THE CHANGING ROLE OF CHRISTIAN NEWSPAPERS IN GHANA: A CASE
STUDY OF THE CATHOLIC STANDARD

BY

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DECLARATION

With the exception of the references and quotations which have been duly acknowledged, I hereby declare that this dissertation is the outcome of my original work, under the supervision of Professor Audrey Gadzekpo of the School of Communication Studies, University of Ghana and that it has never been submitted either in whole or in part for another degree elsewhere. I however hold the responsibility for any lapses and shortcomings.

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DATE............................................

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DATE............................................
DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my Bishop, Most Rev. Francis A.K Lodonu, Catholic Bishop of Ho.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

In a profound way, I wish to express my gratitude to my supervisor, Prof. Audrey Gadzekpo who was very patient and meticulous with this work. She carefully guided me with useful suggestions to ensure that this work met the standard.

To Mr Martin Segtub, I say thank you for your selflessness and support.

I thank Mr Patrick M. Gbagonah, who spent precious time to help in the collection of data as well as other assistance to ensure the successful completion of this work.

I also thank the Managing Editor of the Catholic Standard, Mr Fritz Andoh and the staff for their co-operation and interest shown in this work.

I am grateful to my lecturers for their guidelines and my course mates for their encouragement.

I also thank my family for their support and friends for being there when needed most. To all who contributed to the successful completion of this work I remain very grateful. May God richly bless you.

Finally, I give the greatest gratitude to the Almighty God for His grace and providence that has seen me through this study.
ABSTRACT

This study content analysed the Catholic Standard from 1938 to 2012. The objective of the study was to determine whether the role of the Catholic Standard has changed through the different types of governance systems over the years. A sample of 480 issues out of a total number of 3,216 issues in the 74 year period of the Catholic Standard were randomly selected and considered for analysis.

The study content analysed headlines of front page, middle page and back page stories, as well as headlines of editorials of the Catholic Standard to determine the kind of stories they signalled. The study looked at four different political periods: the pre-independence period, the immediate post-independence period, the period of unconstitutional regimes and the period since Ghana’s return to constitutional rule in 1992.

The study found that during the pre-colonial era, publications from the Catholic Standard dealt mainly with religious stories but also took note of some secular events in the country. In the post-independence period, the study found that in addition to the religious stories were more secular stories that touched on the political, social and economic issues in the country and on the international front. During the period of unconstitutional regimes, the standard after a brief moment of silence on the political happenings in the country made use of features and editorial columns to condemn the brutalities that were taking place in the country. The period of constitutional regimes saw the Catholic Standard touched more on political issues and civic education than in the three previous regimes.

The study recommends that publishers of the Catholic Standard should remain focused on its objectives. The study recommends also that future studies should examine the views of readers in relation to the changing roles of the Catholic Standard as well as the impact of daily newspapers the content of the Catholic Standard.
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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

In this contemporary world, it is nearly impossible for a society to survive without religion and the media. There has been phenomenal interest in religious matters following the September 11 attack on the World Trade Tower in the USA (Hoover 2008). In spite of this attention, the critical role played by the media in the world has been overlooked because the ever-presence of the media is mostly ignored. (Hoover 2008). Hoover (2008) argues that this neglect is true in many sectors of modern life, but no more so than in religion, even though religions have always been mediated and many religious movements have had prominent involvement in modern media since at least the late 19th century.

Religion can somehow be considered as a medium (Van-Zoonen, 2010). It is also sometimes considered to form a channel between the self and God that consists of a set of institutions, authorities and practices, such as churches, holy texts and preachers (De Vries, 2001). The concept of mediatisation in the study of media and religion was introduced by Hjarvard (2008). To him, mediatisation comes to play when themes or topics concerning religion and spirituality dominate the media. In agreement to Hjavard’s (2008) view for mediatisation, Hepp and Kronert (2009) add that mediatisation concerns itself with the steady, widespread use of “technical communication media” in society. That is mediatisation has made religion more reachable at different locations but at the same time. In essence therefore, mediatisation is a point of convergence for both religion and the media. Van-Zoonen (2010) argues that mediatisation has become ubiquitous in almost all aspects of our lives. Therefore, studying religion independently from the media is impossible (Hjarvard, 2008) for four reasons.
In the first place, the media have become the primary source of their religious ideas, whether these ideas concern their own religion or those of others (Poole, 2002; p.22). Second, they have also become the primary source of religious imagination (Plate, 2003; p.45). Third, many social functions of religion, especially where it concerns community building and rituals, have been taken over by the media” (Martin-Barbero, 1997; p.104). Fourth, religious institutions themselves have subsumed to ‘media logic’, i.e. framing their actions and activities in forms that appeal to the media, and to the audiences that live with the media (Horsfield, 2004; p.25).

The mass media provide channels, networks and resources by which religious identities find a place in both local and global settings. This is made possible through the instruments and processes of modern media, from broadcasting, to print, to film, to the digital and the social media. These media instruments are what religious institutions are leaning on to propagate their religious dogma. As such, these dogmas are targeted at the saved rather than the unsaved. Biernatzki (2003) observes that religious broadcasting is often so much targeted at the "saved" that the meaning of its content becomes obscured and not brought fully into the light.

One of the greatest opportunities that newspaper journalists have is the chance to re-examine the basic notion of news itself- what information and which event in a changing world should be “newsworthy” to a wide audience. By virtue of what religion stands for, religious newspapers in particular must be able to seize these opportunities to review and present facts and truth that have news value in order to reach and shape an even wider audience or readers.
1.1.1 Press History in Ghana

Gadzekpo notes that “the history of the press in Ghana has been chequered and marred by decades of political and economic instability” (Gadzekpo, 2007; p.89). She observed that like the press in many African countries, Ghanaian press history abounds with instances of state interference in private newspaper publishing. The 1970s and 1980s especially may be considered the doldrums of the press in Ghana. State control and monopoly and the attendant “culture of silence”, were the principal features of two decades of military dictatorship briefly interrupted by the liberal government of the People’s National Party (PNP) (Ansu-Kyeremeh and Karikari, 1998). For example, The Pioneer was banned for some time in the 1960s and 1970s by the Nkrumah (in the dictatorial era of the first republic) and Acheampong (during the National Redemption Council) regimes respectively.

Gadzekpo (2007; p.89) further notes that the media were ineffective in their role as the watchdogs of society. The media often functioned “as tools of the succession of military regimes which ruled the country from the mid-1960s through the 1970s and 1980s. Gadzekpo (2007; p.90) again points out that the root of an opinionated, publicised press should be traced beyond the ‘revolutions’ of post-colonial Ghana to the colonial conditions that gave rise to several indigenous newspapers, dating to the late 19th century.

The first newspaper published in Ghana was The Royal Gold Coast Gazette and Commercial Intelligencer (Jones-Quartey, 1974). According to Jones-Quartey (1974), the newspaper was published from 1822 to 1824 by Sir Charles McCarthy, Governor of the British Gold Coast settlements. As a semi-official organ of the colonial government, the paper was originally meant to provide information to European merchants and civil servants in the colony. It later aimed at promoting literacy, encouraging rural development as well as
subduing the political aspirations of the native elites by securing their loyalty and conformity with the colonial system. Publication ceased in 1824 after McCarthy’s demise. The appropriation of print media by local African elites began some 33 years after the collapse of the first newspaper in the Gold Coast. The *Accra Herald* was published by Charles Bannerman, son of a British lieutenant governor and a princess from the Asante royal family in 1857. Bannerman’s hand-written newspaper “marks the genesis of African-owned and edited newspapers in the Gold Coast; a press that was not beholden to the state but managed by private indigenous entrepreneurs” (Gadzekpo, 2008; p.196).

Having survived for 16 years, Bannerman’s paper inspired “a proliferation of African-owned newspapers in the late nineteenth century, among them the *Gold Coast Times, Western Echo, Gold Coast Assize, Gold Coast News, Gold Coast Aborigines, Gold Coast Chronicle, Gold Coast People, Gold Coast Independent, and Gold Coast Express*”. There were also the *Christian Messenger and Examiner* (1859), *Christian Messenger* (1883), and the *Gold Coast Methodist Times* (1886) introduced by the Christian missionaries. Newspapers like the Ashanti Pioneer (1938), the *Accra Evening News* (1949), founded by Nkrumah; the *Daily Graphic* (1950) and the *Sunday Mirror* (1953) dominated the media landscape in the mid-60s. Whereas the *Daily Graphic* which was introduced into the colony by the London Daily Mirror Group, headed by British newspaper magnate Cecil King, sought to maintain a policy of political neutrality, emphasizing objective reporting by local African reporters, many of the newspapers owned by the indigenes “were essentially political tools for achieving political ends” (Gadzekpo, 2008; p.196).

Attempts at gagging the Ghanaian press started during the colonial period with the enactment of the repressive laws such as the Newspaper Registration Ordinance in 1893 and the
Criminal Code Amendment Ordinance, also known as the Sedition Ordinance, in 1934. Ghana’s Kwame Nkrumah, a journalist and a nationalist was jailed in the early 1950s for anti-colonial activities under the Sedition Ordinance of 1934. However, the situation worsened during Ghana’s independence under Nkrumah’s regime and successive military dictators. Nkrumah, who was an advocate of leftist social ideology, felt the media was too powerful to be left in the hands of individual citizens. He therefore made a conscious effort to tame the press and bring it under state control. Consequently, Nkrumah established the Guinea Press under which he introduced the state-owned *Ghanaian Times* in 1958 (Ansu-Kyeremeh and Karikari, 1998).

Nkrumah who was disgusted with the commercialisation of private newspapers consistently harassed the private papers until he eventually bought the *Daily Graphic* and the *Mirror* in 1962. With *Graphic* and *Mirror* being incorporated into the state apparatus and being backed by the existing party newspapers such as the *Accra Evening News*, and newly launched ones such as the *Daily Gazette* and *Sunday Punch*, the newspaper scene became state dominated by the time Nkrumah was overthrown in a military coup.

However, the *Ashanti Pioneer*, founded in 1938 by John and Nancy Tsiboe which became *The Pioneer* in 1968, remained defiant in the 1950s and the early 1960s until it was finally banned by Nkrumah in 1962. “The editor of *The Pioneer* in the early 1960s, A.D. Appea, was the first journalist after independence to be detained without charge or trial under the notorious Preventive Detention Act of the Nkrumah government” (Karikari, 2002).

The five military regimes which ruled Ghana between February 24, 1966, when the National Liberation Council (NLC) effectuated the first coup d’état, up to January 7, 1993 were
repressive and hostile towards media pluralism and press freedom. The PNDC era (1981–1993) was a particularly hostile period for the media in Ghana (Gadzekpo, 2007; p.90). Dismissal and replacement of editors was very common. The private press came under intense censorship with some being closed down and their journalists and editors jailed or chased into exile.

Gadzekpo (2008; p.196) describes the state of the Ghanaian media during the PNDC era in the following words: “Enfeebled and decimated, the only “viable” newspapers in Ghana were state-owned, sports or entertainment-oriented newspapers, or lottery news sheets. State media journalists were little more than de facto civil servants whose editors and managers were appointed by government and played to their tune.”

The emergence of the Fourth Republican Constitution provided an opportunity for media pluralism and the private media began to rise again. Freedom of expression and media protections are enshrined in the 1992 Constitution. The National Media Commission was established with the chief task of insulating state media from governmental control and ensuring high journalistic quality, thus, vastly improving the regulatory environment for journalists. However, as Kakari (1994) notes, “in the early years of re-democratisation, the unfettered private press were adjudged as playing a role expected of the independent media under a libertarian, pluralist constitutional system of government; namely . . . serving as watchdogs of accountability.” The content of a number of newspapers fell far short of journalistic standards with some of them publishing outright fictitious stories against public officials and Cabinet members (Kumado, 1995; p. ix).

In an assumption of office, President Kufour showed his support for press freedom and freedom of expression by repealing the Criminal Libel Law in 2001. Both the private and
the state media were allowed access to the castle under President Kufuor’s regime, thus, demonstrating his support for the media. The Kufuor administration also donated an edifice to the Ghana Journalists Association (Kakari, 1994).

The goodwill the media have enjoyed in the Fourth Republican Constitution continues today. And this has opened the floodgate for media plurality and as Kakari (2015) puts it “exact figures for the number of newspapers do not exist.” Gadzekpo (2008) gives a graphic description of the press today in the following manner:

“Like chickens that have been tied up for far too long, state-media journalists are unable to flee the coop and authority and unchallenging of the status quo. Private media, on the other hand, coddled for too long, have become unaccustomed to self or any regulation, and rarely punish unprofessional behaviour or reward accurate news coverage.”

1.1.2 The History of the Catholic Standard

The Catholic Standard is Ghana’s only national Catholic weekly. The paper dates back to 1903 when the Society for African Missions (SMA) Priests of the Roman Catholic Church established a printing press at Cape Coast to print a newspaper called DUX from 1938 to 1947. The paper was officially registered as a national weekly in 1940. In 1977, the Standard Newspapers and Magazines Limited (SNAM), publishers of the Catholic Standard, moved from Cape Coast to Accra so as to attract more advertisements and industrial jobs. The company changed the name of the paper from The Standard to the Catholic Standard on April 12, 2009, to project its Catholic identity. (cf. 70th Anniversary Brochure).

The main mission of the newspaper is to serve as the voice of the voiceless, reflecting the truth and at the same time, committing itself to the socio-economic development and civic
education of Ghanaians, while fostering unity and promoting evangelisation. (cf. 70th Anniversary Brochure)

The Catholic Standard is one of the few newspapers that has endured and outlived the political vicissitudes that have characterized Ghana’s political history from independence. It became the default medium for people to express their political sentiments during those periods of severe restriction and military dictatorship. The paper went through various challenges including being banned from December 1985 to February 1992. The Catholic Standard had since been published regularly. (cf. 70th Anniversary Brochure)

From its establishment in 1938, the Catholic Standard has had 16 editors. Below is the list of the editors of the Catholic Standard with their respective years, with the exception of four of the editors whose actual dates could not be traced due to some missing files.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Editor Name</th>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Years</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fr. P. Dericks</td>
<td>Founder/ First Editor</td>
<td>1938-1945</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fr. Ramakers</td>
<td>Acting Editor</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fr. John Van Heeswijk</td>
<td>Acting Editor</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frs. C Bodewes and J Gooren</td>
<td>Acting Editors</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fr. Patrick O’Neil</td>
<td>Editor</td>
<td>Jan. 1952-Dec. 1957</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fr. M Van Vetzen</td>
<td>Acting Editor</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. James Griffin</td>
<td>Acting Editor</td>
<td>April-November 1962</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fr. M Peters</td>
<td>Editor</td>
<td>1962-1977</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. J P Owusu-Ansah</td>
<td>Acting Editor</td>
<td>March-December 1977</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Paul Osei Nyame</td>
<td>Acting Editor</td>
<td>1977-1979</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. AK Bonnah Koomson</td>
<td>Editor</td>
<td>1979-1984</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Benedict B Assorow,</td>
<td>Acting Editor</td>
<td>January 1985-June 1985</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fr. Charles Palmer-Buckle</td>
<td>Acting Editor</td>
<td>June 1985-August 1992</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Thomas Kwo-Nyaku</td>
<td>Acting Editor</td>
<td>August 1992- May 1994</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Benedict B Assorow</td>
<td>Acting Editor</td>
<td>January 1996-August 1998</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Isaac Fritz Andoh</td>
<td>Editor</td>
<td>August, 1998- Present</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1.2 Statement of the Problem
Although not the first Christian newspaper in Ghana, the *Catholic Standard* is the only surviving Christian newspaper. However, reviewing literature points to the fact that very little is known about it, and how it functioned in the different periods especially during the period of unconstitutional rule where it served as the default medium for many Ghanaians.

At the inception of the *Catholic Standard*, the paper concerned itself with publishing stories that were religious in nature. The concentration was to communicate religious and moral principles especially from the Catholic perspective, and from the international front.

The overthrows of governments affected its roles as far as news reporting and communicating to society and communities were concerned. For instance, the PNDC era (1981–1993) was a particularly hostile period for the media in Ghana (Gadzekpo, 2007; p.90). Between 1985 and 1992, the *Catholic Standard* was banned. With the introduction of the Fourth Republic, the 1992 Constitution has given the press and other media the freedom to express and exercise their opinion, expression, and freedom of the press and other media.

The problem the study identified therefore is whether the *Catholic Standard* is able to play its role effectively as the voice of the people in this era of media pluralism and media competition, or whether the role has changed.

1.3 Purpose of the Study
The purpose of the study is to provide an insight into understanding the role of Christian newspapers in Ghana: using the *Catholic Standard* (which is the oldest surviving Christian newspapers in Ghana) as a case study and how it has adapted to transformations in the political and media history of the country.
1.4 Objectives of the Study

The objective of the study is to examine the role the Catholic Standard has played throughout the political history in Ghana and how the political environment has affected the mandate and purpose of the Catholic Standard.

1.5 Research Questions

1. What role did the Catholic Standard play during the phases of pre-independence and post-independence history of Ghana, including the period of unconstitutional rule?

2. What role is the Catholic Standard playing in the fourth republic within the context of democracy, and media liberalization?

3. How has the political environment affected the objectives and mandate of the Catholic Standard?

1.6 Significance of the Study

This study is significant for two reasons. First, this study will hopefully provide insight into the transformational phase of religious newspapers in the media landscape of Ghana. Again, this study would hopefully generate some interest and discussion on religious newspapers and their roles in the socio-political and socio-economic environment in Ghana, and also serve as a basis for further research on the subject in Ghana.

Lastly, considering the dearth of literature on the subject matter, this study is significant in contributing literature more specifically within the Ghanaian context.

1.7 Arrangement of Chapters in the Study

This study is structured into five chapters. Chapter one deals with the background to the study, history of the press in Ghana as well as that of the Catholic Standard. The chapter
also provides the problem statement to the study, purpose of the study, objectives of the study, research questions, significance as well as arrangement of chapters in the study.

Chapter two, addresses in detail, reviews of significant literature on the changing roles of newspapers in general. The chapter also provides an extensive review of theory that highlights reasons for the changing phases in newspaper reporting.

Chapter three concentrates on the methodology adopted for the study. This section discusses the research design, research technique, sample selection, data gathering, data analysis and limitations to the methodology.

Chapter four presents alongside literature an analysis, interpretation and discussions of findings to the study. Finally chapter five summarises and draws inferences from findings to arrive at conclusions for the research work. Lastly, the chapter suggests some recommendations for future studies into the study area as well as to management of the Catholic Standard.
CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

Generally, religious media tends to be positive, conservative and a constructive force, especially when it comes to issues of law and order, or when promoting traditional moral values. Religious media by default supports social and cultural values and policies consistent with its own particular religious tradition (McQuail, 1994).

To clearly appreciate McQuail’s (1994) assertion, this chapter discusses theoretical frameworks and the role of Christian newspapers and also reviewed related literature from journals, text books, and the internet to amplify arguments that address the main interests of this study.

2.2 Theoretical Framework

There are two theoretical underpinings to this study. These are the Religious Media Theory (RMT) and the Agenda Setting Theory. These theories are discussed below.

2.2.1 The Religious Media Theory (RMT)

The Religious Media Theory (RMT) emphasises the holistic character of religiously-motivated communication. The theory argues that religious values and goals are very closely and powerfully linked to the relationship and the attitude of Christian tradition to the media (Lehikoinen, 2003; p.14). The RMT is a theoretical construction on the common characteristics of Christian communication traditions. Religious Media Theory thrives on several theories of religion.

Religious Media Theory emphasises communication dynamics, which cause the whole range of various religious texts, religious media, and various religious agents to operate in
a modern media scape (Lehikoinen, 2003; p.16). Of particular concern are the motives of religious communication, which are actualised on a more concrete level through forms and opportunities of religious media communications, both unique and structural in particular contexts. Religious Media Theory has both descriptive and normative aspects to it. It also has media ritualism and functional religion in the media. The normative religious media theory has two dimensions: the external and the internal dimensions, and the descriptive focuses on one key aspect.

2.2.2 Normative Religious Media Theory

The normative religious theory has a “broader social philosophy or ideology of a given society” that sets certain expectations and limitations to the media (McQuail, 1994). Internal Normative Religious Media Theory expresses the normative and theologically based thinking of institutions on proper or correct ways of using the media. Equivalent in nature to other secular newspaper theories, the internal normative religious media theory is found in the official statements of these institutions (Moran, 2010). On the other hand, external normative religious media theory refers to the external enabling and limiting norms set by a given society. For instance, legislation on religion, public service legislation or conditions, legislation on the freedom of speech of religion, or other general laws regulating the media landscape (Lehikoinen, 2003; p.16).

Normative expressions of the religious newspapers are found in key documents or even secondary literature used to define or describe the purposes of the specific institution. Normative expressions include communications of church doctrines, and operative communication ideologies or instructions (Schultze & Marty, 2000; p.66).
2.2.3 Descriptive Religious Media Theory

The descriptive religious media theory focuses on dimensions describing the societal, cultural, and media system framework and determinants that enable or limits religious communication dynamics. Technically they are not normative elements, rather structural and are derived from an empirical outlook and combination of the system of religious media communication in a given context. Additionally, the descriptive media theory utilises inductive analysis of given empirical material as well as other theoretical understanding (Bailey & Redden, 2013; p.44).

2.2.4 Media Ritualism and Functional Religion in the Media

The last aspect in the Religious Media Theory which is often not stressed in literature is the media ritualism and functional religion of the media. This aspect of the religious media theory relates to the audience side of religious and other media. The interest of these dimensions within the religious media theory is to assist in understanding the religiously related way of meaning making in the modern media environment. For purposes of this study, the Religious Media Theory helps in explaining the changing role Christian newspapers in Ghana.

2.2.5 The Agenda Setting Theory

The basic premise of the agenda setting theory examines how newspapers and the media in general report on particular issues, and influence or shape public awareness and debate (McCombs & Shaw, 1972; p.176). According to McCombs and Reynolds (2009; p.3), simply by selecting what should appear in the newspapers, newspaper editors act as gatekeepers of mediated messages. They promote newspaper and media agenda by prioritising certain issues. They can provide sustained and prominent coverage to an issue while others are marginalised or ignored.
Earlier propositions about the agenda setting theory suggest that while newspapers and media do not tell us what to think, they are likely to tell us what to think about. Griffin (2012; p.113) suggests that newspapers and the mass media in general have potentials to draw people’s attention to certain issues, and allows for conclusions already raised in the public agenda. Griffin (2012; p.113) also notes that the agenda setting theory reaffirms the generic power of the press, while still maintaining the individual’s freedom to choose. The theory assumes that individual members of society reflect on such issues already raised, and then make personal submissions based on their subjective reasoning.

Given how often the news media are blamed for the problems and changes in religion, issues of interest narrows down to: how can Christian newspapers set the religious agenda in the broadest sense? Can Christian newspapers inform the public that religion is an important issue worthy of discussion in the public sphere? Or Christian newspapers have resorted to reporting on issues other than relating to religion? Consequently, the theory also prompts an inquiry into whether journalists are responsible for defining the prominence of particular issues within religion. Do Christian newspapers have the potential to orient people as to what to think about?

2.3 Changing Phases in the Media (Newspaper) Landscape and its Consequences

Developments in systems related to the media in its largest extent are influenced by factors such as population and cultural traits, physical and geographical characteristics, and political, social and economic conditions (Lowenstein & Merril, 1990). The media, particularly the press, have close relationships and interconnections with systems of a country. These systems of a country include: the politico-economic system, socio-cultural systems, educational systems, international relations and other systems as may exist in a
country (Skamnakis, 2006). Usually regulating such media systems in a way reflects the attitudes of the country toward economic organisations, rights of individuals, political traditions, international relations, and so on (Papathanassopoulos, 2004; p.26).

The media in general, with particular emphasis on newspapers have over the decades gone through several phases. These phases, according to Skamnakis (2006), depict exactly how systems are within a society’s economic, political, cultural, social, and religious landscape. For instance, Baldasty (1992) pointed out that, in the beginning of the nineteen century in USA, contents of newspapers were dominated by politics and advocacy, reflecting close ties to political parties and interest groups. Curran and Seaton (1991) expressed scenarios of political affiliations and advocacy roles in the Great Britain just as in the USA.

Bird and Garda (2014; p.5) indicate that during the apartheid era in South Africa, newspapers either wittingly or unwittingly played roles in legitimising and centralising the system of apartheid. Bird and Garda (2014; p.5) pointed out that English and Afrikaans papers whilst operating differently in this regard, nonetheless did not always sufficiently challenge the workings, policies and activities of the apartheid state.

Gadzekpo (2007; p.89) mentions that the history and development of the media in Ghana are deeply linked to the political history of the country. During the era of colonialism, newspapers introduced were generally used as political tool to concatenate the pieces of peripheral political events among the people than as a tool for disseminating information. Rockson (1990; p.37) reports that periods preceding the independence of Ghana saw the emergence of newspapers which were produced locally with an aim geared toward the
struggle for emancipating colonial rule by adopting radical viewpoints in pioneering roles within the context of fighting British imperialism.

Krumsvik (2006; p.22) points out that, newspapers until the last few decades were part of a world where they could pull out “Exclusive” headings every time they were reasonably certain they were the only ones who covered specific stories and interviews. Particularly where radio and TV stations waited for such exclusive stories and interviews during prime time news broadcasts. However, in the twenty-first century, relationships between the media, particularly newspapers and systems in a country has developed towards being autonomous from political strings and control, whereas the entry of business minded people with profit motives have reinforced the tendency for transforming media systems to a clearly commercial phenomenon (Skamnakis, 2006).

Lavarch (2012; p.24) in emphasising the media within the scope of democracy and politics, suggests that in order for democracy to flourish, the availability and accessibility to information is crucial, and for that reason, the media, specifically newspapers play critical roles in stimulating debates about important issues, presenting facts and reporting news, uncovering corruption and misconduct and providing means for diverse viewpoints among people. Lavarch (2012; p.24) notes that most importantly, newspapers play key accountability mechanism for keeping institutions such as political power of executives government, social and cultural power of institutions as diverse as churches and religious groups and economic power. Through all these discussions above, it is observed that the crucial role played by newspapers within systems in a country presents a dichotomy owing to consequences of roles and power it has accrued more especially in relation to shaping the flow of information.
Hooke (2012; p.35) continued to emphasise that in China, newspapers have changed from existing as the ‘tongue and throat’ of the country’s Communist Party to becoming commercialised. Hooke (2012; p.35) mentioned that, the change means that while newspapers in China are not expressly challenging the party and government, they ask questions, and this has resulted in opening up the country. In India, the growth of a popular vernacular press is skewed to entertainment, scandal, gossip and sports with some coverage of public affairs; which while not being a perfect development, supplements what the Indian media system is offering to citizens (Hooke, 2012; p.36).

2.4 Christian Newspaper: History, Roles and Essence

Hosseini (2008; p.56) asserts that, many scholars, theologians and media researchers perceive religion and media as a subject of keen interest; and this is basically due to the fact that it can be analysed from multiple standpoints. Mohammadi (2003; p.148) points out that regardless of the keen interests spurred in terms of research, the lack of logical distinction between theoretical studies and applied studies of religion and media presents several shortcomings to the study area.

Houlden (1995; p. xii) expresses the view that, since Christianity is a religion and has institutions, authorities and practices, there is the need to communicate them, and that presents a sociological function that requires the application of basic media principles; so as to understand how these Christian values apply in society. Hence, the keen interest emphasised by Hosseini (2008; p.56) in relation to understanding the enormous variety of communicative actions present in Christianity.
Rodgers (2013) points to the fact that the call for religious (in this case, Christian) newspaper dates back to the early parts of the 19th Century. By the mid-1830s, a number of Christian dailies had been published. Rodgers (2013) continues to indicate that shortly after printers started turning out newspapers in America, it was estimated that about 39% of Christian periodicals were published between 1820 and 1852. He further notes the differing views by different people (mostly the clergy and journalists) on the need or existence of a Christian newspaper (Rodgers, 2013). Downie and Schudson (2009; p.5) on the other hand noted that while others expressed optimism for the survival of Christian newspapers, some saw Christian newspapers as unfit for a competitive communication industry. Downie and Schudson (2009; p.6) argued that, the dynamism within environmental systems lately, have influenced the patronage of Christian newspapers to dwindle. Additionally, focus on issues reported by Christian newspapers are generally becoming diverse, seemingly not being able to effectively capture as much information as readers would want to have almost all the time. The internet is also contributing significantly to reasons why Christian newspapers may seem unfit for the competitive communication industry.

One of such optimists was Elias Smith who published the Herald of Gospel Liberty in 1808. His rationale behind the publication was to disseminate information about the Kingdom of God to a large number of people in different places at the same time through a less expensive medium. Elaborately, Rodgers (2013) supports the rationale behind Smith’s publications. Rodgers (2013) mentions that Smith referred to the publications as “imagined religious communities among strangers”. In 1887, Howard Crosby argued that it was necessary to have a Christian daily since Americans had a culture of reading and he believed that Christian newspapers would help play fundamental roles in safeguarding “truth” and “right” in America (Rodgers, 2013).
In similar works authors such as Soukup (1996; p.34); Schultze (2005; p.85) and Stout (2013; 13) expressed doubts about the survival of Christian newspapers and had concerns about funding the newspaper. For instance, Soukup (1996; p.34) noted that in the 1890s, the New York World, which started as a Christian newspapers had become one of the best-selling secular newspapers in America. It had become secular because the content was not selling and its sustenance became difficult. In order to survive, secular news was introduced and it gradually became a secular newspapers.

Rodgers (2013) points out to the differences in opinions among advocates of Christian newspapers in reference to its publishable contents during the early parts of 1899. Some were of the view Christian newspapers should be void of stories that report on vices and crimes in societies while others saw otherwise (McGonigle & Quigley, 1996; p.76). The Chautauquan: an 1899 journal, defined the axis of a Christian newspaper and what it should be. The Chautauquan proposed removal or less reportage on “sensational, criminal and unpleasant” stories that characterised the usual or normal press from the Christian newspaper. The rationale for such a proposal was to make Christian newspapers distinct and carefully edited newspaper carried out in a highly principled manner (Fourie, 2008; p.40).

2.5 Religious Newspapers in Africa

The use of mass media (Christian media) such as the press for evangelisation and provision of information in Africa has a long history and can be traced to the early parts of the 19th century. Media usage by African churches were closely connected with evangelisation; because the media came to Africa through the instrumentalities of missionaries (Kappeler, 2009; p.25). The missionaries who planted churches in Africa brought the printing press into Africa; this was to help facilitate the spread of the gospel they preached. For example,
Bengt and Steed (2000; p.31) document that, during the 1811s, Wilhelm and Klein brought with them from England to Sierra Leone, a printing press, a font of roman types, and a quantity of printing paper to promote the objective of their mission.

In Nigeria, the Anglicans established a tradition of vernacular literacy that, in fact, was much older than that of literacy in English. In 1854, Rev Townsend fitted up a printing press and inaugurated a printing school in the mission compound at Abeokuta. In 1859, Rev Townsend founded the Iwe Irohim which was published in Yoruba language fortnightly. It was the best organized of the papers at that time and more importantly it was the first to be published in an African language (Kappeler, 2009; p.25).

In Ghana, Christian newspapers date back to 1859 (Gadzekpo, 2007; p.92). Gadzekpo (2007; p.92) documents that the first paper was the Christian Messenger and Examiner in 1859, edited by Rev. Thomas Birch Freeman and Rev. H. Wharton, who were Missionaries of the Methodist mission. This was followed by the Christian Messenger, started in March 1883 and printed in Basel by the Basel Missions; its first editor was Rev. J.G. Christaller, ideally to have been published every two months in Twi, Ga and English (Twumasi, 1981; p.13). The Gold Coast Methodist Times- (1886-1899), which was published fortnightly in Cape Coast from about September 1886 to February 1898, was another Christian newspaper in the literature of Christian newspapers in Ghana. It was founded by the Wesleyan Mission. Its first editors were Rev. W.T. Choppin and Rev. W.M. Cannell.

It became popular under the editorship of Rev. S.R.B. Solomon (later known as Samuel Attoh Ahuma) who was editor from 1894 to 1897.
The first Catholic newspaper Ghana was the *Gold Coast Catholic*. This was a monthly newspaper which began publications in Cape Coast in January 1926. It is unclear whether it is the same as the *Catholic Voice* that is thought to have existed during this period. Essentially, Christian newspapers seek to enhance the communicative actions of the church; as noted earlier, these actions are best understood in relation to communication through the religious media communication theory. Additionally, Twumasi (1981; p.13) suggests there are instances where other related media theories may support certain aspects of communications in religious newspapers, especially Christian newspapers for purposes of this study.

### 2.6 Changing Phases in Christian Newspapers

Downie and Schudson (2009; p.5) raised concerns about purpose in prevailing environments; Geybels, Mels and Walrave (2009; p.40) mentioned funding and sustenance; and de Feijter (2007) suggested readership coverage as some of the key influences to changes in the usual reportage and focus of Christian newspapers in general. Additionally, owing to the underpinnings of some media theories, such as the agenda setting theory, it still appears normal to observe changes in reportages and publications of Christian newspapers, such that it allows them to partake in reporting on issues that influence not only the religious lives for that matter Christian lives of readers but also shapes the public awareness and debates within the social context of the day, be it in line with religion, politics, entertainment, sports, education, social rights, economics, finance and others (Zsupan-Jerome, 2014; p.50).

Changes within the general media landscape also contribute to the changing phases and roles in Christian newspaper publications. Ram (2011; p.5) also alludes to the arrival of the
digital revolution contributing to reshaping the media landscape especially Christian newspapers. The digital revolution characterised by the emergence of new forms of media and rise of online social networks provide a strong sense that the newspaper industry in general particularly Christian newspapers are no longer in control of their own future (Rosenstiel & Mitchell, 2011; p.2). Rosenstiel and Mitchell (2011; p.2) also emphasise that attention has shifted from newspapers especially Christian newspapers to current media purely driven by technology like Google and other social media leading the way and dominating the public space that once belonged to the news media in respect to every aspect of human and social lives.

In the context of this study, the researcher seeks to assess how a Christian newspaper in Ghana, namely the Catholic Standard, has changed over the time.
CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

The underlying factor in most studies in research methodology is that the selection of methodology is based on the research problem and stated research questions. According to Naichiamas and Frankfort-Naichiamas (1996), methodologies are considered to be systems of explicit rules upon which research is based, and against which claims for knowledge are evaluated. Conducting any type of research should be governed by a well-defined research methodology based on scientific principles.

3.2 Research Design

The research design for the study was qualitative and the type employed was historical research method. Historical research involves the study and analysis of data about past events. The specific methods used are flexible and open because the purpose is to learn how past intentions and events were related due to their meaning and value (Law, et al., 1998). This method was used because the intention of this research was to establish the facts about events or conditions of interest, which happened in the past (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). With this method, data could be collected in the form of observations, interviews and examination of documents such as archaeological research, research into historical events, artefacts, and old documents. Historical research can provide important information about the impact of the past on present and future events as well as content analysis.

This research used the Catholic Standard as a case study, giving attention to what role it has played over the years especially because of the political interruptions the country experienced which affected the role of the media in Ghana. Yin (1994) suggests that a case
study is employed as a method of research in order to address research questions that attempt to find out ‘how’ or ‘why’, and the extent of control over behavioural occurrences devoid of the researcher’s opinion. Yin (1994) adds that a case study is also advantageous since it finds objective answers to the research questions in spite of the common conditions of the phenomenon being studied in a real-life context.

Bromley (1990) also defines case study as a “systematic inquiry into an event or a set of related events which aims to describe and explain the phenomenon of interest”. He again suggests that the unit of analysis could differ from an individual to a corporation.

Additionally, content analysis was employed to analyse the samples that were obtained from the population considered. By definition Berelson (1954) indicates that content analysis approach is a technique for carrying out an objective, systematic, as well as a quantitative description of the manifest content of communication. Nonetheless, later definitions emphasised the abandonment of requirements of quantification. Holsti (1969) mentioned that attention in the use of the method has now shifted to using inferences, objectivity, and systematisation of special characters of message contents.

3.3 Data Gathering Method

For the purposes this study, data gathered for analysis concentrated on the headline captions on the front page, the middle page, the back page and the editorial of the Catholic Standard that were sampled. Regarding the choice of using the headlines in the newspaper, Bonyadi and Samuel (2013) argue on its relevance as being able to discuss the schema of the news, and also form the summary of the news report.

Dor (2003) also indicates that headlines in newspapers optimise the relevance of the stories being discussed for readers. In other words, newspaper headlines provide readers with
optimal ratio between contextual effect and processing efforts, and directs readers to construct the optimal context for interpretation. Bell (1984) refers to examining headlines in a study as categorising or indexing. The basic idea adopted here is to identify from the Catholic Standard, the extracts of data that are informative; and also to sort out the important front page and editorial headlines hidden in the mass of each issue since headlines are considered the most important element on the page of newspapers. Thus, for each month, headlines from front page, middle page, back page and editorials were looked at to discover patterns and trends of news coverage over the years.

3.4 Population of the Study

The population for the study was the editions of the Catholic Standard dating from 1938 to 2012. The total number of issues used for the study was 3,216 issues (67 years * 48 = 3216) instead of 3,552 issues (74 years * 48 = 3,552). The Catholic Standard began its publication as a cyclostyled fortnightly sheet in 1938 with catechetical, social and devotional information. It was called DUX from 1938-1947, issued every two weeks and therefore examining news reports from that period would give a fair understanding of the nature of reportage when compared to the epochs stated in the objectives (such as the military and constitutional regimes). It is important to mention that it was banned for seven years, that is, from December 1985 to February 1992. It was during these times that the newspaper licensing law 1989 (PNDC law 211) and a Legislative Instrument (LI 1417), Newspaper Licensing registration 1989, section 1 (1) of Law 211 were used to silence private media. As a result, the total number of issues from 1938-2012 is 3,216.
3.5 Sample Size and Sampling Method

As it is not easy and necessary to study all available issues of the standard from 1938-2012, there is the need for drawing a sample from which findings, inferences and conclusions for the whole study could be made. A total sample size of 480 issues out of the 3,216 issues representing the years 1947, 1948, 1951, 1965, 1966, 1979, 1992, 1996, 2002, 2008 and 2010 of the Catholic Standard publications were randomly selected and studied. It is important to state that the Catholic Standard is composed of four monthly issues. The minimum annual issues of the weekly newspaper will be 48 issues and a maximum of 52. This is because for the minimum number of issues, the workers might have a month break in the year while without a break it will be 52 issues in a year. This study therefore settled on the minimum issues of 48 to calculate the population and sample size and this specifically covered the pre-independence era, post-independence era, the period of unconstitutional (military) rule and the Fourth Republic of Ghana after the liberalization of the media.

For this study, the simple random sampling technique was employed to select the issues. Issues from each category of epochs: (pre-independence era, post-independence era, the period of unconstitutional (military) rule and the Fourth Republic of Ghana after the liberalization were scanned and randomly selected. With simple random sampling, each individual, object or element is chosen randomly and entirely by chance, such that each individual or element has the same probability of being chosen at any stage during the sampling process, and each subset of \( k \) individuals or objects have the same probability of being chosen for the sample as any other subset of \( k \) individuals or objects (Yates, 2008). Further, with each epoch the researcher used a random number table, which is a table of digits 0, 1..., 9, each digit having an equal chance of being selected at each draw.
To use this table in drawing a random sample of size $n$ from a population of size $N$, the researcher did the following:

1. Labelled the units in the population from 0 to $N-1$, which in this case were 1938-2012.
2. Found $r$, the number of digits in $N-1$. For example, if $N = 100$, then $r = 2$.
3. Read $r$ digits at a time across the columns or rows of a random number table.
4. If the number in (3) corresponds to a number in (1), the corresponding unit of the population was included in the sample, otherwise the number was discarded and the next one was read.
5. This was continued until $n$ units were selected.


In spite of the weakness of the probability sampling, (such as larger sampling errors and less precision), the following strength of simple random sampling inspired its use in this study. First, each selection is independent of other selections, and every possible combination of sampling units has an equal and independent chance of being selected. Besides, it is generally easier than other probability sampling procedures (such as multistage and cluster sampling) to understand and communicate to others.

3.6 Instrumentation

Instrumentation is generally the process of collecting data and this involves the selection of the instrument as well as the conditions under which the instruments will be administered. There are various methods of obtaining data. Osuala (2005) identifies these methods as documentary sources, mail questionnaire, interviewing and observation. Since the Catholic Standard as in the case of all newspapers is documentary in nature, this study adopted the documentary source as the instrumentation method.
3.7 Research Protocol

Having obtained the permission, the researcher on agreed dates, visited the Catholic Standard office in Accra and went through all the available Catholic Standard archives. In the process, the researcher retrieved and selected the files randomly in relation to the objectives of the study and categorized them under the various periods. That is, published news in the pre-independence, independence and post-independence era including the period of unconstitutional rule and also the Fourth Republic of Ghana after the liberalization of the media.

For the pre-independence era, the years 1947, 1948 and 1951 publications were randomly selected. In the independence and post-independence era which includes the military regimes, the years 1958, 1966, and 1979 were selected. Further, to represent the period of democracy and media liberalisation of the Fourth republic, the years 1996, 2002, and 2009 of the Catholic Standard were selected for the study.

Table 2: Sampled Catholic Standard

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pre-independence and Independence archive</th>
<th>Post-independence (Military regimes)</th>
<th>Fourth Republic of Ghana (Rawlings, Kufuor and Mills regimes)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1947 (Dux)</td>
<td>1958</td>
<td>1996</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1948</td>
<td>1966</td>
<td>2002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1951</td>
<td>1979</td>
<td>2009</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.8 Approach to Data Analysis

In general, documents are any preserved recording of a person’s thoughts, actions or creations (Potter, 1996). The examination of documents is especially important to historians who investigate patterns and trends from the past. Documents may be examined to investigate patterns and trends of the past as it is commonly done by historians. If no humans remain alive to provide primary evidence, then documents are the only source of data (Potter, 1996). Documents are also examined by researchers who are investigating subjects who are available. The examination of documents may also provide confirmatory evidence of the information obtained from interviews and observations.
CHAPTER FOUR
DISCUSSIONS OF FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter is a presentation of the analysed data obtained from the study. The data was analysed in relation to what the objectives sought to achieve as well as questions posed by the research questions. The data was analysed from the headlines that the Catholic Standard used for the stories published/covered during the phases of pre-independence, post-independence, and the period of unconstitutional rule and the Fourth Republic of Ghana. Additionally, the role the Catholic Standard is playing in the current period of media liberalization.

The qualitative approach to analysing the content of the Catholic Standard was aimed at addressing the questions:

1. What role did the Catholic Standard play during the phases of pre-independence and post-independence era including the period of unconstitutional rule?
2. What role is the Catholic Standard playing in the fourth republic within the context of democracy, and media liberalization?
3. How has the political environment affected the objectives and mandate of the Catholic Standard?

As stated earlier in this study, the headlines of the front pages, editorial, middle page and the back pages were analysed. In analysing the newspaper, two genres were identified, namely: religious and secular. The analysis for the epochs therefore was presented in relation to these genres.
4.2 The phase of pre-independence role of the *Catholic Standard* (1947, 1948, 1951)

4.2.1 Religious role/reportage

In analysing the *Catholic Standard*, the research found that the front page headlines, middle page and back page during this era were mainly religious in outlook. The religious reportage can be seen in three aspects, that is, theological, liturgical and spiritual. News items with headlines like *The Eucharist and the Saints* (17th Jan. 1951); *The Pope of the Eucharist* (17th Jan. 1951); *the message of the Eucharistic Congress* (18th April, 1951) were theological. The theological reportage talked about doctrines of the Catholic faith.

Spiritual reportage by the *Catholic Standard* in this era included: *My sacrifice and yours look at the unity of the Catholics of the world* (3rd Jan. 1951); *the whole world prays for Africa* (3rd Jan. 1951); *Inspect your new house in heaven* (28th Oct. 1951). The spiritual news dealt with messages that give information about the need for prayer, life of the saints, worship, and figures in the Bible.

Sampled data obtained for this era did not indicate liturgical news. Liturgical news would include celebration of the sacraments, such as baptism, the Eucharist (Mass), and other forms of worship such as societal devotions.

4.2.2 Secular role/reportage

Secular news is coverage of news items or stories that do not have implicit or explicit religious connotation. Despite it being a religious newspaper, the *Catholic Standard* also reported news items that were political, social, and economic in nature during this era. The *Catholic Standard* took account of the political happenings in the country as well as from the international front such as: *What is communism* (28th Jan. 1948); *Communism means*
violence, bloodshed, civil war (24th March 1948); and The South African race question (19th Sep.t 1951).

These news reports show that the Catholic Standard was not only interested in reportage of religious activities but political and social as well. “What is communism: Communism means violence, bloodshed, civil war” in relation to the secular news published, shows how the paper condemns evil political systems. Again there were stories also from the international front that touched on human rights such as; Russian slave system “No parallel in history”; and British minister speaks in defence of human rights (Nov 10, 1948).

We stand for free education for every citizen (Aug. 22, 1951); Ends and means of education (Aug. 22, 1951); are some news reports that relayed information about the educational system at the time. Critics of defence of unborn child dodge word murder, (5th Dec.1951), is an example of health news that the paper covered during this era. These news items by the paper are an indication that the paper was interested in the social life of the citizenry.

The Catholic Standard during this era mainly published stories that support the RMT and were mostly religious. The nature of the reportage suggests that such news was for specific people, namely Catholics. The Catholic Standard also played a gate keeping role during this era.

4.3 The Post-independence Era (1958)

The year 1958 was an immediate post-independence era when Nkrumah had become president. The year 1966 saw Nkrumah out of power through a coup d’état when Lieutenant General Emmanuel Kwasi Kotoka became the Head of State. The press during these periods faced one of the most challenging times in the political and media history of the country
(Gadzekpo, 2008). Again, although not a military or unconstitutional era, Nkrumah’s administration ruled the country in a de facto or dictatorial way when he declared a one-party state.

4.3.1 Religious Role/ Reportage

Analysis of the data showed that the Catholic Standard covered religious news items both from the local and international arenas during the post-independence era. For instance, stories such as, Pax Romana underscores updating of church (3rd Jan. 1958, front page headlines); Anglican defends pope; France supports religious freedom; who are the new cardinals, Archbishop outlines the work of ecumenism; UN on religious discrimination; Holy week liturgy changed (4th April, 1958). The role the paper played in relation to this genre of reportage is simply the gate keeping role. The newspaper not only provided information to its members and the general Christian community but also educated the public on religion. An example is Freedom in theology (3rd Jan. 1958).

4.3.2 Secular Reportage

Secular news that had coverage in the Catholic Standard had the same characteristics of the secular reportage during the pre-independence era. That is, they were political, social and economic. Examples of such news reports that had economic underpinnings were: Russian and Chinese aims in Africa (17th Jan. 1958); Social Welfare Conference; Agricultural institutes opened (22nd Aug. 1958); War, poverty and population (17th Oct. 1958); Greater Africanization of schools (10th Oct. 1958) were social issues (health, education, etc) while reportage like Church Should avoid politics (12th Sept. 1958); Rhodesia Crisis (31st Oct. 1958); Osagyefo goes to Island; Cardinal condemns nuclear war (7th Nov. 1958); Dictator
Salazar Condemned (24th Nov. 1958); Sudan in Turmoil (5th Dec. 1958); were political in outlook.

From the analysis above, it could be said that during the post-independence era, the Catholic Standard played the watchdog role of the press. Despite the fact that the paper tried covered stories that were secular (especially political and economic), the church deliberately avoided stories criticising the authoritarian rule of Dr. Kwame Nkrumah. This can be inferred from one of the editions in 1958. The paper published a story with the headline, Church should avoid politics. (12th Sept. 1958).

4.4 Post-independence era (Military Regimes, 1966 and 1979)

Religious stories were again the main concentration of the Catholic Standard during the military regime. However, the type of religious news was what seemed to have slightly changed during this era. There seems to have been no theological news either from the Ghanaian society or from the international front. They were mainly spiritual and liturgical such as 1st Death Anniversary of Paul VI Pope John Paul II Recalls; The church is you (11th Jan. 1966); Frontier priests ordained Church, “messenger of peace; Pope in anti-Nazi plot (25th Jan. 1966) School for assistant Nurses opened at Maase St. Patrick’s (6th Feb. 1966); Nearly half of Ghana is Christian, Catholic form largest group (13th Feb. 1979)

4.4.1 Secular News

The Catholic Standard again reported issues that dealt with the economy of the country during these military regimes. For instance, in the April edition, the Catholic Standard published news items such as, Your salary and the National Economy (10th April 1966); The “Petrol Queues” necessary? (29th Sept. 1979); Economic inequalities between nations is a
scandal (10th April 1966); Economic students thrash out problems (10th April, 1966); Revolutionary Budget and Stop inflation (18th Nov.1979). The newspaper at this time seemed to have serious concerns about the state of the economy in Ghana more than the immediate post-independence era. This could be because the economic mismanagement or malfeasance during the military era was worse than the one-party state era. Hence, they saw the need in reporting on economic issues.

Other secular news like Ghanaian women must take up teaching (3rd April, 1966); and New Regulations on Mixed Marriage (April 10, 1966) were social news that touched on family and relationship; and motivation for women. The political news reported include Integration or suppression? (19th June, 1966); Education, Democratic Effort (editorial); and Southern Sudan on the point of Anarchy (10th April, 1966); Kutu Utuka executed (24th June, 1979); Poised for action, AFRC Commended (1st July, 1979); Churches speak out on Executions (front page, July 1, 1979). AFRC must complete work (editorial, Sep, 16, 1979); Journalists and Press freedom (18th Nov. 1979)

The foregoing headlines that constituted the secular news covered by the Catholic Standard indicate that the paper kept to its watchdog role during military regimes (Acheampong and Rawlings respectively).

Again, realising the deteriorating state of the country during the military rule, the Catholic Standard saw the need to add voice to reportage by other newspaper. The Catholic Standard can be said to have contributed to the watchdog role in the country during this era. The Catholic Standard began to be vibrant in safeguarding not only the social aspects of the nation but also the political and economic facets as well. The Catholic Standard saw the
need for ensuring accountability from the powerful (the military juntas) in the country because accountability must necessarily be present in all aspects of life where there is some level of power, authority and leadership. The actualisation of accountability and probity cannot be effective in a dispensation of media suppression and media censorship. With this knowledge, the Catholic Standard in its November 18, 1979 edition wrote its editorial on the topic: Journalists and Press freedom. This was to educate the public (reader/audience) on the importance of press freedom in a society.

4.5 The Era of Constitutional Rule /Fourth Republic (1996, 2002 And 2009)
From 1993 to 2013, a period of twenty years, Ghana’s Fourth Republic which liberalised the media has enjoyed an era of constitutional rule with three different political administrations: Rawlings, Kufour and Mills. A year each from these administrations was sampled to represent the three different administrations.

4.5.1 Religious Reportage
The beginning of the constitutional era saw the Catholic Standard reporting less religious news. Contrary to its mandate and objective to mainly publish religious news to the public especially to Catholics (and to an extent, the Christian community), the Catholic Standard recorded a less religious reportage as compared to the secular news. These were the religious news the Catholic Standard published right after the ban on private media was lifted. Priest’s congress opens in Sunyani (14th Jan. 1996); Two nuns murdered (14th Jan. 1996); Churches worried about Ghana’s future (24th March, 1996); Eucharistic congress to mark Ghana’s jubilee (1st Dec. 1996). The few religious news items published during this period did not have clearly defined categories such as (liturgical, theological and spiritual).
In Kufour’s era, the religious news covered by the Catholic Standard seemed to have minimized. As in the case of the Rawlings’ constitutional dispensation, the religious news had no clearly defined direction. Below are some of the religious headlines in the 2002 edition of the newspaper. Bishop Owusu laid to rest (17th Feb. 2002); No one can destroy the Catholic Church; Pope calls for legal recognition of embryo (14th April, 2002); Pope has energy (23rd June, 2002); Centenarian honoured by the Holy Father, Catholics number 1.045 billion in the world, Nigerian leader says he will weep if a woman is executed for adultery; Vatican radio director concerned about US intent on Iraq; Miracle worker Padre Pio canonised (30th June, 2002).

There was far more improvement in the reportage of secular news by the Catholic Standard. For instance, immediately the ban on newspapers was lifted in 1992 to usher in a democratic era of media freedom, The Catholic Standard had news items such as, Africa’s changing political landscape affects investors (22nd March, 1992); Stop the referendum and repeal all repressive laws (29th March, 1992); The upcoming referendum, an exercise in futility (22nd, March, 1992); More say “NO” to referendum (29th March, 1992); Men of probity needed. (22nd March, 1992).

The political undertones that featured prominently in the Catholic Standard right after the ban shows how ready the Catholic Standard was to fully take up the watchdog role of the media. In 1996 for example, stories such as Era of fake democracies (7th Jan. 1996); Rawlings “spoilt” my Christmas (14th, Jan. 1996); Religious leaders move to end Rawlings/Arkaah crisis (21st Jan. 1996); and Media to make or unmake ‘96’ elections (24th
March, 1996); African leaders are enslavers (21st April, 1996); Thirst for power – cause of Africa’s war (14th Dec. 1996); were published to criticise the new era of constitutionalism.

During Kufour’s administration, the Catholic Standard did not publish any serious political news. The secular news that had political undertones were soft news items. For example, military media co-operation was published as an editorial. The secular news items that were published during this time were mainly social and economic. The social news included addressing youth and employment (editorial); Control indiscipline through education, Extend meals programme to all deprived areas (8th Sep., 2002) Palmer-Buckle blames parents for children’s indiscipline (15th Sep. 2002); Stop spousal battering (15th Sep. 2002); were social news that talked about education, discipline, family and relationship.

The Catholic Standard again did not have much political reportage during Mills’ administration. Some of the political news items that were published (with softer tones) were: Don’t use media to propagate falsehood (7th June, 2009); Use media to serve humanity- Archbishop Naameh (6th Dec. 2009). The secular news items that were reported had more bearings to social issues in the country than political and economic issues. These reportage: The suffering of children is the Gospel betrayed (middle page); Dressing code for tertiary students; Climate change, our collective responsibility (back page); Foster co-existence among ethnic groups; Human trafficking (editorial); Bushfires and the dry season (editorial) are social news that cut across the environment, gender, decency, discipline and education.
4.6 Summary of Chapter

From the discussions it can be seen that although the Catholic Standard played its gatekeeping and watchdog role, it was quite docile reporting news that reflects happenings in that era. It mainly reported religious news that had clearly defined in line with the three aspects (theological, liturgical and spiritual) of the religious news.
CHAPTER FIVE
SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses and gives summary of the findings of the study. The discussion pivots around the objective of the study.

5.2 Summary of Findings

5.2.1 Pre-Independence

The roles the Catholic Standard played during the pre-independence era were varied. The findings of the study suggest that during the pre-independence era, the Catholic Standard did not take interest in the political and social happenings in the country. It rather dwelled on happenings at the international front as well as church affairs (locally and internationally).

5.2.2 Post-Independence

The Catholic Standard did not have much significant change in its reportage during this phase in the political history of Ghana. Analysis of the data revealed that the standard remained faithful to the religious (especially Catholic) occurrences both in this country and on the international front. Changes that occurred in the Catholic Standard were features that addressed social issues. Such headlines dwelled on marriages, population control and human values necessary for the development of the society. These stories and features might be intrinsically important to the Catholic Standard since it has some bearing with the religious aim of the paper. The paper’s inability to report on the occurrences of the time may be due to the press censorship and press repression introduced and enforced by the authoritarian
rule of President Dr. Nkrumah. The Standard probably did not want to be a victim of press repression since its interest was to ensure that the religious and social lives of citizens were given audience. Again the existence and survival of the Catholic Standard was of more importance to the editors of the newspaper because they needed to keep in touch with happenings surrounding the (Catholic) church and around the globe especially from the Vatican. This does not necessarily mean the Standard was in agreement with the authoritarian rule at the time.

5.2.3 Unconstitutional and military rule

Five military regimes ruled Ghana; in 1966, when the National Liberation Council (NLC) carried out the first coup d’état alongside some civil and democratic regimes till 1992, which officially marked the end of military regimes in Ghana during the rule of the Provisional National Defence Council (PNDC) regime. Gadzekpo (2007) asserts that the long periods of unconstitutional rule resulted in insignificant impacts on the press although there were some short periods of constitutional rule in between those era. The Second Republican government of the Progress Party, led by Dr. Kofi Abrefa Busia, lasted from August 1969 until its overthrow in a coup two and a half years later in January 1972. That period saw a repeal of a newspaper licensing law put in place by the Nkrumah government. However, changes to the top management of state-owned newspapers, and a libel suit against a private newspaper editor marred its liberal press credentials, while signalling continued governmental discomfort with independent media.

Ghana’s third attempt at constitutional rule barely lasted two years—from September 1979 to December 1981. Just as during the Second Republic, there was a brief opening up of the press, but the short-lived nature of the opening up of democratic space was not enough for any lasting impact on the professional, psychological and material conditions of the media.
In short the military governments that seized power and ruled Ghana through two decades concretized and strengthened media coercion and dominance by the state. The period was marked by arbitrary arrests, imprisonments and intimidation of journalists in both private and state-owned media, and also general job insecurity, as private newspapers tried to stay in business under circumstances of political repression and economic depression Gadzekpo (2007).

The political instability during these eras led to economic and social setbacks. In spite of the brutalities and economic mismanagement that faced this country, the *Catholic Standard* remained silent and never covered a story about the (political) happenings in the country in 1966. The same could not be said about the *Catholic Standard* during 1979 when it started reporting political and economic issues. The new style of news reportage included features, editorial columns such as the *living letters* and the *Abonsam fireman. Rural Gossip* and serialised articles started showing in the *Catholic Standard*. The interest of the *Catholic Standard* in national issues was explicit from this period and featured stories like “*who rules the country*”, “return to constitutional rule”; and “political and social justice”. Amidst the hostility towards the Ghanaian press, the *Catholic Standard* trumpeted without fear the orchestration of the military junta.

### 5.2.4 Fourth Republic: Democracy and Neo-Liberalism

The *Standard* during this era improved their reportage and included religious, social, political and economic issues. With strong headlines such as ‘*Stop the referendum and hand over by March ending*’ the standard could be said to have started acting in a way that aimed at conscientising the citizens to fight for a democratic and constitutional government again. Referring to Karikari (1994), this is what Gadzekpo (2007) reports to be “a role expected of
the independent media under a libertarian, pluralist constitutional system of government; namely serving as watchdogs of accountability”.

5.2.5 Constitutional Regime

The Catholic Standard maintained the same style of reportage prior to this era. With constitutional rule, freedom of the press and freedom of expression, and media protection (article 21 and chapter 12), the Catholic Standard felt more empowered and inspired to report political and economic issues in addition to the social and religious reportage.

The political environment and its effect on the mandate of the Catholic Standard

The changing styles of reportage by the Catholic Standard attest to the fact that the Ghanaian press had had a long struggle to freedom and independence as Gadzekpo (2007) points out. The criticisms by the press and readiness to exercise the freedom of the press (backed by chapter 12 of the 1992 Constitution) after the ban had been lifted point to how ready the press or media were to contribute to the development of the country. These freedoms and protection however come with responsibilities. For instance a newspaper that publishes damaging stories about an individual, group or party, that newspaper is obliged or required by law to publish a rejoinder from the stigmatised party. State and government officials nonetheless employed tact that sought to control and intimidate the press (both state owned and private) when stories published about the government was not in favour of the ruling government.
5.3 Conclusion

The present study indicates that religious newspapers such as the Catholic Standard basically exist to communicate news and values of the church. However, since they exist in a society, they have a role to play as watchdog and be the voice of the voiceless. This is the reason for which the Catholic Standard in its inception seemed not to be interested in the political affairs of the nation and therefore said or reported nothing about the activities of the colonialist. The post-independence and unconstitutional era of the Catholic Standard saw the introduction of reportage that was social in nature. Despite the political persecutions of the press during the PNDC regime, the Catholic Standard was quite vociferous and criticised the military regime. The democratic dispensation from 1993 gave room for freedom of expression and media freedom. This freedom has encouraged media pluralism more than ever in the history of the Ghanaian media.

5.4 Recommendation

Based on the findings from the study, these are some recommendations.

First, it is recommended that publishers of the Catholic Standard; to remain focused on its objectives, and the theoretical rationale for its establishment regarding its reportage irrespective of the socio-political or socio-economic dispensation in the country. Also, the study recommends that future studies into the area should examine the views of readers in relation to the changing roles, and also consider a thorough content analysis of the Catholic Standard rather the headlines, as well as the impact of what other newspaper reportages had on publications of the Catholic Standard.
5.5 Limitations of the Study

This study like any academic research is not without limitations. One major limitation was literature used for the study. There is not much literature relating to the present study especially in Ghana. This made the review of related literature quite difficult.

The methodology for the study could have greatly contributed to the analysis of the data if the study had been conducted with some interviews to compliment the historical or documentary research especially since some files were not accessible. Interviewing some past editors could have helped find out why the Catholic Standard played the role it did during the phases discussed in this study.

Time was also a constraint to the study. This study was conducted within a period of four months, a time not sufficient enough for a study such as this. The research outcome would have been more critical had it been conducted over a year or more. This would have helped the researcher analyse the content of the newspaper and not only the headlines.
APPENDIX

The Catholic Standard

1947

1958

1966

1993

1996

2002

2010
BIBLIOGRAPHY


