

## THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CHRISTIAN SPIRITUALITY AND HEALTH: AN EXPLORATION OF THE VIEWS OF CHRISTIAN STUDENTS IN GHANA.

Rev. Fr. John Kwaku Opoku<sup>1</sup> and Rev. Fr. Dr. Peter Addai-Mensah<sup>2</sup>

Department of Religious Studies, Faculty of Social Sciences  
Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology -Kumasi

---

**ABSTRACT:** *Spirituality and health have overtime been very influential to humans and in the life of every student; good health is an essential aspect in order to have a successful academic life. Being healthy is not anymore about absence of diseases or illness. It requires being in a state of complete physical, psychological, spiritual and social well-being. The article aims at examining the various views that Christian students hold concerning spirituality and health and to find out the effects that both (spirituality and health) have on the lives of students. The research was conducted among Christian students in the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST), Kumasi, using questionnaires and interviews to seek views of students on the impact of the relationship between spirituality and health. From the findings, most of the respondents expressed a strong desire to find meaning in their lives and well-being. It was, however, observed that some students were reluctant to patronize clinical treatment when needed as a result of their staunch spirituality. Also, the paper identifies some Christian beliefs and practices which respondents considered as elements that promote good health as well as other spiritual practices that have adversely affected students' health. It is, therefore, suggested that, for the wellbeing of students to be achieved, there should always be a balance between the two approaches, and resort to any of them when appropriate.*

**KEYWORDS:** Christian Spirituality, Health, Relationship, Student' Well-being and Exploration

---

### INTRODUCTION

It is no news that spirituality influences the health and well-being of individuals. This is because the human being is as well a spiritual being. In modern times, the importance of spirituality in health has emerged because of dissatisfaction with the impersonal nature of medical system, and the realization that medical science does not have answers to every question about health and wellness. Also essential is the concern for the spiritual make-up and needs of humans which have become imperative to health care.

The concept of spirituality is perceived by people in diverse ways. For some, it is about partaking in an organized religion while others see it as a more personal relationship. That is,

---

<sup>1</sup> John K. Opoku is a Catholic priest and a lecturer at the Department of Religious Studies (KNUST). Currently as a PhD candidate with the dissertation topic: medicine, healing and spirituality: an akan cultural influence, John has specialized in bioethics and pastoral theology and has co-authored five books and other academic articles in both local and international journals. He is also the Dean of the Amakom Deanery of the Catholic Church in the Kumasi Arch-Diocese.

<sup>2</sup> Peter Addai-Mensah is a Catholic priest and also the Catholic Chaplain and a senior lecturer at the Department of Religious Studies (KNUST). His areas of specialization are: systematic theology, spirituality and African studies. He has co-authored eleven books and several academic articles

getting in touch with their spiritual side through private prayer, yoga, meditation, quiet reflection, or even long walks. Yet one can attest that, spirituality extends beyond an expression of religion or practice of religion. This is to posit that there is a similarity as well as dissimilarity between religion and spirituality. Health, on the other hand, as defined by the World Health Organisation (WHO), is a “state of complete physical, mental, and social well being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity”<sup>3</sup>.

The relationship between spirituality and health has been the focus of considerable interest in recent years. Studies undertaken by scholars, such as; Harold G. Koenig<sup>4</sup>, Daaleman and Nease<sup>5</sup> among others, have confirmed that spirituality has a profound effect on mental and physical health of patients and the lack of spiritual well-being can lead to illness and disease. Also, a research conducted by Anandarajah and Hight showed that spirituality plays an important role in the lives of sick persons and that there is a positive correlation between patients’ spirituality or religious commitment and health outcomes.<sup>6</sup> No one really knows for sure how spirituality is related to health. However, there is proof that the body, mind and spirit are connected. An effect on the health of any of these three elements affects the other(s). Several researches have shown that things such as positive beliefs, comfort and strength gained from religion, meditation and prayer can contribute to healing and a sense of well-being. Improving your spiritual health may not cure an illness, but it may help you feel better, prevent some health problems and help you cope with illness, stress or death. The question is that, how do Christian students in respect of their spirituality cope with their health and well-being?

## CHRISTIAN SPIRITUALITY AND HEALTH

Health is generally seen as a state of being free from any sickness mental, physical or social. The word health was originally derived from the old English word, “hoelth” which meant a state of being sound and was generally used to infer to a soundness of the body.<sup>7</sup> According to the Australian Aboriginal people, “...Health does not just mean the physical well-being of the individual but refers to the social, emotional, spiritual and cultural well-being of the whole community. This is a whole of life view and includes the cyclical concept of life and

---

<sup>3</sup> World Health Organisation, “Definition of Health”, <http://who.int/about/definition/en/print.html>, (Accessed on 28/8/2014).

<sup>4</sup> Harold G. Koenig, “Use of Religion by Patients with Severe Medical Illness”. *Mind/Body Medicine*, 2 (1997):31–36

<sup>5</sup> Timothy P. Daaleman and Dale Eugene Nease, Jr. “Patient attitudes regarding physician inquiry into spiritual and religious issues”, *Journal of Family Practice*, 39, (1994): 564–567.

<sup>6</sup> Gowri Anandarajah and Ellen Hight., “Spirituality and Medical Practice: Using the HOPE Questions as a Practical Tool for Spiritual Assessment”, *American Family Physician* 6, no. 1 (2001): 81-91.

<sup>7</sup> Michael L. Dolfman, “The Concept of Health: An Historic and Analytic Examination”, *Journal of School Health*: 43, (1973):491

death.”<sup>8</sup> From these definitions, we can attest to the fact that being healthy is an all inclusive stuff. That is, it involves the physical, mental, social and spiritual well being of a person.

In Christianity, spirituality involves the recognition and acceptance of a God beyond our own intelligence and with whom we can have a relationship. It involves the whole person (body, mind, soul, relationships). Spirituality is derived from the Hebrew word “*ruach*” meaning: spirit, breath, wind, that which gives life and animates something<sup>9</sup>. McGrath terms spirituality as that “which animates a person’s life of faith or that which moves a person’s faith to greater depths and perfection. Spirituality arises from a creative and dynamic synthesis of faith and life, forged in the crucible of the desire to live out the Christian faith authentically, responsibly, effectively, and fully”<sup>10</sup>. This God can provide an experience of inspiration, joy, security, peace of mind, and guidance that goes beyond what is possible in the absence of the conviction that such a power exists. Therefore, Christian spirituality involves a choice we make to ‘know and grow’ in our daily relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ by submitting to the ministry of the Holy Spirit in our lives. Also, Christian spirituality is noted to be a lived experience since Christianity is a lifestyle and a Christian outlive the new life of faith through his or her inner experience with Jesus Christ. A lived Christian faith for that reason should have at least three essential activities: believing, trusting, and doing<sup>11</sup>. Christianity Spirituality can therefore be termed as the quest for a fulfilled and authentic life that involves taking the beliefs and values of Christianity and weaving them into the fabric of our lives.

## METHODOLOGY

The study adopted a qualitative and quantitative approach. The qualitative was mostly used since it is proven to be essential in studying susceptible opinions, attitudes and behaviours. Interviews were conducted among Reverend Ministers (10) who headed various Christian denominations. Also, (10) student leaders of some selected Christian denominations on campus were also interviewed. Questionnaires (200) were administered to Christian students across colleges, denominations and Christian fellowships in the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST) to solicit their views on Christian spirituality and health. In addition, primary sources used in this article were aided by information from reports, books, journals, articles, publication and the internet. From these sources, common emerging issues and concerns were indentified and narratives interpreted.

Some of the questions that respondents were asked in the questionnaires administered are as follows:

---

<sup>8</sup> National Health and Medical Research Council, “Promoting the Health of Indigenous Australians: A Review of Infrastructure Support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Advancement”, Final Report and Recommendations, (Part 2:4). (NHMRC: Canberra, 1996).

<sup>9</sup> Duncan S. Ferguson. Exploring the Spirituality of the World Religions: The Quest for Personal, Spiritual and Social Transformation (New York: Continuum International Publishing Group, 2010), 14.

<sup>10</sup> Allister E. MacGrath., Christian Theology (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2007), 69.

<sup>11</sup> Groome, T. H. Christian Religious Education (New York: Harper Collins Publishers, 1981)

- What do you understand by Christian spirituality?
- What in your understanding constitute health?
- Is there a relationship between Christian Spirituality and the student's health?
- What are some of the impacts of Christian spirituality on a student's health?
- How can Christian students promote good health and spirituality?

### SAMPLE AND DATA COLLECTION

The total number of questionnaires administered to respondents was two-hundred (200). Respondents to these questionnaires included students in the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology. By this, the questionnaires were distributed across all the six colleges in the University; College of Art and Social Sciences, College of Health Science, College of Science, College of Engineering, College of Architecture and Planning, and the College of Agriculture and Renewable Natural Resources. Among respondents, one hundred and forty-two (142) were males, while fifty-eight (58) of them were females.

The ages of respondents ranged from 25 years and below, 26-35 years, 36-50 years, and 51 years and above. The survey identified diverse figures in the ages of respondents. The table below indicates the distributions in the age-ranges of respondents.

**Table 1: Age-range of respondents**

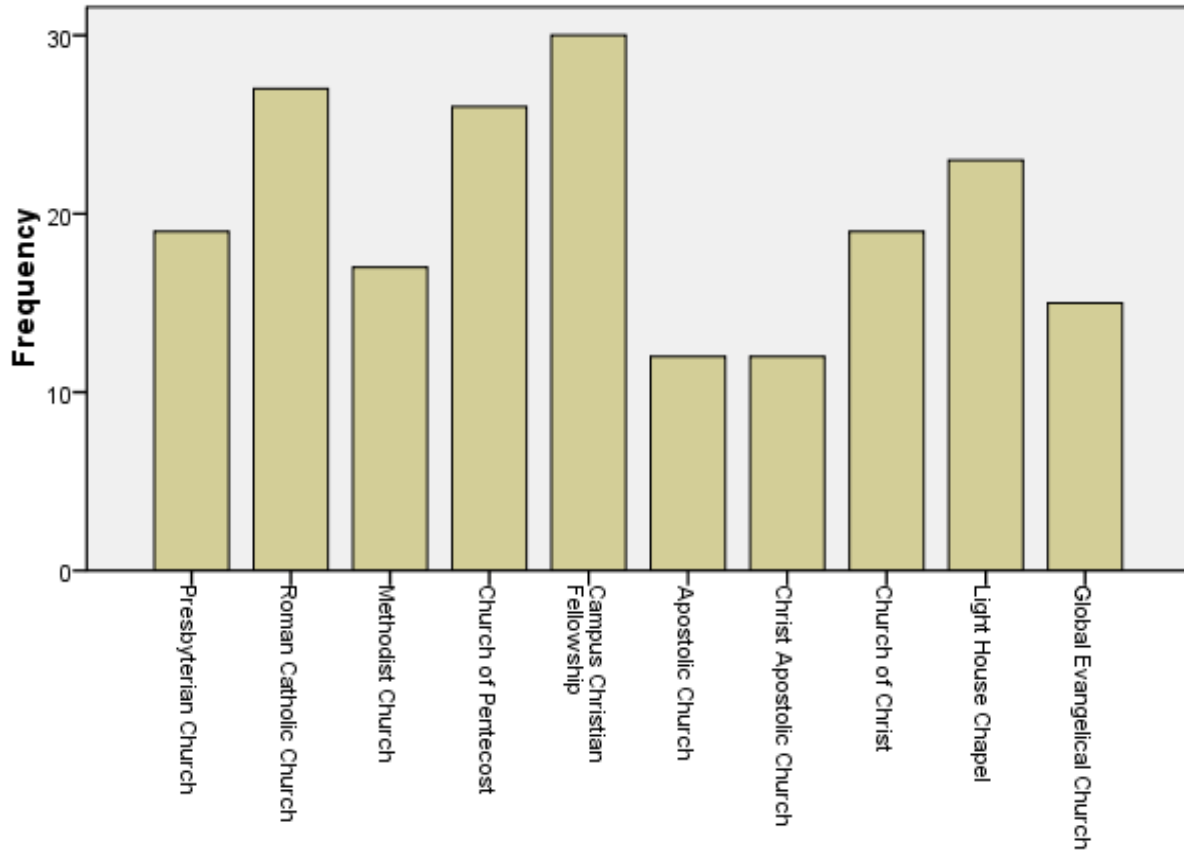
Age-range	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Below 25 yrs	144	72.0	72.0
26-35 yrs	34	17.0	17.0
36-50 yrs	1	.5	.5
51 yrs and above	16	8.0	8.0
No response	5	2.5	2.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Additionally, not all respondents belonged to a particular denomination. According to the survey, Christian students who responded were of different denominations which included; the Presbyterian Church, Roman Catholics, Methodist, Church of Pentecost, Campus Christian Fellowship, Apostolic Church, Christ Apostolic Church, Church Of Christ, Light House Chapel, Global Evangelical Church. According to data received, students who were members of the Campus Christian Fellowship were of majority with a total percentage of 15.

Meanwhile, the Apostolic Church and the Christ Apostolic Church had the lowest percentage of respondents (6% each). This does not in any way reflect a statistical distribution of the population of students in any of the denominations listed above in the university. Due to the subject matter of the research, no student was from any of the other major religions (Islam, African Traditional Religion, Hinduism) in the country. This is to say that all respondents were expected to be Christians. The table below gives a distribution of respondents' affiliation to religion.

**Table 2: Religious denominations of respondents**

<b>Denomination</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Valid Percent</b>	<b>Cumulative Percent</b>
Presbyterian Church	19	9.5	9.5	9.5
Roman Catholic Church	27	13.5	13.5	23.0
Methodist Church	17	8.5	8.5	31.5
Church of Pentecost	26	13.0	13.0	44.5
Campus Christian Fellowship	30	15.0	15.0	59.5
Apostolic Church	12	6.0	6.0	65.5
Christ Apostolic Church	12	6.0	6.0	71.5
Church of Christ	19	9.5	9.5	81.0
Light House Chapel	23	11.5	11.5	92.5
Global Evangelical Church	15	7.5	7.5	100.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	

**Figure 1: Graphical distribution of religious denominations of respondents**

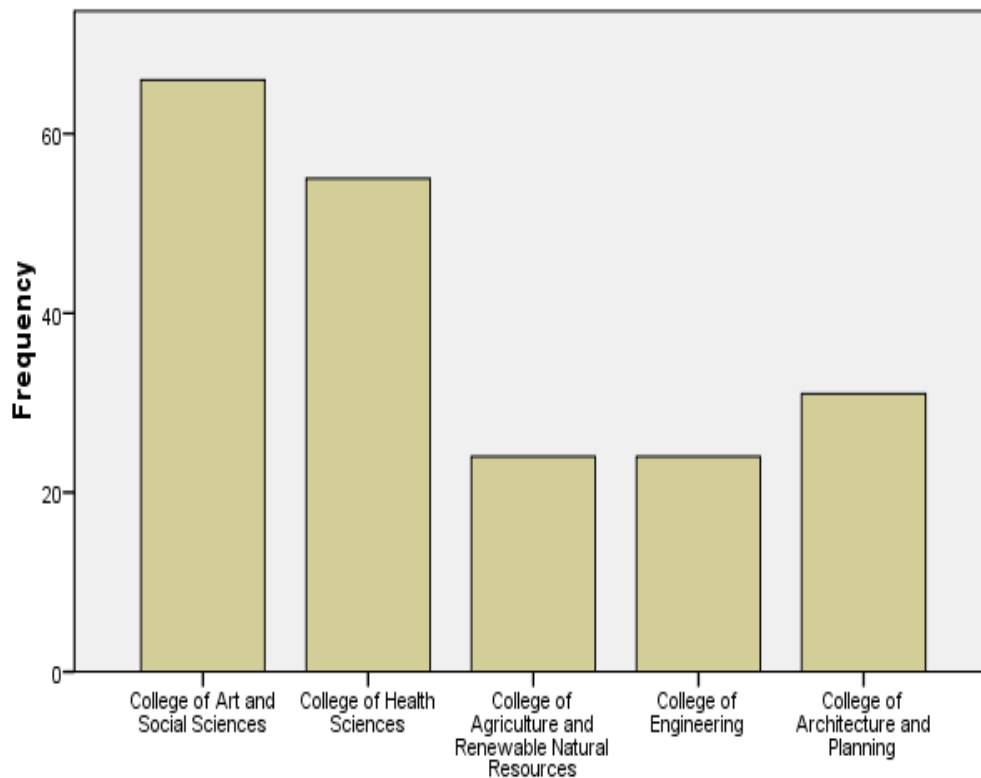
Among respondents, as indicated earlier, were students from the Colleges of Art and Social Sciences, Health Sciences, Agriculture and Renewable Natural Resources, Engineering, Architecture and Planning and the College of Science. The percentages of respondents in the various colleges are as follows.

**Table 3: Colleges of respondents**

Colleges	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
College of Art and Social Sciences	66	33.0	33.0
College of Health Sciences	55	27.5	27.5
College of Agriculture and Renewable Natural Resources	24	12.0	12.0
College of Engineering	24	12.0	12.0
College of Architecture and Planning	31	15.5	15.5

Colleges	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
College of Art and Social Sciences	66	33.0	33.0
College of Health Sciences	55	27.5	27.5
College of Agriculture and Renewable Natural Resources	24	12.0	12.0
College of Engineering	24	12.0	12.0
College of Architecture and Planning	31	15.5	15.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Figure 2: Graphical distribution of colleges of respondents**



## DISCUSSION/FINDINGS

Information gathered from the study indicated that virtually all respondents had some understanding of what Christian spirituality entails. The study indicated Jesus Christ as the centre of Christian spirituality in whose teachings Christians base their lives on. Nonetheless, the study brings to fore some unique respondents' contributions to the meaning of Christian Spirituality.

### Christian Spirituality

When asked what their understanding of Christian spirituality was, respondents gave several definitions. Christian spirituality in their view includes;

- A changed life as a result of believing in Jesus Christ who is the giver of life.
- Understanding the will and plan of God by developing the conscious effort to grow and mature in Jesus Christ.
- Applying God's word to our everyday life by doing what the Bible says.
- The core values and beliefs an individual adheres to in the sphere of his or her life in both the spiritual and physical world.

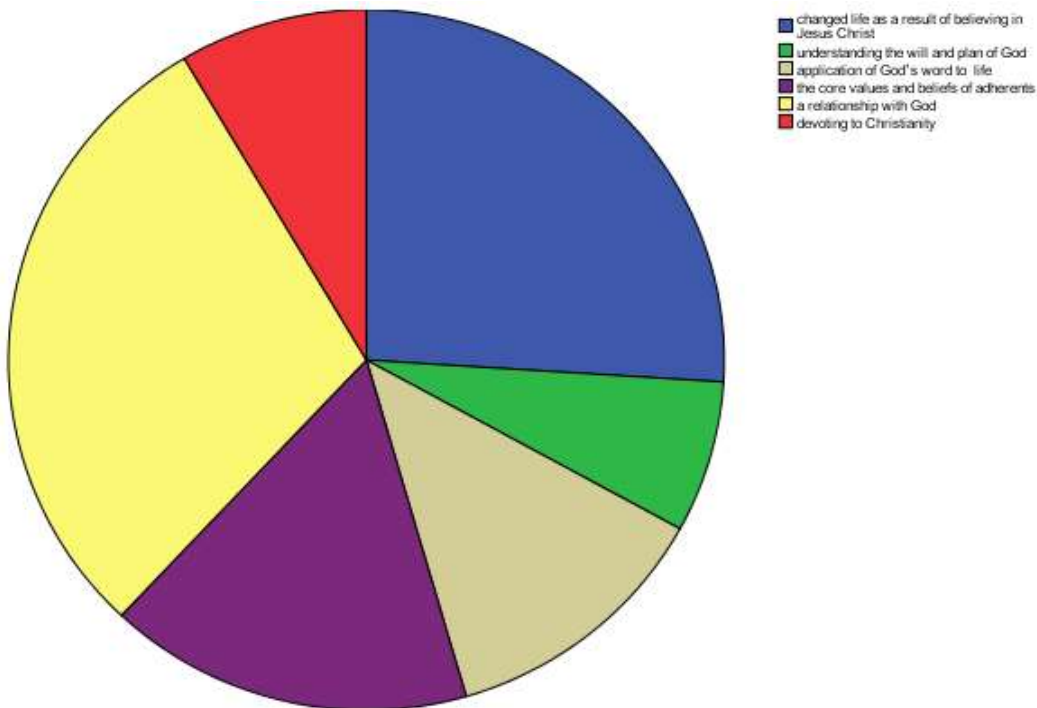
Among other respondents, Christian spirituality meant:

- The level of one's relationship with God which is enhanced by making a conscious effort to growing to the fullness and stature of Jesus Christ.
- The act of devoting one's total being to Christianity as the expression of one's faith in Christ Jesus.
- The closeness or bonding between a Christian and God which cannot be measured or seen physically and sharpening the dimension of life which is not visible by the leading of the Holy Spirit.

**Table 4: Perceptions on Christian spirituality**

<b>Views on Christian spirituality</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Valid Percent</b>
Changed life as a result of believing in Jesus Christ	52	26.0	26.0
Understanding the will and plan of God	14	7.0	7.0
Application of God's word to life	25	12.5	12.5
The core values and beliefs of adherents	33	16.5	16.5
A relationship with God	59	29.5	29.5
Devoting to Christianity	17	8.5	8.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Figure 3: Chart distribution of perceptions on Christian spirituality



This understanding of Christian spirituality was further buttressed by many interviewees as that form of spirituality which revolves around the way a person lives his or her life base on the authentic teachings and values of Jesus Christ.

### Health

Responding to what health really entails, the World Health Organization's definition was accepted by the majority of respondents. In line with that definition, the sum contribution of respondents to the meaning of health cuts across the well-being in all dimensions of life. Many respondents stated that;

- Health is a complete state of well-being which includes the physical, spiritual and psychological aspects of a person; a good state of the mind and body; the well-being

of a person in matters pertaining to the social, emotional, economic, academic, and spiritual and all other matters which make life meaningful without stress and troubles.

For other respondents, health comprises;

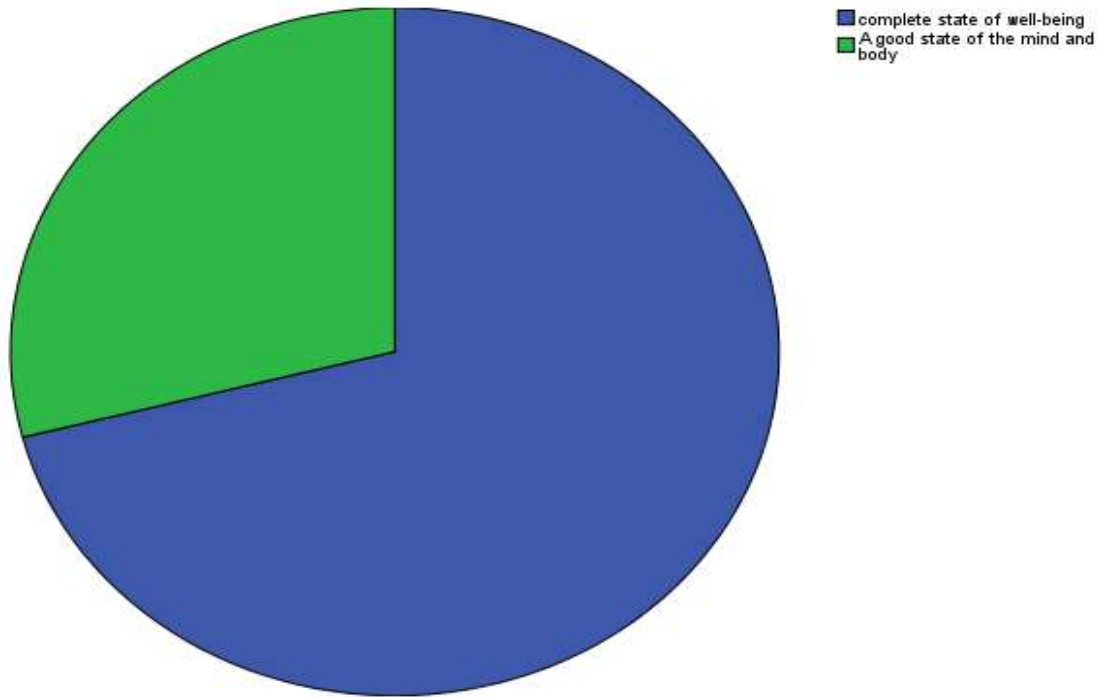
- The complete state of a person in which the proper function of the internal environment affects the external body to function well.

From the views sampled from interviews, it can be stated that health should always be defined to include all the life dimensions which come to play in our well-being. This is because a person can be sick physically as well as spiritually and also in every aspect of life (including; emotional, social and economic -because economic challenges, for instance, can put a person in an unhealthy state).

**Table 5:** Perceptions on the meaning of health

Meaning of health	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Complete state of well-being	142	71.0	71.0
A good state of the mind and body	58	29.0	29.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Figure 4:** Chart distribution of perceptions on the meaning of health



The spirituality of a person cannot be measured, however, in finding out how students express their spirituality on campus, various opinions were held. Spirituality was seen in two aspects, the theory and the practice. The theory is what Christian-Students are being taught while the practice is experiential in how they live their lives. Nonetheless, it is being observed outwardly that Christian-Students actively participate in church services and programs made known. In the same vein, an assertion was made that in Christian Spirituality, there is a kind of formal and informal spirituality. The formal spirituality is that which Christian students express outwardly, that is, through their participation in church activities and fellowships. The informal spirituality, on the other hand, has to do with an individual's personal relationship with God (the closet life). According to the survey, majority of the respondents confirmed that Christian Students are concerned about their spirituality or spiritual growth on campus. Out of the total sampling population, respondents who confirmed this were one hundred and fifty (150) representing 93.75%. On the other hand, respondents who did not observe Christian students to be concerned about their spirituality were six (6) representing 3.75%. Respondents who did not indicate either yes or no to this question were also four (4) representing 2.5%.

### **Relationship between Christian Spirituality and Health**

The findings on the relationship between health and spirituality, as indicated by the table and figure below, seemed to be well understood by many respondents. This is because many people attested to the fact that there is a possible relationship between health and spirituality. One hundred and sixty-two (162) respondents confirmed that there is a relationship between the two phenomena. In contrast, twenty (20) of them said there is no relationship between Christian spirituality and health. Respondents who did not indicate either yes or no were eighteen (18).

**Table 6: Relationship between health and spirituality**

<b>Relationship between health and Christian spirituality</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Valid Percent</b>
possible relationship	162	81.0	81.0
no possible relationship	20	10.0	10.0
no idea	18	9.0	9.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>

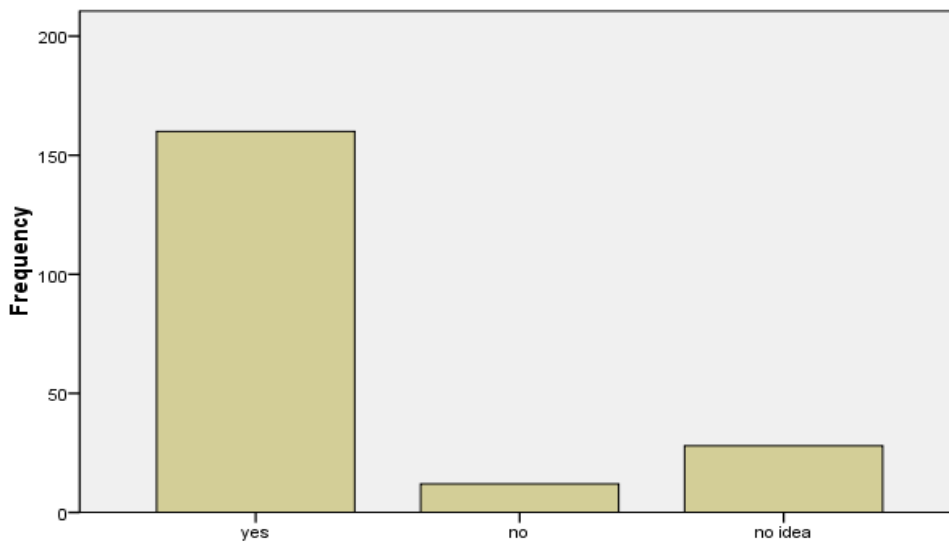
According to those who agree to the fact that there is a relationship between Christian spirituality and health, the human person is made up of the body, spirit and soul according to Christian doctrines. So, the spiritual conditions of a person automatically affect the physical (the body). As a result of such relationship there is the need for holistic treatment and health personnel should give attention to the spiritual demands of patients. In the study, majority of the respondents confirmed there is a relationship between Christian spirituality and Health.

### **The Impacts of Christian Spirituality on Health**

In our quest to know whether there are any impacts of Christian spirituality on the health of students, respondents who confirmed that there are some impacts were one hundred and sixty (160) representing 80%. In contrast, respondents who chose the 'no' option were twelve (12) representing 6%. Respondents who did not indicate either 'yes' or 'no' option were twenty-eight (28) representing 14%. These are presented on the graph (figure 3) below.

**Table 7: Impact of Christian spirituality on health**

<b>Impact of Christian spirituality on health</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Valid Percent</b>
yes	160	80.0	80.0
no	12	6.0	6.0
no idea	28	14.0	14.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Figure 5: Graphical distribution of impact of Christian spirituality on health**

From the survey, one hundred and twelve (112) respondents out of the 160 (who said there were impacts) indicated that the effects are positive ones, while twenty-eight (28) indicated that they are negative. Also, some respondents (14) indicated that there were both positive and negative effects of Christian Spirituality on Students' health. Respondents who did not indicate any option were six (6).

### **Positive Impacts of Christian Spirituality on Health**

The survey brought to light that, Christian spirituality facilitates good health among students because the spiritual and physical dimensions of the human person cannot be separated. Due to some rules or laws guiding the conduct of Christians in the word of God, students' conducts are in turn regulated. In other words the moral enhancement of Christian Students curtails attitudes and behaviours that have the tendency to endanger health. For instance acts like smoking, substance abuse, sexual escapades, etc.

Christian spirituality therefore allows Christians to see themselves as stewards of their bodies and as such learn to refrain from all forms of immorality, which in turn keeps the body clean and healthy. Example of biblical verse that ensures a person stays healthy is as follows; "Don't you know that you yourselves are God's temple and that God's Spirit lives in you? If anyone destroys God's temple, God will destroy him; for God's temple is sacred, and you are that temple" (New International Version, 1 Corinthians 3:16-17).

With the belief in divine or miraculous healing and sacraments such as communion and prayer of faith, the Christian is mostly healthy because the trust that God is the source of all healing is enough to give the individual a psychological relief in all situations. Majority of the respondents appreciated the spiritual approach to healing even though it was not made known as the only approach to healing. Moreover, the study also showed that, most Christian denominations and fellowships on campus organized health campaign; health walk, health talk, and screening during their major programs such as anniversary celebrations, congress, etc., and these promote good health among students.

According to the survey, one hundred and two (102) respondents representing 60.5%, claimed to have witnessed healing testimonies in Church as against 79 who said otherwise. This result indicates that most respondents have witnessed healing testimonies from people being healed from diseases like; ulcer, sickle cell, paralysis, fibroid, blindness, dumbness, hepatitis, malaria, madness and fever. Furthermore, a majority of 132 respondents (86.25%) stipulated that it is useful to give recognition to (Christian) Spirituality in students' health.

### **Adverse Effects of Christian Spirituality on Health**

From the survey, one hundred and thirty (130) respondents representing 65% were of the view that there are 'sometimes' challenges in ensuring good health among students as a result of their spirituality. Meanwhile, 50 respondents believed that there were no challenges that Christian spirituality poses to Students' health. However, it was indicated that a remaining number of 20 respondents did not know whether a challenge existed or not. It was noted that students who upheld their spirituality had a negative attitude towards scientific approach to healing. It was identified that some students neglect medical attention and pray over sickness that need the help of a physician. Spiritual activities, such as 'fasting' for long period, in the view of some respondents had health complications such as stomach ulcer or stomach pain. The over spiritualization of health issues of simple medical background; the belief that the Christian cannot fall sick and that medicine is carnal or earthly have adverse impacts on the health of students. Christian students go extra mile to stay awake overnight praying and denying the body of its normal relaxation. The poor prayer postures they exhibit in a long run turn to have ill-effects on the body.

From the study, we tried to find out whether respondents have had such complaints about Christian Students who refuse to resort to clinical methods of healing as a result of their spirituality. Out of the 200 respondents, ninety (90) respondents representing 56.25% stated that they have had such complaints. One hundred and two (102) respondents (38.75%) however stated that they have received no complaints. For the remaining eight (8) respondents, such complaints were neither known nor unknown.

Preceding the views of the respondents, it can be concluded that scrupulosity can be dangerous to health. A person having the notion that everything physically is bad or vain can be affected with ill-health. Due to this great spiritual leaders in some way have suffered ignominious ends, marked by grotesque pain and suffering. According to Dossey (1993), some of the historically recent examples include Saint Bernadette, who in 1858 saw the vision of the virgin at Lourdes, where thousands of healings are claimed to have occurred. Bernadette didn't receive such a healing when she needed one, and the cause of her death was a bone cancer or disseminated tuberculosis, at the age of thirty-five. From this, credence can be made that, our spiritual fervency does not entirely guarantee our health, without any interruption in the body. So, 'when and how' do we merge spiritual and physical methods of healing in order to make a balanced or holistic health?

### **Merging Christian Spirituality and Health for Holistic Well-being**

Views sampled from the respondents acknowledged the need to emerge Christian spirituality with health for a holistic health. Respondents opined that, there is the need to balance the relationship between the physical and the spiritual dimension by treating physical things as physical and spiritual aspects as spiritual. There must also be a developing consciousness that

God is interested in our health and as such recognizes the use of medicine (New International version, Proverbs 17:22, Isaiah 53:5b). So, the principles that characterize the Christian belief must be practiced with diligence.

Besides, students should be mindful that the idea of spirituality is more of an individual affair so each person has the responsibility of making his or her Spirituality useful in every aspect of life, especially when it comes to health. Christian students should therefore make reference to biblical principles in order to know which dimension of healing to resort, when the need arises.

The fact can be attested that human beings are intrinsically or by nature linked to God, therefore nothing can be done without making reference to God. Nevertheless, there must be an application of reasoning in faith. Christian spirituality has got two main elements; faith and reason which he calls the two 'Arms of God'. These two must go hand in hand inasmuch as Christian spirituality and Students' health are concerned. This he asserts with reference to one profound quote by Albert Einstein; that "Science without religion is lame and religion without Science is blind".

## **IMPLICATION OF THE STUDY**

Addressing issues relating to spirituality and health often contributes enormously to the well being of humans since both aspects (spirituality and health) plays a major influence on man's existence. This article as a result contributes to the existing knowledge on health and spirituality. It goes further to make known both attitudinal and behavioural measures needed to revitalize Christian spirituality as far as the good health of students is concerned. Moreover, the findings of the study contribute to considerable factors needed to ensure a holistic health of the majority of students by management of any tertiary institution.

## **CONCLUSION**

From the study, health is generally defined to permeate a person's well-being in all dimensions of life, be it physical or spiritual. Spirituality on the other hand, is understood to make the whole idea or quest for life meaningful. The spiritual state of a person directly or indirectly affects the physical and vice-versa. In line with this, Christian Spirituality as a way of life an individual -who is a Christian -lives is based on Christian beliefs, practices and values. Even though there are some common themes that make the Christian spirituality obvious to ascertain, Christian spirituality is more of an individual's lived experience based on the level of faith or behaviour and attitude towards the Christian beliefs and values. By this, individuals (Christians and students) react differently from one another with regards to life issues and circumstances (health). It is to be stipulated that, for several years, in the light of these phenomena (spirituality and health) the health of Christian students in the university has been promoted. The impacts that emerge as a result of the interplay between Christian spirituality and students' health have for long remained beneficial to the physical life and academic responsibilities of students.

The study proved that Christian students made provisions to be fervent in their spiritual life, where as some possessed indifferent attitudes towards scientific methods of healing. However, in the diverse opinion sought from respondents, we have come to know that majority of Christians appreciate the spiritual approach to healing, yet there is no guarantee

that the physical or scientific approach to restoring health should be ignored. The mere fact that Christian students are concerned about their spirituality does not guarantee good health; good health is maintained when individuals develop the consciousness and right attitude towards health. Hence, to ensure a holistic health, Christian Students should always maintain a balance between the two approaches, and resort to any of them when appropriate.

## REFERENCES:

- Aldridge D. *Spirituality, Healing and Medicine: Return to the Silence*. London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers Ltd, 2000.
- Anandarajah, G. and Hight, E. "Spirituality and Medical Practice: Using the HOPE Questions as a Practical Tool for Spiritual Assessment", *American Family Physician* 6, no. 1 (2001):81-91.
- Carrette J. and King R., *Selling Spirituality: The Silent Takeover of Religion*. London and New York: Routledge, 2005.
- Daaleman, T. P, and Nease, Dale E. Jr. "Patient attitudes regarding physician inquiry into spiritual and religious issues", *Journal of Family Practice*, 39, (1994): 564–567.
- Dolfman, Michael L. "The Concept of Health: An Historic and Analytic Examination", *Journal of School Health*: 43, (1973):491
- Ferguson, Duncan S. *Exploring the Spirituality of the World Religions: The Quest for Personal, Spiritual and Social Transformation*, New York: Continuum International Publishing Group, 2010.
- Galanter M., *Spirituality and the Healthy Mind: Science, Therapy, and the Need for Personal Meaning*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2005.
- Groome, T. H. *Christian Religious Education*. New York: Harper Collins Publishers, 1981
- Hauerwas S. *Naming the Silences: God, Medicine, and the Problem of Suffering*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdsman Publishing Company, 1990.
- Koenig, H. G. *Medicine, Religion And Health: Where Science And Spirituality Meet*. Templeton Foundation: Press Pennsylvania, 2008.
- Koenig, Harold G. "Use of Religion by Patients with Severe Medical Illness". *Mind/Body Medicine*, 2 (1997):31–36
- Larson B. D & Larson S. S., "Spirituality's Potential Relevance to Physical and Emotional Health: A Brief Review of Quantitative Research". *Journal of Psychology and Theology* 31, no. 1 (2003):37-51.
- Levin J. S., Religion and Health: Is there an Association, Is it Causal? *Social Science and Medicine* 38, no. 14 (1994):75-82.
- McGrath, Allister E., *Christian Theology*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2007.
- Shelton C. M., *Adolescent Spirituality: Pastoral Ministry for High Schools and College Youth*. Chicago: Loyola University Press, 1983.
- World Health Organisation (WHO). 'Definition of Health', World health Organisation, <http://who.int/about/definition/en/print.html>.