

Public Theology and Democratic Consolidation in Ghana: Challenges And Responses



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ABSTRACT

This study is a review of the challenges of democratic consolidation in Ghana and how Public Theology provides theological insights for the church in its responses to the democratic consolidation challenges. Democratic consolidation in Ghana has been considered relatively successful. However, it has been noted that democratic consolidation in Ghana is being undermined by challenges like dictatorship of the majority, the culture of silence, disregard of democratic institutions, and neglect of bread and butter issues among others. The church has played a significant role in democratic consolidation in Ghana through advocacy, civic education, election observation, social services, and interfaith dialogue. By promoting democratic values and good governance, the church has contributed to the growth and stability of Ghana's democracy. According to this study, the challenges that threatened democratic consolidation in Ghana persist. It is important for the church therefore to continue to build on its successes and address these challenges in order to further contribute to the strengthening of the nation's democratic culture. The study used a qualitative approach to gather data. The study concluded with the recommendation that theological insights from Public Theology like human value, dignity, the sovereignty of God, fallibility of human nature, and democracy as a way of life must be concentrated on in the church's search for responses to the challenges of democratic consolidation and culture in Ghana.

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INTRODUCTION

Most African countries at the moment have accepted democracy as their system of government. Constitutions have been enacted with the separation of powers, among the Executive, Legislature, and Judiciary. There are various freedoms such as speech, press, movement, association religion, and institutions of accountability have all been spelt out with well-defined mandates. Various security agencies, electoral processes that define terms of office, voting rights, and handing over of power to new political administrations are very clear in statutory books. Democracy, however, is more than granting voting rights and establishment of institutions. Respect for fundamental rights and established institutions remain the key benchmarks for consolidated democracy. Sam Okudzeto has opined that if

regular elections are held but democratic institutions are not respected, democratic consolidation will be undermined and weakened.¹

The church plays a vital role in the democratic consolidation in Ghana. The church's participation in democratic consolidation like other social issues is however determined by its responses to the insights from Public Theology. Ghana is often cited as a successful example of democratic consolidation in Africa, having transitioned from military rule to multi-party democracy in 1992. Democratic consolidation according to Okudzeto refers to the process by which a democratic system becomes firmly established and accepted by its citizens. It is the process by which a newly established democracy becomes more stable and entrenched over time. It ensures the strengthening of the institutions and practices of democratic governance in a country, such that democratic norms and values become entrenched and accepted by all political actors and citizens.²

Ghana's journey towards democratic consolidation has been a relatively successful one compared to many other African countries. Democratic consolidation in Ghana is characterized by the efforts made by the country to build a stable and effective democratic system since the return to multiparty democracy in 1992. Esther Ofei Aboagye has pointed out that a key factor that has contributed to this success is the country's commitment to democratic principles, which is enshrined in its constitution. The Constitution guarantees freedom of speech, press, assembly, and association, among other democratic rights and freedoms. There is moreover, a vibrant civil society that includes non-governmental organizations, media organizations, and advocacy groups. These organizations play an important role in monitoring the government and holding it accountable.³

A major feature of Ghana's democratic consolidation is the country's commitment to holding regular free and fair elections. Since the adoption of the new constitution, Ghana has held eight presidential and parliamentary elections, all of which have been considered credible and largely peaceful. In the estimation of Serebour Quaicoe, these elections have been widely regarded as transparent and credible, helping to build public confidence in the democratic process.⁴

Ghana has an independent judiciary that has shown a willingness to uphold the rule of law, even in cases where the government is involved. Justice Emile Short has observed that this helps to ensure that the government is held accountable and that citizens have access to justice.⁵ Ghana has a multi-party system with several strong political parties. This helps to ensure that there is healthy competition between parties, which helps to prevent any one party from dominating the political landscape.

An important aspect of Ghana's democratic consolidation is the strengthening of its democratic institutions. These institutions have played an important role in promoting transparency, accountability, and good governance in Ghana. These include organizations such as the National Commission for Civic Education, which worked to educate citizens about their rights and responsibilities in a democratic system. Ghana also benefited from a relatively strong economy and a growing middle class, which helped to stabilize democratic institutions and promote a culture of democracy. Additionally, the country's electoral commission played an important role in ensuring free and fair elections, which helped to build trust in the democratic process as indicated by Serebour Quaicoe.⁶

Ghana's successful democratic consolidation can be attributed to a combination of factors, including committed political leadership, a strong civil society, a growing middle class, and effective electoral institutions. While there have been some challenges and setbacks along the way, Ghana has emerged as a model for democratic consolidation in Africa and a beacon of hope for other countries

¹ Excerpts of an Interview with Lawyer Sam Okudzeto on National Interest February 13, 2020.

² Excerpts of an Interview with Sam Okudzeto.

³ Excerpts of an Interview with Dr. Esther Ofei Aboagye on Moving from Political to Developmental Constitution September 24, 2020.

⁴ Excerpts of an Interview with Dr. Serebour Quaicoe Preparation Towards December General Election November 5, 2020.

⁵ Excerpts of an Interview with Justice Emile Short Transparency and public accountability November 7, 2019.

⁶ Excerpts of an Interview with Serebour Quaicoe.

seeking to establish stable and democratic systems of government. Democratic consolidation in Ghana has been a relatively successful process due to the country's commitment to democratic principles, strong democratic institutions, and peaceful transitions of power.⁷ The church which has been considered as a vital partner in the nation's process towards democratic consolidation has performed the function with its prospects and challenges. The church has managed the prospects and challenges and has been guided by its Public Theology a reality that it must not deviate from. The intention of the study, therefore, is to examine the theological insights that Public Theology offers the church in its effort to make a relevant contribution to democratic consolidation in Ghana.

METHODOLOGY

The study in its qualitative form examined available related library materials, reports and conducted interviews. The interviews focused on academics and practitioners who have been keenly involved in matters of democratic consolidation in Ghana. Church leaders who have spearheaded the engagements of the church in democratic consolidation were also identified and interviewed.

Public Theology and Democratic Consolidation

Public Theology has been considered in an earlier article by the author as the engagement of the Christian faith and values in the public sphere, with a view of promoting social justice and the common good.⁸ In Ghana, Public Theology has played an important role in promoting democratic consolidation by fostering a culture of civic engagement and advocacy for democratic values. It provides critical and constructive theological perspectives on the challenges facing Ghana's democracy and promotes values that support democratic governance. It has also helped to promote social cohesion and reconciliation. By encouraging dialogue and understanding among different religious and ethnic groups, public theologians have helped to promote peaceful coexistence and mutual respect.

Public theologians have engaged in public debates and discussions about issues such as corruption, poverty, and social inequality. They have challenged political leaders and the wider society to live up to the principles of democracy and to work towards the common good. Through their engagement in public discourse, public theologians have helped to promote transparency, accountability, and good governance. According to Emmanuel Asante, they have provided a moral compass for the country, helping to ensure that democratic values are upheld and respected.⁹

Ghana is a diverse country with many ethnic, cultural, and religious groups and social cohesion is essential for building a stable and inclusive democracy. Public Theology helps to promote social cohesion by emphasizing the commonalities and shared values of different communities and by advocating for policies and practices that promote unity and social harmony. It contributes to democratic consolidation by supporting good governance, providing a framework for ethical and moral reflection on political issues, holding political leaders accountable for their actions and promoting transparency and accountability in good governance, and advocating for policies and practices that prioritize the needs and well-being of all citizens, particularly the most vulnerable and marginalized. It is instrumental in advocating for democratic values such as human rights, transparency, and accountability.¹⁰

Through sermons, communiqués, other public statements, and engagement with political leaders, public theologians have helped to promote a culture of democracy and good governance. They have also been vocal in highlighting instances of corruption and abuse of power and calling for greater transparency and accountability in government. By engaging with these issues from a theological

⁷ Excerpts of an Interview with Sam Okudzeto.

⁸ Kwabena Opuni-Frimpong, "Doing Public Theology in African Christianity: A Reflection on Communiqués by Churches in Ghana." *E-Journal of Religious and Theological Studies* 7 (11), (2022): 190-200.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.38159/erats.20217111>

⁹ Excerpts of an Interview with Rev Prof Emmanuel Asante Religion, Peace and Security in Ghana October 21, 2019.

¹⁰ Kwabena Opuni-Frimpong, *Christian Ministry of Advocacy*. (Accra: Sonlife Press, 2015).

perspective, Public Theology promotes values such as justice, compassion, and solidarity that are essential for democratic governance.

Public theologians subsequently play a role in promoting public dialogue and engagement on issues related to democratic consolidation, helping to build a more informed and engaged citizenry. Furthermore, Public Theology provides a prophetic voice in promoting democratic values and holding political leaders accountable for their actions, by challenging oppressive systems and advocating for the marginalized. It further promotes a culture of democracy that is grounded in ethical principles and values.

Public Theology has made significant contributions to democratic consolidation in Ghana by promoting justice, transparency, accountability, peaceful coexistence, and respect for diversity. Its engagement with public life has helped to shape political discourse and decision-making and has contributed to building a more robust and resilient democratic system in Ghana. It plays a vital role in Ghana's democratic consolidation by providing a moral and ethical framework for public discourse and decision-making. Its engagement in public debates has helped to promote democratic values, transparency, and good governance, and to foster social cohesion and reconciliation.¹¹

The Church and Democratic Consolidation in Ghana

Ghana is a predominantly Christian country, with about 71% of the population identifying as Christians according to the 2021 census. With its large and influential followers, the church has remained a powerful force in using its moral authority to advocate for human rights, democratic values and to hold governments accountable. Moreover, the church has been identified as an important partner in the country's efforts to consolidate its democracy. Its commitment to social justice, human rights, and good governance has helped to promote transparency, accountability, and democratic values, and has subsequently contributed to the stability and development of Ghana as a democratic state.¹²

According to Asante, the contribution of the church to democratic consolidation in Ghana has been very significant, especially in shaping public opinion, advocating for democratic values and good governance practices, promoting social justice, voter mobilization, and civic education.¹³ It has used its platforms to educate the public on their civic rights and responsibilities and has encouraged citizens to participate in the democratic process through voter registration and turnout. The report of the Alliance for Christian Advocacy Africa on the 2020 general elections pointed out many churches that have established voter education programmes aimed at promoting democratic values and encouraging citizens to participate in the electoral process.¹⁴

In addition, the church has been actively involved in promoting transparency and accountability in governance. Church leaders have spoken out against corruption and other forms of misconduct by public officials and have called for accountability and the rule of law. The church has supported the establishment of institutions that promote good governance, such as independent election commissions, human rights commissions, and anti-corruption agencies. The church has been a strong advocate for social justice in Ghana, particularly in addressing issues of poverty, inequality, and marginalization, advocating for the respect of human rights and the protection of vulnerable groups, such as women and children.¹⁵

A major characteristic of the church is its significant role in promoting peace and reconciliation. In times of political tension and conflict, the church has been instrumental in mediating disputes and promoting dialogue among different groups. In addition, the church has played a critical role in promoting peaceful elections in Ghana. Aboagye-Mensah has noted that during election cycles,

¹¹ Kwabena Opuni-Frimpong, "Christian Advocacy Ministry in African Christianity: The Nature, Prospects and Challenges in Ghana." *Journal of Mother-Tongue Biblical Hermeneutics and Theology* 3 (4), (2022); 57-67. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.38159/motbit.2021351>

¹² James Anquandah, *Agenda Extraordinaire: 80 years of the Christian Council of Ghana 1929-2009*. (Accra: Asempa Publishers, 2009).

¹³ Excerpts of an Interview with Emmanuel Asante.

¹⁴ Alliance for Christian Advocacy report on 2020 General Elections.

¹⁵ Opuni-Frimpong, "Doing Public Theology in African Christianity."

churches have established peace committees and deployed election monitors to ensure that the electoral process is conducted in a peaceful and transparent manner. Through these efforts, the church has helped to prevent violence and promote confidence in the democratic process.¹⁶

Challenges of Democratic Consolidation

Despite these achievements, Ghana still faces some challenges in consolidating its democracy including poverty, unemployment, disregard for democratic structures and state institutions, inequality and ethnic tensions. It is important for the church to continue to build on its successes and address these challenges in order to further contribute to the strengthening of the nation's democratic culture. Emile Short has noted that corruption, which undermines democratic institutions and erodes public trust in the government, is a major issue that demands collective responsibility fight. In addition, there have been concerns about the independence of some democratic institutions, such as the judiciary and the media. The church that has been identified as a major partner in democratic consolidation must understand and respond to the challenges of democratic consolidation with its Public Theology insights.

Democracy as Dictatorship of the Majority

The dictatorship of the majority is the manipulation of constitutions, security agencies, judiciary, media, electoral laws, election management, and election results by dominant political parties that have the power to form governments. It is affirmed in parliaments by the mindset that the opposition will have their say while the majority will have their way. Democracy can be abused if the institutions are not respected. According to Okudzeto, democracy becomes a dictatorship of the majority groups using their numbers to abuse and misuse democratic institutions.

Uncertainty about the term of office becomes a worrying trend if the majority governing party decides to use their numbers to manipulate the stipulated constitutional provision on the term of office by changing it to their favour. Some African leaders have served a number of years in office which were not determined by the constitution at the point of entry into office even though their political parties that have the majority allow them to do so. Democracy as a dictatorship of the majority according to Short is fuelled by the 'Winner Takes All Constitutions and Systems' syndrome backed by legal provisions. This syndrome has remained a major challenge for the consolidation of democracy in Ghana.¹⁷ The dictatorship of the majority sustains disrespect of the rule of law, corruption, lack of transparency and accountability, attack on freedom of the press, human right abuses, etc., in a governance system that eventually undermine democratic consolidation and culture.

Culture of Silence

A culture of silence does not necessarily mean that the people are not talking. It is when the citizens have an inherent fear that they may be punished for sharing their thoughts on national issues if their expressions contradict the views of their political leaders. Paulo Freire refers to the culture of silence as when the student speaks and re-echos only what their teachers and leaders want to hear.¹⁸

The fear of the citizens of their leaders and their inability to raise their voices against corruption, non-performance of governments, etc., must be noted as a sign of weak democracy.¹⁹ Many citizens are gradually becoming afraid of their leaders, and a culture of silence is becoming a norm. It must be noted that under healthy democracies leaders are supposed to be afraid of their people knowing that the political power that gives them offices is the power of the people and that the people can get them out of power at any time that they feel dissatisfied with their performances.²⁰

¹⁶ Excerpts of an Interview with Most Rev Dr Kwasi Aboagye-Mensah on New Year, New Opportunities, Fresh Challenges January 2, 2020.

¹⁷ Excerpts of an Interview with Emile Short.

¹⁸ Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. (New York: Continuum Publishing, 2000).

¹⁹ Excerpts of an Interview with Sam Okudzeto.

²⁰ Excerpts of an Interview with Sam Okudzeto.

The major threat to peace and security are corruption, hunger, poverty, and unemployment of high numbers of young people.²¹ However, political parties in government do mobilise party foot soldiers and serial callers to media houses to attack dissenting views in public discourse about genuine reflections on some peoples' real-life conditions just to silence them. Some voices of wisdom from church leaders, researchers, statesmen, traditional leaders, etc. in the process have been attacked and silenced.

Threats to Free, Fair and Credible Elections

The Electoral Commission of Ghana granted official accreditation to the Alliance for Christian Advocacy Africa to monitor the 2020 General Elections of Ghana. The team of one hundred Pastors from various denominations pursued the monitoring in eight regions i.e., Greater Accra, Ashanti, Volta, Eastern, Northern, Bono, Ahafo, and Western. The report of the monitoring team concluded that the threats to free, fair, and credible elections were violence, cheating, ethnocentrism, and dictatorship of the majority.²²

Security of elections is supposed to be in the domain of the Police Service. However, the various political parties have established various vigilante groups to pursue their interests. Even though the laws of Ghana frown upon vigilantism, the parties find their way of fostering political violence with their various vigilante groups. The Ghana Police Service reported eight deaths at the end of the 2020 general elections with several other injuries resulting from election violence.²³ Elections in Ghana have been characterised by various peace efforts by churches and other civil society organizations due to the challenge of violence associated with elections. Violence and threats to peace have led to the promotion of Peace Ambassadors, prayer and fasting meetings on peace and the signing of peace pacts. Concerns for peace in public discourse are even dominating discussions on socio-economic development issues according to the report of the Alliance for Christian Advocacy Africa.²⁴

Electoral cheating manifests itself during the registration of voters, double voting, counting, and collation of ballots. The various political parties keep accusing themselves of bussing registrants who do not reside in the constituencies to register for their benefits during the voting day. Moreover, the accusations and counter-accusations of registration of minors who are below the voting age of eighteen years are facilitated by the various political parties mainly the New Patriotic Party (NPP) and the National Democratic Congress (NDC).²⁵

Ethnocentrism has been considered a key threat to free and fair elections. Politicians who seek to have advantages over their own ethnic groups or create tensions and hatred among others decide to play the ethnic card in their public statements and political campaigns. Such efforts have the tendency to spark tribal and ethnic violence but for their own political interests, and this trend has been perpetuated over the years.²⁶

Disrespect of Democratic Institutions

Most African countries at the moment have accepted democracy as their system of government. Constitutions have been enacted with the separation of powers, among the Executive, Legislature and Judiciary. There are various freedoms such as speech, press, movement, association religion and institutions of accountability have all been spelt out with well-defined mandates. Various security agencies, electoral processes that define terms of office, voting rights, and handing over of power to new political administrations are very clear in statutory books. Democracy, however, is more than granting voting rights and establishment of institutions. Respect for fundamental rights and established

²¹ Excerpts of an Interview with Emile Short.

²² Alliance for Christian Advocacy for Africa Election 2020 Report.

²³ Alliance of Christian Advocacy Report on the 2020 General Elections.

²⁴ Alliance of Christian Advocacy Report on the 2020 General Elections.

²⁵ Alliance of Christian Advocacy Report on the 2020 General Elections.

²⁶ Alliance of Christian Advocacy Report on the 2020 General Elections.

institutions remain the key benchmarks for consolidated democracy. If regular elections are held but democratic institutions are not respected, democratic consolidation will be undermined and weakened as indicated earlier on.

Bread and Butter Issues

Democracy must be seen as working for all the people and not some of the people. Moreover, it is the expectation of the citizens that democracy must respond to bread-and-butter issues. There are electorates with high hopes, especially during political campaigns that their needs will be met due to the promises and projections of aspiring politicians. High hopes and expectations after general elections are unfortunately dashed as the winning parties do not manage such expectations in governance. In some cases, the politicians even do the worse and opposite of their promises to the people e.g. on reduction of cost of living, taxes, fuel, cost of medication, unemployment, cost of building materials, inflation etc. The electorate however observe the rapid change of lifestyle of the politicians that they voted for after winning the elections. Democracy for many electorates is for bread and butter issues. Public trust and confidence are undermined when the citizens consider themselves as being cheated and manipulated after voting. The phenomenon is eventually fuelling voter apathy in the electoral process.

Unless the economic status of the citizenry is improved it will be extremely difficult for them to participate meaningfully in the democratic system. There is always a strong link between the economic well-being of citizens and their ability to participate in political institutions. Indeed, those who have strong economic muscles are the ones who control the political state. Those who are financially strong can very easily dictate the direction that elections would go, especially, in developing countries like Ghana where most people are materially poor. Thus, to create a democratic culture in which people will have equal opportunity to participate in political life, then, the gifts and the potentialities of all citizens must be developed so as to make them financially credible. The inability to create a nation where most people are financially strong will result in the few rich people taking away the political freedom of the majority of the citizens. In such a situation most people will lose their respect and value.

Theological Responses

Churches have opportunities that provide entry points as they seek to function as agents for democratic consolidation. The prospects have served the individual churches and ecumenical bodies in their public witness over the years. The church's prospects in responding to the contemporary challenges of democratic consolidation are embedded in its insights from Public Theology.

Biblical Insights and Responses

A major characteristic of democratic culture is to treat all human beings as equals. A practical expression of this is found in the Scriptures. The Bible makes it abundantly clear that in dealing with each other, for instance, in the law courts, judges must not show partiality in judgement. Judges must make sure that justice is given to both the small and the great alike. In Deuteronomy, God has these strong words to say to his people: 'I charged your judges at that time: hear the disputes between your brothers and judge fairly, whether the case is between brother Israelites or between one of them and an alien. Do not be afraid of any man, for judgement belongs to God. Bring me any case too hard for you, and I will hear it' (Dt. 1:16). Again, 'appoint judges and officials for each of your tribes in every town the Lord your God is giving you, and they shall judge the people fairly. Do not pervert justice or show partiality. Do not accept a bribe, for a bribe blinds the eyes of the wise and twists the words of the righteous. Follow justice alone, so that you may live and possess the land the Lord your God is giving you' (Dt. 16: 18-20).

Thus, the church is under an obligation to proclaim to the nations this unique message of the equality of all persons, a message which is central to the Church's faith and practice. It is equally essential for establishing democratic consolidation and culture. The church must moreover, pay attention to the fact that all human beings have great value. This is derived from the theological

conviction that all human beings are created in the image of God whose value is absolute. Of all the creatures of God, human beings are the only ones made, 'a little lower than God, and crowned with glory and honour' (Ps. 8:5). On the basis of this, all human beings are to be treated with great respect and dignity.

All human beings belong to the privileged class, in the sense that they carry the image of God. There are several democratic principles that can be deduced from this fundamental belief of the church. It is important that the nation creates a democratic culture in which all citizens participate actively and effectively in the economic as well as the political life of the land. According to biblical insights all human beings have such dignity and great value, it follows that all persons are capable of participating in all the vital sectors of society, notably, the economic and political life of the nation.

Due to the fact that all humans have such a great value, it follows that exploitation and oppression of fellow human beings cannot be tolerated. To exploit and oppress a human being because he or she is financially weak is to dehumanise that person. It is not surprising that in the Bible, God sides with the poor and oppressed against the exploiters and oppressors. It is important to point out that Jesus was also on the side of the poor and the oppressed in society. When Jesus went to his home in Nazareth, he read from the gospel of Luke that he had come in order that the poor and the captive will have good news preached to them and that the victims of inequity will have freedom and dignity. Indeed, the fact that Jesus was born, died, and was raised with a human body emphasised God's determination to maintain human value and dignity. The political implication is that any democratic culture must aim at affirming human values and dignity. A democratic culture must be created which respects fellow human beings and treats them as such as biblically affirmed.

Democracy as a Way of Life

Democracy is a way of life that should permeate all areas of human existence because it is about relationships.²⁷ How should peace, justice, and the rule of law in various communities, such as in the family, schools, colleges, universities, in the church, and in the political state be enforced? This can be done by observing certain basic principles in human relationships such as accepting that all human beings are equal and possess dignity and values that must be acknowledged and respected. Dissenting views in relationships must be respected as well as a mark of healthy democratic culture.

Democracy is about the ability to govern a group of people with diverse behaviours, practices, and moral norms that are shaped by their ability to question and analyse social, political, religious, and economic issues in freedom and dignity. A democratic culture essentially upholds the equality and dignity of all persons. It encourages genuine and responsible participation of all the people in the economic, political, religious, and social lives of the nation. It further motivates the citizenry to exercise their human rights; take full responsibility for the choices they make when there are conflicts of personal and group interests. Democracy expresses boldly and responsibly one's freedom of assembly, freedom of association, and freedom of speech. According to Ofei-Aboagye, one of the cardinal virtues of democracy is tolerance.²⁸

Democracy is the rule of all the people, men and women. It is not the rule of either one person or any particular class of men and women. Democracy is a rule by the people who are recognised as equals. It is true that in ancient Athens, in the cradle of democratic institutions, women, slaves, and foreigners were not counted as members of the governing assembly. It was only the male adults who were chosen by lot to be members of the Assembly. In modern times, however, this discrimination has come under serious attack. All persons, male and female, have equal rights to be elected to rule. Thus Okudzeto states, "In line with the biblical teaching and modern understanding of democracy as the government of the people, by the people and for the people, it is essential that in the effort to establish a democratic culture, we recognise and affirm the equality of all human beings."²⁹

²⁷ Excerpts of an Interview with Esther Ofei-Aboagye.

²⁸ Excerpts of an Interview with Esther Ofei-Aboagye.

²⁹ Excerpts of an Interview with Sam Okudzeto.

To stress the equality of human beings does not mean that all the people in the country are to do the same job. All humans are equal but are not necessarily the same. People have different abilities and gifts which are meant to complement each other's efforts. Because people do different kinds of jobs, it is to be expected that social policies in some ways may treat different people differently. There are some people whose contributions to the common good of the nation may be riskier than others. However, according to Okudzeto, it does not follow that such people are inherently superior to others. Different persons are called to perform different kinds of services or vocations, some of which may be nobler than others. But it will be wrong to conclude that because one is rendering a service which is regarded more highly, such a person is more human than those whose jobs are not so regarded. In fact, in some cases, those who do the so-called 'menial work', make a far-reaching contribution to the common good of society than those who use their social positions to exploit the nation for their selfish ends. It is wrong to use people's jobs as a criterion for assessing equality and inequality in society.³⁰ The Bible does not use social worth to determine the value of human beings.

The basis for measuring human equality is the fact that all human beings are made to be in the image of God even though they have different gifts and capabilities. Man's true value to God is not determined by his/her extraordinary gifts and unique abilities. Rather, their greatest value as human beings is that they are made in the image and form of God. There is no moral justification for treating some people in the society as less human simply because they do not belong to a particular gender, political party, ethnic group, religious affiliation, etc.³¹

Democracy and the Sovereignty of God

The Constitution of Ghana affirms that the democratic institutions of the nation are determined by the sovereign will of the people. This statement must be qualified. The ultimate sovereignty in a democracy is not the people but God. God is the one who created human beings and gave them dignity. Human beings still remain as creatures and not the Creator. The One who ultimately governs the nations of the world is God. The affirmation of God as the only true ruler is at least the beginning point for the criticism of political idolatries.

No ruler, system of government, programme, or ideology can be invested with the ultimate power and sovereignty. Okudzeto has further argued that all human beings and their institutions and systems, be they democracy or any form of political system must be subjected to human criticism.³² To fail to critically analyse human governments is a form of idolatry. Democracy like all other human institutions is not ultimate. In a democratic culture, citizens recognise that political rulers are mere human beings and not divine; and that both the ruled and the rulers come under the critical judgement of God who alone is supreme and sovereign.

The Fallibility of the Human Race

It is stated quite clearly in the Bible that the first ancestors created in the image and likeness of God fell due to disobedience. According to the biblical narrative, Adam and Eve listened to the voice of a creature, the serpent, and did what God had forbidden them. God had commanded them, 'You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you will surely die' (Gen 3:2). The disobedience of man to the will of God is what is normally referred to as the fall. The fall had many consequences for mankind. The image of God in humanity was crashed, but not altogether lost. Human nature was infected with sin and corruption, but the image of God was not totally lost. Humanity still has the potential of that which is beautiful and good; but even at its highest, human nature is marred.

This state of humanity has a lot of implications in the political arena. It shows that humans are capable of making good and responsible moral choices. However, every choice that is made is tainted with sin. It means that human beings are capable of knowing and doing what is just; but at the same

³⁰ Excerpts of an Interview with Sam Okudzeto.

³¹ Excerpts of an Interview with Sam Okudzeto.

³² Excerpts of an Interview with Sam Okudzeto.

time, no individual can be trusted too much, especially with power. In other words, human beings need a political structure that will, on the one hand, free them to do the good that they are capable of, and on the other hand, such an institution should have built-in checks and balances which will control human sinfulness. The democratic institution seems to be the best human structure so far as that is capable of meeting such a need. It must be noted that the capacity of human beings for justice makes democracy possible, but the inclination to injustice makes democracy necessary.

In creating a democratic culture, there is a need to take the church's conception of human nature very seriously. It helps in knowing that human beings have the capacity to do good because of the image of God in them, and also because of the redemptive work of Christ Jesus at work in them through the enabling power of the Holy Spirit. In the same breath, it must be realised that no human being is to be trusted with too much power, for he or she will misuse it for selfish reasons. It is very easy for people who feel insecure to misuse power to cover up their misdeeds.

CONCLUSION

Democratic consolidation in Ghana has been considered relatively successful. However, it has been noted that democratic consolidation in Ghana is being undermined by challenges like dictatorship of the majority, the culture of silence, disregard of democratic institutions, and neglect of bread and butter issues among others. The church has played a significant role in democratic consolidation in Ghana through advocacy, civic education, election observation, social services, and interfaith dialogue. By promoting democratic values and good governance, the church has contributed to the growth and stability of Ghana's democracy. The challenges that threatened democratic consolidation according to the study still persist. The study recommends that insights from Public Theology like human value, dignity, the sovereignty of God, fallibility of human nature, and democracy as a way of life must be concentrated in the church's search for responses to the challenges of democratic consolidation and culture in Ghana.

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INTERVIEWS

- Most Rev Dr. Kwasi Aboagye-Mensah New Year, New Opportunities, Fresh Challenges January 2, 2020.
- Rev Prof Emmanuel Asante Religion, Peace and Security in Ghana 21/10/2019
- Dr. Tony Oteng Gyasi Young People, Unemployment and Entrepreneurship 09/01/2020
- Prof Kwame Karikari Media, Public education and national orientation 16/01/2020
- Lawyer Sam Okudzeto National Interest Part 2 20/02/2020
- Justice Emile Short Transparency and public accountability 07/11/2019
- Lawyer Sam Okudzeto National Interest Part 1 13/02/2020
- Dr Esther Ofei Aboagye Moving from political to developmental constitution 24/09/2020
- Dr Serebour Quaicoe Preparation Towards December General Election 5/11/2020

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