

Christianity and the Region

Introduction:

How did the religions of the region influence social life?

CHRISTIANITY

1. The Christian Churches taught the following about gender:

- (i) The men were superior to the women
- (ii) The man was the head of the household
- (iii) The women were to stay at the home and take care of the children and home life while the men worked
- (iv) Church men were given leadership positions; e.g. Local preachers, Deacons, Priests

2. They provided recreational and educational facilities

3. They did valuable charity work such as operating soup kitchens and day care for desperate mothers.

4. They conducted informal adoptions. Some of the Missionaries themselves adopted and took care of orphaned or less advantaged children. They operated Boys and Girls Homes.

5. They provided a wide range of occupation for lower class people, allowing them a measure of social mobility: clergy men, deacons, watchmen of the church grounds and caretakers.

6. Health Practices: The Church taught that "cleanliness is next to godliness". Members were therefore encouraged to practice good hygiene.

Diet: some denominations such as Seventh Day Adventists taught their followers to abstain from eating certain foods such as pork and beef. They had a vegetarian diet.

7. Conflict: in the early period (1838-1850) the blacks experienced much discrimination when they tried to worship in the Christian churches such as the Anglican and the Catholic churches. They were required to sit at the back. The services were conducted partly in English and partly in Latin. They did not understand much. The way it was conducted was outside of their culture and experience. They were not asked to do much. They found the exercise quite boring.