



## Religious beliefs in a scientific age: A question of metaphysical relativism



### Research Article



This article is published in Nairobi, Kenya by Royallite Global in the **Journal of African Studies and Ethnographic Research**, Volume 3, Issue 4, 2021

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#### Article Information

Submitted: 10<sup>th</sup> October 2021

Accepted: 20<sup>th</sup> December 2021

Published: 31<sup>st</sup> December 2021

Conflict of Interest: No conflict of interest was reported by the authors  
Funding: None



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ISSN: e-2708-0811, p-2708-0803

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#### Abstract

Relativism is a family of philosophical views which deny claims to objectivity within a particular domain and assert that facts in that domain are relative to the perspective of an observer or the context in which they are assessed. Metaphysical Relativism, in general, and, on the other hand, is the position that objects in particular, and reality in general, only exist relative to other objects, and have no meaning in isolation – what they mean depends on how the individuals who hold such beliefs interpret them (the beliefs). This article explains what the language of religious belief is (or should be, using some selected examples of prophecies and discourses largely in Ghana) and how this language affects an otherwise what should have been a rational way of demonstrating one's faith. The paper used, what has been adopted, stipulatively, metaphysical relativism as reason, perhaps, for why religious beliefs, no matter how illogical one may think, cannot be interpreted within the framework of logic.

**Keywords:** fideism, metaphysical relativism, prophet, religious beliefs, rhetoric



#### How to Cite:

Ansah, R., & Ansah, J. O.-A. (2021). Religious beliefs in a scientific age: A question of metaphysical relativism. *Journal of African Studies and Ethnographic Research*, 3(4). Retrieved from <https://royalliteglobal.com/african-studies/article/view/717>



## Public Interest Statement

Metaphysical relativism presupposes realism – Realism, in philosophy, the viewpoint which accords to things which are known or perceived an existence or nature which is independent of whether anyone is thinking about or perceiving them – in that there are actual objective things, and in this case, some objective Object of worship (or Object of belief) in the world that are relative to other objects. Since the idea of realism asserts the existence of an objective reality, it gives support to religious beliefs. The article has proposed that these beliefs may be fuzzy and ungratifying.

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## Introduction

In Ghana today, as with Nigeria and other African countries where religious movements, especially Christianity and Islam, are widespread, prophets are prophesying even elections results! (Omoregbe 1993:179-180). A prophecy may be defined as a message that is claimed by a prophet to have been communicated to them by a deity. In religion, and as this article adopts, a prophet is an individual who is regarded as being in contact with a divine being (a deity, a supernatural being) and is said to speak on that being's or entity's behalf, serving as an intermediary with humanity by delivering messages or teachings from the supernatural source to other people. Such messages, as given by the divine being and delivered by the prophet, typically involve inspiration, interpretation, or revelation of divine will concerning the prophet's social world and events to come. Can science and or the scientific method based on observation and experimentation be used in interpreting prophecies? This article argues that it is not every prophecy that must be believed; for some prophecies are either fallacious or are not based on the authority of the source (or object) of worship – No matter how difficult it may be to prove these beliefs scientifically. A prophecy, according to Philips (1996:277-278) is a religious (or spiritual) prediction made by a prophet, under divine inspiration (having a direct message from the object of worship, my own insertion). It is a form of mystical experience that somehow allows the person to perceive or feel related to a divine realm, receive a divine message, and so forth (Peterson, et al 2007:646). A prophet is someone who speaks by divine inspiration; someone who predicts the future, as he or she is inspired by the object of worship – they (prophets) belong to the category of diviners, seers and mediums (Mbiti 1969:248). Again, the article asserts that most of these prophets engage in rhetoric – the ancient art and science of persuasion, the study of persuasion, and the individual process of persuasion – using metaphysical relativism as pretext and hiding behind same, and rather seek to make the followers poorer and become burden to national development. Also, the article reveals that most of these religious leaders, prophets, etc. are even naïve and immature themselves in how to reveal or communicate prophecies, if any, to their followers.

The inquiry into the relationship between faith, prophesy and logic and critical thinking cuts across diverse religious perspectives. The interpretation of a religious worldview, belief, is not fundamentally different from the cultural background of the originating religion. This cultural

influence on religion, which shapes our faith and belief is brought to the fore in the observation that “the way God is conceived and portrayed in any religion is a reflection of the world-view of the culture that gave birth to that religion. This makes religion a form of cultural relativism – The idea that a person's beliefs, values, and practices should be understood based on that person's own culture, rather than be judged against the criteria of another person's culture. For every religion without exception is the product of a culture and part of that culture (Omoregbe 1993:28). This assertion is interpreted in this article to demonstrate that, it forms, perhaps, the basis of why followers of religious beliefs fail to question reasons for why some of the beliefs are so weird and creepy, and deviates from logic.

### **Methodology**

This is an analytic study that has gathered data from religious discourses and analyzed their (the data based on religious beliefs) reasonableness in the light of science and critical thinking. The article has used the method of critical evaluation (where religious beliefs are critically evaluated) in analyzing the data from religious beliefs.

### **Religion, argumentation and reasoning**

Religion plays a central role in both individual and communal life. It is not surprising that Emile Durkheim defines religion as a social phenomenon (in Peterson, et al 2007:8). Following this initial description of religion, this section discusses religious communications that appear within religion – the main area of interest of this article. It is very difficult to pin religion to one definition. Even so, Stephen Philips' (1996:2) definition of religion seems to appeal more to the focus of this paper. According to Philips, religion is the set of beliefs, feelings, dogmas and practices that define the relations between human beings and the sacred or divinity. A given religion is defined by specific elements of a community of believers: including but not limited to; dogmas, sacred books, rites, worship, sacrament, moral prescription, interdicts and organization. The majority of religions have developed starting from a revelation based on the exemplary history of a nation, of a prophet or a wise man who taught an ideal of life (Philips 1996:2). The word religion is derived from Latin "*religio*" (what attaches or retains, moral bond, anxiety of self-consciousness, scruple). The origin of "*religio*" is debated since antiquity. Cicero said it comes from "*relegere*" (to read again, to re-examine carefully, to gather) (Cicero 1993:127). Whichever way we look at religion, one can infer from the descriptions above that religion is a belief in an object of worship and obeying the tenets of this object of worship. In every religion, this research holds, faith is the underlying tenet that ought to be obeyed and followed, mostly (if not always), ‘without questioning’. Could this be the reason for the rather ‘dodgy’ prophecies in religion?

A new ministry in Christianity, the prophetic ministry – Christian congregations whose leaders are prophets (see the definition of prophet above) – is gaining lots of notoriety in Ghana in particular, Africa at large and the world as a whole today. A good number of Christian leaders

are either prophets or they are becoming prophets. Most of the followers of these religions are either gullible, uncritical (at least as this research and other similar literature have shown) or they don't want to question anything based on faith, since, according to them, the language of faith is fuzzy and can only be interpreted by people with "special or mystical eyes" (Omoregbe 1993:209). These prophets have taken advantage of this and are running riots with a barrage of prophecies (Peterson, et al 2007:316) – The level of gullibility of the followers is legendary! This has led to most of the followers, in their own evidence, becoming more impoverished, insolvent and impecunious than their former selves (before they accepted this new faith). What exactly is about religion that makes it easy (or attracts) for followers of a particular religion to be uncritical about what their (the religions') leaders say to them (the followers)? Could it be that every prophecy that comes from these prophets must be obeyed without questioning (Peterson, et al 2007:306)? How about the prophecy that some prominent people will die at a certain time and it did not and still does not happen or those who were prophesied to that they'll win elections and never happen(ed) (Philips 1996:314)? These questions are endless, and could go on unabated. New ones (questions) come up each day.

From time immemorial, the language to differentiate appearance from reality has been very difficult if not impossible to come by. At what time does rationality override matters of faith in religion in general and Christianity in particular? Do fallacies play a role in prophecies (Philips 1996:303)? Must we, indeed, live by faith and not by sight? What does it mean to live by faith? How do we juxtapose this with what we are told in Acts 17:11: "Now the Berean Jews were of more noble character than those in Thessalonica, for they (the Bereans; my own insertion) received the message with great eagerness and examined the scriptures every day to see if what Paul said was true" (Holy Bible, New International Version, NIV)? Also, how does this "unquestioning faith" explain what we are told in Hosea 4:6 – "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: because thou have rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee, that thou shalt be no priest to me" (Holy Bible, King James).

This diverse perception of religion is also observable in the different conceptualization of the meaning of religion as a worldview of multi-dimensional meaning to different persons and religion. However, there exist fundamental affinities between some of the notable religions of the world. They essentially seek a relationship between the human person and the God-head (Philips 1996:168). This applies to Christianity, Islam, African traditional religion or what some scholars, including Onaiyekan (2001:9), refer to as 'Godianism' (the Godianists hold the position that God manifests himself in every form of religion and they are all equally legitimate. God does not discriminate along hierarchical preferences as avenues to worship him). All religions equally attempt to elicit positive moral attitude from their members. In realizing this, religion provides "its adherents a valid worldview and an adequate practical guide to life (Onaiyekan 2001:9).

The different religions attempt to unravel some or the truth about human existence. But the means of reaching the truth manifests divergently in different religion. Christianity, Islam,

African traditional religion, the religions of the East; all seek to apprehend the truth in diverse ways. Just as every intellectual or school discipline is geared towards comprehending reality or truth from a particular scientific (in the broad or narrow sense) point of view, religion imbues itself with the capacity for providing answers to man's quest for eternal self-preservation. Many religions lay claim to being capable of providing answer(s) to fundamental questions of human existence, the purpose of life, the nature of existence after death etc. (Mbiti 1969:282). All these point to anthropocentric nature of religion and knowledge in general "for it is centred around man's well-being both here and in the hereafter ... All search for knowledge is prompted by the instinct of self-preservation, and this is what underlies all scientific investigation" (Omoregbe 1993:26-27).

Prophetic messages, which attract our attention or investigation in this article, is not only a Christian reality but one that permeate other religious worldviews such as Islam, and African traditional religion. We have placed emphasis on Christianity in this article due to lack of scholarly competence in other religions and the scope of the abstract of this paper. Where we find compelling relationships between Christianity and other religion, we have included such information in our discussion.

The earliest documented appearance of Christianity in Ghana dates back to the second half of the fifteenth century (Wiltgen 1956:1). At present, different denominations, with diverse messages, rituals, attitudinal disposition and temperament co-exist in Ghana. Aside the 'traditional' churches brought by the Missionaries (Anglican, Catholic, Baptist, Presbyterian Church, Methodist, Assemblies of God, Pentecost, Apostolic, etc.), we also have Churches founded by Ghanaians and other Africans (International Godsway Church, Christian Action Chapel, Church of Christ, International Central Gospel Church, Perez Chapel, Royal House Chapel, Wind and Fire Gospel church, Living Faith Church Worldwide, Christ Apostolic Church, The African Episcopal Church, Christ Embassy, Deeper Life Ministry, Cherubim and Seraphim, and a host of others, are some of these churches) (Kodua 2004:22).

We have made no attempt to content-analyze the prophetic messages of the pastors, owners or leaders of these Churches but we have observed a general trend of prosperity prophecies with a band-wagon effect on their members. The personal lifestyle of many of the pastors (prophets) also completely deviates from the economic realities of the society that engenders them. Some of the pastors or leaders now possess private jets which some claim will facilitate evangelism. They have invested in education, agriculture, recreation, printing press, and a wide range of business activities. The opulent lifestyle and economic triumph of many of the Church owners, founders, leaders, conquerors or pastors is at variant with that of the members and Christ whom all Christians should emulate. Church members are encouraged to ceaselessly give or sow seeds (give money, etc.) into the kingdom of God. Many of these Churches, as we shall see later in the examples discussed in this article, in God's name, collect money in form of offering, tithe, thanksgiving, harvest, first seed, sacrificial offering and many other forms of occasional

collections. They prophesy into the lives of members, reminding them that God loves the cheerful giver and some of the prophecies involve applying subtle or overt threat in their ministration such as reminding worshippers that they rob God by not paying their tithe and the consequences that will occur for failure to pay tithe (Malachi, 3:7ff.).

It is against the backdrop of some existential tension in some Christian practices that we have always wished to examine a more fundamental issue of the relationship between faith and critical thinking (reasoning) – religious beliefs in an age of science: A metaphysical relativism? – with a view to understanding if this will facilitate personal and national development. Before this stated objective, we wish to observe that there exists a metaphysical temperament or fundamental seed of aggression in the teaching of some or many among the religious worldviews. Though Christianity and Islam claim to be peaceful religions and there abound passages to support this view, the Bible also asserts that all those who do not believe in Jesus Christ will be condemned (John 3:18; 14:6) while the Qur’an claims that the fire of hell awaits those who refuse to be Moslems (Koran 35;33). If both religions claim to be revealed word of God, both cannot be correct at the same time. This is where we recommend that religion should not only be based on faith but argumentation and reasoning. Argumentation, here, is the act or process of forming reasons and of drawing conclusions, using arguments, and applying them to a case in discussion. And, an argument here, simply put, is any form of discourse in which it could be said that reason(s) is/are being offered for the acceptance or otherwise of a certain position, claim, assertion, conclusion, etc. So, argumentation involves arguments and reasoning – the drawing of inferences or conclusions through the use of arguments (Kahane 1992:17). Also, the ‘Godianist’ or the African traditional religious practitioner cannot be excused from such religious beliefs; “Inherent in the nature of these African (and other world) religions is the use or the threat of the use of ritual violence as preventive or offence weapon against real or imaginary enemies” (Okedjeji 1999/2000:7). *Godianism*, according to Onaiyekan, is synonymous to African traditional religion. *Godianism*, like African traditional religion, believes in religious pluralism – many religious groups (religions), the same God (Mbiti 1969:1). According to *Godianism*, God manifests himself in every form of religion and so, all religions are all equally legitimate. God does not discriminate along hierarchical preferences as avenues to worship him (Onaiyekan 2001:9).

An indispensable criterion for comprehending the nature of authentic prophesy is the identification of the veracity of claims. In other words, it is imperative that we make effort in understanding the true value of prophetic claims. This may not be as simple as it appears. The quest for truth is intricately connected with the search for knowledge. This quest resonates in the Socratic dictum, “Man, know thyself” (Honer and Hunt 1969:1). Self-knowledge, here, becomes an undeniable prerequisite towards knowledge of the external world. Self-knowledge is an essential reality, a basic existential fundamental of all who are referred to as human beings. Pope John Paul II beautifully captures this view in his introductory remark to the Encyclical Letter, *Faith and Reason*: “... the more human beings know reality and the world, the more they know themselves

in their uniqueness, ... This is why all that is the object of our knowledge becomes a part of our life” (Pope John Paul II. 1998:2). The quest for truth and knowledge was brought to the fore in Pontius Pilate’s interrogation of Jesus Christ. Pilate asks, (in John 18:38, the Holy Bible): “What is truth”? This was a question he asked Jesus in response to Jesus’ claim that he, Jesus, is a witness to the truth. The undeniable value of truth is observable in the entire subject matter of epistemology – the branch of philosophy concerned with the nature, source, scope, acquisition, limitations and validity of knowledge and truth (Honer and Hunt 1969:56).

To discern the truth or otherwise of prophetic messages, one needs a critical mind-set. The challenge of applying critical thinking to faith discourses seems apparent in the realization of some fundamental differences between faith and critical thinking. While faith is generally defined as accepting without doubting revealed truth – faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see (The Holy Bible; Hebrews 11:1) – its nature could allow for manipulation and betrayal. Our inability to confirm messages couched in esoteric spiritual framework makes it difficult to comprehend the truthfulness of faith-based messages, as well as prophecies. Critical thinking, on the other hand, seeks a rational, objective and verifiable process of arriving at a conclusion.

We, however, posit in this article that the relationship between faith and reason does not necessarily have to be mutually exclusive as our religious belief and assumptions could be supported and strengthened by critical thinking and there are religious thinkers, St. Thomas Aquinas, St. Anselm of Canterbury, who supported this position (Philips 1996:303). Critical thinking should stimulate faith as it enhances our ability to ask questions about our beliefs or religious assumptions with a view to being in a vantage position in making fundamental decisions about our existence. In this light, critical thinking serves as a tool to cultivate a discerning view about our religious beliefs so we can become thoughtful and astute believers. Furthermore, critical thinking’s role as a subject that questions, examines and weighs options with a view to coming up with the best possible alternatives, enhances the believer’s ability to decipher if the principles upon which their faith are anchored are coherent and reasonable (Ansah, et al 2016:1). Part of the problem that some societies experience is the lack of application of reason in assessing what ordinarily should be part of the human heritage – rationality. Some prophets even prophesy obviously, as the examples discussed in this article shall show, irrational prophecies to members and they (members or followers) accept them (the prophecies) as the gospel truth, without a shred of questioning. Images abound on the internet where prophets instruct church members to embark on what appears in some quarters, embarrassing and dehumanizing acts and based on faith alone. Some prophets even swindle members of huge sums of money and live extravagant lifestyles while many of their Church members live in abject poverty. The uncritical attitude of some believers, either as Christians, Moslems, Traditional African Religion practitioners or any other religion calls for a more critical mind-set in religious worship as this has effect, negatively, on the larger society. An uncritical intellect is not likely to be in any good position to contribute to societal development.

Societal development requires a rigorous thought process and maintaining an equilibrium between contrasting interests and positions.

The human quest for knowledge and truth is part of man's innate reality of coping with existential complexities. It is a reality observable in the history of humankind over the ages and it is the goal of every scientific endeavour. Philosophy lends an unprecedented support in human quest for knowledge and development:

Driven by the desire to discover the ultimate truth of existence, human beings seek to acquire those universal elements of knowledge which enable them to understand themselves better and to advance in their own self-realization ... Through philosophy's work, this ability to speculate which is proper to the human intellect produces a rigorous mode of thought; and then in turn, through the logical coherence of the affirmations made and the organic unity of their content, it produces a systematic body of knowledge (John Paul II 1998, paragraph 4).

All the narrations above indicate to us (human beings) that we need to approach religion and faith with some level of intellectual consciousness and discerning mind-set to avail ourselves of the opportunities derivable therefrom. There is no doubt that there is a symbiotic relationship between faith and reason and they both nourish their scope for better possibilities for science and faith. While religion will thrive better with adequate information and understanding about the nature of reality, science will also improve when it has faith in the possibility of a positive outcome in the process of inquiry or investigation (Honer and Hunt 1969:2). Human beings' innate desire for truth urges them on towards a better comprehension of themselves, nature and the totality of reality. Succinctly put, Pope John Paul II makes the following observation:

The desire for truth, therefore, spurs reason always to go further; indeed, it is as if reason were overwhelmed to see that it can always go beyond what it has already achieved. It is at this point, though, that reason can learn where its path will lead in the end ... The fundamental harmony between the knowledge of faith and the knowledge of philosophy is once again confirmed. Faith asks that its object be understood with the help of reason; and at the summit of its searching reason acknowledges that it cannot do without what faith presents (1998: paragraph.42).

As aforesaid, the lack of knowledge, and or desire to seek meaning to prophecies is/are leading many astray and that is why this article has put together some of these religious discourses (mostly through prophecies) and discussed them logically to reveal the incoherencies inherent in them.



Hardly a day goes by in Ghana today without one hearing of one prophecy or the other – Surely, an appreciation of how to receive and comprehend prophecies will assist religious leaders and followers in handling the issue of prophecies – as come from religious beliefs – very appropriately and, perhaps, rationally (reasonably).

### **Some instances of social (religious) discourses (based on faith alone!)**

Let us begin our discussion on examples of religious language based on faith with some rather eerie religious discourses that happened very recently to appreciate the nature of religious discourses today in the world as a whole and Ghana in particular:

**Headline of a YouTube video reads:** Pastor Orders Female Members to Remove Underwear So God Can Enter Their Bodies – <https://youtu.be/NNg2Ug153fQ> August 1, 2019 at 4:45pm. According to the *Kenyan Daily Post* (3 March 2014 <https://newsone.com/2939386/rev-njohi-female-undergarments/>) “Kenyan Pastor Rev. Njohi has raised not only a few eyebrows but red flags with his unorthodox suggestion of having his female congregants remove their bras and underwear before coming to church, so that Christ can freely enter their bodies with his spirit.”

Njohi, who is the pastor of the Lord’s Propeller Redemption Church in Kenya, reportedly refers to undergarments as “ungodly.” *The Kenyan Daily Post* reported further that “The bible-toting minister called together a meeting with church officials and allegedly discussed banning the under garments because people need to be free in body and spirit in order to receive Christ.” In true fashion, the church’s female population reportedly did come to church sans their undies. A similar video of a certain pastor Mboro of South Africa continues the same discourse with this headline:

‘Pastor Mboro asks members to remove their underwear and wave in church & touch their private parts’ – <https://youtu.be/k9rVtA5Pnj4> Thursday August 1, 2019 at 5:30pm.

According to this YouTube video, Pastor Mboro asked members of his church to remove their underwear and wave in church & touch their private parts. Many people, the story indicates, are calling out the South African Pastor for being a pervert, by asking his congregants to remove their panties and wave them in the air like some sort of ritual. To some critics’ amazement, the church-goers obliged and soon started waving their panties in the air. Though it is not clear what the pastor was trying to achieve by asking the unimaginable of his congregation as the worship session is going on; however, he was heard saying, “Must we stop because somebody does not like it?”

Lots are happening today around the world concerning this subject. This article, as has been repeatedly indicated, has selected a couple of these happenings, particularly in Ghana, and discussed them painstakingly to demonstrate the unscrupulousness inherent in them.

### Examples and analysis of ‘unscrupulous’ religious discourses in Ghana

This section of the paper concentrates on some selected religious discourses and possible unscrupulousness inherent in these discourses. Most of the discourses, if not all, this article holds, are based on fideism. Fideism, according to Philips, and which this article adopts, is the view that the nature of religious faith precludes rational or philosophic inquiry into the grounds (reasons), or lack thereof, for religious beliefs. Or, in some versions – where faith is not considered a matter of belief – fideism is the view that faith precludes philosophy. Where beliefs are involved, they are not held on defensible grounds but “on faith” (Philips 1996:303). The section uses case examples to illustrate the unscrupulousness at work in some religious discourses in Ghana.

The Founder and leader of Heaven's Gate Ministry in Ghana, Prophet Kumchacha, has defended what he himself calls ‘spiritual killing’ of two journalists in the Kumasi Metropolis for allegedly attempting to destroy his reputation. His justification is “I have worked as a pastor for twenty-nine years and during Rawlings’ era, I was arrested three times for preaching, slept in Kumasi Central Police Station for about four times, and the situation was not different from Accra Central Police Station. So, building through these tough times till twenty-nine years and for someone to use a day, a second or an hour to tarnish your image is very painful” (Kumchacha kills journalist spiritually – <http://www.ghanaweb.com>. Tuesday, November 20, 2018).

The basis for which Prophet Kumchacha is said to have engaged in the spiritual killing is evidently an invocation of emotional feeling as he narrates the difficulty he had been through before assuming his present position. The conditions such as sleeping in Kumasi Police station are meant to be pitiful, for which reason he is inviting sympathizers to side with his action of, as he puts it, “spiritually killing” all journalists who criticize his pastoral style. His position is a case of appeal to pity, as he portrays that because he suffered so much before establishing his ministry, sleeping in prison homes, etc., he should be pitied by journalists in a manner that journalists are mindful of the way they talk about him. It follows the reasoning; I have worked very hard at getting to this point so I deserve a certain conclusion – praise me instead of always criticizing me.

Another headline reads – Shatta Wale will die on 24th December 2018 – A Prophet claims

An unnamed man of God, a website holds, has said that four major accidents involving Yutong Buses would occur on the Accra-Kumasi Road, in Ghana. According to the prophet, the cause of these accidents is a particular political party. This may be described as a case of false cause fallacy (a mistake in reasoning) – the fallacy that if one fails to provide very good and cogent reasons for linking two things as one causing the other, one commits; we see here that there is not any well explained relation between a political party and the occurrence of a road accident. The absence of the details regarding the causal relation between a political party and road accidents gives a clear indication of an imagined causal relation on the part of the so-called man of God. Thus, unless further and better particulars are provided, the rationale can best be treated as a case of false cause fallacy (and in any case, the said accident never occurred) (Kwaku Nti – <https://www.ghananewspage.com>. Monday, December 3, 2018).

In another development, the Founder of the International Godsway Church, Bishop Daniel Obinim claims that no religious leader, the world over, comes close to him when it is about being powerful. In this argument, the Bishop may be said to either boasting or committing the appeal to ignorance fallacy – a supposition that something is likely to be true because we cannot prove that it is false or vice versa (Honer and Hunt 1969:22) – or both.

The gift that is with me if we take into the spiritual realm, the whole world it has never happened. What I am saying is not in the Bible so if I say them and you insult me, I am not bothered... I am the only person who can turn myself into a dog, snake and other animals to execute what the spirit wants me to do (Obinim claims he is more powerful than any other prophet the world over – <https://www.ghanaweb.com>. Sunday, May 5, 2019).

The fact that we may not know what happens in the spiritual realm, or the mere fact that this cannot be found in the Bible, or no one else has been seen turn into a dog, snake other animals (except perhaps in movies), are not sufficient reasons for his position. His position rests on lack of evidence, which renders the argument fallacious and a case of metaphysical relativism. Again, the Founder and leader of the International Godsway Church, Bishop Daniel Obinim, bragging that if Ghanaians dare him, he will buy five private jets, commits another case of the appeal to ignorance fallacy:

No pastor has opened his mouth in Ghana to say that he is richer than Obinim, and no one can ever say that. Like I will make them know how wealthy I am, unless the government investigates me. Like I will bring five airplanes to Ghana in this month of June, if you like dare me (<https://www.atinkaonline.com>. Wednesday, June 5, 2019).

Because no pastor claims to be richer than him (according to him), doesn't mean that there is no pastor richer than he is; or because no pastor has come yet to say that doesn't mean no pastor can ever do. His claim is based on lack of evidence as a result of metaphysical relativism, which, in this case, is fallacious; appeal to ignorance – *argumentum ad ignoratiam*. These are, but very few instances that can be cited to explain how metaphysical relativism is allowing people to hold, rather, illogical religious positions and yet, no one dares question. Once you question, the answer you receive is, “this is what I believe, and you can't make me (force me) to change my mind!”

## Conclusion

All in all, one can say without a shred of equivocation that one social area that has seen and continue to see lots of debates in Ghana today in particular and the world at large, is religion. Africans generally, indeed, and Ghanaians in particular, are notoriously religious (Mbiti 1969:1) Our social life is so heavily defined by religion that what a religious system, group, organization, institution, etc., says about us as a continent (Africa) in general and Ghanaians in particular, we believe, reveals a great deal about what we take life to be and our relationship to this life. Hence, the credibility of a religion, according to Kunhiyop (2008:374), is closely linked to its ability to explain God (or the Object of worship) and evil associated with man. But how can one know and or identify a credible religion? This question, if we are able to answer, perhaps, may go a very long way in helping us identify and deal with possible uncritical discourses that may lead to fallacies from religion and religious groups and their leaders. This paper has looked at some selected, perhaps, unscrupulous religious practices, that appear in religious discourses in Ghana and discussed within what we hold as metaphysical relativism in an age of science. Indeed, lots of things are going on in the world as a whole, Africa at large and Ghana in particular, as far as religion is concerned – from religious leaders who predict national elections results, which always contradicts as different religious leaders give different predictions (Pastor A says political party A will win and Pastor B says political party B will win; and both claim they heard from God; whose prediction should we believe as credible?) to those who ask members of their congregation not to marry from a certain tribe and so on. The examples used are mostly from the Christian Religion (Christianity) because that is where there is so much controversy (in terms of the discourses) and what followers are subjected to do (mostly, without any shred of understanding and or questioning why they are asked to do the things they are asked to do). The paper has revealed that because religious discourses are fuzzy (as they are mostly based on faith), it is very difficult to determine whether indeed what is being said is from the object of worship or not. So, you are forced to accept all such religious positions as cases of metaphysical relativism? Even so, on the basis of critical analysis, one can detect a number of flaws in the form of fallacies in these religious discourses. It is against this backdrop that this paper selected some ubiquitous ones – religious happenings – as they appear in these discourses to discuss. The unfortunate thing is that, because most of the followers of religion ‘follow faith’ rather than ‘reason’ (that is even if they understand ‘faith’ at all), they are easily indoctrinated and they end up doing whatever thing they are asked to do, however unreasonable (if we subject what they are asked to do to logical reasoning). We hold, in this paper, that for religious beliefs to be accepted as credible, they should not only be based on faith, but, also, reason. This, we believe, to a very appreciable extent, will help deal with the increasing cases of metaphysical relativism in religion leading to the same religion, say Christianity, holding different positions about the same Object of worship (God), leaving the followers not only confused, but, as well, misled.

**Funding:** This article did not receive funding from any source, whatsoever

**Acknowledgement:** We are grateful to colleague lecturers who assisted in reviewing this work

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### Authorship and Level of Contributions

**Richard Ansah:** Conceived the research idea and contributed to the design of the study, acquisition of data, analysis and interpretation of data. The two authors played a major role in the manuscript preparation and revision prior to submission and publication respectively. **Juliet Oppong-Asare Ansah:** She did most of the expatiations and analysis of the data.

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