WEST AFRICAN TRADITIONAL RELIGION

[May not be taken with Christian Religious Studies and Islamic Studies

GENERAL AIMS

At the end of their study of the subject, the candidates are expected to have

- 1. gained insight into and have appreciation of the traditional religious beliefs and practices and their impact on the lives of the people,
- 2. worked out practical ways of confronting the challenges that face West Africans in utilizing acceptable traditional moral ideas and principles,
- 3. understood how our traditional principles can be applied in their daily lives,
- 4. analised the major traditional religious factors that influence the political, social and economic life of West African.

SCHEME OF EXAMINATION

There will be two papers, Papers 1 and 2 both of which will be a composite paper and will be taken at one sitting.

- **PAPER 1:** Will consist of fifty multiple-choice objective questions all of which must be answered within 50 minutes for 40 marks.
- **PAPER 2:** Will consist of three sections, Sections A, B and C, each consisting of three essay-type questions. The sections shall cover the following areas of the syllabus
 - Section A: General Introduction to West African Traditional Religion
 - Section B: The Individual and the Community
 - Section C: Contemporary Society

Candidates will be required to answer four questions in all, choosing at least one question from each section, for a total of 60 marks. The paper will take 2 hours 10 minutes.

DETAILED SYLLABUS

SECTION A: GENERAL INTRODUCTION TO WEST AFRICAN TRADITIONAL RELIGION.

1. Introduction to the Study of West African Traditional Religion Nature

- (a) Characteristics of W.A.T.R
 - (i) Belief in the Supreme Being
 - (ii) Divinities, Ancestors, Mystical Powers etc
- (b) Purpose/Reasons for the study of W.A.T.R

2. Terms Used to Describe West African Traditional Religion

- (a) Fetishism and Paganism
- (b) Animism and Ancestral Worship
- (c) Polytheism and Monotheism
- (d) Totemism
- (e) Primitive

3. Sources of West African Traditional Religion

- (a) Non-Oral Sources
 - Traditional Arts/Crafts
- (b) Oral Sources
 - (i) Names and Attributes of God
 - (ii) Theophorous Names
 - (iii) Proverbs/Wise sayings
 - (iv) Songs/Dirges
 - (v) Myths / Legends and Drum Language

4. Approaches to the Study of West African Traditional Religion

- (a) Thematic Approach
- (b) Comparative Approach
- (c) Historical Approach
- (d) Enumerative Approach

5. The Structure of West African Traditional Religion

- (a) God in West African Belief
- (b) The Ancestors
- (c) The Divinities
- (d) Charms and Amulets

6. Worship in West African Traditional Religion

- (a) Worship in W.A.T.R Introduction
- (b) Main features:
 - (i) Prayer/Libation
 - (ii) Sacrifice
 - (iii) Spirit possession

SECTION B: THE INDIVIDUAL AND THE COMMUNITY

7. Religious Personalities in West African Traditional Religion.

- (a) The concept/types of religious personalities
- (b) Processes for selecting religious personalities
- (c) The functions of religious leaders.

8. Festivals in West African Traditional Religion.

- (a) Types of Festivals
- (b) The significance of Festivals

9. **Religion and Medicine in W.A.T.R.**

- (a) Religion and Medicine: Introduction
- (b) Herbal Medicine
- (c) Traditional and Orthodox Healing

10. **Concept of Time, Work and Wealth**

- (a) Concept of Time
 - (i) Definition of time in West Africa.
 - (ii) Concept of the Future
 - (iii) The Importance of Time

(c) The Concept of Wealth

- (i) Meaning/Attitude towards Wealth
- (ii) Ways of acquiring Wealth
- (iii) Consequences of acquiring Wealth

11. **Concept of Man and Destiny**

- (a) Concept of Man
- (b) Concept of Destiny

12. Enemies of Life in West African Traditional Religion

- (a) Witchcraft and magic
 - (i) Meaning of witchcraft and magic
 - (ii) Acquisition of Witchcraft
 - (iii) Role of Witchcraft and Magic
- (b) Malevolent Spirits

13. Religion and Ethics in West African Traditional Religion.

- (a) The main Features of Ethics
- (b) Sources of Ethics in WATR
- (c) Moral Values/Virtues in West African Traditional Religion
- (d) Taboos and Sin in WATR
- (e) Convenant in WATR

14. **Rites of Passage**

- (a) Rites of passage
 - (i) Description of the stages; Rites of passage: Birth, Naming, Puberty, Marriage and Death,
 - (ii) Importance of Rites of Passage

SECTION C: CONTEMPORARY SOCIETY

15. Traditional Political Institutions in West African Traditional Religion.

- (a) Chieftaincy
 - (i) Structure of chieftaincy institutions
 - (ii) Process involving in selecting Chiefs
 - (iii) Importance of chieftaincy institution
- (b) Asafo Companies
 - (i) Introduction/Background
 - (ii) Importance

16. Religion and Tourism in West African Traditional Religion.

(a) Introduction

- (b) Religion and tourism
- (c) The uses of free/leisure time
- (d) Sacred personalities and tourism
- (e) Sacred places and tourism
- (f) Sacred objects and tourism

17. Religion and Stress Management in West African Traditional Religion.

- (a) Meaning and types of stress situation in West Africa traditional society
- (b) Causes and effects of stress situations
- (c) Management of stress situations

18. The Role of W.A.T.R. in Conflict Resolution and Management

- (a) Introduction meaning/concept of conflict in West African traditional society.
- (b) Causes of conflicts
- (c) Effects of conflicts
- (d) Conflict resolution and management in West African society

19. Religion and Reproductive Health in West African Traditional Religion.

- (a) West African Traditional Religion and Reproductive Health Features: issues of Hygiene, sexuality and Promiscuity/Abortion
- (b) Circumcision Rites and Reproductive Health

20. W.A.T.R. and Modernity

- (a) The impact of foreign religions on (Christianity and Islam) WATR
- (b) The impact of West African Traditional Religion on Christianity and Islam.
- (c) The impact of Science and Technology on West African Traditional Religion.
- (d) West African Traditional Religion and Conservation of the Environment.
- (e) The Impact of Urbanization on West African Traditional Religion.

21. New Religious Movements (NRM) in West African Traditional Religion.

- (a) Afrikania Missions (Ghana)
- (b) Godianism (Nigeria)
- (c) The future of West African Traditional Religion.

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