's daily actions such as waste management, energy use, and consumption reflect moral and ethical choices that affect the planet.
- **Sustainable Living and Global Citizenship:** Environmental care is not only a scientific or religious duty but also a civic and global responsibility, requiring cooperation, awareness, and action for a sustainable future.

# SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY AND THE ENVIRONMENT

## Science as a Method of Enquiry

Science is a way of learning about the world through careful observation and logical reasoning. It involves collecting **empirical data** (information gained through the senses or instruments), and it focuses on **objectivity**, meaning that personal opinions or emotions must not affect the results. Scientific methods include **experiments, measurements, and observations**, which help you to find out how things work in the natural world.

Science follows a step-by-step process:

1. You **observe** things in nature
2. You **ask questions** about what you see
3. You **form ideas or hypotheses** to explain them
4. You **test your ideas** through experiments
5. You **analyse results** and draw conclusions
6. You use those results to ask **new questions** and keep discovering

Science helps you to solve problems—whether they relate to disease, agriculture, climate, or pollution. It is always searching for evidence and explanations that can be tested and verified by others.

## Technology as the Application of Science

Technology is the use of scientific knowledge to make tools, machines, systems, or processes that help human life. You see technology all around you—in phones, vehicles, farming tools, energy systems, and even clean water supply.

Technology allows you to **manipulate or change the natural environment** to meet human needs. For example:

1. Building dams to control water
2. Using tractors to farm large lands
3. Creating solar panels to capture sunlight and generate electricity

Without technology, many of the advances you enjoy today in health, communication, and transportation would not exist.

## Contributions of Science and Technology to Environmental Protection

Science and technology have played a key role in helping you and others understand, protect, and preserve the environment. Below are detailed contributions:

## Understanding the Earth through Scientific Research and Artificial Intelligence (AI)

1. Scientists use satellites, sensors, and AI to monitor weather patterns, climate change, and pollution levels.
2. AI helps predict environmental disasters like floods, droughts, and earthquakes, so you can prepare and reduce damage.
3. Research helps you understand how human actions harm the earth and provides solutions to restore balance.

## Efficient Production and Waste Reduction

1. Technology has made farming, manufacturing, and energy production more efficient, so less waste is created.
2. Machines now use fewer raw materials and create fewer harmful by-products.
3. Industries can recycle or reuse waste, reducing the amount that ends up in landfills.

## Development of Green or Clean Technology

1. Clean energy technologies like **solar panels**, **wind turbines**, and **hydropower systems** reduce the use of fossil fuels.
2. Electric cars produce fewer harmful gases than petrol or diesel vehicles.
3. New machines help clean polluted water and treat sewage safely.

## Raising Environmental Awareness through Internet Technology

1. Websites, videos, and social media platforms help you learn about the environment and how to care for it.
2. Scientists can quickly share findings across the world using the internet.
3. Environmental campaigns reach more people and inspire action to protect the planet.

## Preservation of Forests through Digital Tools

1. Cameras, drones, and satellite images help track illegal logging and monitor forest health.
2. Using phones, computers, and digital storage reduces paper use, which means fewer trees are cut down.
3. Apps and mapping tools help locate endangered species and design protected areas.

## Sustainable Agriculture and Resource Management

1. New scientific knowledge helps farmers grow more food on less land using fewer chemicals.
2. Technology improves irrigation systems to save water.
3. Soil testing and smart farming tools help protect the land and keep it fertile.

## Recycling of Waste Using Science and Technology

1. Machines sort and process plastic, glass, and metal to be reused.
2. Biodegradable materials and composting methods turn food and organic waste into useful fertiliser.
3. Scientific studies help improve recycling methods and reduce pollution from waste.

### Activity 8.1 Using Science and technology to care for the environment

You will interact with a guest from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) or a science-related profession.

1. Before the visit, write down at least three questions you would like to ask the guest about how science and technology help protect the environment.
2. In pairs, discuss your questions and improve them together.
3. During the session, listen carefully and take notes as the guest explains their work.
4. After the talk, share one key point you learned with your group.
5. As a group, create a short poster or presentation that shows how science and technology are used in real life to care for the environment.

### Activity 8.2 Your research how science and technology protect the environment

You will work in groups with classmates to explore how science and technology protect the environment.

1. Form a group with 4 of your classmates.
2. Use a range of sources, including books, simplified articles, or websites, to find at least 3 examples of how science or technology protects the environment (e.g., solar energy, recycling machines, pollution control).
3. Share what you found with your group in simple language, so everyone understands.
4. Together, record your research in a simple way, using pictures, key facts and real life examples.

### Activity 8.3 Learn from Videos and Lead the Talk

Watch educational videos and summarise what you learn for a class discussion.

1. With your group of at most 5, choose a short **educational video** (3–5 minutes) on how science or technology is used to protect the environment (e.g., using solar panels, AI in farming, smart water systems).
2. Watch the video and take simple notes—write down the main idea and 2–3 supporting points.
3. In your group, discuss the key ideas and make sure everyone understands.
4. Prepare to present your summary to the class in just 1–2 minutes.
5. During the class discussion, ask or answer questions from other groups based on what you learned.

## CHALLENGES IN USING SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY ALONE TO SOLVE ENVIRONMENTAL PROBLEMS

You may believe that science and technology can solve all environmental problems, but is that entirely true? As you begin this topic, you will discover that although science and technology provide powerful tools such as solar panels, water purification systems, and environmental monitoring devices, they cannot work on their own.

### Think about this

- a. What happens when people know what is right but still choose to burn waste, pollute rivers, or destroy forests?
- b. What if a community cannot afford clean energy solutions?
- c. What if people do not understand how to use the technology available, or worse, choose to ignore it?

In this lesson, you will explore why science, and technology must be combined with human values, education, cooperation, and responsibility. Some of the challenges you will examine include:

1. High cost and limited access to environmental technologies
2. Lack of public education and awareness
3. Harmful habits and cultural practices that go against environmental care
4. Dependence on machines without changing personal behaviour

By the end of this topic, you will understand that science alone is not enough. Real environmental solutions need people like you to act wisely, responsibly, and with care for the earth.

Are you ready to explore the deeper reasons why we need more than just science and technology to save the environment?

## Weaknesses of Science and Technology in Environmental Protection

While science and technology have made remarkable contributions to solving environmental problems, they also come with significant limitations. These weaknesses remind us that knowledge and innovation alone are not enough—they must be guided

by values, ethics, and a deep respect for the natural world.

### **Science and technology may have the knowledge and know-how but lack the values to direct this knowledge to serve all of humankind in an equitable way**

Science is based on facts, experiments, and data—not on emotions or moral beliefs. It can tell you how to build a machine that reduces pollution, but it cannot tell you whether it should be used in a way that is fair or just. For example, advanced water purification systems may exist, but they are often available only in rich communities, while poor communities suffer from unsafe water. This shows that without ethical guidance and human values such as justice, fairness, and compassion, scientific knowledge may not benefit everyone equally.

Science does not automatically promote kindness, responsibility, or concern for the future. Without these guiding principles, knowledge can be misused, or worse, used to exploit people and nature.

### **Science and technology often see the world from a materialistic perspective, focusing on how nature can be used or exploited for human benefit**

Scientific and technological thinking is often based on the idea that the earth and its resources exist to serve human needs. This view treats forests, rivers, animals, and even the air as resources to be controlled, extracted, and used for economic gain. For example, mining operations use powerful technology to extract minerals, but this often destroys landscapes, pollutes rivers, and displaces communities.

This mindset ignores the idea that nature has intrinsic value—meaning that it is valuable not just because of what it can give to humans, but because it has a right to exist. Without a deeper spiritual or moral connection to the earth, science and technology may lead to short-term gain at the cost of long-term harm.

### **Science and technology can create more environmental problems while trying to solve human problems**

Ironically, some technologies meant to improve human life end up causing new environmental challenges. For example;

1. Pesticides and chemical fertilisers were developed to increase food production, but they also pollute soil and water, and harm insects and animals.
2. Factories and machines increase production and convenience but also release greenhouse gases that worsen climate change.
3. Plastic was invented to make life easier, but now it fills landfills and oceans, threatening marine life.

This is known as the technological paradox—when solving one problem creates another.

It shows the need for careful planning, ethical reflection, and long-term thinking when applying scientific solutions.

## Science and technology are often over-focused on material prosperity, which may go against the sustainable use of the environment

The main goal of many scientific and technological advancements is to increase production, wealth, and convenience. While this may bring comfort and economic growth, it often leads to overconsumption and waste. The push for newer phones, faster cars, and bigger factories can result in deforestation, pollution, and the destruction of ecosystems.

Sustainability means using resources in a way that does not destroy them for future generations. However, the profit-driven nature of many technologies promotes short-term success over long-term environmental care. Unless science and technology are guided by values like moderation, humility, and respect for life, they can speed up environmental degradation rather than stop it.

### Activity 8.4 Parliamentary Debate – Take a Role and Speak Up

You will take part in a mock parliamentary debate on the motion: “*Science and Technology Alone Can Solve Environmental Problems*.” Your role is to represent a specific viewpoint and contribute to the discussion based on your assigned position and level of ability.

1. Choose or be assigned a role (e.g., Government Minister, Environmental Activist, Religious Leader, Village Elder, Technology Expert).
2. Read a short description of your role and what you believe about science, technology, and the environment.
3. With your group, prepare your arguments for or against the motion. Use points you have learned and your own reflections.
4. Take turns presenting your views in a respectful debate format. Listen to others and respond where necessary.
5. After the debate, reflect as a class: *Was science and technology enough? What else is needed to protect the environment?*

## Activity 8.5 Learn from an Expert on the limitation of relying on only Science and technology in environmental protection

You will meet a visiting expert (e.g., environmental educator, scientist, or EPA officer) to learn about the limits of relying only on science and technology to protect the environment.

1. Before the visit, write down two or three questions you want to ask about the challenges of using science and technology alone.
2. During the session, listen carefully and write down the expert's responses. You may ask follow-up questions.
3. After the visit, create a summary poster showing three key things you learnt about the weaknesses of science and technology.
4. Present your poster to the class and suggest one way you can apply this knowledge in your own community.

## Activity 8.6 Guided Online Research

You will use the internet to find **credible information** about the weaknesses of science and technology in solving environmental problems.

1. Get a list of good websites or search words from your teacher to help you find the right information.
2. Look for three real examples where science or technology tried to solve a problem but caused a new one (like using pesticides, throwing away old electronics, or smoke from factories).
3. Write down your findings using a simple table. Include:
  - a. What went wrong
  - b. What could be done better
4. Work in a small group to share what each person found and talk about the similarities and differences.
5. As a group, make a short presentation (you can draw, talk, or use slides) to explain one problem and how it can be fixed using human values, learning, or teamwork.

# INTEGRATING CHRISTIAN VALUES INTO SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY TO SOLVE ENVIRONMENTAL PROBLEMS

You already know that science and technology give you powerful tools to fight pollution, produce clean energy, and protect natural resources. But have you ever stopped to ask: *What guides the way you use these tools? What helps you choose between what is possible and what is right?*

In this topic, you will explore how your Christian values—such as love, stewardship, justice, honesty, care for creation, and respect for life—can guide the way you use science and technology. These values help you focus not only on solving problems but also on doing what is morally right and fair to others, including future generations.

For example, you will learn how the value of **stewardship** reminds you that the earth is God's creation and must be used wisely. The value of **justice** encourages you to make sure that poor communities also benefit from clean technology. The value of moderation teaches you not to overuse natural resources, even if technology makes it easy.

As you go through this lesson, you will see that real solutions to environmental problems need both smart ideas and good values. Science and technology tell you what can be done. Your Christian faith tells you what should be done. Are you ready to discover how your beliefs and your knowledge can work together to help heal the earth?

## The Complementary Role of Christianity in Environmental Protection

While science and technology provide knowledge, tools, and solutions for solving environmental problems, Christianity offers a strong moral and spiritual foundation that helps guide how those solutions are applied. Together, they can form a powerful partnership in caring for the earth. Below are the ways Christianity complements science and technology in environmental protection:

### 1. Moral and Ethical Guidance

Christian teachings emphasise that the earth is God's creation and that everything in it—plants, animals, rivers, and even the air—has intrinsic value, meaning it is valuable in itself, not just for human use. This belief shapes how you view and treat the environment.

The Bible teaches that harming creation is a form of disobedience to God. Verses like Genesis 2:15 (“The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it”) give humans a clear duty to care, not destroy.

While science tells you how to clean polluted water, Christianity reminds you why it matters: because protecting life is a moral responsibility. This moral framework helps guide decisions about the use of resources, especially when technology offers choices that could benefit some while harming others.

## 2. Community Engagements

Churches and Christian organisations are often deeply connected to local communities. They can play a key role in mobilising people for environmental action.

Many churches already engage in:

- a. Clean-up campaigns to remove waste from streets and water bodies
- b. Tree-planting exercises to restore lost forests
- c. Educational programs that teach the community about climate change and responsible living
- d. Advocacy for fair environmental policies and protection of natural resources

Because churches bring people together regularly, they can be used as platforms to inspire collective action and long-term commitment to environmental care.

## 3. Simplicity and Moderation

Christian values promote living in a way that avoids greed, selfishness, and waste. The teachings of Jesus and the early church often highlight a life of simplicity, contentment, and moderation. This directly supports environmental sustainability.

You are encouraged to:

- a. Use only what you need
- b. Avoid overconsumption and materialism
- c. Reduce waste through mindful choices
- d. Respect the limits of the earth's resources

These principles support the goals of science and technology in reducing pollution, conserving energy, and promoting a balanced relationship with nature.

## 4. The Value of Stewardship

Christianity teaches that humans are **stewards**—caretakers—of the earth, not owners. Psalm 24:1 says, “The earth is the Lord's, and everything in it.” This means you are responsible for protecting what belongs to God, not exploiting it for selfish gain.

This belief can lead to:

- a. A personal sense of duty to protect nature
- b. Emotional and spiritual connection to the land
- c. Responsible use of science and technology guided by care, not greed

Stewardship is not only about managing resources, but also about **loving creation** as a reflection of God's goodness. It inspires long-term thinking and action beyond profit or convenience.

## 5. Interdisciplinary Collaboration

Christian leaders, scientists, technologists, and policymakers can work together to solve environmental problems more effectively. When they combine their strengths, they bring:

- a. **Scientific knowledge** (how to solve the problem)
- b. **Spiritual and moral insight** (why it matters and how to guide behavior)
- c. **Policy and leadership** (how to make change happen at a national or global level)
- d. **Community trust and influence** (how to reach people at the grassroots)

For example, environmental conferences now often include religious voices alongside technical experts, recognizing that lasting change requires both **data and values**.

Together, Christianity and science can lead the way toward a more just, sustainable, and caring relationship with the environment. Christianity reminds you not only to act, but to act with love, wisdom, and responsibility.

### Activity 8.7 Christian Values That Support Environmental Protection

1. With a partner, read short Bible verses or Christian quotes your teacher provides.
2. From the texts, **identify three Christian values** (e.g., love, stewardship, moderation) that can help protect the environment.
3. Write each value on a separate sticky note or index card.
4. Walk around the classroom and post each note on one of three labeled posters: “**Protecting Nature**”, “**Helping Others**”, or “**Living Simply**.”
5. Review where others placed their values and discuss how each value supports environmental care.

### Activity 8.8 Christian Values that Complement Science and Technology

1. In small groups, choose **three Christian values** (e.g., stewardship, justice, compassion) from a class list.
2. For each value, create a **one-sentence explanation** of how it supports science and technology in solving environmental problems.
3. Make your explanation **simple enough for a child to understand**.
4. Illustrate each value and explanation on a mini-poster or slide.
5. Present your three posters or slides to the class in a short 2-minute talk.

### Activity 8.9 the Effectiveness of Christian Values in Practice

1. Think of three real-life situations (e.g., illegal mining, plastic pollution, water misuse).

2. In a small group, choose **three Christian values** (e.g., honesty, moderation, responsibility).
3. For each situation, **discuss how applying each value** could help science and technology become more effective in solving the problem.
4. On a worksheet or chart, rate how **strong**, **moderate**, or **weak** the value's impact would be—and explain why.
5. Share one insight from your group during a class reflection circle.

## EXTENDED READING

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JWTVtYEcJic>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IPddkbeY9og>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SN4hQUAi8kE>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FIYVnvHa2dc>

# REVIEW QUESTIONS 8

- 1.** What is science?
- 2.** What is technology?
- 3.** Mention two ways science helps to protect the environment.
- 4.** Give two examples of technology used to care for the environment.
- 5.** State one Christian value that supports environmental protection.
- 6.** What does the Bible mean by humans being "stewards" of the earth?
- 7.** Explain how renewable energy helps the environment.
- 8.** Describe one problem caused by technology while trying to protect the environment.
- 9.** Why can science and technology alone not fully solve environmental problems?
- 10.** How does the Christian value of simplicity support environmental protection?
- 11.** Explain how science and technology can reduce waste in cities.
- 12.** In what ways can Christian churches help protect the environment in your community?
- 13.** Compare how science and Christian values approach care for the environment.
- 14.** Analyse the weakness in using only machines and technology to solve pollution problems.
- 15.** How can Christian values like love and responsibility improve the use of environmental technology?
- 16.** Suggest three ways your church or community can combine Christian teachings with science to reduce environmental harm.
- 17.** Think of a local environmental problem and explain how science and Christian values together can help solve it.
- 18.** Design a simple campaign for your school that uses both science and Christian values to protect the environment.
- 19.** Write a short speech explaining why Christian values should be added to science and technology when solving environmental problems.
- 20.** Develop a class project idea that uses both solar energy (science) and community clean-up (Christian service) to solve an environmental issue.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- <https://www.gordonconwell.edu/center-for-global-christianity/resources/status-of-global-christianity/>

# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS



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This book is intended to be used for the Year One Christian Religious Studies Senior High School (SHS) Curriculum. It contains information and activities to support teachers to deliver the curriculum in the classroom as well as additional exercises to support learners' self-study and revision. Learners can use the review questions to assess their understanding and explore concepts and additional content in their own time using the extended reading list provided.

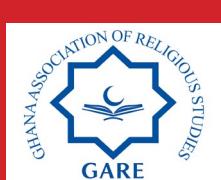
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