

INVALIDATING INDIGENOUS RELIGIOUS TRADITIONS VIA CHRISTIANITY: POPULAR GHANAIAN GOSPEL SONGS/MUSIC

Genevieve Nrenzah

Key Words

Psychological and emotional effects of Music, Anthropologists and Ethnomusicologists, Human conditions, and Graphic communicative illustration.

Introduction

Music is the organization of the raw material of sound into formal and structural patterns that are meaningful and generally acceptable to that society in which the organization has taken place. A pattern that relates directly and in a most intimate manner to the worldview and the life experience of that society viewed as a homogeneous whole, and are accepted as such by that society.⁶²

Music is present in the everyday lives of people of all ages and from all cultures around the world. Listening to music, singing, playing (informally, formally), creating (exploring, composing, improvising), whether individually and collectively, are common activities for many people.⁶³ It is one of the universal ways of expression and communication for humankind.⁶⁴ Anthropologists and ethnomusicologists have suggested that music has been a characteristic of the human condition for millennia.⁶⁵

Apart from enjoyable activities, music exhumes entertainment, pleasure, gratification, exercise, relaxation of the mind, and

62 Ademola, Adegbite. "The concept of sound in traditional African religious music." *Journal of Black Studies* 22, no. 1 (1991): 48.

63 Biasutti et al., *The Impact of Music on Human Development and Well-Being*. Lausanne: Frontiers Media SA. 2020, 1.

64 Biasutti, M., Welch, G. F., MacRitchie, J., McPherson, G. E., Himonides, E., eds. (2020). *The Impact of Music on Human Development and Well-Being*. Lausanne: Frontiers Media SA. *Frontiers in Psychology* 17 June 2020, 1. doi: 10.3389/978-2-88963-683-9

65 Cross, I. (2016). "The nature of music and its evolution," in *Oxford Handbook of Music Psychology*, eds S. Hallam, I. Cross, and M. Thaut (New York, NY: Oxford University Press), 3–18. DOI: 10.1093/oxford/9780198722946.013.5

energizing the body. It allows the manifestation of individual internal conditions and feelings, bringing about many positive effects in those who engage in them.

Music is performed in most religious settings or communal gatherings and individually by people. In African indigenous religious cultures, music and sound have always been intricately connected to an embodiment of self, spirit, and divinity, and it mediates morality, belief, and experience. Ghanaian traditional music and songs comprise diverse genres such as the *Asafo* songs, sung or performed during wars, communal work/cleaning, or even joyful events; *jama*, performed in joyous moments such as festivals or competitive sports; *kete* or *adowa* and *bɔbɔɔbɔ*, performed alongside dance performances for almost all occasions - marriages, funerals, and festivals.

Music and songs form a significant part of the liturgy and other church activities in Christian circles. Helmut Georg *Koenigsberger* assessing the music and religion in early modern European history commented that theology and music were heavenly sisters, and neither would touch the other's honor; there could be no antagonism nor rivalry.⁶⁶ Music gives the spirit its relationship to harmony and unity. Music differs from all the other arts in that it is not the image of ideas but the image of the will itself, which explains the extraordinary effect of music, an effect much more significant than that of any other art.⁶⁷

Music's psychological and emotional effects on human beings can be powerful, extensive, and influential. A person might not be aware of music's structural, mathematical, and architectural characteristics, but "the brain has to do much computing to make sense of it."⁶⁸

66 Koenigsberger, H. G. (2017). Music and Religion in Early Modern European History. In *Music and the Renaissance* (pp. 275-306). Routledge.

67 Helmut Georg Koenigsberger, [Music and Religion in Early Modern European History](#) in Vendrix, P. (Ed.). (2011), 201-237. In *Music and the Renaissance: Renaissance, Reformation, and Counter-Reformation* (1st ed.). Routledge. 207. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315090900>

68 [Keep Your Brain Young with Music | Johns Hopkins Medicine](#) Schäfer, Thomas et al. "The psychological functions of music listening." *Frontiers in psychology* vol. 4 511. 13 August 2013, doi:10.3389/fpsyg.2013.00511

If a person has ever been moved to tears by a tender live performance at Church or a religious gathering, then that person can easily understand the power of music to affect moods, even inspire action, and change from behavior.⁶⁹ It follows then that the words and tone in songs and music can be compelling, sustain the interest of persons in specific locations such as sacred space, and keep working on their inner minds even when they leave the space.

Following the submission of Schäfer, I argue that gospel music and songs are a device and power source Christianity inventively contrivances in delegitimizing indigenous religions in Ghana. It has helped Christianity significantly fuel itself to expand at the detriment of the mainstay of indigenous religious traditions (IRTs). Christianity has been increasing since its inception though this has not been the case at the outset of her introduction in Ghana. Omenyo highlights the two phases of Christianity in Ghana. The Portuguese trader's era of the 1400s and the 19th century missionary era. He argued that Christianity created a "theological deficit" in both phases by demeaning the Akan religious worldview and reducing Akan beliefs to illusions and imagination.⁷⁰ While the first phase to Christianize Ghana was largely unsuccessful, the second phase thrived with help from the colonial government, the advent of African Christianity in the form of African Initiated Churches (AICs)⁷¹ and the translation of the Bible into local language. Sill contends, "translating Christian religion' understood in the narrow sense of translating a text, namely, the Bible, as well as in the broader sense of the transferring of an entire religion."⁷²

69 Manza, interview by Genevieve Nrenzah, 10 January 2021.

70 Cephas N. Omenyo. *Pentecost Outside Pentecostalism: A Study of the Development of Charismatic Renewal in the Mainline Churches in Ghana*. (Amsterdam: Uitgeverij Boekencentrum, 2006) 4.

71 Nrenzah, G. *Modernizing Indigenous Priesthood*, 118

72 Ulrike Sill, Thick Translation of Religion between Cultures: The Basel Mission in Ghana, in DeJonge, M., & Tietz, C. (Eds.). (2015). *Translating Religion: What is Lost and Gained?* (1st ed.). Routledge. 84-103. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315724102>

It was a significant breakthrough as the people could understand the Bible in their native language and draw examples in the Bible synonymous with their experiences of practical ritual performances.⁷³

The translation of the Bible into indigenous languages led to the emphasis of the IRTs as supposedly repository of the devil. Meyer argues of a paradox that characterizes Christianity in Ewe land, "On the one hand, existing Ewe concepts were integrated into the Christian Ewe discourse through translation, while on the other, a strict boundary between Christianity and Ewe religion was drawn through diabolisation. Missionaries based the claim that the gods and ghosts served by the Ewe were natural agents of the devil on their interpretation of the New Testament."⁷⁴ The foundation made by missionaries by casting Ewe IRTs and others in Ghana as evil and inhabited by the devil remained on the people's minds even long after the missionary had left. Meyer recounts how competitive, diverse Christian denominations are often united in praying against their common enemy, the devil, formulating ritual procedures to deal with the devil present in IRTs.⁷⁵

It seems that breaking away from the past and being born again does not end the battle with the devil; the Christian must constantly work harder spiritually to put the devil and his cohorts at bay. As well as being considered weapons to counter the enemy, songs and music also become the graphic communicative illustration in exhibiting that one has nothing to do with IRTs. Words are carriers of intents; their effect on the mind and a person is powerful. Language then is an effective tool of communication that holds a key in changing the mind

73 Genevieve Nrenzah. *Modernizing Indigenous Priesthood and Revitalizing Old Shrines: Current Developments on Ghana's Religious Landscape*. (Bayreuth: University of Bayreuth Publishing, 2015), 118.

74 Meyer, Birgit. "Diabolisation." In *Translating the Devil: Religion and Modernity among the Ewe in Ghana*, 83-111. Edinburgh University Press, 1999. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.3366/j.ctvxcrhvm.11>.

75 Birgit Meyer, *Translating the Devil: Religion and Modernity among the Ewe in Ghana*, reprint, Edinburgh University Press, 2019, xviii

and being of a person. Therefore, songs composed and sung in the local language can convey a message of Christianity in delegitimizing the IRTs. They have the potential of making the IRTs meaningless by using positive messages and words in the Bible to project the Christian faith while demonizing IRTs.

Scholars of religious studies probably have less explored the conception that songs and music can influence a person's thoughts, feelings, and behaviors. The increasing body of empirical and experimental studies concerning the broader benefits of musical activity and research in the sciences associated with music suggests that there are many dimensions of human life – including physical, social, educational, psychological (cognitive and emotional) – which can be affected positively by successful engagement in music.⁷⁶ Thomas Schäfer et al.'s observations on approaches in music functions from an empirical perspective help us to practicalize theory. They noted two utilities in this direction. The first aim is to observe or identify how music is used in daily life, and the second approach infers the structure or pattern underlying the use of music.⁷⁷

North and Hargreaves have noted, “musical behavior is a characteristic of all human beings. The environment and the experiences of individuals, often within groups, shape its realization.”⁷⁸ The environment Ghanaians find themselves in has been defined by Christianity as an embodiment of evil embedded in the belief systems of dualism and “spiritualization” of the world and humans. Lyrics from songs, therefore, depict these subjects. The ability of songs to heal is explored by Fancourt, who alerts us on music's contribution to health and well-being, provides evidence of physical and

76 Biasutti et al. *The Impact of Music on Human Development and Well-Being*, 1

77 Schäfer, Thomas et al. “The psychological functions of music listening.” *Frontiers in psychology* vol. 4 511. 13 August 2013, 3. doi:10.3389/fpsyg.2013.00511

78 G.E. McPherson. “Commentary: Music education and the role of music in people's lives,” in *Music and Music Education in People's Lives: An Oxford Handbook of Music Education* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2018), 3–18. DOI: 10.1093/oxford_ he/9780199730810.0 13.0002.

psychological impacts.⁷⁹ Social inclusion and communalism in the case of Ghana is a characteristic of IRTs, which is gradually being replaced by the social system of the nuclear family, courtesy of Christianity and colonialism. Welch et al. argues on musical activity's ability in enhancing an individual's sense of social inclusion⁸⁰ in the current discontented situation. The recent collection of Biasutti et al. draws on eighty-eight researchers from seventeen different countries, with each paper illustrating the relation of music to other essential aspects of human functioning stamps the acceptance of music's impact on humans.⁸¹

Methodological Considerations

In IRTs of Africa, religious language, imagery, the products and influences shape symbols, and texts often, which in this inquiry is in local gospel songs and music. This paper explores songs/music as one of the positive tools that Christianity has been deploying in delegitimizing IRTs successfully in the past and continuously sustaining it in contemporary times. Using content analysis and interviews, I analyzed the presence, tones, pictures, meanings, and relationships of certain words in the lyrics, themes, or concepts in locally composing gospel songs and argued a paradox exists in Ghanaian local gospel lyrics. Christianity employs coordinated lyrics in local gospels to delegitimize IRTs while legitimizing the Christian faith. Through performed singing in communal religious spaces, individual spaces, and dissemination of songs in video production, words work on the mind, leading to a stronger belief in Christianity and conviction of the evil inhabited IRTs. Becoming a Christian means a rebirth, an ignition of the

79 D. Fancourt, and S. Finn, What Is the Evidence on the Role of the Arts in Improving Health and Well-Being? A Scoping Review. (Copenhagen: World Health Organisation, 2019).

80 G.F. Welch, E. Himonides, E., J. Saunders, J., I. Papageorgi, and M. Sarazin, M. Singing and social inclusion. *Front. Psychol.* 2014, 5:803. DOI: 10.3389/fpsyg.2014.00803

81 Biasutti et al. *The Impact of Music on Human Development and Well-Being*, 5.

power in God and Jesus his son vividly illustrated in the songs of the defeat of the devil and triumph of Jesus. Continuous praise and worship through the magnification of God through appellations make the Christian triumph over evil through the empowerment of the Holy Spirit. The more a message repeatedly feeds the mind, the mind keeps processing it as such, and with time, it becomes the truth.

From fifty local gospel songs of audio and sometimes videos, I illustrate my argument with themes from the data. A few generally well-known songs that speak to the argument have been included and analyzed. Most of the songs composed by gospel musicians come with corresponding videos, and I noted that the videos are often produced to communicate the message of the lyrics. The analysis of the songs is based on both audio and visual. The selected songs are from professional gospel musicians and anonymous composers or folk songs. While many of the songs have anonymous composers, I found out that many belong to churches such as the Church of Pentecost, Assemblies of God, and Christ Apostolic Churches. These are churches known to be led by the spirit of God to compose songs during their annual church gatherings. Since they have churches in every corner of Ghana, when they depart from these church programs, they depart with the songs and consciously disseminate them in their local assemblies, and it keeps going until it becomes a household song. In this paper, we do not link the songs directly to them because they do generally not claim ownership of the songs. The diverse themes sifted from the lyrics of the songs have been grouped into three – the theme that depicts IRTs as repository of evil and a must for a person to experience rebirth, triumphs through empowerment from Jesus and Holy Spirit as well as appellations magnifying God and Jesus over IRTs.

Indigenous Religious Traditions as Repository of Evil

As alluded to earlier, missionary Christianity perceived the practice, belief, and people as heathen, evil, and demonic. With this mindset, they set out to rescue the perishing. Right from the beginning of the onslaught of Christianity, the lines were drawn between good and evil. Christianity was and is good, and IRTs were and are still wrong, so all activities were geared towards bringing light to the darkness. Debrunner illustrates this in his account of the 20 January 1482 expedition headed by Diego d'Azambuja when they landed in Elmina. He is said to have reported back home that:

Our men held the mass with many tears of devotion, and thanks to God for allowing them to praise and glorify Him among those idolaters and asking Him that as He was pleased that they were the first to erect an altar at so great a sacrifice. He would give them wisdom and grace to draw those idolatrous people to the faith. So that the Church which they would found there might endure until the end of the world.⁸²

The mission activities of the nineteenth century also continued with the total disregard for the people and their religion. Smith narrates an incident in Akropong where J. A Mader (1851-77), a very zealous missionary, openly flogged a fetish priest for opposing the preaching of the gospel.⁸³ Asaafa and Kwaaman sacred groves in the central region were destroyed and replaced with a church. A king in Akwapim was warned with a letter and threatened to be punished by the queen of England by Inspector Josenhans if he married a female catechumen and violated her conscience as a Christian with polygamy. Missionaries felled sacred trees in Aburi in 1850 to build mission houses.⁸⁴ These countless examples suggest the historical rift between IRTs and Christianity that was inherited

82 Debrunner, H. *A History of Christianity in Ghana*. Accra: Waterville Publishing House, 1967, 17.

83 John David Kwamena Ekem. *Priesthood in Context: A Study of Priesthood in Some Christian and Primal Communities of Ghana and its Relevance for Mother-Tongue Biblical Interpretation*. (Sonlife Press: Accra, 2009), 95.

84 Nrenzah, *Modernizing Indigenous Priesthood*, 97-98; Ekem, *Priesthood in Context*, 82.

and practiced in contemporary Ghana. Songs are a significant part of the Christian mission including hymns. The lyrics of the song below shows the mission theology of the early:

*Rescue the perishing,
Care for the dying,
Snatch them in pity from sin and the grave;
Weep o'er the erring one, lift the fallen,
Tell them of Jesus the mighty to save.*

*Refrain:
Rescue the perishing,
Care for the dying;
Jesus is merciful,
Jesus will save.*

Later Christians would contextualize the already created notions of IRTs through songs to fuel the continuous rift, delegitimizing IRTs while validating Christianity. The environment or the circumstance musicians find themselves serves as a source of inspiration. African American gospel, for instance, was rooted in the experiences of servitude because of slavery. This song was intended to give people hope in a dire situation. The African American songs believe that “God has brought us through so much already, we can only be sure He will continue to do so.”⁸⁵ They were encouraging themselves even in servitude of sustenance readily provided by Christianity. The songs’ foundation substantiates their situation and a way out—to be saved by accepting Jesus. The slavery situation is temporal because it only affects the body, but the everlasting soul will live life hereafter in a perfect place with God and Jesus in Heaven.

In the Ghanaian context, the belief was that the people and environment were filled with deities, sickness, witchcraft, evil, and darkness. The belief system, according to Christians, puts them in bondage. To extricate oneself from the bondage,

85 Marvin Curtis V. “African-American Spirituals and the Gospel Music: Historical Similarities and Differences.” *The Choral Journal* 41, no. 8 (2001): 9. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/23553686>.

that person must be born again and must be delivered from those evil powers. Ritualistic activities were earmarked to that effect, but the significant thing is music-- a powerful tool for communication with the ability to generate and challenge the existing social order.⁸⁶ In Christian musical lyrics, words to change that which is the mainstay IRTs, while introducing the new Christianity that will change the lives of the people physically and spiritually is painted in the compositions. The genre in the Ghanaian gospel context is overcoming bondage, evil, sickness, witchcraft, gods, dwarves, juju (evil potent charm that harms the other by favoring the user) power residing in IRTs. Next, I discuss some of the songs with these themes.

<i>Yen nana nom, 2x</i>	<i>Our ancestors 2x</i>
<i>Yen nana nom som abosom.</i>	<i>Our ancestors worshipped deities</i>
<i>Na yendi 2x</i>	<i>As for us</i>
<i>Na yendi ysbosom Yehowa</i>	<i>As for us, we will serve God</i>

This is a very popular song in Ghana, which is sung communally in churches, school worship, and individually. People express the joy of liberation from the religion of nananom (ancestors) to a blissful religion of light. For one to be liberated and break free from the chains of their ancestors, one must be born again. Accepting Christ as a personal savior means a rebirth or being born again. According to Meyer, being born again is to break entirely from the past; any attempt to reintroduce cultural practices into Christianity as the mainline churches pursue under the Sankofa agenda is “described as ‘sliding back’ or ‘relapsing’ into ‘heathendom.’⁸⁷ When one is born again, he/she is empowered with power from God to overcome IRTs. Christians often demonstrate this power by stepping on the devil through songs like the one below:

86 Adomako Ampofo, A. and Awo Aseidu. “Changing Representations of Women in Ghanaian Popular music: Marrying research and advocacy.” *Current Sociology*. Vol. 60 (2), 2012, 258-279.

87 Birgit Meyer. “‘Make a Complete Break with the Past.’ Memory and Post-Colonial Modernity in Ghanaian Pentecostalist Discourse.” *Journal of Religion in Africa* 28, no. 3 (1998): 317-318. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1581573>.

<i>Metia abonsam so, metia abonsam so</i> <i>M'ahuru makɔ soro metia abonsam so</i> <i>Metia abonsom so, metia abonsam so</i> <i>M'ahuru makɔ soro, ɔsoro, osoro</i> <i>Metia abonsam so</i>	I am stepping on the devil I jump up to the sky and step on the devil I am stepping on the devil, I am stepping on the devil I jump up to the sky, the sky, sky I am stepping on the devil
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Deities dwell in the belly of the earth and other natural bodies. By Christians jumping up and stepping on Satan on ground/land, implicitly, the singer is stepping on the deities and, in effect rendering them powerless; as the believer jumps up and receives strength from God, s/he can step on evil in triumph.

Interestingly, being born again does not mean a one-time activity. The Christian must work towards daily survival and struggles with the devil. The Christian is also counselled to be vigilant in his/her dressing, food, thinking, behavior, job, extended family, festivals, rites of passage, and practically everything in the social system of the Ghanaian as the devil can use any activity to impede their progress. Songs like the one below, *Ya wo me fofro*, and *I am born again*, talks about being free from the IRTs deities and their activities of feeding gods, pouring libation, reiterating the happiness that the blood of Jesus exhumes. In the local gospels, IRTs base is metaphorically described as a place where evil abounds. When one sings that *ya wo me fofro* (I have experienced rebirth) or *M'ahu kanea* (I have seen the light it) implies that the religious traditions before this experience were dark. Becoming a Christian transforms a person from the old state of being in darkness to a new state of being born again into a new blissful life of "light" - Christianity.

<p><i>Ya wo me fofro</i> <i>Mennhye Kwakufuri san bio</i> <i>Menn ma bosom aduane bio</i> <i>Menngu nsa bio</i> <i>Mogya no agye me o</i> <i>Yesu mu ye anigya nkoa</i> <i>Me ne nananom kan ntem a yapaei 2x</i> <i>Aninyam aninyam nka Nyame oo</i></p>	<p>I have been born again I am no longer under Kwaku Furi (deity) I will no longer feed the gods I will no longer pour libation The blood has saved me There is joy in Christ I have completely cut off the ancestors Glory! Glory to God!</p>
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My body eiii my God I go give am oo
My body eii edey for my God 2x
Some people dem dey, them
Some people dem sey, dem dey worship agbaragba oo
Some people dem dey dem dey worship Budha, na my body

Diana Akumuyi's song above sends the final signal to the devil that the Christian is totally for Jesus. The devil cannot possess him or her body to push him here and there. Praises of the liberator also become a tool in the devil's fight. Christians must constantly detach themselves from Satan, roaring, and roaming to devour Christians. Sometimes, songs cast a slur on IRTs named here Satan, insinuating his urge to destroy or kill Christians, but Jesus is with them to save and protect them from Satan's destructive activities. Again, the experience of being born again gives the believer some level of hooting at or demeaning IRTs in glorifying God. *Aninyam nka Nyankopɛn* is a perfect example of glory, glory to God.

<i>Aninyam nka Nyankopong 2x</i> <i>Me wo akoko me fa ma bosom</i> <i>Aniyam aniyam nka Nyame oo</i> <i>Me sika me fa ma Komfo</i> <i>Aniyam aniyam nka Nyame oo</i> <i>Me wo ntuma me fa me kramo</i> <i>Aniyam aniyam nka Nyame oo</i> <i>Mara kasa megya Nyame eeeee</i> <i>Onyame o ye ohene oooooo</i> <i>Aniyam aniyam nka Nyame oo</i>	Glory, glory to God Glory to God 2x I have fowl; I will not give to god Glory, glory to God I have money I will not give to the indigenous priest Glory, glory to God I have cloth I will not give to Muslim Glory glory to God My God, my father God eeeee God is a King Ooooooo Glory to God ooo
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Kyekyere no ei, kyekyere no ma me (tie him, tie him, tie Satan on a metal for me) is also sung to hoot at the devil and at the same time to show off Gods power to tame Satan and all there is to make the Christian worry-free.

Kyekyere no ei, kyekyere no ma me
kyekyere no ei, kyekyere no ma me
Kyekyere no kyekyere no Satan bo dadie mu ma me 2x

Again, demonstrating that one is now a Christian and abhors IRTs-- singing Satan pull off I am no longer yours, sends the signal to the devil and cohorts that a person is now officially not their member.

<i>Twe wo ho, Twe wo hon, abosam twe</i> <i>wo ho</i> <i>Me ye wodzi bio 2x</i> <i>Twe wo hon menn ye wodzi bio seisei</i> <i>2x</i> <i>Abosam twe wo hon, me ye wodzi bio</i>	Satan pulls of the pull of; Satan pull off am no longer yours 2x Pull off, pull off Satan, pull off I am no longer yours Pull of am no longer yours right Now Satan pulls off. I am no longer yours.
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This song reminds Christians that they no longer belong to the past--commanding Satan to pull off because he is no longer welcomed significantly boosts the singer's ego and gives him a sense of new security in the new community to which he now belongs. The songs analyzed display the lyrics Ghanaian Christians employ in denigrate IRTs while authenticating

Christianity. There is also the theme of power, empowerment, and triumph over the devil, which we examine next.

Power, Empowerment, Triumph over IRTS through Jesus and Holy Spirit

Power is an explosive phenomenon that energizes and fuels IRTs. The diverse divisions within the IRTs sometimes contest during their *agorɔ and akɔm* festivals to substantiate who wields more power. To downplay this supposed power so feared by people, musicians, through their lyrics belittle this so-called power present in IRTs by displaying a power above all other powers in Jesus Christ. Lyrics often accompanied with graphic videos of the songs communicate the message of Jesus winning and deities losing all the time.

Songs composed by Tagoe sisters typically have these power narratives. One of the songs worthy of analyzing is *Edin bɛn nie*⁸⁸ (what a name!) composed by Rev. Kusi Berko Brempong of blessed memory. The lyrics and the accompanying video overwhelmingly describe the Christian God's powers present in Jesus Christ over IRTs base - gods, dwarves and witchcrafts.

The song tells a story, and then consistently he repeats the chorus *Edin bɛn nie montwere me, montwere me*, what a name, what a name, shows that hammers on the name of Jesus as the name above every other name and a name that frightens dwarves, gods, witches and *Mami Wata*. The song is worded and convincing, and the video was performed to powerfully communicate power in Jesus whiles showing the powerlessness of IRTs deities, which vanishes at the mention of Jesus. This song is important because it became and is still a household song.

88 Rev. Kusi Brempong: Track Edin Ben Nie (Official Video) Universal God Records - YouTube

Edin ben nie montwere me, montwere me 2x
Edin ben nie montwere me, montwere me 2x

Asem ato me
Nsuo afa me sunnie
Maye aye, aye, aye me nya fawode oo
Nfi nhya du num nie, me nya yaresa
Na sonn mate se obi wo ho,
obi wo ho oma fawode oo
Edin ben nie montwere me, montwere me.
Edin ben nie motwere me, mo twere me 2x
Edin ben nie motwere me, mo twere me 2x

Wiase abrobo ye hun nkoa.
Bronya be sie a na meyemu hyehye me
Masem me ka ne se, masem ye mobo bebre
Mefie abayie for, abayie for reye me
Enso mate se obi wo ho bayie suro no
Obi wo ho abayie dwani no oo
Enti Edin ben nie montwere me, montwere me, aa.

Edin ben nie montwere me, montwere me 2x
Edin ben nie montwere me, montwere me 2x

Komfo be wo ho, o wo ghana asaase se ha
Sa Komfo na wa bin bebere
Bebere ko ne kyen ko ko bisa wun hyebre
Bebere no ko ne kyen ko bo hunhun ban
Eno nti Komfo no ka wo nitrim se, opese onyan tumi
bia esin tumi nyinaa
Na Se nia okasa mami wata koto no,
na sa okasa tumi nyina kon ni fom oo.
Na se okasa bayie nyina adwunno no
Nti oko kwayee Bretuo be mo,
oko kwaye Bretuo be mo, oko hyia ne mmoatia
Oko nhya ni mmoatia oni omo ye adwuma no nyinaa
Odi to omo enim se, Mawura nom mmotoa, medi
asem nam oo, na ma ma mo kye me
Mehya tumi bia esin tumi nyinaa, na sa me kasa
Na Se mekasas mami wata koto no,
na sa mekasa tumi nyina kon ni fom oo.
Na se mekasa mmoatia nyina adwuno me
Mmotia se Okomfor no see, eei Okomfo
asem kese ben na wo de ba no?
Sa die no diee, sa die no deie enye yie da,
Efise obi wo ho a, Nyankopon adin nkan edi ama no.
Nti die wa nyan no, Okomfo die wo nyan no fa nu sa
Sa nimpa kro no die hen die yen tumi ebo no den
Ye bo ne din a yenyina beyra
Okomfo gyina ho koon na obisa mmoatia no,
Wo die edin ben nie motwere me, motwere me ma ba
aa,

Edin ben nie montwere me, montwere me 2x
Edin ben nie montwere me, montwere me 2x

enti Okomfo bisa mmoatia no se me ko india ana, eho
na me ho nipa kro aa
mmoaa ye si no se Komfo dabi enko india

*What a name, what a name, show me, show me
What a name, what a name, show me, I have come.*

*I am in trouble
My pillow has wallowed in the water.
I have tried and tried everything without getting freedom
It's been more than 25 years without healing.
I have heard that someone gives healing
Someone offers freedom
What a name, what a name, show, show me*

*What a name, what a name, show me, show me
What a name, what a name, show me, I have come.
Life is full of fear.
I get anxiety the Christmas season.
All I say is that I am miserable
Witches in my family, witches have bewitched me
Yet I have heard of someone whom witches fear
Someone who witches run away from
So what a name, show me, show me aa.*

*What a name, what a name, show me, show me
What a name, what a name, show me, show me, I have come
There is an indigenous priest.
An indigenous priest who lived on this land Ghana
He was a powerful priest
Many people solicited his direction in their lives,
Many people went to him for protection
So the indigenous priest thought that he wanted
all power in this world
So that when he speaks, Mami Wata will bow before him
So that when he speaks, all other powers will kowtow before him
So that when he speaks, witchcraft powers will run away
He, therefore, went to the deep forest
He went to the deep forest for a meeting with dwarves
It with the dwarves he has been working with
He informed them that, my lord dwarfs, I came with a message
I want powers that is above all other powers
So that when I speak, Mami Wata will bow before him
So that when I speak, all other powers will kowtow before him
So that when I speak, witchcraft powers will run away
The dwarves' told the indigenous priest, eei priest, what big
case are you trying to bring.
As for this request, this request can never be granted ever
Because God has already given those powers to someone.
So take what you have gotten already like that; indigenous
priests take what you have like that.
As for that person, we cannot mention his name
If we mention his name, we will all vanish
The indigenous priest stood there quietly and asked the dwarves
What name is that, what name is that show me, show me aa
What a name, what a name, show me, show me
What a name, what a name, show me, show me, I have come*

*Then the indigenous priest asked the dwarves
whether he should go to India to find that
person with powers.
The dwarves told him that, no, not in India.
The priest asked whether he should go and
inquire from the powerful chief priests.*

*The dwarves said no, he is not the one.
The priest then asked the dwarves, so where
should I go?
The priest then mentioned names of powerful
rulers who have come and gone
Mentioned the names of lords that have come
and gone, but the dwarves said, no, the person
is none of the people you mentioned
The indigenous priest stood quietly for a while
with all his intentions bottled in his mind
Then he asked the dwarves, is it Jesus? All of a
sudden, the dwarves vanished.*

obisa mmo se me ko komfo hene hene ho ana
mmoa se no se dabi oo enye ono
obisa omo bio see enhinfa na me ko
obobo mpanyinfo bebre aba asese woyi so kro.
obibo owuranom mu bebre aba asese woyi so ko, mmoa
si no se enye omu mmo bia
Komfo dzina ho kon na ni sem nyina aka ne tim ooo
Afi obisa mmotia no se, eye yesu ana, oti nani no na
mmotia no adwani ko

Nti edi ben ne awawadin, awurade din awawadin,
owura Yesu den awawadin. Awawa din aaa
Edin ben nie motwere me, motwere me ma ba 2x
Edin ben nie motwere me Yesu din aa
Edin ben nie motwere me, Yesu din aa
Edin ben nie motwere me, Yesu dzin mmotia suro no
Yesu din

Edin ben nie mɔntwere me, mɔntwere me 2x
Edin ben nie mɔntwere me, mɔntwere me 2x
Yesu din.
Edin ben nie mɔntwere me, Yesu din aaaa

*So, what a name, a wonderful name, Our
Lord's name is wonderful
Lord Jesus name is a wonderful name, wonder-
ful name aa
What a name, what a name, show me, show me
What a name, what a name, Jesus name aa
What a name, what a name, Jesus name aa
What a name, show me, dwarves are afraid of
Jesus' name.*

*What a name, what a name, show me, show me
What a name, what a name, show me, Jesus
name aa.*

*Nkunim, nkunim, nkunim
Nkunim wo mogya ni mo
Me di otanfo no so
Wo mogya aa a ni mu*

Victory, victory, victory in the blood of Jesus tells of victory over IRTs. Retelling that there is power in the blood of Jesus. In the blood of Jesus, one can reign over the enemy.

*Hwana buba eiii, yensuro
Mortia bɛ ba
Kakufuri bɛba
Kabrikye for bɛba yensuro*

Power and military triumph depict the world as a warzone where followers of God (Christians) and the devil are at war. It cast the die between evil and good. The devil always engages or brings situations to sway the children of God, and the Christians triumph over Satan by the blood of Jesus. Songs such as these are military and fast in action and are sung to triumph over evil - IRTs. Rev. *Yawson's, ɔbonsam, bɔ wo a bɔ no bi* (when the devil hits you, hit him back) denotes that the believer faces the devil squarely because Christ is with him/her and the devil is afraid of Jesus's name.

ɣbonsam, bɔ wo a bɔ no bi
ʒpim wo pim no bi
ʒpush wa push no bi
ka na nim, kan na nim
Yesu Kristo ka wo ho
Na ɔbedwane, Obosam suro Yesu dzin.
ɣbosam akom akom akom a Wotumi ayv hwe 2x
Yesu baa ya ɔde tumi ye adwuma
Yeei ei ɔde tumi ye adwuma
Holy ghost baa ya ɔde anointing ye adwuma
Yeei ei ɔde tumi ye adwuma

Triumphing over the devil instigates Christians to praise God with appellations in celebration.

Appellations Magnifying God and Jesus over IRTs

In IRTs, appellations are hidden names often used in praising God, deities, priests, and chiefs. In the indigenous setting, the appellation is heavier depending on whom it is meant for. For example, *Otumfuɔ* means someone that holds power. The Asantehene has the title *Otumfuɔ* Osei Tutu II. Chiefs or religious functionaries also have titles and appellations such as *Kuntukonunku* (fearful), *Dasebre* (generous), *Osagyefo* (liberator), *Odeneho* (unlimited resources), *Okatakyie* (brave person), *Odomankoma* (giver of all things), *Odombarima*, *Osabarima* (brave), *Anɔpahema* (dawn), and *Nyakuntɔn* (rainbow). These titles have been transferred to the Church and used to address only the Christian God. In the Christian song, *Mmrane* appellations by Rev. Berko below, he tells the story in a form typical of an indigenous religious priest - pouring libation. He calls God his father. Papa, when I call you, come oo. He calls him ancient of days. He sings of God-deserving praise. On and on, he uses the traditional appellations for God:

<p><i>Daadaa Nyame a Efiri akyirikyiri woye Onyame W'anim ne w'akyi Onyame biara nni ho Odomankoma wofata ayeyie oo Papa ee mefrefre wo a bra oo Okatakylie ee begye wo ayeyie ee Odomankoma begye wonkamfo nnwom Agyei... agyei... agyei... Tumi nyinaa wura Onyankopon e Wone nea wone na wote ase ampa Odomankoma Onyame bi nka wo ho oo Ye ye ye yeya ye yaye Enti enne mebo wo mmrane Mebo wo mmrane agye e Na mefrefre wo a, ampa ara efata wo ampa Odomankoma begye w'ayeyi nnwom M'awurade ee aseda se woo o Agya mebo wo mmrane eee, emmrane se wo Agya mebe wo dinn, aseda se wo Agya mebo wo mmrane eee, emmrane se wo Agya mebe wo dinn, aseda se wo</i></p>	<p>Ancient of Days You are God from eternity Before you there is no other Everlasting God you deserve all praise Father! Respond when we call you The Ultimate One, come for your praise Everlasting God come and inhabit this praise song Daddy eii...Daddy eii...Daddy eii</p> <p>Omnipotent God You are who you are and indeed, you are alive Everlasting God, there is no god besides you <i>Ye ye ye yeya ye yaye</i> So today I will call out your appellations I will sing your appellations, daddy I call on your name because you are worthy</p> <p>Father, I will sing your appellations, 'cos you are worthy I will proclaim your name, 'cos you deserve thanksgiving Father, I will sing your appellations, 'cos you are worthy I will proclaim your name, 'cos you deserve thanksgiving</p>
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The song is directed in praising the almighty God, and it is purposefully arranged such that one does not confuse the appellation of God to any other. The praise names used for chiefs are also used for God but not as much as for indigenous religious functionaries. In indigenous religions, God is worshipped through the deities and ancestors, but the song makes nonsense of that concept and goes directly to God with the appellations. It brings the Christians' mind that only God and his Son Jesus deserve those praise names and not any hidden deity somewhere or an earthly chief who can die.

The composer talks of chiefs who call themselves *Otumfuɔ*, *Kuntukununku*, and *Osagyefo* but could not overcome death unlike God who is alive forever. Meaning Christians should

shun away from these earthly powers and IRTs because they will wane away, but God never dies; therefore, he alone deserves these appellations.

Conclusion

The paper sought to reflect on the communicative impact of local gospel songs/music on a person. It raised the argument that local gospel music lyrics are meant to communicate a message to the listener, and the message is geared almost all the time towards delegitimizing the mainstay IRTs and their contents. I analyzed songs composed by gospel musicians and others by anonymous composers, which otherwise are popular nationwide.

The genre of songs typically has sub-themes such as fear, spiritual battle between the devil and God, power, empowerment, healing, freedom, and appellations. Three main themes were sifted out of the many and discussed. Findings indicate that local gospel songs purposefully delegitimize IRTs belittling its components as insignificant and powerless.

Another recurring theme is power and empowerment from Jesus and God to deal with Satan and cohorts present in IRTs. The final point is the transfer of appellations and praise names used in IRTs for God, deities, ancestors, and chiefs to the Christian God. The usage backed by lyrics substantiates that the chiefs, deities, and ancestors to which those influential praise names are bestowed are mere mortals. Also, those earthly leaders come and go and their powers wanes, they are mere mortals who die or whose reign are no longer recognized once they depart the earth. Conversely, the immortal and almighty God and Jesus are ascribed the praise names because they are eternal, *so mmrane se amo*, (they deserve praise) as Rev. Berko puts it.

The findings in the analysis are revealing in that I looked at the explicit lyrics and intent behind the composition and noted that local gospel musicians intentionally compose to disseminate

the message that positivizes Christianity at the detriment of IRTs. This paper fills the gap on music as a communicative tool in changing and sustaining the interest of believers in a religious tradition, but specifically, it contributes to the growing literature on African indigenous religious studies.

Abstract

This paper is about a subtle means deployed by followers of Christianity in delegitimizing Indigenous Religious Traditions (IRTs) in Ghana. It traces the activities of the historical debut of both the fourteenth-century Portuguese entry and the 19th-century missionary activities. It argues that local gospel music lyrics are meant to communicate a message to the listener, and the message is geared almost all the time towards delegitimizing the mainstay IRTs and their contents. The current generation of Christians, even though headed by Africans, are following suit of what happened earlier in those two periods—employing various means in expanding Christianity in an attempt to shrink or uproot IRTs. Lyrics and graphic video pictures in Songs/Music have been an ardent device directed to this agenda. Using historical and the content analysis method in analysing fifty local Ghanaian gospel music, we noted the genre in the songs as fear, spiritual battle between the enemy, the devil (witches, dwarves, juju,) disease, and God, power, empowerment, healing, freedom, and appellations. The recurring markers from songs composed by both known musicians and anonymous composers were grouped into three broad themes and analyzed. Findings indicate that the local gospel songs depict a plan to undermine IRTs by distinguishing between good and evil. Supplier, giver of good things (God and his son Jesus), and the destroyer and detractor of good things is the (devil) present in IRTs.