

African american (country ghana)

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RELIGION IN GHANA Ghana has a very high religious tolerance amongst its people. This has led to the various emergences of several religious denominations within the country. The primary composition of the religious groups in Ghana is Muslims, Christians and the traditionalists. The Christian sects are divided into: Roman Catholic, protestant (non-Pentecostal), independent African churches and protestant (Pentecostal). In Ghana a multitude of Christians also follow the Hindu religion. Over the years the percentage that makes up the Christianity religion in Ghana has been on the rise. This has been attributed to the rise in the number of Christians attending the independent African churches which has contributed to the need of other Christian sects adjusting their doctrines to suit some of the local beliefs. It is also generally believed that the Northern part of Ghana is predominantly Muslim while the southern part is predominantly Christian¹. Due to the high religious tolerance in the country the major Christian celebrations are recognized as holidays. These planned celebrations allow the Christians to visit their families so as to celebrate together. All the Muslims across the country observe the month of fasting which is known as Ramadhdhan. While the Hindus from Hare Krsna Mandir come to chant the Hare Krsna Mahamantra and celebrate some of the important Hindu holidays. The traditional occasions are also celebrated which include the Adaye festivals, Odwira festivals and Apoo festivals.

The emergence of Christianity in Ghana is credited to the arrival of the Portuguese missionaries during the fifteenth century. However, it was the Wesley/Methodist and Basel/Presbyterian missionaries who came in the nineteenth century and laid the foundations of Christianity in Ghana². This

has led to most of the secondary schools today in Ghana being church or mission-related institutions. Churches have not only contributed to the education sector but also have financial responsibilities.

Even with the presence of the Akan religion has more influence on the people due to its intimate relation to locals and family loyalty. This traditional cosmology bases its beliefs on the supreme god who is referred to as Nyame. Nyame who is the Supreme Being is often thought of as detached and remote from the religious daily life practices and thus not worshipped directly.

The northern part of the country is predominantly Islam. The spread of Islam in Ghana is credited to the commercial and trading activities of Muslims from the Northern region of Africa. The Clerics and Wangara or Mande traders carried the Muslim religion into Ghana. A majority of the Muslims in Ghana are Sunni³. The Qadiriya and Tijaniya brotherhoods of Islam are also represented in Ghana. The Muslims and Christians enjoy excellent relations, however there is still a gap amongst them. This is largely attributed initial blocking of Muslims into modernization as they feared that their children would convert to Christianity when sent to the missionary schools.

Along with Buddhism, Hinduism is one of the gradually developing religions in India. The spread of Hinduism has been spearheaded by Swami and Hare Krishnas. Some of the active Hindu organizations in Ghana include: Ananda marga, Sathya Sai, and Brahma Kumaris. This huge following of Hinduism leads to witnessing of major Hindu festivals in Ghana.

The presence of several religious groups in Ghana is an indication of the

existence of freedom of religion. However, there are laws in place which regulate churches in Ghana. This has been made possible with the need of certification of the various religious settings. However despite these regulations, there are numerous orthodox and spiritual churches which are in operation in the country⁴.

Bibliography

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