

## Faith and Reason Expressed: The Case of Ghana

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### Abstract

It is sometimes difficult to acquire the right answers in solving the problems of life. In this regard, many people wallow in the quagmire of confusion in their quest to get answers to the problems that confront them in life. Largely, this state of confusion emanates from one making a choice amid two alternatives that are capable of rendering solution. The two alternatives that seem to be capable in this context are faith and reason. Whereas some people advocate for only faith, others advocate for only reason to be the independent approaches to solving human problems respectively. Nevertheless, the question is, can faith or reason alone solve one's problems in the midst of the existential factors in the Ghanaian context? By joining this debate, the paper examines the expressions of faith and of reason on separate terminus taking inspirations from the Ghanaian perspective. The paper argues that in finding answers to problems of life, Ghanaians must not depend on only faith or on only reason. Rather, they must blend both faith and reason inasmuch as they are confronted with daily issues of life. This is because issues that operate on the terminus of faith alone (religion) on one side of the coin and that of reason alone on the other side of the coin are complex and delicate to human existence.

**Keywords:** Faith, Reason, Ghana

### Introduction:

*Faith and reason are both necessary for the human person to understand reality and live properly<sup>3</sup>*

The issue of faith and reason has been a topical one from antiquity to postmodern times. Traditionally, faith and reason have each been considered by some people to be sources of

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<sup>3</sup>See John Paul II, (1998). *Fides et Ratio: On the relationship between faith and reason*. Washington, DC: United States Catholic Conference.

justification for religious belief. This is because both (faith and reason) can ostensibly serve the same epistemic function. For this reason, it has been a matter of much interest to philosophers and theologians in view of how the two are related and thus how the rational agent should treat claims derived from either source. Many scientists, theologians and philosophers have argued that religious faith and logical reason are not compatible. Some scientists and humanists have further suggested that natural reason alone is sufficient to provide human beings with answers to questions about the meaning or purpose of human existence<sup>4</sup>. Notwithstanding the above claims however, in Ghana today, it is obvious that majority of Ghanaians who are faced with difficulties get confused. Their confusion to some degree emanates from the fact that they do not know from which of the two alternatives (faith and reason) the one that will yield them solutions to their problems. At times, when this confusion becomes so acute, the only means one resorts to is faith (religion) forgetting if not, completely about “reason”. Nevertheless, by taking into consideration the general idea that has been espoused above, this paper takes inspirations from the Ghanaian context and examines how faith and reason are expressed. By so doing, the paper suggests how and when faith and reason could be employed in solving problems of life.

### **Ghana as a Study Area**

The study area is Ghana. The Republic of Ghana lies almost in the centre of the countries along the Gulf of Guinea (the West African coast). Its southern coast extends between latitudes 4½° North at Cape Three Points and 6½° North in the extreme east and is thus not far from the Equator. From the coast, the country extends inland to about latitude 11° North covering a distance of 672 kilometres from South to North. The distance across the widest part from east to west measures 536 kilometres. The country has a total land area of 239,460 square kilometres. To the east of Ghana lies the Republic of Togo, beyond which are Benin and Nigeria. On the west is La Côte d'Ivoire and on the north is Burkina Faso. Ghana's coastline is 560 kilometres of mainly sandy beaches. According to the year 2010 Population and Housing Census, it was estimated that Ghana has a population of about twenty-four million, six hundred and fifty-eight thousand, eight hundred and twenty three (24,658,823) people. Out of the 24,658,823 people, 71.2% of the population professes the Christian faith, 17.6% are Muslims, 5.2% are adherents of traditional African religion and 5.3% do not belong to any religion<sup>5</sup>. Inferring from the statistics on the religiosity of Ghanaians, there is reason to examine how Ghanaians apply faith and reason in dealing with issues of life.

### **A Look at Faith**

It is difficult to comprehend faith or the notion of religious faith to its fullest terms. Tavani (2008) writes that generally if one were to look up the term “faith” in a dictionary, she (sic) would likely encounter a definition that included terms such as “confidence” or “trust” – for instance, “confidence or trust in a person or thing”<sup>6</sup>. He adds that a close examination of the notion of religious faith reveals at least two different senses that offer a clearer comprehension of the subject. The two different senses have to do with faith as an *act*, and, faith in terms of its *content*. Tavani (2008) posits that primarily, the two aspects of faith might seem to be inseparable.

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<sup>4</sup> Tavani, H. T. (2008). The classic debate on the relationship between faith and reason: Some contemporary challenges from the perspectives of relativism and postmodernism. *InSight: Rivier Academic Journal*, 4(1), p. 1.

See, for example, Wilson, E. O. (1998). *Consilience: The unity of knowledge*. New York: Vintage Books.

<sup>5</sup> Land and people of Ghana, see: <http://www.ghc-ca.com/frm-e-land-people.html>, accessed on 27<sup>th</sup> February, 2014. See: Ghana Statistical Service (May, 2012). 2010 *Population and housing census: Summary report of final results*. Accra: Ghana Statistical Service.

<sup>6</sup> See, for example, the *Random House Dictionary of the English Language* (New York: Random House, 1968).

For example, the content of one's faith (i.e., the principles, doctrines, and articles that comprise a certain faith) might well inform an individual's act of faith (i.e., one's choice, decision, commitment, etc.)<sup>7</sup>. Faith as an *act* as mentioned by Tavani (2008) has been interpreted in diverse ways by several scholars. For example, Thomas Aquinas speaks of faith as an "*act* of the intellect assenting to the truth at the command of the will"<sup>8</sup> whereas Paul Tillich defines faith as an "*act* of the total personality"<sup>9</sup>. John Locke speaks of faith as an "assent to [a] proposition..."<sup>10</sup> and William James describes faith as our "right to adopt a believing attitude in religious matters"<sup>11</sup>.

Tavani (2008) in using Tillich's phrase "dynamics of faith" posits that faith in its dynamic sense, can be understood as an interactive and interpersonal relationship that one has with God. It can also be seen in the form of a commitment that an individual consciously makes to a certain way of living. This way of living includes an individual's commitment to a vocational form of religious community life, or following a set of doctrines. For example, when one "professes" his or her faith. For Tavani (2008), religious faith can be viewed in terms of its content – i.e., the content of the beliefs themselves as opposed to an individual's act of believing. Here, the focus on "faith" is in terms of a particular set or system of religious beliefs and doctrines, rather than on one's subscription or commitment to those beliefs<sup>12</sup>. There are some groups of people who are referred to as *fideists*. A "*fideist*" is someone who believes that faith is independent of, and superior to reason<sup>13</sup>. For a fideist, using reason alone to demonstrate and evaluate religions or religious beliefs is always inappropriate. Fideists argue that faith is not the kind of thing which needs rational justification. Fideists maintain that attempting to prove one's religious faith may even be an indication of a lack of faith<sup>14</sup>.

Another term worth mentioning in connection with faith is *fideism*. The term "*fideism*" derives from the Latin for faith. It is an epistemological theory that questions the power of reason to reach certainty and argues rather that truth can be attained only through faith. Most forms of fideism conceal a distrust of reason, particularly in the areas of morality and religion. In this context, therefore, faith can be understood as belief despite the absence of conclusive evidence: it also implies an emotional attitude of trust or reliance towards its object. Fideists consider such faith essential to religious commitment. The strongest exponent of this view was Søren Kierkegaard who rejected objective reasoning outright as a basis for faith. For Kierkegaard, faith is a fundamentally different process from objective reasoning, a matter of passion rather than reflection. He opposed the notion of proof to that of faith, arguing that faith is only possible when faced with uncertainty<sup>15</sup>. In this paper however, the term faith is understood as an expression of a strong sense of belief in an occurred or yet to occur phenomenon and a particular Christian religious products<sup>16</sup>.

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<sup>7</sup> Tavani, H. T. (2008), p. 2.

<sup>8</sup> St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, II (Qu. 4, Art. 5). In A. C. Pegis, (Ed.). *Basic Writings of St. Thomas Aquinas*, Vol. 2 (New York: Random House, 1945).

<sup>9</sup> Tillich, P. (1957). *Dynamics of Faith*. San Francisco, CA: Harper and Row, p. 4.

<sup>10</sup> Locke, J. *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, ed. A. C. Fraser (Oxford: Clarendon Press), Vol. II, p. 416.

<sup>11</sup> James, W. (1896). *The Will to Believe and Other Essays*. New York: Longmans, Green & Co., p. 1.

<sup>12</sup> Tavani, H. T. (2008), pp. 2-3. See: Swindal, J. (2001). "*Faith and reason*", Internet Encyclopaedia of Philosophy, par. 1, Retrieved from <http://www.utm.edu/research/iep/f/faith-re.htm>, accessed on 2<sup>nd</sup> March, 2014.

<sup>13</sup> Tavani, H. T. (2008), p. 6.

<sup>14</sup> Meister, C. (2009). *Introducing philosophy of religion*. London and New York: Routledge, p. 154.

<sup>15</sup> *Faith and Reason*, retrieved from <http://www.sevenoaksphilosophy.org/religion/faith-and-reason.html>, accessed on 25<sup>th</sup> February, 2014.

<sup>16</sup> Some notable examples are anointing oil, handkerchiefs, stickers, and holy water.

## A Look at Reason

*“It is wrong always, everywhere, and for anyone, to believe anything upon insufficient evidence”<sup>17</sup>.*

The Latin rendition of the English word “reason” is “*ratio*”<sup>18</sup>. Tavani (2008) writes that the term reason is ambiguous and is sometimes used equivocally. For him, in an informal and colloquial sense, reason is sometimes associated with “common sense”<sup>19</sup>. In general terms, the meaning associated with reason is, the principles for a methodological inquiry, whether intellectual, moral, aesthetic, or religious<sup>20</sup>. It can be added that reason largely will deal with the critical and effective use of the intellect/mind. According to St. Augustine, reason is the mind’s capacity of distinguishing and connecting the things that are learned<sup>21</sup>. Inferring from Augustine, there is reason to posit that using the intellect/mind requires a person’s ability to employ a grave evaluation of issues in a logical sequence before passing out judgment.

A person who holds that reason is independent of, and superior to, faith is referred to as a rationalist. Rationalists contend that using faith rather than reason to demonstrate or evaluate religions or religious beliefs is always inappropriate. This is because faith stales the moral agent’s<sup>22</sup> sense of reasoning before an action is taken and therefore attributes every failure to superstition. Some genres of rationalists include critical rationalists<sup>23</sup> and strong rationalists. Critical rationalism is the process of rationally criticizing and evaluating religious belief systems while acknowledging that conclusive proof of such a system is impossible. For critical rationalists, in one’s quest to use reason to solving human problems, one must use reason decisively. In other words, the moral agent is anticipated to weigh the strengths, weaknesses and the consequences of reason before reason is used. The other genre of rationalists are the strong rationalists. For this group of rationalists, they maintain that in order for a religious belief system to be properly and rationally accepted, it must be possible to prove that the belief system is true. By ‘prove’ it is meant that it is possible to show that a belief is true, in a way that is convincing to any intelligent person. It opposes faith and relies on reason. In other words, one should only believe what is reasonable and presented with empirical proofs rather than believing solely because of faith<sup>24</sup>. Having discussed the terms faith and reason in the context of this paper, the next issues to be dealt with focuses on how faith and reason are expressed in the Ghanaian context.

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<sup>17</sup>Clifford, W. K. (1877). *The ethics of belief*. See: [www.memelyceum.com/documents/ethics\\_of\\_belief.pdf](http://www.memelyceum.com/documents/ethics_of_belief.pdf) Accessed on 6<sup>th</sup> November, 2014.

<sup>18</sup> Runes, D. D. (Ed.). (1959). *Dictionary of philosophy: Ancient-medieval-modern*. USA: Littlefield, Adams & Co., p. 264.

<sup>19</sup> Tavani, H. T. (2008), p. 3.

<sup>20</sup>Swindal, J. (2001). Accessed on 2<sup>nd</sup> March, 2014.

<sup>21</sup> Runes, D. D. (Ed.). (1959), p. 263.

<sup>22</sup> Ozumba (2001), writes that to be a moral agent means that moral qualities can be ascribed to a person. For Ozumba, a moral agent must be free and responsible, imbued with certain maturity, rationality and sensitivity. See: Ozumba, G. O. (2001). *A course text on ethics*. Nigeria: Onosomegbowho Ogbinaka Publishers Limited, p. 3.

<sup>23</sup> See: Karl Raimund Popper, *Critical Rationalism*.

<sup>24</sup> Sterne, A. (2012). *Faith and reason*. Retrieved from <http://www.stpetersfireside.org/2012/08/faith-and-reason/>. Accessed on 6<sup>th</sup> November, 2014.

## Faith Expressed

Much can be and has already been said by renowned scholars about the religiosity of Africans and Ghanaians. By revisiting the assertions made by the scholars, the paper refers to Anderson (2013)<sup>25</sup> who recalls some of the notable assertions made by some of the scholars. Anderson (2013) writes, “scholars like Mbiti (1989), Parrinder (1969) and Idowu (1962) have referred to Africans as “*notoriously*”, “*incurably*” and “*in all things*” religious people respectively. The scholars maintain that religion so deeply permeates all the spheres of their (Africans) lives that it cannot be distinguished from non-religious aspects of life. For this reason, in the African traditional life, there are no atheists and that the African cultural heritage is intensely and pervasively religious. This attribution of religiosity to the African peoples, though a general one, may be said to be true of Ghanaians. Thus, Opoku (1974) observed:

“The phenomenon of religion is so pervasive in the life of the Akan, and so inextricably bound up with their culture, that it is not easy to isolate what is purely religious from other aspects of life. It may be said without fear of exaggeration that life in the Akan world is religion and religion is life”<sup>26</sup>.

Majority of Ghanaians express their faith in diverse ways. Some prefer to lodge at prayer camps to offer prayers to salvage their sicknesses rather than seeking medical attention. In concretising this view, data<sup>27</sup> was collected to find out which alternative (lodging at prayer camps and consulting a pastor to get their problems solved as against seeking medical attention) one would choose over the other. The data revealed that a total number of two hundred (200) interviewees out of two-hundred and fifty (250) maintained that prayer camps and pastors are efficient in remedying their situations than resorting to medical care. The interviewees claimed that medicine dispensed by doctors does not cure every disease. For them, most of the doctors operate on the principle of *try and error* to deliver health care service in majority of Ghana’s medical centres. More so, the interviewees consider prayers and pastor-patronage services to be less costly as compared to seeking medical attention. A section of the interviewees maintained that they would choose prayers offered by pastors over medical attention. This is because it is time consuming and unprofitable to spend the entire day in long outpatients queues in the hospital only not to have access to the doctor.

In connection with the above findings, some notable prayer camps in Ghana were visited. In Ghana today, it would interest one who visits some popular prayer sites/camps to witness how some Ghanaians express their faith over reason. For example, some prayer camps like “Atwea Mountain”<sup>28</sup> and Edumfa Heavenly Ministry<sup>29</sup>. At these prayer camps, glimpses were

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<sup>25</sup> Anderson, Jnr. G. (2013). Religion and morality in Ghana: A reflection. *Global Journal of Arts Humanities and Social Sciences*, 1(3), pp. 162-170. See: Mbiti, J. S. (1989), p. 1, Parrinder, E. G. (1969), pp. 28–29, Idowu, Bolaji, E. (1962), p. 146.

<sup>26</sup> Opoku, K. A. (1974), In C. Eric Lincoln (Ed.), p. 286.

<sup>27</sup> Data was collected from two hundred and fifty (250) respondents from five towns in Ghana, Cape Coast, Elmina, Ajumako, Mankessim and Kintampo, all in the Central, and Brong Ahafo regions of Ghana respectively. The total sample size included 100 males and 150 females. A total of 100 respondents were age group 35-50 years whereas 150 were age group between 25-34 years.

<sup>28</sup> The Abaasua/Atwea Mountain is located at Abaasua a small village between Banko and Nsuta in the Sekyere Central District in the Ashanti Region of Ghana. Oral sources claim that a Methodist Minister, the late Rev. Asibey who was in charge of the Effiduase Circuit of the Methodist Church, Ghana in the 1960s, discovered the Mountain as a place for prayer retreat by the direction of God. On reaching at the foot of the mountain, God instructed him to climb to the top to pray and dedicate the place as a prayer site. From that day, the Abaasua Mountain has been a site for prayer retreat for many

caught of many people. Some of whom were shedding tears as they prayed, others sang with loud voice, some were clapping their hands and jumping (signifying the act of trampling on the devil). Some of the inmates at the prayer camps were chained, others were receiving spiritual assistance in the form of deliverance and fervent prayers from the priestesses and pastors in charge. Some of the inmates appeared to be physically weak. This was because they had fasted fervently and prayed close to ten days without eating any food. However, the inmates were restricted to only the intake of small quantity of water.

Moving away from the prayer camps to the issue of miracles, there is much reason to posit that the performance of miracles has become a topical issue in Ghana today. This is because almost every Ghanaian Pentecostal-Charismatic Christian church performs miracles. The miracles that occur are but not limited to the restoration of the sight of the blind, curing the deaf and dumb, and healing the cripples etc. In the midst of the occurrences of these miracles however, there are certain Christian religious products<sup>30</sup> that facilitate the occurrences of miracles. Interviewees from five different Ghanaian Pentecostal-Charismatic Christian churches maintained that the religious products contained supernatural powers that readily remedy both spiritual and physical problems. This information gathered from the interviewees ties closely with the research findings of Stiles-Ocran (2004). Literature indicates that Stiles-Ocran (2004) conducted research on some Pentecostal-Charismatic Churches in Ghana. He observed that majority of the Ghanaian populace patronise Christian religious products than seeking medical attention.

According to Stiles-Ocran (2004), his interviewees maintained that the Christian religious products are used to administer healing and deliverance. Again, the products serve as a medium that empowers the clients for wealth or prosperity at anointing services and the use of the religious products is very efficacious<sup>31</sup>. Inferring from the findings of Stiles-Ocran (2004) in connection with the issue under discussion, then there is reason to comprehend the news item that hit the airwaves of Ghana on 19<sup>th</sup> of May 2013. On that said date, four (4) people were reported dead with thirteen (13) other persons injured at a Nigerian-based Pastor's Church in Accra<sup>32</sup>. This tragedy was as a result of a serious stampede that occurred at the main entrance to the church's premises. The report was that thousands of people had flocked the Church in pursuit of healing, spiritual and financial breakthrough. The influx of people to the church in question was in view of an alleged free distribution of *bottled holy water* (Italics mine) that is claimed to be the panacea to people's physical and spiritual afflictions<sup>33</sup>.

Another area that depicts an expression of faith over reason is how some Ghanaians invite into their homes and businesses some pastors to pray for them to get their problems solved. In this respect, the research conducted a survey in one hundred and fifty homes<sup>34</sup>. The

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Christian Churches and Ministries in Ghana and even beyond. (The Mountain is popularly known as Atwea Mountain because it is close to the Atwea village which in terms of population has over shadowed the Abaasua village), See: <http://www.pcgatweamountain.com/>, accessed on 2<sup>nd</sup> March, 2014.

<sup>29</sup> Edumfa Heavenly Ministries is a spiritual revival and healing centre near Cape Coast, Ghana. Edumfa is a town in the Abura-Asebu-Kwamankese District of the Central Region. See: <http://edumfaheavenlyministry.org/index.html>, accessed on 2<sup>nd</sup> March, 2014.

<sup>30</sup> See p. 5, footnote number 17.

<sup>31</sup> Stiles-Ocran, D. B. (2004). *Prophetism in Ghana: A case study of some charismatic churches*, M. Phil thesis, University of Ghana, Legon, Accra, pp. 75-76.

<sup>32</sup> The capital town of the Republic of Ghana.

<sup>33</sup> See: <http://edition.myjoyonline.com/pages/news/201305/106286.php>, accessed on 27<sup>th</sup> February, 2014.

<sup>34</sup> Data was collected from four towns in Ghana from February 12<sup>th</sup> to April 20<sup>th</sup>, 2014. The four

survey revealed that ninety-eight (98) out of the one-hundred and fifty (150) homes in one way or another had invited and hosted a pastor to offer prayers for their wellbeing. Another way that illustrates how faith is expressed over reason is evident in the prayer of one renowned pastor of the “*Christian Action Faith International Ministries*”<sup>35</sup> that hit the airwaves of Ghana on Monday February 3, 2014. This pastor is reported to have led his congregation to offer a fervent intercessional prayer for the *Cedi*<sup>36</sup> to bring to a standstill its losses against the American Dollar. The prayer was in connection with the wake of the galloping inflation of the Cedi by the Commencement of the year 2014<sup>37</sup>. The prayer is captured below verbatim:

“I hold up the cedi with prayer and I command the cedi to recover and I declare the cedi will not fall; it will not fall any further. I command the cedi to climb. I command the resurrection of the cedi. I command and release a miracle for the economy”<sup>38</sup>.

Away from the above instances discussed, the paper recalls an incident that involved the expression of faith over reason. The incident ensued between the medical staff of the Princess Marie Louise Children’s Hospital and the parents of a nine-year old girl belonging to the Jehovah Witnesses Religious faith on Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> June, 2011. The confrontation was in connection with blood transfusion. It was reported that the nine-year old girl was rushed to the hospital for medical treatment only to be told that the girl was anemic. This implied that the girl needed blood. In the medical staffs’ quest to save the life of the dying girl, the parents of the girl vehemently protested against the intended transfusion of blood to their daughter since it was against their faith. Nevertheless, the police intervened and the life of the girl was rescued<sup>39</sup>. From the instances cited earlier like others that have not been captured in this paper, one begins to question the place of reason in Ghana. Do the above instances give reason to argue that ‘reason’ does not play much role in the life and thought of Ghanaians? If it is the case, then there is reason to posit that it is no wonder that Asare-Opoku, Mbiti and other scholars have maintained that religion permeates in all the aspects of the African including Ghanaians that one cannot

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towns were; Cape Coast, Accra, Winneba and Takoradi. In Cape Coast, fifty homes were visited. Out of the fifty homes, thirty confirmed that they had invited an itinerant pastor who had come to stay with them for about three weeks to organize fervent prayers with them in anticipation of total liberation from demonic spiritual attacks. In Accra, sixty homes were visited. Out of the sixty homes, forty maintained that, they had invited pastors who came to live with them for two months. The pastor’s stay was to help them develop their spirituality and offer deliverance for the entire family owing to issues pertaining to spiritual marriage and frequent divorce. In Winneba and Takoradi twenty homes each were visited. Fifteen out of the twenty homes in Winneba acknowledged that they had invited a pastor to live with them for three days to pray against witches attack. In Takoradi, only thirteen out of the twenty homes visited confirmed that they had invited a powerful pastor who had come to stay with them for two days to counsel and pray for their twenty-three year old boy who had subscribed to the smoking of Indian hemp.

<sup>35</sup> Christian Action Faith International Ministries is one of the Penteco-Charismatic churches in Ghana

<sup>36</sup> The Cedi is the national currency of Ghana. It comes in coins and notes.

<sup>37</sup> Duncan Williams spiritually ‘commands the cedi to rise’, See: <http://news.myjoyonline.com/business/2014/February-2nd/duncan-williams-spiritually-commands-the-cedi-to-rise.php>. Accessed on 7<sup>th</sup> May, 2014.

<sup>38</sup> Asare-Donkoh, F. (2014). *Can prayer alone ‘resurrect’ the cedi?* See: <http://graphic.com.gh/features/opinion/17257-can-prayer-alone-resurrect-the-cedi.html#sthash.Agr9p9KU.dpuf> Accessed on February 10<sup>th</sup> 2014.

<sup>39</sup> GhanaWeb. (Sunday, 19 June 2011). *Doctors, police “fight off” Jehovah’s Witnesses over blood transfusion*. Retrieved from <http://www.ghanaweb.com/GhanaHomePage/NewsArchive/artikel.php?ID=211555> accessed on 29<sup>th</sup> September, 2014.

distinguish what is religious from non-religious aspects of their life.

### **Reason Expressed**

Like the discussions made on the expression of faith above, one expects to see that of reason. However, can the above discussion be likewise in the case of reason? In the popular mind of some Ghanaians lingers the impression that there seems to be too much religion (faith) in Ghana. In this regard, excess religion (faith) has mired the efficient use of reason. Though it can be true of the above stance however, there is the need to sound a caveat. This caveat is in view of the fact that one cannot completely deny the place of reason. Else, without fear of exaggeration, there would be enough reason to say of Ghanaians that they do not ‘reason’ or rationalize. Nevertheless, it must be categorically established that it is not the case that Ghanaians do not use their reason. Ghanaians express their reason in matters pertaining to the environment. Importantly, issues pertaining to sanitation, environmental degradation and illegal mining. In his bid to tackle the canker of filth in Ghana, the Ghana government has instituted a monthly clean-up exercise schedule. This clean-up is to be observed on every first Saturday of the month. This day is tagged *Sanitation Day*. This initiative, aims at sensitizing Ghanaians about the need to clean up their environment to reduce filth and the spread of diseases in the nation<sup>40</sup>. In this regard, there is reason to maintain that reason is at work instead of its counterpart, faith. One other way Ghanaians express reason is in the area of Law, basically, legal justice. That is to maintain that in a situation where a person or groups of persons think that someone has infringed upon their rights. In this regard, people turn to the Law Courts and Legal Units<sup>41</sup> for justice but not to faith. Corruption is a canker that is bedeviling Ghana and Ghanaians. In the words of Brig. Gen. Nunoo-Mensah (Rtd.), corruption in Ghana like other countries has reached what has been called “epidemic proportions”<sup>42</sup>. Importantly, Ghanaians do not tackle corruption with faith but rather, their reason.

In the paragraphs that follow, the paper presents data collected from a survey amongst some students and from some communities in Cape Coast. The survey was conducted in three schools<sup>43</sup> and five different communities<sup>44</sup> all located in the Cape Coast Municipal. In the schools, the students responded to the question of how they express their reason in their world of life and academics. Ninety students of the one hundred and forty sample size population maintained that it would be of no use to rely only on faith in dealing with issues of life and academics. For them, though they reckon the importance of faith, reason must lead faith. Faith should be a compliment to reason. The students advanced that comprehensive reading produces success in one’s academic life rather than the reliance on “anointed pens” distributed by pastors in church prior to examinations. Away from the students, attention was paid to the five communities noted earlier. The inhabitants responded to the question of how they responded to the issue that threatens their livelihood. For majority of the respondents, they would prefer to seek prayers from their pastor if they have any troubling issue (health, unemployment, divorce, business). If for some days the problem persists, they would find other alternatives that can best

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<sup>40</sup>*Daily Graphic*, Thursday October 30, 2014 Cover Page. The government declared Saturday, November 1 and subsequently every first Saturday of the month National Sanitation Day.

<sup>41</sup>For example: The Domestic Violence and Victims’ Support Unit (DOVVSU).

<sup>42</sup>This is how Brig. Gen. Nunoo-Mensah (Rtd.), a former Security Advisor who is currently at the forefront of the crusade against corruption, described the issue in a radio interview, cited in an editorial of *The Catholic Standard*, November 2-8, 2014 Issue, p. 4.

<sup>43</sup>Forty students from two different Senior High Schools in Cape Coast were interviewed to find out how they express reason in their world of life and academics to solve their problems. One hundred students were additionally interviewed from the University of Cape Coast.

<sup>44</sup>The five communities are; Apewosika, Kokwaado, Kwaprow, Amamoma and Kwesipra, all in the University of Cape Coast environs in the Central Region of Ghana.

solve such problems. Here one infers from the stance of the respondents that reason becomes the best apparent alternative.

### **Faith and Reason Expressed: An Evaluation**

Faith and reason are at work in the Ghanaian society. There is a relationship between faith and reason. There is no contradiction between faith and reason. They complement each other<sup>45</sup>. That is to say, human reason and experience but not faith alone can be considered as sources of moral wisdom and knowledge for the human person. In assessing the use of faith and reason in Ghana, the paper argues that it would be fallacious for one to maintain that a person's level of education determines whether to apply faith or reason in resolving a life crisis. This position, the paper holds because there are some people whom despite their level of education will and have misapplied the best befitting alternative capable of solving a particular life issue. Nevertheless, the caveat the paper alerts is that the afore proposition does not imply that one's level of education plays no significant role in choosing between the two options – faith and reason.

Away from the above, one may question why it seems faith is expressed over reason in Ghana. Is it because Ghanaians are noted for their high level of religiosity? The paper posits that it is not necessarily so. However, Ghanaians generally have the conviction that real life issues are to be explored well in our attempts to finding solutions. This gives Ghanaians the urge to become zealous to uphold the autonomy of faith and by so doing, reason becomes depreciated. The paper proposes an adherence to the ideal of a reasonable faith. That is, a genre of faith which is not indeed purely rational, in the sense that it could be demonstrated by reason but one which “has exposed itself to the scrutiny and testing of critical and corrective reason and has survived<sup>46</sup>. The paper posits that Ghanaians must first develop their reason before used or expressed. This is because reason is a good tool and source of solution to problems of life. However, the question remains, must Ghanaians give much prominence to faith in finding solutions to the existential problems because we seem to have failed to develop our reasons? The paper revealed that instances where Ghanaians fall so much on traditions, faith is expressed over reason. For example, Ghanaians situated in rural communities who experience low harvest and pests attack on their crops generally attribute such a fiasco to the handiworks of the gods and spirit beings. In this regard, faith or religion becomes the first resort. By so doing, they placate the gods and the spirit beings for a failure that might possibly not have been inflicted by the gods. Nevertheless, must it be the case that faith be the first to be expressed? Should there not be pragmatic questions like; “was it the appropriate period for planting, were the weather conditions favourable, were the seeds viable for planting? Such reasonable questions are generally left out.

### **Conclusion**

Faith and, or reason are dicey and delicate approaches Ghanaians use to solve their problems. In view of this, the outsider must be cautious in passing judgment on how one uses any of the two approaches. Taking on board this background, the paper sought to look at how faith on one hand and reason on the other hand are expressed in the Ghanaian context. The paper discovered that many Ghanaians subscribe to the use of faith in most cases than that of reason. Nevertheless, it could not be said that the subscription to faith implied a total absence of reason. This is because there is reason to argue that in Ghana faith does not operate in a vacuum. Reason could not be the only alternative employed by Ghanaians. In situations where reason was

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<sup>45</sup> Sokolowski, R. (1995). *The God of faith and reason: Foundations of Christian theology*. Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press. See also: *The Catechism of the Catholic Church* (1995). New York: Double Day. No. 159, which states that “though faith is above reason, there can never be any real discrepancy between faith and reason”.

<sup>46</sup> See: Macquarrie, J. (1996). *Principles of Christian theology*. London: SMC Press Ltd., p. 40.

used, it was observed that faith became the complement. From the above perspectives, the paper concludes by referring to Pope John II who writes, “*Faith and reason are both necessary for the human person to understand reality and live properly*”<sup>47</sup>. In this respect, the paper admonishes Ghanaians not to allow faith to solely dictate the pace in their lives in their quest to finding answers to problems. Faith and reason should not be placed on the same pedestal in one’s pursuit to solving a particular problem. In this regard, reason must be placed over faith so that faith becomes the complement. By so doing, Ghanaians must however blend both faith and reason in their quest to solve problems of life.

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<sup>47</sup> Refer to p. 1 footnote no. 3

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