



Transformed Individuals, Transforming the World: A Challenge to the Christian Church in Ghana

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ABSTRACT

It has been argued that due to the fallen moral standards even in the Church, moral decadence and its associated ills have risen to alarming heights in Ghana. The 2021 Population and Housing Census shows that over 71% are Christians, yet corruption, greed, arrogance, pride, and extravagant lifestyles, for example, have become a challenge to the moral fibre of the country. The question is “Why is Christianity growing in Ghana, yet clouded with an increase in moral decadence? Opinion leaders, including some church leaders, do not only agree that corruption should be nipped in the bud, but they encourage that a conscious effort is made to change attitudes. Through a literary review of relevant scholarly materials, this paper argued that individual transformation is a prerequisite to transforming the world. With an ethical theory of deontology providing the theoretical lens, this paper posited that the Church is responsible for intensifying her Christian education, nurturing, or character formation activities to enable members to become faithful disciples and active responsible citizens who would transform their world. This article contributes to the exploration of Christian education and Moral or Character Formation in Ghana.

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INTRODUCTION

Despite the popularity of Christianity in the Ghanaian setting, reports of moral decline have increased. Opinion leaders, including some religious leaders, continue to bemoan the collapse of the moral fibre of society. This increase in the fall in moral standards has been explored by some scholars in recent times.¹ The subject has been given prominence as a result of media reports of increased corruption, violence, armed robbery, teenage pregnancy, suicide, and other social vices, just to mention a few. They have become very prevalent and

¹ “The Role of The Church in The Fight Against Corruption.” <https://edubirdie.com/examples/the-role-of-the-church-in-the-fight-against-corruption>. [Accessed on July 12th, 2023]; Anthony Kofi Anomah, “The Fight against Corruption in Ghana: The Role of the Church and Church Leaders.” In *International Journal of Research and Innovation in Social Science*, Vol. II, Issue XI, November 2018; George Anderson Jnr. and Margaret M. Tayviah. “Corruption in Matrimony with Religion in Ghana: Questioning the Possibility.” *E-Journal of Religious and Theological Studies* 5, no.2 (2019): 112-120. <https://doi.org/10.32051/06241911>; George Anderson Jnr. & Inusah H. “Virtue Ethics as a Model for Addressing Moral Decline in Ghana.” *E-Journal of Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences* 4, no.3 (2023):170-180. <https://doi.org/10.38159/ehass.2023431>; Seth Asare-Danso, “Moral Education and the Curriculum: The Ghanaian Experience.” In *International Journal of Scientific Research and Management (IJSRM)*. Vol. 06. Issue 01(2018):34-42. DOI: 10.18535/ijrsm/v6i1.el05; J. Kwabena Asamoah-Gyadu, et al., “Religion and Values in Contemporary Africa: Christian Interpretations of Vice/Virtue Discourses in Ghana.” *International Bulletin of Mission Research*, 46(2), (2022):159–168. <https://doi.org/10.1177/23969393211000266>; Petria M. Theron, “The impact of Christian Higher Education on the lives of students and societies in Africa.” *Koers – Bulletin for Christian Scholarship* 78(1), Art. #60, (2013). <http://dx.doi.org/10.4102/koers.v78i1.60>; Peter Addai-Mensah, “The Role of Akan Values on Moral Upbringing of Children in Contemporary Society.” *Journal of Mother-Tongue Biblical Hermeneutics and Theology* 2, no.4 (2020): 96-101. <https://doi.org/10.38159/motbit.2020101>; Kwabena Opuni-Frimpong, “The Akan Traditional Leadership Formation: Some Lessons for Christian Leadership Formation” *E-Journal of Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences* 2, no.7 (2021): 75-91 <https://doi.org/10.38159/ehass.2021272>

pervasive such that people have accepted it as a way of life.² Statistically, the 2021 Population and Housing Census revealed that over 71% of Ghana's population are Christians. It has been stated that due to the fallen moral standards even in the Church, corruption, for example, has risen to alarming heights in Ghana.³ Opinion leaders do not only agree that it should be nipped in the bud, but they encourage that a conscious effort is made to change attitudes.

In a recent address to open the 2023 World Convention of the Full Gospel Business Men's Fellowship International (FGBMFI) in Accra in July 2023, the President of the Republic of Ghana, Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo, implored Christian businessmen and women, for example, to imbibe in their business dealings, morality, honesty and truthfulness to further push forward the fight against corruption. He observed that it was not only the front-page reporting of abuse of positions and offices, involving people in government and other prominent personalities that draw back society and stalled growth, but also, the flouting of rules and regulations in all aspects of human endeavour and bypassing the laid down guidelines that are meant to safeguard and direct the society.⁴ He mentioned some of the offences as; reckless driving, bribing the police after being pulled over for a traffic offence, building without a permit, citizens turning a blind eye to issues of corruption, degrading the environment through the destruction of water bodies, illegal mining or galamsey, pollution, and other social vices. One cannot say without any equivocation that Christians have become part of the problem. The onus is on every individual Christian, who has been transformed by the word, to also ensure that these issues are reduced to the barest minimum or nip in the bud.⁵

The challenge is how to accomplish this at the individual or personal level. To bring about the needed change in Ghanaian society, Christians, in all areas of society, should be prepared to live and work according to Christian ethics based on the teachings of Jesus Christ. For this to happen, it is the view of this paper that, individual transformation is a prerequisite. The question that necessitated this study is "Why is Christianity growing in Ghana, yet there is a decline in the moral standards of citizens"?

This paper does not have the intention of re-echoing previous debates, on the causes of the moral crisis in Ghana, but it will ascertain the role of the church in character formation or transformation in Ghana. The thesis of this paper is that if it is intensified, Christian education, nurturing, or character formation can contribute not only to the Christian mission through faithful discipleship but also to the transformation of individuals amid societal decay. Utilizing the theory of deontology as the ethical framework, the paper argues that the church must intensify its Christian education or nurturing activities to enable adherents to become faithful disciples and responsible citizens, worthy of their calling. The paper is in three segments: the first explains the concept of Christian Education or Nurturing. Second, through the theory of deontology, the paper examines the fall in the moral standards in Ghanaian society amidst the popularity of Christianity and challenges the church to reexamine its Christian nurturing curriculum. Third, the paper discusses the way forward.

METHODOLOGY

Generally, researchers employ different research designs in conducting their study. These may include, but are not limited to, interviews, observations, focus group discussions, and collecting and analysing numerical data.⁶ To achieve the objective of this study, content analysis was employed by doing a literature review on the topic. The paper reviewed books and journal articles about Christian education by some early interpreters. It also searched for contemporary literature and studies using electronic databases, such as Google Scholar, on the subject matter in appreciating the role of the church in the transformation of individuals in Ghana. In this current paper, *Christian Education, Moral / Character Formation, Nurturing and Christian Transformation* are used interchangeably.

Understanding the Concept of Christian Education or Nurturing

Christian education has been defined many times by different scholars over the years. One of the early interpreters of Christian Education, Randolph Crump Miller, in 1956 commended a simple definition. He observed that Christian education is an educational activity that takes place at both the Christian home and the

² Kojo Pumpuni Asante, "Ghana Has Failed Woefully in Its Fight Against Corruption." Available from <https://corruptionwatchghana.org/tag/cdd-ghana> [Accessed on July 19th, 2023]

³ Frank Okyere. "The Christian Church in Ghana and corruption". Available from <https://www.graphic.com.gh/features/features/the-christian-church-in-ghana-and-corruption.html> [Accessed July 10th, 2023]

⁴ Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo, "Christian businessmen should lead in the corruption fight." Available from: <https://ghanatoday.gov.gh/news/christian-businessmen-should-lead-in-the-corruption-fight-akufo-addo> [Accessed on July 20th 2023]

⁵ Akufo-Addo, "Christian businessmen should lead in the corruption fight."

⁶ Kwabena Opuni-Frimpong "An Exploration into Akan Traditional Patterns of Learning and its Significance for Contemporary Akan Christian Formation." *Journal of Education and Learning Technology* 2, no.1 (2021): 17-28. <https://doi.org/10.38159/jelt.2021221>

church with believers supporting each other.⁷ In his opinion, Christian education is a continuous activity. It is not static. Such a process must bring growth and change over time. He points out that such a process should aim at redeeming or transforming the individual from one level to the other. In his opinion, Christian education must bring transformation in the life of the individual. This orientation, strictly speaking, must start with the orientation of the mind, which must lead to behaviour patterns, that is helping people become, to help in their building up. The Apostle Paul emphasised this transformation and said that there must be the “renewal of the mind” (Rom 12: 1-2). This implies that there must be a connection between belief and behaviour change. Miller goes on to say that both the home and church must be used in this continuous transformational process.

In talking about the transformational process, Stephen O. Maitanmi observed that Christian education is the continuous phenomenon by which individuals are challenged with and measured by the word of God.⁸ This *process* includes the entire church, which is aimed at leading individuals to take control of their glorious inheritance in the Christian fellowship. He further observed that this activity is both personal, as well as, communal in nature. Maitanmi noted that Christian education concerns itself with the past, the present and the future. Seeking to introduce individuals to their sacred tradition, making the Christian faith relevant in society, and nurturing practises that lead to mature Christians in society.

Another definition of Christian Education is exemplified by Dora P. Chaplin. Quoting Adelaide Teague Case,⁹ Chaplin observed that Christian Education is presenting the accumulated resources of Christian life and thought to the various age groups. This should be done in such a manner that the redemptive work of Christ will be seen in their lives.¹⁰ Chaplin believes that Christian education must transform the individual; either the child, youth or the adult, to exhibit Christ-centred life for the benefit of all. Christian education must therefore place much attention on “spiritual formation.” One therefore cannot, but, agree with Robert Pazmino’s classical definition of Christian education “as the deliberate, systematic, and sustained divine and human effort to share or appropriate the knowledge, values, attitudes, skills, sensitivities, and behaviours that comprise or are consistent with the Christian faith.”¹¹ Such an activity must foster a renewal, regeneration, or transformation of both individuals and institutions through the teaching of the gospel. Christian education must bring people to experience the *Christ-event*.

What seems obvious from the above definitions and other Christian Education interpreters, is the absolute connection between Christian Education or nurturing and the transformation of lives. Worded differently, every Christian education activity must bring about transformation in the life of the individual. It must lead the individual to become a faithful Christian in society. Knowing Jesus Christ and living for Him, must be the objective of every Christian. It must be emphasised that the purpose of Christian nurturing is a whole-life experience of development that enables them to serve their community well.¹² It is the view of this paper that such a renewed mindset [belief] of the individual will consequently have an impact on society [behaviour patterns], thus, having the right influence on society.

The Church and Christian Education or Nurturing

The Christian Church, as an institution established by God here on earth, is made up of individuals who confess Jesus Christ as their LORD and Saviour in their lives. The Church is described in the New Testament in several ways such as Christians (Acts 11:26; 26:28; 1 Pet 4:16), Disciples (Acts 11: 26), Saints, Children of God, Brethren (Philp 4:21; 1 Pet 2:17), Members (1 Cor 12: 27), Servants (Rom 16: 1,2) and Priests (1 Pet 2:5,6; Rev 1:6). Kwabena Opuni-Frimpong’s observation about the church is worth mentioning. According to him, the Church is a fellowship of believers with well-defined structures worshipping the Lord Jesus Christ and not just simply the physical buildings.¹³

⁷ Randolph Crump Miller, *Biblical Theology and Christian Education*. (New York: Scribner, 1956): 53.

⁸ Stephen O. Maitanmi. “Reflections on Christian Education,” *Journal of Research on Christian Education*, 28:2, (2019): 91-93, DOI: 10.1080/10656219.2019.1649401.

⁹ She influenced a generation of religious educators and was the leading authority in the field in the Episcopal Church of her day. Available from: <https://www.biola.edu/talbot/ce20/database/adelaide-teague-case>. [Accessed on July 20th, 2023]

¹⁰ Dora P. Chaplin, *Children and Religion*. (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1948): 136.

¹¹ Robert Pazmino, “Christian Education is More than Formation.” *Christian Education Journal: Research on Educational Ministry*. 7. 356-365. 10.1177/073989131000700208. (2010).

¹² Mark A. Lampert, “The Hand-Me-Down’ Philosophy: A Challenge to Uniqueness in Christian Education.” In *Christian Education Journal* (8):2 (1988): 39.

¹³ Kwabena Opuni-Frimpong. “An Examination of the Role of Public Theology in the Church’s Efforts Toward National Transformation in Ghana,” *E-Journal of Religious and Theological Studies*, 9 no.6 (2023): 240. <https://doi.org/10.38159/erats.2023964>

Ivan Sanders also observed that the Church is an agent of education because it brings the community together.¹⁴ It gathers people of diverse backgrounds, occupations, skills, ages, and genders together as one body. Again, Mugambi made the point that the Church's key role in the Character formation of individuals in various societies, cannot be overemphasised.¹⁵ It is therefore apt that the individual Christian would be given the right information to make the right decisions in life. Such a person would then be able to transform the society. This is what Christian Education is expected to achieve.

In describing the motives for Christian education, as the building block of the Christian faith, Esther Megill argued that Christian education must be for all, be it recent converts or even matured Christians.¹⁶ According to her, the Church should not only be interested in the quantitative growth of its members but must also be interested in their qualitative growth through continued education or nurturing. Articulating his views on the responsibility of the Church in society, Emmanuel Asante submitted that the Church, the "*ekklesia*," has a definite calling, that is to *Go and make disciples of all nations* (Matthew 28: 19f). The Church is also called *to be the salt of the earth and light of the world* (Matthew 5: 13-16). The Church is called *to declare the wonderful deeds of him who called her out of darkness into his marvellous light* (1 Peter 2: 9).¹⁷ This infers that the Church must nurture her members not only to be faithful followers of Christ but people who would also transform their various societies. The paper argues that transformation comes when the human mind is renewed, and the church has a strategic role to play in this area.

Christian Nurturing and the Human Mind

John Calvin¹⁸ observed that forsaking all carnal thoughts, as a human being, is not only a difficult task to achieve but to dedicate one's life to God and a neighbour, as well as, to live the life of angels in this corrupt world, is also difficult.¹⁹ To deliver the mind from every trap, the Apostle Paul called attention to the change of worldview and challenged his readers to be *transformed by the renewing of their minds* (Rom 12: 2). This is because the transformation of the mind leads to the transformation of the society. A transformed mind assesses issues of this world in the light of the word of God and not human opinions.²⁰ It is that transformed mind through which the Spirit of God operates. It must be noted that there is no superior argument of transformation, than a change of mindset. To think wrongly and very little about God and the things of God in life, and then to begin thinking about spiritual things more than anything else, is a demonstration of the work of God's grace, through the power of the Holy Spirit.

The Mind, from the *King James Bible Dictionary*, includes the abilities of observing and appreciation and those of feeling, judging, determining the intellectual faculty, and understanding reason; in the narrower sense, as the capacity for spiritual truth, the higher powers of the soul.²¹ The mind is the organ for acknowledging the Divinity; distinguishing between goodness and evil. It is the power of considering and judging thoughts, feelings, purposes, desires, and so on. So, in simple terms, the mind is the faculty of thought, understanding and the attitudes that it produces. In the words of John Calvin, the mind is the human element which is reliable in giving proper direction to the will of the individual.²²

A person's mind is also considered in an ethical sense. For instance, in the New Testament, the mind is considered as either *good or evil*. Thus, the mind may be "*hardened*" (2 Cor. 3:14), "*blinded*" (2 Cor. 4:4), "*corrupt*" (2 Tim. 3:8), and "*debased*" (Rom. 1:28). What Calvin says is thus worth noting "that because of its ignorance, the human mind cannot follow a sure path in its search for truth."²³ It is for this reason that the mind should be enlightened to follow the truth. As Calvin puts it "for without God's light [which is the teaching of

¹⁴ Ivan Sanders. Available from: <https://www.elizabethton.com/2020/10/09/church-the-cement-of-a-community-and-its-people/>. [Accessed on July 27th, 2023]

¹⁵ J. N. Kanyua Mugambi, *From liberation to reconstruction: African Christian theology after the Cold War* (Nairobi: East Africa Educational Publishers Ltd, 1995): 139.

¹⁶ Esther L. Megill, *Education in the African Church*. (Legon: Trinity College Publications, 1980): 2.

¹⁷ Emmanuel Asante, *Culture, Politics and Development: Ethical and Theological reflections on the Ghanaian Experience*. (Combent Impressions, 2007): 98.

¹⁸ The French theologian was a pastor and reformer in the 1500s during the Protestant Reformation. Historically, Calvin is one of the most notable Protestant theologians of all time.

¹⁹ John Calvin (*n.d.*). *True Christian Life*. Available from: <https://renovare.org/articles/the-joy-of-self-denial> [Accessed on July 25th 2023].

²⁰ Isaac Boaheng, "Renewing the mind, transforming the society: Reflections on Romans 12:2 from a Ghanaian perspective," *E-Journal of Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences* 4, no.4 (2023): 392-403. <https://doi.org/10.38159/ehass.20234412> [Accessed on July 25th, 2023]

²¹ King James Bible Dictionary. Available from: <https://kingjamesbibledictionary.com/StrongNo/G3563/mind>.

²² Calvin, *Institute*, 41.

²³ Calvin, *Institute*, 52.

the Word] the mind is blind.”²⁴ In the words of Saint Augustine of Hippo, “We open our physical eyes to receive the light, but the eyes of our mind remain shut unless our LORD opens them.”²⁵ This implies that mere argument cannot illuminate the individual’s mind, but appealing to the witness of Scripture, the teaching of God’s Word; will bring about the transformation in the life of the individual.

It must be emphasised that this regeneration or transformation is not achieved by a universal understanding conferred by nature, but ‘given’ by a spiritual revelation (John 3:27) through the teaching of the Word. Eleanor Daniel *et.al.* observed that the essence of Bible teaching is to bring transformation into the life of the individuals until they reach maturity in Christ, which is a lifelong task.²⁶ This maturity, according to Daniel *et.al.*, is accomplished when that individual knows God’s Word, with an understanding, that brings a change in the life of that person, in terms of, bearing fruit, growing in the knowledge of God, being resolute in the faith with thanksgiving.

An Ethical Analysis of Christian Nurturing from a Deontological Perspective

The fall in the moral standards amidst the rise of Christianity in Ghana has brought to the fore an important aspect of the impact of Christianity on the moral fibre in the country. Some commentators have even accused the church of indirectly contributing to the rise of corruption in Ghana.²⁷ Some continue to ask, “If Ghana is a Christian country, then where is the corruption?”²⁸ The point here is that the moral decadence in Ghana implies that Christians have not demonstrated the values of their faith by desisting from greed and corruption.

The *Spiritual, Moral, Social, and Environmental* witnesses of the Church have not been complemented by moral uprightness. Undoubtedly, the responsibility of the Church, as the *light* of the world and the *salt* of the earth, becomes doubtful, especially when about 72 % of the Ghanaian population profess to be Christians, amid an ever-increasing rate of social vices that have bedevilled the nation. It is assumed that based on the number of churches in the country, coupled with the size of the Ghanaian population, who are Christians, it is expected that corruption, moral decadence, and its related negative vices would be reduced to the barest minimum.²⁹

As the “moral conscience of society,”³⁰ the church in Ghana is expected to play its role in building the society through character formation, provision of social amenities, and the winning of souls for the Kingdom of Jesus Christ, and play its prophetic role as the voice of the voiceless in the society. Unfortunately, the reverse is the case in Ghana. It is very difficult these days to determine the difference between a Christian and a non-believer since they both persons share and exhibit the same worldly lifestyles and common standards in their respective environments. The question under discussion in this study concerns how Christian education or nurturing could be used to nurture adherents of the Christian faith to become responsible and active Christians in society amid moral decadence. It is the researcher’s belief that any suitable framework required to answer this question must take into account the churches’ responsibility in building society through transformed lives.

The various unanswered issues raised by the moral decadence, amidst the popularity of Christianity in Ghana,³¹ call for a deontological understanding of ethical behaviour. Beatrice Okyere-Manu claims that deontology is subjecting to the standard of ethical conduct from a perspective of obligation.³² Okyere-Manu observed that this idea of duty is the only motivation that can deliver a moral incentive for the individual. This implies that a deed is ethically acceptable if the one responsible is inspired by beliefs and ethically unacceptable if that deed is not. Antwi and Okyere-Manu observed that a moral person is one whose attitude or response to moral rules is satisfactory and commendable by the entire society.³³ On his part, Austin Cline also noted that in a deontological scheme, responsibilities are carried out by an established rule, especially, by those set out within

²⁴ Calvin, *Institute*, 57.

²⁵ Saint Augustine, II,5.5 quoted by Calvin, *Institute*, 63.

²⁶ Eleanor Daniel *et al.*, *Introduction to Christian Education* (Cincinnati: Standard, 1980), 93.

²⁷ Kwesi Pratt, “The Churches Are Indirectly Promoting Corruption.” Available from: <https://www.modernghana.com/news/581080/kwesi-pratt-accuses-churches-of-indirectly-promoting-corrupt.html>. [Accessed on July 10th, 2023]

²⁸ Beauty Emefa Narteh, “Churches asked to play lead role in the fight against corruption.” Available from: <https://newsghana.com.gh/churches-asked-to-play-lead-role-in-the-fight-against-corruption>. [Accessed on July 10th, 2023]

²⁹ Kwaku Twum-Baah, “Large Christian population has little impact on development.” Available from: <https://www.ghanaweb.com/GhanaHomePage/NewsArchive/Large-Christian-population-has-little-impact-on-development-75527>. [Accessed on July 5th, 2023]

³⁰ Joshua Kudajie and Robert K. Aboagye-Mensah. *The Christian and National Politics*. Vol. 1 (Accra: Asempa Publishers, 1991). n.p.

³¹ Anderson And Tayviah. “Corruption in Matrimony with Religion in Ghana: Questioning the Possibility.”

³² Beatrice Okyere-Manu. “Ethical Implications of Xenophobic Attacks in South Africa: A Challenge to the Christian Church.” *In CrossCurrents* 66(2):227-238 (June 2016). DOI: 10.1111/cros.12180. [Accessed on July 18th 2023].

³³ Joseph Kofi Antwi and Beatrice Okyere-Manu, “Brago as an Akan African Indigenous Knowledge System Pedagogical System: An ethical critique.” *In Intersecting African Indigenous Knowledge Systems and Western Knowledge Systems: Moral Convergence and Divergence*. Pietermaritzburg: Cluster Publications, (2018): 83

a belief system.³⁴ Being moral is therefore a matter of obeying the rules laid out by a religion. As a duty-centered ethical approach, deontological ethics actualises the individual's responsibilities, with the question what am I supposed to do?³⁵

From the above discussion, it is obvious that the church in Ghana has the task of nurturing or transforming the characters of their members, to enable them to become responsible citizens. This has rightly been stated that Christians are commanded to be the “*salt and light*” of the world, and by their integrity, aimed at transforming their societies for development.³⁶ Again, the Bible is certain about the church's role in making disciples in the “*Great Commission*” (Matt. 28: 19-20).

Ruth Harley Barton *et al.* stated that the main goal of the church is to enhance the spiritual maturity of each member.³⁷ This is done through evangelism and discipleship, as bestowed on the disciples by Jesus Christ, and enshrined in the “*Great Commission*” (Matt 28: 19-20). However, it has been contended that the way man appreciates the import of this “*Great Commission*,” guides what he does with Christian education.³⁸ Gangel argued that the command of Jesus is not only to evangelise at home and abroad, but it is a life change, not content transmission. According to him, Jesus emphasised duplication of the Body in the various societies, not just adding to the number of Christians. This is corroborated by Mizzel and Henson. According to them the directive of the “*Great Commission*” requires turning out matured disciples through baptism and teaching.³⁹

Yet it seems many of the churches in Ghana have been focusing and preaching on prosperity and wealth, which leads to corruption.⁴⁰ Writing on the issue of Corruption in Africa, for example, Abiodun Simeon Ige, maintained that,

“The commercialization of the gospel has overtaken salvation messages. These “cash and carry pastors”, “freelance preachers”, “pastors for hire”, “emergency pastors”, “hungry pastors” (and so on) have given the Church a bad name. They live flamboyant lifestyles like politicians. They own and maintain private jets ably financed by their Church members who are government workers, peasants, and artisans among others.”⁴¹

In this context, the church in Ghana is expected to review or evaluate its Christian education or nurturing programmes that impact character formation. The passage in Scripture where the Apostle Paul writes, “*We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to obey Christ*,” (2 Cor. 10:5), demonstrates the three responsibilities of Christians in society.⁴² These are changing the narrative of both the individual and the society, taking action and making it relevant to the society and finally ensuring that it transforms the society. For Abraham Kuyper,⁴³ the Christian faith is not only about private conversion or salvation, but, such faith must influence the entire society.⁴⁴ Since Christianity is for life, it is crucial, according to Jonathan Chaplin, that Christians must be taught [nurtured, educated or transformed] to develop *faithful Christians* in a contemporary diverse society, like Ghana.⁴⁵ To achieve this, two issues are important, first the constant review of the Individual's life and second, the transformation of the Individual's worldview.

³⁴ Austin Cline. “Deontology and Ethics.” *Learn Religions*. September 10th, 2021. Available from [learnreligions.com/deontology-and-ethics-249865](https://www.learnreligions.com/deontology-and-ethics-249865). [Accessed on July 14th, 2023]

³⁵ Paul Appiah-Sekyere, *et al.* “Christian Ethics and Traditional Akan Ethics: A Comparative Study.” *In E-Journal of Religious and Theological Studies*. Vol 4. No.1, (2018): 16 – 27 [Accessed on July 18th, 2023]

³⁶ President Akufo-Addo, Available from: <https://ghanatoday.gov.gh/news/christian-businessmen-should-lead-in-the-corruption-fight-akufo-addo> [Accessed on July 20th 2023]

³⁷ Ruth Harley Barton, *et al.* “Spiritual Formation in the Church.” *Journal of Spiritual Formation & Soul Care*, 7(2), (2024): 292–311. Available from: <https://doi.org/10.1177/193979091400700212>. [Accessed on July 26th, 2023]

³⁸ Gangel. “What Christian Education is,” 21.

³⁹ Mizzell, & Henson, “Spiritual Formation and Leadership Development.” 93.

⁴⁰ Anderson Jr. and Tayviah. “Corruption in Matrimony with Religion in Ghana: Questioning the Possibility.” 118.

⁴¹ Abiodun Simeon Ige, “John the Baptist Approach to Corruption: A Recipe for the Church in Africa” *FACTA UNIVERSITATIS Series: Law and Politics* Vol. 14, No 4, (2016): 577 - 585 DOI: 10.22190/FULP16045771

⁴² Theron, “The impact of Christian Higher Education on the lives of students and societies in Africa.” 5.

⁴³ The Dutch Calvinist, Abraham Kuyper, is widely recognised as historian, theologian, philosopher, writer, professor-educator, and statesman. He championed the recognition of private education (common and higher) by government. As a result of the work of Kuyper and others, the Amsterdam Free University was opened on 20 October 1880, dedicated to a Calvinistic orientation. In 1886 he led the break from the State Church and the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands were established with Kampen as its seminary (Christian Classics Ethereal Library n.d.).

⁴⁴ Christian Classics Ethereal Library, n.d., Biography of Abraham Kuyper, available from: <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/kuyper>[Accessed July 25th, 2023]

⁴⁵ Jonathan Chaplin, “Integrity in solidarity: Christian professionals in a plural public sphere.” In B. De Mynck, J. Hegeman & P. Vos (eds.), *Bridging the Gap: Connecting Christian Faith and Professional Practice*. (Dordt College Press, Sioux Centre, 2011): 13-24.

Evaluation of the Christian Life

For Christian education to be relevant to the Christian mission in Ghana, there is a constant need to evaluate its content. Every aspect of the Christian life, be it at home, office or in the marketplace, needs to be evaluated. Several Biblical examples call for a constant appraisal of the Christian life and service. For instance, David in Ps. 139:23,24 invited God to search him and see if there is any wicked way in him. Worded differently, David, as a friend of God, was asking God to evaluate him as he serves Him and his people. Again, when God called Abraham, He gave him two important commands, “*walk before me faithfully, and be blameless.*” (Gen. 17:1). In simple language, God charged Abram to serve Him faithfully and live a blameless life. This means walking in the presence of the LORD and being of such good character or not wavering before Him, to the extent that no transgression could be found in him. Abram was therefore expected to evaluate his actions daily as he walks before God.

In the same light, Christian nurturing in the church should be able to help individuals to walk before God and be blameless. It should help Christians to constantly subject their lives to continuous evaluation as “*the salt and light of the world,*” both in the church and the marketplace. This is because the appropriate place to parade the Christian faith or Christian maturity is not only in the church but outside the church; in the marketplace.⁴⁶ The searching question of Jesus to his disciples, “*But whom do you say that I am?*” (Luke 9:20), should constantly cause every Christian to repeatedly subject his/her life to be assessed by fellow Christians, as well as the entire society.⁴⁷ As Calvin asserted “we should all regard our particular situation [whether in the church, or marketplace], as a signpost allocated to us by God, so as not to forget ourselves or *flit to and fro* in life.”⁴⁸ Christian education should thus inculcate into every Christian the knowledge that God’s calling, serving as a guiding principle, should be a sound basis for all human conduct, and as a constant rule of life.

Christian Nurturing and the Transformation of Individual’s “Worldviews”

Several scholars have affirmed the role of “*worldview*” in the character formation process.⁴⁹ These thinkers argue that “*worldview*” makes up the individual’s beliefs, which directly controls that person’s actions in society.⁵⁰ It determines how an individual perceives the immediate environment.⁵¹ Theron also demonstrated that the Christian worldview is usually understood as a construct of Christian belief.⁵² It is the foundation of the Christian belief systems that offer the deepest responses to everyday life’s issues, such as the meaning of life, the origin of man, and so on. It must be pointed out that everyone has a worldview, depending on that individual’s level of maturity, some worldviews are well-organised and structured, others are disconnected and inconsistent.⁵³ A Christian worldview helps individual Christians to understand that they are in the round-the-clock service of God, independent of their vocation or their calling.⁵⁴ This understanding helps Christians to be authentic Christian professionals, capable of resisting the pressures of this world. Thus, a Christian worldview contributes to a solid Christian character formation.

Theron rightly argued that the character formation of the individual does not only address the cognitive and rational development of that person but also their personality.⁵⁵ Pieter Vos maintained that this is important,

⁴⁶ Nana Akufo-Addo, “Christian businessmen should lead in the corruption fight.”

⁴⁷ Available from: <https://repository.up.ac.za/bitstream/handle/2263/30107/02chapters5-9.pdf> [Accessed on July 22nd 2023]

⁴⁸ John Calvin, *Institute of the Christian Religion*, (Edinburgh: The Banner of Truth Trust, 2020): 821.

⁴⁹ Louise Kretzschmar, “African and Western approaches to the moral formation of Christian leaders: The role of spiritual disciplines in counteracting moral deficiencies.” *HTS Teologiese Studies / Theological Studies*. 76. 10.4102 (2020). /hts.v76i2.5913; Beatrice Okyere-Manu, & Morgan, Stephen & Joseph Kofi Antwi. “The Ethical Implications of Religio-Cultural Healing Practices on Ghana’s Environment: An Ethno-medical Interrogation.” 10.2307/j.ctv2gs4grp.10. (2022); Kofi Antwi & Beatrice Okyere-Manu, “Bragro as an Akan African Indigenous Knowledge System Pedagogical System: An ethical critique.”; Benno van den Toren. “Teaching Ethics in the Face of Africa’s Moral Crisis: Reflections from a Guest.” *Transformation*: 30. 1-16. 10.1177/0265378812468405. (2013); J. Hegeman, J. & Jochemsen, H., “Direction discernment and moral formation in higher education.” In B. De Muynck, *et al.*(eds.), *Bridging the gap: Connecting Christian faith and professional practice*. (Dordt College Press, Sioux Centre, 2011): 93-108.

⁵⁰ Philosophers and theologians often use the notion of “worldview” in the narrower sense to mean ‘the comprehensive framework of one’s basic beliefs about things.’

⁵¹ Richard Edlin, “Christian Education and Worldview.” *In International Christian Community of Teacher Educators Journal*, 3(2). (2008). Available from: <https://doi.org/>-[Accessed on July 26th, 2023]

⁵² Theron, “The impact of Christian Higher Education on the lives of students and societies in Africa.”⁷.

⁵³ Steven H. VanderLeest and Jeffrey Nyhoff, “Reformed Worldview” Nancy Zylstra (ed.) Calvin University, (2005). Available from: <https://cs.calvin.edu/activities/books/rit/chapter7/worldview.htm>. [Accessed on July 26th, 2023]

⁵⁴ Petria M. Theron, & Lotter, G.A., “The necessity of an integral Christian worldview: reconnoitring the challenges for influencing the unbelieving world.” *Koers* 74(3), (2009): 467–493. Available from: <http://dx.doi.org/10.4102/koers.v74i3.134>. [Accessed on July 14th, 2023].

⁵⁵ Theron, (2013), ‘The impact of Christian Higher Education on the lives of students and societies in Africa’, 7

as it guarantees the character of the person in both social and political life.⁵⁶ On his part, Antwi, also observed that a person of good morals is the favourite of the society.⁵⁷ In his classic book *The "Institute,"* Calvin stated very clearly that the life of a Christian can only be described from a biblical perspective. The Christian life, according to Calvin, is self-denial, "which Christ so carefully requires of all his disciples at the start of their apprenticeship,"⁵⁸ as, "if anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me" (Matt. 16:24). It has been assumed that once self-denial possesses the person, arrogance, pride, greed, sensual pleasures and any other negative inclinations, which are born out of self-love, all go away.⁵⁹ If Christ died so that we might live in Him, it is appropriate to concede that living a transformed life entails dying daily with Christ so that He might live within mankind.⁶⁰ It was for this reason that Paul's directives to Christians are paramount, "have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus" (Philip. 2:5).

Christian Nurturing and "Kakistocracy"

According to the Webster Bible Dictionary, "Kakistocracy" is "Government by the worst men."⁶¹ The word is derived from two Greek words, *kakistos* (κάκιστος; worst) and *kratos* (κράτος; rule), which means a national or a community ruled by its least apt or knowledgeable citizens. It must be emphasised that these "worst" or least competent leaders can be found in the home, church, families, schools, the police, the military, hospitals, the marketplace, the chieftaincy institutions, and even in government. This paper argues that to avoid "kakistocracy" in Ghanaian society, the church must intentionally nurture her, "faithful disciples" to become active and responsible citizens so that they can in turn transform their world, and not become "kakis" in the society. This cannot be achieved through prayers, but intentional character formation.

The church, as one of the socialisation institutions in Ghana, must have programmes that help to integrate her "faithful disciples" into the general society as responsible citizens. Such programmes must not only focus on, adultery, idolatry, fornication, and so on, but they must also focus attention on the negative effect of greed, indiscipline, payment of bribes, environmental degradation through galamsey, nepotism, non-payment of taxes, and so on. The church must prepare her "faithful disciples" to "resist the devil" (James 4:7) wherever they find themselves.

It must be emphasised that salvation, transformation, or deliverance of the individual, is not only a personal issue but social as well. The Apostle Paul made it clear when he told his readers that, "believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved [personal] you and your household [social]" (Acts 16:31). Again, "for the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God" (Romans 8:19). Thus, creation, [environment, society, institution, the system, the nation], is waiting for salvation, or deliverance as a result of corruption, galamsey, indiscipline, nepotism, and any other negative tendencies in the society.

This calls for a re-orientation or a paradigm shift of the Christian education programmes to meet contemporary challenges, so that over 71% of Christians in Ghana, can be ennobled to transform their societies. These issues ought to be embedded into any Christian education content or curriculum in Ghana, for Transformed Individual Christians must be helped to transform their world. Individuals who have been nurtured, or transformed on sound Biblical principles, would eventually become good and responsible leaders, be it at home, school, Church, Family, Chieftaincy, Marketplace, Judiciary, in the Media, or in Governance. This, it is hoped, will prevent "Kakistocracy" in Ghanaian society. It must be noted that the absence of sound moral transformation will produce "Kakistocracy" in Ghanaian society, or "Intelligent Criminals."⁶²

The Way Forward

Contemporary Christian educators in Ghana must help to deepen their members' understanding of personal salvation and social transformation. Again, it must prepare the individual through a well-informed and competent discipleship programme, for a multi-religious society; in addition to serving the broader Christian

⁵⁶ Pieter Vos, "After duty: The need for virtue ethics in moral formation." In B. De Mynck, *et.al.* (eds.), *Bridging the Gap: Connecting Christian Faith and Professional Practice.* (Dordt College Press, Sioux Centre, 2011): 143-144.

⁵⁷ Joseph Kofi Antwi, "The value of a person in Akan traditional life and thought: A contemporary inquiry." *European Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies.* 3. 94. (2017). 10.26417/ejis.v3i2.p94-102.

⁵⁸ Calvin, *Institute*, 791.

⁵⁹ Calvin, *Institute*, 791.

⁶⁰ Nathan Mizzell, & Joshua Henson, "Spiritual Formation and Leadership Development." In *Theology of Leadership Journal.* Vol.3, Issue 1, (2020). Available from: <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/344787803>. [Accessed on July 26th, 2023]

⁶¹ Webster Bible Dictionary. Available from: <https://www.studydrive.net/dictionaries/eng/web/k/kakistocracy.html>

⁶² Kwabena Opuni-Frimpong, "STEM education without morals, spiritual values breed intelligent criminals." Available from: <https://myjoyonline.com/stem-education-without-morals-spiritual-values-breed-intelligent-criminals-opuni-frimpong>. [Accessed on July 2nd, 2023].

community, as it seeks to “*take every thought captive to obey Christ*” (2 Cor. 10:5). For the Christian faith to be relevant in the Ghanaian society, both the social and private lives of the individual Christian must be informed by their Christian standards, virtues, integrity fashioned or nurtured through the social, moral, environmental and spiritual witness of the church. There is an urgent need for a paradigm shift of the Christian education programmes to meet contemporary challenges, to curb “*Kakistocracy*” in Ghana; *for when the drum beat changes, you must also change the style of your dance.*

Furthermore, as representatives of Christ, Christians in Ghana are to “*let their light shine before all people so that they may see their good deeds and give glory to God*” (Matt. 5:16). It is important to also state that coupled with the preaching of the prosperity gospel and giving of spiritual direction, “*Akwakyere*,” as it is referred to in Ghana, which has also become the order of the day, the Church must intentionally deepen its teachings on faithful discipleship, purity and self-denial. Thus, character formation must be part of the content of every educational activity in Ghana, be it at School, Home or Church. In respect of the question of false prophets and their unethical behaviours, which have characterised the religious environment, the various Christian bodies, like the Christian Council of Ghana (CCG), the Ghana Pentecostal and Charismatic Council (GPCC), the Ghana Catholic Bishops' Conference (GCBC), with other stakeholders, should consider the establishing, a National Religious Commission, in the form on the National Media Commission, to control the emerging bizarre activities within the ministerial profession.

CONCLUSION

This paper has shown that Christians by their calling, are to ensure that the spiritual change they experience in Christ in the church is reflected in their daily activities in the marketplace where they spend the larger part of their active lives. The authentic showroom of their Christian life is not in the church, but in the marketplace, in the family, in the office, on the street, and in governance. As such, they cannot afford to sit below the salt or in darkness. They are to be at the forefront, as authentic Christian Professionals in the marketplace. This paper has argued that the content of Christian education in Ghana needs a paradigm shift to address contemporary social issues. The paper has highlighted the need to change the worldviews of Christians and its impact on the transformation of the individual. It has demonstrated that personal salvation must be translated into social transformation, as it curbs the idea of “*kakistocracy*.”, the paper believes, that the absence of sound character formation will lead to producing “*intelligent criminals*.” The paper also critiqued the church for focusing on the preaching of the prosperity gospel, which also leads to corruption. The paper challenges Christians to constantly evaluate their Christian lives and behaviours together with their mandate as the *light of the world and the salt of the earth*. To make the Christian faith relevant in society, the church has the task of helping its members to know that “*for no good tree bears bad fruit, nor again does a bad tree bear good fruit*” (Luke 6:43).

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