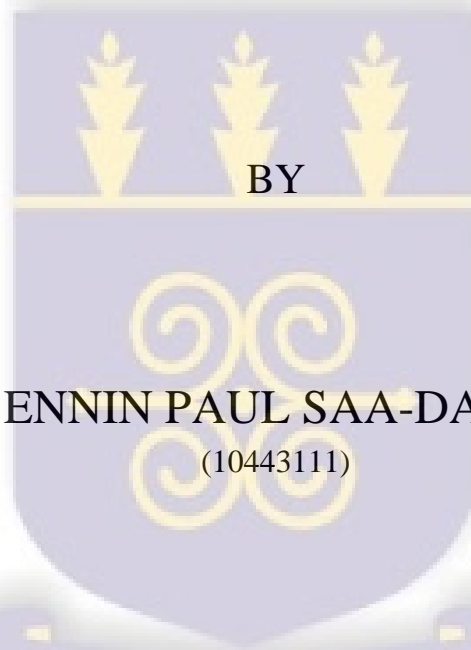


INSTITUTE OF AFRICAN STUDIES

UNIVERSITY OF GHANA, LEGON

**THE ROLE OF RELIGIOUS INSTITUTIONS IN
GOVERNANCE IN AFRICA: THE CASE OF THE
GHANA CATHOLIC BISHOPS' CONFERENCE**



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GHANA, LEGON, IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AWARD OF MPhil AFRICAN
STUDIES DEGREE

JULY, 2015

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that with the exception of quotations and literature cited which served as sources of information and which have been duly acknowledged, this Thesis is the result of research personally carried out by myself under the listed supervisors. This work is in no way a reproduction, in part or in whole, of any work presented for the award of a degree anywhere.

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On each and every one who contributed in any way to the successful completion of this study, I implore God's blessing and guidance in your chosen path.

Ennin Paul Saa-Dade

IAS, UG, Legon

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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my parents, Mr. and Mrs. J.K. Ennin, the domestic church which nurtured me and inculcated in me the values of the common good; to the Ghana Catholic Bishops' Conference and all their collaborators for their efforts towards building a better Ghanaian society; and to all who are involved in the campaign to develop Africa through a system of governance that responds to the aspirations and needs of the ordinary people of Africa.



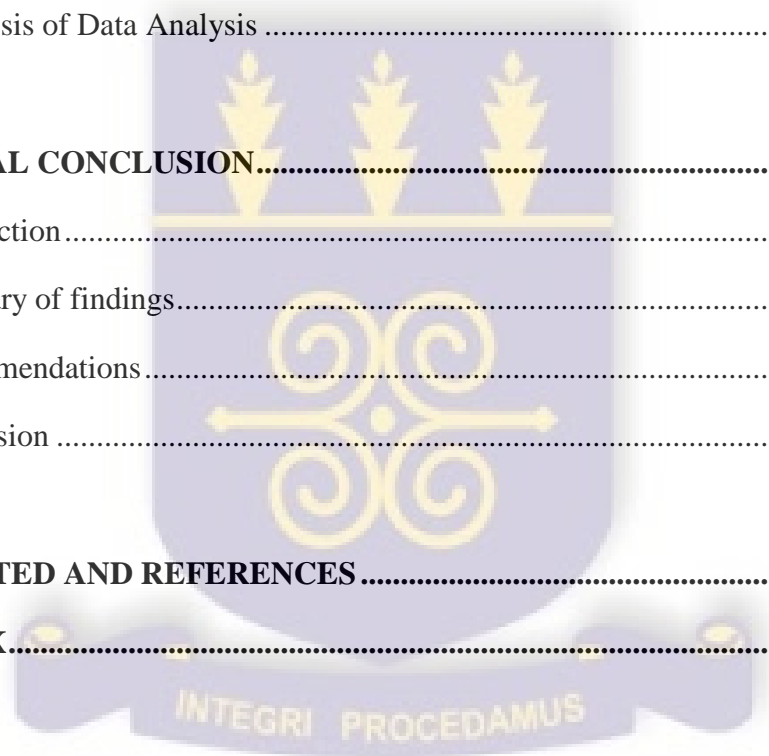
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ABSTRACT

The focus of the study is to examine the role of religious institutions in governance in Africa using as a case study the Ghana Catholic Bishops' Conference and its interventions on governance issues in Ghana since the inauguration of the Fourth Republic. In all 35 documents were carefully examined. The documents include Communiqués, Pastoral letters, Joint statements and other special messages found in the archives of the GCBC at the National Catholic Secretariat in Accra. Each document was studied and its content analysed and then classified. To get the opinion of the general public on the activities of the GCBC in relations to governance issues in the country a survey of 60 respondents comprising 30 Catholics and 30 Non-Catholics, using the quota sampling method was undertaken. The survey instrument was questionnaire. The occupational, educational and age distribution of respondents were diverse, with a gender equation of 55.9% to 44.1% of male to female.

The results of the study show that the GCBC has been very active in issues concerning governance in its interventions and pronouncements. Apart from health and education in which the Catholic Church in Ghana is a traditional stakeholder, top governance issues that got the attention of the GCBC are issues of peace and security, economic and neopatrimonialism, bribery and corruption, the environment, and ethnic harmony in descending order. Also the findings from the documents of the GCBC show that the GCBC was consistent in its interventions irrespective of the political party in power, thus showing no political preference or bias. Furthermore, the study found out that the primary method employed by the GCBC is denunciation and appeal to individual and collective conscience. In more recent times, however, the GCBC has moved from general denunciation to tackling specific cases and advocating alternative solutions.

A key part of the GCBC actions is its use of experts in its work and its desire to work in partnership with other religious bodies, professional associations and the government in seeking ways of improving governance in the country and bettering the living conditions of citizens. It also sees its public role as part and parcel of its religious mandate.

When it comes to public opinion, the findings show that there was little or no difference between Catholic and Non-Catholic respondents. Generally the public, irrespective of religious belief, has a very positive image of the Catholic Church. It rates very favourably, the contribution of the Catholic Church to the nation's development, especially in the areas of education and health. GCBC enjoyed similar ratings in its interventions in governance issues such as the fight against corruption, promotion of peace and security and ethnic harmony, though a sizeable proportion of respondents will like to see an improvement in its efforts in the fight against corruption. Also, very few do have access to pronouncements and communiqués of the GCBC, and as such are not really informed of the propositions of the Conference. Furthermore, majority of respondents could not vouch for the neutrality of the GCBC in terms of its political affiliation.

Consequently, among the recommendations made include the need for the GCBC to do more in its public relation and diffusion of its activities through the effective use of the mass media. Networking with other religious groups and professional associations was also proposed. It was also suggested that the GCBC should examine its follow-up strategies to concrete actions it undertakes in the interest of the general public. Moreover, it was proposed that it should involve more of its followers in its actions and maximise its organisation strength, large membership and powerful influence in the Ghanaian society.

It is hoped that these recommendations will be of help to the GCBC in its effort to impact positively on governance in the country, and thus improve the living condition of ordinary Ghanaians.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AFRC	Armed Forces Revolutionary Council
AIC	African Independent Churches
AU	African Union
CCG	Christian Council of Ghana
CCL	Code of Canon Law
CEHUD	Centre for Human Development
CHRAJ	Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice
CPLO	Catholic Parliamentary Liaison Office
CPP	Convention Peoples Party
EOCO	Economic and Organised Crime Office
EU	European Union
GCBC	Ghana Catholic Bishops' Conference
GYEEDA	Government Youth Employment and Entrepreneurial Development Agency
IMF	International Monetary Fund
INEC	Independent Electoral Commission
NCD	National Commission for Democracy
NCHS	National Catholic Health Service
NCJPC (JPC)	National Catholic Justice and Peace Commission
NCS	National Catholic Secretariat

NDC	National Democratic Congress
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NPP	New Patriotic Party
OAU	Organisation of African Unity
PDC	Peoples' Defence Committees
PNDC	Peoples' National Defence Council
PNDC/L	Peoples' National Defence Council Law
SADA	Savannah Accelerated Development Authority
SMA	Society of African Missions
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
WDC	Workers' Defence Committees

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of study

The interaction between religion and public life is in a continuous flux as society itself undergoes constant evolution. In traditional African society, like the Akan in Ghana, the distinction between religion or the sacred sphere and secular or the public sphere had been tenuous, and “religion had tended to govern virtually every aspect of communal and personal life” (Assimeng, 2010:130). In such traditional societies, religion was part of the public life and institution. It gave the moral and divine justifications to social and political order of the community, and thus served as the mechanism for social control.

However, the coming of missionary religions like Islam, and to a greater extent, Christianity, and the colonial domination of Africa by European powers, with the resultant socio-political configuration of what is now modern-day Africa, changed the power relations between religion and the public sphere. While Christianity and Islam gave the individual a sense of independence as a person in relation to the divine, disrupting as it were, the social collectivity in religious practice and social conception of traditional Africa (Hillman, 1993; Assimeng, 2010), colonialism brought with it separation of Church and State at official levels; that is, the differentiation of the public sphere from the private sphere, with religion and religious practice being relegated to the private sphere.

The effect of the differentiation between Church and State, and the relegation of religion to the private domain, imply that religion ceases to be a dominant force in governance issues of public life, with some sociologists viewing this phenomenon as a natural retrogression of religious influence in society as societies move from a

traditional, pre-literate, and monolithic culture to a more complex, literate, industrial and pluralistic society (Lenski, 1965). Gilbert (1924) asserts that when societies become more pluralistic, with religious diversity, there is a corresponding individuation of ethos which affords individuals the possibility to decide which religion to choose, and whether to choose any at all. Thus, as African societies become more literate, industrial, modern, and urban, with its religious diversity and ethnic plurality, religion becomes just a compartment of social life, losing its once sovereignty over all aspects of human behaviour and over other social institutions that it had in traditional society. In the modern African society, religion finds itself in what Assimeng (2010:124) has described as “specialisation of the institutional competence”.

The transition of the social function of religion from a robust public role in traditional societies to the private domain is not unique to African societies. In fact, the African experience is a reflection of the European religious dynamics and experience. In Europe, during the period of Christendom, and before the Enlightenment, Church and State were seen as two sides of the same coin based on divine authority. St. Augustine’s *City of God* provided the theoretical and doctrinal framework for the State and the Church to coexist together and legislate over the political, social and spiritual life of the people, the former entrusted with the temporal domain, and the latter pontificating over spiritual affairs. The Church, thus, was associated with the State and provided the moral authority and legitimacy for the State’s temporal and political power. The Church, hence, wielded enormous power and had great influence in society and social behaviour.

However, the Church-State relationship was to change with the Enlightenment, the Protestant reformation, the French revolution, the industrial and scientific advancement, and the coming into being of liberal democracy and secular states, in what is generally termed as “modernity”. Many commentators saw the separation of Church and State and

the declining influence of the former, as well as the diminishing religious attendance in Churches in the later part of 20th century Europe, as a sign of the irrelevance of religion to modern and industrial societies. However, recent studies, both in the West and in Africa, point to a resurgence of religion in the public sphere (Chazan, 1992). Religious actors were highly influential in the initial stages of the “third wave” of democratization (Gifford, 1998; Huntington, 1991; Ranger, 2008; Toft et al, 2011). The Catholic Church in particular has been credited for its role in the democratisation process in several countries in what has been termed the “catholic wave” by Philpot (2004) in the latter part of the 20th century.

Numerous quantitative and qualitative studies in recent times point to an aggressive attitude and role of religion in democratic and fledgling democratic systems (Kiecolt and Nelson, 1988; Jelen and Wilcox, 1995; Wilcox, 1990; Hoffman and Miller, 1997; Shepherd, 1993; Smith, 1994). For example, Rozell and Wilcox (1995) observed a Christian political activism in the United States, especially among the religious right, since the 1980s. While the religious right has primarily been interested in moral issues such as restoring prayer in schools, and elimination of laws protecting both abortions and lesbian and gay rights (Wilcox, 1996), the Christian left in the United States, in contrast, has traditionally focussed on social justice issues (Kiecolt and Nelson, 1988).

In Africa, the “wind of change” of the 1990s, or what Mazrui (1992) termed “Africa’s second liberation struggle”, saw the Catholic Church and other religious organisations play significant roles in several countries, including Ghana, in the struggle for democratic governance. In Ghana, the Church is a strong advocate of good governance, and was instrumental in the political process that led to constitutional rule of the Fourth Republic in 1992. Furthermore, participation in religious organisation is the

prevailing associational activity across the continent (Chazan, 1992) with the continent accounting for one of the highest levels of religiosity in the world.

In an Afrobarometer (2010) survey with respondents in 20 countries, 80 percent replied that religion is very important, and another 17 percent suggested that religion is somewhat important. In the same vein, a World Values Survey data about the importance of God in the respondent's life affirmed that African respondents included in the survey assigned great importance to religion and religious practice (WVS, 2005). In all, over 65 percent of respondents found religion to be very important personally. Some countries, including Ghana (87 percent), registered a percentage higher than the overall average.

Since the “wind of change” of the 1990s, democratization has proceeded to different extents across the continent. In the same vein, there is no doubt that religious associations have increased latitude to organize for obvious political purpose. Political liberalization allows for associational pluralism to expand. This liberalism impacts on religious organisations in terms of internal cohesion, search for political alliances and representation, and struggle for recognition and relevance in the public sphere (cf. Riedl, 2012). In this atmosphere one would expect new cleavages to arise and be mobilized for political ends (Posner, 2005; Snyder, 2000). Nonetheless, Church-State relations in modern states and in liberal democracies have been contentious and complex, and its involvement in a democratic state has been varying in time, manner, and extent. Osei (2009) believes that the consolidation of the democratisation process on the continent must include such processes like making religion an ally for fighting fraud, corruption, and for promoting peace and social transformation among others. And Philpot (2004) is of the view that the complexity of Church-State relations lies in the Church itself and its struggle to come to terms with liberal democracy and the rule of law in a secular state.

1.2 Problem statement

Since independence, Africa has been plagued by a number of socio-economic and political crises. The euphoria that greeted the attainment of independence after years of anti-colonial struggle soon gave way to economic stagnation, coups, dictatorships, wars and general disillusionment. If the 1980s were described as the lost decade in Africa's development, the 1990s were filled with Afro-pessimism (Ekpo & Omoweh, 2001). This led Callaghy (1994) to ask if "Africa is falling off map". In its 1989 report on Africa, *From Crisis to Sustainable Growth*, the World Bank identified governance as the major cause of Africa's persistent underdevelopment and developmental woes. Thenceforth, the Good Governance concept officially entered international discourse and development agenda in relation to Africa. The 1990s, consequently, saw a number of mass protests and large scale social mobilisation for political reforms across the continent, leading to multi-party democracy in a number of countries. Religious institutions, not the least, the Catholic Church, played significant roles in this democratisation process.

However, a decade after the institution of democratic governance, which was to usher in a new era of growth and prosperity for the African people, the United Nations Development Programme *Human Development Report* for the year 2000 painted a different picture: sub-Saharan Africa remained the poorest region on earth despite its enormous natural resources; 26 out of the 35 nations of the world classified as "low human development" were in sub-Saharan Africa; 29 of the 43 countries on the UNDP list of "least developed nations" were in sub-Saharan Africa; from 1990 to 1998 the annual growth rate in the region's per capita Gross National Product declined by four-tenths of one percent per year. Moreover, average life expectancy was the lowest in the world at 48.9 years, with infant mortality rate the highest in the world at 10.6 percent and the under-five mortality rate at 17.2 percent. Recent political crisis in the Ivory Coast,

Guinea, Mali, Kenya, Zimbabwe, amidst growing insecurity in Nigeria, Mali, Central African Republic, South Sudan, Somalia and Kenya point to the fact that democratic governance on the continent is fragile.

Ghana, which is hailed as a beacon of democracy in Africa, having conducted six national elections, since the inauguration of the fourth republic, and seen peaceful transfers of power from one government to another, is today experiencing a lot of governance issues involving upholding the rule of law, accountability and transparency, checks and balances, protection of civil and human rights and genuine participation of the citizens in decision making process of development. Osei (2009) asserts that obstacles like political manipulation, poverty, dependency, ethnicity, religious extremism, political exclusion, short-sighted nationalism, fraud and corruption are threatening the democratisation process, and it would take the collective involvement of civil and religious institutions to sustain it. For instance, on the issue of corruption, Transparency International corruption index and media reports show that corruption in Africa, including Ghana, is becoming endemic. The general impression is that corruption is rampant and is impeding national development and genuine democratisation (Ngunyi, 2000; Ayittey, 1998; Maipose, 2000; UNDP, 2000). These issues are linked to a general crisis of leadership and of conscience (Assimeng, 2007).

Given, therefore, the high level of religiosity in Ghana, and Africa as a whole (Chazan, 1992; Reidl, 2012; Posner, 2005), and the social and personal importance of religious membership in Africa and the changing demographics it implies, one needs to ask the influence of religious institutions in addressing the apparent governance crisis issues on the continent. What role is and should religious institutions on the continent play in the governance of African states to sustain the democratisation process? To what extent do their participation in the governance of a nation translate into public social

mobilization, forms of political representation, accountability and transparency, reforms for democratic rule and good governance, or impact on national stability, peace and general development, particularly in ethnically and religiously pluralistic societies?

1.3 Aim and objective

The study seeks to explore the role of religious institutions in the governance of democratic states, taking as a case study the Ghana Catholic Bishop's Conference (GCBC). The thesis will examine the contribution of the Catholic Church, the largest religious body in Ghana (2010 Ghana Population census), to the governance process in Ghana, and especially in combating some governance issues like bribery and corruption, and the general lack of transparency and accountability in the management of the country's resources, as well as issues on peace and security, and environmental concerns. It will look at its organisational structure and analyse its policy interventions on national issues, its relationship with the state and other non-state actors, as well as the challenges it is confronted with in its effort to promote a culture of good governance, accountability and transparency in public life. It shall make recommendations that may enhance its public role. It aims, therefore, to evaluate the effectiveness, or otherwise, of the measures currently implored by the GCBC, and to explore potential avenues of improvement in its efforts to help build a strong democratic culture in the nation's polity.

1.4 Theoretical Framework

The thesis is based on two theoretical frameworks. The first is civil society and its role in the good governance discourse; and the second is the doctrine that sees religious institutions as the moral conscience of society.

1.4.1 Civil Society as key to Good Governance

Civil society refers to the segment of the society, organisations, groups and associations that interact with the state, influences the state and yet is distinct from the state (Chazan, 1992). It is regarded as a “countervailing power” to the state, a way of curbing authoritarian practices and corruption. For good governance to occur requires “a systematic effort to build a pluralistic institutional structure that brings a broader spectrum of ideas and values to bear on policy making” (World Bank, 1989: 61) and keep the state in check. The Church has been a key element of civil society in Africa, and in some cases the only organisation which could act as a check to state power and hegemonic (Gifford, 1998).

Not very long ago, economic reforms were not associated with the governance structure of a country; in fact, many argued that authoritarian forms of government were needed for rapid economic development and successive US administrations supported dictatorial regimes in every continent. Now the political mantra is democracy and the World Bank and Western donors require it almost as a condition of assistance. This U-turn happened when neoliberal reforms contained in the Structural Adjustment Programme prescribed by the World Bank in the 1980s failed to produce the desired results, the experts blamed the political structure of the time, which was mainly authoritarian political systems, claiming that political liberalization would unlock Africa's development potential.

In general terms, Good governance is the making and implementation of policies that would impact positively on the citizens of the country. In other words, the bringing of public policy in alignment with social needs (Ake, 1993), or what Atake and Dodo (2010: 17) termed “unpopular empowerment”; that is, the empowerment driven by the interests of the ordinary people because it empowers them, makes government more

accountable and less corruptible as well as brings public policy more in alignment with social needs. It is summarily interpreted as the exercise of authority through political and institutional processes that are transparent and accountable, and encourage public participation. It simply refers to the transparent and accountable management of a country's resources for its equitable and sustainable economic and social developments.

However, in more technical terms, the concept of good governance was first introduced to international development discourse by the World Bank's 1989 report on Sub-Saharan Africa: *From Crisis to Sustainable Growth*. This document was a major statement of the institution's intellectual leadership of the donor community (Gibbon, 1993), and ever since, the Bank has taken the lead in the articulation and ideological refinement of the new development doctrine. The 1989 report, together with the Bank's study *Governance and Development* (1992), and the summary Bank report entitled *Governance: The World Bank's Experience* (1994) still represent the most rigorous and assertive official pronouncement of current development thinking, the *locus classicus* of the governance literature. While previous state-led development efforts failed because they “did not build on the strengths of traditional societies”, the good governance agenda claims to be different (World Bank, 1989: 60). The good governance agenda claims to have a greater degree of cultural awareness and appropriateness, as there are “close links between governance, cultural relevance and the components of civil society” (Landell-Mills, 1992: 567). The new development paradigm recognizes, “far from impeding development, many indigenous African values and institutions can support it” (World Bank, 1989: 60). Accordingly, countries have to devise institutions, which are in consonant with their social values.

Good governance is being used by donor agencies and the Bretton Woods institutions as a “stick and carrot instrument” for keeping in line errant developing

countries that must match their request for aid with good behaviour. This implies that countries with satisfactory record of good governance could count on the international monetary fund and the World Bank for aid. On the contrary, those countries that have performed poorly in good governance, must improve to qualify for adequate support (Bamgbose, 2005). Since then, good governance has become a “hot” topic because of the perceived critical role it plays in determining societal wellbeing. The concept of good governance, therefore, implies a political and institutional environment respecting human rights, democratic principles and the rule of law. It also includes the role of the authorities in managing resources, promoting a favourable climate for economic and social initiatives and deciding how to allocate resources (EU, 1989).

Although contemporary development discourse cannot be seen as monolithic and unchanging there is nevertheless broad agreement on the fundamental elements of good governance as constructed by the World Bank. At the first Annual African Governance Forum in Addis Ababa, on July 1997, the then Secretary General of the United Nations, Kofi Annan, identified peace, democracy, human rights and sustainable development as the four pillars of good governance. In the same vein, Salim Ahmed Salim, the former Secretary General of the former Organisation of African Unity (OAU) now African Union (AU), had emphasised quality leadership, sound management of the economy, a strong judicial system, an independent and responsible media as good governance (Atake & Dodo, 2010).

Good governance, therefore, implies the existence of competent and effective institutions respecting democratic principles. It extends democratisation into the sphere of resource management. According to the UNDP, the principles of good governance include: participation, rule of law, transparency, responsiveness, consensus orientation, equity, effectiveness and efficiency, accountability and strategic vision (UNDP, 2000).

These UNDP based principles have a claim to universal recognition as they reflect the values that need to be implemented in order to justify the governance framework (Chowdhury & Skarstedt, 2005). The consensus and dialogue of elements embracing all the elements mentioned above, plus education and gender equality, is development and nation building (Atake & Dodo, 2010).

Key to these features of good governance is market reforms and the role of civil society. Good governance was identified as a structural necessity for market reform (Kaufmann, 2008). By associating liberal democracy with neoliberal economic policy in the good governance discourse, the market and political space becomes a realm of freedom and liberty. The aim is to “release the energies of ordinary people” and to “empower ordinary people to take charge of their own lives, to make communities more responsible for their development, and to make governments listen to their people” through the empowerment of civil society” (World Bank, 1989: 54). It draws on emotive and forceful imagery and appeals to notions of rights and justice. This call for empowerment has far-reaching political consequences, in that it implies a challenge to local as well as national power structures. If people were empowered to hold those in power more accountable, they might demand more services and a more just distribution of income, and thus put into question the whole gamut of existing socio-economic arrangements (Abrahamsen, 2000).

In the good governance discourse, reforms have to be led by enlightened leaders operating ‘outside’ politics, hence, from civil society, to advance the general welfare interests of society against self-serving bureaucrats and other vested interests. Civil society, therefore, emerges as the key link between economic liberalization and democratization; it is both the locus of economic growth and vitality, and the seedbed of democracy. Civil society is regarded as a countervailing power to the state, a way of

curbing authoritarian practices and corruption; hence the concern for strengthening or nurturing civil society. They “can create links both upward and downward in society and voice local concerns more effectively than grassroots institutions. In doing this, they can bring a broader spectrum of ideas and values to bear on policy making” (World Bank 1989: 61). By deliberately supporting the development of plural institutional structures, external agencies can help create an environment that will tend to constrain the abuse of political power (Landell-Mills & Serageldin, 1991: 313). The issue here is that in the contest between the state and the masses, the state is the dominant one, so the idea is to weaken the power of the state by increasing the power of civil society (Igoe & Kelsall, 2005).

Critics of the good governance discourse and the role it gives to civil society assert that its representation delegitimizes state-led development by overemphasizing the internal deficiencies of the African state so as to impose neoliberal policies. In this representation, the prevailing interventionist state becomes the enemy of the people, the reason for Africa's underdevelopment and misery (Abrahamsen, 2000). The good governance agenda, then, emerges as the liberator that will allow not only for development but also for the release of society's true, indigenous values by empowering civil society. The objective of civil society, therefore, is to discipline and mobilise the ordinary people to bring them in line with the prevailing dominant paradigm. Civil society is therefore used to ensure stability, order and the enabling environment for development as determined by international neoliberal and capitalist forces.

Moreover, there are issues with the very concept of civil society. The good governance discourse's representation of civil society as inherently democratic is seen to be too romantic and optimistic. Civil society and its relationship to democratization cannot be understood in abstract terms, but requires instead a specific analysis of the

various groups and interests involved in these struggles (Abrahamsen, 2002). Is there one or several civil society? In the highly differentiated and heterogeneous nature of African societies, is civil society undifferentiated and harmonious, with no classes, no races, no genders, ethnic groups or oppressors' interests? Moreover, is civil society independent in their thinking? What about the influence of global players on civil society operations? Civil society is supposed to represent the interest of the community. But how are today's civil society, which is dominated by NGOs and organisations with international links who pursue the agenda of their international donors, representative of the local communities they seek to represent (Igoe & Kelsall, 2005; Hagberg, 2004)? Where do religious organisations, like the Catholic Church, come in in this civil society discourse and its relation with government and non-state actors in the governance of the state?

1.4.2 Religious Institutions as moral conscience of society

The second theoretical framework for the study is that which sees the Church as the “moral conscience” of society (Kudajie & Aboagye-Mensah, 1990: 9). The Church claims a moral right and obligation to intervene in national affairs when it deems it right (*Memorandum* 1978; *Joint Pastoral Letter*, 1982). In the words of Bishop Sarpong (1990: 9), “Christ wants his church not to be meaningless in society or to be pushed to the periphery, [but] to be right at the centre of things, right where the action is”. Under this theory, the Church plays a dual role in national affairs: the political education of the masses and the prophetic role as the conscience of society. These two goals, in the Church's view, are inseparable (Pobee, 1991).

Until the Second Vatican Council which ended in 1965, the Catholic Church had been very critical of liberal democracy and secular governance characterised by separation between Church and State and religious freedom. Having suffered from

violent anticlericalism during the French revolution in the eighteenth century, the republican movements that it inspired around Europe, the *Kulturkampf* of Bismarck's Germany, and the socialist movements, the Catholic Church was suspicious of any secularisation doctrine of state governance (Philpot, 2004). It was in this atmosphere that it once denounced liberalism and democratisation in edicts like Innocent X's condemnation of Westphalia, and Pope Pius IX's 1864 *Syllabus of Errors* condemning theories about religious freedom, separation of Church and state, progress, liberalism, and democratic governance (McGreevy, 2003). This was, in fact, an attempt to preserve and salvage the political privileges and religious prerogatives it enjoyed under the old monarchical order and the remnants of the medieval political system of Christendom, when the Church was associated with the state.

It took the intellectual works of Catholic scholars in the 1930s, such as Jacques Maritain and John Courtney Murray, who, inspired by the American system of separation of Church and State, laid the theoretical framework and rationale principle for the Church's embrace of democratic governance. Based on natural law and catholic tradition, they argued for the compatibility of Catholicism with the secular system of separation of Church and State, based on a constitutional order which guaranteed religious freedom for the Church, defended human rights, upheld accountability and the sovereignty of citizens, as morally grounded in natural law (Maritain, 1951; 1964; Murray, 1963). Here we espouse briefly the political thought of Jacques Maritain regarding church-state relation.

The concept of human freedom is a key element in the moral and political philosophy of Jacques Maritain. He argued that the end of humanity is to be free, and by "freedom", he meant, not just pure rational autonomy, but the realisation of the human person in accord with his or her nature, which is the attainment of moral and spiritual

perfection. For him, human beings, though they are persons with a transcendent destiny, they are also individuals who are related to a common, social order of which they are parts. “It is in virtue of their individuality that human beings have obligations to the social order, but it is in virtue of their personality that they cannot be subordinated to that order” (Sweet, 2008). He describes his political thought as “integral Christian Humanism”, in that the human being is an entity that has both material and spiritual dimensions, and so should be considered as “a unified whole”, and as human beings in society, they are participants in a common good (Maritain, 1954). His integral humanism seeks to bring the different dimensions of the human person together, without ignoring or diminishing the value of either, in that while one's private good as an individual is subordinate to the common good of the community, as a person with a supernatural end, one's “spiritual good” is superior to society. And for him, this is something fundamental that all political communities should recognize (Sweet, 2008).

For Maritain, therefore, every political order should recognize the sovereignty of God. He rejects atheistic humanism and secularism, and defends American-style democracy and liberalism in that it recognises the spiritual and the religious sphere. This theocentric humanism, he asserts, has its philosophical foundation in the dualist nature of the human person, as a spiritual and material being, and as such, morality and socio-political institutions must therefore reflect this. He therefore, advocates a political order under the rule of law, based fundamentally on natural law, which is the source of human rights. He held that natural rights are fundamental and inalienable, and antecedent in nature and superior to society. Rights are grounded in the natural law, and this is specifically in relation to the common good. It is this good and not individual rights which forms the basis of the state (Maritain, 1954).

It is his natural rights theory that led him to embrace a democratic and liberal form of state governance. He argues for a political society that is both personalist, pluralist, and Christianly-inspired. He held that the authority to rule derives from the people, for people have a natural right to govern themselves. This conception of a liberal state was at variance with the official position of the Catholic Church at the time, the church to which he belonged. Yet, he saw it as consistent to the Christian doctrine because, to him, the ideals of democracy were themselves inspired by a belief in God's rule, and that the primary source of all authority is God (Maritain, 1954). For him, therefore, political leaders represented the "hidden will" of the people, which is the common goal. Minorities, as a reflection of this "hidden will" or common goal, therefore, have an important role to play in the state (Maritain, 1954: 140). This is where the moral authority of religious institutions comes in.

In the political state, there is a need for a leadership role which would be played by "a multiplicity of 'civic fraternities' founded on freedom, inspired by the virtues of Christianity, reflecting a moral and spiritual discipline, and which are fundamentally democratic" (Sweet, 2008:21). Such groups, though would not necessarily exercise political power, they would help to ensure that society as a whole is permeated with and reflect Christian values. This they do, not because these values are part of a privileged religion or faith, but because they are necessary to the good order of the temporal community. In other words, in the political state, the religious institution, like the Church, coexist with the institution of the state, as cooperative entities working towards the integral good of the person, and the general common good of the society; with the state concerning itself with matters which, while focusing on temporal concerns, address the needs of the whole of the human person, and the church focussing on moral matters affecting the individuals.

It was not until the 1960s that official Church teaching embraced the concept of democratic governance and separation between Church and State. Pope John XXIII's encyclical letter *Pacem in Terris* of 1963 and the Second Vatican Council teachings, especially those on the Church in the modern world (*Gaudium et spes*, 1965), and on religious freedom (*Dignitatis humanae*, 1965) were among the first ecclesial documents to finally embrace liberal democracy, religious freedom, accountability of government to the citizens and separation of Church and State, as basic tenets rooted in natural law, the dignity of the human person and the rights of peoples. Pope John Paul II was to be an ardent advocate of liberal democracy and accountability, showing up around the world at critical points in democratisation process (Huntington, 1991). He defended democratic governance as the best form of government most conducive to promoting human justice, accountability and progress of nations (John Paul II, *Centesimus Annus*, 1991).

Having accepted democratic form of government as the best to promote human progress and defend justice and human dignity, the Catholic Church at national and local levels became the moral vanguard to the state, appropriating to itself the right to intervene and contribute to the democratic governance of their countries. In oppressive regimes and totalitarian rules the church claimed to speak for the silent majority advocating for democratic reforms and the creation of just social structures (Yirenkyi, 2000). The Church's teaching galvanised Church leaders and lay persons to work together to fight for a just society and to stand against corrupt and dictatorial regimes; and to see their role in public life as the moral conscience of the society and the building of God's kingdom, a kingdom of love and truth, peace and justice.

Furthermore, responding to and cautioning against political intolerance of the religious voices in governance issues, specifically that of the liberals against the religious right in American politics, Carter (1993) argues that there is nothing wrong when a

religious group presses its moral claims in the public square. He believes that in a democratic culture which respects freedom of speech and association, it is democracy itself that benefits if religion is allowed to act as independent moral voice in society. In his opinion, democracy, and therefore every group, should envision a “public square where all are welcome” (1993: 229).

The key question therefore is: how does the Church as a key component of civil society and the “moral conscience” of a nation contribute to the governance of the state for the common good?

1.5 Literature Review

In his study of the “Catholic wave” Philpot (2004) associated the undeniable influence of the Catholic Church in democratisation process of the 80s and 90s in “catholic countries” as well as other developing countries around the world with what Stepan (2000) has termed the “twin tolerations”. In other words, “centuries-long rapprochement by which the Church and the democratic state each slowly came to tolerate the other in doctrine and practice, eventually arriving at a mutual and reciprocal agreement” (Philpot, 2004:32). For him, this mutual toleration of Church and State is essential to liberal democracy, and democratic governance as well affords the Church the needed autonomy to operate in the public sphere. This mutual toleration means that the state respects the rights of all religious bodies to practice and express their faith and to participate in democratic governance, while religious bodies accept religious freedom for people of all faiths (and no faith) and renounce claims to special constitutional status or prerogatives.

From a survey of the “catholic wave” countries, from Catholic Spain and the Philippines, through communist countries in the former Eastern bloc, to developing

countries in Latin America, East Asia and Africa, Philpot identified the success, or otherwise, of the Church's influence in the public sphere to a number of elements. One such element is the condition that Weigel (1992) aptly calls "moral extraterritoriality", that is, "an island of free thought and speech, of truth speaking to power, in a sea of regime-controlled discourse". From this island of autonomy and freedom, of moral authority, Church leaders could challenge a regime's legitimacy and competence in the governance of the state.

Another element is differentiation between Church and State, in terms of separation of powers, finances, governance and privileges between the two. While some among sociologists of religion saw in the concept of differentiation in the 1950s and 60s as a sign of religious decline, the natural outcome of the enlightenment, of the triumph of reason and scientific progress (Martin, 1978), Philpot attests that differentiation instead has fostered the health of religion, giving it the necessary autonomy by which it needs to flourish. He maintains that "not only might a differentiated Church flourish, but its very distance from the state might allow it to influence politics more powerfully—and democratically, through persuasion, protest, and appeals to legitimacy". This was the argument of Alexis de Tocqueville in 1830 America, and that of Murray and Maritain in the 1930s, as well as of Casanova (1994); that the Church can remain strongly influential in a modern democracy. In other words, religion can thrive and can be an important player in a liberal-democratic state. The more differentiated and autonomous the Church is from the State, the more legitimacy and moral authority it possesses to influence democratic and governance reforms in the public sphere.

A third element identified by Philpot is international linkages, something which the Catholic Church in particular enjoys. The Church's ties, built around its transnational organisational structure, which exhibits its visible unity, creates a network of bishops,

links distant Catholics to one another, and builds a global solidarity across borders, with the moral authority of the Pope, whose travels to countries can mobilise crowds of persons sometimes in their millions. Such an organisation becomes a formidable opponent and a moral challenge to any political authority in any democratic state. It is no coincidence, therefore, that the “Catholic wave” and Catholic political activism, came in the 1980s and 1990s, when the official Church doctrine had embraced liberal democracy and rule of law as a legitimate form of government. Furthermore, networking and links to national movements and organisations outside the Church provides allies against undemocratic and corrupt governments. Alliances with trade unions, professional bodies, students’ movements, help form and give national identity to coalitions against governance issues affecting the citizens.

Philpot concludes that the challenge facing the Catholic Church today is how to “navigate its way through democratic politics, finding the proper contours of the twin tolerations, the appropriate limits of differentiation”. From the healthy distance that this differentiation brings, “the Church may then promote human flourishing through characteristic democratic activities such as persuading, lobbying, preaching, and advising voters”. On the other hand, the Church will have to accept temporary defeat because its religious doctrines and teaching may not have political backing, but then it guarantees it to continue to play the democratic game, to challenge the very terms of the democratic association, and hold political leaders to account on their governance stewardship. Philpot’s work, as insightful as it is, is limited to the Church’s influence in the struggle against dictatorship and the transition to liberal democracy.

In the same perspective, Huntington (1991), in his study of what he termed “The Third wave”, lists five factors responsible for the transition to democratic rule. One of the factors is the changes in the doctrine and activities of the Catholic Church. He

identifies these changes to have occurred between the 1960s and the 1980s, and attributes them to the Vatican Council II and the pronouncements of the Popes at the global level, as well as the popular involvement of ordinary people at the local level, giving rise to “a new Church that almost invariably came into opposition to authoritarian government” (1991: 79). Though his work is not directly concerned with Africa, however, his articulation of the power of the Catholic Church and its leaders to mobilise at local levels for social change – the use of its resources, like radio stations, buildings, newspapers and international networks – is worth noting. This led him to conclude that “Catholicism was second only to economic development as a pervasive force making for democratisation in the 1970s and the 1980s” (1991: 85) and to predict that Church leaders may become more influential in the public arena as the number of Christians multiply.

On the African front, Riedl (2012) addresses the key phenomenon of religious mobilization in the political arena, particularly in light of recent democratization in Africa. She analyses the various forms of religious engagement in politics with data from Kenya, Senegal, and Zambia as critical cases. She opines that the dialectical relationship between the political opportunity structure and religious politicization is evolving in tandem. She starts from the premise that modernity has not caused the overall increase or decrease of religion, but rather its evolution, constantly changing and evolving, at least with respects to its relationship with society (Fox, 2008:20). These evolutionary phenomena of religion, Reidl asserts, are indeed occurring across Sub-Saharan Africa in tandem with regime liberalization and the spread of multiparty competition. She affirms that religion, as a domestic factor, interplays with other social cleavages of race, ethnicity, region, social class, and political position, and as an international organisation, it is affected and can count on resources, networks, and ideologies that it shares with

others in a globalized world. With democratization in Africa, which has created social and political spaces, religious associations have increased latitude to organize for obvious political purpose aimed at influencing state governance and being relevant in these newly pluralistic societies. Christian activities tend to focus on individuals and the private sphere, as well as through education and welfare services to recruit and to influence social policy issues.

Reidl's analysis lends credence to the idea that religious organizations are mobilizing simultaneously on a number of fronts in newly pluralistic environments: simultaneously seeking to attend to their flock, to increase or retain their own religious followers, and to be relevant to the domestic populations in that capacity. As such they are increasingly politically mobilized, both encouraged by and in reaction to the regime context, taking up the social cause and addressing perceived social marginalization. And where they perceive that they are repressed politically and have their voices suppressed, the remaining path is often increasing militancy.

While Reidl brings out the important element of religious association and mobilisation in the public sphere, as well as the capacity of religious institutions to do so for political influence, she seems to suggest that such political influence is to pursue the interest of the religious group, and not necessarily the common good of the state. In this regard, how would one classify, for example, the mobilisation of a religious group or groups against dictators and corrupt governments, even those who were close allies and gave special prerogatives to the religious organisations in question?

Ranger (2008) has suggested that different types of religious organizations have been more or less successful in engaging in pro-democratic politics depending on the type of regime they were confronting. Thus, in the immediate independence era, mainline churches, which were perceived to be associated with colonialism and the

colonial nations, were on the side-lines of political activism and governance issues. However, these became very active in the 1980s and were at the forefront of “the wind of change” of the 1990s and the “third-wave” democratic transitions that occurred across the continent. In most cases, these mainline churches were some of the few organized social networks that could mobilise for social change and constitutional reforms.

Moreover, Ranger contends that in some cases, the hierarchical organisation of these mainline churches “made it difficult for them to be actively engaged in the ongoing stage of democratic transition that requires embedding democratic practice because of their own internal constraints restricting egalitarian participation and independent expression within the organization”. In his opinion, Evangelicals, probably because of their independent and more democratic form of governance, have been more politically animated in their crusades against corruption, seeking transparency and justice. He concludes, therefore, that the organisational structure of a religious denomination may be particularly suited for some types of political engagement more so than others.

While the internal organisational structure of a group, religious or otherwise, may affect its external engagement, like religion in the public sphere, studies (Philpot, 2004; Huntington, 1991), including those on Africa (Pobee, 1991; Yirenkyi, 2000) suggest that, contrary to Ranger’s assertion, the mainline churches, or what Turner (1967) termed “older churches”, were the key players in the democratisation process in several countries, irrespective of the democratic nature of their internal organisation. Osei (2009) makes a case for vigilance in the recent democratisation of African countries using the recent political crises in Kenya, Zimbabwe, and Georgia as case studies. For him, the consolidation of the democratisation process on the continent must include such processes like making religion an ally for fighting fraud, corruption, and for promoting

peace and social transformation among others. And talking of religion, his focus was on the mainline churches, due to their organisational and numerical strength.

John de Gruchy (1995) brings into the argument some underlying principles of democracy that have its resonance in the Christian theological discourse. Analysing the relationship between Christianity and democracy, based on case studies of the United States, some Latin American and African countries, he argues, among other things, that churches in Africa have been “midwives” of democratic transition and reconstruction, and have made different kinds of contribution to the democratic process, such as providing leaders of integrity and honesty; mediating between warring factions; facilitating national reconciliation and reconstruction; providing social cohesion; gathering international support and linking élites with the people .

On the opposite side of the argument is Haynes (1996) who gives a strong criticism of the Church, especially the mainline churches, in its relationship with the political order. The Catholic Church, in particular, comes in for heavy criticism. Haynes argues from the framework of ideological hegemonic control. He sees the role of the leaders of the mainline churches as in league with the ruling elite “to seek to achieve a hegemonic ideology that stresses the desirability of stability rather than progressive change”, and so seeking to “defuse, reduce, and when necessary, strive to help eliminate serious political challenges to the status quo”.

The Catholic Church, in his view, tended to be ambivalent about the concept of fundamental political and social reforms because they were as fearful of any major political and social change as were the political elites. Where they were entrusted with the mandate to head national conferences and mediate the democratic transitional process, it was not apparent that they wished actually to endorse the demands for change, and were somehow obligated to go along with the popular demand so as not to lose

credibility themselves if they sided with the secular political leaders. Furthermore, where there was a successful transition mediated by the Catholic Bishops, Haynes says they should best be understood as “successful passive revolution” (105); that is a subtle way by which a dominant socio-political group changes the way it wields power as a means to maintaining it, and avoid losing it although. He is more favourable to the new Pentecostal and charismatic churches because he considers them to be popular movements responding to the real needs of the people. They are vehicles for mobilising community organisation, often to help fend off that hegemonic control imposed by the political elite and the mainline churches.

Haynes may have a point in that some religious leaders and political elite may share similar interests and so may want to safeguard the status quo, as was the case in some catholic countries prior to the Second Vatican Council. However, empirical evidence and several studies point to the fact that church leaders, especially those from the mainline churches were the ones who were able to confront and force democratic reforms in many African countries. In some cases, political elites turned to the Pentecostal and charismatic churches for endorsement and popular legitimacy when they got no support from the main line churches (Gifford, 1998).

Available literature on the public role of religion in Ghana is concentrated on the church's political activity (Aboagye-Mensah, 1994; Assimeng, 1986; Pobee, 1991; Ninsin and Drah, 1987, 1991; Yirenkye, 2000). It reveals that the 1980s marked a proactive church in terms of its role in national politics than at any other time in its history, a phenomenon that has continued to this day. The literature also reveals that most of the public involvement of the Church was initiated collectively under the umbrella of the Christian Council of Ghana (CCG) and the Ghana Catholic Bishops' Conference (GCBC), with its related body, the National Catholic Secretariat (NCS). The

1980s correspond to the period of the regime of the Peoples National Defence Council (PNDC) of Jerry John Rawlings which was characterised by military brutality, arbitrary arrests, numerous human rights abuses and lack of public discourse and free speech.

Pobee (1991) observed a dual role and objective of the Church's involvement in national affairs: the political education of the masses through seminars and its prophetic role as the conscience of society. These two goals in the view of the Church are inseparable: "They [the CCG and the GBC] spoke and continued to speak against the evils of the government and the nation [...]. They took steps to educate the people and the government on the issues at stake; [...] they discouraged violence, chaos and bitterness" (Pobee, 1991: 72). Through memoranda and pastoral letters the Church expressed its concerns about issues of justice, insecurity coupled with frustration of citizens, socio-economic deterioration, and education, among others. These letters affirm the church's self-assertion as the moral conscience of the society. In supporting this moral assertion, Pobee writes: "the historic churches have continued to be 'the voice of the voiceless', the champion of freedom, integrity, and fair play in national politics" (1991: 59). He goes on to point out that "the churches stood guard over human dignity and justice with a human face [...]; it was a courageous stand to take in a context of immense violence, intolerance, and recklessness of soldiers" (1991: 62).

On its part, the Church has documented and laid claim to its moral authority and legitimacy to intervene in public affairs and to challenge the State in its governance style. In two volumes of *Ghana Bishops Speak*, the GCBC has documented its policy interventions and moral legitimacy to intervene in issues of public interest and governance since 1968. Similarly, the CCG had catalogued its moral and prophetic role in some specific socio-political issues in a book entitled: *A Call to Citizens: The church and state - Christian Council and national affairs* (1992).

Furthermore, in his study of the increasing political activism of the Church since the 1980's, Assimeng (1989) asserts that this activism was supported by majority of Ghanaian Christians, and that it is the ruthlessness of the regime of the day which intimidated the masses that led the church to act collectively. The atmosphere and tension that characterised the period was such that only established bodies such as the CCG, the GCBC, and professional bodies like the Ghana Bar Association could stand up to the regime. In his survey of Evangelical Presbyterian clergy who were asked whether they had favourable or unfavourable attitudes toward the involvement of the church in politics, majority of those sampled (73 percent) indicated a favourable attitude toward the church's involvement in political and governance, while 12.7 percent had an unfavourable attitude, with another 12.7 percent had no opinion and 1.6 percent had no response (1989: 205). Though, this was a limited work, the study provides some useful information about clergy attitudes toward the Church's involvement in political and governance issues.

Though the Church claims a moral legitimacy and democratic right to be involved in national affairs and issues of governance, it is left to be seen how the political education of the citizenry, one of the goals of the Church, actually impact on governance and political choices. Takyi *et al* (2010), in a study based on 2005 Afrobarometer Survey data, examines the links between religion and voting patterns in Ghana's 2004 elections. They affirm the important role religion plays in both the personal lives and political choices of Ghanaians. Their findings suggest that Christians, especially the Protestant groups, were more likely to vote for the New Patriotic Party (NPP) than the National Democratic Congress (NDC). The study however, does not ascertain whether the choices were based on the political interventions of their religious leaders or rather on their personal preferences.

Aboagye-Mensah (1994) also looks at the salient role the Church played in the democratisation process in Africa with special focus on Ghana. He ascertains the church's claimed that Christians have every right to participate in the political process and to make their voices heard on social policies as individuals or collectivities, an argument similar to that of Carter (1993) about the role of religion in the United States. His work brings out the struggle of church leaders to successfully manoeuvre their way into the political space and public discourse despite an apparent attempt to structurally side-line them and to reduced them to the private domain. How the Church can maintain this involvement in the public sphere and remain relevant in addressing pertinent governance issues like accountability and transparency is yet to be seen.

In a similar study on the role of Christian Churches in national politics based on a survey of lay persons and clergy in Ghana, Yirenkyi (2000) affirms that religion has a double function of legitimating both the status quo and protest. In his study, he observed that the church has successfully played the latter role as an instrument of social change. According to the survey, when Ghanaian civil liberties such as the protection of human rights, concern about the poor and the oppressed, and freedom of the press are seriously jeopardized, the Church has a moral right and obligation to intervene. First, as a social critic, and this should be its prophetic role in the political arena. Hence, the Ghanaian Christian participation in national issues had primarily been based on social justice issues, in contrast to the religious right in the US which are based on moral issues like abortion, contraception; etc. although in recent times issues concerning abortion, contraception, condoms, and gay marriages all fixture in the Church's public interventions. Second, the church fulfils its civil role to educate Christians about their civil rights and motivate them to participate in the democratic process. In fulfilling this

educational objective, the church avoids partisan politics, and alienates itself from any political party agenda.

The study also brought out the reluctance on the part of almost half of the Ghanaian clergy respondents to use the pulpit to address political issues or for clergy direct involvement in politics. This, in the view of Yirenkye, is an indication of the inherent difficulties involved in political participation. Judging by the sometime volatile nature of Ghanaian political space, the caution by those who oppose clergy political involvement may be prudent. However, the clergy and laity who support political involvement are very much aware that the democratic experiment in Ghana, and elsewhere in Africa, remains fairly tenuous. Thus, despite the problematic nature of involvement, the respondents see their continued activism from a social justice perspective as crucial. Interestingly, however, the Ghanaian laity has a much broader perspective, and is willing to take more risks than the clergy, and would like to see more Church involvement in national issues. They are of the view that the more the Church is involved in addressing governance issues the better it will be for the democratic culture of the nation.

Yirenkye (2000) agrees with the assertion of the lay faithful, and based on the fact that Ghanaian Christians constitute the largest religious group as well as the majority of the population (73 percent in 2010), and rejects any call from political actors that the Church should get out of politics. In his view, the laity is right in rejecting the government's insistence that the church should get out of politics. Furthermore, looking towards the future of religion in a nation where 99.7 percent claim to be religious (Yirenkyi 1999: 180-183), and in comparison to the religious mobilisation in the US (Wilcox, 1996), he predicts that it is most likely that religion's prophetic and educational role will move to the centre of Ghanaian national debate.

5.4 Synopsis of literature review

What emerges from the literature review shows that religion and religious institutions have played and continue to play important role in the struggle for political space, to shape policy, to hold governments accountable, and to participate actively in democratisation both in Africa and elsewhere. In Africa in particular, the nature of the state makes it that the Church, more than any other civil society, provides the community space, the organisational structure, as well as the available social capital, to mobilise and to build on the democratic gains achieved. Religious institutions therefore serve as the watchdog on the state, and to hold the state accountable to the citizens. In countries, like Ghana, where religious participation and association constitute the largest associational life and the majority of the population, it is predicted that religious involvement in the public and political sphere will grow and move to the centre stage.

Most of the studies analysed concentrate on the influential participation of the Church in the transition from dictatorship to liberal democracy. However, “democratisation involves struggle and commitment on the part of those in state and societal structures and that the road is not a smooth one, even after one or two successful multi-party elections” (Olowu et al., 1999:6). Having asserted itself to be the moral conscience in the transition to democratic rule, in the fight for human rights, how has the Church maintained its moral legitimacy in the Ghanaian democratic order in addressing some of the pertinent governance issues affecting the state? The key question therefore is: how does the Church as a key component of civil society and the “moral conscience” of the nation contribute to good governance in a democratic state? Furthermore, the literature review acknowledges that religious groups are the strongest form of associational life in Africa today that can challenge the state, yet much of its internal functioning is not known. This is what this study seeks to do: to examine the role of the

GCBC and its inner workings and mechanisms in its engagement with the state in relations to governance issues.

1.6 Research questions

The primary research question the paper seeks to answer is: In what ways has the GCBC contributed to democratic governance in the country? In responding to this question the study seeks also to address other associated questions: Do the issues addressed by the GCBC correspond to the challenges confronting governance in Ghana and in Africa in general? Is the GCBC a neutral player in the governance game? How do the organisational structure, size and spread of the membership of the Church provide a basis for and aid its political engagement?

1.7 Limitation and delimitation of work

While references may be made to other domains, the research's focus is on official policy interventions of the GCBC as an institution in the forms of communiqués, pastoral letters and messages on national issues bothering on governance. It is centred on the activities of the GCBC in the Fourth Republic, that is, since 1992, when Ghana adopted democratic governance and constitutional rule. Nevertheless, activities of the GCBC which had bearing on the democratisation process leading to constitutional rule will be examined and serve as a foundation for their subsequent interventions.

1.8 Methodology

The study will use both primary and secondary sources. Primary sources will include official communiqués and other policy interventions of the GCBC on national life and governance issues. These are found in two published volumes of *Ghana Bishops*

speak, and in the archives of the National Catholic Secretariat, Accra. For data collection to get the opinion of the public the quota sampling technique was used and interviews were conducted through the use of questionnaire. Quota sampling is done by having the same proportion of samples among identified groups in the population. In this study it was between Catholics and Non-Catholics. The quota sampling method was preferred to see the variation that may exist between Catholics and the wider population in their appreciation of the activities of the GCBC in the area of governance. Secondary sources used include academic literature on governance issues, especially in Africa, and Ghana in particular, and on the role of religious institutions and civil society in democratisation. The general methodology will be an interpretative analysis of content and data.

The research work combined both quantitative and qualitative methods. The qualitative approach permits one to go deeper into motives and reasons behind the actions, views and attitudes; it helps to solicit extra-information that may explain data which would otherwise not be got through the quantitative method. The quantitative analysis helped provide the categorisation and statistical data to analyse the governance areas or sectors that are of interest to the GCBC, in terms of quantum and frequency, and also helped bring into evidence the dominant and recurring viewpoints of respondents.

1.9 Organisational framework

The work is articulated around five chapters. The first chapter, which is the introduction, presents the problem statement, aim and objective, the theoretical framework and literature review, methodology, significance of work, and organisational framework. Chapter two explores the current issues affecting governance in Africa, in general, and Ghana in particular; its challenges and prospects since the 1990s. It provides the contextual framework for understanding governance in Ghana and the role religious

institution play in this area. It will be an analytical synthesis of the relevant viewpoints and theories on the subject. It will provide the platform to confront and contrast the interventions of the GCBC on national issues when appraising the efforts of the GCBC.

Chapter three focuses on the profile of the GCBC, its historical origins, internal organisation and its relations with the state since its establishment. Chapter four is the content analysis of GCBC documents, while Chapter five is the analysis of the data collected on the field. The work concludes with the presentation and summary of findings and appropriate recommendations.

1.10 Significance of study

The research project focuses on the potential of religious institutions, like the GCBC, to shape the future of social mobilization, interest representation, transparency and accountability, attitudinal change and positive political engagement in Africa. It is dedicated to examining the policy interventions of the GCBC on national issues as a corpus. It will contribute therefore to understanding the methods and internal workings of the GCBC in its relations to the state and public issues. It is hoped that the insights from this study will help strengthen the GCBC and other religious and civil society groups in their interaction with the state in combating pertinent governance issues affecting Africa's democratic governance and development. Furthermore, given the international organisational nature of the Catholic Church and how this global network provide opportunities for exchange of ideas and resources, the research will bring out a better understanding of the political impact of global trends in religious institutions on Africa.

CHAPTER TWO

GOVERNANCE CHALLENGES IN AFRICA

2.1 Introduction

Governance has been described as “the various institutionalized practices in how holders of power in government actually relate to civil organisation and the public. [It] represents a particular system of rule [that] has become consolidated” (Lindberg, 2001:185). Lindberg links forms of governance to the forms of state, and affirms that these are rearticulated, adapted and restructured according to political and socio-economic pressures and realities.

During the 1990s many African countries embraced democratic governance, turning away from military and one-party regimes that had dominated the preceding years. Only five countries in Sub-Saharan Africa had some democratic system of governance in 1989; however between 1989 and 1997 about 49 had held democratic elections (Bratton and Van de Walle, 1997; Bratton, 1998). However, when other parameters beyond periodic holding of elections, like political rights, the rule of law and accountability, are brought into the equation the narrative changes: 17 states made no substantial gains in the 1990s; another eight states made some improvements between 1989 and 1992 but then fell back and showed non-substantial improvements in 1999 when compared to 1989. Seven others made good gains between 1989 and 1992, but then stalled, while nine more remained unchanged between 1989 and 1992 but gained momentum between 1993 and 1999. Only four countries — Ethiopia, Ghana, Mozambique and Madagascar made some incremental improvement in political rights and had some form of democracy which went somewhat further than mere formal periodic elections during the period (Lindberg, 2001).

However, even among countries considered to be on the path of democratic growth, like Ghana, several governance challenges remain. Since 2000, Ethiopia and Madagascar have known political difficulties, with Ghana surviving a presidential election partition challenging the results of the 2012 presidential election, not to mention all the other governance challenges, such as corruption and lack of accountability. Several reasons have been given as the cause of Africa's slow embrace of democratic governance and culture. Among these are the unnatural process of state formation, the nature of the state itself and other related issues like corruption, ethnicity and insecurity.

2.2 The question of state formation, sovereignty and legitimacy

Several scholars have blamed the governance challenges in Africa and the consequent underdevelopment of the continent on the artificial nature of state formation in Africa which has given rise to problems of sovereignty and legitimacy. Proponents of this theory argue that most African states exist merely because of international juridical recognition, but that in actual fact, they lack the essential qualities of sovereignty and legitimacy, even in the eyes of their own citizens (Jackson, 1987; Clapham, 1998). Jackson, for instance, describes African states as "quasi-states" (Jackson, 1990; Jackson and Rosberg, 1982), while Buzan (1991) called them "weak states" characterised by high levels of political violence, lack of coherent national identity, lack of clear hierarchy of political authority, ambivalent national affinity, which is seen in the daily conduct of public officials and ordinary citizens alike vis-à-vis the state and state resources.

The weak nature of the state is linked to the question of sovereignty and legitimacy, the result of the arbitrariness with which African states came into existence. Thus several African scholars (Ofuho, 1998; Ekeh, 1975; Mamdani, 1996) have attributed the sovereignty question and its attendant legitimacy problem of African states

to colonialism. Not only did the Berlin conference of 1884 divide Africa without recourse to existing ethnic boundaries and native kingdoms, but also colonial policies and the use of ethnic authorities to divide and rule, created ambiguities and double/dual loyalties in resultant modern African states. The thrust of this argument is that African states did not evolve naturally as a Westphalian state, i.e. like other sovereign states elsewhere in the world. For Africa, except in the case of Ethiopia, Eritrea and South Sudan, it was top-down imposition, the result of colonial conquest, and not bottom-up.

Such arguments, however, fail to appreciate the fact that European and American countries, as we know them today, were also the result of historical constraints, including wars, conquest and domination by more powerful neighbours and external forces. Thus, the notion of a Westphalian state that evolves naturally and organically bottom-up is a theoretical ideal, and not so much a historical reality in most state formations. Hence, Africa is not alone in the top-down imposition of statehood and sovereignty. To think that European states' formation was a wholly organic growth from ethnic nations to modern states is a historical fallacy (Thompson, 1995).

Nevertheless, one will agree with Young (1994) that the African colonial experience was different due to some specific colonial policies and systems of governance, like the indirect rule of the British, which have shaped and have impacted significantly on the nature of state governance in post-colonial Africa (Gifford, 1998). The colonial state was essentially about control and extraction. Hence, there was never a social contract between state and society based on shared values and objectives, and so there was little in terms of legitimacy and popular commitment to public institutions. Public institutions were foreign, and basically seen as oppressive instruments of extraction (Sandbrook, 1985). The post-colonial state inherited essentially the same state apparatus and so lacked the Weberian "rational-legal authority": that is legally defined

structure of exercising power on behalf of the public, operated by officials who treat others impersonally according to laid down objective criteria. The post-colonial African states instead quickly became neo-patrimonial, extractive, prebendal, personally-appropriated states, vampire states, and predatory states, where loyalty, allegiance, personal favours and relationship ties are the elements on which the state system operates.

Colonial governance policy, like the British indirect rule system, created what Ekeh (1975) calls the “two publics” - the civic public and the primordial public; two allegiances and loyalties, and their resultant morality. According to Ekeh, in the primordial public allegiance is to one’s ethnic group of which one sees his membership in terms of moral obligations to benefit and sustain it, and in return obtains immaterial benefits in the form of identity and psychological security. The civic allegiance is to the state and is in contrast amoral and seen as foreign; the individual seeks to gain materially from the civic public without any moral obligation to give back in return for his benefits. So, while one feels obliged to benefit and sustain his primordial publics, he seeks to gain from the civic public. Duties are emphasized in the primordial public but de-emphasized in the civic, and rights are squeezed out of the civic public with “the amorality of an artful dodger” but voluntarily relinquished in the primordial public. Thus, the relationship of the African to the primordial public is moral, but that to the civic public is amoral. And it is the dialectical tensions that exist between these two publics which constitute the uniqueness of post-colonial African politics. For example, Ekeh continues:

A good citizen of the primordial public gives out and asks for nothing in return; a lucky citizen of the civic public gains from the civic public but enjoys escaping giving anything in return whenever he can. But such a lucky man would not be a good man were he to channel all his lucky gains to his private purse. He will only continue to be a good man if

he channels part of the largesse from the civic public to the primordial public. (Ekeh, 1975: 107)

In other words, in the dialectics between state, citizenship, loyalty and legitimacy, “the unwritten law [...] is that it is legitimate to rob the civic public in order to strengthen the primordial public” (1975:107). For him the problem with African political governance should be understood and hopefully solved by the realization that the civic public and the primordial public are rivals. The fact is, the civic public is starved of badly needed morality, and any politics without morality are destructive. He concludes, therefore, that the destructive nature of African politics in the post-colonial era owes something to the amorality of the civic public which has its origins in the colonial system of two publics, thus creating the problem of sovereignty and legitimacy.

So, the historical geographical establishment of modern African states may have been artificial and arbitrary, yet it was the social construction of state structures of governance, which are supposed to consolidate the sovereignty and legitimacy, that have on the contrary provoked governance challenges facing African states today. As a remedy, therefore, to the difficulty of sovereignty, legitimacy and citizenship, there is need to revisit the kinds of bargaining that have gone on between the different ethnic societies and groups and the state in terms of resource extraction and allocation, security and representation. It is such a social contract among all the social and ethnic groups that can achieve genuine legitimacy and sovereignty of the state in the eyes of its citizens and establish a relation of accountability between the State and the people, and vice versa.

2.3 The nature of governance in African states.

The problem of Africa’s development has been linked to the nature of the state (Ake, 1996) and of government (Zalot, 2002). Villalòn (1998) gives five characteristics

of the nature of post-colonial African states: a client state, a personalised state, an overdeveloped and centralised bureaucratic state, a prebendal or rentier state, and an extractive state. He describes African states as client state because during the cold war they depended on a major sustaining power for their economics. The end of the cold war therefore meant the end also of the benefits of those links. They are personalised states in that they are administered in a paternalistic form of government with the president seen as a father figure and the sole political figure. African states are said to be overdeveloped in that they operate a large state apparatus with too many people employed in the public sector; they are at the same time centralised due to the fact that the power to allocate state resources is in the hands of few persons in government institutions, and ultimately the head of state.

Furthermore, African states are described as prebendal or rentier because political leaders allocate state resources and give preferential access to their allies who in turn reciprocate through peculiar loyalty. They are said to be extractive because the state becomes the only primary means to accessing resources and accumulating wealth to the exclusive benefit of those in power and their allies. The consequence of this is the demise of indigenous entrepreneurs due to fear of political sabotage. Hence, indigenous entrepreneurs not linked to governments prefer to invest their resources abroad, leading to capital flight, brain and brawn drain and endemic underdevelopment. In other words, the system of governance practiced in most African states amounts to neo-patrimonialism and clientelism.

Neo-patrimonialism is a form of governance which is closely associated with a capstone state and is based on personalised rule, organised through client networks of patronage, personal loyalty and coercion (Lindberg, 2001). Clientelism is closely linked to neo-patrimonialism, and involves the symbiotic or reciprocal relationship between a

superior, who guarantees security and largesse, and an inferior who provides political support for his patron. Clientelism tends, therefore, to maintain the interest of the ruling elite and prevents class or uprisings as a political factor. It takes diverse forms involving a “hegemonic alliance” where the private sphere is not separated from the public order: ethnic loyalty, bureaucratic patronage among civil servants, academics seeking preferential treatment or lucrative positions in government, businessmen looking for government contracts, or to the church and clergymen wanting tax-exemptions (Bayart, 1993). This phenomenon breeds the “big man” syndrome and a system of inefficiency where accountability and transparency are relegated to the background.

Clientelism and neo-patrimonialism are often linked to regime survival and so leaders try to maintain their rule through regular extraction of natural resources in predatory manner and the use of national resources to finance their patronage network. They resort to diverse ways including monopoly of economic resource, exclusionist politics, winner-takes all approach to politics, all in a bid to exercise total control of state machinery and its economic apparatus for patronage purposes. Quotas, tariffs, subsidies, import licences, and so on become channels of personal enrichment for regime loyalists through rent-seeking activity (Gallagher, 1991). By keeping a tight grip on the apparatus of the state and access to economic resources, the leaders prevent other competitive patronage networks from rising from within to challenge their hold on power and so safeguard their stay in power.

Though neo-patrimonialism and clientelism are associated with personal rule of strongmen, yet in Africa the system seems to be institutionalised, irrespective of the change in leadership or the form of government, whether civilian or military, dictatorial or democratic regime. In other words, the governance structures found in African states are in themselves neo-patrimonial. Lindberg (2011) sees in the institutionalisation of

neo-patrimonial structures of governance in Africa as a strategy of revenue extraction and use, characterised by monopolised structures of economic management which denies economic surplus to productive entrepreneurs, especially perceived political rivals. This is seen in state control of trade surplus and over reliance on external sources of funds by way of loans, concessions, and multinationals. In so doing, the state prevents potential rivals from gaining access to economic power, alienates itself from the people and tries to survive without recourse to them in the form of heavy taxation. As Hobson (1997) noted, with the exception of a few countries like Ghana, taxes are very low and limited in many African countries. The effect is that there is no relationship between the state and civil society in terms of accountability and checks. This is in comparison to European states where taxation is an essential ingredient in the state-citizen relations, ensuing state accountability to the public and state provision of social services.

When a neo-patrimonial state embraces liberal democracy, due to the neo-patrimonial nature of institutionalised structures of governance, the democratisation process becomes quickly perverted into a pseudo-democracy or illiberal democracy, that is, a false democracy. Such a democracy is just in name and does not go further than periodic elections which are often flawed. It has nothing of the institutional checks and balances of governance characteristic of any genuine democratic structures: popular participation, decentralisation of administration, rule of law, accountability and transparency, a free press and a strong civil society.

In Africa, several dictatorial and one-party regimes accepted liberal democracy due to a worsening internal economic crisis and social tension and external international donor pressures, whose funds were needed badly to forestall any social revolution. So what actually happened was a redefinition and adaption of the neo-patrimonial state into a representative democracy in order to secure for itself “the necessary resources for

continued existence of the neo-patrimonial institutions” (van de Walle, 1994:135; Lindberg, 2001). The inevitable consequence of such democratic transition is the perversion of the representative democracy by the prevalence of neo-patrimonial structures. This perverted democracy is common now in most African countries.

For instance, research has shown that though the institution of the office of Member of Parliament in Ghana is strong, it is shaped by informal norms in ways that favour the provision of private goods in clientelistic networks that risk perverting the democratisation process (Lindberg, 2010). Such pressures like transferring traditional responsibilities of “family head” unto the office of MP, with the expectation of him solving the personal needs and problems of his constituents, like paying school fees, health bills, provision of jobs, defending an individual in police custody and other such needs. And it is in these personalised goods, provided in a clientelistic manner, that MPs are mostly held accountable by their constituents and local party officers. In a more surprising revelation MPs claim they feel least held accountable by civil society groups, and especially religious leaders as these only invite them to their functions in the church or mosques, where they are expected to make some monetary donations. Little is asked of the use of the statutory funds allocated to MPs for the development of their constituency or of the constitutional role of legislating and their oversight role of the executive. Thus, even in established democratic institutions, like the Member of Parliament, in an emerging democracy like Ghana, neo-patrimonial and clientelistic structures and behaviour tend to affect real accountability and democratisation.

In other related studies (Lindberg and Zhou, 2009; Kafir and Twebaze, 2009), co-optation of the legislature by the executive both in Uganda and Ghana is seen to weaken the growth of the legislature and its oversight role over the executive, and increase the clientelistic and neo-patrimonial rule of governance. The primary means of co-optation

in Ghana is the hybrid nature of the constitution which allows MPs to be appointed ministers. Others include the power of the president to appoint persons to memberships of boards and state parastatals, the control of the executive over resources for constituency services. In this way the executive rewards loyal MPs with lucrative appointments to these posts, while errant ones are whipped into line by the political party, in what is commonly called “party discipline”. Unfortunately these attitudes only entrench neo-patrimonial structures and pervert genuine democratic governance.

The inability of the African people to rid themselves of predatory governments or clientelistic politics and to adopt policies that benefit the nation as a whole, and not just a few cronies of government, is, in the view of Ayittey (1998), the crux of Africa’s governance challenges and the major setback to its development. The hypothesis, therefore, is that less neo-patrimonial structures in the governance of a state will lead to more democratisation and induce genuine accountability into the system, which in turn will lead to a more balanced relationship between the state and the people and to sustained development.

2.4 The canker of Corruption

In general terms corruption is the use, or rather abuse, of public office to achieve private goals (Gifford, P, 1998); a phenomenon that Bayart (1993) has described with the phrase “la politique du ventre”, that is “the politics of the stomach”. Corruption is a broad term that has been used to label a host of illicit practices: police extortions, kickbacks for awarding contracts and procurement, fraud in quality control, judiciary partiality, favours in exchange for confidential information or appointments, etc. Several definitions of corruption have been given. Hope (2000: 18) defines corruption as:

the utilisation of official positions or titles for personal or private gain, either on an individual or collective basis, at the expense of the public good, in violation of established rules and ethical considerations, and through the direct or indirect [intervention] of one or more public officials whether they be politicians or bureaucrats.

The Webster's Third New International Dictionary (Unabridged) gives the definition of corruption as "inducement (as of a political official) by means of improper considerations (as bribery) to commit a violation of duty". A widely cited definition is that of Ney (1967: 417) which states that corruption is "a behaviour which deviates from the formal duties of a public role because of private-regarding (personal, close-family, private clique) pecuniary or status-gains; or violates rules against the exercise of certain types of private-regarding behaviour". An underlying element in all these definitions is that there is a moral tone to the phenomenon of corruption. Like its Latin root "corruptus", which "invokes a range of images of evil, corrupt designates that which destroys wholesomeness" (Klitgaard, 1988: 23).

The correlation between corruption and neo-patrimonialism is obvious (Joseph, 1987; Young, 1994). That bribery and corruption thrive in a neopatrimonial and clientelistic system cannot be overemphasized. This is tied very much to the nature of state governance in such a system as discussed above: the system of patronage, nepotism, favouritism, cronyism, etc. In a purely patrimonial state there is no distinction between private and public purse, so one cannot talk about corruption. However, in the neo-patrimonial and prebendal state as found in Africa, the state is built around modern apparatus of states governance but functions as if it a patrimonial state. Thus states apparatus are confused with private property; public officials operate as if the position and resource they hold are private domain. In other words, the state is hijacked by those in power and do all it takes, including using violent means, to monopolise the political

and economic power to advance their private interests, turning their countries into “vampire states” (Ayittey, 1998:154).

Government corruption is closely associated with and is the negative consequence of a clientelist state. It is seen as a major impediment to Africa’s development woes. Statistics of government corruption in Africa are alarming (Hope, 2000; Ayittey, 2000). Between two to three billion US dollars is estimated to be lost annually from government revenue in Nigeria through government corruption; and that the amount of money drained from government coffers through corruption in Africa is roughly the same amount of financial assistance African governments seek from the World Bank and the IMF (Ngunyi, 2000). It is estimated that a one-standard deviation improvement in the corruption index of a nation raises the average GDP growth rate by 1.4 per cent (Leite & Weidmann (1999).

Some have attributed the issue of corruption to the culture of gift-giving and reciprocity embedded in traditional African society. For instance, no one goes to the chief’s palace empty handed. Also, in a society where kinship and primordial ties are very strong and where someone in a superior position is expected to provide for and give gifts to those in an inferior position can facilitate the corrupt practices in the public offices. Nevertheless, over time research has been able to make distinctions, even finer ones, between bribe giving and subsequent corruption on one hand, and allowable “reciprocity”, “transaction” or “gift” on the other hand (Noonan, 1984; Klitgaard, 1988).

Apart from the neo-patrimonial and personalist nature of the state, the reality of the over bureaucratisation of African government apparatus is seen as a contributory factor to corruption. The fact that one needs government approval for virtually everything, and for this, ordinary citizens are at the mercy of unscrupulous governments officials, public offices become a conduit for graft. So bribery becomes a normal part of transacting

business (Zalot, 2002). Another reason given for rampant corruption in Africa is low wages of government workers and so corruption and receiving bribes become a way of survival especially in hard economic times. For either you stand tall in your ethical standards and die or stand tall in social circles by lowering your ethical standards and survive (Maipose, 2000).

Corruption is also attributed to rent-seeking behaviour of state and non-state actors especially in resource rich countries (Mauro, 1995; Leite & Weidmann, 1999). Rent-seeking is the phenomenon whereby “social groups like unions and businessmen devote energy to lobbying governments for favours instead of seeking ways to improve their competitiveness” (Auty, 2002:226). Such lobbying makes government officials to likely favour groups that are politically allied to them or to be predatory. In so doing the government diverts national resources into ministries or projects that profit their allies or businesses that are close to the regime to the detriment of the rest of the population whose welfare consequently suffers. Corruption “functions as a form of illicit tax that reduces investment and saps efficiency” (Auty, 2002:207).

Ekeh (1975) brings in an interesting element from his theory of the two publics, the civic and the primordial, the acme of which he says is corruption. He asserts that corruption is the direct consequence of the amorality of the civic public and the mentality that legitimizes the use of largesse from the civic public to benefit the primordial public. He differentiates two forms of corruption associated with this dialectics: a) embezzlement of funds from the civic public, that is from the state; and b) the solicitation and acceptance of bribes from individuals seeking services provided by the civic public, that is from civil servants in government ministries. What is baffling, he notes, is that both forms may receive implicit approbation from members of one’s primordial public. However, anyone who tries to engage in either form of corruption in

the primordial public risk serious sanctions from members of his own primordial public; and ironically, he risks the same irk if “he seeks to extend the honesty and integrity with which he performs his duties in the primordial public to his duties in the civic public by employing universalistic criteria of impartiality” (1975:110). This ambivalence in the conception and behaviour of Africans in relation to corruption is a real governance and ethical question that needs to be examined and dealt with seriously.

Whatever may be the benefits of corrupt practices, for instance, as a way of redistribution of wealth within the community, yet, and admittedly, corruption has devastating effects on a nation’s development because it siphons resources from the community. Ney, in his study of the cost-benefit of corruption, concludes that corruption is usually harmful:

we can refine the general statements about corruption and political development to read: ‘it is possible that the costs of corruption in less developed countries will exceed its benefits except for top level corruption involving modern inducements and marginal deviations and except where corruption provides the only solution to an important obstacle to development’” (Ney, 1967:427).

The costs of corruption are therefore enormous. There is the efficiency cost in terms of the waste and misallocation of resources that often go with corruption, leading to inefficiencies in the system. Also in the redistribution of resources through corruption, studies show that the rich and the privilege who either occupy positions of authority or have friends in high places, benefit more from corrupt practices at the expense of the poor, the rural and the disadvantaged, who are often at the bottom of the ladder and thus further marginalised. There is also the effect of nefarious incentives that corruption creates within the society, especially the unproductive incentives found in a rent-seeking society, mostly through bribery in order to secure monopoly and bureaucratic favours.

And in the political space, corruption leads to alienation and discontent among the populace, especially when high profile corruption cases go unchecked and unpunished. This may lead to political instability as popular disaffection may blame corruption as the cause of a nation's difficulties and economic woes.

Furthermore, corruption is expensive to the nation because the bribes and kickbacks have to be ultimately absorbed into the pricing and quoting of government programmes and projects (Zalot, 2002). Proper planning of development projects are not done because government officials are more interested in what they will gain personally from the projects than their benefits to the state. Consequently, state leaders plan and approve projects, not on economic sense or strategic development and social benefit to the country, but simply because that specific project presents a greater opportunity to accumulate wealth and to satisfy some parochial interest (Ayittey, 2000). In short, corruption reduces the amount of money available to governments for social and capital investments in critical development related activities like health, education, infrastructure, agriculture, etc. It also leads to institutional inefficiency, low public sector productive, waste and mediocrity, because the bribe given becomes more important than the quality of work being done (Hope, 2000; Zalot, 2002).

Corruption is a serious threat to democratisation and governance in Africa. Studies using Transparency International corruption index on sixteen African countries showed that there is a correlation between the level of political rights and the level of corruption (Lindberg, 2001). Thus, a key way to sustain democracy and development in Africa is to eliminate corruption by discarding the neo-patrimonial forms of governance endemic in most African states. A key element to this transformation has a lot to do with the way and manner resources are extracted and used in Africa.

2.5 Ethnicity and Politics of exclusion

Thomson (2000: 61) defines an ethnic group as “a community of people who have the conviction that they have a common identity and common fate based on issues of origin, kinship ties, tradition, cultural uniqueness, a shared history and possibly a shared language”. Tribalism, in the words of Ekeh (1975:108) “is a term used in most of post-colonial Africa to denote animosities between members of different ethnic groups”. When some people talk about ethnicity or tribalism, they do it in regards to some form of specific misfortunes in their social aspirations. Others do so to explain the negative returns to some endeavours. In these respects, ethnicity and tribalism become an explanatory theory which provides what Peter Berger called “a haven for social interpretation and complexity”. Ethnicity in itself is a neutral concept. Its use could, however, have negative or positive effects. For instance, expressions of ethnicity, just like religion, do not necessarily result in violence. Such desires and demands are usually channelled peacefully through political institutions, just like other clashes of interest within society. Social pluralism results in differences of interest, which is the engine of politics itself. This pluralism includes ethnicity.

However, many social commentators and political scientists, sees ethnic pluralism as the primordial cause of political conflict in Africa (Thomson, 2010). Several examples of political violence on the continent tend to underscore this assertion: the pogrom of Ibos and the consequent Biafran war in Nigeria in the late 60s, the 1994 Rwandan ethnic cleansing amounted to genocide, the political violence in the aftermath of the 2008 Kenya presidential elections and the recent the post-electoral violence in La Cote d’Ivoire all had ethnic undertones. Nevertheless, to blame each of these events solely on ethnic pluralism may be misleading. As Thomson (2010) advocates, a few fundamental questions should be asked as to why tribe ‘A’ has entered into conflict with tribe ‘B’.

Conflict, after all, is not an unprompted phenomenon: why was ethnic identity important in this confrontation? What was the specific cause of the dispute? Why has the clash happened at this time? Why was the altercation not contained by peaceful political bargaining, in the manner of most differences?

Thus, in Africa, the issue of ethnicity and tribalism is to be looked at in the context of group mobilisation and the fragile situation of nation-building, in which competing sentimental allegiance to state and to ethnic group become a balancing act and a clashing of interests. Traditional African society before colonisation was characterised by ethnic flexibility (Ekeh, 1975; Mamdani, 1996). Expansion and conquest were based on alliance and incorporation. Ethnic boundaries were porous and not rigid. In fact, there was no national ethnic identity as Akan or Ewe or Ga, or Yoruba, or Igbo (Thomson, 2010). These ethnic associations and groupings came with the colonial indirect rule system, when the colonial administration wanted a system of administration that was less expensive.

Ranger (1965) argues that ethnic identities and boundaries, and customary laws were inventions of the colonial period. By creating ethnic identities and allegiances as a basis for participating in the colonial state administration, for tax payment and for revenue allocation, ethnicity and its allegiance came into political relevance; it became exclusive because it became the instrument and criteria for allocating resources. The result is what Mamdani (1996) calls the bifurcated state and a dualism between the colonial administrative apparatus of citizens (the educated indigenes) as against the customary ethnic based natives or subjects. Effects of the above are not only that ethnic identity and configuration were incorporated into state governance, but also state resources and the national cake were shared based on ethnicity, and more so now. Thus, even the siting of so called development projects – airports, schools, hospitals, district

headquarters etc. are made some times, not so much on its economic efficiency and expediency, but for ethnic balance and to appease certain communities.

Consequently, ethnic mobilisation and tribalism arise in postcolonial African states wherever there is confrontation between segments of the African bourgeoisie regarding the proportionate share of national resources to differentiated regional and mainly ethnic groups. In such situations, leaders in-charge of such distribution seek to channel as great a share of these resources from the national cake to individuals who are in the same primordial public as they are, probably “because a significant proportion of them will eventually find their way into the coffers of the primordial public” (Ekeh, 1975:108).

Given the nature of African states, the neo-patrimonial and personalistic nature of state government, political elites turn to “politics of exclusion” (Ayttey, 1998: 76) where economic and social organisation is based on ethnic configurations, either for regime survival, divide and rule, loyalty and parochial interests. Such politics of exclusion breeds favouritism, nepotism, jobbery and consequent organisational inefficiency, because the regime favours loyalty over competence. So regime loyalty, soon translates into ethnic favouritism because it is not your competence but who you know or who knows you that determines one’s position; and invariably the person one knows tends to be a person from the same background and ethnic group. This invariably aggravates the undemocratic, unscrupulous, corrupt and pre-bendal nature of the state, and can lead to social and ethnic tensions, breed insecurity and violence and undermine national development. But eventually it is the nation that is hurt most deeply: “efficiency and quality are sacrificed for expediency and, what is perhaps worse, in the long-run the amorality of the civic public deepens” (Ekeh, 1975:109).

Hettne (1996: 42) proffers as a solution to ethnic tensions: the unconditional acceptance of ethnic and cultural pluralism as an essential precondition of any

harmonious development policy. This implies: i) the acceptance in policy and planning of the fact of cultural pluralism rather than the adoption, as an indispensable basic, of the idea of a shared national cultural heritage; ii) measures towards internal self-determination within states, but within a situation of agreed compromise with state power, and the devolution of some powers to local communities; and iii) sustainability, or the devising of strategies both of long-term worth and of acceptable environmental impact.

2.6 Conflict and insecurity

Security is a great concern to all human societies. This is because security impinges on survival of every human person and of every society. Without security, individuals within the state will find it difficult to engage in productive activities. Similarly without security, the state is bound to experience great difficulty in harnessing its human and material resources towards meaningful development and the promotion of general wellbeing of the people (Imobighe, 2001).

Conflict is said to be an expression of social tension and social struggle over values and claims of scarce status, power, resources in which the aims of the opponents are to neutralise, injure or eliminate rivals (Boulding, 1977). The phenomenon of conflict has two basic characteristics: (a) a setting in which conflict occurs, and (b) human actors forming identifiable groups because these groups are pursuing what are, or at least appear to be, incompatible goals. There are many causes of social conflict (Azar, 1990). In the first place, competition among individuals as well as competing group interests can lead to conflict. There is also the dominant nature of capital in society, ideological differences, differences in religion, caste or language, and the struggle over control of resources and scarce values among others. There is also the horizontal inequality theory

of conflict (Gurrs, 2000; Stewart 2002) which posits that where horizontal inequalities, that is, social, economic and political inequalities across a given population, coincide with cultural or ethnic differences, culture or ethnicity could become a powerful mobilizing agent that can lead to a range of political disturbances including violence, conflict and civil war. Stewart notes that severe horizontal inequalities make multi-ethnic countries more vulnerable to the emergence of violent conflict along ethnic lines. In essence the inequalities inherent in the society become the root cause of political conflict (Sterwart, 2002:3).

Africa has had its fair share of conflicts. It was estimated that there were over 9 million refugees and internally displaced persons in Africa due to conflicts; and that Africa has witnessed more than 30 internal armed conflicts since 1970 (Shah, 2009; Annan, 1998). In 1996 alone, 14 out of the 53 countries in Africa were involved in armed conflicts resulting in more than 8 million refugees and displaced people (Hawkins, 2008). The above data show that conflict and insecurity are serious concerns to Africans and pose considerable threat to democratic governance and any meaningful development.

Historical imbalances over control of state power and resources due to colonial policy have impact also on some of the internal ethnic conflicts in Africa. With the Berlin conference of 1885 and the partitioning of Africa, the colonial system imposed the modern concept of nation-state on Africa, and ethnic entities that were hitherto independent, with their own sociocultural and political systems, were made to form one country. To facilitate the colonial system of administration ethnic groups that were hitherto independent, but deemed unorganised, in particular stateless or acephalous societies, were put under the rule and domination of ethnic groups that were considered more organised. With the collapse of the colonial system, the victims of this ethnic subjugation will use whatever means to shackle off the yoke put on them by the colonial

system. Such conflicts like that involving Gonja and Kokomba and Dagomba and Konkomba in northern Ghana have their historical origin to such colonial policy (Awedoba, 2010).

Several reasons have been put forward as causal factors of conflict and insecurity in Africa. These can be grouped into three main categories: 1) political: which includes external military aid, dysfunctional states, competition for state power, problem of political liberation; 2) economic: this includes resource control and competition, economic reform program; and 3) social: comprising of poverty, ethnic tensions, uneven distribution of development, etc. As a result of “the endemic phenomenon of civil strife, socio-political unrest and intractable conflicts mostly within Africa states, Africa’s collective and global attention has been diverted from the developmental needs of the various states to the management of tension, human misery and militarism within the continent” (Imobighe, 2001: 39). With the increasing insecurity threats from religious extremists and terrorism in Kenya, Nigeria, Central African Republic, Mali, Chad, Somalia, and ongoing civil wars in DR Congo, South Sudan, among others, peace and security remain essential governance issues to African states in the 21st century.

2.7 Synopsis of chapter two

The chapter focussed on governance challenges facing African states and identified the factors accounting for these challenges. A key factor is the issue of neo-patrimonialism and clientelistic approach to governance. These issues have traceable roots in the African colonial experience and the state apparatus that grew out of this experience in the post-colonial era. The phenomena have contributed to other governance challenges confronting Africa today: among them bribery and corruption, ethnicity and politics of exclusion, institutional inefficiencies, leading to social tensions,

inequalities, political conflict and insecurity, and general underdevelopment. The challenge therefore is to eliminate neo-patrimonial structures of governance and establish strong democratic and accountable institutions. Given that the political class is the perpetrators and beneficiaries of these neo-patrimonial and clientelistic apparatus of governance, it behoves on non-state actors in society to champion the needed changes. How religious institutions, like the GCBC, can contribute to bringing about the needed changes in the governance structures is what the subsequent chapters will focus on.

CHAPTER THREE

PROFILE OF THE GHANA CATHOLIC BISHOPS' CONFERENCE AND IT'S RELATIONS WITH THE STATE

3.1 Introduction

The chapter examines critically the profile of the Ghana Catholic Bishops' Conference. It traces the origin of the GCBC from the missionary period through the independence era to its present state. It focuses on the profile, historical evolution, aims, membership and organisational structure of the GCBC. Taking into consideration the historical environment and the legal ecclesial foundation, it examines the GCBC's relations with the state, as well as its collaboration with other ecclesial bodies in matters dealing with the state. The chapter is important to the study because it gives the necessary background and brings out the strengths and potential areas of weakness in the GCBC as an institutional body. This will help in understanding and analysing the role the GCBC plays in issues of governance.

3.2 Foundation of the Ghana Catholic Bishops' Conference

Although the first recorded presence of the Catholic Church in what is now Ghana dates as far back as the 15th century, with the celebration of the first Mass by Portuguese catholic naval chaplains in Elmina in 1482, it was not until the late 19th century that a concerted and systematic missionary effort to establish the Catholic Church in the then Gold Coast was undertaken by the Society of African Missions (SMA) in the south and the Missionaries of Africa (White Fathers) in the north. The first missionaries, Frs. Auguste Moreau (SMA) and Eugene Murat (SMA), arrived at Elmina in 1880 (van Brakel, 2002). The activities of the Catholic missionaries saw the establishment of several ecclesiastical jurisdictions in the then British Protectorate, Ashanti, and Northern

Territories – Cape coast, Keta, Kumasi, Accra, Tamale – leading to the creation of the Gold Coast Ecclesiastical Province in 1950 with Cape Coast as Archdiocese and the others as dioceses (NCS, 2012). The National Catholic Secretariat (NCS), the implementing arm of the Ghana Catholic Bishops' Conference, was established a decade later in 1960 and registered as a corporate body in 1962 (NCS, 2012).

The Code of Canon Law (CCL), the legal document binding all Latin Rite Catholics (CCL, 1), states that the Bishops' Conference “is the assembly of the bishops of a country or of a certain territory exercising together certain pastoral offices for Christ's faithful of their territory. By forms and means of apostolate suited to the circumstances of time and place, it is to promote, in accordance with the law, that greater good which the Church offers to mankind” (CCL, 447). Thus, in Ghana the Bishops' Conference is the central body of the Catholic Church, the official ecclesial body mandated to “deliberate on matters of concern to the Church in Ghana and to encourage good activities in accordance with the needs of the times” (NCS, 2012:18). Canon 447 of the Code of Canon Law is the legal anchor of the conference and gives the *raison d'être* and object of the conference of bishops: “the joint and harmonious action of the bishops of a specific geographical area”. The purpose of the actions of the conference is not only for the good of the Church and the faithful, but also to offer “that greater good to mankind”. The legal mandate given to the conference, therefore, goes beyond that of faith and morals to include whatever enhances that greater good of mankind, including governance.

3.3 Membership

The Code of Canon (CCL, 450 §1) specifies as members of an Episcopal conference “all diocesan bishops, and those equivalent to them in law; all coadjutor

bishops, auxiliary bishops and other titular bishops who exercise in the territory a special office assigned to them by the Apostolic See or by the Bishops' conference". Presently, there are 4 archdioceses, 15 dioceses and 1 apostolic vicariate in Ghana. Consequently, there are 20 ordinary members of the Ghana Catholic Bishops' Conference, since there are no auxiliary and titular bishops with special assignment in the territory. The Apostolic Nuncio and Bishops Emeriti could be invited to the conference.

The process involved in the appointment of Catholic Bishops, impact on the credibility and institutional strength of the Bishops' Conference. The Code of Canon Law states that "the Supreme Pontiff freely appoints bishops" (CCL, 377 §1) and "no rights or privileges of election, appointment, presentation or designation of bishops are conceded to civil authorities" (CCL, 377 §5). In other words, the Supreme Pontiff of the Catholic Church, commonly known as the Pope, has the responsibility and the sole right of appointing Catholic Bishops worldwide. Civil authorities are explicitly excluded from the process. This is to avoid political interference and manipulation in the appointment of Catholic Bishops, thus leaving the Pope the free hand to make the choice as to the candidate who has the requisite qualities to ascend to such a position.

There are objective qualities that a suitable candidate for the episcopate must possess. They are as follows:

- Be outstanding in strong faith, good morals, piety, zeal for souls, wisdom, prudence and human virtues, and possess those other gifts which equip him to fulfil the office in question;
- Be held in good esteem;
- Be at least 35 years old;
- Be a priest ordained for at least five years;
- Hold a doctorate or at least a licentiate in sacred scripture, theology or canon law, from an institute of higher studies approved by the Apostolic See, or at least, be well versed in these disciplines. (CCL, 378 §1).

The above list, though not exhaustive, paints an overall picture of the profile of a Catholic Bishop, and by implication, of members of the Bishops' Conference. Generally, they are persons of a certain intellectual capacity and academic qualification, with at least a licentiate, that is, the equivalent of Masters of Philosophy degree. They have personal charisma, possess moral virtues, of matured age and experience, and are held in good esteem by the public. Since they represent the Church, these are persons who possess good sense of judgment and so weigh issues well before taking decisions.

The responsibility of assessing the suitability of the candidates rests ultimately with the Apostolic See, that is, the Roman Curia of the Pope (CCL, 378 §2). Commenting on the quality of five Ghanaian Bishops appointed in 1995 Paul Gifford (1998: 64) asserts: "of the five new bishops, one has a doctorate in church history from the University of Münster, another has a doctorate in scripture from the University of Aberdeen, another was three years into a doctoral programme at Marquette University, Wisconsin, another has an American MBA. When added to the competence of the others – like Bishop Peter K. Sarpong, Oxford trained anthropologist – the Catholic leadership has attained a quality that no other church can match". The GCBC, therefore, possess the necessary human resource, in terms of intellectual capacity and human quality of the membership, to engage with government on national issues.

Moreover, there is a whole process involved in determining and vetting candidates before the Vatican makes the final choice. First, there is the compilation of names at the level of the Bishops conference and ecclesiastical Provinces. At least every three years, the bishops of a province or the bishops conference, depending on circumstance, draw up a list of priests suitable for the episcopate (CCL, 377 §2). It is a kind of "Name bank" of persons judged to possess the requisite qualities to be appointed bishop. This list is done in secret and cut across dioceses, regions, and ethnic linings. Each diocesan bishop also

is free to make known to the Apostolic See names of priests in his diocese whom he thinks are worthy and suitable for the episcopal office (Can. 377 §2). This process is to create a database of persons or “Name Bank” of possible episcopal candidates.

When the need to appoint a bishop arises, that is, when a diocese becomes vacant or a new one is created, a process of consultation led by the Apostolic Nuncio is set in motion. Persons to be consulted include the Metropolitan Archbishop and all the bishops of the Ecclesiastical Province to which the diocese in question belongs, the President of the Bishops’ Conference, senior priests who make up the College of Consultors of the diocese in question, as well as individual prominent lay persons in the diocese. At the end of the process of consultation a list of three names, otherwise known as *ternus*, is made and sent to the Apostolic See at the Vatican (CCL, 377 §3). The Pope is free then to choose any of the names on the list of three. He may also decide to choose someone not on the list depending on the information available to him.

The process of appointment of bishops is of major relevance to this study. In fact, there are two questions that the appointment process of bishops who make up the GCBC attempts to deal with. The first is the neutrality of the GCBC vis-à-vis the government of the day when dealing with governance issues in the country; and the second is to know whose interest the viewpoints of the GCBC promote.

On the first issue, the manner of appointing Catholic Bishops helps to establish, to some extent, the neutrality of the GCBC. Given that the bishops are appointed by an authority devoid of political pressures from state actors and outside the control even of the bishops themselves, renders them more or less free from potential political godfathers or pressures from purported influential personalities to whom they may owe their appointment or nomination. Though individual bishop may have personal political linings and sympathies, yet these sympathies are not attached to his position and he is not

bound by any loyalty or favours linked to his nomination and appointment. Furthermore, the fact that the appointment of bishops comes from the Vatican and the process is handled at the national level by the Apostolic Nuncio, and not even by the GCBC, safeguards the institution from ethnic and regional favouritism.

Thus, the GCBC counts among its members persons from different backgrounds with wide range of ethnic and regional diversity. As such, though individual bishops may have political preferences and sympathies, as a body, decisions are reached by consensus and therefore must take into consideration the opinions and ideas of each member of the Conference. Consequently, positions adopted by the GCBC can be said to have a high percentage of objectivity and neutrality, devoid of partisan bias, since its members cut across both ethnic and regional divisions, two elements which most often inform political discuss in Africa.

The second question about the interest the GCBC promotes is one that is pertinent. As established earlier, the members of the GCBC are all appointed by the Vatican, an institution that is outside the country and has its own goals and objectives; its own interests. This element, as we have seen, gives a certain sense of liberty and freedom to the bishops and the GCBC, vis-à-vis the national government and state actors. However, it does not give the same freedom and liberty to the Bishops vis-à-vis the Vatican and its position on social issues. Thus, the Bishops are bound to uphold the teachings and dictates of the Catholic Church as decreed by the Vatican on social questions. In fact, each bishop, before taking possession of his office must “make the profession of faith and take the oath of fidelity to the Apostolic See, in accordance with the formula approved by the same Apostolic See” (CCL, 380). It is logical therefore to ask if such fidelity to the Apostolic See does not sometimes make the Bishops to take a position that may be in line with the dictates of the Apostolic See and the Catholic Church, but may

not necessarily be in the interest and ultimate development of the country. Or does the position of the Catholic Church always correspond to the common national good of the country? Related issues on this point shall be brought up and looked at in the course of the study.

3.4 Organisational Structure

The GCBC has a President, who is the head of the Administrative board, the executive organ of the Conference. There is also a Vice-President. Their terms of office are three years, but they can be re-elected for a second term. The current President is Most Rev. Joseph Osei-Bonsu, Bishop of Konongo- Mampong diocese, while the Vice-President is Most Rev. Anthony Adanuty, Bishop of Keta-Akatsi Diocese. The Administrative Board meets twice a year, usually in February and in August, to handle ordinary matters and other issues which cannot wait for the Plenary Assembly. The Administrative Board also includes a representative from each of the four Catholic Ecclesiastical Provinces (Accra, Cape Coast, Kumasi and Tamale).

The GCBC meets twice annually in Plenary Assembly, which is the highest legislative organ. It meets usually in May and in November. The May Assembly is dedicated to reports from the various departments, commissions and chaplaincies established by the conference. The November Assembly deals with matters of general concern, both ecclesial and national. It is at this meeting that the bishops usually deliberate on governance issues affecting the nation and issue a communiqué to that effect. At its November meetings representatives of different groups and resource persons are invited to give inputs and to address the bishops on ecclesial, national and international issues affecting the country (NCS, 2012).

The executive arm of the GCBC is the National Catholic Secretariat (NCS). It was established in 1960 and was registered as a Corporate Body in 1962. The mission of the NCS is to “implement the decisions and policies of the Bishops' Conference through its Departments and Commissions for the spiritual and human development of the people of God” when the Conference is not in session. Both the GCBC and the NCS are the two institutions by which the Catholic Church is most visible in its relations with the state. However, they are not to be seen as two separate entities or bodies, as the latter is answerable to and depends on the GCBC, which is the official mouthpiece of the Catholic Church in Ghana. The activities of the NCS are coordinated by a Secretary-General and an Assistant Secretary-General, with the collaboration of other administrative and accounting personnel. Their primary task is to ensure that “decisions and policies of the Bishops' Conference are effectively and efficiently carried out” (NCS, 2012:19).

The NCS is divided into sub-sectors, otherwise called “departments” and “directorates”. Since 2010, when an internal restructuring exercise was completed, there have been five departments at the NCS: Department of the Secretary-General, Department of Pastoral Ministry and Evangelisation, Department of Human Development, Department of Strategic Investment, and Department of Social Communication. Each department is headed by an Executive Secretary and works under the supervision of an Episcopal Committee headed by a bishop, which “ensures that the work of the department/commission is in keeping with the faith and teachings of the Church”. The Episcopal Committee also “sets the policies, strategies and agenda of the departments/commissions with the assistance of the staff” (NCS, 2012:19). The department of the Secretary-General is the overall coordinator of the activities of the other departments.

Of particular interest to our study is the department of Human Development because it is the department charged with issues dealing with governance, justice and peace at the NCS.

3.5 Department of Human Development

The Department of Human Development has as its core mission: “promoting the holistic development of the human person involving creating conditions for, and meeting his expectations of economic, social, cultural, political, physical and psychological wellbeing in an atmosphere of freedom, peace, justice, equity and security” (NCS, 2012:24). The website of the National Catholic Secretariat gives seven key functions of the department:

- a) To promote social development and relief projects to enhance the welfare of individuals and communities;
- b) To establish linkages with international and local funding organisations and charity groups to support the initiatives of the department;
- c) To attract financial and physical resources to support the pastoral objectives of the Church;
- d) To promote the policy, institutional and functional development of the health sector and activities of the Church;
- e) To promote the policy, institutional and functional development and implementation of the education and religious education sector and activities of the Church;

- f) To promote and implement programmes towards good governance, justice and peace at the national level; and
- g) To carry out any other functions assigned by the Episcopal Committee.

To carry out its mandate effectively, the department has sub-sectors called “directorates. There are four such directorates:

a) the directorate of education and religious education which is responsible for providing “holistic and quality education based on gospel values in Catholic schools to produce graduates who fit into the field of work” in fulfilment of the Church’s “civic and apostolic responsibilities” (NCS, 2012:30);

b) the directorate of health coordinates the activities of the National Catholic Health Service (NCHS) providing leadership and technical assistance to the various Catholic Health Centres in the country comprising of 32 hospitals, 70 clinics, 8 nursing/midwifery training schools, 4 health pharmacies, and 2 specialised institutions;

c) the directorate of social development oversees the various development related activities and programmes of the Church in Ghana. The work of the directorate is currently focused on youth self-employment and empowerment, protecting livelihoods, protecting the vulnerable and socially-excluded, migrants and refugees, and Caritas;

d) the governance, justice and peace directorate was formerly known as the “Dialogue and Advocacy for Good Governance”. Since it is the directorate that concerns this study, a little more in-depth analysis will be given here.

The directorate of governance, justice and peace has as its main mandate to “enhance the influence of the Catholic Church in Ghana, based on the principles of the Catholic Social teaching, especially the preferential option for the poor, on matters of governance, justice and peace” (NCS, 2012: 27). The directorate works with other

Catholic bodies like the National Catholic Justice and Peace Commission (NCJPC), the Centre for Human Development (CEHUD) and the Catholic Parliamentary Liaison Office (CPLO) in carrying out its mandate. The directorate is charged with seven key responsibilities:

- a) Closely monitors and updates the GCBC on all governance, justice and peace matters in the country;
- b) Promotes the dissemination of the Social Teaching of the Church in collaboration with the Centre for Human Development;
- c) Facilitates and coordinates programmes of the Justice and Peace Commission (JPC) in Ghana and hosts the secretariat of the commission;
- d) Provides programme support for advocacy intervention of the GCBC;
- e) Engages and liaises with commissions, agencies, departments, bodies and organisations in and outside the country;
- f) Represents the Church's voice and values on civil society platforms in ensuring the principles of accountability, transparency and stewardship in the management of public goods and service delivery for the common good;
- g) Serves as a bridge between the Church and State and ensures the traffic of ideas, values, opinions and insights from both parts while effectively influencing policy development in the country on the basis of the Social Teaching of the Church (NCS, 2012: 27).

The directorate is headed by a priest-director. He works under the supervision of an Episcopal Committee which is headed by a bishop and acts as the governing board of the directorate. The priest-director is assisted by a team with competencies in the various focus areas. They work in conjunction with the various JPC teams in each diocese. Hence, it has a grassroots outreach and a national spread like the Church it represents.

From the organisational structure of the GCBC described above, a few emerging points can be gleaned:

- a) Esprit du corps – it is a team work

The GCBC, and its attendant secretariat, the NCS, exemplify a highly structured and organised body. It has a broad based administrative infrastructure, with a pyramidal organisation that links the grassroots to the bishops at the apex. The bishops have at their disposal qualified persons who study and advise the bishops in their areas of competence. Their input helps the GCBC make informed decisions about issues they address. Furthermore, the directorate responsible for governance issues liaises with several other groups, thus enlarging their horizon and learning from the knowledge and competence of others. Hence, opinions expressed by the GCBC are that of a body and not individual views. It is a team's work. So, individual bishops are not targeted for criticism and are shielded from political attacks. This helps with objectivity as different points of view are taken into consideration in the analysis of issues. Nevertheless, the highly structured organogram could stifle personal initiatives and minority voices within the Conference.

- b) It is guided by principles derived from Scripture and the Catholic Social Teaching.

The work of the GCBC and the opinions it proffers are governed by the doctrines of the Catholic Church, especially those on the Social teachings founded on Scripture. Bishops take an oath of fidelity to remain in communion with the Pope and to defend always the teachings of the Church. These principles are universal Gospel values of justice, love for the poor, fairness, truth, tolerance and moral uprightness among others, which are necessary ingredients for social cohesion, peaceful coexistence and

transparency. While these principles guide the bishops in their deliberations and in making right judgement on social and governance issues, one may ask if their dogmatic attachment to Church doctrines do not, sometimes, come into conflict with certain government policies that respond to concrete problems of the citizens.

For instance, in 1960 the CPP government proposed a bill to deal with the issue of polygamy, which was traditionally and culturally accepted, but which Christianity and colonial administration delegitimised, disrupting thereby the traditional norms governing inheritance and delegitimising children of polygamous relations, as only one wife could be legally registered. The government bill proposed to register one wife, while allowing the existence of other wives, and the right of their children to have a share of their parents' estate. The Church rose in arms against the bill because the doctrine of the Church was against polygamy. The bill was withdrawn but the problem persisted (Pobee, 1991). The Church failed to see that “in a country where traditionally polygamy was bound up with kinship systems, norms of land tenure, economic security, family continuity, prestige, social control and inheritance” (Pobee, 1991: 65) it was important to have a legal framework to govern such issues.

Another example is the question of the use of condoms in the face of the HIV/AIDS pandemic. While the government was concerned with preventing the spread of the deadly disease among its citizens, the GCBC was fighting the moral question of the use of condoms because it was in opposition to the doctrine of the Church on artificial contraception. In its pastoral letter on AIDS of October 1990 the GCBC restated the Catholic position on the prevention of HIV/AIDS as the morally correct and medically sure ways: “abstinence outside marriage; fidelity within marriage; avoidance of intravenous drug abuse” (GCBC, 1995: 174). It voiced its opposition to the use of condom in the fight against HIV/AIDS in no uncertain terms:

In connection with the pandemic of the disease Aids, the use of condoms is morally reprehensible. Indeed, it is not as effective as those who propagate it would want us to believe. It is our view that to advocate the use of condoms as a means to preventing AIDS, as the news media are doing, is to open the floodgates to immorality among the youth thus exposing them to the very dangers they want to avoid. The only way to avoid this dreaded disease is disciplined moral life. (GCBC, Communiqué, 1989: 139).

This is the position of the Vatican and the Catholic Church in general. This stand, however, has come under a lot criticism, both in the media and among NGOs, as an ideal removed from the reality of human weakness, especially in the area of sexuality, and ignoring the devastating effect of HIV, not to mention the suffering of those infected and affected by HIV/AIDS; for instance children and orphans of HIV/AIDS.

So, it can be said that, on one hand, the GCBC is keen to upholding its Catholic doctrine even in the face of serious challenges to society, and on the other hand, its passion to guarantee and safeguard the teachings of the Church “at all cost” is founded on the belief that in them lay the solution for a better, healthier, more prosperous and peaceful society.

c) It has a preferred option for policy that helps the poor

As a principle, and in line with the Social Teaching of the Church, the GCBC takes stands that favour the poor and the marginalised. It takes seriously the affirmation of the Second Vatican Council that “the joy and hope, the grief and anguish of the people of our time, especially those who are poor or afflicted in any way, are the joy and hope, the grief and anguish of the followers of Christ as well” (GS, 1; GCBC, 1999: 175). Consequently, as a matter of conduct, the position of the GCBC takes into consideration how it affects the poor and those on the bottom echelon of society. In the development

realm, the GCBC believe in the bottom-up approach: that developing the grassroots and uplifting the poor and those at the bottom, benefits the whole society in the long run.

This approach however, runs counter to the more conventional and prevalent liberal capitalist economics which believe, on its part, that creating an environment conducive for big business and capital to flourish is most beneficial to the society because there is the trickle-down effect: the top-down economics. While the chosen position of the GCBC, in line with the Catholic Social Teaching, makes human sense as it puts the human person at the heart of economic development, it is inevitably in collision path with the liberal economic model of the Bretton Wood institutions which is concern with GDP figures and capital accumulation as yardstick of progress. Invariably, such a stance already lends itself to a collision course with the positions and decisions of those charged with the management of the economy.

d) It takes its involvement in social and governance issues as an integral part of its mission.

In the foreword to the first volume of *Ghana Bishops speak*, Peter Cardinal Appiah Turkson, who was then the Archbishop of Cape Coast and president of GCBC, asserts thus: “through these [pastoral letters and communiqué] the bishops of Ghana have sought to be ‘seers’ for the Church in Ghana ...conscious of their prophetic witness to the people of Ghana” (GCBC, 1999: xiii). The GCBC perceive their involvement in the social and governance issues of the nation as part and parcel of their spiritual and ecclesial calling.

3.6 The GCBC in relation to the State

The relationship between the GCBC and the state, meaning the government of Ghana, dates back to the independence era. It is a relationship that can be described as a “two-edged sword”: as a partner of government and as a critic of state policy. Both sides shall be looked at concentrating on the years between independence and the Fourth Republic, since the period of the Fourth Republic constitutes the focus of the next chapter.

3.6.1 The GCBC as partner of State

The Catholic Church has been a development partner of the government since independence in the area of education, health and rural development. Various governments have attested to and given positive accolades to the Church and to the GCBC. Despite the criticisms of nationalists who saw “the Church as, at least, an accessory of colonialism and imperialism” (Pobee, 1991:14), the contribution of the Church to the social service and development of the nation was undeniable. Thus while Nkrumah, on one hand, would chastise Christianity of imploring “colonial subject to lay up his treasures in heaven where moth nor rust doth corrupt”, and allowing “[European] traders and concessionaries and administrators acquire his mineral and land resources, destroy his arts, crafts and home industries” (Nkrumah, 1967: 23); on the other hand, he praises the heroism of Christian missionaries who in spite of the imminent danger and certainty of death risked their lives for their African brothers and sisters. In his words, “the fortitude which they showed is the sure foundation upon which your works has been based. Ghana salutes these men and women who gave their lives for the enlightenment and welfare of the land” (Orchard, 1958:148).

In the same vein, Mr. A.W. Amoro during a debate in Parliament on the Private Members' Motion in 1965 made reference to the Church's contribution to national development when he said "the Roman Catholic Church and the Churches which form the Christian Council which are concerned with the spiritual welfare of the people, also help in national reconstruction by building schools and hospitals. They trained teachers and nurses to man these schools and hospitals". (Ghana Parliamentary Debates: 234).

General Acheampong, on his part, acknowledged the role played by the GCBC in national development when he mentioned, at the episcopal ordination of Bishop J.K. Owusu on 30 June 1973 at Sunyani that, "cooperation between state and Church in all facets of human endeavour can only lead to integral development... Moral excellence in fact remains the bedrock of a nation's progress and development and herein lies the need the state has of the Church's work and mission" (Acheampong, 1980: 158). In these remarks the Church and its leaders are seen as partners in progress by state actors.

Furthermore, the GCBC and the NCS have had occasions of collaborating with government at resolving social and political difficulties in the country. The GCBC, working with other bodies, has played mediatory roles between government and different professional bodies in Ghana in times of crisis. For example, during the Acheampong regime when professional bodies laid down their tools, and students took to the streets in 1977, leading to the closure of the Universities, it was the GCBC, in collaboration with the CCG which took up the conciliation effort to calm nerves at a time of rising tension (Pobee, 1991). Also when nurses went on indefinite industrial action in 1978, it was the GCBC, working with the CCG, who intervened and convinced their leaders to call off the strike for the sake of peace and humanity. The Minister of Health testified to the contribution of the GCBC and CCG in his letter of appreciation: "Thank you for your invaluable role ... in pleading with our nurses to call off their strike. Indeed, your

intervention has helped in restoring the vital services and brought great relief to all Ghanaians” (Pobee 1991:70).

It must be pointed out that the cooperation between Church and state in the provision of social services and development is not without difficulties. In the education and health sectors, where this cooperation was quite visible, the Church, until 1951, was receiving grants-in-aid from the government for this work. However, the nationalist government of the CPP attempted a complete takeover of schools and hospitals in the country. The move was vehemently resisted by the Church. This resistance led to a compromised position in which the Church became co-workers with the government. This ambivalent position continues to raise tensions from time to time between the GCBC and the state even today. For instance, in 1995 a government policy sought to ban the employment of hospital personnel in mission hospital and at the same time to mandate the redeployment of 15 percent of their hospital staff on government pay-roll to government hospital. It was a policy that risked affecting adversely the health care system especially in rural areas where most mission hospitals are located. The GCBC resisted it and fought it vigorously for a solution to be found to such a policy (GCBC, 1999).

Even the mediation role the GCBC played between the government and its opponents was not without its setbacks. For example, amid the tensions of 1977 and the standoff between students, professional bodies and government, when a delegation of the GCBC and the CCG sought audience with General Acheampong, the head of state, in their mediation efforts, he refused to receive them. They had to seek other means to get the government and its opponents to iron out their differences (Pobee, 1991).

3.6.2 GCBC as critic of state policy

Relations of GCBC with the state have been strained some of the times and have witnessed difficult moments. The collision line dates back to the Nkrumah era when the CPP, immediately after independence, started what was to be the “deification of Nkrumah”. In its political campaigns, the CPP used numerous titles of Christ and biblical language, such as messiah, saviour, to describe Nkrumah, to the extent of wanting to turn Nkrumah’s birthplace of Nkroful into a national shrine (van Brakel, 2010). Such actions were deemed blasphemous to the Catholic hierarchy.

In an Easter pastoral letter which was read to all Catholics, Bishop Porter, then Archbishop of Cape Coast, voiced concerned against the “constant use of the various names of Christ to indicate the Prime Minister; attributing qualities and sayings of Christ to him propagating a vague form of religion, which is to replace Christ’s own religion”, and declared Good Friday as a day of special reparation for the “blasphemous insults against God’s Holy Name” (Pobee, 1991:150). The response of agents of the state was swift and condescending with an editorial in the Ghanaian Times of 23 April 1960 which read: “*So what Porter?*” One needs to add here that this was still the era of nationalism and decolonisation and the fact that the Catholic hierarchy was mostly European made any perceived criticism of the government by the Catholic hierarchy as anti-nationalism and a continuation of foreign imperialism.

One notable example to the perception that the Catholic hierarchy was imperialist minded was the anti-Bronk campaign in Kumasi in the early 1960s. Bishop van den Bronk was a Dutch, appointed Bishop of Kumasi in 1952 at the height of the independence struggle in the Gold Coast and the Africanisation drive. The recruitment and sending of members of the Young Pioneers Organisation, a socialist oriented ideological movement, for training in the Soviet Union raised some concern among the

Catholic hierarchy. Bishop Bronk dared to voice his opinion against this phenomenon, apparently in a sermon (van Brakel, 2010). He came under serious criticisms from the government press. He was accused of being an “imperialist spy paid to subvert our people’s mind”, and “represents in its most classical form, the religious imperialism of days gone by and in him is manifest the neo-colonialist tricks which the imperialists have embarked upon” (Ghanaian Times 20 Dec. 1961). The Editorial of the Ghanaian Times 22 December 1961 sums the reaction of government:

What business is his, a Dutchman, if Ghana, decided to send nine-tenths of her youth to the Soviet Union and other Eastern countries for education? It is none of his business. It is none of the business of the Church he purports to be serving. And the people of Ghana can no longer tolerate his rank interference, his mischief and his diabolical campaign against our government.

The Bishop had to endure several attacked in the press and his house was dynamited on one occasion (Pobee, 1991).

While it was easy to brand as imperialist bishops of foreign origins during the First Republic each time the Church disagreed with the state and was critical of government policy, such confrontational reaction of the state to the Church sprung up now and then in subsequent governments. Each time the Church’s position differed from that of official government position the attacks came.

During the Acheampong regime the issue of Union Government created friction between the GCBC and the government. The GCBC was against the way the concept of Union Government was being championed by the government of the day. Persons purported to be from the government had violently broken up a meeting of the Ghana Professional Bodies Association, which was perceived to be against the Union Government agenda, on 12 October 1977. Meanwhile, the government passed a decree in

December of that same year protecting from prosecution any person(s) who promotes the Union Government agenda. The GCBC, along with other groups, saw such a move as unjust, and issued a statement on 15 March 1978, which the Standard, an organ of communication of the GCBC, carried. The statement, among other things, faulted the one-sided propaganda in favour of Union Government and condemned the arrest and maltreatment of opponents of Union Government (GCBC, 1999:20). Persons associated with government accused the Standard newspaper of “hiding behind the cloak of press freedom and freedom of worship to subvert the government” and that “foreign agents are now using the Church to reverse progress and stability” (Ghanaian Times March 15, 1978).

Also, during the time of the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC) in the aftermath of the June 4, 1979 uprising, the GCBC, working in collaboration with the Christian Council of Ghana, issued a memorandum to the AFRC in which it expressed misgivings about the amount of violence in the revolution while welcoming the statement of Flt. Lt: Rawlings, head of the junta that the revolution was a moral one to restore human values, public morality and accountability to the country, after such many years of decadence and institutionalised corruption (NCS & CCG, Memorandum, 1979; GCBC, 1999:36). However, it was in the 1980s that the rift between the GCBC and the Rawlings administration reached an all-time high.

In their “Statement on the state of the nation” of 11 November, 1982, the GCBC descended heavily on the misdeeds of the 1982 revolution which sought to “better the condition of the exploited masses of the people and to involve them in decision-making at the grassroots level... to which end Peoples’ and Workers’ Defence Committees (PDC and WDC) were introduced”. In the view of the Bishops, “the idea behind the setting up of the PDCs and WDCs is a sound one because it is when people participate in decision-

making that they really get involved in and are committed to implementing the decisions taken”. Yet they were overly critical of these instruments of the revolution asserting that “no clear thinking appears to have gone into the formation of these committees, and no clear-cut guidelines for their operations”, instead “these committees have become instruments of terror, division and antagonism in our society... and have driven a wedge between ‘people’ and ‘non-people’” due to the “discriminatory nature of their composition and operation”; and have become “haven of corruption, extortion and callousness” (GCBC, 1999: 74). They accused the government of paying lip service to grave economic and social issues through daily political slogans while atrocities of all sorts were being committed against civilians in the name of the revolution: wanton killings, senseless beating, merciless molestations and general harassment, climaxing in the “outrageous abduction and subsequent abhorrent, cold-blooded, cowardly murder of three judges and an ex-army officer” (GCBC 1999:75).

Government versus Church opposition reached its peak in 1989 when the GCBC, together with the CCG, refused blankly to comply with government directive for all religious bodies to register with the ministry of interior. The reason given for such a registration was to make churches accountable to government due to reported abuses of some new churches because “some Churches conduct their services in a disorderly manner, others disturb public peace, others are just commercial houses etc.” (GCBC, 1999:144).

In a joint letter with the CCG of 14 November 1989, the GCBC voiced its opposition to the registration of churches because it saw the underlying PNDC law 221, in its present form as an “infringement of the fundamental human right of the freedom of worship”. Consequently, they refuse as a matter of conscience to register under the law “as it now stands” (GCBC, 1999:155). The PNDC government refused to back down and

the GCBC and the CCG refused to give in and to comply allowing the deadline to pass. The friction continued until the coming of the Fourth Republic. However, other religious bodies like the Pentecostal Association of Ghana and the Organisation of Independent Churches avowed their support for the registration exercise, probably because it was a way of gaining legitimacy. It is noted that about 19000 registration forms were purchased by various religious groups (News from Africa Watch, 18 May 1990).

At this juncture, it will be helpful to look at the kind of relation that exists between the GCBC other religious groups, especially Christian bodies. The GCBC has an Inter-Religious Dialogue and Ecumenical Unit at the National Catholic Secretariat. The main objectives of the Unit are, to:

- Promote, enhance and sustain good relations between the Catholic Church and other Christian churches, Islam and Traditional African Religion;
- Explore areas of co-operation and dialogue between the church and other religions;
- Coordinate activities of Ecumenical Relations and Inter-Religious Dialogue in all the nineteen Dioceses and the Apostolic Vicariate of Donkorkrom of the Catholic Church in Ghana;
- Acquire and disseminate relevant documents and information on Ecumenical Relations and Inter-Religious Dialogue, and to update the knowledge and skills of commission members;
- Organise regular meetings and seminars/workshops with leaders of other faiths;
- Present a common front with other religions on certain national issues. (NCS, 2012:22)

While very little was found in terms of joint action on governance issues between the GCBC and the leadership of the Muslim community and followers of African Traditional Religion, the GCBC has had a rather good and collaborative relationship with other Christian bodies, especially the Christian Council, made up of mostly historic churches of the protestant and reformed tradition.

At several moments in the history of Ghana, the GCBC has teamed up with the Christian Council to form a common front against the government. They were comrades in arms against the formation of the now infamous Union Government during Acheampong's regime; they issued joint memorandum in 1979 denouncing the atrocities of the revolution; they worked together, as mentioned above, to resist the registration of churches; both bodies mounted a successful campaign for religion to be part of school curriculum; worked together to promote free, fair and peaceful elections and have given joint statements on economic issues (GCBC, 1999; Dickson, 1995). They have also jointly mediated labour disputes between Government and professional bodies (Daily Graphic, 20 May, 1995; 23 May 1995). Such practical ecumenical activities between the GCBC and the CCG strengthen the work of the GCBC in its dealings with state actors.

However, with the African Independent Churches and those of the Pentecostal-Charismatic tradition, such collaboration was sometimes difficult. During the independence struggle, the historic churches were sometimes seen as instruments of the colonial powers and of imperialism while the African independent Churches were regarded as liberators. This is because the African Independent Churches had "a strong sensitivity to African culture and tended to be nationalistic in character and to be more involved in the nationalistic movements of the period than were the historic traditional churches" (van Brakel: 113). While the GCBC tried to forge a common cause and find common ground in addressing state and governance issues with these churches, it was not always easy.

During the First Republic, for instance, the fieriest critique of Bishop van den Bronk came from Rev. Dr. V.G. Kobina Mensah, the founder of the Church of Africa and later Omanhene of the Suaman Traditional Area. Against the backdrop of Bishop Bronk's opinion against the sending of Young Pioneers to the Soviet Union for training,

Rev. Dr. Mensah wrote a letter in the Ghanaian Times of 22nd December 1961 entitled “Bishop Bronk Must Go”, in which he defends the government and criticises the Catholic Church of imperialism. He asserted:

Ghanaians have been by culture and tradition very deeply religious which is proved by Constitutional Proclamation of Religious Freedom but suffice it to say that such guarantee does not mean Levitical gangsterism and conspiratorial Christianity. We do not want in Ghana the sort of priests, monks, and nuns under whose tuition and supervision Lumumba, Okito, and Mpolo were murdered, and still continue engineering the unchristian subversive clique of highway man Tshombe in the Congo... Let Bishop Bronk go now and fight against the Communist Party of Italy in Rome and the Vatican City which is capturing political power in his holy land. (van Brakel, 2010:114).

During this period the nationalist fervour of the independent churches made them partners of the Nkrumah Africanist drive. To use the expression of Pobee (1991:60) they “travelled in one boat and in the same direction, namely the securing of the pride and dignity and culture of ‘homo africanus’ which had in the past been deprecated”. This made it difficult for the Catholic hierarchy, at the time made of up mostly European bishops, and thus perceived as imperialist stooges, to work with African independent churches in matters concerning government and state policies.

In recent times, collaboration with the AIC and with those of the Pentecostal-Charismatic tradition has not fared better. An example is what was noted earlier concerning the registration of churches mandated by the PNDC regime. While the GCBC and the CCG were against the mandatory registration of churches issued by the government, the AIC and the Pentecostal churches affirmed their support for the exercise and patronised it. Probably, such a registration gave them some legal legitimacy, something the mainline Churches possessed. Also, on national occasions such as the National Thanksgiving Service, the pronouncements of prelates from the GCBC and the

CCG differ substantially from those of the leaders of the Pentecostal churches who do not shy from giving enthusiastic praise and adulation to state actors and government of the day, in the manner of favour seeking (Gifford, 1998). Such subjective and personalised positions of the Pentecostal churches and sometimes co-optation by political and state actors make it difficult for the GCBC to collaborate with them on governance and political issues.

3.7 Synopsis of chapter three

The profile of the GCBC shows a well-organised institution that combine grassroots-outreach with a hierarchical-pyramidal organisational structure. With a well organised and constituted secretariat like the NCS, with its different departments, committees and focus committees, the GCBC possesses a potent apparatus in carrying out its objectives in its relations with the state and in dealing with governance issues. The quality of the membership of the GCBC, its autonomy vis-à-vis the State, as well as its international links, especially with the Vatican, are elements that strengthen the GCBC. These elements, especially its international link with the Vatican, are also potential grounds of criticism against some of its positions on national issues.

The relations of the GCBC with the state were generally cordial, characterised by mutual respect. However, there were instances when relations were strained. Relations become strained each time the Church took a stand that was opposite to that of the government in power or when it voiced concern about some government actions and policies that infringed on human rights and the rights of the citizens. It has been criticized as being foreign stooges and imperialists' instruments. However, the issue seems to be less about the motives behind the opinions of the GCBC; rather, it was more

about government intolerance of dissenting views against its policies, especially coming from a well-established body as the GCBC.

The chapter has also shown that the GCBC operates on principles and has stood its grounds and adhered to its principles and ethical conduct of upholding the dignity of the human person and fighting against injustice and misconduct in its dealings with state actors. The GCBC has also been careful not to compromise herself and so has been cautious in approaching political issues. Nonetheless, it has not been afraid to engage with government and to oppose it whenever it judges this necessary (Neefjes, 1970). The next chapter examines, in its form and content, the concrete manner by which the GCBC deals with governance issues of state since the inauguration of the Fourth Republic.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE GCBC INVOLVEMENT IN GOVERNANCE ISSUES:

CONTENT ANALYSIS OF GCBC DOCUMENTS

4.1 Introduction

The chapter deals with the content analysis of GCBC documents in relation to governance issues in Ghana since the Fourth Republic. In all 35 documents were carefully examined. The documents include Communiqués, Pastoral letters, Joint statements and other special messages. Each document was studied and its content analysed and then classified. Due to the variation in the style of the documents, the documents were first categorised into two main groups, those that could be reduced to a single issue tagged “single-theme documents” and those touching on several issues tagged “multi-theme documents”. After this first categorization, each category was then examined using their thematic content. For the “multi-theme documents” they were analysed based on issues identified in chapter two as major obstacles to good governance and development in Africa: neo-patrimonialism (clientelism), bribery and corruption, ethnicity, and insecurity. However, other emerging challenges, such as the environment, were added to the themes to see how the GCBC dealt with it.

The analysis was done in a comparative form. The period under review, that is, from 1993 to 2014, was divided into three political spaces:

Political Space I: The period between 1993 and 2000 when the National Democratic Congress won the mandate to govern the country under the leadership of Flt Lt. Jerry John Rawlings, and which has been politically tagged “NDC I”;

Political Space II: The period between 2001 and 2008 when the New Patriotic Party (NPP) under the Presidency of John Agyekum Kuffuor governed the nation. It is tagged “NPP”.

Political Space III: The period between 2009 and 2014 under Prof. John Evans-Attah Mills/John Mahama presidency. It is tagged “NDC II”.

A comparative analysis of the interventions of the GCBC on governance issues under the three political spaces was chosen because it will not only help to ascertain the consistency or otherwise of the GCBC’s involvement in governance issues over the years, but also to scrutinise its political neutrality or otherwise under the various governments. Neutrality is a major test case for the credibility of the intervention of religious institutions in governance and political issues. Furthermore, the study will scrutinize some key elements of the documents: the style, methods and approach used by the GCBC. Such an analysis will help one to appreciate the impact or otherwise of the GCBC’s efforts in governance issues, as well as bring out an evolving pattern, if any, in the GCBC’s approach to governance in the country.

However, as a sort of preamble, the chapter starts with analysis of documents preceding the inauguration of the Fourth Republic. The objective of this preamble is to lay the foundation as to the contribution of the GCBC to the debate and actual return of Ghana to constitutional rule in 1993. The author believes such a foundation will give better understanding and appreciation of the role of the GCBC in issues of governance in Ghana in the Fourth Republic.

4.2 The GCBC and the journey to democratic rule and the Fourth Republic

The Catholic Church in Ghana (in conjunction with other actors like the Christian Council of Ghana) can be said to have played the role of “midwives of democratic transition and reconstruction” (De Gruchy, *Christianity*, 131). Between January 1991, when the sitting head of state, Flt. Lt. Jerry John Rawlings, announced in his New Year Speech broadcast to the nation a national debate on the future governance of the nation, and November 1992, when the presidential elections were held to usher in the Fourth Republic, the GCBC issued five documents giving its point of view on the return to constitutional rule: *The Catholic Church and Ghana’s search for a new democratic system* (February 20, 1991), *Communique issued by the Catholic Bishops’ Conference of Ghana at the end of their annual meeting in Wa: July 2-5, 1991* (July 5, 1991), *Proposal by the Catholic Bishops’ Conference of Ghana on the transition to constitutional rule* (April 8, 1992), *Communiqué issued by the Ghana Bishops’ Conference at its annual General Assembly held in Kumasi: July 6-11, 1992* (July 11, 1992), *A Pastoral letter from the Christian Council of Ghana and the Ghana Catholic Bishops’ Conference – 1992* (September 25, 1992).

Of the five documents, two are communiques, touching on several issues including the transition to democratic rule; two are pastoral letters dealing with the specific issue of the transition to constitutional rule; and one is a joint-pastoral letter with the Christian Council of Ghana on the General elections of November 1992.

4.2.1 Motivation for GCBC actions

In its view the GCBC sees their action as “a continuation of [its] spiritual mandate” (Pastoral letter 1991; GCBC, 1999:185). It sees its contribution to the national debate concerning the future governance of the nation as “a greater responsibility” and so wants

its voice to be heard. Furthermore, while acknowledging that the debate had already been ignited in some quarters, but in a muted form, the GCBC felt that its participation in the debate will “encourage others to join in”. These “others” are civil society groups, professional bodies, other religious institutions and indeed private citizens. Thus, the GCBC intervention corresponds to the double-role of being a member of civil society as well as fulfilling its role as moral guide of the nation, the two theoretical frameworks used for the study.

4.2.2 Nature of proposals put forward by the GCBC

A critical analysis of the intervention of the GCBC shows well thought-out and coherent documents with concrete proposals and suggestions, what it terms “principles and structures for the future governance” (GCBC, 1999: 185) of the country. Key proposals include the importance of human rights, the incorporation of traditional Ghanaian values into the modern democratic system and the need for stable institutions that guarantee freedom, justice and individual and collective progress.

Furthermore, the documents show that the GCBC was not afraid to take positions on issues, even when it goes against the position or proposal of the government. For instance, on the duration of the transition period and the timetable to democratic rule, the GCBC was insistent (in February 1991 and in July 1991) that the end of 1992 was enough time for this to happen. It is difficult to tell if the position of the GCBC had any influence on the decision to hold elections in November 1992 and inauguration of the president and the Fourth Republic in January 1993.

Some other positions of the GCBC which seemed to have been heeded by government include the dismantling of the Revolutionary cadres of the PNDC era, a constitutional place for traditional chiefs in the form of the Regional and National

Houses of Chiefs (GCBC, 1999:187), a Human Rights Court to protect the rights of citizens, the need for political parties in democratic governance (188), an elected national assembly and an elected president with a term of office of four or five years, renewable once (193), the lifting of the ban on political parties (199) the formation of a Constitution Review Committee and an independent electoral body instead of the National Commission for Democracy (NCD) of the government charged with the responsibility of organising broad consultation, drafting a constitution and organising elections (198); there was also the issue of holding presidential and parliament elections on the same day instead of the two-tiers system proposed by the government (216). On the National Commission for Democracy the government chose to establish the National Consultative Assembly and the Independent electoral commission (INEC); while on the two tier voting system, it was the aftermath of the first elections in 1992 that led the government to adopt the one-tier voting system in subsequent elections.

Nevertheless, some issues proposed by the GCBC went unheeded. The issue of a national reconciliation forum (GCBC, 1991: 211) prior to the Fourth Republic as a way of healing the memory of the past and building national unity and cohesion was not heeded to; the repealing of certain draconic laws such as the Newspaper licensing law (PNDCL 211), the Preventive Custody Law (PNDCL 4), Habeas Corpus (Amendment) Law (PNDCL 91) (200; 205). All these, in the view of the GCBC would ensure freedom of the media and guarantee the freedom of expression so vital for democratic governance; but these were not repealed before the inauguration of the Fourth Republic.

On most issues, the GCBC was consistent in its view and approach throughout the period of transition to democratic rule. It was unrelenting making its voice heard and its opinions known. It offered alternatives where it did not agree with government. However, on the issue of having a referendum to adopt the new Constitution, the GCBC

documents suggest that the GCBC held two views which were contradictory: an initial position which was favourable and a later position which questioned the suitability of a referendum as a means to giving legal backing to the constitution. In its February 1992 Pastoral letter, in the section concerning “Time-table for return to Constitutional Rule” the GCBC speaks of a referendum in these terms:

On the specific details of a time-table, we propose a return to full constitutional rule by the end of 1992. A Constitutional Review Committee can be empanelled to review the 1979 Constitution in the light of any new ideas which have come up since then. The Committee should be able to complete its work within a specified period. *The final draft which emanates can later be submitted to a referendum*¹ (GCBC, 1999: 200).

In this document the GCBC saw “referendum” as the natural means to give legal backing to the Constitution. However, in the document “Proposals by the Catholic Bishops’ Conference of Ghana on the Transition to Constitution Rule” of April 8, 1992, the GCBC questions the utility of a referendum and dedicates a whole section titled “Referendum” to this:

One item on the time-table outlined by the Chairman in his 5th March address is the referendum to approve or disapprove of the Draft Constitution scheduled for 28th April, 1992...In our view a referendum is not a suitable way of settling complicated issues which require more than a Yes or No answer. A referendum is the direct vote by the electorate of a state or region, etc., on some issue, usually of national importance, such as union with another state or the acceptance of a government programme (214).

The GCBC gave a four-point reasoning to their argument:

¹ Emphasis in italics is mine.

First, how can one vote YES/NO on such composite and complex document as a draft constitution, made up of hundreds of articles, clauses, paragraphs and sub-sections?... We do not see how a complex document like the Draft Constitution can be reduced simply to a matter of YES or NO.

Secondly, given the fact the Constitution is written in technical language and that the period between the submission of the document to the government (31st March) and the time of voting (28th April) is barely a month, how can anyone realistically expect most Ghanaians, especially our illiterate brothers and sisters to familiarise themselves with the document and vote meaningfully? What is the moral implication and validity of asking people who have no ability or the chance to read and understand the document to vote to affirm it?

Thirdly, what happens in the event of the electorate saying “NO” to the Draft Constitution? Will it mean that the Consultative Assembly will have to start afresh and submit the reworked document to another referendum? Is there any guarantee that that document will then be acceptable to the electorate?

Fourthly, are we to understand that the referendum will be the promulgation of the Constitution? (215)

They conclude therefore that it was in the interest of the nation to shelve the referendum and proceed otherwise:

In our view it will be better, as has already been suggested in certain quarters, for the government to come out with a legislation constituting the Consultative Assembly into a Constituent Assembly, which will then promulgate the Constitution (215)...In the light of the arguments raised above and in the supreme interest of our nation, we strongly urge the PNDC government to abandon the idea of a referendum to approve the Draft Constitution.

It is difficult to understand the fact that within two months of advocating for a referendum, the GCBC makes a U-turn to question the use of a referendum in adopting a complex document such as a Constitution. It makes one to question, on one hand, whether much thought was given to the idea of a referendum when it was first mentioned; and on the other hand, whether the change in position was due to other

influences outside the GCBC. And if the latter is the case, which the statement “as has already been suggested in certain quarters” in its conclusion seemed to indicate, especially if the suggestion proposed was from those opposed to the government, then the GCBC can easily be said to be flip-flopping on issues or to be siding with the opposition against the government. Both conclusions will not be good for the GCBC in its prophetic role in society. As asserted by Philpot (2004), the twin differentiation of autonomy and neutrality are important ingredients for the Church’s effective role in governance.

To conclude this section, it is important to highlight certain measures outlined by the GCBC as needed to maintain political stability in Ghana:

Good government, respect for the constitution by all section[s] of the nation, namely government as well as the civilians, but particularly the military, equitable distribution of the nation’s wealth, the inculcation of the courage to protest against a bad government by peaceful means, commitment to collective vigilance, general discipline of the army and civilians and general training in non-violent resistance against unconstitutional takeovers (GCBC, 1999: 196).

As the GCBC itself acknowledged, the decisive factor and message it seeks to give to the public is the necessity to appropriate and to own constitutional governance, to the extent of resisting by peaceful means, any unconstitutional takeover by the army or any other group. Underlying the means to protecting constitutional rule therefore is “education in passive and non-violent resistance”. This was a courageous position to take by church prelates at a time the country was under a military/revolutionary regime. It showed how tenacious and committed the GCBC was to constitutional rule.

The role played by the GCBC in the transition to constitutional rule in Ghana goes contrary to Haynes’ (1996) argument against mainline churches when he asserts that the leaders of the mainline churches are in league with the ruling elite “to seek to achieve a

hegemonic ideology that stresses the desirability of stability rather than progressive change”, and so seeking to “defuse, reduce, and when necessary, strive to help eliminate serious political challenges to the status quo” (105); and that the Catholic Church, in particular, was ambivalent about the concept of fundamental political and social reforms because they were as fearful of any major political and social change as were the political elites.

On the contrary, the contribution of the GCBC to the transition to democratic rule affirms rather the thesis of John de Gruchy (1995) that Churches have been “midwives” of democratic transitions and reconstruction in Africa. Having said that, one must not ignore the criticism that Paul Gifford (1998) makes of the mainline churches who, in his view, are in the same elite class with the bankers, academics, doctors, lawyers, journalists, industrialists and entrepreneurs, the same class whom Rawlings chastised and demonised when he took over the realms of government as the ultimate populist hero of the “veranda boys”, as against the élite in 1979 and 1981.

4.3 Distribution and categorisation of documents

In all 35 documents were examined. They are classified using first and foremost typology, and then on thematic content.

4.3.1 Typology

In terms of typology and nature they can be classified into three main categories: Communiqués, Pastoral letters and Joint statements as shown in the table below.

Table 1: Classification by typology

Type	Communiqué	Pastoral letter	Joint Statement	Total
Frequency	23	7	5	35
Percentage	65.7%	20%	14.3%	100%

An analysis of the documents in terms of typology shows that majority of the documents examined are Communiqués issued at the end of their annual meeting to address matters of concern affecting the country and the Church. The pastoral letters and Joint statements, usually with the Christian Council of Ghana, are not regular features, but ad hoc statements to address specific urgent matters that need attention.

4.3.2 Classification by themes

In this classification the documents are categorised into two main groups, “Multi-theme” focused, that is, documents that deal with several issues; and “Single-theme” focused, that is, those documents that deal with only one issue.

Table 2: Multi-theme and Single-theme

Typology	Multi-theme	Single-theme	Total
Frequency	20	15	35
Percentage	57%	43%	100%

Out of a total of 35 documents examined, 15 (43%) were focused on a single-theme, that is, dealing with one specific issue; and 20 (57%) were multi-theme, that is, touching on several issues. Most of the Communiqués touch on several issues while 6 (85.7%) of the Pastoral letters, 2 (40%) of the Joint Statements and 7 (30.4%) of Communiqués are single-theme documents. Consequently, the GCBC prefers using Pastoral letters when issuing a document to address a specific issue, while using the Communiqué to address several issues.

The single-theme documents include the *Pastoral letter on Drug-trafficking and Prostitution* (December 1995), *Joint communiqué on the Economic* (November 1995), *Pastoral letter on Election Period* (1996), *Advent Pastoral letter on Bribery and Corruption* (1997), *Christmas message for a Peaceful Elections* (December 2004), *communiqué on the importance of Education to combating social ills* (November 2005), *Communiqué on Peace and election*, (November 2008), *Communiqué on the Environment* (November 2010), *on Good Governance and Peace* (November 2011), *on the Family and Elections* (November 2012), *on Evangelisation* (2013), *on the Family* (2014); To these, one can add the *Pastoral letter on the Catholic Church and Ghana's search for a New Democratic system* (February 1991), *Proposals on the Transition to Constitutional Rule* (April 1992) and the *Joint Pastoral letter of the Christian Council and Catholic Bishops' Conference on General Elections* (September 1992).

Table 3: Issues addressed using single-theme documents

<i>Issues</i>	<i>Political</i>	<i>Social</i>	<i>Elections and peace</i>	<i>Good governance and Peace</i>	<i>Corruption</i>	<i>Religious</i>	<i>Others</i>	<i>Total</i>
Frequency	2	2	5	1	1	1	3	15
Percentage	13.3%	13.3%	33.3%	6.7%	6.7%	6.7%	20%	100%

A look at the issues dealt with in the single-theme documents shows that the theme of peace and elections is dominant: 6 out of 15 (40%) when we combine elections and peace and good governance and peace. Thus, the GCBC sees that it has a role to play in the safeguarding of peace and stability in the country. This corroborates the assertion of Osei (2009) that religion should be made an ally in the fight against fraud, corruption and in promoting peace and social transformation, when he called for vigilance in African countries who are embracing democratic governance, based on the recent political crises in Kenya, Zimbabwe, and Georgia.

Also, a closer look at the years of issue of these documents, one can note that, apart from 2000 in which the subject of election was included in the multi-theme communiqué (probably due to the Jubilee Year), the GCBC issues a special document focused on elections each election cycle (1992, 1996, 2004, 2008, 2012). Further analysis in terms of year of issue of single-theme documents shows that the single-theme approach appears to be the preferred style of the GCBC since 2010 because all the communiqués issued were single-theme focus.

The single-theme approach allows the GCBC to examine a particular issue into detail, analysing the causes, consequences, and recommendations for dealing with the issue, something the multi-theme approach does not allow. However, the multi-theme approach allows the GCBC to touch and give their opinion on several issues that they judge are important at the time. But touching on several issues at the same time may dilute the punch, the needed focus and attention that the single-theme approach gives. The author's preference, therefore, is for the single-theme approach due to its in-depth treatment of issues, articulate and well thought out suggestions and strategies to deal with them.

4.4 Comparative Analysis among the three political periods: NDC I, NPP, NDC II

4.4.1 Preliminaries

In this analysis, both single-theme and multi-theme documents are examined. Since GCBC documents, especially the multi-theme documents, cover a wide range of issues, our analysis is limited to the four governance areas highlighted in chapter two: neo-patrimonialism, corruption, ethnicity and tribalism, and insecurity. The issue of the environment and reconciliation, which were occurring issues in the GCBC documents,

were also examined. However, it must be mentioned that two issues, namely education and health, which occurred in almost all the documents of the GCBC, as the Catholic Church is a major stakeholder in these areas, were not included. The author believes that these areas would merit an entire study in their own right. Limiting the study to these specific governance issues the author believes will allow for a more in-depth analysis, taking into consideration the scope, time and nature of this study.

During the periods in review the figures below show the number of times the corresponding issue was dealt with in the documents of GCBC.

Table 4: Comparative analysis based on issues and political period

Issue	Economy/ Neopatrimonialism	Corruption	Insecurity/ Peace	Ethnicity/ Tribalism	Environment	Reconciliation
NDC I: 1993-2000						
Frequency	8	6	7	3	5	3
Percentage	36.4%	30%	31.8%	33.3%	45.4%	50%
NPP: 2001-2008						
Frequency	9	7	8	4	3	3
Percentage	40.9%	35%	36.4%	44.4%	27.3%	50%
NDC II: 2009-2014						
Frequency	5	7	7	2	3	-
Percentage	22.7%	35%	31.8%	22.3%	27.3%	0%
Total	22	20	22	9	11	6

4.4.2 General remarks

The table above shows that (education and health issues are not included) issues concerning the economy and neopatrimonialism, security and peace, and corruption dominate the interventions of the GCBC. Environmental issues also occupy an important place. The other issues — ethnicity, reconciliation, though important, are not prevalent in

the documents. One can infer therefore, that economic and neo-patrimonial issues, security and peace issues, and corruption are the three major governance issues that the GCBC identifies as facing Ghana as a country on the path towards good governance, with the environment commanding some consideration. This corresponds to the conclusion of experts on the major obstacles militating against good governance and development in Africa as identified in chapter two.

Another point that one observes from the table above is that the figures are practically identical on the issues irrespective of the government in power. Whether it is an NDC government or NPP government, the GCBC has been consistent in denouncing and addressing the issues as it saw them. This lends credibility to the neutrality of the GCBC and debunks some of the accusations of political bias of the Bishops' conference.

Furthermore, if one takes the table above as a mirror of the Ghanaian situation, it suggests that little or no improvement has been made in the key areas of governance. In fact, things seem to be getting worse when one considers the fact that NDC II still has two more years (2015 and 2016) to go.

The above comparative analysis is very important because it shows that the GCBC adheres to a key element identified by Philpot as essential to the success, or otherwise, of the Church's influence in the public sphere; what Weigel (1992) aptly calls "moral extraterritoriality"; in other words, an island of autonomy and freedom, of moral authority, from where Church leaders could challenge and hold accountable a regime's management of the state.

4.4.3 Content Analysis: Style and method

4.4.3.1 Denunciation

A thorough examination of the documents of the GCBC shows that the primary method used by the GCBC in carrying out its prophetic role as the “conscience of the nation” and part of civil society is denunciation. It often starts with words of gratitude and commendation for efforts of government and then quickly goes into denouncing the negative woes of the country. The following statement from the communique of November 2003 rightly sums it up:

After these words of gratitude and commendation, dear fellow Ghanaians, we, your bishops, would like to call your attention to a few negative issues in our country for our consideration. This is because we need to warn ourselves against the dangers of social and moral corruption, as the strength of any chain is in its weakest joint. We cannot be a healthy nation when dangerous trends, unnatural practices, anti-social values, disrespect for law and such like aberrations are allowed to run alongside good and wholesome ones. As we have felt compelled to point out in many previous communiqués, this nation has for many years suffered one scourge after another (GCBC 2006: 92).

It goes on then to denounce the issues: unstable economy, unnecessary conflicts, intra-ethnic and inter-ethnic hostilities, bribery and corruption etc. This pattern of approach is seen in communiqué after communiqué as the above quotation already suggests. While denunciation is an essential instrument towards changing behaviour and governance habits, isn't there a need to go beyond it to suggesting alternatives and practical ways of dealing with the problems denounced. This shall be examined below.

4.4.3.2 Acknowledgements of efforts made

A key element of the GCBC approach to governance is acknowledging positive steps taken by government, civil society or other groups towards improving good

governance. Thus, all the communiqués have words of commendations about some positive steps or improvements that have been made. Below are examples, one example each, from the three political periods since 1992:

NDC I : We would like to repeat some of the positive signs of progress and hope for which we bless the Lord and hail our Government...On the whole our democratisation process shows positive signs of success. We are enjoying a good measure of security. We are also enjoying a reasonable amount of freedom of movement, freedom of the Press and freedom of expression. In the pursuit of the true spirit of democracy, there is an appreciable measure of the rule of law (Communiqué, 1997; GCBC, 2006: 38).

NPP: We are heartened by the reconciliation exercise that is currently going on in the country. We see it as a healing outlet for draining ourselves and our nation of the bitterness and pain of suffering, the consequence of pride, selfishness and greed. We are quite delighted about the spirit of openness and frankness, of forgiveness and of reconciliation that have characterised the public hearings of the National Reconciliation Commission (Communiqué, 2003; GCBC, 2006: 95).

NDC II: We wish to commend the Executive, Legislature and all Ghanaians for the various roles they played in the passage of the Presidential Transition Act. This Act, we hope will, to a large extent, address unacceptable political practices, and enhance transparency and accountability in the management of public asset...We also commend the government for the Constitutional Review Process aimed at introducing reforms to the 1992 Constitution after twenty years of democratic practice. We note that the government has issued a white paper on the Commission's Report and has inaugurated the Constitutional Review Implementation Committee. It is our expectation that the process will continue to be open, participatory and inclusive to deepen our democracy and governance for the well-being of citizens (Communiqué, 2012:2).

4.4.3.3 From Generalities to Specifics

From analysing the documents of the GCBC, one sees a progressive pattern in how issues have been dealt with over the years. One sees a gradually move from the general

to specifics; that is, from commenting on the issues in general terms to now naming and addressing specific cases that have occurred in society. For instance, when one takes the issue of bribery and corruption, in the 1990s the tendency was condemnation of the phenomenon in general terms:

Poverty may not be the only or even the main reason why present-day Ghana is so openly corrupt, but it is certainly a potent contributory factor. Everything possible must be done to eradicate bribery and corruption from the society and to prevent its institutionalisation (Communiqué 1997);

Bribery and corruption at all levels of our national life is now taken for granted. It has become a dangerous social cancer that is eating its lethal way into the fabric of the Civil Service, the Ghana Education Service, the Police Service, Parliament, the Judiciary, the various arms of Government, Business, the Churches, the Armed Forces, even, alas, the sacred Ministry, to give just a few examples (Communiqué 1998).

However, in recent communiqués, the GCBC sites specific cases of suspected corrupt practices having taken place and demands answers or investigations. For instance, in 2013, after denouncing the malfeasance in some of our public institutions which were reported in the media and the culture of impunity, the GCBC calls specifically “on the Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice (CHRAJ), the Economic and Organised Crime Office (EOCO)... anti-corruption bodies mandated to protect the common good and purse and to fight graft in our public sector, to ensure public office-holders are held accountable for their actions”. In 2014, it goes a step further to name specific cases of suspected practice of corruption, urges government to show political will in this fight and calls for punitive action against those found guilty:

Present-day Ghana is openly and pervasively corrupt. People at all levels of society, including some Christians, are engaged in naked corruption with

impunity. We commend the Government for the recent prosecution of some high level personalities in government and for setting up various Commissions of enquiry into alleged corrupt practices at high levels. ... We think however, that our Government could do more... Reports of corruption from the media and on-going national commissions of enquiry such as the Judgement Debts, GYEEDA, and SADA, National Service Scheme and the 2014 FIFA World Cup as well as allegations of corruption in CHRAJ are worrying... We expect Government to act without fear or favour in dealing with those who will be found culpable in the reports of the on-going investigations. (Communiqué, 2014).

The move from the general to specific is found in the other areas as well and touches on specific programmes, particular cases, and places. Such an approach gives more bite to the pronouncements of the GCBC as it focuses attention on current cases and burning issues of the day.

4.4.3.4 Partnerships

The GCBC attaches real importance to the need for partnership and networking in tackling issues of governance and national development. In carrying out its public and prophetic roles, the GCBC works in collaboration with others. Among the documents examined a few were joint communiqués issued together with the Christian Council of Ghana (CCG). For instance, the Joint Pastoral letter on General Elections, (September 1992); Joint communiqué on Ghana's economy, issued after a Seminar on "Ghana Economy which way forward" organised by the CCG and the NCS (November 1995). There is also the joint communiqué of the CCG and the GCBC at the end of their annual meeting of April 1993. In addition to this, the GCBC invited the following as participants to a seminar on Conflict Resolution organised for the GCBC by the Catholic Relief Service in 1997: the CCG and the Muslim community (GCBC 2006:37). All these outreach events point to the fact that the GCBC believes in working together and

building bridges with other organizations and groups in the effort of promoting good governance and tackling governance issues in the country.

Furthermore, the GCBC declares time and time again in its communiqués its availability and willingness to partner government in tackling some of the issues affecting the country, as the table below suggests:

Table 5: Appeal for Partnership with Government

Period	NDC I (1993-2000)	NPP (2001-2008)	NDC II (2009-2014)
Appeal for Partnership	4	5	3

On occasions, the GCBC acknowledges the government’s invitation to them to participate in deliberations concerning policy on issues of importance. For instance, on the issue of educational reforms under NDC I it acknowledged: “We therefore note with satisfaction that the government has set up a commission to take a hard look at the reforms. And we also appreciate the invitation to participate in the exercise” (Communiqué 1994; GCBC, 1999: 244).

However, during the same period, the GCBC bemoaned the fact of government reluctance and hesitation in this partnership because some state actors construe the GCBC interventions as opposition to Government:

[Although we] advocate and cherished partnership with the government in the development and welfare of our people ...and wish the government would feel free to consult us in areas in which we can be of some assistance...and pray the Government to listen to us not as voices raised against them but as friends and co-partners in progress... It is distressing that ours is sometimes pictured as a camp pitched against the government. Such impressions which, unfortunately, have existed during the time of successive governments up to now, are very frustrating and demoralising in the Church’s endeavour to be relevant to her society. (GCBC 1999: 260).

The bishops, therefore, reiterated the principle behind their motivation and sometimes opposition to government: “we would like to stress that it is out of loving concern that we must, from time to time, disagree with policies that we know are not in the interest of our people” (GCBC 1999: 260). Later, they would openly declare their disappointment with government refusal of their contributions: “we find it hard to appreciate the government’s reluctance, not to say refusal, to allow us the Church to continue to make some more contribution towards the progress of our nation” (GCBC, 1999: 280). They enumerate several examples of government apparent refusal of their contributions, among which is their request for frequency allocation, which they could use, “incessantly to give education on, among other things, integral human development, morals and civic responsibilities to our people”.

Under NPP the GCBC re-echoed their commitment to partner government in the search for a better life for the citizens: “We on our part will continue our practice of supporting good government initiatives and pointing out where we think there is need for examination of policies” (GCBC 2006: 86) — a commitment it reaffirmed again and again:

We, your bishops, cannot be insensitive to the plight of the Ghanaian poor. Therefore, in partnership with the government, the Church will assist in the provision of such social amenities and community-based projects as health services, educational facilities, agriculture, small-scale industries in the rural areas, potable water, credit unions, insurance schemes, etc. She will also continue to insist on the exercise of good governance with the view to consolidating our economic growth and improving the living conditions of our people (GCBC, 2006: 86).

However, the GCBC would once again lament on the uncooperative nature of government:

We are disillusioned by the lip-service that is paid to the contribution of the Catholic Church to national development. On the one hand, on formal and official occasions, we are told time and time again that the Catholic Church's contribution to education, healthcare, social welfare, agriculture, provision of potable water, etc., is unparalleled. On the other hand, we are constantly side-lined in matters of policy making and implementation (GCBC, 2006: 79).

Under NDC II, the GCBC continues its quest to partner government in the issues of national importance. This time around, however, the GCBC is taking the initiative by inviting relevant government agencies and relevant bodies to fora organised by it. For instance, in the education sector, the GCBC expressed satisfaction with government response to the educational fora it organised in all ten regions of the country, to which officers of the Ministry of education, the Ghana Education Service, some members of Parliamentary Select Committee on Education were invited and indeed participated in. In the words of the GCBC "we are encouraged by the candid discussions we had with the Minister of Education on this issue and the Minister's affirmation of the need for such agreement to guide Church-State Partnership in Education" (Communiqué 2012: 3).

Probably, this approach could be developed and applied to other sectors of governance to enhance Church-State cooperation in the collective efforts to enhance good governance in the country. In the view of the author, such an approach, in which the Church takes the initiative, through concrete programmes and platforms, may be a more positive line of engagement with government as against the traditional lamentation and appeal to have government attention which have characterised previous Church-State relations. Nonetheless, in so doing, the Church must always seek to protect and safeguard its autonomy and independence vis-à-vis government in order to guard its dignity and prophetic role. As have been pointed out by Maritime (1954), Philpot (2004)

and Gifford (1998), such autonomy and differentiation are indispensable criteria if the Church seeks to be effective in its public role.

The efforts and insistence of the GCBC to make its voice heard on social policies as individuals or collectivities, is an argument similar to that of Carter (1993) about the role of religion in the United States, and the observation of Aboagye-Mensah (1994) when he studied the salient role the Church played in the democratisation process in Africa with special focus on Ghana. One observes the struggle of church leaders to manoeuvre their way into the political space and public discourse in a pluralistic society characterised by multi-associational space which multi-party democracy creates.

4.4.3.5 GCBC Proffered Remedies

In its involvement with governance issues, the GCBC does not only denounce what it has termed “negative development” (GCBC, 2006:39), but it also seeks to provide alternative solutions to government in tackling these negative developments hindering good governance and sustainable development. However, majority of these solutions is about appeal to individual and collective conscience, as well as for prayers. For instance, on the issue of corruption, after giving an in-depth analysis of the causes and consequences of bribery and corruption in their Advent pastoral letter of December 1997, the GCBC, as a remedy to the twin canker, links it to religious morality and sin, and then appeals to conscience:

Who is guilty? All of us. The one who gives the bribe commits a sin and a criminal offence as well as the one who takes the bribe, so also the one who looks on unconcerned or only condones it. That is why all of us Ghanaians must make a serious examination of conscience concerning bribery and corruption, nepotism, favouritism, ‘old boyism’, tribalism etc, and repent of our sins of commission and omission. (GCBC, 2006: 49)... Our dream for a new Ghana, devoid of bribery and

corruption, is only possible if we work hard for it, starting from each one of us; if we pray to God for it; if we live according to the commandments of God, and most especially, if whatever we do will be guided by the words of Christ "...you shall love your neighbour as yourself (Mk 12:31)" (GCBC 2006, 50).

Such appeals and calls to individual and collective efforts ran through the recommendations of the GCBC on the different issues they deal with. Even, when commenting on specific issues like the killing of the Yaa Naa and the security situation of Dagbon, "Appeal-Prayer" was the approach used:

This peace is what we wish for our brothers and sisters who are entangled in intra-ethnic hostility in Dagbon...We pray and trust that the seemingly intractable conflict in Dagbon arising from the unfortunate killing of Yaa Naa Yakubu Andani will soon come to an end...We are fully aware of the strenuous efforts being made by some concerned traditional rulers, religious leaders, NGOs and individuals at great cost to themselves to make this happen. Let all factions please heed their counsel and directions... We strongly condemn any politicisation of this event. We appeal very strongly to the Bureau of National Investigation (BNI) and the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) to intensify their operations to identify the perpetrators of the gruesome act and bring them to justice (GCBC, 2006:101).

However, the GCBC from time to time does provide concrete strategies and alternative remedies to combat the "negative developments". For instance, in its 1998 communiqué, the GCBC declared a crusade against bribery and corruption. Concrete actions in its campaign against this twin canker included:

Involvement of all the faithful: clergy, religious and laity;
Intensive prayers: celebration of Masses, use of Novenas, prayer meetings, pilgrimages, adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, symposia etc. all for that purpose, including a special prayer against bribery and corruption to be composed by the Bishops and said after every Mass.

Formation of small units and cells of people committed to honesty and probity, to wage a relentless war on dishonesty and impropriety; these should never give bribe, under any circumstance whatsoever, no matter what their needs may be; to vow never to demand or accept bribes, even if this will deprive them of a job to which they are entitled to; to commit themselves to combating any acts of bribery and corruption that they may notice or that comes to their attention.

The Catholic Justice and Peace Commission on parish and diocesan levels were charged with this responsibility.

The GCBC pledged their full support to all who shall be victimised in this exercise. (GCBC 2006:56).

This concrete effort by the GCBC was the farthest it had gone to enunciating strategies within the Church itself for combatting corruption. The Appeal-Prayer approach was still present, and one may question the effectiveness of such action. However, one must acknowledge that the Bishops are first and foremost religious leaders and spiritual guides; so invariably, calls for prayers and appeal to individual and collective conscience as a means to behavioural changes are part of their task. Psychologically also, the fact of one repeating daily a prayer against bribery and corruption, with incessant preaching on the subject, could influence one's attitude towards the twin canker; it can serve as a means of conscientisation and awareness creation of the evil effects of the phenomenon.

Nonetheless, one may question the effectiveness of the "appeal-prayer" approach and if there isn't the need for the GCBC to go beyond denunciation, condemnation, prayers and appeals. In this light, the decision of the GCBC to get the involvement of grassroots Justice and Peace Commissions, the formation of small units and cells of anti-corruption campaigners and to give its full backing to any crusader who is victimised in this process were bold steps. It remains to be seen if there was a follow-up to this initiative. None of the documents examined made mentioned of an evaluation of this initiative.

On several occasions, the GCBC mentions in its documents the presence and aid of experts at its deliberations. For instance, in its July 2002 communiqué, in relation to the Ghana economy, it stated “having listened to experts on the state of the Ghanaian economy...” or in that of November 2003 where it talks of “voice of lay experts”. It is important to underline this element because it shows that the GCBC takes seriously its pronouncement and the alternative propositions it makes.

Furthermore, the fact that the GCBC in its deliberations has assistance from experts on the different subject matter it addresses should embolden it to suggest well articulate alternative solutions or strategies that it feels are not been given due consideration in government circles. For instance, during the Transition period, the GCBC was very bold, proactive and in-depth in its proposals to government on the democratic principles and institutions needed to guarantee a stable democracy. One may suggest that such in-depth analysis and strong alternative strategies, based on the opinion of independent experts, may be tabled with same insistence to government in other areas such as corruption, security, ethnicity, environment, etc.

4.4.3.6 Voice of the local people

The documents examined show that it is the custom of the GCBC to interact with the local people of the area where their assembly is held. The fact that the annual meeting of the bishops is rotational from diocese to diocese affords the bishops the opportunity to familiarised themselves with issues affecting the local population in their interaction with them. Also, they take the opportunity of being around important national projects like the Cocoa Research Institute (Communiqué 1997), the Keta Sea Defence (Communiqué 2002), Ashanti Goldfields (2003), etc. to visit and get first-hand knowledge of happenings there.

In their interaction the bishops appraise themselves with the needs of the people and also the economic opportunities of the area that could be developed. One important aspect of this interaction with the people is that the GCBC makes it a point of duty to become the mouth-piece of the area by highlighting the needs and the opportunities in its communiqué. An example is the visit to the Gonja District of the Northern Region during its 2004 annual meeting held in Damongo:

As our custom, we would like to draw attention to the generally very severe conditions in the Region in which we found ourselves, with special reference to the West Gonja District where we stayed for eight days. We would like to mention the poor nature of the roads, especially the Ffulso-Damango[sic]-Sawla road, the lack of potable water and the absence of good educational institutions. We commit ourselves to supporting the local diocese in its efforts to bring development to these areas. We appeal for assistance in these as also in those of agriculture, health and telecommunication (GCBC, 2006: 104).

It went further to talk about “another very important aspect of the locality. The area is endowed with the biggest Game Reserve in West Africa. It also has one of the biggest waterfalls in Ghana” (GCBC 2006: 104-105). It therefore suggested the development of these great assets into tourist attractions as economic potential, appealing to the traditional rulers to “readily make available to the Forestry Commission pieces of land that can be turned into Parks”, while drawing attention to the need to urgently review the Wild Life Conservation Commission.

Such appeals on behalf of the local people and suggestions to government and relevant agencies are regular features of the GCBC communiqués. It is in the same line with the assertion of Pobee (1991:59) that “the historic churches have continued to be ‘the voice of the voiceless’, the champion of freedom, integrity, and fair play in national politics”. However, nothing is found in subsequent communiqués to suggest that the

proposals of the bishops were given attention or a follow-up to their commitment as a body was made.

4.5 Synopsis of Chapter Four

The chapter examined and analysed the documents of the GCBC in an attempt to understand the involvement of the GCBC in governance issues in Ghana. The documents were varied in form, style and content. It results that the issues of Peace and Security, corruption, economic and neo-patrimonial practices were issues that were high on the agenda of the GCBC. This corresponds to the opinion of experts, as seen in chapter two, as the main governance obstacles in Africa.

While the GCBC uses “denunciation” as a way of tackling negative issues of governance, and appeal to individual and collective conscience, the analysis shows that all through the different governments, the issues were similar and GCBC “denunciation” and appeals occurred at almost the same frequency. Also, in the approach of the GCBC, there seems to be a gradual pattern of preference for single-issue documents to multi-themed ones. Furthermore, there is a noticeable tendency on the part of the GCBC to move from “Generalities” to “Specifics”, and particular identifiable cases. In all, what emerges from the study of the GCBC documents is that the GCBC sees itself as an important player and stakeholder in the governance and development of the country. This it does with passion and commitment for the common good and benefit of ordinary people whose voice they are content to be.

CHAPTER FIVE

ANALYSIS OF FIELD DATA

5.1 Introduction

This chapter focuses on the analysis of data collected from the field. It looks at the sampling method and research technique used in data collection. It then examines the general characteristics of respondents, the views of the respondents about the Catholic Church in general and concludes with examining the opinion of respondents on the GCBC and its contribution to governance in the country.

5.2 Sampling and Research technique

The sampling technique used was the quota method, in which 60 respondents were divided into two equal portions of 30 each between Catholics and Non-Catholics. In each quota, respondents were randomly selected. The aim of choosing this method was to compare responses and opinions of Catholics as against those of Non-Catholics. This was deemed necessary because they could have implications for the survey responses. The purpose of the survey was to see how the Catholic public and the Non-Catholic population react to initiatives and activities of the GCBC, and to compare with how it corresponds to the content analysis of GCBC documents. The survey was carried out in parts of Accra for convenience purpose.

The basic research technique implored for collecting field data was questionnaires. The questionnaire had three main parts: the General biographical data which included Age, Gender, Occupation, Educational background, Marital status and Religious belief; then there was the part concerning general opinion about the Catholic Church and its role in national development; and the third part concerned the specific activity of the GCBC on governance. 98% of the questionnaire was self-ministered. The

remaining 2% was done face to face with response at their request and convenience. The questionnaire implored both open and close questions so as to allow respondents space to give additional information if they wish to.

5.3 General Characteristics of Respondents

The tables below show the age and sex distribution, marital status, and educational background of respondents.

5.3.1 Age distribution of respondents

Table 6: Age Distribution of Respondents

	Frequency	Percent
18- 25	20	33.3
26- 35	19	31.7
36- 45	10	16.7
46- 55	10	16.7
66- 75	1	1.7
Total	60	100.0

The majority of respondents (65%) are young persons between the ages of 18 and 35. A good percentage (33.4) is middle-aged between the ages of 36-55. A respondent is above 60 years.

5.3.2 Gender distribution of respondents

Table 7: Distribution of Respondents By Gender

	Frequency	Percent
MALE	33	55.9
FEMALE	26	44.1
Total	59	100.0
Missing NR	1	
Total	60	

The gender distribution of respondents as shown in the Table 7 above portrays 55.9% male and 44.1% female.

5.3.3 Educational background of respondents

Table 8: Educational Background of Respondents

	Frequency	Valid Percent
PRIMARY/MIDDLE	1	1.7
SECONDARY/ SSS	7	11.9
DIPLOMA	12	20.3
1 st DEGREE	36	61.0
POST GRADUATE	3	5.1
Total	59	100.0

Analysis of the respondents' educational background, as shown in Table 8 above, portrays that all the respondents are literate and have had an education. Most of the respondents have some form of tertiary education, with 66.1% having at least graduate degree. Only one respondent did not have secondary education, and 11.9 % have only secondary education. Thus, the sample population is very much literate and understood the issues being discussed.

5.3.4 Occupational distribution of respondents

DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS BY OCCUPATION

Distribution of respondents by occupation shows that respondents come from a wide spectrum of profession and occupational background with those of the teaching profession (14) and students (7) being in the majority. It is important to note that a large proportion of respondents (41%) did not respond to this question.

5.3.5. Religious affiliation of respondents

Table 9 shows that majority of Non-Catholic respondents were Christians of other denominations.

Table 9: Distribution of Respondents By Religious Belief

	Frequency	Percent
CATHOLIC	30	50.0
CHRISTIAN OTHER THAN CATHOLIC	26	43.3
MOSLEM	3	5.0
OTHERS	1	1.7
Total	60	100.0

5.3.6 Political Affiliation of respondents

Majority of respondents (77.2%), when asked if they were a member of a political party or had political leanings responded in the negative. Only 13% affirmed that they belonged to or were affiliated to a political party. It could therefore be deduced that responses were not so much affected by political affiliations of respondents.

Table 10: Distribution of Respondents By Political Affiliation

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	YES	13	22.8
	NO	44	77.2
Total		57	100.0

5.4 General opinion of respondents on the Catholic Church

5.4.1 The image of the Catholic Church as a religious group

The vast majority (98.3%) of respondents has a favourable image of the Catholic Church. This positive opinion of the Catholic Church cuts across religious affiliations and belief. Only one respondent gave a negative answer to the question. Some of the recurring reason given for such position image of the Catholic Church include its contribution to national development: “aside propagating the gospel of Jesus Christ, it has contributed enormously to Ghana's development”, especially in the area of health and education; its sense of discipline: “because it's one of the religious bodies with high level of morals and decent traditions”; its influence in society due to its large membership, global spread, and well-structured organisation: “because most of their bishop conference decisions are adopted by Ghana”; “because of its rich culture and world influences”; it is “the biggest and most accepted religious group by citizens in the country”; “the church has very great influential persons and institutions”, “it is an important and well organized church”.

Table 11: Catholic Church one of most important and well-respected Religious bodies

	Frequency	Percentage
YES	58	98.3
NO	1	1.7
Total	59	100.0

5.4.2 Contribution of the Catholic Church to national development

In the area of the Catholic Church's contribution to national development, again the ratings were very positive across board. Only 2 respondents gave a negative answer to the question if the service rendered by the Church is very useful and profitable to the generality of Ghanaians. And the reason given is that "all they do is connected to their faith and not to Ghana". However, majority of the respondents 56 out of 60 responded in the affirmative to the question. Reasons given for their response are linked to the church's provision of institutions such as school, hospitals and training institutions which promote, discipline, high moral standards and national development, as well as "the services of the church which are always geared toward peace, unity, reconciliation and good standard of living" and thus benefit the whole society. A respondent gave as an example that "during the Religious and Moral Education elimination period, the church was firm".

Table 12: Services of Catholic Church useful to the development of the country

	Frequency	Percentage
Valid YES	56	96.6
NO	2	3.4
Total	58	100.0

When it comes to rating the Catholic Church in terms of its contribution to national development, the ratings were very favourably and the cuts across religious affiliation. Overall 45 (93.7%) rated the Church between Good and Excellent, with the remaining 5 (8.3%) rating the Church “Fair” as shown in the Table below.

Table 13: Contribution of Catholic Church to National development

	Frequency	Percent
FAIR	5	8.3
GOOD	25	41.7
VERY GOOD	18	30.0
EXCELLENT	12	20.0
Total	60	100.0

The cross-tabulation below using religious affiliation, shows very similar ratings between Catholics and Non-Catholics, with slight differences: among Catholic only one respondent rated “Fair”, while 4 gave the same rating among Non-Catholics. Also 15 among Catholic respondents rated “Good”, with 10 respondents among Non-Catholics giving the same rating. However, while 8 Catholic respondents rated “Very Good” 10 Non-Catholic respondents gave the same rating. Both groups tied at 6 respondents in rating “Excellent”.

Table 14: Contribution to National development: Religious belief Cross-tabulation

		RELIGIOUS BELIEF		Total
		CATHOLIC	NON-CATHOLIC	
HOW would you rate the Catholic Church in terms of its contribution to NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT	FAIR	1	4	5
	GOOD	15	10	25
	VERY GOOD	8	10	18
	EXCELLENT	6	6	12
	Total	30	30	60

5.4.3 Contribution of the Catholic Church to democracy and democratisation in the country

In the area of the Catholic Church and its contribution to democracy and democratization, respondents were very positive in their ratings. For instance, in the area of upholding Freedom and Justice, 81.4% rated the Church between Good and Excellent, 86.5% in its contribution to Human Rights, and 76.3% in Democracy in general, as shown in the Tables below.

Table 15: Catholic Church contribution to upholding Freedom and Justice

	Frequency	Percentage
POOR	1	1.7
FAIR	9	15.3
GOOD	28	47.5
VERY GOOD	17	28.8
EXCELLENT	3	5.1
Total	59	100.0

Table 16: Catholic Church contribution to Human Rights Activities

	Frequency	Percentage
POOR	1	1.7
FAIR	7	11.9
GOOD	25	42.4
VERY GOOD	21	35.6
EXCELLENT	5	8.5
Total	59	100.0

Table 17: Catholic Church contribution to Democracy

	Frequency	Percentage
POOR	2	3.4
FAIR	12	20.3
GOOD	28	47.5
VERY GOOD	13	22.0
EXCELLENT	4	6.8
Total	59	100.0

The corresponding Cross-Tabulations show very slight differences between Catholic Respondents and Non-Catholic Respondents. In the area of upholding Freedom and Justice, 5 Catholic Respondents rated the Church “Fair” as against 4 Non-Catholic Respondents with 1 Non-Catholic Respondent rating the Church poor. Also, 25 Catholic Respondents rated the Church between Good (12), Very Good (10) and Excellent (3), 23 Non-Catholic Respondents rated the Church in the same category (Good 16; Very Good 7) with no Excellent rating. In the same vein, 27 Catholic Respondents rated the Church between Good (14), Very Good (10) and Excellent (3) when it comes to its contribution

to Human Rights. Non-Catholic Respondents (24) gave similar ratings in this category (Good 11, Very Good 11, and Excellent 2). In the area of the Church’s contribution to democracy while 2 Non-Catholic Respondents rated the Church “Poor”, no Catholic Respondent rated the Church “Poor”. However, 7 Catholic Respondents rated the Church “Fair”, as against 5 Non-Catholic Respondents who rated the Church “Fair”. Furthermore, 23 Catholic Respondents rated the Church between Good and Excellent (Good 15, Very Good 5 and Excellent 3) while 22 Non-Catholic Respondents rated the Church in a similar range (Good 13, Very Good 8 and Excellent 1).

Table 18: Upholding Freedom and Justice: Religious belief Cross-Tabulation

		RELIGIOUS BELIEF		Total
		CATHOLIC	NON-CATHOLIC	
HOW would you rate the Catholic Church in terms of its contribution to UPHOLDING FREEDOM & JUSTICE	POOR	0	1	1
	FAIR	5	4	9
	GOOD	12	16	28
	VERY GOOD	10	7	17
	EXCELLENT	3	0	3
	NR	0	1	1
Total		30	29	59

Table 19: Human Rights Activities: Religious belief Cross-tabulation

		RELIGIOUS BELIEF		Total
		CATHOLIC	NON-CATHOLIC	
HOW would you rate the Catholic Church in terms of its contribution to HUMAN RIGHTS ACTIVITIES	POOR	0	1	1
	FAIR	3	4	7
	GOOD	14	11	25
	VERY GOOD	10	11	21
	EXCELLENT	3	2	5
Total		30	29	59

Table 20: Contribution to Democracy: Religious belief Cross-Tabulation

		RELIGIOUS BELIEF		Total
		CATHOLIC	NON-CATHOLIC	
HOW would you rate the Catholic Church in terms of its contribution to DEMOCRACY	POOR	0	2	2
	FAIR	7	5	12
	GOOD	15	13	28
	VERY GOOD	5	8	13
	EXCELLENT	3	1	4
Total		30	29	59

5.4.4 The Catholic Church and the interest of the general public

Majority of respondents (42) think that the Catholic Church operates in the general interest of the majority of the people of this country. Of these 24 are Catholics and 18 are Non-Catholics. It is revealing to know that out of the 16, who responded “No” to this question, 6 are Catholics and 10 are Non-Catholics. And the recurring reason for those who think the Catholic Church does not operate in the general interest of the majority of the people in the country is that its operation is guided by its faith and doctrines and not necessarily by the interest of the country. This assertion corresponds to those who criticize and question the interest of civil society groups with international linkages and donors (Igoe & Kelsall, 2005; Hagberg, 2004).

Table 21: Religious belief Cross-Tabulation with general interest of the people

	RELIGIOUS BELIEF		Total	
	CATHOLIC	NON-CATHOLIC		
DO you think the Catholic Church operates in the general interest of the majority of the people in this country?	YES	24	18	42
	NO	6	10	16
Total		30	28	58

5.5 Opinion of Respondents on the activities of the GCBC on governance issues

Several questions were asked to seek respondents' opinion about the involvement of GCBC in governance issues in the country.

5.5.1 Neutrality of the GCBC on governance issues.

The survey sought to test the political neutrality of the GCBC in its activities. The responses show that while 23 of all the respondents believed the GCBC has been politically neutral over the years, 37 of them either disagreed or could not vouch for their political neutrality. In the Cross-Tabulation below (Table 22), only 15 or 50% of Catholics responded affirmatively to the question of the GCBC's political neutrality, and 8 or 26.6% of Non-Catholics affirming same. Hence 50% of Catholics could not vouch for political neutrality of their leadership, and majority (63.3%) of Non-Catholic Respondents could not do same. This poses serious credibility issues for the GCBC.

Table 22: Political Neutrality of GCBC and Religious belief Cross-tabulation

		IN your opinion is the GCBC politically neutral in their activities over the years?			Total
		YES	NO	NOT SURE	
RELIGIOUS BELIEF	CATHOLIC	15	3	12	30
	CHRISTIAN OTHER THAN CATHOLIC	8	4	15	23
Total		23	7	27	57

5.5.2 The GCBC on certain governance issues

Generally, majority of respondents rated the GCBC favourably in its activities on governance issues, with its interventions in the area of Peace and Security getting the highest rates of 85.7% between Good, Very Good and Excellent, followed by promotion of ethnic harmony, 80.4%, then its fight to protect the environment, 71.5 %, and lastly its crusade against bribery and corruption, 62.5%. The high rating for Peace and Security issues corresponds to the fact this area recorded the highest frequency in GCBC's own interventions and documents. However, apart from the favourable ratings in the area of Peace and Security and the domain of promoting ethnic harmony, the GCBC's rating in the fight against bribery and corruption and the protection of the environment falls below the general rating given to the Catholic Church in its contribution to democracy and democratisation.

Table 23: GCBC in the fight against bribery and corruption

	Frequency	Percentage
POOR	6	10.7
FAIR	15	26.8
GOOD	17	30.4
VERY GOOD	14	25.0
EXCELLENT	4	7.1
Total	56	100.0

Table 24: GCBC in the promotion of Peace and Security in the country

	Frequency	Percentage
POOR	2	3.6
FAIR	6	10.7
GOOD	18	32.1
VERY GOOD	20	35.7
EXCELLENT	10	17.9
Total	56	100.0

Table 25: GCBC in the protection of the environment?

	Frequency	Percentage
POOR	4	7.1
FAIR	12	21.4
GOOD	28	50.0
VERY GOOD	9	16.1
EXCELLENT	3	5.4
Total	56	100.0

Table 26: GCBC in the promoting ethnic harmony and against tribalism

	Frequency	Percentage
POOR	2	3.6
FAIR	9	16.1
GOOD	17	30.4
VERY GOOD	19	33.9
EXCELLENT	9	16.1
Total	56	100.0

In the Cross-Tabulations below (Tables 27-30), 26 Catholic Respondents as against 22 Non-Catholic Respondents gave favourable ratings to the GCBC in the area of Peace and Security; 21 Catholics and 19 Non-Catholics in the area of the protection of the environment, 23 Catholics and 22 Non-Catholics on the issue of promoting ethnic harmony and fighting tribalism, while 17 Catholics as against 18 Non-Catholics rated the GCBC favourably in its crusade against bribery and corruption. It is interesting to note that a higher number of Catholic Respondents rated the GCBC low in its fight against bribery and corruption (Poor 4, Fair 8) when compared to Non-Catholic Respondents (Poor 2, Fair 7). This shows that generally the public, and especially Catholics, expect the GCBC to be doing more in the fight against bribery and corruption.

Table 27: Promotion of peace and security and Religious belief cross-tabulation

		RELIGIOUS BELIEF		Total
		CATHOLIC	NON-CATHOLIC	
HOW would you rate the Ghana Catholic Bishops' Conference in the promotion of peace and security in the country	POOR	0	2	2
	FAIR	3	3	6
	GOOD	7	11	18
	VERY GOOD	12	8	20
	EXCELLENT	7	3	10
Total		29	27	56

Table 28: Protection of the environment and Religious belief Cross-tabulation

		RELIGIOUS BELIEF		Total
		CATHOLIC	NON-CATHOLIC	
HOW would you rate the Ghana Catholic Bishops' Conference in the protection of the environment	POOR	0	4	4
	FAIR	8	4	12
	GOOD	13	15	28
	VERY GOOD	6	3	9
	EXCELLENT	2	1	3
Total		29	27	56

Table 29: Promotion of ethnic harmony and Religious belief Cross-tabulation

		RELIGIOUS BELIEF		Total
		CATHOLIC	NON-CATHOLIC	
HOW would you rate the Ghana Catholic Bishops' Conference in the promoting ethnic harmony and fighting against tribalism in the country	POOR	1	1	2
	FAIR	5	4	9
	GOOD	6	11	17
	VERY GOOD	12	7	19
	EXCELLENT	5	4	9
Total		29	27	56

Table 30: Fight against bribery and corruption and Religious belief Cross-Tabulation

	RELIGIOUS BELIEF		Total	
	CATHOLIC	NON-CATHOLIC		
HOW would you rate the GCBC in the fight against bribery and corruption	POOR	4	2	6
	FAIR	8	7	15
	GOOD	7	10	17
	VERY GOOD	8	6	14
	EXCELLENT	2	2	4
Total		29	27	56

5.5.3 The relevance of the GCBC to governance and general state of the country

On the relevance of the GCBC to the socio-political situation of the country, from the Tables below, 24 or 48% of respondents believe that without the active participation of the GCBC, the situation will be worse, while 14 or 28 % do not believe so, with 12 or 24% not able to tell whether the GCBC active participation makes a difference. In the same vein, 23 (44%) believe the country can manage well without the GCBC as against 21 (40.4%) saying the nation cannot manage well without the GCBC, with some 8 (15.4%) not sure.

Table 31: Present state of the country would be worse without the GCBC

	RELIGIOUS BELIEF		Total	
	CATHOLIC	NON-CATHOLIC		
DO you think the situation on the present state of the country would have been worse without the active participation of the GCBC?	YES	11	13	24
	NO	10	4	14
	CAN'T REALLY TELL	4	8	12
Total		25	25	50

When comparing Catholic Respondents and Non-Catholic Respondents, an interesting scenario arises. 13 Non-Catholic Respondents as against 11 Catholic Respondents believe that the country will be in worse situation without the active participation of the GCBC; and only 4 Non-Catholic Respondents as against 10 Catholic Respondents affirming the contrary.

5.5.4 Personal awareness and knowledge of GCBC statements and action

According to the data, there appear to be general lack of awareness on the activities of the GCBC. To a majority of the respondents including Catholics, they are not aware of or ever read any of the statements, pronouncements, or communiqués of the GCBC concerning the state of the nation. The corresponding Cross-Tabulation shows less than half (14) of the Catholic Respondents and only a fifth of the Non-Catholic Respondents are aware or read communiqués, pronouncements of the GCBC on national issues. The recurrent reason given by respondents for this general lack of awareness is accessibility, and the fact that they are not diffused sufficiently enough in the mass media. The few who had knowledge of these pronouncements and read them, generally, had good impression of the statements describing them as “very detailed and clear in its policies”, “very impressive”, “they took a nationalist look at the situation”, “I really liked them; they were on point”, and “it is good... it keeps the government on their toes”.

Table 32: Cross-Tabulation: Religious Belief on awareness of activities of GCBC

		RELIGIOUS BELIEF			
		CATHOLIC	NON CATHOLIC	Total	%
ARE you aware of or read any of the statements, pronouncements, or communiqués of the GCBC concerning the state of the nation?	YES	14	6	20	36.4
	NO	14	21	35	63.6
Total		28	27	55	100

As could be deduced from the data, a majority of the respondents were not aware of or ever read any of the statements, pronouncements, or communiqués of the GCBC concerning the state of the nation. It is worth noting that this apparent lack of knowledge or interest in the activities of the GCBC has nothing to do with the educational level of the respondents. The cross-tabulation below establishes this fact.

Table 33: Awareness of GCBC statements and Educational Background Cross-tabulation

		ARE you aware of or read any of the statements, pronouncements, or communiqués of the GCBC concerning the state of the nation?		Total
		YES	NO	
EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND	PRIMARY/JSS	1	0	1
	O'LEVEL/ SSS	1	5	6
	DIPLOMA	3	9	12
	DEGREE	13	19	32
	POSTGRADUATE	2	1	3
Total		20	34	54

5.5.5 Working in Partnership

The survey sought to solicit the views of the public on the calls for the GCBC to collaborate closely with other religious and professional bodies in the country. In responding to a question on this subject, 84% of the survey participants answered in the affirmative. While 10% of them disagreed with this assertion/ belief, 6% were undecided.

Table 34: View on GCBC collaborating with other religious and professional bodies

	Frequency	Percentage
YES	42	84.0
NO	5	10.0
UNDECIDED	3	6.0
Total	50	100.0

The general opinion of respondents, therefore, was that the GCBC will do well to work with other religious groups and professional associations in their public role and in tackling governance issues. Reasons given were mainly that as “an adage goes ‘unity is strength’” and that in “joining forces, a stronger energy will be generated” and this will be helpful for the country. Others felt a “more unified Christian front is preferred” and so the GCBC should collaborate more with the Christian Council of Ghana (CCG).

A cross-tabulation of these responses and religious denomination showed no real difference between respondents who are Catholics and those who are Non- Catholics.

It is important to mention that according some of the respondents who were pessimistic and sceptical about this stands “this will be legitimate only when religious differences and barriers are being eliminated.” They variously drew attention to the existing doctrinal differences among the religious denominations. Quoting one of the respondents, it is only possible “when all bodies involved are willing to adopt a common

doctrine.” Others were of the opinion that collaborating with others, like the Christian Council, “will just slow down their [GCBC] activities”. These responses reflect somehow the activities of the GCBC, which works more with the CCG than with the other Christian Churches and rarely with the Muslim Council and adepts of African Traditional Religion. While the GCBC collaborates with Professional bodies, the study did not come across any joint communiqué or statement of the GCBC with these professional bodies.

5.5.6 Other suggestions

As regards suggestions, while generally respondents gave words of encouraging to the work of the GCBC, a few interesting ones need to be noted. A few proposed the use of “professional and experts” by the GCBC to enhance their understanding of issues and thus help them give alternative propositions to government. This is something the GCBC is already doing. Other suggestions include giving “alternatives means to sustaining the fallen standards of some national policies such as the NHIS and school feeding programme” and “brainstorm to solicit ideas from others though they might have different opinions”. There is however an interesting advice given by a respondent: “the bishops should act as per their mandate as shepherds of their various diocese and stop acting as chief executive officers and financial managers”.

5.6 Synopsis of Data Analysis

From the data analysis done so far one can conclude that generally people have a good and respectable opinion of the Catholic Church and do acknowledge the contribution of the Church to infrastructural development in the country, especially in the area of education, health and poverty alleviation. Moreover, there is general favourable

rating for the Catholic Church in terms of its contribution to the development of democracy in the country and in specific areas of human rights and freedom and justice. People also appreciate the contribution of the GCBC in different areas of governance especially in the promotion of peace and security in the country, ethnic harmony and to a less extent in the fight against bribery and corruption and in protecting the environment. One important observation from the data analysis is that not much is known about the activities of the GCBC and generally the public, including Catholics, are not very conversant with the pronouncements and communiqués of the GCBC. And this is general due to accessibility issue.

GENERAL CONCLUSION

1. Introduction

Having come to the end of this study, in this section we shall give a summary of what the study has been about and the findings of the study. This will include also the findings of the content analysis of the GCBC documents as well as the data on the opinion of the public on GCBC activities. Recommendations will then be made, followed by a general conclusion.

2. Summary of findings

This study has shown that Africa in general and, Ghana in particular, is confronted with several governance issues which are hindering democratic growth and general development. Among the governance challenges, bribery and corruption, neo-patrimonialism, insecurity, environmental degradation, ethnicity and politics of exclusion are among the major issues. Also, the study has shown that the Catholic Church in Ghana, through its leadership, the GCBC, has played and continues to play a major role in confronting these challenges. Its main instrument of combat is denunciation through issuance of statements and appeal to both collective and individual conscience for change.

Furthermore, the study has shown that over the years the GCBC has varied its approach in its involvement in governance issues. Such variations include using single-theme documents to give in-depth analysis of issues, using experts in different fields to give inputs, visiting various locations and becoming the mouth piece of the local populations. In its activities to confront governance challenges in Ghana, the GCBC has observed the twin differentiations, that is, neutrality vis-à-vis the different political parties, and autonomy in relations to state actors and government. It has been consistent

in its approach, and persistent in its denunciation. Nevertheless, it is difficult to ascertain the effect of these interventions of the GCBC or to measure its impact on the ground.

Analysis of data collected from a random survey of the population in Accra showed that generally people have a favourable opinion of the Catholic Church, and this cuts across religious affiliation, educational background, age and occupation. This positive image of the Church comes from its contribution to national development especially in the areas of education, health and poverty alleviation projects. It comes also from its organisational strength and global spread.

Moreover, majority of respondents, both Catholic and Non-Catholic rate the Catholic Church high in terms of its contribution to national development, democracy, human rights and upholding of freedom and justice. In the same line, respondents rated the GCBC favourably in its activities on governance issues with Peace and Security, promoting ethnic harmony, protecting the environment, fighting bribery and corruption in that order. However, respondents, especially Catholics felt the GCBC could do more in the fight against bribery and corruption.

The study also showed a general lack of awareness among respondents of the activities of the GCBC. This lack of awareness cuts across educational and religious affiliation. This was due to lack of accessibility and low media publicity of its activities and pronouncements. Of critical importance also is the question of the political neutrality of the GCBC. Majority of the respondents, including Catholics, could not vouch for the neutrality of the GCBC, even though, the content analysis of its pronouncements and statements showed consistency and neutrality irrespective of the political party in power.

3. Recommendations

From the study, the following recommendations are made in the spirit of helping the GCBC to improve on its activities on governance issues.

- 1.1 The Catholic Church enjoys the esteem and goodwill of the population. However, the activities of the GCBC are not well known. The GCBC will need to improve on its publicity, visibility, as well as the diffusion of its pronouncements and statements on national issues to the general public.
- 1.2 The use of other channels of the mass media, print, electronic, new technology, apart from the Church's own Standard Newspaper, to publicise its position and pronouncements on governance issues will go a long way to educate the public and also get them involved in tackling some of the issues affecting the country.
- 1.3 The GCBC does take certain decisions and commitments, however, the follow-up to these decisions and commitments are not given space in their communiqué. It will be good for the GCBC to make reference to some of their decisions and commitments and the follow-up being done.
- 1.4 The Church's organisational strength and national and international spread as well as its large membership, are opportunities that the GCBC can mobilise in its efforts to tackle governance bottlenecks in the country. For this, it may need to mobilise its grassroots structures and empower the membership to get involved.
- 1.5 The question of neutrality is very important to the very credibility of the GCBC in tackling governance issues. Even though the documents of the GCBC show that the GCBC is consistent in its position irrespective of the government in power, the GCBC needs some public relations to convince the population that

its positions and pronouncements are from a neutral political space, the “island of freedom and autonomy” or “moral extraterritoriality”

4. Conclusion

The study has shown so far that the GCBC has contributed a lot to the democratisation process in Ghana. During the transition period from the revolutionary days to the Fourth Republic, the GCBC was steadfast, consistent, persistent, bold and clear in its positions. Since the inauguration of the Fourth Republic the GCBC has been outspoken and taken on several governance issues including issues like bribery and corruption, ethnicity and tribalism, neo-patrimonialism, peace and security, environmental issues and economic issues. It has sought counsel from experts and professionals in its analysis of issues and in its statements and proposals. Furthermore, the GCBC has taken up the cause of local populations and become their mouth piece in channelling their needs to government and appropriate government agencies.

Nevertheless, the GCBC according to the survey of public opinion lacks visibility. The public, both Catholics and Non-Catholics, thinks the GCBC can do more taking into consideration calibre of persons who constitute the GCBC, its organisational structure and large national and international spread. In the view of the public, if there is any one body which can influence society and help build a strong democratic country, then it is the GCBC. However, in doing this, it has to work in synergy with other bodies and organisations like the CCG, and professional associations. As one respondent said “unity is strength”. To be able to fulfil its task effectively, the GCBC will need to be more visible and work on diffusing its activities and positions on governance and national issues, as well as mobilise the membership of the Church behind its positions.

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APPENDIX

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR THE GENERAL PUBLIC

Dear Respondent,

This questionnaire is to elicit information on the Ghana Catholic Bishops' Conference and its role in the governance of the country. It is part of a study being conducted on "The Role of the Religious Institutions in Governance in Africa: The case of the Ghana Catholic Bishops' Conference" sponsored by the Institute of African Studies, University of Ghana, Legon. Be assured that any information given here is for academic purposes only and will be treated as confidential.

General Information

1) Age :

a) 18-25 yrs []

b) 26-35 ‘’ []

c) 36-45 ‘’ []

d) 46-55 ‘’ []

e) 56 -65 ‘’ []

f) 66-75 ‘’ []

2) Sex : Male []

Female []

3) Educational background :

Primary/Middle []

Ordinary level SSS []

Advanced Level []

Diploma []

Degree []

Others (Specify) []

- 4) Marital Status :
- a) Married []
 - b) Single []
 - c) Separated []
 - d) Divorced []
 - e) Widowed []

5) Occupation (if any) :

- 6) Religious belief:
- a) Catholic []
 - b) Christian other than Catholic [], kindly specify.....
 - c) Moslem []
 - d) Traditional African Religion []
 - e) Others [], kindly specify.....

- 7) Are you a member of any political party? Or have you any political leanings?
- Yes []
- No []
- If yes, please indicate the political party or persuasions and the level of your political involvement.....

Importance of the Catholic Church in Ghana

- 8) Do you believe that the Catholic Church is one of the most important and well-respected Religious bodies in this country?

Yes []

No []

Give some reasons for your belief.

.....

9) What is your general opinion of the Catholic Church in Ghana?

.....
.....

10) Did you find the services rendered by the Catholic Church very useful and profitable in terms of the development of the country?

Yes []

No []

Please give reasons for your choice of

answer.....

.....

14) How would you rate the Catholic Church in terms of its contribution to the following in the country?(Poor /Fair /Good/Very Good/Excellent)

1. National Development

2. Upholding of Freedom and Justice

3. Human Rights Activities

4. Democracy

15) Do you think the Catholic Church operates in the general interest of the majority of the people in this country?

Yes []

No []

Give reasons for your

answer.....

16) Mention some of the spectacular / particular contributions made by the Catholic Church which have had a significant impact on this country.

.....

The Role of the Ghana Catholic Bishops' Conference

17) The Ghana Catholic Bishops' Conference, which is the religious conference of all Catholic Bishops' in this country, has been accused of being an elitist club which is irrelevant to the lives of ordinary citizens. What is your opinion on this statement?

.....

.....
18) In your opinion is the Ghana Catholic Bishops' Conference politically neutral in their activities over the years?

Yes []

No []

Not sure []

Give reasons for your answer

.....

19) In which way do you think the Ghana Catholic Bishops' Conference has contributed significantly to the practice of democracy and good governance in this country?

.....

20) How would you rate the Ghana Catholic Bishops' Conference in terms of the following: (Poor / Fair / Good / Very Good / Excellent)

a) In the fight against bribery and corruption.....

b) In the promotion of peace and security in the country.....

c) In the protection of the environment.....

d) In promoting ethnic harmony and fighting against tribalism in the country.....

22) Do you think the situation on the present state of the country would have been worse without the active participation of the Ghana Catholic Bishops' Conference?

.....

23) Can you mention one or two ways or means through which in your opinion you feel the Ghana Catholic Bishops' Conference can improve upon its services to the nation if what they are doing now is not sufficient?

.....

.....

24) Are you aware of or read any of the statements, pronouncements, or communiqués of the Ghana Catholic Bishops' Conferences concerning the state of the nation?

Yes [] No []

If yes, what was your impression?

.....

If no, any reason why?

.....

25) In your opinion, do you think this nation can manage effectively with or without Catholic Bishops?

.....

Give reasons for your answer.

.....

26) In your opinion, do you think the Ghana Catholic Bishops' Conference could perform better in closer collaboration with other religious bodies and professional associations instead of working in isolation?

.....

27) Any other comments?

.....