



Church and Politics: An Assessment of the Bases and Approach of the Church's Political Engagement in Ghana

Samuel Sarkodie-Addo¹  and John Kwaku Opoku¹ 

¹ Department of Religious Studies, Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology, Kumasi Ghana.

Abstract

The church has maintained that it has a role to play in the country's politics and that its interests are the welfare of the nation rather than a partisan agenda. To explore these assertions, this article analysed official documents and other studies on the church's political engagement. The analysis was complemented with data from interviews with selected clergy and Christian politicians. Eight (8) members of the clergy and twenty-seven politicians (27) from the mainline, and the Pentecostal-Charismatic churches, were interviewed. They were selected using both purposive and snow-balling sampling techniques. The paper contends that the church's involvement in Ghana's politics has an intrinsic theological and moral basis as well as socio-economic motivations. Also, the approach and attitude in its political engagement to a large extent have been that of dialogue, collaboration, and non-partisan. Among other factors, the church's approach has been significant in the successes it has chalked in its political engagements. However, in the discourse of church and politics in Ghana, much attention has not been given to the basis for the church's continual political engagements, and the attitude and approach it has adopted over the years. This paper seeks to contribute to bridging this gap. The paper recommends that studies are conducted on how individual churches (denominations) and other ecumenical bodies besides the Christian Council of Ghana (CCG) and the Ghana Catholic Bishops' Conference (GCBC) have engaged politics in Ghana and to analyse their approaches and impact.

Correspondence

Samuel Sarkodie-Addo

Email: sammypierro@yahoo.com

Publication History

Received 15th May, 2023

Accepted 16th June, 2023

Published online 13th July, 2023

Keywords: *The Church, Politics, Engagement, Motivation, Ghana.*

INTRODUCTION

As the 20th century was drawing to a close and with the rise in modernisation, secularists predicted that religion will become irrelevant in the public space leading to its removal thereby and eventually becoming an individual and private affair.¹ However, events and trends after this hypothesis, show something on the contrary. Religious beliefs, practices, religious politics, and their role in the public

¹ Ozlem Ulker, "Religion and Politics in A Sociological Perspective: A Comparison Between the USA and France," *International Journal of Social Inquiry* 6, no. 2 (2013): 2.

space, persist and are prevalent if not even stronger than in the past.² The main debate is no longer whether the church has a role but rather what role it is playing, and how it is carrying or ought to carry it out.”³ Some churches have engaged in politics by fielding candidates for political positions.⁴ Others have engaged by either supporting or opposing certain regimes⁵ and sometimes mobilising support for politicians or political parties.⁶ For example, “The leader of the Jesus is Lord Church in Indonesia campaigned to be president in 2004 and 2010, and for senator in 2013.”⁷ Also, Gill asserts that “the electoral mobilization of Protestant minorities in Peru allowed Alberto Fujimori to win a surprise victory in the first round of balloting in 1992 and eventually became president.”⁸

The church’s engagement in Ghana’s politics has not been monolithic. With regard to the history of the church’s political involvement, two main groups can be identified; these are, the Historic Mission Churches (HMCs) on one hand, and the Pentecostal-Charismatic churches on the other hand. Right from their inception, the HMCs (sometimes referred to as *mainline churches*)⁹ were implicated and involved in the politics of the country as well as its social life. The HMCs have political clout and public influence which has been enhanced by the schools they established and moral authority¹⁰ and the social services they provide.¹¹ They have been at the forefront of the church’s engagement in Ghana’s politics.¹² However, the same cannot be said of the Pentecostal-Charismatic churches until the late 1980s. Their political involvement and influence from the time of independence up to the 1980s were at the fringes. Their engagements and impact on Ghana’s politics might have been questioned just as the political consequences of Pentecostalism, in general, have been debated.¹³ However, this changed significantly after the 1980s. Acheampong asserts that in the past three decades, Pentecostals have in diverse ways directly involved in Ghana’s politics, in a phenomenon he describes as “*from enclave to engagement*.”¹⁴ The political influence of the Pentecostal-Charismatic churches lately, has been asserted by Okyerefo,¹⁵ Atiemo,¹⁶ Asamoah-Gyadu,¹⁷ and Gifford.¹⁸

In view of this background, it is not surprising that most of the available literature and studies on the church’s engagement in Ghana’s politics from independence through to the 1980s are on the works of the CCG and the GCBC. Most of these works emphasise the role the church has played and its impact on democratic and socio-economic development. Others also have focused on the criticism

² Anthony Gill, “Religion and Comparative Politics,” *Annual Review Political Science* 4 (2001): 118.

³ Elom Dovlo, “The Role of Religious Bodies in Ghana’s Political Development Process,” *Legon Journal of the Humanities* 8 (1995): 2

⁴ John Choo, Evelyn Tan and Daniel P.S. Goh, “Christian Megachurches and Politics in the Philippines,” *ISEAS Perspective* no. 62 (June 2020): 1.

⁵ Eva Bellin, “Faith in Politics: New Trends in the Study of Religion and Politics,” *World Politics* 60, January (2008): 324, <https://www.brandeis.edu/politics/people/faculty/pdfs/bellin-faith-in-politics.pdf>

⁶ Gill, “Religion and Comparative Politics,” 118.

⁷ Choo, Tan and Goh, “Christian Megachurches and Politics in the Philippines,” 3.

⁸ Gill, “Religion and Comparative Politics,” 118.

⁹ Abamfo O. Atiemo, *Religion and Human Rights: Towards the Inculturation of Human Rights in Ghana*, 6. Accessed July 25, 2021. <https://research.vu.nl/>filesPDFchapter 7.pdf>

¹⁰ Michael P. K. Okyerefo, “Scrambling for the Centre: Ghana’s New Churches as an Alternative Ideology and Power,” *Religions* 10, no. 668 (2019): 6, accessed July 6, 2021. doi:10.3390/re110120668

¹¹ John S. Pobee, *Religion and Politics in Ghana* (Accra: Asempa Publishers, 1991), 15.

¹² Emmanuel Asante, “The Participation of the Church in Politics,” *ERATS* 1, no.1 (2017): 74.

¹³ Gwyneth H. McClendon and Rachel Beatty Riedl, *From Pews to Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019), 14.

¹⁴ Fredrick Acheampong, “Pentecostals and Ghana’s Fourth Republic: From Enclave to Engagement” (PhD Thesis, Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand, 2018), 151.

¹⁵ Okyerefo, “Scrambling for the Centre 2.

¹⁶ Atiemo, *Religion and Human Rights: Towards the Inculturation of Human Rights in Ghana*, 7.

¹⁷ Kwabena Asamoah-Gyadu, *Sighs and Signs of the Spirit: Ghanaian Perspectives on Pentecostalism and Renewal in Africa* (Ghana: Regnum Africa, 2015), 16.

¹⁸ Paul Gifford, *Ghana’s New Christianity: Pentecostalism in a Globalising African Economy* (Indiana: Indiana University Press, 2004), 31-32.

and tension between the church and state political actors ensuing from the latter's political engagement. However, much attention has not been given to the basis for the church's continual political engagements, and the attitude and approach it has adopted over the years. This paper seeks to contribute to bridging this gap. Politics is seen by many including politicians, as not the 'domain' of the church hence it has to 'stay out' of it.¹⁹ Others also criticise the church not for its engagements in politics but for being inconsistent and partisan.²⁰ However, the church has always insisted on its right to engage in politics, and that it has done so in a non-partisan manner. To find out the church's justification for its political engagement, and whether it has been partisan or non-partisan in its approach, were the main objectives of this study. To explore these, official documents and other studies, especially on the works of the CCG and GCBC were examined. The paper adopted a qualitative research method which begins with a literature review of the reasons and motivations for the church's continual involvement in Ghana's politics, and the approach it has adopted in its political engagement. The paper continues with the methodology used and is followed by the key findings and discussion. It concludes with a summary and some of the outcomes of the church's political engagements as well as recommendations.

LITERATURE REVIEW

In this section, the paper discusses the basis for the church's political involvement in Ghana, some of the public issues it has engaged in, and the approach it has adopted.

The Basis for the Church's Political Engagements

The church's participation in politics and governance of the nation is premised on its commitment to better the lives of the citizens of the nation.²¹ The church shares in the joy and pains of the people especially the poor. It desires to see a better Ghana as "it continues to shape government policies through its suggestions and pastoral advice."²² In a Pastoral letter issued in May 1979, the church stated "We would like to let you know how much we share the pain and anguish of all Ghanaians and how deeply moved we are by the cry of the poor that arises from our villages and cities..."²³ The Church holds that politics involves the conduct and management of public affairs to promote the public interest.²⁴ The church and Christians have a role to play as stewards²⁵ and to use it to demonstrate God's love toward society.²⁶ It, therefore, contends that "by abstaining from the public square, Christians are compromising on one of the most fundamental teachings of the Christian faith: *"You shall love your neighbour as yourself."*²⁷ Having the interest of society as the core of the church's political engagement agrees with the view espoused by Moltmann that, the impact of the Christian message and God's Kingdom on earth transcends the Christian community.²⁸ Also, according to

¹⁹ John S. Pobee, *Religion and Politics in Ghana*, 146.

²⁰ Kwame Emmanuel Tettey, "A Case for Political Engagement of the Church in Ghana as a Check on Power in Political leadership," *Journal of African Christian Thought* 23, no.1 (June 2020): 42.

²¹ Christian Council of Ghana. "The Church's Political Role in Nation Building." *Christian Home Series* vol. 1 (Accra: Christian Council of Ghana, 2016), 1.

²² National Catholic Secretariat, *Ghana Bishops Speak: A collection of Communiqués, Memoranda and Pastoral Letters of the Ghana Catholic Bishops' Conference* 2nd edition (Accra: National Catholic Secretariat, 2006), xvii.

²³ National Catholic Secretariat, "Joint Pastoral letter of the Catholic Hierarchy of Ghana to all the Faithful of the Country on the Return to Constitutional Rule – 1979," in *Ghana Bishops Speaks* 1st edition, 30.

²⁴ Christian Council of Ghana, *The Church's Political Role in Nation Building*, 3.

²⁵ Christian Council of Ghana, *The Church's Political Role in Nation Building*, 5.

²⁶ National Catholic Secretariat, "A Message from the Catholic Hierarchy of Ghana to all Christians, on Civic Responsibilities- 1968," in *Ghana Bishops Speaks*, 2-3.

²⁷ Christian Council of Ghana, *The Church's Political Role in Nation Building*, 23.

²⁸ Moltmann, "Political Theology in Ecumenical Contexts." In *Political theology: Contemporary challenges and future directions*, ed. Francis Schüssler Fiorenza, K. Tanner & M. Welker. Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2013, 4.

Grzymala-Busse, the church's moral authority and hence influence on public discourse and policy is enhanced when the public sees that it is acting in their interest.²⁹

In addition, the church contends that it has a moral and prophetic responsibility. The CCG is of the view that, God's concern for the poor and oppressed should urge Christians to engage with politics, "even if it's only to give a voice to those who have none."³⁰ GCBC states that they "have been conscious of their prophetic witness to the people of Ghana and the entire Catholic Church."³¹ In doing this, they have endeavoured "to give direction, to admonish, to exhort, to correct, to encourage and to praise Ghanaians..."³² They add that it is their prophetic mission to call on successive governments' attention to injustices and oppression and they have done so without compromising. In a Communique issued in 1984, the church stated they had not ceased to play their prophetic role since the December 31st. 1981 coup which ushered in the PNDC Government.³³ Similarly, through a Communique in 1987, the clergy describes themselves as 'God's Prophets' and it was in the light of their prophetic duty that they point out dangers in the society.³⁴ The church argues that it would be shirking its responsibility when it stated that "We should be failing in our duty if we did not denounce the use of intimidation, violence, threats to life and actual loss of life in some circumstances..."³⁵ The church's prophetic role becomes even more critical in situations whereby it is apparently, the *only* voice of the downtrodden and oppressed in the country.³⁶ The terror in some regimes was intimidating in that "...only established bodies such as the Christian Council, the Catholic Bishops' Conference, and the Association of Professional Bodies, have been capable of collectively expressing condemnation of the regimes."³⁷ This role is supported by Gifford who contends that the church has critical prophetic responsibility.³⁸ Kim buttresses with his assertion that the church has a prophetic role in the wider society.³⁹ This view is also shared by Wyk⁴⁰ and Fiorenza.⁴¹ They advance that, the teachings of the church should not only consciously address the political but also be critical of politics and society as a whole. Baker and Skinner add that, the church has a duty "to affirm what is good and challenge what is bad...to be critical, and sometimes to accept being unpopular."⁴² Sarpong is of the view that this role of the church is so important because "without criticism, freedom yields to totalitarianism, justice

²⁹ Anna Grzymala-Busse. "Weapons of the Meek: How Churches Influence Public Policy." *World Politics* 68, no.1 (January 2016):1-36. doi: 10.1017/S0043887115000301" 3.

³⁰ Christian Council of Ghana, *The Church's Political Role in Nation Building*, 27.

³¹ National Catholic Secretariat, *Ghana Bishops Speak* 1st edition, xiii.

³² National Catholic Secretariat, *Ghana Bishops Speak*, xiii.

³³ National Catholic Secretariat, "Communique Issued by the Ghana Catholic Bishops' Conference at the end of their Annual Conference in Takoradi: July 10-12, 1984," in *Ghana Bishops Speak*, 83.

³⁴ National Catholic Secretariat, "Communique Issued by the Ghana Catholic Bishops' Conference at the end of its Annual Meeting held in Tamale: July 7-11, 1987," *Ghana Bishops Speak*, 118, 120.

³⁵ National Catholic Secretariat, "Joint Pastoral letter of the Catholic Hierarchy of Ghana on the Referendum on Union Government 1978," in *Ghana Bishops Speaks*, 27.

³⁶ National Catholic Secretariat, "Joint Pastoral letter of the Catholic Hierarchy of Ghana on 'Moral Conversion and National Reconstruction' on the Occasion of Easter 1982" in *Ghana Bishops Speaks*, 63.

³⁷ Max Assimeng, *Religion and Social Change in West Africa* (Ghana: University Press, 1989), 242.

³⁸ Paul Gifford "Christianity and Politics in Doe's Liberia," in *Christian Reflection in Africa: Review and Engagement*, Paul Bowers ed., (Carlisle: Langham Global Library, 2018), 230.

³⁹ C.H. Kim, *Theology in the Public Sphere: Public Theology as a catalyst for Open Debate* London: SCM Press, 2011, ix.

⁴⁰ Tanya van Wyk, "Political Theology as critical theology," *HTS Theological Studies* 71, no. 3 (2015): 1. doi:10.4102/hts.v71i3.3026

⁴¹ Elisabeth Schussler Fiorenza, "Critical Feminist Theology of Liberation: A Decolonising Political Theology," in *Political theology: Contemporary challenges and future directions*, 23-24.

⁴² Chris Baker and Hannah Skinner, *Faith in Action: The dynamic connection between spiritual and religious capital*, accessed April 27, 2022, <https://williamtemplefoundation.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/Faith-In-Action-William-Temple-Foundation-2014.pdf>

gives way to exploitation...⁴³ The church in Ghana, led by the CCG and the GCBC, being aware of this has refused to be intimidated by oppressive regimes⁴⁴, and have courageously defended human rights and justice sometimes even at the risk of their lives.⁴⁵

In carrying out its moral and prophetic roles, the church has fought against policies, actions and bills they considered inimical and oppressive. In a Pastoral letter in 1982, the GCBC stated it has over the years “thought it their duty to fulfil their prophetic mission, by drawing the attention of successive governments to injustices and acts of oppression of all sorts.⁴⁶ The Conference is of the view that “when laws are inimical to the progress of the country and wellbeing of its citizens, Christians, as electors, have the right to register their opposition against them.”⁴⁷ Also, the CCG posits that “focus of political engagement must be in active resistance to governmental oppression and negative policies.”⁴⁸ Some of the key policies include the Preventive Detention Act (PDA) by Nkrumah, Union Government under General Acheampong, and Religious Bodies Registration Act (PNDCL 221) under Rawlings. The Preventive Detention Act (PDA) was announced in December 1957.⁴⁹ Asante describes the Act as a “dreaded bill” which allowed the government to keep citizens in detention without trial.⁵⁰ The church admits the success and good impact of Nkrumah but also points out the abuses under his regime most of which were associated with the PDA. “For all its achievements, which are undeniable, the First Republic, especially towards the end, was characterised by the regrettable denial of human rights and general arbitrariness in the conduct of the national affairs.”⁵¹ Also, at several times such as in 1977⁵² and March 1978⁵³ through either communique, memorandum, or pastoral letters, the church expressed their opposition to the Union Government. The church also resisted the Religious Bodies Registration Law (PNDCL 221) and refused to register its members.⁵⁴

Besides its prophetic and moral role, the church advances that it has a pastoral duty towards its members to enlighten them about the implications of politics for the church and the society, and the political responsibilities and privileges of Christians as citizens of the country. The GCBC states that their congregants are entrusted to them by God and it is their pastoral duty to provide instruction and direction to them.⁵⁵ Also, the CCG states “The church has a mandate to educate her members to be responsible citizens.”⁵⁶ In 1968, as the country was preparing for civilian rule after the overthrow of Nkrumah, the church called the attention of all Christians to the fact that “they are both Christians and citizens of Ghana... as citizens, they have not only privileges but also responsibilities.”⁵⁷ The church also reminded Christians of the implications of politics for their mission; “Christians derive a great

⁴³ Peter K. Sarpong, *Aspects of Ghanaian Ethos: A compendium of articles, lectures and talks on various socio-cultural and religious topics* (Tema: Digibooks Ghana Ltd., 2019), 158.

⁴⁴ Assimeng, *Religion and Social Change in West Africa*, 242.

⁴⁵ Pobee, *Religion and Politics in Ghana*, 62.

⁴⁶ National Catholic Secretariat, “Joint Pastoral letter of the Catholic Hierarchy of Ghana on ‘Moral Conversion and National Reconstruction’ on the Occasion of Easter Celebration 1982,” in *Ghana Bishops Speak*, 62.

⁴⁷ National Catholic Secretariat, “Message from the Catholic Hierarchy of Ghana to all Christians, on Civic Responsibilities - 1968,” in *Ghana Bishops Speaks*, 2.

⁴⁸ Christian Council of Ghana, *The Church’s Political Role in Nation Building*, 26.

⁴⁹ Pobee, *Religion and Politics in Ghana*, 59.

⁵⁰ Asante, “The Participation of the Church in Politics,” 77.

⁵¹ National Catholic Secretariat, “Statement on the State of the Nation by the Catholic Bishops’ Conference of Ghana: November 11, 1982,” in *Ghana Bishops Speak* 1st edition, 76.

⁵² National Catholic Secretariat, “Memorandum on the Proposed Union Government Submitted by the Catholic Bishops’ Conference of Ghana, 1977,” in *Ghana Bishops Speak*, 15-16.

⁵³ National Catholic Secretariat, “National Catholic Secretariat, “Heads of Member-Churches of the Christian Council of Ghana and the National Catholic Secretariat meet with the Head of State and Chairman of the Supreme Military Council -1978,” in *Ghana Bishops Speaks*, 20.

⁵⁴ National Catholic Secretariat, “Message of the Christian Council Ghana and the Catholic Bishops’ Conference to their Faithful and Congregations: November, 1989,” in *Ghana Bishops Speak*, 154-155.

⁵⁵ National Catholic Secretariat, *Ghana Bishops Speaks*, xiii.

⁵⁶ Christian Council of Ghana, *The Church’s Political Role in Nation Building*, 1.

⁵⁷ National Catholic Secretariat, “Message from the Catholic Hierarchy of Ghana to all Christians...,” 1.

help or encounter obstacles from the civil government under which they live in their mission work on earth.” Hence they should be interested in the kind of government the country would have.⁵⁸ Similar calls were made in the 1979 elections which ushered Ghana into the Third Republic;⁵⁹ in the 1992 election dawning the Fourth Republic,⁶⁰ and in almost all subsequent elections. According to CCG “the alternative to Christian political involvement is unthinkable...”⁶¹ The need for Christians to be interested in and participate in politics is supported by Asante who posits that Christians by virtue of being in the world are already part of the political system.⁶² Johnson holds a similar position and adds that Christians are not only part of the political system but they also are influenced by it.⁶³ Moreover, Pippert argues that Christians can neither be isolated nor insulated from the world including the political realm.⁶⁴ In addition to all the above justification and motivations, the church sees itself as a stakeholder and a partner in the affairs of the country and has sought to play that role through collaboration.

Collaboration and Commendation

The church’s political engagement is also premised on seeing itself as a social partner with the government and other actors, in the ordering of the country and management of its affairs. In 1995, the church issued a Communique and stated “We pray the Government to listen to us not as voices raised against them but as friends and co-partners in progress”⁶⁵ and seeks how to improve the country’s socioeconomic and political fortunes.⁶⁶ In keeping faith with its social responsibility, the church outlines its contribution to the socioeconomic development of the country.⁶⁷ The church has challenged itself with the need to “always seek to co-operate with the ruling government in the attempt to improve the quality of life of the people.”⁶⁸ It emphasised the importance of collaboration and cooperation in July 1982⁶⁹ and July 1994.⁷⁰ The church repeated this in a Communique issued in July 1986⁷¹ and July 2000.⁷² In 2002, GCBC pledged its support to the Government. The Bishops stated, “...in partnership with government, the Church will assist in the provision of social services and community-based projects such as health services, educational facilities, agriculture, small-scale industries in rural areas, potable water, credit unions, insurance schemes, etc.”⁷³

Further, in expressing its belief in the principle of collaboration, and also as an approach to holding governments accountable, and fighting injustices and abuses, the church has collaborated with other religious groups and Civil Society Organisations (CSOs). In a Pastoral Letter in 1978, the GCBC

⁵⁸ National Catholic Secretariat, “Message from the Catholic Hierarchy of Ghana to all Christians...,” 1.

⁵⁹ National Catholic Secretariat, “Message from the Catholic Hierarchy of Ghana to all Christians...,” 33.

⁶⁰ National Catholic Secretariat, “A Pastoral letter from the Christian Council of Ghana and the Ghana Catholic Bishops’ Conference – 1992,” in *Ghana Bishops Speak*, 228.

⁶¹ Christian Council of Ghana, *The Church’s Political Role in Nation Building*, 24.

⁶² Asante, *Theology and Society in Context*, 68.

⁶³ Kristen D. Johnson, “Christianity Public or Private?” 128.

⁶⁴ Rebecca Manley Pippert, *Out of the Saltshaker and into the World* (Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 1999), 125-126.

⁶⁵ National Catholic Secretariat, “Communique Issued by the Ghana Catholic Bishops’ Conference at the End of its Plenary Assembly Held in Sunyani: July 7-14, 1995,” in *Ghana Bishops Speak*, 260.

⁶⁶ National Catholic Secretariat, “Communique Issued by the Ghana Catholic Bishops...,” 254.

⁶⁷ National Catholic Secretariat, “Joint Pastoral letter of the Catholic Hierarchy of Ghana on ...,” 63.

⁶⁸ National Catholic Secretariat, “The Catholic Church and Ghana’s Search for a New Democratic System – February 1991,” in *Ghana Bishops Speak* 1st edition, 198.

⁶⁹ National Catholic Secretariat, “Ghana Catholic Bishops’ Conference Plenary Assembly in Wa: July 5 – 10, 1982,” in *Ghana Bishops Speak*, 71.

⁷⁰ National Catholic Secretariat, “Communique Issued by the Catholic Bishops of Ghana at the End of their Annual Meeting in Accra: July 7 – 14, 1994,” in *Ghana Bishops Speak* 1st edition, 246.

⁷¹ National Catholic Secretariat, “Communique Issued by the Catholic Bishops’ Conference of Ghana at the end of their Annual Conference in Sunyani: June 30 – July 5, 1986,” in *Ghana Bishops Speak*, 114.

⁷² National Catholic Secretariat, “Communique Issued by the Catholic Bishops’ Conference of Ghana at the end of their Annual Plenary Assembly held in Cape Coast from 10th to 15th July 2000,” in *Ghana Bishops Speak* 2nd edition, 74.

⁷³ National Catholic Secretariat, “A Communique Issued by the Ghana Catholic Bishops’...,” 86.

stated “Committed as we are to work for peace through justice in fraternal collaboration with other churches, agencies, and persons dedicated to this cause, we would like to discuss some aspects of the forthcoming Referendum in the light of the above principles...”⁷⁴ This was repeated and emphasised in February 1991;⁷⁵ October 1989⁷⁶ and July 2000.⁷⁷ Also, Anquandah argues that all relevant data attest to the fact that “the Christian Council’s attitude and policy have been one of peaceful, collaboration and co-operative engagement.”⁷⁸ Clowney underscores the need for the church to partner with other groups and states that “political action on the part of Christians must always be undertaken in concert with others who seek the same immediate objectives.”⁷⁹ In the view of Dovlo, this needs dialogue “a process to understand each other’s beliefs, to overcome prejudice and come to consensus about certain issues common to us.”⁸⁰

In the spirit of collaboration, the church has also praised and commended successive governments where they were due. In July 1984, the church appreciated a significant calm in the country since the advent of the 31st December 1981 revolution. The church attributed that to “the decrease in the number of cases of brutality and harassment of innocent citizens...”⁸¹ It further commended the PNDC Government for implementing some of its suggestions⁸² and for the introduction of the Economic Recovery Programme (ERP).⁸³ Also, in a Communique issued in July 1995, the church commended the Government for withdrawing the Value Added Tax (VAT).⁸⁴ The NPP Government was commended by the church in July 2001 for stability and freedom⁸⁵ and in November 2003 for its efforts that boosted private sector growth.⁸⁶ This came against the backdrop of economic challenges in 2002 which the church called the Governments attention to.⁸⁷ The church’s collaboration and commendation have been vital in its political engagements. This strength and the church’s success have been enhanced by its non-partisanship.

Non-partisan Approach

The church contends that its political engagement has been non-partisan. In 1968, the church stated “...civil government by political parties is the form of our times, and the Church does not prescribe a particular political party for her members. Christians are free to join any political party of their own

⁷⁴ National Catholic Secretariat, “Joint Pastoral letter of the Catholic Hierarchy of Ghana on the Referendum on Union Government 1978,” in *Ghana Bishops Speaks*, 27.

⁷⁵ National Catholic Secretariat, “The Catholic Church and Ghana’s Search for a New Democratic System...,” 198.

⁷⁶ National Catholic Secretariat, “Memorandum Submitted by the Christian Council of Ghana and the Catholic Bishops’ Conference to the PNDC Government through Hon. Mr. Justice D.F. Annan, PNDC Member,” in *Ghana Bishops Speak* 1st edition, 149.

⁷⁷ National Catholic Secretariat, “A Communique Issued by the Ghana Catholic Bishops’...,” 73-74.

⁷⁸ James Anquandah, *Agenda Extraordinaire: 80 Years of the Christian Council of Ghana, 1929 – 2009*. (Accra: Asempa Publishers, 2009), 68.

⁷⁹ Edmund P. Clowney, *Contours of Christian Theology* (Illinois: Intervarsity Press, 1995.), 193.

⁸⁰ Dovlo, “The Role of Religious Bodies in Ghana’s Political Development Process,” 6.

⁸¹ National Catholic Secretariat, “A Communique Issued by the Ghana Catholic Bishops’...,” 84.

⁸² National Catholic Secretariat, “A Communique Issued by the Ghana Catholic Bishops’...,” 85.

⁸³ National Catholic Secretariat, “A Communique Issued by the Ghana Catholic Bishops’ Conference at the End of their Annual Conference at Navrongo: July 4 -9, 1988,” in *Ghana Bishops Speak*, 129.

⁸⁴ National Catholic Secretariat, “A Communique Issued by the Ghana Catholic Bishops’ Conference at the End of its Plenary Assembly held in Sunyani: July 7 -14, 1995,” in *Ghana Bishops Speak*, 256.

⁸⁵ National Catholic Secretariat, “A Communique Issued by the Ghana Catholic Bishops’ Conference at their Annual Plenary Assembly held in Wa, Upper West Region, from 5th to 13th July, 2001,” in *Ghana Bishops Speak* 2nd edition, 77.

⁸⁶ National Catholic Secretariat, “Ghana Catholic Bishops’ Conference Plenary Assembly, November 9-17, 2003,” in *Ghana Bishops Speaks* 2nd edition, 92.

⁸⁷ National Catholic Secretariat, “A Communique Issued by the Ghana Catholic Bishops’ Conference at their Plenary Assembly Held at Denu in the Keta-Akatsi Diocese from 3rd – 12th July, 2002,” in *Catholic Bishops Speak* 2nd edition, 84-85.

choice...⁸⁸ The CCG asserts “the Bible does not prescribe which political party we should belong to or which leader to follow but it does provide some guidelines...”⁸⁹ The church reiterated this in 1991 “...we reaffirm our belief that Church as an institution cannot and should not indulge in partisan politics.”⁹⁰ It explains that a partisan approach in its political engagements “would compromise her objectivity and impartiality, and make it difficult for her to speak out prophetically in denunciation of injustices that may be perpetrated by the regime with which she is identified.”⁹¹ It emphasised this in September 1992 “the Church, the Body of Christ, comprising people of different political persuasions, must always remain non-partisan but continue to call for justice, love and the maintenance of law and order, and guarantee liberties...”⁹² The need for a non-partisan approach by the church is supported by political theologians such as Metz, Lefort and Smolin. Metz is of the view that the church must not become purely a political religion and therefore has to eschew identifying herself with any particular political ideology.⁹³ Lefort opines that a political alliance might compromise the church’s larger mission and commitment to the common good.⁹⁴ This is buttressed by Smolin who holds that the church’s mission “should be expressed primarily through non-political associations and institutions...”⁹⁵ Dovlo supports this call and says “Since leadership is the assumed face of religious bodies, it must maintain a level of non-partisan so as to have the moral leverage to mediate, guide and guard the democratic process.”⁹⁶ This to a large extent, has been the stance and approach of the church in its political engagements in Ghana.

The literature on the church’s political engagement in Ghana shows that the church has always justified and defended its political engagement. It has a moral, prophetic, pastoral, and social role underpinned by its love for the country. It has resisted several government policies and condemned certain actions which it finds oppressive and inimical to the socioeconomic and political fortunes of the country. The church’s attitude and approach have been collaborative and non-partisan. It was of interest to this paper to further explore and examine these claims.

METHODOLOGY

This study adopted a qualitative research method. To explore the study objective, official documents and other studies, especially on the works of the CCG and GCBC were examined. It was complemented by data from interviews with some selected clergy and Christian politicians. Eight (8) members of the clergy and twenty-seven politicians (27) from the mainline, and the Pentecostal-Charismatic churches, were interviewed. They were selected using both purposive and snow-balling sampling techniques. To ensure confidentiality, all informants were codified. Members of the Clergy were classified as *Key Informants* (KI) and their codes were KI1 to KI8. The Christian politicians were classified as *Research Participants politicians* (RPp) and assigned codes from RPp1 to RPp27. Where necessary, only KI and RPp are used for a particular clergy and Christian politician respectively. Also the term ‘office’ was used for participants’ position or role and ‘officer’ for the person.

⁸⁸ National Catholic Secretariat, “Message from the Catholic Hierarchy of Ghana to all Christians, on Civic Responsibility – 1968,” in *Ghana Bishops Speak*, 1.

⁸⁹ Christian Council of Ghana, *The Church’s Political Role in Nation Building* Christian Home Series vol. 1, 35.

⁹⁰ National Catholic Secretariat, “The Catholic Church and Ghana’s Search for a New Democratic System – February 1991,” in *Ghana Bishops Speak* 1st edition, 198.

⁹¹ National Catholic Secretariat, “The Catholic Church and Ghana’s Search for a New Democratic System – February 1991,” in *Ghana Bishops Speak*, 198.

⁹² National Catholic Secretariat, “A Pastoral Letter from the Christian Council of Ghana and the Ghana Catholic Bishops’ Conference – 1992.” In *Ghana Bishops Speak*, 228.

⁹³ Johann B. Metz, *Faith in History and Society: toward a practical fundamental theology*, trans. David Smith (New York, The Seabury Press, 1980), 89.

⁹⁴ Claude Lefort, “Permanence of the Theologico-Political?” in *Political Theologies: Public Religions in a Post-Secular World* ed, Hent De Vreis and Lawrence E. Sullivan (New York: Fordham University Press, 2006), 170.

⁹⁵ David N. Smolin, “Church, State, and International Human Rights: A Theological Appraisal,” *Notre Dame Law Review* 73, no. 30 (2014):1531, accessed February 4, 2020, <http://scholarship.law.nd.edu/ndlr/vol73/iss5/30>

⁹⁶ Dovlo “The Role of Religious Bodies in Ghana’s Political Development Process,” 10.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The discourse of the paper is centred on three key findings from both the primary and secondary sources of data. These are the bases the church gives for its political engagements, the various means it has adopted, and its non-partisan claims amidst accusations of being partisan.

Bases for the church's political engagements

There are four main reasons the church in Ghana has offered for its political engagement. Firstly, the church is motivated by love and concern for the welfare of the nation.⁹⁷ It claims that it has resolved to help shape government policies for the common good.⁹⁸ Having the interest of the masses shows that the church is making its message and existence to be relevant to the wider community which is in consonance with the position of Moltmann.⁹⁹ Interest in the common good rather than the church being inward looking is critical for its public credibility, acceptance, and influence.¹⁰⁰ Secondly, the church sees itself as a moral conscience and a prophetic voice of the society especially to the voiceless. This is underpinned by its interests in the masses especially the poor and the oppressed.¹⁰¹ It is a critical role that the church claims it cannot shirk¹⁰², and therefore has been consistent to be a voice.¹⁰³ This is sometimes at risk of attacks and insults.¹⁰⁴ This critical role of the church is supported and advanced by Sarpong¹⁰⁵, Wyk¹⁰⁶, and Fiorenza.¹⁰⁷ Thirdly, the church argues that it has a pastoral duty toward its congregants to educate them on the consequences of politics, their responsibilities, and their privileges.¹⁰⁸ It was also significant that the church challenges its members to the reality that governments and government policies can either hinder or advance the church's mission hence they have to be interested and be politically savvy.¹⁰⁹ This is supported by Asante,¹¹⁰ Johnson¹¹¹ and Pippert.¹¹² Here the church's interest is at stake though the national interest is the overarching goal. In doing this, the church does not necessarily dictate to the members which particular political party or candidate they should vote for.¹¹³ Rather they encourage and challenge them to be guided by their consciences, their Christian faith, and the interest of the nation.¹¹⁴ This is consistent with their non-partisan stance in their political engagements. Last but not least, the church sees itself as a partner in the management of the affairs of the country. It has demonstrated this by actually contributing to areas

⁹⁷ Christian Council of Ghana, *The Church's Political Role in Nation Building*, 1.

⁹⁸ National Catholic Secretariat, *Ghana Bishops Speak: A collection of Communiques, Memoranda and Pastoral Letters of the Ghana Catholic Bishops' Conference* 2nd edition (Accra: National Catholic Secretariat, 2006), xvii.

⁹⁹ Moltmann, "Political Theology in Ecumenical Contexts," 4.

¹⁰⁰ Grzymala-Busse "Weapons of the Meek: How Churches Influence Public Policy" 3.

¹⁰¹ Christian Council of Ghana, *The Church's Political Role in Nation Building*, 27.

¹⁰² National Catholic Secretariat, "Joint Pastoral letter of the Catholic Hierarchy of Ghana on the Referendum on Union Government 1978," in *Ghana Bishops Speaks*, 27.

¹⁰³ National Catholic Secretariat, "Communique Issued by the Ghana Catholic Bishops' Conference at the end of their Annual Conference in Takoradi: July 10-12, 1984," in *Ghana Bishops Speak*, 83.

¹⁰⁴ Pobee, *Religion and Politics in Ghana*, 62.

¹⁰⁵ Sarpong, *Aspects of Ghanaian Ethos*, 158.

¹⁰⁶ van Wyk, "Political Theology as critical theology," 1.

¹⁰⁷ Fiorenza, "Critical Feminist Theology of Liberation: A Decolonising Political Theology," 23-24.

¹⁰⁸ National Catholic Secretariat, *Ghana Bishops Speaks*, xiii.

¹⁰⁹ National Catholic Secretariat, "Message from the Catholic Hierarchy of Ghana to all Christians, on Civic Responsibilities – 1968," in *Ghana Catholic Bishops Speak*, 1.

¹¹⁰ Asante, *Theology and Society in Context*, 68.

¹¹¹ Johnson, "Christianity Public or Private?" 128.

¹¹² Pippert, *Out of the Saltshaker and into the World*, 125-126.

¹¹³ National Catholic Secretariat, "Message from the Catholic Hierarchy of Ghana to all Christians, on Civic Responsibility – 1968," in *Ghana Bishops Speak*, 1.

¹¹⁴ National Catholic Secretariat, "Joint Pastoral letter from the Catholic Bishops of Ghana to the Clergy, Religious, the Faithful and all Men of Goodwill in Ghana on the Political Activities and Elections Leading to Constitutional and Civilian Rule of the Third Republic in Mid-Year 1979," in *Ghana Bishops Speak*, 41.

such as healthcare and education in Ghana, collaborating with many successive governments, supporting 'good' policies, and commending them where it is due. In carrying out its political engagement, the church has adopted various means it finds appropriate and effective under different regimes and circumstances.

The Means of Engagement

The study found out that, in the dictatorial and military regimes, the church's modus operandi was mainly the issuing of memoranda, pastoral letters, and public pronouncements. Others included writings, speeches, and sermons of church leaders. The pastoral letters and sermons were mainly for member churches and individual Christians on the position of the CCG and GCBC on key socio-political issues such as human rights abuse and economic crisis. In its engagement with government policies, actions, political and economic crises, the church issued several Pastoral letters to communicate with its members. The reasons for the letters are always stated. GCBC contends that their congregants are entrusted to them by God and it is their pastoral duty to provide instruction and direction to them. And the Conference has played this role sometimes with pastoral letters and communiques.¹¹⁵ The memoranda, communique, and public pronouncements, on the other hand, are usually issued jointly or separately by the CCG and the GCBC and are primarily addressed to the political actors. The GCBC states "The Bishops have also, through these, addressed secular issues of national concern."¹¹⁶ These were the means predominantly used by the church under these regimes. Gyampo attests to this and states that during the dictatorship and military rule, the role of the CCG "was confined to issuing of press statements and memoranda." He explains that this was largely because "the political space was not too open to tolerating other proactive interventions."¹¹⁷

These, notwithstanding, there were few instances where the church had sit-down meetings with politicians and the government. Notable among these is the CCG's meeting with the Attorney General in January 1958 and President Nkrumah in March of the same year on the PDA.¹¹⁸ It had a sit-down meeting with them the Supreme Military Council Government on the Union Government and all the issues surrounding it¹¹⁹ and also with Flt. Lt. J.J Rawlings and a few other members of the PNDC in April 1982, and another with the government's delegation on 16th November, 1984.¹²⁰ It is important to submit that, whether pastoral letters, memoranda or communiques, the church had to use the most effective mass media but there were limitations with this under military regimes and dictatorship.

The media through which the church's message especially the memoranda was channelled prior to the Fourth Republic, were its own newsletters, and the public mass media (print). The church understands the importance of the media and has always called for it to be free and fair. In July 1978, the church stated "It is the imprescriptible right of citizens to be correctly and accurately informed of public events." Therefore, they called on the media to be just and fair"¹²¹ Also, for the most part of the 1980s "...private ownership of radio and television stations was not allowed... only government-controlled media establishments were in operation."¹²² The church's access to the media was restricted due to Government control including the church's own publications. For example, on 13th December

¹¹⁵ National Catholic Secretariat, *Ghana Bishops Speak*, xiii.

¹¹⁶ National Catholic Secretariat, *Ghana Bishops Speak*, xiii.

¹¹⁷ Gyampo, "The Church and Ghana's Drive Towards Democratic Consolidation and Maturity," 5.

¹¹⁸ Pobee, *Religion and Politics in Ghana*, 49.

¹¹⁹ National Catholic Secretariat, "Heads of Member-Churches of the Christian Council of Ghana and the National Catholic Secretariat meet with the Head of State and Chairman of the Supreme Military Council -1978," in *Ghana Bishops Speak*, 20.

¹²⁰ National Catholic Secretariat, "Communique of the Ghana Bishops' Conference at the end of Plenary Assembly, July 1-6, 1985," in *Ghana Bishops Speaks*, 114 -115.

¹²¹ National Catholic Secretariat, "Joint Pastoral letter of the Catholic Hierarchy of Ghana on the Referendum on Union Government 1978," in *Ghana Bishops Speaks*, 28.

¹²² Kwasi Ansu-Kyeremeh, "Culture of Silence: Change Without Continuity in an African Communication Framework," *Legon Journal of the Humanities* 12, (1999-2001): 33.

1985, the PNDC government revoked the registration of the Catholic national weekly paper, *The Standard*.¹²³ The GCBC was convinced the action was taken to silence the church and to prevent Ghanaians from knowing the truth of the state of affairs of the country.¹²⁴ The GCBC assertion is supported by Gifford who says “The Catholic Standard was banned for its human rights stance during the early years of the Rawlings era.”¹²⁵ The GCBC called on the Government several times to reinstate the *Standard* but to no avail. In 1987, the leadership stated, “We caution against the tragic introduction into our normally open society of the ‘culture of silence’.”¹²⁶

Moreover, in 1990, the church asserted that there was a planned attempt by the Government to reduce or eliminate religious broadcasts from the public sphere.¹²⁷ The PNDC Government introduced the Newspaper Licensing Law (PNDC 211) which the GCBC¹²⁸ and individuals such as Osei-Bonsu¹²⁹ advocated for it to be repealed. In 1995, the church and religious bodies were still given limited media access; “we would like to make it clear that we are not happy about the proposed exclusion of religious bodies from the allocation of frequencies for broadcasting purposes...”¹³⁰ The discrimination against religious bodies and the biased nature of the media in their reportage echoes the GCBC sentiment that, the Government wanted only ‘what it wants to hear’ instead of ‘what it should hear.’¹³¹ Ansu-Kyeremeh buttresses this when he asserts that “there were conformity, praise-singing and self-censorship among the government-controlled media.”¹³² This environment was definitely an impediment to the church in its political engagement at the time.

However, the church varied its methods in the Fourth Republic by adopting new strategies. This includes political education programmes, training of election observers, research-based advocacy, Presidential Forums, and Signature campaigns among others. According to Gyampo, this change in approach started in the late 1980s as the country was preparing for the 1992 election. He asserts “The CCG undertook an initiative that radically departs from the usual petitions and writing of letters to officialdom.” He explained that the CCG organised political education programmes to sensitize Ghanaians about their role in the pursuit and establishment of constitutional democracy.¹³³ Anquandah supports this in his assertion that the year 1988 is a milestone in the CCG’s socio-political engagement. This is because the “Council took a bold initiative to organise a political education programme on a platform other than that of the Government of the PNDC.”¹³⁴

In 1991, a series of seminars were held by the CCG to call on Christians to be involved and make their voices heard in the political discussions which were ongoing.¹³⁵ In 1997, the GCBC organised Conflict Resolution Seminars with participants from CCG, the Muslim Community and the

¹²³ National Catholic Secretariat, “Communique issued by the Catholic Bishops of Ghana at the end of their Annual Conference in Sunyani: June 30 – July 5, 1986,” 116.

¹²⁴ National Catholic Secretariat, “Communique issued by the Catholic Bishops at the end of their Annual Conference in Sunyani: June 30 – July 5, 1986,” in *Ghana Bishops Speak* 1st edition, 116-117.

¹²⁵ Gifford, *Ghana’s New Christianity*, 23.

¹²⁶ National Catholic Secretariat, “Communique Issued by the Catholic Bishops’ Conference of Ghana at the end of their Annual Conference in Tamale: July 7 -11, 1987,” in *Ghana Bishops Speak*, 119.

¹²⁷ National Catholic Secretariat, “Communique Issued by the Catholic Bishops’ Conference of Ghana at the end of their Annual Conference held in Cape Coast: July 2 -6, 1990,” in *Ghana Bishops Speak*, 168.

¹²⁸ National Catholic Secretariat, “Communique Issued by the Catholic Bishops’ Conference of Ghana at the end of their Annual Conference held in Cape Coast: July 2 -6, 1990,” in *Ghana Bishops Speak* 1st edition, 169.

¹²⁹ Osei Bonsu, “Steps Towards a Peaceful Transition to Constitutional Rule,” in *The Nation, the Church and Democracy: Christian Council of Ghana Report on 1991 Mid-Year Seminar* (Accra: Christian Council of Ghana, 1992), 46.

¹³⁰ National Catholic Secretariat, “Communique Issued by the Catholic Bishops’ Conference of Ghana at the end of their Annual Conference in Sunyani: July 7-14, 1995,” in *Ghana Bishops Speak*, 260.

¹³¹ National Catholic Secretariat, “Communique issued by the Catholic Bishops’, in *Ghana Bishops Speak*, 116.

¹³² Ansu-Kyeremeh, “Culture of Silence,” 33.

¹³³ Gyampo, “The Church and Ghana’s Drive Towards Democratic Consolidation and Maturity,” 5.

¹³⁴ Anquandah, *Agenda Extraordinaire*, 121-122

¹³⁵ Christian Council of Ghana, *The Nation, the Church and Democracy*, 55.

laity of the Catholic church.¹³⁶ This and similar programmes undertaken by the CCG, GCBC, and other partners in the words of Anquandah “subsequently became a model for pursuant of elections of 2000, 2004 and 2008.”¹³⁷ The CCG introduced other innovations in 2008 such as the Signature campaign, Electronic Media Campaign for Peace, Mobile phone Text Messaging, Presidential Forum, and National Week of Prayer and Fasting. In preparation for the 2016 elections, the CCG in collaboration with the Office of the National Chief Imam organised interfaith dialogue and youth sensitisation programmes.¹³⁸ Presently, many churches have established their own media houses to aid in the propagation of their messages including their moral and prophetic role in the political sphere and the society in general.

The Church’s Non-Partisan Claim

Field data through interviews was collected to further explore the non-partisan claims of the church in its political engagement. All the eight (8) clergy interviewed expressed that the church has to be non-partisan in order not to divide its flock, and also play its ‘fatherly’ and mediatory role in Ghana’s politics. KI7, however, did not discount the partisanship disposition of some churches and some members of the clergy. He stated, “There are indications and suspicion that some churches are more inclined to support NDC and others NPP.”¹³⁹ He expressed this as one of his fears in the church’s political engagement.¹⁴⁰ Moreover, six (6) out of the twenty-seven (27) Christian politicians interviewed shared that they had seen and experienced political biases in their interactions and engagements with their churches, especially the leaders. Three (3) of them said they did not receive support and were discriminated against by their church leadership because of their political affiliation. RPP12 said, “There are strong partisan politics by church leaders... current priest was closer to my predecessor who was an NPP and even used his Facebook to make ‘good’ comments about her... the Priest and some elders *openly* supported the opposition party when I was the Chief Executive.”¹⁴¹ However, it is worthy of note that, two (2) of the politicians stated that, they had a good relationship with their leaders because of their specific political affiliations. RPP25 had this to say, “Most church members including the Pastors are pro-NPP hence they support me.”¹⁴²

Moreover, RPP27 made a significant observation; he said “church relationship with politicians depend on the Region and town one finds him or herself... when you are in the stronghold of your party, people including the church view you differently.”¹⁴³ It appears that the ‘party stronghold’ is a factor of political biases, and even made those in the ‘minority party’ too sometimes ‘hide’ their political identity. RPP10, a member of the NPP in Kumasi (the party’s stronghold), said “The NDC members in my local church usually do not want to be known.”¹⁴⁴ There are studies to show that the political posture of the clergy can be influenced by the political preference of the majority of their congregants.¹⁴⁵ It is not only the ‘stronghold’ factor but also the church leader’s own political biases that may influence that relationship. This is because, two of the politicians, RPP21¹⁴⁶ and RPP12¹⁴⁷,

¹³⁶ National Catholic Secretariat, “Communique of the Ghana Catholic Bishops’ Conference Plenary Assembly in Ho: July 1-11, 1997,” in *Ghana Bishops Speak* 1st edition, 115.

¹³⁷ Anquandah, *Agenda Extraordinaire*, 127.

¹³⁸ Christian Council of Ghana, *Christian Council of Ghana and Office of the National Imam: Interfaith Youth Sensitisation Programme on Election 2016*. (Accra: Christian Council of Ghana, 2016)

¹³⁹ Interview with KI7 on 30th March, 2022.

¹⁴⁰ Interview with KI7.

¹⁴¹ Interview with RPP12 on 16th May, 2022.

¹⁴² Interview with RPP25 on 14th March, 2022.

¹⁴³ Interview with RPP27 on 8th February, 2022.

¹⁴⁴ Interview with RPP10 on 15th June, 2022.

¹⁴⁵ Michael Bender "Preachers, Politics and the Pulpit: The Influence of Church Structure on How Clergy Approach Political Topics and How Congregations Receive Their Messages," *Honors Theses* 79 (2016): 6, 23, accessed June 10, 2022. https://ecommons.udayton.edu/uhp_theses/79

¹⁴⁶ Interview with RPP21 on 24th May, 2022.

¹⁴⁷ Interview with RPP12

had two different sets of church leaders in their respective local churches. Their experiences were that one set of leaders was supportive but the other was not because of their political party. Relatively, the number of politicians, six (6) out of twenty-seven (27), representing 22 percent, is not a majority to conclude that the political biases among the church leaders were pronounced. But it is significant because it has huge implications for the church's engagements and its non-partisan claims. It could also give credence to some of the accusations of political biases and inconsistencies against the church at the national level. All the politicians who complained about 'discrimination' because of their political party were members of the NDC. This is also significant because, it seems that most of the complaints, criticisms, and sometimes attacks against the church at the national level, have come from the NDC party. This perception has historical roots as asserted by Baffour of the CCG¹⁴⁸, Tettey¹⁴⁹, and Gifford¹⁵⁰ among others.

The findings from the field show that some individual local church leaders and even some congregations may be politically biased. However, collectively, the church especially through the CCG, GCBC, and other ecumenical bodies, has been influenced by both the letter and spirit of non-partisanship to a large extent. The fact that it has not shirked its responsibility but has continued to be the moral conscience and voice of the voiceless attests to this. It has played its role irrespective of the regime or political party in power. Also, the spirit and practice of commendation and collaboration are consistent with the church's claim that it has the duty to correct, speak against, and praise governments and society.¹⁵¹ These are also indications of its commitment to Ghana and the welfare of the citizens and not partisan interest.¹⁵² It further shows that the church is not only known for resisting certain government policies but also for supporting policies it finds helpful for the country. All these support the church's non-partisan claims. The non-partisan approach has contributed to the respect, influence, and impact of the church in Ghana's political sphere. Warner stressed the importance of the church's non-alliance to its political and public credibility.¹⁵³ This is supported by Sarpong who is of the view that the church's credibility will be compromised should it support one particular political party.¹⁵⁴ Also, Dumler-Winckler states that being non-partisan gives the church boldness and the moral authority to play its critical role by opposing corrupt and oppressive political systems and leaders.¹⁵⁵ The CCG and the GCBC and the Ghanaian church as a whole, have largely trod on the path of non-partisan politics. Anquandah asserts that, in all its efforts to achieve its vision, the CCG is "guided by the Holy Bible and in all matters of national interest, remained non-partisan."¹⁵⁶ This according to Gyampo has been instrumental in the CCG's political and public influence. He asserts "Its leaders have not been interested in pursuing frontal and active partisan politics... they have refused to be co-opted by incumbent governments." He adds that this has given the leadership "the leverage in playing their role also as referees in Ghana's drive towards democratic maturity."¹⁵⁷

All these notwithstanding, the church's political engagement is not without critique and obstacles. There are many times the church has been accused of being partisan and inconsistent. Some of these allegations have been levelled against the CCG and GCBC at one point or the other and against some specific church leaders. Tettey states "Perhaps, the critique that the Church must take most

¹⁴⁸ Interview with Rev. Abraham Opoku Baffour on 17th August, 2021.

¹⁴⁹ Tettey, "A Case for the Political Engagement of the Church in Ghana...", 43.

¹⁵⁰ Paul Gifford, *African Christianity: Its Public Role* (London: C. Hurst and Co. Publishers Ltd., 1998), 111.

¹⁵¹ National Catholic Secretariat, *Ghana Bishops Speak* 1st edition, xiii.

¹⁵² National Catholic Secretariat, "A Communique Issued by the Ghana Catholic Bishops' Conference at their Plenary Assembly held in Sunyani: July 7 – 14, 1995," in *Ghana Bishops Speak*, 254

¹⁵³ Carolyn M. Warner, *Confessions of an Interest Group: The Catholic Church and Political Parties in Europe* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), 5.

¹⁵⁴ Sarpong, *Aspects of Ghanaian Ethos*, 21.

¹⁵⁵ Emily Dumler-Winckler, "Protestant Political Theology and Pluralism: From a Politics of Refusal to Tending and Organizing for Common Goods," *Religions* 10, no. 522 (2019):10 doi:10.3390/rel10090522

¹⁵⁶ Anquandah, *Agenda Extraordinaire*, 7.

¹⁵⁷ Gyampo, "The Church and Ghana's Drive Towards Democratic Consolidation and Maturity", 6.

seriously is the accusation that it manifests partiality, partisanship, and inconsistency in its political engagements.”¹⁵⁸ This happened under Nkrumah concerning the implementation of the PDA,¹⁵⁹ and SMC under their Union Government Campaign¹⁶⁰ and during the Rawlings PNDC/NDC era.¹⁶¹ The church has also come under several attacks in its political engagements. These include the arrest of some clergy,¹⁶² beating up of clergy,¹⁶³ state officials in open confrontation with churches,¹⁶⁴ disruption of the church’s activities by state officials,¹⁶⁵ and verbal attacks and threats on the church.¹⁶⁶ Studies have shown that governments and political actors are ready to cooperate and even support religion but will do everything to limit religion’s political influence. Fox contends that by regulations and their actions, they “draw a line between supporting religion and allowing religious institutions and actors unbridled political influence.”¹⁶⁷ Similarly, Clowney asserts that faith is accepted as ‘harmless’ as long as it does not impinge on what is said or done outside.¹⁶⁸ The Ghanaian church is constantly in a dilemma because whether it speaks or remains silent on socio-political issues, it is criticized.¹⁶⁹

Despite these, the church has remained true to its convictions as a moral conscience and voice of the voiceless and carried out its political responsibilities in a manner that has yielded positive results including the consolidation of Ghana’s democracy. Gyampo sums up the contribution of the CCG and hence the church to Ghana’s democracy in these two statements: “The CCG played a role as part of civil society in Ghana towards the return of the country to a constitutional democratic rule in 1992 by serving as one of the pressure groups that advocated for a return to multi-party democracy.”¹⁷⁰ Through the various activities of voter education, constructive criticisms, election monitoring, observation, etc, the CCG has supported the maturation and consolidation process of Ghana’s democracy.¹⁷¹

RECOMMENDATIONS

A significant feature of the church’s engagement in Ghana’s politics is that many of the politicians were and still are Christians even under military regimes. However, the various primary and secondary data examined have very little about specific engagements between the church and the Christians in politics. The little study on the church’s engagement with Christian politicians is a research gap that is worth investigating. The paper, therefore, recommends and hopes other researchers will focus on this. The paper also recommends that studies are conducted on how individual churches (denominations) and other ecumenical bodies besides the CCG and GCBC, have engaged in politics in Ghana and their impact. Last, but not least, it is recommended that a study is done with a church or churches in the Asante and Volta regions which are the stronghold of the NPP and NDC respectively. This is to further explore the finding that, local church leaders and congregants are influenced by the dominant political party in their political engagements. This would contribute to the academic discourse on church and

¹⁵⁸ Tettey “A Case for Political Engagement of the Church in Ghana as a Check on Power in Political leadership,” 42.

¹⁵⁹ Gyampo, “The Church and Ghana’s Drive Towards Democratic Consolidation and Maturity”, 3.

¹⁶⁰ National Catholic Secretariat, “Heads of Member-Churches of the Christian Council of Ghana ...,” 23.

¹⁶¹ Gifford, *African Christianity*, 111.

¹⁶² Bediako, *Christianity in Africa*, 18.

¹⁶³ National Catholic Secretariat, “Communique issued by the Catholic Bishops’ Conference of Ghana at the end of their Annual Conference in Kumasi: July 4 -9, 1983,” 80.

¹⁶⁴ Sarpong, *Aspects of Ghanaian Ethos*, 33.

¹⁶⁵ National Catholic Secretariat, “Message of the Catholic Bishops Conference, the Christian Council Churches the Registration of Religious bodies PNDC LAW 221, ’in *Ghana Bishops Speak*, 142.

¹⁶⁶ National Catholic Secretariat, “Communique issued by the Catholic Bishops Conference of Ghana at the end of their Annual Conference in Sunyani: June 30 – July 5, 1986, ’ in *Ghana Bishops Speak*, 115.

¹⁶⁷ Jonathan Fox, *Political Secularism, Religion, and the State: A Time Series Analysis of Worldwide Data* (United States of America: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 89-90.

¹⁶⁸ Clowney, *Contours of Christian Theology*, 171.

¹⁶⁹ Asante, “The Participation of the Church in Politics,” 81.

¹⁷⁰ Gyampo, “The Church and Ghana’s Drive Towards Democratic Consolidation and Maturity”, 5.

¹⁷¹ Gyampo, “The Church and Ghana’s Drive Towards Democratic Consolidation and Maturity”, 6.

partisan politics, and also provide the church with relevant data to reflect on its non-partisan claims and respond appropriately.

CONCLUSION

The objective of the paper was to examine the bases for the church's political engagements in Ghana, and the attitude and approaches it has adopted. The paper has established that the church's political engagement has been based on its concern and love for the country, its biblical mandate as a prophetic voice and moral conscience of the society, its pastoral duty towards its members, and seeing itself as a key partner in the management of the affairs of the country. Also, the church's involvement, to what extent it has engaged in politics, and the approach used have largely depended on the political situations and their implications. It has been more issue-based underpinned by the well-being of the country rather than by regimes and personalities. Its approach and attitude in political engagement have mainly been that of dialogue, collaboration, and non-partisan. Though at the local level, some church leaders show partisanship, the church has largely been non-partisan. Further, the means of engagement have been pastoral letters to reach its members, and memoranda and communiques to address governments and the entire citizenry. These were the main *modus operandi* under military and dictatorial regimes. Under civilian regimes especially in the Fourth Republic, the church has adopted other strategies such as seminars on elections, interfaith dialogue on elections, and peace-pact meetings with political parties before elections. In spite of these, the church has had to contend with many challenges in its political engagements including verbal and physical attacks, accusations of being partisan, and all forms of intimidation. However, it has not been dissuaded from fulfilling its moral, prophetic, and social responsibilities in Ghana's political sphere. Its boldness and persistence as a voice of the voiceless and moral conscience of Ghanaian society have yielded positive results. All have culminated in ensuring that Ghana's constitutional democracy is consolidated and built upon.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Acheampong, Fredrick. "Pentecostals and Ghana's Fourth Republic: From Enclave to Engagement." PhD Thesis, Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand, 2018.
- Anquandah, James. *Agenda Extraordinaire: 80 Years of the Christian Council of Ghana, 1929 – 2009*. Accra: Asempa Publishers, 2009.
- Ansu-Kyeremeh, Kwasi. "Culture of Silence: Change Without Continuity in an African Communication Framework." *Legon Journal of the Humanities* 12, (1999-2001): 31-52
- Asamoah-Gyadu, Kwabena. *Sighs and Signs of the Spirit: Ghanaian Perspectives on Pentecostalism and Renewal in Africa*. Ghana: Regnum Africa, 2015.
- Asante Emmanuel, "The Participation of the Church in Politics," *ERATS* 1, no.1 (2017): 72-86.
- Assimeng, Max. *Religion and Social Change in West Africa*. Ghana: University Press, 1989.
- Atiemo, A.O. *Religion and Human Rights: Towards the Inculturation of Human Rights in Ghana*. Accessed July 25, 2021. https://research.vu.nl/files/2441111/Chapter_7.pdf
- Baker, Chris and Hannah Skinner, *Faith in Action: The dynamic connection between spiritual and religious capital*. Accessed April 27, 2022, <https://williamtemplefoundation.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/Faith-In-Action-William-Temple-Foundation-2014.pdf>
- Bediako, Kwame. *Christianity in Africa: The Renewal of Non-Western Religion*. Ghana: Regnum Africa, 2014.
- Bellin, Eva. "Faith in Politics: New Trends in the Study of Religion and Politics." *World Politics* 60, (January 2008): 315-347. <https://www.brandeis.edu/politics/people/faculty/pdfs/bellin-faith-in-politics.pdf>
- Bonsu, Osei Joseph. "Steps Towards a Peaceful Transition to Constitutional Rule." In *The Nation, the Church and Democracy: Christian Council of Ghana Report on 1991 Mid-Year Seminar*. Accra: Christian Council of Ghana, 1992.
- Choo, John Evelyn Tan, and Daniel P.S. Goh, "Christian Megachurches and Politics in the Philippines." *ISEAS Perspective* no. 62 (June 2020): 1-6. Google Advanced Search.

- Christian Council of Ghana, *Christian Council of Ghana and Office of the National Imam: Interfaith Youth Sensitisation Programme on Election 2016*. Accra: Christian Council of Ghana, 2016.
- Christian Council of Ghana. "Mobilising the Church for National Transformation." *Christian Home Week Series* Vol. 4. Christian Council of Ghana: Accra, 2017.
- Christian Council of Ghana. "The Church's Political Role in Nation Building." *Christian Home Series* Vol. 1. Accra: Christian Council of Ghana, 2016.
- Christian Council of Ghana, *The Nation, the Church and Democracy: Christian Council of Ghana Report on 1991 Mid-Year Seminar*. Accra: Christian Council of Ghana, 1992.
- Clowney, P. Edmund. *Contours of Christian Theology*. Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 1995.
- Dovlo, Elom. "The Role of Religious Bodies in Ghana's Political Development Process." *Legon Journal of the Humanities* 8 (1995):1-12
- Dumler-Winckler, Emily. "Protestant Political Theology and Pluralism: From a Politics of Refusal to Tending and Organizing for Common Goods." *Religions* 10, no. 522 (2019): 2-18. doi:10.3390/rel10090522
- Fiorenza, Schussler Elisabeth. "Critical Feminist Theology of Liberation: A Decolonising Political Theology." In *Political Theology: Contemporary challenges and future directions* eds. Francis Schüssler Fiorenza, K. Tanner & M. Welker. Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2013.
- Fox, Jonathan. *Political Secularism, Religion, and the State: A Time Series Analysis of Worldwide Data*. United States of America: Cambridge University Press, 2015.
- Gifford, Paul. *African Christianity: Its Public Role*. London: C. Hurst and Co. Publishers Ltd., 1998.
- _____. *Ghana's New Christianity: Pentecostalism in a Globalising African Economy* Indiana: Indiana University Press, 2004.
- _____. "Christianity and Politics in Doe's Liberia." In *Christian Reflection in Africa: Review and Engagement*. Edited by Paul Bowers. Carlisle: Langham Global Library, 2018.
- Gill, Anthony "Religion and Comparative Politics." *Annual Review Political Science* 4 (2001): 117-138.
- Grzymala-Busse, Anna. "Weapons of the Meek: How Churches Influence Public Policy." *World Politics* 68, no.1 (January 2016):1-36. doi: 10.1017/S0043887115000301
- Gyampo, Van "The Church and Ghana's Drive Towards Democratic Consolidation and Maturity." *Journal of Political Science and Public Affairs* 3, no. 161 (2015): 1-7, accessed June 27, 2021. doi: 10.4172/2332-0761.1000161
- Johnson, Kristen Deede. *Theology, Political Theory, and Pluralism: Beyond Tolerance and Difference*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007.
- Kim, C.H. *Theology in the Public Sphere: Public Theology as a catalyst for Open Debate* London: SCM Press, 2011.
- Lefort, Claude. "Permanence of the Theologico-Political?" In *Political Theologies: Public Religions in a Post-Secular World* ed. Hent De Vreis and Lawrence E. Sullivan. New York: Fordham University Press, 2006.
- McClendon, H. Gwyneth and Rachel Beatty Riedl, *From Pews to Politics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019.
- Metz, B. Johann. *Faith in History and Society: toward a practical fundamental theology*, translated by David Smith. New York, The Seabury Press, 1980.
- Moltmann, Jürgen. "Political Theology in Ecumenical Contexts." In *Political theology: Contemporary challenges and future directions*, ed. Francis Schüssler Fiorenza, K. Tanner & M. Welker. Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2013.
- National Catholic Secretariat "A Communique Issued by the Ghana Catholic Bishops' Conference at the end of its Annual Meeting held in Takoradi: July 10 -13, 1984." In *Ghana Bishops Speak: A collection of Communiqués, Memoranda and Pastoral Letters of the Ghana Catholic Bishops' Conference* 1st edition. Accra: National Catholic Secretariat, 1999.

- National Catholic Secretariat. "A Communique Issued by the Ghana Catholic Bishops' Conference at the end of their Annual Conference at Navrongo: July 4 -9, 1988." In *Ghana Bishops Speak: A collection of Communiques, Memoranda and Pastoral Letters of the Ghana Catholic Bishops' Conference* 1st edition Accra: National Catholic Secretariat, 1999.
- National Catholic Secretariat. "A Communique Issued by the Ghana Catholic Bishops' Conference at their Annual Plenary Assembly held in Cape Coast from 10th to 15th July 2000." In *Ghana Bishops Speak: A collection of Communiques, Memoranda and Pastoral Letters of the Ghana Catholic Bishops' Conference* 2nd edition. Accra: National Catholic Secretariat, 2006.
- National Catholic Secretariat. "A Communique Issued by the Ghana Catholic Bishops' Conference at their Plenary Assembly held at Denu in the Keta-Akatsi Diocese from 3rd – 12th July 2002." In *Ghana Bishops Speak: A collection of Communiques, Memoranda and Pastoral Letters of the Ghana Catholic Bishops' Conference* 2nd Edition. Accra: National Catholic Secretariat, 2006.
- National Catholic Secretariat. "A Communique Issued by the Ghana Catholic Bishops' Conference at their Annual Plenary Assembly held in Wa, Upper West Region, from 5th to 13th July 2001." In *Ghana Bishops Speak: A collection of Communiques, Memoranda and Pastoral Letters of the Ghana Catholic Bishops' Conference*. 2nd Edition. Accra: National Catholic Secretariat, 1999.
- National Catholic Secretariat. "A Message from the Catholic Hierarchy of Ghana to all Christians, on Civic Responsibilities- 1968." In *Ghana Bishops Speaks: A collection of Communiques, Memoranda and Pastoral Letters of the Ghana Catholic Bishops' Conference*. 1st Edition. Accra: National Catholic Secretariat, 1999.
- National Catholic Secretariat. "A Pastoral letter from the Christian Council of Ghana and the Ghana Catholic Bishops' Conference – 1992." In *Ghana Bishops Speak: A collection of Communiques, Memoranda and Pastoral Letters of the Ghana Catholic Bishops' Conference*. 1st Edition. Accra: National Catholic Secretariat, 1999.
- National Catholic Secretariat. "Advent Pastoral Letter – 1997: A Message to our Nation on Bribery and Corruption by the Ghana Catholic Bishops' Conference." In *Ghana Bishops Speak: A collection of Communiques, Memoranda and Pastoral Letters of the Ghana Catholic Bishops' Conference*. 1st Edition. Accra: National Catholic Secretariat, 1999.
- National Catholic Secretariat. "Communique Issued by the Ghana Catholic Bishops' Conference at the end of its Annual Meeting held in Tamale: July 7-11, 1987." In *Ghana Bishops Speak: A collection of Communiques, Memoranda and Pastoral Letters of the Ghana Catholic Bishops' Conference*. 1st Edition. Accra: National Catholic Secretariat, 1999.
- National Catholic Secretariat. "Communique Issued by the Ghana Catholic Bishops' Conference at the end of its Plenary Assembly held in Sunyani: July 7-14, 1995." In *Ghana Bishops Speak: A collection of Communiques, Memoranda and Pastoral Letters of the Ghana Catholic Bishops' Conference*. 1st Edition. Accra: National Catholic Secretariat, 1999.
- National Catholic Secretariat. "Communique of the Ghana Bishops' Conference at the end of Plenary Assembly, July 1-6, 1985." In *Ghana Bishops Speaks: A collection of Communiques, Memoranda and Pastoral Letters of the Ghana Catholic Bishops' Conference*. 1st Edition. Accra: National Catholic Secretariat, 1999.
- National Catholic Secretariat. "Communique Issued by the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Ghana at the end of their Annual Conference held in Cape Coast: July 2 -6, 1990." In *Ghana Bishops Speak: A collection of Communiques, Memoranda and Pastoral Letters of the Ghana Catholic Bishops' Conference*. 1st Edition. Accra: National Catholic Secretariat, 1999.
- National Catholic Secretariat. "Communique Issued by the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Ghana at the end of their Annual Conference in Sunyani: June 30 – July 5, 1986." In *Ghana Bishops Speak: A collection of Communiques, Memoranda and Pastoral Letters of the Ghana Catholic Bishops' Conference*. 1st Edition. Accra: National Catholic Secretariat, 1999.
- National Catholic Secretariat. "Communique Issued by the Ghana Catholic Bishops' Conference at the end of their Annual Conference in Takoradi: July 10-12, 1984." In *Ghana Bishops Speak:*

- A collection of Communiques, Memoranda and Pastoral Letters of the Ghana Catholic Bishops' Conference*. 1st Edition. Accra: National Catholic Secretariat, 1999.
- National Catholic Secretariat. "Communique Issued by the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Ghana at the end of their Annual Conference in Tamale: July 7 -11, 1987." In *Ghana Bishops Speak: A collection of Communiques, Memoranda and Pastoral Letters of the Ghana Catholic Bishops' Conference*. 1st Edition. Accra: National Catholic Secretariat, 1999.
- National Catholic Secretariat. "Communique of the Ghana Catholic Bishops' Conference Plenary Assembly in Ho: July 1-11, 1997." In *Ghana Bishops Speak: A collection of Communiques, Memoranda and Pastoral Letters of the Ghana Catholic Bishops' Conference*. 1st Edition. Accra: National Catholic Secretariat, 1999.
- National Catholic Secretariat. "Communique Issued by the Catholic Bishops of Ghana at the end of their Annual Meeting in Accra: July 7 – 14, 1994." In *Ghana Bishops Speak: A collection of Communiques, Memoranda and Pastoral Letters of the Ghana Catholic Bishops' Conference*. 1st Edition. Accra: National Catholic Secretariat, 1999.
- National Catholic Secretariat. "Ghana Catholic Bishops' Conference Plenary Assembly held in Koforidua: July 2 – 10, 1998." In *Ghana Bishops Speak: A collection of Communiques, Memoranda and Pastoral Letters of the Ghana Catholic Bishops' Conference*. 1st Edition. Accra: National Catholic Secretariat, 1999.
- National Catholic Secretariat. "Ghana Catholic Bishops' Conference Plenary Assembly, November 9-17, 2003." In *Ghana Bishops Speaks: A collection of Communiques, Memoranda and Pastoral Letters of the Ghana Catholic Bishops' Conference*. 2nd Edition. Accra: National Catholic Secretariat, 2006.
- National Catholic Secretariat. *Ghana Bishops Speak: A collection of Communiques, Memoranda and Pastoral Letters of the Ghana Catholic Bishops' Conference*. 2nd Edition. Accra: National Catholic Secretariat, 2006.
- National Catholic Secretariat. "Heads of Member-Churches of the Christian Council of Ghana and the National Catholic Secretariat meet with the Head of State and Chairman of the Supreme Military Council -1978." In *Ghana Bishops Speaks: A collection of Communiques, Memoranda and Pastoral Letters of the Ghana Catholic Bishops' Conference*. 1st Edition. Accra: National Catholic Secretariat, 1999.
- National Catholic Secretariat. "Joint Pastoral letter of the Catholic Hierarchy of Ghana on 'Moral Conversion and National Reconstruction' on the Occasion of Easter Celebration 1982." In *Ghana Bishops Speak: A collection of Communiques, Memoranda and Pastoral Letters of the Ghana Catholic Bishops' Conference*. 1st Edition. Accra: National Catholic Secretariat, 1999.
- National Catholic Secretariat. "Joint Pastoral letter of the Catholic Hierarchy of Ghana on the Referendum on Union Government 1978." In *Ghana Bishops Speaks: A collection of Communiques, Memoranda and Pastoral Letters of the Ghana Catholic Bishops' Conference*. 1st Edition. Accra: National Catholic Secretariat, 1999.
- National Catholic Secretariat "Joint Pastoral letter of the Catholic Hierarchy of Ghana to all the Faithful of the Country on the Return to Constitutional Rule – 1979." In *Ghana Bishops Speaks: A collection of Communiques, Memoranda and Pastoral Letters of the Ghana Catholic Bishops' Conference*. 1st Edition Accra: National Catholic Secretariat, 1999.
- National Catholic Secretariat. "Joint Pastoral letter from the Catholic Bishops of Ghana to the Clergy, Religious, the Faithful and all Men of Goodwill in Ghana on the Political Activities and Elections Leading to Constitutional and Civilian Rule of the Third Republic in Mid-Year 1979." In *Ghana Bishops Speak: A collection of Communiques, Memoranda and Pastoral Letters of the Ghana Catholic Bishops' Conference*. 1st Edition. Accra: National Catholic Secretariat, 1999.
- National Catholic Secretariat. "Message of the Christian Council Ghana and the Catholic Bishops' Conference to their Faithful and Congregations: November 1989." In *Ghana Bishops Speak: A*

- collection of Communiqués, Memoranda and Pastoral Letters of the Ghana Catholic Bishops' Conference*. 1st Edition. Accra: National Catholic Secretariat, 1999.
- National Catholic Secretariat. "Message from the Catholic Hierarchy of Ghana to all Christians, on Civic Responsibilities – 1968." In *Ghana Bishops Speaks: A collection of Communiqués, Memoranda and Pastoral Letters of the Ghana Catholic Bishops' Conference*. 1st Edition. Accra: National Catholic Secretariat, 1999.
- National Catholic Secretariat. "Statement on the State of the Nation by the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Ghana: November 11, 1982." In *Catholic Bishops Speak: A collection of Communiqués, Memoranda and Pastoral Letters of the Ghana Catholic Bishops' Conference*. 1st Edition. Accra: National Catholic Secretariat, 1999.
- National Catholic Secretariat. "The Catholic Church and Ghana's Search for a New Democratic System – February 1991." In *Ghana Bishops Speaks: A collection of Communiqués, Memoranda and Pastoral Letters of the Ghana Catholic Bishops' Conference*. 1st Edition. Accra: National Catholic Secretariat, 1999.
- National Catholic Secretariat, *Transforming Religious Differences and Experiences for Social Cohesion and Democratic Governance: A Report on the Role of an Interfaith Platform in the 2016 Elections in Ghana*, edited by Samuel Zan Akologo. Accra: National Catholic Secretariat, 2017.
- National Media Commission Act, 1993 (ACT 449), accessed May 18, 2022.
[https://bcp.gov.gh/acc/registry/docs/NATIONAL%20MEDIA%20COMMISSION%20ACT,%201993%20\(ACT%20449\).pdf](https://bcp.gov.gh/acc/registry/docs/NATIONAL%20MEDIA%20COMMISSION%20ACT,%201993%20(ACT%20449).pdf)
- Okyerefo, P.K. Michael. "Scrambling for the Centre: Ghana's New Churches as an Alternative Ideology and Power," *Religions* 10, no. 668 (2019): 1-13. doi:10.3390/rel10120668
- Pippert, Manley Rebecca. *Out of the Saltshaker and into the World*. Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 1999. Political Context Study – Ghana. Accessed July 1, 2022.
<https://www.jus.uio.no/smr/english/research/projects/ripoca/workshop-april-2010/Ghana%20political%20context%20study%20final%20draft%2029.12.08.pdf>
- Pobee, S. John. *Religion and Politics in Ghana*. Accra: Asempa Publishers, 1991.
- Sarpong, K. Peter. *Aspects of Ghanaian Ethos: A compendium of articles, lectures, and talks on various socio-cultural and religious topics*. Tema: Digibooks Ghana Ltd., 2019.
- Smolin, M. David. "Church, State, and International Human Rights: A Theological Appraisal." *Notre Dame Law Review* 73, no. 30 (2014):1515-1546. Accessed February 4, 2020.
<http://scholarship.law.nd.edu/ndlr/vol73/iss5/30>
- Tetty, Kwame Emmanuel. "A Case for Political Engagement of the Church in Ghana as a check on Power in Political Leadership." *Journal of African Christian Thought* 23, no. 1 (June 2020): 38-46.
- Ulker, Ozlem "Religion and Politics in A Sociological Perspective: A Comparison Between the USA and France." *International Journal of Social Inquiry* 6, no. 2 (2013):73-94.
- Warner, M. Carolyn. *Confessions of an Interest Group: The Catholic Church and Political Parties in Europe*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000.
- Wyk, van Tanya. "Political Theology as critical theology," *HTS Theological Studies* 71, no. 3 (2015): 1-18. Accessed June 22, 2020. doi:10.4102/hts.v71i3.3026

ABOUT AUTHORS

Samuel Sarkodie-Addo is currently a PhD Candidate at the Religious Studies Department, Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST). He holds a BSc in Medical Laboratory Technology, and an MPhil in Religious Studies. His research focuses on Church and Politics, and Christian Stewardship.

John Kwaku Opoku is an Associate Professor at the Department of Religious Studies, Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST). He is a Catholic Priest at the Catholic Archdiocese of Kumasi. He holds a Ph.D. in Theology and Health (Radboud Universiteit-Nijmegen). His areas of specialization are Pastoral Theology, Bioethics, and Religion and Health. He is also a member of the European Centre of Research Training and Development (ECRTD), United Kingdom.