

African Feminist Ethics Within and Beyond the Academy

Akosua Adomako Ampofo, Sharon Adetutu Omotoso and Titilope F. Ajayi in conversation with Mercy Amba Awudziwa Yamoah Oduyoye and Ria Boss

Akosua Adomako Ampofo, Sharon Adetutu Omotoso, and Titilope F. Ajayi held an intergenerational conversation on African feminist ethics within and beyond the academy with renowned feminist theologian, Professor Mercy Amba Awudziwa Yamoah Oduyoye¹ and Ghanaian-Burkinabé R&B/soul singer, songwriter, and activist, Ria Boss. Aunty Mercy, as she prefers to be called, spoke with us from Akosua's home in Accra, where Titilope is also based, while Ria and Sharon joined via Zoom from Paris and Bochum, respectively. The conversation has been edited for length and clarity.

Akosua Adomako Ampofo (AAA): Good morning, everyone. On behalf of *Feminist Africa* (FA), thanks for joining us. One of the special aspects about FA is that we don't just provide academic-type pieces. There are also conversations and interviews. So, for this issue, Sharon and I decided to have a conversation with women that we believe can speak to the theme of feminist ethics.

Sharon Adetutu Omotoso (SAO): In this issue of FA, we are interested in how to theorise feminist ethics in a philosophical context, and we want to speak with people who are on "the ground", so to speak, and doing very important work through music, arts, the environment, religious practice, and so on.

Titilope F. Ajayi (TFA): I'm currently working with the Institute for Security Studies based in Nairobi as a senior researcher on a project to do with security governance in Africa. But my research interests are very much centred on gender, with a particular focus on women, feminist and women's movements, and politics on the continent. I'm excited to be here and I'm looking forward to the conversation.

AAA: Thank you, Titi. Now to our two guests: imagine yourselves on a stage somewhere in the universe. A mic is thrust in your face, and you're supposed to introduce yourselves. Take it away, Aunty Mercy.

Mercy Oduyoye, a.k.a Aunty Mercy (AM): I generally would say, my name is Amba Ewudziwa. Because we have forgotten that we were given names on the eighth day before later being baptised in church or somewhere and getting married and forgetting the name we were given on the eighth day. I decided I wasn't going to allow anybody to forget that. So, my real name is Amba Ewudziwa. My father was Yamoah. Then, as the British and the Christians came and "taught" us, my father gave his name to his wife and to everybody else.

My mother was Mercy; I have a feeling my father didn't want to lose the name Mercy, so he also called me Mercy. So, both his wife and his first daughter are Mercy. I was Mercy Yamoah until my thirties, when I became Mercy Oduyoye, and recently I have decided I am Mercy Yamoah Oduyoye. In the international world and Nigeria, I'm known as Oduyoye. In Ghana, they can't even pronounce the name, so I may as well relieve everybody by saying, I am Yamoah. So, if you're looking for Mercy Amba Ewudziwa Yamoah, that's me.

All my schooling was in Ghana, in Methodist schools – Mmofraturu, then Achimota School, then Legon [University of Ghana]. Before Legon, I attended what used to be called "Tech" – the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology – for my teacher training. I have taught everywhere from kindergarten to supervising PhDs, and I have taught in many countries. In my retirement, I decided community work was important and have been involved in a variety of feminist and theological grassroots projects. This is how I began the Institute of Women in Religion and Culture as part of the Legon Theological Seminar in 1999.²

Ria Boss (RB): It's a pleasure to be here with you all today. I'm Ria Boss, short for Maria Bossman. I am a singer, songwriter, and performer. I had my basic schooling at Ghana International School, and went on to SOS-Hermann Gmeiner International College, which is a boarding high school in Tema, Ghana. I then left to the [United] States, and I was at the Eugene Lang School [College] of Liberal Arts in New York, where I got my BA in Culture and Media Studies. I then went on to get my MA in Media Management. I'm a performer

– I sing, I write songs, and I hold songwriting workshops. I’m also the creative team lead, programme facilitator, and content creator for an organisation called Black Girls Glow, which was founded by Poetra Asantewa, my dear sister and partner in business.

Black Girls Glow was founded to foster collaborations between women creatives in Ghana. It started as a sound residency but has since turned into a cluster of programmes. Our sound residency is called Kushka, and then we also have “You Are Cared For”, which is an audio-visual initiative that uses art and pop culture as a sexual health advocacy tool for young women. I’m also involved in a writing workshop, “Casting Spells”, which is aimed at helping young women delve deeper into themselves to help make their writing even stronger. I am also the co-founder of “Ria Boss Performance”, a live performance and open mic platform, which is an event platform for more established artists. So yeah, I’m excited to be here and part of this conversation today, and to learn from all of you.

SAO: Thank you very much. Ria, this will go straight to you. We recognise that we all inhabit multiple identities and spaces. How did you come to do what you are doing, or to be where you are today? And in what ways do you think that will help our conversation on feminist ethics and praxis today?

RB: I think it’s impossible for me to answer this question without thinking about the women that raised me, my grandmother and my mother – strong, sort of feminist women themselves – learning how to be resilient and seeing women at the forefront of many things. And so, because of that, I think from when I was very young, I’ve always strived to take up space. I guess you could say a lot of my songwriting revolves around empowering women, and that really came from my mother, to be honest, watching her in her various work environments, in the spaces where she used to be. Sometimes, she was the only woman in that space.

So, a lot of my inspiration comes from that, and then again, I think my music practice has brought me into feminist spaces, working with people like Poetra Asantewa. Because of that relationship, I became a member of Black Girls Glow. I had just moved back to Ghana – this was 2017 – and was tapped by Poetra Asantewa to take a place in the first residency. She called me and six other women artists to be a part of the first residency, and each of us, in our

own ways, was using our art practice to uplift women, or to speak about issues surrounding women, or African women to be specific.

That's how I first got in contact with Black Girls Glow. Then, after the songwriting residency, I took on a more staff-type position because I realised I wanted to be able to do more than just write the music. I wanted to also be in the background helping young women artists uplift themselves, such that they could be in positions that we are all in as well. And that led me to working with Black Girls Glow. I help with the workshops, be it songwriting or storytelling – guiding women to find themselves through music and songwriting; and we've been doing this for the last eight years, excluding [2020] the pandemic year. So far, we've seen over 40 women through the residency programme, and I've seen all these women go on to do amazing things with regards to not only uplifting themselves but also using their practice to uplift other women. At the core of it all, what I write about and what I believe in, is making sure that women feel empowered, heard, and seen, and creating spaces for them.

AM: I think I should start by saying that I was never a theoretician; I just went with the flow. When things happened, and especially if I didn't like them and I wanted to react or respond, I just went ahead and did that. And I looked for people who would support me to do the crazy things that I have done. I think one of the things that I am mostly known for is the creation of the Circle of Concerned African Women Theologians and I did that because I was the first African woman to have a university degree in Christian Theology.

I was getting called to come and talk, and write, and so on. And I felt one tree does not make a forest, so, I started looking for other women, and I wasn't finding them. So, I decided something must be done. There must be women theologians somewhere. And that's how, by 1989, together with some other women, we've been able to call together almost 80 women to come to Trinity [Theological Seminary] to create the Circle of Concerned African Women Theologians. Last year [2024] they said it was a homecoming. The excuse was that they were coming to celebrate my 90th birthday. So, they all descended on Trinity, and we had a wonderful time. I was so moved because I had no idea that the Circle would do what it has done, but I'm so grateful to the women who supported the idea and helped to create it. The first time I was trying to hold a women theologians meeting, I went to Professor Idowu of the Religious

Studies Department in Ibadan. When I asked Idowu to come and speak, because I was going to have this meeting, he said to me, “We don’t even have men theologians; now you’re talking about women theologians.” But now, come and see what happened! He came all the same, and he gave us what has become almost our mantra: “A bird with one wing does not fly.” He said he was expecting women to become the second wing of African theology and that if our wing develops, African theology will fly. I think that is what we have tried to do: to make sure that when we say African theologians, we are not only thinking of men, and that we have women theologians as well.

When I was about to retire and I looked for a place to retire to, I decided to retire in Ghana, not in Nigeria, because having chosen an area that is so controversial, working with women when nobody wants to work with women, I wasn’t going to also do it in a “foreign country”. I was going to do it in my own country, so that if people are plotting to do something to me, somebody will come and tell me in Twi, in my own language, “Hey, be careful, so and so is going to do such and such.” If I’m in Ibadan,² and they say it in Yorùbá, maybe I will not understand.

So, I decided to relocate to Ghana to start the Institute of African Women in Religion and Culture. The thing about both the Circle and the Institute is that they are multi-religious. My underlying word has always been *religion*. I wasn’t talking Christian, African Traditional Religion or Islam; I was talking religion as it affects women’s lives in total. So, the programmes that we had in Trinity were always multi-religious. And then we always had the queen mothers³ come and make sure that we were doing the traditional bits properly. The Muslim bit caught some people in Trinity; they were not very happy, but they were not able to tell me not to include Islam. I just did what I wanted to do, I said I didn’t care, *because* they are religious people, and I’m talking about women and religion. So that’s me.

AAA: Thanks, Aunty Mercy. Because we all have multiple identities and work with and from our different identities, I’d like you both to say what it means to you to be an African woman and explain if you identify as feminists.

RB: Okay, I would say it’s sort of living in a space that’s both rich in culture and heritage, yet fraught with a lot of challenges and contradictions; reconciling the past and the present but embracing the strength of our communities. I think

being an African woman today also involves a lot of responsibility to confront and challenge the forces of patriarchy, and our colonial legacies, and structural inequalities that I think still exist. And so, for example, with regards to music, I think being an African woman today, is looking at people like Mzbel who create anthems on [sexual] consent. I think that some of the intersecting systems that affect everything from economic opportunities, access to health, etc. alongside all the struggles that we have, African women have always been at the forefront of change. And so, I feel that drawing from the strength of our ancestors and communities, we build a more inclusive Africa.

I definitely do identify as a feminist and an African feminist at that. I think a lot of feminism has been appropriated from the West, and I don't think it's like a copy and paste when it comes to African women. African feminism for me is about addressing issues that are very specific to our own communities. And when I think about, for example, one of the reasons why Black Girls Glow was founded, it was because Poetra Asantewa saw that there was a gap, right? A lot of creative women did not have spaces where they could feel uplifted. And so, our answer to that was to create a space where women were at the centre, where feminism means insisting on dignity and respect for all people. It's about recognising that while we as African women have shared struggles, it's also very specific to our regions, to where we grew up, to class, to gender, etc. And so, yeah, I identify as a feminist.

AM: Well, the language of feminists in the '60s and '70s was really very negative. And when I started working with women and people were asking me, especially Americans, whether I was a feminist or a womanist, I used to say, look, English is not my language, so I don't know what feminist means, and I don't know what womanist means. All I know is that I'm working with women and for women's interests. So, I just labelled myself as an African woman theologian. But when people refer to me as a feminist, I say fine, why not? A feminist is a human being who recognises that women are human. So, whether it's a man or a woman, and you treat women properly as children of God, fine. I will relate to that person, and I will call that person a feminist if they want to be called feminist. So, I was working in a period when, you talk about feminist, then you immediately go to the stupidity of burning bras in the streets and things like that, which was far from what my interests were. I don't care whether you are wearing a bra or not wearing a bra. My interest is, are you behaving as

a human being to yourself and to other people? Are you interested in the humanity of women and of women's participation in creating the kind of world that we think God wants us to live in? If we don't take care of ourselves as women, who is going to take care of us? So that is my feminism, and I still hold on to that.

AAA: And what does it mean for you to be an African woman today? How has it changed over the course of your life? We do care work, but who cares for us?

AM: I have never been anything else but African, so I don't know whether it has changed. You see, because some of the things that were labelled as Western, they were extraneous. My mother's uncle, Nana Dickson, would not let me go to Wesley Girls' High School because he sent my mother there and she turned up like a European woman, drinking her tea with her cup like this, and with a pinky finger, and breaking her bread instead of directly biting into it, because that was what the image of a white woman was. None of this was my lifestyle being a Black woman; and, of course, me, I'm not just *Black*, I am *really* Black with a skin that you can recognise as being Black. So, I didn't have any other image of myself than being an African woman. And then I spent so much time in Europe and America that I could be nothing, but a Black woman.⁴ I wasn't even conscious that I was a Black woman. I was just conscious that I was a woman with a big tongue who is always talking, and that's that. And I always said exactly what I thought needed to be said, whether people wanted to hear or not, whether it was polite or impolite, I just said things as they were. So that is what being an African woman means to me. You see, when I'm talking about African women, I'm looking at somebody like my grandmother, my father's mother. When they first moved from Apam [in the Central Region of Ghana] to go and live in Asamankese [in the Eastern Region], there was only a Presbyterian church there.

My grandmother came from a family of Methodists. They were Wesleyans, as they called themselves in those days. So, my grandmother would not go to the Presbyterian church and gathered the Fante women in her area [Kwamena] around her mud oven, and they would sing *ebibindwom* [African songs]. Why? Because, she said, the Presbyterians – *Baselfo*⁵ don't know how to sing. So, my grandmother was like that, and I'm a little bit like her. I just say things as I see them, and it is her Fante lyrics that created the Methodist Church in

Asamankese.⁶ So, you must do things like that to open new avenues to things that we could be doing. So being an African woman means opening ways where African women can find fullness of life the way you have experienced it, or the way you think it should be experienced.

AAA: Okay. Sharon, how will you extract the ethics aspect of this from our guests?

SAO: From what Ria and Aunty Mercy have said, I see a consciousness, a recognition of a woman's placement, her African position, African ideals, thoughts, and values. And these things are embedded in the kinds of work that they do with women, the music they write, and, of course, I also see the intergenerational connections. Ria talked about her grandmother and mother; Aunty Mercy also talked about her grandmother and mother. And so, you see, the intergenerational linkages of the values. That for me is how they describe being an African woman. It's never a singular thing and I appreciate that. That leads me to ask the question, what does feminist ethics mean to you, Ria?

RB: I think that Prof. [AAA] said something really beautiful when she asked, "As women, who is going to take care of us?" And when we think about feminist ethics, that for me is the question that guides how I even move with the framework that I use. I prioritise things like equity, empathy, care, a deep respect for everyone's lived experiences. And when I say everyone, here I'm referring to women's lived experiences, because all our lived experiences can be very vast and very different. But how do we hold space for these multiplicities, for example? I think that feminist ethics also challenge traditional moral structures that sometimes reinforce harmful hierarchies and sometimes silence voices. So, in my work, I try as much as possible to echo or answer that question of who is going to take care of us, and also, who is going to humanise us?

That for me, is what feminist ethics is. It's not just about advocating for women's rights, but it's also about fostering a more inclusive society for all. It also demands that we examine our own personal relationships and critically evaluate the institutions around us – policies, cultural norms that sometimes perpetuate very harmful stereotypes of inequality. I try as much as possible in everything I do, to always ask myself – well, first, what my mother would do [laughs] – but then, secondly, how is what I'm doing going to help a sister or

my aunt or my cousin? How are these found in the ways in which I'm trying to also practise my art? How will a young girl find inspiration from that to also help somebody coming after her? So, this is what feminist ethics means to me: it means in everything that you do, again, ask yourself that same overarching question of who is going to take care of me, or who is going to take care of my sisters?

SAO: How do we do this? And who is going to take care of us? Is feminist ethics all about care? Because we keep hearing and reading specific writers arguing that care puts more burdens on women who already don't have time to care for themselves. We care for everybody – who cares for us? Is it all about care? What about justice or equity?

RB: I would say that care definitely is something that we all gravitate to. But you're right. It isn't just about care. It's also about justice, about more than just looking to us as taking care of everyone. It's also looking to how do we make sure that systems in place take care of us, but also find justice for us? How is it that we find not just women's voices to create this care, but also bring in allies as well? So, I think this is actually something that I'm so glad you brought up, because I also sometimes realise that I go into that conversation a lot with "care" leading first, but then I realise, too, that justice is something that's as important.

AM: Yeah, I think the emphasis on equity is what I will bring to the table, because justice, fine, but sometimes there is a nuance between what is just and what makes for equity. And if equity in simple language would mean treating human beings equally, giving them equal space and opportunities to develop themselves and contribute to the community's good, then we are working with equity. There may be some justice somewhere there, but equity is the equal participation that everybody has a right to bring to the table.

AAA: Where does solidarity fit into feminist ethics or ethics in general for you, that recognition that someone is a fellow human and so I must be for and with them? Aunty Mercy?

AM: Solidarity, of course, is the image we have of how women should treat one another and how they should support one another, especially when they are doing things that are just and right, and things that promote the humanity of the whole community. And you can't be in solidarity with somebody who is

working for your detriment. So, you stay in solidarity with those who are working for your good and for what you believe is the good of the community. That's how I see solidarity.

RB: Yeah, I also agree with that, as finding community. So, solidarity is also making sure that you're in community with those that share the same ideals as you. That will also help in uplifting all the different messages that you have. I know that from my work, let's say with music, I find that a lot of the different women creators, artists that I work with, we all have similar approaches to how we view our feminism, or what it is we are fighting for, whether it is in writing our music or it's in the books that they're writing, etc. But it's also in finding community in that work. So that's how I also see solidarity.

AAA: I'm going to push the solidarity thing a little further. So, Auntie Mercy, in your Circle of feminist theologians, there will be theologians who, for the most part, you agree with. Ria, you are working on your music with like-minded musicians. But then there will be areas of disagreement, right? How can we do solidarity work while taking account of our diversity and sometimes contestations? For example, for the Network of Women's Rights in Ghana, an area of disagreement for us was how involved we should be when it comes to the rights of LGBTQ+⁷ people. Some of us would argue that discrimination is discrimination, regardless of the identities, or lifestyle choices of who is being oppressed, thus, we should be a voice for their freedoms. Others opine that, if we are not careful, our core message of advocating for women's rights can get diluted. Also, on Black masculinities, something that I work on, I've had feminist sisters say, "We haven't finished dealing with women's issues and now you're putting men and boys' concerns on the table; it can be a distraction." And, of course, I get it. For example, in our film, *When Women Speak*,⁸ at some of the screenings, a man will ask (always a man), "Where are the men?" And a young creative on the team will ask, with an eye roll, "Can you read the title?" But our gender troubles do include men. So, from your experience, how have you dealt with disagreement in your spaces?

AM: Since you bring up masculinity, we had a Circle meeting in, I think, it was Yaoundé, in Cameroon, and that was when we staged a drama to show that it is necessary for feminist groups, for women's groups, to point out the necessity of being inclusive when it comes to men because, whether we like it or not, they

are in our homes as grandfathers, fathers, brothers, and sons, and we have to deal with them. So, if they have ways of life that we think are detrimental to women, we need to point it out to them. But if they are also being discriminated against because of women, then we need to discuss those issues as well. One thing that was always coming up, and I think not just in Ghana, but most parts of Africa, is this business of sending a girl child to school. But it also came to a point when we had to then say, masculinity is important, but it is not as important as sending the girl child to school. Because all these years that the boys are going to school, nobody was saying that the girls are being discriminated against. The minute we said, the girls are being discriminated against, and we should focus on them, then everybody is saying, the boy child is in trouble, so there's always a battle, a gender divide somewhere that when you want to focus, call attention to women's plight, women's rights, women's contribution, women's participation, then somebody is going to say, what about the men? And then when you say, okay, the men are part, they are part of the community, so we should look at their issues, then somebody will say, so what about the women? This means that we cannot focus on one gender without the other. Now, what bothers me is that when we stopped talking about women's studies and feminist studies, and so on, and started talking about gender studies and gender issues, then people were still treating gender as women.

In my church, the Methodist Church, they have a gender desk, which always had a woman as the head, and all the issues that they bring forward for discussion were by women and about women. I said, but that's not gender, where are the men? And then, when you point out that we are forgetting the men, then you are in trouble. So, it's an area that we have not been able to be comfortable with. But whether we like it or not, the men are here. They are troublesome, but they are our brothers and husbands.

RB: I think very similarly, we also get a lot of these issues of “why not men?” in some of the conversations with my peers. Prof. [AAA] was speaking about the LGBTQ+ community, and we might agree somewhat on many issues affecting them, and then some women within our circles feel very strongly against [addressing LGBTQ+ rights]. In those kinds of situations, I've come to look at it from the perspective of trying to first understand their point of view, and it's really important to put yourself in the shoes of someone else with regards to understanding. So, while I sometimes find myself in situations where we

disagree on particular things, it becomes a conversation. A friend and I, we disagree on LGBTQI+ rights, even though she identifies as a feminist. *I* believe that by that pure identification as a feminist, you should be able to understand the plight of the LGBTQ+ community. But for her, she comes at that discussion from a particular religious context, and I don't think it's fair for me to completely dismiss her or disapprove of where she gets that feeling from. I think that her position obviously comes from a particular understanding. Does it mean that her feminism is outright wrong? I don't agree with it, absolutely not, but my perspective is never to lead with conflict, but from a point of understanding.

AAA: Great wisdom from a young person.

SAO: So, what I hear from you both in trying to answer the question, what feminist ethics means to you is, it's not just care, but equity also, and then we raise the solidarity issue, the image we have of how women should treat one another. We agree that feminist ethics is also about learning to say "no" and to manage disagreement on complex settings. So, where does feminist ethics stay when there is a gender divide? That's what Auntie Mercy was talking about, and I hear that there must be an imperative to disallow a shutdown of core or fundamental feminist positions. So, when there are conflicts, feminist ethics tells you there are also feminist goals that must be defended. Does that reflect what you're trying to say?

RB: Yes, I think so.

SAO: Thank you. How much of who you are and what you do is informed or influenced by African feminist theory or practice? For Auntie Mercy, her roles in faith and theology are very important within feminist discourse, and within her field [religion], it is often blamed as the culprit of women's marginalised and even oppressed status. So how have you walked your ethical journeys among, or with, even against, male colleagues or other feminists?

AM: Well, I don't know how to start this, but, when I started the work I was doing, the language of feminism and womanism and women's rights and so on was not there. A lot of the things that come in religion, especially in Christianity, if Christians were really Jesus' people, as they are labelled, we would not have most of the conflicts that we have now, because of the basic ideas, even of

solidarity, of empathy, of concern for the good of the other person, that are embedded in Christianity.

You know, I am really a very basic, naïve, uninformed person [laughs]. So, I always go down to brass tacks or fundamentals. If you are the only woman on a staff of eight or nine, does that mean you are the one to make the tea when there is an office with an administrator, with a man who oversees the supplying of tea? No, but Professor Idowu would turn to me, or he would actually be sitting right opposite me, and he would look me in the face and say, “Mercy, can you now bring us the tea?” How do I answer that? I mean, first of all, I’m an African woman, well brought up. Idowu is an African man. He’s older than I am. He’s my boss, so what he says should be law, shouldn’t it? Yeah, but really not for me, you know. I’m telling you this story because I walked around a lot of these things with my wisdom. I wasn’t referring to Jesus or anybody but my own wisdom. Idowu said, “Mercy, can we now have tea?” I said nothing. I just got up; I went behind him where the phone was sitting. I picked up the phone, and I said, Mr Adeniyi, we are ready for tea. And then I came and sat back down, and the tea came. Haven’t I brought the tea? [all laugh].

So, there have been a lot of these kinds of events in my life in dealing with these men, theologians. They thought they were walking around me, but I was walking around them most of the time with the way I treated the situations that they raised. You know, when I was in the Ecumenical Association of Third World Theologians, we women were having our discussion in Nairobi, about how we are going to do the next whatever it is we wanted to do and then talking about creating the Circle. Then, Appiah-Kubi asks me, sitting there, his legs stretched out, relaxed like he is the paterfamilias⁹, “How can you women be planning these things and you don’t tell us?”

AAA: Sorry, Aunt Mercy, who is Appiah-Kubi and what was his position?

AM: Appiah-Kubi was a very well-known African theologian in those days, and a Ghanaian. He was in the Ecumenical Association of Third World Theologians; he was one of the founders, and he was really surprised that we, the women, had been meeting and then trying to create an association, and he – the man, the big man, the African man – we did not consult him; we did not tell him what we were doing. I said, “Are you a woman?” That’s all I said to him. I’m calling a meeting of women. You are not a woman. So there! I have

several of these kinds of situations where I had to find ways of walking around these, my brothers, without really creating too much antagonism.

AAA: Ria, for you, as a younger feminist woman working with young people, sometimes you'll find an important place for an ethical choice in popular culture and, at the same time, pop music is often seen as a crime scene where the objectification and even abuse of women can occur. So, in Ghana, there was this semi-Me-Too movement against an important pop festival host who, while heralding feminism in public, was abusing his intimate partner in private. What can you say to these seeming or alleged contradictions for an African ethical feminist practice in the music industry?

RB: I think that was surrounding the Chale Wote festival that happens in Ghana every year. And one year we found out that one of the [male] founders of the festival, a self-proclaimed feminist, had actually abused the [female] co-founder.¹⁰ I was quite close to them, so, watching that happen in real time was also a bit unnerving, because we have these individuals that can champion these spaces and say all these types of things about feminism and inclusion, and making sure women are at the forefront. But then, behind closed doors, they are not actually practising what they are preaching. You find that in a lot of the music industry; it is a crime scene! We do have a lot of music that still to this day completely objectifies women. You have the case of currently, for example, the big artist, who is now in court, because of situations surrounding abuses of multiple young women; and a lot of women have been coming out to say this.

In Ghana, we have specific rap groups who have also been said to have been abusing women, etc. But then you'll find that the music is still played in particular spaces. People are still working with these individuals, and when you confront them, they say, "Oh, you know, we still need to eat," or "we still need to be able to work with them because of their platform." I'm somebody that decidedly would never work with individuals that perpetuate those types of things, but I find that there are some individuals that still find themselves being able to work in those types of environments. And it's a tricky and complicated situation to navigate in the creative industry. And there are people that value what it is a person might be able to get for them with regards to networks or exposure instead of thinking about what it means ethically, what it means to work with them on that level.

So, my work with Black Girls Glow tries to always remind the young women that you need to make sure that the spaces that you're working with will take care of you, first of all, see you as equals, and treat you with the respect that you deserve. It's very difficult sometimes when we find ourselves in spaces with individuals that purport to be something that they are not, and we have a lot of that in the creative industry. We still have quite a long way to go, but, with me, I have cut ties with organisations, individuals, or artists that, for lack of a better term, do not respect women. I think that it's important that in our lived experience and practice we let individuals know that we won't stand for disrespect or abuse. It has cost me certain festival positions and particular opportunities, but I can sleep better at night. Also, it's setting an example for younger creative women coming up to know that we do not need to be in the spaces that will inevitably end up making you feel worse for wear, because another thing that we also find in the music industry is young women getting together with these producers, who sometimes come from a sexual side, which can become very murky. And so that's why, for example, a space like Vibrate Space exists. Black Girls Glow has a partnership with them where every Thursday it's open to women only, so that women can not only be the ones that are producing but also feel safe in these spaces as performers as well. That's why we do things like "You Are Cared For", which is our audiovisual programme for sexual education, to remind women of their bodily autonomy and their agency. So, little by little, we're trying to create the spaces that can combat all of the things, but we still have a long way to go.

TFA: I'm particularly interested in the creative space because we know how much sexualisation and abuse takes place there. What's your sense of how much your feminist ethics and approaches are changing not just the way women see themselves and how they handle these dynamics, but how men who dominate these spaces are responding to what is essentially a movement that you're building? How would you both say that men are responding in these spaces, both the music space, and the theological space?

RB: In the music space, when it comes to the men, some of them just don't respond at all.

AAA: If you don't mind naming names, have you been able to "convert" any influential men along the way?

RB: Let's see... I would say that a lot of the men that support Black Girls Glow identify as feminist men, and so, thankfully, we didn't have to convert many of them. But sometimes the men, especially in the creative scene, just ignore our messages; sometimes they act like it's [the exploitation and abuse] not happening. And sometimes they just get very uncomfortable. Subsequently, you might not be invited into those spaces when they're having contests, etc. But that's fine with us, because we've created spaces where we don't need them anymore.

SAO: Beyond creating your own space, have you had instances, perhaps a particular case, where you've had to stand as a group or as a body to deal with a particular issue?

RB: I would say yes, and that's in reference to the issues surrounding the Chale Wote festival, in that all of us women – and not just Black Girls Glow, but let's say the young African Feminist Collective – took a stand, and none of us go to the festival; and also, none of our peers go to the festival, they do not engage with any of the artists anymore. Recently, Black Girls Glow was asked by an artist to work on a combined project, and we were very interested. Then this person told us that the project would be showcased at the Chale Wote festival. Although, it came with pretty good compensation, we had to ask ourselves: what do we look like partnering with someone who does not even understand the history of what happened with Chale Wote? We discovered that this person had no idea. And we realised that there's a subset of individuals that have no idea that these things are happening, or no idea that the abuse happened to one of the founders. So that became a teaching moment for us to now tell this person what had happened. They were shocked and eventually did not go on to do the project with Chale Wote festival. They also ended up telling more of their peers of the situation. So that's one way that we've also tried to stand up against it.

AAA: Aunty Mercy, any similar experiences?

AM: Not similar. But I was talking about the Circle meeting that happened just last year. Trinity [seminary] is not very comfortable with what we're doing at the institute, because we bring in "all sorts", and so we were always at loggerheads with the administration. Now, when the senior women who came to the meeting at my house heard what was going on, they said, "No, no, we

have to go and see the president about this.” So, four or five of them went to the president, at that time it was Reverend Professor Asamoah-Gyadu. They went to him, and they said, “What are we hearing about Trinity not wanting to do gender studies at the Institute? This was one of the things that you agreed to: to have the students do gender studies. Are you now cancelling it and frustrating Joyce?¹¹ Because you will not approve her programmes?” And these four or five women really gave it to him, and then he explained, “No, no, no, it’s not like that. We will see to it that it is done properly. Joyce should insist.”¹² Why should Joyce insist? She’s brought the programme – approve it or don’t approve it, you know. So, sometimes, when women get together and confront the powers that be, they [men] themselves come to look at themselves, see that what they are doing is wrong. I’m hoping that things are going to be better because the current president is saying, “Oh, we will look into all those things that the Circle women have brought to us.” So, we just have to keep going.

AAA: Aluta continua!

AM: Aluta continua!

AAA: So, Aunty Mercy, for you, your faith, but also your theology, which is an academic thing, really, both are part of your life. In the beginning, you said religion and faith are not the same thing, right? And that’s why you focus on religion to bring these diverse belief systems into the work that you do. So how do you walk that ethical journey with other people – women, men, Ghanaians, Africans, Christians, Muslims – when religion is often blamed for the bad, but the good is often not mentioned?

AM: Well, you know, I’m sometimes almost in tears because when we mention religion and its negative things, usually the people I’m with, being Christian, will say, it’s the Muslims. See what they are doing in Iran. See what they are doing in Iraq. See what the Muslims are doing to women in Afghanistan. I said, “I’m not talking about what the Muslims are doing to Muslim women; I’m talking about what Christians are doing to Christian women.” Even within religion, we can just look at other people and say they are the bad guys. But I look at the Christian faith, I look at what we do in church, and [sighs] the language... okay, it’s the English language. But why is it that even when we translate into our own languages, we cannot make our language inclusive? We have created a God who is male, thinking therefore all males are gods and the

males want to be treated like God? And that is the thing that is very difficult to get rid of. When you try to point it out, even through the language, people just snicker at you, and they think, “Oh, what’s it about?” This is just English language.

In the Methodist Church, we have a group, we call ourselves the Children of the Manse,¹³ that is, the sons and daughters of ministers of the Methodist Church. During one of the months, they like to sing a hymn, “Faith of Our Fathers Living Still”, blah blah. And I asked, why can’t we just sing “Faith of Our Forebears”? Because for me, my faith is basically the faith of my mother, because my father, as a Methodist minister, was going around converting everybody in all the villages around, and the person who was doing early-morning 5 a.m. prayers with us at home – we used to call them *Ahamakye* prayers – was my mother. So, I’m not saying sing “Faith of Our Mothers”,¹⁴ but let’s sing “Faith of Our Forebears”, “Faith of Our Parents”. You know, even simple things like that, it’s very difficult to change in the church, very difficult to change the mindset. But every now and then, you meet a Methodist minister who thinks there’s something in what these women are saying and we have to back them, we have to do something about it, and Asamoah-Gyadu, he changed “Faith of Our Fathers” to “Faith of Our Forebears” or something like that in one of the sessions. But it is true, people who quote the Bible to show how evil Eve and the other woman were: they’re always the Jezebels.

SAO: I am just thinking about resistance, change, solidarity, care, justice, and equity. One thing that has touched me from both of you, has been how you’ve both been able to deal with contradictions, walking around situations, working them out to save women from all forms of oppression. We are discussing *African* feminist ethics, and Aunty Mercy talked about the wisdom to deal with antagonisms. So, there is a wisdom embedded in women with which we navigate spaces and that wisdom is very applicable when we are talking about feminist ethics. Scholars have problematised care as a single narrative, but feminists offer alternatives. So, there is feminist ethics of risk, discussing how women take or avoid risks. Both of you have talked about the risky things you have done, including ignoring financial benefit that could have come to you. My response to these kinds of situations is presented in the concept of “ethics of vigour”, where I connect care, risk, courage, and proffer a mix while addressing a wide range of issues. So, besides feminist ethics of care, would

there be particularly homegrown theories that you think would better address our immediate challenges?

AM: The care is fine, but I think the word solidarity should be there somewhere.

RB: Yeah.

AM: Because when women are not in solidarity with each other, everything falls apart.

RB: Yeah.

AAA: How can we create the “women’s community” in such a way that we are more or less on the same page, and in solidarity?

RB: I think I would echo that sentiment as well, that solidarity is extremely important. Again, that goes back to what I said earlier about being within community. That’s how I see solidarity.

AAA: Auntie Mercy, what word or words would you use for solidarity in your language? In another context, some of us were recently very critical of the humanitarian “industry” and its language, and we asked our workshop participants, mainly PhD students and postdocs from across Africa, to define humanitarianism in their own languages. Some struggled more than others; some had a word, some had a sentence. How might we say “feminist ethics” in Twi or Ga? How about solidarity?

AM: If I was doing a sentence, I would say, “*Nipa ne nua ne Nipa*” or something like that. Because we have to recognise the humanity of the other person in order to be connected to them and to their needs, and connect their needs to our own needs.

AAA: So, a human being’s sibling is another human being?

AM: Human being, yeah.

AAA: And the Akan say that not everybody walking around as an embodied person is human. Ria, back to Sharon’s not-so-easy question: do you have any other thoughts on that, considering that a lot of what we are talking about has purportedly been most articulated in academic spaces or intellectual spaces. People who have a command of a language, probably a colonial language, theorise these things. But we have older people from our own communities who are very articulate in their languages because they were trained to speak the

language, use proverbs, and apply “native” wisdom, and so on. We don’t see much of that with my generation and after. How can we move this theorising into those spaces so that people can understand? Some people are clueless about the unacceptable behaviours and the feminist actions that went on at the Chale Wote festival. They are clueless, not only because they didn’t read the news item, but perhaps because they don’t understand the ways in which abuse works and is experienced by others. So, please, your comments?

RB: It is the duty of the artist to be able to bring things that are more academic into contextualised language. That’s why in my writings and songs I try to bring the theory into a more artistic and poetic perspective. That is how we are able to bridge that gap. I admit that sometimes because it’s extremely academic, it might seem a bit daunting to some, but it’s not daunting. It is a matter of also being able to understand it, because, as much as some people might not be able to understand the language, between community organisers, artists like me, market leaders, activists, we’re all engaged in particular feminist principles. Maybe we just don’t have the particular words or the language for these concepts, but they exist. And so, using, for example, Poetra Asantewa, with her writing, she simplifies things such that it can be understood a bit more deeply. We’re seeing a lot more young women artists talking about really hard topics in their music, whether it’s about abuse, equity, justice, or reproductive rights. In some of the new music, we have artists like Esther Legend or Annabelle Rose. We have Lily and Lola, Efyā, who are all women who use their songwriting and their music practice to also speak to difficult subjects, simplifying some of what could be deemed as more academic, I guess.

TFA: I want to bring together the threads about colonialism and languages and translation, and ask you – artists like Efyā, for example, have a particular listenership. It might be a class issue. How well would you say that the [feminist ethics] message is translating into other genres of music, and in other sorts of listenerships? So, people who, for example, tend to sing more in local languages have a different listenership would you not say? How well is the message transmitting across those different groups and among the people who listen to them?

RB: The message is translating. I go back to artists like Mzbel, who wrote the song “Sixteen Years” in the nineties, a song that was an anthem for young

women to be wary of men who would just come and [try to] abuse them. And she sings in Twi, for example. That's an artist that used her own platform to disseminate that type of information. It does translate, but I will agree that in certain cases, class comes into play, privilege comes into play with regards to the listenership as well. And so that's why it's also important for us to be able to collaborate across genres. For example, I collaborate with, let's say, Efyra, or I collaborate with Abrewa Nana to be able to bridge those gaps.

AM: With the church, theology and Christianity, what the theologians write and what the preachers preach are very different. Most preachers speak in a way that the congregations understand, with anecdotes and proverbs. But when they get to writing, you take that theology book and it's full of words that you have never seen before, and I don't know why they do that. I have had people who have said to me, "Oh, Aunty Mercy, we can understand *your* writings." I said, what writings do you not understand? Then they will mention certain books [with male authors]. I would say, "But they were not writing them for you; they were writing them for the academy." They were writing them to get their PhDs and so forth. So that's where we are with this communication gap.

AAA: Both of you have talked about mothers and grandmothers, and it has been interesting for me in my work on masculinities. When I ask young men about the influencers in their lives, it's also their mothers and grandmothers. So the mothers and grandmothers are "doing all", as we say. Occasionally, a young man will mention a male pastor or teacher and so on, but they are much more likely – or as likely as young Black women – to see other women, mothers and grandmothers, as influencers in their lives, than fathers and grandfathers. When they do mention men, it's some "big" names. This leads me to ask you to offer a few more examples or anecdotes about women, or feminist figures, who have had the strongest influence on you. And what role has feminist ethics played in those relationships? Aunty Mercy, please go first.

AM: Well, with me, the first feminist in my life was my father's mother, Martha Aba. She should have been queen mother at Apam, [but she] got married, followed the husband to go to Asamankese to do cocoa farming. And Aba said when she got to Asamankese that she was not going to go and do any farming, because if she got a wound,¹⁵ she could no longer go and be queen mother. My grandmother was just like that: she stuck to her guns, she did whatever she

thought was right for her and was, as I said before, the woman who ensured that she wasn't going to go to a church that doesn't know how to sing, so she would create her own group. Very few women will stand against their husband, let the husband go to his church while she does her own thing. But it is not always like that. My grandmother brought up a lot of other women, mentoring them, teaching them how to do this and that. She was going to church every day. I remember carrying her Bible and hymn book to church. At 5a.m., she would wake you up, and you will carry her books to church. Whether she was actually reading, I never got to know. I didn't ask, but when you're going to church, you have to carry books. So, I carried the books, and we went to church. That was my grandmother.

The other woman who later came into my life, way back, was Florence Ansaah Cofie, wife of a medical doctor. Their cars always had the numbers 50-50 on them, whatever the car was. So, one day I asked, "Why are all your cars numbered 50-50?" She said, "Ei! Between me and my husband, it's always 50-50. I mean, if he's earning 1,000, he brought 500; if I'm earning 100, I brought 50. So, it doesn't matter the amount; the percentage is the same. Both of us are contributing 50-50." And that taught me that in marriage, especially today, the way people are looking at marriage, it's either dependency on the man or, as these days, boys always looking for girls who already have houses. That's not it. It is two people trying to work together.

I was also impacted by Annie Jiagge, who was a High Court judge here in Ghana. When Annie Jiagge came to teach in Achimota School, she was Annie Baëta [her name before marriage]. She had just finished her law degree. I think she was the first woman lawyer in Ghana. So those of us in Achimota at that time, we were all over her. Later she was very, very influential in the church and in the World Council of Churches and so on. And in one conversation, Annie Jiagge said to me, "A marriage is a woman's civil death." We were talking about naming, and I asked, "Why?" She said, "You will see; you're getting married, you will see how everybody will forget that you were Miss Yamoah." And later it became so clear, because Trinity was trying to name the women's hall, which she was instrumental in getting the money for, and I was trying to get Trinity to name the hall after Annie Baëta, and they were not going to do it.

[So,] I went to Nairobi. There was a boy at the All-Africa Conference of Churches, an accountant, who was Ewe who belonged to the EP [Evangelical Presbyterian] Church. So I was telling him about this naming thing, our asking [Trinity] to name this building after Annie Jiagge, and then he says, “Who is Annie Jiagge?” I said, “Okay, do you know, Professor Baëta?” He says, “Yes.” I said, “Oh, you know Professor Baëta, but you don’t know Annie Jiagge? Professor Baëta is the [elder] brother of Annie Baëta.” He then says, “Oh, you didn’t say Annie Baëta; you said Annie Jiagge.” So, Annie Baëta is dead, and nobody knows Annie Jiagge. That experience influenced me a lot. There are several other women like that who, it is short vignettes, their lives and their sayings come to my mind when I’m looking at women’s influence in the world, and whether we can do better than what we have done so far. Is that okay?

AAA: Yes, unless you want to mention any names. Ria, your go.

RB: I always, always bring up my mother again, because I think she’s one of the biggest influences. Just to give a bit of context. She is Anna Bossman, and for a large part of my childhood, she was the Deputy Commissioner of the Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice here in Ghana. She later became the Acting Commissioner for Human Rights and Administrative Justice, and, honestly, watching her in that position truly impacted me because I saw exactly how almost every case she took up was on behalf of women and children. There were some instances where she had to take a stance on behalf of the LGBTQI+ community. She’s someone that has truly influenced the way I view myself and my feminism, and she would say that she got that from her mother. And so, my grandmother definitely is another influence on the more creative side, I would say.

Another huge influence for me is Nina Simone. In fact, much to the frustration of my mother, I call her my second mother, through her practice – not only within the civil rights movement, but also in her music practice as well. Eartha Kitt is another artist who’s also really influenced the way I view myself, especially because she had really strong views about being a strong woman without a man, influencing women to see themselves as empowered, and to uplift themselves, and to see that they are not just equal, but also sometimes even more powerful than [men]. As a young girl, that’s something that really influenced me and helped me to see my place in the world.

AAA: Sharon has a question for us on culture and praxis.

SAO: Thank you so much. So, African gender culture and practices, as expressed in proverbs and other cultural artifacts, has tended to be cast in a negative light as far as women are concerned. And Aunty Mercy has said some things about that today, and also you have addressed this in your book *Daughters of Anowa*. What wisdoms or learnings do you think we can derive from our Indigenous cultures and cultural tools to help us expand the African feminist ethics project or the African feminist archive, as the case may be?

AM: Well, my immediate response is one of exasperation, because people are picking our cultural understandings, artifacts, proverbs and doing things with them that were not the original intentions. I recently heard that in Canada they have named a street Sankofa Road, or something. Now, the worst thing that can ever happen to me is to open this blessed phone that is now in our hands – that tells you things that you don't want to see – and to see Trump holding the Sankofa bird. Trump, I don't know what interpretation he is giving to Sankofa. But you see, the modification had already come from the Arts Centre here in Accra, where the artists have put an egg into the beak of the bird. I was at the Arts Centre, and I asked the boy, "Why have you put an egg in the beak of a bird? Have you ever seen a bird with an egg in the beak flying around?" He said, "No." But what the boy was trying to say is that our mothers are always forgetting us, their children, and the Sankofa bird is saying, "Go back and take care of your children."

AAA: Wow!

AM: This business of mothers and children has become one of the images that you cannot resist [or] get away from. What about fathers and children? Do they have a stake? Then what happens to children? So I was explaining to this young man, "Look, I have been with Owura Amu, Ephraim Amu, in Achimota School, in Tech, in Legon, always in his choir and he explains all these things every time clearly. And what he's saying is when the bird turns its beak, it goes to the tail – the thing that we call *tsofi* [turkey tail] – and it dips the beak into the glands, and fat comes on the beak, and it uses the fat to preen its feathers."

AAA: Wow!

AM: That is it! So, what the bird is telling us is: go back, pick the good things that you have left behind to come and do something good in your life. Yeah, and the song, “Ɔkofɔ Kwesi Barima aa wommpɛ biribi ayɛ” [meaning men who do not look for anything/any work to do].¹⁶ First of all, in Akan, you don’t say “Kwesi Barima”, it’s always “Yaw Barima.” So, if the man is calling himself, “Kwesi Barima”, it means he’s even crazy: he doesn’t even know his own language and he doesn’t know what he is doing (even his name is wrong). Now, the Sankofa bird has become so popular that Donald Trump is seen using that Akan sacred symbol of “go back and pick up the good things in your background and use them to correct and to enhance the present.” I’m just praying that if there is something to enhance, that he’s going to use the Sankofa symbol to do it. But, God forgive me, I am still trying to find out. So, the traditional things, they are there, but they are there for us to use judiciously.

It’s not everything in the culture that can be used in a positive way and people can pick up positive things and bastardise them. I was once talking about Bolanle Awe, and others asked me to come and speak at [the Institute of] African Studies at the [University] of Ibadan. That was because I had a paper that was about [Akan] proverbs in traditional culture and the research¹⁷ I did to get those proverbs and to get that paper,¹⁸ I have never forgotten. There’s so much in our culture that we don’t know what to do with. We don’t even know them anymore because nobody is talking about them or teaching them. I hope that we will discover the things that are positive in culture and use them ourselves positively before people get hold of them and use them for the wrong reasons.

AAA: Even though the question was for you, Aunty Mercy, Ria, would you like to comment, especially as you’re from a different generation? And Aunty Mercy told us her age: 91 this year. Ria, we’d like to know how old you are so that, when people read the piece, they see the cross-generational difference that binds you.

RB: I’m 34 but turning 35 on the 24th of November [2024]. Very excited about it. I don’t really have a comment on this, but I do feel that when it comes to some of our proverbs and cultural artifacts, a lot of us, especially, let’s say, my own peers and younger, there’s so much that we don’t know. There’s so much that we can learn, especially from our elders, and as I sit here, I feel like I’ve

learnt a lot – especially about the Sankofa symbol/concept – that I did not know. I also think cross-generational wisdom sharing is important for us to bridge that gap in having more conversations with our elders, such that we can bring this into our practice as well.

AAA: And the future of feminist ethics: what do you both see as happening, what *should* happen, what do you see as your roles in making what should happen happen?

AM: We can all still find it interesting or useful to read the proverbs and learn, so they were talking like this? I am glad that at least there is still some interest in what was going on in the past and that this can be found in what I have written. That's what I hope for the future. Because, you know, I belong to the generation that was reading Chaucer, and so on – all those fun, fantastic English languages. And sometimes I'm asking myself, what are you reading Chaucer for? I don't want my work to become like Chaucer today to the younger generation.

RB: I think the future is about continuing to be strong in the work that we're doing, continuing to recruit, so to speak, and to not ever become discouraged. For example, something like Black Girls Glow that we founded in Accra, next year: we're going to be moving to Kumasi, something that we hope to also take outside of Ghana, to maybe Nigeria and South Africa. We already have a programme where we cross-collaborate with the Berlin Music Board, and African women that are in Berlin as well. And so, continuing to do the work, continuing to create these bridges cross-culturally, but also within our own community, we can't stop, we have to keep going.

AM: Let me add that one thing that Trinity may be doing, that I'm really praying happens, is that they are going to continue the work that we are doing at the Talitha Qumi Centre and they create the Feminist Theological Research Centre or something out of what I was doing. So, I am thankful for that and it's a man who is spearheading that. So, I'm thankful that at least there will be a couple of men, together with the women, who will modify the male-centred work, because, otherwise, what's the point? The visions that I had will be modified, but at least the trend of inclusiveness of women and inclusiveness of community will be there. So, I'm very happy about that; it assures me that our work will go on and on.

AAA: That will be a legacy!

SAO: About the future of African feminist ethics, I see you talk about relevance, continuity, and co-creation. And these are very important things that we must factor into the future. The fight continues. The struggle is real and the realities that we face keep changing, but they are still in the same name – oppression. Whatever it is, we have to keep our work relevant.

AAA: Okay, I say a big thank you to both of you, Auntie Mercy and Ria, and to my colleagues Sharon and Titi.

Acknowledgements

We are grateful to our interlocutors, and to Dr. Joyce Boham, Ebenezer Bosomprah, and Nana Akua Agyapong for diverse assistance in facilitating and organising Auntie Mercy's participation and approval of the final piece.

Notes

1. Auntie Mercy likes to remind people that, whatever her husband's surname might suggest, she prefers to be known as Amba Yamoah. Yet most of her books and official documents bear the name Oduyoye. She recalls, in her thirties, how at the Ghana Passport Office officials insisted her husband could not be issued a passport unless his name was linked to hers. Desperate to travel, they turned to a young acquaintance in the office who promised to "take care of it". On the day of departure, their passports were handed over, and she discovered that her maiden name had been erased and replaced with her husband's surname.
2. Auntie Mercy lived in Ibadan for about seven years.
3. These are traditional leaders/rulers in their own right.
4. When Auntie Mercy worked at the World Council of Churches, her immediate supervisor was a White Dutch man named Albert. She did, however, have some notable racist experiences in the Netherlands, including entering the pool at her hotel, at Albert's urging, only to realise that all the White people who had been swimming had got out.

5. Baselfo (plural) or Baselnii (singular) is the term for persons associated with the Basel Mission, a Christian missionary society based in Switzerland.
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Presbyterian_Church_of_Ghana;
<https://pcgonline.org/brief-history/>
6. Aunty Mercy's grandmother started the Methodist Church in Asamankese with her grandfather, and her grandfather's brother and his wife, making the Yamoah family from Apam the ones who started the church in Asamankese.
7. Aunty Mercy opines that the arrangement of the letters should have begun with "G" for gay men, because starting with "L" may place lesbian women at the forefront of public scrutiny.
8. A documentary on Ghanaian women's activism.
9. The term is Latin for "father of the family" or the "owner of the family estate". The paterfamilias was the oldest living male in a household and could legally exercise autocratic authority over his extended family.
10. Find links to reports of the allegations at <https://labarijournal.com/has-ghanas-chale-wote-street-festival-lost-its-shine/>;
<https://africanarguments.org/2020/02/could-metoo-moment-end-africa-biggest-arts-festival-chale-wote/>; and
<https://medium.com/@sionneneely/speaking-my-truth-f0850d2752f1>
11. Dr. Joyce Boham is the manager of the Institute of Women in Religion and Culture, which is attached to the Trinity Theological Seminary in Legon, Accra. The Institute is also known as the Talitha Qumi Centre, which is Aramaic and translates as "Maiden, arise!" or "Little girl, I say to you, arise!"
12. In 2016, Akosua Adomako Ampofo, first author in this conversation, was invited by Rev. Professor Kwabena Asamoah-Gyadu to give a lecture to the students of Trinity College on gender issues in Africa.
13. "Children of the Manse" is an American term, according to Aunty Mercy, which was adopted by the children of Methodist ministers in Ghana, due to "Americanisation".

14. Interestingly, according to Aunty Mercy, somebody managed to change the lyrics of the Methodist Hymn 430 to “Faith of Our Mothers” (see <https://hymnary.org>).
15. Traditional leaders are not supposed to have any physical “blemishes”. Should someone decide to seek a person’s elimination from consideration, even a small scar could be used as a pretext.
16. This song was composed by the renowned Ghanaian musicologist, Ephraim Amu.
17. She was researching the 3,600 Akan proverbs collected by Reverend Johann Gottlieb Christaller.
18. The lecture on Akan proverbs is published by the Institute of African Studies, University of Ibadan.