

Research Article

Christian Schools In Ghana And Stated Identity: The Case Of Christian Service University College, Kumasi

ABSTRACT

Is a school tagged Christian because it was established by a Christian, Christian organization or a church? It has been argued that even though it is not wrong to classify religious institutions by their relation to a church or a religious body, that in itself does not indicate how close an institution is or the extent to which a particular church or its theological beliefs and practices actually influence a college or university. A number of faith-based tertiary institutions have emerged on the educational scene in Ghana in the past few decades with a number of them established by churches and Christian bodies. Just like churches, people have a lot of expectations from Christian institutions. This paper has sought to examine one such Christian institution in Ghana to find out if its Christian identity is as stated or is simply assumed. This will then set the stage for further research into other unique characteristics of Christian institutions. The paper employs the qualitative case study approach in analysing the Christian Service University College's stated identity, expressed in its core values, vision and mission statements, from the perspective of the Association of Christian Schools International (ACSI). The findings are that, Christian Service University College (CSUC) has a clearly stated Christian identity which has been expressed adequately in its core values, vision and mission statements. It is therefore recommended that with this foundational block in place, CSUC will employ the needed human and financial resources to see the institution function to meet its mission goals and other outcomes expected of a Christian Institution. This paper contributes to the deepening of knowledge on Christian Education and the need to get the foundations right in establishing a Christian institution at all levels of the educational system.

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INTRODUCTION

Concerns have been raised by some scholars as to why several Christian institutions have lost their Christian identities and are now not different from any other secular institutions in outlook and practice. People such as Appleyard are quick to mention schools like Princeton and Harvard Universities among others in America that were known to be Christian institutions but are now totally secular as any other secular university.²

In probing to ascertain the veracity of these concerns, attention was drawn to what is a Christian school? Is a school tagged Christian because it was established by a Christian, Christian organization, or a Church? A proper understanding of a definition of an institution's own identity will go a long way to bring clarity to this whole dilemma.

² A. Appleyard (S.J). "The Secularization of the Modern American University" in *Conversations on Jesuit Higher Education*, 10 (1996): 31-33. Also, see David Beale. "The Rise and Fall of Harvard (1636-1805)" *Detroit Bible Seminary Journal*, (Fall 1998): 89-101.

What Is A Christian School?

A Christian institution is said to be primarily and literally an institution like any other registered institution and accredited under the requisite regulations and laws of a country to offer educational courses and services relevant for its level. Being Christian assumes its ownership or affiliation is Christian but according to Vaden, it takes more than a name and association or ownership to make a Christian school or institution Christian.³

A search through many Christian institutional documents gives various definitions of what a Christian school is. In its 2018 Parent-Student Revised Handbook, Dayton Christian School traces the foundations of Christian schools in America to the beginnings of the founding of the state. The document records that most the schools were started by churches and the teachers were mostly Christian. In these schools, young people were taught to read so that primarily, they would be able to read and understand the Bible. All other subjects that were taught were done to project the workings of God through all those disciplines. History was about how God has worked through the ages, science was about God's wonderful creation, even mathematical illustrations and examples were taken from the Bible or the religious life of the people.⁴ In effect, faith was integrated into their learning.

The Dayton Handbook continues that as government took over the establishment of public schools over time, most of the teachers were still Christians, and they often taught God's Word, as well as the other subjects until the employment of non-Christian teachers to teach in the public schools, which they argue, shifted emphasis on the Bible and biblical principles to Humanism⁵ which began to dominate the educational system in America.⁶ This brought the recognition of the fact that what their children were being taught in the public schools was the opposite of what they were trying to teach them at home. These concerned parents began starting Christian schools, in which their children would receive an education where Jesus Christ is proclaimed as Lord in all areas of life and all subjects in the curriculum taught from a Christian and biblical worldview.⁷ A Christian school therefore, from the Dayton Christian School's perspective, is an institution which places emphasis on the Bible and biblical principles and seeks to impact the lives of its students in line with their religious beliefs.⁸

According to Willowdale, a Christian school is like any other school where teaching and learning takes place. The difference however is that as a Christian Institution, it is a place where Christian love and concern are interwoven with the task of learning.⁹ Willowdale advances further that, resources and gifts in a Christian school are regarded as given by God to be used in service and leadership and that it should be a place where Christian principles are integrated into all courses. They strongly advocate that the Christian school must be "a community of faith, a place where students and teachers speak freely about God and His greatness... God's words are spoken in the classroom of a Christian school."¹⁰ Willowdale concludes:

His voice is also heard on the playground, in the hallways, in the Principal's office, in the boardroom, and in the community to which the school witnesses. In even the smallest aspect of the Christian school, it is obvious that it is an institution that nurtures students in their faith, equipping them to eventually pass along God's truths to succeeding generations.¹¹

The Association of Christian Schools International (ACSI) also defines a Christian school as one that has as its mission the education of people from a Christian perspective derived from shared biblical values mutually held by churches and Christian families, teaching biblical truth as centred in the Lord Jesus and applicable in all areas of life.¹² It further states that it is important that the school presents this Christian point of view as exemplified by a dedicated, professional faculty and evidenced in all facets of learning and growth. The association is of the conviction that when this dynamic reaches fruition, it should yield students who know how to learn, live, and work as faithful citizens of the kingdom of God.¹³ It is therefore understandable for Kienel to propose that, it is essential to understand the fundamental principles of what makes Christian education truly Christian.¹⁴ Kienel suggests that to properly understand what Christian education is which directly relates to a Christian educational institution, one needs to interrogate its distinctive characteristics, how the Christian philosophy of education translates to the classroom, the curriculum, student activities and future careers.¹⁵

³ Brett Vaden, *What makes a Christian School Christian*, Accessed: April 03, 2019 <https://classicallatin.org/exordium/what-makes-a-christian-school-christian/>.

⁴ Dayton Christian School, *Parent-Student Handbook Revised*, (2018).

⁵ According to the Cambridge Dictionary, Humanism is "a belief system based on the principle that people's spiritual and emotional needs can be satisfied without following a god or religion." Cambridge Dictionary, accessed April 03, 2019 <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/humanism>

⁶ Dayton Christian School, *Parent-Student Handbook Revised*, (2018).

⁷ Dayton Christian School, *Parent-Student Handbook Revised*, (2018).

⁸ Dayton Christian School, *Parent-Student Handbook Revised*, (2018).

⁹ Willowdale Christian School, *Parent Handbook*, 2013 -2014 Policies & Guidelines, (WCS: Toronto-Ontario), p6.

¹⁰ Willowdale Christian School, *Parent Handbook*, 2013 -2014 Policies & Guidelines, (WCS: Toronto-Ontario), p6.

¹¹ Willowdale Christian School, *Parent Handbook*, 2013 -2014 Policies & Guidelines, (WCS: Toronto-Ontario), p6.

¹² Vernard T. Gant & Tasha M. Tillman, ed. *How to Start an Urban Christian School* (Colorado Springs: ACSI, 2001), p69

¹³ Vernard T. Gant & Tasha M. Tillman, ed. *How to Start an Urban Christian School* (Colorado Springs: ACSI, 2001), p69.

¹⁴ Paul A. Kienel, Ollie E. Gibbs & Sharon R. Berry eds, *Philosophy of Christian School Education*. (Colorado: ACSI, 1998)

¹⁵ Kienel, Gibbs & Berry. *Philosophy of Christian School Education*

The Identity of a Christian School

A Christian institution, from the above discussion, is not simply Christian because of the terminology “Christian” attached to its name and its association or affiliation to a church or a Christian group. Vaden has argued that, what makes a Christian school Christian is neither by meeting in a church building nor including in its list of subjects Bible or Bible studies and make students study and memorize scripture.¹⁶ Vaden expatiates further on his argument that, much as sitting in a police car does not necessarily make one a Policeman, so does sitting in a church building not necessarily makes a school Christian. A Christian school, he posits, is the one that acknowledges “Christ as the aim of everything it does.”¹⁷ In a *Handbook of Christian Education*, Ron Horton has emphasized that “the work of the Christian school is an extension of the Christian educational ministries of the Christian home and the church. Its purpose, therefore, is the development of the student in the image of God. This purpose determines both the content and the means of instruction.”¹⁸

From the above discussion, a Christian school or institution is not only so because it bears the name “Christian” or even associated or affiliated to a church or a Christian group, but is defined by its mission and identity which should be the education of students from a Christian perspective and developing them in the image of God according to the Association of Christian Schools International (ACSI).¹⁹ This implies a curriculum which is derived from shared Christian values mutually held by the founder’s faith, be it a church, a Christian group or an individual Christian. There is also the need for appropriate instructional strategies and a dedicated and professional faculty who will exemplify the Christian worldview at all facets of learning and growth.²⁰ The environment in a Christian institution, according to Willowdale School, must be a “safe, caring environment, where learners can discover, explore and learn about themselves, others and the world that God created.”²¹ They add that, it is an extension of the Christian home and church where dedicated Christian teachers strive to nurture the whole person - head, heart and hands. The Council for Christian Colleges and Universities captures the purpose of Christian Education as forming students of moral commitment who live out Christian virtues such as love, courage, and humility. To them, this task gives meaning and coherence to every part of the academy, from the classroom to the fine arts studio, from the internship placement to the residence hall and the athletic field.²²

In a research on church-related Colleges and Universities, Robert Benne has argued that even though it is not wrong to classify religious institutions by their relation to a church or a religious body, that in itself does not indicate the level of affinity or the extent to which a particular church or its theological beliefs and practices actually influence a college or university.²³ These therefore raise a number of questions one of which has been posed in this work.

Research Question

Is Christian Service University College a Christian school by its documented definition of its identity? This is the question to which this research seeks to find an answer in order to ascertain the real status of CSUC as to whether it is a Christian school or just another secular school but owned by or associated with Christian foundations.

Methodology

This study uses the qualitative research methodology and according to John W. Creswell, a qualitative research seeks to explore and understand the meaning individual stakeholders and institutions ascribe to a social or human problem.²⁴ William L. Neuman further elaborates that it has to do with interpretative issues that originate in religious and literary studies of textual material, in which in-depth inquiry into text and relating its parts to the whole can reveal deeper meanings.²⁵ In this case, a lot of textual as well as literary materials are employed. Qualitative research is also said to simply try to find answers to how individuals or people or even institutions are affected by events that go on around them.²⁶

CSUC is one among a few tertiary institutions in Ghana that classify itself as a Christian institution.²⁷ The study

¹⁶ Brett Vaden, *What makes a Christian School Christian*, Accessed: April 03, 2019 <https://classcallatin.org/exordium/what-makes-a-christian-school-christian/>

¹⁷ Vaden, *What makes a Christian School Christian*.

¹⁸ Ron Horton (Ed), *Handbook of Christian Education*, (Greenville: Journey Forth, 2017), 8-9.

¹⁹ Vernard T. Gant & Tasha M. Tillman, ed. *How to Start an Urban Christian School* (Colorado Springs: ACSI, 2001), p69. See also Brett Vaden, *What makes a Christian School Christian*, Accessed: April 03, 2019 <https://classcallatin.org/exordium/what-makes-a-christian-school-christian/>

²⁰ Vernard T. Gant & Tasha M. Tillman, ed. *How to Start an Urban Christian School*, p69

²¹ Willowdale Christian School, Parent Handbook , 2013 -2014 Policies & Guidelines, (WCS: Toronto-Ontario), p6.

²² CCCU, *What is Christian Higher Education*. Accessed: September 12, 2018. <https://www.cccu.org/about/#heading-what-is-christian-higher-4?>

²³ Robert Benne, *Quality with Soul: How Six Premier Colleges and Universities Keep Faith with Their Religious Traditions*, (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 2001).

²⁴ John W. Creswell, *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative and Mixed Methods Approaches*, 3rd Edition. (Los Angeles: Sage Publications Inc, 2009).

²⁵ W. L. Neuman. *Social Research Methods, Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches*, (Boston: Pearson. 2004), 87

²⁶ Leicester University Research course document on The Nature of Qualitative Research, Accessed March 12, 2019, https://www.le.ac.uk/oerresources/lill/fdmvco/module9/page_21.htm

²⁷ Christian Service University College, *Revised Statutes* (2007) 2.3(i).

was carried out to find out if CSUC by its stated definition can be said to be a Christian Institution or otherwise. Data was collected through the assembling, study and analysis of relevant documents available in hard prints and through online sources. Some interviews were also conducted with some relevant personalities who were purposively sampled to corroborate some or otherwise some stated information. These personalities are those who have been associated with CSUC from its earliest beginnings. The data was analysed with the Association of Christian Schools International's (ACSI) criterion being the analytical framework. This is because it incorporates almost all the tenets that are employed by a number of other scholars and institutions as a definition for a Christian School.²⁸ Among these institutions are Council for Christian Colleges and Universities (CCCU),²⁹ Brett Vaden,³⁰ Ron Horton,³¹ Willowdale School³² among others as indicated in this work. It is basically an analysis of the stated definition and identity of CSUC from what is termed as the ACSI model's perspective.

By this model, a Christian school is defined as follows:

- It must have a clear Christian Philosophy of education.
- Its mission must be the education of people from a Christian perspective derived from shared biblical values mutually held by churches and Christian families, teaching biblical truth as centred in the Lord Jesus and applicable in all areas of life.
- The school presents this Christian point of view as exemplified by a dedicated, professional faculty and evidenced in all facets of learning and growth. CCCU insists that their professors pursue academic excellence because they are committed to God as the author of truth.³³

Findings

The history of Christian Service University College has been clearly documented in summaries over the years and can be obtained in the various student handbooks and graduation brochures, official diaries and lately on its website. However, a more comprehensive documentation of the history from its beginning to 1990 is what Adubofuor captures in his doctoral thesis.³⁴ The College, originally called Christian Service College (CSC), began based on a fusion of visions of two Evangelical Christian groups. A group of Ghanaian Christians had a vision of setting up an interdenominational, evangelical institution of a high academic standard, where men and women would be trained for all types of Christian Ministry.³⁵

There was a second group made up of expatriate missionaries who had a vision of setting up an institution to train workers from the well-established Church in southern Ghana to be sent into northern Ghana and neighbouring countries where the Church was relatively very small. These two groups agreed to merge their vision in setting up Christian Service College (CSC) in January 1974. Evangelical Christianity in Ghana in the late 1960s and 1970s was characterized, among other things, by intimate interaction and collaboration and blurring of denominational, mission and group distinctions.³⁶

The Worldwide Evangelization for Christ (WEC), which was one of the missionary groups and the second group of missionaries, had acquired property in Kumasi on which they had built four dwelling houses and a recording studio with plans to construct a large building to serve as the beginning of a training college. Soon the two visions merged.

Adubofuor has documented and it has been corroborated by Ntsiful³⁷ and Gyane,³⁸ all very old and committed stakeholders that in October 1974, the first residential classes started with four students including Ntsiful and the College grew from strength to strength and has now become an Evangelical Christian University College.

In the preamble to its first University College statutes, promulgated in 2005, it has been stated that the Institution was set up in 1974 to “undertake programmes to equip evangelicals and other Christians for leadership roles in church and society, research in orthodox and contemporary theological issues in Africa and dissemination of information for

²⁸ Vernard T. Gant & Tasha M. Tillman, ed. *How to Start an Urban Christian School* (Colorado Springs: ACSI, 2001). See also Brett Vaden, *What makes a Christian School* Christian Dayton Christian School, Parent-Student Handbook Revised Paul A. Kienel, Ollie E. Gibbs & Sharon R. Berry eds, *Philosophy of Christian School Education*.

²⁹ CCCU, *What is Christian Higher Education*. Accessed: September, 2018.

³⁰ Brett Vaden, *What makes a Christian School Christian*.

³¹ Ron Horton (Ed), *Handbook of Christian Education*.

³² Willowdale Christian School, *Parent Handbook, 2013 -2014 Policies & Guidelines*, (WCS: Toronto-Ontario), p6.

³³ CCCU, *What is Christian Higher Education?* Accessed: September, 2018. <https://www.cccu.org/about/#heading-what-is-christian-higher-4>

³⁴ Samuel B. Adubofuor, *Evangelical Para-Church Movements in Ghanaian Christianity: c1950 to Early 1990s*. Unpublished PhD Dissertation, University of Edinburgh (1994).

³⁵ Adubofuor, *Evangelical Para-Church Movements in Ghanaian Christianity: c1950 to Early 1990s*.

³⁶ Christian Service University College, *Students' Handbook 2013/2014 Academic Year* (Savant Grafix, 2013). See also www.csuc.edu.gh

³⁷ Interview with Mr. John Kojo Ntsiful. J. K. Ntsiful was one of four students who were the first to be admitted to be trained at CSC as a theological institution for the training of Christian workers for the work of ministry.

³⁸ Interview with D O Gyane, one of the Ghanaian Christian brethren who fused their vision with the WEC missionaries to establish CSC to train Christian workers. He has been involved with all the developments of CSC from its very beginning.

the education and enlightenment of the church and society.”³⁹ From the above definition of CSUC, it was indeed set up to be a Christian school and so it was from its inception. It is however important to probe further into its defined identity which has been captured in its statutes as expressed in its Vision, Mission, Core values and Purpose.

CSUC’s Documented Identity

The identity of CSUC has been defined under three sub themes enumerated as a working community, academic community and the rest spelt out in its philosophy and mandate.

These are explained as follows:

Working Community: - It has been stated in its statutes that “we are a working community.”⁴⁰ A further elaboration on this indicates that with much work to be done in the classroom and out of class hours, students were to reckon to strike a balance between work and studies and it required a lot of diligence and determination. Students were also required to ensure clean surroundings and make time for exercise for the purpose of physical and mental health. This was to be of great value to them in the future.

In an interview with some workers who have been working in the College since the early 1980s and some even earlier as well as some old students, working in the college was part of the training of students. Students were responsible for cleaning their hostels which were then dormitories, the administrative and all other offices and the entire compound and the surroundings of the college. They also dined together and washed their own dishes and other utensils.⁴¹

Students were engaged in other practical activities such as farming to cultivate a number of their vegetables and some food crops including cassava, plantain and also worked on the College’s palm plantation and in the poultry farm. In these and other activities, the identity of the institution as a Christian Service institution was identified.

Academic Community:- As an academic community, the founding fathers sought to obey the biblical mandate to prepare minds for creative thinking. The need is expressed for guidelines to ensure healthy co-existence of people in every community. Each student of CSUC was to seek to prepare him/herself for service to God and humanity. Therefore, any conduct that was inconsistent with Christian lifestyle, or which showed consistent disregard for the institutional guidelines was not acceptable. If such conduct came to the notice of authorities, such a person was first, to be helped through counselling. However, if the person was unwilling to accept advice and continued in an unacceptable behaviour pattern, it could lead to the loss of certain privileges or, in serious cases, a rustication or an outright dismissal.⁴²

Philosophy and Mandate: - In view of the rapid social trail and transformation in modern African society, intellectual and scientific advancements, increasing religious conflicts and challenges in contemporary society, the Christian Service University College exists to provide relevant Christian theological, business, science and social science education at the tertiary level.⁴³

In response to these challenges, the University College seeks to produce leaders with scholarly depth, reflective faith, moral uprightness and potential for further education, as well as the skills to serve and educate the church and society.⁴⁴

Vision

The Christian Service College, in its 2005 revised statutes, sought to be an internationally recognized academic Centre of excellence for Teaching and Research in Theology, Information Technology, Business and Liberal Arts, in an ecumenical and sound ethical environment to all persons of diverse background.⁴⁵ In its 2017 revised statutes however, it has been stated that CSUC is a University of choice where Jesus Christ is Lord and people are empowered to impact the world.⁴⁶ It is observed that the factor of Jesus Christ has been made more conspicuously visible and central to the vision of CSUC.

³⁹ CSUC, *Statutes*, (2005), statute 3(2).

⁴⁰ CSUC, *Statutes*, (2005), statute 3(2).

⁴¹ Among the people interviewed were: Mr. John Kojo Ntsiful who was among the first batch of five students who were first admitted to begin CSC. Mr. Ntsiful since he got in touch with CSC has continued his relationship with the institution in various capacities as a student, research assistant, assistant lecturer, a full time Faculty member until his retirement as a Senior Lecturer. Even after his post-retirement contract duration, he continues to serve CSUC as a part time lecturer. Others are Mr. Stephen Oti-Appiah, a Senior Librarian, Mr. Joe Kontoh-Manu, a Senior Estates Officer.

⁴² CSUC, *Statutes*, (2005), statute 3(2).

⁴³ CSUC, *Statutes*, (2005), statute 3(2).

⁴⁴ CSUC, *Statutes*, (2005), statute 3(2).

⁴⁵ CSUC, *Statutes*, (2005), statute 3(2).

⁴⁶ Revised Statutes of CSUC (October, 2017). Statute 3.1

Mission

Again, as captured in its 2005 College statutes, the Christian Service College (CSC) as was known then, was committed to providing an educational environment of academic excellence in theology and other interdisciplinary programmes.⁴⁷ It was said to cherish the ideals, which reflected the development of the total human being and sought to foster in its students intellectual involvement, professional competencies, social responsibility, religious and moral sensitivity, spiritual fulfilment and a lifestyle capable of sustaining these within balance and positioning them to serve the nation and the world at large.⁴⁸ In its 2017 statutes, it has been revised to read that its mission is “to promote knowledge for the training of men and women in Christian values and principles, academic and professional excellence for the transformation of society.”⁴⁹ Again the Jesus Christ factor has been made more visible and prominent in its mission statement probably to highlight it being a Christian institution.

Core Values

In furtherance of its vision and mission as a Christian institution, CSUC is said to uphold five core values which are cherished and deemed as central and basic to the institution’s life and activities and are therefore supposed to be inculcated into all those who work or study at the institution. The core values are said to govern the operations and conduct of the Executive Committee and staff of the University College as well as their relationships with society at large, their customers, suppliers, employees, local community and other stakeholders. The core values as enshrined in its statutes are:

- Lordship of Jesus Christ

The Christian Service University College (CSUC), being a Christian institution, is said to be committed to the Lordship of Jesus Christ and living in obedience to His will. This involves trusting Him to meet every need: material, spiritual, emotional or whatever it might be to fulfil His will. It also involves seeking and accepting His guidance for the institution and depending on His divine leadership. In view of this, members of the community are expected not only to join together for worship in concrete demonstration of their commitment to the Lordship of Christ, but are also encouraged to make a personal commitment to Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour.⁵⁰ According to John Ntsiful,⁵¹ making Jesus Christ’s lordship an unashamed core value and the first among its core values is meant to communicate strongly to its constituents, its acknowledgement of his pre-eminence in the existence of the institution.

- Integrity

The University College is said to believe in integrity, which is defined as moral uprightness, honesty, reliability, incorruptibility, wholeness and soundness of character. It involves transparency and gives no room for foul play either in public or in private. The University College sees this as important since character is vital to their calling and work.⁵²

- Hard Work

CSUC is said to be dedicated to hard, sacrificial, diligent and conscientious work; always striving to do things better and continuously improving and innovating to deliver the best possible outcomes.⁵³ By this staff and students are expected to seek excellence in all endeavours and to be committed to continuous improvement through perseverance even in the face of hardship and opposition as documented in its 2017 revised statutes.⁵⁴

- Good Stewardship

CSUC is said to believe and upholds the belief of Divine ownership of both the natural, material and spiritual world as well as the souls of all humankind.⁵⁵ It is therefore said to be committed to accountability and responsibility in all actions and adheres to the biblical principle that those who have been given a trust must prove faithful (1 Cor. 4:2).⁵⁶ As such CSUC aspires to be dedicated to the efficient and effective use of the institution’s resources (physical, intellectual, spiritual and financial) to achieve maximum results. A good

⁴⁷ CSUC, Statutes, (2005), *statute* 3(2)

⁴⁸ CSUC, Statutes, (2005), *statute* 3(2)

⁴⁹ Revised Statutes of CSUC (October, 2017). Statute 3.2

⁵⁰ Revised Statutes of CSUC (October, 2017). Statute 2.3(i).

⁵¹ Interview with Mr. John Kojo Ntsiful.

⁵² Revised Statutes of CSUC (October, 2017). Statute 2.3 (ii).

⁵³ Revised Statutes of CSUC (October, 2017). Statute 2.3 (iii).

⁵⁴ Revised Statutes of CSUC (October, 2017). Statute 2.3 (iii).

⁵⁵ Revised Statutes of CSUC (October, 2017). Statute 2.3 (iv).

⁵⁶ Revised Statutes of CSUC (October, 2017). Statute 2.3 (iv).

Steward is said to be conscious of time and uses it efficiently. Time is said to be a unique resource God has given to us and as such punctuality at work, classes and all other programmes are required to be adhered to strictly by students, staff and other stakeholders of the CSUC family.⁵⁷

- Mutual Support and Care

CSUC is said to be human centred and oriented and therefore provides excellent services to all who work at or visit the campus. CSUC is said to uphold the Christian virtues of love, oneness, and fellowship. Love, mutual support for one another, unity and oneness among members of the community, are thus encouraged.⁵⁸ As such it is said to be committed to the biblical principles of carrying each other's burden (Gal. 6.1). This includes help and support (spiritually and materially). Members of the community are also supposed to join together for worship and prayer, trusting that in worshiping the Lord together, they will grow up together in Him. This is seen as a vital aspect of the institution's service to God.⁵⁹

Purpose

Four areas have been captured under the purpose for which the institution was established, and these are:

- (i) **Spiritual:** To produce men and women whose educational outcomes and competence, character and Christian virtues are enduring expressions of the College's internalized motto of *to know Christ better and to make Him better known*.
- (ii) **Social:** To prepare students for social awareness and responsibility and to assume leadership and service in society.
- (iii) **Intellectual:** To build a teaching community that fosters interdisciplinary studies and advance knowledge through excellence in research and scholarship.
- (iv) **Professional:** To nurture a high sense of professionalism among her students to strive towards excellence and personal achievement in their various fields of endeavours.⁶⁰

CSUC is said to offer students an alternative to the traditional secular tertiary education and an opportunity to make the training of their heads (mind), hearts, hands and heels an integral part of their spiritual life. It thus offers many initiatives and programmes for nurturing future leaders in an environment that promotes the integration of work with the Christian faith.⁶¹

CSUC'S POLICY ON HIRING AND APPOINTMENTS

CSUC has as a policy that every employee and appointee to any position, besides the academic other considerations, must be a person with a strong Christian faith and a practising Christian of good repute.⁶² This includes the Chair and members of the University College Council, the President, Registrar and all other staff, academic, administrative and all others. Before the invitation for interview, the Chaplain as part of his gate keeping duty ascertains the faith background of the applicant and it is further probed into during the interview itself. Again, in accordance with the institution's statutes, an employee appointed undergoes an official orientation and mentorship which include sessions with the University Chaplain and Counsellor, and "all employees of the University College upon assumption of duty are required to execute the Article of Faith of the University College."⁶³

DISCUSSION

CSUC, A CHRISTIAN SCHOOL OR CHRISTIAN-RELATED SCHOOL

First among the issues that portrays an institution as Christian, the Association of Christian School International (ACSI) model requires that a school must have a clear Christian Philosophy of education.⁶⁴ From CSUC's stated definition and identity, it presents a philosophy that seeks to undertake programmes to equip evangelicals and other Christians for leadership roles in church and society, research in orthodox and contemporary theological issues in Africa and dissemination of information for the education and enlightenment of the church and society.⁶⁵ Its Christian philosophy comes out in its mission statement which is "to promote knowledge for the training of men and women in Christian values and principles, academic and professional excellence for the transformation of society."⁶⁶

⁵⁷ Revised Statutes of CSUC (October, 2017). Statute 2.3 (iv).

⁵⁸ Revised Statutes of CSUC (October, 2017). Statute 2.3 (v).

⁵⁹ Revised Statutes of CSUC (October, 2017). Statute 2.1

⁶⁰ CSUC Statutes, (2005), statute 2

⁶¹ Revised Statutes of CSUC (October, 2017). Statute 3.3

⁶² Revised Statutes of CSUC (October, 2017). Statute 3.4

⁶³ Revised Statutes of CSUC (October, 2017). Statute 2.2(b)

⁶⁴ Vernard T. Gant & Tasha M. Tillman, ed. How to Start an Urban Christian School (Colorado Springs: ACSI, 2001), p69.

⁶⁵ Christian Service University College Statutes, 2005

⁶⁶ Revised Statutes of CSUC (October, 2017). Statute 3.2

Again, it is expressed in various forms and spread out in its stated core values and purpose for existence. The first of its core values requires a person who comes into association with CSUC to be committed to the Lordship of Jesus Christ and living in obedience to His will. Such a person should seek and accept his guidance in the leadership of the institution.⁶⁷

Secondly, a Christian school is said to pursue a mission that must be the education of people from a Christian perspective derived from shared biblical values mutually held by churches and Christian families, teaching biblical truth as centred in the Lord Jesus and applicable in all areas of life.⁶⁸

In the stated mission statement of CSUC, it seeks “to promote knowledge for the training of men and women in Christian values and principles, academic and professional excellence for the transformation of society.”⁶⁹ Teaching in Christian values implies teaching biblical truth as centred in the Lord Jesus Christ and applicable in all areas of life as indicated in the ACSI perspective and shared by CCCU and other Christian Scholars and institutions as discussed in the literature.⁷⁰

Thirdly, ACSI’s prescription indicates that a Christian School presents a Christian point of view as exemplified by a dedicated, Christian professional faculty and evidenced in all facets of learning and growth.⁷¹ As indicated in CSUC’s policy on hiring and recruitment, it is assumed that staff who are employed or hired to work at CSUC must be practising Christians. As to whether their professional and Christian dedication will be exemplified and evidenced in all facets of learning and growth is another issue for further research.

CONCLUSION

As a matter of principle and in line with the defined analytical framework, CSUC can be said to satisfy one criterion of a Christian institution in the definition of its identity which should be the education of students from a Christian perspective and developing them in the image of God. This is consistent with what has been stated in CSUC’s statutes and other documents. It is not classified Christian because it was established by a body of evangelical Christians. To define a clear Christian philosophy of education is very critical in the proper functioning of every Christian institution since that serves as the foundation upon which the super structure of Christian education is built. The building of the super structure is however beyond the purview of this work and is therefore recommended as very important for further research.

⁶⁷ Revised Statutes of CSUC (October, 2017). Statute 3.2

⁶⁸ Vernard T. Gant & Tasha M. Tillman, ed. *How to Start an Urban Christian School* (Colorado Springs: ACSI, 2001), p69.

⁶⁹ Revised Statutes of CSUC (October, 2017). Statute 3.2

⁷⁰ Vernard T. Gant & Tasha M. Tillman, ed. *How to Start an Urban Christian School* (Colorado Springs: ACSI, 2001), p69.

⁷¹ Vernard T. Gant & Tasha M. Tillman, ed. *How to Start an Urban Christian School* (Colorado Springs: ACSI, 2001), p69.

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