

The Church and the Use of Family Planning: A Case Study of the Presbyterian Church of Ghana, Ebenezer Congregation, Old Tafo



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ABSTRACT

The debate on whether the use of family planning methods within the Ghanaian Christian circle is a sin or not has been going on for quite some time now. The misunderstanding and misinterpretation of some Biblical texts like Genesis 1: 28 and Genesis 3 have led to this confusion in Ghanaian Christian circles. This paper used both empirical and non-empirical methodology and a qualitative research method with a case study approach to analyse some biblical texts; traditional concepts and contextualization of the use of family planning methods in the Presbyterian Church of Ghana, Ebenezer Congregation, Old Tafo. The findings of this paper are that: the Bible does not condone the use of family planning methods. Also, the Akan people of Ghana, do not frown on the use of family planning methods. The article concluded that family planning is not a sin from both biblical and Akan cultural perspectives. The authors recommended that: there should be extensive family planning education by the government; public education on the side effects of the use of some family planning methods; teaching family planning in the church will also be beneficial to members and there should be a critical reading of the Bible to guide the creation of church doctrines. The key findings from this paper contributes to Christian ethics by educating Ghanaian Christians on the concept of family planning.

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Publication History

Received:
18th August, 2024
Accepted:
24th November, 2024
Published online:
19th December, 2024

Keywords: *Family Planning, Akan, Presbyterian Church of Ghana, Infertility,*

INTRODUCTION

The main concept of family planning is that couples find a means to space out the birth of their children. Sexual intercourse is not always for pleasure but can result in pregnancy if some measures are not taken. This results in the need to use family planning methods. Family planning may help in the proper upbringing of children and the well-being of the family. Family planning further helps couples to decide when to conceive. The ability to foresee and have the desired number of children, as well as the spacing and timing of their births, is referred to as family planning.¹ Family planning methods have long been a

¹ Ghzl Ghazi Alenezi and Hassan Kasim Haridi, "Awareness and Use of Family Planning Methods among Women in Northern Saudi Arabia," *Middle East Fertility Society Journal* 26 (2021): 1–8.

source of heated discussion and disagreement within the Christian community.² Family planning requires extending the time between births which may lower the likelihood of foetal death.

In the Akan society of Ghana, the ability to have many children brings respect to the parents and extended family.³ The Christian Scripture does not specify the number of children to be given birth to but it provides that parents are to be sufficient and responsible enough to take care of their begotten children. In the Bible, God said to Adam and Eve “Be fruitful and multiply” (Gen 1 vs 28, ESV). Many Christians think that in fulfillment of this statement, they have to give birth to many children. However, the advancements in Ghanaian societies and changes in the way of life may not support and favor parents with many children who are not financially stable. Such parents cannot afford a quality of life for themselves and their children, hence, always accusing Satan and evil spirits of their own calamities yet they think they are in the will of God.

Many scholars have contributed to the search for a solution to the free use of birth control methods as Christians in Ghana, of which family planning is the most dominant. However, some Ghanaian Christians are confused about whether the use of family planning methods is a sin or not. The focus of this paper is to address, among others, the question as to whether or not family planning is a sin for Ghanaian Christians based on Scriptural and traditional knowledge. This paper develops a contextual theology on the use of family planning. The contextual theology will be drawn from both what the scripture teaches and Ghanaian folk wisdom.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Be Fruitful and Multiply: Examining Genesis 1:28

Fredrick Mawusi Amevenku and Isaac Boaheng postulate that God, first of all, gives the declaration “be fruitful and multiply” to the birds and sea creatures in Genesis 1:22.⁴ The authors further assert that the declaration “be fruitful and multiply” was again used when God told Adam and Eve “be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth” (Gen 1:28 NIV) on the sixth day.⁵ Barry Danylak notes the importance of the dual occurrence of the declaration, “be fruitful and multiply” in Genesis 1. He asserts that Genesis 1:28 emphasizes that self-reproduction is an essential and natural function that God has given to all creation, not just humans.⁶

Amevenku and Boaheng further note that anti-contraceptive scholars contend that God has commanded all couples to bear fruit and multiply—a command that includes having children. They (anti-contraceptive scholars) interpret this biblical statement as an unwavering directive for creation, with a conclusion that using birth control of any kind is an act of disobedience against God. The imperative used in the phrase “Be fruitful and multiply” lends credence to their position.⁷ In the view of Danylak, Jewish tradition has never questioned the interpretation of “be fruitful and multiply” as a divine command of the Torah, dating back to the rabbinic interpreters of the New Testament era.⁸

However, David Daube observes that the verse is not a command but rather the full passage constitutes a blessing.⁹ He contends that the blessing is made clear in Genesis 1:28 when God said unto them, “Be fruitful and multiply, fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea, the birds of the heavens, and over every living thing that moves on the earth.”¹⁰ The author further states that God gave Adam and Eve a blessing that was a supernaturally inspired prophecy, describing their future.¹¹ Candida R. Moss and Joel S. Bade opine that, “Be fruitful and multiply” is better read as a blessing rather than a command.¹² They postulate that in the first place, neither Noah nor Jacob had children again after

² François Sahabo, “An Analysis of the Perceptions of African Christian Men Regarding Family Planning Choices at Paran Pentecostal Church in Durban” (University of Kwazulu - Natal, 2015).

³ Kwasi Opoku-Agyemang, “Fertility and Motherhood in Akan Cosmology,” *African Studies Review* 28, no. 1 (1985): 74.

⁴ Fredrick Amevenku and Isaac Boaheng, *African Biblical Christianity and Contemporary Ethics* (Accra: Noyam Publications, 2022).

⁵ Amevenku and Boaheng, *African Biblical Christianity and Contemporary Ethics*.

⁶ Barry Danylak, *Redeeming Singleness: How the Storyline of Scripture Affirms the Single Life* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2010).

⁷ Amevenku and Boaheng, *African Biblical Christianity and Contemporary Ethics* .68.

⁸ Danylak, *Redeeming Singleness: How the Storyline of Scripture Affirms the Single Life*.26.

⁹ David Daube, *Law and Wisdom in the Bible: David Daube's Gifford Lectures, Volume II*, vol. 2 (Templeton Foundation Press, 2011).2.

¹⁰ Daube, *Law and Wisdom in the Bible: David Daube's Gifford Lectures, Volume II*.2.

¹¹ Daube, *Law and Wisdom in the Bible: David Daube's Gifford Lectures, Volume II*. 2.

¹² Candida R. Moss and Joel S. Bade, *Reconceiving Infertility: Biblical Perspectives on Procreation and Childlessness* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2015).

they received God's word and if God's words are understood as a command, then it would be concluded that both Noah and Jacob are guilty of disobeying the divine will.¹³ Darek Isaac opines that God spoke with authority over Adam and Eve, using terminology akin to other blessings found in Scripture that Adam and his offspring would procreate, show dominion, and consume every kind of plant on the earth like earlier blessing-talks in the Scripture (Gen. 1:22). This one also foretold of future deeds that Adam and Eve will engage in. Darek agrees with Daube that it was a prophetic blessing uttered over them but in keeping with God's design, in order to enjoy the blessings in the supernatural, natural principles had to be followed.¹⁴

In this paper, the writers view the text as more of a blessing than a command. God did not intend for mankind to procreate just because they could but for mankind to be responsible by being able to cater for their children. The article affirms that God did not specify the number of children every couples should give birth to, however, the Scriptures, which is the word of God empowers or admonishes mankind to give birth to the number of children they can well cater for. The writers postulate that the infertility of a woman may not be a result of disobedience to God but sometimes for God's own glory to manifest before his people and in the life of the infertile woman

Onan's Act and Family Planning

According to Amevenku and Boaheng, it is common to use Onan's actions in Genesis 38 as evidence that God is against birth control.¹⁵ This chapter tells that Onan's brother Er married Tamar (v. 6), and God killed Er (v. 7) because of some wrongdoing. Then Judah, their father, told Onan, to go lie with the deceased brother's wife and perform the duty of a brother-in-law to her; by raising up offspring for his brother (Gen. 38:8, NIV). The authors assert that the child would be Er's legal successor, also, this directive was issued in conformity with the levirate marriage customs of Israel and its neighbouring countries.¹⁶ Levirate marriage refers to a widow's union with her late husband's brother in order to raise children who would be regarded as his brother's children to maintain that line of descent (Deut. 25:5–6, NIV).¹⁷

Amevenku and Boaheng opine that the verse dispels any implication that Onan used birth control and that doing so earned him God's anger.¹⁸ The authors further asked whether Onan's transgression should be linked with birth control in general or this means that contraception should usually be viewed as something that God detests.¹⁹ In the view of Charles Edward Cerling, Genesis 38 is the most misinterpreted verse on the subject of birth control as a whole.²⁰ Cerling opines that Onan's condemnation for coitus interruptus has been the conventional understanding of the Church and no contemporary pundit endorses this viewpoint.²¹ He again states that, various explanations for Onan's wrongdoing range from ridiculing the obligations of a levirate marriage to the straightforward claim that he was punished for a conduct that God disapproved of rather than using contraception.²² In Cerling's view, many commentators now unanimously agree on the one truth only: Onan's use of contraception was not penalized.²³ The writers observe that, though this explanation is not entirely accurate, some contemporary scholars believe Onan was slain because he disobeyed the levirate law, which mandated a brother-in-law to marry his brother's widow in the event of his death.²⁴

Gordon J. Wenham provides an explanation stating that in Onan's case, it is especially reprehensible, for God's repeated promise to the patriarchs was that he would make them fruitful.²⁵ The

¹³ Moss and Bade, *Reconceiving Infertility: Biblical Perspectives on Procreation and Childlessness*.

¹⁴ Darek Isaacs, "Is There a Dominion Mandate? Reply: A Response to Hennigan, Kulikovsky, and McDurmon," *Answers Research Journal* 6 (2013): 165.

¹⁵ Amevenku and Boaheng, *African Biblical Christianity*, 73.

¹⁶ Amevenku and Boaheng, *African Biblical Christianity*, 73.

¹⁷ Amevenku and Boaheng, *African Biblical Christianity*, 73.

¹⁸ Amevenku and Boaheng, *African Biblical Christianity*, 73.

¹⁹ Amevenku and Boaheng, *African Biblical Christianity*, 73.

²⁰ Edward Charles Cerling, "Aborting and Contraception in Scripture," *Christian Scholars Review*, 1971, 48.

²¹ Cerling, "Abortion," 48

²² Cerling, "Abortion," 49.

²³ Cerling, "Abortion," 49.

²⁴ Cerling, "Abortion," 49.

²⁵ J. Gordon. Wenham, *Word Biblical Commentary Vol 2, Genesis 16-50* (Dallas: Word Books Publisher, 1994).

writer agrees with Cerling that Onan was slain because he disobeyed the levirate law.²⁶ Evangelical Protestant, Bryan Hodge, contends in his book that while the levirate marriage law is clearly mentioned, the larger context demonstrates why Onan was executed: because God saw his action as a rebellious, futile use of the sexual act.²⁷

God's Sovereignty and Family Planning

Arthur W. Pink defines the concept of God's sovereignty as his omnipotence, monarchy, and godhood.²⁸ The author further asserts that being sovereign means that God is God, the Most High, acting in the army of heaven and among the people of earth in accordance with his will; it indicates that none can oppose him or obstruct his goals (Ps. 115:3).²⁹ The writer again states that God's entire essence is characterized by his sovereignty; he is sovereign in everything about him, how he uses his authority and his power whenever, wherever, and however he pleases.³⁰

Michael A. Grisanti postulates that anti-birth control scholars see family planning as a rebellion against God's rightful sovereignty over procreation, hence, couples are forbidden from controlling the time and quantity of children they should have since the Bible portrays God as the one who opens and closes a woman's womb.³¹ Grisanti further indicates that some couples are open to using natural family planning methods such as breastfeeding, withdrawal method and others but reject all artificial family planning methods such as condoms, contraceptive pills and others, believing that doing so does not negate God's sovereignty.³² Grisanti concludes that Christians can only make judgments about when and how many children to have after carefully considering how their actions would most honor God.³³

Sara White cites Pope Paul VI saying that God, not man, is in control of the body and then, the goal and significance of a sexual act are either entirely or partially eliminated by family planning.³⁴ In White's view, family planning methods challenge God's omnipotence; it is imperative that couples understand God's sovereignty over conception and reproduction; he is the source of life, and as such, mankind is under his rule.³⁵ In the view of Bruce Waltke, the Bible teaches that God is sovereign over all of life, including the conception and birth of children (Ps. 127:3).³⁶ Waltke affirms that children are a gift from God, not merely a human choice or right.³⁷ Similarly, Derek Kidner opines that Psalm 139:13-16 describes how God is intimately involved in the creation of each individual life. The writer further asserts that these verses highlight God's sovereignty in determining the timing and circumstances of new life.³⁸

On the other hand, Gordon Fee contends that the Bible does not present children as an obligation that overrides all other considerations as 1 Corinthians 7:8-9 suggests that marriage and family are good, but not mandatory.³⁹ Philip H. Towner supports this claim with his assertion that 1 Timothy 5:8 advises that providing for one's family is a key responsibility; implying the need to thoughtfully consider one's ability to care for children.⁴⁰ Craig Blomberg concludes by saying, that the biblical view of God is ultimately sovereign over family planning, but he has given mankind some discretion within his sovereignty.⁴¹ The writer again adds that couples should prayerfully consider their circumstances,

²⁶ Cerling, "Abortion," 49.

²⁷ Bryan Hodge, *The Christian Case Against Contraception* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2010).

²⁸ W. Pink. Arthur, *The Sovereignty of God* (USA: Lightning Source Inc., 2002).

²⁹ Arthur, *The Sovereignty of God*, 23.

³⁰ Arthur, *The Sovereignty of God*, 26.

³¹ Michael A. Grisanti, "Birth Control and the Christian: Recent Discussion and Basic Suggestions," *The Master's Seminary Journal* 23, no. 1 (2012).90.

³² Grisanti, "Birth Control and the Christian," 90.

³³ Grisanti, "Birth Control and the Christian," 91.

³⁴ Sara White, "Pope Paul VI and the Pill.," *A Journal of Critical Ethics in Bioethics* 7, no. 2 (2008): 12.

³⁵ White, "Pope Paul VI and the Pill," 12.

³⁶ Bruce Waltke, *The Book of Proverbs, Chapters 1-15* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1990).533.

³⁷ Waltke, *The Book of Proverbs, Chapters 1-15*, 533.

³⁸ Derek Kidner, *Psalms 73-150: An Introduction and Commentary* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1973).

³⁹ Gordon D. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1987).274.

⁴⁰ H. Philip Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2006). 352.

⁴¹ Craig Blomberg, *Neither Poverty nor Riches: A Biblical Theology of Possessions* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1992).161.

desires, and responsibilities when making decisions about having children, recognizing God's control while also exercising godly stewardship.⁴²

Cultural Perspective of Childbirth in Akan Tribes of Ghana

According to Adinkrah Mensah, pregnancy has a deep socio-cultural meaning in Akan and is seen as a sacred and transformative period.⁴³ He further asserts that within the Akan community, pregnancy and childbirth are central to a woman's identity and social status.⁴⁴ Dyer Silke et al., note that a person's decision to marry can be determined by cultural issues such as childbearing which is the number one reason for marriage in Akan culture because raising a family is important to the Akan.⁴⁵ Once more, the writers indicate that having children is a major source of respect and honor for Akan couples, especially the women.⁴⁶ Donkor and Sandall expand on this by arguing that in the Akan society, a woman's identity and social standing are fundamentally shaped by her pregnancy and delivery.⁴⁷ Therefore, in Trudie Gerrits' opinion, giving birth is a means of preserving Akan marriages.⁴⁸

Lewis Asimeng Boahene is of the view that, in Akan culture, reproduction is a key factor in determining a woman's value.⁴⁹ Boahene again states that there is a saying that "a childless woman never gives thanks".⁵⁰ He interprets this statement that; barren women have nothing to be grateful for since they are deprived of the greatest joy in life—children. As a result, it should come as no surprise that among the Akan, a woman's family is expected to give her husband a sheep "badudwan" after she gives birth to her tenth child. This is to thank the husband for increasing the size of their family.⁵¹ Adinkrah posits that welcoming a newborn is a joyful occasion since it is regarded as a blessing and a continuation of the family lineage.⁵² As a result, naming ceremonies are used to officially welcome infants into the community and help them feel a sense of social identification and belonging.⁵³ Ernestina S. Donkor states that there are difficulties related to childbirth; it may put an individual or couple in a difficult situation yet there is so much happiness in welcoming a newborn child.⁵⁴

Akan Communal Lifestyle

According to Peter Sarpong, Akan communities in Ghana place a great emphasis on reciprocal duties and communal living. The Akan people also view themselves as belonging to an extended family or clan and have a strong sense of collective identity.⁵⁵ He continues that the matrilineal extended family known as the "abusua" is the center of their social structure.⁵⁶ Godwin Kwasi Nukunya is of the view that members of the *abusua* owe it to one another to support and help one another, whether it is with work, resources, or child care.⁵⁷ He goes on to say that the head of the *abusua*, who is usually the oldest woman, is crucial to decision-making and dispute settlement.⁵⁸

Nukunya emphasizes once more that this social attitude encompasses the entire community as well as the family and the focal point of Akan villages is a central courtyard known as a "dwan" where

⁴² Blomberg, *Neither Poverty nor Riches*, 162.

⁴³ Adinkrah Mensah, "Better Dead Than Dishonored: Masculinity and Male Suicidal Behavior in Contemporary Ghana," *Social Science & Medicine* 72, no. 5 (2011): 718–26.

⁴⁴ Mensah, "Better Dead Than Dishonored," 718-726.

⁴⁵ Silke J Dyer et al., "Men Leave Me as I Cannot Have Children": Women's Experiences with Involuntary Childlessness," *Human Reproduction* 17, no. 6 (2002): 1665.

⁴⁶ Dyer et al., "Men Leave Me as I Cannot Have Children," 1665.

⁴⁷ Ernestina S Donkor and Jane Sandall, "The Impact of Perceived Stigma and Mediating Social Factors on Infertility-Related Stress among Women Seeking Infertility Treatment in Southern Ghana," *Social Science & Medicine* 65, no. 8 (2007): 1683–94.

⁴⁸ Trudie Gerrits, "Social and Cultural Aspects of Infertility in Mozambique," *Patient Education and Counseling* 31, no. 1 (1997): 39.

⁴⁹ Lewis Asimeng-Boahene, "The Social Construction of Sub-Saharan Women's Status through African Proverbs," *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences* 4, no. 1 (2013):123.

⁵⁰ Boahene, "The Social Construction of Sub-Saharan Women's Status,"123.

⁵¹ Boahene, "The Social Construction of Sub-Saharan Women's Status," 123.

⁵² Mensah, "Better Dead Than Dishonored," 718-726.

⁵³ Mensah, "Better Dead Than Dishonored," 718-726.

⁵⁴ Ernestina Safoa Donkor, "Socio-Cultural Perceptions of Infertility in Ghana," *Africa Journal of Nursing and Midwifery* 10, no. 1 (2008): 22–34.

⁵⁵ Peter Sarpong, *Ghana in Retrospect: Some Aspects of Ghanaian Culture* (Tema: Ghana Publishing Corporation, 1974):28.

⁵⁶ Sarpong, "Ghana in Retrospect," 28.

⁵⁷ Kwasi Godwin Nukunya, *Tradition and Change in Ghana: An Introduction to Sociology* (Accra: Ghana Universities Press, 1992):47.

⁵⁸ Nukunya, "Tradition and Change in Ghana," 47.

residents congregate to mingle, transact business, and settle disputes.⁵⁹ It is required of community members to assist with projects like constructing, farming, and preserving public areas.⁶⁰

Consequence of Infertility in Akan Culture

According to Angelina Ogyiri Asare, due to the numerous social and cultural ramifications of infertility, it is not viewed as a private matter in Akan culture.⁶¹ Abdoul Azize Diallo et al. assert that the traditional Akan community is pro-natal, which means that having children is the primary goal of marriage in order to carry on the family name, as a result, it is uncommon to witness an Akan couple decide to forgo having children voluntarily.⁶² Donkor posits that the majority of Akan women and men desire children for a variety of reasons, including status identification and succession.⁶³ Dorcas Ofosu-Budu and Vilma Hänninen assert that infertility affects both partners severely and it is particularly painful for women since they are traditionally seen as the reproductive leaders.⁶⁴ Donkor adds to this by stating that women are frequently held responsible for infertility and that there have been social pressures and expectations for women to procreate.⁶⁵ In Fosu-Budu and Hänninen's view, infertility is denigrated whenever there is rivalry, conflict, or disagreement over unrelated issues.⁶⁶ Some of the consequences women face as a result of infertility are discussed below.

Infertility and Mental Health

Fledderjohann asserts that high levels of psychological discomfort associated with infertility affect both men and women equally, proving that high levels of distress related to fertility are not a problem that is exclusive to women.⁶⁷ Nonetheless, compared to their male counterparts, infertile African women typically experience much higher levels of suffering.⁶⁸ According to Diallo et al., infertile couples frequently experience stress from the male partner's family.⁶⁹ The husband's family members frequently attempt to explicitly or indirectly express sympathy by offering advice on how to get the woman out of her situation.⁷⁰ Diallo et al. argue that infertile couples may also experience psychological stresses from their neighbourhood or society. Jokes about infertility that people hear at social gatherings are a common source of stress in society.⁷¹ Lewis Asimeng Boahene opines that, learning that one is infertile damages one's pride and self-esteem and makes one feel unattractive, imperfect, and undeserving.⁷² Asare notes that, infertility is associated with depression symptoms such as feelings of hopelessness, isolation due to social stigma, withdrawal of social and grief.⁷³

Infertility and Marital Problems

According to Nyarko and Amu, marital disagreements, poor communication, altercations, and threats of divorce are associated with infertility.⁷⁴ Otchere Lane et al. postulate that couples experience a widening distance from each other as well as, a rise in problems (such as neglect and trust issues) after realizing

⁵⁹ Nukunya, "Tradition and Change in Ghana," 47.

⁶⁰ Nukunya, "Tradition and Change in Ghana," 52.

⁶¹ Ogyiri Angelina Asare, "Influence of Psychological Distress On Self-Esteem of Women with Infertility" (2020).27.

⁶² Abdoul Azize Diallo, Prince Justin Anku, and Rhodalyn Adwoa Darkoa Oduro, "Exploring the Psycho-Social Burden of Infertility: Perspectives of Infertile Couples in Cape Coast, Ghana," *Plos One* 19, no. 1 (2024): e0297428.

⁶³ Donkor, "Socio-Cultural Perceptions of Infertility in Ghana," 23.

⁶⁴ Dorcas Ofosu-Budu and Vilma Hänninen, "Explanations for Infertility: The Case of Women in Rural Ghana," *African Journal of Reproductive Health* 25, no. 4 (2021): 145.

⁶⁵ Donkor, "Socio-Cultural Perceptions of Infertility in Ghana," 22.

⁶⁶ Ofosu-Budu and Hänninen, "Explanations for infertility," 145.

⁶⁷ Jasmine J Fledderjohann, "'Zero Is Not Good for Me': Implications of Infertility in Ghana," *Human Reproduction* 27, no.5 (2012): 1383.

⁶⁸ Fledderjohann, "Zero is Not Good for Me," 1383.

⁶⁹ Azize Diallo et al, "Exploring the Psycho-Social Burden of Infertility," 1.

⁷⁰ Azize Diallo et al, "Exploring the Psycho-Social Burden of Infertility," 1.

⁷¹ Azize Diallo et al, "Exploring the Psycho-Social Burden of Infertility," 1.

⁷² Asimeng-Boahene, "The Social Construction of Sub-Saharan," 123.

⁷³ Ogyiri Asare, "Influence of Psychological Distress On Self-Esteem of Women with Infertility," 43.

⁷⁴ Samuel H Nyarko and Hubert Amu, "Self-Reported Effects of Infertility on Marital Relationships among Fertility Clients at a Public Health Facility in Accra, Ghana," *Fertility Research and Practice* 1 (2015): 2.

they are unable to become parents.⁷⁵ Ofosu-Budu and Hänninen also note that it is typical for infertile women to endure bad treatment and disdain from their in-laws when husband and wife reside in the same complex as their husband's family (in-laws).⁷⁶ Gerrits opines that Akan men may also experience intense social pressure to procreate.⁷⁷ In the midst of this pressure, when there are difficulties in conception, the man can be forced to take on more wives or have extramarital affairs in an effort to conceive. Clearly, this can have a disastrous effect on the marriage between the infertile man and his wife.⁷⁸

Infertility and Social Stigma

Stigma in society can arise from infertility. Akosuah Adomako Ampofo claims that being childless is frequently seen as a sign of failure in life, particularly for women. Again being childless can result in social rejection, marital issues, and a decline in one's social status in the society.⁷⁹ In the opinion of Donkor and Sandall, this stigma may be particularly noticeable in traditional Akan societies where children are highly esteemed and considered a blessing. It's possible for infertile women to experience abuse, loneliness, and gossip. The infertile women could also experience pressure to cure their infertility through traditional rituals or spiritual cures.⁸⁰

Akan Belief in Spirits

Joseph B. Danquah claims that the Akan people are deeply rooted in their rich spiritual history, which has persisted for generations and is essential to their sense of self.⁸¹ He further states that the belief in a supreme creator god called "Onyame", who is regarded as the ultimate source of all existence and the arbitrator of both the physical and metaphysical realms, lies at the heart of Akan spirituality.⁸² In addition, as stated by Peter Sarpong, the Akan worship a pantheon of lesser deities, ancestor spirits, and other supernatural beings who they think have an impact on and interaction with people's lives as well as the community. Elaborate ceremonies, divination techniques, and a general worldview emphasizing the interconnection of the human, natural, and invisible domains are ways in which these spiritual ideas are conveyed.⁸³

Traditional Methods of Family Planning

Calendar/ Rhythm Method

Like other Africans, the Akan rely on rhythmic practices. According to Zawn Villines, the calendar or rhythm technique is a naturally occurring method of family planning.⁸⁴ He contends that it entails monitoring one's menstrual cycle and body language to ascertain the optimal time to have intercourse in order to avoid getting pregnant.⁸⁵ As stated by Samuel Agyei-Mensah, the calendar method of family planning has long been used as a traditional method of birth control and fertility management within the Akan cultural framework.⁸⁶ He argues that this method which involves meticulously tracking a woman's menstrual history to identify her fertile and infertile periods is rooted in the Akan people's deep understanding of their own menstrual cycles and reproductive patterns.⁸⁷ He repeats that Akan couples usually refrain from having sex during the fertile days or use other conventional means of contraception to avoid getting pregnant, but they do have sex during the infertile interval.⁸⁸ He goes on to say that this

⁷⁵ Promise E Sefogah et al., "Exploring The Psychological Experiences Of Women With Infertility In Urban Ghana: A Qualitative Study: Psychological Experiences of Women with Infertility," *Postgraduate Medical Journal of Ghana* 12, no. 2 (2023): 71.

⁷⁶ Ofosu-Budu and Hänninen, "Explanations for Infertility," 145.

⁷⁷ Gerrits, "Social and Cultural Aspects of Infertility in Mozambique," 43.

⁷⁸ Gerrits, "Social and Cultural Aspects of Infertility in Mozambique," 43.

⁷⁹ Akosua Adomako Ampofo, "'When Men Speak Women Listen': Gender Socialisation and Young Adolescents' Attitudes to Sexual and Reproductive Issues," *African Journal of Reproductive Health*, 2001, 196–212.

⁸⁰ Donkor and Sandall, "The Impact of Perceived Stigma," 1691.

⁸¹ Joseph Boakye Danquah, *The Akan Doctrine of God: A Fragment of Gold Coast Ethics and Religion* (London: Cass, 1968).45.

⁸² Danquah, *The Akan Doctrine of God*, 45.

⁸³ Sarpong, *Ghana in Retrospect: Some Aspects of Ghanaian Culture*.72.

⁸⁴ Zawn Villines, "Rhythm Method of Birth Control: What to Know," *Medical News Today*, February 17, 2023.

⁸⁵ Villines, "Rhythm method of birth control" *Medical News Today*, February 17, 2023.

⁸⁶ Samuel Agyei-Mensah, "Fertility Transition in Ghana: Looking Back and Looking Forward," *Population, Space and Place* 12, no. 6 (2006): 145.

⁸⁷ Agyei-Mensah, "Fertility Transition in Ghana," 145.

⁸⁸ Agyei-Mensah, "Fertility Transition in Ghana," 148.

method of family planning is seen as a natural and holistic approach that is in line with the Akan spiritual beliefs regarding the value of responsible parenthood and the sanctity of life. However, he believes that the calendar method's efficacy can be limited, and Akan communities have also gradually added modern family planning techniques to complement their traditional methods.⁸⁹

Withdrawal Method/ Coitus Interruptus

According to James Trussell, the withdrawal method, sometimes referred to as the “pull-out” method or coitus interruptus, is one of the most popular conventional approaches.⁹⁰ It occurs when the male partner removes his penis from the vagina before ejaculating.⁹¹ Isaac Osei-Akoto and Adwoa Osei-Akoto postulate that some Akan couples have been using this method as a form of birth control.⁹² The authors assert that although not as effective as contemporary contraceptive methods, the withdrawal technique—known locally as “daa yie”—has been accepted by some Akan communities as a culturally acceptable method of controlling fertility, particularly in situations where other options are scarce or unavailable.⁹³ The authors further assert that, in keeping with the Akan holistic view of sexual and reproductive health, the practice is commonly coupled with spiritual rites and beliefs to maximize its efficacy. However, the withdrawal approach remains controversial, and an increasing number of Akan couples are using more effective family planning methods to meet their reproductive objectives.⁹⁴

Breast Feeding Method

The World Health Organization states that the breastfeeding method, also known as the lactational amenorrhea method (LAM), is a temporary method of family planning that makes use of the natural effect that breastfeeding has on fertility. “Lactational” refers to a nursing connection. To have “amenorrhea” is to stop bleeding every month.⁹⁵ In the opinion of Charlotte Tawiah-Agyemang et al., exclusive breastfeeding has long been acknowledged as a successful traditional method of family control and birth spacing among the Akan people. The Akan encourage new mothers to nurse their infants exclusively for the first six months of life, based on the notion that prolonged breastfeeding can temporarily reduce a woman's fertility.⁹⁶ The writers contend that many Akan tribes oppose the introduction of extra meals or beverages at this time since it is thought to interfere with naturally occurring lactational amenorrhea.⁹⁷ The authors again hypothesize that extended breastfeeding is seen as a culturally accepted means for Akan women to manage their reproductive health and space out pregnancies, in line with larger Akan beliefs about being a responsible parent and raising children.⁹⁸ However, the exclusive breastfeeding strategy has had to change to meet shifting social standards and demands as Akan families have been exposed to more contemporary family planning techniques.⁹⁹

Herbal Medicine

Kumud Bala et al. claim that traditional herbal medicines are usually made using extracts from medicinal plants.¹⁰⁰ Victoria N. Addo asserts that family planning and fertility control have traditionally been aided by the use of herbal treatments and concoctions within the Akan cultural heritage. She makes the same claim once more that Akan herbalists and traditional birth attendants are known to make certain herbal

⁸⁹ Agyei-Mensah, “Fertility Transition in Ghana,” 148.

⁹⁰ James Trussell, “Contraceptive Failure in the United States,” *Contraception* 70, no. 2 (2004): 89–96.

⁹¹ Trussell, “Contraceptive failure in the United States,” 397–404.

⁹² Isaac Osei-Akoto and Adwoa Osei-Akoto, “Traditional Family Planning Methods among the Akan of Ghana,” *International Journal of Social Science Studies* 5, no. 8 (2017): 37.

⁹³ Osei-Akoto and Osei-Akoto, “Traditional Family Planning Methods among the Akan of Ghana,” 40.

⁹⁴ Osei-Akoto and Osei-Akoto, “Traditional Family Planning Methods among the Akan of Ghana,” 40.

⁹⁵ World Health Organization Department of Sexual and Reproductive Health and Research (WHO/SRH) and Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health/ Center for Communication Programs (CCP), *Family Planning: A Global Handbook for Providers* (Baltimore and Geneva: CCP and WHO, 2022), 20.

⁹⁶ C Tawiah-Agyemang et al., “Early Initiation of Breast-Feeding in Ghana: Barriers and Facilitators,” *Journal of Perinatology* 28, no. 2 (2008): S47.

⁹⁷ Tawiah-Agyemang et al., “Early Initiation of Breast-Feeding in Ghana,” 51.

⁹⁸ Tawiah-Agyemang et al., “Early Initiation of Breast-Feeding in Ghana,” 51.

⁹⁹ Tawiah-Agyemang et al., “Early Initiation of Breast-Feeding in Ghana,” 51.

¹⁰⁰ Kumud Bala, Mahima Arya, and Deepshikha Pandey Katare, “Herbal Contraceptive: An Overview,” *World J Pharm Pharm Sci* 3, no. 8 (2014): 1307.

preparations that are said to have contraceptive effects for women who drink them.¹⁰¹ These herbal concoctions, which are frequently made from native herbs, roots, and barks, are believed to thicken cervical mucus, temporarily suppress ovulation, or interfere with other aspects of reproduction. She also believes that in order to maximize the effectiveness of these herbal contraceptives, rituals and spiritual acts are usually performed in conjunction with their administration.¹⁰² Even though there is ongoing controversy regarding the scientific validity of many Akan herbal family planning methods, some Akan communities still use them, particularly in locations where access to modern contraceptives is limited.¹⁰³

METHODOLOGY

The study used both empirical and non-empirical research methodology and fell under Christian ethics. This study adopted quantitative research and analyzed using descriptive statistics. The primary source of data was gathered through a questionnaire given to the members of the Presbyterian Church of Ghana, Ebenezer Congregation-Old Tafo as well as through personal observation. The secondary method involved the use of publications such as journals, books, articles, and other unpublished works.¹⁰⁴

The study employed the purposive method to select respondents. The sample space was 300 people but the sample size was 50 people. Probability sampling was employed in this study. This paper used descriptive statistics analysis to critically examine the data to establish accurate information from the article questions. The data was analyzed thematically. The study considered that all sources have been acknowledged.

PRESENTATION OF DATA

Historical Background of the Presbyterian Church of Ghana, Ebenezer Congregation, Old-Tafo.

The church began in 1965 as a Bible study and prayer group but collapsed due to a lack of leadership. Reorganized in 1980, it struggled with participation until 1985, when it was revived by Hennor Ernest and Nehemiah Awuakye, starting with seven members who hosted the church’s first “All-Night” service. Despite challenges, the group was inaugurated in 1991 with 60 members and nine executive officers. Growth was spurred by evangelism, reaching 110 members by 2003. A children's service started with 20 children, later forming a Junior Youth group in 1991. A Boys’ and Girls’ Brigade began as a junior choir in 1990, later led by Mr. Ampabeng. The church became Old Tafo District in 1997, completing an auditorium in 2022 under Rev. Dr. William Owusu Boateng, and now has 11 congregations with around 2,700 members, mostly adults.¹⁰⁵

Biographical Data of Respondents

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	26	52%
Female	24	48%
Total	50	100
Educational Background	Frequency	Percentage
Primary	2	4%
JHS	24	48%
SHS	9	18%
University	15	30%
Total	50	100.0
Age Range	Frequency	Percentage
Below -20	16	32%

¹⁰¹ V N Addo, “Herbal Medicines: Socio-Demographic Characteristics and Pattern of Use by Patients in a Tertiary Obstetrics and Gynaecology Unit,” *Journal of Science and Technology (Ghana)* 27, no. 3 (2007): 149–55.

¹⁰² Addo, “Herbal Medicines: Socio-Demographic Characteristics,” 73.

¹⁰³ Addo, “Herbal Medicines: Socio-Demographic Characteristics,” 73.

¹⁰⁴ Department of Theology Christian Service University College, “Research Manual for Project Work and Dissertation,” 2019.

¹⁰⁵ Ebenezer Presbyterian Church-Old Tafo, Kumasi, Presbyterian Church of Ghana, *50th Anniversary Celebration (1953-2003)*, 2023.

24-25	14	28%
26-30	9	18%
31-45	9	18%
46-45	2	4%
Total	50	100

Source: Researchers fieldwork, (2024)

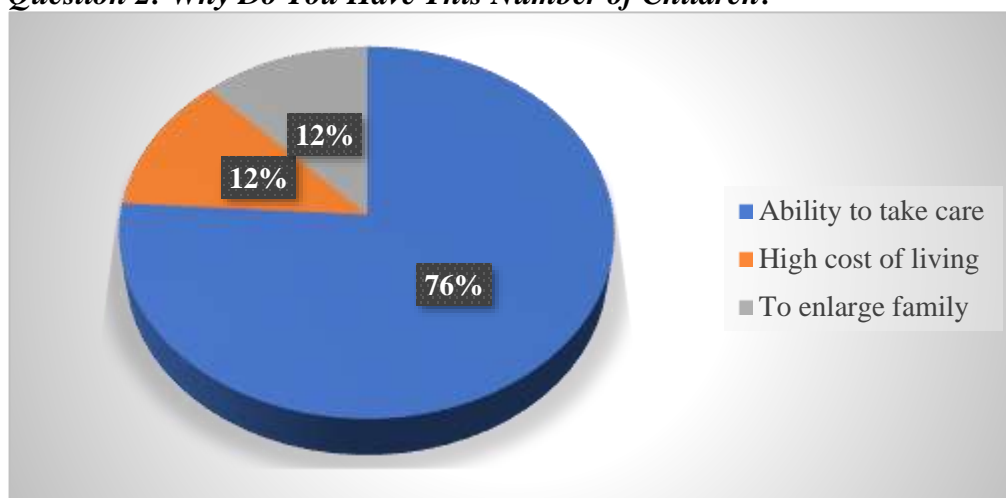
Responses from Participants

Question 1: Do you have Children?

Do You Have Children			If Yes, The Number Of Children?		
	Frequency	Percentage		Frequency	Percentage
Yes	17	34%	1-3	22	88%
No	33	66%	4-6	3	12%
Total	50	100	Total	25	100

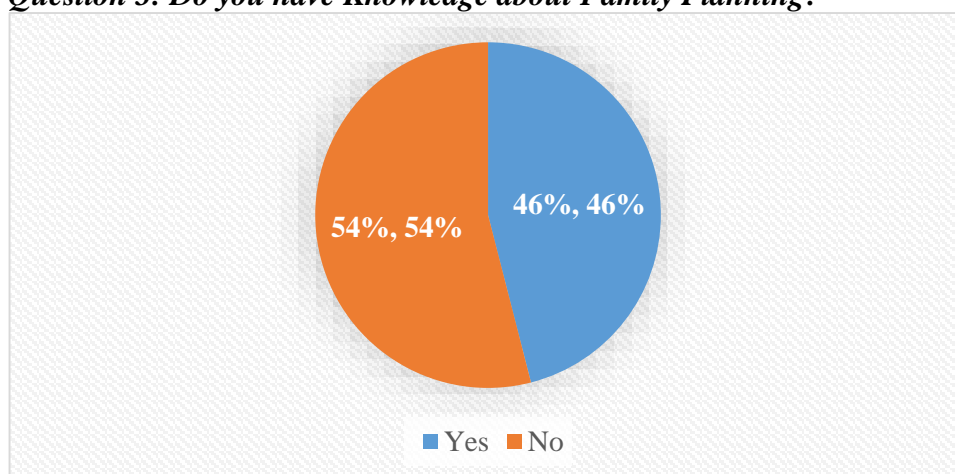
Source: Researchers fieldwork, (2024)

Question 2: Why Do You Have This Number of Children?



Source: Researchers fieldwork, (2024)

Question 3: Do you have Knowledge about Family Planning?



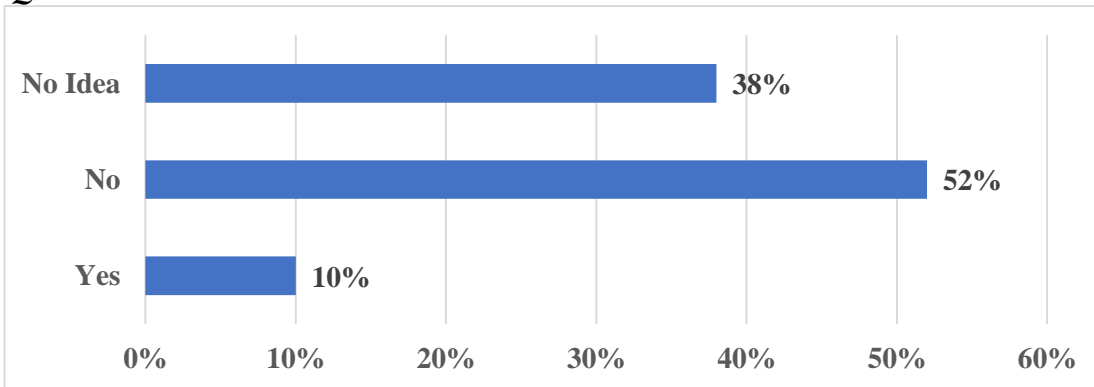
Source: Researchers fieldwork, (2024)

Question 4: Do you use any family planning method?

DO YOU USE FAMILY PLANNING METHOD?			IF YES, WHY?			IF NO WHY?		
	F	%		F	%		F	%
YES	17	34%	To Space-Out My Childrenw	11	55%	I Can Take Care Of As Many Children I Give Birth To	12	40%
NO	33	66%	Because I Don't Want To Give Birth To Many Children	4	20%	My Partner Doesn't Want It	4	14%
			My Partner Wants It	5	25%	I Am Not Familiar With It	14	46%
TOTAL	50	100	Total	20	100	Total	30	100

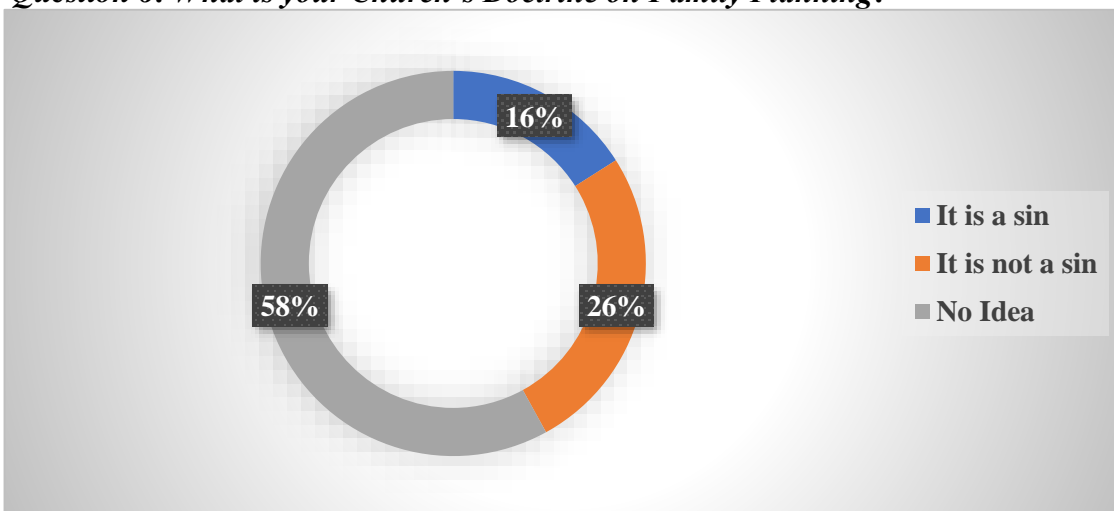
Source: Researchers fieldwork, (2024)

Question 5: Is Birth Control a Sin?



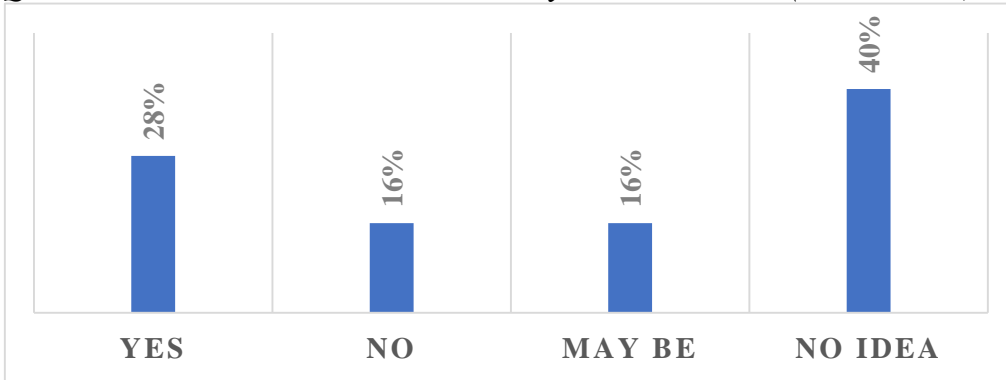
Source: Researchers fieldwork, (2024)

Question 6: What is your Church's Doctrine on Family Planning?



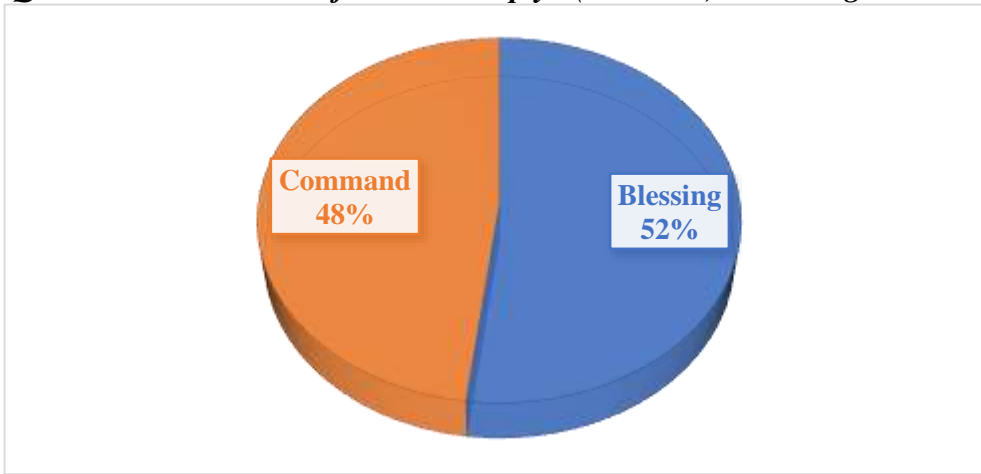
Source: Researchers fieldwork, (2024)

Question 7: Is Onan's act in the Bible why God Killed Him (Gen 38:8-10)?



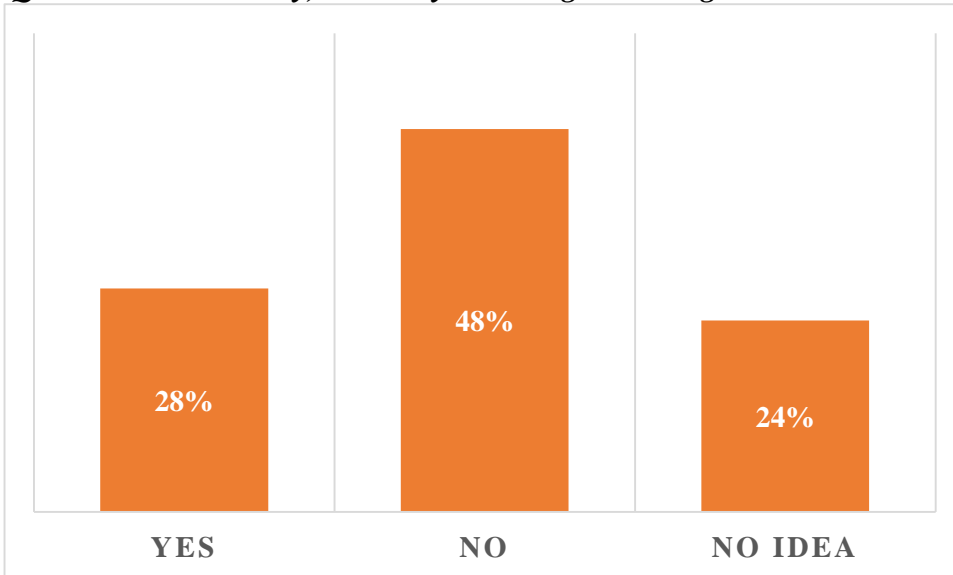
Source: Researchers fieldwork, (2024)

Question 8: Is "Be Fruitful and Multiply" (Gen 1:28) a Blessing or Command?



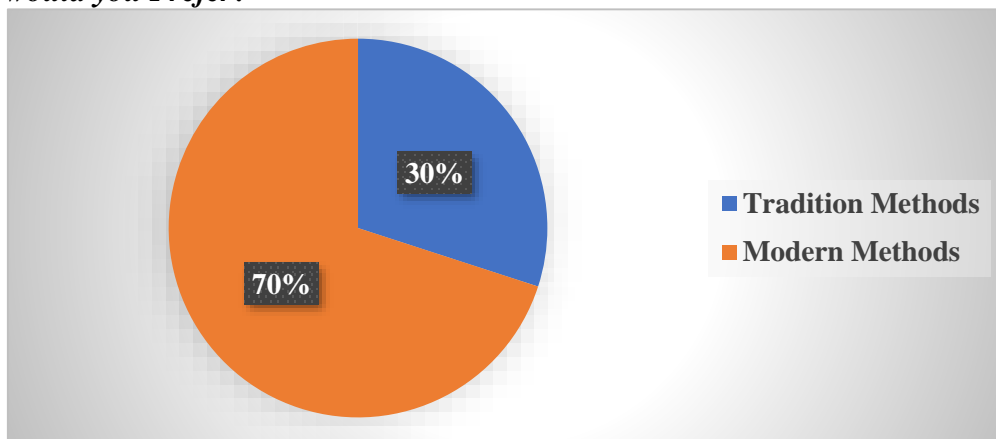
Source: Researchers fieldwork, (2024)

Question 9: Culturally, is Family Planning Encouraged?



Source: Researchers fieldwork, (2024)

Question 10: Between Traditional Methods and Modern Methods of Family Planning, which one would you Prefer?



Source: Researchers fieldwork, (2024)

Question 11: What Traditional Method of Family Planning would you Recommend?

	F	%
WITHDRAWAL METHOD	14	28%
HERBAL MEDICINE	16	32%
BREASTFEEDING	4	8%
CALENDAR METHOD	16	32%
TOTAL	50	100

Source: Researchers fieldwork, (2024)

Question 12: Which Modern Method of Family Planning would you Recommend?

	F	%
PILLS	20	40%
IMPLANTS	8	16%
INJECTABLE	16	32%
CONDOMS	6	12%
TOTAL	50	100

Source: Researchers Fieldwork, (2024)

DISCUSSION

a. Knowledge about Family Planning

The knowledge of family planning within the Akan community has been obscure. They were not planning actually on spacing out their children to be able to cater for them but they might control their birth because they actually did not want to give birth. Family planning practices are beneficial and practicable when one has knowledge about it. As literacy is increasing in Akan communities, people are getting to know and becoming interested in using family planning methods: both the traditional and modern methods. The Bible does not provide specified information on family planning but the Bible requires Christians to be capable to cater for their children irrespective of the number of children.

Awareness and understanding of family planning is a crucial factor that influences people’s use and attitudes towards it. If individuals are well-informed about what actually family planning is; its benefits, available methods and their potential side effects, people are more likely to develop a positive outlook. As a result, the majority of people will likely participate in family planning practices. Ensuring access to comprehensive family planning information through various channels such as healthcare providers, media, schools and community outreach can improve knowledge and dispel myths or misconceptions.

The knowledge of family planning was reflected in this paper with minor differences. In this paper, a minority of the respondents 46% have knowledge about family planning while 54% do not know

anything about family planning. The majority of the respondents not knowing about family planning will automatically affect the practice of family planning methods in their marriages.

Kwasi Boaheng Antwi-Boasiako has noted that providing comprehensive family planning information can help families plan for and manage their economic resources more effectively, supporting the overall economic stability of the community.¹⁰⁶ Adequate family planning knowledge allows families to space births and ensure the health and well-being of mothers and children, which is crucial for sustaining the community.¹⁰⁷ The lack of accurate information and cultural sensitivity in family planning programs can lead to misconceptions and resistance within the Akan community.¹⁰⁸

b. Attitudes towards Family Planning

Respondents have poor attitudes towards family planning. Attitude towards family planning can be influenced by many factors such as knowledge about it, availability of family planning services, cultural perception and partner's decision. A significant number of the respondents 66% do not want to use family planning at all of which the majority of them specify that they are not familiar with the use of family planning methods. Out of 100% of those who do not use family planning, 46% of them are of the view that they are not familiar with the family planning methods. 40% stated that they can take care of as many children they can give birth to and the remaining 14% is of the view that their partners do not want family planning.

There are 34% who are familiar with family planning methods. When considering 100%, 55% use family planning to space out their children, 25% asserted that their partners actually want them to use family planning methods and 20% were of the view that they do not want to give birth to many children.

As stated earlier, knowledge about family planning has an influence on one's attitude toward family planning. It is for sure that one may not practice something he or she knows nothing about. Knowing about family planning is not only about hearing the name and the meaning of it but includes the various methods, side effects, mode of application of a method and others. One's knowledge of all these can influence the attitude of the person to practice family planning or not. Also, the availability of family planning services can have an effect on attitude towards it. The Ghana Health Service is doing well to make family planning services available in every community. The services include counselling and exposure to the family planning personnel and methods. Again, cultural perceptions influence attitudes towards family planning. If the means of practicing family planning methods go against the culture of a certain tribe, the members of the tribe would not practice family planning for fear of receiving a curse or bad luck from the spiritual world, especially in Akan culture where giving birth to many is applauded or seen as a blessing, one may have a negative attitude towards the use of family planning.

Ampofo posits that Akan women often face societal pressure to demonstrate their fertility and bear children, which can shape their attitudes toward family planning.¹⁰⁹ In some Akan communities, men may have the primary decision-making power over family planning, which can affect the willingness of women to use contraceptive methods.¹¹⁰ Education also can influence one's attitude toward family planning. Akan adolescents with higher levels of education tend to have more positive attitudes towards sexual and reproductive health, including family planning.¹¹¹

c. Factors Motivating Women's Use of Family Planning Methods

The survey determines some factors that motivate women to use family planning. The first factor is their knowledge about family planning. A right understanding of the concept of family planning has the propensity of motivating women to use family planning methods. 46% of the respondents have

¹⁰⁶ Kwasi Boaheng Antwi-Boasiako, "The Akan Concept of Communal Living and Its Implication for Development in Contemporary Ghana," *Journal of Black Studies* 251 (2019): 50–53.

¹⁰⁷ Adebayo Oluwafemi Ogunnaike, "Childbearing and Family Planning in Yoruba Culture," *Journal of Cultural Studies* 15, no.2(2020): 47.

¹⁰⁸ Esi Sylvia Gavor, "The Akan Cosmological System and Sustainable Development in Ghana," *Journal of Sustainable Development of Africa* 19, no. 2 (2017): 63.

¹⁰⁹ Ampofo, "'When Men Speak Women Listen': Gender Socialisation and Young Adolescents' Attitudes to Sexual and Reproductive Issues."97.

¹¹⁰ Esther Oppong-Odoom, "Communal Living and Reproductive Decision-Making in Akan Culture," *African Journal of Sociology* 12, no. 2 (2020): 63.

¹¹¹ Adomako Ampofo, "When Men Speak, Women Listen," 205.

knowledge about family planning. The primary factor motivating women to use family planning is the intention of spacing out their children. Out of the 34% that use family planning methods, the majority of them do so to space out their children. The last factor per the survey that motivates women to use family planning is that the birth control method is not a sin. 52% of the respondents accept birth control as not a sin which gives them the free range to practice family planning.

Women are not the only determinant of the use of family planning methods among couples, although many of the methods are applied to them, both traditional and modern methods. Women sometimes use family planning when their husbands demand it. Women in the Akan context are known to be very submissive to their husband's decisions, they view their husband's decisions as final since husbands are the heads of the family. Again, health issues on the part of the woman may also call for the need to use family planning methods. Women go through a lot in the conception period through to labour, they need time to heal and recover their health, however, women will not have to deny their husbands sexually when the need arises. So in order to avoid unexpected pregnancy, the woman will have to resort to family planning methods to be able to satisfy the husband yet no conception.

In modern times, both husbands and wives are workers, either in the public or private sector, but in the olden days, wives were to be in the house only to cater for children and the upkeep of the house and the husbands would go to work hard to bring money or food for the family. Though sometimes the wives assist the husbands in making ends meet it is the responsibility of the husband to provide for the home. Currently, only a few husbands let their wives stay in the house just as in the olden days, and such women are referred to as "housewives". Women are working very hard to support their husbands financially because of economic hardship and other reasons. It will thus be difficult for a woman who works to give birth to many children. So after giving birth to basically five or fewer children, the couples may cease giving birth not that they are not capable but they may use family planning methods not only as a means to space out children but to control the number of births.

d. Modern Family Methods and the Akan Concept of Large Family Sizes

The Akan concept of large family size is actually waning due to factors such as the modern family planning methods and information on birth control made easily available and accessible in Akan societies. The modern family planning methods are quicker and easily applied. The modern ones do not take much time and are quite reliable. Information about these methods is made known to couples at the health centers. There have been so many advertisements for these modern methods of family planning on media platforms.

Also, the rise in the cost of living and economic challenges faced by Akan families has led to a growing preference for smaller family sizes.¹¹² Prices of goods and services keep on increasing making living in Ghana difficult for its citizens. Every parent wants to properly take care of their children, but the cost and standard of living will not permit the average Ghanaian to give birth to many children.

Again, the Akan culture being dynamic makes room for modernization which has resulted in a smaller family size. The Akan people were more into farming, making them able to feed large families even without buying anything. Formal education which has become popular is also expensive. Unlike in the past, the prices of food and services are very expensive and quality formal education has become a requirement that has increasingly been expensive.

The survey provided some factors that have caused the decline in belief in the concept of large family size. From the survey, all respondents are educated. 48% of them have their education level up to Junior High School, 30% have theirs up to the University level, 18% have their education up to Senior High School and 4% have their up to primary school. The Akan concept of large family size is waning per the survey because a majority of the respondents want small family sizes. 88% of the respondents who are Akan have people between 1 to 3 children and just 12% have between 4 to 6. The 12% do not use family planning because they want a large family size, however, 76% of the respondents have fewer children because they want to take proper care of them. The decline in the belief in large family sizes can thus be attributed to exposure to Western education and economic issues.

¹¹² Gavor, "The Akan Cosmological System," 63.

e. *Is Family Planning a Sin or Not*

The survey sought the opinions of respondents as to whether family planning is a sin or not. The majority of the respondents responded that family planning is not a sin. 52% of the respondents are of the view that birth control, is not a sin. Also, 16% confirmed that the church under discussion teaches family planning as a sin but 26% of the respondents stated that the church doctrine does not describe it as a sin. Surprisingly, quite a significant percentage, 58% had no idea that the church under discussion teaches family planning. However, 28% saw Onan's act in the Old Testament as a sin and the reason why God killed him whereas 16% said it was not a sin. 56% could not choose a stance on whether Onan's act was a sin or not. There is a slight difference between the percentages that accepted family planning as a sin and the percentages that do not see it as a sin.

Family planning as a topic has endured so much argument in the Christian circle as to whether it is a sin or not. Some Christians quote Onan's case in Genesis 38 that God killed Onan because of his idea of practicing "coitus interruptus", a method of family planning in order not to have a child with his brother's wife. The critical reading of the chapter will bring to the reader's notice that Onan was killed not because of the family planning method he used but because he intended not to continue the lineage of his brother which he had been mandated to do. There has been a scholarly debate on Genesis 1:28 as a command or a blessing. If the passage is considered a command, it will make family planning a sin because God's intention will be that, man gives birth to the number of children that he is able to conceive irrespective of the capabilities and resources available for quality and good standard of living of the children. Jesus said that the poor we will always have with us (Matt 26:11, NIV), meaning that some people will remain poor throughout their lives., even by way of thinking and behaving will make them poor. Such people being commanded to give birth to many children will be of no good to them. Human beings by the free will of God have the sole responsibility of deciding the number of children they will give birth to. Hence, family planning is not actually a sin but mankind's ways and means of regulating unwanted pregnancies.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings and discussion, it is recommended that extensive family planning education should be undertaken by the Ministry of Health in the various communities through the various health providers and the media. The extensive broadcast of family planning methods and their benefits will entice and empower Ghanaians to patronize them. The advertisement or education of these methods will keep the people informed making them aware of these methods and causing them to use them. The more they learn about these methods, the more they want to practice to know how it works.

Teaching family planning in the church will also be beneficial to members. The church is one of the influencers of Ghanaian Christians. The members embrace and accept what is been taught in the Church as from God. The various auxiliary groups in the church such as women's fellowship can educate themselves about family planning methods in their various meetings.

Provision of information on side effects of some family planning methods. The knowledge of the effect of some family methods especially the modern ones will help Ghanaians to know which kind of method is good to use. Entreating people to use family planning methods for them to be responsible and capable of taking care of their family should not result in endangering their own lives. There should be proper information to the public about the negative effects of some family planning methods.

There should also be a critical reading of the Bible to guide the creation of doctrines of a church. An exegetical and contextual reading of texts in the Bible should be done and encouraged in the Church so that churches do not end up contradicting themselves.

CONCLUSION

The study has focused on the Biblical, traditional and church perspective on the use of family planning methods. There have been so many arguments on family planning as a topic in the Christian circle. This article has provided information to address the confusion about whether family planning is a sin or not. The position of this study is that family planning is not a sin. The Bible does not consider family planning as a sin. Even though this is not specifically stated in the Bible but understanding of the texts used in the Bible leans towards this position. Contextually, family planning is not negated. The traditions of the Akan

people are friendly toward family planning. The findings of the survey conducted within the Presbyterian Church of Ghana, Ebenezer Congregation shows that respondent's knowledge and practices of family planning were on the higher side. It can thus be concluded from the facts presented in this paper that, many Christians use family planning methods to space-out their children in Ghana and do not regard it as a sin

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