

# AFRICAN CHRISTIANITY RISING



**COMPLETE EDUCATIONAL EDITION  
EDUCATIONAL EXTRAS  
CONTENTS & GUIDE**

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**PLEASE NOTE**

For additional teaching materials from this project, both in video and print, for ongoing discussions, suggestions and ideas for how best to use these documentary materials in teaching, and to make your own contributions to the discussion, visit the project webpage at [www.jamesault.com](http://www.jamesault.com)

# *African Christianity Rising*

## **Educational Extras**

The following **Educational Extras** on two DVDs included in this **Complete Educational Edition** are intended to provide a wider, more diverse and flexible set of teaching tools for educators. Portraits of each church community we filmed provide more details of their stories than the full-length films. Biographical sketches and additional reflections from our distinguished commentators and consultants generally do not appear in the films at all. Since these **Educational Extras** are a product of how our *African Christianity Rising* films were made, the account of that process following this **Table of Contents** will help users understand what they represent and how they might be used.

## **Table of Contents**

### **Educational Extras: Ghana**

#### **1. Peter Sarpong – life & work 15:24**

Original portrait of Peter Kwesi Sarpong, Catholic pioneer introducing African cultures into worship, featuring his visit as Bishop to St. John's parish in Amokom, Kumasi. We filmed daily life in the parish and in Sarpong's office.

#### **2. Peter Sarpong – secular life 4:29**

Sarpong's life and reflections in secular terms produced for the Africa Hall of the Springfield Museums, Springfield, Massachusetts.

### **3. Mensa Otabil – life & work 6:36**

Original portrait of Mensa Otabil at Christ Temple, Accra, the original congregation of his International Central Gospel Church, now with branches all over the world.

### **4. Mt. Zion & Traditional Priest 21:21**

Original short portrait of Mt. Zion Revival Ministries, a prophet-founded church with 20-some branches in the rural area outside Akropong. Their preaching against people going to a traditional shrine priest working next door serves as a bridge to introduce her, Madame Akotowaa, and her work—for instance, cleansing a nearby village one afternoon that had experienced some disturbing deaths.

### **5. Nana Akotowaa – traditional priest 10:25**

The afternoon's work of a traditional shrine priest called to cleanse a village that had suffered some disturbing deaths.

### **6. Grace Presbyterian – deliverance ministry 33:00**

Original portrait of a then young Presbyterian congregation's flourishing deliverance ministry helping fuel its rapid growth. It was organized around two long prayer meetings each week, along with personal counseling and care. We portray two of the half dozen cases we followed.

### **7. Grace Presbyterian – on mission in New York 6:33**

A glimpse of Grace Presbyterian's deliverance team's annual mission trip to North America, here in New York City, at one of the City's oldest churches. Focuses on Catechist Abboa-Offei, one of our main characters, conducting prayer and counseling, and participating in a traditional outdoor ceremony.

**8. Presbyterian Synod – struggle for democracy 4:36**

A glimpse of a political uproar at the 1998 Synod of the Presbyterian Church of Ghana when a group of “young turks” challenged the existing leadership’s altering rules to permit the re-election of the existing Moderator. With commentary from key participants and interpretation from Kwame Bediako revealing this moment as a lesson in how obstacles to democracy are struggled with in church and society. (Tech note: Synod was originally shot in PAL Betacam but edited from NTSC VHS translations of PAL VHSdubs.)

**9. Calvary Christian Ministries – first portrait 10:54**

Original portrait of a new charismatic church founded and led by Fred and Rose Kwayisi-Darkwah, that became a central thread in *Stories from Ghana*.

**10. Macedonia Prayer Camp – preproduction visit 2:21**

From Hi-8 footage shot during a pre-production visit to the Macedonia Prayer Camp, representing an immensely popular movement in Ghana at the time. Family conflicts within its leadership when we returned to do production filming, kept us from following through with its important story. However, these early visits influenced our documentary project’s overall direction.

**11. Kwame Bediako – on traditional religion 3:33**

Reflections on traditional religion in Ghana. From a 3-hour life-story interview with Bediako in 1998.

**12. Kwame Bediako – life journey 4:25**

Bediako tells the story of his own faith journey from extensive interviews shot in 1998 and 2006.

**13. Kwame Bediako –“African Christianity may help the West...” 2:46**

Reflections on how African Christianity might help the West come to terms with its own suppressed past.

**Educational Extras: Zimbabwe (and Andrew Walls)**

**1. United Methodists – original portrait 23:00**

Original portrait of St. James United Methodist Church in Dangamvura Township in the City of Mutare, focusing on the stories of several members, including a school teacher and widow, Mrs. Bwawa, a lay leader in the church, and a youth member, Hazel, afflicted by family conflicts. We follow members to a church-wide women's association revival camp meeting.

**2. Victory Tabernacle – original portrait 20:48**

Original portrait of Victory Tabernacle, a new Pentecostal church in Mutare. Its pastor, Trevor Manhanga, who was involved in founding it as a youth member, was now head of the Pentecostal Assemblies of Zimbabwe, whose annual conference we filmed. We follow Manhanga's work counseling a young woman in conflict with her mother, from whom she had been separated for years by divorce.

**3. Zion Apostolics – original portrait 20:00**

Original portrait of a branch of Zion Apostolics, a "spiritual," prophet-founded church based in rural Zimbabwe, in Bikita South (though we filmed its urban branch, as well.) Focused on Bishop Ndamba and his first wife, Vashandira, a midwife, healer and prophet, whom we follow to their annual Passover gathering.

**4. Victory Tabernacle – follow-ups 2011 8:42**

Follow-ups filmed in 2011, in the wake of Zimbabwe's economic collapse and political crisis, with Lusajo and her family (now in South Africa) and Trevor Manhanga, still leading Victory Tabernacle and the Pentecostal Assemblies of Zimbabwe.

**5. Zion Apostolics – follow-ups 2011 3:07**

Follow-ups filmed in 2011, in the wake of Zimbabwe's economic collapse and political crisis, with Vashandira and family in her home village.

**6. United Methodists – follow-ups 2011 7:42**

Follow-ups filmed in 2011, in the wake of Zimbabwe's economic collapse & political crisis, with Hazel, Mrs. Bwawa & others from St. James United Methodist Church, in Dangamvura Township, Mutare.

**7. Andrew Walls – life & revelations 7:18**

In one of several life-story interviews filmed with Andrew Walls, a key consultant to this project, he describes revelations while teaching in Sierra Leone in the 1950s & 1960s that launched his path-breaking career as a church historian.

**8. Andrew Walls – life & revelations (short) 2:56**

(See previous item.)

**9. Andrew Walls – the Enlightenment & Christianity 1:56**

Walls' reflections on the Enlightenment's effects on Christianity, from one of several life-story interviews shot with him over the course of this project.

**10. Andrew Walls & Kwame Bediako – Pentecostalism  
& African cultures 3:05**

Andrew Walls' and Kwame Bediako's reflections on the relation of African (and African American) religion and culture to Pentecostal or charismatic Christianity, from several life-story interviews filmed with each of them and Walls' class at Princeton Theological Seminary.

# About the Extras

## How the *African Christianity Rising* films were made

A word about how the *African Christianity Rising* films were produced will help users understand what the Educational Extras included here represent and how they might be used.

After preproduction fieldwork in Ghana and Zimbabwe, which involved meeting potential collaborators and exploring a wide range of churches to portray, we began intensive filming in Ghana in 1998, with major funding from the Pew Charitable Trusts. We filmed in the range of church-types generally found now on the ground in sub-Saharan Africa: historic mission-founded churches (in the case of Ghana, the Presbyterian Church of Ghana and the Catholic Church), new charismatic churches like Mensa Otabil's International Central Gospel Church, and old-style "spiritual" or "prophet-founded" ones. In addition, at the suggestion of our sound recordist, Francis Kwayke, we also filmed the work of a traditional shrine priest working in the same village as the rural "spiritual" church we filmed. Francis, along with our translator, driver and production assistant, Joe Banson, helped negotiate our way into these diverse communities in local languages and attuned to local custom and culture.

Returning to the United States from Ghana with over 125 hours of footage from six different communities, we wrestled with the challenges not only of the range and complexity of stories we had filmed, but also of the daunting task of translation—especially translating unseen spiritual realities from an ancient primal language like Ghanaian Twi into modern English. Given these challenges, we decided to first build separate portraits of each individual community filmed (running from 15 to 33 minutes), before weaving these threads into full-length films. We ended up doing the same with our Zimbabwe footage. These original portraits, then, represent one set of items included as "extras" in this educational edition. Some focus on personal stories bringing viewers into aspects of local culture and worldview contributing to church growth—for instance, personal dramas

of deliverance ministry we filmed in the Presbyterian Church of Ghana, or family conflicts involved in one young mother's breakdown in a young charismatic church.

Other original portraits focused on the life of an on-camera commentator who was a central figure in the church in question—for instance, Mensa Otabil, a pioneer in building new charismatic churches in West Africa, and Peter Sarpong of the Catholic Church, a pioneer in introducing African cultures into worship.

However, when we wove these story threads into single films, most of this biographical material fell by the wayside. So did significant details of the personal dramas we portrayed, and even entire stories themselves. For this reason it seemed valuable to include these original portraits in this Complete Educational Edition. In addition, some educators, given their specific interests or location in particular church traditions, will find segments focused on a specific church or denomination of particular use.

After building individual portraits from our Ghana footage, we then went to do filming in Zimbabwe, in 2000, when President Robert Mugabe was just beginning his struggle to hold onto power by exploiting the issue of white-owned farms. We filmed 125 hours in a comparable range of churches, finding intimate, personal stories in each. We filmed among United Methodists as an example of a mission-founded church, focusing on a congregation in the township of Danganvura in the City of Mutare in eastern Zimbabwe. We filmed Victory Tabernacle, also in Mutare, where we based ourselves, as an example of a new Pentecostal or charismatic church. Its pastor, Trevor Manhanga, had recently become head of the Pentecostal Assemblies of Zimbabwe. As an example of an old-style “spiritual” or “prophet-founded” church, we filmed a community of Zion Apostolics, both in their city branch in Mutare, and, more extensively, in their rural home base in Bikita South.

Returning to the United States, after doing similar translation work, we built individual portraits of these three communities. As with our Ghana portraits, when we wove these into a single film, we necessarily cut some

valuable material. In the Zion Apostolic community, for instance, the polygamous nature of the family of our two main characters, Bishop Ndamba and his first wife, the midwife and prophet, Vashandira, was completely omitted in the finished film.

In addition to these nine original portraits from both our Ghana and Zimbabwe footage, we created some interpretive and biographical passages from extensive interviews filmed with our distinguished commentators and consultants, leading scholars on Christianity's growth in Africa. The principal ones involved Kwame Bediako and Andrew Walls, who both served as key consultants on this project. Bediako's Akrofi-Christaller Institute in the provincial capitol of Akropong was our key partner institution in Ghana and provided us hospitality and a base of operations. Though we filmed several life-story interviews with Andrew Walls, a consultant who helped give this project direction from its very beginnings, he does not appear at all in the films themselves.

Before we could build these two full-length films, however, we ran out of funding. The translation work, along with the time-consuming task of editing speech in languages my editors and I could not understand, exhausted our funds. The "tech bubble" had burst, the stock market collapsed, and it took five years before we managed to get funding from the John Templeton Foundation to complete the project. Meanwhile, we filmed several of our subjects in the United States, either on routine visits, including mission trips, or currently studying and working there. Pieces from some of this work are also included as "extras" in this package.

Funding from the John Templeton Foundation also provided for follow-up filming with subjects in both Ghana and Zimbabwe. While we were able to do that quickly in Ghana in 2006, Zimbabwe's economic collapse and political crisis, unleashing violence toward journalists, prevented us from returning at that time. However, several years later, after completing initial roughcuts of both films, we had the opportunity to return to Zimbabwe to do follow-up filming. We wove that material into our final Zimbabwe film in 2012, and have also included longer versions of those follow-ups in this educational edition.

These educational extras also include one vignette among the many that we edited but could not find a place for in our finished films. It is the story of a political uproar at a historic synod of the Presbyterian Church of Ghana, when a group of “young turks” challenged existing leadership’s decision to alter rules in order to permit the existing Moderator to run for re-election. The event laid bare, according to Kwame Bediako’s interpretation, some of the challenges democracy faces both in church and society in Ghana and other African nations, and the role churches can play in helping develop democratic cultures.

Finally, these extras also include two items created from our footage for other purposes. One is a biographical sketch of Archbishop Peter Sarpong created originally as an exhibit on African life and culture for the Africa Hall of the Springfield Museums in Springfield, Massachusetts. For that purpose, it contains more secular content. The other is a glimpse from preproduction Hi-8 footage of a Saturday prayer meeting at the Macedonia Prayer Camp outside Accra, Ghana. Though for various reasons—principally an internal family conflict in that ministry—we never did substantial filming there, these early visits influenced our project by demonstrating the immense popularity and energy of deliverance ministry, then the fastest growing ministry in Ghana. These stories, and others, will be told in a book I am developing on this project that will in its e-book edition have links to video embedded in its text. This piece was created for that purpose.

## **Following Ongoing Work**

We intend to create additional teaching tools from this project’s extensive and intimate footage and host a discussion blog on issues our *African Christianity Rising* films & their educational extras raise, where lessons can be shared about them and how they might be used. Please visit our website for ongoing details: [www.jamesault.com](http://www.jamesault.com). In addition, we welcome proposals for additional uses of the rich and extensive footage filmed for this project.

## Technical Note

These extras, while eminently viewable, are to varying degrees in rougher states than our finished films or the original footage. Video is generally at lower resolutions and sound is not thoroughly mixed.

## Credits

### Ghana – Production Credits

Camera: Tom Hurwitz

Additional camera: William Sefa & James Ault

Sound: Francis Kwayke

Associate producer: Ernest Abbeyquaye

Production assistant, translator, driver: Joe Banson

Production Manager: Anya Hurwitz

Gaffer/grip: Yaw Sefa

Partner institution: Akrofi-Christaller Institute, Akropong, Ghana

Consulting scholars: Joel Carpenter, Andrew Walls, Kwame Bediako,

Kingsley Larbi, Lamin Sanneh & Pashington Obeng

### Ghana – Postproduction Credits

Initial editing of portraits: Jean Boucicaut

Editing portrait adaptations & full-length *Stories from Ghana*:

Kate Purdie, Ameshill Productions, Marlboro, VT

Translator & culture consultant: Richmond Ampiah-Bonney

English voice overs: Richmond Ampiah-Bonney, Kate Anyidoho,

Sharon Tetteh, Patience Enuameh

Music: Francis Kwayke & Associates

### Zimbabwe – Production Credits

Camera: David Lyman

Additional camera: Trust Mashoro. James Ault & Innocent Chiwanza

Sound: Temba Nyamweda

Additional sound: Peter Muringisamwa & Tafadzwa Mabambe

Production assistant, translator: Tafadzwa Mabambe

Consultant & assistance, 2011: Ezekiel Makunike

Partner institution: Africa University

Consulting scholars: Joel Carpenter, Andrew Walls, Martinus Daneel,  
Tabona Shoko, Jehu Hanciles, Titus Presler

### **Zimbabwe –Postproduction Credits**

Editor, Kate Purdie, Ameshill Productions, Marlboro, VT

Additional editing—2011 follow ups: Scott Hancock,  
Zachary MacDonald

Translators/consultants: Tafadzwa Mabambe, Tsitsi Moyo  
Herbert Dzapata

Still photographs: Andra Stevens

Music: Machanic Manyeruke

Additional music: Victor Kunonga

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## **Praise for *African Christianity Rising* Materials**

“Magnificent and often really moving. . . I know of no comparable material that raises so many of the critical issues in contemporary African Christianity. By far the most useful aspect is that all these ideas and beliefs—which Americans might find strange or off-putting—are presented by likable and intelligent interview subjects: the ideas are, in short, given human faces. I have vastly enjoyed using these films in undergraduate classes, where they evoke intense interest and stir excellent discussions.”

*Philip Jenkins*, Professor of Humanities, Pennsylvania State University

“Teaching how Africa’s world religions intersect with indigenous belief systems pose daunting pedagogical challenges, especially in the West. Ault’s impressive documentaries effectively challenge the sensationalism notoriously persistent even among intelligent lay learners. They deftly engage the creative agency among the masses of African religious adherents in national and transnational contexts and are essential teaching tools in African studies.”

*Olufemi Vaughan*, Professor & Director, Africana Studies  
Program, Bowdoin College

“The depth and scale of the work is truly remarkable and I believe that it makes important statements about the development of Christianity in Africa.”

*Ed Worster*, Program Director, South African Broadcasting

## ***Praise for African Christianity Rising Materials***

“The most penetrating and informative material I have ever seen on African Christianity, bringing out its vitality and variety without ever sensationalizing or exoticising.”

*Terence Ranger*, Professor of African History,  
Oxford University

“Very inspiring... and terribly informative!”

*Samuel Kobia*, former General Secretary, World Council  
of Churches, from Kenya

“A striking portrait, revealing a Christianity poised to renew the vitality of a faith once received from Europe and America.”

*Al Raboteau*, Professor of Religion, Princeton University

"These two films offer a remarkable degree of insight into the way the Christian faith is developing in Africa. I have watched these films with audiences of specialist scholars, of students at various levels and of general public. In every case the effect has been striking, powerful and clarifying. These films pack more information and present it more tellingly than would vast areas of print."

*Andrew Walls*, Founding Director, Centre for the Study of  
World Christianity, University of Edinburgh, and  
*The Journal of Religion in Africa*

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