



A Critical Analysis of the Ghanaian Context, Experience and Perspectives of Public Theology

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ABSTRACT

The article aimed at a critical analysis of the Ghanaian experience of Public Theology. It argued that through Christian perspectives derived from sermons, communiqués, and other official public statements the church has participated in public conversations, public-policy cycles, and other public issues within the Ghanaian context. Participation involves challenging the structures of corruption, injustice, poverty, and inequality that exist in societies and advocating for policies and practices that promote the common good. With perspectives from Christian beliefs and values the study observed the framework for addressing these issues and promoting a more just and equitable society and further places emphasis on the social responsibility of Christians. The study concluded that Ghanaian public theologians must stress the importance of the Christian community's involvement in addressing social issues and not just focusing on individual spiritual growth. This will lead to the development of a number of initiatives by Christian organizations and churches to address social issues such as poverty, health, democratic consolidation, wealth creation, education, and social justice.

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INTRODUCTION

Public Theology in African Christianity emphasizes the prophetic role of the church in speaking truth to power as the author has indicated in another publication.¹ This involves challenging the structures of injustice, poverty, and inequality that exist in African societies and advocating for policies and practices that promote the common good. African theologians such as John Mbiti, Desmond Tutu, and Kwame Bediako have been instrumental in developing Public Theology in African Christianity. Bediako for instance has emphasized the need for contextualized theology that takes into account the cultural, social, political, and economic realities of African communities and the importance of the church's prophetic voice in shaping these realities.² The church is seen as a transformative agent in society, working towards the realization of God's kingdom on earth. Public Theology in African

¹ Kwabena Opuni-Frimpong, "Christian Advocacy Ministry in African Christianity: The Nature, Prospects and Challenges in Ghana." *Journal of Mother-Tongue Biblical Hermeneutics and Theology* 3 (4), (2022); 57-67. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.38159/motbit.2021351>

² Kwame Bediako, *Christianity in Africa: The Renewal of a Non-Western Religion*. (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1995).

Christianity seeks to transform African societies by promoting the values of justice, peace, reconciliation, and democratic consolidation and by advocating for the common good of all members of society. It is a dynamic field that continues to shape African Christianity and its engagement with the wider world.

Faith in public life has been acknowledged throughout the Bible and Christian history. The concept of 'public theology' or 'public church' was, however, introduced into theological circles by Marty Martin in the 1970s.³ Public Theology is the response to the questions about the public role of the Church. It has been considered as the public witness of the church by Karel August.⁴

Public Theology is a field of study that seeks to explore the intersection of Christian values, beliefs, and practices with public life, including cultural, social, economic, and political issues. It is concerned with how Christian perspectives and values contribute to discussions and debates about these issues, and how Christian communities engage in public dialogue and action. It is often seen as a response to the challenges faced by contemporary societies, including poverty, unemployment, economic inequality, hunger and political polarization. It is a multidisciplinary field that seeks to bridge the gap between academic theology and practical engagement with society. Public Theology in African Christianity is a broad and complex topic that involves the intersection of the Christian faith, culture, and public life. African Christianity is characterized by its diversity, and therefore, Public Theology in Africa encompasses a wide range of perspectives, experiences, and practices. At its core, public theology in African Christianity is concerned with how Christian faith and values can be brought to bear for relevant impacts on the social, economic, political, and cultural aspects of life.

Public Theology is grounded on the belief that Christianity has a role to play in shaping the public sphere.⁵ It emphasizes the importance of interfaith dialogue and cooperation, recognizing the religious diversity of African societies. Anquandah has opined that African Christian leaders have worked closely with leaders of other faiths to promote peace, social justice, and human dignity.⁶ Public theology in African Christianity reflects a deep commitment to social transformation, grounded in a biblical vision of God's justice, love, and compassion. It challenges Christians to be active agents in matters of social transformation. It is a dynamic and diverse field that seeks to apply Christian beliefs and values to the complex social, economic, and political realities of African societies. It is a vital contribution to the ongoing process of social transformation and development in Africa.

Public Theology sets the agenda for African theologians as they seek to develop a theology that is grounded in the realities of African life, culture, and history. As indicated by Emmanuel Asante they are drawing on African traditions and values, and are seeking to integrate these with Christian beliefs and practices.⁷ This approach is sometimes referred to as inculturation or contextualization according to Kwame Bediako.⁸ It is an important aspect of the contribution that African Christianity is making to the global church and to the wider world. African Christian leaders have been involved in advocating for policies and practices that promote values, such as democracy, human rights, and sustainable development.

African theologians and Christian leaders continue to engage in Public Theology, addressing a range of contemporary issues such as poverty, corruption, human rights, environmental degradation, and political violence. They draw on biblical and theological insights to provide critical analysis of

³ Sebastian Kim, *Theology in the Public Sphere: Public Theology as a Catalyst for Open Debate*. (London: SCM Press, 2011).

⁴ Karel T. August, *The Quest for Being Public Church, The South African Challenge to the Moravian Church in Context 1737-2004*. (Bellville: The Print-Man 2009), 213.

⁵ Kwabena Opuni-Frimpong, "Doing Public Theology in African Christianity: A Reflection on Communiqués by Churches in Ghana." *E-Journal of Religious and Theological Studies* 7 (11), (2022); 190-200. DOI : <https://doi.org/10.38159/erats.20217111>

⁶ James Anquandah, *Agenda Extraordinaire: 80 years of the Christian Council of Ghana 1929-2009*. (Accra: Asempa Publishers, 2009).

⁷ Emmanuel Asante, *Theology and Society in Context: A Theologist's Reflections on Selected Topics*. (Accra: Sonlife Press, 2014).

⁸ Kwame Bediako, *Theology and Identity: The Impact of Culture Upon Christian Thought in the Second Century and Modern Africa*. (Oxford: Regnum Books, 1992).

these issues, as well as offer ethical and prophetic guidance on how to address them. They do so by drawing on Christian teachings and principles, but also by engaging with other religious traditions and secular discourses. A distinctive feature of African public theology is its emphasis on community and collective responsibility.

African theologians stress the importance of the communal dimension of African society and argue that Christian faith should be expressed in ways that promote the well-being of the community as a whole as observed by Olav Tveit.⁹ Public theologians seek to contribute to public debates and public-policy making by drawing on their religious traditions and engaging with other voices in the public sphere. They seek to promote ethical and moral principles in public life and to bring a critical perspective to issues of power and injustice. It is an important contribution to ongoing conversations about how societies can address the challenges of the 21st century in a just and equitable way.

Public Theology is the entire discipline of Christian advocacy and public witness. It is biblical and contextual. Even though it is done within contexts it also transcends contextual boundaries. It must be noted that there is not one theology that responds to all issues of Christian public witness. The church talks about public theologies that seek to address the numerous issues in the public sphere. There are, therefore, public theologies within the entire discipline of Public Theology. The church may talk about public theologies of education, health, sanitation, peace, good governance, traditional leadership, etc. Moreover, there is no Public Theology in any context and nation that respond to public issues everywhere. Public Theology in responsible mining in South Africa may not make much relevance to the same mining challenges in Ghana. That does not mean that the various countries may not learn from their various best practices and shared values. The rationale of the study is therefore, to identify the theological resources that through communiqué, Christian teachings, and official statements the church can derive for its participation in public conversations and public policy issues in Ghana.

METHODOLOGY

The study in its qualitative approach examines available materials on the engagements of the church's Public Theology perspectives on national issues in Ghana. The study pays much attention to communiqués and other official public statements of the individual churches like the Presbyterian Church of Ghana and the ecumenical bodies like the Christian Council of Ghana, Ghana Catholic Bishops Conference, Ghana Pentecostal and Charismatic Council and the All African Conference of Churches that seek to articulate their perspectives on national issues in Ghana and the African context.

Jesus the Public Theologian

Jesus always provides the paradigm for the life and work of the church. Jesus on several occasions is seen calling people into the kingdom of God. The response to the call into the kingdom of God brings the people into a spiritual relationship with God. The call into the kingdom of God has been considered evangelism which constantly engages the attention of the church.¹⁰ 'And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom,' (Matt 4:23, 9:35). Spiritual (evangelistic) witness seeks to bring people into a relationship with God. But that is not the end of Christian witness and mission. There is another level of Christian mission and that is what is called Christian social witness or Christian public witness.

Jesus was equally involved in public witness. The operations of his anointing involved doing good to all manner of persons. In Acts 10:38, 'God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him.' This kind of witness was not only targeting the people who were accepting the invitation to participate in life in the kingdom of God but also others who were living with challenges

⁹ Olav Fykse Tveit. "The Role of Religion in Sustainable Development and Peace." *Berlin World Council of Churches*. February 17-18, 2016.

¹⁰ Kwabena Opuni-Frimpong, *Indigenous Knowledge and Christian Missions*. (Accra: SonLife Limited, 2022).

and needed help and hope. He met some of such people on their way to the cemetery, wedding ceremonies, beaches, farms, family meetings, and other public spaces.

Some of the people who benefited from Jesus' public witness came back to thank him. Others, however, after receiving their healings for whatever reason did not come back to express their appreciation to Jesus. Even though Jesus acknowledged the ingratitude of those nine lepers, that did not discourage him from responding to the needs of other people that he encountered (Luke 17: 12-19). The blind man from birth that Jesus healed did not even know who Jesus was until Jesus introduced himself to him on a different occasion John 9. The public witness presents Jesus as an example of a public theologian for the church. The example calls on the church to remain an institution of care and concern for all people.

Public Theology in the Ghanaian Context

The centre of gravity of global Christianity has been acknowledged to have shifted to the southern hemisphere according to Andrew Walls.¹¹ The Christian presence in Ghana is noted in the number of influential people in government and other professions that have considered themselves Christians. The churches attract high numbers of young people at home and in academic institutions. Media space is constantly occupied with Christian activities and programmes. Church services and meetings are spread along the length and breadth of the nation. The 2021 population census in Ghana reported the Christian population as 71%.

The nation that is considered with high Christian numbers is also noted for its disturbing socio-economic and political challenges. The issues of poverty, illiteracy, lack of quality health and educational facilities, domination and manipulation of foreign investments in natural resources, electoral violence, unemployment, gender injustice, social inequalities, economic migration of the youth to Europe and North America, corruption, etc. are also known concerns of the nation. The irony is that Ghana, the nation with a high Christian presence has also remained a nation with high numbers of such socio-economic challenges as the author has discussed elsewhere.¹² The church in Ghana must not only show concern about the socio-economic challenges but must equally provide relevant responses to the challenges towards social transformation as some of the people who are causing and experiencing the challenges are also members of the church.

Christian Mission of Hope

The Church must give hope. Christian hope, however, must be beneficial to both people in the church as well as those who are outside the church and may be considered as the public church. Christian hope is not for those only in the church. Jesus said, 'You are the light of the world, you are the salt of the world' Matt 5:14-16. The Church must be a source of hope to the people in the societies within which the church is situated to do missions as well as those who are known members of the church.

Tveit (a former General Secretary of the World Council of Churches, 2010-2020), has argued that 'if Christian hope is not hope for all, it is not hope at all.'¹³ A necessary condition for hope is that it expresses itself in love for others, whoever and wherever they are. If the church helps only the members of the church but does not provide hope or help for the people in the communities, genuine Christian hope is lacking and inadequate. People outside the church must have hope because of the presence of the church in the community. If it is not hope for all, it is not hope at all therefore remains the guiding principle in mission. The involvement of the church in democratic consolidation and economic transformation for example is primarily to offer hope.

The public significance and impact of the church is a question that demands urgent answers in the Ghanaian context. The church's presence in the world must provide hope to the distressed world. While the church may want to prepare faithful disciples, attention must equally be paid to matters of active citizens and the well-being of the people. It is expected that the implication of Christian

¹¹ Andrew Walls, *The Missionary Movement in Christian History*. (New York: Orbis Books, 1996).

¹² Kwabena Opuni-Frimpong, *Christian Ministry of Advocacy*. (Accra: SonLife Press, 2015).

¹³ Tveit, "The Role of Religion in Sustainable Development and Peace."

theology, church life, and Christian witness will respond to the context within which it serves. The people do hope for a better future in their struggles and therefore the church in its efforts to remain relevant must be on a pilgrimage to the nations.

Public Theology in African Christianity is not just for academic fulfilment. It is the key determinant of the social relevance of the public witness of the church. Many people at the church and its prayer meetings etc. are seeking human dignity, well-being, sustainable peace and hope. A desirable future, however, does not happen accidentally. It calls for planning, sacrifice and action. The church has been called to witness. The church, however, provides both spiritual (evangelistic) and public witness. Christian mission includes spiritual (evangelistic) and public witness something that Public Theology must facilitate in its planning and progress.

Public Theology as Public Conversation

Public conversations provide the public with the engagements and perspectives of Christian beliefs and values on public issues. The public is the place of reflections on common interests. It involves both people of the faith as well as others who may not be adherents of the faith. Reflections on the public witness of Jesus provide responses to the public of Public Theology. Jesus spent time teaching in the synagogues and to his disciples on matters of faith and the kingdom of God. It is also instructive to note that he uses the streets for his teaching and preaching ministries. The beaches, funerals, weddings, farms, etc. remained as platforms of his witness about the kingdom of God. His audience in such public spheres included both his disciples and the ordinary people on the streets. He responded to public issues and on several occasions used them to point to the common good and the glory of God.

The early disciples of Christ followed the pattern of the public witness model of their Master. They were available at the synagogues and temples to participate in worship and witness. They also made their witness felt in the public sphere including beaches, prisons, palaces, etc. Paul utilized the public space for his public witness. The public provides members of the faith communities who seek to make changes in public life with varied platforms. Martin Luther decided to make his reflections on the church and society available to the public to pursue the desired change. The reflections on public issues moreover, are usually directed to the public through the media, the state and civil society.

Media Public Space

The media has played a very significant role in the governance system of Ghana. It facilitates the flow of information on national issues. The media has remained an important partner in the political process in democracies and good governance. Through the instrumentality of the media, one is able to get information about many aspects and topics of public life, including religion, governance, education, health, economy, international relations, etc. in Ghana and beyond. Church leaders have pursued media engagements through press releases, communiqués, panel discussions and documentaries.

The various media patterns provide the space for faith perspectives on public concerns. Communiqués by the churches are usually discussed on radio, television, newspapers, social and digital platforms. The church leaders are called upon to provide insights into their expressed opinions. The issues often provide platforms for engagements and dialogue in the media space.¹⁴

The media influence public opinion, the perception and impressions that people use to measure, assess and interpret public life and actions. Public opinion subsequently, influences the decision-making processes of both individuals and corporate entities on matters of public policies. The churches have influenced public opinion on public policy issues through their pastoral letters, official statements, and issuance of communiqués that are reflected upon in the media public space.

Digital Public Space

Digitalization and social media have become extensions of everyday life. The contemporary digital public space has provided platforms for matters of public education, information sharing, Christian worship, entertainment, and resource mobilization. Misinformation and fake news have also become

¹⁴ Paul Gifford, *Ghana's New Christianity*. (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press 2004).

deepened due to the digital public space and social media but that does not take away the fact that digital space and social media have even advanced Christian ministry and theology. Contemporary digital and social media platforms have widened the scope of discussions and engagements. The Christian public witnesses have found their way on YouTube, WhatsApp platforms, Facebook, e-learning, and the websites of churches. The interactive segments create opportunities for feedback and sharing of opinions.

The Central Government

Public policies are the decisions of governments. They include what governments decide to do or not to do with national resources. The presidency, parliament, military, judiciary, state boards, and other public sector institutions are responsible for public policy, maintenance of law and order, and provision of welfare. They also provide the public space for Public Theology engagements. They have remained the space for policies where matters of budgets, laws, resource mobilization, enforcement of laws, and economic policies for policy-making and implementations are formulated. The communiqués which normally do reflect on public-policy issues are presented to governments and are considered as opinions from the church communities. The public-policy formulation and implementation platforms further provide public space for faith-based organizations and public-policy officials' engagements.

Implementation of public policies has its challenges. According to Joseph Ayee, 'In developing countries of Africa, Asia, and Latin America, public policies often do not get implemented at all, and those which do manage to get through the tortuous process of implementation often look very different from what the framers originally intended.'¹⁵ When public policies are not implemented or not implemented according to the intended outcomes, the citizens who are at the receiving end suffer. The common good becomes threatened. The challenges of lack of proper implementation of public policies have been recognized and considered by the churches and ecumenical bodies. The All African Conference of Churches communiqué recognized the compassionate voice of Faith-Based Organizations to challenge 'the voices of hatred, exclusion, chauvinism, and extremism.'¹⁶ The idea of the churches challenging the voices of neglect, exclusion, and extremism must be a result of the lack of proper implementation of public policies and decisions.

Paying attention to political leaders who are the key administrators of public policies is very crucial for development. Ayee has opined that 'leadership at all levels has increasingly been singled out as the most important variable that has shaped the various developments and governance outcomes witnessed on the African continent.'¹⁷ Consequently, the blame for development and political failures lies squarely at the feet of self-interested or misguided leaders whose choices, it is believed, have undermined prosperity and stability. At the same time, success is attributed to deft guidance by effective political and bureaucratic leaders.

The role of church leaders in the governance of the nation is duly recognized. According to Ayee, 'Leadership is a political process which involves the skills of mobilizing people and resources to achieve a set of shared and negotiated goals. It refers not only to national political leaders but equally to leadership at sub-national levels and in all sectors of society i.e. in businesses and business organizations, trade unions, NGOs, professional associations, churches, and bureaucracy and in the relations between them.'¹⁸ Church leadership is recognized as a key leadership that must contribute to national development. Church leaders' perspectives on public matters have become expectations by the public to the extent that the failure or long delays of the church leader's participation in matters of public concern are considered as neglect of Christian social responsibility and stewardship of the faith leaders.

¹⁵ Joseph R.A. Ayee, *An Anatomy of Public Policy Implementation*. (Avebury Brookfield USA 1997),1.

¹⁶ Communiqué issued by the All African Conference of Churches held at Desmond Tutu Conference Centre Nairobi, Kenya on November 29-30, 2016.

¹⁷ Joseph R.A. Ayee, *An Anatomy of Public Policy Implementation*. 1.

¹⁸ Ayee, *Leadership and the Ghanaian State Today: Reflections and Perspectives*, 1.

Civil Society Public Space

Civil society organizations provide public space for conversations on national issues. While pursuing their specific interests they end up responding to the national issues and interests. Faith-based organizations have regularly been invited by various civil society organizations to participate in such conversations and make contributions. The public policy cycle usually involves consultations with civil society organizations and faith-based organizations.

Workplaces and Markets Public Space

Public-policy issues usually find their way into the public space. Conversations in the markets, workplaces, public transport, and in other various rural and urban communities reflect on issues that concern the citizens. Church members who are active members of the societies equally present their opinions on national concerns to such conversations with the perspectives that have been shared in sermons, pastoral letters, and communiqués by their church leaders.

Church members who are convinced about the positions of the church-based organizations subsequently present such views as excerpts of conversations in Trade Unions, Business Organizations, Professional Bodies, Non-Governmental Organizations, donor agencies, and traditional leadership institutions. Public conversations directly and indirectly are influenced by faith perspectives especially if the faith communities are properly educated and informed. Donor agencies and some governmental bodies have accepted to work with church-based institutions after reflections and acceptance of positions and perspectives of the churches on identified public subjects in public conversations.

Perspectives of Public Theology

Public Theology perspectives in Ghana are derived through preaching, official public statements by church leaders, and the issuance of communiqués. Communiqués for instance are normally done by both individual member churches like the Presbyterian Church of Ghana,¹⁹ individual ecumenical bodies like the Christian Council of Ghana²⁰ and Joint Ecumenical Bodies like the Christian Council of Ghana, Ghana Pentecostal and Charismatic Council and the Ghana Catholic Bishops Conference.²¹ They present the faith perspectives on public issues e.g. education, health, economic prosperity, employment, good governance, human rights, credible elections, and interfaith harmony.

In the effort to derive its sound and relevant faith perspectives on public issues the PCG for instance took a specific decision to issue and present communiqués to the government and the people of Ghana.²² The Presbyterian Church of Ghana (PCG) during its 65th Synod at Sunyani in 1994 took a decision to send communiqués to the Governments and people of Ghana at the end of every Synod meeting. Synod, which is now termed General Assembly by the PCG, decided that a ‘Communiqué be sent to the Head of State and the people of Ghana anytime Synod met. This is to replace the traditional message of greetings to the Head of State.’²³

The decision was a departure from its earlier practice of sending goodwill messages to the colonial authorities. The perspective through the issuance of the communiqués was to deepen the church’s influence in the public sphere. According to the PCG ‘to partner the Government in governance, a communiqué would make more impact than a mere message since a communiqué would call Government’s attention to burning issues that need attention in the country.’²⁴ The practice of

¹⁹ Communiqué issued by the Presbyterian Church of Ghana (PCG) at the end of its 19th General Assembly at Abetifi-Kwahu in the Eastern Region of Ghana on August 16-22, 2019.

²⁰ Communiqué on National Issues by the Christian Council of Ghana adopted at the Joint Heads of Churches

²¹ Joint Press Statement by the Christian Council of Ghana and the Ghana Catholic Bishops’ Conference Issued in Accra on May 18, 2016.

²² Opuni-Frimpong, “Doing Public Theology in African Christianity,” 190-200.

²³ Presbyterian Church of Ghana Synod Decisions of 65th Synod held at Sunyani on August 20-24, 1994.

²⁴ Presbyterian Church of Ghana Synod Decisions of 65th Synod held at Sunyani on August 20-24, 1994.

presenting faith perspectives through communiqués and other official public statements to governments and the people of Ghana has remained a practice for other churches and ecumenical bodies.

Holistic Christian Ministry

Christian ministry is expected to be holistic. Holistic ministry means that Christian witness must touch the totality of the human person i.e., the body, soul, and spirit of the people. The human being is not only a spiritual being. They are also agricultural, health, and educational beings. Emmanuel Asante has opined that ‘a holistic definition of ministry, however, must include aspects of human well-being, or what the economists call welfare, in areas, such as health, food, education, housing, employment, the environment, religious and cultural values and sustainability of each of these.’²⁵ Holistic approach in Christian ministry is expected to lead to the total development of the nation for the common good and the glory of God.²⁶ Believers will one day go to heaven, but they must be concerned about societies and social life as they equally have an impact on their faith journey.

Church members must not only become born again, well-educated in the Christian faith, and spirit-filled disciples but they must equally go out into the marketplaces, the law courts, and other sectors of society and function as active citizens. Church members need to be helped to bring their faith values and spirituality into matters of good governance and the generality of public life. Church leaders must have sustainable capacities to make significant contributions to good governance and other public issues. Pastors who are very good at preaching, prayer, deliverance, and healing, must also have the capacity to do effective Christian ministry when it comes to pandemics, social transformation, organization of peaceful and credible elections, etc. A holistic Christian ministry, therefore, ensures that there is no disconnection between life in the cathedral and the market.

Church leaders are expected to bring their faith perspectives on matters of public concern as a ministerial mandate. They are to be on pilgrimage with the people. The church must journey with the societies that they have been called to serve in matters of education, health, economic life, etc. A relevant church must be where the people are and journey with them. The Christian faith in its nature speaks to all dimensions of human life. The gospel does so because God is interested in all facets of humanity. The church subsequently must show interest in matters of the common good and social transformation.

Some ministers of the gospel don’t feel at ease talking about political issues and some politicians also believe that ministers of God should just concentrate on the spiritual matters and leave politics for the politicians. There are some church members who feel very uncomfortable when their church leaders are in ecumenical bodies like the Christian Council of Ghana, Ghana Pentecostal and Charismatic Council, Catholic Bishop Conference, etc., and make statements on matters of politics. God is interested in every facet of humanity. Indeed, God is an active participant in every aspect of humanity and therefore the church must show interest and concern as well.

Public Theology in Ghana: The Impact

Public Theology has remained the interface between theology and public life in Ghana, as it seeks to bring theological insights and reflections into dialogue with the public sphere. Its concern is with a range of issues, including poverty, inequality, human rights, environmental degradation, and political oppression. It has sought to address these issues by drawing perspectives on Christian teachings and principles, but also by engaging with other religious traditions and secular discourses. It has been characterized by the promotion of a gospel that is relevant to the social, political, and economic realities of the country. It provides a theological framework for Ghanaian Christians to engage with the wider society and contribute to the national transformation. It has involved the application of Christian theology to issues of public concern, such as social justice, poverty, corruption, and human rights.

²⁵ Asante, *Theology and Society in Context*, 5.

²⁶ Opuni-Frimpong, *Christian Ministry of Advocacy*.

Public theologians have pursued engagement with public policy and decision-making. They seek to influence public policy debates and shape the decisions made by governments, international organizations, and other institutions. They do so by providing theological and ethical perspectives on a range of issues and by advocating for policies and practices that promote the common good. Public theologians seek to influence public policy debates and to shape the decisions made by governments, international organisations, and other institutions.

Ghana has a long history of Christianity, with over 71% of the population identifying as Christians. As a result, Christianity has played a significant role in shaping Ghanaian society, including its political and social structures. Public Theology has influenced the country's history of colonialism and subsequent struggles for independence. Many Ghanaian theologians have sought to articulate a Christian response to issues such as poverty, corruption, and political oppression. This has led to a focus on issues of social justice and the promotion of the common good.

An important aspect of Public Theology in Ghana is its engagement with traditional African religious beliefs and practices. Ghanaian theologians have recognized the importance of traditional religious beliefs and practices in Ghanaian culture, and seek to integrate them into Christian theology and practice. This has led to a rich and diverse theological discourse in Ghana, which draws on both Christian and African traditions.²⁷ Ghanaian theologians stress the importance of the community in shaping individual identity and promoting social justice. This has led to a focus on issues such as communal ownership of resources, the importance of social networks and relationships, and the need for collective action to address social problems. It is a vital contribution to the ongoing process of cultural ennoblement, social transformation, and development in Ghana.

Despite significant economic growth in recent years, poverty remains a significant problem in the country. Public theologians argue that Christians have a responsibility to address poverty and inequality, and they have been involved in a range of initiatives aimed at addressing these issues, such as providing education and healthcare services to disadvantaged communities. Public theologians in Ghana have also been involved in advocacy on issues such as environmental degradation, human rights, and gender equality. They believe that Christian values can provide a framework for addressing these issues and promoting a more just and equitable society. A significant contribution of Public Theology in Ghana is the emphasis on the social responsibility of Christians. Ghanaian theologians stress the importance of Christian communities being involved in addressing social issues, and not just focusing on individual spiritual growth. This has led to the development of a number of initiatives by Christian organizations and churches to address social issues such as poverty, health, education, and social justice.

CONCLUSION

The study concludes with an observation that through Christian perspectives derived from sermons, communiqués, and other official public statements the church has participated in public conversations, public-policy cycles, and other public issues within the Ghanaian context. Participation involves challenging the structures of corruption, injustice, poverty, and inequality that exist in societies and advocating for policies and practices that promote the common good. Perspectives from Christian beliefs and values provide the framework for addressing these issues and promoting a more just and equitable society and further places emphasis on the social responsibility of Christians. For Ghanaian public theologians, it is recommended that they must stress the importance of Christian communities being involved in addressing social issues and not just focusing on individual spiritual growth. This will lead to the development of a number of initiatives by Christian organizations and churches to address social issues such as poverty, health, democratization, education, and social justice.

²⁷ Opuni-Frimpong, *Indigenous Knowledge and Christian Missions*.

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