THE CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY OF AMERICA

Ethnic Dissension in the Church in Ghana: A Formation Programme to Raise Consciousness and Train Catechists

A TREATISE

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Doctor of Ministry

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Ethnic Dissension in the Church in Ghana: A Formation Programme to
Raise Consciousness and Train Catechists

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Pope John Paul II’s observation in Ecclesia in Africa that “Tribal oppositions …
create difficulties for the life of the Churches and the acceptance of Pastors from other ethnic
groups”, and, thus, creating divisions in the Church in Africa needs a pastoral response. This
can come about in a conscious and well designed formation programme, with the Word of
God as the foundation.

As our method, presentations were made to create awareness of the divisions and
their negative effects on society and the Church. These were followed by the Prayer of
Encounter with its three stages of confrontation, making connections, and taking a stance
towards Jesus. Participants reflected upon and prayed in humility over various biblical
passages about the sacraments of baptism and the Eucharist, with the objective of entering
into a deeper relationship with Christ. It is our relationship with the Word of God, Jesus
Christ, that brings us conversion, which is a change of mind, and the needed transformation
so that we can “acquire a fresh, spiritual way of thinking” (Eph. 4: 23).
The reworking of our value systems, the reshaping or reforming of our lives along the values of Christ was the ‘high’ point and the ultimate desire of the workshop in which participants were exposed to the problems of ethnicity in Africa and in the Church. It also created in participants a conscious awareness of ethnic dissension in Ghana and its effects on the society and the Church, as evidenced in their written responses. Participants demonstrated how they were challenged and also, empowered by the Word of God, to take the stance to do away with any form of ethnic discrimination and dissension in the Church.

Ethnic or tribal oppositions are a reality in the Church in Africa. They destroy the unity and love in the Christian community. We can eradicate them not by any political or human will but by a conscious formation programme that makes us understand the implications of what our baptism and the Eucharist are in the light of the Word of God, Jesus Christ, and so ‘live’ the sacraments in our lives.
This treatise by Augustine Owusu-Sekyere fulfills the treatise requirement for the doctoral degree in Ministry approved by Rev. Msgr. Stephen Rossetti, Ph.D., D.Min., as Director, and by Rev. Christopher Begg, S.T.D., Ph.D., Associate Dean for Seminary and Ministerial Studies as Reader.

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CHAPTER 1
BACKGROUND INFORMATION

In 1995, Pope John Paul II wrote on the Church in Africa and stated,

Another challenge identified by the Synod Fathers concerns the various forms of division which need to be healed through honest dialogue. It has been rightly noted that, within the borders left behind by the colonial powers, the co-existence of ethnic groups with different traditions, languages, and even religions often meets obstacles arising from serious mutual hostility. "Tribal oppositions at times endanger if not peace, at least the pursuit of the common good of the society. They also create difficulties for the life of the Churches and the acceptance of Pastors from other ethnic groups". This is why the Church in Africa feels challenged by the specific responsibility of healing these divisions.¹

The Pope’s observation could be said to be a summary of how ethnic dissension has plagued the Church in Africa. It has not stopped; it is there. And it resurfaces from time to time.

Prior to the issuance of the Ecclesia in Africa in 1995, a Synod for Africa had been held in Rome the year before on the theme "The Church in Africa and her evangelizing mission towards the Year 2000: 'You shall be my witnesses' (Acts 1:8)". Before the synod, preliminary questions were sent to the prelates in Africa to help them address some important questions to be considered by the Synod Fathers. On the preliminary questions in the lineamenta under “Proclamation of the Good News of Salvation”, question number thirteen stated, “In the light of the mystery of the Church as communion, what do you think of racial or tribal divisions and oppositions in your country? What role do the agents of evangelization play in your country in favour of Church-communion?”²

¹ John Paul II, Ecclesia in Africa (Città del Vaticano: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1995), no. 49.
The question above specifically referred to the racial or tribal divisions that militate against the Church in the various countries in Africa to the extent that these divisions pose hindrances to Church-communion. The response from the African Bishops to the lineamenta and the subsequent deliberations in Rome pointed to the fact that ethnic dissension is a reality in the Church in Africa.

In this chapter, the issue of tribal opposition or ethnic conflict in the Church will be viewed to establish its reality. We shall see how it is reflected in the Church in Africa as a whole, drawing, in large part, on the interventions at the two Synods for Africa in 1994 and 2009.

The African Scene

At both the 1994 and 2009 Synods for Africa, many interventions or submissions were made by the African Bishops to the effect of the existence of ethnic dissension or tribal opposition in the Church. A few examples will suffice here.

At the 1994 Synod, Bishop Albert Kanene Obiefuna of Awka Diocese in Nigeria observed that the African truly lives his or her life as a Christian and as African in the context of his or her tribal life. He stated,

The truth remains that the typical African lives the family life and also his Christian life in the context of his or her tribal life. Beyond his or her tribe and ethnic group the same values rarely work. They are usually caught up in the clan and tribal interests. Similarly, the Church, whether we look at it from the inter-diocesan, diocesan, parish or station level is seen and valued from the point of view of its relationship to and benefit to the clan, tribe, town or village. Where the Church is built, where the parish centre is cited [sic], where
the Bishop comes from, where he lives, are all [the more] important than what they are and stand for.\textsuperscript{3}

He said even during political elections, “what counts is not whether the candidate is a Catholic or not but to what clan, tribe or town the candidate seeking election belongs. The nearer his or her home is to the African the more qualified he or she is for election.”\textsuperscript{4}

Bishop Obiefuna reminded the Synod Fathers that the boundaries of the Church extend beyond the clan and the tribe, something he thinks a typical African does not consider even if he or she is a Catholic. Commenting on the idea that “blood is more important even for the African who has become a Christian”, the Bishop continued,

Indeed the African Christian with his exaggerated ethnicism finds it difficult to accept the truth that the man or woman in India who is a Christian is much more a brother or sister than the non Christian brother or sister in the natural family (Gal. 5, 10). This mentality is so pervading that the saying goes among the African that when it comes to the crunch, it is not the Christian concept of the Church as a family which prevails but rather the adage that ‘blood is thicker than water’. And by water here one can presumably include the waters of baptism through which one is born into the family of the Church. Blood relationship is more important even for the African who has become a Christian.\textsuperscript{5}

On the external factors, Bishop Julius Babatunde Adelakun of Oyo Diocese in Nigeria observed at the first Synod how tribalism impedes evangelization and questioned,

Tribal divisions and mutual suspicion remain powerful forces with weaker groups being oppressed by the stronger, provoking intertribal conflicts and violence. This kind of situation constitutes both an obstacle and a challenge to evangelization on the continent. How can the Good News be proclaimed in such a situation of crisis?\textsuperscript{6}

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{4} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{5} Ibid.
\end{flushright}
Contributing also to the submissions on how the Church is affected by tribal and civil wars that take place in a country, Bishop Benedict Dotu Sekey of Gbarnga in Liberia touched on how “fruits of efforts made over many decades of evangelization to establish this very Kingdom [of God] have collapsed overnight” in his country. He continued, “In their place have emerged institutionalized lies and complete disregard for the sanctity of human life, desecration and massacre, injustice, hatred and war. In such a situation the Church quite often is not spared; its personnel and institutions become targets.”

The second Synod for Africa in 2009 which was a follow up to the one in 1994 also identified ethnic or tribal issues affecting the Church internally and externally. The theme chosen for the second Synod was “The Church in Africa in Service to Reconciliation, Justice and Peace: ‘You are the salt of the earth… You are the light of the world’ (Mt. 5:13-14).” This second Synod hoped to promote the conclusions of the first Synod and also to give effective answers to the African continent thirsty for reconciliation and in search of justice and peace. The Synod was of the hope that the “obvious injustice and violence,” which are the result of local and regional conflicts, were going to give way to the fact that in Jesus

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8 Ibid.

9 The Special Council for Africa and the general secretariat of the Synod of Bishops approved the *instrumentum laboris* at meetings held from January 23-24. The *instrumentum laboris* was based on the answers from the bishops’ conferences of Africa to the *lineamenta* issued by the synod’s secretariat. These were published in 2006 in various languages, including Arabic and Swahili. This working document was ready and Pope Benedict XVI himself presented it to the African episcopal conferences during his apostolic visits to Cameroun and Angola, March 17-23. In addition to the challenges that it was to address, the *instrumentum laboris* also sought to contribute to the “harmonious development” of humanity and the society at large. In this wise, the *instrumentum laboris* puts forward important aspects of the current ecclesial and social situations in Africa.
Christ we belong to the same family; we are bound by the same Word and the same Bread of life.

Internally, the Church in Africa suffers from ethnic dissension. It is worthy to note that in the month of February 2009, eight months before the second Synod began, Pope Benedict XVI, referring the Nigerian Bishops in their ad limina visit to ethnic unrest, said,

The marvelous image of the Heavenly Jerusalem, the gathering of innumerable men and women from every tribe and tongue and people and nation who have been ransomed by the blood of Christ, encourages you to confront the challenge of ethnic conflict wherever present, even within the Church.\(^\text{10}\)

The Pope showed his appreciation to the prelates who have accepted a pastoral mission outside the limits of their own regional or linguistic group and said,

I thank the priests and the people who have welcomed and supported you. There is no place in the Church for any kind of division. All believers, especially seminarians and priests, will grow in maturity and generosity by allowing the Gospel message to purify and overcome any possible narrowness of local perspectives.\(^\text{11}\)

In his intervention at the 2009 Synod, announced on Vatican Radio, Bishop Albert Vanbuel of Kaga-Bondoro in the Central African Republic admitted that there are zones of darkness that exist within the Church. He said the Church is aware of this and, in communion with “the core of the Church-family”, aspires for peace with all her being. He talked about division in the Church fueled by ethnicity and stated,

In recent months we deplored the divisive acts between priests, between priests and bishops, between priests and the laity; this is certainly not the Gospel which we must proclaim. We were sent to build a Church united in the

\(^{10}\) This is contained in the Vatican Information Service news, VISnews 090216, released on Monday, February 16, 2009.

\(^{11}\) Ibid.
Spirit of God who guides us. We cannot tear at the body of Christ at the same time.\textsuperscript{12} It was the hope of Bishop Vanbuel that “The Year for Priests dedicated to us by the Holy Father can inspire us and offer us a new direction: faith in Christ, faith in priests and faith in every baptized person.”\textsuperscript{13}

On his part, Bishop Martin Munyani of Gweru in Zimbabwe observed that as the Church was seeking reconciliation for the African continent it should not overlook the reconciliation it needs for itself. He stated, “Reconciliation is needed not only in the nation at large but also in the Church, for we see simmering tension in some of our parishes due to language and ethnic differences.”\textsuperscript{14}

The Dominican priest, Fr. Emmanuel Ntakarutimana of Burundi, made a significant observation in 2009 on the issue of conflict in the Church. He noted that Burundi, Congo-Brazaville, Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of Congo are Africa’s “four most heavily Christian nations.” These are also the four nations that have witnessed the “most appalling carnage” in the last fifteen years “including the Rwandan genocide and vast war in the Great Lakes region centered on Congo – each of which have left millions dead and generated tens of millions of refugees.”\textsuperscript{15} Ntakarutimana talked about his personal experience in Burundi and said that when violence erupted the Muslim-dominated areas suffered the lowest


\textsuperscript{13} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{14} Independent Catholic News, posted on Thursday, October 8, 2009.

casualties, and concluded, “The more Christian an African nation is, the higher the odds of being slaughtered there.”

The observation by Ntakarutimana is, in a sense, corroborated by Laurent Mbanda, a Rwandan. In a book he co-authored in which he questioned the depth of Christian formation, Mbanda told of the role the Church played in the Rwandan conflict that culminated in the genocide. He thinks the Church could have made a difference.

The Ghanaian scene

Ghana, like other African countries, suffers from ethnic dissension in the Church although the degree of the dissension may vary from diocese to diocese, from parish to parish, or from station to station. In short, the examples given from other African countries on ethnicity could be said of Ghana.

Ethnic conflicts or dissensions affect the Church in Ghana both externally and internally. These are challenges that the Pope and Synod Fathers at the Synod for Africa in 1994 identified as forms of division which need to be healed through “honest dialogue.” The issue of ethnic conflicts or dissensions in the Church is a new area being explored so as to give a pastoral response.

At the First National Catholic Pastoral Congress held at Cape Coast from April 7-14, 1997, there were some discussions about ethnic dissensions and how they affect the Church in Ghana. In paragraph 267 under “Formation of Priests for the Third Millennium” in the

\[16\text{Ibid.}\]

\[17\text{Laurent Mbanda and Steve Wamberg, Committed to Conflict: The Destruction of the Church in Rwanda (London: SPCK, 1997).}\]
instrumentum laboris, the Church in Ghana is convinced that the priest has a mediatory role to play in terms of its spiritual and socio-cultural needs so as to foster ethnic integration in the country. The instrumentum laboris stated,

Ghanaians, including priests, have inherited some strong prejudices and complexes from their ethnic backgrounds which serve as serious obstacles to the integration of the different ethnic groups of the country. With their level of education and armed with analytical tools, priests should be indispensable players in the breaking of prejudices and complexes which hurt ethnic relationships and prevent our people from coming together in a meaningful way for their spiritual and social development.\(^{18}\)

The document acknowledged that to a large extent, not much has been done about the breaking or dismantling of ethnic prejudices in the Church and in the nation. In order to enable future priests to lead their people to cross the barrier of ethnic prejudices and complexes, the priests are to be given a “broad cultural formation, including language training. They should be led to appreciate real, positive ethnic differences as gifts given by God to be shared with other people.”\(^{19}\) It was the hope of the pastoral congress that if such training is effectively carried out, there would be a “broad sharing of priestly personnel in the country that would enable an appreciable number of priests to work anywhere in Ghana as missionaries to their fellow Ghanaians.”\(^{20}\) In talking about ethnic dissension in the Church in Ghana, four cases from four dioceses will serve as concrete examples in a later chapter.

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\(^{19}\) Ibid.

\(^{20}\) Ibid.
Place of Project Implementation

The project component of this treatise will take place in the Konongo-Mampong Diocese in Ghana. In this diocese one can find people of almost any of the ethnic groups in Ghana. Ethnic groups, or linguistic and cultural groups, in Ghana are estimated roughly at one hundred. According to a website description of Ghana’s ethnic groups,

In 1960 roughly 100 linguistic and cultural groups were recorded in Ghana. Although later censuses placed less emphasis on the ethnic and cultural composition of the population, differences of course existed and had not disappeared by the mid-1990s. The major ethnic groups in Ghana include the Akan, Ewe, Mole-Dagbane, Guan, and Ga-Adangbe. The subdivisions of each group share a common cultural heritage, history, language, and origin. These shared attributes were among the variables that contributed to state formation in the precolonial period.\(^\text{21}\)

The focus group or target audience is the catechists who are indispensable lay leaders of their various Church communities. Without the catechists, the Church in the Diocese and Ghana in general, would suffer a great deal. In the villages especially they are the “priests”. For example, a parish manned by one priest may have twenty, or even more, towns and villages as part of the parish. The priest cannot be at all the outstations on Sundays and other days for Mass and other liturgical functions. At best, he can be at two or three places at different times on a Sunday or weekday. It is the catechist who ministers to the faithful in the absence of the priest on Sundays and other days. In Ghana, the role of the catechist goes beyond preparing candidates to receive the sacraments. In addition to preparing candidates for the reception of the sacraments, the catechist in Ghana plans and leads devotions, the liturgical and para-liturgical services where there is no priest. The catechist also teaches

catechism and helps form the faithful in the faith. He or she is an indispensable agent in the evangelization process. As such, the catechist needs ongoing training and formation to perform his or her dual task of leadership and ministry.\textsuperscript{22}

\textsuperscript{22} Ecclesia in Africa, no. 53, encourages the formation of agents of evangelization with due attention to the formation and training lay catechists and the lay faithful in general, appropriately recognizing their indispensable role in the evangelization of Africa.
CHAPTER TWO
CAUSES OF THE ETHNIC CONFLICTS: THEIR ROOTS, BASES AND NEGATIVE EFFECTS

Ethnic dissension or conflict in Ghana, and in Africa in general, is multi-faceted and interwoven. The conflict, often complex in nature, has its roots and bases. In this section, an attempt is made to trace some of the root causes of ethnic conflict or dissension and the negative effects they bring. In an article, “Chieftaincy and Ethnic Conflicts in the Northern Region of Ghana, 1980-2002”, N.J.K. Brukum, a Senior Lecturer and Former Head of the Department of History at the University of Ghana, stated,

A disturbing phenomenon in the political landscape of the Northern Region of Ghana during the past twenty-two years has been the intermittent outbreak of either intra-ethnic or inter-ethnic conflicts. Indeed, there have been twenty-two such conflicts in the area since 1980.23

The statement by Brukum that within twenty-two years there had been twenty-two intra-ethnic and inter-ethnic conflicts in just one of the ten regions in Ghana is an indication of how serious the issue of ethnic or tribal conflicts can be. However, it needs to be stated that, although some areas may experience many ethnic conflicts within a certain time frame, others may enjoy relative peace within the same time frame.

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A major factor of ethnic or tribal conflict is historical. Some tribes have been enemies for centuries. This is what Michael Brown, a Senior Fellow in U.S. Security Policy and Editor of Survival at the International Institute for Strategic Studies in London, calls “ancient hatreds” that “have legitimate historical bases.”24 According to Brown, “It is certainly true that many groups have legitimate grievances against others for crimes of one kind or another committed at some point in the distant or recent past. Some ‘ancient hatreds’ have legitimate historical bases.”25 These “ancient hatreds” make some tribes frame their stories to give legitimacy to their actions. Brown rightly observed,

However, it is also true that groups tend to whitewash and glorify their own histories, and they often demonize their neighbors, rivals and adversaries. Explaining away the Hutu slaughter of 800,000 – 1,000,000 Tutsi in Rwanda in 1994, one Hutu who had been training for the priesthood insisted, ‘It wasn’t genocide. It was self-defense’. Stories that are passed down from generation to generation by word of mouth become part of a group’s lore. They often become distorted and exaggerated with time, and are treated as received wisdom by group members."26

In another book, Brown made a similar assertion. He wrote, “Some explanations of ethnic conflict focus on the false histories that many ethnic groups have of themselves and others.”27


25 Ibid.

26 Ibid., 12-13.

He stated,

These stories become part of a group’s lore. They tend to be highly selective in their coverage of events and not unbiased in their interpretation of these events. Distorted and exaggerated with time, these histories present one’s own group as heroic, while other groups are demonized. Grievances are enshrined, and other groups are portrayed as inherently vicious and aggressive. Group members typically treat these ethnic myths as received wisdom.\(^{28}\)

Donald Horowitz, a Professor of law and political science at Duke University, supports the observation by Brown that there are ancient hatreds, and these hatreds can be revived to give them a modern twist. He wrote, “It is true, of course, that some ethnic antagonisms are of long duration. Memories of earlier, lapsed conflicts, centuries and sometimes millennia old, can be revived to fit contemporary conditions.”\(^{29}\) These “ancient hatreds” undergird and influence many relations of tribes in Ghana and other African countries.

An article, “The Ethnic Problem in the Ghanaian Body Politics and its Security Significance”, described how historically tribal wars and conquests shaped behavior, attitudes and perceptions of people. The article tells how such historical origin of animosity and antagonism between the two ethnic groups, Asantes and Fantes, might have come about.

The ethnic problem in Ghana has historical origins in the past tribal wars, alliances, territorial conquests, slave trade and payment of tributes by vassals to the conquerors. How the ancestors of a particular ethnic group fared in the tribal wars over the centuries shaped the behaviour, attitudes and perceptions

\(^{28}\) Ibid.

of their descendants. Thus an Asante may today recall the glorious past of the Asante Kingdom, which received tributes from its vassals. Thus an Asante may today recall the glorious past of the Asante Kingdom, which received tributes from its vassals. Each group, however, may present its own history to its people in its own way.

An important factor that does not promote social cohesion is the stereotype mentality some people have of other tribes or ethnic groups. These biases often let people look down on others. The article continued,

Certain stereotypes of the various ethnic groups in Ghana have over the decades, become etched on the minds of Ghanaians. These stereotypes often turn out to be sweeping generalizations and misconceptions, not taking into account the dynamics of socio-cultural changes and interactions. Thus, Asantes are often perceived as boastful and avaricious; Ewes as clannish and miserly; Fantes as frivolous and eager to outdo the European in his ways and culture; Gas as braggarts and pugnacious; Kwahus as endowed with business acumen, but shylocks and Northerners as conservative, subservient and inflexibly loyal. Again, it used to be the general perception that Ewes and Northerners were the most eager to be enlisted in the Ghana Armed Forces and the Ghana Police Service, because there was lack of good employment in their areas. Ethic conflicts may also come about as a result of who has the right to land. Land borders on power, economic sustainability and survival of an individual, family or group. In Ghana, land and chieftaincy are two major factors that ethnic conflicts have their roots in. “A frequent source of tension revolved around determining who had the right to recognize and dismiss land claims.” Since the people are mostly farmers, land plays a major role in their livelihood. To have land is the assurance that a family and its posterity’s future is

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31 Ibid.

certain. Land, therefore, is held in high esteem as it has both political and economic force. It is for these reasons that many ethnic tensions revolve around land. Dzodzi Tsikata and Wayo Seini, two Ghanaian lecturers and researchers at the University of Ghana, gave a report on conflicts in three regions in Ghana that centred on land and chieftaincy disputes. They wrote,

There are several longstanding inter-ethnic and intra-ethnic disputes among various communities across Ghana. In the Volta Region alone, four main conflict areas have been identified. They are the Nkonya/Alavanyo, Nkwanta, Peki/Tsito and Abutia Kpota conflicts (Daily Graphic, 11/6/2003). The first two are inter-ethnic while the last two are intra-ethnic. Three of the conflicts – the Nkonya Alavanyo, Nkwanta and Peki-Tsito – are land conflicts while the Abutia conflict is a chieftaincy dispute.\(^{33}\)

They continued,

In the Northern Region, there are longstanding often violent inter-ethnic conflicts between the Gonja and the Konkomba (who are also implicated in the Nkwanta area conflicts of the Volta Region) and between Dagombas and Konkomba. In the Brong-Ahafo Region, violent clashes between the Nafana and Ntore ethnic groups at Brohani near Wenchi over land and sovereignty resulted in three deaths and 2,000 persons being rendered homeless.\(^{34}\)

Another major contributory factor that has promoted ethnic conflicts in Africa is how the colonial governments used the ‘indirect’ and the ‘direct’ rule systems in their administration of states. Many times, they employed ethnicity to their advantage by craftily creating animosity between tribes or ethnic groups. In Ghana, the British government did two things to fuel ethnic tension. The first is what Tsikata and Seini call “administrative invisibility”. By “administrative invisibility” is meant that some ethnic groups were made to

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34 Ibid.
overshadow others by the colonial government. The result of this act was the agitation by the groups that felt relegated to the background. They wrote,

Another aspect of the multi-ethnicity of regions that had implications for inter-ethnic relations is the administrative invisibility of so-called minority ethnic groups. The Northern Region for example is said to have fifteen ethnic groups. And yet, on account of false information and political manoeuvres on the part of certain chiefs and the colonial state’s own political calculations, the ethnic complexity of regions and pre-existing political relations were ignored, and multi-ethnic communities and areas were arbitrarily named after so-called dominant groups. This resulted in strengthening the claims of such groups over land that others had long settled.35

In a footnote, the two writers said, although there are many ethnic groups in Northern Ghana, four of them were recognized by the colonial government to the detriment of the others. They noted, “Thus in Northern Ghana, only four groups – Gonja, Nanumba, Mamprusi and Dagomba – are recognised, to the detriment of groups such as the Mo, Vagala, Safalba, Lobi, Kpariba, Tampluma, Kalande, Choruba, Damptu, Konkomba, Basari, Nchumuru, Nawuri, Chakosi and Bimoba (Brukum, 1995).”36 As, Tsikata and Seini rightly observed, “The continued administrative invisibility of so-called minor ethnic groups in the post-colonial period has fuelled their sense of discrimination, injustice and exclusion.”37

This sense of discrimination, injustice and exclusion are the major underlying factors for the present day conflicts in the Northern Region of Ghana. The chiefs of the four ethnic groups were recognized by the colonial government as the overlords of the lands in the Northern


36 Ibid., 17.

37 Ibid., 16.
Region. To have land in Ghana or in Africa is a sign or symbol of power because the people’s life is directly dependent on land. As overlords of the lands, the chiefs demand obedience and loyalty from their subjects and the other ethnic groups.

A professor of history at Temple University, Benjamin Talton, also observed that the colonial rule in Ghana promoted ethnic tension. In his book on the Konkomba struggle for political equality in Ghana, he wrote in the fifth chapter under the title, “That all Konkomba Should Henceforth Unite – Ethnic Politics and the use of Violence in Northern Ghana, 1977-1994”:

During the period of colonial rule in the Northern Territories of the Gold Coast, land and ethnicity were polarized in very similar ways . . . The British structured local politics in a way that forced tradition to be intertwined with constrictions of ethnicity, rendering it static and clearly demarcated . . . Similarly, tradition and land were intertwined, which contributed to particular ethnic groups dominating or controlling particular well-defined areas through claims to custom with putative roots in the period before European rule. A frequent source of tension revolved around determining who had the right to recognize and dismiss land claims.38

The psychological and social implications of this are that the life and survival of the minority tribes depend on the wishes and desires of the dominant groups. These minority groups do not subscribe to this. They will not tolerate that they are subject to other tribes and that their lives depend on them. They think the dominant groups have been imposed on them. A case in point is that of the tension between the Gonjas on one hand and the Nchumurus and Nawuris on the other hand. Brukum asserted that there is documentary evidence that the two tribes, Nchumuru and Nawuri are the original owners of the lands on which they live. He wrote,

38 Benjamin Talton, Politics of Social Change in Ghana: The Konkomba Struggle for Political Equality, 143.
Nchumurus and Nawuris are the owners of the places of their settlements. For example, the 1932 Native Administration Ordinance that delimited the Gonja District acknowledged this when the Ordinance demarcated Gonja District as including: All the tribal lands lying within the Northern section a) belonging to the Owure of Nchumuru or b) belonging to the Nawuri tribe and subject to the Wurubu of Kpandai.  

Brukum said there are three ways of acquiring ownership of land: by birthright (first settlers), by conquest and by lease. He stated that neither Ndewura Jakpa who was the Gonja conqueror nor any of his successors crossed the River Daka to conquer either the Nchumurus or Nawuris. He continued,

There is also no evidence of the forefathers of the Nchumuru or Nawuri sub-letting the land on lease basis to Gonja. Gonjas cannot also claim to have arrived in the area before Nchumurus and Nawuris . . . Gonja claim to have conquered the Nchumuru and Nawuri and, therefore, the latter have no chiefs, and by implication no land, is not supported by the facts. Gonja claim to “own” the two ethnic groups dates back to only the colonial period.  

Such a situation, as described by Brukum, creates tension and continually gives room for conflicts to erupt. The least provocation by either side is a recipe for conflict. Since the minority tribes think it was the colonial government that gave support to the other tribes to dominate them, they would no longer submit to them after Ghana had gained independence. They will fight for their ‘independence’ and dignity.

In an online article, “Ethnicity Main Causes of Instability, Civil Conflict and Poverty in Africa”, Crisford Chogugudza, a political commentator in London, shared the view that colonial powers used the ‘divide and rule’ system in their governance of Africa by employing ethnicity to create animosity among the tribes. He wrote,

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39 Brukum, 110.

40 Brukum, 110-111.
Issues of ethnicity or ethnic divide once suppressed by European colonial governments in Africa have become resurgent raising prospects for a myriad of conflicts in most African states. Paradoxically, prior to independence, some colonial administrators manipulated ethnic rivalries amongst indigenous populations by employing a strategy of ‘divide and rule’. This strategy created enmity and suspicions among African peoples and the situation has not significantly changed.\(^\text{41}\)

He continued, “Many politicians across Africa continue to use ethnicity to promote themselves and inflict maximum political damage on their opponents . . . Today ethnicity and conflict have replaced social harmony, diversity and development.”\(^\text{42}\)

In Ghana, many people think the second legacy from the British government, that did and continues to enhance ethnic dissension, is the colonial government’s promotion of inequality in the social system. Ethnic conflicts erupt as a result of some disparities in social and economic welfare. According to Tsikata and Seini,

Certain underlying processes generated the patterns of identity formation and equalities in Ghana. These can be found in the dominant mode of production within the social formation. Many scholars cite colonial dependency as the root of inequalities so evident in the Ghanaian economy. In colonial Ghana, the internal production of goods and services had a dual structure: a dynamic modern export sector, and a backward and underdeveloped subsistence sector that also served as a labour reserve for the modern sector. This is at the root of the North-South inequalities and also the other patterns of inequality in Ghana.\(^\text{43}\)

An article, “Ghana Ethnic Groups”, shared the above expressed view when it stated, “Ethnic rivalries of the precolonial era, variance in the impact of colonialism upon different regions


\(^{\text{42}}\) Ibid.

\(^{\text{43}}\) Tsikata and Seini, 14.
of the country, and the uneven distribution of social and economic amenities in post-independence Ghana have all contributed to present-day ethnic tensions.”

Suspicion and fear have roles to play in conflicts. On the negative aspect of suspicion and fear, a writer observed,

Psychologically, there may always be the fear by one ethnic group or some ethnic groups that a particular ethnic group or others intend to dominate them. Conflict occurs when groups or individuals perceive that others have frustrated or are about to frustrate their major interests . . . When inter-ethnic animosity, strife and suspicions permeate society, there is resultant social rancour and acrimony to the extent that the social fabric is weakened. For example, when at the workplace it becomes rife that promotions and top appointments are not based on merit, and superiors elevate tribesmen over others not from their tribe, morale is seriously dampened, while societal cohesion is undermined.

From history and all practical indications, it is seen that a tribe or ethnic group that was once dominated by the other would often be suspicious in dealing with that group. It could also be the other way round. In a situation of suspicion, conflict can easily erupt. Thus, the culture of suspicion or mistrust becomes a recipe for generating conflict. It was for this reason that Albert Kan Dapaah, Member of Parliament for Afigya Sekyere West in the Ashanti Region of Ghana, asked the Ghanaian Parliament to “confront the dangerous mistrust” between the Akan and Ewe tribes. Contributing to a motion on the Peace Council Bill 2010 after its second reading in Parliament on Tuesday, March 22, 2011, Mr. Dapaah, a former Minister of the Interior in the previous regime observed that the country


was “replete with political and ethnic conflicts” and said, “the dangerous mistrust between 
the two major ethnic groups in Ghana must be tackled to ensure harmony and tranquility in 
the country.”\textsuperscript{46} He said over the years this mistrust or acrimony has been ignored or swept 
under the carpet but parliament should have the courage to deal with the problem because “if 
we do not resolve it now it could break up the country.”\textsuperscript{47} The Bill sought to “establish the 
National Peace Council to promote peace in the country against the background of the 
intermittent clashes over minor infractions which could have been solved amicably rather 
than resort to armed conflicts.”\textsuperscript{48}

Suspicion can also be at another level: between a tribe, or tribes, and the government. 
Brukum gave an example of how the action or inaction of the government can have impact 
on tribal conflicts. In some cases, the government, whether consciously or not, may seem to 
take sides. This creates suspicion on the part of the tribe that feels ignored or treated with 
contempt. Brukum gave an account of the Government of Ghana and the role it played in 
some conflicts in northern Ghana. He said in April, 1991, when the government saw that “it 
was obvious war would break out”, it banned all meetings of the various youth movements in 
Northern Ghana. When war finally broke out in the same month in the town of Kpandai, the 
Gonjas destroyed all Nawuri villages and chased all Nawuris out of their land. He said, 
although this took place, there was no response from the government. “There was official 
silence”. He continued,


\textsuperscript{47} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{48} Ibid.
Apart from the Catholic Church, no one went to the assistance of the Nawuri refugees. However, when the Nawuris struck back in June of the same year and sent Gonjas and their army of occupation fleeing, official assistance was quickly organized for them. The attack compelled the government to dispatch a peacekeeping force to the area.49

David A. Lake, Chair of the Political Science Department at the University of California in San Diego, and Donald Rothchild, Professor of Political Science at the University of California in Davis shared the view that fear for the future, suspicion and mistrust can stimulate ethnic violence. In an article, “Containing Fear: The Origins and Management of Ethnic Conflict”, they wrote,

We argue instead that intense ethnic conflict is most often caused by collective fears of the future. As groups begin to fear for their safety, dangerous and difficult-to-resolve strategic dilemmas arise that contain within them the potential for tremendous violence. As information failures, problems of credible commitment, and the security dilemma take hold, groups become apprehensive, the state weakens, and conflict becomes more likely.50

They went on,

Ethnic activists and political entrepreneurs, operating within groups, build upon these fears of insecurity and polarize society. Political memories and emotions also magnify these anxieties, driving groups further apart. Together, these between-group and within-group strategic interactions produce a toxic brew of distrust and suspicion that can explode into murderous violence.51

The situation described above can give rise to “ethnic nationalism”, as Brown has pointed out. He said, “The emergence of ethnic nationalism makes some form of ethnic conflict almost inevitable.”52

49 Brukum, 111.


51 Ibid., 126-7.
He continued,

The rise of ethnic nationalism in one group will be seen as threatening by others and will lead to the development of similar sentiments elsewhere. This will sharpen distinctions between groups, make it more likely that ethnic minority groups will be persecuted and more likely that ethnic minorities will demand states of their own. Secessionist crusades will be launched – and opposed . . . This will lead others to be more vigilant and to build up their own military forces.53

According to Clement Mweyang Aapengnuo, a Catholic priest and former director of the Centre for Conflict Transformation and Peace Studies in Damongo, Northern Ghana, the issue of ethnic conflict is deep-seated and needs not to be oversimplified. In an article, “Misinterpreting Ethnic Conflicts in Africa” he stated, “People do not kill each other because of ethnic differences; they kill each other when these differences are promoted as the barrier to advancement and opportunity."54

Rev. Aapengnuo did not rule out governmental interference, land and chieftaincy as contributing to ethnic dissension in Ghana and Africa in general. He gave some examples from Kenya, Rwanda, Nigeria and Ghana to buttress his point. He said in Kenya, ethnicity became an issue in their recent elections because of political power struggle which found it useful to inflame passions to mobilize support. He wrote, “This is not to suggest that ethnically based tensions do not persist – rather, that post-election bloodshed in 2007-2008 was not an inevitable outburst of sectarian hatred”.55 In Rwanda, violence “has usually been

53 Ibid.
55 Ibid.
over resources and power. Political manipulation of these resource conflicts led to the well-orchestrated 1994 genocide. Politicians, demagogues, and the media used ethnicity as a play for popular support and as a means of eliminating political opponents (both Tutsis and moderate Hutus).”

In the case of Nigeria, he said some institutional arrangements made by the government generate violence. In Nigeria’s federal system, the state and local governments have such an enormous influence controlling “roughly 80 percent of the country’s gross domestic product”. In addition to this, it is the local government that classifies inhabitants as “indigenes” or “settlers”. Even though families may have lived in an area for generations, they are considered settlers. He stated that “settlers are banned from holding some positions in state government, are not eligible for state education subsidies, and are restricted from owning land.” Such arrangements create violent tensions and often breed conflict.

In Ghana, as in other African countries, a government may also whip up ethnic sentiments to hold on to power or win more people to its side. For political expediency, it may set an ethnic group against another. This is another factor that may lead to ethnic conflict. This observation was made by a writer,

Again, ethnic bias may be so deep-rooted that professors of a so-called enlightened ethnic group may fanatically cling to a negative mindset about certain other ethnic groups. Wherever ignorance and illiteracy are widespread, especially in the rural areas and the urban slums, it is easier for political operatives and agents provocateurs to use disinformation and other tactics to whip up ethnic sentiments and play one ethnic group against the other. This is

56 Ibid.
57 Ibid.
made easier when there is a communication gap between the various ethnic groups.58

The whipping up of ethnic sentiments is seen more vividly when politicians mount the platform. It becomes more pronounced when politicians go to the villages and towns to canvass for votes. Aapengnuo gave as an example that in 1979, the military government of the Supreme Military Council decided to vest all lands in the Northern Region in four of the seventeen indigenous ethnic groups that inhabited the area. It was a time the government was canvassing for an endorsement in a referendum to create a one-party state. The government needed a ‘yes’ vote from the north to counteract the ‘no’ vote from the opposition south.59

According to Aapengnuo,

The issue became a defining moment in the mobilization of ethnic groups such as the Konkomba and Vagla in the name of developing their area. The first intercommunal violence began shortly thereafter – and continued for the next fifteen years, culminating in the Guinea Fowl War of 1994-95 in which some 2,000 people were killed. During that time, more than twenty-six intercommunal conflicts over land (resources) and chieftaincy (power) occurred in Northern Ghana, all characterized as ethnic conflicts.60

It is noteworthy that the Ghana Catholic Bishops’ Conference, other Christian bodies, Muslims and some prominent Ghanaians, have spoken against the whipping up of ethnic sentiments in the country. For example, at the annual New Year School in Accra on Monday, January 4, 2009, the Chief Justice, Mrs. Justice Theodora Wood, condemned ethnicity in Ghanaian politics, and called for “collective responsibility of all and sundry to sustain


59 Ibid.

60 Ibid.
democratic governance in the country.”

The Chief Justice asked for unity among Ghanaians adding, “unless we see tolerance and inclusiveness as critical elements of multi-party democracy, we could ruin the fragile unity of the country and constitutional governance.”

In sum, ancient hatreds, dominance, suppression, administrative invisibility, power struggle, political manipulation, chieftaincy, land, and economic imbalance all contribute to ethnic dissension and conflict in Ghana and Africa. Any one of these can trigger violence but, in most cases, it is a combination of these factors.

Negative Effects of Ethnic Dissension

Ethnic conflicts or disturbances bring untold hardships. The following two articles summarize the destructive nature of ethnic conflicts. In “Ghana Ethnic Groups”, the writer stated that the February, 1994 ethnic conflict in Ghana between the Dagomba, Gonja and Nanumba on one hand and the Konkomba resulted in hundreds of people being killed and 150,000 displaced. This war, known as the Guinea Fowl War of 1994-95, is generally estimated to have killed 2,000 people. The war was as a result of quarrel between a Konkomba and a Nanumba over the price of a guinea fowl at Nakpanyili near Bimbila in the Northern Region.

Writing on the “Guinea Fowl War” and its effects, another article, “Ghana: Mediating a Way out of Complex Ethnic Conflicts” stated,


62 Ibid.

Fighting continued for months with disastrous effect. The numbers of dead and displaced are still uncertain, however, several observers suggest that there were 2,000 deaths in 1994 alone, that 322 villages were devastated and some 178,000 people were displaced. Farms, herds and produce were destroyed, and the economy severely damaged. Social life in general as well as the interaction between the various ethnic groups was also badly affected, as were medical and educational facilities in the region.⁶⁴

Whenever there is ethnic conflict, the lives of the people are affected. Towns, villages and settlements are destroyed and people get displaced. In Ghana, there are thousands of people scattered around because they flee from conflict zones. Food production is affected because people flee from their homes to other places for shelter and protection. While away from home they may depend on other people for sustenance. Many of these, who are farmers, cannot farm to feed their families where they go. They also do not find jobs in the towns and cities they flee to. This leads to their youth walking on the streets as their parents may not be in a position to enroll them in school to study. Undoubtedly, some of the people, especially the women may be compelled or lured by their situation to engage in some immoral practices. When the situation gets under control some of the displaced go back home but others may not. Those who go back may have to start life again from the scratch because their homes and farms may have been destroyed or burnt.

Ethnic dissension causes rift and conflicts in the Church. It stifles the spiritual, psychological and mental health of the Christian community. Pastorally, it undermines the unity and love of the faithful. It disfigures the image of Christ among us who calls us to love one another unconditionally. St. Paul discovered this dissension in his community and addressed it: “For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; the same Lord is for all, enriching all who call upon him” (Romans 10:12).

St. Paul as well tells us in Ephesians 4: 1-6:

I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, beg you to lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all lowliness and meekness, with patience, forbearing one another in love, eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of us all, who is above all and through all and in all.

Paul called for unity in his Ephesian community, the unity that has the Spirit of God as the source. As Joseph Grassi, a New Testament scholar, rightly put it, “The Spirit is the single inner source of the Christian life and as such is continually moving all members toward what promotes peace and harmony”.  

He continued, “Ephesians is the Gospel of Christian unity. There follows a beautiful sevenfold formula of unity. As a result of Jewish influence, the early Church had a deep appreciation of the oneness of the God who dwelt in

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their community . . . Each of the seven expressions brings out an aspect of the basic community”.66

In calling for unity, Paul lays out a seven-fold aspect of this unity: one body, one Spirit, one hope, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all. Paul develops the concept of baptism and tells us that Christians are configured into Christ by baptism. In Galatians 3:27-28 he tells us: “For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.”

The concern of Paul for the oneness of Christians is clearly stated in his first letter to the Corinthian community. He rebuked the people for allowing division to creep into the community. For Paul, their baptism should be a source of oneness because baptism is a basic factor that unites them in and with Christ. The loyalty of the Christian is to Christ and not any human being. In 1 Corinthians 1:10-13 he wrote,

I appeal to you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree and that there be no dissensions among you, but that you be united in the same mind and the same judgment. For it has been reported to me by Chloe's people that there is quarreling among you, my brethren. What I mean is that each one of you says, "I belong to Paul," or "I belong to Apollos," or "I belong to Cephas," or "I belong to Christ." Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul?

In the two verses that follow, Paul expressed his joy that he did not baptize many people so as not to be associated with the division in the community. He told them, “I am thankful that I baptized none of you except Crispus and Gaius; lest anyone should say that You were baptized in my name,” although, in the next verse, he recounts also baptizing the

66 Ibid., 346-347.
household of Stephanas, beyond which he does not recall baptizing anyone else.

Paul saw the power inherent in baptism. In and through baptism, the Christian symbolically dies to the old self, the sinful self, and rises to newness of life, the life of the resurrection. Baptism makes the Christian a new being, a new creation. Thus, he wrote to the Romans:

Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life. For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his. We know that our old self was crucified with him so that the sinful body might be destroyed, and we might no longer be enslaved to sin. (Romans 6:3-6)

In the seven-fold formula presented by Ephesians, we are told that there is one God and Father of us all, who is above all, and through all and in all. The Church has, from its beginning, upheld that it is a family. This one God, who is Father of all, makes the baptized into one family without any division. For this reason Jesus Christ teaches us to pray by acknowledging and calling God our Father. He told the disciples in Matthew 6:9, “Pray then like this: Our Father who art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name”.

For the Christian, God is the Creator of all, and Father of all. This point was stressed by Pope Benedict XVI on October 27, 2011 at Assisi in Italy on the occasion of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the historic meeting for peace called by Pope John Paul II in 1986. Accompanied on a day’s pilgrimage to Assisi by representatives of other religions or faiths and non-believers to reflect, dialogue, and pray for peace and justice in the world, Pope Benedict XVI told the Buddhists, Hindus, Traditional African Religion worshippers, rabbis,
non-believers, and Christians of various denominations that all people are created by God and that all are his children. There is the need to end violence and replace it with peace. He told them,

The God in whom we Christians believe is the Creator and Father of all, and from Him all people are brothers and sisters and form one single family. For us the Cross of Christ is the sign of the God Who put 'suffering-with' (compassion) and 'loving-with' in place of force . . . It is the task of all who bear responsibility for the Christian faith to purify the religion of Christians again and again from its very heart, so that it truly serves as an instrument of God's peace in the world, despite the fallibility of humans.⁶⁷

Shortly before making this pronouncement, the Pope acknowledged with shame that, in the course of history, force was used in Christianity. He said,

As a Christian I want to say at this point: yes, it is true, in the course of history, force has also been used in the name of the Christian faith. We acknowledge it with great shame. But it is utterly clear that this was an abuse of the Christian faith, one that evidently contradicts its true nature.⁶⁸

In his Letter to Families, John Paul II recalls that the “family is the way of the Church”. He says the communion we have in the family prepares us for the communion of saints. He wrote,

The family is the way of the Church. In this letter we wish both to profess and to proclaim this way, which leads to the kingdom of heaven (cf. Mt. 7:14) through conjugal and family life. It is important that the communion of persons in the family should become a preparation for the communion of saints. This is why the Church both believes and proclaims the love which "endures all things" (1 Cor. 13:7); with St. Paul she sees in it "the greatest" virtue of all (cf. 1 Cor. 13:13). The apostle puts no limits on anyone. Everyone is called to love, including spouses and families. In the Church everyone is called equally to perfect holiness (cf. Mt. 5:48).⁶⁹

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⁶⁷ Vatican Information Service, Visnews 110127, Twenty-First Year, No. 186 on Thursday, October 27, 2011.
⁶⁸ Ibid.
In her effort to realize, or recognize, and heartfully accept that all are one family in the Lord who gives us his spirit, Africa faces some challenges, two of which are clearly brought out in *Ecclesia in Africa*.

First, Pope John Paul II questions how the lay faithful who assume civic responsibilities are formed in the faith. With good formation, Christians can bring the gospel message to bear on the social fabric in order to change society and its thought pattern. He wrote,

A last question must be asked: Has the Church in Africa sufficiently formed the lay faithful, enabling them to assume competently their civic responsibilities and to consider socio-political problems in the light of the Gospel and of faith in God? This is certainly a task belonging to Christians: to bring to bear upon the social fabric an influence aimed at changing not only ways of thinking but also the very structures of society, so that they will better reflect God's plan for the human family.\(^70\)

As if answering the question himself, the Pope continued,

Consequently I have called for the thorough formation of the lay faithful, a formation which will help them to lead a fully integrated life. Faith, hope and charity must influence the actions of the true follower of Christ in every activity, situation and responsibility. Since "evangelizing means bringing the Good News into all the strata of humanity, and through its influence transforming humanity from within and making it new", Christians must be formed to live the social implications of the Gospel in such a way that their witness will become a prophetic challenge to whatever hinders the true good of the men and women of Africa and of every other continent.\(^71\)

The second challenge to Africa is that Africans must be missionaries to themselves in a land that has become “a new homeland for Christ”. Pope John Paul II recalled the words of Pope Paul VI and stated,

\(^{70}\) *Ecclesia in Africa*, no. 54.

\(^{71}\) Ibid.
Born of the preaching of valiant missionary Bishops and priests, effectively assisted by "the ranks of men and women catechists, to whom missionary work among the nations owes so very much", the Church in Africa, having become "a new homeland for Christ", is now responsible for the evangelization of the Continent and the world. As my Predecessor Pope Paul VI said in Kampala: "Africans, you are now your own missionaries".72

The Church in Africa has come of age as a missionary to its own people. In this sense then Africa must be in a position to evangelize effectively by making Christ fully present in its culture. Evangelization comes about not only by proclaiming the Word but also through personal witnessing to the new life in Christ. Pope John Paul II makes this clear when he wrote,

The purpose of evangelization is "transforming humanity from within and making it new". In and through the Only Son the relations of people with God, one another and all creation will be renewed. For this reason the proclamation of the Gospel can contribute to the interior transformation of all people of good will whose hearts are open to the Holy Spirit's action.73

The Pope was obviously making reference to an earlier encyclical, Evangelii Nuntiandi, by his predecessor, Pope Paul VI, in which is stated:

For the Church, evangelizing means bringing the Good News into all the strata of humanity, and through its influence transforming humanity from within and making it new: "Now I am making the whole of creation new." But there is no new humanity if there are not first of all new persons renewed by Baptism and by lives lived according to the Gospel.74

Pope Paul VI continued,

The purpose of evangelization is therefore precisely this interior change, and if it had to be expressed in one sentence the best way of stating it would be to say that the Church evangelizes when she seeks to convert, solely through the

72 Ecclesia in Africa, no. 56.
73 Ecclesia in Africa, no. 55.
74 Paul VI, Evangelii Nuntiandi (Città del Vaticano: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1975), no. 18.
divine power of the message she proclaims, both the personal and collective consciences of people, the activities in which they engage, and the lives and concrete milieu which are theirs.\textsuperscript{75}

Four things are noteworthy here: renewal by baptism, lives lived according to the Gospel, interior change or transformation, and newness of life. The four could be said to be the elements of conversion.

On the “strata of humanity”, Pope Paul VI wrote,

Strata of humanity which are transformed: for the Church it is a question not only of preaching the Gospel in ever wider geographic areas or to ever greater numbers of people, but also of affecting and as it were upsetting, through the power of the Gospel, mankind's criteria of judgment, determining values, points of interest, lines of thought, sources of inspiration and models of life, which are in contrast with the Word of God and the plan of salvation.\textsuperscript{76}

On the evangelization of Africa, the question of forming the laity to take up their responsibilities as posed in \textit{Ecclesia in Africa} by Pope John Paul II is still valid. Effective evangelization can come about when there is effective formation of the laity, and of course the clergy. With effective formation of the faithful, as noted by the Pope, the Christian or gospel message can come to bear on the social fabric and challenge its values in the light of the gospel message, “aimed at changing not only ways of thinking but also the very structures of society, so that they will better reflect God's plan.” The challenge now is for Africa to bring the gospel message to bear on the thought patterns of its people and its social structures. As the Pope noted, "The task of evangelizing all people constitutes the essential mission of the Church … Evangelizing is in fact \textit{the grace and vocation proper to the

\textsuperscript{75} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{76} \textit{Evangelii Nuntiandi}, no. 19.
Church, her deepest identity. She exists in order to evangelize.”

As Aylward Shorter, a renowned British anthropologist, rightly noted, human cultures are “flawed by ignorance, error, and sin”. There is the need then to purify human cultures with the gospel message in the power of the Holy Spirit. In the African social structure, as in others, we experience dominance, greed, nepotism, hatred, ethnic dissension, division, vilification, victimization, revenge, vengeance and some other social vices that are not compatible with the Christian message. The Gospel values need to upset the African culture and its social strata so as to purify them.

Upsetting the African culture and purifying it leads to inculturation. Another way we can also formulate the question posed above by Pope John Paul II in *Ecclesia in Africa* on the formation of the lay faithful is: “How inculturated has the African become?” By inculturation is meant making Christ present in a given context or culture. For effective evangelization to take place the Gospel values must necessarily dialogue with the African culture. On this view Aylward Shorter clearly expressed his conviction when he said human cultures reflect the Divine truth, and that encounter between faith and culture results in inculturation. He wrote,

A major consequence of inculturation is that a given culture is transformed by faith, and that the culture in question is introduced thereby into the Mystical Body of Christ, which is the Church. Inculturation is able to do this, because human cultures reflect divine truth. They are sanctioned by God as part of creation. The world-seeding Logos of God, the rational principle of creation "through whom all things were made" (John 1:3), has

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77 *Ecclesia in Africa*, no. 55.

planted seeds of divine truth in every human culture. This is a normal consequence of humanity’s creation in the image and likeness of God.\textsuperscript{79}

The insight expressed by Shorter is very significant for the three things he brings out. First, through inculturation human culture is transformed by faith. Second, through inculturation the culture is introduced or assumed into the mystical body of Christ. Third, in every culture is planted the Divine truth.

Indeed, African cultures have seeds of Divine truth planted in them. Pope Paul VI rightly remarked after observing the experience of African traditional religion and said it is a “spiritual view of life which considers all living beings and visible nature itself as linked with the world of the invisible and spirit.”\textsuperscript{80} He added that this, spiritual concept is the most important element . . . the idea of God as the first or ultimate cause of all things. This concept, perceived rather than analyzed, lived rather than reflected on, is expressed in very different ways from culture to culture, but the fact remains that the presence of God permeates African life as the presence of a higher being, personal and mysterious.\textsuperscript{81}

What is needed now is how the whole culture will be transformed to manifest God’s truth and love. For the African culture to be transformed, the Gospel message must come to bear on it. This is inculturation, a process that brings the desired change in openness to the Gospel challenge. Through inculturation, the three levels of the work of evangelization will become meaningful: initial or missionary evangelization, new evangelization and ongoing evangelization.

\textsuperscript{79} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{80} Paul VI, \textit{Africae Terrarum}, October 29, \textit{Acta Apostolicae Sedis} (1967), 1076-77. See also Raymond Hickey, \textit{Modern Missionary Documents and Africa} (Dublin: Dominican Publications, 1982), 179.

\textsuperscript{81} Hickey, 180.
Laurenti Megesa, a Tanzanian priest and a moral theologian, reflected on the Church in Africa and offered insight into the advantages that inculturation brings to the Church. He saw that for the African Church to grow there is the need for inculturation. He posited that inculturation has the four-point purpose:

- It enables Christianity to be localized;
- It helps people to understand the Christian faith more fully;
- It helps people to live their faith more integrally as Africans;
- It facilitates the spread of Christianity in Africa.\(^{82}\)

Ary A. Roest Crollius, a Jesuit scholar on religious affairs at the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome, shares the view of Magesa and adds that inculturation does not help only the local Church, but also enriches the universal Church. Thus, he wrote encouraging “the integration of the Christian experience of a local Church into the culture of its people, in such a way that this experience not only expresses itself in elements of this culture, but becomes a new unity and communion, not only within the culture in question but also as an enrichment of the Church universal.”\(^{83}\) It is in inculturation that the symbolic values and core systems of the African can be touched for meaningful evangelization.

Peter Phan, a former Professor of Religious Studies at the Catholic University of America, sees the process of inculturation as necessary for the growth in the faith. He says essential to this process of inculturation is the “mutual criticism and enrichment between the local culture and the Christian faith. Both faith and culture are changed as the result of this process.”\(^{84}\)


Phan shares insight into the development of inculturation and says inculturation is the “third stage in a three-step trajectory of evangelization and missionary activity.” He says that the first stage is where we have “foreign philosophical and theological categories” from the cultures of the missionaries, combined with “foreign ecclesiastical structures”, imported into the mission territory or the Church to be evangelized. These imported elements are made to “function by means of a ‘functional substitution’. In this phase, translation is the chief means of adaptation.” The second stage, according to him, is acculturation. Here, both the Christian faith and culture borrow and adopt from each other elements like concepts, symbols, rituals, myths and structures that may bring about enrichment to the advantage of both. He cautioned, however, such a mutual borrowing still operates at a superficial level. Its basic strategy is that of adaptation or accommodation of the foreign religion to the local culture or vice versa. The Christian faith still remains a subculture within the host culture, and not infrequently a particular brand of Christianity, often an European one, exercises a dominating role on the local church.

Phan continued that, often, acculturation may lead to either juxtaposition (assimilating both elements of the culture and Christianity and these elements operating side by side) or syncretism (the basic tenet or identity of the culture and the faith or Christianity is lost). At this stage of adaptation, Christianity’s encounter with culture is at the intermediate level of the culture. It is still at the surface level. The third level of culture, which is the

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85 Ibid.

86 Ibid.

87 Ibid.
deepest, is still left unaffected. The third level of culture that is not affected is the area of symbolic systems and values. It is at the level of inculturation that these systems and values will encounter the Gospel values. When these symbolic systems and values are upset and challenged, evangelization will make the desired impact. It is then that the baptismal water will be thicker than blood. It is at this stage that there will be no Greek or gentile in the Church. The call by Pope Paul VI, reiterated by Pope John Paul II, that Africans are to be missionaries to their people, then is appropriate. Africans can best evangelize Africans because they know best their culture, symbolic systems and values.

For the Church, without inculturation, the Gospel message cannot be proclaimed effectively. The General Directory for Catechesis (GDC) states that: “Christ by his incarnation committed himself to the social and cultural circumstances of the men among whom he lived. This is the original inculturation of the Word of God and it is the model of all evangelization by the Church, ‘called to bring the power of the Gospel into the very heart of culture and cultures’”. 88

In talking about the importance of evangelization of cultures, Pope Paul VI had already stated categorically that:

what matters is to evangelize man's culture and cultures (not in a purely decorative way, as it were, by applying a thin veneer, but in a vital way, in depth and right to their very roots), in the wide and rich sense which these terms have in Gaudium et Spes, always taking the person as one's starting point and always coming back to the relationships of people among themselves and with God. 89


89 Evangelii Nuntiandi, no. 20.
Pope Paul VI maintains that there has always been a drama between the Gospel and culture, and the drama makes it a necessary condition for full evangelization of cultures.

The split between the Gospel and culture is without a doubt the drama of our time, just as it was of other times. Therefore every effort must be made to ensure a full evangelization of culture, or more correctly of cultures. They have to be regenerated by an encounter with the Gospel. But this encounter will not take place if the Gospel is not proclaimed.  

Shorter identifies inculturation with evangelization and states that cultures have the Holy Spirit active in them even before they are evangelized.

But human cultures are also a theatre of God’s saving action, because they are flawed by ignorance, error and sin. Christians believe that the Holy Spirit is active in human cultures, even before they are explicitly evangelized, and that the Spirit is responsible for Christ’s saving presence in them. It is the duty of inculturation (evangelization) to reveal this presence and this activity, to discover and affirm the seeds of truth and to challenge everything in the culture, which impedes the full manifestation of God’s truth and love.  

Indeed, in order to make the Church in Africa the Church for all without any discrimination, and devoid of any dissension whatsoever, the Church should make it a priority to “challenge everything in the culture, which impedes the full manifestation of God’s truth and love.”

It will suffice to end this chapter recalling the encounter of Pope Benedict XVI with the prelates from the Episcopal Conference of Angola and Sao Tome in their ad limina visit on October 29, 2011. He told them:

As Church, the first and most specific contribution we must make to the people of Africa is the proclamation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, because announcing Christ is the primary and most important factor of development. Development arises from transformation of heart and transformation of heart comes from conversion to the Gospel.  

90 Ibid.

Two questions may be asked here: First, how transformed are our hearts? Second, how converted are we?

The Pope continued his address by referring to some three problems facing Angolan Christians and said the third lies in:

the remnants of ethnic tribalism, evident in the attitude of communities that tend to close in on themselves, rejecting people from other parts of the country. ... In the Church, the new family of all who believe in Christ, there is no space for division of any kind.93

The Pope continued,

Men and women of different tribes, languages and nations gather round the altar where, sharing the one Body and Blood of Jesus in the Eucharist, they become true brothers and sisters. This bond of fraternity is stronger than that our earthly families or tribes.94

The Pope admitted that Angolan Christians are a people “who undergo the pressure of the customs of the societies in which they live. Yet, by the grace of Baptism, they are called to renounce harmful practices, and to swim against the tide guided by the spirit of the Beatitudes”.95 The spirit of the Beatitudes is love of God and of neighbour.

Concluding his remarks, the Pope recalled his visit to Luanda in 2009 and reiterated a phrase he had pronounced there:

God has enabled human beings to fly, over and above their natural tendencies, on the wings of reason and faith. If you let these wings bear you aloft, you

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92 Vatican Information Service, VISnews 110131, “Christianity, an Essential Factor of Development in Africa”, October 29, 2011, Twenty-First Year, no. 188.

93 Ibid.

94 Ibid.

95 Ibid.
will easily recognise your neighbour as a brother or sister, born with the same fundamental human rights.  

It is “transformation of heart” and “conversion to the Gospel” that will let Africans fly “over and above their natural tendencies” on the “wings of reason and faith”. In this way, Africa will rise above its old self and easily recognize a brother or sister as neighbour, a people created in the image of God with the same fundamental rights and dignity. Thus, the light of Christ will dispel the darkness of hatred, revenge, dissension, and division.

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96 Ibid.
In the Church in Ghana, there have been some instances when tribal sentiments have come to the fore. Four such incidents in recent times are described in this chapter.

The Church in Southern Ghana

Archdiocese of Accra

In 2005 when Bishop Charles Palmer-Buckle was transferred from Koforidua to Accra to be the Archbishop, there were protests by a section of the faithful because they thought he was not an indigene of Accra. Surprisingly, Archbishop Palmer-Buckle was ordained a priest for Accra before Koforidua was carved out of Accra and he became its first Bishop. Archbishop Charles Palmer-Buckle gave an account of his experience as he faced opposition in his transfer from the Koforidua Diocese to the Archdiocese of Accra. His account can be a summary of how ethnic dissension may be felt in the Church in Ghana. In an interview granted the National Catholic Reporter at the same time the second Synod for Africa was underway in Rome, the Ghanaian prelate, who was also a Synod Father, was straightforward on the issue of ethnic dissension in the Church.

In the interview, Archbishop Palmer-Buckle acknowledged that ethnicity, including ethnic divisions in the Church, which had come up a great deal at the Synod was real. He concurred with the Bishops who said problems can occur when a bishop is appointed from outside the “dominant ethnic group in a given diocese” because a group may feel that the
Bishop should be “one of ours”. The Bishop could even be resisted by his own priests.

Archbishop Palmer-Buckle thinks the Church in Ghana has reached a state where it can nominate or appoint bishops who are not necessarily from a particular tribe or an area.

To the question as to how the faithful receive these Bishops, the Archbishop answered,

One or two little difficulties here and there. For instance, I will use myself as an example. My father was Ga, and that is the indigenous tribe localized in Accra. My mother is from Nzema, near the Ivory Coast border, on the coast. Even though I was a priest in Accra before I became a bishop in Koforidua, which is part of Accra, when I was being transferred to become the Metropolitan Archbishop of Accra, some people wanted to say that I was not a Ga, and they didn't want a Fanti … they thought I came from my mother's tribe. Whoever did that obviously did not know my ancestry, but this is to tell you that it is there. Whether it came from the Church, or from political influence on the Church, is another thing that we have to find out.97

Archbishop Palmer-Buckle maintained that there is no written policy as to where the Bishop should come from. He thinks that the desire for ‘Africanization’ and ‘inculturation’ in Africa has contributed to this phenomenon by veering too far in the “direction of ethnic preferences” without considering or thinking of the outcome or consequences. The Archbishop said the Church began to talk about ‘inculturation’, which then became ‘Africanization’. He stated, “Now, the concept of ‘Africanization’ has descended into a certain form of tribalization. It is a problem.”98 He acknowledged that: “It is only now we are beginning to realize that using that [ethnicity] as a yardstick is certainly against the idea of being a ‘Catholic’ Church.”99 He advised that in finding a bishop for a diocese the policy is

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98 Ibid.

99 Ibid.
to find the best person apart from any tribal colouring.

He opined, “The policy should be to find the best guy, period. We Bishops have a duty to start educating our priests and laity to know that we must transcend the confines of ethnicity in the choice of leadership. It has to be the guy who is best qualified, and we should not see it through a tribal lens.”

At the rededication mass of the Martyrs of Uganda Church at Mamprobi in Accra on May 2, 2010, Archbishop Palmer-Buckle, who has been a victim of ethnicity in the Church, did not mince words saying, “Anyone who attempted to bring division into the Church either by virtue of ethnicity or social class was of the devil.” The rededication was necessitated by a desecration of the entrance to the church building by some unidentified persons. The desecration, some believed, was initiated by a tribal faction, although this could not be verified or substantiated. The Archbishop continued his homily stating that, “The profession of faith showed that all Catholics were one and united and must, therefore, work towards becoming one irrespective of tribe or social class.” He explained that “catholic” in Greek means unity in diversity so, in the Church, there was “room for every tribe, culture, language or political persuasion.”

100 Ibid.

101 In an article captioned “Bring Down the Walls of Evil” published on, September 13, 2010, the Ghanaian national paper, Daily Graphic, reports the Sunday homily the day before by Archbishop Charles Palmer-Buckle at Martyrs of Uganda Catholic Church at Mamprobi, a suburb of Accra.

102 Ibid.

103 Ibid.
Another instance of ethnic dissension recorded in the Church in Ghana was on Friday, May 27, 2011 at Apowa in the Diocese of Sekondi-Takoradi. According to the report by *The Chronicle* newspaper,

Friday May 27, 2011, will forever remain in the memory of the Catholic Bishop of the Sekondi Takoradi Diocese, Bishop John Martin Darko. It was a day on which he was publicly humiliated by members from the Apowa branch of the Church, for attempting to enforce what was supposed to be a routine practice in the Church. The Bishop . . . was chased away by the Apowa congregation for attempting to post two new parish Priests . . . to head the Church.\(^{104}\)

The faithful of Apowa were not happy with the Bishop for transferring two priests from the parish at Apowa. They claimed the two priests who had led the congregation to build a “modern church complex” were being transferred by the Bishop under “controversial circumstances”. However, a critical look reveals that the two new priests assigned to Apowa were an Akan and a Ga whereas the two who were transferred were Nzemas. Although, the people of Apowa are Ahantas, they consider themselves one people with the Nzemas. Geographically, the Nzemas and Ahantas share a boundary.

According to *The Chronicle* newspaper, “The Bishop and the two Fathers had to be quickly driven away in a car, to avoid physical assault by the rampaging members of [the] congregation, who were bent on teaching him a lesson.”\(^{105}\) Bishop Darko, the third Bishop of Sekondi-Takoradi, believed that some of his priests who wanted to usurp his powers were behind what happened. The report concluded, “Meanwhile, some of the priests working with

Bishop Darko have reportedly written a letter to the representative of the Pope in Ghana, claiming that he (the Bishop) hates some of them who are from the Nzema tribe, a claim which has been denied by the Bishop.\textsuperscript{106}

Bishop Darko, like his two predecessors, has suffered much accusation and opposition from some ethnic groups in his diocese. Among these are priests. The result of this is that the Bishop and his predecessors suffered much psychologically. Often, some priests from the other ethnic groups distance themselves from their Bishop. These priests may choose to attend meetings and, on a flimsy excuse, protest against whatever the Bishop may decide. Thus, the relationship and collegiality with the Bishop and fellow priests are affected. Like Bishop Darko, the first two Bishops of Sekondi-Takoradi were equally challenged by this situation to spend much time on issues of ethnicity.

The Church in Northern Ghana

Damongo Diocese

When the See of Damongo, a diocese created in 1995, became vacant on February 12, 2009, because its Bishop was transferred to Tamale to be the Metropolitan Archbishop, it took about two years before a new Bishop was ordained and installed. Between this period and the ordination and installation of the new Bishop on March 25, 2011, there were bickering and insinuations, even among priests, as to which area the new Bishop should come from. It was common knowledge that the Dagaaba priests from the southern sector of the Northern Region preferred a Dagaaba Bishop from their area to a Dagaaba Bishop from

\textsuperscript{105} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{106} Ibid.
the northern sector of the Northern Region. It could be for this reason, although this was not explicitly stated, that Most Rev. Joseph Osei-Bonsu, Bishop of Konongo-Mampong and President of the Ghana Catholic Bishops’ Conference, asked all in the Diocese to eschew all negative tribal or ethnic sentiments and give the new Bishop their full support. This advice, given at the ordination and installation of the new Bishop, was to encourage all in the Diocese to give their Bishop the assistance and support he would need to shepherd his flock.

Bishop Osei-Bonsu stated,

Please get rid of all negative tribal or ethnic sentiments and see yourselves as all members of the one family of God. By virtue of our baptism and membership of the Church, we should all realize, as St. Paul says, that ‘There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus’ (Gal. 3:28).

It is for all the above reasons that the lineamenta for the 2009 Synod encouraged the Synod Fathers to have an “in-depth reflection” on the topic or theme chosen to meet its goals.

It went further to specifically state under “Some Aspects Requiring Particular Attention” that discrimination is a “deadly virus” so all African Christians are primarily called “to be messengers and committed witnesses in the search for ways and means to convince every African that the ethnic group, region and ideology are not absolute values, and, therefore, should not be the principal reference points for their conduct and activity.”


This view of Christianity requires a break from negative forms of solidarity: that is, those which originate precisely in the overemphasis on the ethnic group. This means to have solidarity with those from one's own ethnic group in what is good, but not to have solidarity with them in evil. These positive forms of solidarity among members of a same ethnic group and those who belong to different ethnic groups are grounds for optimism in breaking the mechanism of hatred and self-destruction of peoples.\textsuperscript{109}

Navrongo-Bolgatanga Diocese

The Church in the Navrongo-Bolgatanga Diocese has also undergone some turbulent times in its development due to ethnic dissension. In 1977 when the Diocesan See was being transferred from Navrongo to Bolgatanga there arose stiff opposition from the people of Navrongo who are Kasena. The Kasenas felt it was not proper for the See to be transferred to Bolgatanga, a Frafra land. Most Rev. Joseph Osei-Bonsu, Bishop of Konongo-Mampong and President of the Ghana Catholic Bishops’ Conference, recalled this in his homily on the occasion of the ordination of Rev. Msgr. Alfred Agyenta as Bishop of Navrongo-Bolgatanga on June 29, 2011 when Bishop Osei-Bonsu asked for peace to prevail in the Diocese. He told the priests, religious and the lay faithful,

There is a lot of spiritual, human and material potential in your diocese, but all this cannot be tapped if there is no peace in the diocese. As you know, your diocese has gone through very turbulent and tempestuous times. The diocese has suffered from factionalism, with groups championing the cause and status of Navrongo with its Basilica over against Bolgatanga with its cathedral, with some groups even claiming to champion the cause of Bishop Lucas Abadamloora of blessed memory.\textsuperscript{110}

\textsuperscript{109} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{110} Ibid.
Until this day, some people are still agitating that the mortal remains of Bishop Abadamloora be transferred from the cathedral in Bolgatanga to his native Navrongo which is less than fifty miles away for reburial. Bishop Osei-Bonsu used the occasion to appeal to them to “let Bishop Lucas Abadamloora rest in peace in his grave in the cathedral here in Bolgatanga and let all talk and letter writing with regard to his burial place cease from now on.” He regretted that a lot of energy, passion, paper and ink have been expended on this issue and others.

Bishop Osei-Bonsu admitted that the Diocese of Navrongo-Bolgatanga has suffered a lot from ethnocentric tendencies. He recounted the many ethnic groups in the Diocese and said these should rather enrich the Diocese with their diverse cultures. He told the people,

My dear people of God, the Diocese of Navrongo-Bolgatanga has also suffered from unhealthy ethnocentric tendencies. God has indeed blessed your diocese with different ethnic groups which enrich the diocese with their diverse cultures. The ethnic groups include the Frafra, Builsa, Kasena, Mamprusi, Kusasi, Bimoba, Komba, Mossi and Bisa. You should be proud that you belong to one of these ethnic groups. But when you start regarding your ethnic group as being superior to other ethnic groups, then there is something wrong.

The President of the Ghana Catholic Bishops’ Conference continued,

In the Church we are all equal; nobody is superior and no ethnic group is superior. By virtue of our baptism and membership of the Church, we should all realize, as St. Paul says, that “There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus” (Gal. 3:28). We are all very special in the eyes of God who has reasons for creating us and putting us where he thinks we must be.

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111 Ibid.
112 Ibid.
113 Ibid
Bishop Osei-Bonsu appealed to the people not to decide to accept or reject the new Bishop on the basis of which ethnic group he belongs to but rather accept him as a child of God like any of them, and as a priest like any of the priests in the Diocese but who has been chosen by the Pope because of his character and competence. He said, “In the same way, in your various parishes and churches, people should be elected into positions of authority not on the basis of their ethnic origin but on the basis of their character and competence.”\(^{114}\)

It will be recalled that when announcing the appointment of the Rev. Msgr. Alfred Agyenta as Bishop-elect of Navrongo-Bolgatanga, the Apostolic Nuncio to Ghana, Most Rev. Leon Kalenga, said the Bishop-elect was not chosen because he is from the area. “We are preaching Jesus Christ not tribes,” he said and appealed to members of the Diocese to unite and support the new Bishop to carry out his duties well, adding, “The Church is one family.”\(^{115}\) This was clearly in reference to the ethnic dissension in the Diocese. In such situation, one can observe that some priests are bonded more by their ethnic origins instead of the priesthood. Likewise among the faithful, many people are bonded more by their tribe or ethnic group than by their baptism which incorporates them into the body of Christ, the Church. This does not promote the atmosphere for true interaction among the faithful people of God. Such is an overview of how ethnic dissension permeates the Church in Ghana.

\(^{114}\) Ibid.

CHAPTER 5
UNDERSTANDING OUR BAPTISM AND THE EUCHARIST
AS THE BASIS FOR HEALING DIVISIONS

In Ghana, the seed of the faith was sown in 1480 by the Portuguese. Although this was short-lived, since 1880 there has been a continuous and vigorous evangelization by the Church. The question may be asked, why is it that for over one hundred and thirty years of continuous evangelization there is still ethnic dissension in the Church in Ghana?

In this chapter, I submit that our understanding and acceptance of what our baptism and the Eucharist are will make a difference and affect our relationship with one another in the Church. This calls for adequate formation in the faith. Without sufficient formation in the faith, the Church in Ghana cannot take up the challenge or responsibility of healing ethnic divisions.

Our major source will be the Sacred Scriptures to arrive at and accept that the power of baptism and the spiritual strength derived from the Eucharist should be the major sources of empowerment for Christians to overcome all forms of division. Without accepting the Word of God as it is, and acting on it, there cannot be any genuine reconciliation and healing of divisions. In this chapter the core point or main argument is that it is the understanding of our identity as Christians in the light of the Gospel message, the Word, that we can overcome any form of division in the Christian family, the Church. Our identity as Christians is derived from our baptism and the Eucharist.
Baptism

The Catechism of the Catholic Church teaches that,

Baptism makes us members of the Body of Christ: “Therefore . . . we are members one of another.” Baptism incorporates us into the Church. From the baptismal fonts is born the one People of God of the New Covenant, which transcends all the natural or human limits of nations, cultures, races, and sexes: “For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body.”

The teaching on baptism here raises five issues:

1. Through baptism we become members of the Body of Christ, the Church.
2. Through baptism we are members one of another.
3. Through baptism we are born one people of God, so we become a people of the New Covenant.
4. It is in the one Spirit that we were baptized into one Body.
5. The one body we are because of our baptism transcends all natural or human limits of nations, cultures, races, and sexes.

If this is the faith we share because of our baptism, the question arises why there should be divisions in the community of the baptized faithful, the Body of Christ. How do we understand what our baptism is, and its implications?

We have already referred to Bishop Albert Kanene Obiefuna of Awka Diocese in Nigeria when he observed at the 1994 African Synod that the African truly lives his or her life as a Christian and as African in the context of his or her tribal life, and that this mentality “is so pervading that the saying goes among the African that when it comes to the crunch, it is not the Christian concept of the Church as a family which prevails but rather the adage that

blood is thicker than water”. The observation by Bishop Obiefuna is a practical one which brings out a very important question: why does the African live his or her family life and his or her Christian life in the context of his or her tribal life? In Africa, it is common to find that people take sides because of their tribe and not their religion. From the Bishop’s observation, we can deduce that there is a missing link as to how the African Christian sees his Christian family and his blood family. This is the dichotomy, a defect which needs to be addressed, or corrected.

This correction can be done in the light of the Gospel message under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. This is where thorough formation in the Christian faith comes in. It is the power of the Gospel message that can transform humanity from within and make it new. The Ghanaian Christian needs to be formed to live the social implications of the Gospel message so as to challenge any form of ethnic dissension and whatever hinders the true good of humanity. It is, therefore, important to confront the Ghanaian with the message of the Gospel. For example, how does he or she understand what St. Paul tells us in Galatians 3:27-28, “For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.”? What does it mean to “put on Christ”? What does “there is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female” mean? What is oneness in Christ? These are some of the questions that the Ghanaian Christian must be confronted with.

St. Paul saw the power inherent in baptism. In and through baptism, the Christian symbolically dies to the old self, the sinful self, and rises to newness of life, the life of the
resurrection. Baptism makes the Christian a new being, a new creation. Thus, he wrote to the Romans:

Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life. For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his. We know that our old self was crucified with him so that the sinful body might be destroyed, and we might no longer be enslaved to sin. (Romans 6:3-6)

What does this passage mean to the Ghanaian Christian?

The Ghanaian Christian needs ongoing conversion which stems from the power of the gospel message which will culminate in interior change, as Pope Paul VI said,

The purpose of evangelization is therefore precisely this interior change, and if it had to be expressed in one sentence the best way of stating it would be to say that the Church evangelizes when she seeks to convert, solely through the divine power of the message she proclaims, both the personal and collective consciences of people, the activities in which they engage, and the lives and concrete milieu which are theirs.  

The Eucharist

The Catechism of the Catholic Church teaches that,

Those who receive the Eucharist are united more closely to Christ. Through it Christ unites them to all the faithful in one body – the Church. Communion renews, strengthens, and deepens this incorporation into the Church, already achieved by Baptism. In Baptism we have been called to form but one body … Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread.  

117 Evangelii Nuntiandi, no. 18.

118 Catechism of the Catholic Church, no. 1396.
Our concept, understanding and acceptance of what the Eucharist is makes a
difference in forming us to be what we are, Christians. In Ghana, the traditionalists, or
worshippers of Africa Traditional Religion, attach much importance to the traditional sacred
meal, something that should challenge the Christian. Among others, one significant thing is
that when a worshipper harbours evil thoughts for a long time or commits a heinous crime,
there is the fear that the deity will spiritually strike down the worshipper with the ‘stick’.
This also applies to a worshipper who harbours grievances or hatred against a fellow
worshipper but fails to voice it or settle it. From all practical indications, the Ghanaian
traditionalist strives to live his or her faith, his or her religion because the faith or religion is
a way of life. Christians can learn some positive things from the worshippers of African
Traditional Religion. Our Christian sense of a family and of forgiveness seems to be
dwindling gradually. There is, therefore, a more urgent need for the ecclesial community to
draw pragmatic programmes to resuscitate it.

Bernard Häring, a renowned Catholic theologian, made an insightful statement in the
conclusion to his book, *The Sacraments and Your Everyday Life*, when he stated that the
sacraments are to help us to commit and recommit ourselves to God so that we grow into his
“true image on earth”. In other words, the sacraments are to be lived so that we grow into
the image of God.

Reflecting on the Eucharist, Pope Benedict XVI once said,

*In the Eucharist the Lord gives Himself to us with His body, His soul and His
divinity, and we become one with Him and among ourselves. Our response to
His love must, therefore, be a concrete response; it must be expressed in a true*

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conversion to love, in forgiveness, in mutual acceptance and in attention to everyone’s needs. Many and varied are the forms of service we can offer others in everyday life. The Eucharist thus becomes the source of spiritual energy that renews the world in the love of Christ”.  

The observation by the Pope on the Eucharist is very challenging for the four things he brings out.

1. The Eucharist makes us become one with God and among ourselves.
2. We respond to this love of God in concrete terms, expressed in a true conversion to love.
3. Our love’s response is to be concrete in forgiveness.
4. We respond in mutual acceptance and in attention to everyone’s needs.

When these four things are expressed concretely in our everyday life, then the Eucharist will become the “source of spiritual energy that renews the world in the love of Christ”.

The above observation gives rise to some questions. Does the Ghanaian Christian accept that the Eucharist makes us become one with God and one with others? How well formed or converted is the Ghanaian Christian so that he or she responds concretely to God’s love in daily life? To what extent can he or she forgive others and those from different ethnic groups? How mutually does he or she accept others from the different ethnic or cultural groups?

The Christian ritual meal, the Eucharist, is a meal of transformation. The ritual meal becomes a meal of transformation in that the partakers are molded into the image of Christ.

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120 This reflection on the Eucharistic mystery on the topic “Eucharist Increases Love for God and Service to Others” was given during the Angelus session in the internal courtyard of Castelgandolfo on Sunday, September 25, 2005. See Vatican Information Service daily news, VIS 050926 (390).
Through their participation, the faithful are gradually transformed to become the *alter Christus*, another Christ. This, in fact, is the idea expressed in the concluding prayer of the twentieth Sunday in ordinary time:

God of mercy,
by this sacrament you make us one with Christ.
By becoming more like him on earth,
may we come to share his glory in heaven,
where he lives and reigns forever and ever.¹²¹

We become more like Christ on earth when we love, forgive, and mutually accept one another unconditionally.

We have briefly reflected on our baptism and the Eucharist and the fact that these two sacraments make us what we are, Christians. By our baptism, we are incorporated into the Church and so we become members of the Body of Christ. Our baptism gives us our identity as Christians, and the Eucharist forms us into the image of Christ. The question now is how the Ghanaian can continually come to terms with his or her Christian identity and also consciously accept the transforming power of the Eucharist. Understanding and accepting what our baptism and the Eucharist are to us make a difference. In this project, the fact of our baptism and the Eucharist will be used as the foundation for fostering tribal unity in the Church. Therefore, some relevant scriptural or biblical passages on baptism and the Eucharist will be employed, or reflected on, in Christian formation grounded in God’s Word. It is the Word of God, Christ himself, who dispels division and any form of darkness in the Christian community and creates a Eucharistic community, a community of love, charity and unity. No human, political or social entity can supply or effect this but only God’s Word.

CHAPTER 6
METHODOLOGY

In chapter 5, we reflected on our baptism and the Eucharist and said our identity as Christians is derived from them. The issue was then raised that it is by our understanding of our identity as Christians in the light of the Word of God that we can overcome any form of division in the Church and bring about healing of the divisions. The point was also established that there is a need for formation which will respond to our Christian call. This formation must have its basis in Scripture. In Scripture, we get to know the mind of Christ and act on it. Therefore, as our method, the Prayer of Encounter will be employed to reflect upon and pray over various scriptural or biblical passages about baptism and the Eucharist, with the objective of entering into a deeper relationship with Christ. It is this relationship with Christ that can bring us conversion and transformation, and mould us into his image and likeness. When we are formed into the image and likeness of Christ, we will have the mind of Christ and act like Christ.

The *Dogmatic Constitution on Revelation* teaches us that, “The sacred synod also earnestly and especially urges all the Christian faithful, especially Religious, to learn by frequent reading of the divine Scriptures the ‘excellent knowledge of Jesus Christ’ (Phil 3:8). ‘For ignorance of the Scriptures is ignorance of Christ.’” It continues,

Therefore, they should gladly put themselves in touch with the sacred text itself, whether it be through the liturgy, rich in the divine word, or through devotional reading, or through instructions suitable for the purpose and other aids which, in our time, with approval and active support of the shepherds of the Church, are commendably spread everywhere. And let them remember

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that prayer should accompany the reading of Sacred Scripture, so that God and man may talk together; for ‘we speak to him when we pray; we hear him when we read the divine saying’.

As Fr. David Knight, founder of His Way Spiritual Growth Center in Memphis, put it, “If we want to enter into relationship with Christ, then, to encounter him ever more deeply as a person, the way to do this is by reflecting and praying over the Scriptures.” In this chapter, the method of Fr. Knight in his book, His Way, an everyday plan for following Jesus, is used. It is a method of prayer called encounter which has its basis in Scriptures. In his book, Fr. Knight has rightly stated that,

To be holy as God is holy, to love not as man should but as God does – this is reserved for those who have come to know the Father through the revelation of Jesus Christ. And this is really what Christianity is all about. “Eternal life is this: to know you, the only true God, and him whom you have sent, Jesus Christ” (John 17:3). We begin to be Christians, consciously, the moment we start asking Jesus, “Teacher, where do you dwell?” It is when we begin to desire, and to choose, and to act upon the choice to know the Lord that we begin to be followers of Christ.

He continued,

To know the Lord does not mean to know about him. It means to know him, to encounter his living, acting mind and will and to respond with understanding and appreciation. It means to “acquire a fresh, spiritual way of thinking. You must put on that new man” (Ephesians 4: 23-24). The Christian is a person who has taken on, and is striving to take on, the way of thinking, judging and appreciating things proper to Jesus Christ. The Christian has “put on” the mind of Christ; the Christian is a person who thinks like God.

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123 Ibid., 25.
125 Ibid., 43-44.
126 Ibid., 44
Prayer of Encounter:

The starting point of the Prayer of Encounter is Scripture. It is through Scripture that we can have true conversion which leads to true change of heart and mind. Like a two-edged sword, the Word of God scrutinizes us and challenges us to reform and do good as Christ wants. Fr. Knight put it thus,

We experience the reality of Christ when we experience the effect of his reality on our life. And the first effect which real encounter with him should bring about within us is conversion. What conversion really means is a change of mind: You change your way of thinking about something. You change your attitudes, rework your value systems. It is a change of heart. This is what St. Paul was trying to get across when he told the Ephesians to “acquire a fresh, spiritual way of thinking” (Eph. 4: 23).\(^{127}\)

He continued,

We are truly converted to Christianity when we have changed our minds about our way of living and acting in this world, not because we are beginning to think straight, but because we are beginning to think like Christ. A Christian reform of life does not mean keeping the Ten Commandments; it means reshaping, reforming our lives along the lines of the attitudes and values of Christ. And these go far beyond the Ten Commandments.\(^{128}\)

The Prayer of Encounter, done in humility and faith, has the objective of getting to know God as a person, and of getting to know him better. When we get to know the Lord better, our attitude, thought pattern, values, and priorities will change for the better. In the Prayer of Encounter, we reflect on the Word of God until we take or come to decision or decisions that will change our lives.

The Prayer of Encounter consists of three phases. “We confront something the Lord has said; we make connections by asking questions about it until we can relate it to our

\(^{127}\) Ibid., 92.

\(^{128}\) Ibid., 95.
experience; and we take a stance toward what we have seen, toward him.”129 Before these three steps or phases, there is the preparatory stage which consists of what Fr. Knight calls the flight plan, taxiing out of the runway, and revving up the engine.

The Flight Plan

It is necessary to set time aside, and find or create an atmosphere conducive to prayer. We prepare for the Prayer of Encounter by reading from Scripture. Some words in the passage that strike us may be noted, to be confronted.

Taxiing Out of the Runway

We begin our prayer by getting ourselves into the right frame of mind. It is to “psyche ourselves up” to encounter the Lord. “The essential thing is to get oneself ready to think, not on the plane of the ordinary, distracting business of the day, but on the plane of the transcendent reality of God . . . We think about the fact that we are going to encounter God. We try to get up an appetite for the things he may have in store for us.”130

Revving Up the Engine

Here, we put ourselves in the presence of the Lord. Although God is everywhere, we recall his presence by making a conscious act of awareness to place ourselves before him. We then make some physical act of recognition indicating or acknowledging the presence of

129 Ibid., 74.
130 Ibid., 69-70.
God. For example, we may bow our head or close our eyes. “With God we have to be just as human. To consciously ‘give’ him recognition where we are by entering into deliberate awareness of his presence, we have to acknowledge his presence with our bodies as well as with our minds. We work as whole people.”¹³¹ After acknowledging God’s presence, we say a short prayer in our hearts asking his help to understand and respond to his Word. This prayer may be in our own words. With the revving up of the engine, it is time to do “the take off”, the Prayer of Encounter which consists of the three phases.

1. Confronting

In many instances, we read the Word of God but it “rolls across our minds without leaving a trace”. There is the need to confront the Word of God so that it “bites” us. We must be convinced that it is the Word of God, and it is God who talks to us. Each individual personalizes it and accepts that God is talking to me. “One way to do this is to read a passage from Scripture and ask, ‘What effect has this had on my life?’”¹³²

For example, Galatians 3:27-28 tells us, “For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.” A question we may ask is: What effect has this had on my life? We can relate it to ethnic dissension in the Church and ask, how does this passage impact me in my dealings with people from other ethnic groups? Have I promoted oneness in the community of the faithful? Have I truly accepted

¹³¹ Ibid., 71.
¹³² Ibid., 74.
people from other ethnic groups as true members of the Church, the body of Christ, without any prejudice?

2. Asking Questions

The second stage is questioning ourselves. For example, we may ask: What did Jesus really mean when he said this? What should I really be doing if I accept this message? What does it mean to “put on Christ”? What does “there is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female” mean? What is oneness in Christ? Do I promote oneness in the community of the faithful? These are some of the questions with which the Ghanaian Christian must be confronted. “Such questioning helps us keep in mind a very fundamental principle: Jesus is not giving us rules to follow in the Gospels; he is giving us examples of how he thinks.”\textsuperscript{133} With some reflection we may come up with how Jesus thinks, the \textit{mind of Jesus}.

3. Taking a Stance

Fr. Knight states that it is a very dangerous thing to reflect on Scripture without letting it call our life into question. In itself, reflecting on Scripture is not prayer. “It is prayer only if we have the intention of reflecting \textit{until} we come to some decisions to change our life. Without this intention our reflection is not going to bring us into any real relationship with Christ.”\textsuperscript{134} This means our reflection must be intentional, something that comes out of our

\textsuperscript{133} Ibid., 76.
\textsuperscript{134} Ibid., 83.
own volition. When we reflect too, we do so until we come to a decision, and that decision must affect us. “And so the most important stage of our prayer is the stage during which we take a stance with our wills toward what we have read, reflected upon and understood. The response we make with our wills in prayer can be either affective or effective. The essential requirement of affective response is that it should be honest; of effective response that it should be concrete.\textsuperscript{135} Affective response is when we accept what the Lord has proposed as the ideal and we have the desire to do it. Affective response then is “desire, not wishful thinking”. Affective desire turns into effective response when we decide to actually do something. “Desire becomes effective when it reaches the point of decision.”

In sum, the Prayer of Encounter, technically called \textit{discursive meditation}, falls into the general category of “mental prayer”. In this prayer, we use our memory, intellect and will. With our memory we \textit{confront}. We use our intellect to \textit{ask questions} and \textit{connect} our old experience to the new. We then take a \textit{stance} with our will. We embrace ideals and make resolution.\textsuperscript{136} The Prayer of Encounter will be used to reflect on various scriptural passages about baptism and the Eucharist.

\textsuperscript{135} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{136} Ibid., 87.
A workshop or project design for implementation was made, and about two and a half months before the workshop, the presenter got in touch with the director of catechetics in the Diocese of Konongo-Mampong in Ghana, Rev. Jacob Tardie Adomako, who helped to organize and mobilize the catechists for the workshop before the presenter arrived in Ghana. After briefing and discussing with him on the phone and by email on the need for the workshop, the presenter sent him the project proposal so he could grasp and appreciate well what was going to take place. At a general meeting with catechists, Fr. Adomako briefed them about the workshop and asked those who could participate to write their names on a paper he provided. The director told them there was the need to have people from various ethnic groups at the workshop. He also made it clear that the medium of expression was to be English. Thirty people responded and about two weeks after, he fixed a date with them. The original date fixed for the workshop was Tuesday, June 19 to Thursday, June 21, 2012. However, due to a major diocesan activity that incidentally coincided with the workshop, the date was changed to Tuesday, July 3 through Thursday, July 5, 2012.

Due to the change in date, seven catechists could not attend the workshop. Twenty-three of the catechists, however, attended. The number was acceptable as between twenty and thirty participants were expected. Among the participants were people of Asante (Ashanti), Akan (not Asantes), Wala and Fante dialect or ethnic backgrounds. A secretary, Mr. Eugene Anane Gyamfi, who had just graduated from the Catholic University College of Ghana, was
employed to take recordings at the workshop. In all, seven presentations were made at the workshop by the candidate, the sole presenter. At the end of each presentation, the Prayer of Encounter was used with its three basic steps. That is, “We confront something the Lord has said; we make connections by asking questions about it until we can relate it to our experience; and we take a stance toward what we have seen, toward him.”

The presenter read a scriptural passage and guided participants to reflect on it. After some moment of silence and reflection, participants wrote their responses in their notebooks to a question on how they can help to build unity in the Church. The presenter encouraged participants to assign themselves names using the alphabets instead of their proper names so that their identities would be concealed. In this way, it was hoped, participants would be more open in writing their responses. Each section concluded with the workshop prayer which asked the Heavenly Father to destroy all forms of prejudices, biases and barriers within us and, by virtue of our baptism and the Eucharist, to form and recreate us into his image to be like Jesus Christ.

See appendix C for the workshop prayer composed by the presenter.

137David Knight, 74.
Day 1

Participants registered as they arrived.

Session 1

Using “interviews for creative introduction”\textsuperscript{138} as an icebreaker, participants met in pairs (dyads) and interviewed each other. They later regrouped and each introduced the other to the larger group. Handouts, a summary of what was to take place at the workshop, were given to participants. The purpose and the general overview of the workshop were reviewed with the participants. The pre-questionnaire was administered and collected by the presenter.

\textit{Presentation 1}

After participants had stretched out for about ten minutes, the presenter read and shared with them the concern of Pope John Paul II, emphasizing the need to address the problem of ethnic conflicts in the Church, as the purpose and objective of the workshop.

Another challenge identified by the Synod Fathers concerns the various forms of division which need to be healed through honest dialogue . . . "Tribal oppositions at times endanger if not peace, at least the pursuit of the common good of the society. They also create difficulties for the life of the Churches and the acceptance of Pastors from other ethnic groups". This is why the Church in Africa feels challenged by the specific responsibility of healing these divisions.\textsuperscript{139}

Participants shared their thoughts on the pastoral concern of the Pope. They all agreed that the Pope’s observation is true and that we need to address it in all seriousness.

Participants wrote down their responses. After they had given their insights, the prayer


\textsuperscript{139} \textit{Ecclesia in Africa}, no. 49.
of the workshop was said. Snacks were served after which a participant led us in prayer. The presenter, a priest, gave the blessing and participants retired to bed.

Day 2

The second day started with Holy Mass at 7:30 a.m., using the readings of the day. This was followed by breakfast. After breakfast, participants gathered and the presenter welcomed them to the day’s activities. Then came an ice breaker: Trust or Blind Walk. In pairs, one person was blindfolded (eyes are closed) and led by the other. The one who led was to ensure that no harm befell the one who followed. Out of trust, the blindfolded person followed. Although voluntary, the purpose of this exercise was to encourage trust and active participation. Those who were blindfolded changed roles to be leaders, with all the participants taking part in the exercise. Although the exercise was originally planned to take ten minutes, it took fifteen minutes as participants enjoyed doing it.

Presentation 2: Some Causes of Ethnic Conflicts in Ghana

This was in the form of a seminar that encouraged participants to give their input. The presenter solicited from participants what they know to be the causes of ethnic conflicts in Ghana and their effects. These were written on a blackboard in the conference room by the presenter and recorded in a book by the secretary. Participants wrote down what they considered to be the causes of ethnic conflicts. The presenter filled in with other causes that were not captured by participants.
Effects of Ethnic Violence

There was a ten-minute break after which participants gathered and identified some of the devastating effects of ethnic violence. These were written on a blackboard and recorded by the secretary. Participants had a break for fifteen minutes, followed by the Prayer of Encounter.

Prayer of Encounter

Participants sat in a relaxed mood and called to mind the presence of God.

Breath Taking: For about two minutes, participants took in deep breaths and let them out. As they took in their breath, they asked God to fill them with his Spirit, and as they let out their breath the asked that any sin within them be let out.

The song “Spirit of the Living God, Fall Afresh on me” was sung. A scriptural passage was slowly read twice for reflection. In Galatians 3:27-28 St. Paul tells us:

For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

In silence, participants did personal reflection on the passage for ten minutes followed by guided reflection. These questions for consideration were used one after the other, giving time for reflection.

1. Confronting Scripture: What is “baptized into Christ”? What does “put on Christ” mean? What is “you are all one in Christ”?

2. Making connection: What can I say of myself in regard to this passage? Who has been a Greek or Jew in my life? How have I accepted people from other ethnic groups?
3. Taking a Stance: What stance do I take as a Christian towards others who are not from my ethnic group?

Participants wrote their responses. The workshop prayer was said and participants went for a one hour coffee and snack break.

*Presentation 3: Some Ethnic Conflicts in the Church in Ghana*

The third presentation drew on some ethnic dissensions in the Church in Ghana. It covered the Archdiocese of Accra, the Dioceses of Sekondi-Takoradi, Damongo, and Navrongo-Bolgatanga as presented in chapter 4. After the presentation, there was a fifteen-minute break for the participants to stretch out. After the break, the participants gathered for the Prayer of Encounter.

*Prayer of Encounter*

The Prayer of Encounter began with singing the traditional song, “Fill me with Your Spirit, my God”. Participants then sat in a relaxed mood calling to mind the presence of God. The following scriptural passage was slowly read twice for reflection:

> For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; the same Lord is for all, enriching all who call upon him. (Rom. 10:12).

Participants did personal reflection on the passage for ten minutes followed by guided reflection by the presenter. The following questions for confrontation were used one after the other, giving time for enough reflection.

1. Confronting Scripture: What is “no distinction between Jew and Greek”? What is “the same Lord is for all”? What is “enriching all who call upon him”?
2. Making connection: Who has been a Jew or Greek in my life? Do I enrich myself in the Lord by calling upon him (through prayer)?

3. Taking a Stance: What must I do so as not to build a “Jew or Greek” in the community of the faithful? How do I promote unity in the community of the faithful?

Participants recorded their responses. The session ended with the workshop prayer and lunch break.

Session 4

The fourth session began with an icebreaker: Self-Descriptors. The essence of the self-descriptors was to get acquainted in an active and novel way. Participants stood, moved around the room, and introduced themselves by giving their first name and two adjectives about themselves. For example, “Hello, I am Thomas, and I am helpful and courteous.” “Hi, I am Agatha; I am attentive and fun-loving.” With each new introduction, participants were encouraged to use different adjectives.

Presentation 4: Negative Effects of Ethnic or Tribal Divisions in the Church

This was in the form of a seminar. The presenter facilitated and solicited from participants what they consider to be the negative effects of tribal divisions in the Church and how they impact on evangelization and unity. Participants were encouraged to share their practical experience with the group. The presenter gave input where necessary. Responses from participants on the negative effects of ethnic or tribal divisions in the Church were written on a blackboard. They were then recorded by the secretary in a book.

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140 Eitington, 7.
Two participants from two different towns shared their experience with other participants. They said as catechists in their villages, they needed money to go for a course in catechetics but when they asked their local Church committees (councils) for the money the committees refused. When they asked why their committees would not pay the money for them to go for the course, they were told that, although they were the catechists in the villages, they were not natives. Instead, the committees wanted the natives to go for the course. One of them said he was told that if he gained any knowledge he would, in future, leave the village and go to his native place. They felt discriminated against. There was a fifteen-minute break after which came the Prayer of Encounter.

Prayer of Encounter

Participants sat in a relaxed mood calling to mind the presence of God. This scriptural passage was slowly read twice:

I appeal to you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree and that there be no dissensions among you, but that you be united in the same mind and the same judgment. For it has been reported to me by Chloe's people that there is quarreling among you, my brethren. What I mean is that each one of you says, "I belong to Paul," or "I belong to Apollos," or "I belong to Cephas," or "I belong to Christ." Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul? 1 Corinthians 1:10-13

As in the last Prayer of Encounter, participants did personal reflection on the passage for ten minutes followed by guided reflection. The questions for confrontation were used one after the other, giving time for enough reflection.

1. Confronting Scripture: Participants reflected on these phrases a. “there should be no dissension among you”, and b. “be united in the same mind and the same judgment”.
2. Making connection: Whom do I belong to, Christ or whom? How do I accept or relate to people of different tribes? Do I accept or relate to others on the basis of tribe? What do I do as a Christian to cement unity and love in the Church?

3. Taking a Stance: What stance do I take to promote unity and acceptance in the community of the faithful that has people from other tribes (that comprises all, irrespective of tribe or ethnic group)?

Participants recorded their responses. The workshop prayer was said, followed by supper and evening prayer. Participants retired to bed.

Day 3

The day’s activities started with Holy Mass. After Mass, participants gathered for the fifth presentation.

_**Presentation 5: The Unchristian Nature of Ethnic Dissension (Why Ethnic Dissension is Unchristian)**_

This was in the form of a seminar. The presenter facilitated and solicited from participants why ethnic dissension is unchristian. The responses from participants were written on a blackboard by the presenter. The secretary, in turn, wrote them in an exercise book. There was a break for fifteen minutes for participants to “stretch their legs”, followed by the Prayer of Encounter.

_Prayertime of Encounter_

Participants sat in a relaxed mood and sang “Come Holy Ghost, Creator come”, imploring God’s assistance. Participants, still in a relaxed mood, recalled God’s presence.
While acknowledging the presence of the Lord, in their own words, they prayed in their hearts, asking of God to understand and respond to his Word.

This verse was slowly read twice for reflection:

> For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body -- Jews or Greeks, slaves or free -- and all were made to drink of one Spirit. 1 Cor. 12: 12-14

Participants did personal reflection on the passage for ten minutes followed by guided reflection led by the presenter. The questions for confrontation were used one after the other, giving time for enough reflection.

1. Confronting Scripture: What is “the body is one with many members”; “by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, Jews or Greeks, slaves or free”; “all are made to drink of one Spirit”? After the confrontation, participants prayed over what was confronted.

2. Making connection: Are there any “Jews” or “Greeks” in my life?

What is the passage trying to get across to me?

3. Taking a Stance: What is my response to the passage as regards my relationship with the faithful from other ethnic groups?

Participants recorded their responses. The session ended with the workshop prayer followed by breakfast.
Session 6

Participants gathered after breakfast for the sixth session which began with an ice breaker, Hobby Hunt.141 Hobby Hunt, as an icebreaker, allows the “participants to become acquainted with one another in a more meaningful way; that is, glimpses into attitudes, values, aspects of personality, and concerns become possible.”142 The essence of this exercise was to see who matches whom in their interest in hobbies.

In the Hobby Hunt, the participants were given a list of twelve popular hobbies which included football (soccer), gardening, movies, storytelling, and jogging. Participants chose their top six. They went round seeking those who share in their preferences, writing their names on a worksheet. After the ice breaker came the sixth presentation.

Presentation 6: The Eucharist

In this presentation, the presenter relied on the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* which teaches that,

Those who receive the Eucharist are united more closely to Christ. Through it Christ unites them to all the faithful in one body – the Church. Communion renews, strengthens, and deepens this incorporation into the Church, already achieved by Baptism. In Baptism we have been called to form but one body . . . Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread.143

The presenter gave a reflection on this passage for fifteen minutes after which participants did the Prayer of Encounter.

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141 Eitington, 6.

142 Eitington, 4.

143 *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, no. 1396.
Prayer of Encounter

Participants sat in a relaxed mood and sang “Come Holy Ghost, Creator come”, asking for God’s assistance. Participants, still in a relaxed mood, recalled God’s presence. While acknowledging the presence of the Lord, in their own words, they prayed in their hearts, asking God to let them understand and respond to his Word. The verse for reflection was slowly read twice.

The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not a participation in the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not a participation in the body of Christ? Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread. 1 Corinthians 10:16-17

Participants did personal reflection on the passage for ten minutes followed by guided reflection by the presenter. The following questions for confrontation were used one after the other, giving time for enough reflection.

1. Confronting Scripture: What is “the cup of blessing which we bless”? What is “participation in the blood of Christ”? What is participation in the body of Christ?
2. Making connection: How does my partaking of the body and blood of Christ unite me to Christ and my fellow Christians? Do I understand that the Eucharist makes me one with the community of the faithful?
3. Taking a Stance: As one who shares the same bread and blood with people from different ethnic groups, how will I live and promote acceptance and unity in the community of the faithful?

Participants recorded their responses after the reflection. This session ended with the workshop prayer, followed by lunch.
Session 7

*Presentation 7: The Christian Response to Ethnic Conflicts: Unity and Love*

After lunch, the seventh session began. Participants sat in a relaxed mood and sang “Come Holy Ghost, Creator come”, asking God to send his Spirit on them. Participants, still in a relaxed mood, recalled God’s presence. While acknowledging the presence of the Lord silently, they prayed in their hearts asking God to help them understand and respond to his Word.

The following passage for reflection was slowly read twice by the presenter:

I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, beg you to lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all lowliness and meekness, with patience, forbearing one another in love, eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of us all, who is above all and through all and in all. Ephesians 4: 1-6

Participants did personal reflection on the passage for ten minutes.

The presenter facilitated by posing these three questions for participants to reflect on and solicit from them their recommendations or responses.

1. What is my calling as a Christian?
2. What is the life worthy of my calling?
3. How do I maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace in the midst of people from various ethnic groups or tribes?

Participants wrote their responses in their exercise books. The session ended with the workshop prayer and break.
General Observations and Inputs by Participants

After the break, participants returned to the conference room to make some observations about the programme and give input. The observations and inputs were followed by the participants’ answering the post-questionnaire.

Closing Ceremony

The presenter thanked the participants for responding to the invitation and participating in the programme. The presenter said he was pleased that they were the group he used for this first workshop of its kind. He also thanked Fr. Jacob Adomako Tardie who organized the catechists for the workshop, Mr. Eugene Anane Gyamfi, the workshop secretary, and the kitchen staff. He expressed his heartfelt thanks also to some benefactresses who generously provided the lunch on the last day of the programme. He asked participants and all present to pray for the Bishop of the Diocese, Most Rev. Joseph Osei-Bonsu, who took an interest in the project and assisted financially to make the programme a success. Prayer was said and after the blessing, participants bid farewell to one another and departed to their various stations.
Four ethnic groups were used for the workshop as shown in chapter seven. These groups were enough to achieve a desirable or fruitful result. If there had been more groups or tribes at the workshop, the results would likely have been similar for three reasons. First, as stated in chapter two, suspicion, mistrust, historicity, ancient hatreds that undergird and influence many relations of tribes, the sense of display of superiority by some tribes, and making others look inferior are root or underlying causes of ethnic conflicts. The above factors exist among the four groups as they do among the other tribes in Ghana. Therefore, the four groups used for the workshop could be representative of the tribes in Ghana. Second, the success of the workshop did not depend on the several ethnic groups that participated but on the individuals and how they accepted and allowed the Gospel message and values to permeate them to become ‘new creatures’. Thus, the workshop was more an individual introspection as shown in the Prayer of Encounter. Third, the essence of having people from several ethnic groups is that, after the workshop, they become ambassadors to their groups and help build their communities with the message of oneness and unity in the Church.

The workshop evaluation is grouped under three areas: (A) the responses at the workshop (a. responses from the presentations and b. the Prayers of Encounter), (B) questionnaire responses and (C) general observations and inputs by participants.
A. Responses at the Workshop

(a) Responses from the Presentations

First Presentation

In the first presentation which was on the observation by Pope John Paul II, participants agreed with the Pope that ethnic dissension obstructs, among other things, evangelization in the Church in Africa, and that there is the need to address it. It was only one person who said, although he agrees with the Pope, he does not think the situation applies in all African states. Participants wrote down their concerns in the exercise books provided them. Two such responses were:

1. “Yes, I agree with the Pope because at the moment we hear of such things in many parts of Africa, including Ghana.”

2. “Yes, I agree with the Pope. We need the clergy and lay faithful to spread this message to all Catholic faithful to stop tribal oppositions and preach peace and unity.”

See appendix D for additional written responses from participants.

Second Presentation

The second presentation was the Causes of Ethnic Conflicts in Ghana. Participants identified some of the causes of ethnic conflicts in Ghana as being the superiority some tribes seem to exercise over other tribes, suspicion, mistrust and discrimination against some tribes. They also identified chieftaincy and land disputes as contributing factors. No mention was made of politics, administrative invisibility and historicity (tribes glorifying themselves for their past and looking down on others) and these were supplied by the presenter.
As the *effects of ethnic violence*, participants said ethnic violence displaces people, disrupts their social life and stifles development. These result in poverty and hunger. It has the tendency to bring about loss of human life and the destruction of houses and settlements. Ethnic violence creates animosity and builds up hatred.

See appendix E for other views from participants.

Third Presentation

The third presentation was *Some Ethnic Conflicts in the Church in Ghana*.

The presenter discussed some ethnic dissension in the Church in Ghana with reference to the Archdiocese of Accra, Dioceses of Sekondi-Takoradi, Damongo and Navrongo-Bolgatanga.

Fourth Presentation

The fourth presentation was *Negative Effects of Ethnic or Tribal Divisions in the Church*.

Participants expressed their views on the negative effects of ethnic or tribal divisions in the Church after some brainstorming, facilitated by the presenter. All the participants agreed that ethnic or tribal dissension is not good for the growth of the Church. Among the negative things identified by participants were that it creates blocks or factions in the Church. It also creates division and disunity in the community of the faithful, things that do not help to promote evangelization. These were written on the blackboard and recorded by the secretary.

See appendix F for participants’ views expressed.
Fifth Presentation

The fifth presentation was *The Unchristian Nature of Ethnic Dissension (Why Ethnic Dissension is Unchristian)*. The presenter facilitated the session. Participants unanimously agreed that ethnic dissension is unhealthy and unchristian. Some positive responses from participants were written on the blackboard and recorded by the secretary. Among them were that ethnic dissension breeds hatred and vindictiveness. It disrupts the unity and love of the faithful, and stifles evangelization.

See appendix G for other views expressed by participants.

(b) Responses from the Prayers of Encounter

There were six Prayers of Encounter at the workshop, each coming after a presentation. Participants confronted a scriptural passage, made a connection to their life and took a stance. Participants wrote down their responses.

First Prayer of Encounter

The first Prayer of Encounter was after the presentation on *Some Causes of Ethnic Conflict in Ghana*. Participants reflected on Galatians 3:27-28 in which St. Paul tells us:

> For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

Responses from participants were encouraging, as indicated in their written statements in their exercise books. Two such statements were:
1. “I am in the family of Christ, and we are all one family in Christ. When I reflected on this passage, it reminded me there was a time I did not accept somebody in my life though I have accepted Christ in baptism. Now I am going to accept everybody in my life.”

2. “It means I need inner change. I should turn a new leaf and not discriminate. As far as I am concerned, I have not discriminated against anybody but from now on I resolve to continue not to discriminate against anybody.”

See appendix H for additional written responses from participants.

Second Prayer of Encounter

The second Prayer of Encounter was made after the presentation on *Some Ethnic Dissensions in the Church in Ghana*. Participants reflected on Romans 10:12:

> For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; the same Lord is for all, enriching all who call upon him.

Participants were positive in the stance they took as evidenced from what they wrote in their exercise books. Two such stances were:

1. “We should not divide ourselves because we are one in Jesus Christ. I will try my best to build the Church in prayer so that there will be unity.”

2. “It is not good for me to discriminate. I must always consider or weigh what I say, do and think about so as to bring unity. I should unite the whole group with Bible teachings, prayer and love.”

See appendix I for more written responses from participants.
Third Prayer of Encounter

After the fourth presentation, *Negative Effects of Ethnic or Tribal Divisions in the Church*, participants reflected on 1 Corinthians 1:10-13:

I appeal to you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree and that there be no dissensions among you, but that you be united in the same mind and the same judgment. For it has been reported to me by Chloe's people that there is quarreling among you, my brethren. What I mean is that each one of you says, "I belong to Paul," or "I belong to Apollos," or "I belong to Cephas," or "I belong to Christ." Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul?

Participants gave responses, written in their exercise books, which affirm their change in outlook. Among the responses were:

1. “I belong to Christ. I know I do not fully trust or accept others who are not from my tribe. As a Christian, I must be open to and accept every member of the Church in good faith. I must be just to all.”

2. “I belong to Christ. I have little faith in people from other tribes. The stance I take is that I have to involve everyone in activities and decision making. I must accept everyone’s opinion in good faith.”

3. “Sincerely, I do not trust someone from the other ethnic group. As a Christian, and being with people from other ethnic groups, I have to understand people’s culture and language. I have to love and care for them all without any condition.”

See appendix J for additional written responses from participants.

Fourth Prayer of Encounter

After the fifth presentation, *The Unchristian Nature of Ethnic Dissension (Why Ethnic Dissension is Unchristian)*, participants reflected on 1 Cor. 12: 12-14:
For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body -- Jews or Greeks, slaves or free -- and all were made to drink of one Spirit.

The responses of participants, written in their exercise books, showed a positive outlook and understanding. Two of the responses were:

1. “God tells me not to discriminate. My response is to do well to stop ethnic discrimination.”

2. “The passage is telling me that I should not discriminate but take all men as brothers and all women as sisters, and treat everybody equally. My stance is that I promote cordial relationship with all people irrespective of their tribes or ethnic sentiments.”

See appendix K for more written responses from participants.

Fifth Prayer of Encounter

The fifth Prayer of Encounter was made after a reflection on the Eucharist as stated in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, no. 1396. These responses from participants show a positive growth in their appreciation and understanding of the Eucharist as a source of love and unity in the community of the faithful. These were two of the responses from participants:

1. “I am called by Christ. The worth of my calling is to bring peace, unity and love to everybody. I have to accept everybody as fraternal brother or sister respecting the
culture and language of every ethnic group. I must prove to them that the water of our baptism is greater than the family or biological blood.”

2. “I and my neighbour from the other ethnic group receive the body and blood of Christ and drink from the same cup. We all become one body in Christ. Therefore, I have to accept people from other ethnic groups as my family in Christ and take them as my brothers and sisters.”

See appendix L for more written responses from participants.

Sixth Prayer of Encounter

After the seventh presentation, *The Christian Response to Ethnic Conflicts: Unity and Love*, participants reflected on St. Paul’s letter to the Ephesians 4: 1-6:

I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, beg you to lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all lowliness and meekness, with patience, forbearing one another in love, eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of us all, who is above all and through all and in all.

Participants wrote down their responses in their exercise books, an affirmation of their commitment to uphold unity in the Church, two of which were:

1. “There is the need to see people from all ethnic groups as human beings, and as human beings we are equal before the Lord. Therefore, I should not look down on people from other groups. Whenever I find people of different ethnic groups boasting over others as being superior, I should advise them that we are all equal.”
2. “God has called me to do his will. I should, therefore, lead the life of humility and meekness as Christ and not discriminate in the Church.”

See appendix M for other written responses from participants.

B. The Questionnaire

Pre-questionnaire

Before the presentations, five questions were given participants to answer. Questions 1 and 2 assessed how familiar with or how aware participants were of the ethnic situation in Africa and in the Church, choosing one from among the following: very much, much, not much, just a little and not at all. Space was provided for participants to answer questions 3 – 5. Question 3 tested participants’ knowledge of some of the causes of ethnic conflicts in Ghana, and question 4 their awareness of some ethnic dissensions in the Church in Ghana. Question 5 assessed participants’ knowledge of some setbacks or hindrances due to ethnic conflicts in the Church.

Ethnic Conflicts in Africa

The following question, showing the responses of participants, was administered before and after the presentations. It tested participants’ familiarity with or awareness of ethnic dissension or conflict in Africa.

Q1. How familiar are you with the effects of ethnic conflicts in Africa?

Participants demonstrated they had grown in their awareness and knowledge on issues of ethnic conflict in Africa.
Table 1. Participants’ responses before and after on their familiarity with the effects of ethnic conflicts in Africa

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participants’ response</th>
<th>Very much</th>
<th>Much</th>
<th>Not Much</th>
<th>Just a little</th>
<th>Not at all</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Before</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>After</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Ethnic Dissension in the Church

The following question, showing the responses of participants, was administered before and after the presentations. It tested participants’ familiarity with or awareness of ethnic dissension in the Church.

Q2. How familiar are you now with issues of ethnic dissension in the Church?

Participants demonstrated they had grown in their awareness and knowledge on issues of ethnic dissension or conflict in the Church.

Table 2. Participants’ responses on their familiarity with issues of ethnic dissension in the Church

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participants’ response</th>
<th>Very much</th>
<th>Much</th>
<th>Not much</th>
<th>Just a little</th>
<th>Not at all</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Before</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>After</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q3. What do you think are some of the causes of ethnic conflicts in the country?

Question 3 tested participants’ knowledge of some of the causes of ethnic conflicts in Ghana. All participants identified at least one cause of ethnic conflict. Only one person indicated he had no idea.
Table 3. The number of participants and what they identified as causes of ethnic conflicts in Ghana

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Causes</th>
<th>Politics</th>
<th>Religion</th>
<th>Superiority shown by some tribes</th>
<th>Chieftaincy</th>
<th>Land</th>
<th>Intolerance and misunderstanding of other tribes</th>
<th>No idea</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No. of participants</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q4. Can you name or give examples of some ethnic dissensions or conflicts in the Church?

Question 4 tested the awareness of participants of some ethnic dissensions in the Church in Ghana. Of the twenty three participants, 14 categorically stated that they were not aware or do not know of any ethnic dissension or conflict in the Church and so they could not give any examples. Five gave examples of some misunderstanding in their local church but these were not related to ethnic conflicts. These were misunderstanding between a priest and some outstations (towns), the Church council and the youth, and former Church council members and their predecessors. Three, however, could identify a couple of ethnic dissensions in the Church. One identified the dissension in Accra when Archbishop Charles Palmer-Buckle was transferred to Accra. The Gas, natives of Accra, resisted because they said they need someone from their tribe. Two participants gave two minor incidents in their parishes. In one station, the Dagaabas (Dagaares) complained that the Akans do not respect their views when they discuss issues on the Catholic Welfare Association. Another said a year ago at his station, there was a complaint that the Northerners (people from Northern Ghana) have dominated the Catholic Women Association so some people from other tribes did not want to join the association. One of them gave an example of how when the Goaso
Diocese was carved out of Sunyani Diocese, the people of Bechem resisted becoming part of the newly created Diocese because they thought Bechem should have been the Bishop’s See.144

Q5. In your view what are some of the setbacks or hindrances of ethnic conflicts in the Church?

Participants responded that when there are ethnic conflicts in the Church the effects are both spiritual and physical. Some of the things identified are that ethnic conflicts in the Church stuck the development of the faith. They bring division in the Church, and this leads to backbiting, apathy and disunity. They discourage people from going to Church, thereby reducing Church attendance. In this way, the Church retrogresses because conflicts stifle any meaningful development.

Post Questionnaire
Self-assessment of Participants

The self-assessment was for participants to assess themselves. In selecting one on the scale very much, much, not much, just a little and not at all participants were to assess the growth, change or impact on them after the workshop. Question 2 sought to assess how their consciousness or awareness of ethnic conflict or dissension and its devastating effect on

144 The controversy that ensued was not ethnic related because the people of Bechem and Goaso are both Ahafo people of Akan origin. Bechem resisted becoming part of the newly created Goaso Diocese when Sunyani Diocese was divided into two. The people at Bechem thought Bechem parish should have been the See of the Bishop for three reasons. First, Bechem was the older parish, with Goaso once being a part of it. Second, Bechem is an urban town with more infrastructures, schools and government offices than Goaso, a rural town. Third, the Church at Bechem was bigger and more vibrant than the Church at Goaso. This development which lasted no less than a year took the intervention of the Church hierarchy in Ghana and the Nuncio before Bechem rescinded its decision.
society has grown.

Q2. How has your consciousness or awareness of ethnic conflict or dissension and its devastating effect on society grown?

Table 4. Participants’ indication of how their consciousness of ethnic conflict and effects on society had grown

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Responses</th>
<th>Very much</th>
<th>Much</th>
<th>Not much</th>
<th>Just a little</th>
<th>Not at all</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No of Participants</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Questions 4 and 5 were on baptism and the Eucharist. Participants were to assess for themselves how their understanding of baptism (Q4) and the Eucharist (Q5) as sources of unity, love and acceptance had grown. Participants demonstrated that they had grown in their awareness and knowledge on issues of baptism and the Eucharist as shown in the tables.

Q4. My understanding of baptism as a source of unity, love and acceptance has grown at this workshop.

Table 5. Participants’ growth in understanding baptism as a source of unity, love and acceptance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Responses</th>
<th>Very much</th>
<th>Much</th>
<th>Not much</th>
<th>Just a little</th>
<th>Not at all</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No of Participants</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q5. My appreciation of the Eucharist as a source of unity, love and acceptance in the community of the faithful has grown at this workshop.

Table 6. Participants’ appreciation of the Eucharist as a source of unity, love and acceptance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Responses</th>
<th>Very much</th>
<th>Much</th>
<th>Not Much</th>
<th>Just a little</th>
<th>Not at all</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No of Participants</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
For questions 6 and 7 participants were provided space to write down new insights they had gained from the workshop on baptism and the Eucharist. Participants demonstrated that they had acquired some new insights into baptism and the Eucharist which were beneficial to them. These were written down on their survey sheets.

See Appendices N and O for participants’ other written comments.

Space was provided for personal comments by participants on their self-assessment. Participants wrote on the survey that the programme enriched them. These were some of their comments:

1. “The programme is very much educative and encouraging. It must be done again.”
2. “The programme was successful as it has enlightened my knowledge on ethnic or tribal issues.”
3. “Before the programme, I had little knowledge of ethnic dissension in the Church but now I have gained more.”

See appendix P for additional written responses from participants.

Programme Evaluation

There were ten questions for the programme evaluation. Space was also provided for comments. For questions 1, 3, 4, and 5 the scale strongly agree, agree, disagree and strongly disagree was used for assessment. Question 2, however, used too long, long, short, too short and acceptable to assess the overall length of sessions or presentations.

The programme evaluation assessed the helpfulness of the prayer after each session (Q1), presentation (Q5) and the Prayer of Encounter (Q3). Question 4 tested participants’
view on the choice of the Scriptural passages. Participants demonstrated the helpfulness of the various components of the programme.

Q1. The prayer after the sessions was helpful.

Table 7. Participants’ responses on the helpfulness of the prayer session

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Responses</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No. of participants</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q2. The overall length of each session or presentation was Too long, Long, Short, Too short, Acceptable.

Table 8. Participants’ responses on the overall length of sessions or presentations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Responses</th>
<th>Too long</th>
<th>Long</th>
<th>Short</th>
<th>Too short</th>
<th>Acceptable</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No. of participants</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q3. The Prayer of Encounter was insightful and helpful.

Table 9. Participants’ responses on the insightfulness and helpfulness of the Prayer of Encounter

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Responses</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No. of participants</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q4. The Scriptural passages were rightly or fittingly chosen.

Table 10. Participants’ views on how fitting the choice of the Scriptural passages were

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Responses</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No. of participants</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Q5. The presentations were helpful.

Table 11. Participants’ responses on the helpfulness of the presentations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No. of participants</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Space was provided for participants to suggest how the programme or workshop could be improved (Q6), what they saw as most helpful (Q7) and least helpful about the programme (Q8). Space was given for participants, as leaders in the Church, to state how the programme was helpful to them.

Q6. What suggestion will you offer to improve the programme?

Participants did not offer many suggestions on how to improve the programme. Many of them suggested that it must be organized regularly, and that all priests and the faithful would benefit from it. Two participants, however, made some suggestions which could be considered:

1. “I suggest that next time some films on ethnic conflicts be shown so that we have a vivid account of their effects.”

2. “I suggest for consideration the use of audio-visual or slide shows to help to facilitate delivery.”

Q7. What did you see as most helpful about the programme?

Participants showed diverse interests as to what helped them most in the programme: presentations (3), Prayer of Encounter (4), causes of ethnic conflicts (2), presentations and Prayer of Encounter (2), the Pope’s observation (1), presentation on why ethnic dissension is
unchristian (1), the creating of awareness of ethnic conflicts (1), prayer after each session (3), scriptural passages (1), and participants were encouraged to contribute freely (2). Two participants, however, said everything in the programme was helpful to them.

One participant said what touched him most was the example given by the presenter that during the 1994 Nanumba and Konkomba war in Ghana, some Nanumbas went to the minor seminary in Tamale and demanded that the Konkomba seminarians be given up to be killed. The Nanumba seminarians did not give the Konkomba seminarians up but hid them. The Nanumba seminarians were not swayed by the pain of the ethnic conflict which had killed hundreds of both Nanumbas and Konkombas to betray their colleagues. The Nanumba seminarians remembered that they were grounded in the same faith with the Konkomba seminarians.

Q8. What did you see as least helpful about the programme?

Fifteen participants wrote that they did not see anything least helpful about the programme, while six left the space blank. One participant said there was the need to improve the accommodation facility.

Q9. As a leader, how has this programme been helpful to you?

Participant responded in the affirmative that the programme has been helpful to them. Three such responses were:

1. “I am now very aware how mindful I should be when I speak in order not to hurt people from other ethnic groups.”
2. “The programme has helped me to understand how bad ethnic conflicts are.”

3. “The programme has given me some insights on the issues of ethnic dissension, and it has encouraged me to accept all ethnic groups in the Church.”

See appendix Q for participants’ other written responses.

Participants were asked to rate the programme on the scale excellent, very good, good, satisfactory, fair and poor, after which they gave their personal comments in a space provided.

Q10. On the whole how do you rate the programme?

Table 12. Participants’ rating of the programme

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participants’ response</th>
<th>Excellent</th>
<th>Very good</th>
<th>Good</th>
<th>Satisfactory</th>
<th>Fair</th>
<th>Poor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No. of participants</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Comments

Participants wrote some positive comments and recommendations on the survey. Four such comments were:

1. “All that we have done is good for us as leaders. We should organize such programmes periodically.”

2. “This programme should be extended to many dioceses.”

3. “I suggest such beautiful programmes be organized for other religious leaders and groups.”
4. “In my view, such programme must be held in all the dioceses to help the people live in love and unity.”

See appendix R for participants’ other written comments.

Presenter Evaluation

This section which had five questions with a space provided for personal comments focused on the presenter. On the scale strongly agree, agree, disagree, and strongly disagree, participants were to evaluate how clearly the presenter explained the material (Q1), how knowledgeable he was of the subject matter (Q2) and how accurate the presentation was done (Q3). It also sought to assess how the needs of participants were addressed (Q4) and how the presenter created a friendly atmosphere and encouraged participants to involve in the programme (Q5).

Q1. The presenter explained the material clearly.

Table 13. Participants’ evaluation of presenter’s explanation of material

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Responses</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No. on participants</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q2. The presenter was knowledgeable of the subject matter.

Table 14. Participants’ evaluation of presenter’s knowledge of subject matter

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Responses</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No. of Participants</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Q3. The presentation was accurately done.

Table 15. Participant’s evaluation of the accuracy of the presentation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Responses</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No. of Participants</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q4. The presenter addressed the needs of participants.

Table 16. Participants’ evaluation of presenter addressing the needs of participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Responses</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No. of Participants</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q5. The presenter created a friendly atmosphere and encouraged participation.

Table 17. Participants’ evaluation of presenter creating a friendly atmosphere and encouraging participation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Responses</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No. of participants</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Any other comments:

All the participants showed appreciation of the presenter’s delivery. Some of the comments written by participants on the survey on the presenter evaluation were:

1. “The presenter was knowledgeable of the subject matter. The presentation was accurate and it was done in a friendly atmosphere. May the Almighty God richly bless him.”

2. “Presenter fairly distributed questions to and fairly solicited inputs from participants.”

See appendix S for additional participants’ comments.
(C) General Observations and Inputs by Participants

Participants wrote down their general observations and input about the programme on their survey sheets which indicated some positive impact the programme made on them. Three of them were:

1. “The Prayer of Encounter has helped me to know what unity in the Church is all about.”

2. “This programme has taught me that we need to let God be in the forefront in all activities.”

3. “The presentation brought us face to face with the issues of conflicts and their effects in the Church. What we have got from the programme has been an eye opener.”

However, participants agreed that the programme should be organized for all priests, various groups and all the faithful in the Church. It was also proposed that more ethnic groups should be involved in future programmes so that they will also benefit from them. See appendix T for participants’ other written observations and inputs.
CHAPTER 9
CONCLUSION

Pope John Paul II’s call in *Ecclesia in Africa* that “the Church in Africa feels challenged by the specific responsibility of healing”\(^{145}\) the divisions created by “tribal oppositions,” and the difficulties they pose in the Church, needs a pastoral response. The question of tribal or ethnic oppositions in Africa, with their resultant effects on the Church, cannot be underestimated. It is the recognition of these tribal oppositions, creating awareness about them, and finding a way of healing the divisions in the Church that are the necessitating factors underlying this project.

At the first Synod for Africa held in Rome in 1994, a large majority of the Bishops from Africa raised the challenge of tribal or ethnic dissensions in their various countries which distort the social and political order and, directly or indirectly, affect the Church and her evangelization. They also drew attention to the fact that apart from ethnic dissension militating against the Church from the external realm, there is also the internal factor. Thus, the Synod became the motivating arena for the Bishops to acknowledge publicly how tribal oppositions have crept into the Church and have been, and are still stifling its growth.

As one bishop said at the Synod, and which has already been noted in the first chapter,

Indeed the African Christian with his exaggerated ethnicism finds it difficult to accept the truth that the man or woman in India who is a Christian is much more a brother or sister than the non Christian brother or sister in the natural

\(^{145}\) *Ecclesia in Africa*, no. 49.
family (Gal. 5, 10). This mentality is so pervading that . . . Blood relationship is more important even for the African who has become a Christian.  

It is in the light of the above that the *lineamenta* for the second Synod for Africa in 2009 asked the Bishops to have an “in-depth reflection” on the themes chosen for the Synod. Under the theme “Some Aspects Requiring Particular Attention”, the *lineamenta* said discrimination is a “deadly virus” and encouraged all Africans “to be messengers and committed witnesses in the search for ways and means to convince every African that the ethnic group, region and ideology are not absolute values, and, therefore, should not be the principal reference points for their conduct and activity.”

There are a variety of things or issues that give rise to ethnic conflicts in Africa. These are complex, multi-faceted and interwoven. Among the causes of tribal or ethnic conflicts in Africa is “ancient hatred” that has “legitimate historical bases.” As Brown rightly observed, “Some explanations of ethnic conflict focus on the false histories that many ethnic groups have of themselves and others.” He stated,

> These stories become part of a group’s lore. They tend to be highly selective in their coverage of events and not unbiased in their interpretation of these events. Distorted and exaggerated with time, these histories present one’s own group as heroic, while other groups are demonized. Grievances are enshrined, and other groups are portrayed as inherently vicious and aggressive. Group members typically treat these ethnic myths as received wisdom.

A major contributory factor is how the colonial masters employed ethnicity to their advantage by fanning ethnic dissension and promoting their “divide and rule” principle of

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148 Ibid.
administration. This was what created the “administrative invisibility” of the “so-called minority ethnic groups” in the northern part of Ghana, a situation that has since independence fuelled their sense of discrimination, exclusion and injustice and has given rise to their challenging the status quo and demanding their rightful place in society.

Ethnic division which was used by the colonial masters to rule Africa is also employed by some African governments after independence to hold on to power. There is also the problem of the culture of suspicion and mistrust among tribes. The problem could also be between tribes and the government. That chieftaincy and land also play important roles in ethnic conflicts are visible phenomena in Africa. Africa is predominantly agricultural so land plays a major role in the life of the people. A chief’s power, in many cases, depends on his land and subjects. Chieftaincy and land are, therefore, intertwined. Either of the two or any of them can be a factor of ethnic conflict. In addition to the above factors, there are also the problems of power struggles, political manipulation, dominance, suppression and economic imbalance that can give rise to ethnic dissension or conflict.

The theological foundation for this project stems from the fact that ethnic or tribal dissension causes rifts and conflicts in the Church, and impacts negatively on the spiritual, psychological and mental health of the Christian community. Pastorally, it affects the unity and love in the community of the faithful, and disfigures the image of Christ who calls us to an unconditional love. This calls for a pastoral response.

The pastoral response needed will come out of our understanding of our baptism and the Eucharist. Our understanding and acceptance of the implications of our baptism and the Eucharist will make the difference in shaping and forming us to be what we are - Christians.
These will be the basis or foundation for healing the divisions in the Church and, thus, foster tribal unity, as shown in what one participant wrote, “I have now realized that baptism makes all Christians one so I will embrace all ethnic groups and tribes in my community as I do those from my own tribe.” It is by living these sacraments in concrete terms that we can grow into the image of God. This will require adequate formation in the faith based on the Word of God. It is the Word of God, Christ himself, who dispels the darkness of sin and division. In employing the Word of God in the formation exercise, the Prayer of Encounter as a method is very useful. In the Prayer of Encounter we confront, ask questions and connect our old experience to the new and make resolution.

In Scripture, we get to know the mind of Christ and act on it. It is when we have the mind of Christ that we can have a change in perception and attitude. To have the mind of Christ is to think like Christ. It is to think and act with the heart of Christ, and follow him who is the Way, the Truth, and the Life. It is thinking and doing things like Christ who does not discriminate but who is all-embracing, full of compassion and full of unconditional love for all. It is thinking and living the Gospel values. It is seeing, judging and walking in the newness of life, the light of Christ who is God’s glory. It is with this mind that we can do away with ethnic and all forms of discrimination.

Thus, the Prayer of Encounter helps us to reflect on scriptural passages on baptism and the Eucharist with the view to entering into a deeper relationship with Christ. It is our clear understanding and acceptance of what our baptism and the Eucharist are that will help shape our outlook and positively affect our relationship with one another in the Church. As the Catechism of the Catholic Church teaches,

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149 See appendix H.
Baptism makes us members of the Body of Christ: “Therefore . . . we are members one of another.” Baptism incorporates us into the Church. From the baptismal fonts is born the one People of God of the New Covenant, which transcends all the natural or human limits of nations, cultures, races, and sexes: “For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body”.

The same Catechism of the Catholic Church teaches that,

Those who receive the Eucharist are united more closely to Christ. Through it Christ unites them to all the faithful in one body – the Church. Communion renews, strengthens, and deepens this incorporation into the Church, already achieved by Baptism. In Baptism we have been called to form but one body . . . Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread.

At the workshop, participants demonstrated that when they had the Prayer of Encounter and reflected on their baptism and the Eucharist, their understanding of what their baptism and the Eucharist are made an impact on them. For example, after a deep reflection on what his baptism is, one participant wrote, “Baptized in Christ’ means that I have been buried in Christ so I have acquired the nature of Christ. I have been configured in Christ. To ‘put on Christ’ means my life and how I present myself outwardly should be Christ-like. The stance I take is that, because all of us are in Christ, there is the need for me to stay in unity with everyone.” On the new insights on baptism gained by participants at the workshop, a participant wrote, “I now understand and see myself as incorporated into Christ with people from other ethnic groups.”

On the Eucharist, a participant wrote, “Yes, through Communion we are united. The stance I take is that I help create the awareness that since we take the same bread our ethnic

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150 *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, no. 1267.

151 Ibid., no. 1396.

152 See appendix H.

153 See appendix N.
backgrounds should be put aside. We should be educated that we now form one body, and this should be of a greater concern than our ethnic background. At times too, I should invite people from other ethnic groups to offer prayers and involve them in other activities as well.”\textsuperscript{154}

It is our relationship with Christ that brings us conversion, which is change of mind, and the needed transformation so that we can “acquire a fresh, spiritual way of thinking” (Eph. 4: 23). It is a change in attitudes, a reworking of our value systems. As Fr. Knight rightly put it, and as was already quoted in chapter 6 of the text,

We are truly converted to Christianity when we have changed our minds about our way of living and acting in this world, not because we are beginning to think \textit{straight}, but because we are beginning to \textit{think like Christ}. A Christian reform of life does not mean keeping the Ten Commandments; it means reshaping, reforming our lives along the lines of the attitudes and values of Christ. And these go far beyond the Ten Commandments.\textsuperscript{155}

The reworking of our value systems, the reshaping or reforming of our lives according to the values of Christ was the ‘high’ point and the ultimate desire of the workshop. The workshop, as a forum, created an avenue for participants to see themselves in the light of the Gospel, in confrontation with the Word. As they mirrored themselves in the light of the Word of God, participants were challenged to come to terms with themselves. The Word of God became a sharpened two-edged sword that cut across and scrutinized their inner selves. The Word awakened them from their ‘slumber’ and they recognized who they were, a people who had

\textsuperscript{154} See appendix L.

\textsuperscript{155} Ibid., 95.
not fully embraced the Gospel values of acceptance and unconditional love. They came face
to face with the reality of themselves and acknowledged the sin and injustice of
discrimination which stared at them. The Word of God challenged them to resolve and take a
stance in each of the Prayers of Encounter as evidenced in their responses, as one participant
wrote,

The verse for reflection explains to me that when one is baptized in Christ,
one becomes a new born person. We are all one in Christ means that when one
joins the family of Christ, there is no division, tribe or colour. After a deep
reflection on the verse and applying it to my lifestyle, I realized that I have
been a blocking stone to many who have come in my life. I do discriminate
against tribes. Sometimes, I say negative things about people from other
tribes, things I did not consider to be sinful.¹⁵⁶

This workshop, a formation experience for the participants who are catechists and
pastoral co-workers and agents of evangelization, helped in a more comprehensive way, to
open the lid of the can of ethnic discrimination and its negative consequences in Africa and
in the Church. In a more vivid way, it helped to create a conscious awareness of the evil and
injustice of the ethnic situation in Africa and in the Church. When the method used in this
project is applied in any situation where there is ethnic dissension in the Church, similar
results will be achieved. The participants realized this fact and so asked that the programme
be organized for all priests and all the lay faithful. The participants are like any other
Africans. The ethnic card people play is similar, no matter the positions of the persons
involved because at the back of their mind, the notion of “blood is thicker than water” is
pervasive.

¹⁵⁶ See appendix H.
It is the creation of the awareness of the existence of ethnic dissension in the Church and the negative effects it brings that will challenge the people to come to terms with the ethnic situation. As one participant wrote, “The programme has helped me to become aware of the problems of conflicts in the Church.” The creation of awareness is the first step in the process of healing the divisions Pope John Paul II talked about. After the awareness is created as done in the presentations, and knowing who we are as Christians in the light of our baptism and the Eucharist, the Word of God becomes the tool to address or deal with the ethnic dissension in the Church. This is what will promote unity, healing, acceptance and diversity in the community of the faithful. No political or human power can bring this about.

The Prayers of Encounter made significant impact on participants to the extent that they clearly demonstrated a change in attitude and in mind, as evidenced in their responses. One participant clearly demonstrated this when he wrote,

I was baptized in Christ. At my baptism, the only names mentioned were the Father, Son (Jesus) and the Holy Spirit. To put on Christ means I have taken him as my personal saviour. Everybody is my brother or sister. In Christ, there is no Akan or Ewe. I used to discriminate but now I have seen from Galatians 3:27-28 that we are all one. I need not discriminate because we all have baptism in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and we have the same Eucharist.\(^{157}\)

This is the major contribution of this project to ministry: the conscious creation or raising of awareness of the reality of ethnic dissension in the society and in the Church, and providing a process of dealing with it in order to promote unity, healing, acceptance and diversity in the community of the faithful.

So far, seven presentations have been made. The first was on the observation of Pope John Paul II in which he decried ethnicity and “tribal oppositions” in the Church in Africa.

\(^{157}\) See appendix H. Akan and Ewe are two ethnic groups in Ghana.
and called for the healing of the divisions that come about as a result of ethnic conflicts. The second presentation was on the causes of ethnic conflicts, examples of which have already been given. The third presentation was on some ethnic conflicts in the Church in Ghana. Using four dioceses as references, and citing examples from them, it was established that ethnic dissension is a reality in the Church in Africa, although it is not often discussed.

The fourth presentation, which was on the negative effects of ethnic or tribal divisions in the Church, showed that whenever there is ethnic dissension in the Church it stifles evangelization. Whenever the Church’s evangelization effort is blocked or compromised, it mars the image of the Church and makes it lose the dignity of its existence because the Church exists to evangelize.

The fifth presentation was on the unchristian nature of ethnic dissension (why ethnic dissension is unchristian). Ethnic dissension is unchristian because, among other things, it disrupts unity and love in the Church, thereby stifling evangelization. The sixth presentation, which was on the Eucharist, called on all Christians to form the one body they are called to be, the family of Christ. The seventh presentation dwelt on unity and love as the Christian response to ethnic conflicts.

In sum, it could be said that ethnic dissension in the Church is a reality. It disrupts the unity, love and cohesiveness in the community of the faithful, and it stifles evangelization. There is, therefore, the need to heal the divisions it brings. The only way we can heal the divisions is by the Word of God, who is Jesus Christ himself.
APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

PRE-QUESTIONNAIRE

The following pre-questionnaire was administered before the presentations.

1. How familiar are you with the effects of ethnic conflicts in Africa?
   - Very much
   - Much
   - Not much
   - Just a little
   - Not at all

2. How familiar are you with issues of ethnic dissension in the Church
   - Very much
   - Much
   - Not much
   - Just a little
   - Not at all

3. What do you think are some of the causes of ethnic conflicts in the country?

4. Can you name or give examples of some ethnic dissensions or conflicts in the Church?

5. In your view what are some of the setbacks or hindrances of ethnic conflicts in the Church?
APPENDIX B
POST QUESTIONNAIRE

The following questionnaire was administered at the end of the programme for evaluation purposes.

Self-assessment of Participants

1. How familiar are you now with the effects of ethnic conflict in Africa?
   Very much  Much  Not much  Just a little  Not at all

2. How has your consciousness or awareness of ethnic conflict or dissension and its devastating effect on society grown?
   Very much  Much  Not much  Just a little  Not at all

3. How familiar are you now with issues of ethnic dissension in the Church after this programme?
   Very much  Much  Not much  Just a little  Not at all

4. My understanding of baptism as a source of unity, love and acceptance has grown at this workshop.
   Very much  Much  Not much  Just a little  Not at all

5. My appreciation of the Eucharist as a source of unity, love and acceptance in the community of the faithful has grown at this workshop.
   Very much  Much  Not much  Just a little  Not at all

6. What new insight on baptism have you gained from this programme?

7. What new insight on the Eucharist have you gained from this programme?
Programme Evaluation

1. The prayer after the sessions was helpful.
   Strongly agree   Agree   Disagree   Strongly disagree

2. The overall length of each session or presentation was:
   Too long   Long   Short   Too short   Acceptable

3. The Prayer of Encounter was insightful and helpful.
   Strongly agree   Agree   Disagree   Strongly disagree

4. The Scriptural passages were rightly or fittingly chosen.
   Strongly agree   Agree   Disagree   Strongly disagree

5. The presentations were helpful.
   Strongly agree   Agree   Disagree   Strongly disagree

6. What suggestion will you offer to improve the programme?

7. What did you see as most helpful about the programme?

8. What did you see as least helpful about the programme?

9. As a leader, how has this programme been helpful to you?

10. On the whole how do you rate the programme?
    Excellent   Very good   Good   Satisfactory   Fair   Poor

Comment:
Presenter Evaluation

1. The presenter explained the material clearly.
   - Strongly agree  agree  disagree  strongly disagree

2. The presenter was knowledgeable of the subject matter.
   - Strongly agree  agree  disagree  strongly disagree

3. The presentation was accurately done.
   - Strongly agree  agree  disagree  strongly disagree

4. The presenter addressed the needs of participants.
   - Strongly agree  agree  disagree  strongly disagree

5. The presenter created a friendly atmosphere and encouraged participation.
   - Strongly agree  agree  disagree  strongly disagree
APPENDIX C

WORKSHOP PRAYER

(Composed by Presenter)

Lord our heavenly Father,

We thank you for creating us in your love.

In baptism, you reborn us and gather us into the one body of your Son and our Saviour Jesus Christ.

We thank you for the gift of divine life in the Eucharist through Christ, the head of the Church.

Father, may you continue to form us, recreate us, into your image.

May we be like Christ, your son.

With the mind of Christ, may we accept and love one another without any ethnic biases or prejudices, or any form of barrier unreflective of your love, so that we may be a family of love and unity, imitate and walk in his way on our pilgrimage to you, our final destination.

Through Christ, our Lord.

Amen.
Participants’ written comments on the observation of Pope John Paul II in 1995 on the Church in Africa:

1. “The observation by Pope John Paul II in 1995 as a challenge is a true reflection of tribal oppositions which endanger peace in Africa and also create difficulties for the life of the Church.”

2. “Yes, I agree with the Pope because at the moment we hear of such things in many parts of Africa, including Ghana.”

3. “The observation by the Pope is true. It is a danger to us all. We must have a feeling of tribal oppositions and turn against them”.

4. “Yes, I agree with the Pope. We need the clergy and lay faithful to spread this message to all Catholic faithful to stop tribal oppositions and preach peace and unity.”

5. “Yes, it is true but I do not think it is in all the African countries.”

6. “I agree perfectly with what the Holy Father said about tribalism. To me it means that when there is a tribal opposition it goes a long way to endanger the peaceful atmosphere in the community. It even makes it difficult to accept good ideas from people of other tribes. I think it is the responsibility of all to help solve this problem.”

7. “I accept and agree with the Pope. Tribalism does not help the Church to grow.”

8. “It is true that the Church in Africa is facing challenges with ethnic conflicts. It is time to rise and fight against these challenges in our various Churches in Africa.”

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We should all know that we are one in Christ Jesus. Therefore, we should do away with the tribal oppositions.”

9. “Yes, tribal opposition brings fear in the congregation. It even affects the homily or sermon given by the priest for fear the priest may offend someone.

10. “Yes, all that the Pope has said is true. Ethnic conflicts create difficulties in the country. For example, it brings unhealthy competition in the people.”
Participants’ view of some of the causes of ethnic conflicts:

1. Superiority and inferiority complex: Example is when one regards his or her ethnic group as superior or as being a higher social class and the other group as inferior. Those groups that are made to feel inferior may react violently.

2. Discrimination: When some people feel discriminated against because of their ethnic background they may act violently.

3. Suspicion and mistrust: There are some suspicion and mistrust among tribes. Wherever there is suspicion, there is mistrust. These create tension in society and they do not help to promote peace and love.

4. Chieftaincy and land dispute: Chieftaincy and land go together. In Ghana, there are many land disputes that involve chiefs and their tribes against other chiefs and tribes. These disputes create animosity.

The presenter filled in with other causes that were not captured by participants. These were:

1. Politics: Some governments, in order to create a political base, whip up ethnic sentiments that bring division and turn other tribes against others.

2. Administrative invisibility: The colonial power, in its administration, devised a means by which it placed some chiefs over others so they could use those chiefs to
advance their cause. For example, they used those chiefs to collect taxes from other ethnic groups. After independence, the tribes placed under those chiefs are constantly fighting for their autonomy.

3. Historicity: Some tribes glorify themselves for their past and look down on others.

Participants’ views of some effects of ethnic violence:

1. It stifles development.

2. It promotes hunger.

3. It brings poverty to the people as houses and settlements are destroyed or burnt.

4. It brings loss of human life.

5. It brings displacement as people migrate from one place to another to avoid loss of life.

6. The social life of the people is disrupted.

7. It creates animosity and builds up hatred.
NEGATIVE EFFECTS OF ETHNIC OR TRIBAL DIVISIONS IN THE CHURCH

Participants identified these negative effects of ethnic or tribal divisions in the Church:

1. They create blocks or factions in the Church.
2. Divisions bring disunity in the Church.
3. They promote apathy and indifference.
4. They drive some of the faithful away from the Church.
5. They do not attract others to join the Church.
6. They bring financial constraints to the Church as some people may not be encouraged to assist financially.
7. They stifle effective evangelization and any meaningful developments in the Church.
These positive responses from participants were written on the blackboard and recorded by the secretary:

1. It does not promote peace in the Church.
2. It breeds division.
3. It breaks our oneness.
4. It breeds hatred and vindictiveness.
5. It breeds scandal.
6. It retards and stifles development.
7. It retards and stifles evangelization.
8. It creates an atmosphere of insecurity.
9. It disrupts the unity and love of the faithful.
APPENDIX H

FIRST PRAYER OF ENCOUNTER

Responses of participants at the First Prayer of Encounter:

1. “‘Baptized in Christ’ means that I have been buried in Christ so I have acquired the nature of Christ. I have been configured in Christ. To ‘put on Christ’ means my life and how I present myself outwardly should be Christ-like. The stance I take is that because all of us are in Christ, there is the need for me to stay in unity with everyone.”

2. “I am in the family of Christ, and we are all one family in Christ. When I reflected on this passage, it reminded me there was a time I did not accept somebody in my life though I have accepted Christ in baptism. Now I am going to accept everybody in my life.”

3. “Since I have died with Christ and risen with him, I have to do his will. Therefore, I should not discriminate and boast over others. I should exercise the Golden rule, not to do to others what I do not want them to do to me. I know I have been partial in my dealings with some people from some ethnic groups. Now, I have to show love and concern and accept every person because we are in the same image of God.”

4. “To be baptized in Christ means I have accepted Christ as my personal saviour. To put on Christ means wherever I go I should appear in my manner and speech as Christ himself. We are one in Christ means since we have all accepted Christ as our Lord, there should not be any discrimination whatsoever. It is true that I have uttered some
words to people of other ethnic groups which resulted in exchange of words. Now that St. Paul has revealed this to me I have taken every individual as my brother or sister, not counting his or her ethnic background.”

5. “It means I need inner change. I should turn a new leaf and not discriminate. As far as I am concerned, I have not discriminated against anybody but from now on I resolve to continue not to discriminate against anybody.”

6. “The verse for reflection explains to me that when one is baptized in Christ, one becomes a new born person. We are all one in Christ means that when one joins the family of Christ, there is no division, tribe or colour. After a deep reflection on the verse and applying it to my lifestyle, I realized that I have been a blocking stone to many who have come in my life. I do discriminate against tribes. Sometimes, I say negative things about people from other tribes, things I did not consider to be sinful.”

7. “I have now realized that baptism makes all Christians one so I will embrace all ethnic groups and tribes in my community as I do those from my own tribe.”

8. “I have accepted people from other ethnic groups as brothers and sisters. Through the advice from St. Paul, I have realized the importance of being close to people from other ethnic groups. I accept to love, care and take them as my family members.”

9. “I feel that we are children of God in Christ. St. Paul is telling me to be one with others. I ask God to let me see Christ in my fellow human being from any ethnic group.”

10. “It means I and Christ are one. If Christ is in me, I belong to him. I need to be friendly in dealing with everybody.”
11. “I was baptized in Christ. At my baptism, the only names mentioned were the Father, Son (Jesus) and the Holy Spirit. To put on Christ means I have taken him as my personal saviour. Everybody is my brother or sister. In Christ, there is no Akan or Ewe. I used to discriminate but now I have seen from Galatians 3:27-28 that we are all one. I need not discriminate because we all have baptism in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and we have the same Eucharist.”

12. “I have Jesus in my life. I have to obey him. I have to love everyone as Jesus loved me. From now onwards I will try my best to deepen and show love to everyone I meet.”

13. “When one is baptized in Christ, it means one has become a new member in the family of Christ. I had been thinking that it is not good to marry people from other tribes or ethnic groups so I have looked down upon those who do so as not being wise but now, I have come to know that in Christ Jesus we are all the same though we have different languages.”

14. “I have been able to bring many to Christ. I have accepted people from other tribes as my fellow Christians. I am trying to bring people of other tribes to Christ as I have been doing in the past.”

158 Language in itself does not bring ethnic dissension. Language is used here as representing a person from the other tribe or people from other tribes.
APPENDIX I
SECOND PRAYER OF ENCOUNTER

Some of the positives responses participants wrote in their exercise books were:

1. “I do not think I have a Jew or Greek in my life. We are all one in the Lord, either Jew or Greek. We were baptized in one Spirit. Therefore, we should live as one family. The stance I take is that I should take the Word of God as my daily bread and give it out. Once I have the Word of God in my life I need to teach the congregation to understand it very well.”

2. “There is no distinction between Jew and Greek. My understanding is that since God created us equally, and breathed into us to become living beings there must be no distinction or difference between us. It is the same Lord who created Jew or Greek, Frafra or Asante. I do enrich myself through prayer. Since I consider everyone as created by God I do not see anyone as a Jew or Greek. The stance I take is that as a Christian I must solicit for true peace when I encounter people no matter which ethnic group one may come from. I must always meet the people and discuss God’ Word with them so that God’s Word will permeate us.”

3. “The Church is like one mother with all the members as her children. We are one family then. The Lord is for all because he is the head of the family. No matter where one comes from – ethnic or tribal – we are members of the family of Christ. I must treat all the members as one body by being justice and peace maker. I should always treat the members equally and advise them to do the same.”
4. “I must accept everyone’s view and cooperate with all in the Church to bring unity.”

5. “We should not divide ourselves because we are one in Jesus Christ. I will try my best to build the Church in prayer so that there will be unity.”

6. “It is not good for me to discriminate. I must always consider or weigh what I say, do and think about so as to bring unity. I should unite the whole group with Bible teachings, prayer and love.”

7. “I do not have a Jew or Greek in my life. In order not to build factions of Jews or Greeks I need to pray daily and often. I must read the Bible daily for the Bible is the Word of God. This will form and mould me into Christ.”

8. “I understand that the same Lord is for all ethnic groups. The stance I take is that I have to identify myself as one who does not discriminate against ethnic groups. I have to see every ethnic group as one people of God.”

9. “As a Christian there should not be any distinction between any two individuals whether one is white or black, long or short, Akan or Ewe. We are all the same. Any individual I have quarreled with has been a Greek to me. It is my prayer always that I will forgive those who offend me so that God will also forgive me. The stance I take is that I should be mindful of my speech and bring unity where there is disunity. Regular meetings with the faithful can help promote unity. I should seek also to settle disputes between individuals.”

10. “By virtue of baptism and the faith, and the universality of the Church, we are the people of God so I should not see any distinction, not even on the part of those without the faith. My not speaking the truth has been a Jew or Greek in my life.”
The stance I take is that I should desist from being a hypocrite. Without hiding the truth, I should let my ‘yes’ be yes and my ‘no’ be no. I have to visit all societies and tribal groups in the Church and share the Word of God with them. In doing all this I will also let people see that I am a changed person.”

11. “There is no difference between men and women. There should be no slave or free. The same Lord is for all. I resolve to love everyone in my community, organize ethnic groups in my community, and accept and love everyone.”

“We all belong to God so there is no discrimination. The same Lord is for all. I must love everyone in the Church so as not to create any Jew or Greek. I should also promote love among the faithful.”

12. “Jesus came for all of us. I now call Jesus to fill my heart with the Holy Spirit so that I do not discriminate but rather bring unity among my church members.”

13. “We have one God and we belong to the one family in Christ. I take the stance that I will try my best to organize the faithful and educate them that we are one universal Church. I have to promote peace and unity in the Church.”

14. “No matter the tribes we belong to, we are all for Christ. As Catholics we have to show respect to everyone. To promote peace in the community, I have to bring all the people together for some activities.”

15. “As a good Christian I should always talk politely to people who are not from my tribe so as to make them feel at home. As a leader, I should call other ethnic groups to meetings and share ideas with them. Also, I shall join them for their cultural activities.”
16. “We are all the children of God. Most of the time I try to enrich myself through prayer. As a leader in the Church, I must be humble and understand others in order not to make a Jew or gentile in the Church. I must be sociable, show concern and love to all the faithful.”

17. “I should make the Word of God my daily bread and give it out for the Word of God builds us. It is the Word of God that teaches us to forgive one another. Once I have the Word of God in my life, I need to teach the faithful to understand it.”
APPENDIX J

THIRD PRAYER OF ENCOUNTER

Participants’ responses, written in their exercise books, which affirm their change in outlook:

1. “I belong to Christ. I know I do not fully trust or accept others who are not from my tribe. As a Christian, I must be open to and accept every member of the Church in good faith. I must be just to all.”

2. “I belong to Christ. I have little faith in people from other tribes. The stance I take is that I have to involve everyone in activities and decision making. I must accept everyone’s opinion in good faith.”

3. “I do relate to everyone I encounter. At my workplace, most of my friends are non-Asantes. To promote unity in the Church, there must always be group discussions and discussions on the Bible for us to understand the meaning of baptism and the Eucharist.”

4. “I belong to Christ. I shall take those who are not from my tribe to be my friends in order to make them feel at home. I shall join them in their activities both in the Church and outside.”

5. “Sincerely, I do not trust someone from the other ethnic group. As a Christian, and being with people from other ethnic groups, I have to understand people’s culture and language. I have to love and care for them all without any condition.”
6. “I am for Christ. I do not wholeheartedly trust the other person. My stance now is with love and the fear of God, I will accept him or her.”

7. “I have people from other tribes in my Church. I must teach them to love and forgive one another. To promote unity, I have to give them God’s Word because it is God’s word that can build us.”

8. “I am for Christ, and I do accept others. I should try to be a good leader and forgive anyone who has offended me.”

9. “I trust and love anybody from any ethnic group. In order to bring peace, I need to communicate with everyone in the community.”

10. “I cannot open up to any other tribe as I would my own. Once I have the Word of God in me, I need to teach the congregation to understand the word.”

11. “I belong to Christ. Since Christ is not divided I accept everybody. I will give love to everybody.”

12. “I relate to everyone no matter where the one comes from. I will show love to everyone and listen to their views.”
Responses of participants, written in their exercise books, showing a positive outlook and understanding:

1. “We have common destiny. This passage is telling us that we are in Christ so we must unite, show love and promote peace. My response to the passage as regards my relationship with the faithful from other ethnic groups is that I have to unite other ethnic groups that are divided. I should try to let them understand that they are one body in Christ.”

2. “My response is to live in unity with one another as God tells me.”

3. “God tells me not to discriminate. My response is to do well to stop ethnic discrimination.”

4. “The passage is telling me that I should not discriminate but take all men as brothers and all women as sisters, and treat everybody equally. My stance is that I promote cordial relationship with all people irrespective of their tribes or ethnic sentiments.”

5. “The passage is telling us to unite as one body. Together we can build the Church and preach the Gospel of the Lord. I understand from Paul that I do not have to involve in tribalism because it destroys unity and love in the Christian life.”

6. “The passage tells me to love everybody because Christ is not divided into many parts.”
7. “When division comes, some people tend to be Greeks or Jews in my life. At times, some people from some ethnic groups tend to be my enemies when there is some quarrel but I must act as a Christian and be close to them in order that we maybe one people of God.”

8. “To drink from the one Spirit means it is the same Spirit that is working in all of us. The passage reveals the oneness of the Church of Christ and the fact that we are different yet we have to be one. This is unity in diversity.”

9. “God is one and we all descended from Adam so we must be one and promote peace. It is misunderstanding that we have among ourselves. I will pray to God to give us understanding.”

10. “This passage is challenging me to create unity and peace. It is challenging me to accept everybody as a brother or sister. My life should prove to people from other ethnic groups that we are one people, worshipping one God who is our father.”

11. “By the one Spirit we are all baptized into one body. My response is that I be close to those who are not from my ethnic group. I should take them as my brothers and sisters, and share meals and drink with them. I should also pray with them.”

12. “There should not be any discrimination whatsoever. My response to the passage is to treat everybody equal no matter where one comes from because we are all made in the image of God.”

13. “Yes, there are some Greeks or Jews in my life. They are those who quarrel with me and hate me. Since they are at loggerheads with me, I consider them as not my brothers. However, since we are all Christians I must try by all means to settle the
impasse between us. My response to the passage is that I should consider people from other ethnic groups as brothers and sisters.”

14. “We are all children of God so we have to see ourselves as brothers and sisters.

There should be no quarrels, jealousy or hatred but peace. My response to the passage is that I should be present to and receive all irrespective of the ethnic group one comes from.”
Responses from participants showing a positive appreciation and understanding of the Eucharist as a source of love and unity in the community of the faithful:

1. “Yes, through Communion we are united. The stance I take is that I help create the awareness that since we take the same bread our ethnic backgrounds should be put aside. We should be educated that we now form one body, and this should be of a greater concern than our ethnic background. At times too I should invite people from other ethnic groups to offer prayers and involve them in other activities as well.”

2. “We all drink from the same cup, a sign that we are of the same family. I take the stance that I must welcome the ideas of all the members and treat them equally irrespective of where one comes from. I must encourage all to unite.”

3. “God created us equal so if anybody from a different ethnic group also partakes of the same bread as I do, then we are all one. I therefore, accept the one in Christ.”

4. “We are from different ethnic groups but we receive the same Eucharist. I shall make everyone my sister or brother and welcome them as partners in the Church.”

5. “I am called by Christ. The worth of my calling is to bring peace, unity and love to everybody. I have to accept everybody as fraternal brother or sister respecting the culture and language of every ethnic group. I must prove to them that the water of our baptism is greater than the family or biological blood.”
6. “Yes, I see that Communion brings love to me and others, and because we are one and share the one bread everybody is my brother or sister. I will show everyone love, compassion and kindness.”

7. “To accept someone means I must accept the one’s culture. I must not look down or feel superior over other people. I must try and break the barrier of “birds of the same feathers flock together” which sometimes may be applied to other ethnic groups. I need to get closer to people of other ethnic groups. I must show interest in their history and culture just as I would like them to show interest in mine. I need to involve them in activities.”

8. “I and my neighbour from the other ethnic group receive the body and blood of Christ and drink from the same cup. We all become one body in Christ. Therefore, I have to accept people from other ethnic groups as my family in Christ and take them as my brothers and sisters.”

9. “Communion renews, strengthens and deepens incorporation into the Church. It unites me with my fellow Catholics. Since I share the one bread and drink one cup with other Catholics, I have to love everybody as myself.”

10. “By virtue of our faith, baptism and the reception of the Eucharist, proper education should be done so that everybody may know the oneness of the body of Christ.”

11. “Yes, we all eat the one bread and drink the one cup. The one from another ethnic group I must receive as my neighbor and friend.”

12. “Now that I understand that the body and blood of Christ unite me and fellow Christians from other ethnic groups, I have to be one with and work with them.”
13. “The Eucharist has to unite me with all who receive it because Christ is in us all.”

14. “The participation in the bread and the blood of Christ helps me to lead my life as a Christian. It helps me to forgive and unite with others. It reminds me not to sin. All people from different ethnic groups take the one bread and drink the one cup. It is the same Christ we eat and drink so I should accept everybody in my life and help those who need my help.”

15. “Christ in us, through the Eucharist, becomes a unifying force for us to live as people of God, though we are from different ethnic groups and backgrounds. Since I see Christ in my brother or sister I become more united with him or her. There should be no antagonism in me against one who shares the communion with me.”
APPENDIX M

SIXTH PRAYER OF ENCOUNTER

Responses of participants in their exercise books, an affirmation of their commitment to uphold unity in the Church:

1. “My calling is to bring peace, love and unity among the Christian family. Christ is the head of the family with various ethnic groups as family members.”

2. “There is the need to see people from all ethnic groups as human beings, and as human beings we are equal before the Lord. Therefore, I should not look down on people from other groups. Whenever I find people of different ethnic groups boasting over others as being superior, I should advise them that we are all equal.”

3. “I should not create divisions but promote oneness and peace among the various ethnic groups or tribes in the community. I should always call for togetherness and plan activities with all ethnic groups.”

4. “I must obey Christ. Since there is one body and one Spirit, I will let the Spirit work in me through the baptism I have received so that we may be one as Christians.”

5. “God has called me to do his will. I should, therefore, lead the life of humility and meekness as Christ and not discriminate in the Church.”

6. “To maintain the unity in the Spirit in the bond of peace in the midst of people from various ethnic groups or tribes, I have to be friends to everyone no matter one’s tribe. I need to respect each other’s tribe. I have to join each group in their activities and
respond to their call whenever I am needed. I need to know their needs and do what I can to help them.”

7. “I maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace with all eagerness, lowliness, meekness, patience and forbearing one another in love to foster the unity of purpose with people from various ethnic groups or tribes.”

8. “I have to work with various ethnic groups or tribes and take them for my family or friends. I have to love them and visit the people in their homes.”

9. “I have been called to sow the seed of love and lead exemplary life in my community so that peace will prevail. I must be careful about how I talk and the language I use. I do not have to show any form of discrimination and see that there is always a friendly atmosphere.”

10. “The life worthy of my calling is to live in holiness as Christ. It is to stop any form of discrimination and to live in love with one another. I have to pay visits to all ethnic groups and assign them responsibilities in the Church. I need to share God’s Word with them.”

11. “My calling as a Christian is to worship God with all my heart, all my soul and all my strength. I will maintain the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace in the midst of people from various ethnic groups or tribes when I understand and cooperate with one another. I need to proclaim God’s Word to them and do teachings on love and acceptance.”

12. “I must forget and forgive the wrongs others have done to me and show love. I have to pray with people from other ethnic groups and educate them that we are all one in
the family of Christ. We all share the same baptism and receive the same body and drink the same one cup.”

13. “To create peace in the community of the faithful, I should desist from demonstrating a sense of superiority, from casting insinuations, from creating divisions and from being bias in my dealings with people from other ethnic groups. I have to be truthful in my dealings with them.”

14. “Without God, nothing can be done. I will always pray to God to unite and give us love. With his love in us we can do away with ethnic biases, prejudices and any form of barrier unreflective of his love.”

15. “As a leader in the Church, I must teach the faithful the Word of God which teaches us love. I must also speak against ethnic conflicts in the Church.”

16. “I have to accept everybody as my brother or sister, respecting the culture and language of every ethnic group. I have to show them love and let them know that the water of our baptism which makes us the family of God is greater than our human family so there should not be any discrimination.”

17. “I should maintain the love and unity Jesus has taught me. It is the Spirit and love of God that will make us maintain the bond of peace.”

18. “To maintain the bond of unity and peace, I have to continue to teach the faithful that they are my brothers and sisters. I must read the Word of God and allow it to find home in me so that I can accept and treat each one as Christ would have done.”
APPENDIX N
NEW INSIGHTS GAINED BY PARTICIPANTS ON BAPTISM

Responses of participants in their exercise books on the new insights they gained on baptism:

1. “The new insight I have is that baptism brings unity and love.”
2. “It has helped me to know we are one people.”
3. “I now understand and see myself as incorporated into Christ with people from other ethnic groups.”
4. “I now understand that baptism unites the faithful.”
5. “Through baptism, we have become united though we are from various ethnic groups.”
6. “Baptism unites the members in the Church as one body in Christ.”
7. “It recreates in us Christ. It builds us anew, and it is the source of unity for us all.”
8. “Baptism has taught me forgiveness, love and unity.”
9. “I have learnt that a person becomes a family member in Christ.”
10. “In baptism, a person becomes a member of the family of the Church. This creates our oneness in Christ.”
11. “I have understood that baptism is a source of unity love and acceptance of everybody without discrimination.”
NEW INSIGHTS GAINED BY PARTICIPANTS ON THE EUCHARIST

Participants recorded the new insights they gained on the Eucharist:

1. “Though we belong to different ethnic groups we are united as one people by receiving Christ.”

2. “The Eucharist unites me with those who receive it. This sustains the love of Christ in me and the unity I have with others.”

3. “My receiving communion is very important because all those who receive it get closer to Christ.”

4. “The Eucharist is a source of unity in Christ. In it, we share the love and unity with those who partake the bread.”

5. “I have a good insight in that I see myself as united in Christ with other ethnic groups.”

6. “I have learnt that the Eucharist communes me with my enemies who also receive communion.”

7. “Through the Eucharist, we become one body in the one Lord. This strengthens and renews me.”

8. “In the Eucharist, we share the one body and drink the one cup which is Christ. So there should not be any division.”

9. “The Eucharist unites us with Christ and strengthens our love and peace.”
10. “The Eucharist draws the faithful nearer to God, and this must bring change in our lives.”

11. “The Eucharist is a source of reconciliation and unity between us and God and between us and our neighbour.”

12. “The Eucharist brings us together as brothers and sisters in Christ.”
APPENDIX P

GENERAL COMMENTS ON SELF-ASSESSMENT

Participants recorded their general comments on their self-assessment:

1. “I have seen that this programme has taught me more about the ethnic conflict in the Church.”

2. “As a participant, I have come to know that everybody in this world, whether black or white, is equal in Christ.”

3. “The programme has urged me to accord due respect to all people from different ethnic groups.”

4. “The programme is very much educative and encouraging. It must be done again.”

5. “The programme was successful as it has enlightened my knowledge on ethnic or tribal issues.”

6. “Before the programme, I had little knowledge of ethnic dissension in the Church but now I have gained more.”

7. “This workshop should be organized regularly for us in order to nourish us.”

8. “The programme has helped me to understand that we should not fight among ourselves.”

9. “I have learnt more about unity and love in this programme.”
APPENDIX Q
HELPFULNESS OF THE PROGRAMME

Participants’ positive responses on the helpfulness of the programme:

1. “What I did not know and I was lacking has been exposed to me. This will help me to discourage any ethnic or tribal sentiments both in the Church and in the country. It will help me to educate the faithful on the importance of our unity and oneness when we partaking the Eucharist.”

2. “The programme has revealed to me how I should exercise my leadership role. As a leader, I will be in a position to deal with people in order not to offend them.”

3. “It has helped me to know more about unity and love that should be in the Church.”

4. “The programme has increased my faith. It has also shown me how to relate to my Church members and anybody I encounter.”

5. “The programme has helped me a lot. It has made me know more about some conflicts in the Church. Now, I am in a position to treat all the Church members equally.”

6. “I am now very aware how mindful I should be when I speak in order not to hurt people from other ethnic groups.”

7. “The programme has helped me to understand how bad ethnic conflicts are.”

8. “The programme has given me some insights on the issues of ethnic dissension, and it has encouraged me to accept all ethnic groups in the Church.”
9. “The programme has enlightened me on a new approach to using the scripture in my teachings.”

10. “It has encouraged me to go and build unity and love in the Church.”

11. “As a leader, the programme has helped me to know that we are all equal so we should not discriminate against anybody. Unity must be encouraged.”

12. “The programme has made me aware of the ethnic conflicts in the Church and in Africa.”

13. “The programme will help me to work with ethnic groups in my Church in our evangelization.”

14. “This programme has prepared me to unite with my congregation even when I am offended.”
Participants’ positive comments and recommendations about the programme as written on the survey:

1. “All that we have done is good for us as leaders. We should organize such programmes periodically.”

2. “This programme should be extended to many dioceses.”

3. “I suggest such beautiful programmes be organized for other religious leaders and groups.” “In my view, such programme must be held in all the dioceses to help the people live in love and unity.”

4. “I thank the Lord for allowing this programme to come on. The priest (facilitator) did well.”

5. “The programme should be extended to fellow catechists who did not have the chance to take part in this programme so that they also will be formed to speak against ethnic conflicts in the Church. This will help them play their leadership role very well.”

6. “I have already said this programme is an eye opener. We have closed our eyes to the issues of ethnic dissension in the Church, and we least talk about them. These have been revealed to us. The programme should be organized from time to time in our Churches.”
7. “The programme is good because we have now known why we should not encourage any ethnic or tribal differences in the Church, country or Africa.”

8. “The programme is very good. From now onwards, I am going to promote and preach love, unity and peace.”

9. “The programme should not end here. I appeal to the presenter to come again and help to form us.”
APPENDIX S

PRESENTER EVALUATION

Participants’ comments on the presenter’s delivery as written by participants on the survey:

1. “The presenter was very good with this programme. I encourage him to go on like this to help the people of God. Congratulations to him.”
2. “The presenter was good.”
3. “The presenter was knowledgeable of the subject matter. The presentation was accurate and it was done in a friendly atmosphere. May the Almighty God richly bless him.”
4. “The presenter was very good. He explained the materials very well and so he taught us very well.”
5. “The presenter was knowledgeable about the topics. He was simple and accurate in his presentations.”
6. “The presenter was up and doing.”
7. “The presenter was very good. He explained the topics well.”
8. “The presenter was very good and friendly.”
9. “Presenter fairly distributed questions to and fairly solicited inputs from participants.”
APPENDIX T

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS AND INPUTS BY PARTICIPANTS

Participants wrote down these general observations and inputs about the programme on their survey:

1. “The programme has helped me to become aware of the problems of conflicts in the Church.”

2. “As a catechist, the methods used have helped me to know how to exercise my leadership role so as to build unity in the Church.”

3. “We need to involve people from other ethnic groups in future programmes so that it will help them as well.”

4. “The prayer of encounter has helped me to know what unity in the Church is all about.”

5. “This programme has taught me that we need to let God be in the forefront in all activities.”

6. “This programme is a must for all priests so organize one for them.”

7. “The workshop has helped and equipped me so, please, come again and organize another one.”

8. “The time was short. I think in future, we will need more time. We love the presentations; more of this programme should be organized.”
9. “The presentation brought us face to face with the issues of conflicts and their effects in the Church. What we have got from the programme has been an eye opener.”

10. “The presenter should be assisted to continue the work he has started to spread throughout Ghana and Africa as a whole.”


Phan, Peter C. “Cultural Diversity: A Blessing or a Curse for Theology and Spirituality?” in *Louvain Studies*, vol. 19, no1, Fall, 1994.


