



**SELINUS UNIVERSITY**  
OF SCIENCES AND LITERATURE

**PRIMAL SPIRITUALITY OF INDIGENOUS SONGS IN  
AFRICAN CHRISTIANITY: A THEOLOGICAL AND  
ECO-ETHICAL ANALYSIS OF SOME SELECTED LYRICS  
OF AGBADZA AND BOBOBO CULTURAL MUSIC IN THE  
APOSTLES REVELATION SOCIETY (ARS) AND GLOBAL  
EVANGELICAL CHURCH (GEC) IN GHANA**

**BY**

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## DECLARATION

I, Ron Macaulay ID Number UNISE2843IT, hereby declare that this thesis is the result of my own research work submitted to Selinus University of Sciences and Literature, Rome Italy. It is my research work produced from a study on **“Primal Spirituality of Indigenous Songs in African Christianity: A Theological and Eco-Ethical Analysis of Some Selected Lyrics of Agbadza and Bobobo Cultural Music in the Apostles Revelation Society (ARS) and Global Evangelical Church (GEC) in Ghana”**. I declare that except for literature cited, which has duly been acknowledged, no part of this thesis has been a reproduction of any work for the award of a degree.

The thesis is written under the supervision of Prof. Salvatore Fava and Dr. Sabrina Mazza of Selinus University, Rome Italy.



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## ABSTRACT

When cultural songs that are akin to Scripture are being sung to praise God in some Ghanaian churches, worshippers take advantage to express their Christian faith and primal spirituality. Primal spirituality is a way to explore the core of human spiritual experience, which involves activities, such as meditating, singing, or performing rituals. Africans can express any of this primal knowledge to enrich their Christian faith. Singing indigenous songs often serves as a vehicle for expressing this spirituality, which affirms communal identity and connection to the divine. Hence, their primal spiritual knowledge is conveyed through singing accompanied by drumming, clapping, and dancing. This primal spiritual condition is a personal quality before any other religious beliefs, such as Christianity or Islam. Therefore, African Christianity is about how to live the Christian faith and worship God within the African way of life, and not necessarily syncretising different systems of religious beliefs, but the expression of the soundness of Africanness. Thus, expressing primal knowledge and Christian faith help them to present their spirit, soul, and body wholly to God. For this reason, the thesis has been grounded in *the concept of Africanness in African Christianity*, which is how Christianity communicates with African cultural heritage. In Christianity, as most Christians everywhere employ music at church to worship, so it is among African Christians. The focus of the music is to lead the people to praise God, which also has a calming effect in a tense situation. African Christians believe that music is a great tool that helps them to feel closer to God. It is because Africans are not oblivious to the fact that they have a strong belief in religion, and also aware that their Africanness cannot be relegated to a less important position of religious tradition. A distinct way of expressing Africanness can be identified when Agbadza and Bobobo music and the lyrics akin to Scripture are engaged in some African churches to worship God. This primal expression is functionally identical in the Apostles Revelation Society (ARS), and some branches of the Global Evangelical Church

(GEC). Nevertheless, while Agbadza is culturally considered war music among the Anlo-Ewe, Bɔbɔbɔ music among the Evedome is also seen as immoral and frowned upon. The main objectives of the study are to find out why many Christians get excited when these cultural music are being engaged in their churches, and why others consider them war and immoral. In addition, the theological and eco-ethical thoughts on some of the selected lyrics are considered. Finally, I examined the impacts these cultural music have on their communities, which guarantee their future and sustainability of the greater good of their impacts. Relevant theological, ethical, and phenomenological methodologies and result-oriented methods were employed to achieve the study's objectives. The theological and eco-ethical thoughts on the practice were examined. The key components of the lyrics "*Afeto Yesue, va dɛm kaba – Lord Jesus, come and rescue me quickly*", and "*anyigba le dzo le ge – the Earth will catch fire* were looked at with eco-ethical eyes. In addition, "*Nuwɔ gbe si medze si la naga nɔ menye o – the sinful life I knew never should dwell in me*", and "*elabe ewua Gbɔgbɔ – because it quenches the Spirit* were scrutinised. This aspect is not an environmental or ecological study; rather it is a study about the eco-ethical thoughts embedded in the lyrics and their impacts on the eco-community. According to the data collected and analysed, the conclusive findings were clear. All indications showed that the worshippers had been getting excited because of the communicative, healing, deliverance, inspirational, and encouraging nature of the Agbadza and Bɔbɔbɔ lyrics. The theological thoughts embedded in the lyrics have a direct meaning in God. Based on reasonable theological and moral grounds, the lyrics are geared towards the dependable nature of God, love, justice, caretaking, and eternal life. Notwithstanding the spiritual benefits, it has been observed that the eco-ethical dimensions of the lyrics could have helped address environmental issues because most were eco-ethical descriptive and prescriptive. Again, the selected songs could have been harnessed to transform the mode of evangelism that would

have an impact on the eco-communities. Surprisingly, it was found that the informants were oblivious to the eco-ethical and moral information conveyed by some of the lyrics. Despite the obliviousness, the leadership of both denominations seemed to be doing their best to promote the expression of Africanness in the churches, for the fact that they are Africans and would forever remain Africans. To reap the full benefits of Agbadza and Bobobo music, I strongly recommend that the ARS and GEC as church denominations are to develop eco-care responsibility as God-fearing people, because disrespect for ecological laws eventually affects the lithosphere no matter how spiritual Christians have become. It would be that, due to eco-care negligence, many unbelievers could die prematurely before the Gospel gets to them. To achieve this goal, resourceful persons such as theologians, ethicists, sociologists, environmentalists, educationists, pastors, elders, choirmasters, composers of songs, politicians, and non-governmental organisations, among others are to come together to brainstorm ways the ARS and GEC, and other church denominations could employ cultural music to save human lives for Christ and care for the environment. In addition, other institutions should come up with a practical approach to eco-care, as some of the cultural music are employed to bring Christians and non-Christians together to deal with eco-crisis affecting their communities. The call goes out to all African Christians, for that matter Ghanaians in particular, to acknowledge the pertinent knowledge that are divinely provided in their cultures, and be proud to give meaning to the Christian revelation embedded in them.

## **DEDICATION**

For the development and production of this thesis, I feel a deep sense of gratitude to dedicate this work to my children Redeemer and Irene who proofread the scripts, and whose support and encouragement enabled me to complete this study.

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# CHAPTER ONE

## Introduction

### 1.1 Background of the Study

The engagement between the primal spirituality of cultural music and the Christian faith within the basic tenets of African Christianity has become a subject that raises critical discussions among many scholars in religious, anthropological, philosophical, theological, and ethical circles. The subject is how primal elements, such as cultural music, and spiritual values manifest themselves within the deep sense of Christian faith and serve as the fundamental beliefs and concepts on which African Christianity is based.

Andrew Walls establishes that “African Christianity is shaped by Africa’s past”.<sup>1</sup> Africa’s past encompasses a rich diverse complex history of indigenous songs and dances that are integral parts of its community life. They practice various religions, including indigenous African spiritual systems, Christianity, and Islam. Walls’ quest for in-depth knowledge traces the relationship between indigenous spiritual systems and African Christianity to Africa’s past, which has “shaped” its brand of Christianity.<sup>2</sup> Stott and Coote agree with Andrew Walls’ assertion and indicate that African primal mode of religious thoughts exactly, and completely belong to the African religious past.<sup>3</sup> Gillian Bediako defines primal to mean the vital elements of human comprehension of the Transcendent, which is about God and the universe.<sup>4</sup> This means that the African’s comprehension of primal beliefs resonates with their spirituality that has its fundamental understanding and manifestation rooted in primal religion. When Africans are converted to Christianity, “the past is not negated but realigned to give the African Christian an

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<sup>1</sup>Andrew F. Walls, *The Cross-Cultural Process in Christian History: Studies in the Transmission and the Appropriation of Faith* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 2002), p. 120.

<sup>2</sup>Walls, *The Cross-Cultural Process in Christian History*, p. 120.

<sup>3</sup>John R.W. Stott and Robert Coote (eds.), *Down to Earth – Studies in Christianity and Culture* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980), p. 194.

<sup>4</sup>Gillian M. Bediako, “Theology in Africa in the 21<sup>st</sup> century: Essential Foundations”, *Journal of African Christian Thought*, Vol. 3, No. 1 (June 2000), pp. 12-16 (12).

identity”.<sup>5</sup> It is explicit without any reservations that the primal condition resonates with the African religious past, which is the personal quality before any other religious beliefs like Christianity or Islam. Hence, the underlying objective to revitalise Christianity in Africa is to live the Christian faith and worship God within the African way of life. The major impetus has been that Africans have realised the inadequacy Christianity brought to them from the West, which was not addressing African problems.<sup>6</sup> This draws the attention of Joel Mokhoathi who estimates that “there are scholars, such as Fiedler, Mugambi, and Sanou, who contended that the attitude of early missionaries towards the African cultural and religious heritage was often misguided”.<sup>7</sup>

Mainly, African cultures include a wide range of traditions in music, dance, and religious practices shaped by historical influences. Typical of this influence over Western Christianity is the use of African cultural music in African Christianity to express the concept of Africanness, of which two kinds of Ewe cultural music are the focal points of interest in this thesis. Because Africans are famous and well-known for their spirituality, Mbiti notes that in Africa, “God is often worshipped through songs, and Africans are very good at singing”.<sup>8</sup> Because they have the affinity to relate to God through songs, music is part of their spiritual exercise to revere him.

Among the diversity of cultural music of the people of Ewe and Evedome of West Africa, and Ghana in particular, are the growing phenomenon of “Agbadza” and “Bobobo” music, which involve local songs. Local songs in this context are particularly the lyrics of songs that culturally originate with and belong to the people in their language. Originally, while Agbadza is culturally considered war music “among the Ewe of the southern part of Ghana, Togo, Benin, and

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<sup>5</sup> Stott and Coote (eds.), *Down to Earth – Studies in Christianity and Culture*, p. 194.

<sup>6</sup> John B. Taylor, *Primal Worldviews: Christian Involvement in Dialogue with Traditional Thought Forms* (Ibadan: Daystar Press, 1976), p. 12.

<sup>7</sup> Joel Mokhoathi, “From Contextual Theology to African Christianity: The Consideration of Adiaphora from a South African Perspective” (South Africa: Department of Religion Studies, University of the Free State, 2017). p. 1.

<sup>8</sup> John S. Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy* (New Hampshire: Heinemann Educational Books Inc.), 1989, p. 67.

Nigeria”,<sup>9</sup> Bobobo from its inception is mostly used among the Evedome in Ghana and Togo. Generally, these kinds of cultural music are played at funerals, churches, and places of entertainment. In addition to the above-mentioned functions, Nketia indicates that “they also include [worship] songs in situations and performances associated with communal work activities”.<sup>10</sup> Undoubtedly, songs encourage workers and enable them to coordinate their work efforts. Similarly, Asamoah and Agbenyo also establish that “music has the transformative power of fostering community cohesion, religious identity, and spiritual devotion among Africans”.<sup>11</sup> Because they, Africans, belong to a particular religion and community, activities such as communal labour, and community cleansing are done as they engage in singing. The African perceives every facet of human activity as spiritual, and therefore, singing is of vital importance to their expression of spirituality. Nketia further asserts that “a village that has no organised music or neglects community singing, drumming, and dancing is said to be dead”.<sup>12</sup> Community singing is a powerful tool for creating unity, fostering joy, and preserving cultural identity. Hence, it has been observed that Agbadza music is a heritage of primal beliefs, and cultural values, creating a sense of belonging, and customs of the Ewe society. The lyrics of Agbadza and Bobobo songs as a phenomenon are significant, which has to do with both their theological and ethical relevance and the social acceptability of their engagement. The significance of the songs brings people of different backgrounds, cultures, or beliefs together in a harmonious activity.

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<sup>9</sup> Sophia Apenkro, *The Evolution of Agbadza Music and Dance*. <https://www.sophiaapenkro.com/the-evolution-of-agbadza-music-and-dance/> [Accessed on 27-12-2023]

<sup>10</sup> J. H. Kwabena Nketia, *Drumming in Akan Communities of Ghana* (London: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1963), p. 49.

<sup>11</sup> Emmanues F. Asamoah and Samuel Agbenyo, “The Bible and Music in African Christianity”, *African Journal of Culture, History, Religion and Traditions*. Vol. 7, Issue 1 (2024), pp. 51-66 (51).

<sup>12</sup> J. H. Kwabena Nketia, *Music in African Cultures: A Review of the Meaning and Significance of Traditional African Music* (Legon, Ghana 1966), p. 249. In Emmanuel F. Asamoah and Samuel Agbenyo, “The Bible and Music in African Christianity”, p. 60.

Looking at the primal spirituality of cultural music from the perspective of traditional thought forms, John B. Taylor establishes that, “Even within those who do not practice one of the primal faiths, the views may continue to exist as unconscious values and pattern of thought”.<sup>13</sup> This means that adherents of other faiths might be exhibiting primal views daily in their outlooks and thought patterns without knowing them. Hence, the traces of primal spirituality are unique phenomenon among the Ewe, which heavily relates to their religious beliefs of sacred Reality (the Supreme Being, God). Asare Opoku also establishes that, Africans engage in religion and express their spirituality in whatever they do. Sometimes they communicate their religious beliefs through songs, which they sing whether they are farming, fishing, weaving, hunting, or travelling.<sup>14</sup> Mostly, singing songs as a spiritual means of dealing with spiritual matters as expressed through oral means reduces stress and promotes feelings of happiness, as far as their psychological and emotional well-being are concerned. While their musical activities involve singing to produce the desired music, careful attention is paid to the lyrics.

Primal spirituality as expressed in songs is the expression of their power and primal spiritual knowledge. The expression of their primal spiritual thoughts helps them to present their spirit, soul, and body wholly to God. Hence, Kwame Bediako notes that “These primal thoughts motivate the assertion that Africans have an authentic knowledge of God. They know how to relate and communicate their ideas effectively with [him] *God*”.<sup>15</sup> They express their thoughts and pass on knowledge, ideas, and stories that help people learn about and appreciate their cultures. Morakeng Lebaka agrees with Bediako’s assertion and adds that “singing is linked to religious experience and expression. In African spirituality, singing is all about bringing people

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<sup>13</sup> Taylor, *Primal Worldviews*, p. 2.

<sup>14</sup> Kofi Asare Opoku, *West African Traditional Religion* (Accra: FEP International Private Limited, 1978), p. 1.

<sup>15</sup> Kwame Bediako, “Understanding African Theology in the 20th century”, *An International Journal for Theological and Religious Studies Students*, Vol. 20, No. 1 (October 1994), pp. 14-19 (15).

back to the right rhythms of life. Traditionally, when Africans worship, they sing and dance together. They tend to become emotionally or spiritually involved in the service”.<sup>16</sup> Lebaka establishes this fact because he examined the value of African traditional religious music in a particular African congregation; the Evangelical Lutheran Church of the Lobethal congregation. For him, “The introduction of traditional African religious music into Evangelical or Pentecostal church services has not compromised the essence of Christian worship. It rather encourages maximum participation in worship by members”.<sup>17</sup> This is because religious music often reinforces community values and solidarity. In this way, everyone is encouraged to participate through clapping, singing, or dancing.

Though Hodges, Cross, and Morley argue that there is no specific term that refers distinctively to music, Sloboda concludes that the only universality of music is its ability to alter human emotions, and provide relief and comfort.<sup>18</sup> The fact that “music and the lyrics affect emotions and the heart, some African churches use local musical instruments and songs in their worship services”<sup>19</sup> in addition to Western hymns and organs. The Western missionaries were those who introduced the usage of hymns and organs in the missionary churches. Distinctly, the use of local instruments and songs is how the Ewe of Ghana conceptually demonstrates their Africanness in church. For them, the practice brings meaning to the quality of their spiritual lives, vital, and often with spiritual and moral teachings embedded in them. Nevertheless, while Agbadza is considered war music, Bɔbɔbɔ among the Ewe is seen as immoral by some Christians, and therefore, frowned upon by them.

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<sup>16</sup> Morakeng E. K. Lebaka, “The Value of Traditional African Religious Music into Liturgy: Lobethal Congregation”, *HTS Teologiese Studies/Theological Studies*, Vol. 71, No. 3 (June 2015), pp. 1-6 (1).

<sup>17</sup> Lebaka, “The Value of Traditional African Religious Music into Liturgy”, p. 4.

<sup>18</sup> Asamoah and Agbenyo, “The Bible and Music in African Christianity”, p. 55.

<sup>19</sup> Asamoah and Agbenyo, “The Bible and Music in African Christianity”, p. 56.

Notwithstanding the mixed feelings towards Agbadza and Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀ cultural music, the majority of Ewe Christians get exceedingly excited about the engagements between these cultural music with Christian faith in their churches. They also employ these music when they go out to evangelise in their communities. This behaviour seems bewilderingly complex and has become a subject of debate. Interestingly, the behaviour is similar to Richard Niebuhr's Christ and culture "enduring problem", of which he first notes that it is a many-sided debate.<sup>20</sup> The enduring problem refers to the ongoing tension between Christian faith and ethics' engagement with culture. This attracts many views and perceptions of culture. It means cultures in different societies can take a variety of forms and flow in various directions as they encounter Christian faith and ethics for the fact that culture is dynamic.

In this situation, perhaps the lyrics of Agbadza and Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀ songs resonate with their primal spirituality and serve as grounds for those who get excited, and therefore, use them for worship and evangelism purposes. This agrees with Yoakum who asserts that "music, in all of its complexity, has the potential to impact not only congregations but also non-believers in profound ways".<sup>21</sup> It evokes powerful emotions, offering peace and joy to them on human level. Hence, to a large degree, these cultural music are engaged in worship besides hymns, because of the theological and ethical thoughts embedded in the lyrics of the songs. Aloysius Pieris' research among the Asians concludes that a theological practice that does not address the needs of a people will be regarded as virtually meaningless.<sup>22</sup> This is a major paradigm shift, which has occurred in the church: from orthodox Christian hymns to cultural and primal, indigenous spiritual songs that are altered to suit their mode of worship.

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<sup>20</sup> H. Richard Niebuhr, *Christ and Culture* (New York: Harper and Row, 1951), p. 1.

<sup>21</sup> Trevor Yoakum, "That all May Hear: How Indigenous Church Music Encourages Church Growth in Africa", *Great Commission Research Journal*, Vol. 11, No. 2 (Fall 2020), pp. 88-103 (88).

<sup>22</sup> S. J. Aloysius Pieris, *An Ancient Theology of Liberation* (Maryland NY: Orbis Books, 1992), pp. 71-72.

On this note, Kwesi Wiredu argues that, everyone is a product of culture and the human mind is *a sine qua non* to receive such a cultural heritage.<sup>23</sup> This is because Christians are necessarily products of their cultures, and assimilation of that cultural heritage begins from the mind. The assimilation of such cultural heritage and the expression of such identity involve indigenous lyrics to demonstrate aspects of their identity, of which the lyrics of Agbadza and Bobobo music are part.

While African Christian worship is generally admitted to be accompanied by music, it is mostly done with distinctive lyrics compatible with Scripture. The fact that songs and their lyrics affect emotions and the heart, some African churches heavily rely on indigenous musical instruments and vernacular songs in their church services. On a more serious note, Kwame Bediako establishes that, “our cultures are God’s gifts to us in the sense that they provide the framework in which our existence finds meaning and purpose as full members of God’s creation”.<sup>24</sup> Thus, humans as God’s creatures belong to various cultures. For this reason, the use of local instruments and vernacular songs is one means by which the Ewe contextually demonstrates their Africanness in church. “When this is done to a large degree, the African church demonstrates the possibility of how Jesus Christ could be identified as an African”,<sup>25</sup> thus, African primal spirituality has meaning in Christ. Available literature shows that “this occurs only when the Gospel is contextualised within a cultural setting”,<sup>26</sup> as its information is made understandable. The viewpoints of the scholars engaged in this study are akin to the position of the majority of Ewe Christians who get excited when their indigenous music are being engaged to praise God in their churches. For this reason, the primal spirituality of Agbadza and

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<sup>23</sup> Kwesi Wiredu, *Cultural Universals and Particulars: An African Perspective* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1996), p. 21.

<sup>24</sup> Kwame Bediako, “Christianity and African Culture”, *Journal of African Christian Thought*, Vol. 13, No. 1 (June 2010), pp. 45-57 (50).

<sup>25</sup> Bediako, “Christianity and African Culture”, p. 46.

<sup>26</sup> *The Lausanne Movement: A Range of Perspectives* (Oxford: Regnum Books, 2014), p. 382.

Bɔbɔbɔ music, which are “integrally related to the cultures in which they arose”,<sup>27</sup> and being played within particular church denominations are pertinent to these Christians. For them, the Christian faith has meaning in their cultural heritage.

These Ewe Christians’ identity, which refers to the characteristics, beliefs, and practice rests in the central Christian doctrine as based on the beliefs in the life, teachings, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. For that matter, African Christianity is the way Africans relate to Christ and worship God within their cultural context. This primary goal of the phenomenon has to do with Christianity’s engagement with primal spirituality in the African context. In other words, it is how to live by the Gospel and worship God within the African way of life, and not necessarily syncretising different religious belief systems. Whatever form the concepts assume, the fundamental issue is that there is Africanness, which forms a chord that binds them together. Hence, African worldview stands as the philosophical tradition that guides, and protects their Christian identity in African spirituality.<sup>28</sup>

Consequently, it is fascinating to note that, many Ewe churches in Ghana have introduced cultural music such as Agbadza and Bɔbɔbɔ in their churches, a practice in which they express their Africanness as African Christians. According to Asamoah and Agbenyo, “Religious history indicates that all known cultures associate music with the supernatural and accompany religious activities with music”.<sup>29</sup> Both missionary founded and indigenous churches in Africa are experiencing revitalisation in this regard. Typical among these African churches are the Apostles Revelation Society (hereinafter called the ARS), and some branches of the Global Evangelical Church (hereinafter called the GEC).

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<sup>27</sup> Mary N. MacDonald, “The Primitive, the Primal, and the Indigenous in the Study of Religion”, *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, Vol. 79, No. 4 (December 2011), pp. 814-826.

<sup>28</sup> Felix U. Egwuda-Ugbeda and Obiorah Ekwueme, *The Wheel of Life in African Worldview and its Sustenance Through Performances* (Nsukka: Theatre and Film Studies, University of Nigeria)

<sup>29</sup> Asamoah and Agbenyo, “The Bible and Music in African Christianity”, p. 54.

In Africa, for that matter Ghana in particular, every opportunity marks an occasion for spiritual engagement, which most of the time manifest by the use of local musical instruments and songs. Hence, it has been observed that expressions of Africanness are functionally identical in the ARS, and some branches of the GEC. Of interest is the fact that, the worshippers get excited when some cultural music such as Agbadza and Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀ are engaged to praise God in these churches. In this study, the theological and ethical thoughts embedded in the lyrics of Agbadza and Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀ songs attract a considerable amount of interest. The reason why the worshippers get excited about their local or cultural music needs to be explored to contribute to existing scholarship. This is because there must have been some theological and ethical or philosophical thoughts on the practice, which may have informed their decision.

Most noticeably, little written record appears to have been known about the theological and ethical ideas some lyrics of Agbadza and Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀ music convey in these churches. Ideas that seek to explain theology, ethics, and creation. It is against this background I have to investigate the reason why the members of the ARS and GEC get exceedingly excited when Agbadza and Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀ music are being played in their churches in Ghana, and the impact the lyrics have on their eco-communities, and what guarantees the future and sustainability of these music.

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

Undisputably, songs and their lyrics have meanings, and composers of those songs compose them to excite and inspire hearers. Similarly, most ARS and GEC members in their churches get exceedingly excited about Agbadza and Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀ songs when they are engaged in worship. The subjects at issue are the excitement, theological and eco-ethical thoughts embedded in the selected lyrics of Agbadza and Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀ music, which are past on from generation to generation among the Ewe. Against these are some cultural resistances among early missionaries. Early

missionary movements often discouraged indigenous practices, leading debates about the appropriateness of their use in modern worship. While Agbadza has been considered war music, Bobobo has been regarded as immoral though both are being played at funerals, churches, and social gatherings. Surprisingly, in the midst of the mixed feeling towards these cultural music, the ARS and GEC engage them in their churches to praise God. They adopt these music and the lyrics that are akin to Scripture in their worship services. In addition, it has been observed that while these cultural music are employed alongside hymns in the ARS, in most of the GEC they are employed alongside both hymns and contemporary music. Contemporary music in this context means musical instruments and songs belonging to the Western world, which are modern for the fact that they are alien to the indigenous Africans. This means that the two church denominations share similar phenomena in their worship services with few notable exceptions. And by extension, these kinds of music are played by both Christians and non-Christians at funerals, and for entertainment, of which the ARS and GEC members are no exception. Notwithstanding the views of those who think Agbadza and Bobobo are war and immoral music, it is interesting to note that members of the ARS and GEC worshippers get exceedingly excited when local songs are raised in their own languages to praise God. It seems the lyrics and the drumming must have resonated with their primal spirituality. It is believed that the vernacular explains deeper than a foreign mode of communication. Perhaps there must have been some common grounds between the primal mode of worship and the expression of the Christian faith in the ARS and GEC.

The phenomena of the Agbadza and Bobobo music, which the worshippers get excited about attract a considerable interest, and I want to investigate why they get excited about them. In other words, the hybrid of the mixed feelings, which consist of the excitement, war and immoral nature of these cultural music as seen by some Christians have become problematic, and need to be investigated.

### 1.3. Research Objectives

This dissertation explores the theological and eco-ethical implications of the use of cultural music, specifically, Agbadza and Bobobo music within the context of African Christianity. This research is done specifically within the ARS and GEC in Ghana. The objectives of this study are to engage primal spirituality of cultural or local music with Christian faith. To provide rational grounds for the main objective, some attention has been given to the cultural music, which continues to proliferate in the ARS and GEC. Interestingly, when local or cultural songs are being sung to praise God in these churches, worshippers get exceedingly excited. There must have been a reason why the members of the ARS and GEC get excited, particularly, when Agbadza and Bobobo songs are being sung in their churches. The research seeks to understand why these musical traditions generate excitement among worshippers and to analyse the theological and eco-ethical content of some selected lyrics. By analysing the selected lyrics, the study will lay a foundation for cultural music among the Eue. In order to unfold this main objective, I set the following sub-objectives to assist me achieve the main objective. Thus, to

1. Analyse the significance of Agbadza and Bobobo cultural music among the Eue.
2. Examine the factors underlying the excitement, the war and immoral nature of the selected Agbadza and Bobobo songs.
3. Investigate the common grounds between the primal mode of worship and the expression of the Christian faith in the ARS and GEC.
4. Discuss the theological and eco-ethical thoughts on the lyrics of Agbadza and Bobobo songs in the ARS and GEC.
5. Lay a foundation for what the ARS and GEC should have been doing differently to lay bare the impact these cultural music would have had on their eco-communities.

#### **1.4. Research Aim**

This theological and eco-ethical study is intended to foster a sense of Africanness, and also to contribute to continuing discussions on African Christianity, and African Christian eco-response to creation care. This research creates a better understanding of the use of cultural music in African churches, particularly, the ARS and GEC in Ghana as the expression of their Africanness devoid of syncretistic practices.

#### **1.5. Research Questions**

According to Ghale, “In qualitative studies, research questions are primarily used to capture and explore meaning rather than test hypotheses”.<sup>30</sup> This is to explore complex concepts and gain deeper insights into people’s behaviour, thoughts, and emotions. Therefore, the overarching question I intend to answer focuses on “Why do the members of the ARS and GEC get exceedingly enthusiastic when the lyrics of Agbadza and Bobobo songs are sung in their churches?” The sub-questions set to assist answer the main question are:

1. What is the significance of Agbadza and Bobobo cultural music among the Ewe?
2. Why Agbadza and Bobobo music are perceived war and immoral in nature?
3. What are the common grounds between the primal mode of worship and the expression of the Christian faith in the ARS and GEC?
4. What are the theological and eco-ethical thoughts on the lyrics of Agbadza and Bobobo music among the ARS and GEC?
5. What impact Agbadza and Bobobo music have on the eco-community that guarantees their sustainability?

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<sup>30</sup> Hira Bahadur Ghale, “Study on Community Participation in Local Level Planning for Sustainable Development, Majjogmai Rural Municipality, Ilam, Nepal” A PhD Dissertation (Rome: Selinus University of Sciences and Literature, 2023), p. 18.

## **1.6. Significance of the Study**

This is a highly significant research because it is a theological and eco-ethical study of real cases, which are noticeable features in cultural music and Christian faith. The study copiously demonstrates the reason why indigenous music plays a vital role in the lives of African Christians. Fascinatingly, Africans see music as a working relationship between one another, and also as a preferred method of dance that is so basic. Hence, the findings and recommendations will be of immense benefit to Christians. It is my expectation that the study unearths and seeks to enhance the potential benefits of Agbadza and Bobobo music, and also, provide insight into the needs of these music in the churches.

The findings and recommendations will serve as a reference document for Christians in Ghana. It seeks to provide basis for awareness and better understanding of cultural music. It also seeks to unravel some selected lyrics that are metamorphosed into Christian songs, which are compatible with Scripture. This will affect the spiritual life of Christians positively. Finally, the relevance of the study will serve as the basis to unearth the eco-ethical knowledge embedded in lyrics, and provides appropriate methods which will be useful in arousing further research work.

## **1.7. Delimitation of the Study**

The study is about Agbadza and Bobobo music among the Ewe who spread along the southern part of West Africa. However, for the purpose of this work, the scope of the study has been narrowed to the Ewe of Ghana, specifically within the ARS and GEC. Members of these African churches comprise both males and females. The age range of the sample of this work ranges between eighteen (18) and sixty (60) years. The fundamental reason for the inclusion of this age group is that they are made up of both youths and adults, who are capable of identifying the relevance of the lyrics as to why they feel excited singing those songs, and can interpret their

meanings. The exclusion of the ages below eighteen is that they are children who are not mature enough to understand the difference between the lyrics and contemporary songs. Though some of those whose ages are below the specified years could sing and dance to the tune, they might not be able to express themselves to indicate the relevance of the songs.

The entire population of the targeted churches cannot be used for this study. In addition, the fact that Agbadza and Bobobo songs of the ARS and GEC are many, not all of them can be used for this study. I, therefore, employ purposive sampling, not by a random method, but deliberately selected some Agbadza and Bobobo songs from each of these denominations to achieve the objectives of the study. Further explanation has been given under primary sources. Hence, in this study, I scrutinised the theological and eco-ethical thoughts on the lyrics in the selected branches of the ARS and GEC.

### **1.8. Limitation of the Study**

We should not assume that the methodology adopted for the study was without limitations. What the researcher regards as limitations are the constraints that limit the smooth progress of the research. For instance, the elaborate and demanding nature of the theological and eco-ethical analysis of the problem within the ARS and GEC in Ghana affected the researcher's health. Contributory factors have been the proximity, and how to exercise a considerable amount of constraint to avoid subjectivity. Disregard of this can influence the interpretation of the results.

The researcher notices that while there has been a large number of literature on music in general, materials on Agbadza and Bobobo lyrics that are sung in churches are scanty. The researcher encounters time and financial constraints. This is because the times for the interview inconvenienced the key informants from whom data was elicited, due to their busy schedules. Therefore, the researcher contacted them many times, which delayed data collection.

Due to the primal nature of the phenomenon under study, as far as the questionnaires are concerned, a variety of closed-ended and open-ended questions to achieve the objective of the study have been employed. The closed-ended questions greatly assisted the informants in choosing alternative responses. The open-ended questions made it easier for the informants to understand the questions and helped them to contribute meaningfully, to the amount of information the researcher needed. Hence, the ethical principle of anonymity had been employed to reassure the informants of the confidentiality, which their responses accorded. The researcher had experienced a highly significant number of interferences in the face-to-face interviews conducted. As a result, this interference was an impediment to smooth dialogue. The findings may not be applicable everywhere because situations may differ from place to place. However, it could open up further research opportunities outside these churches on similar or different subject matters.

### **1.9. Definition of Key Terms**

*Africanness:* Africanness refers to the qualities, characteristics, and cultural identity that define and express the essence of being African. It encompasses the shared experiences, traditions, values, and worldviews that connect people of African heritage, indigenous spiritual beliefs, and practices as well as the blending of these with Christianity or other religions both on the continent and in the diaspora.

*Atmosphere:* Scientifically, the atmosphere is the layer of gasses that surrounds a planet, moon, or other celestial body held in place by gravity. For earth, the atmosphere consists of gases such as nitrogen, oxygen, and trace amount of other gases like carbon dioxide and argon. Earth's atmosphere protects life by filtering harmful solar radiation. It is about all that come together around us; space for air or all gases

*Biosphere:* Biosphere refers to the part of the earth where life exists, encompassing all living organisms and the environments in which they live. It includes all ecosystems, such as forests, oceans, grasslands, deserts, and urban environments. It is the earth's surface where things that have life, such as humans, animals, and birds live.

*Contemporary music:* In this context means musical instruments and songs belonging to the Western world, which are modern for the fact that they are alien to the indigenous Africans.

*Eco-ethical:* It refers to the moral responsibility of the individuals, and communities to make decisions and behaviours that minimise harm to the environment and promote ecological balance. In practice, eco-ethical behaviour can include reducing waste, conserving resources for future generations.

*Eschatology:* This concerns the consummation of the whole history of the world. It refers to the second coming of Christ – The Parousia. It is the belief in the resurrection of the dead.

*Ethical:* The term ethical refers to principles or standards of right and wrong that govern a person's behaviour, which conforms to acceptable standards of morality, fairness, and justice. Key characteristics of being ethical are acting with honesty, integrity, and fairness, respecting the rights and dignity of others; considering the consequences of actions on individuals and society.

*Exosphere:* It is about 500km above the earth's surface. Particles in the exosphere move freely and are not bound by gravity as strongly as lower atmospheric layers.

*Hydrosphere:* This encompasses river, sea, other water bodies, and vapour.

*Indigenous:* Indigenous means originating or occurring naturally in a specific place. Also, it relates to groups of people who are the original inhabitants of a region, maintaining distinct cultural traditions, languages, and ways of life that are tied to their ancestral lands.

*Informant:* is someone who gives information about their language, social customs, religious, and environmental activities, among others to someone who is studying them.

*Lithosphere:* Lithosphere is the solid outer layer of the earth where human beings, animals, birds, and non-humans inhabit; the geographical space where we live.

*Music:* The concept of music transcends the contemporary understanding of sound and rhythm. It encompasses a broader spectrum, embodying the interconnected arts of melody, dance, and poetry (Merker, 2000; 2009).

*Spirituality:* Spirituality is a broad concept that refers to the spiritual aspects of life. It is a sense of connection to something greater than oneself, such as the divine, nature, or humanity.

*Sustainability:* Sustainability in this study is the ability to make an activity continue to exist or happen for a period of time without causing damage to the environment. Organise society in a way that thinks about present and future imperative needs, such as environmental preservation.

*Tertiary:* Tertiary is third in place, degree, or order. Education at a college, university

*Theological:* The term theological relates to theology, which is the study of the basic character of God, religious beliefs, and divine principles. It involves exploring the understanding of faith, doctrines, and the relationship between the divine and the world.

*Troposphere:* The troposphere is the lowest layer of earth's atmosphere, where most of the planet's weather occurs. It is about 8 to 15km from the earth depending on location and season. This is where humans live. It occupies the space which constitutes weather and climate.

## **1.10. Methodology**

This provides the rationale behind the specific methods and ensures the process is structured, consistent, and reliable. Methodologically, this work is a theological and eco-ethical study. The work is not an academic study of music as a field; exclusively, it is rather a theological and eco-ethical study of the lyrics of some selected songs. To achieve the objectives of the study, theological, ethical, and phenomenological approaches were adopted. I blended these approaches

as I adopted qualitative techniques for data collection and analysis. The analysis is in both qualitative and quantitative form. The main reason for adopting a qualitative research design for this study had been to achieve a deeper understanding of the lyrics of some selected Agbadza and Bobobo songs among the Ewe, and the ARS and GEC in Ghana.<sup>31</sup> The quantitative is where percentages and numbers were used to express the informants' responses.

Theological, ethical, and phenomenological methods have been chosen because the topic under study involves lyrics of cultural music with morality deeply embedded in them, within the Christian faith in particular church denominations. Again, theological and ethical methods have been chosen because of the “close relationship between theology and ethics in that it is the theological beliefs that form the basis for conduct. Moreover, God is the subject of theology, and his righteousness is the basis for the norms of ethical conduct”,<sup>32</sup> which determines right and wrong, good and bad conduct.

To make decisions based on facts rather than on one's feelings or beliefs, the phenomenological method has been employed. The phenomenological aspect of this work looks at the phenomenon of Agbadza and Bobobo lyrics in African Christianity and people's views and responses to them. James Cox indicates that phenomenology is a philosophical method for knowing or investigating how we know reality by describing the phenomenon. Furthermore, Edmund Husserl also establishes that phenomenology is the rule for performing epoché, and eidetic intuition for building up an objective picture of the phenomenon.<sup>33</sup> Epoché means that to achieve the aim of a study, the researcher must suspend his or her previous judgment about the world, including his or her feelings, ideas and presumptions. The eidetic intuition enables the researcher to look into the very structure or meaning of the phenomenon under study. This,

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<sup>31</sup> Richmond Yeboah, “Galamsey Fight in Ghana: An Analysis of Failure of Government Interventions Since 1989”. *E-journal of Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences*, Vol. 4, No. 4 (April 2023), pp. 455-472 (461).

<sup>32</sup> James Gills, *Biblical Ethics and Contemporary Issues* (Makati: Carib Baptist Publications, 1998), p. 8.

<sup>33</sup> James L. Cox, *An Introduction to the Phenomenology of Religion*. (2010), p. 11.  
<http://www.books.google.com.gh/books> [accessed on 24 January 2014].

therefore, follows that the analysis of the findings is based on what the informants provided, and not from the perspective of the researcher.<sup>34</sup> Hence, theological, ethical, and phenomenological approaches had been adopted for the study. While the phenomenological method had been used to explore the phenomenon of Agbadza and Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀ music and the factors that underlie the excitement, theological and ethical principles had been applied to analyse the lyrics of the selected songs in the ARS and GEC in Ghana.

I employed both primary and secondary methods for data collection. To have common grounds of comparison between theology and the lyrics of Agbadza and Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀, I considered eco-ethical dimensions of their relationships and similarities, including their positive and negative elements.

#### **1.10.1. Research Design and Methods of Data Collection**

The research design is the strategic plan or framework for the entire study, and also provides the structured plan to address the research problem. It also enhances the reliability, validity, and credibility of the results. Hence, the primary source of data collection includes gathering first hand information by conducting face-to-face interviews, administering questionnaires, group discussions, and participant observation. According to Blaikie, “Primary data are generated by a researcher who is responsible for the design of the study, the collection, analysis, and reporting of the data”.<sup>35</sup> Secondary sources also helped in achieving the research objectives.

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<sup>34</sup> Ron Macaulay, “Cohabitation Among Young Adults of the Global Evangelical Church in Ghana”. MPhil Thesis (Legon: University of Ghana, Department for the Study of Religion, Legon, 2015), p. 10.

<sup>35</sup> Norman Blaikie, *Designing Social Research* (New York: Polity Press, 2000), p. 183.

### 1.10.2. Primary Sources

Primary sources for data collection were employed. This is first-hand information collected through observations, questionnaires, personal interviews, telephonic interviews, and focus group discussions. “It is a new data used to answer specific research questions”.<sup>36</sup>

One (1) Agbadza and one (1) Bɔbɔbɔ songs had been selected from each of the churches (congregations). Samples of four (4) churches (2 ARS and 2 GEC) and four (4) pastors of these denominations in the Volta and Greater Accra Regions of Ghana had been selected for this work. A total of four (4) Agbadza lyrics and four (4) Bɔbɔbɔ lyrics were used in this study, which gave a total of eight (8) selected lyrics from the congregations. One (1) indigenous Agbadza and Bɔbɔbɔ lyric each had been selected from the Ewe community to augment those of the churches, which add up to ten (10) songs to find the distinction between them.

Questionnaires were administered to the targeted churches. The questionnaires included a series of questions to gather information from a statistically significant number of informants. The questions posed to the informants were open and closed-ended questions. The categories of informants were two (2) pastors, twenty-four (24) elders, and forty (40) youths from the ARS, and another group of two (2) pastors, twenty-four (24) elders, and forty (40) youths from the GEC. Two (2) non-Christians were interviewed in addition to the four pastors. While a total of six (6) were interviewed, one hundred and twenty-eight (128) were made to answer questionnaires as the targeted informants of the selected ARS and GEC congregations. This gives an overall total of one hundred and thirty-four (134) informants. The opinions of the individual informants were also sought to augment the data.

Interviews held with the four (4) targeted pastors who represented the ARS and GEC pastors had been used in this study. These categories of leaders had been chosen because they

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<sup>36</sup> Blaikie, *Designing Social Research*, p. 232-3.

were responsible for the administration of the churches in various capacities. Equal attention had been given to those who were not Christian, and for that matter were not members of the ARS or GEC, to form a balanced view of the account of this research. Hence, two (2) non-Christians who were male and female Ghanaians had been purposely selected to express their opinions on Agbadza and Bobobo music. In that regard, interview guides were employed. The interview was structured to facilitate a smooth flow of conversation.

Again, I adopted the method of participant observation to observe the subject matter under study in the ARS and GEC and took notice of the significant aspects related to the research. A focus group discussion was held to seek the group's opinion on the subject matter. This largely depends on the good memory and perceptions of cultural music of the informants.

Finally, I used English language and Ewe to communicate with the informants. In the process of the interviews, I also made phone calls and used a recording device with permission from the informants. This enabled me to replay, which adequately assisted me in capturing the important data collected for analysis.

### **1.10.3. Secondary Sources**

This is the type of information or material that interprets, analyses, evaluates, and summarises primary sources. It provides a second-hand account and commonly used to gain insights, or broader understanding of a topic. Hence, secondary sources formed the basis for this work. This comprises scholarly books, contacting archives, some published and unpublished materials, journal articles, the Bible and dictionaries, library, and internet, among others. This theological and ethical study intended to foster a sense of Africanness, and also contribute to continuing discussions on African Christianity. These also included materials on primal religion, African

culture, African Initiated churches (AICs), and mainline missionary founded churches, among others.

#### **1.10.4. Sampling and Sampling Procedure**

Purposive sampling and social networking approach had been adopted to gather data for the work. In purposive sampling, the units of the sample have to be selected not by a random procedure, but intentionally picked for the study. This is because they satisfy certain qualities, which are not randomly distributed, but they exhibited most of the characteristics of interest to the study.<sup>37</sup>

#### **1.10.5. Methods of Data Analysis**

This refers to the techniques and processes used to examine, interpret, and draw conclusions from data collected during the study. Mixed-method analyses, thus, both qualitative and quantitative approaches were used to give a more comprehensive understanding of the data. Hence, theological, ethical and phenomenological approaches had been adopted to analyse the responses of the informants. Tables and pie charts, which had been expressed in percentages, had also been employed to analyse the data collected. This enabled me to have a true view of the practice, which led to the conclusion of this work and recommendations. I chose this approach, because it had enabled me unravelled the complexity of the phenomenon under study.

### **1.11. Ethical Considerations**

According to Lategan, the necessity of research ethics is the considerations of the values and norms that are needed in the creation of new knowledge and the solving of problems. It is the

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<sup>37</sup> Tom K. B. Kumeckpor, *Research Methods and Techniques of Social Research* (Accra: SonLife Press and Services, 2002), p. 138.

guiding rules that help the researcher to avoid harms, deception of informants, violation of privacy/anonymity/confidentiality, and respect the publication of findings.<sup>38</sup> Therefore, I paid particular attention to the respect for religious beliefs, and the rights, dignity, and welfare of all the ethical considerations employed in this study. This encompasses treating diverse religious and ethical perspectives with respect and avoiding ridicule or misrepresentation. It is also to avoid theological bias or favouritism when discussing or critiquing belief systems. This is the area where the informants have to give voluntary consent to the research, and I also have to provide them with clear information about the study's purpose, procedures, risks, and benefits before involving them in the research.

Cultural sensitivity is another ethical consideration in this research. This has to do with acknowledging the cultural contexts of theological concepts and practices, and being mindful of language that may offend specific communities or traditions. This helps to ensure integrity, accuracy, and fair interpretation of sacred texts within ethical frameworks. Integrity in theological and ethical scholarship requires that coercion and power dynamics, thus, clergy/congregation relationships to influence interpretation are avoided. Integrity in interpretation in this study ensures avoiding the selective use of texts to misrepresent doctrines or promote a biased agenda, respecting cultural, social, and religious differences. Research integrity reminds me to report results honestly and transparently. It also ensures that the research benefits respective groups and does not perpetuate stereotypes or inequalities.

Confidentiality in sensitive discussions is essential when interviewing individuals about personal faith or ethical dilemmas. Safeguarding private information about religious practices or ethical concerns shared in confidence is very crucial in this study. This calls for ensuring that critiques of ethical or theological positions do not lead to social or psychological harm but

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<sup>38</sup> L. O. K. Lategan, "Employing Research Ethics in Theological Ethics" (South Africa, Bloemfonteini: Central University of Technology, 2006), pp. 69-82 (69-70).

promote dialogue and understanding rather than divisiveness. Hence, I used collected data only for the purposes stated in the research, following ethical guidelines for secondary data use. This calls for honesty and transparency, clearly stating the researcher's own theological or ethical perspective where necessary to avoid misleading. The various churches and informants in this study are also pseudo-named to protect their image.

The ethical engagement with sacred texts and traditions, acknowledging the sacredness of religious texts and treating them with appropriate reverence in research cannot be overemphasised. This is to ensure that interpretations are informed by theological scholarship and not taken out of context. It also encompasses the consideration of societal implications of theological and ethical research, and promoting research that contributes to justice, peace, and the common good. This is done considering the potential environmental consequences of research activities, minimising ecological harm when I was conducting the fieldwork.

### **1.12. Conceptual (Theoretical) Framework**

This thesis is grounded in *The Concept of Africanness in African Christianity*, which is how Christianity would communicate with African cultural heritage. African heritage refers to the cultural, historical, and legacies of the people from the African continent. This encompasses a vast array of traditions, customs, languages, and social structures, including music and dance, developed by the diverse ethnic groups that have existed as their way of life. The music, dance, clothing, and spiritual practices are renowned for their diversity and symbolic meanings.

This concept has been adopted as the conceptual framework, based on indigenous lyrics of African music that are metamorphosed into “Christian songs”, which are sung to express Africanness in African Christianity. A key remark of critical interest is that, “Christianity is taken to be a ‘non-cultural entity’, which only finds a sense of expression within a cultural

medium”.<sup>39</sup> Hence, very often, African primal views are sometimes relegated to a low position, and other times altered to conform and be compatible with the Christian faith. Against this assertion, it is believed that, “God has no favourites among cultures. He accepts them all”.<sup>40</sup> The primal mode of culture must comply with recognised theological rules, and a sense of expressing spirituality devoid of syncretising the Christian faith. Some of these songs fall within the domain of Agbadza and Bobobo music among the Ewe churches.

For them, contextualising refers to the process of placing ideas within a broader context to make them more understandable. This involves explaining or analysing something concerning the circumstances or factors surrounding it. By providing context, the meaning or significance of the subject can be clarified, making it easier to comprehend its relevance or implications. As for Fezekile Futhwa, these are highly encouraged factors surrounding African heritage among African Christians.<sup>41</sup> For this reason, Joel Mokhoathi argues that, “African Christianity is characterised by the struggle for authenticity, uniqueness and identity considering the social conditions at the time to fully understand its impact”.<sup>42</sup> He explains that, “It is a form of resistance against early missionary activities and their presentation of Christianity in Western apparel; on the other hand, a search for self-actualisation”.<sup>43</sup> As for Africans, they get excited when Africanness is expressed within their own culture to give them identity, as far as music among African Christians is concerned.

Music in this context is the lifeblood of the Africans; hence, it is one of the means of communication with God and one another. It is used to communicate proverbs, and wise sayings among others within an indigenous setting. Indigenous lyrics are full of wisdom, which are used

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<sup>39</sup> Joel Mokhoathi, “From Contextual Theology to African Christianity”, p. 3.

<sup>40</sup> Lausanne Movement, *Gospel and Cultures in the Lausanne Movement* (Oxford: Regnum Books, 2014).  
<https://lausanne.org>

<sup>41</sup> Fezekile Futhwa, *Sesotho Afrikan Thought and Belief Systems* (Alberton: Nalane Publication, 2011), p. 10.

<sup>42</sup> Joel Mokhoathi, “African Christianity: Intersections between Culture and Identity among Amakhosa” (Free State, South Africa: Department of Religion Studies, University of the Free State, 2017), p. 1.

<sup>43</sup> Mokhoathi, “African Christianity”, p. 1.

to console bereaved families at funerals, and also used to entertain social gatherings to communicate effectively their Africanness with one another. The lyrics are metamorphosed, and sung in some Ghanaian churches to worship God, and also, to express their primal spirituality as Africans. John Mbiti asserts that, “Africans are notoriously religious”, therefore, there has always been a spiritual undertone of their way of life.<sup>44</sup>

The traces of primal spirituality are a unique phenomenon among the Ewe, which heavily relates to their religious beliefs of sacred reality that is so basic and treated with great respect among them because they are connected to God or the Supreme Being. And by extension the Africans’ ways of having an affinity for religion help them to have an interest in spiritual matters. For this reason, “African spirituality enables Africans to understand that there is God”,<sup>45</sup> and that he deserves to be worshipped religiously because they have an interest in him. While spirituality is the quality of being interested in religious matters, religion, as defined by Simon Blackburn, “is the attempt to understand the concepts involved in religious belief, for example, existence, necessity, fate, creation, sin, justice, mercy, redemption and God”.<sup>46</sup> These resonate with the belief that Africans are deeply spiritually inclined people because they believe in God, and communicate with him in varieties of ways to express their Africanness, of which music is one.

One notable feature of African spirituality is the notion that the world is full of spirits, which is the understanding that guides their approach to life. Gerrie ter Haar establishes that the Africans’ spirituality enables them to conclude that, “The spirit world possesses power: spiritual power that can be employed to improve the quality of life of those who resort to it. For religious

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<sup>44</sup> John S. Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy*, p. 1.

<sup>45</sup> Bediako, “Understanding African Theology in the 20th century”, p. 15.

<sup>46</sup> Simon Blackburn, *Oxford Dictionary of Philosophy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), p. 316.

believers, therefore, spiritual power is an ‘enabling power’.<sup>47</sup> Consequently, songs that are composed of definite lyrics are sung to invoke those spiritual powers to assist them in time of need. Their spirituality has its fundamental understanding rooted in their primal religion.

One thing fascinating about Africans is that they know that there is only one God, and their primal views are always about one God. This confirms that there is only one Reality in the primal view, and African Christians also believe that there is one Reality. The concept of God in African culture is how the African understands or perceives God. In addition, the knowledge of God in Africa “is expressed in songs, prayers, proverbs, names, short statements, news, stories, and ceremonies, among others”.<sup>48</sup> The lyrics of songs and prayers are the typical areas that you see primal experience manifesting itself in African Christianity. Sometimes, the primal self-spirituality of the indigenous people is seen as a threat to the Christian faith if not explicit and comprehensible to them. While primal spirituality enables Africans to sing and praise the Supreme Being (God), so it is in the Christian faith. Because of the African primal heritage of a belief in the spiritual, it is easier for Africans to embrace the Christian faith. In this respect, African primal views are much closer to the Bible’s teachings.

### **1.13. Literature Review**

This is a critical analysis of existing scholarly works that fall within the domain of my thesis. They help to explain the background of the research topic and establish its importance. They also assist in identifying gaps and highlighting where research is lacking or incomplete, which shows how my work fits into the broader academic conversation without duplicating previous studies. Thus, the study seeks to bridge the theological and ethical gaps between these literature and the issues at stake in this study. Hence, the selected literature in this work justify why my research is

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<sup>47</sup> Gerrie ter Haar, “Religion in the Development Debate: Relevance and Rationale”, *Ghana Bulletin of Theology*, Vol. 3 (2008), pp. 2.

<sup>48</sup> Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy*, p. 29.

necessary and how it contributes to the field of theology and ethics, and showcase my understanding of the field and related concepts.

Though there are numerous literature available that are equally relevant to this work, few pieces of religious, historical, theological, and ethical literature have been selected for this work. These are literature on specific areas of primal views, culture, Christian faith, eco-ethical views, and missions. In the review, I try to find out what is the author trying to convey by writing the book? This is to evaluate how useful, or successful the book has been to scholarship, and to highlight it for the attention of others. Hence, the following literature have been reviewed and immensely used in this study to help achieve the objectives of the thesis.

Literature by John V. Taylor entitled, *The Primal Vision, Christian Presence amid African Religion*, dealt with primal belief and Christian faith. According to Taylor, the “Holy Spirit teaches his people everywhere to be in Christ without ceasing to involve in mankind”,<sup>49</sup> culturally. This demonstrates the fundamental relationship between primal religious view and Christian faith of unity and love for one another.

Taylor discussing “The Classroom Religion” asserts that the primal is a doorway and a preparatory ground for the Gospel. What Taylor meant by classroom religion is that primal religion prepares the ground for Christian faith. Nevertheless, many see it as a classroom where students go to acquire knowledge purposely to acquire a “certificate”. In many instances, when they come out of the classroom, they find it difficult to practice what they have learnt. This applies to many Christians; they find it difficult to practice what the Scriptures ask them to do. Sometimes it is because the teachings do not scratch where they itch; therefore, look for what would scratch where they itch.

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<sup>49</sup> John V. Taylor, *The Primal Vision, Christian Presence amid African Religion* (London: SCM Press, 1963), p. 108.

Presenting a meticulous account, Taylor notes that all religions carry in themselves light and one must be careful not “to call another’s light darkness”.<sup>50</sup> He notes that the African primal is inherent in its worldview and needs to be engaged creatively. It is in this creative engagement that Christ converses with the soul of Africa. This leads to the conflict over supremacy, which emerges from malevolence (evil) and fear experienced as myth. But for him, this myth is “a reality immeasurably greater than the concept”.<sup>51</sup> Though there are some fears, the two have some shared commonalities. He holds that, all things share the same nature and interact with one another, and that Christianity grows fast where primal worldview is valued. He posits that the primal worldview gives meaning to the latter (Christianity) and shares in some uniqueness, thus, drinking in the same words.

The scholar immensely contributed to the general understanding of primal religion and Christian faith as he compared the Jews as the children of Abraham to the adoption of the Gentiles. Hence, he asserts that, while the conception of “the children of Israel involve the patriarchal pattern of a common ancestor, in the Gentile church, Christians are children of Abraham by faith and adoption”;<sup>52</sup> resulting transformation into God’s family.

At the end of his work, the spiritual awareness of the primal vision is culminated in a song that he wished to be translated and sung in every tongue of Africa.<sup>53</sup> This resonates with the fact that language inspires confidence. When language is explicit and elaborate, it adds meaning to the message it carries. It plays a central role in education and development.

It is pertinent to mention that the scholar was so remarkably meticulous in using African cultural examples because he dealt with an African church in Buganda. Largely, the intrinsic interest of the subject is that he shed light on primal thoughts and Christian theological views of

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<sup>50</sup> V. Taylor, *The Primal Vision, Christian Presence amid African Religion*, p. 33.

<sup>51</sup> V. Taylor, *The Primal Vision, Christian Presence amid African Religion*, p. 33.

<sup>52</sup> V. Taylor, *The Primal Vision, Christian Presence amid African Religion*, p. 111.

<sup>53</sup> V. Taylor, *The Primal Vision, Christian Presence amid African Religion*, p. 196.

African Christians. Hence, the scholar had almost succeeded in grounding his perceptions on some fundamental tenets of theology to enable Africans to search for God and find him. Despite extensive studies on the general understanding of primal views, there is limited research exploring its impact on churches. Though the scholar did not work among Ghanaians, I find the literature relevant for this work because it deals with the relationship between the primal mode of religious belief and Christian faith. Therefore, the literature is in a position to direct the cause of this thesis, and also assist me bridge the theological and ethical gaps.

Taylor's perspective, which comes from the primal vision and Christian presence, seems similar to Kenneth Cragg's viewpoint on the primal and Christian faith. Kenneth Cragg, in his book *Christian Faith and Primal Religions of the World, with Special Reference to Africa*, posits that primal religion represents the most elementary understanding of the transcendent and of the world. It is the foundation block on which all other religions build on. The foundation laid by the primal enables other religions, especially, Christianity to ride on smoothly and easily.

Cragg could see direct linkages between the practices, experiences and understanding of primal religious spirituality and that of Christianity. He, therefore, believed understanding the primal nature of the African world could positively contribute to Christian experience and theology. He notes the type of salutation the Christian should extend to those outside the Christian community determines their worship.<sup>54</sup> For him, the linkage between primal background and Christianity is so strong and relevant that conversion from a primal background to Christ will only involve handing to Christ what was already being practiced in the primal state and not dumping it. The primal background of African religion was littered with numerous practices that had an affinity with Christianity. From Cragg's perspective, it is vital to interact, understand and discern the religious practices, culture, and tradition of a people, and determine what turns towards Christ or leads away from Him.

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<sup>54</sup> Kenneth Cragg, *Christianity in World Perspective* (London: Lutter Worth Press, 1968), p. 64.

Cragg drew similarities, particularly, between sacramental practices and elements in Christian faith and practices by persons of primal religious background.<sup>55</sup> All these Christian symbols related to the sacrament all variously depict aspects of the African's awareness of life, as sacral, communal, participatory and present. They also show linkages between Biblical assumptions and the African, about time, people, things, nature, and society.

He observes that the world is yearning for a world that offers security to individuals and the community. This can be seen in the African primal practices, but it is also deep in the symbol of baptism. It suggests pathways for future research. Though I found the link between baptism and naming quite remote from this study, the literature is related to the primal religious aspect of this work. Therefore, I find the literature relevant for this work because it deals with the relationship between the primal mode of religious belief and Christian faith. The study also seeks to uncover the theological and ethical gaps and fill them.

While Cragg's material deals with Christian faith and primal religion, John B. Taylor also immensely deals with Christian involvement in dialogue and traditional thought forms. John B. Taylor's *Primal Worldviews: Christian Involvement in Dialogue with Traditional Thought Forms* deals with primal worldviews as the term, which represents the primal view of life and experience. Looking at primal to refer to those forms of society from the perspective of traditional thought forms, John B. Taylor establishes that, "Even within those who do not practice one of the primal faiths, the views may continue to exist as unconscious values and pattern of thought in any of the successor cultures".<sup>56</sup> This is what he said to mean that Christians and adherents of other faiths might be exhibiting primal worldviews on daily basis in their outlooks and thought patterns without knowing them. On the other hand, the author quickly indicates that, "Primal worldview operates in varying degrees within the continuing primal

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<sup>55</sup> Cragg, *Christianity in World Perspective*, p. 71.

<sup>56</sup> B. Taylor, *Primal Worldviews*, p. 2.

religious traditions, within those who have abandoned the primal inheritance of their fathers and found no new faith, and within those who have adopted some form of the Christian or any other religion without shedding their own culture”.<sup>57</sup> The author is meticulous in dealing with the issues of indirect form of dialogue with the worldview rather than with individuals. He mentions the practice of pouring of libation in certain Ghanaian state ceremonies, and other societies where Christians are installed in public offices such as Nigeria, which involves libation.<sup>58</sup>

Taylor indicates that where primal religious systems are reformed, they are known as neo-primal, a term he adopted to describe such. However, he quickly added that, “They are neo-primal in so far as there is usually a sufficient departure from the original practice and certain borrowing from the invasive religion”.<sup>59</sup> In this case, Christians refuse to accept or continue with the original practices. For him, there are myriads of primal views one of which has to do with where sections of modern African religious movements reform primal view to conform to Old Testament Scriptures. Thus, they “have sought to replace the primal religious system with a new form based on the Scriptures of the Old Testament, or on the Jewish faith. This has involved a departure from the original royalties in favour of biblical position, without embracing Christian faith”.<sup>60</sup> Where there are vast churches, which fall under the AICs that exhibit a reversion form of Christianity to primal views where primal position is openly espoused, “others emphatically repudiate such views and understand themselves as African reformers of the inadequate Christianity brought from the West”.<sup>61</sup> They believe that the Spirit brings about their movement. Hence, the author was so remarkably meticulous in using different forms of primal views to make his argument and shows that there are divergent views though he did not work among Africans.

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<sup>57</sup> B. Taylor, *Primal Worldviews*, p. 5.

<sup>58</sup> B. Taylor, *Primal Worldviews*, p. 7.

<sup>59</sup> B. Taylor, *Primal Worldviews*, p. 8.

<sup>60</sup> B. Taylor, *Primal Worldviews*, p. 9.

<sup>61</sup> B. Taylor, *Primal Worldviews*, p. 12.

Though Taylor did not work among Ghanaian churches, his literature has been very relevant to my work because it deals with primal spirituality in the African context in Christians' dialogue with traditional thought forms. My thesis bridges the gap between the theological and ethical thoughts embedded in the lyrics of *Agbadza* and *Bɔbɔbɔ* music among the Ewe Christian communities, specifically within some of the ARS and GEC in Ghana.

While Taylor's literature deals with where some sought to replace the primal religious system with a new form based on the Scriptures, literature by Aloysius Pieris deals with Asian theology. Aloysius Pieris' *Asian Theology of Liberation*, contends that theology in the Asian worldview is more than God-talk. He is of the view that theology, which does not address the needs of a people, namely the "third worldness" and the peculiar nature of the Asians [Ewe], will be regarded as utterly meaningless.<sup>62</sup> Though the author mentioned theology as very important, he shifted his attention to primal religion. Hence, the special feature of Aloysius' literature is its cosmological appeal, which concerns primal views and cultures of the universe. He makes a strong case for primal religion as the primordial form of religion and involves interaction with nature and the elements of nature. He also makes the case that primal religion is not limited to Asia. Even though the form may differ in Asia, primal religions exist on all continents. Hence, his study, therefore, immensely dealt with primal religion with the cosmic mind. He contends that primal religion anyway has a direct bearing on the cosmic forces and is interwoven with the language, cultures, and lives of the people in general. Though the author did his work among Asians, he arrived at a general statement that cut across all religious boundaries. Therefore, the literature is relevant to my work because it deals with primal spirituality, which is not limited to Asia, but exists in other continents, of which Africa is part. While the author did his religious work among Asians, this work fills the theological gap between Asia and Africa, which has specifically been done within two African church denominations in Ghana.

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<sup>62</sup> S. J. Aloysius Pieris, *An Ancient Theology of Liberation* (Maryland NY: Orbis Books, 1992), p. 71-72.

The fact that cultural issues and Christian faith have become a perennial problem, Richard Niebuhr in his book, *Christ and Culture*, identifies five typologies. To show how Christians made an attempt to solve the “enduring problem,” Niebuhr introduces and interacts with five views. His typology of five conceptions of this relationship helps discern how Christianity has been appropriated in various cultural contexts, taking Africa as the main example. The views he introduces and interacts with are: Christ against culture, Christ of culture, Christ above culture, Christ and culture in paradox, and Christ the transformer of culture. Christ against culture and Christ the transformer of culture are familiar reference points for theologians, pastors, historians, ethicists, and even political theorists. In his book, he analyses the different ways in which the relationships have been conceived.

The question is, “if culture is man-made, and since humans are imperfect and sinful, how can Christ mingle with imperfection? This is compounded by the fact that there are verses in the Bible that suggest that Christians should be out of the world, and also verses that suggest they should be in the world”.<sup>63</sup> This is even harder to see when the biblical literature does not represent a single example of a belief that is represented in non-cultural forms or society. Niebuhr attempts to define “whom we mean by ‘Jesus Christ’ and what we mean by ‘Culture’”. About Jesus, Niebuhr states that our definitions of Jesus are inadequate in the sense that they do not fully capture His totality, since they are culturally conditioned. Still he believes that they are adequate for meeting Him”.<sup>64</sup> Niebuhr’s first position of “‘Christ against culture’ typology “affirms the sole authority of Christ over culture and resolutely rejects culture’s claims to loyalty”.<sup>65</sup> This suggests that when one avoids culture, one avoids sin.

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<sup>63</sup> Niebuhr, *Christ and Culture*, p. 14.

<sup>64</sup> Niebuhr, *Christ and Culture*, p. 14.

<sup>65</sup> Niebuhr, *Christ and Culture*, p. 42.

If a person decides to take Niebuhr's second position, "Christ of culture", there is the fear that one may live a compromising lifestyle; "everything cultural is unquestionably acceptable".<sup>66</sup> This is because the statement that gives the main impetus for Christ of culture is how Christians should relate to their surrounding culture. In this typology, Christ is seen as not against culture, but conformable and interpretable by cultural context. In other words, it is a position that can be explained comprehensively alongside culture.<sup>67</sup>

Again, the literature copiously discussed how some Christians assimilate into their culture because they see Jesus as the one who directs all men in culture to wisdom, moral perfection, and peace. In this category, cultural expressions are accepted uncritically and celebrated as a good thing. For them, Christ the "Man for all cultures" helps people discern and live according to God's will in the context of their respective cultural and religious traditions. In this view, men and women hail Jesus as the Messiah of their society, the fulfiller of its hopes and aspirations, the perfecter of its true faith, and the source of its holiest spirit. These people seek to maintain fellowship not only with believers but also with unbelievers. For them, "Christ of all cultures helps people discern and live according to God's will in the context of their respective cultures and religious traditions. The biggest problem with this view lies in the distortion of Christ when seen to make Jesus conform to the best of society".<sup>68</sup> With this position, there will be a non-authentic view of Jesus, which calls for Gospel engagement, if possible, to bring transformation.

Niebuhr's third position, "Christ above culture", does not say either Christ or culture. One cannot separate "human cultures from the grace of God, for all those works are possible

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<sup>66</sup> Emmanuel Asante, *Culture, Politics and Development: Ethical and Theological Reflections on the Ghanaian Experience* (Ghana: Challenge Enterprise, 2007), p. 48.

<sup>67</sup> Niebuhr, *Christ and Culture*, p. 83.

<sup>68</sup> Niebuhr, *Christ and Culture*, p. 83.

only by grace. One cannot separate the experience of grace from cultural activity”.<sup>69</sup> When man sinned in the beginning, his rebellion against God is expressed in cultural (actual) terms, which involves eating, yet it does not mean that eating, as part of culture is bad.

Niebuhr’s fourth position, “Christ and culture in paradox” demonstrates that we are citizens of two worlds that are often at odds with each other. The members of this group hold loyalty to Christ and responsibility for culture. The problem is the lack of clarity regarding the circumstances under which Christ is portrayed either in support of or against culture. There is a danger that one acts in favour of neither. But belief is proved by willing to suffer for it.

Those who take Niebuhr’s fifth position, “Christ the transformer of culture” believe that human culture can become “a transformed human life through the grace of God”.<sup>70</sup> The debate about Niebuhr’s taxonomy is to organise the above views into different groups to show their relationships. It has been helpful in drawing attention to the reality that, “Christians cannot divorce themselves from culture. It helps to respond to the ‘enduring problem’ of how to ‘be in the world but not of the world’. The reminder that there is no cultureless Gospel, hence, the church is always culturally embedded, and that the conflict is not with culture per se”.<sup>71</sup> Ideally, Niebuhr’s approach was so remarkably methodical in plotting the trajectories of Christ and culture. On the contrary, there is also a key point of testing in whether or not the church will follow its Lord in the path of suffering, which is crucial for missions. While Niebuhr should have related Christ to culture taking a case-by-case approach to practical problems as they arise, such as ethical and theological methods, Niebuhr thinks of the problem in abstract and general

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<sup>69</sup> Emmanuel Asante, *Culture, Politics and Development: Ethical and Theological Reflections on the Ghanaian Experience* (Ghana: Challenge Enterprise, 2007), p. 49.

<sup>70</sup> Niebuhr, *Christ and Culture*, p. 196.

<sup>71</sup> Asante, *Culture, Politics and Development*, p. 49.

terms.<sup>72</sup> Hence, the gap this thesis intends to fill comes from theological and ethical perspectives of selected lyrics in particular church denominations, which are ARS and GEC in Ghana.

Samuel Wage Kunhiyop in his book *African Christian Ethics* dealt with war and violence among many others from a Christian religious perspective. The book has been divided into two major parts. While part one deals with ethical foundations, part two touches on contemporary ethical issues. Kunhiyop's literature extensively dealt with Western ethics, Christian ethics and African ethics, which paved the way for him to come out with African Christian ethics. According to him, Western ethics is based on individuals. Individuals make their own decisions about what is right and wrong without regard for the views of parents, relatives and the community. It is not communal. African ethics is communal in that it seldom thinks in terms of individual ethical decisions that do not affect other people. For him, "History is full of conflicts and wars. Some of these wars were political: others were sparked by ethnic and religious conflicts."<sup>73</sup> The scholar gives distinction between Western thinking of war and African understanding of war. In the Western thinking, war is normally understood mainly in terms of armed hostility between nations. Thus, Western discussions of the ethics of war focus on pacifism, preventive war and what constitutes a just war. Kunhiyop indicates that, "Most wars in Africa arise from tensions between ethnic groups, associated with shared culture, language, religion, social custom, and geographical origin."<sup>74</sup> The church in Africa therefore has to develop an understanding of the nature of conflicts and of how Christians should respond to them within the context of African Christian ethical principles.

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<sup>72</sup> Craig A. Carter, *Rethinking Christ and Culture: A Post-Christendom Perspective* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: BrazosPress, 2006), pp. 73, 114.

<sup>73</sup> Samuel Waje Kunhiyop, *African Christian Ethics* (Nairobi: Hippo Books, 2008), p. 107.

<sup>74</sup> Kunhiyop, *African Christian Ethics*, p. 108.

In African Christian ethics, he argues that everything human in this world is fallen; therefore, the Scriptures must play a normative role.<sup>75</sup> They are a reliable guide as to what we should believe and how we should live. The author dealt with how the moral decision the Christian makes in life must reveal his or her holiness. Thus in each situation, it is required of Christians to know the decision to make about what is right and wrong.

Kunhiyop did his work among African Christians; however, it was not done in a particular church denomination where Agbadza and Bobobo music are perceived as war and immoral when they are engaged in worship. Hence, this work aims to bridge the identified gap by investigating the nature of cultural music from specific Christian religious perspectives.

The phenomenon under study is a cultural issue, and Andrew Finlay Walls, in his book, *The Cross-Cultural Process in Christian History: Studies in the Transmission and Appropriation of Faith* indicates that, African Christianity is shaped by Africa's past. Walls' understanding of primal religion is the religion a people had before the advent of Christianity or Islam. Among Africans, he calls it African Traditional Religion and on other occasions Traditional African Religion.<sup>76</sup> He traced the relationship between African Traditional Religion and African Christianity to Africa's past that in his own words has "shaped" its brand of Christianity.<sup>77</sup> He sees a seamless continuity from African Traditional Religion and African Christianity. The continuity of African religious history, Christian and pre-Christian, with no sharp break in African understandings of relationships with the transcendent world, is cemented in most parts of Africa by the fact that the Christian God has a vernacular name, a name in common speech, to indicate the God of Israel and of the Scriptures.<sup>78</sup>

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<sup>75</sup> Kunhiyop, *African Christian Ethics*, p. 70.

<sup>76</sup> Walls, *The Cross-Cultural Process in Christian History*, p. 120.

<sup>77</sup> Walls, *The Cross-Cultural Process in Christian History*, p. 120.

<sup>78</sup> Walls, *The Cross-Cultural Process in Christian History*, p. 120.

According to Walls, there seems to be no break between the African's past and his present, since the God of the Bible had already existed and did not change with the introduction of Christianity to Africa. The people had already known God by the local name before the Western missionaries came to proclaim the Gospel to them. Walls argues that, primal religion has produced more Christians than any other religion in the East or West,<sup>79</sup> but the reasons are not farfetched. First, in most parts of Africa, there was a belief in a universal Being who controlled the entire universe. This Being had divinities through whom the African could communicate. The introduction of the Christian God with Jesus Christ as the only mediator was therefore no "strange" doctrine to the African. Also, the use of symbols, articles and objects by Christians especially the AICs such as the cross, special water among others were also embedded in the traditional religions. Sometimes, some of these special items were used for conducting healing and deliverance, a practice that was not alien to the traditional practitioner.<sup>80</sup> Walls establishes that, "if the Word ceases to be made flesh in a community, the Christian group in that community is likely to lose, not just its effectiveness, but its power of resistance".<sup>81</sup> Nevertheless, the caution is that under no circumstances should the Christian blend in with unacceptable religious practices and societal norms.

In light of the above discussions, Walls does not lose sight of the fact that despite the "continuities" and "relations" there are what he calls "discontinuities" and "dis-relations" –points of departure where the African Christian have to abandon certain aspects of his culture that are contrary to his relationship to Christ and to embrace new things. On the other hand, there are times when the African Christian is in a dilemma as to what choices to make. This Walls calls the "Indigenising" and the "Pilgrim's" principles. For example, even though there is "the impossibility of separating an individual from his social relationships and thus from his

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<sup>79</sup> Walls, *The Cross-Cultural Process in Christian History*, p. xv.

<sup>80</sup> Walls, *The Cross-Cultural Process in Christian History*, p. 122.

<sup>81</sup> Walls, *The Cross-Cultural Process in Christian History*, p. 13.

society”,<sup>82</sup> the divinities recognised by the traditional African as agents of the Supreme Being are viewed by the African Christian as demons.<sup>83</sup>

The need for more scholarly work on African Christianity is one of the key areas highlighted by Andrew Walls. Not only is he against cultural hegemony<sup>84</sup> but also argues strongly for the need for African theology to be taken seriously because Africa has the largest Christian population in all the continents of the world and thus deserve a hearing.

The review reveals a consensus on the importance of primal views, while significant disagreement exists regarding African traditional religion. Though Andrew Walls’ literature does not deal with music, it is relevant to my work because it deals with African Christianity within which Agbadza and Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀ music among the Ewe is situated. The gap that this work wants to fill to contribute to scholarship is to come from theological and ethical perspective.

Also, in Andrew F. Walls’ literature, *The Mission Movement in Christian History: Studies in the Transmission of Faith*, it has been expressed as the literature considers the “indigenising principle”, upon which the basic ideas the redemptive system is based. Andrew Wall notes that, “It is of the essence of the Gospel that God accepts us as we are, on the ground of Christ’s work alone, not on the ground of what we have become”.<sup>85</sup> He based his argument on the grounds that salvation is by faith alone, and not by works. “God in Christ takes people as they are in order to transform them into what he wants them to be”.<sup>86</sup> Since the Gospel and culture engagement is about transformation, which includes primal religion, it has the potential to transform Africans to recognise God as worthy of worship. Andrew Walls’ contribution of these explanations makes it easy to have a proper understanding of the God of Israel as the God

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<sup>82</sup> Andrew F. Walls, *The Missionary Movement in Christian History: Studies in the Transmission of Faith* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1996), p. 7.

<sup>83</sup> Walls, *Cross-Cultural Process in Christian History*, p. 126.

<sup>84</sup> Walls, *The Missionary Movement in Christian History*, p. 8.

<sup>85</sup> Walls, *The Missionary Movement in Christian History*, p. 8.

<sup>86</sup> Walls, *The Missionary Movement in Christian History*, p. 8.

of Africa.<sup>87</sup> He touches on how African Christians take initiatives to seek God in prayer, prophecy and healing as they engage the Scriptures in their dealings with spiritual matters. This discovery gives fresh impetus to the study that this material has become useful to my work, though it has not been done among Ghanaian Christians.

While Walls' literature deals with mission movement in Christian history, Lamin Sanneh deals with the religious impact of Christianity in West Africa. Sanneh's *West African Christianity: The Religious Impact*, focuses on how the church came to Africa because he did his work among Africans. His book touches on the missionary activities in West Africa, and various church denominations that had been established in some West African countries. Sanneh categorically indicates in his literature that, "The African as the agent of religious adaptation, has played a far more critical role than his missionary counterpart whose role as historical transmitter has too often been exaggerated".<sup>88</sup> His work throws more light on the specific work of African evangelists among their indigenous people as compared to those of their foreign missionaries. For him, to detach the African factor is to misunderstand the history of Christianity in Africa. Sanneh also posits that, "The spread of Christianity to Africa is better known from the richly documented and more recent period of the nineteenth century, but the roots of that contact can be traced back to the very beginning of Christianity itself".<sup>89</sup> Though Sanneh's literature has not dealt with cultural music in any Ghanaian church; the findings provide a foundation for examining cultural practices. Also, despite the extensive studies on history of Christianity in West Africa, there is limited research on cultural music. The gap that this study seeks to fill is cultural music adopted in specific churches in Ghana.

John S. Mbiti in his literature entitled *African Religions and Philosophy* copiously describes various aspects of African primal spirituality and religious thoughts. His work deals

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<sup>87</sup> Walls, *The Missionary Movement in Christian History*, pp. 11-12.

<sup>88</sup> Lamin Sanneh, *West African Christianity: The Religious Impact* (Maryknol, NY: Orbis Books, 1983), p. xii.

<sup>89</sup> Lamin Sanneh, *West African Christianity*, p. 1.

with how the early Westerners approach Christianity, Africans' expressions of worship, and Christianity in Africa, among others. The author has not just touched on the age-long Christianity in Africa; he also mentioned how Africans worship God. Mbiti notes that, "God is often worshipped through songs, and Africans are very good in singing. Many of the religious gatherings and ceremonies are accompanied by singing, which not only helps to pass on religious knowledge, but helps create and strengthen corporate feeling and solidarity".<sup>90</sup> This finding in the author's literature needs to be highlighted to other researchers for further study as this work seeks to do. Mbiti posits that, "Christianity has been in existence for a very long time in Africa. It has influenced the lives of Africans for so long that it can rightly be described as an indigenous, traditional and African religion".<sup>91</sup> The scholar demonstrates a great deal of scholarship in his literature, a material that has largely contributed to this thesis, because he did his work among Africans.

The book authored by Kwame Bediako entitled *Christianity in Africa: The Renewal of a Non-Western Religion*, deals with Christianity in African life and as a non-Western religion. The author tries to convey that Christianity in "African life should begin by asking if Christianity is in fact suited to the African".<sup>92</sup> For him, Christianity is about Christ and his Gospel. If Christ is presented to every nation in Africa, it should be about Christ and how to live the Christian life within the context of the African. This means how to live by the Gospel and worship God within the African way of life, and not necessarily syncretising different systems of religious beliefs, but the expression of the soundness of Africanness. Bediako indicates that, "the Christian churches of Africa, be they of missionary origin or the fruit of solely indigenous African initiative...remain important religious and social institutions in their own right which cannot be ignored".<sup>93</sup> Bediako

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<sup>90</sup> Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy*, p. 67.

<sup>91</sup> Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy*, p. 223.

<sup>92</sup> Kwame Bediako, *Christianity in Africa: The Renewal of a Non-Western Religion* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1995), p. 3.

<sup>93</sup> Bediako, *Christianity in Africa*, p. 3.

compares the preaching of Philip Quaquo of Ghana, the first African ordained into the priesthood of the Anglican Communion, to that of William Wade Harris of Liberia, the first independent African Christian prophet. Quaquo depended heavily on Western missionary finance and control and preached for nine years to convert fifty-two (52) souls. Harris depended far less on Western finance and control and preached for two years to convert one hundred and twenty thousand (120,000) adults. The author regards “Prophet Harris as a paradigm both of a non-Western and essentially primal apprehension of the Gospel and also of a settled self-consciousness as African Christian, which is uncluttered by Western missionary controls”.<sup>94</sup> Here, the author stressed the effectiveness of the primal mode of communicating the Gospel to indigenous African society, which is worthy of emulating.

Bediako also refers to a sermon preached at the burial service of the late William Ofori-Atta and said, understanding the conversion of the deceased meant that the Christian faith could not merge with the religious aspects of traditional life and custom. He, the deceased’s own words say, “Christianity is a person. That person is Christ: the Son of God”.<sup>95</sup> Though the deceased saw Christianity as a faith that could not merge with religious aspects of traditional life and customs, some may argue that for Christianity to be African, it should consider aspects of traditional religious elements. In the author’s work, what he seemed grappling with was that, “although Christianity is Europe’s greatest gift to Africa, it is not exclusively the white man’s religion. Christianity is a world religion because Jesus Christ is the Lord and King of the universe”.<sup>96</sup> This Bediako explains as a way of seeing Christianity as an African religion. It also touches on how primal elements and spirituality manifest themselves within the African Christian faith.

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<sup>94</sup> Bediako, *Christianity in Africa*, pp. 91-2.

<sup>95</sup> Bediako, *Christianity in Africa*, p. 56.

<sup>96</sup> Bediako, *Christianity in Africa*, p. 57.

Bediako establishes that the wonders of God must be heard in one's own language.<sup>97</sup> Language is a means of communication. Hence, I would like to identify and highlight language as one of the things that is good in Bediako's work for the attention of others. Though Bediako's work is not situated within music, it is relevant to my thesis because it touches on primal mode of communicating the Gospel, of which language is one of the key instruments. This is because the Agbadza and Bobobo lyrics that are sung among the Ewe of Ghana are always in vernacular. I find the literature relevant for this work because it deals with the relationship between primal mode of religious belief and Christian faith.

Ogbu U. Kalu's literature entitled "*African Christianity: An African Story*" navigates through the insertion of the Gospel, which deals with the shape and flow of African church historiography, Ethiopianism in African Christianity and an overview. For him, culture seems important and therefore, difficult to avoid. "Translation of indigenous languages and culture as proper vehicles for conveying the Gospel opened the innards of cultures".<sup>98</sup> This makes the translation of the Gospel into local languages an effective tool for introducing new aspects to African Christianity. The author demonstrates that God has been introduced to the African as a stranger. He argues that God is in every African village. Kalu notes that, "Since the conversion of Emperor Constantine, the story of Christianity has increasingly appeared to be the story of a Western religion".<sup>99</sup> For him, Africans were present at the launch of Christianity on the day of Pentecost in Acts 2. Kalu shares similar view with Lamin Sanneh that Christianity was introduced to Africa since its inception on the day of Pentecost in Acts 2. Long after the inception, the emergence of African Instituted churches spread because of the inadequacy of the Western doctrines. Kalu notes that, "Spiritual hymns and songs are revealed to the founder, prophets and prophetesses. While some of the AICs combine hymns from mission and other

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<sup>97</sup> Bediako, *Christianity in Africa*, p. 60

<sup>98</sup> Ogbu U. Kalu, *African Christianity: An African Story* (ed.) (Africa World Press, 2007), p. 7.

<sup>99</sup> Kalu, *African Christianity*, p. 23.

churches, they have their hymn repertory developed directly within the structural guidelines and style of the Western, mainline churches' hymnals".<sup>100</sup> Kalu's literature provides the foundation for examining some selected cultural songs in Ghanaian churches such as the ARS and GEC, which has become a gap; hence, this study fills the gap.

Literature by Johnson Kwamena Asamoah-Gyadu entitled *Sighs and Signs of the Spirit: Ghanaian Perspective on Pentecostalism and Renewal in Africa* is a comprehensive and highly perceptive account of theological influence of Christianity. The author dealt assiduously into matters concerning healing, the area he entitled "We are here to heal" and Christian revitalisation and renewal in Africa. Asamoah-Gyadu argues that, "Christian religious innovation in Africa has mostly had a pneumatic orientation, in which the reality of God is encountered primarily through the power of the Holy Spirit".<sup>101</sup> Thus, Africans are so deeply religious that their religiosity would not allow them to do anything without the involvement of the spirit. They observe the world from spiritual perspective. Hence, he indicates that the "orientation resonates just with the biblical material, but also and very much with traditional religious piety".<sup>102</sup> The author mentions that revitalisation movement in Africa emerged within the 20<sup>th</sup> century and continues until today. He touches on the prophets who led revivals with massive conversions such as William Wade Harris of Liberia, Garrick Sokari Braide of the Niger Delta, among others.

The author identifies healing as one of the fundamental quest in African Instituted churches (the AICs). Asamoah-Gyadu relies heavily on the revitalisation movement in his literature so much that he tries to comb all aspects of the movement, which is very pertinent to this study. For instance, he highlighted the power behind "soteriological" revitalisation as the Holy Spirit who is the power behind salvation and protection from evil forces. The author

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<sup>100</sup> Kalu, *African Christianity*, p. 281.

<sup>101</sup> J. Kwamena Asamoah-Gyedu, *Sighs and Signs of the Spirit: Ghanaian Perspective on Pentecostalism and Renewal in Africa* (Oxford: Regnum Books, 2015), p. 1.

<sup>102</sup> Asamoah-Gyedu, *Sighs and Signs of the Spirit*, p. 1.

mentions the characteristics that suggest, “The streams of Christianity that have appealed to Africans most are those that have placed considerable emphasis on the power of Jesus Christ as experienced through the Holy Spirit”.<sup>103</sup> The reason many are drifting towards the AIC’s. He talks about the outpouring of the Holy Spirit as symbolism of the globalisation of Pentecostalism. This he mentioned to explain what the Lord Jesus said to his disciples in Acts 1:8. He identifies three symbols, which are the “dove”, “eagle” and “globe”. While “the dove is the symbol of the Holy Spirit who empowers God’s children, the eagle shows the empowered in soaring above limitations into greater height, and the globe a movement that knows no limitation in terms of international reach in mission”.<sup>104</sup> The author made mention of Mensa Otabil’s mode of prophetic declarations that they were not empty, but “the power of these declarations as weapons of spiritual warfare”.<sup>105</sup>

Asamoah-Gyedu’s literature is relevant to my work though he has not dealt with music; it touches on salient aspects of African Christianity, which is part of this work. For instance, his work deals with Pentecostalism, which is the work of the Holy Spirit in the church. Pentecostal worship goes with spiritual songs. I take cognisance of the fact that the GEC relies heavily on the expressions of the gifts of the Holy Spirit in the church of which music is one.

Michael S. Northcott’s literature entitled “*A Moral Climate: The Ethics of Global Warming*” fits squarely in this study because the author did his work on ecological issues facing the human race. He sets examples to support his arguments such as those of Australia, Israel, and the prophecies of Jeremiah and Isaiah, which includes judgement and hope. For Northcott, “deforestation is a major contributor to human greenhouse gas emissions”.<sup>106</sup> He grounded his

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<sup>103</sup> Asamoah-Gyedu, *Sighs and Signs of the Spirit*, p. 6.

<sup>104</sup> Asamoah-Gyedu, *Sighs and Signs of the Spirit*, p. 45.

<sup>105</sup> Mensa Otabil, “Prophetic Declaration”, in J. Kwamena Asamoah-Gyedu, *Sighs and Signs of the Spirit: Ghanaian Perspective on Pentecostalism and Renewal in Africa* (Oxford: Regnum Books, 2015), p. 81.

<sup>106</sup> Michael S. Northcott, *A Moral Climate: The Ethics of Global Warming* (London: Darton, Longman and Todd Ltd, 2007), p. 3.

study in moral climate and human moral decadence, which has generated breakdowns of the relationship between God, humans, and the earth. The author identifies global warming and floods, and how millions of people are affected by flooding yearly. Northcott refers to Noah's flood. He mentions how human action has affected the climate more noticeably. This has violated the covenant "God made with Noah and his descendants after the flood".<sup>107</sup> The author mentions that "pollution is seen as a consequence of the failure to follow divine law: as Isaiah has it, 'the earth lies polluted under its inhabitants, for they have transgressed laws, violated the statutes, broken the everlasting covenant'" (Is. 24:5).<sup>108</sup> I wish to highlight Northcott's literature to other readers about how humanity has broken its relationship with a moral God and his creation, and created ecological depression, which consisted largely of climate change, poverty, famine, and diseases. These findings provide the basis for examining some lyrics of songs sung in the ARS and GEC, because they have something in common with the eco-ethical meanings of the selected lyrics of Agbadza songs in this study, therefore, are relevant to this work.

Northcott's work agrees with Anthony Asoanya's work entitled "*The Ecological Crisis in Africa as a Challenge to Lasting Cultural and Sustainable Development*" which explains culture as the product of men in group, set of ideas, attitudes and habits. He touches on sustainable development as "development that meets the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs".<sup>109</sup> Asoanya deals with the survival of humanity and the planet Earth. For him, the environment of Africa has drastically changed that "Africans themselves must do something about it".<sup>110</sup> The author explains that the ecological catastrophe in the world can clearly be found in the book of Genesis which contains

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<sup>107</sup> Northcott, *A Moral Climate*, p. 74.

<sup>108</sup> Northcott, *A Moral Climate*, p. 75.

<sup>109</sup> Anthony Asoanya, *The Ecological Crisis in Africa as a Challenge to Lasting Cultural and Sustainable Development* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang GmbH, 2011), p. 23.

<sup>110</sup> Asoanya, *The Ecological Crisis in Africa as a Challenge to Lasting Cultural and Sustainable Development*, p. 28.

“Priestly” and “Yahwist” accounts. While the Priestly version is about divine mandate to care for creation, the Yahwist is about how humans are not absolute masters of creation. The author has dealt with Christian faith but not its integrated Christian songs which have become a gap.

It is worth noting that through this general review, it is evident that while significant progress has been made in understanding the various literature contacted in this thesis, key gaps remain, particularly in primal views on cultural music and Christian faith, the theological and eco-ethical dimensions of some lyrics of cultural music, and the impacts they have on their communities. These gaps underscore the need for a specific focus of my research. This study aims to address these limitations by adopting a theological and eco-ethical approach, thereby contributing to a deeper understanding of the significance of indigenous music in the Christian faith and providing a foundation for future research. The following Chapters, especially Chapters 2 to 5, outline the methodological approach adopted to achieve the objectives.

#### **1.14. Organisation of Chapters**

The thesis is structured into seven chapters. Chapter one covers the introduction to the background of the thesis. This chapter includes the statement of the problem, and objectives of the study. It also includes the research questions to be addressed in this work, the significance of the study, definition of key terms, the delimitation and limitation of the study, and the methodology used to study the phenomenon. The methodology details the research design, population and sampling methods, data collection and analysis techniques, and ethical considerations employed in the study. The background also includes the conceptual (theoretical) framework, some relevant literature that had been reviewed to argue the purpose and direction of the thesis.

Chapter two covers the concepts of Agbadza and Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀ among the indigenous Ewe, and the concept of Christian music. This covers the African primal concept of music, the interface between primal spirituality and Christian faith, Christian and primal moral values in juxtaposition. It also includes the healing nature of culture music of the Ewe, the emergence of African Christianity, and the impact of Christian faith on primal views.

Chapter three discusses the theology of Agbadza and Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀ lyrics of the ARS and GEC. The chapter has unravelled the theological thoughts embedded in the lyrics of these local music. In addition, a comparative analysis on the cultural music of the ARS and GEC is covered. It also discusses Christian mission engagement with Agbadza and Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀ music.

Chapter four deals with eco-ethical analyses of the eco-dimensions of Agbadza lyrics *Yesue, va dɛm kaba*, and *Anyigba le dzo le ge*. Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀ lyrics include *Nuvɔ̀gbe, si medze si la* and *Elabe ewua Gbɔ̀gbɔ̀*. It also considers African Christian response to Eco-moral issues.

Chapter five indicates the presentation of data collected from the various categories of informants. This includes data collected from ARS and GEC pastors, elders and youth informants, observations, and group discussions. In addition, data was also collected from two non-Christians to seek their opinions on the subject matter.

Chapter six deals with the findings, which includes the analysis of Agbadza and Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀ music, the future of Agbadza and Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀ in the ARS and GEC, the sustainability of these music, and the discussion of key findings.

Finally, Chapter seven covers the fulfilment of the objectives of the study. This chapter offers recommendations to address environmental issues, the need for holistic missions, and collaborative efforts to employ cultural music for eco-care.

### **1.15. Conclusion**

This chapter gives a comprehensive account of the background which serves as the introduction to the thesis. The general overview of the background of the phenomenon of Agbadza and Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀ music gives a clearer picture of understanding to the statement of the problem, which is the focus of the thesis has been provided. The objectives and the scope of the study are clearly stated. Thus, the dissertation focuses on the themes of African Christianity, primal spirituality, cultural music, Agbadza and Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀ music, theology, ethics, and cultural heritage. The research also explores the role of these musical traditions in shaping the spiritual experiences and practices of the ARS and GEC in Ghana. Also, the methodology employed, conceptual framework, and literature reviewed have been copiously explained in this chapter.

The next chapter seeks to find out whether there are concepts of the phenomenon under study, if there are, how they relate to the Christian faith. This categorically covers the African primal concept of music, the significance of Agbadza and Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀ music, and the Christian and primal moral values in juxtaposition. It also includes the healing nature of cultural music of the Ewe, the emergence of African Christianity, and the impact of Christian faith and primal views.

## CHAPTER TWO

### The Significance of African Primal Values in African Christianity

#### 2.1. Introduction

In the previous chapter, the background of the subject at issue, the statement of the problem, objectives, and questions were explained, the scope and limitation, the methodology for analysing the issues, the grounded conceptual (theoretical) framework, and the selected scholarly literature reviewed had copiously been indicated.

This chapter seeks to investigate the African primal concepts of Agbadza and Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀ music of the Ewe, the significance of Christian music, and a brief comment on the emergence of African Christianity. In addition, the spiritual healing nature of music, and Christian faith and moral values of the Ewe juxtaposed with Agbadza and Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀ music are considered in this section. The chapter finally seeks to find out whether the Gospel influences African culture.

#### 2.2. Primal Spirituality

Primal spirituality refers to the most fundamental or original forms of spiritual awareness and connection, often rooted in humanity's earliest experiences of existence, nature, and the divine. It is not tied to an organised religion but focuses on innate, universal aspects of spirituality that transcend specific beliefs or doctrines. Primal spirituality often emphasises a deep connection with the natural world, seeing all living things as interconnected and sacred.

Many indigenous traditions and ancient practices reflect primal spirituality through rituals, storytelling, and reverence for the earth and ancestors. It represents the shared spiritual foundation present in all humans, emphasising unity, compassion, and harmony. Activities like meditation, dance, drumming, or rituals tied to the elements often play a role in expressing

primal spirituality. Primal spirituality serves as a way to explore the core of human spiritual experience, reconnecting with what many see as the purest, most authentic expression of being.

### **2.3. The Concept of African Primal Music**

The word music can have completely different meanings to different people at different locations, depending on the context, whether political, social, historical, psychological, or religious. Music as a human endeavour has the potential to change. Therefore, it is widely accepted that African music has experienced decisive reforms throughout the centuries. What is named and called traditional or cultural music today is very likely to be different in former times.<sup>111</sup> Undoubtedly, there are varieties of music that can permeate many cultures irrespective of their geographical areas. Whenever music is mentioned, Kofi Agawu posits that, “Some think immediately of the popular dance forms originating in urban Africa, others of the ancient songs and drums associated with traditional societies, and still others think of new music composed for the concert hall. These are all legitimate forms of African music”.<sup>112</sup> This is the case of the distinct music at issue in this study. In actuality, what we now call Agbadza music has gone through a variety of changes to become what we have today.

African primal music refers to the early, traditional forms or foundational music practices that emerged in Africa before significant external influence, such as colonisation or globalisation. It is deeply rooted in the indigenous cultures and ways of life of African communities and often reflects the spiritual, social, and environmental aspects of these societies. The key feature of African primal music is that they are passed down orally rather than written, ensuring their continuity through generations. They are characterised by complex rhythms, often played on traditional percussion instruments like drums, rattles, and clapping. The spiritual and

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<sup>111</sup> Gerhard Kubik and Donald Keith Robotham, “African Music” (Britannica Academy, Encyclopedia Britannica, Int., 2024).

<sup>112</sup> Kofi Agawu, “The African Imagination in Music”, *Oxford Scholarship Online*, (March 2016), p. 2.

communal connection of music is that it is often tied to rituals, ceremonies, and communal events, such as birth, marriage, harvest, or spiritual worship.

There are two popular types of music among the people of Ewe. While some are Agbadza and Bobobo music that are used for religious and entertainment purposes, others are work music that are used by workers. Performers often improvise within a framework, making each performance unique. One of the multifaceted aspects of music is that it unites communities during celebrations and work, as mentioned earlier in chapter one. Though work music is not part of this study, it is pertinent to give brief information about its significance in general terms. Work music everywhere is the performance of songs that lift the workers' spirits and enable them to coordinate their efforts. The music probably helps the workers to maintain a positive attitude towards their neighbours. In addition, music often helps workers control the mood of the workplace.<sup>113</sup> African music often happens in social situations where people's primary goals are not how best it has been performed. Instead, music is for ceremonies such as life cycle rituals, festivals, childcare, parties, and lovemaking, among others. Music in Africa, mostly, includes rhythmic playing of other cultural instruments, and the dynamics of bonding that the participants encounter. Kunhiyop asserts that, "Singing is part of everyday African life, and songs reveal much about the ethical motivations for action. There are special songs for particular groups to sing on special occasions".<sup>114</sup> Songs are often accompanied by music with call-and-response patterns between a lead singer and the chorus.

Kumasi and Brock indicate that, "Historically, a drum's beat signifies a primal cultural response that traditional societies worldwide use to privilege sound as informational tool to heighten communication and knowledge".<sup>115</sup> In indigenous societies, the drumbeats are used to

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<sup>113</sup> Jackson, "Music of Work" in Chapter 4, (1972).

<sup>114</sup> Samuel Waje Kunhiyop, *African Christian Ethics* ((Nairobi: Hippo Books, 2008), p. 12.

<sup>115</sup> Kafi Kumasi and Andrei Brock, "The Global Drumbeat: Permeations of Hip Hop Across Diverse Information Worlds", *International Journal of Information, Diversity and Inclusive*, Vol. 6, No. 1 (2022), p. 2.

make announcement to community members. This is very typical of traditional chiefs and traditional dance performances. “Music-making contributes to an event’s success by focusing attention, communicating information, encouraging social solidarity, and transforming consciousness”.<sup>116</sup> Music closely associated with a life event is also enjoyed at other times for its own sake. Music serves society and speaks powerfully compelling messages as it sends useful pieces of information about a wide variety of subjects.

In spite of the facts that have been mentioned earlier, some hold the view that “African music cultures are strongly humanistic. The human body inspires the construction and playing technique of musical instruments. Music serves society, and many kinds of African music foster group participation”.<sup>117</sup> Music fosters unity and cooperation within communities. While some believe that music is a religious activity, therefore, is capable of providing psychological healing, others hold that human problems can be resolved through science rather than religion. Perhaps, paradoxically, the case of the Ewe might be different.

#### **2.4. The Significance of Agbadza Cultural Music**

During the pre-Christian epoch, “little appears to have been known about the authentic ideas about Africa’s primal views”.<sup>118</sup> These views influence cultural practices and social systems in various African communities. African primal views are preserved through oral traditions, including songs. As I delve assiduously into this important research, it is pertinent to state that the people of Ewe in general see music as a performance that is so basic to their socio-religious and cultural lives. In addition, they see it as a connecting link between them and God, and one another. Mbiti defines culture as “the way people live, behave and act, and their physical as well

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<sup>116</sup> David Locke, “Africa/Ewe, Mande, Dagbamba, Shona, Baaka”, p. 69-70

<sup>117</sup> David Locke, “Africa/Ewe, Mande, Dagbamba, Shona, Baaka”, p. 104.

<sup>118</sup> F. B. Welbourn, “Concepts of God in Africa” (ed.), *Journal of Religion in Africa*, Vol. 4, No. 3 (1971-1972), pp. 226-227 (227), Accessed 14 September 2022.

as their intellectual achievements, art and literature, dance, music, drama, the styles of building houses, people's clothing, in social organisation and political systems, in religion, ethics, moral and philosophy, values, beliefs, in the customs and institutions of the people".<sup>119</sup> Mbiti did his extensive research among Africans and gave a comprehensive definition of African culture. Thus, "culture is dealing with a specific way of life lived by a group of people".<sup>120</sup> It is what holds people together in a community.

It is generally recognised that, the deliberate development of a particular skill such as music within a particular culture, tradition, and history in a given society are subject to restrictions or constraints. Anku notes that, "Where ethnicity defines the boundaries of social and cultural life, particular traditions of drumming tend to be similarly confined".<sup>121</sup> Thus, some types of music and lyrics are kept within the limits of a particular culture. The lyrics determine which class the song belongs. A typical example of the lyrics of an indigenous Agbadza song, which is sung by the people of Anlo-Ewe, mostly at funerals, and not at church, is as follows:

*Akli dɔ goka me, tu eqi le Anago,  
Dahomey Nyafliwiwo dze goka me,  
Mieyina Dahomey xɔluwo kpɔge dɔ,  
Akli dze goka me, Xɔgbonu viwo ne Uu agbo miayi,  
Aho dze, allele! Mieyina Dahomey xɔluwo kpɔge dɔ.*

The literal translation from Ewe into English means as follows:

*Akli had fallen captive; a gunshot had been sounded at Anago,  
Dahomey children (agents) had been trapped,  
We are going to see Dahomey warriors,  
Akli had fallen captive; children of Xɔgbonu open the gate for us to go,  
The Sun has risen, woe! We are going to see Dahomey warriors.*

On the one hand, looking at these lyrics on the surface reveals that, there was no direct or clear theological reference made to God. It was all about a person whose name was "Akli", and

<sup>119</sup> John S. Mbiti, *Introduction to African Religion* (Ibadan: Heinemann Books Ltd, 1975), p. 7.

<sup>120</sup> Emmanuel Asante, *Culture, Politics and Development: Ethical and Theological Reflections on the Ghanaian Experience* (Ghana: Challenge Enterprise, 2007), p. 1.

<sup>121</sup> Willie Anku, "Drumming among the Akan and Anlo-Ewe of Ghana: An Introduction", *African Music*, Vol. 8, No. 3 (2009), pp. 38-64 (38).

communities named as “Anago”, “Xogbonu”, and “Dahomey” the current Benin were political territories in geographical areas. “Tu eqi” is a gunshot that had been sounded, “Agbo” is a gate, and “Xoluwo” are superpowers or warriors. One would establish that, the song and its lyrics fall in the domain of human rule and organisation. It was also about exercising power and authority over other political and territorial areas and claims. Again, it was about a warrior rescue team matching out to rescue a captive of war. In addition, the lyrics depict a means of communicating a message to either human beings or supernatural beings. One would draw the inference from these lyrics that, it was about a dispute that arose between two territorial powers. Samuel Kunhiyop notes that while wars are mostly about political power, others are sparked by ethnic and religious conflicts.<sup>122</sup> In this case, the high probability was that this political scandal had generated into war, hence, the singing of this war song. Perhaps the reason why some continue to perceive Agbadza as war music is what Samuel Kunhiyop noted that, “Most wars in Africa arise from tension between ethnic groups, which are associated with shared culture, language, and religion”.<sup>123</sup> Over here, Kunhiyop was referring to the olden days where cultural and religious misunderstandings generate into conflict. For instance, the indigenous Agbadza lyrics *Akli qo goka me, tu eqi le Anago – Akli has fallen captive; a gunshot had been sounded at Anago* on the surface sounded like a war music. This resonates with what John V. Taylor also notes that the African primal is inherent in its worldview largely defined by benefits, and needs to be unravelled and engaged creatively.<sup>124</sup> The song depicts that ethically when justice is treated very unfairly, it develops into injustice.

On the other hand, taking a critical look at the lyrics based on ethical principles, one could discover a sense of primal view of moral conscience, and a way of demanding justice

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<sup>122</sup> Kunhiyop, *African Christian Ethics*, p. 107.

<sup>123</sup> Kunhiyop, *African Christian Ethics*, p. 108.

<sup>124</sup> John V. Taylor, *The Primal Vision, Christian Presence amid African Religion* (London: SCM Press, 1963), p. 108.

because someone had unjustifiably been taken captive or a slave. It was a form of demonstrating the attitude of family relational and communal life, which was largely based on love, concern for one another, and understanding one another. In the theological and moral realms, there are common competitions between what is good and evil, right and wrong, happiness and sadness. Hence, singing war songs to boost their morale is of vital importance to their expression of ethical principles, spirituality, and bravery. Love and caretaking are moral issues as well as theological because they are some of the moral attributes of God, who is Spirit share with humanity. Nevertheless, these warriors depended on natural ability, which was their own strength to save rather than depending on the supernatural God. It is possible that libation had been poured, or some rituals had been performed, but one could not be sure whether any of them was actually done because none of the lyrics indicated it.

Freeman Donkor relates that, “In olden days, Agbadza was played as warrior music called *Atrikpui*, then, *Akpoka* which has developed into Agbadza. It is a traditional dance and music genre. It is one of the most popular and widely performed traditional dances among the Ewe, often associated with social gatherings, festivals, and community events. Agbadza is two words put together. Literally, the name *agba* is a woven stretcher for injured people, and *dza* refers to the treatment of injury or pouring of libation for healing”.<sup>125</sup> To elucidate, the stretcher is a type of bed used for carrying someone who is too injured or ill to walk. Occasionally, the singing of the lyrics goes hand-in-hand with the playing of the musical instruments to make it a completely harmonious music. Mawuli Atsagli, a typical native explicitly enumerates that, “Agbadza is a heritage of traditional beliefs, values, and customs of the Ewe society. He reveals that the Ewe people went through various times of war and oppression before settling down in the Volta Region of Ghana”. To train their warriors to be ready for battle, the Ewe used various

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<sup>125</sup> Freeman Kwadzo Donkor, “Agbadza” (Royal Hatigan, 1986), p. 762.

songs and dances to encourage the warriors”.<sup>126</sup> In other words, the Ewe uses songs and dances to motivate and prepare their warriors for battle. According to Ernest Selorm, Agbadza can also be employed “at funerals, as it is customary to perform war dances at funerals”.<sup>127</sup> This is because Agbadza as war music expressed primal spirituality in that regard.

This war music is sometimes used for military training exercises, with signals from the lead drum ordering the warriors to move ahead to the right, or left; go down, and so forth. This dance also helped in preparing the warriors for war, and upon their return from war. Most of the time, the military sings the songs without the use of musical instruments as they march along, and other times at their military parade with musical instruments.

“Agbadza as a traditional music includes a master long, indeed, considerably higher in intensity drum called *Atimevu*, the medium size known as *Sogo/Uuga*, a supporting drum called *Asivui*, a small drum called *Uuvi/Kadaŋu*, rattles known as *Axatsɛ*, and gong-gong”.<sup>128</sup> While the *Sogo* “serves as the leader of the ensemble and is responsible for indicating to the other drums what they are supposed to be playing, *Kadaŋu* is a support drum that has a recurring rhythm throughout the performance. It creates a specific melody, adding to the overall musical texture of the song. Rattle (*Axatsɛ*) is a beaded-rattle that follows the rhythm of the timeline closely to complement the Agbadza song”.<sup>129</sup> Under normal circumstances, the drummers and singers are trained to perform this kind of music. The Agbadza dance features simple yet rhythmic movements. Contemporary musical instruments are sometimes used in combination with local instruments to play Agbadza in some churches, and at social events.

With a period of peace “in the 1920s, the Ewe transitioned towards using some of their old songs as entertainment, leading to the popularity of Agbadza as the most widely played Ewe

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<sup>126</sup> Mawuli Atsagli, interview, 29 September, 2022, Adaklu Wumenu, Volta Region, Ghana.

<sup>127</sup> Ernest Selorm, “Agbaza Dance” (August 2020) (Accessed on 12/09/2022).

<https://detravelingfotografafa.wordpress.com/2020/08/16/agbadza-dance/>

<sup>128</sup> Anku, “Drumming among the Akan and Anlo-Ewe of Ghana, p. 40.

<sup>129</sup> David Locke “Agbadza” (PDF). *The Critical Edition* – via Tufts University Press.

dance today”.<sup>130</sup> Before Agbadza music begins, libation prayers are offered to God through the ancestors to seek their protection and presence. In the African primal view, every opportunity is an occasion for spiritual engagement. Because of the primal belief that libation can help, overcome fears, anxieties, and frustrations it is poured before the commencement of the music. Libation in Africa is a ritual of heritage. The ritual involves offering a drink to honour and please the Creator, the lesser divinities, sacred ancestors, and humans present and not present. Libation aims to promote the cosmic order or oneness in the universe. Libation is poured to invoke the ancestors, believing they will give the needed peace. The person who pours the libation enters into this undertaking to recognise and proclaim the existence and superiority of those higher powers, submit, and obtain their blessings for a particular individual or group. Generally, libation may be poured with any drinkable liquid including water, milk, wine, beer, or strong spirits. The fact that the primal spirituality of Africans enables them to understand that there is God,<sup>131</sup> libation is poured to him through the ancestors after which they proceed with the Agbadza music.

The dance has four movements, in other words, rituals in performing Agbadza. The series of movements that are done to set the tone of *Agbadza* are: *Banyinyi*, *Adzo*, and *Utsotsɔ*. To delineate clearly, the first ritual as *Banyinyi* is in a form of a short introductory prayer to the gods and ancestors. Immediately, *Adzo*, which is less energetic, follows, and only the master drum is beaten along with *Gakogui* and *Axatse* which is rattle. *Gakogui* “is a two conical metal joined to a tiny rod of metal”.<sup>132</sup> Anku notes that, community-drumming sessions usually begin with the singing of a body of songs: this is done by singing few war songs, serving as preparation to the main dance.<sup>133</sup> These are done to usher in Agbadza formally known as *Utsotsɔ*, which is

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<sup>130</sup> David Locke “Agbadza” (PDF). *The Critical Edition* – via Tufts University Press.

<sup>131</sup> John S. Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy* (New Hampshire: Heineman Educational Books, 1989), p. 29.

<sup>132</sup> Anku, “Drumming among the Akan and Anlo-Ewe of Ghana, p. 49.

<sup>133</sup> Anku, “Drumming among the Akan and Anlo-Ewe of Ghana, p. 49.

the beginning of the main performance of the music at funerals, and entertainments, to mention but a few.

It is worth mentioning that, *Hatsatsia* is predominantly used for *Kinka* rhythms, which involves the performance of selected historical songs. It goes along with *Gakogui* and *Atokɛ*. *Atokɛ* is “an iron banana-shaped bell played with a small forged iron rod. The *Atokɛ* can be used in place of the *Gakogui* because they are both used for the same purpose”.<sup>134</sup> In this case, the singers use “horse tails” similar to that of *Atsiagbekɔ* to make signs that are corresponded to the songs as they sing moving in a circle.

During the performance of this music, the lyrics usually convey moral lessons, storytelling, or social commentary. It reflects the Ewe people’s history, values, and tradition. Through the lyrics and performance, Agbadza conveys messages, preserves oral history, and teaches cultural norms. While traditionally performed in its original form, Agbadza has been adapted and incorporated into contemporary settings including schools, exhibitions, and even modern musical compositions. It remains a vital symbol of Ewe culture.

Generally, “this traditional dance is found among the Ewe of the Volta Region of Ghana. As indicated earlier, it is fascinating to mention that the Ewe people in Togo, Benin, and the Western part of Nigeria also play Agbadza as their cultural music”.<sup>135</sup> Nonetheless, the entire tribe of Ewe does not usually perform the Agbadza music and its dance. “We have the Anlo-Ewe who are the patrons of the dance; the Avenor, the Tongu, and also, some of those who have relocated to Ewedome perform Agbadza”.<sup>136</sup>

Agbadza has many rhythms linked to it, which are *Atsiagbekɔ*, *Kinka*, and *Adzida*. Worthy of note among them in this study is *Atsiagbekɔ*. *Atsiagbekɔ* is a contemporary version of

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<sup>134</sup> David Locke, “YeUeUu in the Metric Matrix”, *Music Theory Online* (January 2010), p. 16. (Accessed on 22 March 2023)

<sup>135</sup> Sophia Apenkro, “The Evolution of Agbadza Music and Dance”. (Accessed on 27/12/2023) <https://www.sophiaapenkro.com/the-evolution-of-agbadza-music-and-dance/>

<sup>136</sup> Sophia Apenkro, “The Evolution of Agbadza Music and Dance”. (Accessed on 27/12/2023) <https://www.sophiaapenkro.com/the-evolution-of-agbadza-music-and-dance/>

Agbadza. Usually, *Atsiagbeko* is employed in chorographic performances at festivities and for entertainment purposes at churches, social gatherings, and cultural presentations. “Atsia” in the Ewe language means style or display. The *Atsia* dance, which is performed mostly by women, is a series of stylistic movements dictated to dancers by the lead drummer. Each dance movement has its own prescribed rhythmic pattern, which is synchronized with the lead drum. The dancers usually use horsetails “*Sosike*” in Ewe to perform or display their styles in this dance. This shows that Agbadza as a cultural music among the Anlo-Ewe has other branches, which are equally used to express Africanness in many societies and churches.

There are two movements, “which characterise this type of music. One is a slow movement where the arms move back and forth while extended downwards. Another is a fast movement which is known as *Ageshie*, which is performed by the youth”.<sup>137</sup> While the men put cloth around their waist in this type of dance, the women wear “Kaba and slit”. Currently, “we live in a period of peace, and this has changed Agbadza considerably, rendering it as a recreational dance performance”.<sup>138</sup> All of these types of Agbadza music go with identical lyrics with their respective meanings and serve as a unifying cultural practice that brings communities together.

## 2.5. The Significance of Bɔbɔbɔ Cultural Music

Bɔbɔbɔ, on the other hand, is a Ghanaian and Togolese cultural dance performed by the Ewe people from the mid-Volta region of Ghana, and Southern part of Togo.<sup>139</sup> It is an African cultural music, particularly of the Ewe community in the Volta Region of Ghana. There are slow and fast versions of Bɔbɔbɔ music. The slow one is called *Akpese* and the fast one is termed to be Bɔbɔbɔ. “A native of Wusuta vividly narrates that, this tribal music is said to have

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<sup>137</sup> Anku, “Drumming among the Akan and Anlo-Ewe of Ghana, p. 50.

<sup>138</sup> Anku, “Drumming among the Akan and Anlo-Ewe of Ghana, p. 51.

<sup>139</sup> Kunal Tomar, “Bɔbɔbɔ Dance – Ghana: An African Tribal Dance” (December 2017), p. 3-4. Retrieved on 12 June 2023.

originated from the mid Volta region in Ghana. In the late 1940s, Francis Nuatro from Kpando<sup>140</sup> introduced Bobobo as a cultural music among the people of EUedome. It is believed that the root of this “dance has been embedded in the culture of a village called Wusuta located around the Volta Lake in Ghana. Nuatro fused styles of other music to produce Bobobo genre of music. This dance is generally performed during joyful events. In addition, this dance style involves drums accompanied by singing”.<sup>141</sup> The songs often praise God or tell biblical stories.

Mainly, females perform this dance form and the costume worn includes a colourful long dress and two white handkerchiefs. As it is the case of Agbadza, “traditional instruments belonging to the community is used in this dance style. They include a pair of castanets, rattles, a master drum called *Uuga*, a supporting drum called *Asivui*, and a small drum called *Uuvi*; all of these are beaten using open hands”.<sup>142</sup> Castanets are musical instruments made of two small round pieces of metal that you hold in one hand and knock together.

In practical terms, dancers developed impressive styles of dancing. “This dance involves the performers forming a circle and swaying to the rhythmic beats of the music produced by the drums played by the musicians. In addition to the dancing, the performers are supposed to twirl around two handkerchiefs in the air”.<sup>143</sup> Both Christians and non-Christians engage Bobobo music in their social activities. When it is being used in the church, scriptural songs are sung to worship God. However, both Christian and non-Christian songs are sung if the occasion is not a church service. Bobobo is often played at joyful events and funerals as indicated earlier in Chapter One. At funerals and other occasions, “Bobobo drummers weave moderate beats while women dancers tweak their backsides. Most of the time, a bugle is used to add spice to the

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<sup>140</sup> <https://gna.org.gh/2020/07/remembering-francis-kodzo-nuatro-borborbor-originator-and-icon/> (Accessed on 21/10/2022)

<sup>141</sup> Worlanyo Xatse, interview, 6 October, 2022, Ho, Volta Region, Ghana.

<sup>142</sup> <https://gna.org.gh/2020/07/remembering-francis-kodzo-nuatro-borborbor-originator-and-icon/> (Accessed on 21/10/2022)

<sup>143</sup> <https://gna.org.gh/2020/07/remembering-francis-kodzo-nuatro-borborbor-originator-and-icon/> (Accessed on 21/10/2022)

music. There is usually one song leader who will sing the first line of a song and lead the people from one song to the next by combining the meanings of different songs in unique ways to evoke the spirit of the community to celebrate warriors when they return from war”.<sup>144</sup> During the dance, you will hear a lot of people saying, “Mibɔbɔ dɛ edzi”, which means go down on it or bow; hence, the name Bɔbɔbɔ.

There are few training centres for drummers and performers. These training centres are organised by the drummers and performers but do not require a formal specialist-training course. Of interest is that most lyrics of these indigenous songs reflect the original poetry, which the African creative artists employ to compose their songs. Their informed choices of the lyrics show the manner of great thinking, the insight of philosophy that makes way for the delight, which only the vernacular can meaningfully provide.<sup>145</sup> Relatively speaking, “Bɔbɔbɔ is the most popular style of recreational music adopted by many young adult groups in the Volta Region. It links traditional drumming rhythms with proverbial lyrics”.<sup>146</sup> Lyric is about the words of a song. This agrees with Aloysius Pieris that, “each language is a distinctly different way of ‘experiencing’ the truth, implying that linguistic pluralism as an index of religious, cultural, and socio-political diversity”.<sup>147</sup> This relates to the language of the ethnic group, and its structure that gives meaning to the song.

One thing, that is notable among African composers, is that no one dictates to them the words they think fit for the music. Until it has become necessary, the composer sometimes willingly accepts the social pressures mounted on him or her to mould the lyrics to suit the circumstances.<sup>148</sup> This sometimes enables African cultural heritage to communicate with Christianity. To a large degree, this cultural heritage is not war music as is the case of Agbadza.

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<sup>144</sup> Worlanyo Xatse, interview, 6 October, 2022, Ho, Volta Region, Ghana.

<sup>145</sup> Hugh Tracey, “Behind the Lyrics”, *African Music*, Vol. 3, No. 2 (1963), pp. 17-22 (17).

<sup>146</sup> Tracey, “Behind the Lyrics”, *African Music*, p. 18.

<sup>147</sup> S. J. Aloysius Pieris, *An Ancient Theology of Liberation* (Maryland NY: Orbis Books, 1992), p. 70.

<sup>148</sup> Tracey, “Behind the Lyrics”, *African Music*, p. 17.

A typical example of the indigenous Boko song that has its lyrics conceptually resonate with theological thoughts, which is being commonly sung at funerals and for entertainment is:

*Miwo nvi le agbe me, menye ku fe nvi wo wana o,  
Miwo nvi le agbe me, menye ku fe nvi wo wana o,  
Miwo nvi le agbe me, menye ku fe nvi wo wana o,  
Wo nu nam loo, menye de maku hafi o.*

Literally, the translation from Ewe into English means,

*Make brotherly love in life, they do not make death's brotherly love/ goodwill.  
Make brotherly love in life, they do not make death's brotherly love/ goodwill.  
Make brotherly love in life, they do not make death's brotherly love/ goodwill.  
Do it for me, not after I have died.*

In practice, the song depicts caretaking for others, a reminder of communal life and brotherly love or goodwill gesture and unity. It also depicts kind feelings towards or between people and a willingness to be helpful. The lyrics of this song have a primal spiritual undertone, which is akin to what must have occurred among people in actuality. Theologically, this is about caring for one another. This agrees with the social nature of human beings as God created them. God created human beings to live a social life. Hence, the lyrics of this song correspond to biblical Scripture, though there has not been any Scripture referred to in the lyrics. Kenneth Cragg posits that, "Hospitality is merely the closest of all analogies to the meaning of the Gospel, the transactions of worship, and the nature of God, as these are known and loved, in Christ".<sup>149</sup> The meaning of the song also suggests that brotherly love and hospitality have meaning in worship. Hospitality simply means services that are rendered to others, such as providing for food, drink, and clothing among others. Nevertheless, what is missing is the unconditional love of God, but human love is conditional and has its limitation.

The Boko lyrics *miwo nvi le agbe me, menye ku fe nvi wo wana o – make brotherly love in life, they do not make death's brotherly love/ goodwill* depicts care taking for others, a

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<sup>149</sup> Kenneth Cragg, *Christianity in World Perspective* (London: Lutterworth Press, 1968), p. 71.

reminder of communal life and goodwill gesture and unity. This type of song is also not sung in churches, but mostly at funerals by non-Christians though. The reason is that, it seeks to address family divisions and hatreds so that members of other families may learn to live with one another in peace. Nevertheless, the traditional ceremonies, which involve a traditional set of actions that are performed in a formal way, “with which certain popular tunes were associated made them objectionable (in the eyes of the purists) for use in church”.<sup>150</sup> This means that even notes that are played or sung and are nice to listen to are not allowed in the churches. A contributory factor is where the appealing nature of indigenous music for both religious and secular use makes it in such a way that, many who are not well trained “to cope with the problem are putting out various pieces to meet this demand”.<sup>151</sup> To a degree, the desire to maintain a distinct cultural identity, which must have been the impetus behind the behaviour, is lost.

## **2.6. The Significance of Christian Music**

Within the Reformed tradition, music plays an important role in worship, and as an expression of faith itself. It is characterised by elements like rhythms, melody, harmony, and dynamics which combine to evoke emotions, and convey ideas. Asamoah and Agbenyo assert that, “While the Bible does not dedicate a specific chapter to the subject of music, it is an integral and inseparable facet woven throughout the fabric of Scripture”.<sup>152</sup> Also, music is defined by the Longman Dictionary as a series of sounds made by instruments or voices in a way that is pleasant or exciting. In the Christian concept of music, Christians employ music at funerals, entertainment places, and largely at church in worship. Among Christians, the concept of music is not an

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<sup>150</sup> Lazarus Nnanyelu Ekwueme, “African Music in Christian Liturgy: The Igbo Experiment”, *African Music*, Vol. 5, No. 3 (1974), pp. 12-33 (30).

<sup>151</sup> Ekwueme, “African Music in Christian Liturgy”, p. 26.

<sup>152</sup> Emmanuel F. Asamoah and Samuel Agbenyo, “The Bible and Music in African Christianity”, *African Journal of Culture, History, Religion and Tradition*, Vol. 7, No. 1 (2024), pp. 51-66 (1).

artistic performance, but the people's songs in response to God, and the attitude in which they sing is crucial. The focus of the music is to lead the people to sing and praise God.

Church music and dance is an essential part of Christian worship since early biblical days. Songs express thanks to God in different forms. There are thanksgiving songs, praises, instruction, personal experience, and historical celebration songs. The major concept of Christian music as the idea of singing is a religious concept, and the purpose is to praise God. Christian music enriches worship as the songs allow the whole congregation to participate meaningfully. Worship music has a calming effect in a tense situation, and it also helps in sharing Christ with unbelievers who come to church.

One significant area music covers, according to Encyclopaedia Britannica, is the performance of liturgical rites. Liturgical music, also called church music is written for performance in a religious rite of worship. The term is most commonly associated with the Christian tradition. Liturgical music is developed from the musical practices of the Jewish synagogues, which allowed the cantor to improvise a charismatic song, and those early Christian services sung by the congregations.<sup>153</sup> A Cantor is a man who leads the prayers and songs in a Jewish religious service. In the Christian context, music is a matter of the heart or spirit; it cannot be done without some visible or outward expression. Some of the outward expressions that come with music include singing, clapping, drumming, and dancing, among others. This expression depicts the primal mode of music when Agbadza and Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀ music have been engaged in the ARS and GEC, where members express their Africanness. It is a primal urge and traces of primal spirituality. The feelings or actions seem to belong to a part of people's character that is ancient, something people exhibit even in their new religion.

Christian music is a great tool that helps Christians to feel closer to God. It is common for people to pick a church because of the style of its music. According to Jefferson Davis, "one of

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<sup>153</sup> Encyclopaedia Britannica, *Britannica Academic: African Music* (Encyclopaedia Britannica Inc., 2024), p. 1.

the best ways to identify what we mean by the Christian activity of singing in a religious building to show respect and love for God includes music”.<sup>154</sup> It is to “describe the outward or visible forms of worship by Christians. This approach looks at the phenomenon of Christian activity of singing as it might appear to a detached observer trying to grasp what it is Christians do when they come together”.<sup>155</sup> Christian activity of singing belongs to a wide category of human behaviour known as ritual and is the subject of the academic discipline of ritual studies.

Davis notes that obstacles to true singing as worship are not about contemporary or traditional music, electronic gadgetry or seeker sensitivity. Rather, the habits of mind and heart, conditioned by our surrounding culture hinder our faith in the real presence of the transcendent God among his people. Sensing a real need for renewal, Davis offers a theology of singing as worship that unearths the most fundamental obstacles to our vital involvement in the worship of our holy God.<sup>156</sup> His profound theological analysis leads to fresh and bracing recommendations that will be especially helpful to all those who lead worship through singing.

For Saliers, the question is about eschatology; the doctrines concerning the human soul and the type of worship Christians have to offer God through singing. It is also a question about what the Christian community, a group of people who have the same interests has to offer the world.<sup>157</sup> For him, singing must be a missionary activity that includes people from every nation and language to praise God. Hence, the Scripture declares, “Sing the glory of his name, make his praise glorious” (Ps. 66:2). In addition, “Let everything that has breath praise the Lord (Ps. 150:6). Wilson Costen posits that, for most African societies, humans live in a religious universe, so that objects, musical instruments, songs and all of life are associated with the acts of God.<sup>158</sup>

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<sup>154</sup> John Jefferson Davis, *Worship and the Reality of God: Evangelical Theology of Real Presence* (Nashville: Inter Varsity Press, 2010), p. 18.

<sup>155</sup> Davis, *Worship and the Reality of God*, p. 19.

<sup>156</sup> Davis, *Worship and the Reality of God*, p. 20.

<sup>157</sup> Don E. Saliers, *Worship as Theology: A Foretaste of Glory Divine* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1994), p. 15.

<sup>158</sup> Melva Wilson Costen, *African American Christian Worship* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1993), p. 1.

The fact that they live in a religious world, their activities are directed towards God in order to achieve a particular spiritual value.

Again, in Christian concept of music, as joy is the keynote of Christianity, singing plays a leading part in worship (Col. 3: 16; Eph. 5: 19). Therefore, according to the GEC's corporate identity, music is one of the core values of the church. They give expression to their faith "through hymns, songs of praise, drumming, clapping of hands, dancing in adoration to God".<sup>159</sup> The church employs musical instruments, soloists, and choristers as elements and expression of their faith and worship in full reverence to God, and under the guidance of the Holy Spirit and the Word of God.

On the other hand, the Pentecostal movement, from its inception, has embraced contemporary music in its praise and worship services. It is common for churches to include a full band, complete with drums, guitars, horns, and any other instrument that musically inclined congregants play. The singing itself is often characterised by its high energy and enthusiasm. While some Pentecostal church services include solo and choir music, most Pentecostal singing is congregational, with a worship leader directing musicians and the congregation in singing.

The respective behaviours in worship, such as standing, clapping, dancing, bowing, kneeling, singing, and praying stem from the old covenant, and therefore, it is wrong for anyone to think that these rituals are merely modern phenomena, and the following are the reasons for that assertion. The first reason is the fact that Abraham practised the act of bowing in his days. The Bible recorded that "...he ran to meet them from the tent door and bowed himself towards the ground" (Genesis 18: 2). He was not the only one who did that but his nephew Lot (Gen. 19: 1). Secondly, King Jehoshaphat instructed that singers should be set ahead, or in front of his army when he had to fight the Ammonites, Mount Seir, and Moabites. The singers were made to lead the army singing praises to God with different musical instruments and loud noise (2

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<sup>159</sup> Global Evangelical Church. *Corporate Identity* (Accra: Global Evangelical Press, 2007), p. 4.

Chronicles 20: 21-22). Thirdly, it makes unequivocal sense when Jesus Christ is on record to have sung with his disciples in worship to God in the form of a hymn (Matt. 26:30; Mk. 14:26).<sup>160</sup> This means that prayer and singing of hymns, psalms, and spiritual songs were practices among the Jews in the days of our Saviour Jesus Christ, which cannot be considered a modern era. Lastly, Apostle Paul in his writings wrote to believers everywhere to pray, sing psalms, hymns, songs, and spiritual songs, lift holy hands, bow their knees, and make melodies in their hearts to the Lord to express their spirituality. His days also cannot be taken as a modern but ancient era: primal worldviews.

Finally, if singing songs, hymns, spiritual songs, praying, clapping of the hands, and dancing, to mention but a few, were done in ancient times of Abraham, King Jehoshaphat, Jesus Christ, and Paul the apostle, then it is wrong for anyone to think that these rituals are merely modern phenomenon; they are primal mode of expressing their spirituality. Nevertheless, what has actually brought about the emergence of African Christianity? The next section comments on the wonderful activities of the Western missionary enterprise and the factors leading to the emergence of African Christianity.

## **2.7. The Emergence of African Christianity**

In view of the fact that Christianity has come to stay on African soil, Bediako posits that, “The Christian churches of Africa, be they of missionary origin or the fruit of solely indigenous African initiative...remain important religious and social institutions in their own right which cannot be ignored”.<sup>161</sup> What it means is that the various churches in Africa will continue to exist to promote their beliefs and practices regardless of how they originated.

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<sup>160</sup> Emmanuel F. Asamoah and Samuel Agbenyo, “The Bible and Music in African Christianity”, *African Journal of Culture, History, Religion and Tradition*. Vo. 7, Issue 1 (2024), pp. 51-66 (52).

<sup>161</sup> Kwame Bediako, *Christianity in Africa: The Renewal of a Non-Western Religion* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1995), p. 3.

Notwithstanding their origin or initiative, Walls notes that, “There were Christian communities in Africa”<sup>162</sup> before the Western missionary activities emerged in Africa. As also mentioned earlier in Chapter One, Sanneh posits that, “The spread of Christianity to Africa is better known from the richly documented and more recent period of the nineteenth century, but the roots of that contact can be traced back to the very beginning of Christianity itself”.<sup>163</sup> This suggests that “there are documents, which confirm that Christianity to Africa can easily be traced to its beginning in Jerusalem. Those documented materials are of great help to historians and theologians of the contemporary period to trace how Christianity began and where it had reached; the churches that emerged and the impact they had made on African religiosity”.<sup>164</sup> For instance, Sanneh indicates that, “In the book of Acts of the Apostles, among the people who spread Christian teachings were people from *Cyrenia* [Africa] who helped found the church in Antioch where the disciples were first given the name Christians”.<sup>165</sup> He further establishes that “in the Acts [of the Apostles] we are given details of the baptism of an important government official designated as an Ethiopian palace chancellor...the name of this Ethiopian official was Judich”.<sup>166</sup> Sanneh tries to explain that, since Ethiopia as part of Africa was present at the beginning of the church, it could therefore be argued that Africans brought Christianity to Africa. This reveals also that “Christianity first spread into North and East Africa in the first and second centuries, mainly through Egypt and around the Mediterranean coast. Key places like Alexandria and the Coptic churches in modern day Egypt, and Ethiopian Orthodox church became major Christian centres. Western Christianity came much later, mainly during the Age of Exploration

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<sup>162</sup> Andrew F. Walls, *The Cross-Cultural Process in Christian History: Studies in the Transmission and Appropriation of Faith* (Maryknoll NY: Orbis Books, 2002), p. 49.

<sup>163</sup> Lamin Sanneh, *West African Christianity: The Religious Impact* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1983), p. 1.

<sup>164</sup> Sanneh, *West African Christianity*, p. 2.

<sup>165</sup> Sanneh, *West African Christianity*, p. 3.

<sup>166</sup> Sanneh, *West African Christianity*, p. 3.

and colonialism”.<sup>167</sup> Notable among them are Roman Catholic, Methodist, Baptist, Anglican, and Presbyterian churches, to mention just a few.

When the Western missionaries embarked on missionary activities, “they explored other dimensions to foster their mission, which the indigenous recipients of the message benefited from. Some benefits of Western missionary work were education, health care, and awareness of human rights. They contributed to health care by introducing Western (orthodox) medicine and building health facilities to take care of the sick”.<sup>168</sup> Africans were educated so they could read widely to interpret the lifestyles of Westerners as a way of civilisation.

Against the lot of wonderful activities of the Western missionary enterprise, the Africans however blamed the early Christian missionaries for having branded all of their indigenous forms of art as the work of the devil.<sup>169</sup> Such arts include cultural music, local musical instruments, vibrant rhythms, and gorgeous costumes, among many others. The amount of damage done to the African thoughts and culture may have affected them materially and psychologically. This has brought about the emergence of African Christianity, akin to African Independent/Initiated/Instituted Churches (the AICs) where their Africanness is expressed. In other words, the emergence of the AICs was heavily based on Africans’ belief in the supernatural; nothing happens to them without attributing them to spiritual connotations and the undertone of spiritual attacks. Answers to spiritual issues are the high anticipation that brought about the formation of AICs that are led by indigenous Africans. Examples of typical AICs are the Zionists, Faith Tabernacle, and the Church of the Lord (Aladura), among many others. Lamin Sanneh indicates that “the Faith Tabernacle started as a prayer group within an Anglican church

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<sup>167</sup> Sanneh, *West African Christianity*, p. 9.

<sup>168</sup> Sanneh, *West African Christianity*, p. 12.

<sup>169</sup> Lazarus Nnanyelu Ekwueme, “African Music in Christian Liturgy: The Igbo Experiment”, *African Music*, Vol. 5, No. 3 (1973/1974): pp. 12-33 (13).

known as Saint Saviour Church at Ijebu-Ode by Joseph B. Shadare”.<sup>170</sup> The movement spread and “other centres were opened at Ilesha under Babatope, and Ibadan under Akinyele who after healing experience in 1926 abandoned medicine of all kind”.<sup>171</sup> Divine healing is one of the characteristics of the Faith Tabernacle which attracts many to the church. Eventually, the church divided over doctrinal issues relating to orthodox medicine and divine healing, and became known as Christ Apostolic Church (CAC). Amos Swelindawo, a Zionist bishop (many AICs in Southern Africa are called Zionists), states unambiguously, “We Zionists do not draw people to our churches through mission committees as the mainline churches do. Instead, our missionary power lies in the witness of our everyday lives”.<sup>172</sup> It means their Christian life preaches the Gospel. This is evident in their approach to life issues as they demonstrate the fruit of the Spirit.

We cannot see Christianity as independent of primal spirituality. “There is mutuality and reciprocity between the two if they share acceptable norms and have enough reasonable grounds for African Christianity”.<sup>173</sup> For this reason, African Christianity emphasises integrating Christian teachings with African cultural practices and values. This approach ensures that the faith resonates with local traditions, language, and symbols. Examples include the use of African music, dance, and art in worship, and reinterpreting traditional rituals in Christian contexts.

Afriyie posits that, “While some AICs may have started as a reaction to the operation of the mission churches, the spirituality expressed is not a ‘copying’ of African spirituality, but one that comes about with the awareness of the existence of the spiritual realm”.<sup>174</sup> This means that the AICs are not imitations of African traditional religion as some think. According to Asamoah-

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<sup>170</sup> Sanneh, *West African Christianity*, p. 184.

<sup>171</sup> Sanneh, *West African Christianity*, p. 185.

<sup>172</sup> Thomas Oduro, Hennie Pretorius, Stan Nussbaum, and Bryan Born, *Mission in an African Way: A Practical Introduction to African Instituted Churches and Their Sense of Mission* (Wellington, S.Af.: Christian Literature Fund, 2008), p. 108.

<sup>173</sup> Kwame Bediako, “Gospel and Culture: Some Insights for our Time from the Experience of the Earliest Church”, *Journal of African Christian Thought*, Vol. 2, No. 2, (December 1999), p. 8.

<sup>174</sup> Ernestina Afriyie, “A Christian Expression of African Spirituality: The Case Study of Three African Initiated Churches in Ghana”, *E-Journal of Religious and Theological Studies*, Vol. 9, No. 6 (June 2023), pp. 221-237 (221).

Gyedu, “The AICs were usually formed around the personal religious experience of a charismatic figure who then started to exercise certain graces of the Spirit, particularly, prophecy and healing”.<sup>175</sup> The reason for the emergence is that African Christians felt uncomfortable in the straitjacket of English songs and the artificiality of its adoption in churches. For the Africans, worship must consist of prayers in which all participate actively singing, clapping, and drumming. Worship is about results; it is first and foremost to ensure well-being and prosperity. People have needs that must be met in their religion.<sup>176</sup> As resourceful as Africans are, they began quite early to make adaptations to the normal order of Christian worship to suit local conditions.<sup>177</sup> This includes their composition of songs because the meanings of the lyrics of songs are of much concern to the Africans. This prompts many African theologians to focus on the themes of liberation from oppression, poverty, and social injustice. Their theological reflections often draw on the experiences of colonialism, apartheid, and economic equality. This resonates with the message of Jesus Christ as a liberator, which aligns with the struggles for freedom and dignity in African societies.

African Christianity often integrates spiritual and material aspects of life, reflecting a worldview where the sacred and the secular are interconnected. Andrew Walls holds that when people are converted from their primal faith to another, they do not lose their worldview. What usually happens is a reordering of the things in the worldview.<sup>178</sup> For Afriyie, Africans who become Christians are still Africans and their views of the world do not change much. Their understanding of what goes into worship remains the same.<sup>179</sup> Unfortunately, during the days of missionary enterprise in Ghana, the adaptation of folk music for Christian worship among the

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<sup>175</sup> J. Kwabena Asamoah-Gyadu, *Sighs and Signs of the Spirit: Ghanaian Perspective on Pentecostalism and Renewal in Africa* (Oxford: Regnum Books, 2015), p. 2.

<sup>176</sup> Afriyie, “A Christian Expression of African Spirituality”, p. 228.

<sup>177</sup> Ekwueme, “African Music in Christian Liturgy”, p. 15.

<sup>178</sup> Andrew F. Walls, *The Cross-Cultural Process in Christian History*, (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2002), pp. 122-123.

<sup>179</sup> Afriyie, “A Christian Expression of African Spirituality”, p. 228.

Evil was termed as the work of the devil, and so was barred from being used in Christian worship. African Christians view mission as a holistic endeavour involving spiritual renewal and societal transformation reflecting a theology of service. Andrew Walls establishes that, “Nowadays, most African churches are independent in the sense that their leadership is African, and *Western* missionary direction minimal”.<sup>180</sup> In this case, the GEC could be considered an independent church because it is not a foreign missionary directed church. This is because, since 1991, the GEC has depended on God’s providential care to run its affairs.

Essamuah states that, “The Gospel is Good News when it provides answers for a particular people living in a particular place at a particular time”.<sup>181</sup> The high anticipation of the Africans is that the Gospel must answer all their questions. Therefore, healing, prophecy, and deliverance ministries are prominent, emphasising God’s power to intervene in everyday life. The African perception of Christianity is about Christ who is the Good News himself. Therefore, for the Africans, the Gospel as Good News and the practices of African Christianity must reveal and promote Christ in the world and address all issues. In that vein, African Christianity gives significant attention to spiritual warfare, divine intervention, and the activity of the Holy Spirit. Miracles, exorcism, and encounters with spirits are central to many African Christian traditions. Hence, African theologians often reread the Bible through an African lens, identifying with themes of exodus, exile, and deliverance. Also, healing ministries are central, addressing both physical and spiritual needs. This reflects the African understanding of health as encompassing body, mind, and spirit. For this reason, churches often serve as spaces for addressing societal issues like mental health, broken relationships, and community well-being. Besides, there is a growing theological focus on stewardship of creation, informed by traditional African reverence for nature. They often incorporate themes of sustainability and care for the environment as part

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<sup>180</sup> Andrew F. Walls, *The Missionary Movement in Christian History: Studies in the Transmission of Faith* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1996), p. 114.

<sup>181</sup> Casely B. Essamuah, “Methodist Missionary Society History Project” (Salisbury: United Kingdom, 2003).

of their mission. For this reason, Africans thought that Western theology and worship were not addressing African issues, for the fact that nothing happens to them by chance.<sup>182</sup> This is because African spirituality emanates from religion. In that regard, Africans think that in order to address their issues, they must propound theology and worship by themselves. A situation that had “developed into the formation of pockets of prayer groups within some mainline (missionary) churches”.<sup>183</sup> It was those prayer groups, which eventually became the AICs at many places.

The ARS mode of Christian worship in African Christianity is similar to that of the AICs. According to Ranger, the AICs are about “African independence from missionary control and about the superior biblical legitimacy of African Christianity”.<sup>184</sup> Their practices are largely based on the Old Testament. “Many stressed the founding work of a prophet or prophetess from which a church traced its spiritual or institutional lineage”.<sup>185</sup> Over here, the AICs claim that their beliefs and practices, which depend on their founders, are fair and reasonable. While the activities of the ARS heavily fall under the AICs because of its African initiative nature, the GEC as a neo-Pentecostal church falls under the Western missionary enterprise.

One thing that is certain among African Christians is that they sing religiously to register their allegiance and great pleasure to God and present their requests to him through singing to express their spirituality. From an African Christian perspective, primal spirituality manifests itself within the African Christian faith and serves as the bedrock of their faith. They are sincerely vigorous and dedicated to their perception of spirituality. For that matter, they demonstrate their spirituality as they sing religiously, and expect positive results from God.

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<sup>182</sup> J. Kwamena Asamoah-Gyedu, *Sighs and Signs of the Spirit: Ghanaian Perspectives on Pentecostalism and Renewal in Africa* (Oxford: Regnum Books, 2015), p. 6-7.

<sup>183</sup> Sanneh, *West African Christianity*, p. 14.

<sup>184</sup> Terence Ranger, “African Initiated Churches” Transformation, *Sage Publications, Ltd.* Vol. 24, No. 2 (April 2007), pp. 65-71(66).

<sup>185</sup> Samuel I. Britt, “Sacrifice Honors God”: Ritual Struggle in a Liberian Church, *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, Vol. 76 No. 1 (March 2008), pp. 1-26 (3-4).

Hence, some of those songs are functionally identical with the Ewe Christian churches in Ghana, of which Agbadza and Bobobo music are notable features among them.

This is a fact that Agbadza and Bobobo music are substantiating evidence to prove that primal spirituality is demonstrable. Andrew Walls points out that, culturally, there is “the desire to ‘indigenise’, to live as a Christian and yet as a member of one’s (*own*) society”.<sup>186</sup> Though one expects a departure from the primal self, it is rather not the case. This shows that it is impossible for a convert to leave his culture completely to become a Christian. Andrew Walls argues that, when a person accepts Christ as Saviour, it “does not mean that he starts or continues his life in a vacuum, or that his mind is a blank slate. It has been formed by his culture”.<sup>187</sup> The fact is that no one has ever been a “*tabula rasa*”, in other words, a white washed slate. Human beings are cultural beings, and according to Bediako, “Jesus is the hermeneutic, the interpreter of both the Gospel that he is, and the culture into which he comes. In coming to us, Jesus comes into our world and into our culture”.<sup>188</sup> This resonates with the belief that when an African wakes up early in the morning, the first thing he does is to inquire of his gods what the day holds for him, which is known as *dɔfoe kaka* in Ewe within the “afa cult”. When he becomes a Christian, this belief is not downgraded. The belief helps him to go to God in prayer every early morning, an act that can be found in the Scriptures. This is identical with Jesus that “very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed” (Mk. 1:35). The purpose is to show us the way; hence, the Gospel engages various cultural practices, including the indigenous lyrics of the Agbadza and Bobobo music. When Christians go out to win converts, they do so from their cultural backgrounds, using the languages and cultural tools they accumulated through the process of socialisation and

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<sup>186</sup> Andrew F. Walls, *The Missionary Movement in Christian History: Studies in the Transmission of Faith* (New York: Orbis Books, Maryknoll, 1996), p. 7.

<sup>187</sup> Walls, *The Missionary Movement in Christian History*, p. 8.

<sup>188</sup> Bediako, “Gospel and Culture”, p. 11.

education.<sup>189</sup> Furthermore, when they go out to preach the Gospel, some of the tools they use are drumming, singing, dancing, and clapping, among others.<sup>190</sup>

Contrariwise, Richard Niebuhr's "Christ against culture typology affirms the sole authority of Christ over culture, and resolutely rejects culture's claims to loyalty",<sup>191</sup> as mentioned earlier in Chapter one. Here the emphasis is on opposition to culture resulting in a withdrawal from society. Hence, the false notion that sin lies in culture and when the Christian escapes culture, he or she can escape sin. Nonetheless, Niebuhr was quick to mention that, Christ the transformer of cultures typology believes that "human culture can be transformed through the grace of God".<sup>192</sup> This transformation seeks to enhance the original good that is found in culture while identifying the effects of sin, and working to reduce those effects. The primal elements serve as the fundamental beliefs and concepts on which African Christianity is based, devoid of attempting to combine the elements of African traditional religions to the teaching of the Bible, which resulted in a mixture called "Syncretism".

At the other end of the spectrum is the fact that, the vehicle that carries the primal thoughts is vernacular language, which is identical with Agbadza and Bobobo music among the Ewe. Kwame Bediako establishes that, "The happenings on the day of Pentecost, as recounted in the second chapter of the Acts of the Apostles give an important biblical and theological warrant for taking seriously the vernacular languages in which people hear the wonders of God".<sup>193</sup> For instance, lyrics in vernacular "language can give a comprehensive account, and therefore, become a theological tool. In this respect, vernacular lyrics explain deeper than a foreign language. It sometimes renders foreign language inadequate to transmit the meaning of a

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<sup>189</sup> Ron Macaulay, *Redeeming the Master Plan: An Ethical Study on Marital and Sexual Issues*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed. (Accra: Gusfa Ventures, 2019), p. 97.

<sup>190</sup> Macaulay, *Redeeming the Master Plan*, p. 98.

<sup>191</sup> Niebuhr, *Christ and Culture*, p. 42.

<sup>192</sup> Niebuhr, *Christ and Culture*, p. 196.

<sup>193</sup> Bediako, *Christianity in Africa*, p. 60.

message, which is of vital importance to the hearers”.<sup>194</sup> Vernacular language inspires confidence; it is the medium of communicating cultural identity. The fact that culture and religion begin with language when vernacular language is explicit and elaborate, adds meaning to the message it carries.

Within the GEC, which is a non-AIC church, the difference in meaning is clear in the Christmas season song where many curious meanings are arising out of lack of agreement of the language with which the words are composed. A typical example of a Christmas season English song and its Eue translation which is not part of the theological verifications that would be dealt with in Chapter Three is: “*O come all ye faithful, joyful and triumphant.....* The chorus reads: *O come let us adore Him.....*” (Evangelical Hymn 43). When one compares this to the Eue translation, the fourth line (chorus) of the lyrics reads, “*Miva midze klo subœ*” (Eue hymn 73), one would realise that the meaning is not the same as how it is in English. The Eue translation is deeper and more meaningful to the people of Eue than the English version. According to Longman Dictionary, to “adore” means to love someone very much. Collins Cobuild Advance Dictionary also defines “adore” as feeling great love and admiration for someone. All of these translations are handicapped by lack of clear understanding. Nevertheless, the Eue version means, “*Come let us kneel and worship him*”, which seems easy to understand and makes more sense to the Eue than the English version. It means the people of Eue understand that when you worship someone, you must also kneel to give homage to the person, who in this context is God (Jesus Christ) the King.

## **2.8. The Christian Faith and Primal Moral Values in Juxtaposition**

Music is a heritage of primal “beliefs, values, and customs of the Eue society. Within the African past and heritage, there are shared primal worldviews that provide fundamental ways of knowing

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<sup>194</sup> Bediako, *Christianity in Africa*, p. 60.

and expressing God, which has meaning within an ethnic group”.<sup>195</sup> Therefore, Christian worship, which includes music, “as a human expression of the encounter with God, the Father of Jesus Christ must always be local. God also accepts African worship when local instruments and songs are employed to worship him”.<sup>196</sup> One thing, that is certain among African Christians, is that they pray religiously to register their allegiance to God and present their requests to him as a way of expressing their spirituality. Mostly, they begin their prayers by singing songs that they believe will invoke the Spirit of God.

From an African Christian perspective, primal spirituality manifests itself within the African Christian faith and serves as the bedrock of their faith. They are sincerely very vigorous and dedicated to their understanding of spirituality. African primal views seem to involve God in the encounter one has with the Christian faith. Harold Turner establishes that, “Primal worldview provides the realisation that there is a background to every faith. Primal religions of the world have provided the religious background of the faith of the majority of Christians in the 20 centuries of Christian history, including the Christians of Europe”.<sup>197</sup> Turner’s argument means that, “even European Christians have a primal religious background since Christianity has not originated with them, and that they were not living in a religious vacuum”.<sup>198</sup> This means that the primal worldview was in existence long before the “world religions” came into being. This encourages that, “The African church needed to build its bridges to the ‘revelation’ given to Africans in their pre-Christian and pre-missionary religious traditions of the past”.<sup>199</sup> It is because Africans consider themselves to be religious, and that they have traces of primal spirituality, which cannot be relegated to a position not considered to be as important religious

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<sup>195</sup> Britt, “Sacrifice Honors God”, p. 5.

<sup>196</sup> Britt, “Sacrifice Honors God” p. 8.

<sup>197</sup> Harold Turner, “The Primal Religions of the World and their Study”, in Victor Hayes (ed.), *Australian Essays in World Religions* (Bedford Park, 1977), pp. 27-37 (28).

<sup>198</sup> Victor Hayes (ed.), *Australian Essays in World Religions*, p. 29.

<sup>199</sup> Bediako, “Understanding African Theology in the 20th century”, p. 18.

tradition. According to Bediako, “The Western value-setting for the Christian faith in the missionary era had also entailed a far-reaching under-estimation of the African knowledge and sense of God; the unavoidable element of Africa’s continuing primal religions”.<sup>200</sup> For him, Africans are doing better and that Africans have the capability of expressing their primal knowledge to enrich their Christian faith.

Hence, Freytag made a challenging statement that, “A wood fire can make the night bright for us. But when the sun is risen we see that its bright light makes the fire itself the cause of a shadow”.<sup>201</sup> He thinks that both Western and African societies should come to terms with the fact that, one has to consider each other’s theological views about God, because one may not have all the answers. Freytag postulates that “too cerebral religion that ignores African realities has no answer to African Christian issues. It is fascinating to note that, though sometimes primal beliefs conflict with the Christian faith, in other instances, these beliefs are closer to a biblical worldview, which corresponds to the Christian faith”.<sup>202</sup> It means that the African primal experience is the bedrock of the Christian faith.

With regard to brotherly concern for one another, whether it is spiritual, it has been observed that the personal totality of a being is a spiritual matter, which fills the background of the African primal worldview.<sup>203</sup> This assertion derives from the understanding of primal religion in the context of how “the African learns to say I am because I participate in the life of the extended family. This is because in Africa, a person is not complete without other people; hence, people belong to a community first”.<sup>204</sup> Also, this is because it is believed that, it is the community that trains a person how to cope with societal norms in order to live a communal life. For this reason, Taylor explains that, “man is understood within the broader context of primal

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<sup>200</sup> Bediako, “Understanding African Theology in the 20th century”, p. 15.

<sup>201</sup> W. Freytag, *The Gospel and the Religions* (SCM press 1957), p. 39.

<sup>202</sup> Freytag, *The Gospel and the Religions*, p. 40

<sup>203</sup> John V. Taylor, *The Primal Vision, Christian Presence amid African Religion* (London: SCM Press, 1963), p. 85.

<sup>204</sup> V. Taylor, *The Primal Vision*, p. 85.

religion to mean ‘Man is a family’”.<sup>205</sup> It means Africans see themselves based on relatedness; what affects one person affects all regardless of biological relationship. This explanation is similar to the Christian faith. According to the Christian faith, the Holy Spirit teaches that “everyone everywhere should live in Christ without ceasing to be involved in familial relationships”.<sup>206</sup> In addition, Jesus prayed that his disciples be one as he and the Father are one (Jn. 17:11). This demonstrates the fundamental relationship between primal religious view and Christian faith. He arrived at this perception as “he considered the biological links of family, and also by virtue of our interdependence as humans on society, culture, history and nationality”.<sup>207</sup> The impetus of African communal life is that the Father and Son are one, and he instructed all to be one (John 10:30; 17:22). Hence, the encounter between primal worldviews of African traditional thought and Christian faith is significantly correlated with neighbourliness. Bediako posits that, “Can the Christian faith make any claims to uniqueness? Interestingly, both Old and New Testaments respond in the affirmative that it can. It is in this creative engagement that Christ converses with the soul of Africa”.<sup>208</sup> According to Taylor, “All religions carry in itself light and one must be careful not ‘to call another’s light darkness’”.<sup>209</sup> He holds that, all things share the same character and interact with one another and that Christianity grows fast where a primal worldview is valued. Adrian Hastings drew attention to the fact that, “The chief non-Biblical reality with which the African theologian must struggle is the non-Christian religious tradition of his own people. The challenge to African theologians is to take decisive steps towards identifying areas that need to be transformed and also provide opportunities for spiritual growth”.<sup>210</sup> A typical example is what Walls identifies as “symmetrical mediation in which

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<sup>205</sup> V. Taylor, *The Primal Vision*, p. 85.

<sup>206</sup> V. Taylor, *The Primal Vision*, p. 108.

<sup>207</sup> V. Taylor, *The Primal Vision*, p. 109.

<sup>208</sup> Bediako, “Christianity and African Culture”, p.45.

<sup>209</sup> V. Taylor, *The Primal Vision*, p. 33.

<sup>210</sup> Bediako, “Understanding African Theology in the 20th century”, p. 15.

intermediary spirits (usually ancestral) act as the vehicles of communication to and from the Supreme Being”.<sup>211</sup> Here, it is believed that primal religion is the most elementary understanding of the transcendent and how to reach him; hence, it is believed that there is a correlation between biblical and African primal religions.

In addition, while “Africans believe that they live in a spirit world, and that, there are spirits; Christians also believe that there are evil spirits and God’s Spirit. Again, as Africans believe that rain is one of the supernatural blessings of God, so it is in Christianity”.<sup>212</sup> They also believe that God the Creator of the universe is everywhere, this is because God is omnipresent. Mysteriously, the universality of God’s presence in his creation transcends human comprehension. Still, as child adoption is practised in the African primal world because of their communal life, so adoption is believed in the Christian faith. Furthermore, as African primal spirituality accepts the performance of initiation rites as a practise, so does baptism as an initiation rite in Christianity. Indeed, it is an excellent heritage to hold in high esteem the spirituality of primal views than that, which is secular. In this respect, African primal views are much closer to the Bible’s teachings.

Nonetheless, Walls does not lose sight of the fact that despite the “continuities” and “relations” there are what he calls “discontinuities” and “dis-relations” – “points of departure where African Christian[s] have to abandon certain aspects of *his* [their] culture which are contrary to *his* [their] relationship to Christ and to embrace new things”.<sup>213</sup> This is possible when Scripture is comprehensively contextualised to address situations as one considers aspects of the problem that need to change. Sometimes, the primal self-spirituality of Indigenous people

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<sup>211</sup> Walls, *Africa’s Place in Christian History*, p. 123.

<sup>212</sup> Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy*, p. 53.

<sup>213</sup> Andrew F. Walls, *The Cross-Cultural Process in Christian History; Studies in the Transmission and the Appropriation of Faith* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 2002), p. 126.

is seen as a threat to the Christian faith if it is not explicit and understandable to them. To avoid these dangers, a deep prior understanding of the primal African worldview is required.

One interface between African traditional beliefs and the Christian faith is that nothing happens to Africans without spiritual involvement. Therefore, it is believed that a particular spirit controls every aspect of life. It is also believed that the Gospel is the Good News of liberation for the oppressed, and it emphasises concrete embodied encounters. “Where such a focus on liberation is absent, the Christian faith is distorted, and the corresponding Christian discipleship is harmful. This makes sense in understanding the way of Jesus as the way of justice, and justice as the content for Christian moral faithfulness”.<sup>214</sup>

Again, the encounter between the primal view and Christian faith is that everyone seeks ways to understand and control the problems of life, which are attributed to the manipulation of spirits. In many parts of Africa, “someone must be responsible for problems. For instance, in most African societies every nightmare is interpreted as a spiritual attack”.<sup>215</sup> This interpretation of faith creates a barrier between those with Christian faith and those without it. On the contrary, when people are made to understand God as the protector of life, they would feel protected. Nevertheless, some Christians put the Bible or written lyrics of particular songs under their pillows and feel confident that God will never allow anything bad to happen to them during the night. With this perception, some people think that God who is Spirit can work through physical objects. The questions that arise are, are these behaviours right or wrong? What is the relation between morality and religion?<sup>216</sup> According to Bolaji Idowu, “Morality is basically the fruit of religion and that it was dependent upon it. God made man; and he implants in him the sense of

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<sup>214</sup> Turman Marshall Turman and Reggie Williams, “Life in the Body: African and African American Christian Ethics”, *Journal of the Society of Christian Ethics*, Vol. 38, No. 2 (Fall / Winter 2018), pp. 21-31 (24).

<sup>215</sup> Chijioke Azuawusiefe, “Nollywood and Pentecostalism” *CrossCurrents*, Vol. 70, No. 3 (September 2020), pp. 206-219 (208).

<sup>216</sup> Joshua N. Kudadjie, “Does Religion Determine Morality in African Societies? A Viewpoint”, *The Ghana Bulletin of Theology*, Vol. 4, No. 5 (December 1973), pp. 30.

right and wrong. This is a fact the validity of which does not depend upon whether man realises and acknowledge it [*or not*]”.<sup>217</sup> Hence, the study considers the Christian and primal moral values as subjects to find out whether they affect each other or not.

As mentioned earlier, music is a heritage of primal beliefs, values, and customs of the Ewe society and therefore, needs to be guided. One needs to find out about the cultural values of his society. It has been indicated earlier that when the indigenous people meet to play Agbadza and Bobobo as cultural music at funerals and entertainment places, libation is poured to the ancestors after that they proceed with the music. However, this aspect is distinctly avoided in African Christianity because of the effects of alcohol on human behaviour morally.

John Ansah posits that, “People everywhere must soon have realised that not just any way of doing things or of living yields success. In a community, the unguided flow of activities of members can produce a chaotic life”.<sup>218</sup> For him, a community’s survival demands so much effort, care, and attention to moral issues, or everything will go in a confused way and out of order. Surprisingly, some biblical instructions are similar to African values and customs. If hatred that leads to disunity and slander are frowned upon in the Bible, which has its roots in the moral fibre of humanity, they are not scientific but real moral issues. On the contrary, as far as morality is concerned, God watches people’s motives and judges them for treating him lightly in any respect. One of the most distinctive characteristics of the teachings of Jesus, as compared with the teachings of other religious leaders, is the close relationship between a religious experience and its effects on one’s life. The living God enters into the living experience of human beings, thus humans experience God as the light of their mind and find in obedient fellowship with God the strength and inspiration of life.<sup>219</sup> This helps human beings to live

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<sup>217</sup> E. Bolaji Idowu, *Olódumarè, God in Yoruba Belief* (Longmans: 1963), p. 145.

<sup>218</sup> John K. Ansah, *Taboos in Ghana: The Ethical Wisdom of Our Fathers* (Nettetal: Steyler Verlag -Wort and Werk, 1988), p. 257.

<sup>219</sup> James Gills, *Biblical Ethics and Contemporary Issues* (Makati City: Carid Baptist Publications, 1994), p. 95.

morally. However, it is confusing when Harold Turner suggested that, “Religion is not identical with morality, with culture, or with society”.<sup>220</sup> This is because religion is how humans understand the world and develop into society, have a culture, and taboos (morals).<sup>221</sup>

In traditional thought, primal moral values are societal taboos about acceptable social standards of behaviour, which are right, wrong, or evil. It is also about the moral goodness of character and behaviour. Therefore, according to primal views in the African theological thought forms, African primal knowledge is about a moral God; devoid of morals and ethical principles and beliefs, it is very destructive capable of causing great damage to society. Morally, Africans are very particular about the moral life of individuals in their communities. Hence, most of their songs are connected with human behaviour. Because they regard for communal life, any problem one is involved in affects the entire community. The morality of society is also taught as well as the consequences of evil doing. The popular belief therefore is that whatever an individual does is bound to affect the wider community for either good or bad.<sup>222</sup> In a similar vein, Kunhiyop opines that, we need to understand the ethical principles and beliefs that guide moral actions in Africa if we are to develop an ethical system that is both Christian and African.<sup>223</sup>

African Christians, particularly the Anlo-Ewe and Evedome, freely choose to engage Agbadza and Bobobo as their cultural music to express their Africanness in African Christianity. Farrell establishes that the term “free will” is commonly defined as “the power of acting without the constraint of necessity or fate; the ability to act at one’s discretion”.<sup>224</sup> First, if choices are made from strictly neutral position, without any prior inclination, then people make choices for no reason and therefore their choices have no moral significance. People must know why they

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<sup>220</sup> Turner, *The Primal Religions of the World and their Study*, p. 29.

<sup>221</sup> Kofi Asare Opoku, *West African Traditional Religion* (Accra: FEP International Private Limited, 1978), p. 152.

<sup>222</sup> Anthony Asoanya, *The Ecological Crisis in Africa as a Challenge to Lasting Cultural and Sustainable Development: A Theological Approach* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang GmbH, 2011), p. 70.

<sup>223</sup> Samuel Waje Kunhiyop, *African Christian Ethics* (Nairobi: Hippo Books, 2008), p. 6.

<sup>224</sup> Michael Farrell, *Inclusion at the Crossroads: Special Education—Concepts and Values* (London: David Fulton Publishing Ltd., 2004), p. 76

choose and how to choose. Sproul argues that, “When God judges our choices; he is interested in our motives”.<sup>225</sup> The Anlo-Ewe and Evedome Christians choose to engage Agbadza and Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀ mostly because they communicate moral rules to the community which they must follow.

Some Christians have argued that it is not enough simply to follow a prescribed set of rules or even to do the right thing. One must also develop a certain set of character traits. Some of the distinguishing characteristics of primal morals that promote these cultural music are respectfulness, honour, discipline, piety, and neighbourliness. These virtues sustain a community and give it a strong future. “Their conscience speaks against wrong attitudes and actions that would threaten the harmony of the clan”.<sup>226</sup> Some of the societal morals are “patient, chastity before marriage, faithfulness during marriage, mercy, truthfulness, justice, and hard work”, among others.<sup>227</sup> “Hard work is encouraged among Africans because without it one is not qualified to marry, or capable of marrying and taking care of one’s family”.<sup>228</sup> This primal value in African thought is akin to biblical principles of how to work in order to “have something to share with those in need” (Eph. 4:28, NIV). Unfortunately, “asking God to provide by miracle” is a behaviour which stands in stark contrast to hard work, which is over-emphasised today, and should never be a substitute for hard work. Because primal moral values will not allow that, it leads to laziness, idleness, stealing, and corruption. Tracey notes pertinent problems of moral issues, such as “gregariousness, social disciplines, what is considered to be good behaviour and good manners; the problems of defence, attack and violence”.<sup>229</sup>

God gave wonderful gifts to Africans in their strong bonds between people and within the community. Concern for others is one of the key evidences of African personhood. Some notable

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<sup>225</sup> R. C. Sproul, *Chosen by God* (Illinois: Tyndale Publishers, Inc., 1986), p 51.

<sup>226</sup> Benno van den Toren, “Teaching Ethics in the Face of Africa’s Moral Crisis: Reflections from a Guest”, *Transformation*, Vol. 30, No. 1 (January 2013), pp. 1-16 (9).

<sup>227</sup> Mbiti, *African Religion and Philosophy*, p. 207.

<sup>228</sup> Mbiti, *African Religion and Philosophy*, p. 112.

<sup>229</sup> Hugh Tracey, “Behind the Lyrics”, *African Music*, Vol. 3, No. 2 (1963): pp. 17-22 (19).

concepts of well-rounded characteristics that agree with biblical teaching are forbearing, faithfulness, and self-control. Apostle Paul wrote to the Galatian church that, the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience (forbearing), kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control (Gal. 5:22-23, NIV). In the African ideal, a person earns honour by living out these character qualities. Generosity, hospitality, or attending to one's neighbour are other areas of primal values in the Bible. African primal views hold hospitality and generosity in high esteem. I can, however, admit to some extent that, there may be some degree of flaws, but not that of being ungenerous or inhospitable.

Contrariwise, there are varieties of vices that are sinful. According to Gaba, "Sin may be described as the breach of prohibitions imposed on a human being by his object of worship or the doing of anything that is displeasing to spirit powers with the result that the displeased spirit powers manifest themselves adversely in human affairs".<sup>230</sup> While the African holds a moral sense of justice and truth, and the knowledge of the existence of good and evil, his primal world view seems to be the fulcrum around which every activity revolves.

This is a guiding principle by which a person reaches his or her full potential as an individual and as a necessary part of African society. This leads to the engagement between African primal view and Christian faith. As Africans cherish morality, so their wellbeing is paramount to them. This has to do with the link between songs and human wellbeing, how songs and their lyrics have the potential positive impact on the human health.

## **2.9. The Healing Nature of Cultural Music**

In Africa, people seek help from spiritual healers because they believe that there is a connection between their illness and spirits. Sometimes, they fear their ancestors are angry or that someone

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<sup>230</sup> Christian R. Gaba, "Sin in African Traditional Religion" *The Ghana Bulletin of Theology*, Vol. 4. No. 1. (December 1971), pp. 21-30 (22).

has cursed them. But the fact that everyone in this world would eventually die means healing does not always occur. Although they may not know if God will heal, they sing and pray expectantly for healing.<sup>231</sup> One instance is “when a worldwide influenza epidemic broke out at Ijebu-Ode in Nigeria around 1918”.<sup>232</sup> It was in the height of this that “a few committed Christians sought for a more practical approach to solving the prevailing problem. This they found by devoting themselves to domestic family worship, private prayers at home, and small gathering for prayers in churches”.<sup>233</sup> This practice includes singing accompanied by prayer. It is explicit that African Christians understand the effectiveness of singing and prayer because Africans have religious overtone grounded in their religious conviction that no misfortune happens without the influence of evil spirits.

### **2.9.1. Medical Healing**

According to Kpobi and Swartz, “Health seeking in many African countries typically involves making use of multiple healing systems, including indigenous and faith systems, as well as biomedical healthcare systems”.<sup>234</sup> Although many Africans are not oblivious to the fact that abuse of drugs and alcohol could account for it, they also believe spiritual factors could cause ill health. In order not to lose focus for the fact that, the study is not about orthodox medicine and the treatment of diseases, it moves straight to the spiritual aspect as the objective of the study.

### **2.8.2 Spiritual Healing of Music**

The use of non-biomedical methods to treat mental disorders in developing countries, like Ghana, has long been acknowledged. Andrew Walls notes that, “If the Christian was to trust

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<sup>231</sup> Mathew A Elliot, *Africa Study Bible*, (Oasis International Ltd.), p. 1838.

<sup>232</sup> Sanneh, *West African Christianity*, p. 184.

<sup>233</sup> Clarke, *West Africa and Christianity*, p. 190.

<sup>234</sup> Lily Kpobi and Leslie Swartz, “Indigenous and faith healing in Ghana: A brief examination of the formalising process and collaborative efforts with the biomedical health system”, *African Journal of Primary Health Care & Family Medicine*, Vol. 11, No. 1 (July 2019) (Accessed on 11 January 2024)

Christ and not entreat the old powers, should he not trust Christ for all the things for which he once entreat the powers?”<sup>235</sup> It means that when someone puts his/her faith in Christ, a better answer to issues is expected in his new faith, which should prevent him from going back to where he used to go. This is because Africans confront their environment as a spiritual sphere, and religion is what enables them to understand their world. “As it is common with other neo-Pentecostal churches, the GEC also believes in, and practices the gifts of the Holy Spirit and underscores the healing ministry of Jesus Christ.”<sup>236</sup> Additionally, many African churches believe that healing takes place by means of prayer, therefore, prayer must not be mechanical; prayer must be spiritual. One must not neglect the African worldview of spirituality that humans are spirit, soul, and body. Hence, they practice faith healing without recourse to medicine. Some of the elements they use are water, clay, spittle, and so forth. This is because many Africans, especially, the AICs believe that there are some diseases which orthodox medicine has no cure for.

According to Emmanuel Yao Awumee, healing in the GEC implies restoration to health, marriage, business and total well-being. This denotes the state of having peace within oneself, with God and with others that leads to psychological, emotional and social stability of a person. Awumee sees this as the goodwill of God for humans and includes both the spiritual and physical aspect of life. He explains that the sin of the first man and woman, Adam and Eve, has serious effects not only on human person, but also on all aspects of human life and desperately need redemption and restoration.<sup>237</sup>

As mentioned earlier, the people of EUE see music as a connecting link between one another, and as a performance that is so basic to their socio-religious life. As the people of EUE

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<sup>235</sup> Walls, *The Missionary Movement in Christian History*, p. 117.

<sup>236</sup> Evelyn Efua Arhin-Sam, “Ghanaian Pentecostal Medical Doctors in Faith Healing”, M. Phil Thesis (University of Ghana, Legon, 2011) p. 77

<sup>237</sup> Emmanuel Y. Awumee, Interview, GEC Aflao Parish, Aflao. 20 December 2022.

see music as a socio-religious act, so do some churches. Hence, there seems to be a gap between Western Christianity and African understanding of religion. This means that the inadequacy of the impact of Western churches on African spiritual issues and needs has become a gap between Western Christianity and African Christianity. It is because “almost all African societies believe in witchcraft for various reasons known to them. It is the traditional way of explaining the ultimate cause of any evil, misfortune, or death”.<sup>238</sup> Others are:

Barrenness, people whose children die at birth, women with irregular menstrual flow, accident victims, traders who suffer losses, office workers who fail to get promotions – all suspect witches as the cause of their misfortune. Even those who are most successful in their businesses or profession constantly fear being bewitched by envious relatives or friends.<sup>239</sup>

For them, they believe that the God that they worship should be able to take care of their life issues. Christian Gaba asserts that, “In Africa traditional life the usual cure for sickness is accompanied by spiritual healing”,<sup>240</sup> the encounter with the supernatural power of God. Hence, Mbiti notes that, “God is often worshipped through songs, which creates and strengthens corporate feeling and solidarity”.<sup>241</sup> The reason is that, Africans believe in the supernatural; nothing happens to them without attributing them to spiritual connotations and the undertone of spiritual attacks. For instance, “In Africa, illness is regularly associated with spiritual powers, and with moral or social offences and obligations, conscious or unconscious. The chief diagnostic question is not, therefore, what illness is it? But what or who caused it?”<sup>242</sup>

Almost everyone everywhere is keenly aware of the assumption and implications of the work of music that, it has a spiritual power to effect healing and deliverance from spiritual depression. According to Opoku’s understanding of African spirituality, “The general African

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<sup>238</sup> Kunhiyop, *African Christian Ethics*, p. 377.

<sup>239</sup> Daniel A. Offiong, *Witchcraft, Sorcery, Magic and Social Order Among the Ibibio of Nigeria* (Enugu: Forth Dimension Publication, 1991), p. 78. In Samuel Wage Kunhiyop, *African Christian Ethics* (Nairobi: Hippo Books, 2008), p. 377.

<sup>240</sup> Gaba, “Sin in African Traditional Religion”, p. 28.

<sup>241</sup> Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy*, p. 67.

<sup>242</sup> Walls, *The Missionary Movement in Christian History*, p. 98.

belief concerning man is that he is made up of material and immaterial substances, and although there may be variations of this idea from one African society to another, the fundamental assumption among them is the unity of the personality of man. Man is a biological (material) being as well as a spiritual (immaterial) being”.<sup>243</sup> Hence, ill-health is not considered as only physical, but also spiritual. Dovlo observes that although “there are modern medical facilities in the form of hospitals and clinics in Ghana, there are much recourse to religion for the purpose of the sustenance and restoration of good health”.<sup>244</sup> This is because Africans believe that every misfortune has a spiritual undertone, and therefore, seek spiritual means of resolving them. “The practice of faith healing and deliverance particularly associated with the charismatic movement is based on the belief that Jesus' promise of healing recorded in Mark 16:18 is for every generation of believers”.<sup>245</sup> The fact that Christians walk by faith, healing does not take place without faith in the healer – Jesus Christ.

Warner was quick to add that, evidence indicates that by the ninth century prayers for the sick had fallen from regular practice but by the twelfth century in Italy, the Waldensians were practicing faith healing, while the sixteenth-century Protestant Reformation brought with it a revival of prayers for the sick.<sup>246</sup>

## **2.10. The Impacts of Christian Faith and Primal Worldviews**

While Agbadza, Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀, and other Christian music are engaged to worship God, they are also employed to address life issues. The lyrics are sung to send messages to hearers as a means of spreading the Gospel of Christ. How can the Gospel positively affect Ghanaian culture? Laryea

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<sup>243</sup> Opoku, *West African Traditional Religion*, p. 10.

<sup>244</sup> Elom Dovlo, ‘Healing and Religious Pluralism in Ghana’, (Stockholm: Draft Paper Presented at Graduate Seminar, University of Stockholm, September 2006), p. 1.

<sup>245</sup> Warner, “Faith Healing”, in Daniel G. Reid, *et al.*(eds), *Dictionary of Christianity in America*, (Town: Inter Varsity Press, 1990), Discovering Collection Database, PC Study Bible V5.

<sup>246</sup> Warner, “Faith Healing”, Discovering Collection Database, PC Study Bible V5.

posits that vernacular expressions “inspire confidence that mother-tongue languages are a receptacle fully capable of mediating the truth of the Gospel”.<sup>247</sup> Absolutely, he cites Pobee to explain this point that “language is more than syntax and morphology; it is a vehicle for assuming the weight of a culture. When language is explicit and elaborate, it adds meaning to the message it carries”.<sup>248</sup> The Gospel is good news; and the good news must bring spiritual enlightenment. In matter of principle, the explanation of the Gospel helps the sinner to repent of his sin, and accept forgiveness. Hermeneutically, among the Ewe sin is “*nuvo*” [*nugbegblē* rotten, rancid, and spoilt]. Among other tribes of Ghana such as the Ga, sin is “*esha*” rotten, rancid, corrupt, evil and spoilt. Also, it is “*boneε*” rotten, rancid, corrupt, evil, and spoilt among the Akan.<sup>249</sup> Conclusively, among all of these tribes, sin smells and tastes unpleasant, and consequently needs to be repented of.

Again, while repentance among the Ewe is “*dzimetotro*” turning your back towards something, among the Ga is “*tsuitsakemɔ*” change of heart; and “*adwensakra*” change of mind among the Akan.<sup>250</sup> All of these translations put together culminate in the relevance and the impact the Gospel message would have on Ghanaian culture.

Since “every culture is not a holy ground, the Gospel should be a liberator from life-denying aspects of culture”,<sup>251</sup> a position which calls for transformation of the ungodly behaviour to align with the right. “These are not rules or principles but a total vision of life, to which we are called to respond with freedom”.<sup>252</sup> The fact that the Gospel must have an impact on unacceptable cultural practices, to respond to the Gospel freely also calls for accepting that one

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<sup>247</sup> Philip T. Laryea, “Biblical Hermeneutics in a New Key: Intercultural Perspectives Arising from a Mother-Tongue Reading of the Scriptures in the Ghanaian Context” *Journal of African Christian Thought*, Vol. 22No. 1 (June 2019), pp. 40-45 Laryea, “Biblical Hermeneutics in a New Key”, p. 40.

<sup>248</sup> John Pobee, *Toward an African Theology* (Nashville: Abington, 1979), p. 23. In Philip T. Laryea, “Biblical Hermeneutics in a New Key”, p. 40.

<sup>249</sup> Laryea, “Biblical Hermeneutics in a New Key”, p. 44.

<sup>250</sup> Laryea, “Biblical Hermeneutics in a New Key”, p. 44.

<sup>251</sup> Kalu, “Gospel, Culture and Mission”, p. 295.

<sup>252</sup> Kalu, “Gospel, Culture and Mission”, p. 288.

has been forgiven and freely justified. This should lead Christians to live according to the biblical principles as taught by Jesus Christ, which substantiates their claim that they are his true believers.<sup>253</sup> This is because “believe in the...Gospel has to shape the minds of those who believe differently so they can come to understand reality differently”.<sup>254</sup> I agree with Bediako because the adherents of the Gospel are distinct people who are to demonstrate particular life qualities. This does not mean that one must lose his or her cultural identity, or gender to become a Christian.<sup>255</sup> This is about total comprehensive view of the Gospel.<sup>256</sup> “Here, a person is not only exposed to the text, they also fully encounter and participate in their own text and context as well”<sup>257</sup> in order to avoid any distorted Gospel message, which is harmful to their spiritual nourishment. Hence, Sanou cites Hiebert that:

There is a need for every Gospel communicator to “master the skill of human exegesis as well as biblical exegesis to meaningfully communicate the Gospel in human context. We need to study the social and cultural systems in which humans live in order to communicate the Gospel in ways the people we serve understand and believe”. Also put the Gospel into human contexts so that it is understood properly but does not become captive to these contexts.<sup>258</sup>

In addition to Hiebert’s assertion, the ideas, beliefs, languages and philosophical thoughts people learn as members of a society are to be taken into consideration. The Gospel has the power to transform culture, especially, to demolish structures that are evil, and plant structures that are godly.

In the light of where Agbadza and Bòbòbò music are engaged in worship by some African churches, it means that the fibre of Christianity is being revitalised through their primal fundamental understanding, which is rooted and manifested in Africa Christianity. Similarly,

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<sup>253</sup> Glen H. Stassen & David P. Gushee, *Kingdom Ethics: Following Jesus in Contemporary Context* (Illinois: InterVarsity, 2003), p. xi.

<sup>254</sup> Bediako, “Gospel and Culture”, p. 11.

<sup>255</sup> Bediako, “Gospel and Culture”, p. 11.

<sup>256</sup> Bediako, “Gospel and Culture”, p. 11.

<sup>257</sup> Laryea, “Biblical Hermeneutics in a New Key”, p. 43.

<sup>258</sup> Paul G. Hiebert, *The Gospel in Human Contexts: Anthropological Exploitations for Contemporary Mission* (Grand Rapids MI: Baker Books, 2009), pp. 12-13.

music is a vehicle that carries the Gospel to transform life predicaments. According to Asamoah-Gyadu, when a committee was established to look into why many were drifting into African Initiated churches (the AICs)? One of the answers was that, “Their worship is appealing, and people take an active part in it and obviously enjoy it”.<sup>259</sup> This is an indication of how African Christians seek to explain their spirituality, which includes the type of songs that invoke the Holy Spirit during their worship to address human issues.

## **Conclusion**

In this chapter, I have briefly looked at some few concepts of indigenous music among the Ewe. Two indigenous (Agbadza and Bobobo) lyrics had been selected and used in this chapter. Based on reasonable moral and theological grounds, the lyrics geared towards love, justice, care taking and communal life. The lyrics depicted the expression of primal spirituality of Africanness. A brief comment on the wonderful activities of the Western missionary enterprise and the factors leading to the concept of the emergence of African Christianity has been included in the work. The study concludes that to express African way of life in worship is not necessarily syncretising different systems of religious beliefs, but the expression of the soundness of Africanness. One interesting fact is that, the cultures of the Bible and Africa primal views share many similarities, and are always about one God. However, we cannot say African and biblical culture are the same just because they look similar. The demonstration of this belief should be based both on Christian revelation and on African cultural values.

Hence, the overarching purpose of the next chapter is to examine the theological thoughts embedded in some selected lyrics of Agbadza and Bobobo music in the ARS and GEC.

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<sup>259</sup> J. Kwabena Asamoah-Gyadu, *African Charismatics: Current Developments within Independent Indigenous Pentecostalism in Ghana* (Leiden: Koninklijke & African Christian Press, 2005), p. 8.

## CHAPTER THREE

### Theological Thoughts on Selected Agbadza and Bobobo Lyrics

#### 3.1. Introduction

Within the African past and heritage, there are shared primal worldviews that provide fundamental ways of knowing and expressing God, which has meaning within an ethnic group. Hence, in the previous chapter, the study tried to examine some concepts of Agbadza and Bobobo music that are central to this research. In the process, the study also recognised primal moral values, the healing nature of music, the emergence of African Christianity, and the impact of the Gospel on unacceptable cultural practices, which calls for transformation of the ungodly behaviour to align with the godly.

This chapter briefly interacts with the inception of the ARS and GEC in Ghana, and the theological thoughts embedded in Agbadza and Bobobo lyrics that are the traces of primal spirituality of engagement with Christian faith by them. The chapter also considers a brief analysis of the lyrics, and finally, Christian mission engagement with Agbadza and Bobobo, which leads to the conclusion of this chapter.

#### 3.2. Theological Thoughts on Selected Agbadza Lyrics of the ARS

It is fascinating to note that, many Ewe churches in Ghana have introduced Agbadza in their churches. Typical among them is the ARS in Ghana. Historical fact reveals that the ARS is an African Initiated/Indigenous Church (AIC) “founded in Ghana around 1945 by Charles Kwabla Nutornuti Wovenu at Tadzewu, in the Volta Region of Ghana, where its Head office is located. Before he founded the ARS, he left Akwatia where he lived for Anyako, the town of his birth in

the Volta Region. He initially affiliated with the Eue Presbyterian Church”,<sup>260</sup> now Evangelical Presbyterian Church (EPC). Though the ARS is considered an AIC church, still there are elements of Presbyterianism that can be found in its worship, for instance, the singing of hymns. Andrew Wall notes that, “The term ‘independent’ must not obscure the fact that many (not all) ‘independent’ churches consciously maintain a missionary legacy”.<sup>261</sup>

After the founder’s conversion to Christianity, he began to experience a spiritual phenomenon that caused him to sing, preach, and pray involuntarily. He formed choirs and prayer cells and also founded a school. It started as a congregation of the EPC and a school at Tadzewu in 1939.<sup>262</sup> Baptised as a Presbyterian, he invited a minister in the area to baptise the souls he had won for Christ. In 1944, Wovenu came into conflict with the EPC over his spiritual practices, as well as the administration of a grant of money from the colonial District Commissioner to the school he founded.<sup>263</sup> Much to his surprise, he was ex-communicated from the EPC, ostensibly, because he had no seminary training and could not do the work of God. Besides, Baeta establishes that it was about non-payment of school fees by schoolchildren and over the holding of special prayer sessions for healing.<sup>264</sup> As a result, he founded the ARS. Hence, there are conjectures and suppositions that, the ARS shares Western missionary background, which is the Bremen missionary enterprise that established the EPC.

With the inspiration Wovenu had, “he adapted African traditions that were not opposed to the worship of God. Hence, from its inception, indigenous songs, African drumming, singing,

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<sup>260</sup> H. D. Klutse, (ed.) “Who was Wovenu?” <https://apostlesrevelationsociety.com/Origins%20of%20ARS> [Accessed on 17-01-2024]

<sup>261</sup> Andrew F. Walls, *The Missionary Movement in Christian History: Studies in the Transmission of Faith* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1996), p. 114.

<sup>262</sup> C. G. Baeta, *Prophetism in Ghana* (London: SMC Press, 1962), p. 79.

<sup>263</sup> H. D. Klutse, (ed.) “Who was Wovenu?” <https://apostlesrevelationsociety.com/Origins%20of%20ARS> [Accessed on 17-01-2024]

<sup>264</sup> Baeta, *Prophetism in Ghana*, in Christian F. W. Gbekor, *From Local to Global* (Accra: SonLife Printing Press, 2019), p. 46.

clothing, languages, and other practices became integral parts of the liturgy of the church”.<sup>265</sup> The ARS liturgy is rich in African imagery and symbolism. It incorporates forms of drums and African musical instruments and songs that are adapted to scriptural lyrics.<sup>266</sup> Komi Hiagbe posits that the reason for such expression is “the deep desire for a self-understanding and contextualisation of the tenets of the faith as received in the continent through the western missionary”.<sup>267</sup> Hence, the ARS’ approach to worship is largely based on expressions of the AICs, as far as its beliefs and practices are concerned. As for the ARS, they distinctively rely heavily on music, such as Agbadza, Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀, and local hymns in their worship services. “Though membership is drawn predominantly from the Ewe ethnic group, the ARS has grown to embrace the Akan and other ethnic groups along the Western coast of Africa and has several international branches”.<sup>268</sup> They use Agbadza and Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀ during the period of praise and worship in church, and at funerals when a Christian dies. These music are also used when they go out to evangelise in the communities and on special occasions. As non-Christians get excited about Agbadza as their local music, the same way the Christians do in the church. The engagement of vernacular lyrics and tunes that are familiar to the worshippers helps them project the creation of a harmonious and healthy cultural diversity. A notable feature of this church is its keen and dominant style of music. One of the branches of the ARS in the Volta Region engages Agbadza music where indigenous songs known as “Akpaluhawo” are also used at funerals.<sup>269</sup> This approach was a unique hybrid of Agbadza and Akpaluhawo Gospel music. Observation reveals that, all of the local musical instruments indicated earlier in Chapter Two, and few contemporary

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<sup>265</sup> Klutse (ed.) “History of the Apostles Revelation Society (ARS) Church” (1994-2023).

<https://apostlesrevelationsociety.com/Origins%20of%20ARS> [Accessed on 17-01-2024]

<sup>266</sup> Klutse, (ed.) “Brief History Of Apostles Revelation Society (ARS) Church” (1994-2023).

<https://apostlesrevelationsociety.com/Origins%20of%20ARS> [Accessed on 17-01-2024]

<sup>267</sup> Komi A. Hiagbe, *Reconciled to Reconcile: An African View of John Calvin’s Doctrine of Salvation* (Zugl: Frankfurt, Peter Lang, 2008), p. 23.

<sup>268</sup> Klutse (ed.) “History of the Apostles Revelation Society (ARS) Church” (1994-2023).

<https://apostlesrevelationsociety.com/Origins%20of%20ARS> [Accessed on 17-01-2024]

<sup>269</sup> Anita Seade, Interview, 16 January 2024, Anyako, Volta Region, Ghana.

musical instruments are engaged in this church. In addition, the lyrics of songs that are sung in this church are composed to conform to Scripture.

Peter Kasenene establishes that, “The expression of Africans’ response to God in their context and experience [is] based on the Scriptures, Christian tradition, and the African heritage”.<sup>270</sup> This means that, the contexts in which the people of “Eve” know God have been transformed and realigned to conform to Scripture, and Christian beliefs and practices that have existed for a long time. Of interest is that most lyrics of these songs reflect the original poetry, which the African creative artists employ to compose their songs. Their informed choices of lyrics show the manner of great thinking, the insight of philosophy that makes way for the delight, which only the vernacular can meaningfully provide.<sup>271</sup> A typical literal translation of Agbadza lyrics of the ARS “Love” church from Ewe into English is as follows:

ARS Love Church’s Agbadza lyrics

*Mawuga ye gblɔe na mi be, hafi miava anyigba sia dzi yenya tame si yeƆo Ɔe mianu;  
Ɖutifafa fe tamee, dzɔgbenyui fe tamee.  
Ebe woayra mi le asime, woayra mi le agble me, woayra mi le futa,  
woayra mi le du me, ne miedogo woayra mi, ne miegbɔ woayra mi,  
Gake amea Ɔewo li, ne nu dze edzi ne wo nɔvi la eve na dɔme nawo kaka.*

*The Great God had told us that, before we came into this world He knew the thought he  
had for us,  
Thought of peace, thought of goodness.  
He said we would be blessed in the market; we would be blessed in the farm,  
We would be blessed at the shore; we would be blessed in the city;  
When we go out we would be blessed, when we come back we would be blessed.  
But there are some, when it is well with their brother, it pains them.*

It is of interest to note that, what qualifies God to be distinct in this lyric is “the Great”. African primal view has informed the composer of this song to identify God as not one of the gods, but “the Great God”. In Ewe *Mawuga* is an expression of the all-sufficiency of God which means “I

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<sup>270</sup> Peter Kasenene, “Ethics in African Theology”, in Simeon O. Ilesanmi, “Inculturation and Liberation: Christian Social Ethics and the African Theology Project” *The Annual of the Society of Christian Ethics*, Vol. 15 (1995), pp. 49-73 (49).

<sup>271</sup> Hugh Tracey, “Behind the Lyrics”, *African Music*, Vol. 3, No. 2 (1963): pp. 17-22 (17).

will be greater.” While *Ma* could be rendered as “I will”, *wu* would be as “be more”, and *ga* would be rendered as “greater”. This corresponds to Geoffrey Parrinder’s definition of God. The lyrics of this song show the effectiveness of the primal mode of communicating God’s message. The background meaning of the lyrics “*Before we came into this world, He knew the thought he had for us, thought of peace, thought of goodness*” is both primal and Scriptural. According to primal principles, Mbiti notes that, “In African societies, the birth of a child is a process which begins long before the child arrives in this world and continues long thereafter. This resonates with the lyrics ‘*Before we came into this world He knew*’. Nature [God] brings the child into the world” with a purpose.<sup>272</sup> It means that the African primal view of childbirth has meaning in the biblical understanding of childbirth. Hence, the lyrics “*Before we came into this world, He knew the thought he had for us*”. God told the Prophet Jeremiah “Before I formed you in the womb, I knew you” (Jer. 1:5). The African by his primal knowledge concludes that human beings are not just born; they are given birth to for reasons known to God alone. Therefore, they believe that others should not become indignant when there are manifestations of God’s purposes in a person’s life. For this reason, the words, “*But there are some when it is well with their brother, it pains them*” are sung. The ideas that, “*He said we would be blessed in the market, farm, at the shore, in the city, when we go out, and when we come back*” are tangible evidence of God’s blessings, which conform to theological beliefs in Deuteronomy 28:3 and 6. The lyrics suggest that both Christians and non-Christians should understand God’s ways and repent, which agrees with what Cragg describes as “the crisis of repentance and faith that makes us Christians”.<sup>273</sup> Another typical literal translation of Agbadza lyrics of the ARS “Joy” church from Eue into English is as follows:

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<sup>272</sup> John. S. Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy* (New Hampshire: Heinemann Educational Books Inc.), 1989), p. 107.

<sup>273</sup> Kenneth Cragg, “Conversion and Convertibility with special reference to Muslims”, in John R.W. Stott & Robert Coote (eds.), *Down to Earth – Studies in Christianity and Culture* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980), p. 194.

ARS Joy Church's Agbadza lyrics

*Nuvɔ fe fetu enye ku, gake Mawu fe amenuveve enye agbe mavɔ (Rom. 6:23).*

*Menye dɔwɔwɔ me wole o (Efes. 2:9).*

*Xɔese ko, mi kple wo afe miakpɔ dɛdɛ (Dɔw. 16:31).*

*Towo atedɔa togbewo aUa; amenuveve matedɔa le gbɔnye o (Is. 54:10).*

*The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life (Rom. 6:23).*

*[It is] Not by works (Eph. 2:9).*

*[Just] Believe...you and your household will be saved, (Acts 16:31).*

*Mountains [shall] be shaken [removed]; hills be moved [shaken]; my unfailing love will not be moved [from you] (Is. 54:10). (in brackets by researcher)*

An intent examination reveals that there are significant theological thoughts embedded in the lyrics of this Agbadza song of the ARS singing group. “*The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life*” is a direct quote from Romans 6:23. A sincere remarkable note is that, the African understands sin as an action that is against religious rules and is considered an offence against God. Ansah notes that, there are laws, regulations, customs, ritual observations, beliefs, and taboos that govern the behaviour and life of the people that constitute a code of conduct preserved in oral tradition.<sup>274</sup> Therefore, this primal moral observation reveals that, African spirituality enables Africans to understand that God detests sin, which is payable after death.

The fact that Africans believe there is life and death, and the hereafter;<sup>275</sup> they therefore earnestly seek that life. Their special delight in spiritual solutions to life issues often prompts the composers to what type of songs to compose. Religious problems or situations that make things more difficult to understand and deal with are constantly expressed in public, perhaps because public confession has a therapeutic effect of healing in it.<sup>276</sup> They hereby confirm that eternal salvation is “[*It is*] *Not by works*” (Eph. 2:9). The lyrics entreat everyone to “[*Just*] *Believe...you and your household will be saved*” (Acts 16:31). To believe is to be sure that something is definitely true or possible. This agrees with what Cragg describes as “integrity in conversion, a

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<sup>274</sup> John K. Ansah, *Taboos in Ghana: The Ethical Wisdom of our Fathers* (Staylor Verlag, Wort Werk. Neitetal. 1988), p. 258.

<sup>275</sup> Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy*, p. 145.

<sup>276</sup> Tracey, “Behind the Lyrics”, p. 20.

unity of self in which ones past is genuinely integrated into present commitment”.<sup>277</sup> A promise to let your past guide you to believe in something or behave in a particular way in the future. This is African creative thinking about spirituality. It is a theologically sound statements of faith lyrics, hence, the statement “*Mountains [shall] be shaken [removed]; hills be moved [shaken]; my unfailing love will not be moved [from you]*” (Is. 54:10). They express their trust and spirituality by believing that mountains are likely to be shaken by earthquakes and be removed, but the promises of God are never broken by the shock of any event. The combination of God’s words and his love addressed to people are forms of theological communication, that provides rational grounds for faith in Christ in every turbulent situation.

### **3.3. Theological Thoughts on Selected Agbadza Lyrics of the GEC**

The GEC is one of the Ghanaian Christian churches established in 1847 by the Bremen missionaries among the Ewe speaking people of Ghana. Nonetheless, in 1991, there were doctrinal, financial, and constitutional issues in the EPC, a situation that eventually developed into the schism in the EPC. As a result, this faction took the name EPC of Ghana, which was changed to Global Evangelical Church (GEC) on 3rd May 2003. It is an Evangelical and neo-Pentecostal church, and therefore, has a western missionary background. As it is believed by most evangelical churches that the Gospel of Jesus Christ is the power of God for transformation of human life, the GEC also see it as such and as her crucial responsibility. This is because the GEC believes that salvation comes through the finished work done by Jesus Christ on the Cross. Again, it accepts that the Bible is flawless and without mistakes. Its inerrancy, therefore, is the final authority of the church. Hence, the GEC is committed to the propagation of the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ as a means of bringing the saving knowledge of Jesus Christ to people, and

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<sup>277</sup> Cragg, “Conversion and Convertibility with special reference to Muslims”, in John R.W. Stott & Robert Coote (eds.), *Down to Earth – Studies in Christianity and Culture* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980), p. 194.

bringing them to the fellowship of the church. The GEC has the duty to develop the spiritual life of her members, and to teach ethical principles of holiness, which are based on the teachings of the Bible to her members. The church believes that conversion is personal, and each individual needs to face and deal with it in his or her lifetime.<sup>278</sup>

From the onset when the Bremen missionaries linguistically introduce the Ewe language writing, songs that are sung in worship service are hymns written in Ewe. Nevertheless, when the church was growing and many were enlightened, the church shifted to Pentecostal way of worship where spiritual gifts are demonstrated. Local music was introduced into the church and singing groups were emerged whose songs were sung as local musical instruments were employed.

The GEC is Pentecostal in its expression of worship, and believes in the fruit and gifts of the Holy Spirit in all of its branches in Ghana and many parts of the world. In addition, just as primal expressions of indigenous songs can be identified with many African churches such as Pentecostal churches, the GEC also identifies music, which includes singing indigenous songs that are metamorphosed into lyrics that are biblical as one of its core values.<sup>279</sup> A number of detailed examples are Agbadza, Bɔbɔbɔ, contemporary music, and both English and Ewe hymns. One distinctive point of departure between the two denominations (ARS and GEC) is that while the ARS “adopted aspects of Old Testament worship akin to African religious tradition such as religious feasts and animal sacrifices as a means of obtaining God’s favour”,<sup>280</sup> the GEC does not involve rituals that cannot be found in the New Testament in Christian worship.

The GEC members sing to show that Christ has redeemed and accepted them as his followers. Though the predominant songs are sung in Ewe, they are translated into other languages that are culturally understandable. This familial form of engaging vernacular lyrics

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<sup>278</sup> Global Evangelical Church. *Corporate Identity* (Accra: Global Evangelical Press, 2007), p. 4.

<sup>279</sup> Global Evangelical Church. *Corporate Identity*, p. 4

<sup>280</sup> Hiagbe, *Reconciled to Reconcile*, p. 23.

enables them to enjoy the music “whether in meek supplication, in holy adoration, or in hearty praise of the one who is, by faith, their Lord and Saviour”.<sup>281</sup> Notwithstanding the translation of songs into other languages, they ensure that the songs are translated to reflect what it means in the Ewe. One danger is to interpret the African primal spirituality of the Ewe unintelligibly because one is unrelated to their African world of thought. To avoid the danger of misinterpretation, it requires that one has a deep understanding of African culture. Galadima quoted Idowu that, “Though Africans have embraced Christianity, they are still Africans; therefore, they have a strong desire to maintain their identity as Africans, though Christians”.<sup>282</sup> This is similar to the Ewe proverb that says, *Kpɔgbalē xoxo tsi tsiɔbe tsiɔfo, gake ɲɔɲɔea meɔ o*, which literally means in English, “The old tiger skin had been beaten by the rain, but did not lose its spotted nature”. Again, observation reveals that, the local musical instruments mentioned earlier in Chapter two are engaged in the church worship. In addition, the lyrics of the songs are metamorphosed into songs that conform to Scripture. Idowu establishes that, churches need to take account “of their own musical and cultic traditions, and adapting their own life to the Nigerian [Ghanaian] situation in such a way that it reflects both the universal and the local”.<sup>283</sup> The Ghanaian case is similar to those of Nigerians.

A literal translation of Agbadza lyrics of the GEC Global Chapel from Ewe into English is as follows:

GEC Global Chapel’s Agbadza lyrics  
*Afetɔ Yesue, vaɔɔem kaba, (dzi zi eve)*  
*Anyigba le dzo le ge hallelujah,*  
*Afetɔ Yesue vaɔɔem kaba.*

*Lord Jesus, come and rescue me quickly, (repeat twice)*

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<sup>281</sup> Lazarus Nnanyelu Ekwueme, “African Music in Christian Liturgy: The Igbo Experiment”, *African Music*, Vol. 5, No. 3 (1973/1974): pp. 12-33 (12).

<sup>282</sup> Bulus Galadima, (Ed) “Evaluation of the Theology of Bolaji Idowu”, *African Journal of Evangelical Theology*, Vol. 20, No. 2 (2001), pp. 105-131 (108).

<sup>283</sup> Bolaji Idowu, “Towards an Indigenous Church”, *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, Vol. 5, No. 1 (May 1967), pp. 160-161 (161).

*The earth will catch fire, hallelujah,  
Lord Jesus, come and rescue me quickly.*

There are great theological thoughts that can derive from these Agbadza lyrics, “*Lord Jesus, come and rescue me quickly*”. Firstly, it sends a notice to the hearers that one is in a dangerous situation, and therefore, needs assistance, a Deliverer, Rescuer or a Saviour. Secondly, the situation demands that someone with the capability to rescue should come to his or her aid. The lyrics refer to a person who is capable by name “*Lord Jesus*”, which is the Greek form of the Hebrew name Joshua. The theological meaning of the name Jesus is “the Lord Saves”. Just as Joshua had led Israelites into the Promise Land, so Jesus would lead his people into heaven – eternal life.<sup>284</sup> According to Walls, the introduction of the Christian God with Jesus Christ as the only Saviour was therefore no “strange” doctrine to the African.<sup>285</sup>

Again, Jesus has been addressed as Lord. To address someone as “Lord” is one of the traces of the primal spirituality of indigenous songs in African Christianity this study is analysing. This means that the title “Lord” is not strange to the African.

It is also found in Scripture that, “And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins” (Matt. 1:21). This shows that God’s instruction comes to his people when they are at a loss and need a saviour. In addition, the GEC’s Agbadza song depicts an earnest request for salvation from this world because “*The earth will catch fire*” as exhibited in the lyrics. This is because the prophet Malachi prophesied that, “Surely the day is coming, it will burn like a furnace. All the arrogant and every evildoer will be stubble, and the day that is coming will set them on fire”, says the Lord Almighty (Mal. 4:1). For them, the belief is that the earth will one day be burned by fire. Mbiti who did his research among Africans asserts that, “A few believe that God gets angry and punishes people; and the apparent separation of God from men is generally attributed to his being grieved by human

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<sup>284</sup> Life Application Study Bible (Michigan: Zondervan, Grand Rapids, 2011), p. 1987.

<sup>285</sup> Walls, *The Cross-Cultural Process in Christian History*, p. 122.

deeds”.<sup>286</sup> Nevertheless, the lyrics connote that there is a way of escape; hence, the call for a Saviour or salvation that, *Jesus, come and save me quickly*.

Another typical literal translation of Agbadza lyrics of the GEC Mercy chapel from Ewe into English is as follows:

GEC Mercy Chapel’s Agbadza lyrics

*Yesue do dzo aɔe, dzo sia wodoa amea ɔeke mateɔu atsi o, (dzi zi ene)*  
*Nɔviwo, miva, miva midzo miayi Yesu gbɔ, miawɔ dɔ na Yesu,*  
*Dzika ɔeke matso miafo o, Mawu fe dzoa dzoa ɔe wonye,*  
*Elea nu ɔusi kple mia, ne ele nu amea ɔeke mexɔne esi o,*  
*Eyɔdɔ dɔnɔwo keɔ, Egba kpe sesewo gudugudu,*  
*Yata mikafu Mawu ɔe eta he,*  
*Yesue do dzo aɔe, dzo a wodoa amea ɔeke mateɔu atsi o,*

*Jesus had set fire; the fire he set no one can quench it, (repeat four times)*  
*Brethren, come, let us go to Jesus; so we can work for Jesus,*  
*Our hearts will not be troubled; God’s fire is a peculiar fire,*  
*He grasps on both right and left, when he grasps no one can take it from his hand,*  
*He heals all the sick; He breaks all the hard rocks,*  
*Therefore, praise God for it,*  
*Jesus had set fire; the fire he set no one can quench it.*

The above lyrics are some of the favourite songs of GEC Bethel Revival Choir in Accra. Their Agbadza music has gone viral in the Ghanaian society. The dancers usually use horsetails “Sɔsike” in Ewe as indicated in Chapter two to perform or display their styles in this dance. Quickly the composer points to a fire Jesus has set as a peculiar one. The question is how could the Saviour who had just been called upon to rescue those who had been engulfed in fire, set one himself that no one could quench? The shocking aspect is *the fire he set no one can quench it*. Perhaps something might have attracted the setting of the fire. Though the Lord Jesus had never set a fire to consume anyone, this lyrics is an analogous to the expression of historical event that, *“Jesus had set fire; the fire he set no one can quench it”*. To provide a comprehensive literal explanation, fire is an uncontrollable flame that destroys and damages things. Hence, it corresponds to God’s warning about the danger of disobedience and said, “... lest

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<sup>286</sup> Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy*, p. 49.

My fury come forth like fire, and burn so that no one can quench it, Because of the evil of your doings” (Jer. 4:4). And also, “But if you will not heed me....then I will kindle a fire in its gates, and it shall devour the palaces of Jerusalem, and it shall not be quenched” (Jer. 17:27). Simply put, this means disobedience attracts judgement and destruction, in this case by fire. This agrees with Quarcoopome that, experience soon teaches one what could be done and what must be avoided. For example, after burning one’s fingers in the present, it becomes a part of one’s future character to avoid putting the finger into a fire. It is said, “Once beaten; twice shy.” Thus experience, the best teacher, teaches the fear of God and morality.<sup>287</sup>

The lyrics also exhibit primal spirituality in African Christianity when Mbiti also identifies two types of “holy fire a number of people keep for religious purposes. They light the holy fire and carry it to their homes with the belief that it symbolises the process of death and resurrection”.<sup>288</sup> He notes that, “A good number of people look upon lightning as God’s instrument by means of which he punishes wrong doers or accomplishes his intentions”.<sup>289</sup> Again, fire is a sign of judgement. The fact is that, “It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God” (Heb. 10:31). Because “*He grasps on both right and left, when he grasps no one can take it from his hand*” as the composer has put it. The composer offers examples of experiential approaches to learning the fear of God, and at the same time extending an invitation to the God who loves. This lyric also reveals a sense of sharing Christian and social life experiences with others. Hence, the call to others that, “*Brethren, come, let us go to Jesus; he heals all the sick*”. This agrees with John Taylor’s perceptions on some fundamental tenets of theology that enable Africans to search for God and find him.<sup>290</sup> Now the composer invites members of the same family, especially, the religious group to “go to Jesus”. The purpose is to

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<sup>287</sup> T. N. O. Quarcoopome, *West African Traditional Religion* (Ibadan: African University Press, 1981), p. 160.

<sup>288</sup> Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy*, p. 53.

<sup>289</sup> Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy*, p. 56.

<sup>290</sup> John V. Taylor, *The Primal Vision, Christian Presence amid African Religion* (London: SCM Press, 1963), p. 196.

work for him fearlessly without being worried or wasting their time, because he heals all the sick based on a strong belief in Jesus that, he promised healing to all as recorded in Mark 16:18.

Again, true fellowship is identical with these lyrics as long as the singers did so out of a sense of liberation, and direct relationship with God and one another with a tender Christocentric devotion. Thus, Christ centred worship and fellowship. The lyrics testifies to the acts and strength of God that, “*He breaks all the hard rocks*”. Thus, when ordinary powers of nature have failed, God has made bare his arm, and people must conclude that nothing is impossible with him. This agrees with Costen that, there are shared primal worldviews that provide fundamental ways of knowing and expressing God, because humans live in a religious world.<sup>291</sup> For them, they believe that God is able to do the seemingly impossible task.

### 3.4. Theological Thoughts on Selected Bɔbɔbɔ Lyrics of the ARS

Another pertinent cultural music with its theological thought embedded in its lyrics the study seeks to unravel is Bɔbɔbɔ music. Where Evangelical and Presbyterian hymns are not sung, the ARS members engage in Bɔbɔbɔ music also to worship God. This type of music is employed in many branches of this church. There is a historical approach to music, which is significant in African Christianity of which the ARS is part. A typical example of Bɔbɔbɔ lyrics of the ARS “Love” church, which is occasionally sung in Ewe and its English translation, is as follows:

ARS Love Church’s Bɔbɔbɔ lyrics

*Ne mie ɔfo Kanaan, miadro agba ɔfi atutu aɔfatsi na mia nɔewo, (dzi zi eve)*

*O Mose, O Mose, kplɔ Israelviwo yi Kanaan,*

*Ne mie ɔfo Kanaan, miadro agba ɔfi, miawɔ atu na mia nɔewo.*

*When we have come to Canaan, we will lower our luggage and wipe each other’s tears, (repeat twice)*

*O Moses, O Moses, lead the Israelites to Canaan,*

*When we have come to Canaan, we will lower our luggage; hug each other.*

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<sup>291</sup> Melva Wilson Costen, *African American Christian Worship* (Nashville: Abingdom Press, 1993), p. 1.

To the African composer, no one determines the words he finds fit to set as the lyrics of his music unless he willingly accepts the social pressures.<sup>292</sup> The rational grounds provided for the lyrics are that it reminds Christians of their pilgrimage to heaven. These lyrics refer to the exodus of the Israelites from Egypt to the Promised Land Canaan. The Promised Land is a flourished land described in Scripture as a “land flowing with milk and honey” (Ex. 3:8). Hence, the lyrics, “*When we have come to Canaan, we will lower our luggage; hug each other*” fits a particular occasion. Here we must note that the theological thoughts embedded in these lyrics are the confirmation to Abraham and his seed of those promises that, in due time Canaan would be theirs. Canaan would be theirs also means that the descendants of Abraham looked further to another promised Canaan in the future, which is heaven they must still be in anticipation of receiving. In its historical context, Moses was the one God chose to lead them to the land of Canaan, for the reason they call upon him, “*O Moses, O Moses, lead the Israelites to Canaan. When we have come to Canaan, we will lower our luggage; hug each other.*” Those whom God delivers out of a spiritual Egypt, he will bring to a heavenly Canaan. The lyric also notes the difficulties and sufferings that are part of the pilgrimage to Canaan, after which they would agree to live a communal life, warmly embrace and eagerly accept one another.

According to Joshua Kudadjie and Robert Aboagye-Mensah, Israel as a chosen nation, has a history, theology and ethics. Historically, their ancestor Abraham was called to leave his country and relatives. Theologically, they are to worship God alone; ethically, “Israel must reflect the nature and character of a holy God. Geographically, Israel is in the world, but because of her history, theology, and ethics she is not of the world”.<sup>293</sup> The Christian community is also called out. All that has been said of Israel noted in the Old Testament applies to the Christian

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<sup>292</sup> Tracey, “Behind the Lyrics”, p. 17.

<sup>293</sup> Joshua N. Kudadjie and Robert K. Aboagye-Mensah. *Christian Social Ethics* (Accra: Asempa Publishers, 1992), p. 4.

community. The common ground is that, the church has inherited the history and theology of Israel, which lead to their ethical and moral responsibilities.

Another typical literal translation of Bòbòbò lyrics of the ARS “Joy” church from Ewe into English is as follows:

ARS Joy Church’s Bòbòbò lyrics

*Teḏe Mawua ŋu, teḏe Mawua ŋu, teḏe ŋu haḏi nanya alesi wo le, (dzi zi eve)  
Efe ŋuse gale etɔwo me, efe gbɔgbɔ gale etɔwo zam,  
Dodzi ḏe ŋu ko aḏewo, akpɔ tawo le wo mɔwo keŋ dzi.*

*Get close to God, get close to God, get close to him then you will know who he is, (repeat twice)*

*His power is in those who are his; his Spirit is still using his own,  
Trust him he will deliver you, care for you in all your ways.*

This is an instructional song on how to get close to God, hence the lyrics, “*Get close to God, get close to God, get close to him, then, you will know who he is*”. The theological thought hidden in these lyrics are persuasive and therefore missionary. It persuades others to accept or get close to God for them to know who and what his nature is. Africans believe that their life issues are attributable to God’s providential care. In the Scriptures, Jesus gave a public invitation to his hearers and said, “Come to me all who labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest” (Matt. 11:28). Bediako cited Baeta in his literature and said, “Baeta saw the ‘spiritual’ churches as having taken a great ‘positive’ step, the equivalent, in the apostle Paul’s words, of ‘turning to God from idols, to serve a living and true God’”.<sup>294</sup> If an attempt in this direction is taken, then, they could be empowered by God, because “*His power is in those who are his; his Spirit is still using his own*”. This provides common grounds for faith in God to access his Spirit. This calls for trust and one’s dependent on his providential care; hence, the call to “*Trust him, he will deliver you, care for you in all your ways*”. It means God does not think that his children are old enough to take care of themselves.

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<sup>294</sup> Kwame Bediako, *Christianity in Africa: The Renewal of a Non-Western Religion* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1995), p. 63.

### 3.5. Theological Thoughts on Selected Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀ Lyrics of the GEC

What attracts considerable attention is that while some churches engage Agbadza in their worship, others engage Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀ which have come to dominate public worship. Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀ songs resonate with their expression of African spirituality and serve as grounds for those who get excited as indicated in Chapter one. A typical example of the lyrics of Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀ music of the GEC “Global” chapel, which is mostly sung in Ewe at church and its English translation, is as follows:

GEC Global Chapel’s Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀ lyrics

*Wò Yesu ko nɔ nye dzi me (Yoh. 14:20).*

*L’agbe kple ku me ke!*

*Ɖutikɔkɔe katã nanye nye dela Yesu tɔ!*

*Nuvɔ gbe, si medze si la, naganɔ menye o;*

*Elabe ewua Gbɔgbɔ si Mawu tsɔ de menye (GEC Ewe Hadzibalē 446 lia).*

*You, Jesus only may in-dwell my heart (Jn. 14:20).*

*In life and death!*

*All glory and honour unto my Saviour Jesus Christ!*

*The sinful life I knew never should dwell in me;*

*It quenches the Spirit of the Lord that was implanted in me. (GEC Hymnal 446).*

Theologically, for Jesus to come into someone’s heart is to accept to follow him and live for him. Upon accepting to follow Jesus as a challenge, one comes to realise that it leads him to a higher moral standard of living, as well as to a thrilling, excited and happy spiritual pilgrimage. The lyrics have meaning in Jesus’ statement that “on that day you will realise that I am in my Father, and you are in me, and I am in you” (Jn. 14:20). It calls for self-surrendering, “*You, Jesus only may in-dwell my heart. In life and death!*”<sup>295</sup> This is what the composer of this song seeks to do because we do not have to know the future in order to have faith in God; we have to faith in God to know and be secure about the future. The lyrics talk about the glory that should be given to Jesus Christ as the the Saviour. Hence, *all glory and honour unto my Saviour Jesus Christ*. The glory belongs to God in Jesus Christ and is still to be reflected by the church and those who

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<sup>295</sup> Global Evangelical Hymnal, Hymn 446.

suffer with Christ (Rom. 15:9). The object of the church and individuals is to see that the world acknowledges the glory, which is God's.<sup>296</sup> The sort of implicit theology embedded in the lyrics can become a liberating strength when the composer says, "*The sinful life I knew never should dwell in me*". Of interest is the fact that the African is notoriously spiritual, and primal views help him to understand that spirits live in people; hence, in Christianity, sinful life *quenches the Spirit of the Lord*.

The final typical literal translation of Bobobo lyrics of the GEC "Mercy" Chapel from Eue the original language into English is as follows:

GEC Mercy Chapel's Bobobo lyrics

*Dodzi, dodzi xɔsetɔ, Ne aUa la sese ha la,  
Dziɖula zuge nala, wo Mawu ade dziwo.  
Dodzi, dodzi xɔsetɔ, Ne aUa la sese ha la,  
Dziɖula zuge nala, wo Mawu ade dziwo* (GEC Eue Hadzidzi 387)

*Endure, endure believer, even if the battle is severe,  
Victor you will become, your God will support you.  
Endure, endure believer, even if the battle is severe,  
Victor you will become, your God will support you.* (Evangelical hymn 387)

One thing which is worthy of note is that the African sees the world as a spiritual battlefield because it is full of spirits. Believer in this context refers to a Christian or follower of Christ. Christians, therefore, may have originally been thought of as "soldiers of Christ", or "the household of Christ".<sup>297</sup> When one accepts Christ as the Saviour, he or she goes through the same spiritual world. This primal knowledge has meaning in what apostle Paul said in Ephesians 6:12. It says, "For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms". Hence, the lyrics of this songs encourages one to *endure even if the battle is severe, victor you will become, your God will support you*. Battle is a fight between opposing

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<sup>296</sup> I. Howard Marshall, A. R. Millard, J. I. Packer & D. J. Wiseman, *New Bible Dictionary*, Third Ed. (Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 1996), p. 415.

<sup>297</sup> I. Howard Marshall, A. R. Millard, J. I. Packer & D. J. Wiseman, *New Bible Dictionary*, Third Ed., p. 184.

armies, especially, one that is part of a larger war. The primary biblical assertion is that victory belongs to God. This is succinctly expressed in the phrase “the battle is the Lord’s (1 Sam. 17:47). It means the people of God experience victory in God’s victory by faith.<sup>298</sup> The various theological views explained above provided common grounds for the engagement between Christian faith and African primal views. They all both ARS and GEC members sing and express their Africanness as they clap, sing, and praise.

### **3.6. A Comparative Study on Agbadza and Bɔbɔbɔ of the ARS and GEC**

This is not a type of statistical analysis, rather a qualitative comparison. The coherence of Agbadza and Bɔbɔbɔ music of the ARS and GEC is that, their members are united because they share common aims, qualities, or beliefs of these churches. Though there are western-influenced local music, there are also sounds, instruments, and voices that include all the locally based Ghanaian composed church music.<sup>299</sup> Here, it could be argued that the Ewe Christians perceive either Agbadza or Bɔbɔbɔ, which is locally, based music as a connecting link between themselves and God, and one another as mentioned earlier. The explanations given so far have not indicated much divergent views; rather they are all on a mission of vital importance to African Christian faith within the ARS and GEC. The music assists them to express their communal relations and concern for one another. It contributes a sense of fellowship with God and one another. This resonates with Scripture where Apostle Paul gives a piece of advice that, Christians have to speak to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, and make melody in the heart to the Lord (Eph. 5:19).

Some distinguishing analytical features this study unravels are the unity and correlation of the lyrics of Agbadza and Bɔbɔbɔ music of the ARS and GEC. It has been recognised that

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<sup>298</sup> Marshall, Millard, Packer and Wiseman, *New Bible Dictionary*, Third Edition, p. 1224.

<sup>299</sup> E. M. Edet, “Music in Nigeria”, *African Music*, Vol. 3, No. 3 (1964), pp. 111-113 (111).

African primal views have informed the composers of the songs to identify the place of God in their lyrics. While some Agbadza lyrics identified God as a Saviour who has a thought of goodness, others referred to Jesus as one who gives eternal life and needs to be trusted. The analysis also reveals that these people wanted to work for God because he promised healing, since life is very important to them. Nevertheless, his goodness also allows him to judge the disobedient children. Some Bobobo lyrics communicate a sense of pilgrimage to a destination, which is “Canaan” or heaven where the God they worship dwells. The theological thought behind this song is that, African Christians need to cultivate positive approach to life. They have to be mindful of their ultimate destination and endeavour to build effective relationship with God and others in order to get there. Notwithstanding the effective relationships, Africans see the world as a spiritual battlefield because they struggle against spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. Hence, God gives his Spirit to those who get close to him. While other Bobobo lyrics are about how one should dedicate himself or herself to Jesus and detest sin so that the Spirit would not quench, still others encourage enduring hardships and sufferings, and overcoming them. The distinctive features of the lyrics are the expressions of Africanness in Christian worship or primal mode of worship in African Christianity.

What is readily distinguishable is that, as these music are engaged, there are expressions of Africanness in the ARS and GEC congregations. The fundamental basis of the performance and expressions of their Africanness in the churches is scriptural. This is because the expressions – clap, sing, and praise, which are done ordinarily, also occur in a number of places in Scripture. The African understands that the Scriptures allow that worshippers should clap their hands, sing and play drums and other musical instruments in worship. This is because Psalm 47:1 says “O clap your hands, all you people”. Again, Psalm 150 enjoins believers to praise God with trumpets, dancing, cymbals and various kinds of musical instruments. All of these show “the

priority of the Bible as a source for Christology”.<sup>300</sup> These are some of the Christological features. Hence, Christ himself lived his life within a cultural setting, and when he sang a hymn in Matthew 26:30, he did not violate the Scriptures.

The life and worship of indigenous communities demonstrate their identity and theology as important formative factors in theological reconstruction. This shows how ordinary people understand the identity and meaning of Christ.<sup>301</sup> Bediako asserts that, “This is what produced a theology of liberation in the African setting”.<sup>302</sup> It means African Christian worship, as a human expression of the encounter with the Father of Jesus Christ must always be local. This is because churches are mostly established at different locations, and made up of diverse cultures as each attempts to express their faith from their own African past, or cultural heritage. In this way, they can worship in their own way to free themselves from the negation of Christ, and rather allow Christ to have effect on their lives.

Within the African past, there are shared primal worldviews that provide fundamental ways of knowing and expressing God. The principal argument is about the way we generally interpret human rhythmic movement, especially, the motions or gestures in music and dance. The fact is that, these are bound to ethnic groups and their experiences. Our cultural background contributes to the way we worship. Elochukwu Uzukwu establishes that, “Our praise, thanksgiving, adoration or measured ritual dance, which display the assembled body of worshippers before God have meaning within an ethnic group”.<sup>303</sup> In practice, this is culturally relative to the various ethnic music groups in Ghanaian churches. The Anlo-Ewe, Evedome, Ga, Basare, Kokomba, Akan, Europeans, and Asians among others have their own ways of worship in their churches. The musical instruments and songs that are played and sung among these

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<sup>300</sup> Kenneth R. Ross, “Current Christological Trends in Northern Malawi”, *Journal of Religion in Africa*, Vol. 27, Fasc. 2 (May 1997), pp. 160-176 (162).

<sup>301</sup> Ross, “Current Christological Trends in Northern Malawi”, p. 162.

<sup>302</sup> Kwame Bediako, “Understanding African Theology in the 20th century”, *Themelios*, Vol. 20, No. 1 (October 1994), pp. 14-19(14).

<sup>303</sup> Elochukwu Uzukwu, *Liturgy, Truly Christian Truly African* (Eldoret: Gaba Publications, 1982), p. ix.

ethnic groups are relative to them. This means that the Anlo-Ewe music and dance would look strange to the Kokomba; likewise to other ethnic groups, and vice versa. For this reason, it is argued that Christianity has to be contextual, and therefore, we can have African Christianity. We can also have Ghana Christianity, and so forth. Of interest also is the fact that, Christianity in Africa and other nations could be different, but the core, which is Jesus, remains the same.

Hence, local music is mostly employed in many Pentecostal and charismatic churches in Ghana, of which mainline churches are no exception. Typical among them is Agbadza or Bobobo music in Ghana. Humans are so designed that without worship, they are empty. Usually, in the rural areas when a new church is planted, the available local musical instruments are used to worship. They use those local musical instruments to go on evangelism. This is an engagement between Christian faith and African spirituality.

### **3.7. The Engagement between Christian Mission and Agbadza/Bobobo Music**

The fact that theology without a mission is empty, theology must take a holistic approach to mission. For this reason, the tool for mission calls for indigenous or cultural tools such as local language, clothing, drums, songs and dancing of which Agbadza and Bobobo music are part. In addition, rhythmical clapping, maracas, and rattles, among others are known and used among Africans to worship God. This tells us that Christianity cannot exist in a cultural vacuum; hence, any claim to preach the “pure Gospel” is an elaborate pretence. This is because Christians are necessarily products of their cultures.

According to Longman Dictionary, a mission is an important job that someone has been given to do, especially when they are sent to another place or locality. It is also the purpose or the most important aim of an organization, or the church. Therefore, the Christian mission is the most important aim of the church. The process by which African theology is currently working

with missions becomes a necessary situation because theology cannot exist without a mission. Put differently, theology must be missionary concurrently.<sup>304</sup> This agrees with David Bosch, Kirk, and Martin Kähler, who establish that “mission is the mother of theology”.<sup>305</sup> This invites the interest of many as to how Christians consider particular opinion about divine access, in official theological reflection or in religious practices. It calls for the importance of theology in understanding African Christianity. Kollman cited Kalu who discerns continuities in African Christianity, and therefore, emphasises African initiatives in Christian creativity.<sup>306</sup> This theologically grounded spirituality, a mode of approaching African Christianity is of vital importance to the expression of Africanness in the Christian mission. Africans facing missionary evangelisation have selectively appropriated the new message and found possibilities for a creative agency amid constraint.<sup>307</sup> Though there are things that limit the freedom of missions so they cannot do what they supposed to do. This agrees with Yohannan’s strong statement that,

There is a distance between African academic discourses on missions and the actual engagement of the local church in missions. It means part of the African academic discourse towards this growth is rarely underscored because it appears that an ideological chasm exists between its discourses and the actual missionary activities on the African continent. Interestingly, the conversions are not the product of the professional discourses of her intellectuals but the product of lay and non-academic persons who seek to assert the simple message of the New Testament church that “only Jesus saves”. Around the world today, the Holy Spirit is breaking over Asian and African nations, raising up a new army of missionaries. These humble, obscure pioneers of the Gospel are taking up the banner of the cross where colonial-era missions left off.<sup>308</sup>

It is obvious that the mission gap as identified by Yohannan has been what some African churches seek to fill by introducing primal modes of worship hence the term African

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<sup>304</sup> J. A. Kirk, *What is Mission? Theological Explorations* (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 2002), p. 11.

<sup>305</sup> David J. Bosch, *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1991), p. 16.

<sup>306</sup> Ogbu Kalu, (ed.) *African Christianity: An African Story* (Pretoria: Department of Church History, University of Pretoria, 2005), in Paul Kollman, “Classifying African Christianities, Part Two: The Anthropology of Christianity and Generations of African Christians”, *Journal of Religion in Africa*, Vol. 40, Fasc. 2 (2010), pp. 118-148 (120).

<sup>307</sup> Paul Kollman, “Classifying African Christianities, Part Two” : The Anthropology of Christianity and Generations of African Christians”, *Journal of Religion in Africa*, Vol. 40, Fasc. 2 (2010), pp. 118-148 (126).

<sup>308</sup> K. P. Yohannan, *Revolution in World Missions* (Carrollton, TX: Golden Trail Court, GFA Books, 2003), p. 17.

Christianity. For him, the professional discussions of the intellectuals do not capture the actual engagement of missions. Decisively, the Christian mission denotes the instruction of Jesus Christ to “go, make disciples of all nations” (Matt. 28:19a). Since all nations include all cultures and tribes, the approach must consider the Christian mission as a whole. The fact that the Christian mission is akin to Gospel engagement with cultural issues, such as Agbadza and Bòbòbò music, the churches in Africa need to cherish their primal mode of Christianity.

At the other end of the spectrum raises the concern for how primal elements of spirituality will manifest themselves within the African Christian faith. Welbourn contributes to Mbiti’s essay and posits that, Africans hold religious beliefs, which are similar to biblical ideas.<sup>309</sup> For instance, Africans believe it is possible to encounter the Spirit power through music, which is therefore in many ways akin to biblical beliefs. A typical of this biblical belief is when Elisha wanted to seek God’s instruction, and asked that a musician be brought to him, and “when the musician was playing, the hand of the Lord was on him” (2 Kg. 3:15). This is an indication of how African Christians seek to explain their spirituality for the greater good of their society.

Richard Niebuhr states that “our definitions of Jesus are inadequate because they do not fully capture His totality since they are culturally conditioned”.<sup>310</sup> Hence, Gaisie asserts that, “Who Jesus Christ is, or becomes to us reflects our level of response to him”.<sup>311</sup> On a more serious note, this means that the amount of knowledge one has about Christ is the determinant of the level of one’s spirituality. This reveals the African spiritual thought about God and translates it into practical thought as seen in Agbadza and Bòbòbò music. This spiritual thought as revealed when cultural music is employed to worship God is also akin to the African spirituality, which demonstrates their indepth knowledge of God.

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<sup>309</sup> F. B. Welbourn, “Concepts of God in Africa by John S. Mbiti”, *Journal of Religion in Africa*, Vol. 4, No. 3 (1971 - 1972): 226-227 (227). Accessed 14 September 2022.

<sup>310</sup> H. Richard Niebuhr, *Christ and Culture* (New York: Harper and Row, 1951), p. 14.

<sup>311</sup> Rudolf K. Gaisie, “New Horizons in African Theology”, *Journal of African Christian Thought*, Vol. 19, No. 1 (June 2016), pp. 4-18 (4).

For Costen, in most African societies, the perception is that humans live in a religious universe.<sup>312</sup> This has been the impetus for them to have an affinity for worship through singing and dancing culturally. Generally, in Christianity worship comprises praise, adoration, thanksgiving, and petition directed towards God through actions and attitudes as part of the Christian mission. Uzukwu notes that, worship is the “*raison d’être*” of the early church’s theology. *Raison d’être* is the reason why theology and worship exist, and why Christians worship.<sup>313</sup> John Piper establishes that worship is the fuel of missions. Christian worship includes singing publicly to God in church or privately. Christian worship pleases the heart of God no matter the location or how many are involved. He argues that, “Churches that are not centred on the exaltation of the majesty and beauty of God will scarcely kindle a fervent desire to ‘declare his glory among the nations’ (Ps. 96:3)” as one worship him.<sup>314</sup> The fact that worship is ultimate; it is the greatest and underlying reality when all other things will be disregarded. It is how to commend the reality of God and cherish him. When you love God, you worship him and recommend him to others to worship him. When worship sinks into a person’s heart, everything changes. The ultimate purpose of man is to glorify God and enjoy his presence forever. This is not a vague theological conjecture. Inevitably, myriads of biblical texts show that God is in pursuit of praise and honour (Is. 43:6-7; 48:9, 11).<sup>315</sup>

The principal argument is that human gestures, and the general interpretation of human rhythmic movements, are bound to an ethnic experience. Cultural background contributes to the way people worship.<sup>316</sup> This means the Anlo-Ewe of Africa also try to express the meaning of worship in their own cultural identity, which they do as they engage *Agbadza* and *Bɔbɔbɔ* with Christian mission to win souls. The fact that Africans believe in communal life, their way of

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<sup>312</sup> Costen, *African American Christian Worship*, p. 1.

<sup>313</sup> Elochukwu Uzukwu, *Liturgy, Truly Christian Truly African* (Eldoret: Gaba Publications, 1982), p. ix.

<sup>314</sup> John Piper, *Let the Nations be Glad: The Supremacy of God in Missions*, 2nd Ed. (Michigan: Grand Rapids, 2003), pp. 17-18.

<sup>315</sup> Piper, *Let the Nations be Glad*, pp. 20-22.

<sup>316</sup> Uzukwu, *Liturgy, Truly Christian Truly African*, p. ix.

worship also has communal recognition. After worship, mission is the greatest human activity in the world.

The Bible is the authentic and inerrant written account of God's relationship with humanity and all of his creation.<sup>317</sup> According to Kalu, "To baptize a nation, therefore, means to bring under the Gospel mandate all that constitutes a nation – rulers, people, and culture".<sup>318</sup> The Christian's primary calling is "to pursue the mission of God in God's world through the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and seek to understand the calling better".<sup>319</sup> The primary calling of Christians enables them to examine their self-understanding as Christians, their calling as disciples, and their vocation as ministers of the Gospel. According to Walls and Rose, we need to see how best to proclaim the message in their context.<sup>320</sup> David Bosch also indicates that mission is an "all-inclusive activity, which embraces (all cultural identities) the poor and the rich, the oppressed and the oppressor, sinners and devout".<sup>321</sup> This is because the mission is about the love of God, which must be demonstrable by locally communicating this love through music such as Agbadza and Bobobo among both Christians and non-Christians of Eue. This means that proclaiming the Good News needs to grapple with today's biggest question – how would the Christian life be appreciable and more expressive? The reason is people will not listen to the Good News unless they see practical evidence of Christianity.

Hence, attention is drawn to the impact of the lyrics of Agbadza and Bobobo music on the environment where both Christians and non-Christians live. The reason is that, the church is more interested in music and salvation of souls to the detriment of protecting God's creation, upon which the souls depend after salvation. The fact that theology without missions is empty,

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<sup>317</sup> Allison Howell, "The Bible and Care of Creation", *Begnum Edinburgh Centenary Series*, Vol. 18, pp. 158-177 (169).

<sup>318</sup> Ogbu U. Kalu, "Gospel, Culture and Mission: Revisiting an Enduring Problem" (UP: University of Nigeria), p. 286.

<sup>319</sup> Kalu, "Gospel, Culture and Mission", p. 283.

<sup>320</sup> Walls, & Ross, (eds). *Mission in the 21st Century*, p. 10.

<sup>321</sup> Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, p. 19.

theology must take a holistic approach to missions. The holistic approach to missions is to worship God, save souls, and take care of God's creation. Jesus Christ taught that "it is not enough to simply refrain from that which is evil; one must also be involved in actions that contribute to the welfare of others and creation."<sup>322</sup>

### **3.8. Conclusion**

In conclusion, the chapter being an analytical work deliberates on the lyrics of Agbadza and Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀. It is interesting to note that though Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀ appears to be local, western hymns that are translated into EUE have much influence on the songs. Most of the lyrics have a correlation with primal views, which is at the centre of this discussion. The theological verifications explained in this work revealed the spiritual nature of Agbadza and Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀ music, especially, in Christian worship.

What the next chapter seeks to do is to unravel the eco-ethical dimensions of some selected lyrics of ARS Joy Church and GEC Global Chapel's Agbadza and Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀ songs that are crucial for this study. Is there any eco-ethical gap between their spiritual nature and the impact they should have had on the communities in which they are called to live out their Christian lives?

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<sup>322</sup> James Gills, *Biblical Ethics and Contemporary Issues*, Third Edition (Makati: Carib Baptist Publications, 1998), p. 103.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### Eco-Ethical Dimensions of Some Selected Agbadza and Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀ Lyrics

#### 4.1. Introduction

In the previous chapter, it has copiously been discussed that, there are theological thoughts embedded in the selected Agbadza and Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀ lyrics that are the traces of primal spirituality in African Christianity. The study also looked at the Christian mission engagement with Agbadza and Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀ music to spread the Gospel.

To make sure that the lyrics of Agbadza and Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀ songs are understood in the cultural situation where Christian faith has to be expressed, it has become necessary to consider the lyrics together with the situation in which these songs are being sung. Therefore, this chapter seeks to unravel the eco-ethical thoughts embedded in some of the selected lyrics of Agbadza and Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀ music. I wish to state categorically clearly that this aspect of the thesis is not an environmental or ecological study; but rather a study about the eco-ethical thoughts embedded in the lyrics and their impact on eco-community. As expressed by the lyrics, I notice a gap between the spiritual effects of Agbadza and Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀ songs and the impact they should have had on the eco-community where these Christians live. This is because songs not only tell what people must do or how to behave morally but also warn them about a possible danger or what they must not do.<sup>323</sup> In the same vein, the chapter seeks to find out why Africans, both Christians, and non-Christians, and by extension, the world engage in creating excruciating problems, a behaviour that is affecting God's creation. Some key components of the lyrics of Agbadza and Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀ songs have been purposely selected to work with in this chapter. The Agbadza and Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀ lyrics considered in this chapter are looked at with eco-ethical eyes, which are *Afetɔ Yesue, va dɛm kaba* – *Lord Jesus, come and rescue me quickly, anyigba le dzo le ge* – *the earth will catch fire,*

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<sup>323</sup> Samuel Waje Kunhiyop, *African Christian Ethics* ((Nairobi: Hippo Books, 2008), p. 13.

and *nuvo gbe si medze si la* – the sinful life I knew. Others are *elabe ewua Gbɔgbɔ* – because it quenches the Spirit, and African Christian eco-response to creation care to conclude the chapter. This is to find out whether or not these music are addressing both spiritual and moral issues affecting the environment, which would guarantee their future and sustainability because “faith without deeds is dead” (James 2:26).

#### 4.2. Eco-Ethical Dimension of Agbadza Lyrics “*Afetɔ Yesue, Va Ðem Kaba*”

Blasu observes that some have regarded issues of eco-crisis as purely scientific, and therefore, do not want theology, ethics, and morals to interrupt scientific disciplines.<sup>324</sup> In stark contrast to this assertion is that the creation account includes scientific-related subject matters such as human life, land, plants, animals, rivers, seas, sun, moon, and stars, among many others. These have their religious, theological, and eco-ethical source in the Bible. Therefore, ecological issues are not scientific only; they are also religious or theological and ethical. They are interdependent.

The ARS and GEC’s ministration of songs in worship is indispensable for maintaining a healthy relationship with God, which also edifies, exhorts, comforts, and preaches God’s message. In addition, the church has to preach the Gospel and take care as a steward for God’s creation upon which human beings depend after salvation. Mbiti notes that, “God is often worshipped through songs, which creates and strengthens corporate feeling and solidarity”.<sup>325</sup> The corporate feeling and solidarity of members by Agbadza and Bɔbɔbɔ cultural music could also be directed towards care for God’s creation to help guarantee their relevance and sustainability. Nevertheless, an eco-ethical link is missing between the ministration of those songs and the impact they should have had on the eco-community. The GEC’s Global Chapel

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<sup>324</sup> Ebenezer Yaw Blasus, *African Theology: Studies in African Religious Creation Care* (Eugene, Or: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2020), p, 113.

<sup>325</sup> John S. Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy* (New Hampshire: Heinemann Educational Books Inc.), 1989, p. 67.

Agbadza lyrics *Afetɔ Yesue, vaɕem kaba – Lord Jesus, come and rescue me quickly* as the song expresses, presumably, is about a devastating situation. The lyrics *Come and rescue me quickly* is a prescriptive statement. It is not simply about what is normal. In ethics, prescriptive language commands what ought to be done; it sets forth moral obligations. It prescribes norms for behaviour that involves a value judgment.

To rescue is akin to saving. The principal Hebrew term translated as “salvation, save, or rescue is ‘yêsa’”. Its basic meaning is to bring into a spacious environment (Ps. 66:12), or saving from the acute danger of life (Acts 27:20).<sup>326</sup> This is a call on the Lord Jesus to rescue or save one from a problem, worry, difficulty, or a situation of danger or harm. This interpretation is qualified by the lyric *anyigba le dzo le ge – the earth will catch fire*, which God has not initiated or spark off, presumably. When the lithosphere is set on fire, it affects both biosphere and hydrosphere. According to Ken Gnanakan, “Theology of the environment involves more than knowing the Bible and all about the crisis”.<sup>327</sup> It is also about how to avoid the crisis. For Christians, faith brings salvation; active obedience demonstrates faith is genuine. True faith always results in deeds. This is because the Scripture testifies about Abraham’s faith, which was accounted to him for righteousness for “faith and his actions were working together” (James 2: 22). This is a challenge to the Agbadza and Bɔbɔbɔ music, which should gear towards eco-care to guarantee their sustainability. This is about the impact music should have on societal ethical issues, because it easily communicates.

Anthony Asoanya notes that, “Christians, like many groups, are being blamed for all kinds of social ills, including environmental problems. But a careful look at the Bible reveals that

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<sup>326</sup> I. Howard Marshall, A. R. Millard, J. I. Packer and D. J. Wiseman, *New Bible Dictionary*, Third Edition (Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 1996), p. 1047.

<sup>327</sup> Ken Gnanakan, *God’s Word: A Theology of the Environment* (Great Britain: University Press, 1999), p. 7.

ecological and environmental concerns are very much central to its message”.<sup>328</sup> It means that the message of the Bible will be incomplete when it relegates ecological issues to a minor position. The members of ARS and GEC sing these songs joyfully as they get excited about them. It is good to glorify God as one sings. But it could be argued that what is also extremely essential is the sound Christian spirituality formation, with a special focus on building one up to be a resilient mature Christ-like disciple who is a caretaker or steward.

Interestingly, the Bible begins with environmental issues (Gen. 1-2). It means the accounts of the Bible are still alive and can identify ecological issues and address them. Dieter Hessel also establishes that the Bible is not anthropocentric, neither bio-centric nor eco-centric in its perspective. The likely reason for this is that none of these aspects of reality is autonomous or independent of the divine aspect.<sup>329</sup> This implies that there has been some interrelationship between nature and divine, which should continue to exist. For the Psalmist, “all your works praise you” (Ps. 145:10), means everything in its own way can praise the Lord. Thus, mountains, hills, wind, fruit trees, animals, cattle, human beings, creeping things and birds have distinctive voices to praise the Lord. Therefore, ethically, the lyrics of the song “*Lord Jesus, come and rescue me quickly*” communicate the signal of devastation brought about by an unfavourable occurrence. On this premise, “an ethics of stewardship challenges human beings to relate with nature responsibly”.<sup>330</sup> This suggests a moderate way of dealing with the ecosystem.

The subject at issue is whether cultural music addresses both spiritual and physical eco-crises confronting humans and their environment, which guarantee their sustainability. As the GEC’s Global Chapel Agbadza lyrics *Lord Jesus, come and rescue me quickly* not only depicts

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<sup>328</sup> Anthony Asoanya, *The Ecological Crisis in Africa as a Challenge to Lasting Cultural and Sustainable Development: A Theological Approach* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang GmbH, 2011), p. 149.

<sup>329</sup> T. Dieter Hessel, *Theology of Earth Community: A Field Guide* (New York: Orbis Books, 1996), p. 36.

<sup>330</sup> Bonaventure B. Gubazire, “Stewardship: An Ethics for Environmental Respectability in Africa”, *E-Journal of Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences*, Vol. 3, Issue 8 (August, 2022), pp. 299-309 (308).

an earnest request for salvation from this world, one facet of this salvation is deliverance from global warming, which the lyrics equally exhibit. These Agbadza lyrics send a notice to the hearers that one is in a dangerous situation. The fact is that God does not intend to destroy what he has created, which Scripture testifies about that, “Then God saw everything he had made, and indeed it was very good” (Gen. 1:31). Though the prophet Malachi prophesied that, “Surely the day is coming, it will burn like a furnace” (Mal. 4:1), it is evidently clear that human behaviour seems to speed up this future disaster. This calls to mind “*Jesus has set fire*”, the GEC Global Chapel Agbadza lyrics, as mentioned in chapter three. Fire is a sign of the Holy Spirit and God’s judgement. The analogous to the expression that, “*Jesus has set fire; the fire he set no one can quench it*” corresponds to God’s warning about the danger of disobedience. This calls for ethical and moral responsibility of the GEC in their eco-communities to put out the fire. For divine intervention, the lyrics appeal to the Lord Jesus to rescue because there is an environmental issue.

In Genesis 1: 26, it is definite that only humanity has been given authority and responsibility for environmental care, which is akin to God’s creation care. However, when humans do not relate well with God and the environment, they create ecological depression. Disrespect for eco-ethical rules prevents them from living healthy relational life in the eco-community. According to Angelos Vallianatos, “Ancient fact of humanity’s fall, as recorded in the book of Genesis, is in reality the first account of ecological catastrophe in the world’s literature. The Old Testament text sets forth those points from which the mistaken direction of human uniqueness is derived”.<sup>331</sup> Noticeably, until Genesis 3, humanity developed a good eco-cultural system about how they perceived, cultivated habits, and related to God and the environment. However, from Genesis 3-6, human behaviour deteriorated to where ecological

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<sup>331</sup> Angelos Vallianatos, “Creation, Koinonia, Sustainable and Climate Change”. In *The Ecumenical Review – The Churches and Climate Change – World Council of Churches*, Vol. 49, No. 2 (1997), p. 195.

disaster evolved. The popular belief therefore is that whatever an individual does is bound to affect the wider community for either good or bad.<sup>332</sup> The lyrics *Lord Jesus, come and rescue me* is an individual appeal for help. Against this appeal, the church as an agent of change needs to apply the words after the excitement of singing those songs to address environmental problems. Human beings are caretakers of God's creation, and the theological and ethical thoughts embedded in the lyrics of the songs need to be harnessed and applied to affect human life and the environment. When these are done, then, the excitement of the music among Christians will be complete, always very useful, and perhaps have a more beneficial effect on the eco-community.

#### **4.3. Eco-Ethical Dimension of Agbadza Lyrics “*Anyigba le Dzo Le Ge*”**

The gap between the spiritual nature of Agbadza and Bobobo music in this study and the meaning the lyrics carry is the lack of their impact on the eco-community where Christians live after salvation. It is also about the lack of holistic missions of the church that will include God and his creation. Here, the practical significance of eco-care comes into clear focus.

The lyrics *anyigba le dzo le ge – the Earth will catch fire* is a descriptive statement. It is not geared towards asking what people ought to do or how they should conduct themselves. Rather, it is concerned primarily with discovering how people behave. It focuses purely on what is, rather than value judgment. While the word *anyigba* in Ewe means Earth in English, the lithosphere refers to the physical world in which man lives as opposed to heaven, it also refers to the dry land as opposed to the sea. Still, while the word Earth refers to the ground surface or the soil, which supports vegetation and life, it also refers to the inhabitants of the earth. The Greek “*ge*” is variously translated to mean all the above explanations.<sup>333</sup> The word, *dzo* in Ewe means fire and refers to flames, light, and heat that destroy and damage property and things that are

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<sup>332</sup> Asoanya, *The Ecological Crisis in Africa as a Challenge to Lasting Cultural and Sustainable Development*, p. 70.

<sup>333</sup> Marshall, Millard, Packer and Wiseman, *New Bible Dictionary*, Third Edition, p. 285.

combustible. This signifies the state of combustion, and the visible aspect of it is flame that destroys or devastates.

The lyrics, *anyigba le dzo le ge – the Earth will catch fire* is a reflection of the environmental degradation embedded in the song. The lyrics reveal activities that have caused climate change, because there is a potential threat to health and security, hence the call for rescue as indicated earlier. Kunhiyop notes that belief in witchcraft is “the traditional way of explaining the ultimate cause of any evil, misfortune or death”.<sup>334</sup> Nonetheless, human challenges cannot be interpreted in spiritual terms only; there are multi-faceted human challenges, such as the outbreak of infectious diseases that polluted water could generate. This is not about physical fire, but a destructive force or effect.

While naturalistic view deny human link with the the rest of creation, the Christian view of ecology acknowledges that a moral God is the owner of the world (Ps. 24:1; Job 41:11).<sup>335</sup> The fact is everything God created in the universe has a high moral purpose and interrelationship, which God has with them. “If nature is a creation of God, it logically follows that there is something of God in nature”.<sup>336</sup> Therefore, when humans’ relationship with God is tampered with, it results in moral breakdown towards the eco-community, which becomes unethical behaviour. Where a relationship is lacking, an individualistic attitude sets in.

Another key factor in environmental degradation the lyrics *anyigba le dzo le ge – the Earth will catch fire* depicts is human need. Here we must note that when humanity do not relate well with the environment due to poor leadership or management, they create ecological depression, which in turn creates human need, poverty, famine, and diseases. Notwithstanding human need as a factor, high rapid urbanisation also somehow attracts fast industrialisation,

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<sup>334</sup> Samuel Waje Kunhiyop, *African Christian Ethics* (Nairobi: Hippo Books, 2008), p. 377.

<sup>335</sup> Anderson, *Christian Ethics in Plain Language*, p 184.

<sup>336</sup> Gubazire, “Stewardship”, p. 305.

which has been the impetus for unethical human activities such as greenhouse gas emissions and environmental pollution. When these things are happening, there is the possibility of global warming for the earth to catch fire as expressed in the Agbadza lyrics. This behaviour is the result of Christians not living biblically because nature and human beings are symbiotically related. Destroying the lithosphere or the environment is somehow destroying oneself.

And by extension, structural sin provides the impetus for eco-crisis. Interestingly, human beings create structural sin. The root of structural sin can be traced to personal sin. Individual sins inevitably affect society, which becomes social sin. When social sin grows, it becomes what is known as structural sin. Every person exists as a member of a wider community. Hence, structural sin exists in cultures, customs, business practices, and financial systems, which can threaten the environment, which is part of the lithosphere.<sup>337</sup> Human activities have their ecological implications that could threaten the Earth as the song decries *anyigba le dzo le ge – the Earth will catch fire*. At the time, one might not be aware of the ramifications of his actions. To a degree, structural sin develops into extensive environmental degradation, which is caused by Christians, non-Christians, and political leadership's poor decision-making to sustain the environment. Therefore, the lyrics of the GEC's Agbadza song *the Earth will catch fire* is a wakeup call that goes out to Christians and non-Christians to rise to the challenge to deal with the created ecological problem. This initiative, first by showing repentance for the wrong behaviours, could gradually be cultivated, and eventually into a decent culture.

To create a decent culture, culture has been defined to mean the way we perceive, cultivate habits, and relate to the environment. Mbiti defines a broad spectrum of culture as, “the way people live, behave and act, and their physical as well as their intellectual achievements, art and literature. Others are dance, music and drama, in the styles of building houses and of people's clothing, in social organisation and political systems, in religion, ethics, morals and

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<sup>337</sup> Ferdinand D. Dagmang, “Structures and Structural Sin”, p. 87-88.

philosophy, values, beliefs, in the customs and institutions of the people”.<sup>338</sup> All of this cultivation of culture is done within the lithosphere – the earth’s atmosphere. When the earth languishes and is not as fruitful as it used to be, then, those who dwell on it become so desolate because of poor cultivation of eco-culture, which affects the ecosystem because of structural sin. The effect of the cause is what the lyrics; *the Earth will catch fire* expressed in the *Agbadza* song. It is officially warning people what is going to happen.

The eco-ethical dimension of the lyrics, *the Earth will catch fire* situated within the context of structural sin is akin to what Calvin DeWitt developed into a framework of seven degradations of the creation. Two such frameworks are: (1) *Land conversion and habitat destruction*, and (2) *land degradation*. He estimates that billion acres of natural lands have been converted to human uses. While some have been beneficial, others have been detrimental. Examples of detrimental effects would be the building of homes on prime farmland, draining wetland areas, and tropical deforestation. The current situation is reminiscent of Isaiah’s warning, “Woe to you who add house to house and join field to field until no space is left and you live alone in the land” (Is. 5:8).<sup>339</sup> Contrast the current state of agriculture with God’s command to obey a Sabbath rest for the land in Leviticus 25:2-4, God instructed that, “For six years sow your fields, and for six years prune your vineyards and gather their crops. But in the seventh year, the land is to have a Sabbath of rest, a Sabbath to the Lord. Do not sow your fields or prune your vineyards”. This instruction is for revitalising the land to yield its crops.

Also, scientific experiments and industrial processes have produced thousands of chemicals. The biological impact of these chemicals on the flora of the planet can be devastating; allowing the Earth to catch fire. The products and by-products of industrial manufacture have

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<sup>338</sup> John S. Mbiti, *Introduction to African Religion* (Ibadan: Heinemann Books Ltd, 1975), p. 7.

<sup>339</sup> Calvin DeWitt, “Seven Degradation of Creation”, in *The Environment and the Christian*, ed. Calvin DeWitt (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1991), p. 15-22; Kerby Anderson, *Christian Ethics in Plain Language* (Nashville, Tennessee: Thomas Nelson Inc., 2005), p. 181.

polluted the air and water.<sup>340</sup> Isaiah's theological reading of the collapse of the house of Judah and the ecological collapse of the land of Israel, her disrespect for ecological moral claim, offers a powerful narrative with which to frame the current ecological crisis.<sup>341</sup> Unqualified absolutists position maintain that, certain actions are inherently right or wrong, moral or immoral regardless of the consequences. Hence, when people are estranged from nature, any immoral action can be justified, which results in environmental exploitation,<sup>342</sup> a behaviour that can let the Earth catch fire forgetting that human beings depend on the ecosystem for their survival.<sup>343</sup>

The belief among Africans is that God is a moral God, therefore, morality is cherished among them; devoid of morals, God is very destructive to their society. Some of the distinguishing characteristics of Africans' morals are respectfulness, honour, discipline, and neighbourliness.<sup>344</sup> These virtues sustain their eco-community and give it a strong future, sometimes expressed in their songs. As music has the spiritual power to effect healing and deliverance from spiritual depression and also boosts the morale of workers in communal labour, it has the power to address environmental issues. However, in this viewpoint, the song *anyigba le dzo le ge – the Earth will catch fire* raises a difficult ethical question. What is the missing link? Virtues make it possible for Africans to develop sets of taboos, which are derived from their indigenous ethical knowledge that deals with ecological matters, such as logging, farming, fishing, and mining.<sup>345</sup> Taboo is a custom that says you must avoid a particular activity or subject, either because it is considered offensive or because your religion does not allow it. One thing that is certain, in the African primal view is forest preservation, and society leads you to believe that particular activities on certain days are taboos. In those days, trees are not cut

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<sup>340</sup> Kerby Anderson, *Christian Ethics in Plain Language* (Nashville, Tennessee: Thomas Nelson Inc., 2005), p. 182.

<sup>341</sup> Michael S. Northcott, *A Moral Climate: The Ethics of Global Warming* (London: Darton, Longman and Todd Ltd., 2007), p. 72.

<sup>342</sup> Ferdinand D. Dagmang, "Structures and Structural Sin", p. 87.

<sup>343</sup> Gubazire, "Stewardship", p. 307.

<sup>344</sup> Mbiti, *African Religion and Philosophy*, p. 207.

<sup>345</sup> Kofi Asare Opoku, *West African Traditional Religion* (Legon: FEP International Private Limited, 1977), p. 152.

indiscriminately, fire is not set on trees and forests, and mining is not done around the forests that are tagged as “sacred or evil forests”. Nevertheless, the contradictory trajectory is the case in these current times. B. Talyor notes that the negation of African taboos, especially, by the missionaries as a “fetish” has contributed to the climate change that we experience, especially in Africa.<sup>346</sup> By contrast, Afrincas know that human beings depend on nature for their existence.

From another perspective, the lyrics *anyigba le dzo le ge – the Earth will catch fire* is also reasonable to expect people to do what is needful. V. Taylor also notes that “all (*religions*) cultures carry in themselves light”.<sup>347</sup> However, it is possible that in ignorance someone could call his light darkness when he thinks another person’s light is better than his. The question is, did forests that were regarded as evil forests help reduce environmental degradation? It could be argued that they did if what was called evil could be metamorphosed into socially acceptable good moral claims. It is fascinating to note that, though sometimes primal beliefs conflict with the Christian faith, in other instances, these beliefs are closer to a biblical worldview, which corresponds to the Christian faith. This means primal experience is the bedrock of the Christian faith. Thus, reconditioning African theological thought helps keep the rich moral values awake and apply them to resolve what is happening around them. To disregard the ecological order by setting fire to the bush, and cutting trees indiscriminately to deforest the environment, a behaviour that exposes the lithosphere to the sun is a moral issue.

At the opposite end of the spectrum of the lyrics *anyigba le dzo le ge – the Earth will catch fire* could also mean the “expectation which Jesus had for his followers. He expressed it most vividly in the Sermon on the Mount by his use of the salt and light metaphors”.<sup>348</sup> This can be found in Matthew 5:13-16, which explains that if Christians make no effort to affect the world around them, they are of little value to God. If they are too much like the behaviour of the world,

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<sup>346</sup> John B. Taylor, *Primal World Views: Christian Dialogue with Traditional thought Forms* (Ibadan: Nigeria Daystar Press, 1976), p. 4.

<sup>347</sup> John V. Taylor, *The Primal Vision, Christian Presence amid African Religion* (London: SCM Press, 1963), p. 33.

<sup>348</sup> John Stott, *Decisive Issues Facing Christians Today* (Michigan: Fleming H. Revell, 1990), p. 66.

they appear to be worthless. Jesus used salt and light as images to illustrate his expectation of his church, and “the influence he expected his disciples to exert in human society”.<sup>349</sup> The world is dark as Jesus implied in the text referring to its corruption that leads to *the Earth catching fire*. The two images illustrate how Christians are fundamentally different from non-Christians. The world is dark, and Christians are expected to be its light. The world is decaying, but Christians are to be its salt and be able to hinder its decay. John Stott posits that, Christians are called to permeate the non-Christian society. Although Christians are morally and spiritually distinct, they are not to be socially segregated and remain aloof from society’s behaviour.<sup>350</sup> It has been observed that Christians criticise the world’s violence, dishonesty, immorality, and disregard for law and human life. Christians are the light of the world, but if the house is dark, there is no sense in blaming the house, because that is what happens when the sun goes down”.<sup>351</sup> This suggests the world is not to be blamed when Christians blend into it that they cannot shine.

Other relative factors that have affected the eco-community are logging, destroying forests for “galamsey” a term used to describe illegal mining, uncontrolled polluted gas emissions from industries, and people’s wrong lifestyles. All of these contribute to the degradation of the environment and to climate change, producing warmer temperatures and more extreme rainfall.<sup>352</sup> Over here, the lyrics *anyigba le dzo le ge – the Earth will catch fire* is a warning signal that sounds louder and louder to both Christians and non-Christians who do illegal mining around water bodies in Ghana. Refusal to change this mindset has polluted rivers such as Ankobra, Pra, Ofin, Subiri, Tano, Densu, among many others in Ghana alone, and also poses a high risk of viral infection for both children and adults who drink, or swim in these rivers.<sup>353</sup> While Ankobra’s contamination levels are very high, such as Arsenic 0.221 mg/L, Lead 0.119 mg/L, and Chromium 0.293 mg/L, the acceptable World Health Organisation and Ghana

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<sup>349</sup> Stott, *Decisive Issues Facing Christians Today*, p. 66.

<sup>350</sup> Stott, *Decisive Issues Facing Christians Today*, p. 66.

<sup>351</sup> Stott, *Decisive Issues Facing Christians Today*, p. 67.

<sup>352</sup> Solomon M. Hsiang, Marshall Burke and Edward Miguel, “Quantifying the Influence of Climate on Human Conflict”, *Science*, 2013, DOI: 10.1126/science.1235367, published online, August 1 2013

<sup>353</sup> Joy News, 6 November 2023, 7.45p.m.

Standard levels are between 0.010 and 0.050 mg/L.<sup>354</sup> All of these put together are in line with the song *anyigba le dzo le ge – the Earth will catch fire* as sung by the GEC; a reflection on the environmental degradation, a place where Christians also live to perform their religious duties.

While some argue that what makes environmental degradation's causal factors right are the consequences, thus, meeting human needs; others also argue that we must cultivate a habit of environmental interrelationship as conscious moral agents for the greater good. This means that meeting human needs, such as gaining employment, trade, and money does not justify the wrong actions.<sup>355</sup> Quiet often, meeting those human needs eventually create detrimental ecological consequences. Hence, the fear of devastation of the environment is clearly spelled out in the song *anyigba le dzo le ge – the Earth will catch fire*.

Sometimes, it points to corrupt institutions, which do not hold people accountable for corruption. Where people are not held responsible, it may affect all other activities because almost everyone may be free to engage in any unhealthy activity. Because of a lack of control over institutions and the entire populace, ecological assets would not be spared. If the ecosystem is disrespected, mass starvation and ecological disaster will be the inevitable consequence. Some of these are “death, disease, homelessness, drought, and decrease in freshwater supply”.<sup>356</sup> These consequences equally affect Christians who sing the song *the Earth will catch fire* and get excited about it. The eco-ramification is that destroying nature is somehow destroying oneself.

Over here, I wish to register that, the beliefs and concepts on which African Christianity is based have to be practical and demonstrable. If these were done adequately, then the descriptive lyrics of the song *anyigba le dzo le ge – the Earth will catch fire* would not be

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<sup>354</sup> Dr. Eric Ansah, Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology, Kumasi (Joy News TV, 1/1/2025).

<sup>355</sup> Kyle D. Fedler, *Exploring Christian Ethics: Biblical Foundations for Morality* (Westminster: John Knox Press, 2006), p. 27.

<sup>356</sup> Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, *IPCC Fourth Assessment Report: Climate Change 2007, “Regional Vulnerabilities”*, Sec. 19.3.3. Accessed on 19 October, 2022.

[http://www.ipcc.ch/publications\\_and\\_data/ar4/wg2/en/ch19s19-3-3.html](http://www.ipcc.ch/publications_and_data/ar4/wg2/en/ch19s19-3-3.html)

necessary. In addition, the solution to structural sin must be the changing of our human actions towards individuals and the environment and addressing our political systems.

#### 4.4. Eco-Ethical Dimension of Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀ Lyrics “*Nuvɔ Gbe Si Medze Si La*”

The GEC’s Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀ lyrics, *nuvɔ gbe si medze si la naga nɔ menye o, elabe ewua Gbɔ̀gbɔ – the sinful life I knew never should dwell in me, because it quenches the Spirit* also fall within the domain of descriptive statement. Descriptive language tells what the case is: the sinful life. Life “*agbe*” originates from God who is life himself (Gen. 2:7; Jn. 14:6), but “its meaningful state is living soul and associated with active being, and therefore may simply mean life”.<sup>357</sup> However, good or sinful life *nyui alo vɔ gbe* manifests itself through human conduct towards God and his creation. *Nukae nye nuvɔ?* What is sin? Sin means, “If anyone, then, knows the good they ought to do and does not do it, it is sin for them” (James 4:17). Philip Laryea defines sin in Ewe and says, “Sin is *nuvɔ [nugbegblē]* rotten, rancid, corrupt, evil, and spoilt”.<sup>358</sup> Sin also means an action that is against religious rules and is considered an offence against God. It also speaks about “the vast proportion of sins occurrences referred to as moral and religious deviation whether in respect of man or God; a deviation from the moral norm”.<sup>359</sup> The phrase, *nuvɔ gbe* in Ewe literally means to be addicted to sin or sinful lifestyle. A sinful act is the expression of a sinful heart, which always includes the perversity of the heart, mind, disposition and will.<sup>360</sup> Sin is one-sided, but its consequences are not. It has religious, social, political, and economic repercussions. The effects of the bad action continue to affect generations unborn.

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<sup>357</sup> Marshall, Millard, Packer and Wiseman, *New Bible Dictionary*, Third Edition, p. 667.

<sup>358</sup> Philip T. Laryea, “Biblical Hermeneutics in a New Key: Intercultural Perspectives Arising from a Mother-Tongue Reading of the Scriptures in the Ghanaian Context” *Journal of African Christian Thought*, Vol. 22No. 1 (June 2019), pp. 40-45 (40).

<sup>359</sup> Marshall, Millard, Packer and Wiseman, *New Bible Dictionary*, Third Edition, p. 1105.

<sup>360</sup> Marshall, Millard, Packer and Wiseman, *New Bible Dictionary*, Third Edition, p. 1107.

The nation Ghana of which both the ARS and GEC belong comprises many ethno-linguistic groups. They set “taboos, which are derived from their indigenous ethical knowledge”<sup>361</sup> to guide them in their day-to-day activities. The activities of these ethno-linguistic groups are largely based on their religious and cultural beliefs of Sacred Reality that is so basic and treated with great respect because they are connected with God or the Supreme Being. It makes sense to them that when a culture begins, it must relate to the ecosystem, hence, certain non-human and inanimate creatures, such as animals, birds, and forests are cared for. According to Aloysius Pieris, primal religion is the primordial form of religion that involves interaction with nature and the elements of nature.<sup>362</sup> Hence, the eco-ethical thoughts embedded in GEC’s Bɔbɔbɔ lyrics, *nuvɔ gbe si medze si – the sinful life I knew* depicts primal immorality. This is because to detest sin is what the African knows as part of his taboos. Nevertheless, modernity has made it that, most of the taboos are seen as primitive ideas.<sup>363</sup>

The lyrics, *nuvɔ gbe si medze si* as Bɔbɔbɔ song which is being sung among both Christians and non-Christians at funerals, entertainment places, and social gatherings, carries some ethical undertone. *Nuvɔ gbe – the sinful life* connotes unholy, hatred for God and neighbour, bribery and corruption, environmental pollution, murder, stealing, and gestures of defiance among others. These illicit lifestyles are against the command to love or care: Love for God and neighbour (Matt. 22:37-39). Love as a virtue goes against all these sinful acts. Therefore, *the sinful life* is in direct opposition to the virtue of love. Ethically, love or caretaking is a principle and an attitude that reveals itself in action, devoting energy to others’ welfare. This is about caring for one another. It is also akin to caring for God’s creation, which includes both humans and non-humans. In the New Testament, the commonest Greek is *agape, agapao*. Jesus

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<sup>361</sup> Opoku, *West African Traditional Religion*, p. 152.

<sup>362</sup> S. J. Aloysius Pieris, *An Ancient Theology of Liberation* (Maryland NY: Orbis Books, 1992), p. 71.

<sup>363</sup> R. Macaulay, “The Future of Taboos in Indigenous Ghanaian Morality” *E-journal of Religious and Theological Studies*, Vol. 6, No. 7 (October 2020), 334-340 (334). DOI: <https://doi.org/10.38159/erats.2020101>

expressed God's love for men through his countless acts of compassion, caretaking, healing, teaching about God's acceptance of the sinner (Lk. 15:11ff), and his grief-stricken attitude to human disobedience. This saving activity is declared in John's Gospel to be a demonstration of the love of God imparting an eternal reality of life to men.<sup>364</sup>

The deterioration of love for God and one another began during the time of Cain and Abel (Gen. 4:3-8). In verse 8, *nuvɔ gbe – the sinful life* is very identical to a morally wrong action when "Cain attacked his brother Abel and killed him". This was the beginning of human wickedness and corruption, the first murder. Adam and Eve acted against God, but Cain acted against God and man. After Cain's hatred attitude, another killing occurred by Lamech, presumably in self-defence (Gen. 4:23). Violence was on the increase throughout human history. This behaviour has affected God's human and non-human creatures so badly from Adam's time to this day. Hence, the Bɔbɔbɔ lyrics, *nuvɔ gbe si medze si – the sinful life I knew* for the fact that love for one another which gears towards caretaking, hospitality and brotherhood, and love for God's creation is missing. Instead, *the sinful life* has corrupted human nature to love evil and hate good, which urges one to destroy that which is good and treat it as a means to human ends.

The study looks with eco-ethical eyes at the issues of interest in the lyrics, *nuvɔ gbe si medze si – the sinful life I knew* as we try to think carefully about God's creation, wickedness, violence and the ecological disaster described in Scripture. In Genesis 6:5, "The Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth...the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually". While the word "wickedness" *vɔqivɔqɪ* in Eue means bad of its kind concerning land and water, "Evil" *vɔ alo nuvɔ* in Eue means displeasing, bad, dreadful, or of no value.<sup>365</sup> Simply put, human behaviour was bad towards God, other humans, and creation – both land and water. Their life principles – moral rules or beliefs were corrupt and of no value. Their habits and

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<sup>364</sup> Marshall, Millard, Packer and Wiseman, *New Bible Dictionary*, 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition, p. 700-1.

<sup>365</sup> BibleWorks 9, "Genesis 6:5". Init bw900swc (2011). [www.bibleworks.com](http://www.bibleworks.com)

dispositions were evil, which left stains of how humanity cultivated habits towards the eco-community<sup>366</sup> – land and water – both biosphere and hydrosphere, which constitute the lithosphere. This had led God to look upon the earth, and indeed, “The earth also was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence” (Gen. 6:11). For this reason, the call of this Bɔ̀bɔ̀ lyrics go out from among the ARS and GEC to all that *nuvɔ gbe – the sinful life* is an inclination to do wrong against God and the lithosphere, rather than the right.

A typical example of *the sinful life* has been described in Scripture in Noah’s time. Noah’s day was flooded with devastating corruption and violence in the eco-community, which had resulted in a worldwide ecological catastrophe. Norman Geisler posits that, “The root of eco-injustice is moral bankruptcy”.<sup>367</sup> This means when the ecosystem is treated very unfairly, it develops into eco-injustice. I seek to agree with Geisler and also wish to push the argument further that, since justice is concerned, when the ethical rule of obedience to eco-justice has been broken, eco-injustice is the inevitable consequence. That is the state of being unable to create a clean and healthy environment for humanity to live morally. In addition, if *nuvɔ gbe – the sinful life*: corruption and violence, as mentioned earlier have their roots in the moral fibre of humanity, they are not scientific, but real moral issues. They are not microscopic analyses in a medical laboratory, or cardiovascular tests as will be the case in a surgical theatre. When humans lack the moral strength to do what is right, their behavioural analysis cannot be based on the biological experimentation of reality. It is the disposition of *the sinful life*.

Here, it can be argued that, everything God created in the universe has a high moral purpose and interrelationship, which is akin to the relationship he has with humans and other creatures. This leads to the misinterpretation of Genesis 1:26 to “rule” and have “dominion”;

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<sup>366</sup> Michael S. Northcott, *A Moral Climate: The Ethics of Global Warming* (London: Darton, Longman and Todd Ltd, 2007), p. 72.

<sup>367</sup> Norman L. Geisler, *Christian Ethics: Contemporary Issues and Options*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Michigan: Grand Rapids, Baker, 2010), p. 317.

leading to wickedly conceited attitudes towards creation. This view and similar *sinful life* have often been blamed for being the root cause of ecological disaster.<sup>368</sup> To have dominion and subdue is to care for the environment as a steward. Unfortunately, dominion has been taken to be an acceptable reason for the destruction of the earth, instead of responsibility, moral probity, and accountability.<sup>369</sup> This responsibility was to protect the environment and work in it, a relationship between humans and the ecosystem. Exploitation happens as a result of the “refusal of humans to see themselves as creatures contingently embedded in networks of relationship with other creatures and with the Creator”.<sup>370</sup> A relationship is a two-way affair. It is how two persons or groups of people feel about each other and behave towards each other. Therefore, God in his capacity created all creatures to depend on him. Unfortunately, humanity chose to be independent of God, which is the inclination to the devastating corruption of *the sinful life*.

At the time of the flood (Gen. 6:8), God had Noah build the ark to train him to develop and improve a natural ability to recognise and live with creation, and to discover his fellow creatures as his closest companions in his environment.<sup>371</sup> This means God is concerned with his creation. Hence, “Human beings should be morally concerned about all non-human creatures that are capable of conscious experiences such as pain and pleasure”.<sup>372</sup> On the other hand, God could have saved Noah without giving him any responsibility of creation care, and demonstration of his faith and obedience to him. Nevertheless, Noah’s faith, which had accorded him righteousness, triumphed over *the sinful life* and all the wickedness and corrupt reasoning described in Scripture.

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<sup>368</sup> Asoanya, *The Ecological Crisis in Africa as a Challenge to Lasting Cultural and Sustainable Development*, p. 165.

<sup>369</sup> Asoanya, *The Ecological Crisis in Africa as a Challenge to Lasting Cultural and Sustainable Development*, p. 166.

<sup>370</sup> Northcott, *A Moral Climate*, p. 16.

<sup>371</sup> Northcott, *A Moral Climate*, p. 73.

<sup>372</sup> Peter Singer, *Animal Liberation or Animal Rights?* (Belmont: Wardsworth Publishing Company, 1995), p. 79.

It is interesting to note that, the ravenous creatures were made to become mild and manageable in the ark; yet, when the occasion of the flood was over, they returned to their former state of ravenous creatures as we can see today because the ark did not alter their natures. This analogy means that hypocrites who outwardly conform to the laws of the ark, which was the symbol of Christ to save sinners, and yet, unchanged, will one day appear before God the kind of God's creatures (Christians) they are. While the Gospel has the power to save the world, some Christians seem to obey God in chapels and disobey him outside the chapel, which is the disposition towards *nuvo gbe si medze si – the sinful life I knew*, the Bòbòbò lyrics under study.

#### 4.5. Eco-Ethical Dimension of Bòbòbò Lyrics “*Elabe Ewua Gbògbò*”

The subject at issue here is the lyrics *elabe ewua Gbògbò – because it quenches the Spirit* is also a descriptive language, which tells what the case is. Over here, it is pertinent to mention that the ARS an AIC church, and GEC a neo-Pentecostal church are Bible-believing churches. For them, the Scriptures are the arbiter in matters of morality, faith and practice. Kunhiyop argues that everything human in this world is fallen; therefore, the Scriptures must play a normative role. They are a reliable guide as to what we should believe and how we should live.<sup>373</sup> Therefore, biblical examples continue to be the guide of this study.

Sinful attitudes quench the Spirit. James Gills posits that, “It is not enough to simply refrain from that which is evil; one must also be involved in actions that contribute to the welfare of others”.<sup>374</sup> The concern here is to care for someone's health, happiness, and total well-being, which includes caring for the environment where the person resides. If a person destroys what will make others feel happy and live a healthy life, then that behaviour is sinful. Hence, the lyrics of the song recall that sinful life *quenches the Spirit of the Lord*. This is far from existentialism,

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<sup>373</sup> Kunhiyop, *African Christian Ethics*, p. 70.

<sup>374</sup> James Gills, *Biblical Ethics and Contemporary Issues* (Makati City: Carib Baptist Publications, 1998), p. 103.

which is the belief that “the teachings of Jesus are impossible to follow literally”.<sup>375</sup> Ogbu Kalu suggests that, “The church must hold on to two realities: its distinctiveness from, and its commitment to,”<sup>376</sup> in this case, eco-care. Thus, for the ARS and GEC to be distinct and recognised, they must display their special quality by what they do with what they have, which are Agbadza and Bobobo music. In addition, these cultural music should demonstrate extraordinary resilience that can change the tone of bad situations.

The Gospel’s witness is the church’s starting point and reference for mission in God’s creation, moving from one geographical area to another (Acts 1:8). The Great Commission is, “Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them...” (Matt. 28:19a). According to Kalu, “To baptize a nation, therefore, means to bring under the Gospel mandate all that constitutes a nation – a nation’s ecosystem, rulers, people, and culture”.<sup>377</sup> It means baptising the nations as one is in the world’s geographical area, and yet not of the world – not under its ethical standards and principles, but under those of God.

God’s Spirit is his presence and power in the lives of Christians who have been given a spiritual task. The Spirit is indispensable to Christianity, and without the Spirit, the church becomes a lifeless organisation, and ineffective in its efforts to spread the Gospel. Because the Spirit relates to and works through man’s spirit, else, it is easy for man to mistake his subjective emotions and personal desires for the Spirit of God. Hence, Christians communicate with God through his Spirit who lives in them (Jn. 4:24; 14:17). The Spirit helps them to obey his instructions and quickens them to act rightly. But sinful life *quenches the Spirit of the Lord – elabe ewua Gbogbo*. If that is the case, then church ceremonies without sincerity of heart will be empty. One could go through the rituals and still be guilty of sins. For that reason, the call *You,*

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<sup>375</sup> Gills, *Biblical Ethics and Contemporary Issues*, p. 114.

<sup>376</sup> Ogbu U. Kalu, “Gospel, Culture and Mission: Revisiting an Enduring Problem” (Pretoria: UP and University of Nigeria, 1996), pp. 283-300 (284).

<sup>377</sup> Kalu, “Gospel, Culture and Mission”, p. 286.

*Jesus only may in-dwell my heart*, a part of the same lyrics reconnects one to God. In that vein, Kalu posits that, “We need to constantly seek the insight of the Holy Spirit in helping us to better discern, and examine our self-understanding as Christians, our calling as disciples and our vocation as ministers of the Gospel”.<sup>378</sup> Seeking the insight of the Spirit is the process of building a relationship with God and his creation.

To build a relationship after the flood, God reintroduced the Genesis ecological order. Hence, to demonstrate the capacity to act responsibly, when Noah came out of the ark; his first approach to the new environment was an act of relationship. He began his caretaker job with an altar for God, and a pious devotional relationship (Gen. 8:20). The fact that God is a relational being, things on this earth have been given the substance of interrelationship. Noah’s approach to the new world depicted following a transcended moral God and order, which demonstrated an interrelationship with a strong sense of family loyalty. In addition, it is an act of reverence and law-abiding towards the Creator and his creation.<sup>379</sup>

In Genesis 8:22, the course of nature had not been discontinued. While the earth remains, and humans live upon it there shall be seed time and harvest time, cold and heat; there shall be summer and winter, and day and night will not cease. This covenant with Noah and his sons, which is called the Noahic covenant with the rainbow as a sign, is also a covenant with the planet earth. In order to preserve the planet, God blessed Noah and his sons, and said to them: “Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth” (Gen. 9:1-2). Both humans and living species have the potential power to be fruitful and multiply.<sup>380</sup> Therefore, God reintroduced the Genesis ecological order for the fact that he is a moral God, and that he cannot change his moral nature. He then committed them to man’s care as was the case in the Garden of Eden (Gen. 2:15).

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<sup>378</sup> Kalu, “Gospel, Culture and Mission”, p. 284.

<sup>379</sup> Athena E. Gorospe, “Evangelicals and the Environment: Going Beyond Stewardship”, (June 2012) pp. 256-266 (257).

<sup>380</sup> Gorospe, “Evangelicals and the Environment”, p. 260.

While God gave the command to “be fruitful” and “multiply” to all creatures, Asoanya establishes that, “Man and woman was given an even additional greater responsibility to ‘subdue’ and ‘rule’ and have dominion over all creation”.<sup>381</sup> I agree with Asoanya and wish to explain further that, this extra responsibility to rule is about stewardship, which entails accountability. Hence, Gorospe establishes that, “The stewardship concept looks at creation from the point of view of the beginning”.<sup>382</sup> Creation care has been reintroduced. There was the need to preserve the planet for future generations. Nevertheless, when Noah’s generation was increasing, sinful life that *quenches the Spirit* was also increasing. In the midst of the new generation, God chose the nation Israel for himself. They have a history because their father Abraham was called out or chosen by God. They have a theology because they are to worship one God, and ethics to live morally.<sup>383</sup> However, their lives also continue to deteriorate. Jesus placed the emphasis correctly “when he noted that conduct is a result of the attitude of the heart”.<sup>384</sup> It means you cannot live morally if you are not moral, and your motive and intension are not clear else, it *quenches the Spirit of the Lord*.

Interestingly, God desires those songs to be sung as a reminder of what he expects his children to do. Hence, he told Moses, “Write down this song and teach it...and have them sing it so that it may be a witness for me against them, ...when many disasters and calamities come on them, this song will testify against them” (Deut. 31:19, 21). Though this instruction was given to the Israelites, it equally goes to Christians as children of the same God. In this case, it was God who gave the song, but when humans choose the songs by themselves, he would equally hold them responsible because God judges all human motives and intentions. Isaiah 24:5a says, “The earth is defiled by its people.” In Ewe, *Wogblē kɔ ɔ̄o ne, alo do gu anyigbã* means the land is

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<sup>381</sup> Asoanya, *The Ecological Crisis in Africa as a Challenge to Lasting Cultural and Sustainable Development*, p. 169.

<sup>382</sup> Gorospe, “Evangelicals and the Environment”, p. 260.

<sup>383</sup> Joshua N. Kudadjie and R. K. Aboagye-Mensah. *Christian Social Ethics* (Accra: Asempa Publishers, 1992), p. 4.

<sup>384</sup> Gills, *Biblical Ethics and Contemporary Issues*, p. 105.

polluted, profane, and godless.<sup>385</sup> This means that Israel's behaviour was the negligence of true religious and moral principles. Israel's behaviour affected the entire world, both humans and non-humans. This inevitably results in a sinful life that *quenches the Spirit of the Lord*. If God's laws concerning the earth are sacred, and if that sacral nature is derived from the idea that a moral God has commanded them; then, disobeying them would result in an ecological crisis, a curse that would consume the Earth. In other words, disrespect for ecological laws will eventually affect the lithosphere, thus, the solid outer layer of the Earth where human beings, animals, birds, and non-humans inhabit; the geographical space where we live, *xexeme* also *agbenɔfe* in Ewe.<sup>386</sup>

In Isaiah 24:7-10, the Lord bitterly lamented that “the vine will languish, all merry-making activities will cease, and the city of confusion will be broken down”. In this case, Israel had failed to come to terms with the fact that, the relationship between them and God had been broken, yet they had been singing to him. It is the “Spirit who energises the Christians to seek to live the way God wants and helps them to understand the truth about God” (Jn. 14:16).<sup>387</sup> Without the Spirit, no one can live a moral life, because sinful life *quenches the Spirit*. The Lord said, “They shall lift up their voice and sing to the glory and majesty of the Lord”, but a transgression of the earth shall be heavy upon it (Is. 24:14, 20). This means those who live on the land of Israel and other parts of the earth shall feel the repercussions of the evil done to it, the effects of the broken interrelationship.

Isaiah's theological reading of the collapse of the house of Judah and the ecological collapse of the land of Israel, her disrespect for an ecological moral claim, offers a powerful narrative to frame the current ecological crisis.<sup>388</sup> This effect of ecological collapse by the

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<sup>385</sup> BibleWorks 9, “Isaiah 24:1”. Init bw900swc (2011). [www.bibleworks.com](http://www.bibleworks.com)

<sup>386</sup> Blasus, *African Theology*, p. 230.

<sup>387</sup> Kunhiyop, *African Christian Ethics*, p. 54.

<sup>388</sup> Northcott, *A Moral Climate*, p. 14.

Israelites as they refused to recognise ecological order constituted a moral disrespect, which inevitably resulted in a moral environmental crisis. This means that the collapse of moral environmentally friendly principles eventually result in environmental degradation. When Christians sing in church and are excited about the songs, their excitement affects the environment where they are to live their Christian lives. But when the Spirit is not alive, then sinful life has *quenched the Spirit*. Dietrich Bonhoeffer suggests that, “It is because modern rationalism, science, and technology train modern humans not to see the earth as divine creation”.<sup>389</sup> I seek to agree with Bonhoeffer because there are strong and reasonable grounds for believing that when the approach to God’s creation has not been considered to have divine origin, it results in ecological depression. This is because the creation account testifies, “in the beginning, God created the heavens and earth” (Gen. 1:1). Against this position, it has been observed that, “global warming is caused by human-generated greenhouse gases”.<sup>390</sup> Some of the common symptoms of global warming and environmental pollution include asthma, headache, discomfort, dizziness, depression, structural damage, and so forth. While Agbadza and Bòbòbò cultural music bring healing to the hearers, the cause of the sicknesses remains the same. The current state of affairs of the entire world reveals that, while geological disasters fall into obvious categories, such as earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, and so forth, man-made disasters take a wider variety of forms. According to Brusentsev and Vroman, man-made disasters are numerous which include the following:

Nuclear radiation, biological disasters, chemical disasters, radiological and cyber disasters, dam failures, bush fires, factory explosions, industrial pollution, transport accidents, toxic wastes, terrorism, and virus threats. [Though] humans cannot usually predict geological disasters, man-made disasters can be avoided and prevented.<sup>391</sup>

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<sup>389</sup> Northcott, *A Moral Climate*, p. 6.

<sup>390</sup> Northcott, *A Moral Climate*, p. 6.

<sup>391</sup> Vera Brusentsev & Wayne Vroman, “Disasters in the United States: Geological and Man-Made Disasters”, *W.E. Upjohn Institute*, pp. 169-179 (172) Accessed on 5 October, 2022. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctvh4zgjh.13>

This means that while humans are not in a position to predict natural disasters, at least, man-made disasters can be guarded against. The beneficial effect is that without human interference with the “troposphere”, thus the earth’s atmosphere or space up to about 8-15km from the Earth where humans live remains cool. However, the extensive environmental degradation which is caused by man-made disasters is here with us, affecting both humans and non-humans. The observable change is what we call these days “Global warming”. When people harden their hearts like this, they become deceived into thinking that good is evil and evil is good *quenches the Spirit of the Lord* (2 Tim. 4:2-3).<sup>392</sup>

One thing, which is certain, is that when the climate becomes extremely hot, it affects the drummers and instrumentalists not to play these cultural music in comfort. Nevertheless, if they do, they sweat profusely which eventually dehydrates them. According to Northcott, global warming is the earth’s judgment on the global market enterprise.<sup>393</sup> It could be argued that when forests are mismanaged, it affects the environment and habitats for non-human species. Interestingly, some of these forests serve as praying grounds for Christians. They go there to pray to God and also meet the Holy Spirit. They also go to the mountains to pray to God. The questions are why do some Christians choose to go to the forests and mountains to pray? Why should God invite Moses to meet him on Mount Sinai/Horeb (Ex. 19:20)? Does this agree with the traditional belief that forests, sacred groves, and some mountains are sacred places and must be cared for? Examples in Ghana are the Achimota forest, Aburi mountains, among others where many Christians go to pray. The fact that prayer goes with singing, they sing and pray to God in anticipation of answers to their prayers. Ecologically, one would conclude that, since prayer demands intense concentration on spiritual matters, a cool, quiet, and solitary environment is conducive to having healthy communication with God. Hence, the lyrics of the song plead that

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<sup>392</sup> Wilbur O’Donovan, *Biblical Christianity in African Perspective* (Carlisle: Paternoster Press, 1996), p. 135.

<sup>393</sup> Northcott, *A Moral Climate*, p. 7.

Jesus only may dwell in the heart. *The sinful life I knew never should dwell in me* because it *quenches the Spirit of the Lord*. This is the rejection of the wrong to do the right. Over here, the lyrics have a potential appeal for prescriptive language to command what ought to be done; it sets forth moral obligation. This means that the ecosystem, which comprises forests and mountains, is of vital importance to Christians and that they need to have an interest in caring for them.

#### **4.6. African Christian Eco-response to Address Ecological Issues**

One thing, that is certain among African Christians, is that they pray and sing religiously to register their allegiance to God and present their requests to him as a way of expressing their spirituality. From an African Christian perspective, primal spirituality manifests itself within the African Christian faith and serves as the bedrock of their faith. They are sincere, vigorous, and dedicated to their perception of spirituality. Nevertheless, God does not accept a religious service that gives him no glory, but a spirituality that demonstrates the fear of God.

It has been indicated earlier that human need or poverty causes some to exploit the environment. Bryant Myers' theory defines poverty as a "broken relationship with God, ourselves, and creation". He argues that breaking these relationships is morally sinful and causes poverty and devastation in the environment. For him, "We must broaden our definitions of poverty and its remedies to include spiritual and religious dimensions. This is because the spiritual roots of poverty play a central role in understanding and eradicating it".<sup>394</sup>

The lyrics in this study reveal various useful eco-ethical thoughts that are embedded in them. The GEC's *Agbadza* lyrics *Afeto Yesue, vaqem kaba – Lord Jesus, come and rescue me quickly* reveals that in a devastating situation, the person called the attention of a rescuer who

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<sup>394</sup> Bryant L. Myers, *Walking with the Poor: Principles and Practices of Transformational Development*, Rev. Ed. (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2011), p. 386.

could deliver or save. The effect of the devastation in the lyrics *anyigba le dzo le ge – the Earth will catch fire* suggests that there must have been a cause, and this cause and effect call for eco-ethical attention to find out how to improve the situation.

Between 1960 and 1980, the World Council of Churches recommended that churches should begin to rethink the theology of development. While the Roman Catholic suggested that everyone must come on board and play their roles as “bicycle spokes”, the Protestant churches responded that the mission must be holistic because humans as stewards are instructed to care for creation. The political sector was not neglected. As for them, they came up with integral objectives such as agriculture, transportation, and livelihood; they thought all of these would reduce human needs.<sup>395</sup> Nonetheless, some groups of Christians known as “reframers” seemed to disagree with this concept suggested by the World Council of Churches.

“Reframers are eschatology expectant Christians who rejoice over eco-crisis and the decaying of the Earth, because to them it fulfills apocalyptic parts of the Bible in their own time as a ‘sign’ that Christ’s second coming is at hand”.<sup>396</sup> They refer to Jesus’ warning in Matthew 24:7 that, “Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be famines and earthquakes in various places”. They adopt an eschatological model that the current world will soon be crushed, therefore, inflicting damage to the earth is only to help the world end earlier. This is unfortunate because Christianity of heavenliness without earthliness is destructive. This is because to be heavenly-minded, one needs to be on Earth first.

Against the reframers’ position is that the redemptive nature of the Gospel, which is good news to save the world, is the church’s mission because God is interested in his creation. “For God so loved the world” (Jn. 3:16) is not only about human beings, but also about the cosmos:

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<sup>395</sup> World Council of Churches, “You are the light of the world”: Statements on Mission by World Council of Churches 1980-2005 (Geneva: WCC, 2005), 162. ISBN: 2825414352.

<sup>396</sup> Richard Young, *Healing the Earth: A Theocentric Perspective on Environmental Problems and Their Solutions*, cited by Ebenezer Yaw Blasu, *African Theology: Studies in African Religious Creation Care* (Eugene, Or: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2020), p. 112.

the whole universe or the Lord Jesus would have treated with contempt the river Jordan in which he was baptised, and the garden of Gethsemane where he prayed to the Father. Hence, Christians can best protect God's creation, because they are expected to be God's true stewards, who still have their being within the ecosystem.<sup>397</sup> To make a virtue out of the situation, Christians need to go back to the Scriptures and carefully study the instruction of God in the Garden of Eden (Gen. 2:15), then, the song *the earth will catch fire* will not be necessary. At this point, the "trichotomy" is that African Christians are faced with a triune theological challenge to redefine the relation between creation, salvation, and human need.<sup>398</sup> This shows the engagement of the Gospel with the ecosystem, which enjoins Christians to appreciate Christian ethical eco-practice.

African Christians cannot take themselves out of the ecological issues and stand in sanitised, disinfected isolation from the eco-community.<sup>399</sup> Even though the word "ecology or ecosystem" is not in the Bible, it is universally accepted, and no one can live without it. The ARS and GEC are African churches who cannot stay aloof from ecological issues. The fact that the GEC's Bɔ̀bɔ̀ lyrics, *Nuvɔ gbe si medze si la naga nɔ menye o, elabe ewua Gbɔgbɔ – the sinful life I knew never should dwell in me, because it quenches the Spirit* is about identifying one's wrongs, it depicts repentance.

To promote environmental care, God instructed the Israelites not to defecate around their camp. Thus, to deal with environmental pollution, he said, "You shall have a place outside the camp, where you may go out...you shall have an implement among your equipment...you shall dig with it...and cover your refuse. The camp must be holy" (Deut. 23:12-14.). Over here, open defecation within and outside the Israelites' community was prohibited. This was God's environmental protection education. The charge is in one phrase: avoid moral environmental

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<sup>397</sup> Ben-Willie Kwaku Golo, "Redeemed from the Earth? Environmental Change and Salvation Theology in African Christianity", *Scriptura* Vol. 111, No. 3 (2012) pp. 348-361 (350).

<sup>398</sup> Northcott, *A Moral Climate*, p. 7.

<sup>399</sup> Kwame Bediako, "Gospel and Culture Guest Editorial", *Journal of African Christian Thought*, Vol. 2, No. 2 (December 1999), pp. 1-56 (1).

degradation. The preservation of the purity and honour of the camp of Israel teaches that decency and cleanliness promote good health, and prevent many diseases. This education has to include leaders in all spheres. I can say with the conviction from eco-ethical perspective that, there is the need to reconcile with God as personal and structural sins, which have to do with governance, are dealt with. This eco-ethical response must involve reconciliation with God, humanity, and relationship with creation. Hence, the GEC *Bɔbɔbɔ* lyrics *the sinful life I knew never should dwell in me* is relevant in this study.

The proclamation of the good news churches need to grapple with is today's biggest question – how to have a sustainable relationship with planet earth. The reason is that people will not listen to the good news unless they see practical evidence of Christians taking care of the earth. Walls and Ross posit that, “Discipleship must move beyond having relationship with God and neighbour to include their relationship with the land and fellow creatures whose welfare we have been entrusted with, which is the first Great Commission mandate (Gen. 1:26-28)”.<sup>400</sup> In the beginning, this is the official instruction given to humanity.

Christians can succeed by virtue of their tenacity. Putting all the lyrics of the *Agbadza* songs together, this sounded that, *nuvɔ fe fetu enye ku, gake Mawu fe amenuveve enye agbe mavɔ – The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life* (Rom. 6:23) are relevant. Therefore, *tefe Mawua ɲu – get close to God* teaches that the disobedient will perish, but the grace of God is available to those who will get closer to him. This person allows Jesus to live in his life, and that anything he does should give glory to him (Jesus). Hence, the lyrics *ɲutikɔkɔe katã nanye nye dela Yesu tɔ! – All glory and honour unto my Saviour Jesus!*

A typical example is, while other African countries failed to integrate the physical and spiritual, African Earthkeepers in Zimbabwe introduced theological education by extension to

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<sup>400</sup> Andrew F. Walls, & Cathy Ross (eds), *Mission in the 21st Century: Exploring the Five Marks of Global Mission* (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 2008), p. 94-97.

help citizens perceive their problems from spiritual perspective. One remarkable motivation of Marthinus Daneel of Zimbabwe is that, he introduced the idea of “War of tress”.<sup>401</sup> Daneel was a pastor, theologian and missionary who invited religious groups to come together. He was deeply influenced by the environmental devastation he witnessed, collaborated with traditional chiefs, spirit mediums, and leader of AICs in Zimbabwe. Hence, they declare what they call the “war of trees”, because they took cue from how their guerrilla war was fought to gain independence. He used that method to bring religious groups together to fight ecological issues. He restored ecological taboos that prevent people from cutting trees indiscriminately. They based their work on a grassroots understanding of theology to address environmental issues. The movement organised tree-planting Eucharists. Whenever they came to plant trees prayers were offered to confess their ecological sins. They shared the Holy Communion to remind themselves that the bread and wine came from plants and trees. They do that to invite the presence of God. These ceremonies symbolised healing the land. Marthinus Daneel’s “Green mission churches” succeeded because “New ethical codes related to the environment and church discipline were developed to combat destructive environmental practices. Christians developed a new sense of common responsibility with traditionalist earth-keepers”.<sup>402</sup> By bridging traditional African religious practices with Christian doctrines, the African Earthkeepers fostered a holistic approach to environmental stewardship, emphasising the sacredness of the Earth across faith traditions.

The Zimbabwean Christians’ concern for creation care was demonstrated because the exhibition of Christian and traditional moral values is a *sine qua non* for having a positive impact on the eco-community that attracted God’s intervention. According to Walls and Ross, “Care of creation is not the sole prerogative of well-intentioned individuals or organisations specifically

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<sup>401</sup> Marthinus L. Daneel, “Christian Mission and Earth-Care”, in Allison Howell, “The Bible and Care of Creation”, p. 170.

<sup>402</sup> Marthinus, “Christian Mission and Earth-Care”, p. 172.

directed at environmental issues. It is one of the significant marks of Christian mission”.<sup>403</sup> This is a matter of considerable public concern, from which religious, political, and traditional leaders need not to stand aloof. When the African Earthkeepers united diverse religious groups towards a common ecological goal, the movement bonds and showcased the potential of interfaith collaboration in addressing environmental challenges.

#### **4.7. Conclusion**

In conclusion, while the selected lyrics expressed theological thoughts about God, his attributes, and his ability to save in chapter three, the eco-ethical dimensions in this chapter revealed the effects of human immoral behaviour and the opportunity to think straight and live acceptable moral lives. This chapter comments on the selected lyrics of Agbadza and Bòbòbò music that the study looks at with eco-ethical eyes. It suggests that besides the excitement of the songs, they should be able to address some ecological issues to guarantee their sustainability. When people are saved by believing in Christ, they remain on the earth where they continue to live their Christian lives.

It also draws the inference that God judges people for mismanaging his creation. During Noah’s time, God saw a gross moral crisis on the earth, which had disqualified humanity to continue to live on it. In addition, because things on this earth have been given the substance of interrelationship, the ecosystem will be affected, and human needs will increase when this interrelationship is not working to achieve its goal. Again, the Gospel, Agbadza, and Bòbòbò music are to engage key environmental issues and take decisive actions to deal with them.

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<sup>403</sup> Walls & Ross, (eds), *Mission in the 21st Century*, p. 97.

The next chapter presents all the various informants' responses, which consist of interviews held with ARS and GEC pastors, two non-Christians, and data on observations of church music.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### Presentation of Data and Findings of Responses

#### 5.1. Introduction

The previous chapter commented on the eco-ethical facets of Agbadza and Bòbòbò lyrics that were critically looked at with an eco-ethical eye. This was a qualitative analysis and not a type of statistical analysis.

To adequately analyse data, this chapter presents face-to-face interviews, the various degrees of responses to the questionnaires administered, and matters arising from group discussions. The informants in this study comprised a sample of pastors, non-Christians, elders, and a group of youths as indicated earlier in Chapter One. As a matter of ethical principle of anonymity and confidentiality, all the real names and identities of the informants are withheld. The responses of the four pastors, thus, two from ARS and two from GEC have been pseudo-named. While the ARS pastors are named *Kwashie* and *Kudzo* who pastor Love and Joy churches, the GEC pastors *Yaotse* and *Yesunyo* are responsible for *Global* and *Mercy* chapels, respectively. The elders and youths of the various churches in this study bear the names of their churches, thus, ARS Love church and ARS Joy church, GEC Global Chapel, and GEC Mercy Chapel. The names of the non-Christians interviewed are Dumega V and Mamaga II. Detailed participant observations were carried out on two of the churches' song ministration sections.

#### 5.2. Presentation of Responses

This section presents the responses of the pastors, non-Christians, elders, and youths. Though the numerous responses in this work vary according to the various degrees of questions in the questionnaire, twelve areas have culminated in four major areas to find out facts that determine the result of the study. The study has identified these four major areas, which are based on

information gathered about the causes of the great excitement of Agbadza and Bɔbɔbɔ music, and the theological thoughts of the lyrics. The rest of the major areas are the challenges of war and immoral nature, and the future and sustainability of the music. To elucidate, this captures the area of whether these cultural music are addressing both spiritual and moral issues confronting humans and their environment that guarantee the sustainability of the Agbadza and Bɔbɔbɔ music in the ARS and GEC. The various responses have been transcribed to reflect the informants' opinions on the practice of cultural music in the churches. The interview of the ARS Love and Joy pastors Kwashie and Kudzo are hereby presented, which is followed by the responses of the two pastors of GEC Global and Mercy chapels Yaotse and Yesunyo who equally responded to such questions posed to the other pastors earlier. Two non-Christians Dumega V and Mamaga II were interviewed, and their responses have equally been presented. To let the data rest on some tenets of scientific research, I adopted the method of participant observations to observe the subject of Agbadza and Bɔbɔbɔ music in two congregations. I also took notice of the significant aspects related to the research.

### **5.3. Interview with ARS Pastors Kwashie and Kudzo**

The ARS as one of the African Christian church denominations has introduced Agbadza and Bɔbɔbɔ music in their worship from the time of its inception. Members of this church get excited when Agbadza and Bɔbɔbɔ music, and other related cultural music are engaged in the worship of God. To let the analysis rest on some factual evidence, the two pastors who represented the ARS Love and Joy churches were interviewed regarding these cultural music.

I interviewed pastor Kwashie of ARS Love Church at Accra in the Greater Accra Region.<sup>404</sup> He responded to questions about Agbadza and Bɔbɔbɔ music, and the core values guiding the church. He also responded to questions, which had to do with the stance of the ARS

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<sup>404</sup> Pastor Kwashie of ARS Love Church, Interview, Tuesday 16 January 2024, Accra.

on the use of cultural music, and what it meant by expressing Africanness in Christian worship. Again, he responded to the question about the effectiveness of Agbadza and Bobobo music in the church, and the proof of their sustainability.

Pastor Kwashie establishes that the church always comes out with themes and teachings that are pertinent to their spiritual nourishment, and promote the spiritual growth of the church. These themes are developed into teaching and learning materials, which help every member to know the teaching that guides the church within a specific period of the year. The pastor enumerates why cultural music is important in the church and stresses their necessity. In addition, he explains that mid-year and yearly reports on church growth received from leaders in all categories of the church, and pastors informed the decision of the leadership about the themes. The leadership is expected to make decisions on consistent themes having the church's core values in mind. According to pastor Kwashie, this information on Agbadza and Bobobo music as the cultural dances in the ARS, put together helps the churches to restructure their teachings and preaching. By so doing, it helps the spiritual life of the members to grow naturally, as they try to express the richness of their existence. This helps the churches to know how and where corrections need to be made. The themes that guide the spiritual leading and administration of the church are guided to be consistent with any given administration. The teaching materials help the church leaders not to deviate from the themes and core values of the church. Some of those materials are *Toḡoḡo nyo wu vɔsa* which means "Obedience is better than sacrifice" in English, and "*Hamedoḡo*", which means "Constitution" in English.

The interview reveals that the church, as a human institution, might not be perfect in every aspect. There are complex and multi-faceted issues that are challenges to the leadership. He notes an instance where the church experienced laxness after a church survey was carried out to get information nationwide. This area pastor Kwashie points out to be of evangelism and discipleship. According to him, the church should continue to strive for greater efficiency in that

direction. When he was asked to rate the level of morality in the church, he, however, agreed that whatever happens in the outside world, could creep into the church if members are not watchful. This makes some of the church members torn apart by societal pressure. Those who are morally weak could be lured into deviant lifestyles. Pastor Kwashie cautions that the church should never encourage immoral acts or gestures of defiance, because even Ghanaian culture frowns upon public expression of defiance. For him, there are moral life standards that are embedded in the Scriptures, which members should follow. Again, he believes that God bestows a moral sense upon man by which he distinguishes good from evil. Therefore, the church has an important role to play in that regard. He was asked to express himself on the immoral nature of Bobobo music. He notes that sometimes the stereotyped deviant behaviour attached to Bobobo music is inevitably a social phenomenon, which concerns them so much. However, the church makes a conscious effort to produce teaching materials with relevant topics that address some of those issues. Those teaching materials include themes that help pastors, teachers, and other leaders to teach on moral issues as often as they can.

Pastor Kwashie clearly explains the cardinal principle of morality that, an equitable principle of dealing with sin is that no particular sin is greater than how another is. All sin is offensive to God. Sexual immorality or giving worship to images which is similar to pouring libation, or whoever “makes use of strong language, or takes by force what is not his” is one of the many sins listed in 1 Corinthians 6:9-10. This is because sexual immorality is not the only sin that will keep a person from the kingdom of God. Other sins will equally prevent many. Therefore, it is the church’s responsibility to help members to live their lives right.

According to him, the ARS disallows members to practise what is considered immoral, but to be one another’s keeper. The pastor was asked to tell the secret behind the unity in the ARS. He responded that, to curtail segregation in the church, members are always encouraged to practise communal life as Africans. Members are also educated to support one another as they

endeavour to help, especially, those in need of jobs. Other areas they take into consideration are that the churches are encouraged to help build effective congregational structures to express Africanness in the churches. Congregational structures are the connection between ministries and group activities in the church.

He indicated that generally, gestures of defiance should not be attached to Bòbòbò music. Hence, the church strongly disagrees that Bòbòbò music is immoral. The church's position is that under no circumstances should the church encourage its members to indulge in any act of defiance. According to him, moral values are enshrined in the traditions, beliefs, the sense of community solidarity, and lyrics of songs. Hence, negative conducts are avoided in the church.

The ARS pastor Kwashie agrees that Agbadza music should always be played in the church, because it has highly been beneficial for both members and non-members when it is used in and outside the church. They also engage "*Tutudu*" literally means push the town, similar to Agbadza music. Many members like dancing to this music because it heals. For him, cultural music helps the churches to identify themselves with society and vice versa when they go out to evangelise. The churches' preaching help members see their necessary place and familiarisation in the church. He also expresses his opinion on the common grounds between the primal mode of worship and the expression of the Christian faith in the ARS. For him, most of the musical instruments that are engaged outside the church are also employed to express their Christian faith when they come to worship. They employ the drum called *Atimevu*, the medium size known as *Sogo*, a supporting drum called *Asivui*, a small drum called *Kadaṅu*, rattles known as *Axatse*, and gong-gong as mentioned earlier in Chapter Two. He establishes that, there has always been a difference between the songs sung at social gatherings and those at church. Those that are sung at church are mostly metamorphosed into Christian songs that align with Scripture. Thus, the lyrics (words) of the songs are always scriptural.

When pastor Kwashie was asked whether there was any assurance that Agbadza and Bɔbɔbɔ music had a future in the church, he responded in the affirmative. For him, what the churches needed to do was to involve the youths in the singing and dancing sections, where they would be taught regularly to understand the relevance of the use of such music, in the church and at other public gatherings.

The ARS pastor Kudzo of Joy Church was also interviewed at Agbozume in the Volta Region of Ghana.<sup>405</sup> The informant answers questions on the position of the church regarding the use of cultural music such as Agbadza and Bɔbɔbɔ, and why the church members get excited about these music. Pastor Kudzo vehemently claims that one of the factors that underlie the excitement has to do with how the music communicates vital information about God and life situations. This makes the lyrics understandable. For him, music as an important mode of communication in Africa reveals the culture in the ARS church. He maintains that, the ARS since its inception introduced an African mode of worship into the church to show an African identity. Hence, the use of local musical instruments, and local songs that are sung in the vernacular accompanied by clapping and dancing. According to him, the master leader of songs usually uses horsetail *Sɔsike* in Ewe to perform, as mentioned in Chapter Two. When ministries in the church are invited to give songs, they play local music; notable among them is the Men's ministry, which usually engages either Agbadza or Bɔbɔbɔ music in ministering to the church.

Pastor Kudzo says what challenges local music has been the proliferation of contemporary music, which is foreign to the African church, particularly the ARS. Nevertheless, the church leadership is trying to educate the members to understand the message that indigenous music communicates. Hence, diverse kinds of cultural music and musical instruments are employed, depending on the cultural background of the various churches.

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<sup>405</sup> Pastor Kudzo of ARS Joy Church, Interview, Friday 12 January 2024, Agbozume, Volta Region.

When I asked pastor Kudzo to express his personal opinion about the war and immoral nature of Agbadza and Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀ music, respectively, he posits that there is nothing perfect in any human society. For him, local music is relevant and not war or immoral as some claim it to be, because music does not live a moral life by itself, but people must live morally. Therefore, if the people are immoral that does not make the intrinsic value of Agbadza and Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀ war and immoral music. Since the lyrics of the songs are scriptural and they believe in the inerrancy of Scripture, he did not see how immoral these music have become. He notes that the Bible contains the instructions of God and therefore is the church's moral constitution.

Concerning the church's core values that are most important to him, pastor Kudzo also pointed to the constitution of the ARS, known as "*Hameɔfofo*" in Ewe. He indicates that the rules of the church contained in the constitution have been making a significant impact on the conduct of the members of the church. He mentions that difficult life issues that do not provide any common grounds for Christians to compromise their faith equally challenge non-Christians. This means both Christians and non-Christians face the same difficulties in life. However, the fact that you are a Christian there is the need for you to behave in a particular way and look up to the Lord for answers to life problems. Despite what has just been said, the church has long been in a position to advice members to help the youths to curtail immoral practices. This is about the unemployed; those who could not find jobs after they have come out of school, because unemployment discourages some to involve themselves in illicit practices.

Because some doubt the sustainability of Agbadza and Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀ music in the ARS, I find out from pastor Kudzo his opinion on this matter. He thought that the church could sustain these music, or they would have faded away over the years, leaving the church with a sense of unease. They always encourage, especially, the youths to play active roles in handling these music in the church and at funerals. In addition to what they practice in the churches, they also meet at their yearly International Convention at Tadzewu in the Volta Region of Ghana where their

headquarters is situated. At the convention, various branches of the ARS come together to showcase African culture and their local music according to their local languages. They also show considerable enthusiasm, which indicates that these local music have a future in the church. But when he was asked to indicate the impact Agbadza and Bobobo music have on their eco-communities, he responded that that is one of the areas they seemed to have failed.

#### **5.4. Interview with GEC Pastors Yaotse and Yesunyo**

The key remark of critical interest of this research is that, some members get excited when Agbadza and Bobobo music are engaged to worship God, but others also feel that Agbadza and Bobobo music are warlike and immoral. Some also hold the view that these cultural music have no future, and therefore, lacks sustainability. I, therefore, contacted two pastors of the GEC who represented the Global and Mercy chapels through face-to-face interviews to ascertain the facts about the phenomenon. Pastor Yaotse of the *Global Chapel* was interviewed at Ashaiman in the Greater Accra Region.<sup>406</sup> The pastor answered questions about the position of the GEC on the engagement of Agbadza and Bobobo music with Christian worship in the church. He begins answering the questions posed to him by identifying the core values that guide the running of the church. According to pastor Yaotse, core values are sound beliefs and ethical practices based on biblical doctrine. He establishes that the core values of the GEC determine organisational culture, the standard of behaviour, and the philosophy of ministry. He enumerates about nine various aspects that the core values deal with. Interestingly, music is one of them. For him, the GEC engages local music such as Agbadza and Bobobo, and contemporary Gospel music to worship God. He quickly refers to one of the popular choirs of the GEC Kotobabi branch known as Bethel Revival Choir whose Agbadza music has gone viral in Ghanaian society.

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<sup>406</sup> Pastor Yaotse of GEC Global Chapel, Interview, Monday 22 January 2024, Ashaiman, Greater Accra.

Pastor Yaotse notes that the GEC believes the Holy Scriptures as the inspired Word of God with final authority in matters of faith and conduct. According to him, one of the factors that underlie the excitement has to do with the considerable commonality of self-expression as Africans. The GEC believes in singing as can be found in the Scriptures; both the Old and New Testaments encourage singing, which has a positive impact on the growth of the GEC. He also comments on the common grounds between the primal mode of worship and the expression of the Christian faith in the GEC. For him, most of the musical instruments that are used outside the church are similar to those employed to express their Christian faith in the church. Pastor Yaotse mentions a few instruments such as rattles, *Sogo*, *Uuvi*, *Adonjo*, and gong-gong, among others as some of the local musical instruments used by the church choirs, Agbadza and Bɔbɔbɔ groups in the churches. The pastor indicates that cultural music and core values guide the church to worship and express themselves as Africans without reservations. He notes that the GEC gives expression to the faith through hymns, songs of praise, drumming, clapping of hands, and dancing in adoration to God. The church employs musical instruments, soloists, and choristers as elements and expressions of the faith and worship, in full reverence of God and under the guidance of the Holy Spirit and the Word of God. Hence, the moral life of the singers and instrumentalists is crucial and a matter of concern to the GEC's leadership.

Pastor Yaotse disagrees with the perception of some people that Agbadza and Bɔbɔbɔ music are war and immoral practices. When it comes to the issue of immorality, there is no way cultural music that is engaged to worship God should end in celebration of sin. However, he quickly explains his view based on 2 Samuel 6:5-7 where Uzzah was killed beside the Ark of the Covenant by God. He says that in Uzzah's case, it was a violation of the Law in Numbers 4:15. In that Law, the ark was to be moved only by the Levites who were to carry it using the carrying poles. They were never to touch the Ark itself. To touch it was a capital offence under Hebrew law. Here, even though King David and the Israelites were celebrating with all their might with

all kinds of musical instruments, they violated God's instructions. God was not angry at the music and the celebration, but with Uzzah who was trying to help God's Ark of the Covenant when it was placed on a cart instead of being carried by the Levites. It was the act that was unholy, not the music. Uzzah, though sincere in his desire to protect the Ark, had to face the consequences of the sin of touching it. As David sought to bring Israel back into a relationship with God, God had to remind the nation dramatically that enthusiasm must be accompanied by obedience to his Law. Pastor Yaotse refers to King David and Israel again and says, later on, David and all Israel brought the Ark of the Covenant of the Lord with shouts, sounding of ram's horns, trumpets, cymbals, lyres, and harps (1 Chron. 15:25-28). He said that this time they did the right thing, and God approved of their performances. Hence, it was not all about the music, but God had a keen interest in the people's obedience to his Law. Therefore, to claim that Agbadza and Bobobo music are war and immoral practices that should not be engaged in the worship of God culturally is incorrect. This he said and established that humans are social and cultural beings.

Again, pastor Yaotse maintains that holiness as one of the important core values of the GEC in thought and life is a process of sanctification. Individuals and corporate bodies are encouraged to pursue holiness through the work of the Holy Spirit, and the process of personal sanctification; thus, members should walk in holiness. He, however, admits that Christians are repentant sinners; dancing styles are bound to have become one of the moral challenges of the church. The pastor relates this challenge to ignorance of the rules that govern the music, and perhaps unwillingness on the part of some members to follow the teachings of the Bible.

As to whether the Agbadza and Bobobo music have a future, pastor Yaotse gives an affirmative answer that they have a future only if leaders of all the GEC branches see the importance of them. Therefore, teaching has to be encouraged to enable, especially, the youths develop an interest in these local music. In addition, he indicates that the various ministries have

to play active roles in this regard. The pastor notes that a key determinant of whether Agbadza and Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀ music will proliferate through the entire church is the extent to which the key stakeholders would accept these music. For him, it is imperative that all stakeholders also own the wisdom of the corporate direction of the GEC. Leaders of ministries and groups should be able to teach the corporate identity of the church. This would guarantee the commitment and support of all.

The sustainability of these local music has become crucial in spreading the Gospel of Christ. Pastor Yaotse suggests that prayer and fasting are keys to spiritual revival. When the churches pray and fast, revival would come since they are effective weapons against the odds of life. Through prayer and fasting, the churches could sing songs that are spirit-filled to minister healing and deliverance to the members. When these are done, it would go a long way to help foster the sense of church community embracing these local music to a greater degree. When it came to how those cultural music were affecting the eco-community in which they worship. The pastor confessed that they all lamented about environmental issues, but the music was not being directed to those areas.

For the sake of gender balance, if not gender equality, a female pastor Yesunyo of GEC *Mercy Chapel* was interviewed at all pastors and their spouses' conference held at Ho, the regional capital of the Volta Region of Ghana.<sup>407</sup> According to her, the GEC gives special recognition to cultural music such as Agbadza and Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀ in the churches where they are used to worship God. pastor Yesunyo of Mercy Chapel disagrees with the view that local music for that matter Agbadza and Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀ music are warlike and immoral. She mentions that during the olden days, Agbadza was utilised as war music. However, in these contemporary times, it is used to worship at churches, funerals, and places of entertainment devoid of songs that are full of

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<sup>407</sup> Pastor Yesunyo of GEC Mercy Chapel, Interview, Thursday 25 January 2024, Ho, Volta Region.

suggestive lyrics. This equally applies to Bobobo music, she claimed. This female pastor testifies that many members and those who do not belong to GEC get excited when any of these local music is employed in church. It sometimes ministers healing and encourages those who are undergoing excruciating moments of life. Therefore, to state that Bobobo music is immoral performance, which could affect lifestyle is out of order though Christians are still humans.

Pastor Yesunyo puts it analogously and said that we have had instances where people, who are very vocal easily, win public favour while the voice of those unpopular is not heard or listened to when it comes to decision-making. Hence, she posits that if Ghanaians could make their local music popular by employing them in churches' public worship and social gatherings, Agbadza and Bobobo music could be the main music that would be engaged in public worship among the Anlo-Ewe and Evedome.

She notes that, the church belongs to God; therefore, he had placed every nation at a particular place with their distinct cultures within which they could find him and worship him in Acts 17:26-27. Pastor Yesunyo also refers to the church's core values, and mentions that the GEC's liturgical expression is charismatic of which music is a part. She explains that, charismatic expression therefore is not unguided excessive emotionalism. Charismatic has to do with the gifts of the Holy Spirit, which are given freely by God to strengthen believers and equip them to live for the Lord and be effective in ministry. The church encourages members to identify and develop their spiritual gifts and talents, which includes singing and drumming. They are to use these gifts decently and effectively to the glory of God. Hence, the GEC's style of worship varies from traditional and contemporary to charismatic. The church employs musical instruments, dance, the lifting and clapping of hands, soloist and choristers as elements and expression of their faith and worship, as mentioned earlier.

Pastor Yesunyo disagrees that though challenging issues face the youths, they must not live unholy lives to the detriment of their spirituality and future. This is because Christianity is

not living in luxury. According to her, though Agbadza and Bobobo music are not in all the GEC branches, she was of the opinion that, members could be encouraged by educating them to have interest in their local music. If that were done properly, it would grow and affect most of the Ewe congregations. She also states that the sustainability of Agbadza and Bobobo music in the GEC is possible if pastors could find some means of having members trained to know how to play the drums and sing the songs, it would go a long way to help Africans express their Africanness in worship. One area, which she could not explain herself well, was the impact Agbadza and Bobobo music had on the eco-community.

### **5.5. Interview with Non-Christian Dumega V and Mamaga II**

To allow the study to rest on some fundamental tenets of religious thoughts of belief, two non-Christians – a chief and queen-mother of Anlo-Ewe – were interviewed to seek their opinions on the subject matter under discussion. The two persons made up of a male and female had purposively been selected to express their opinions on Agbadza and Bobobo music. This sample of persons had been chosen to enable the outcome of this research to be a gender-balanced account. Thus, the information is provided by both Christians and non-Christians who are Ghanaians.

The non-Christian male Dumega V was interviewed at Agbozume in the Volta Region of Ghana.<sup>408</sup> According to Dumega V, Agbadza used to be seen as war music in times of war when the Ewe experienced various conflicts and oppression before settling in the Volta Region of Ghana and the Southern part of Togo. Agbadza is a dance performed at various events such as funerals, weddings, and parties. It serves as an Ewe identity emblem, and widely recognised as a unique aspect of the Ewe culture. Unlike other Ewe dances that are sometimes reserved for certain age groups, religions, or genders. When Agbadza cultural music is being played, anyone

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<sup>408</sup> Non-Christian Male Dumega V, Interview, Wednesday 7 February 2024. Volta Region.

can join in the dance. The dance is sometimes referred to as the “chicken dance” due to the bird-like movements of the two arms required for the performance.

Dumega V establishes that when Agbadza or Bobobo is being played, both Christians and non-Christians together sing some of the songs. I, therefore, tried to find out how possible that has been. He said, very often, when these cultural music are being played at funerals, crusade grounds, and social gatherings, non-Christians also join in to sing those songs that are scripturally based religiously without being affiliated to any of the churches. For him, they know God and wish some of these cultural music to be played to help them find their place in the churches. In addition to the fact that language is pertinent and significant in worship, he postulates that local worship songs should be meaningful, purposeful, and effective when they are sung in the community. Dumega V was asked if he had any idea on how cultural music affected their eco-community. He responded that they sing some of those songs when they are farming, but to have an impact on the farm he could not identify any. For him, they sing those songs to energise themselves on the farm.

The non-Christian female Mamaga II was also interviewed at Anyako in the Volta Region to contribute to the study.<sup>409</sup> According to her, the Agbadza dance is usually played at funerals, marriage ceremonies, and parties. Very often, it is played at any occasion that calls for an Ewe identity emblem, since this music is known by other ethnic groups to be uniquely Ewe. She notes that indiscriminately, everyone is welcome to join in the dance. Unlike other Ewe dances, which are sometimes reserved for a particular class of people who affiliate with particular religions, or genders. The local music and lyrics also facilitate communication and psychological development of the Ewe. Mamaga II also made some highly critical remarks that, generally, the non-Christian lead singers or composers are tempted to be involved in sexual immorality, which is the immoral aspect of music. However, this is not about the Christians.

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<sup>409</sup> Non-Christian Female Mamaga II, Interview, Friday 9 February 2024. Volta Region.

The next question was whether Agbadza is war music or not. She responded that in the olden days, it was considered war music, but currently, there is no war, therefore, Agbadza could not be perceived as war music, as someone might perceive it. For her, Christians and non-Christians rhythmically use similar gestures and handclapping when Agbadza is being played. The only difference is the lyrics of the songs. Christians do not sing songs that are composed and sung by non-Christians, but they utilise similar musical instruments. That is what made Agbadza a welcoming music at both churches and funerals.

When Mamaga V was asked to rate Bobobo music as to whether it is immoral or not, she explained that to the best of her knowledge, the music originated as a social entertainment music which is also used at funerals among the Evedome. This music has spread among the Anlo-Ewe who also use it for such purposes, especially among the youths. For her, the immoral nature of Bobobo might be attached to the styles that are accompanied by the music. Women tweak their backsides to it as they dance. However, she was not in the position to condemn the heritage of a group of people.

## **5. 6. Participant Observations on ARS and GEC Church Music**

As mentioned earlier in Chapter Three, though the founder of the ARS had a Western missionary background, from its inception the church has been an AIC to a large degree. The observation method has been adopted to observe the subject matter under study and take notice of the significant aspects related to the study. To achieve this purpose, one of the ARS congregations had been observed to find out how worship is being done among them.

Christian worship is generally believed to involve a wide category of human behaviour known as rituals and their relevance. During the worship service, their choir group was invited to sing praises to God through song ministrations. The choir showed a lot of interest and excitement

about what they were asked to do. They showed enthusiastic collaboration in ministering the songs to the congregants, and demonstrated a lot of discipline and sound coherence. I discovered that the choir sang from their hymnal, which was not the same as those originated with missionaries and sung in missionary-founded churches. Thus, they composed their own scripturally based lyrics of songs in vernacular accompanied by “adoṅdo” in Ewe, or tong-tong. They employed the medium-sized drum known as *Sogo*, a supporting drum called *Asivui*, a small drum called *Kadaṅu*, rattles known as *Axatse*, and gong-gong as mentioned earlier. The entire chapel was filled with great excitement. The rhythmical movements of the choir, the rituals of raising their hands to heaven, and the various signs made the scene very exciting.

After the choir, the men were invited to give a song. When they came forward to minister songs, to my surprise, they raised songs similar to Agbadza songs which the entire congregation joined to sing. This included both men and women, young and old. As for the ARS Joy church, there was nothing like a contemporary song or music group in the church, therefore, none was invited to sing. Detailed observations were carried out on what had been the basis of the excitement of the congregants. I noticed that, culturally, they were used to that music and flowed with it without any reservations. The lyrics of the songs were heartwarming and thought-provoking.

The next church observed was the GEC Global Chapel. The GEC as a neo-Pentecostal church has a Western missionary background as indicated earlier. Worship is encouraged, particularly, among Pentecostals, which is often viewed by participants as an entryway into the presence of the Holy Spirit. The music at Pentecostal services largely depends on the cultural and social makeup of the congregation. They make music using rhythmical clapping, maracas, locally made drums, rattles, tambourines, guitars, keyboards, and foreign drums, among many others. Compared with congregations that are more traditional where worship music is taken from hymnals, with the use of choirs, and organs, the GEC employ both in public worship.

Over here, the worship service of GEC Global Chapel has been put under close observation. During selections, the various groups in the church were called upon to give songs of praise. While the church choir sang the hymns from their hymnal, from my observation, the songs did not impress the members to my expectation. Another singing group is the Contemporary Gospel Singers' Union (COGSU). They also sang a few English and Twi songs, but still, the members were not excited enough to my expectations. This was an indication that, though contemporary Gospel singers have made contemporary music popular, it is not very much impressive, because many are not theologically sound, as they should though.

Nevertheless, when “Mawunyo Bɔbɔbɔ” group was invited to perform, they came out to the centre of the auditorium with their drums and other musical instruments. The GEC also employed similar locally made musical instruments as the ARS did. The musical instruments include a pair of castanets, rattles, a master drum called *Uuga*, a supporting drum called *Asivui*, and a small drum called *Uuvi*; all of these are beaten using open hands. The song leader raised a tune, and then, the drummers started playing their drums, supported by a bugle or trumpeter. The lyrics of the songs were in vernacular, scriptural, thought-provoking and heartwarming. To my surprise, a circle was formed around the drummers and singers, and they were dancing to the music going round in a circle. The distinction is, in the church, the dancers were not twisting handkerchiefs and tweaking the backsides as is the case when non-Christians are playing Bɔbɔbɔ outside the church. The congregants in their chairs also rose to dance to the music. I realised that the entire chapel was filled with excitement. When the Bɔbɔbɔ music was brought to an end abruptly, there was a shout, Oh! This tells me that both the elderly and youths liked the Bɔbɔbɔ music in their church, and therefore, integrated it into their worship in a way that made the worship more effective. This agrees with Mbiti who posits that, “Christianity has been in existence for a very long time in Africa. It has influenced the lives of Africans for so long that it

can rightly be described as an indigenous, traditional and African religion”.<sup>410</sup> Though this assertion is hard to accept, the religiosity of the Africans calls for this conclusion because the African quickly accepts Christian faith and worship.

One thing about the dancers is that they danced in a circle and an orderly manner. They did not dance in a gesture of defiance. This confirms what the four pastors of the sampled churches indicated in their responses. My careful observation suggests that the tag of immoral nature of Bobobo music is not the case in this church. How Bobobo music is labelled as immoral, careful observation suggests that this is not the case. Perhaps they might be taught how to dance in church when Bobobo music has been engaged in worship. I believe if other churches could perform in an orderly manner as the ARS Joy Chapel and GEC Global Chapel, the label of the immoral nature of Bobobo music might be eradicated, if not eliminated.

### **5.7. Responses of ARS Love Church Elders**

All the tables (Table 1-8) below identified twelve areas, which culminated in four key areas to determine the outcome of this study. Responses of the ARS elders had been solicited to contribute to the study. They were those who showed keen interest in the survey, and therefore, expressed their opinions on the cultural music being used in this church. Twelve (12) elders made up of five (5) males and seven (7) females had expressed the opinions of the ARS Love church regarding Agbadza and Bobobo music. All of the informants of this church indicated that they had completed their specified education were literate and understood the questionnaire and its purpose.

These elders were responsible for the administration of the church in various capacities. They were between 36 and 60 years of age were remarkably educated and had reached Senior

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<sup>410</sup> Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy*, p. 223.

High School (SHS), and any form of Tertiary level. While some were Civil servants and Fire Service personnel, others were Teachers and unemployed. They also play various roles in the church, such as Sunday school teaching, musicians, and counselling. All of these elders answered the questionnaires and expressed their opinions. They confirmed their belief in Jesus Christ that they had been saved and very often heard the message of Jesus preached in the church they belong. Their membership in the church ranges from 5 to 35 years.

They responded to the question, the title they would like to ascribe to Jesus Christ if they have had an encounter with him. While 50% (6) ascribed *Dɔyɔla* a Healer in English to him, 42% (5) indicated *Dela* a Redeemer to him, and 8% (1) chose *Xɔla* which is a Saviour in English. For them, Jesus has the power to perform physical and spiritual healings. They all confirmed their belief in Christ. The informants responded to the question of the reason why they get excited about the music of their choice when they are being played in the church. It was found that 92% (11) positively affirmed that they get excited when Agbadza and Bobobo music are being played in the church, however, 8% (1) confirmed in the negative. They have also expressed why they get excited when these music are being played. According to them, the music depicts one's cultural heritage and enables one to worship and communicate with God through the vernacular songs in his or her own culture or language.

**Table 1**

<b>Issue</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Issue</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
Do you believe in Jesus Christ?	12	---	The lyrics are scriptural	11	1
Does the music reveal culture?	10	2	Bobobo music is immoral	---	12
Do you get excited about the music?	11	1	Agbadza music is warlike	---	12
It shows that you are an African	12	---	The music poses challenges	---	12
Is this music beneficial for you?	12	---	It is affecting church growth	1	11
Do you understand the lyrics?	12	---	Does the music have a future?	---	12

Source: Fieldwork, 2024

The question has to do with whether or not the lyrics are meaningful. Hence, they noted that the lyrics of the songs are meaningful because Agbadza and Bobobo music glorify God when they are engaged in worship. Answer to the question posed as to whether these music reveal culture

attracted the informants' diverse opinions. While 83% (10) agreed that the music reveals culture, 17% (2) disagreed. As a result, those who agreed suggested that these cultural music should always be played in the church. For them, the use of these music are cultural and inspiring. It brings Christianity to Africans and gives one a sense of belonging, which helps win more people for Christ. Still, others opined that cultural music inspires, heals, delivers, comforts the brokenhearted, and preaches God's message explicitly and clearly. It also attracts unbelievers and serves as a means of evangelism. They added that God created them as Africans and saved them as Africans and would forever remain Africans.

Responding to whether these music are beneficial, all the twelve informants 100% responded in the affirmative and confirmed that they are beneficial. For them, the music can lift one's spirit, enable one to have deeper intimacy with God, and dance with joy. All the informants confirmed that they understand the lyrics of the songs whenever they are employed. In addition, 75% (9) of the informants said there has always been a clear distinction between the lyrics, and that they are not the same as those that are being sung by unbelievers; they are very distinct. On the contrary, 17% (2) argued that they are the same.

When the questionnaire posed a question that the lyrics of the songs that are being sung in the church are not scriptural, 83% (10) disagreed and said they were scriptural, while 17% (2) agreed. Those who disagreed argued that many people in the ARS church prefer cultural music. The subsequent question has to do with the war and immoral nature of these cultural music. While 92% (11) of the informants indicated that Agbadza and Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀ music are moral, 8% (1) disagreed and said they are immoral. All the elders of ARS Love church (100% (12) established that these local music have a future. Hence, the informants posited that Agbadza and Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀ music have a future because they are some of the cultural music of Africans. The questionnaire suggested that these cultural music seemed to pose challenges to the ARS. Nevertheless, the informants 100% disagreed and said that is a mistaken belief. As to what should be done to

sustain these cultural music in the church, they indicated prayer and teaching. However, they did not notice the impact they had on their environmental issues. They were not certain whether Agbadza and Bòbòbò music had any impact on their eco-community.

### **5.8. Responses of ARS Joy Church Elders**

The ARS elders of Joy church had expressed their opinions about Agbadza and Bòbòbò music, the cultural music being engaged in their church to worship God. Twelve (12) elders of this church consisting of eight (8) males and four (4) females had expressed issues that were pertinent to this cultural music. All of the informants of this church indicated that they had completed their specified education and were literate who understood the questionnaire.

These elders assume various responsibilities of the church. They were between 36 and 60 years of age and were educated persons. Some were SHS leavers and others were Tertiary graduates. While some were self-employed, Nurses, Fire Service personnel, and Educationists, others were unemployed and Teachers. They also play various roles in the church, such as Singing, Choir, and Preaching. They have membership of the church ranging from 11 to 33 years. All of these elders confirmed that they believed in Jesus Christ. They also indicated that they have been hearing the message of Jesus preached very often in the church they belong.

They responded to the question, with the title they would like to ascribe to Jesus Christ if they have had an encounter with him. While 67% (8) ascribed *Xola* which is a Saviour to him, 17% (2) registered *Doyola* a Healer in English to him, and 17% (2) chose *Dela* a Redeemer because he delivered them from evil forces. They indicated that they had been saved and ascribed to Christ those titles. The informants responded to the question of what the reason behind their excitement was when Agbadza and Bòbòbò music were being played in the church. According to the responses, 92% (11) positively registered that they get excited when Agbadza

and Bobobo music are being played in the church, however, 8% (1) confirmed in the negative. The reason of the excitement of the music had been indicated variously. For them, the music characterises cultural songs in one's own culture.

As to whether or not the lyrics are meaningful is a matter of personal opinion. They indicated that the lyrics of the songs and drumming are meaningful because Agbadza and Bobobo music are part of their culture. The next question was whether these music reveal culture. All the informants 100% (12) agreed that the music reveals culture. The informants were clear in their minds regarding these cultural music, hence, they suggested that they should always be played in the church. The question of whether the music were indeed beneficial, 92% (12) responded in the affirmative, but 8% (1) disagreed. All the informants confirmed that they always understand the lyrics of the songs and that the lyrics are not the same as those sung by non-Christians.

**Table 2**

<b>Issue</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Issue</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
Do you believe in Jesus Christ?	12	---	The lyrics are scriptural	12	---
Does the music reveal culture?	12	---	Bobobo music is immoral	1	11
Do you get excited about the music?	12	---	Agbadza music is warlike	---	12
It shows that you are an African	12	---	The music poses challenges	---	12
Is this music beneficial for you?	11	1	It is affecting church growth	---	12
Do you understand the lyrics?	12	---	Does the music have a future?	---	12

Source: Fieldwork, 2024

When the question posed by the researcher that the lyrics of the songs that are being sung in the church are not scriptural, 100% (12) of the informants disagreed and said they were scriptural. Nevertheless, the question has to do with whether these music are warlike or moral. While 92% (11) agreed that the music are moral and therefore should be used in the church, 8% (1) disagreed and said they are immoral. They also argued that Agbadza music is 100% not warlike, though it used to be in the olden days. All the elders of ARS Love church (100% (12) established that these local music have a future therefore should not be relegated to a minor position. They took this stance because they believed music forms an integral part of their walk

with God. The questionnaire raised a critical question that these cultural music seemed to pose a challenge to the spiritual growth of the ARS. Nevertheless, the informants 100% disagreed. They were asked how their cultural music were having an impact on the eco-community. Surprisingly, they ignored the ecological aspect of the question. Nevertheless, when it came to the explanation of the lyrics *nuvo gbe si medze si la – the sinful life I knew*, they were able to give meaningful explanations to it because it was about repentance, which they were all familiar with.

### **5.9. Responses of GEC Global Chapel Elders**

The elders of GEC Global Chapel were another target group for this study. Twelve (12) elders made up of six (6) males and six (6) females had expressed the opinions of the GEC Global Chapel on Agbadza and Bobobo music. These elders were responsible for the various ministries and groups of the church. They were between 46 and 60 years of age and were educated persons who had reached any form of tertiary level and understood the questionnaire.

While some were Civil servants and Lawyers, others were Bankers and Teachers. They were also playing various roles in the church, such as Adult Sunday teaching, Instrumentalists, and Ushering. Their membership in the church ranges from 9 to 30 years. All of these elders answered the questions posed to them in the questionnaire confirming their belief in Jesus Christ, and heard the message of Jesus preached very often in the church they belong.

They responded to the question, the title they would like to ascribe to Jesus Christ if they have had an encounter with him. There were varied opinions on this matter. While 58% (7) ascribed *Dela* a Redeemer in English to him, 25% (3) indicated *Xola* which is a Saviour, and 17% (2) chose *Doyola* a Healer. They also confirmed their salvation and regarded him according to their choices. The informants responded to why they get excited about the music of their

choice. According to the responses, 92% (11) positively affirmed that they get excited when Agbadza and Bòbòbò music are being played in the church, however, 8% (1) affirmed in the negative. According to them, these cultural music enable one to worship and communicate with God in their local language.

Others also note that the lyrics of the songs and drumming are meaningful. Because Agbadza music has been part of their culture, they feel happy about them. As to whether this music has been revealing culture attracted divergent views. While 83% (10) expressed the same opinion that these music are revealing culture, 17% (2) disagreed. Those who agreed that the music are revealing culture registered their pleasure that these music have been serving as cultural tools for evangelism. Therefore, the church should produce appropriate teaching material and develop a system of regular monitoring the music in the church. Regarding whether these music are beneficial. While 92% (11) responded in the affirmative, 8% (1) disagreed. Those who agreed indicated that these cultural music are beneficial because they have beneficial effects on the spiritual growth of the members. The informants indicated that they understood the lyrics of the songs. Due to their clear understanding of the songs, 75% (9) said the lyrics are not the same as those that are sung by non-Christians, but 17% (2) argued that they are the same. Nevertheless, 8% (1) expressed a divergent view that a mixture of Christian and non-Christian songs are sung at social gatherings.

**Table 3**

<b>Issue</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Issue</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
Do you believe in Jesus Christ?	12	---	The lyrics are scriptural	11	1
Does the music reveal culture?	10	2	Bòbòbò music is immoral	1	11
Do you get excited about the music?	11	1	Agbadza music is warlike	---	12
It shows that you are an African	12	---	The music poses challenges	1	11
Is this music beneficial for you?	11	1	It is affecting church growth	1	11
Do you understand the lyrics?	12	---	Does the music have a future?	11	1

Source: Fieldwork, 2024

When the question posed by the researcher that the lyrics of the songs sung in the church are not scriptural, 83% (10) disagreed and said they were scriptural, while 17% (2) agreed. Those who argued that the songs were not scriptural expressed their concerns about the instruments and rhythms. Others also were of the view that many people in the church preferred cultural music. Nevertheless, the question has to do with how immoral and warlike these cultural music have been. While 92% (11) registered that the music are moral, 8% (1) disagreed and said they are immoral. While (92% (11) established that these local music have a future, 8% (1) disagreed. The informants posited that Agbadza and Bobobo music have a future because they are part of Ghana culture, and therefore, could not be done away with.

Since music as a task could prove quite challenging. The questionnaire wanted to find out if these cultural music have posed challenges to the GEC. In answer, 92% (11) disagreed because they noticed no challenge. However, 8% (1) agreed that the music posed challenges to the church. On this note, the majority expressed their opinions that the lyrics of the music were scriptural. In addition, the Agbadza and Bobobo music rather inspired many not to join social groups, which were likely to influence one to backslide. According to the informants, these cultural music assisted them in reaching out to the community. As a result, the majority disagreed that the churches should cease engaging Agbadza and Bobobo music in worshipping God.

What measures should the church put in place to encourage and sustain the use of these local music in the church? The informants expressed their views that training of the singers and those who play the instruments are crucial. However, as for the impact the song *Afetɔ Yesue, va dɛm kaba, anyigba le dzo le ge – Lord Jesus, come and rescue me quickly, the Earth is about to catch fire*, had on their environmental issues, they indicated complete ignorance about it.

However, to make a virtue out of the situation, they suggested that church leaders sensitise them about how cultural music could address eco-crisis.

### 5.10. Responses of GEC Mercy Chapel Elders

The position of the GEC Mercy chapel elders regarding Agbadza and Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀ music had been expressed by twelve (12) elders made up of three (3) males and nine (9) females. These elders were responsible for the management of the affairs of the church in various capacities. They were between 36 and 60 years of age and were educated persons. While some were SHS graduates, others had reached any form of tertiary level, which confirmed the fact that they understood the questionnaire.

While some were Fashion designers, Midwives, and Lawyers, others were Security personnel and Teachers. They also assumed various responsibilities in the church, such as Bible teaching, and counselling. Their membership of the church ranges from 10 to 37 years. All of these elders answered the questions posed to them in the questionnaire, and 100% (12) confirmed their belief in Jesus Christ that they have been saved, and hear the message of Jesus preached very often in the church they belong.

**Table 4**

<b>Issue</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Issue</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
Do you believe in Jesus Christ?	12	---	The lyrics are scriptural	10	2
Does the music reveal culture?	11	1	Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀ music is immoral	2	10
Do you get excited about the music?	12	---	Agbadza music is warlike	1	11
It shows that you are an African	12	---	The music poses challenges	1	11
Is this music beneficial for you?	10	2	It is affecting church growth	2	10
Do you understand the lyrics?	12	---	Does the music have a future?	11	1

Source: Fieldwork, 2024

As to what title these informants would ascribe to Jesus Christ if they have had an encounter with him, expressed their divergent views. This means that their opinions varied widely on this matter. While 58% (7) ascribed *Xɔla* which is a Saviour to him, 25% (3) indicated

*Dela* a Redeemer to him, and 17% (2) chose *Doyola* a Healer. For them, Jesus is a compassionate Saviour. All of the informants officially stated that they believed and regarded him according to their choices. As to why they get excited when Agbadza and Bobobo music are being played in the church. According to the responses, 100% (12) positively affirmed that they get excited when Agbadza and Bobobo music are being played in the church, however with some reservations. What causes the excitement of those music have been indicated. According to them, the music teaches one's cultural beliefs, values, and customs.

Others also noted that the lyrics of the songs and drumming are meaningful because either Agbadza or Bobobo music inspires and teaches even the word of God. The informants noted that because of the local language in which the Agbadza and Bobobo songs are composed, they communicate with God through them. The question was whether these music reveal culture. While 92% (11) indicated that they do, 8% (1) disagreed. Hence, the majority posited that these cultural music enhance worship and enable them feel as Africans. They suggested that these cultural music should always be played in the church. For them, the use of these cultural music enhance worship. They also enable one to express Africanness in church by putting cloth around one's waist to dance to the music. For them, the music makes Christianity African and not foreign. They give one a sense of belonging, which helps them evangelise. Still, others opined that, Agbadza and Bobobo music inspire, heal, deliver, comfort the brokenhearted, and preach God's message. The question was whether Agbadza and Bobobo music have been beneficial or not. While 83% (10) responded in the affirmative that they are beneficial, 17% (2) disagreed. Those who agreed that the music are beneficial indicated that they help many to learn more about the Ewe culture. When informants confirmed 100% that they understood the lyrics of the songs,

75% (9) added that the lyrics were different from those that were being sung by unbelievers, but 17% (2) argued that they were the same.

As to the question of whether the lyrics of Agbadza and Bobobo songs are scriptural. The different views are that 83% (10) agreed that they are scriptural, but 17% (2) disagreed. Those who agreed indicated that many people in the church prefer cultural music. Against these views was the question of the morality of Bobobo music. While 83% (10) agreed that the music is moral and should be used in the church, 17% (2) disagreed and said it is immoral. Whether Agbadza music is warlike or not, 92% (11) said it is not warlike, but 8% disagreed. While (92% (11) established that these local music have a future, 8% (1) disagreed. As a result, the majority of the informants posited that Agbadza and Bobobo music have a future. These GEC elders believed anything that has Jesus Christ as its foundation definitely has a future.

Responding to the question of whether these cultural music have posed challenges to the GEC. In answering, 92% (11) disagreed because they have not. However, 8% (1) agreed that they posed challenges to the church. On this note, most of the participants answering this question expressed their opinions that the Agbadza and Bobobo music should be employed in worshipping God.

As to what measures should the church put in place to sustain the use of local music in the church? For the informants, a more sophisticated approach is needed to sustain these music. They suggested that, the church should invest in the music department. The youths should be trained in singing and playing these musical instruments in the church. Since Agbadza and Bobobo music show Ewe identity, the church must add seriousness to teaching both positive and negative aspects of these music. The data shows that the informants agreed that intensive

teaching should be done in the church. They requested that eco-care awareness should be created in the church.

### **5.11. Responses of ARS Love Church Youths**

Twenty (20) youths participated in this study who were made up of seven (7) males and thirteen (13) females. Of these informants, 45% (9) indicated their age range from 26-35, while 55% (11) fell within the range from 36-45 who were SHS and Tertiary graduates. Since all of the informants had completed their specified education, then, it means that they were literate and therefore understood the questionnaire. Their membership in the church ranges from 4 to 10 years. These youths were made up of a mixture of married and single members of this church. While some were Self-employed, others were Teachers, unemployed, and a Police officer.

They responded to the question with the title they would like to ascribe to Jesus Christ if they have had an encounter with him. Opinions varied widely on this matter. While 50% (10) ascribed *Dɔyɔla* a Healer to him, 40% (8) indicated *Dela* a Redeemer to him, and 10% (2) chose *Xɔla* which is a Saviour in English. Data shows that they believed in Christ. They all regard him according to their choices. The youths wanted the various cultural music under study in the church they belong, 55% (11) liked Agbadza while 15% (3) wanted *Bɔbɔbɔ*. Still 20% (4) wanted both Agbadza and *Bɔbɔbɔ*. The informants responded to the question of why they get excited about the music of their choice. According to the responses, 95% (19) positively affirmed that they get excited when Agbadza and *Bɔbɔbɔ* music are played in the church, however, 5% (1) affirmed in the negative. Their excitement was that these music depicted one's cultural heritage.

**Table 5**

<u>Issue</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Issue</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>
Do you believe in Jesus Christ?	20	---	The lyrics are scriptural	19	1
Does the music reveal culture?	18	2	Bɔbɔbɔ music is immoral	1	19
Do you get excited about the music?	19	1	Agbadza music is warlike	---	20
It shows that you are an African	20	---	The music poses challenges	1	19
Is this music beneficial for you?	19	1	It is affecting church growth	1	19
Do you understand the lyrics?	20	---	Does the music have a future?	19	1

Source: Fieldwork, 2024

Others also noted that the lyrics of the songs and drumming are meaningful because Agbadza music has been part of their culture, which glorifies God when it is being engaged to worship him. Answer to the question posed to whether these music reveal culture attracted divergent views given by the informants. While 90% (18) agreed that the music reveals culture, 10% (2) disagreed. Those who agreed indicated that these cultural music make one happy to express one's Africanness in church. A question has to do with whether these music are beneficial. While 95% (19) responded that they are, 5% (1) disagreed. For them, they said so because they have convincing reasons for believing that these cultural music have beneficial effect on the church. One reason is that these music help them when they reach out to the public. All the informants confirmed that they understood the lyrics of the songs. Data indicated that 100% (20) said the lyrics are not the same as those that are being sung by non-Christians. Nevertheless, 5% (1) expressed a divergent view that a mixture of Christian and non-Christian songs were being sung at social gatherings.

When the question posed by the researcher was that the lyrics of the songs sung in the church were not scriptural, 95% (19) disagreed and said they were scriptural, but 5% (1) agreed that they were not. The person who argued that the music were not scriptural expressed his opinion that they were traditional. However, the majority were of the view that many people in the church prefer cultural music. But the question had to do with the morality of these cultural music. While 95% (19) agreed that these music are moral and therefore should be used in the

church, 5% (1) disagreed and said they are immoral. While 95% (19) established that these local music have a future, 5% (1) disagreed. As a result, the majority of the informants posited that Agbadza and Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀ music have a future because they are cultural music of Africa, especially, Ghana.

Since music as a task could prove quite challenging, the question has to do with whether these cultural music have posed challenges to the ARS. In answer, 95% (19) indicated that they have not noticed any challenge that these music pose to the church. However, 5% (1) was of the view that the music poses challenges to the church. On this note, the majority expressed their opinions that the lyrics of the music are aligned with Scripture. In addition, the Agbadza and Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀ music inspire some people not to join social groups, which are likely to influence one to backslide. Hence, the majority agreed that the churches should engage Agbadza and Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀ music in worshipping God.

A focus group discussion was held to find out the group's opinions on the subject matter. They expressed their views to augment what they indicated on the questionnaires. What measures should the church put in place to encourage and sustain the use of local music in the church? The informants expressed their personal views. Some thought that the leadership of the churches should allow singers and instrumentalists to undergo training. However, they did not think Agbadza and Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀ music could address ecological issues confronting their communities just because they could not explain the lyrics. This has rendered the sustainability of the music highly questionable. Interestingly, they were able to explain the lyrics *the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life* very well.

### 5.12. Responses of ARS Joy Church Youths

The researcher asked the ARS youths of Joy church to answer questionnaires and took them through group discussion on Agbadza and Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀ music. They indicated that they were believers in Christ, and therefore, were saved by God’s grace. Twenty (20) youths made up of eight (8) males and twelve (12) females participated in this study. While 35% (7) of the informants indicated their age range from 18-25, 65% (13) ranged from 26-35, and were made up of SHS and Tertiary graduates. For this reason, they were literate and understood the questionnaire. These youths comprised a mixture of married and unmarried members of the church. While some were self-employed, others were pupil teachers and farmers. They have membership in the church ranging in age from 6 to 12 years. They expressed their views at group discussions as well to augment what they indicated on the questionnaire.

**Table 6**

<u>Issue</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Issue</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>
Do you believe in Jesus Christ?	20	---	The lyrics are scriptural	19	1
Does the music reveal culture?	20	---	Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀ music is immoral	1	19
Do you get excited about the music?	19	1	Agbadza music is warlike	---	20
It shows that you are an African	20	---	The music poses challenges	---	20
Is this music beneficial for you?	19	1	It is affecting church growth	1	19
Do you understand the lyrics?	20	---	Does the music have a future?	20	---

Source: Fieldwork, 2024

As to which cultural music they wanted in the church, 60% (12) liked Agbadza while 10% (2) wanted Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀. Still 30% (6) wanted both Agbadza and Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀. Whether or not the lyrics are meaningful is a matter of personal opinion. Hence, they noted that the lyrics of the songs and drumming are meaningful, because Agbadza and Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀ music being part of their culture, glorify God when they are engaged to worship him. The answer to whether these two cultural music reveal culture attracted divergent views given by the informants. The informants 100% (20) agreed that these music reveal culture. They suggested that as Westerners use the

songs of their culture to worship God, Africans should also learn to use their cultural music to worship God. The question was whether these cultural music were being beneficial. For them, these cultural music have made a significant contribution to the growth of the church. While 95% (19) responded in the affirmative, 5% (1) disagreed. Because all the informants confirmed that they understand the lyrics of the songs, they are not the same as those that are being sung by unbelievers.

The question has to do with whether the lyrics of the songs are scriptural. While 95% (19) said they are scriptural, 5% (1) agreed. The person who argues that the songs are not scriptural indicated that he has a problem with the rhythms. However, the question has to do with the morality of these cultural music. While 95% (19) agreed that the music are moral and therefore should be used in the church, 5% (1) disagreed and said they are immoral. All the youths of the ARS Joy church (100% (20) established that these local music have a future. Hence, the informants posit that Agbadza and Bɔbɔbɔ music have a future because they belong to the cultures of Africans. Hence, 100% of the informants agreed that these cultural music have not posed challenges to the ARS.

### **5.13. Responses of GEC Global Chapel Youths**

GEC youths of Global Chapel were made to answer questionnaires and took them through group discussion on Agbadza and Bɔbɔbɔ music. Twenty (20) youths comprised six (6) males and fourteen (14) females of the above-mentioned church participated in this study. The informants 25% (5) indicated their age ranged from 18-25, while 57% (15) ranged from 26-35, and were SHS and Tertiary graduates. All of the informants had completed their specified education. They understood the questionnaire and its purpose. They comprised a mixture of those who were

married, single parents, and unmarried members of the church. Their membership in the church ranges from 4 to 9 years. While some were students, and National service personnel, others were pupil teachers.

All the informants indicated that they believed in Jesus Christ, therefore, were saved. They also indicated the titles they would ascribe to Jesus Christ if they have had an encounter with him. While 45% (9) ascribed *Dela* a Redeemer to him, 35% (7) indicated *Dɔyɔla* a Healer to him, and 20% (4) chose *Xɔla* who is a Saviour who has saved them from sin.

**Table 7**

<b>Issue</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Issue</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
Do you believe in Jesus Christ?	20	---	The lyrics are scriptural	17	3
Does the music reveal culture?	20	---	Bɔbɔbɔ music is immoral	6	14
Do you get excited about the music?	18	2	Agbadza music is warlike	4	16
It shows that you are an African	20	---	The music poses challenges	1	19
Is this music beneficial for you?	18	2	It is affecting church growth	1	19
Do you understand the lyrics?	20	---	Does the music have a future?	18	2

Source: Fieldwork, 2024

When the youths were asked to answer the question, of which cultural music was being played, or what they wanted in the church they belong, 50% (10) chose Agbadza while 10% (2) wanted Bɔbɔbɔ. Still, 30% (6) indicated that both Agbadza and Bɔbɔbɔ were being played, but 10% (2) disliked both Agbadza and Bɔbɔbɔ, and therefore indicated contemporary songs and hymns. The twenty youths who participated in this study responded to the question of why they get excited about the cultural music of their choice when they are being played in the church. While 90 % (18) indicated that they get excited, 10% (2) disliked cultural music, therefore, did not get excited. The majority indicated that they get excited to hear people praising God with their own cultural tools. In addition, the lyrics are full of inspiration and give glory to God. The 10% of informants opined that contemporary music should be encouraged in the church to attract those who are not Christians.

While 90% (18) agreed that local music is an important mode of communication in Africa, and therefore, reveals culture in the church, 10% (2) disagreed. Hence, the majority agreed that these cultural music should be played always in the church. This is because it enables one to praise God in one's own cultural understanding of God, which also enhances worship and makes one feel like being an African. It was a form of appreciating God's given culture. Whether Agbadza and Bobobo music are beneficial or detrimental to the Christian faith, 90% (18) established that they are beneficial, but 10% (2) said they are not. According to them, Agbadza and Bobobo music assist them in reaching out to the communities. All the informants admitted that they understood the lyrics of the songs that were being sung in the church.

When the question about the difference between the songs sung in church and those by unbelievers was asked, 90% (18) said they are not the same, but 5% (1) said they are. Still, 5% (1) said that at social gatherings a mixture of them are used. As to the question of whether Agbadza and Bobobo songs are scriptural, 85% (17) agreed that they are scriptural, but 15% (3) disagreed. This informant indicated that the songs are not scriptural. For them, the instruments that are used for cultural practices conflict with those that are being used for Christian worship.

The informants were made to answer whether it was true or not that some think the Agbadza or Bobobo music they liked was warlike or immoral, therefore, should not be allowed in the church. While 70% (14) indicated that the music are moral, 30% (6) said that they are immoral. In addition, 80% (16) said Agbadza is not warlike. They explained that those who hold the view that local music is immoral do not understand the rhythms and the lyrics of the music. Whether Agbadza and Bobobo music have a future or not is the issue. While 90% (18) established that these local music have a future, 10% (2) disagreed. The majority hold the view that many people in the church prefer those kinds of music. Agbadza and Bobobo music explain

the cultural background of the church, which also allow using cultural musical instruments that people are familiar with before accepting Christ.

When the question was posed that Agbadza and Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀ music are posing challenges to the church's spiritual growth, 95% (19) disagreed, but 5% (1) agreed. The reason why they are not posing challenges to the spiritual growth of the church is that the lyrics rather create a sense of the Lord's worthiness to be worshipped culturally. Hence, 95% (19) disagreed that the music should cease in the church while (1) agreed that it should. The 95% (19) of the informants however indicated that these music have a future, but 5% (1) said they are not.

A focus group discussion was held to find out the group's opinion on the sustainability of these local music. The question was about the measures that should be put in place to encourage and sustain the use of local music in the churches. According to them, it was true that local music should be encouraged in the churches to make a difference and give an identity. For them, the church's leadership should embark on extensive education by way of teaching to explain the relevance of Agbadza and Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀ music, in addition to other relevant music they thought were needed for the growth of the church. They were of the view that the church could succeed by her tenacity. This education should largely include the various musicians in the churches to understand the meaning of the lyrics of songs as they engage them in worship services.

Some of them suggested that besides the cultural music, reggae Gospel should be encouraged because some youths enjoy the rhythmic patterns of reggae music. It also shows that to reap the full benefit of Agbadza and Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀ music, they should be able to address ecological issues confronting their communities. They referred to the ecological issues in the communities, which questions they could not answer adequately.

### 5.14. Responses of GEC Mercy Chapel Youths

After the youths of GEC Mercy Chapel answered questionnaires, they were taken through group discussion on Agbadza and Bobobo music. Twenty (20) youths participated in this study and were made up of eight (8) males and twelve (12) females. Of the informants 70% (14) indicated their age ranged from 18-25, while 30% (6) ranged from 26-35 who were SHS and Tertiary graduates, and that they were literate who understood the questionnaires. These youths were made up of a mixture of those who were married and unmarried members of the church. While some were National service personnel and the unemployed, others were Pupil teachers, Fashion designers, Software engineers, and Bankers. They all stated how long (years) they have been a member of the church, and the role they play in the church. They have membership of the church ranging in age from 3 to 11 years. While some are Sunday school teachers, and ushers, others are musicians. All of them indicated that they heard the message about Jesus Christ preached very often in the church, and that they all believed in Jesus Christ.

**Table 8**

<u>Issue</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Issue</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>
Do you believe in Jesus Christ?	20	---	The lyrics are scriptural	19	1
Does the music reveal culture?	17	3	Bobobo music is immoral	2	18
Do you get excited about the music?	19	1	Agbadza music is warlike	---	---
It shows that you are an African	18	2	The music poses challenges	1	19
Is this music beneficial for you?	18	2	It is affecting church growth	1	19
Do you understand the lyrics?	20	---	Does the music have a future?	18	2

Source: Fieldwork, 2024

The question was if they have had an encounter with Jesus Christ, which of the titles indicated on the questionnaire they would ascribe to him? While 55% (11) of the informants said they would ascribe *Doyola* a Healer to Jesus Christ, 25% (5) informants chose *Dela* a Redeemer; still, 20% (4) vouched for *Xola* which is a Saviour, therefore are saved. Regarding which of the cultural music they wanted in the church they belong to, 55% (11) liked Agbadza while 15% (3)

wanted *Bɔbɔbɔ*. Still 30% (6) wanted both Agbadza and *Bɔbɔbɔ*. While 95% (19) indicated that they get excited, 5% (1) disliked cultural music, and therefore, did not get excited. Those who get excited claim that these cultural music depict their cultural heritage, therefore enjoy the lyrics and drumming. According to the study, 85% (17) agreed that music reveals culture in the church, but 15% (3) disagreed. While 90% (18) agreed that these music should always be played at church because it enables one to praise God in one's cultural understanding of God as Africans, 10 % (2) disagreed.

As to whether Agbadza and *Bɔbɔbɔ* music were beneficial, 90% (18) established that they were beneficial, while 10% (2) said they were not. Those who agreed indicated how Agbadza and *Bɔbɔbɔ* music benefited them. According to them, these music serve as evangelistic tools because they attract unbelievers to Christ, which also enable them to find their place in the church when they are converted to the Christian faith. When asked whether they understood the music, all the informants admitted that they understood the lyrics of the songs sung in the church.

The question is about the difference between the songs that are sung in the church and those that are being sung by unbelievers. The majority 95% (19) said they are not the same, but 5% (1) said they are the same. When the question about the lyrics of the Agbadza and *Bɔbɔbɔ* songs that are being sung in the churches seem not to be scriptural was asked, 95% (19) disagreed, but 5% (1) agreed because unbelievers also employ the same rhythms at social gatherings. However, 90% (18) said they feel a great sense of being Africans when the local music is being played, but 10% (2) disagreed. They indicated that their problem was the use of rattles, local drums such as *sogo*, *kidi*, *atimevu*, *axatse*, gongong, trumpets, and contemporary musical instruments.

The informants were made to answer whether it was true or not that some think the Agbadza or Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀ music they liked was immoral, therefore, should not be played in the churches. While 90% (18) indicated that the music are virtually moral, 10% (2) said they are immoral. In addition, 80% said Agbadza music is not warlike as some might think. Whether Agbadza and Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀ music has a future or not is the issue. While 90% (18) established that these local music have a future, 10% (2) disagreed. They believed that anything that has its foundation in Jesus Christ has a future. Those who perceived Agbadza and Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀ music as immoral said unbelievers mostly play these music under the influence of alcohol. Agbadza and Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀ music pose challenges to the church because they are negatively affecting the spiritual growth of the church. Nevertheless, 95% (19) disagreed, and 5% (1) agreed.

The informants expressed their views at group meetings and shared their personal opinions on the subject matter under discussion. The question was what measures should the church put in place as a means of sustaining the local music in the church? The informants expressed their personal views. While some thought that leadership of the churches should provide guards against the dangers of these music in the churches, others argued that the church should use new tunes and rhythms. Still, others aired their views that the church should make sure the songs and lyrics were based on worshipping and praising Christ alone. Therefore, singers and instrumentalists should be trained to handle such music.

The researcher posits that, through these cultural music healing, deliverance, and encouragement are inevitable benefits. Nevertheless, it was also argued that their excitement was not complete if they did not have any impact on environmental issues in the communities where they live their Christian lives. The informants were surprised at this and suggested that the

churches' leaderships should create awareness in the churches and educate them on how this should be done.

Some of the youths raised their displeasure with the church's unconcern about their formal training. For them, the individual instrumentalists trained themselves, therefore, are tempted to demand payment for their performances. This interview with the participants revealed that almost none of the singers or congregants in these churches received formal training either in music education or music composition. It is noticeable that creative music-making takes place during a process of their cultural practice with their traditional instruments.

### **5.15. Findings of Responses**

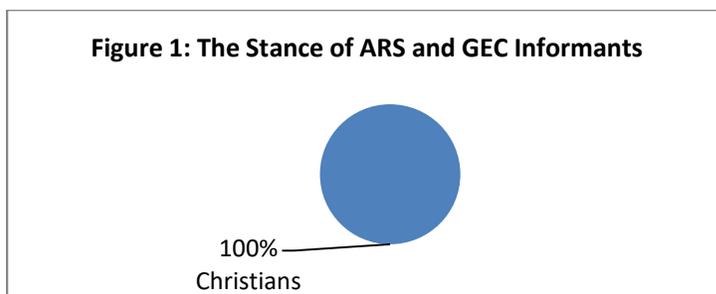
The informants used in this study are four (4) pastors, two (2) non-Christians, forty-eight (48) elders, and eighty (80) youths. The overall total is one hundred and thirty-four (134) informants. The four pastors and two non-Christians were interviewed. The elders and youths informants answered questionnaires administered to them as presented above, and the following are the findings of the responses. The ARS pastors indicated the stance of the ARS on the expression of Africanness in Christian worship. The churches are encouraged to help build effective congregational structures to express Africanness in the churches. To curtail segregation in the church, members are always encouraged to practise communal life as Africans. The four pastors (ARS and GEC) agreed that Agbadza and Bɔbɔbɔ music should always be played in the churches because these cultural music are highly beneficial for both members and non-members.

The question on whether or not the youths of ARS and GEC embrace the engagement of Agbadza and Bɔbɔbɔ music in worship at church. The responses confirmed that they had not been oblivious to the practice. General analysis shows that the informants gave various degrees

of answers to the questions posed to them. In addition to answers to the various closed-ended questions, their answers to the open-ended questions expressed diverse opinions. While the responses of the two ARS pastors seem to be similar, those of the GEC pastors also look alike because the contents of their responses reinforce each other.

### 5.15.1. The Salvation Stance of the ARS and GEC Informants

The ARS and GEC elders comprised 21 males and 27 females totalling 48, who were playing leadership roles in these churches, were made to answer questionnaires. A sample of youths who formed the other category was made up of 29 males and 51 females chosen from the ARS and GEC totalling 80. This gives an overall total number of 128 informants used in this work who answered questionnaires. They were literates who understood the questionnaires because all of them indicated their level of education, which showed that they were SHS and Tertiary graduates. While some were Musicians, Bankers, Fashion designers, Self-employed, Software engineers, and Police officers, others were Midwives, Lawyers, Teachers, and Farmers. Still, some were Business people and an unemployed graduate.



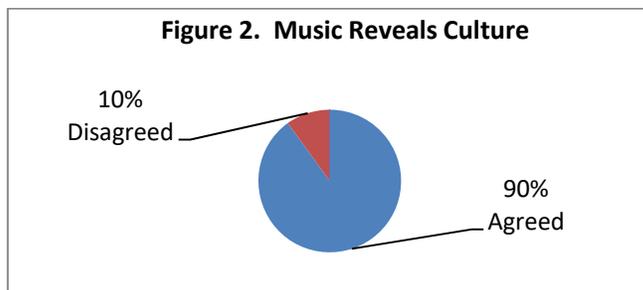
Source: Fieldwork Analysis, 2024.

While the ARS and GEC elders indicated that, they were saved and 100% believers in Jesus Christ, the youths of these churches also declared that they believed in Jesus Christ. They also confirmed that they often hear the message of Christ preached in their churches. Data shows that

the informants are Christians who ascribed the titles Healer, Redeemer, and Saviour to him according to their perceptions. This shows the stance of the ARS and GEC informants including the four pastors, since this accounted for 100% as shown in Figure 1 above.

### 5.15.2. Agbadza and Bobobo music reveal culture

The total responses indicate how Agbadza and Bobobo music reveal culture within the ARS and GEC. Those who agreed and those who disagreed had been indicated. Data shows that 92% (22) ARS elders agreed that the cultural music engaged in the churches reveals African culture. However, 8% disagreed with this choice. In addition, 95% (38) of the youths of the ARS churches also agreed that these cultural music reveal culture in the churches. Data on GEC elders indicated that out of the 24 informants, 88% (21) agreed that the cultural music used in their churches makes them express their Africanness in their churches. As to whether the music is useful, 93% (37) of the GEC youths confirmed that cultural music is useful in the church, therefore should be encouraged in all the churches. Against the choices of these informants were 7% (3) who disagreed with their colleagues. This data shows that when all the elders and youths (128) of ARS and GEC were contacted, 115 were looking for such cultural music in the church since this accounted for 90%, as shown in Figure 2 below.



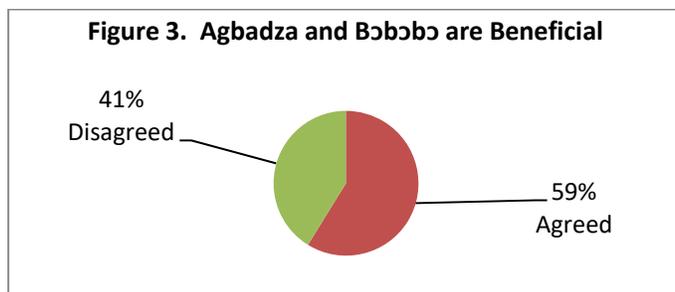
Source: Fieldwork Analysis, 2024.

They explained that as Westerners use the songs of their cultures to worship God, Africans should also learn how to use their cultural music to worship and dance to God. Still, others

opined that, cultural music inspires, heals, delivers, comforts the brokenhearted, and preaches God's message. They gave in evidence that cultural music attracts unbelievers and serves as a means of evangelism, and therefore, needs be considered. For them, God created them as Africans and saved them as Africans, therefore, must serve him with their cultural instruments as Africans to their advantage. The data also shows that all the informants saw the need for the church to embark on teaching members to appreciate the cultural music in the churches. This is because it is believed that cultural music is an important mode of communication in Africa, which reveals the culture among them.

### 5.15.3. Agbadza and Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀ Music are Beneficial

The total responses on how Agbadza and Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀ music have been beneficial to the members and outsiders have been analysed. Data shows that 92% (22) ARS elders agreed that Agbadza and Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀ music are beneficial. It also shows that 95% (38) of the youths of these churches agreed that the cultural music played in the churches have a beneficial effect on the spiritual growth of the members. Data on GEC elders shows that 88% (21) agreed that the cultural music used in the churches is beneficial to the members. Also, 90% (36) of the GEC youths indicated cultural music is beneficial because they attract unbelievers to Christ, which also enable them to find their place in the church when they have been converted to Christianity. Those who agreed and those who disagreed admitted that they understood the lyrics of the songs.

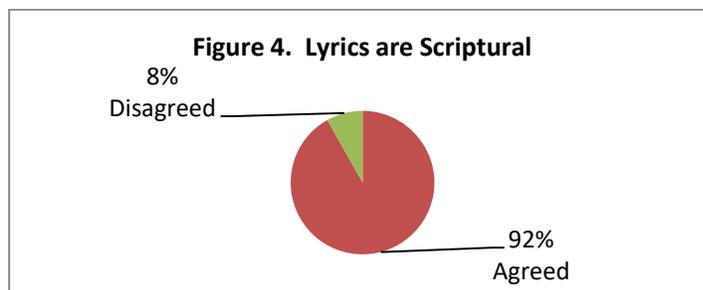


Source: Fieldwork Analysis, 2024.

In Figure 3 shown above, it is noted that all the informants (ARS and GEC elders and youths) contacted, 59% (75) collectively agreed that Agbadza and Bɔbɔbɔ music are beneficial therefore should be employed to worship God in the church. They expressed their views that these local music are not detrimental to the Christian faith. Though some informants disagreed, the data shows that when all the 128 informants who filled the questionnaires for this study were contacted 75 confirmed that, Agbadza and Bɔbɔbɔ music should be practised in the church because this alone accounted for 59%.

#### 5.15.4. Agbadza and Bɔbɔbɔ Lyrics are Scriptural

The total responses on how the lyrics of the songs are scriptural have been analysed to know the general opinions of the ARS and GEC members on the practice. To answer the question posed by the researcher that the lyrics of the songs being sung in the church are not scriptural, here are the responses of the ARS and GEC elders and youths. While 96% (23) of the ARS elders agreed that the lyrics are scriptural, 95% (38) of the youths also agreed. Data on GEC elders shows that 88% (21) agreed that Agbadza and Bɔbɔbɔ music are scriptural. Also, 90% (36) of the youths of the GEC indicated that the lyrics of these cultural music are scriptural.



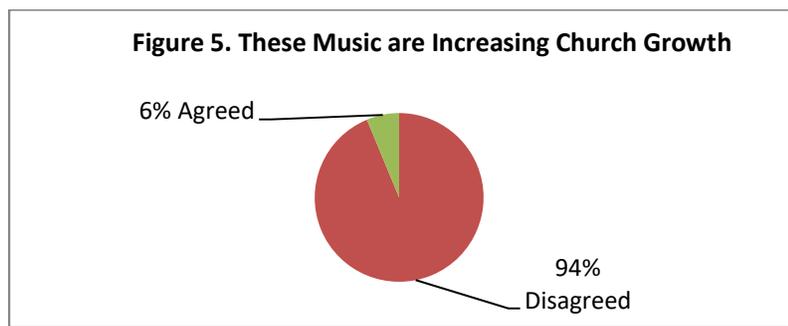
Source: Fieldwork Analysis, 2024.

In the Figure 4 above, it is noted that 92% (118) of the informants (elders and youths) agreed that the lyrics of Agbadza and Bɔbɔbɔ music are scriptural. The minority of the informants explained

that some of the songs were not scriptural because unbelievers who worship idols also use them. Nevertheless, the majority of the total 128 informants contacted to respond to the questionnaire agreed that, Agbadza and Bɔbɔbɔ music should be practised in the churches because this alone accounted for 92%.

#### 5.15.5. Agbadza and Bɔbɔbɔ are Increasing Spiritual Growth

Total responses on how these cultural music are affecting the spiritual growth of the churches have been analysed. Those who agreed and those who disagreed have been indicated. The ARS elders 96% (23) emphasised that these cultural music were not affecting the spiritual growth of the churches. Also 95% (38) of the youths posited that these local music were not affecting the growth of the churches. The view of most of the participants answering this question expressed similar views on the subject. In addition, while data on GEC elders showed that 88% (21) registered that the music were not affecting the growth of the church, 95% (38) of the youths also confirmed that they were not. For them, the reason why they were not posing challenges to the spiritual growth of the churches was that the lyrics created a sense of the Lord's worthiness to be worshipped culturally. Data shows that of the 128 members of these churches contacted to respond to the questionnaires, 120 posited that Agbadza and Bɔbɔbɔ music are not affecting the church since this accounted for 94%, as shown in Figure 5 below.



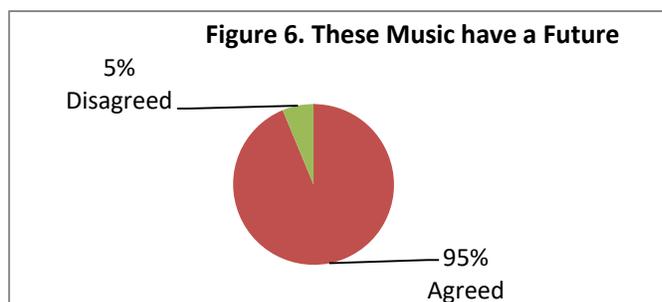
Source: Fieldwork Analysis, 2024.

However, 100% of the informants posited that pastors should emphasise teachings on cultural music in the church. Agreeably, the ARS pastors interviewed acknowledged that education is ongoing, if some elements of sinful acts were noticed they would be dealt with.

### 5.15.6. Agbadza and Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀ Music have a Future

Lastly, the future of both Agbadza and Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀ music has been examined among the informants, who indicated that music is a form of communication; it helps them to identify themselves as Africans and express their Afrincanness. It enables them to feel at home. The data of ARS elders on the future of Agbadza and Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀ music shows that 100% (24) indicated these cultural music have a future. Similarly, the youths also indicated 98% (39) that they have a future. The GEC also holds a similar position. About the future of these music, 92% (22) of the GEC elders agreed that these music have a future, 90% (36) of the youths also agreed. The ARS and GEC elders believed music forms an integral part of their walk with God. Therefore, anything that has Jesus Christ as its foundation has a future.

Nevertheless, the informants could not understand the common song *Afetɔ̀ Yesue, va dɛm kaba, anyigba le dzo le ge – Lord, Jesus, come and rescue me quickly, the Earth will catch fire*, therefore, were not able to explain or identify the impact it has on the eco-community, which guarantees its future.



Source: Fieldwork Analysis, 2024.

In Figure 6 above, data shows that the 128 members of these churches contacted to respond to the questionnaires, 121 posited that Agbadza and Bobobo music have a future since this accounted for 95%, as shown. They also indicated that music has a future because it is one of the cultural tools of the people of Africa, especially Ghanaians. Varied opinions were sampled from the pastors, elders, and the youths. The pastors agreed that Agbadza and Bobobo music should always be played in the churches because these music are highly beneficial for both members and non-members. For them, what challenges the local music has been the proliferation of contemporary music, which are foreign to the African church. Therefore, the informants pointed to the area of education. While all the pastors testified to teaching being done in the churches and encouraging the youths to get involved, the views of the youths agreed with those of the pastors. Nonetheless, the area where they have not paid attention was the impact these music have had on the eco-community where they live. This has to do with whether Agbadza and Bobobo music were addressing both spiritual and moral issues confronting humans and their environment, which guarantee their sustainability.

### **5.16. Conclusion**

This chapter presents data and the findings of this research. To achieve this goal, interviews were conducted where pastors and non-Christians were interviewed; questionnaires were administered to target church elders and youths. The open-ended questions helped the thesis because it had allowed the informants to express their opinions on the subject matter under examination. To augment their responses, I adopted the method of participant observation to observe the subject of Agbadza and Bobobo music in some churches, and took notice of the significant aspects related to the research. The finding of this comprehensive data on this study identifies various

degrees of responses, but zooms in on six areas, which have been culminated in four key areas in the next chapter to determine the result of this work. The informants indicated Jesus' ability to heal emotional, physical, and spiritual brokenness.

Focus group discussions were also held to find out the groups' opinions about the relevance of Agbadza and Bobobo music in the ARS and GEC.

The next chapter focuses on the findings, which have been narrowed to four major or key areas and discussion of findings to arrive at the outcome of this work.

## **CHAPTER SIX**

### **Discussion of Findings**

#### **6.1. Introduction**

The previous chapter presented the data on the opinions of pastors Kwashie and Kudzo of the ARS, and pastors Yaotse and Yesunyo of GEC, elders, and youths of these churches on Agbadza and Bobobo music that cause the excitement of the worshippers. The various questions on the issues of this study were answered adequately. Pie charts in the chapter represent the summary of the answers to the questionnaire by the informants. In addition, the responses of two non-Christians Dumega V and Mamaga II, and the observations were included in the chapter.

This chapter engages the various informants and scholars in discussing the data collected for this thesis. The various degrees of answers, which culminated in four major areas, determine the findings of this work. Each pie chart represents the summary of the analysis of key questions answered by informants.

#### **6.2. Discussion of Major Findings**

The responses of the ARS and GEC pastors, elders, youths, Dumega V, and Mamaga II about Agbadza and Bobobo music are in focus. The lyrics analysed in this study are both prescriptive statements that command what ought to be done, and descriptive, which describes human behaviour. The various degrees of thoughts embedded in the lyrics gear towards either asking what people ought to do, or discovering how people actually behave.

The final analysis below is the finding on the four major areas, which are based on whether it is true that Agbadza and Bobobo music are causing excitement in the churches, the

theological and ethical thoughts embedded in them, their war and immoral nature, and their sustainability.

### **6.2.1. The Excitement of Agbadza and Bɔbɔbɔ Music**

Music as part of church service in Christianity is to enhance the worship of God because the fact remains the same that worship belongs to God. Although music and worship belong to God, the intrinsic value of the lyrics and the lifestyle of the participants are crucial parts of music.

The informants responded to the question why they get excited about the music of their choice when they are being played in the churches. Data used in this study shows that the 80 youths of the targeted churches of ARS and GEC were contacted. They chose the type of cultural music they prefer the church should engage in worship. While 95% (76) of the youths showed interest in any of the cultural music, 5% (4) of them declined. The informants who have shown interest establish that, Agbadza and Bɔbɔbɔ music help them to identify themselves as Africans and express their primal past; thus, Africanness in church. This agrees with Andrew Walls who posits that Africa's past has shaped their brand of Christianity.<sup>411</sup> Again, the primal past helps them to express their knowledge of God in cultural music of their choice. All the informants (the pastors, elders and youths of ARS and GEC) in this study explained why they get excited about Agbadza and Bɔbɔbɔ cultural music. In answer to the question, 95% (125) of them emphasised that due to the healing and communicative nature of these music, both members and non-Christians get excited about them (key Figure 1). Out of the 128 informants who responded to the questionnaires, 22 ascribed *Xɔla* which is a Saviour to Jesus, 38 registered *Dɔyɔla* a Healer to him, and 39 chose *Dela* a Redeemer because he delivered them from evil forces. Interestingly, 29

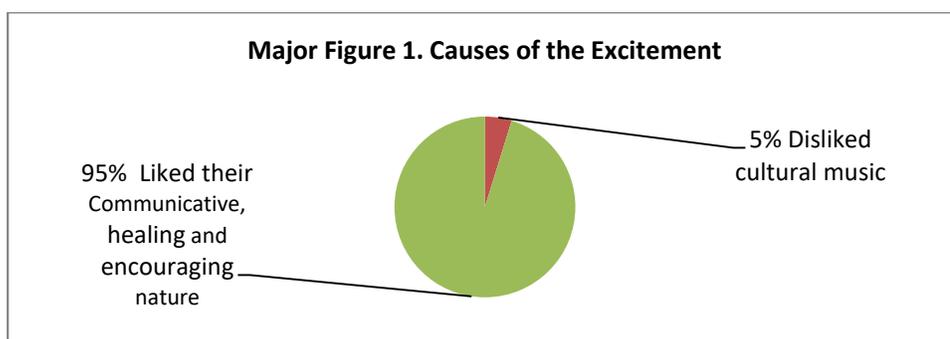
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<sup>411</sup> Andrew F. Walls, *The Cross-Cultural Process in Christian History: Studies in the Transmission and the Appropriation of Faith* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 2002), p. 120.

opted for Saviour, Healer, and Redeemer and also emphasises Jesus’ role as a compassionate Saviour who restores people to wholeness and offers freedom through faith in him.

The informants also expressed the richness of the existence of these music, and that the use of Agbadza and Bobobo music helped them to express the richness of Africanness in church.

In order to ensure that the church is guided by moral principles, both ARS and GEC pastors asserted that, they always make decisions in accordance with the core values of the churches to guide them. Those core values help the churches to structure their style of worship.<sup>412</sup> The main importance and usefulness of the beliefs of the churches were of crucial importance to them.



Source: Fieldwork Analysis, 2024.

Looking at the ARS and the GEC through the prism of healing, they both believe in ministration of songs to effect supernatural healing. The understanding agrees with Kwabena Asamoah-Gyedu who notes that, “Healing is a fundamental quest in African religious practice, and so it is not surprising that it has become a central concern for Christians”.<sup>413</sup> This is based on the belief that Jesus Christ promised healing as recorded in Mark 16:18. This agrees with Warner who asserts that Irenaeus, Justin Martyr and Tertullian viewed passages such as Mark 16:15-18

<sup>412</sup> GEC Global chapel Pastor Yaotse notes that, core values are sound beliefs and ethical practices based on biblical doctrine. He establishes that core values of the GEC determine organisational culture, standard of behaviour and philosophy of ministry. He enumerates about nine various aspects that the core values deal with.

<sup>413</sup> J. Kwabena Asamoah-Gyadu, *Sighs and Signs of the Spirit: Ghanaian Perspectives on Pentecostalism and Renewal in Africa* (Oxford: Regnum Books, 2015), p. 4.

and James 5:14-16 as the church's mandate to pray for the sick in expectation of their healing.<sup>414</sup> This also agrees with the view of most of the informants that, song ministration is a form of prayer that heals miraculously. In this sense, Millard Erickson establishes that the reason why miracles happen is to glorify God who is the source. For him, "Miracles occur to meet human needs".<sup>415</sup>

The healing nature of Agbadza and Bobobo music contributes to the informants' opinions, and therefore, enables them to identify the richness of these cultural music. The GEC Mercy chapel female pastor Yesunyo asserts that, God had placed every nation at a particular place with their distinct cultures within which they could find him and worship him (Acts 17:27).<sup>416</sup> This resonates with Trevor Yoakum's perception that indigenous church music is from the discipline known as ethnodoxology. He refers to Paul Neely's definition that ethnodoxology is "the theological and anthropological study, and practical application, of how every cultural group might use its unique and diverse artistic expressions appropriately to worship the God of the Bible".<sup>417</sup> It is not a surprise when John Stott admonishes that, "God made the universe, sustains it, and still pronounces it good (Gen. 1:31). We should be more grateful than we usually are for the good gifts of a good Creator – for family, for music...which enrich the quality of human life".<sup>418</sup> This seems to be in agreement with the statement made at 1974 International Congress on World Evangelisation in Lausanne that, "God has no one culture that he prefers among the cultures of the world".<sup>419</sup> He is the originator of all cultures as far as language from which music is derived is concerned. Andrew Walls argues along this line that, "Christianity has

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<sup>414</sup> W. E. Warner "Faith Healing", in Daniel G. Reid, *et al.* (eds), *Dictionary of Christianity in America*, (Town: Inter Varsity Press, 1990), from Discovering Collection Database, PC Study Bible V5.

<sup>415</sup> Millard J. Erickson, *Christian Theology*, Second edition (Michigan: Baker Books, Grand Rapids, 1998), p. 434.

<sup>416</sup> GEC Mercy Chapel Female Pastor Yesunyo, Interview, Thursday 25 January 2024, Ho, Volta Region.

<sup>417</sup> Neely Paul, <https://www.worldofworship.org/what-is-ethnodoxology/>, accessed 25 March, 2020.

<sup>418</sup> John Stott, *Decisive Issues Facing Christians Today* (Michigan: Fleming H. Revell, 1990), p. 15.

<sup>419</sup> *The Lausanne Movement: A Range of Perspectives*, p. 373.

no culturally fixed [element] *music*. If the acts of cultural translation by which the Christians of any community make their faith substantial within that community cease, the Word ceases to be made flesh within that community – the Christian group in that community is likely to lose its effectiveness”.<sup>420</sup> Walls’ assertion corresponds to the responses of the informants that they get excited as they express their cultural identity.

Dumega V’s take on Agbadza and Bobobo cultural music played by churches has been given due consideration. He testifies that when these cultural music are being played at funerals, crusade grounds, and social gatherings, both Christians and non-Christians join in to sing and dance to the music.<sup>421</sup> This implies that the vital information about God and life situations embedded in the songs make the lyrics much understandable to them. This agrees with Trevor Yoakum who posits that, “music, in all of its complexity, has the potential to impact not only congregations but also non-believers in profound ways”.<sup>422</sup> Ideally, the Gospel messages the lyrics carry ensure that the hearers in their own social and cultural situations understand the music. The GEC female pastor Yesunyo also testifies to the effectiveness and communicative nature of the Agbadza and Bobobo songs.<sup>423</sup> This resonates with the fact that, language inspires confidence. This experience agrees with Kwame Bediako who noted that if Christ is presented to every nation, especially in Africa, it should be about Christ and how to live and express the Christian life within the context of the African.<sup>424</sup> This suggests that, Christians need to be Disciples of Christ who have to be challenged to make serious commitment to ensure positive spiritual growth in the churches.

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<sup>420</sup> Andrew F. Walls, *The Cross-Cultural Process in Christian History: Studies in the Transmission and the Appropriation of Faith* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 2002), p. 13.

<sup>421</sup> Non-Christian Male Dumega V, Interview, Wednesday 7 February 2024. Volta Region.

<sup>422</sup> Trevor Yoakum, “That all May Hear: How Indigenous Church Music Encourages Church Growth in Africa”, *Great Commission Research Journal*, Vol. 11, No. 2 (Fall 2020), pp. 88-103 (88).

<sup>423</sup> GEC Mercy Chapel Female Pastor Yesunyo, Interview, Thursday 25 January 2024, Ho, Volta Region.

<sup>424</sup> Kwame Bediako, *Christianity in Africa: The Renewal of a Non-Western Religion* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1995), p. 3.

One of the most distinctive characteristics of discipleship is the close relationship existing between a religious experience and its effects on one's life. Thus, when Agbadza and Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀ cultural music are engaged at crusades, according to ARS pastor Kwashie, the expectation is to save human life for Christ, which calls for disciple-making or discipleship.<sup>425</sup> Discipleship is teaching biblical truths to mould and guide others towards living righteously as they follow Jesus Christ. Upon accepting to follow Jesus Christ, one comes to realise that it leads him to a higher moral standard of living. Also, the goal of discipleship is not only to make converts that make converts, but for all believers to become like Jesus Christ. Discipleship helps to know basic foundational truths, which every believer should know and understand.

Again, the informants' recognition of Africanness enabled them to establish that Agbadza and Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀ music help them to identify themselves as Africans, and express their primal past by putting cloth around their waist to dance to the music. This agrees with the view of 92% (11) of GEC Mercy Chapel elders who indicated that, these cultural music enable one to express Africanness in church by putting cloth around one's waist to dance to the music (refer to Appendix). Kenneth Cragg believes that self-identification is the result of understanding of the primal nature of the African world, which could positively contribute to Christian experience and theology.<sup>426</sup> It is worthy of recognition that understanding the conceptual categories of cultural music, which describes the formation, analysis or application of ideas of the local culture, therefore, is of critical importance for indigenous church music.<sup>427</sup> How these music express vital information about God and life situations, make the lyrics much understandable and eminently sensible to the singers. This is because 83% of the GEC Global chapel elders registered that, cultural music inspires, comforts the broken hearted, and preaches God's message clearly. The

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<sup>425</sup> Pastor Kwashie of ARS Love Church, Interview, Tuesday 16 January 2024, Accra.

<sup>426</sup> Kenneth Cragg, *Christianity in World Perspective* (London: Lutter Worth Press, 1968), p. 64.

<sup>427</sup> Yoakum, "That all May Hear", p. 90.

communicative nature of these cultural music brings in John V. Taylor's desire that, a song he composed be translated and sung in every tongue of Africa.<sup>428</sup> Taylor's wish resonates with the fact that communication, which heavily relies on language, inspires confidence, especially when it comes in a form of a song. Since the lyrics which are always in vernacular inspire the mode of their expression, it is akin to Byang Kato's assertion that, "contextualisation of the modes of expression is not only right but also necessary".<sup>429</sup> This seeks to contextualise and articulate the expression of African heritage, which falls within the framework of *the Concept of Africanness in African Christianity* that guides this study. Data confirms that there is some degree of the expression of Africanness in these churches. Hence, in the key Figure 1 above, data shows that Agbadza and Bobobo music should be engaged in the churches to worship God because this alone accounted for 95%. Nevertheless, the churches' weakness was that they did not notice the impact these music have had on their environmental issues, or helped them transform their eco-crisis.

Interestingly, there have been some mixed feelings about these cultural music. The fact remains the same that while some get excited about Agbadza and Bobobo music, 5% showed displeasure with them. On one hand, since ethical issues that concern Christians are based on the guidance of the Bible and reason, it is believed that quite often, the individual creates thoughts that most commonly results in making a judgement about whether an action is right or wrong. In this regard, it is assumed that everyone holds a philosophical view of ethics to judge actions. Hence, the 5% of the informants showed displeasure in both Agbadza and Bobobo music. This shows that judging is an essential part of reasoning, which has to do with what God has said about morality, as far as human behaviour is concerned. For this reason, the displeasure of the

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<sup>428</sup> John V. Taylor, *The Primal Vision, Christian Presence amid African Religion* (London: SCM Press, 1963), p. 196.

<sup>429</sup> *The Lausanne Movement: A Range of Perspectives* (Oxford: Regnum Books, 2014), p. 382.

5% informants has to be looked at from a broader perspective objectively. According to Judith Boss, no other justification is necessary for an action to be right among Christians other than God commanding it. Therefore, if an action is morally justifiable and not contradicts Scripture, that action is right.<sup>430</sup> The 5% informants' position attracts attention because the Christian deontologist would argue that, the end of an action does not always justify the means. It ought to conform to Scripture, because Christians do not find their moral duties in the standard of Christians, but in the standard for Christians, which is the Bible.<sup>431</sup> The minority 5% did not just show displeasure, they suggested contemporary music and hymns. Being Christians, though few, their choice corresponded to Apostle Paul's instruction in Ephesians 5:19 that, "Speaking to one another with psalms, hymns and songs from the Spirit". This position is similar to that of Peter Sarpong when he explains that, "for successful evangelism to take place, the context of each and every given culture must seriously be considered".<sup>432</sup> Since "culture is dynamic and open to transformation",<sup>433</sup> those who take Niebuhr's fifth position, *Christ the transformer of culture* believe that human culture can become "a transformed human life through the grace of God".<sup>434</sup> The fact that culture is dynamic, and the church is in a global village, church music should not be limited to Agbadza and Bobobo music only. This agrees with the notion of GEC youths that they preferred hymns. Hence, when other areas are explored and added to the existing ones, it will go a long way to allow others also find their place in the churches.

On the other hand, though those who showed displeasure indicated their years of membership in their churches, it does not mean all of them understand why cultural music is

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<sup>430</sup> Judith A. Boss, *Perspectives on Ethics* (London: Mayfield Publishing Company, 1998), p. 105.

<sup>431</sup> Norman L. Geisler, *Christian Ethics: Contemporary Issues and Options* (Michigan: Baker Academic, Grand Rapids, 2010), p. 39.

<sup>432</sup> Peter K. Sarpong, *Peoples Differ: An Approach to Inculturation in Evangelisation* (Accra: Sub-Saharan Publisher, 2002), p. 16-18.

<sup>433</sup> Kwame Bediako, "Gospel and Culture: Some Insights for our Time from the Experience of the Earliest Church", *Journal of African Christian Thought*, Vol. 2, No. 2, (December 1999): pp. 8-17 (8).

<sup>434</sup> Niebuhr, *Christ and Culture*, p. 196.

necessary for the African. Sawyerr posits that sometimes it takes time to understand the meaning of a particular practice, worship and teaching which the church has experienced and cherished so much.<sup>435</sup> Contrariwise, for sentimental reasons, their faith may not permit them to accept what they think is sinful. The fact that they are Christians; they would try their best to avoid enjoying songs that they think are culturally immoral to them, or when those music are taken to extremes. This understanding agrees with Niebuhr's Christ against culture typology. For them, they "affirm the sole authority of Christ over culture and resolutely reject culture's claims to loyalty".<sup>436</sup> They always behave in a way that is based on strong principles about what is right and wrong. Therefore, when it came to the explanation of the lyrics *nuvo gbe si medze si la – the sinful life I knew* in chapter five, they were able to give meaningful explanations to it. This is because it was a call to what they believed in as Christians, and the expectation is to live holy, "for it is written: 'Be holy because I am holy'" (1 Pet. 1:16).

As mentioned above, to affirm the sole authority of Christ over culture means recognizing Jesus Christ as the ultimate authority in all aspect of life, including societal values, traditions, laws, and human institutions. This perspective holds that Christ's teachings, as revealed in Scripture, should shape how individuals and societies function. Key aspect of this belief is that Jesus is not just a religious figure but the supreme ruler over every cultural sphere, including politics, education, business, and morality. For them, Scripture is the standard and serves as the ultimate guide cultural engagement, rather than human philosophies or societal trends. Instead of conforming to secular values, Christians are called to influence and transform culture according to biblical principles. In that regard, Christ's teaching define right and wrong

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<sup>435</sup> Harry Sawyerr, "God: Ancestor or Creator? Aspects of Traditional Belief in Ghana, Nigeria and Sierra Leone", in A. C. Edwards, *Journal of the International African Institute*, Vol. 42, No. 4 (October 1972), pp. 358-360 (359), p. 359.

<sup>436</sup> H. Richard Niebuhr, *Christ and Culture* ((New York: Harper and Row, 1951), p. 42.

rather than cultural norms or government policies. It means placing Christ above rationalism, materialism, or any ideology that competes with biblical truth as a way of rejecting cultural idolatry. This does not mean rejecting culture outright but rather submitting cultural expressions, traditions, and institutions to the Lordship of Christ.

### 6.2.2. The Theological and Eco-Ethical Thoughts on the Lyrics

It has been recognised that African primal views have informed the composers of Christian songs to identify the place of God in their lyrics. All the informants admitted that they understood the lyrics of the songs that were being sung in their churches. Many of the informants posit that, Agbadza and Bòbòbò enhance worship and make them feel like Africans. Although some typical indigenous songs do not reflect religious beliefs openly, those used in this study connote acceptable moral and theological values. The moral and theological thoughts embedded in the lyrics are the confirmation of the religiosity of the songs.



Source: Fieldwork Analysis, 2024.

Based on reasonable moral and theological grounds, the lyrics used in this study are geared towards love, justice, caretaking, and communal life. Therefore, the lyrics that are used by the ARS and GEC in this study are scriptural based that teach about God. The lyrics depicted the expression of the primal spirituality of Africanness. While some revealed the Lordship of

Jesus Christ, others revealed his roles as a Saviour and Judge. Surprisingly, some biblical instructions in the lyrics are similar to African values and customs, which make them theologically sound. Interestingly, 100% of the ARS and GEC elders, and youths were clear in their minds that they understood the meaning of the songs, and the message they communicate. Given the informants' responses, their assertions explain their understanding of the communicative nature of Agbadza and Bɔbɔbɔ music.

What makes the ARS' Agbadza lyrics *Mawuga ye gblɔe na mi – the Great God had told us* theological is what it says about God. Theological beliefs form the basis for the verbalisation of the mysteries of God through what he does among his people.<sup>437</sup> The lyrics pointed to the Great God and to what he said about life. His non-moral attribute of omniscience allows him to know everything be it the past, current or future, hence, the lyrics *yenya tame si yeɔfo – He knew the thought he had* resonated with his ability to see beyond the range of ordinary perception. The critical element and prophetic aspect of the lyrics is “*before we came into this world*”, which points to the past. It shows the foreknowledge of God concerning the beginning of life. This is unknown to man until God reveals it. This has meaning in both primal view and Scripture. This also shows that God is the author of human life and that man's existence is a result of a wilful act of God.<sup>438</sup>

The message of the song is the most important idea that someone is trying to tell people about in a particular language. This agrees with Laryea who cited Pobe that “language is more than syntax and morphology; it is a vehicle for assuming the weight of a culture”.<sup>439</sup> Culturally, the meaning of the lyrics of Agbadza and Bɔbɔbɔ songs are crucial for the ARS and GEC

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<sup>437</sup> Asamoah-Gyadu, *Sighs and Signs of the Spirit*, p. 78.

<sup>438</sup> James Gills, *Biblical Ethics and Contemporary Issues* (Makati: Carib Baptist Publication, 1974), p. 154.

<sup>439</sup> John Pobe, *Toward an African Theology* (Nashville: Abington, 1979), p. 23. In Philip T. Laryea, “Biblical Hermeneutics in a New Key”, p. 40.

members. Hence, the informants noted that they communicate with God through Agbadza and Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀ songs; thus, the songs are communicative.<sup>440</sup> This confirms Andrew Walls' assertion that, "The church is the vehicle of Christ's influence. The first sign of the expansion of the influence of Christ is the presence of a community of people who willingly bear his name an 'Israel' that maintains his worship".<sup>441</sup> In other words, the community of Christians willingly communicates Christ's message to the non-Christian world through culturally based music. Here, one can establish that some of those influences Walls refers to as the vehicle of Christ among the Ewe community are Agbadza of the Anlo-Ewe and Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀ music of the *Evedome*. *What the church as the vehicle carries are the songs that go with identical lyrics with their respective meanings.* As mentioned earlier, the response of the ARS and GEC pastors are correlated substantially. It means that the two denominations share similar views on the usage of local musical instruments and lyrics which many get excited about.<sup>442</sup> In both ARS and GEC, to some degree, worship is usually accompanied by local songs, clapping, and dancing, which have come to characterise the neo-Pentecostal and charismatic ways of worship. The ARS Joy Church elders noted that the lyrics of the songs and drumming are meaningful, because Agbadza and Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀ music are part of their culture, which glorify God when they are engaged to worship him.

Again, it has been found that the GEC's Agbadza lyrics *Yesue do dzo aɖe, dzo sia wodoa amea ɖeke mateɖu atsi o* – *Jesus has set fire, the fire he sets no one can quench it* has meaning in Jeremiah's prophecy against Israel (Jer. 17:27), as mentioned in chapter three. It was analogous to expressing Israel's disobedience to God's Sabbath, which attracted divine judgment. Therefore, God intimated that those gates that were not used should be fired, as they ought to

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<sup>440</sup> ARS Joy Church Pastor Kudzo claims that, one of the factors that underlie the excitement has to do with the theological thought the music communicates about God and life situations.

<sup>441</sup> Walls, *The Cross-Cultural Process in Christian History*, p. 9 and 10.

<sup>442</sup> Global Evangelical Church. *Corporate Identity* (Accra: Global Evangelical Press, 2007), p. 4.

shut out sin. An enemy besieging the city and assaulting the gates, should execute this course. Had the Lord Jesus ever set any fire? He even rebuked his disciples when they asked to command fire to come down from heaven to consume those who prevented him [Jesus] from passing a village of the Samaritans (Lk. 9:54-55). In other words, the lyrics expressed the fear of God, which agrees with Kunhiyop that the Scriptures must play a normative role. They are a reliable guide as to what we should believe and how we should live.<sup>443</sup> These theological thoughts embedded in Agbadza and Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀ music are identical with the lyrics. For that matter, such theological thoughts could only be identical with lyrics when Christians compose them, and the singers did so out of a direct relationship with God and one another. In addition, the songs would be relevant only if the lyrics resonate with God's nature and his providential care. Mostly, Jesus is addressed as Lord and King in their songs, which makes it theological.

Passing religious knowledge through singing also requires that the aim of the church and the good moral character of Christians be exhibited. The GEC Global pastor Yaotse refers to biblical examples and registered the fact that, King David and the Israelites were celebrating with all their might with all kinds of musical instruments; nevertheless, they violated God's instructions. They placed the Ark of the covenant on a cart. Here, spirituality and morality come to play. He explains his view based on 2 Samuel 6:5-7.<sup>444</sup>

Data shows that 90% (36) of the GEC youths indicated cultural music is beneficial because it attracts unbelievers to Christ. Thus, music helps the churches to identify themselves with society and vice versa when they go out to evangelise. Andrew Walls indicates that "Africans have responded to the Gospel from where they were, not from where the missionaries were; they have responded to the Christian message as they heard it, not to the missionaries'

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<sup>443</sup> Samuel Waje Kunhiyop, *African Christian Ethics* (Nairobi: Hippo Books, 2008), p. 70.

<sup>444</sup> GEC Global Chapel Pastor Yaotse, Interview, Monday 22 January 2044, Ashaiman, Greater Accra.

experience of the message”.<sup>445</sup> The reason is that the Gospel cuts across boundaries regardless of culture, and it is understood by the audience within their specific cultural settings. Typically, Steenbrink also notes that “the music brought by the missionaries is not a good vehicle for witnessing outside the church or to express the religious feelings within the community”.<sup>446</sup> This agrees with Stassen and Gushee who also share the view that Jesus Christ demonstrated selfless love so that all humanity may be saved including Africans.<sup>447</sup> According to Mamaga II, there should be the expression of love as Christians engage Agbadza and Bobobo music, which could attract the non-Christians to feel at home, as they participate in them.<sup>448</sup> This she said to confirm what Dumega V has identified. This seems to make Agbadza a welcoming music in churches, social gatherings, and funerals. This agrees with the ARS pastor Kwashie’s opinion. He suggests that Agbadza and Bobobo music should always be played in the churches because Agbadza music is highly beneficial for both members and non-members. Dumega V also explains that they know that there is a God and wish that some of these cultural music are used to help them find their place in the churches.<sup>449</sup> This confirms that the church “is making its presence felt within public space”.<sup>450</sup>

With clear conviction, there must have been a distinct remarkable affinity for God among some of the non-Christians. Apostle Paul on his missionary trip among the Gentiles at Athens identified them as such. Paul said, “In every way you are very religious” (Acts 17:22b). The Greek *δαισιδαιμονεστέρους* (deisidaimonesterouv) means superstitious, fearing the gods,

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<sup>445</sup> Andrew F. Walls, *The Missionary Movement in Christian History: Studies in Transmission of Faith* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1996), p. 101.

<sup>446</sup> K. A. Steenbrink, *Music in African and Asian churches. Exchange*, in R. S. Letšosa & B. J. de Klerk, “A Relevant Liturgy for Reformed Churches of African Origin Concerning Liturgical Music”, *Practical Theology in South Africa*, Vol. 22 (1) (2007), pp. 64-82 (66).

<sup>447</sup> Glen H. Stassen and David P. Gushee. *Kingdom Ethics: Following Jesus in Contemporary Context* (Illinois: InterVarsity, 2003), p. 45 and 333.

<sup>448</sup> Non-Christian Female Mamaga II, Interview, Friday 9 February 2024. Volta Region.

<sup>449</sup> Non-Christian Male Dumega V, Interview, Wednesday 7 February 2024. Volta Region.

<sup>450</sup> Asamoah-Gyadu, *Sighs and Signs of the Spirit*, p. 15.

religious, “If indeed, it meant to be understood as religious piety”.<sup>451</sup> In the EUE Bible translation, “religious” means *nu subɔsubɔwo*, but “fearing the gods” is *mievɔa mawuwo*. Philip Laryea relates this to Jesus’ expression in the encounter with a scribe that, he (the scribe) was “not far from the kingdom of God” (Mk. 12:34).<sup>452</sup> Over here, Laryea asserts that the expression “is better rendered thus..., ‘I perceive that in every way you are not far from God’”.<sup>453</sup> In EUE it means, “*Mekpɔe be le mɔwo kata me la, miele adzɔge tso Mawu gbɔ o*”. The fact that in every way they “are not far from God” as rendered earlier, they are likely to develop their practice into godly worship. The simple explanation of this is that, even though Bɔbɔbɔ music that is played among the people of EUEdome outside the church may look immoral, they potentially have a belief in or affinity for God. The EUEdome are extremely interested in the Bɔbɔbɔ music because it is important to them; therefore, they spend a lot of time playing them. When they accept Christ, they look for such music in the churches. This is primal and theological. This resonates with the ARS and GEC informants’ response to the questionnaire that the Agbadza and Bɔbɔbɔ songs are scriptural, and therefore, theological since this accounted for 100% as shown in Figure 5a above.

Shown below is the ethical aspect of the study about God, and the relationship with him and his creation. The Agbadza lyrics *Afetɔ Yesue, va ɔem kaba – Lord Jesus, come and rescue me quickly*, and *anyigba le dzo le ge – the Earth will catch fire* as the song expressed, were immensely looked at with eco-ethical eyes in chapter four. The informants were asked to explain how they understood the lyrics, but they could not. This means that though they get excited about the lyrics, they were handicapped by lack of ethical comprehension of the song. This has rendered the songs impossible to effect change that should sustain the Agbadza music. However,

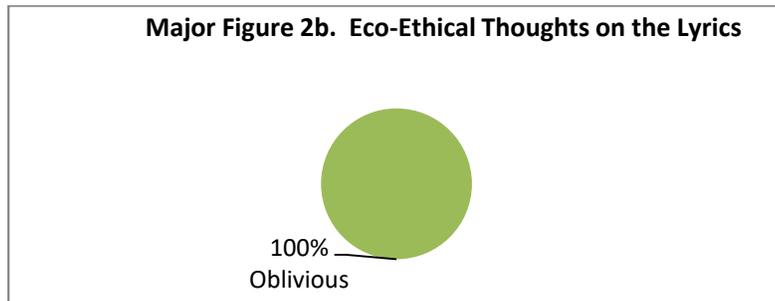
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<sup>451</sup> Gierhard Kittel (ed), *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, in Philip T. Laryea, “Biblical Exegesis in African Perspective”, *Journal of African Christian Thought*, Vol. 6, No. 1 (June 2003), pp. 34-43 (39).

<sup>452</sup> Philip T. Laryea, “Biblical Exegesis in African Perspective”, *Journal of African Christian Thought*, Vol. 6, No. 1 (June 2003), pp. 34-43 (43).

<sup>453</sup> Laryea, “Biblical Exegesis in African Perspective”, p. 39.

some of ARS elders were able to explain the Bobobo lyrics *nuvo gbe si medze si la – the sinful life that I knew* according to their lay understanding. For them, personal sin has nothing to do with their environmental issues. This shows that they were ignorant about structural sin, which can be traced to personal sin.



Source: Fieldwork Analysis, 2024.

Kunhiyop posits that it is crucial to know and appreciate the role of the study of principles that determine actions as right and wrong.<sup>454</sup> In the same vein, an aspect of the Bobobo lyrics, *naganɔ menye o – never should dwell in me*, which is a complement of the above lyrics *nuvo gbe si medze si la – the sinful life that I knew*, is a type of descriptive lyrics. Nevertheless, it has a potential appeal for a prescriptive claim, which ought to be done; it sets forth a moral obligation. This analysis shows that, sometimes, descriptive statements have the potential to change into prescriptive claims. Thus, although the lyrics *never should dwell in me* is describing a very unfavourable state of affairs, one is duty-bound or under obligation to make sure, the sinful life never dwells in him or her.

Hence, eco-ethically, the lyrics shown above *Afetɔ Yesue, va qem kaba, anyigba le dzo le ge – Lord Jesus, come and save me quickly, the Earth will catch fire* was not fully beneficial because they could not apply the lyrics of the song to bring a change in their environments. The Figure 5b above shows that 100% of the informants were oblivious to the ethical and moral information the lyrics convey. John Stott establishes that, “There are two possible attitudes

<sup>454</sup> Kunhiyop, *African Christian Ethics*, p. 5.

which Christians adopt towards the world. One is to escape and the other engagement. ‘Escape’ means turning our backs on the world in rejection and stealing our hearts against its agonised cries for help”.<sup>455</sup> Thus, the unfriendly opinions and feelings of some people towards creation are the common impetus behind their behaviour, which affects the understanding of certain things around them. Hence, Stott concludes that “engagement” is the right attitude Christians must adopt as they demonstrate compassion, “feeling deep within [us] *them* the stirring of the love of God” towards creation.<sup>456</sup> Hence, creation ought to be valued not as a means to an end, but as an end in itself.

### **6.2.3. The War and Immoral Nature of Agbadza and Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀**

Data shows that the GEC pastors Yaotse and Yesunyo mentioned that the GEC’s liturgical expression is charismatic of which music and holiness are important core values of the GEC. For them, church music must be accompanied by holiness.<sup>457</sup> Against this is the presupposition that while Agbadza is war music, Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀ is immoral. According to the information in Chapter two of this study, it has been noted that, while the lyrics of the indigenous Agbadza is warlike, the lyrics that are sung in Chapter three by both the ARS and GEC are about Jesus Christ and salvation. The indigenous “Agbadza song *Akli had fallen captive, a gunshot had been heard at Anago*”, is communicating a message describing what had happened and sounds a warlike song. The second indigenous song is “*Make brotherly love in life, they do not make death’s brotherly love*”. This instructive statement depicts kind feelings towards people. However, the ARS and GEC are very

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<sup>455</sup> Stott, *Decisive Issues Facing Christians Today*, p. 14.

<sup>456</sup> Stott, *Decisive Issues Facing Christians Today*, p. 14.

<sup>457</sup> GEC Global and Mercy chapel Pastors Yaotse and Yesunyo maintain that holiness as one of the important core values of the GEC in thought and life is a process of sanctification. Individuals and corporate bodies are encouraged to pursue holiness through the work of the Holy Spirit, and the process of personal sanctification; thus, members should walk in holiness.

meticulous not to sing these types of songs in the churches; perhaps they have reasons to believe that they are not theological, and therefore not Christian.

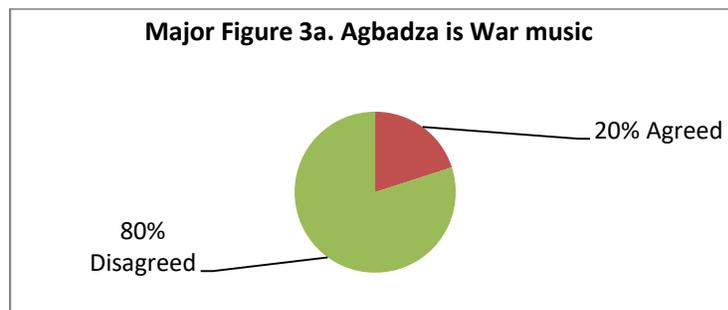
The clear dichotomy between the two types of songs and “Christian songs” has been the fact that, though non-Christians sometimes sing war songs at funerals they are not sung as people who are going to war. They are sung courageously to encourage themselves and those who have come to mourn with bereaved families. Perhaps Agbadza is perceived as warlike music because the song is about a rescue team marching out to rescue a captive of war. This and similar songs are still sung today at funerals by non-Christians. Hence, Agbadza music is seen through the prism of warlike music. According to the GEC female pastor Yesunyo, Agbadza was utilised as war music in the olden days. However, in these contemporary times, it is used to worship at churches, funerals, and places of entertainment because there are no more wars.<sup>458</sup> This has been confirmed by 92% (11) of GEC Mercy Chapel elders who said Agbadza is not war music.

The fact that Agbadza music is a heritage of primal beliefs, cultural values, and customs of the Anlo-Ewe society; it is cherished in the GEC for a reason. Hence, data on GEC elders shows that 96% (23) of them agreed that Agbadza music is not warlike. However, while twenty-four of the GEC youths declined to answer, only 40% (16) of them responded that the music is not warlike. They suggested that though the GEC encourages Africanness, it should not neglect the fact that culture is dynamic, and therefore, should encourage the use of contemporary musical instruments and songs as well. This does not mean that contemporary music is morally acceptable than these cultural music.

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<sup>458</sup> GEC Mercy Chapel Pastor Yesunyo refers to the church’s core values, and mentions that the GEC’s liturgical expression is charismatic of which music is a part. She explains that, charismatic expression therefore is not unguided excessive emotionalism. She disagrees with the view that, local music for that matter *Agbadza* and *Bɔbɔbɔ* music are warlike and immoral.

As far as morality is concerned, the ARS Love church pastor Kwashie and the female pastor Yesunyo of GEC Mercy Chapel shared a common view. They disagreed that Agbadza is neither war nor immoral music. The female pastor testifies that many members and those who do not belong to GEC get excited when any of these local music is employed in the church. For her, Agbadza music sometimes ministers healing and encourages those who are undergoing excruciating moments in life. Nevertheless, the GEC Global Chapel pastor Yaotse indicated that God has a keen interest in people's obedience to his Law than the religious performances. More importantly, for these churches, Agbadza and Bobobo songs that have been metamorphosed into Christian music helps them to identify themselves with society and vice versa when they go out to evangelise. For this reason, 100% (24) of the ARS elders indicated that Agbadza music is not warlike. In addition, 100% (40) of the ARS youths indicated that the music is not warlike.

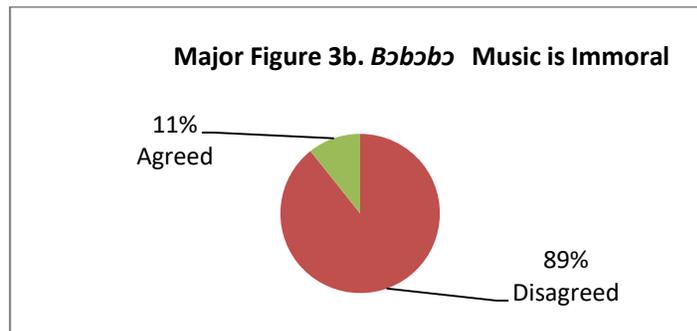


Source: Fieldwork Analysis, 2024.

As indicated earlier, the data shows that out of the 128 members of these churches contacted to participate in this research, 103 posited that Agbadza music is not warlike since this accounted for 80% as shown in Figure 3a above. Currently, Agbadza music has become common music among the Anlo-Ewe for purposes of funerals, church service, and social activities. However, Kunhiyop indicates that, “Most wars in Africa arise from tensions between

ethnic groups, religion, and social custom. The church has to develop an understanding of the nature of conflicts and of how Christians should respond to them.”<sup>459</sup>

This section is the case of Bɔbɔbɔ music. Mamaga II the non-Christian female indicates that the Bɔbɔbɔ music originated as social entertainment music, used at funerals. For her, the immoral nature of Bɔbɔbɔ music might be how women tweak their backsides to it as they dance the styles.<sup>460</sup> This non-Christian informant is not oblivious to the fact that Christians are to make sure that they see their bodies as properties that belong to God, and are sacred to his use and service. Nevertheless, the sample of the ARS elders of the churches in this study shows that, 92% (22) of them agreed that Bɔbɔbɔ music is not immoral as some claim it to be. In addition, 95% (38) of the youths of ARS also established that the music is not immoral. Data on GEC elders show that a total of 88% (21) agreed that Bɔbɔbɔ music is not immoral.



Source: Fieldwork analysis, 2024

Some of the GEC youths were clear in their minds that Bɔbɔbɔ music should be used in the churches; hence, 83% (33) of them expressed their opinions, which indicated that Bɔbɔbɔ music is not immoral. For them, it is a form of appreciating God’s given culture, but intensive teaching should be done in the churches. This data shows that the members of these churches were looking for more teaching to create awareness of cultural music, including Bɔbɔbɔ music, in the church since this accounted for 89% as shown in Figure 3b above. Though the pastors

<sup>459</sup> Kunhiyop, *African Christian Ethics*, p. 108.

<sup>460</sup> Non-Christian Female Mamaga II, Interview, Friday 9 February 2024. Volta Region.

indicate that education was ongoing, this teaching was heavily based on the practice – singing and drumming – of Agbadza and Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀ music. Thus, the teaching has very little to say about sexual immorality. This shows that though the teaching is being done, it is not done as expected by the youths. For Norman Geisler, from a Christian deontological perspective, results are never used as a rationale for breaking rules, even if the results are desirable.<sup>461</sup> This is because God's unchanging character is the basis of moral absoluteness. In view of this, the youths requested that extensive teaching is needed to be done to create awareness of how to handle and dance to Agbadza and Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀ music in the churches. In addition, the educative process needs to begin early, which should include everyone in the churches. Leadership should produce appropriate teaching material and develop a system of regular monitoring of the music in the church.

The fact is that, the God who created the world is interested in every department of it; and the primary goal of the Christian is to please this God. According to Fedler, what Christians believe about the character and the will of God shapes their character and actions.<sup>462</sup> Fedler also notes that since we often cannot control the consequences of our actions; we can control our behaviours.<sup>463</sup> Perhaps, that would help avoid bad consequences. Hence, the GEC Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀ lyrics *the sinful life I knew never should dwell in me* is a self-reminder of how to avoid anything sinful. Stassen and Gushee argue that it is not enough for the church to teach rules and principles about right and wrong, we need to nurture the kind of character and virtues that lead people do the right and avoid the wrong.<sup>464</sup> The opinions of these scholars encourage education and self-control in order to avoid bad consequences. In this regard, the male GEC pastor Yaotse notes that the immoral nature of a particular music is not all about the musical instruments, but God has keen

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<sup>461</sup> Geisler, *Christian Ethics*, p. 73.

<sup>462</sup> Kyle D. Fedler, *Exploring Christian Ethics: Biblical Foundations for Morality* (Westminster: John Knox Press, 2006), p. 205.

<sup>463</sup> Fedler, *Exploring Christian Ethics*, p. 19.

<sup>464</sup> Stassen and Gushee, *Kingdom Ethics*, p. 60.

interest in the people's obedience to his holy Law. Therefore, to claim that Agbadza and Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀ music are warlike and immoral practices and that they should not be engaged in the worship of God culturally is incorrect.<sup>465</sup> In addition, to claim that a piece of local music, such as Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀, among others is immoral in a particular community or church, therefore, should be abolished in all churches looks very incongruous, because it is not a general phenomenon. For the informants, it is the responsibility of pastors and elders to educate the people how to handle these music. The four pastors of the ARS and GEC disagreed with the immoral nature of Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀ music in the churches.

However, according to the ARS and GEC pastors, to find ways to sustain Agbadza and Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀ music in the ARS and GEC, members learn to live communal life to keep these cultural music alive in the churches. This is because the primal background of the Africans is littered with numerous religious practices that had an affinity with Christianity. One is love for God and one another, and music which fosters solidarity of a group of people. In agreement with the opinion, the ARS Love church pastor Kwashie indicates that, to curtail segregation in the church, members are always encouraged to practise communal life as Africans. In addition, these music have to be engaged with considerable enthusiasm.<sup>466</sup> Kenneth Cragg, notes the type of salutation Christians extend to those outside the Christian community, determines the quality of their worship.<sup>467</sup> Mbiti also asserts that, "God is often worshipped through songs, and Africans are very good in singing. Many religious gatherings and ceremonies are accompanied by singing, which not only helps pass on religious knowledge, but helps create and strengthen corporate

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<sup>465</sup> GEC Global Chapel Pastor Yaotse, Interview, Monday 22 January 2024, Ashaiman, Greater Accra.

<sup>466</sup> ARS Love Church Pastor Kwashie, Interview, Tuesday 16 January 2024, Accra.

<sup>467</sup> Kenneth Cragg, *Christianity in World Perspective* (London: Lutter Worth Press, 1968), p. 64.

feeling and solidarity”.<sup>468</sup> Solidarity is loyalty and general agreement between all the people in a group or between different groups, because they all have a shared aim. The African’s spirituality has its fundamental understanding rooted in their primal worldview of communality. When this aspect is missing, then, the lyrics are not beneficial to the hearers. This facet of African communal spirituality is expected in the church. Sometimes it takes time to clearly, understand the meaning of particular doctrines of the various churches.<sup>469</sup>

The GEC Global Chapel pastor Yaotse refers to 2 Samuel 6 where Uzzah was killed by God though music was ongoing, and 1 Chronicles 15:25-28 and said that it was not all about the music, but the people’s obedience to God’s Law. Therefore, to claim that cultural music such as Agbadza and Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀ music are warlike and immoral practices respectively, and that they should be relegated to a low position is incorrect. For him, we will be unfair when we discredit the music and the dancers together. Hence, the ARS and GEC pastors 100% strongly disagreed that neither Agbadza music is warlike nor Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀ music is immoral.

#### **6.2.4. The Sustainability of Agbadza and Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀ Music**

Data shows that pastors, elders and youths in this study eagerly anticipate the sustainability of Agbadza and Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀ music as tools for evangelism and worship in their churches. To sustain both Agbadza and Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀ music in the ARS and GEC, consideration has been given to the moral consequences of conduct, and the ethical choices that it necessarily demands. Would the youths understand they are the new generation of these churches, so they could make the right

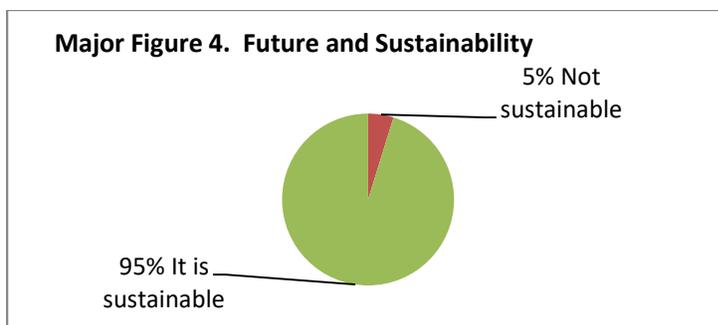
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<sup>468</sup> John S. Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy* (New Hampshire: Heinemann Educational Books Inc.), 1989, p. 67.

<sup>469</sup> Harry Sawyerr, “New Testament Eschatology in an African Background: A Study of the Encounter between New Testament Theology and African Traditional Concepts”, in A. C. Edwards, *Journal of the International African Institute*, Vol. 42, No. 4 (October 1972), pp. 358-360 (359),

choice that these music demands? This demands a highly complex cognitive activity. The informants expressed that teaching, training, and demonstration are key points.

Also, the informants indicated that while elders in some of the churches embarked on training, others also should follow suit. A distinct behaviour of the ARS and GEC, which would help build these churches, is that members are always encouraged to practise communal life as Africans. Music as one of the facets of church life is also encouraged in these churches. Hence, 76 of the youths showed interest in any of the cultural music.



Source: Fieldwork Analysis, 2024.

The pastors contacted in this study, both the ARS and GEC, assured sustainability of Agbadza and Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀ music in these churches. The potential sustainability of the churches' Agbadza and Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀ music is that, since they are employed at funerals, social gatherings and for evangelism and entertainment purposes, these serve as the possibility of their sustenance. This means that since these music are engaged socially, and the indigenous songs are metamorphosed into Christian songs that are sung both at church and funerals, they are sustainable, and therefore need to be encouraged. For the ARS and GEC pastors, sustainability is possible if pastors could find some means of having the youths trained to know how to play the various drums and sing the songs devoid of those that are full of suggestive lyrics. They need to be educated to become generational thinkers and solution providers who think about the future of the church.

Indications show that, this position has been agreed upon by 100% (24) of ARS elders and 92% (22) of GEC Global and Mercy chapel elders.

The ARS pastor Kudzo registers a concern about the proliferation of contemporary music, which has been their challenge. Against this concern, GEC Global Chapel youths suggested that, reggae Gospel should be encouraged because some of the youths enjoy the rhythmic patterns of reggae music. However, one would argue that though music is important, the spiritual growth of the members of these churches is paramount and not the type of music. This is because the danger for any church is that, the music can be reduced to a performance rather than a response to God. The purpose of music and the object of the service are to worship God. The focus of the music is to lead the people to respond to God. According to Donald McGavran, “Any attempt to evaluate church growth must be done taking into consideration the environment within which the church is found”.<sup>470</sup> To contribute to the argument, GEC Mercy Chapel youths suggest that the leadership of the churches should provide guards against the dangers of these music in the churches. With this regard, GEC Pastor Yaotse recommends that through prayer and fasting, the churches could sing songs that are spirit filled to minister healing and deliverance to the members to sustain the relevance of these cultural music.<sup>471</sup> When these are done, it would go a long way to help foster the sense of church community embracing these local music to a greater degree for the greater good. My observation reveals that, all of the local musical instruments indicated earlier in Chapter Two, and a few contemporary musical instruments were engaged in the worship of God at GEC Global Chapel. In addition, embedded in the lyrics of the songs that are sung in the churches under study are words of forgiveness,

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<sup>470</sup> Donald A. McGavran, *Understanding Church Growth* (California: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1970), p. 123.

<sup>471</sup> GEC Global chapel Pastor Yaotse suggests that prayer and fasting are keys to spiritual revival. When the churches pray and fast, revival would come since they are the effective weapons against the odds of life.

saving or rescuing, Lord, and love which are theological. On moral grounds, they may be considered acceptable Christian songs.

The various opinions shared suggest there must be a transformation of human behaviour, which should be geared towards a relationship with a moral God when one becomes a Christian. In other words, the Christian's spirituality should entail a commitment to care for God's creation. John Stott when dealing with how to develop a Christian mind posits that, "Our renewed mind will have a radical effect on our lives, since it will enable us to discern and approve God's will, and so transform our behaviour".<sup>472</sup> To make the church a relevant institution in society,

John Wesley preached the Gospel that inspired people to take up social actions. Some of the evangelical leaders who were enthusiastic about evangelism and social action and concern for human life were Zachary Macaulay, William Wilberforce, and Charles Grant. Social action in mission can be traced from the time of the apostles. Those days, the itinerating missionary carried with him a bag of medicines, new or better seeds and plants, and improved livestock.<sup>473</sup>

Macaulay, Wilberforce, and Grant are remembered for their tireless commitment to justice, moral contributions, and evangelism. Their evangelism and social action include the preservation of plants and seeds. Similarly, the sustainability of cultural music is heavily relied on the moral life of Christians to challenge the existing corrupt systems and unjust structures on moral grounds. This agrees with all the ARS and GEC pastors in this study who 100% suggested that the youths have to be taught to employ Agbadza and Bobobo music effectively to worship God, and approach evangelism holistically. In other words, the youths need to be indoctrinated to become generational thinkers who will demonstrate indefatigable resilience to think about the future of the church, eco-care, and how to use their cultural music for holistic missions.

As mentioned earlier, data shows that 95% (125) of the informants in this study indicated that they get excited because the lyrics of Agbadza and Bobobo songs are full of inspiration,

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<sup>472</sup> John Stott, *Decisive Issues Facing Christians Today* (Michigan: Fleming H. Revell, 1990), p. 32.

<sup>473</sup> Stott, *Decisive Issues Facing Christians Today*, p. 2-3, 5.

communication, healing, and deliverance. Their experience agrees with the report of a committee set by the Presbyterian Church of Ghana in the mid-1960s to look into why some Christians were drifting towards “spiritual churches”. Some of the reasons were “first, pagans find their way more easily into these churches because worship is less intellectual, and second, their worship is appealing, and people take an active part in it and obviously enjoy it”.<sup>474</sup>

Careful participant observations at the GEC Global Chapel reveal that the hymns from the hymnal sung by the choir, contemporary Gospel songs, and the Agbadza and Bobobo music integrated into the Christian worship in a way make the worship more effective. This shows that 5% of the informants are looking for all of these in the church. Since the church is an inclusive organised community, there should be rooms for everyone to feel at home, as they worship. However, a church that is predominantly Ewe, the local cultural music and worshippers need to be encouraged to express Africanness in the churches.

At the other end of the spectrum are the eco-ethical thoughts that are expressed by the lyrics of the selected songs indicated in Chapter Four. In addition to the theological benefits of these cultural music, the fact is that most of the songs are eco-ethical descriptive, and prescriptive. For Christians, faith brings salvation, but active obedience demonstrates their faith. True faith always results in deeds, because “faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead” (James 2: 17). Over here, emphasis is laid within the context of the accounts in Chapter Four to arrive at the sustainability of the Agbadza and Bobobo music in the ARS and GEC. The study found that the lyrics *Afetɔ Yesue, va dem kaba – Lord Jesus, save me quickly* reflect a lamentation by the singers about an eco-disaster. Therefore, the singers are seeking a Saviour who could save them from the disaster; because *the Earth will catch fire* is also part of the lyrics.

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<sup>474</sup> J. Kwamena Asamoah-Gyedu, *Sighs and Signs of the Spirit: Ghanaian Perspectives on Pentecostalism and Renewal in Africa* (Oxford: Regnum Books, 2015), p. 8.

This calls Kalu's explanation to mind that to baptize a nation, therefore, means to bring under the Gospel mandate all that constitutes a nation – a nation's ecosystem, people, and cultures.<sup>475</sup> The Gospel, which means Good News, is about the world including both humans and non-humans: humans to be eco-friendly. Interestingly, indigenous Africans hold strong eco-religious taboos, which are obeyed by them. These taboos are respected not out of fear, but because of eco-care.<sup>476</sup> Contrarily, as mentioned earlier, water bodies are being polluted, and forest reserves are being destroyed in the name of *galamsey*, which constitutes much of illegality to its highest degree at many places. To rejuvenate the eco-care system, eco-taboos and the GEC Agbadza song *anyigba le dzo le ge – the Earth will catch fire* need to be reinterpreted to let the youths of today know the value of caring for the ecosystem, and being eco-friendly. This is because while the ARS informants were surprised at what impact their cultural music could have on eco-crisis, the GEC informants were equally ignorant of the impact of these music. For this reason, they could not explain the lyrics *Afetɔ Yesue, va dɛm kaba, anyigba le dzo le ge – Lord Jesus, rescue me quickly, the Earth will catch fire*. Humans take cognisance of the fact that there is only one planet earth, which encompasses geographical areas as far as the lithosphere is concerned. If they were not oblivious to this aspect of their music, the community members would have joined them to confront the eco-crisis in their communities. This could have made their evangelism more meaningful and effective. The fact that true faith transforms human conduct as well as thoughts, it must always result in good deeds.

The informants identified the usefulness of Agbadza and Bɔbɔbɔ music when they are engaged in evangelism. Here, the primary mandate of the church, to which the ARS and GEC belong, is to preach the Good News for the salvation of human life. This they ought not to be

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<sup>475</sup> Ogbu U. Kalu, "Gospel, Culture and Mission: Revisiting an Enduring Problem" (Pretoria: UP and University of Nigeria, 1996), p. 286.

<sup>476</sup> Kofi Asare Opoku, *West African Traditional Religion*(Legon: FEP International Private Limited, 1977), p. 152.

negligent in doing, which should be geared towards the transformation of human life. If Christians' lifestyles remain unchanged, they do not truly believe the truths they claim to believe in as they evangelise. The "Greek '*euangelion*' means Good News, the announcement of victory. The Good News, also called the Gospel, is that God in Jesus Christ has fulfilled his promises and that a way of salvation has been opened to all".<sup>477</sup> It is about Christ's redemptive work. Christ's death and resurrection are the very foundation and redemptive substance of evangelical truth, which the ARS and GEC ought to preach. Kwame Bediako establishes that "Jesus of Nazareth from human cultural tradition, history, and environment manifested himself to the world in the first-century Palestinian Jewish environment, so we cannot see the Gospel as independent of the environment. He lived his life within a Jewish environment".<sup>478</sup> The Christian faith is the fruit, the result and the manifestation of God dealing with humanity within their environment. Moreover, songs, to a large degree, communicate far better and intuitively that they are more easily remembered than ordinary words, which results in good deeds. Nonetheless, deeds are not a substitute for faith, but rather a verification of Christian faith in Christ. Active obedience demonstrates that the Christian faith is genuine, which has the potential to affect the world as Agbadza and Bobobo music are engaged in evangelism.

According to Robert Bratcher, the basic idea of the Greek *cosmos* is "order" or "arrangement". The idea of "order" is always present in the meaning "universe" or "world" which is the sense the Greek noun most often carries. Hence, the word *cosmos* refers to the universe or the whole of creation.<sup>479</sup> Of interest is the fact that, all humans were in the loins of

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<sup>477</sup> I. Howard Marshall, A. R. Millard, J. I. Packer and D. J. Wiseman, *New Bible Dictionary*, 3<sup>rd</sup> Ed (Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 1996), p. 426.

<sup>478</sup> Kwame Bediako, "Gospel and Culture: Some insights for our Time from the Experience of the Earliest Church", ACI, Akropong – Akuapem (1999): 1-56 (8-9).

<sup>479</sup> Robert G. Bratcher, "The Meaning of Cosmos, 'World', in the New Testament", Vol. 31, Issue 4 (1980), p. 430. <https://doi.org/10.1177026009438003100406>

Adam when sin and death entered the world through him, hence, all have sinned (Rom. 5:12). Sin in human life is similar to pollution in streams. Even a small amount is deadly. This is bad news; hence, humanity is in anticipation of Good News. The Good News is that, “For God so loved the world...; for God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world” (Jn. 3:16-17). The world is a *cosmos*, which encompasses geographical areas, nations and all resources – people, land, forest, animals, birds, water, air, and minerals. This is good news. This calls the attention of Christians to create conscious environmental awareness of creation care, and demonstrate remarkable resilience to change the tone of current ecological situations after they have been saved by grace. When human life is saved, the mind is renewed by God’s Word to think straight (Rom. 12:2), and their moral life is also changed to take good care of the rest of God’s creation (Gen. 2:15). Eventually, stewardship is better understood and demonstrable.

One important dimension of the study is the impact these cultural music should have made on the eco-community. Unfortunately, nothing was shown in that regard. It is expected that the songs that are sung to praise God in the ARS and GEC address environmental issues as well, but they are not employed to address them. Kunhiyop cited Idowu who says that among Africans, “Life is not divided artificially into the sacred and the secular. The things of the earth (material things) have meaning only in terms of the heavenly (the spiritual)”.<sup>480</sup> Thus, the fact that God is Spirit, there is a spiritual undertone in all of his creation – both human and non-human creatures. For spiritual songs not addressing matters of the physical world has contributed to the weakness of the sustainability of the music. This is a challenge the churches have to face and address. The data shows that the informants agreed that intensive teaching should be done in the churches. They requested that eco-care awareness is needed to be created in the churches. This is because the youths noticed that although teachings were done in the churches, these

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<sup>480</sup> Kunhiyop, *African Christian Ethics*, 8.

teachings were heavily based on their spiritual healing and deliverance nature. Thus, the teaching has very little to say about eco-care or climate change. As human beings are guided by moral values, so the environment in which they live their Christian lives also needs to be guided. This has to be done because Christians are caretakers of God’s creation. This agrees with Northcott who posits that, “The environment exists because of the divine will” of God, and humans are “even priests of creation”.<sup>481</sup> In this regard, the youths suggested that intensive teaching is needed to be done to create awareness in the ARS and GEC. Here, Donald Dayton has shown that, “The church’s neglect of social reform grieved the Holy Spirit and hindered revival. The great business of the church is to reform the world...The very profession of Christianity implies the profession and virtually an oath to do all that can be done for the universal reformation of the world”.<sup>482</sup> The world is God’s creation, and the Holy Spirit feels extremely sad when Christians neglect its reformation. Notwithstanding the challenge, the overall data shows that among the 128 informants who responded to questionnaires, 121 agreed that the sustainability of Agbadza and Bobobo music is possible since this accounted for 95% as shown in Figure 4 above. To a large degree, the sustainability of these cultural music depend on the commitment of the churches.

While singing helps the Africans to pass on religious knowledge, the GEC pastor Yaotse confessed that they always lamented about environmental issues, but did not know that their music could be directed to those areas.<sup>483</sup> A remarkable example is the ARS Agbadza lyrics *Nuvɔ fe fetu enye ku, gake Mawu fe amenuveve enye agbe mavɔ - The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life* is a direct quote from Romans 6:23. Fundamentalism reveals that

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<sup>481</sup> Michael S. Northcott, *A Moral Climate: The Ethics of Global Warming* (London: Darton, Longman and Todd Ltd, 2007), p. 78.

<sup>482</sup> Donald W. Dayton, *Discovering an Evangelical Heritage* (Harper & Row, 1976), pp. 15-24. in John Stott, *Decisive Issues Facing Christians Today* (Michigan: Fleming H. Revell, 1990), p. 5.

<sup>483</sup> GEC Global Chapel Pastor Yaotse, Interview, Monday 22 January 2044, Ashaiman, Greater Accra.

Evangelical Christians believed the Good News is the death and resurrection of Christ. Remove this foundation and the whole fabric falls, and our hope for eternity sinks forever. According to Andrew Kirk, “The task of theology is to understand the document (in the first place on its terms) by allowing it to speak for itself”.<sup>484</sup> This does not mean that churches are not on a mission, however, the quality and type of message need to be critically looked at. Interestingly, all the informants in this study testified that they get excited about the lyrics of the Agbadza and Bobobo songs in their churches, which also helped them to reach out to the community. While the use of these cultural music result in healing, deliverance, and encouragement, one would argue that their excitement is not complete if they do not have any impact on environmental issues in the communities in which they live their Christian lives. To reap the full benefit of Agbadza and Bobobo music, these cultural music should be able to address ecological issues confronting their communities.

At issue is if Christianity is about Christ and his mission to “go and make disciples of all nations” (Matt. 28:19a), which encompass human life in geographical areas and institutions, then, Christianity needs to be a holistic mission that permeates all dimensions of human endeavour. Thus, the sustainability of Christ’s mission mandate resonates with the survivability of God’s creation, and without creation, there will be no missions. And by extension, it is explicit that the mission is creation centred. Unfortunately, many people died in sin without being saved due to floods, poor quality of water, air pollution, among others due to the negligence of creation care, a behaviour which is sinful.

As mentioned earlier, sin smells and tastes unpleasant, and consequently needs to be repented of. In this sense, Asoanya notes that the popular belief therefore is that whatever an

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<sup>484</sup> Andrew J. Kirk, *What is Mission: Theological Explorations* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2000), p. 16.

individual does is bound to affect the wider community for either good or bad.<sup>485</sup> Therefore, repentance, which is *dzimetɔtrɔ* in Ewe, turning your back towards something is necessary. When people repent to do the right thing, then, as the Gospel is to demolish evil structures, and plant structures that are godly, so cultural music must transform the face of the mission, which should involve eco-care. The reason is that a mission without human life transformation is empty and dead in itself. Jesus presents a goal for which all Christians strive; he sets us to work pursuing that goal, thus, seek first the kingdom and all things shall be added.<sup>486</sup> The kingdom of God is where Christians are expected to obey God and his orders concerning eternal life and stewardship.

### 6.3. Conclusion

This chapter presented the discussions of the data on opinions of the ARS and GEC pastors, two non-Christians, elders, and youths on Agbadza and Bɔbɔbɔ music that caused the excitement of the worshippers. To arrive at the conclusion of this study, questions on the issues of the war and immoral nature of these cultural music, the factors and effects, and the future and sustainability of these cultural music were looked at. The study reveals that the titles given to Jesus Christ by African Christians correspond with their beliefs of how they understand him. It has been identified that Agbadza and Bɔbɔbɔ music are not warlike and immoral. Therefore, these cultural music have a future and need to be encouraged. The sustainability of these music entails the involvement and training of the youths to have interest in them because they are the future generation of the churches. When the Christian faith is manifested to affect human life and the

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<sup>485</sup> Anthony Asoanya, *The Ecological Crisis in Africa as a Challenge to Lasting Cultural and Sustainable Development: A Theological Approach* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang GmbH, 2011), p. 70.

<sup>486</sup> Ron Macaulay, "Cohabitation among Young Adults of the Global Evangelical Church in Ghana". MPhil Thesis (Legon: University of Ghana, Department for the Study of Religions, 2015), p. 120.

environment, then, it makes the adherents distinct people. The call goes to Christians who should do what is needful.

The next chapter presents the fulfillment of the objectives, which contributes to the given recommendations to end the study. This also includes the contribution to scholarship, conclusion, the questionnaire, pictures of the various local musical instruments, and the type of dance that are usually engaged to perform these cultural music.

## CHAPTER SEVEN

### Recommendations and Conclusion

#### 7.1. Introduction

Music plays a significant role in African Christianity. The overarching purpose of this study is to examine the factors that underlie the excitement of the members of the ARS and GEC when Agbadza and Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀ music are engaged in their churches. Nonetheless, while some people perceive Agbadza and Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀ music as warlike and immoral, others get excited and wish they were engaged in Christian worship at all times. The study looks at the theological and ethical thoughts on the lyrics of the songs. It also seeks to find out whether these local music have a future, and what guarantees the sustainability of these local music in the churches.

Transcribed face-to-face interviews conducted have been used in the work. The conclusion discusses the extent to which the objectives of the thesis have been met. Traces of primal spirituality are the bedrock of African Christian theological thought.

In the previous chapter, we analysed the responses of the ARS and GEC pastors, elders, and youth of the selected churches for this study. To arrive at relevant major findings, the elders and youths were made to answer questionnaires and share their views.

#### 7.2. Fulfillment of the Objectives

The objectives of this study are to analyse why ARS and GEC members get excited when Agbadza and Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀ music are engaged in these churches in Ghana. The direction of the thesis was guided by the relevant literature included in this study. The findings were consistent with the reason why the ARS and GEC worshippers get exceedingly excited about Agbadza and Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀ music in their churches. Issues of war and the immoral nature of Agbadza and Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀ music

were raised. Two non-Christian informants Dumega V and Mamaga II's opinions agreed that Agbadza used to be considered war music, but currently, there was no war among the Ewe therefore could no longer be perceived as such. Against the notion of excitement, some of the youths of the GEC Mercy Chapel raised their displeasure that almost none of the singers or congregants in the church received formal training in music education or music composition.

To unfold this main objective, I set five individual objectives to assist achieve my aim. These individual objectives are to examine the factors that underlie the excitement when the lyrics of Agbadza and Bobobo that are metamorphosed into Christian songs are sung in the ARS and GEC churches. To investigate the theology embedded in the lyrics of Agbadza and Bobobo cultural music among the Ewe. To achieve this, one Agbadza and one Bobobo lyrics among the non-Christians were examined to find out why they are perceived as war and immoral music. The factors that underlie the excitement and the theological thoughts of the lyrics of Agbadza and Bobobo music among the ARS and GEC were also analysed. To achieve this, eight lyrics of Agbadza and Bobobo songs were selected from the ARS and GEC, and examined theologically. The eco-ethical dimensions of some of the selected lyrics were also examined. In addition, the study investigated what guaranteed the future and sustainability of the practice of Agbadza and Bobobo music in these churches. Responses provided by informants in this work helped arrive at why Agbadza and Bobobo music are perceived as warlike and immoral. According to Blaikie, "Primary data are generated by a researcher responsible for the design of the study".<sup>487</sup> Hence, the primary sources employed for this study have fulfilled the research method designed to be used for the study.

The Africanness in African Christianity as the conceptual framework for this study has shaped the methodology of the thesis. It facilitates the process of achieving the objectives and

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<sup>487</sup> Norman Blaikie, *Designing Social Research* (New York: Polity Press, 2000), p. 183.

also fosters the coherence of the chapters which includes the set of ideas, value principles, and philosophies that define and shape the unique identity, culture, and worldview of Africans. This provides the lens through which African heritage, experiences, and perspectives are understood and articulated.

Africanness as a concept in this work acknowledges the rich diversity of music, dance, and spirituality, and the areas examined were the theological and ethical thoughts embedded in the selected lyrics of Agbadza and Bobobo music under discussion. The work embraces the idea of a collective heritage rooted in African values. The major question that has to do with the excitement of the church members when indigenous songs are sung in their churches has been answered. It is clear that due to the healing, comforting, inspiring, and communicative nature of Agbadza and Bobobo music, members get exceedingly excited. This shows that African Christians celebrate indigenous knowledge systems, and endeavour to preserve African identity. It also assists them to focus on reclaiming Africanness and redefining African identity. Hence, these cultural music attract unbelievers and serve as a means of evangelism.

The informants suggested that cultural music should be encouraged since God created them as Africans and saved them as Africans, they will always remain Africans. The research data shows a general opinion that the cultural music engaged in the ARS and GEC is good and that they should be used in the churches. This shows how Africanness is deeply rooted in a holistic worldview and spirituality where religious practices often emphasise their harmonious nature. How these music express vital information about God and life situations, make the lyrics much more understandable and eminently sensible to them. The lyrics connote acceptable moral and theological values because they are geared towards love, justice, caretaking, and communal life.

The perception model of the faith of those who frown upon the expression of Africanness created an unsatisfactory barrier between them and those with faith. Thus, in each situation, it is required that Christians know the decision to make about what is right and wrong. Hence, there is a need to introduce ideas that would encourage and motivate Agbadza and Bòbòbò music as the heritage of the Ewe in the ARS and GEC. This framework for Africanness challenges Africans to include themes of resilience in preserving cultural identity.

The theological and ethical analyses suggest ways of addressing the specific ramifications. Firstly, it has been found that musical instruments played during worship do not make themselves morally acceptable. Rather it is the drummers and dancers who do the actual performance. Morals refer to actual human conduct or behaviour viewed about what is right or wrong, and good or evil. When any person accepts Christ, perfection is not gained instantly; it takes time to be perfect. Therefore, to live morally right also takes time. Hence, data shows that to say local music, such as Agbadza and Bòbòbò, among others is warlike and immoral in a particular community or church, and therefore, have to be abolished in all churches looks very incongruous. This is because the assertions might be identified with a group of people, but that does not make it a general issue. This corresponds to the response of the ARS Joy Church pastor when he was interviewed to seek his opinion on the issue.

It is argued that the Ewe Christians perceive either Agbadza or Bòbòbò, which is locally based music as a connecting link between them and God, and one another. The explanations given so far have not indicated much divergent views; rather they are all on a mission of vital importance to African Christian faith within the ARS and GEC. By the nature of these cultural music, the informants indicated they needed to be encouraged in the churches. To draw the inference, we can simply assert that the perceptions of local music in the ARS and GEC are

congruent, considering the theological thoughts embedded in the lyrics, which are some of the important multi-facets of music.

To them, the challenge is the proliferation of contemporary music, which are foreign to the African church. However, it has been noticed that for successful evangelism to take place, which is the mandate of the church, cultures must be considered. In this regard, the ARS pastors register that members are educated to understand how important Agbadza or Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀ music has become in the church. They also educate them to behave decently, devoid of gestures of defiance, as Christians in their communities. If there are signs of gestures of defiance, then, what is needed to be done to correct the anomaly is to educate the dancers. Since education is the process of imparting and acquiring knowledge through teaching and learning, it will foster how to behave and dance to music decently. When this is done properly, it will go a long way to enhance the level of African Christian expression of worship in the churches.

The pastors of the ARS and GEC assured the sustainability of Agbadza and Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀ music in these churches. Among the 80 youths from the various church denominations contacted in this study, 76 of them showed interest in any of the cultural music. For the ARS and GEC pastors, sustainability is possible if pastors could find some means of training the youths. In addition, Yaotse, a GEC pastor suggested that through prayer and fasting, the churches could sing songs that are spiritually filled to minister healing and deliverance to the members to sustain the relevance of these cultural music. Data shows that 95% (121) agreed that Agbadza and Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀ music are sustainable. For them, these music were addressing their spiritual needs, such as healing, delivering, inspiring, and comforting members. However, they were not able to notice the impact these music could have had on their environmental issues. The song *anyigba le dzo le ge – the Earth will catch fire* raises a difficult eco-ethical question. Though they get excited

about the lyrics, they were handicapped by lack of comprehension of the lithospheric aspect of the song. It has been observed that human beings are not eco-friendly, the behaviour that has broken relationship between them and God's creation. The lyrics *Afetɔ Yesue, vaqem kaba – Lord Jesus, come and rescue me quickly* as the song expresses is about a devastating situation. This song calls for the impact music should have had on ecological issues. The study reveals that, the gap between the spiritual nature of Agbadza and Bobobo songs and their impact on eco-community is the lack of the application of eco-ethical rules that guarantee the sustainability of these music. Therefore, the church should not only be interested in the salvation of humans. If they are only interested in their spiritual benefits, other creatures would be disadvantaged, though humans depend on them after salvation. The study reveals that theology must take a holistic approach to missions. The main reasons the church is on earth are to worship God, save human beings, and take care of God's creation as stewards. The study reveals that it is good that pastors teach Christians how to pray, study the Bible, and attend church; nevertheless, that is just part of their responsibility. What remains for pastors to do is to take another step by teaching church members how to care for their environment.

The study suggests a need for education on creation care to be intensified in the churches. Although teachings are done in the churches, they are heavily based on their spiritual healing and deliverance nature. The church needs to understand that care for God's creation is an act of worship and obedience towards the Creator. This is because when God created human beings, he gave them the responsibility to care for his creation (Gen. 2:15). Therefore, Agbadza and Bobobo lyrics need to be directed towards God's creation to help guarantee their sustainability. The Gospel has to engage key environmental issues and take decisive actions to deal with them. If

this is properly done, then the performance of cultural music, such as Agbadza and Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀ will be extremely beneficial to the churches and their community as a whole.

Notwithstanding the stewardship roles of the church, observation also reveals that the church needs not to lose sight of the fact that the hymns, contemporary Gospel songs, and the Agbadza and Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀ music integrated into Christian worship may be more effective. It is pertinent to mention that a deeper search needs to be conducted into the relationship between Christians and their mission to the world, and whether they should distance themselves from creation care. Knowledge of these perspectives is essential for a more responsible answer to the call made to all Christians.

The overall objectives of the thesis have been met, and it also answered the questions posed. The study achieves the main aim of the thesis, which is to find out why the members of ARS and GEC get excited when Agbadza and Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀ music are engaged in church worship.

### **7.3. Recommendations**

I copiously demonstrated the reason why local music, such as Agbadza and Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀ play significant roles in the lives of African Christians, especially, among the people of Anlo-Ewe and Evedome. Hence, data shows that we cannot just relegate these music to a low position in the church and tag them as war and immoral music. It also shows that we will be unfair when we discredit both the music and the dancers together. Instead, the music has to be separated from the manner of dance styles, such as gestures. This is because the lyrics of Agbadza and Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀ songs are rewritten to correspond to Scripture, which are sung to propagate the Gospel message. Since data shows the gap between these cultural music and the impact they should have had on the eco-communities, which this study has filled. For this reason, the ARS and GEC need to do

something differently to sustain these cultural music in the churches. This equally goes to other Christian church denominations.

The ideas from the research in its entity provide a considerable amount of primary data and a basis for more work to be done among Ghanaian churches. This will assist in reinterpreting practical Christian theology and pastoral liturgy for creation care. For easy consideration, the recommendations have been categorised. This includes recommendations to the ARS and GEC, educational institutions, and environmental protection units to achieve good results.

### **7.3.1. Recommendation to ARS and GEC**

The undertone of the study is not only for holistic Christian education at church, it is also for practical Christian and pastoral involvement in the care of God's creation as stewards. Hence, for approach to real-life situations not to end in abstraction, I strongly recommend the following, which are:

- a. The ARS and GEC as church denominations are to develop leaders of integrity who can spearhead spiritual, moral and social transformational programmes – organising relevant, educative and transformative seminars and symposiums – in Ghana and beyond.
- b. The ARS and GEC pastors and other leaders of integrity are required to maximise the churches' far-reaching spiritual and moral potentials about what is right or wrong.
- c. The ARS and GEC pastors and elders need to be educated continually so that they understand the importance of cultural music in the churches. They should find a place for Agbadza and Bobobo music in their respective churches where these are the cultural music of the people. By so doing, worshippers can express their Africanness in worship, because it enables new members who belong to those groups feel at home in the church.

- d. After the ARS and GEC leaders have been educated, they need to do extensive teaching on the use of local music to facilitate the understanding and appreciation of African identity and embrace Africanness in the churches. It is about time churches look back to learn from the early church in Acts 2-5 how in their cultural way, were “praising God...and the Lord added to their number daily” (Acts 2:47).
- e. As the church is experiencing both spiritual and numerical growth, the ARS and GEC leadership should guard against the church becoming a place of entertainment. It should be a house of prayer and praise as musicians are careful about the proliferation of all kinds of contemporary songs that neither touch the heart of God, nor the soul of the worshippers. The relevance of these cultural music should be geared towards missions.
- f. As Agbadza and Bobobo music are encouraged, the spiritual and moral life of the members is crucial in spreading the Christian faith. The ARS and GEC must aim at raising Christ-like Christians who will live lifestyles of godliness with integrity in every area of their lives, especially, at home, church, workplace, and in the communities. Thus, the fact that music heals and delivers, teachings on morality, integrity, holiness, and righteousness among others need to be intensified in the churches.
- g. Although Agbadza and Bobobo music are to develop to express Africanness, war songs should not be encouraged because they are not compatible with Christ-like character, since character is the epitome of one’s spirituality. Also, the presupposition that Bobobo music is immoral when engaged in church is a matter of moral education. This is because except for the players and dancers, the music in itself is moral.
- h. Since education is the process of imparting and acquiring knowledge through teaching and learning, intensive education is needed to foster a sense of ethical rightness to correct

the anomalous Bòbòbò situation and promote decency in the churches. Again, intensive education is needed to foster a sense of moral behaviour, and how to dance to the Agbadza and Bòbòbò music in the churches. Pastors and other leaders need to supervise the dancers. When this is done properly, it will go a long way to enhance the expression of African Christian worship in the churches.

- i. The creation of corporate feeling and solidarity of churches by Agbadza and Bòbòbò music could also be geared towards creation care to help guarantee their sustainability. African Christian eco-care considers God's creation as good, valuable and purposeful, governed by eco-ethical principles, and loving God and one's neighbour are impulsive eco-care rules.
- j. The churches owe a duty to engage in evangelism and balanced teaching on discipleship that would incorporate both eternal life and eco-care awareness. This is because the more the church renounces sin and speaks against moral environmental degradation the more it helps slow society's deterioration. Christians are to know and task to declare Jesus as Lord of creation because the omission of this aspect of the Gospel makes it incomplete.
- k. The church needs to understand that it is its responsibility to play the custodian or stakeholder role of caring for God's creation. The individual Christians as citizens should be faithful stewards of God's creation, and stakeholders of the society. Spiritual songs should be able to address matters of the physical world which would contribute to the sustainability of these music.
- l. Practices that are inimical and syncretistic to the Good News must be avoided. And by extension, to achieve considerable pastoral care results, religious leaders need to unite to use their position to influence their followers positively. Their cultural religiosity should

be employed to address ecological issues. To address Ghana's ecological and corruption issues adequately, primal spirituality such as taboos, and the Christian relationship between God and his creation need to be engaged to address them.

- m. Stakeholders such as parents need to inculcate a sense of morality and responsibility in their children, such as the habits of respect for God's creation through good parenting plans. Invite role models to talk to the children. It is because when a child grows in an eco-community care area, he or she grows with what cannot be taken away from him or her. "Train up a child.....when he is old he will not depart from it" (Prov. 22:6).
- n. Churches in Ghana including the ARS and GEC should make their Agbadza and Bobobo music more beneficial by learning from Zimbabwean Marthinus Daneel's approach to eco-crisis. The lyrics of Agbadza and Bobobo songs need to be harnessed to transform the mode of evangelism that can have an impact on eco-crisis in the communities. What the ARS and GEC have to be doing differently is to develop evangelism messages from the Agbadza and Bobobo lyrics, which should be preached after a public performance. These messages should be directed towards the salvation of human life and eco-care.
- o. Another way of engaging Agbadza and Bobobo music with eco-care could be to play the music in a targeted community for about forty minutes, talk about Jesus and the environmental crisis for thirty minutes, immediately after which communal labour is done to address environmental issues in that community for fifty minutes. This could vary from time to time to save human lives, create environmental awareness, and demonstrate the relevance of the church.
- p. The ARS and GEC should endeavour to develop evangelism messages from the Agbadza and Bobobo songs that they sing. For example, the Agbadza lyrics such as "*Afeto Yesue,*

*vaqem kaba, anyigba le dzo le ge – Lord Jesus, come and rescue me quickly, the Earth will catch fire*”. This is a call on the Lord Jesus to save one from a problem, or a situation of danger or harm. Another lyric is the Bobobo song, “*Nuvɔ gbe si medze si la naga no menyɛ o – the sinful life I knew never should dwell in me*”, and preached at public gatherings and crusades grounds. The lyrics are reasonable to expect people to do what is needful, a self-reminder of how to avoid anything sinful.

- q. To rejuvenate the eco-care system, the ARS and GEC Agbadza song *anyigba le dzo le ge – The Earth will catch fire* need to be reinterpreted to let the youths of today know the value of caring for God’s creation. All of the songs analysed in this study and similar ones need to be encouraged in the churches because they are spirit-filled, theological and ethical. Leaders should list the specific changes that they anticipate making.
- r. The ARS and GEC need to embark on a house-to-house campaign to inform or create eco-care awareness. The ARS and GEC should assist the Chiefs of communities to beat the gong-gong to invite the public to create eco-care awareness.
- s. There is a need for a stronger and more educated team structure. The primary role of this team should be to educate educators or trainers and develop them into more of a visioning and educating body.
- t. The formation and education of the team should be a major effort for them to educate the laity to assume their proper role in the churches.
- u. Open-day awards should be organised to motivate participants. When the Christian faith is manifested to affect human life and the environment, it makes the church relevant, and adherents also distinct people.

### **7.3.2. Recommendation to Educational Institutions**

- a. Cultural music needs to be promoted in Ghanaian schools. Culture should have its place in school curriculums. If this is done well, it will inform the children to understand their culture, which can help them, make good moral decisions as future leaders of the church and of the nation Ghana.
- b. Ghanaians need more than just to understand language and communicate fluently, which does not develop into productivity. Formal education should be geared towards how to inculcate a sense of responsibility that would produce remarkable productive results. One of these should be how to safeguard their environment.
- c. Seminaries and other religious institutions are to mount courses that deal with the theology of holistic missions to create creation care awareness. Educational institutions should include education on structural sin prevention, which must begin with individual behaviour towards the ecosystem.
- d. Education in Ghana needs to be critically looked at to include environmental studies as an integral part of the school curriculum. The school curriculum should include slots for the development of certain skills such as eco-care from primary to tertiary level. This should be about the practicality of the subjects on environmental care.

### **7.3.3. Recommendation to Environmental Protection Units**

- a. To resolve environmental issues, stakeholders have to discuss ideas from the perspective of primal, Christian, and other faith traditions. This has to be about God's self-conservation law regards the earth's ability to recover from perturbations, and the moral implications of cosmic balance for creation care.

- b. Human lifestyle is the key as enforcement agencies enforce the constitution and laws to enable citizens to live in harmony with the eco-community. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) needs to educate leadership at all levels to demonstrate indefatigable extraordinary resilience that can change the tone of ecological issues in Ghana.
- c. EPA should provide seminars and consultations for specific leadership target groups in organisations, churches, and mission organisations, exploring informed research for particular challenges in the eco-community.
- d. It has been noticed that monetary incentives may not sustain eco-mission, therefore, should not be encouraged. This is because monetary incentives may not last, since unfavourable economic climate already exists.

#### **7.3.4. Reinterpretation of the Lessons in Cultural Music to Address Ecological Issues**

- a. Besides the excitement, healing and deliverance, encouragement, and communicative nature of Agbadza and Bobobo songs, the ARS and GEC should do something differently to lay bare the meanings of those lyrics, which could have an impact on their communities in which they live after salvation.
- b. The fact that the planet Earth encompasses the lithosphere, which includes the hydrosphere and biosphere, the Agbadza lyrics *the Earth will catch fire* entails the biosphere where humans and all other living creatures live needs to be attended to. This is because it would be very unfortunate that, due to creation care negligence, many unbelievers should die prematurely before the Gospel, which is the Good News gets to them. This equally goes to other church denominations.

### **7.3.5. The Need for Holistic Missions and Structural Sin Prevention**

The Gospel contains God's will for the government of the world, which is about people and his creation. The law, which is God's divine authority, has been enacted for the good of the world. It shows man the way of peace, and how to conduct himself morally. Interestingly, when souls are saved, they are not taken to heaven immediately; they still have to remain on Earth to live their godly lives in their eco-communities. On the contrary, the current disrespect for eco-care is a clear rejection of the Gospel, and consequently of God himself. This is because God still has an interest in what he created and said, "It was very good" (Gen. 1:31). Hence,

- a. The ARS, GEC, and other denominations' future-oriented pastors, leaders, and youths of integrity are to embrace new paradigms to help change missions and environmental crises. This should include discovering and developing a theology of holistic missions to save life and address eco-crisis.
- b. A holistic approach to mission involves addressing the spiritual, physical, emotional, ecological, and social needs of people as part of sharing the Gospel. This is to recognise that the Gospel is not only about personal salvation but also about restoring broken relationships and systems in every area of life.
- c. It is also to understand and respect local cultures, beliefs, and traditions while contextualising the message of the Gospel.
- d. A holistic mission effort might involve plating a church while also establishing a school, building wells for clean water, offering medical care, and creating economic opportunities for a community. The focus should be on addressing the whole person and the community's broader needs, rather than isolating spiritual matters from daily life.

This approach mirrors the ministry of Jesus who not only preached about the Kingdom of God but also healed the sick, fed the hungry and advocated for the marginalised.

- e. Structural sin prevention could begin with the individual behaviour towards the ecosystem. The churches could aim at raising mature Christ-like Christians who will live lifestyles of godliness with integrity in every area of human life, especially, at home, church, workplace, community, and nation. This could gradually be cultivated, and eventually into a decent culture.
- f. Educating communities about the existence and impact of structural sin. Advocating for reforms that promote justice and equity, for instance, fair labour laws, and anti-discrimination policies, among others.
- g. Encouraging marginalising groups to participate in decision-making processes. Supporting grassroots movements that challenge unjust structures.
- h. Encouraging businesses, governments, and organisations to adopt ethical and sustainable practices. Create more just, equitable, and compassionate systems that reflect the dignity and worth of all persons.
- i. Holding institutions accountable for actions that harm individuals or communities.
- j. Encouraging communities of faith to act prophetically by speaking against injustice and embodying Christ's message of liberation.
- k. Building alliances across various sectors, such as religious, civic, and government to tackle systemic problems collaboratively.
- l. Resistance from those benefiting from unjust systems or structures. The need for sustains effort and vigilance over time.

- m. The response to structural sin calls the attention of pastors to redefine sin as indicated in 1 John 3:4 which says, “Everyone who sins breaks the law, in fact, sin is lawlessness”. Lawlessness is the refusal to obey the law and an action that is considered an offence against God. Judith Boss asserts that, “no other justification is necessary for an action to be right among Christians, other than God commanding it”.<sup>488</sup>
- n. Since Jesus Christ is who Christians believed in, the Scripture attests to his first Gospel and says, “From that time on Jesus began to preach, ‘Repent, for the Kingdom of heaven is near’ (Matt. 4:17). Kingdom is where a king rules and his laws are obeyed. It is also about the people and their environment – the lithosphere – *xexeme alo agbenɔfe* in Ewe.
- o. Pastors are to preach the full Gospel of Jesus Christ and help Christians obey God’s laws, which are the transcripts of his divine nature and purity.
- p. It is not enough for pastors to teach Christians how to pray, study the Bible, and attend church without teaching them how to care for their environment, otherwise, they are advocating for “Christian laziness”.
- q. The Bible’s message, which is a good message, should be informative, educative, and helpful so that when it is applied would yield good results. It should be able to create awareness and to teach hearers what they must do to live godly lives.

### **7.3.6. The Role of Education in Fostering Generational Thinkers**

Generational thinkers are individuals whose ideas, philosophies, or actions significantly influence their generation or leave a lasting impact on future generations. These thinkers often address critical issues of their time, challenge existing paradigms, and inspire transformation in

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<sup>488</sup> Judith A. Boss, *Perspectives on Ethics* (London: Mayfield Publishing Company, 1998), p. 105.

various fields. They present groundbreaking concepts or perspectives that redefine norms and inspire others to think differently. Their contributions remain significant over time. Hence,

- a. Critical thinking and innovation are keys. The education of the youths should nurture their ability to analyse issues deeply, challenge the status quo, and propose groundbreaking ideas that can influence multiple generations.
- b. The youths need to question established beliefs, structures, or practices and advocate for shaping their era.
- c. The youths need to be educated to foster awareness of cultural heritage while empowering them to adapt and evolve traditions to meet contemporary needs.
- d. They need to be taught how to play Agbadza and Bobobo music effectively to worship God devoid of those that are full of suggestive lyrics.
- e. The youths need to be indoctrinated to become generational thinkers who will think about what will happen to the next generation when they are no more. Sustainability is thinking about what will take the next group of people to know the importance of what is happening currently.
- f. The next generation of the youths needs to be taught to understand the reason why they have to continue what the current generation has been doing, and how it has to be done.
- g. The youths have to be taught to become generational thinkers who always think about the future of the church.
- h. Instilling in them moral and ethical principles to ensure that decisions and innovations are guided by fairness, responsibility, and a sense of global stewardship.

- i. A generational thinker might focus on addressing climate change by developing sustainable energy solutions, teaching future leaders about their importance, and advocating policies that protect natural resources for future generations.
- j. Their potentials need to be unearthed, harnessed, and enhanced to give them the desire for knowledge about church music, culture, and eco-care.
- k. The youths as generational thinkers are to be trained to think beyond immediate gains, focusing on the legacy they will leave behind for future societies in areas like environmental sustainability, social justice, and technological advancement.
- l. These youths have to be mentored as the educators or trainers guide them along the way. The education must be that, Ghanaian children and youths should know God's purpose for creation and relate well with the eco-community.
- m. The youths should be encouraged to organise periodic route matches to create creation care awareness.

### **7.3.7. Collaborative Efforts to Employ Cultural Music for Eco-Care**

Collaborative efforts to employ cultural music for eco-care involve using traditional and contemporary music to create awareness, educate communities, and inspire action towards environmental conservation. These efforts leverage the deep connection between cultural music and community identity to foster a sense of responsibility for the environment.

- a. This can be achieved by weaving environmental themes into cultural music to inspire long-lasting eco-friendly practices rooted in cultural identity.

- b. Engage local musicians and cultural groups to compose and perform songs that highlight the importance of eco-care, drawing on traditional themes, rhythms, and instruments to resonate with the community.
- c. To organise events where musicians collaborate with environmentalists to educate attendees on deforestation, pollution, and climate change, blending environmental messages with cultural music performances.
- d. To use cultural music to tell stories about the natural world, myths, or ancestral practices that emphasise environmental stewardship.
- e. To achieve these goals, resource personnel, such as religious leaders – both Christians and non-Christians – theologians, ethicists, sociologists, environmentalists, educationists, pastors, elders, choirmasters, composers of songs, politicians, and NGOs, among others are to come together to brainstorm ways to employ cultural music as a tool to curtail environmental issues in Ghana and beyond.
- f. These will help facilitate the sustainability of Agbadza and Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀ music in both ARS and GEC. And by extension, it will help facilitate environmental care and protection which will benefit both the church and society, as the church demonstrates its relevance in society.
- g. This general education as expressed in the recommendations has to include both religious and political leaders, such as Christians, Muslims, traditional chiefs/leaders, parliamentarians, the media, family heads, educational institutions, and non-governmental organisations. This should be both individual and corporate-conscious decision-making activity.

#### **7.4. Contribution to Scholarship**

The relevant teachings this study contributes to scholarship is that, while numerous pieces of literature deal with primal views from African religious and Christian perspectives, they are not about the theological and eco-ethical thoughts on songs and their lyrics, which are sung in any African church denominations. Therefore, to fill the gap, this work is done within two African church denominations from African Christian theological and eco-ethical perspectives. This is because it has specifically been done among the people of Anlo-Ewe and Eweome within particular church denominations in Ghana, which are the ARS and GEC. Per the various responses of the informants, it is explicit that many of the lyrics of Agbadza and Bobobo music in the ARS and GEC caused great excitement. The findings are of great benefit to Christians in all Ghanaian churches since the study provides the basis for awareness and a better understanding of cultural music and its lyrics. It unearths the salvation and eco-ethical knowledge embedded in the selected lyrics of these cultural music and provides detailed knowledge of the African Christian faith and contributes to existing scholarship.

#### **CONCLUSION**

In conclusion, the theological and ethical methodology employed, which had been blended with phenomenological principles was conducive to the discussions and findings. The fifteen selected literature reviewed were relevant to the study. It has been discussed that music as a cultural identity of the Ewe has a strong African primal religious undertone, and therefore, plays a significant role among them. Though the thesis is not an academic study of music as a field, it has been assiduous in analysing the theological and eco-ethical dimensions of the lyrics of the selected songs in this study.

It has been observed that music is a communication link between Africans and God. Therefore, they sometimes communicate their religious beliefs through songs that go with cultural music. This means that African's comprehension of primal beliefs resonates with their spirituality, as far as their knowledge of the Supreme Being is concerned. For this reason, there has been a strong belief among the Christian informants that Jesus Christ has the power to bring physical, emotional, and spiritual healing, as well as deliverance from sin, bondage, and evil forces. The concept of Africanness in the study indicates that there are varieties of African primal concepts of music of the Ewe. Some types of music and the lyrics are kept within the limits of a particular culture, and that African music has experienced decisive reforms throughout the centuries. Typical among them are Agbadza and Bobobo music which are heritage of traditional beliefs, values, and customs of the Ewe society.

The bewilderment of excitement, the war and immoral nature of these cultural music, and the impact they have had on the eco-community were the centre of the study. These common factors in the several varieties of concern of the subject at issue have been examined. The belief in African Christianity among the Christian participants in this study is highly expressed in their responses. Having analysed the data collected, answers to the issues of the war and the immoral nature of these cultural music, the factors and effects, their future, and sustainability were arrived at. All the informants freely contributed as they expressed their opinions on them. Their constructive opinions and respective expressions foster healthy debates, learning, and collaboration as they shared their thoughts, beliefs, and perspectives on the subject matters. There is a clear indication that encouraging cultural music in African Christianity can help preserve heritage, foster a sense of identity, and make worship more meaningful for congregants. It highlights their biblical significance, as instruments like drums and harps were commonly used

in biblical worship. For that matter, they demonstrate their spirituality as they sing religiously to praise God. This calls for how to educate congregants on how music, dance, and culture can glorify God, drawing examples from Psalms and other parts of the Bible. Hence, composers need to compose songs that incorporate local languages and cultural expressions to ensure the authenticity of the music. For this reason, there is the need to encourage theological discussions to help dispel misconceptions about traditional music being “unholy”.

The study indicates how Africans are very vigorous and dedicated to their perception of spirituality to showcase their traditional styles. In principle, the African understands that the explanation of the Gospel helps the sinner to repent of his sin, and accept forgiveness, which music equally does. While it would be argued that the Bible has no clear information on Agbadza and Bobobo music, however, it has abundant information on songs. The study notes that despite the prevalence of contemporary Gospel music, both Christians and non-Christians appreciate Agbadza and Bobobo cultural music. The study also reveals that as these cultural music are engaged, what is readily distinguishable is their expressions of Africanness in the ARS and GEC congregations. It considers the Christian mission engagement with Agbadza and Bobobo music which is performed during services, church events, and community outreach programmes. In this regard, it argues that theology without mission is empty, and the tool for mission calls for indigenous or cultural tools of which Agbadza and Bobobo are part. However, they were not certain if these cultural music have had any positive effect on their environment. Thus, they could not testify to the impact these music had on their eco-communities.

The study unravels the eco-ethical thoughts embedded in the selected lyrics of these cultural music as attention is drawn to the impact of the lyrics on the environment where both Christians and non-Christians live. It is expected that the songs that are sung to praise God in the

ARS and GEC address environmental issues too. This is because the study is an engagement between the lyrics of Agbadza and Bobobo songs, and the theological and eco-ethical thoughts on them. The reason is that, to a large degree, it has been observed that the church is interested in music and the salvation of human life to the detriment of protecting God's creation, upon which humans depend after salvation. A quest for absolute solution reveals that theology and ethics relate to the practicality of their relevance rather than merely their belief systems. The practical effect is the consequence of the truth of the belief. This means that the meaning of an idea lies solely in its practical results. The study reveals that though the selected cultural music in this work promoted healing, deliverance, and encouragement, one would argue that their excitement was not complete if they did not have any impact on environmental issues in the communities in which they live their Christian lives. The Christian faith is the fruit, the result, and the manifestation of God, because "faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead" (James 2:17). Taking cognisance of the fact that God is the author of both Scripture and creation, I am convinced that the Bible, if properly interpreted, cannot conflict with the facts of nature. Hence, the Agbadza and Bobobo lyrics considered in the thesis were also looked at with eco-ethical eyes to interpret them. For a fact, it has been inferred that the sustainability of the music could be weakened if these cultural music would not address eco-community issues. To reap the full benefit of Agbadza and Bobobo music, these cultural music should be able to address ecological issues confronting their communities to make their excitement complete. Given this, one would conclude that Christians and their mission to the world request that they should not distance themselves from eco-care. Knowledge of these perspectives is essential for a more responsible answer to the call made to all Christians. For one to show complete ignorance of the most basic theological and ethical facts of lyrics of songs that are sung can be a very dangerous position.

The study identifies a gap between the spiritual nature of Agbadza and Bòbòbò songs, and their impact on eco-community as the lack of the application of eco-ethical rules that guarantee the sustainability of these music. This is clearly identical with the current immoral practices and ungodly living towards God and his creation by both Christians and non-Christians. This results in a broken relationship with a moral God and his creation, and therefore, creates ecological depression, which consists largely of climate change, poverty, famine, flooding, and diseases. It is pertinent to mention that cultural music can be a powerful tool to address ecological issues by raising awareness, inspiring action, and fostering a sense of responsibility towards the environment. It has been revealed that cultural music often carries messages about the relationship between humans and nature. Some of the means are storytelling and advocacy, community engagement, cultural preservation and sustainable practices. This is because traditional songs may recount ecological wisdom, such as sustainable practices, respect for natural resources, and the interconnectedness of life. Modern interpretations of cultural music can include lyrics addressing current ecological challenges, such as climate change, and pollution.

Since music, such as Agbadza or Bòbòbò, serves as a unifying force, it should bring communities together to discuss and act on ecological issues. I, therefore, posit that cultural music that is deeply rooted in local traditions should mobilise people in ways that resonate with their identity and values. Similarly, festivals and events featuring cultural music should serve as platforms for environmental education and activism. Lamentations or protest songs about environmental degradation, such as *Lord Jesus, rescue me quickly, the Earth will catch fire* in this study should inspire grief, empathy, and action. Also in this study, cultural music highlights traditional ecological knowledge, including sustainable and conservation methods. Reviving

these traditions through music can encourage communities to adopt eco-friendly practices. Thus, humanity needs to reconcile with God as personal sin and structural sins are dealt with. The ARS and GEC are African churches who cannot stay aloof from ecological issues. This is because some African cultural songs promote tree-planting rituals, blending ecological restoration with spiritual practice. Though some may arguably disagree that musicians like Fela Kuti of Abeokuta, Nigeria, and Bob Marley of Jamaica were true Christians; nevertheless, they drew from cultural roots to highlight socio-ecological issues, corruption sparking global conversations.

Finally, though the thesis addresses pertinent issues, it is not without limitations for the fact that limitations are a normal part of scholarly work. This is because the thesis only addressed specific research questions, which limits the broader applicability of its findings. The fact that this work is very specific about a particular cultural practice, access to data has become a challenge because of scanty literature available on the area of study. Thus, the study reveals that though there has been widespread of scholastic literature on primal worldviews, African Christianity, and music, scanty literature is on the lyrics of Agbadza and Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀. Nonetheless, this study filled the theological and eco-ethical gap between the lyrics of the selected songs among the Ewe of Ghana and their impacts on the eco-communities.

On the other side of the spectrum is the methodological constraints and generalisability of the findings. Thus, the reliance on specific methodological framework excluded alternative perspectives or interpretations of which case, subjective interpretations that might introduce bias were avoided. This means that the methodology of the study is structured to address a specific research question, which may limit the broader applicability of its findings. It also lacks generalisability, because the findings from the study may only apply to a specific population, thus, the Anlo-Ewe and Evedome, and may not be transferable to other settings. In the case of

evolving knowledge after the study, which may render some aspects of the research outdated, I seek to propose that this study should set the stage for future work among other African societies to address unresolved theological and eco-ethical questions or challenges among them.

## APPENDICES

### Appendix A: Research Questionnaires

#### **Selinus University of Sciences and Literature, Rome, Italy**

My name is Ron Macaulay. I am a final year Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) degree candidate of Selinus University of Sciences and Literature, Rome, Italy. My speciality is Theology and Ethics. I am conducting a scientific research on **“Primal Spirituality of Indigenous Songs in African Christianity: A Theological and Eco-Ethical Analysis of Some Selected Lyrics of Agbadza and Bobobo Cultural Music in the Apostles Revelation Society (ARS) and Global Evangelical Church (GEC) in Ghana”**.

This questionnaire is designed to collect data that will help analyse the theological or philosophical and ethical thoughts embedded in Agbadza and Bobobo Music in the above churches. You are, therefore, invited to kindly participate in the survey. Your responses will be treated confidential, and data for this research will remain confidential.

If you have any question at anytime about the survey or the procedure, you may contact the researcher on 0559563116.

Thanks.

#### QUESTIONNAIRE FOR PASTORS/ELDERS/YOUTHS

Date: .....

Where alternative answers have been provided, tick/underline the right answers only.

For other questions, write your own answer in the space provided.

#### ▪ PERSONAL INFORMATION

1. May you indicate your sex, please: Male  Female

2. May you tick your age range: 18-25  26-35  36-45  46-60
3. Tick your Educational level: Primary  JHS  SHS  Tertiary
4. Have you completed? Yes  No  Not yet
5. What is your current occupation .....

▪ **CHURCH AFFILIATION**

6. Which of the following churches do you belong?  
**Apostles Revelation Society (ARS)**  **Global Evangelical Church (GEC)**
7. How long (years) have you been a member of this church? .....
8. May you indicate the role that you play in your church?.....
9. How often do you hear the message about Jesus Christ preached in your church?  
 Very often  Not often  Not at all
10. Do you believe in Jesus Christ?  
 Yes  No
11. If you have had an encounter with Jesus Christ, which of the following titles would you ascribe to him?  
 Redeemer  Healer  Saviour  All of these  N/A
12. Do you actually regard him as such?  
 Yes  No

▪ **QUESTIONS ON AGBADZA AND BOBOBO MUSIC**

13. Which of the following music is being played, or you want in the church you belong?  
**AGBADZA**  **BOBOBO**  OTHER  N/A
14. Do you get excited about this music of your choice when it is being played in the church?  
 Yes  No
15. Can you state why?.....
16. Music is an important mode of communication in Africa. Does the music of your choice reveal culture in your church?  
 Yes  No

17. Do you agree that this music should be played always in your church?  
 Yes  No
18. Can you state why?.....
19. Is this music beneficial for you when it is used in the church? Yes  
 No
20. How does it benefit you?.....  
 .....
21. Do you understand the words (lyrics) of the song? Yes  No
22. What is the difference between the songs that are sung at social gathering and those at church? They are the same  They are not the same
23. The lyric (words) of the songs are not biblical. Agree  Disagree
24. When the music is being played in the church, it shows that you are an African.  
 Agree  Disagree
25. What types of musical instruments are used? .....
26. Is it true that some think the music you like is immoral, therefore, should not be played in the church? Yes  No
27. Can you explain why they say so?.....  
 .....
28. Do you think this music have a future in the church?  
 Yes, it does  No, it does not
29. Explain.....
30. This music poses challenges to the church you belong because it is affecting the spiritual growth of the church. Agree  Disagree
31. Can you mention the reason why?.....
32. Do you agree that the church should cease or stop playing this music in the church?  
 Agree  Disagree
33. What measures should the church put in place to encourage the use of cultural music in the church?.....  
 .....  
 .....

34. What ecological impact does these cultural music have on the eco-community that guarantees the sustainability of the practice?.....

35. What other music do you like in the church and why?.....

.....

## Appendix B Agbadza and Bɔ̀bɔ̀bɔ̀ musical Instruments and Dance



1. *Gankogui* – a two conical metal or double bell joined to a tiny rod of metal that provides the foundational timeline.
2. *Axatse* – a gourd rattle that adds texture and rhythm.
3. *Uuvi/Kadaŋu* – small supporting drum with interlocking rhythm.
4. *Sogo/Kidi/Uuga* – the medium size supporting drum with interlocking rhythm.
5. *AsiUui* – supporting drum.
6. *Kpetsi* – similar to *Sogo*.
7. *AtimeUu* – the lead master long higher in intensity drum that guides the rhythm.

Women dancing to Agbadza music



A woman and man dancing together to Agbadza music at funeral.



They move their arms and body in a way that matches the style and speed of the music. However, men are not allowed to dance bare chest in the churches. This is done at funerals among non-Christians.

## Appendix C

Agbadza music at church. The master drummer and supporting drummer performing during worship service.



Agbadza music at church. Women get excited dancing to the music.



Agbadza music at church funeral. The master drummer, medium size drummers, and dancers.

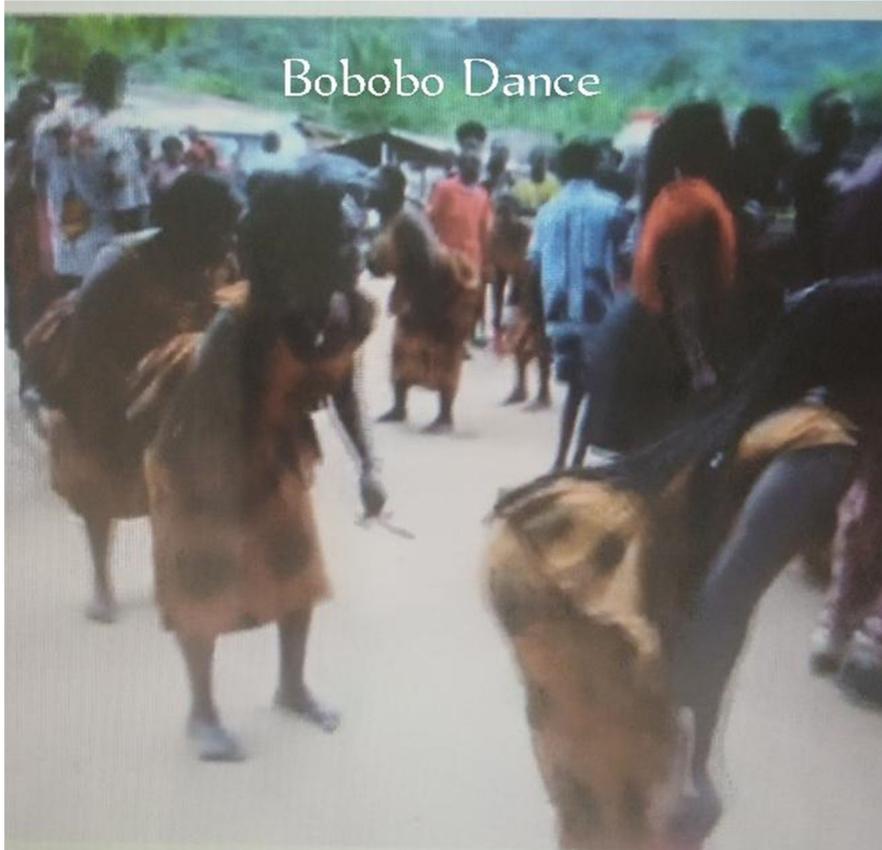


Agbadza music at church assisted with contemporary musical instruments.

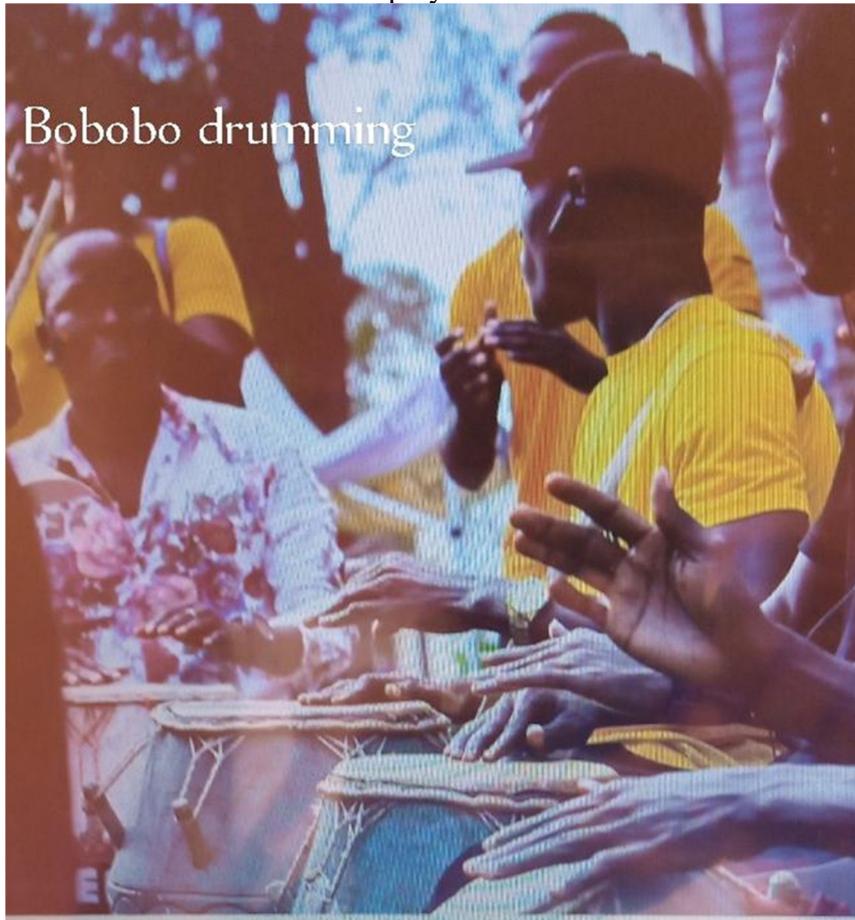


**Appendix D**

Bobobo music as women dance to it in circle.



Bobobo music. Drummers employ the various musical instruments, especially, the drums.



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### **Face-to-face Interview Informants**

- Agbenyegah, Isaiah, Interview, 23 January 2024. Agbozume, Volta Region.
- Atsagli, Mawuli, Interview, 29 September, 2022, Adaklu Wumenu, Volta Region, Ghana.
- Awumee, Emmanuel Y., Interview, GEC Aflao Parish, Aflao. 20 December 2022.
- Dumega V, Male non-Christian, Interview, 7 February 2024. Volta Region.
- Idris, Ibrahim, Interview, 5 February 2024, Accra, Greater Accra Region.
- Mamaga II, Female non-Christian. Interview, 9 February 2024. Volta Region.
- Mileba, Ebenezer Wornyo, Interview, 9 January 2024, Ashaiman, Greater Accra Region.
- Pastor Kwashie, ARS Love Church, Interview, 16 January 2024, Accra, Greater Accra.
- Pastor Kudzo, ARS Joy Church, Interview, 12 January 2024, Agbozume, Volta Region.
- Pastor Yaotse, GEC Global Chapel, Interview, 22 January 2044, Ashaiman, Greater Accra.
- Pastor Yesunyo, GEC Mercy Chapel, Interview, 25 January 2024, Ho, Volta Region.
- Seade, Anita, Interview, 16 January 2024, Anyako, Volta Region.
- Xatse, Worlanyo, Interview, 6 October 2022, Ho, Volta Region.