



# Towards Fostering Patriotism and Instilling Moral Values in Ghana Through Faith: The Role of The Church of Pentecost in National Development

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## ABSTRACT

The Church's place in modern life has gone a lot beyond its original purpose of giving spiritual advice through religious groups. Through participant observation and a review of the literature, this paper examined how the Church, especially The Church of Pentecost (CoP), has changed over time in modern Ghana to promote patriotism and instil moral values in modern Ghana through its two flagship programmes—"National Development Conference 2023" and the "All Ministers Conference 2023". The findings of the research revealed that morals, unity, and national growth were emphasised at these conferences. There were teachings, prayers, workshops, and the raising of the Ghanaian flag as a symbol of how important it is to work together across party lines for national growth. The study highlighted key recommendations, including employing a holistic approach, promoting patriotic songs, fostering collaboration, upholding moral values, emphasizing the national flag, and transcending partisanship. The study concluded that media influence, equality, punctuality, and unity are essential in fostering patriotism and moral values for Ghana's growth and development. The paper contributes to the proactive role of the church in nurturing patriotism and moral values, providing valuable insights into nation-building and societal cohesion.

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## INTRODUCTION

According to Nancy Ammerman, the field of lived religion has predominantly established its boundaries by excluding certain aspects, such as the focus on laypeople, practices occurring outside of religious institutions, and individual agency.<sup>1</sup> However, to broaden the scope of this field to encompass traditions and institutions, it is necessary to maintain a focus on gender, power dynamics, and voices that were previously marginalised. Additionally, it is important to expand beyond the limited geographic and religious boundaries. This clearly tells that religion's role in contemporary society has now extended far beyond its traditional function of providing spiritual guidance within the confines of religious institutions.

In today's complex and rapidly evolving world, religion takes on a more expansive and impactful role—one that encompasses a broader responsibility for the social and moral well-being of both its adherents and the wider community. This evolving role is especially evident in modern churches, which have transcended the limitations of the pulpit to become dynamic agents of change, actively engaging with society and the nation at

<sup>1</sup> Nancy T. Ammerman, "Lived Religion as an Emerging Field: An Assessment of Its Contours and Frontiers," *Nordic Journal of Religion and Society* 29, no. 2 (December 2016): 83–99,83. <https://doi.org/10.18261/issn.1890-7008-2016-02-01>.

large. The Church of Pentecost (CoP), a prominent Christian denomination in Ghana, exemplifies this modern approach to religious responsibility. Rather than confining itself solely to matters of faith and worship, The CoP has taken deliberate steps to become a driving force for positive change and societal development. This progressive approach to its role is both a testament to the church's adaptability and a reflection of the pressing needs of contemporary society. This affirms Taylor's assertion that the church's role in society is towards shaping people rather than changing them and making them more constructive than destructive.<sup>2</sup>

The CoP's engagement with initiatives that promote national development and unity is a clear illustration of its commitment to this broader mission. By actively initiating and or participating in programmes and projects aimed at enhancing the well-being of the nation, the church demonstrates a keen understanding of the interplay between faith, morality, and societal progress. It recognises that faith should not be divorced from the realities of the world but should, instead, be a guiding force in shaping a more just, ethical, and prosperous society.

This article seeks to explore the unique role of the modern church, with a specific focus on The CoP's efforts to foster patriotism and instil moral values in Ghana. The paper delves into two pivotal initiatives organised by the church in 2023—the "National Development Conference" (NADEC) and the "All Ministers Conference" (AMC)—that exemplify the church's dedication to this broader mission. Lessons are drawn from the activities towards fostering patriotism and instilling moral values in Ghana.

## **METHODOLOGY**

Participant observation was used for this work. The researchers took part in the two programmes being studied, actively engaged in their activities, and observed their behaviour, interactions, and experiences firsthand. This approach allowed the researchers to gain deep insights into the subject of their study because it often involves long-term immersion in the field to develop a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon. Using this approach also allowed the researchers to reflect intensely on their own subjective understandings and positions, as well as on their methodological approaches as attested to by Wijngaarden.<sup>3</sup> In addition, a review of relevant literature in the subject area was also done.

## **THE UNIQUE ROLE FOR A MODERN CHURCH**

As mentioned earlier, the church's significance in contemporary society extends far beyond its traditional role of offering spiritual guidance within the confines of religious institutions. In today's complex and rapidly evolving world, religion takes on a more expansive and impactful role—one that encompasses a broader responsibility for the social and moral well-being of both its adherents and the wider community.<sup>4</sup> This evolving role is especially evident in modern churches, which have transcended the limitations of the pulpit to become dynamic agents of change actively engaging with society and the nation at large. The CoP, a leading Pentecostal Church in Ghana, and operating in 151 nations (including Ghana), serves as a notable illustration of the contemporary perspective on religious accountability.<sup>5</sup> Instead of limiting its scope to subjects pertaining exclusively to faith and worship, the church has actively pursued measures to assume a prominent role in fostering constructive transformation and societal progress. The church's progressive stance in fulfilling its function serves as evidence of its ability to adapt and mirrors the urgent demands of modern society. The CoP's engagement with initiatives that promote national development and unity is a clear illustration of its commitment to this broader mission. Through active engagement in initiatives and endeavours that seek to improve the overall welfare of the nation, the church exhibits a profound comprehension of the intricate relationship between faith, morality, and societal advancement.

## **THE ROLE OF RELIGION IN FOSTERING PATRIOTISM: THE CHURCH OF PENTECOST IN FOCUS**

The Church of Pentecost (CoP), with a deep understanding of its influential role in shaping the moral fabric of Ghana, has embarked on a purposeful journey to foster patriotism and inculcate essential moral values within the nation. This commitment is exemplified through two significant initiatives. These are the National

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<sup>2</sup> Graham Taylor, "The Social Function of the Church," *American Journal of Sociology* 5, no. 3 (1899): 305–21, 305.

<sup>3</sup> Vanessa Wijngaarden, "Q Method and Ethnography in Tourism Research: Enhancing Insights, Comparability and Reflexivity," *Current Issues in Tourism* 20, no. 8 (June 11, 2017): 869–82, 869. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13683500.2016.1170771>.

<sup>4</sup> Eddie Chi Wai Ng and Adrian T. Fisher, "Protestant Spirituality and Well-Being of People in Hong Kong: The Mediating Role of Sense of Community," *Applied Research in Quality of Life* 11, no. 4 (December 6, 2016): 1253–67, 1253. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11482-015-9435-6>.

<sup>5</sup> The Church of Pentecost, "About Us," <https://thecophq.org/statistics/>, 2023.

Development Conference (NADEC) and the “All Ministers Conference”(AMC). These initiatives underline the church’s dedication to fostering a sense of national pride and a moral compass for Ghana’s citizens.

### **National Development Conference (NADEC) 2023**

The NADEC, held from July 26-27, 2023, at Pentecost Convention Centre (PCC) at Gomoa Fetteh in the Central Region of Ghana, emerged as a pivotal event aimed at addressing the deteriorating moral condition of the nation and its profound impact on national development. Distinguished figures, including the current Vice President Dr. Mahamudu Bawumia, former President John Dramani Mahama, and former President John Agyekum Kufuor, graced the conference with their presence. The conference’s theme, “Moral Vision and National Development,” underscored the significance of moral values in shaping the future of Ghana. Apostle Eric Nyamekye, The Chairman of the CoP, reiterated the church’s commitment in promoting a righteous Ghana. He said, “Anything we [Ghanaians] do must be to the benefit of the flag of Ghana.”

### **All Ministers Conference (AMC) 2023**

This collaborative conference held from September 20-22, 2023, at Pentecost Convention Centre (PCC), brought together ministers from various denominations across Ghana. Operating under the theme, “Moral Vision and National Development: The Role of the Church,” the event highlighted the importance of religious leaders transcending denominational boundaries to contribute to the nation’s development. The presence of nearly all church leaders demonstrated their commitment to this collective effort. The three-day programme brought Ms. Kathleen Addy (National Commission for Civic Education (NCCE) Boss), Apostle Dr. Aaron Armi-Narh (The Apostolic Church (TAC), President), Apostle General Sam Korankye Ankrah (Royal House Chapel), Archbishop Charles Agyin Asare (Perez Chapel International), Archbishop Charles Parlmer-Buckle (Catholic Archdiocese of Cape Coast, Ghana), Most Rev Dr. Paul Kwabena Boafo (The Methodist Church, Ghana, Presiding Bishop), and other revered ministers.

### **Activities of the Conferences**

The conferences witnessed a range of activities geared toward promoting patriotism and moral values. They include the following:

#### ***Teachings and Prayers***

During the conference, teachings and prayers played a central role, taking the spotlight in the proceedings. The teachings predominantly revolved around two key themes: moral values and national development. Topics such as “Moral Vision and National Development: The Role of the Media,” “The Church and the Battle against Moral Corruption,” “Knowledge and Piety: Ghana in Search of Moral Vision and National Development from Faith-Based Educational Institutions,” and “Integrity in Nation Building” were among the topics covered. These sessions delved into critical aspects of fostering moral values and contributing to the progress of the nation. The discussions aimed to inspire individuals to uphold ethical standards and actively engage in initiatives that enhance the well-being of Ghana. In addition to the teachings, the conference featured moments of intense prayer. Prayers were offered not only for the well-being of the participants but also for the nation. The collective hope was that through these prayers, members of the Church and the nation at large would lead meaningful and virtuous lives, contributing positively to Ghana’s development and prosperity.

#### ***Workshop Sessions***

The workshop sessions played a pivotal role in uniting political figures from diverse parties, transcending the boundaries of partisanship for the collective welfare of the nation. During these sessions, participants engaged in discussions that delved into the issues arising from the teachings related to the selected topics. These discussions were closely aligned with the overarching theme of the programme, emphasizing the importance of addressing shared challenges and working collaboratively towards the greater good of the nation.

#### ***Hoisting of the Ghana Flag***

The deliberate placement of the national flag on the dais served as a powerful symbol to capture the participants’ attention. It underscored the utmost significance of prioritizing the nation’s welfare above personal or political affiliations. The Ghanaian flag, standing alone in the auditorium, conveyed the message that the collective objective was to elevate Ghana’s prosperity beyond individual ambitions or partisan interests.

### ***Singing of Patriotic Songs***

Amidst the various programmes, participants actively joined in singing patriotic songs that resonated with the core values of morality, justice, and integrity. These songs that were sung collectively, acted as a poignant reminder of the critical mission to construct a superior Ghana for future generations. They emphasized the profound significance of bequeathing a nation that had progressed beyond the one inherited. This emphasized a commitment to continuous improvement and the preservation of ethical principles. Among the songs sung were “*Yen Ara Asaase Ni*,”<sup>6</sup> “*Arise Ghana Youth for your country*,”<sup>7</sup> “*God bless our homeland Ghana*,”<sup>8</sup> “*Omanyi ye wo man*,”<sup>9</sup> etc.

### **Collaboration with Civil Society Groups (CSGs) and State Institutions (SIs)**

Collaborative efforts with esteemed organizations like the Ghana Journalists Association (GJA) and the National Commission for Civic Education (NCCE) played a pivotal role in tackling urgent national concerns and motivating participants to surpass existing norms. Mr. Albert Kwabena Dwumfour, the President of GJA, and Kathleen Addy, the Chairperson of NCCE, aptly represented these crucial stakeholders during the event.

### ***Media Coverage***

Most of the media houses such as GBC, Media General Ghana Limited, Omni Media Limited, and Despite Group of Companies, among others thronged to the convention centre for coverage of the programme. The extensive media coverage shifted the focus from political agendas to discussions centred on building a united Ghana.

### ***Security measures***

Rigorous security protocols were meticulously put in place to guarantee a secured and organized event and eliminating any possibility of unexpected incidents. It is noteworthy to stress that there were no instances of queue-jumping or preferential treatment for any individual throughout the event. However, honour was given to those honour was due.

### ***Punctuality***

A well-structured programme was meticulously designed with specific time allocations for each segment. Participants demonstrated remarkable adherence to these allotted time slots thereby contributing substantially to the overall success of the programme.

### ***Unity in Diversity***

During these programmes, a significant and heart-warming moment unfolded when two former Presidents, His Excellencies John Agyekum Kufuor and John Dramani Mahama (the current flag bearer of the major opposition party), along with the sitting Vice President, Alhaji Dr. Mahamudu Bawumia, who represented the President of Ghana, His Excellency Nana Addo Danquah Akufu Addo (who had travelled outside the country for official duties), came together for a memorable photograph. This powerful image symbolized the unity in diversity of

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<sup>6</sup> The authorship of this song is attributed to Ephraim Amu. The song is linked to concepts of patriotism, the construction of national identity, and the cultivation of a sense of affiliation with the nation. The concept underscores the notion of communal land ownership within the context of Ghana, as well as the joint obligation to ensure its welfare. The utilisation of this concept has been observed in several settings with the aim of fostering cohesion and cultivating a collective sense of direction within the Ghanaian population. The song embodies the notion that the territory and the state are collectively owned by all individuals who inhabit it, and it is incumbent upon them to collaborate harmoniously to safeguard and advance it for the advantage of both present and future cohorts.

<sup>7</sup> The composition serves as a nationalistic anthem, urging the younger generation of Ghana to actively engage in efforts aimed at enhancing the welfare and progress of their country. The initiative aims to motivate the youth of Ghana to actively participate in influencing the trajectory of their nation, while also building a sense of unity, national pride, and responsibility among them. The song emphasises the significance of young involvement and active participation in the advancement and advancement of Ghana.

<sup>8</sup> The national anthem of Ghana effectively communicates themes of solidarity, patriotism, and a steadfast dedication to the advancement of the nation. The statement promotes the collective collaboration of Ghanaians, the preservation of principles such as freedom and justice, and the pursuit of a prosperous trajectory for the nation. The national anthem of Ghana commemorates the nation’s abundant cultural legacy and expresses aspirations for a more promising future.

<sup>9</sup> The song places significant emphasis on the significance of self-awareness, self-discovery, and comprehending one’s personal life journey. This practise fosters introspection among individuals, prompting them to contemplate their decisions, behaviours, and the trajectory of their lives. The lyrical content of the song revolves around themes of introspection, personal direction, and the process of making significant choices that contribute to a purposeful existence. This statement encourages individuals to reflect about their current trajectory and evaluate the congruence between their behaviours and their authentic identities. The song serves as a catalyst for fostering individual development and attaining self-awareness.

the nation that transcends political affiliations. The Chairman of The Church of Pentecost (CoP) and the General Secretary of the church were instrumental in facilitating this momentous gathering. During this event, H.E. John Agyekum Kufuor offered a heartfelt prayer for the participants and, by extension, the entire citizenry, invoking a call to live morally upright lives for the development of the nation. This prayer underscored the importance of ethical values in national progress. In a spirit of unity and reconciliation, the Chairman of The CoP and the President of The Apostolic Church (TAC) showcased to the world the harmonious coexistence of their respective churches. This demonstration of unity was a powerful testament to the transformation of their relationship, which had experienced past conflicts. The CoP Chairman recounted a gesture of goodwill when the President of TAC endorsed a land documentation that bore the name of TAC but rightfully belonged to The CoP. This act reinforced the message of unity and brotherhood among these two church bodies.

## **TOWARDS FOSTERING PATRIOTISM AND INSTILLING MORAL VALUES IN GHANA**

The activities organized during these conferences provide valuable lessons for fostering patriotism and instilling moral values in Ghana. These proposals, stemming from the conference, offer a comprehensive approach to nurturing a sense of national pride and an ethical compass for the nation.

1. **Employing a holistic approach:** A holistic approach, combining education on moral values and discussions on national development, reinforced by prayer and collective commitment, must be employed as a powerful catalyst for positive change. The emphasis on ethical standards, collaboration between various sectors, and spiritual reflection underscores the importance of nurturing a sense of moral responsibility and a shared vision for the betterment of the nation. This approach encourages individuals to actively participate in initiatives that promote Ghana's well-being. It reinforces the idea that moral values are integral to the country's progress and prosperity.
2. **Singing of patriotic songs:** Consistent singing of patriotic songs in various settings, including meetings and households, should be practiced by all Ghanaians to serve as a powerful means of instilling a deep sense of patriotism; they carry the weight of history and the values of the nation. They serve as a bridge between the past, present, and future, reminding citizens of the struggles, sacrifices, and achievements of their predecessors. When they are sung, it will help Ghanaians to know how our forebears toiled and the moral values they cherished in founding this nation. Singing these songs not only fosters a sense of pride in one's country but also reinforces the importance of preserving and improving upon the legacy for the benefit of future generations. In addition, it "...helps with the cultivation of national sentiment and loyal service toward the mainland, and sacrifice for one's country".<sup>10</sup> It is a collective act that unites people in their shared love for Ghana.
3. **Collaborative efforts:** True patriotism thrives when diverse sectors of society collaborate for the common good. Collaboration among religious leaders, political figures, civil society organizations, and state institutions is a powerful catalyst for achieving national development goals. This must be always practiced, for knowledge does not reside with one person. When these entities come together, they can harness their unique strengths and resources to address pressing issues, find innovative solutions, and create a sense of unity among citizens. Collaborative efforts transcend individual interests and demonstrate a commitment to the greater welfare of the nation. Such partnerships have the potential to drive meaningful change and promote a collective sense of purpose. The situation where the winner takes all must be discarded.
4. **Upholding moral values:** Moral values must be upheld in the nation by all age brackets; they are the bedrock of a patriotic society. Emphasizing morality, justice, and integrity within national development agendas is crucial for building a nation where citizens are guided by a strong ethical compass. Upholding these values in all aspects of governance, education, and public life sets a standard for behaviour and decision-making. It ensures that the nation's progress is rooted in principles that prioritize the well-being of all citizens, regardless of their backgrounds or affiliations. A morally upright society is one where citizens take pride in their nation and work diligently to uphold its core values.

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<sup>10</sup> Angela Lee, "Patriotic Songs in Primary School Textbooks in Taiwan from 1949-1987.," *Australian Journal of Music Education* 2 (2014): 119-28.

5. **Hoisting of the Ghana flag:** The symbolic act of hoisting the Ghana flag represents the highest form of allegiance to the nation. It signifies that the interests of the nation supersede personal or political affiliations. To truly foster patriotism, all political parties and the citizenry must prioritize the flag as a unifying symbol. It should be a constant reminder that the collective goal is to make Ghana better than any political institution or individual agenda. When the flag is given the utmost respect and importance, it reinforces the notion that the nation's prosperity is a shared responsibility that transcends individual ambitions.
6. **Beyond partisanship:** Patriotism flourishes when people rise above political divides and unite under a common banner for the betterment of their nation. Embracing a sense of national identity that goes beyond partisan politics fosters a shared sense of purpose. Citizens must recognize that they belong to a larger community—the Ghanaian nation—where their collective efforts can bring about positive change. By deprioritizing political affiliations in favour of national interests, individuals can work together towards a shared vision of progress, unity, and prosperity.
7. **Media influence:** Media plays a pivotal role in shaping public discourse and influencing public opinion. This is corroborated by Chaudhuri who asserts that media plays a significant ideological role in reshaping public discourse due to the powerful synergy between its content and presentation.<sup>11</sup> To promote patriotism, media outlets must shift their focus from narrow political agendas to the broader national interest. They should act as vehicles for constructive dialogue and highlight stories of national pride, unity, and resilience. By providing balanced and insightful coverage, the media can inspire citizens to take an active interest in the well-being of the nation. Additionally, media outlets can use their platforms to amplify the voices of those working towards the common good, encouraging others to join in the collective effort to build a better Ghana.
8. **Upholding equality and fair treatment:** Fostering patriotism and instilling moral values must begin with the principle of equity and fair treatment. Citizens must be treated equally and fairly. People in higher authority and the advantaged in society should try as much as possible not to seek preferential treatment at the expense of the less privileged. Regardless of one's background, affiliations, or status, every individual should be given the equal opportunities and rights. These, notwithstanding, honour must be given to whom it is due.
9. **Punctuality as a sign of commitment:** Ghanaians must be punctual to work and all places including attending church services. Lateness to programmes generally prevents the achievement of set goals. Being punctual reflects a commitment to the cause and demonstrates respect for the efforts of others. It encourages citizens to value and respect each other's time, fostering a culture of responsibility and accountability.
10. **Unity and collaboration:** There must be unity and collaboration, irrespective of political or religious differences. These are fundamental for the nation's progress. The gathering of former and current political leaders that represent various parties, sends a strong message that the welfare of Ghana should always transcend partisan divides. It highlights the significance of a united front in addressing the nation's challenges and fostering a sense of patriotism among citizens. Moreover, the display of unity between The CoP and TAC exemplified the transformative power of reconciliation and cooperation. It teaches that by setting aside past conflicts and working together, citizens can build a stronger and more harmonious Ghana where moral values and mutual respect are upheld as essential principles for the nation's growth and development.

## CONCLUSION

The proactive involvement of The CoP in promoting patriotism and moral values underscores the unique role that modern churches can play in nation-building. Through the church, these conferences offer profound lessons for fostering patriotism and instilling moral values in Ghana. They underscore the importance of adopting a holistic approach that combines education on moral values, discussions on national development, prayer, and

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<sup>11</sup> Maitrayee Chaudhuri, "Indian Media and Its Transformed Public," *Contributions to Indian Sociology* 44, no. 1–2 (June 10, 2010): 57–78, <https://doi.org/10.1177/006996671004400204>.

collective commitment as catalysts for positive change. The consistent singing of patriotic songs serves as a powerful means of instilling patriotism and preserving the nation's legacy. Collaborative efforts among various sectors, including religious leaders, political figures, civil society organizations, and state institutions, are essential for achieving national development goals. Upholding values such as morality, justice, and integrity in all aspects of governance and public life sets a standard for behaviour and decision-making. The symbolic hoisting of the Ghana flag reinforces the idea that the nation's prosperity is a shared responsibility that transcends individual ambitions or affiliations. Beyond partisanship, unity under the common banner of national interests fosters a shared sense of purpose. The media's role in shaping public discourse and promoting stories of national pride and unity cannot be overstated. Upholding principles of equality and fair treatment, being punctual, and prioritizing unity and collaboration are fundamental for a patriotic and morally upright society in Ghana.

The church has set a commendable example of collaboration, moral leadership, and unity, offering invaluable lessons for constructing a patriotic nation that places the common good above personal or partisan interests. In an era marked by diverse challenges, The CoP's dedication to nurturing patriotism through faith serves as an inspiring model for Ghana and the world at large.

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