

Christian Congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses



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July 5, 2014

TO ALL BODIES OF ELDERS AND CIRCUIT OVERSEERS OF DANGME-LANGUAGE
CONGREGATIONS

Re: Scriptural view of “*Fiaa*” marriage ceremony

Dear Brothers:

Questions regarding the “*fiaa*” marriage ceremony, which forms part of the traditional marriage among the Krobos, have come to our attention. We are writing to share with you some Scriptural guidelines in connection with the “*Fiaa*” ceremony.

What actually constitutes “*fiaa*” rite? “*Fiaa*” is a rite which is performed by Krobos during a customary marriage ceremony. This rite serves as a seal to the marriage. This confirms that the bride becomes the groom’s and that when the woman dies it is solely the responsibility of the man to bury her along with other rites. Items needed to perform the “*fiaa*” rite include a bottle of schnapps, a little red wine, money and straw (grass). They follow certain precise procedures with these items and thereafter, libation is poured. To climax the performance of the rite, they dance the “klama” dance and bring the dance to the gathering outside. This is a summary of the “*fiaa*” rite performance from the book, “Dangme Fitsofitso” by A. K. A. Aposi Narh.

Should true Christians have a different version of “*fiaa*” marriage ceremony without including the pagan aspect? Jehovah expects Christians to keep their worship pure and untainted, having nothing to do with customs, symbols, or festivals associated with pagan worship. For example, the apostle Paul wrote: “What fellowship do righteousness and lawlessness have? Or what sharing does light have with darkness? Further, what harmony is there between Christ and Belial? Or what portion does a faithful person have with an unbeliever? And what agreement does God’s temple have with idols?” The answer: None at all. He continues: “‘Therefore get out from among them, and separate yourselves,’ says Jehovah, ‘and quit touching the unclean thing;’ ‘and I will take you in.’” (2 Cor. 6:14-17) God has emphasized that his people worship him exclusively, having nothing to do with the appendages of pagan worship. With these principles in mind, we can say that it will not be appropriate for true Christians to perform the “*Fiaa*” as part of the customary marriage ceremony. Neither can a Christian perform the “*fiaa*” marriage ceremony without including the pagan aspect.

Reports reaching us indicate that in the case of Jehovah’s Witnesses, in order to eliminate the pagan aspect of the “*fiaa*” marriage ceremony, the father of the bride can decide what can be accepted. Once he accepts it, it is also acceptable to the community without performing the pagan aspect of the “*Fiaa*.” If so, then we can conclude that what the two families agree upon is what constitutes the marriage.

Granted, brothers, it is never easy to remain separate from this world and all its pagan practices. We can anticipate the tension and anxiety our Scriptural stand on “*fiaa*” marriage ceremony might create, just as it was in the case of our Scriptural stand on funerals. Admittedly, our Lord Jesus said: “Do not think I came to bring peace to the earth; I came to bring, not peace, but a sword. For I came to cause division, with a man against his father, and a daughter against her

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mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. Indeed, a man’s enemies will be those of his own household.” Yes, Jesus knew the strong effect family and social ties can have on our exclusive worship to Jehovah God. Nonetheless, He continues: “Whoever has greater affection for father or mother than for me is not worthy of me; and whoever has greater affection for son or daughter than for me is not worthy of me. And whoever does not accept his torture stake and follow after me is not worthy of me.” (Matt. 10:34-37) Surely, then, Jehovah and His Son Jesus Christ expect us to be resolute on our Scriptural decisions. Therefore, it will not be wise to allow family and community feelings to cloud our worship of our heavenly Father, Jehovah God. We are confident that Jehovah will continue to purify us from all pagan practices. He will make us wiser than our contemporaries and simplify our lives.—Ps. 19:7, 11; 119:98.

Please rest assured that Jehovah, for the sake of his good pleasure will energize you, giving you both the desire and the power to act on these Scriptural directions about “*Fiaa*” marriage ceremony. (Phil. 2:13) We take this opportunity to send our warm Christian love and greetings.

Your brothers,

*Christian Congregation
of Jehovah's Witnesses*