'DECODING' THE CLERICAL VESTMENTS OF THE METHODIST BISHOP IN CHARGE OF SEKONDI DIOCESES

Volume 1, June 2019 Pages: 136 - 153
ISSN: 2665-0983 (ONLINE) DOI: 10.35738/ftr.v1.2019.10

AUTHORS
Cynthia Agyeiwaa Kusi
Department of Textile Design and Technology, Takoradi Technical University, Takoradi – Ghana.

Sarah Asheley Quansah
Department of Textile Design and Technology, Takoradi Technical University, Takoradi – Ghana.

Fredrick Boakye-Yiadom
Department of Sculpture Design and Technology, Takoradi Technical University, Takoradi-Ghana.

Corresponding author's email: cynthks@yahoo.co.uk

ABSTRACT

This qualitative research examined the various components and representations of the Clerical Vestments of the Methodist Bishop responsible for the Sekondi Dioceses**.** The interpretivism and constructivism, which is underpinned by a subjective ontology, was the research approach adopted, and the research instruments entailed interviews, description, photography and observations. The study identified the clerical vestments of the Methodist bishop of Sekondi Dioceses and considered the value of the symbols of office to the congregation. It further discussed the fabric, colours, the philosophical symbolism, aesthetics and value of the clerical vestments and the methods of production of such regalia (cassock, cross, stole, skull cap, cincture and the clerical). The investigation revealed that most of the congregations were not aware of the value of the Vestments of the Priest. Again, the Vestments has philosophical symbolism, artistic impression, aesthetics and the religious impact on the congregation which needs to be documented and studied in order to preserve this rich religious heritage for posterity.

Keywords: Clerical Vestments; Methodist Bishop; Philosophical Symbolism; Religion; Aesthetics

1. INTRODUCTION

Clerical Vestments are the distinctive clothes normally worn by Preachers in the course of conducting services of worship. It is not the purpose of distinctive clerical and liturgical clothing to give the impression of superior status to the Minister or Preacher. Ministers and Preachers, when conducting Services of Worship, presiding over the Sacraments and preaching, do not do so as individuals. While individuality, talent and skill enhance the Minister or Preacher's proclamation of God's grace, the individuality of the Minister or Preacher is of secondary importance to the Church's proclamation of the gospel of grace (James, 1985). In reference to McBrien, (1994) Ministers and Preachers represent the Church of Christ in all places and all ages,drawing the authority of their message from the gracious call of God upon their lives, their dependence upon the leading of the Holy Spirit, their subjection to the tradition of the Apostles and the Holy Scriptures. With this in view to McBrien, (2004), believes that the purpose of Clerical vestments is to mask the individuality of the Minister or Preacher and demonstrate that the Minister or Preacher is a servant of Jesus Christ and the whole Church in all places and all ages. Realistically, the Methodist tradition follows the practice of John Wesley who, although was an Anglican priest, chose the "plainness" of the Puritan pattern of clerical vestment. Thus Methodists avoid elaborate or ornate clerical vestments, neatness and plainness being considered consistent with Methodism's concern for the poor, a spirit of humility and the demeanour of "the servant of all (Anderson, 1994).

Clerical Vestments can be explained generally to embrace the composition of symbols of office of a clergy in a ministry which has both value and aesthetic importance of which Methodist Church cannot be left out. Clerical Vestments is an art in religion which is fast growing in Ghana albeit some attendant problems. The problems are not new in religious discussion. Indeed, publications of Kyeremanten (1987), Osei-Agyemang (1999), Fosu, (2008a: 17-39) and Gyekye (2005: 143-148 and 2012), amongst others have critically examined different issues in the Regalia for the Traditional Religion. Sarpong, (1974), an anthropologist discussed Traditional Religion's Priesthood's Vestments while Otabil (2012) and Duncan-Williams, (2015) also discussed the significance of Priesthood garments in relation to Salvation as the core mandate of every Christian. The traditional Religious Vestments dwelled upon were shrines, grooves, the Palaces of Nominal High Priests and ancestors Temples. Although, a lot of Pastors were seen in their Religious Vestments (such as gowns, cassock, stole, robes etc.) in the study area, the spotlight was on the Methodist Bishop of the Sekondi Dioceses.

The socio-religious importance of the Vestments was not mentioned in their submissions except Sarpong who stated briefly the functionalities of few of the traditional Vestments before he dealt with the Cosmological Beliefs in Traditional Ghanaian Societies. In addition to that, issues such as colours, symbols and materials used in fabricating the Vestments, very germane to the development of religious

June 2019 - Fashion And Textiles Review, ISSN: 2665-0983

history have not been given adequate scholarly attention in the broad spectrum of religious management; invariably the subject remains nebulous.

Although Clerical Vestments has made a dramatic impact on the congregation in many societies, including Ghana, it has not been fully explained to the public its significances in relation to the worship of God to the societies. Secondly, even though the churches purchase these regalia for the churches and the priests, their philosophies, symbolism, aesthetics, and the socio-cultural values have not been fully understood by most of the wearers and the congregation. The Methodist Church in Sekondi cannot be left out in this situation most significantly the custodians of the Bishop's Vestments.

Furthermore, in spite of policies made by the church leaders to protect the church and its Vestments, the problem, no doubt, keeps on escalating by the day since the custodian are alien to the symbolic importance of the Vestments. Unfortunately, policymakers, in the church and the general congregation also seem not to be abreast with the importance of the Vestments used in the church. These have devastating consequences on religious heritage. Therefore, the Methodist traditions must devise pragmatic methods to check the ever-increasing unawareness of the congregations understanding of the Clerical Vestments, which a lot of money is spent on their purchases. Also, rapid growth in the Church's population and technological advancement has rather aggravated the situation. Day in day out, the leadership of the church is looking for new technologies to increase its financial status while little or no effort is made to teaching the congregation their history and heritages which could be passed to the future generation. It is on account of these that the researchers topic was proposed for Decoding the Clerical Vestments of the Bishop of the Sekondi Dioceses that could help in protecting the church's heritage. The socio-cultural importance of the Clerical Vestments comes with the following theories:

1.1 Functionalism

Functionalism, as a school of thought in anthropology, emerged in the early twentieth century. Functionalists seek to describe the different parts of society and their relationship through the organic analogy. The organic analogy compared the different parts of society to the organs of a living organism. The organism was able to live, reproduce and function through the organised system of its several parts and organs. Like a biological organism, society was able to maintain its essential processes through the way that the different parts interacted together. Institutions such as religion, kinship, arts, and the economy were the organs and individuals were the cells in this social organism. Functionalist analyses examine the social significance of phenomena, that is, the function they serve a particular society in maintaining the whole (Jarvie 1973). The significance of this theory to the study at hand is in the correlation between Clerical Vestments is the organ, and the Priest and the rest of the congregation were the cells in this social organism. With a proper understanding of the socio-cultural and aesthetic significance of the Clerical Vestments, the tendency of

June 2019 - Fashion And Textiles Review, ISSN: 2665-0983

members of Church identifying themselves with their tradition is high. The next theory that guided the researchers was Humanism's Theory of the Universe.

1.2 Humanism's Theory of the Universe

For Humanism the central concern is always the happiness of people in this existence. Humanism is an affirmative philosophy. It is essentially yea-saying. It says: Yes, this almighty and abundant Nature is our home; in it, we ever live and move and have our being. This Nature produced the marvel of life and the human race. It sustains us with its varied goods and stirs us with its wonderful beauty. Yes, this is good earth, and upon it, we can create a worthwhile and happy existence for all humanity. Yes, we humans possess the glory of mind and the power of freedom; we know the grace of body and the splendour of love. We are grateful for the many simple pleasures that are ours, for the manifold enjoyments which art and culture and science bring. We, mortals, delight in the sweetness of living rather than lamenting over its brevity. And we rejoice in being able to hand on the torch of life to future generations (Wieman, Macintosh and Otto, 1932).

The relevance of this theory to the research is that God is the creator of the Universe and everything in it. As humans, he has given us the power to live and enjoy everything he has created. He still reminds us of passing on the mantle to the future generation. This is an indication that we must preserve, conserve, restore and teach our past, present and even the future when necessary to our young ones which could be passed on to generation yet unborn. This study seeks to identify the Methodist Bishop of the Sekondi Dioceses' Clerical Vestments. It will examine the colours used in the production of the material (fabric) for the Vestments, and further decodes the philosophical symbolism, aesthetics and value of the clerical vestment.

2. METHODOLOGY

The ontological research paradigm that deals with interpretivism and constructivism, which is underpinned by a subjective ontology were the approach the researchers adopted. This type of research paradigm informed the researchers' decision to focus on an in-depth interview, observation, description and pictorial approach to collecting data. This research approach involves the interpretation of people's cultural practices from the native's point of view; an analysis of a phenomenon based on natural experience or observation of human activities directly as against assumptions or hypotheses (Ary, Jacobs, & Razavieh, 2002; Best, 2000).

With the above knowledge in mind, the researchers were at the Bishop's Manse at Sekondi to take stock of the Vestments. The researchers were at the church premise from the beginning to the end of the church service on Sunday and had the privilege of interviewing the Bishop and other relevant persons during the data collection. Also,

June 2019 - Fashion And Textiles Review, ISSN: 2665-0983

the bishop gave us the privilege to take photographs and video clips of some of the Clerical Vestments, which now serve the pictorial purpose in this study.
In the course of the study, the researchers interviewed some Church leaders, some members of the Church and the designers of the Bishop's costumes. Their responses were harmonised to constitute the descriptions and positions held in this work.
Predominantly, the spotlight was placed on six (6) items used during data collection, namely the cassock, the stole, the cap skull, preaching band, cincture and the clerical.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Clerical Vestments have a different effect based on the colours used, occasion, time, place and the position of the character that uses them. Their content and the significant meanings are realised based on the above-stated determinants. The clerical dress is one of such determinants which need to be studied properly.

3.1 Clerical Dresses

When the Methodist Church of Ghana adopted the Episcopal form of church leadership, it adopted the Vestments of the Episcopal churches (the Roman Catholic and Anglican). The use of these vestments also has come to differentiate the positions in the ministry. All vestments of the Methodist Church of Ghana are influenced by the Western World who first brought the gospel to the people (pers. Comm. Bishop of the Sekondi Diseases). Vestments are made up of many different items of the priest, including the clerical dresses.

The clerical dresses of the Bishop are made up of the cassock, clerical shirt, vests and suits. The clerical dresses of the Methodist Bishop of the Sekondi Dioceses as wearing apparel are either machine or hand woven. These types of dresses converse, as well as titivate and envelop the body of the priest. According to Garrard (1989), Akan cloth can be described as „proverb" cloth because it "offers an accessible public voice to those who are constrained to silence". In the same vein, Rattray, (1923) says that it is "textile rhetoric" in its design and its mode of wearing may be "not just to praise political heroes, to commemorate historical events and to assert social identities, but also as a form of rhetoric a channel for the silent projection of argument" so it is with the dresses of the Bishop.



Figure 1. Bishop dressed in Suit for Office
Source: Field Data (24th March 2017)

3.2 Fabric for the Bishop's garments

Clothing comfort is a very complex subjective perception, which relates to the interactions between fabrics, climatic, human physiological and psychological variables (Li & Wong, 2006). Clothing comfort is one of the most important attributes of textile materials. Comfort cannot be reliably predicted by any single laboratory test of fabric or by any series of different fabric test. This is because comfort in the wearing of the garment is inherently subjective; it is entirely a perception in the mind of the individual wearer and thus defines objective quantified analysis (Li & Wong, 2006). Therefore, the choice of the fabrics for the construction of the Bishop's garment is basically the right of the wearer i.e. the Bishop.

June 2019 - Fashion And Textiles Review, ISSN: 2665-0983

There are two basic fabrics (natural and synthetic fibre based) used in the construction of the Bishop's garments. The most commonly used fabrics are cotton and cotton-polyester blends. Polyester is known to be utilitarian fibre, so it is often added to fibres where affordability, durability, washability, easy to iron and function is a priority (Sackey 2002). The Bishop agrees with this notion, and that informed his decision for selecting these types of fabrics for his garment because the blend of natural and artificial fibres brings breathability, sweat resistance and an easy to manage garment when he wears them (pers. comm. Bishop, 2017). According to the Bishop, the selection of the fabric has no symbolic meanings, but the colours do (pers. comm. Bishop, 2017). The garments come in the colours of black, ash, white and others. Again, these can be worn by all Ministers (bishop, superintendent minister and presiding bishop).

3.3 Colour Symbolism in the Bishop's Garments

The knowledge of the use of these colours is from the Church Almanac, which is designed with colour indications for various occasions. According to Ensenberger (1997) study was carried out in eight countries to explore consumers‟ preferences for different colours and colour combinations. The results show a cross-cultural pattern of both similarity and dissimilarity in colour preferences and colour meaning associations. Hence the colours found in the Bishop's dresses (white, indecent white, deep rose, black, iridescent silver or grey and payner's grey) have religious significance in the worship of God in the Methodist church. The white garments are worn during joyful festivities such as Christmas, Easter Sunday; celebration of the Holy Communion, Naming, Baptism services and Marriage ceremonies (pers. Comm. With the Bishop, RT. Rev. D. D. Brace, 2017) The colour white as used in the Methodist church signifies purity, holiness, righteousness, and triumph (pers. Comm. Rev. Patrick Ansah, 2017). The Bible also confirms this in Revelation 7:9. Sarpong, (1974), states that aesthetically white connotes reverence, purity, simplicity, cleanliness, peace, humility, precision, innocence, youth, birth, good, sterility and marriage. White in Methodist Religion, artistic and aesthetic point of views indicates blessing and holiness. When the Bishop uses white colour, he is basically prophesying these mentioned properties, which are an indication of "welcoming the Holy Spirit" into their mix.

3.4 The Black Cassock

The Cassock is worn for funeral service, ordination, commissioning and induction ceremonies. It is actually the official dress for Church Ministers. The black Cassock is worn during the occasions mentioned above. The colour black signifies strength in Methodism (per. Comm. Evangelist Agyekum, 2017). This is in line with Mbiti's, (1979) position that anthropologically, black denotes power, sexuality, sophistication, formality, elegance, wealth, mystery, fear, evil, anonymity, unhappiness, depth, style, sadness, remorse, anger, underground, good, technical colour, mourning, and death.

June 2019 - Fashion And Textiles Review, ISSN: 2665-0983

Realistically, the Akan ethnic groups in Ghana mourn in the colour black and red to show sadness, seriousness and fortification which is also accepted by the ancestors in the spiritual realm for the same significance as stated above (Gyekye, 1998). This is a clear indication that the Bishop upon wearing the black Cassock is fortified spiritually by God to withstand every principality and power which are against that of God's,

Also, black coloured cassock can withstand sweat and dirt, which makes it manageable. The black coloured cassock absorbs the sweat without any notification, unlike any other colour. Furthermore, the Bishop puts on the black cassock to resist dirt from the environment to make him clean and formal at all times (pers. Comm. With the Bishop, RT. Rev. D. D. Brace, 2017). These are not the only colours the Bishop uses for church services.

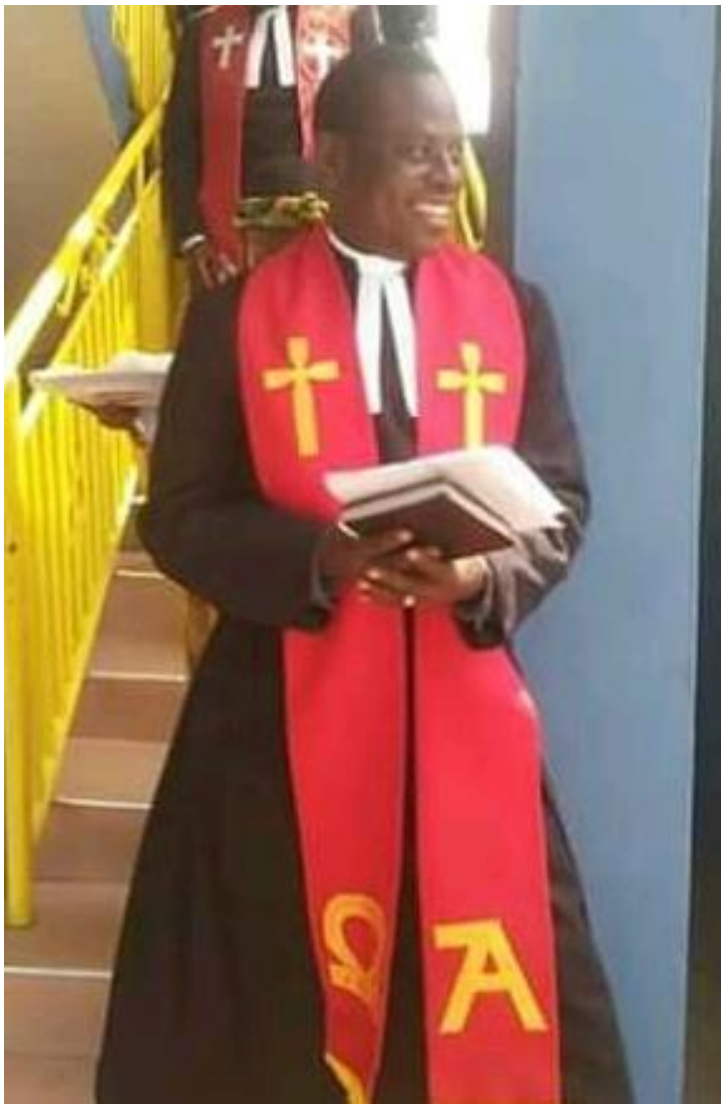


Figure 2. Bishop in Black Cassock

June 2019 - Fashion And Textiles Review, ISSN: 2665-0983

3.5 The Ash Cassock

The ash Cassock is worn for any occasion that is funeral, ordination, commissioning etc. Unlike the Catholic priests who have made it mandatory for Cassock to be always worn, the Methodists Minister can only wear the Cassock only when he/she is on duty (pers. Comm. with the Bishop, RT. Rev. D. D. Brace, 2017). Ash as a colour implies redemption, wisdom, the soul and these can be found in the Bible (Ecclesiastes 12:6), purification (Zechariah 13:9), priesthood, tabernacle (Exodus 25:3) (pers. Comm. with the Very. Rev. Abekah (2017). Chanda, (1993), Mbiti, (1979), and Sarpong (1974) agree with Abekah to a point and stated that the ash colour in religious contest goes beyond his claims and that security, reliability, intelligence, staid, modesty, dignity, stability, solid, conservative, practical, old age, sadness and boring are all part of the symbolic significance of the colour. These accessions imply that if the Bishop puts on the ash cassock, he assumes the position of an elderly person with a lot of wisdom and can be relied upon regardless of his age. He is seen to be pure, clean, modest, stable, intelligent, and solid in all his dealings both in and out of the church. In spite of all these wonderful attributes, the Bishop must again be seen as human and not perfect. He may have his weak side and that will be the sadness and boring part of his life. This is where the church and the society must understand and come in to assist in a positive manner to soldier on for the ultimate which is the salvation.



Figure 3. Bishop dressed in full regalia (ash cassock) for a sod cutting ceremony. Source: Methodist Church Picture Gallery (retrieved on 15th May 2018)

3.6 The Wine Cassock

The Cassock wine is made for Bishops only. In fact, most often than not, the Bishop of the Methodist Church wears dresses made of the shades of wine. The Bishop can wear

June 2019 - Fashion And Textiles Review, ISSN: 2665-0983

any other colour that other ministers wear. What differentiates them is the waistband. For instance, in the case of the Superintendents, green waistbands are used instead of the usual red and white bands. The Superintendents are differentiated by the colour green. Therefore, green runs through their attires i.e. shirts, and gowns (per. comm. with the Bishop, RT. Rev. D. D. Brace, 2017).The Methodist church believes that wine signifies love, compassion, and the heart of God. Christ showed man to love and compassion in their sinful state and offered them the chance to change and follow him for salvation (per. Comm. with Comfort Asamoah Mensah: steward Good Shepherd Methodist Church, 2017). Gyekye, (1979) and Sarpong, (1974) report that the colour wine shows love affection, sober reflection and the heart of a loving soul. The logic drawn from the data with respect to the wine coloured cassock is to identify the position of the Priest and to portray his compassion and love to the public as Christ did to offer redemption to man. The Bishop's cassocks go with some accessories, and one of such is the skull cap.



Figure 4. Bishop clad in wine Cassock during his Ordination as a Bishop
Source: Methodist Church Picture Gallery. (Retrieved on 15th May 2018)

3.7 The Skull Cap

The colour of the skull cap is wine and has the same colour symbolism as the wine cassock of the Bishop. The wearing of the cap connotes the crown of thorns, which Jesus was made to wear at his crucifixion. The crown of thorns denotes the numerous sins committed by man which could have led them into the hellfire and Christ in his infinite mercy and a good leader accepted to carry all the sins onto the cross and die with them. Presently, this crown of thorns is no more because Christ is risen without the crown of thorns, which signifies the sins of man. Therefore, the crown of thorns has been exchanged with the crown of glory, which is the cap. This cap is only worn by Bishops (per. comm. with the Bishop, RT. Rev. D. D. Brace, 2017). From the discussions, it is clear that the cap indicates the position of the priest. The Bishop is seen as the leader of Christ's crusaders and must possess good leadership qualities and lead an exemplary life wealthy of emulation in order to attain the glory and the salvation of God.



Figure 5. Bishop wearing his 'skull cap' during his ordination as a Bishop.
Source: Methodist Church Picture Gallery (Retrieved on 15th May 2018)

3.8 The Stole

The Stole is worn around the neck on the gown or Cassock. The Stole is not worn with Suits. Most importantly, the Stole defines the seasons according to the Christian Calendar. There are two seasons: Lent (Easter) and Advent (Christmas) (per. comm. with the Bishop, RT. Rev. D. D. Brace, 2017). According to the Bishop, these seasons come with emotional attachments about Christian growth. The stole comes in varied colours and symbols to make these seasons more identifiable and meaningful.

June 2019 - Fashion And Textiles Review, ISSN: 2665-0983

The colours of the Stoles are:

White: the white stole goes with the occasions where the white Cassock is worn, e.g. naming ceremony etc.

Violet: Violet Stole is worn during the 40days preparations towards Lent and Advent. For all the Christian seasons, there is a preparatory period towards the actual day of the season. The violet here signifies penitence, i.e. a period of mourning or sadness. So then, the violet Stoll can be worn when there is a funeral. Ball (2001) discussed that the colour violet represents royalty, spirituality, nobility, ceremony, mysterious, transformation, wisdom, enlightenment, cruelty and mourning in Africa indigenous traditional setting. Fisher (1984) agrees with both assertions and believes that violet colour again symbolises wisdom, integrity, and transition in the cosmic word.

Interestingly, the wearer must assume his readiness of contrition to the congregation, which must be demonstrated by his followers as well to the general public. The penitent period, brings soberness, remorsefulness, sadness and apologetic mood on the part of the congregation. Therefore, they are in the mourning period as the clergy puts on the colour violet. This is in agreement with the statement made by Fisher (1984).

Red: Red stole is worn during special occasions like induction to a position, ministerial ordination, commissioning and the day of Pentecost. The colour red signifies the fire of the Holy Spirit (per. comm. with the Bishop, RT. Rev. D. D. Brace, 2017). According to Adams (1999), the red colour has multiple meaning just like any other colour. It can symbolise danger, as one wave a red flag in front of a ball but to roll out the 'red carpet' means to welcome someone extravagantly, and we speak of 'red letter day' when something particularly exciting has occurred. These are in agreement with the Anthropologist and the Roman Catholic Bishop, Mbiti (1979) who underscored the red colour as excitement, energy, passion, desire, speed, strength, power, heat, love, aggression, fire, blood, war and violence. Red again signifies the blood of Jesus, atonement and grace (per. Comm. with Comfort Asamoah Mensah: steward Good Shepherd Methodist Church, 2017).

From all the three statements made with regards to the colour red, fire runs through all of them. Man must stay away from sin because the blood of Jesus was used as an atonement of sins for mankind and grace was given unconditionally. Hence man has no reason to go back for sin else danger awaits him. This is to assure the congregation and the general public that the second coming of Christ will be in the form of a consuming fire and all must repent in order to be saved. The next important colour is green.

Green: Green stole is used after the celebration of Lent and Advent. The green here signifies growth. In effect, the celebration of Easter (Lent) and Christmas (Advent) is supposed to strengthen the faith of the Christian and to help him grow spiritually.
It should be noted that only ordained Ministers can use the stole. Again, during the

growth period, which happens to be a joyous or special occasion, the Minister can use the corresponding colours for such occasion as well. The green stoll can be used after the 40 days of the celebration of Lent. This is because, after the lenting period, the Christian is expected to grow spiritually. (per. comm. with the Bishop, RT. Rev. D. D. Brace, 2017). According to the Bible, green stands for prosperity, health, growth, prophetic, wealth, royalty (Ezekiel 28:13), eternity, faith, and Heaven (Revelation 21:19). These statements made by the Bishop and the Bible are in line with James', (1985) asserted that the green colour in the spiritual realm stands for nature, environment, healthy, good luck, renewal, youth, vigour, spring, generosity, fertility, envy and inexperience. These significances prove that the Bible, the Bishop and James are on the same wavelength as far as the colour green is concern. This means that as soon as the wearer puts on the green stoll it advocates for the growth of the church. This simply denotes that the church must at all cost increase its numerical strength in Christ by winning souls that, according to them, are lost. The youth is also a target to the growth and the development of the church. They must be trained very well in the Lord to take up the mantle when the need arises. The colour green stands for the above. The stole come with symbols which need to be decoded.

3.9 The Symbols on the Stole

The symbols on the stole are mainly from the Greek biblical symbols and *Adinkra* symbols from Ghanaian origin. Among the commonly used Greek symbols are the *Kairo,* which means Jesus Christ is the Son of God. The Methodist Church of Ghana has special symbols used on the stoles of the Bishops at each Diocese. Each diocese has a symbol pertaining to their geographical location. The Sekondi Diocese has its symbol to be a fish and an anchor. The use of the fish shows that the Diocese is located along the coast. The anchor signifies that their faith is hinged or anchored around Jesus Christ, the son of God.

Kente stole: the Kente stole is used against the backdrop that it identifies the wearer as a Ghanaian and the church in Ghana. It really has no scriptural connotation for its uses. The cross on the stole is an indication that the Methodist Ministers wear an empty cross. The reason is given that Jesus Christ died on the cross and he is risen, therefore there must be an empty cross (per. comm. with the Bishop, RT. Rev. D. D. Brace, 2017). The figure below shows some examples of the stoles with symbols on them.

June 2019 - Fashion And Textiles Review, ISSN: 2665-0983

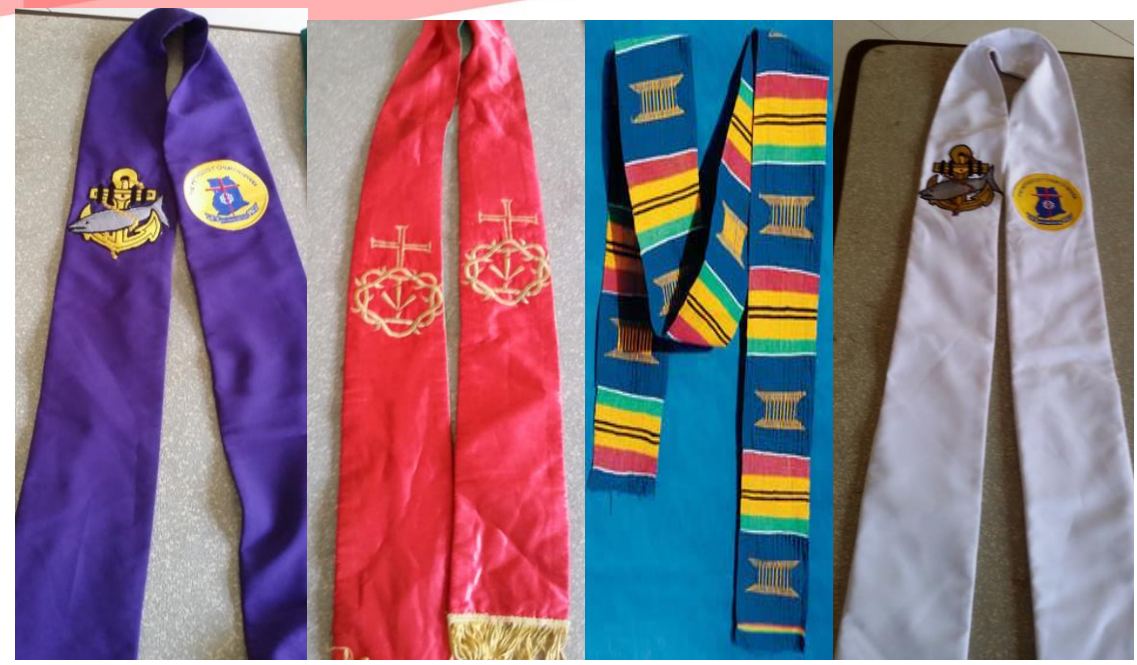


Figure 6. Stoles
Source: Field Data (24th March 2017)

3.10 The Clerical Collar

Among the accessories of the Bishop is the clerical collar. This is a white strip worn around the neck to identify an ordained Minister. The colour white signifies purity and the presence of the Holy Spirit. It blends very well with all the colours of the vestments and makes the dressing of the Bishop aesthetically beautiful (per. comm. with the Bishop, RT. Rev. D. D. Brace, 2017).



Figure 7. Clerical Band
Source: Field Data (24th March 2017)

June 2019 - Fashion And Textiles Review, ISSN: 2665-0983

3.11 Preaching Bands

Each connotes the Laws of God (the Ten Commandments) and the two tablets which were given to Moses. It also admonishes the Minister that he is under the laws of God, and he will be judged base on his dealings according to the law. He must make use of the Law justly without any fear or favour.



Figure 8. *Preaching Bands*
Source: Field Data (24th March 2017)

3.12 The Cincture

This is the waistbands which are worn around the waist on the clerical dress. A Minister who fails to put on the Cincture is seen to be improperly dressed. (per.comm. with the Bishop, RT. Rev. D. D. Brace, 2017).



Figure 9. Cincture
Source: Field Data (24th March 2017)

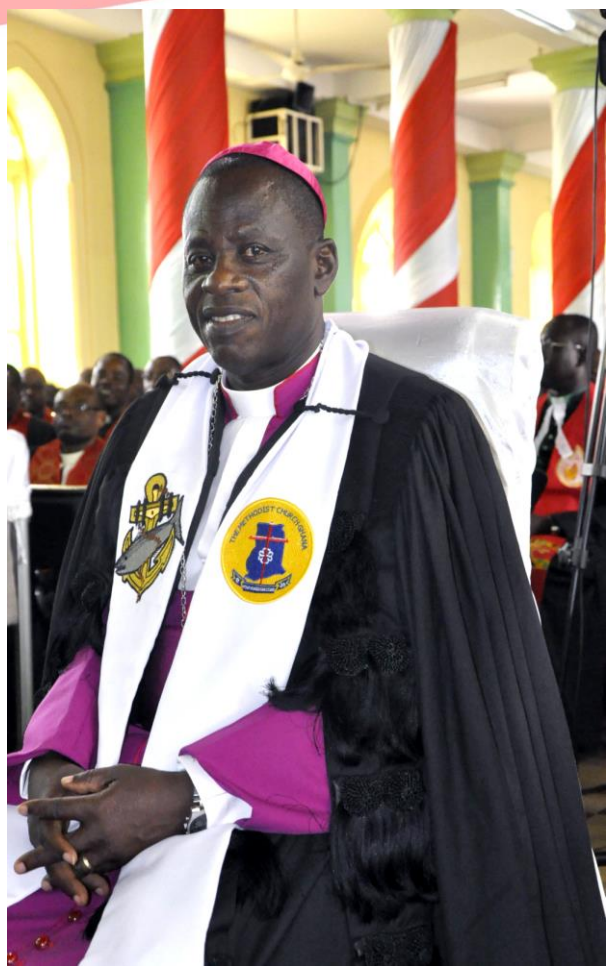


Figure 10. Bishop dressed in full vestment during his ordination as Bishop of the Methodist Church, Sekondi Dioceses.
Source: Methodist Church Picture Gallery (Retrieved on 15th May 2018)

4.0 CONCLUSION

The study demonstrated the quintessence of clerical vestments to the Methodist fraternity. Examining and studying the clerical vestments could improve members' understanding of the vestments, both spiritually and physically. Nevertheless, few of the participants demonstrated some knowledge of the colours of the clerical vestments, as well as their meanings to the church.

The investigation also revealed the ignorance of most of the participants' symbolic understanding of the colours of the clerical vestments in the church. Therefore, Management of the church ought to ensure that members are taught the philosophical symbolism, aesthetics and value of the clerical vestments to help understand their tradition. In other words, the teaching of the clerical vestments should be a constant focus in the church, and members' sensitisation should be a routine activity. Providing education on the church's clerical vestments will enrich

members' spiritual experiences. The good habits they cultivate in studying the philosophical symbolism, aesthetics and value of the clerical vestments would endow them with life long understanding that could be transferred to current church generation and the generation that will come after them.

REFERENCES

Alden, H. M. (1868). *Harper's new monthly magazine, Volume 37, Issues 217-222*. "Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1418". Vatican.va. From http://www.vatican.va/archive/eng0015/_p44.htm.Retrieved2015-06-30.

Anderson, A. (1994). *"A Brief History of the Orthodox Church in Ghana". U.S. Fulbright Research Project 1992-1994*. Orthodox Research Institute. Retrieved 7 December 2013.

Ary, D., Jacobs C. Etal (2002). "*Introduction to Research in Education", Sixth Ed*. Belmont CA; Wadsworth.

Ball, Philip (2001). *Bright Earth, Art and the Invention of Colour*. Hazan. University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 60637, USA

Fabric, colours, symbols and the methods of production of the regalia (cassock, cross, cope riddle, zucchetto, cincture, and the clerical). From http://www.rrsd.mb.ca/riverscoll/snr1/student_rsc/color%20symbolism%20chart.htm (Accessed 24-03-2017)

Gyekye, K. (1998*). African Cultural Values, An Introduction*, Sankofa Publishing Company, Accra, Ghana.

James. W. (1985) "*The Varieties of Religious Experience"* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Jarvie, I. C. (1973), *"Functionalism"* Burgess Publishing Company Limited, Minneapolis.

Kumekpor, T. K. B. (2002*). "Research Methods and Techniques of Social Research"*. Accra: SonLife Press & Services.

Kyeremanteng, K. (1987). "*Defining the influence of traditional African art in European artists' image*" Journal of College of Art, KNUST, Kumasi, Ghana.

Leedy, P. D. & Ormrod, J. E. (2005). *Practical research: Planning and design* (8th Ed.). Upper Saddle River, New Jersey: Pearson Education, Inc.

Li Y. and Wong A. S.W. (2006) "*Clothing Bio- sensory Engineering*". Woodhead Publishing Limited.

McBrien, R. P. (1994) "*Catholicism"* Harper Collins. New York, (pp. 3–20).

McBrien, R. P. (2008) "*The Church: The Evolution of Catholicism"* New York: Harper One (pp.281-282, and 356)

Osei- Agyemang (1999) "*Black African Art image*" Journal of College of Art, KNUST, Kumasi, Ghana.

Sackey, J. (2002) "*Introduction to Textile Technology (Fiber to Yarn)*" Mann Penns Systems, La, Accra.

Siegel, E. (1977) "*Aesthetic Realism: A Tripartite Study*," *The Right of Aesthetic Realism to Be Known,* #247,*"Chapter II : The Minister of the Sacrament of Penance".* IntraText. From http://www.intratext.com/ixt/eng0017/_p3f.htm. Retrieved 21 November 2016.

Wieman, Macintosh and Otto, (1932) "*Is There A God? A Conversation"* (Chicago, New York: