

ISRL 2020 WHITE PAPER

Muslims Interrelationships with Christians & Traditionalists in Ho, VR, Ghana

THE PROJECT UNFOLDS

This Center for Global Studies ISRL-supported white paper originates in a series of experiences while traveling to Ghana and building relationships with Ghanaians in Ho, the capital of the Volta Region of Ghana, West Africa. For 15 years, Ms. Linda Houston and I led month-long residencies, Ohio State ATI's Ghana Research and Education Abroad (GREA). During each, students spent an afternoon discussing Islam in Ghana with the imam of the Central Mosque. We also scheduled afternoon programs with two Muslim women, Christian women leaders, and traditional religionists. The warmth and openness of all the participants led to many eye-opening interactions and exchanges.

During each residency, we also spent an evening with traditional storytellers, who shared riddles and moral tales. In 2015, our Ghanaian program coordinator, Dickson Asase, scheduled a storyteller, Awudu Kwami Osumanu, whose mother grew up as a Christian and whose father was a Muslim. Osumanu, who works as the chief butcher of Ho, was a great storyteller. However, what really engaged us were his memories of his youthful experiences trying to live “with a foot in each world”—Muslim and Christian. Osumanu opined, “A child raised in two houses will not grow.” When Awudu’s mother died, he moved to his father’s house and chose Islam. (15 May 2017)

The GREA program also had a habit of planning and executing a student-faculty research project each year. In 2016, Dr. Nathan Crook, a cultural anthropologist, joined GREA. Dr. Crook and I worked with students to launch a multi-year project focused on storytelling among the Ewe people, the largest ethnic group in Ho. Here are a few of the products that resulted from this project:

VIDEOS

- “Lions, Spiders, and Geese! Oh My!: Valued, Yet Imperiled Moments in Ewe Storytelling” <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3o5qgS88Bmk>
- “Reading Community Social Agendas in Ewe Storytelling Songs” https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iI4BF85C_mE&feature=youtu.be

PEER-REVIEWED PAPERS

- Elder, D.R., Crook, N.C., Crook, J., Walls, K. 2019. Celebrating African Arts: How Traditional Leader Stories, Narratives and Proverbs Inform Contemporary Ghanaian Life. *International Journal of Social, Political, and Community Agendas in the Arts* 14(3): 1-17.
- ISRL-sponsored, Gbagbo, D.K., Elder, D. R. 2019. “Storytelling Songs of The Èwè-Dòmè of Ghana,” *African Music* 11(1): 91-112. <https://doi.org/10.21504/amj.v11i1.2294>

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- ISRL-sponsored 2018, “Ewe (Ghana) Storytelling Songs and Internationalizing the Curriculum” <https://www.ideals.illinois.edu/handle/2142/97952>

In 2017, our student and faculty interviewers recorded 50-plus oral histories of survivors of the famine of 1983. What we learned from a currency changer, a spice seller, and others in the Ho Muslim community were perspectives we might very well have missed had we only interviewed Christians and ATRs. (See “Life was *sɛsɛ*: Narratives of Ghana's 1983 Famine and How Ghanaians Survived,” In review.)

In 2018, we interviewed leaders and their constituents about the value of traditions to their common lives today. (See “Celebrating African Arts” above.)

What we learned in these experiences led us to develop a research project for 2019 to interview 20 Muslim women and men about their lives in the Ho Zongo and their relationships with non-Muslims.

In 2020, we expected to expand this work with further interviews with Muslims and non-Muslims, but the COVID-19 pandemic intervened. Instead, my work with the ISRL has given me the opportunity to engage in a substantive literature search on Islam and Muslims in West Africa, particularly the Volta Region of Ghana, and Muslim-Christian-Traditionalist relations in order to better prepare for interviews in June 2021. The researchers will include GREA members, Ghanaian schoolteachers, and US schoolteachers traveling on our first NGO Ghana Beyond Subsistence’s Teacher Residency. (See www.ghanabeyondsubsistence.org)

GOALS OF THIS ISRL PROJECT:

1. Expand *Ghana Beyond Subsistence* teacher partnerships, esp. with Islamic School teachers; Currently two US teachers have partnered with three Ghanaian teachers to communicate about educational experiences
2. Create a White Paper on Muslim, Christian, ATR Relations in Ho
3. Craft an article for peer-review and publication
4. Infuse new knowledge into my Spring 2021 Comparative Religions
5. Refine list of questions for next interviews in Ghana

The following essay describes what I have learned to date.

MUSLIMS-CHRISTIANS-TRADITIONALISTS IN HO, VR

The first contact between Muslims and the people in the area that is now Ghana occurred as early as the 8th century. Owoahene-Acheampong and Prempeh (2020) describe contact and trade in kola nuts and gold from the North across the Sahara to West Africa. By the 14th century, traders traveled with clerics to interact with the hundreds of linguistic and cultural groups in the area (Acquah 2011).

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Roman Catholic Church Cardinal Peter Turkson (2007), himself a Ghanaian, writes that in the 19th century Muslim traders of the Hausa and Borno ethnic groups migrated to northeastern Ghana drawn by the lucrative slave trade. Turkson further notes that Muslims experienced and exhibited tolerance with and for the local inhabitants but in some cases isolated themselves in “reformist separation” groups in *zongo*, or traveler areas. By the 19th century, these *zongos* were political communities (Owusu-Ansah and Iddrisu 2008).

Europeans arrived from the South around 1472 and built the first castle, Elmina, on the Gold Coast in 1482 (Acquah 2011). They expressed an interest in “halting the spread of Islam” (Dovlu and Asante 2003, p. 214). Christian rivalries for converts began in the 1630’s. Roman Catholic missionaries expressed an aversion for “Calvin poison.” Both the Muslims and the Christians were more interested in proselytizing the traditionalist “pagans” than each other’s converts (Dovlo and Asante 2003). Traditionalists, including the *Asantehene* in Kumasi, sought out Muslim *mallams* for their mystical powers even while maintaining their own religion. They prized the *mallams*’ divinations, amulets, and rituals like the drinking of Qur’anic verses for protection in battle (Owusu-Ansah and Iddrisu 2008, Abdul-Hamid 2011).

In a similar way, beginning in 1854 Basel Mission Society missionaries urged Christian converts to move to segregated communities, or *salems* (White 2015). It seems that the missionaries wanted to shelter, support, and surveil the new Christians to promote their spiritual growth and to keep them within the faith (Frempong 1972).

COMMONALTY for Muslim/Xn/ATR:

1. Religion as backbone of Ghanaian daily life
2. Contention ATR buffers, mediating factor for peacemaking
3. “Dialogue of life,” domestic ecumenism, mixed families
4. Stewardship of earth mandate
5. Political willingness, e.g. Christian President, Muslim VP, & respect for House of Chiefs, Ghana Education Service school materials affirm Ghana’s TRIPLE HERITAGE

Religion as the Backbone of Ghanaian Life

Ghana’s 1992 constitution protects religious freedom. It prohibits “religious discrimination, stipulates that individuals are free to profess and practice their religion, and does not designate a state religion” (US Department of State 2019). These protections are crucial because to be Ghanaian is to be religious and shapes the worldview of nearly every Ghanaian (Acquah 2011). Fortunately, Ghana’s strong democracy contributes to its “good reputation” as an “oasis of peace” (Sulemain 2017), allowing for the realization of religious rights.

According to Parra et. al. (2016), religion serves as a marker of identity for 91% of Ghanaians. Indeed, even in the cities, 70% of those surveyed responded that religion was

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their key identity. Muslims and Christians alike believe that churches and mosques “have answers to family, moral, and social problems.” With the strength of their faith identities, it is difficult for many Ghanaians truly to accept religious difference. Parra et. al. found that 91% of Christians believe a person must be a Christian to be moral (p. 65).

African Traditional Religions as Buffer

Acquah (2011) asserts that the peace, cooperation, and “very good relations” between Muslims and Christians stems from and relies on the buffering nature of the local African traditional religions (ATR), which have “fostered peaceful existence” (p. 8). He urges Ghanaians to “rescue the memory” of indigenous peoples to preserve the climate where religious pluralism can thrive (p. 9).

Ghana’s Traditionalist Yam Festival, the annual September in-gathering and thanksgiving time, provides for a renewal of friendships in the Asogli State of Greater Ho. All are invited to the *durba* where they partake of feasting and dancing. Christians and Traditionalist contribute yams to distribute to Muslim families. Muslims slaughter animals and share with their Christian friends. Interviewee 1 remembers, “My father was an imam, and the Roman Catholic priest invited him to give messages at their churches and festivals. Unlike the older days, we create good relationships, and many intermarry” (26 May 2019).

Local oral histories repeated in every storytelling performance recount that the first Muslims led by a man named Issifu, a legendary character, came to the Ho area well before 1900. Issifu and his fellows were fierce warriors who agreed to help the Ewe fight against frequent attacks by their neighbors, the Ashantis. From the outset, locals interacted well with the immigrants. Issifu’s progeny still live and flourish in Ho.

According to Muslims that we interviewed, over the years Muslim immigrants have come to Ho from Burkina Faso, Niger, Nigeria, and Togo. Interviewee 2 explained that his maternal grandfather was a non-Muslim in Ho who supplied the land for Muslims to settle. Omaru’s father, a Muslim, fought in World War II for the British in Germany while serving in the Gold Coast military (20 May 2019). Muslims from various ethnic groups mix and blend in the *zongo*. According to Interviewee 3, “We are united. We do everything together” (20 May 2019).

Despite our asking openly and repeatedly, only a few reluctantly offered—and minimized—any stories of conflict. Interviewee 4 spoke of her ancestor stopping in Sogakorpe. The *torgbe* (king/chief/grandfather) gave him land, and he became the first Muslim to settle in what is now the south Zongo. As required by the rules of Islamic hospitality, her grandfather allowed family and friends who passed through to stay with him free of charge for three days and more. At a point, the descendants of the original gift giver complained of the many people coming and going. They played war drums and threatened violence. Her grandfather hurried to the chiefs, who spoke to the rabble-rousers, reemphasized that this man and his friends were always welcome, and ended the

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conflict. Interviewee 4 said they rejoiced and sang, “Lale,” “Everyone prays for a good thing but can’t get it. Good marriage, money, health. Everyone prays for a good thing” (26 May 2019).

“Dialogue of Life”

Over the years, all of our informants have attested to the fact that Ghanaians “feast together, work together, and forget about faith” (Ibrahim Latif, 20 May 2019). Abdul-Hamid (2011) touts the “ingenious” nature of Ghanaians’ daily dialogue in neighborly interactions, such as attending and engaging in gift giving at naming ceremonies, funerals, weddings, and community festivals (Owoahene-Achempong and Prempeh 2020). Even the *azan*, the call to prayer sounding from the mosque, wakes Christians and ATRs too, alerting them to remember God (Abdul-Hamid 2011, p. 26). The acts of neighborliness extend into politics, education, church-mosque rituals, and good governance.

Even at an official level, leaders support cooperation. In an open letter, “A Common World,” Muslim and Christian leaders called on Christians and Muslims to “love God and your neighbors,” noting that it is a command in both the Qur’an and the Bible because “the future of the world depends on it” (Wanduism 2015, p. 225). There are many other overlaps highlighted by leaders. However, Owoahene-Acheampong and Prempeh (2020) note some leaders have exaggerated doctrinal differences for political gain.

Muslim men and women are integrated into the socio-economic and political fabric of Ho and work in construction, nursing, education, accounting, and other professions. Members of the Muslim community manage and staff the municipal *abbatoir*, and other Muslim butchers staff an open-air *abbatoir* in the new *zongo*, centrally located near the Muslim school. “Muslims have to slaughter the meat or no Muslim would eat. It would be *haram*,” Interviewee 1 explains (26 May 2019). Most Muslims live in one of the two *zongos*. As a side note, the *zongos* in Accra have been religiously and ethnically pluralistic since 1877 (Owoahene-Acheampong and Prempeh 2020).

We learned that Christian women marry into Muslim families and raise their children as Muslims. This cements interfamily and intercommunity relationships. Some informants disclosed that this presents a good way to recruit new converts to Islam. However, the community denies that a Muslim man will marry outside or turn from his faith.

Stewardship of the Earth

Ghanaians talk openly and frequently about climate change and recognize that “the fate of the earth is the fate of humanity” (Golo and Yaw 2013, p. 285). Indeed, all three religions have a mandate to preserve the earth, which means minimizing the damage that human actions pose.

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Traditionalists value closeness with the natural world (Acquah 2011). Golo and Yaw (2013) explains that in ATR, the earth is a deity. Humans knowingly ignore God's will and direction when they over-log, pollute the air using wood for fuel, and employ poor agricultural practices (p. 288). Traditionalists charge that the "secular state hijacked" their role in protecting the world (p. 292).

Christian groups in Ghana mainly promote care of the earth based on the story that God entrusted Adam and Eve with responsibility to tend the garden, for "the earth is the Lord's" (Psalm 24:1; I Corinthians 4:2; The Lord's Prayer in Matthew 6:9-13). Shalom, justice, wholeness, and directives in the Sermon on the Mount are standards established for humanity by God (Ammah 2013, p. 230). However, some Christians flaunt the subjugation or dominion model, which asserts that God called humans to "subdue" the earth (Genesis 1:28). All is well and good until we damage the planet beyond repair.

Just like Christians, Allah directs Muslims to establish *umma*, the Kingdom of God, on earth. Islam emphasizes *khalifa*, or trusteeship, of the earth. Muhammed taught, "The world is green and beautiful, and Allah has appointed you his guardian over it" and "Do no mischief on earth" (Hadith in Zafar 2019). First, Allah holds humans accountable for their actions; and, second, Allah dislikes corruption of any kind, whether industrial pollution or "reckless exploitation of resources" (Zafar 2019, n.p.). Religious leaders foster common projects, which link religious groups in the work of protecting the land.

Political Willingness

Of course, Ghana experiences political contention. Political parties vie for the power to control income and development money for infrastructure, health, education, and food security. In the last decade, Ghanaians discovered oil reserves just off the coast, which has—by all accounts—led to mismanagement and theft (Hallmark 2017). Pre- and post-election periods are the most vulnerable times.

Despite political lapses, one of the successes of Ghana's government has been the commitment to religious cooperation. In fact, Abdul-Hamid (2011) notes that Christian Ghanaian presidents choose Muslim vice presidents. The Muslim Association Party welcomes non-Muslims, and the government supports conferences that increase religious understanding. Importantly, the Ministry of Education "includes compulsory religious and moral education in the national public education curriculum. There is no provision to opt out of these courses, which incorporate perspectives from Islam and Christianity" and African Traditional Religions, referred to in the curriculum as Ghana's "Triple Heritage" (US Department of State 2019, n.p.). Note that this US State Department report ignores ATRs.

According to a Ghanaian friend and former Religion and Moral Education (RME) teacher, Divine Gbagbo, "RME grooms the students to be morally upright by teaching them values such as honesty, humility, truthfulness, hard work, compassion, respect, and selflessness. These attributes help the children to become responsible adults."

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Just as in the USA, Ghanaians see public education as a means of growing tolerance. Both Christian and Muslim religious groups have faith-inspired schools (FIS) that are public and overseen by the Ghana Educational Services (GES). Children of any faith may attend any school; however, the FIS may charge school fees that a public school does not. But the better the education offered to the students, the more likely people will opt for that school if they can afford the fees. In 1987, the GES established the Islamic Education Unit at the insistence of parents who wanted secular education added to their Qur'anic schools. They preferred that their children acquire their technical and scientific education "in the fear of Allah" rather than having to attend, for example, a Christian school (Owusu-Ansah and Iddrisu 2008, p. 447).

One politico-religious complaint centers on preachers "who misuse religion" to become "bedfellows of politicians," even cozying up to the "lunatic fringe" (Abdul-Hamid 2011, p. 49; See Atiemo 2003; VOA 2009 re: Zetaheal). Other complaints: 1. The government could improve relations by cracking down on the Ghanaian arms industry with an estimated 2.3 million weapons in country and dealers exporting to Togo, Benin, and Nigeria; neighbors with serious problems, such as Cote D'Ivoire and Al Qaeda and Nigeria and Boko Haram (BBC 2019). 2. The United States caused political pressures when it asked Ghana to accept two Guantanamo Bay detainees (Suleiman 2017). Fragile democracies beleaguered by massive infrastructure and poverty challenges deserve support rather than the USA undermining their slow but steady progress with requests they are loath to reject.

In spite of these larger, both inspiring experiences and troubling issues, on the personal level, Ghanaians Muslims in Ho assured us that Muslim-Christian-Traditionalist relationships are and will remain strong. Every informant from 20 to 70-something spoke of their cooperation and respect for each other. "My Christian nieces and nephews love me more than they do their Christian aunts. They always want to stay with me," Aisha Awulley bragged. Muslims, Christians, and Traditionalists look forward to hosting each other at festival times sharing food and entertainment. All agreed that their fates are intertwined.

CHALLENGES TO COOPERATION:

1. Issues for Muslims in Christian schools: students must attend chapel, ask permission for *salat* and freedom to wear *hijab* during exams regardless of individual teachers' prejudice
2. Resource competition: Everyone, but esp. Muslims, feel landless, and competing for precious resources
3. Intra-Muslim disagreements, esp. if studied in Middle East
4. Religious peculiarism/arrogance: "dialogue of the deaf," exclusivist Truth claims, "I am the Way," disagreement about Who Jesus Is, sacrifice/atonement

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| <p>5. Fundamentalism: Wahhabi & Ahmadiyya, which are conversion-oriented, could “join to oppose immoral, irreligious values of secularism” (Azumah 2005, 238); TV evangelists insult Muslims and Zetaheal Mission</p> |
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Requirements of Faith-Inspired Schools

Every informant insisted that they have no challenges in their relationships with Christians. Yet, a few went on to mention a couple of concerns. Interviewee 5, a 25-year-old college student, admitted that a proctor singled her cousin and her out in advance of an exam. The proctor told them to take off their *hijab*, their tight-fitting head coverings, or she would not allow them to take the test. The proctor said they could be hiding answers. Her cousin complied; Interviewee 5 did not. She explained that the *hijab* was a covering protecting her from the observations of others. “The angels are watching over me against bad spirits,” Interviewee 5 emphasized. The proctor allowed her to take the test but remarked, “You will be on my list.” “If she had been my lecturer,” Interviewee 5 worried, “she might have failed me. But for Muslims, if a woman dresses in tight clothes or [goes about] exposed and a man sees her, it’s a sin” (Interviewed 2 June 2019).

Interviewee 6, age 23, expressed frustration over people trying to convert him to Christianity. “I tell them, ‘*Salat* is in the Bible, washing is in the Bible” (26 May 2019). On their part, Christian girls and women who attend Muslim schools may feel forced to wear *hijab* and engage in prayer.

Suleiman (2017) identifies a handful of “seeping divides” in education. With Muslims often attending Christian schools, a few issues arise. Some schools have not provided a space and time for youth to perform *Salat*, their regular prayers. The Muslim community directs them to attend required daily Christian chapel services, but some youth complain that they don’t want to go and yet are forced to so do. In fact, in 2008, a Muslim student fell to his death while “evading authorities trying to force him to attend chapel services” (p. 318). Ongoing conversations usually help the parties come to some agreement.

Landlessness

A concern of Ghanaians in general, and Muslims in particular, is the lack of access to land for building a family home and for farming. In her interview about the Famine of 1983, Muslim onion and spice trader Interviewee 7 remembered regretfully, “We had no aid from the Christians in Ho. Refugees brought us food from Togo” (30 May 2017). These conversations may lead to Christians mentioning that Muslims have too many children, which leads them to needing more than their share of government resources. Scarcity of resources causes hard feelings.

During European colonialization, Christian missionaries educated Ghanaians in the South, which led to government jobs that excluded Muslims in the North. These circumstances largely relate to a specific British policy of 1925 that disallowed Christian proselytizing in the North, perhaps to “minimize interreligious conflict” or to keep a portion of the population available to provide “cheap labor for plantations and mines”

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(Boyle, et. al. 2007, p. 33). Christians obtain access to land through chiefs. While many of the chiefs maintained their traditional religion, they often also committed to Christianity. Thereby, Christians have access to the stool lands they control and parcel out to other Christians.

Another issue among Muslim women informants stems from their belief that some Christians perceive them as uneducated and suppressed by Islam. Conversely, Christians believe that Muslim women think of themselves as wiser because they reject western customs (Interview with Evangelical Presbyterian Church leader, Interviewee 8, 22 May 2014). These points illustrate that Muslims and Christians consider the quality of each other's personal lives and may engage in stereotyping and even scapegoating.

Intra-Muslim Disagreements

Christians and Muslims alike note that intra-Muslim disagreements cause more problems than Christian-Muslim relationships. King (2010) documents "fifty years of disruption," tension and suspicion between local Muslims and Ahmadiyyas, "outsider" Muslims who imported their type of Islam from Great Britain (p. 24). He also notes that Wahhabi Muslims have clashed with their parents over burial rites, among other things (p. 12)

"Dialogue of the Deaf"

Despite the fact that Ghana has enjoyed "absolute peace" between Muslims and Christians since the 15th century, members of both religions claim to hold to "ultimate truths" and require their members to be "critically faithful to their inherited religions" (Abdul-Hamid 2011, p. 23). Christians proclaim Jesus said "I am THE way"—not just *the* way. Muslims emphasize that non-Muslims will be "in the hereafter among the losers" (p. 24). One large divide is Islam's teachings about the life and work of Jesus and Christianity's understanding of the life and work of Muhammed.

Muslims say that they understand that Christians have a "great commission," instructions to evangelize. Do Christians recognize that Muslims also have the duty of *da'wa*, to invite people to Islam? Of course, *sheiks* who have studied in the Middle East return with a desire to make converts. "We only converted 33 Christians this year," Interviewee 9, himself a sheik, noted ruefully (Interviewed 2 June 2019).

In a day and age where extremism causes many communities in West Africa a great deal of heartache and fear, continuous Ghanaian community peacemaking efforts have successfully linked the majority in common cause. And yet, fundamentalists emphasize their superiority and their special status in God's eyes, causing divisions.

Fundamentalism

Every group can possess and show arrogance. Is it a human need to be "right," I wonder? Often, however, fundamentalists emphasize their chosen-ness, or their superior position with God, in belief, worship, and living.

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A wide variety of Christian fundamentalist groups thrive in the fertile religious soil of Ghana, perhaps promoting themselves as a way to become “modern” (Janson and Meyer 2016). To outsiders, at least, these groups appear to be prepared to “fleece the flock,” preying on widows and low-income people to enhance the pastors’ lifestyles of wealth and privilege. Leaders preach “prosperity” for the church attendees as a test of their faith: “If you love God, you will get rich. If you donate money, it will come back to you 50 times over.” (Personal conversation)

One schoolteacher with whom we worked in Ho revealed that her husband was serving in Togo as a start-up minister for a charismatic denomination. He wouldn’t earn a stipend until he had recruited enough contributing members that he could fund himself. Alarm bells rang as this smacked of a pyramid scheme. Posters with preachers dressed in handsome suits and dresses decorate billboards on many street corners. Pastors drive huge SUVs to travel to and from their brand-new homes.

Some ecumenical groups, like the Christian Council of Ghana, proclaim that Muslims also believe in God, “just a different path.” Other groups, like the Converted Muslims Christian Ministry and Ghana Evangelism Committee’s “New Life for All,” frequently funded by the West, hold open-air crusades where they parade around converts who proclaim an anti-Muslim polemic (Dovlo and Asante 2003, p. 218). On their part, Muslims backed by Arab oil money have engaged in “global Muslim self-assertiveness” (Azumah 2000b, p. 25).

Theological differences abound and could create issues for those who wish to apply or force their beliefs on others. The following table documents comparisons I came across during this study.

Comparisons (Owoahene-Acheampong and Prempeh 2020, p. 29; Abdul-Hamid 2011)

CHRISTIANS	MUSLIMS
People of the Book	People of the Book, <i>Ahl-al-Kitah</i>
Covenant with God, Old Covenant with Noah, New Covenant in Jesus	Contract with Allah
Trinitarian: One God, Three Persons	Unity of God, opposes lesser deities Jesus is a prophet, not God Holy men and jinns, angels
Problem with humanity: Rebellion and disobedience	Problem with humanity: Ignorance
No marriage in heaven	Conjugal relationships in Paradise
Heterosexual marriage normative, divorce only with infidelity	Marriage is a religious devotion, “Whoever marries have completed half his [sic] faith”
“Do not be yoked together with an unbeliever” 2 Corinthians 6:14;	Men marry only chaste women who are “People of the Book,” Qur’an 5:5;

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Some say can't marry outside Christian denomination	Muslim women are "not lawful wives for unbelievers"
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QUESTIONS FOR SUMMER 2021

I have begun to develop a list of questions for summer 2021 interviews. These include:

1. Are religious groups in competition? For land? Proselytizing? How do you fulfill the mandate for *da'wa*?
2. Do members of various groups of Christians (Roman Catholics, mainline Protestants, Evangelical and Charismatic Christians) have different relationships with Muslims?
3. What is the range of Islamic groups in the Ho area and how do they relate?
4. How important are ethnic identities in the Muslim community?
5. Are Muslim dress codes consistently applicable or is there flexibility?
6. What is the level of acceptance for Christian or ATR daughters who have married Muslims?
7. How do Islam and Christianity view each other as religions?
8. Are there status differences between Xns and Muslims?
9. What are aspects of ATR local practices that appear in Xnity/Islam?
10. How has ATR changed in your lifetime especially in relation to influences of Islam/Xnity?
11. What else could Ghana/Ho/you do to improve interfaith relationships?

In summary, I expect that this ISRL white paper will serve as a launchpad for continuing research with Muslims in Ho, Ghana. I will create peer-reviewed articles and, perhaps, eventually a book chapter on Muslim oral history and infuse more international understanding of Islam and religious pluralism into my Comparative Religions class. Although I wrote the Comparative Religions class outline and taught the course 20 years ago, I'd given the course over to auxiliary faculty and moved on to developing and teaching other courses. In Spring 2020, I agreed to take it on again and enjoyed it. Onward from this study, I will continue to investigate Muslim religious life and expression in a deeper way; compare these with my knowledge of the experiences of American, Turkish, and Turkish Cypriot Muslims with whom I have lived, worked and developed friendships; and prepare various ways to share this knowledge with students.

SOURCES

Interviews

I have referenced interviews we have conducted with several dozen Muslims and one Christian in Ho, Ghana, between 2015 and 2019.

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