

The Participation of the Church in Wealth Creation in Ghana: A Reflection on the Role of Public Theology



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ABSTRACT

The study is an examination of the place of Public Theology in the church's participation in wealth creation. The article argues that wealth creation that serves the common good must be motivated by perspectives informed by Public Theology. The study admitted that wealth creation is a major strategy for reducing poverty and it is a central concern for many churches, governments, organizations, and individuals. It discovered that selfishness, pride, abuse of others, and irresponsible consumption are easily associated with wealth if its sole purpose of creation is for consumption and self-glorification. In the instance where people accumulate wealth at the expense of the poor and innocent in society, the creation of such wealth becomes unacceptable according to biblical perspectives and does not serve the common good. The study concluded that the motivation for the church's participation in wealth creation must be adequately informed by Public Theology. It recommended that Public Theology must shape the values, attitudes, and practices of churches, individuals, institutions, and society as a whole in wealth creation. It placed emphasis on social responsibility, human dignity, justice, and the common good in the efforts towards wealth creation. Public theologians must facilitate the promotion of a more holistic and sustainable approach to wealth creation that takes into account the well-being of all members of society and not just the wealthy few. The approach involves advocating for policies and practices that promote economic growth, while also addressing issues of inequality, poverty, and corruption.

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INTRODUCTION

As part of its mission and ministry, the church has a duty to empower the people of God to engage in activities aimed at reducing poverty and creating wealth. Wealth creation as a major strategy in reducing poverty is a central concern to many churches, governments, organizations, and individuals. The church encourages and supports its members and the wider society to engage in wealth creation and poverty reduction activities. Selfishness, pride, abuse of others, and irresponsible consumption are however easily associated with wealth if its sole purpose of creation is for consumption and self-glorification. In the instance where people accumulate wealth at the expense of the poor and innocent in society, the creation of such wealth becomes unacceptable according to biblical perspectives and does not serve the common good.

The motivation for the church's participation in wealth creation must be adequately informed by Public Theology. Public Theology plays an important role in shaping the values, attitudes, and practices of individuals, institutions, and society as a whole. It places emphasis on social responsibility, justice, and the common good in the efforts towards wealth creation. Public theologians facilitate the promotion of a more holistic and sustainable approach to wealth creation that takes into account the well-being of all members of society and not just the wealthy few. The approach involves advocating for policies and practices that promote economic growth, while also addressing issues of inequality, poverty, and corruption.

It is worth noting that Christianity has a strong presence in Ghana, with about 71% of the population identifying as Christians according to the 2021 national population census. The church, therefore, has significant influence and plays a crucial role in shaping the beliefs and values of Ghanaians. Many churches in Ghana have actively promoted entrepreneurship and economic development as part of their mission. They have established microfinance programs, vocational training centres, and other initiatives to help their members start businesses and create wealth. Additionally, some churches have invested in large-scale projects such as real estate development and agriculture, which have created jobs and contributed to the country's economic growth as observed by Peter Schweizer.¹

The role of the church in wealth creation in Ghana can be examined from several angles. On the one hand, there are churches that focus on spiritual growth and personal development, which can indirectly lead to wealth creation. On the other hand, there are churches that have taken an active role in promoting entrepreneurship and financial literacy among their members. The role of the church in wealth creation in Ghana is a complex issue that depends on many factors, including the denomination, location, and leadership of the church in question. There is a need for a balanced approach that promotes both spiritual and material well-being while also addressing social and economic inequalities according as indicated in my article on Christian Advocacy Ministry in African Christianity.

The nature of the Gospel and the examples of Jesus demands that the Church be actively involved in matters of development and wealth creation. In development, the Christian contribution is distinctive in its motivation. John Stott has noted that Christian motivation arises from a prior commitment to the Lord and from the nature of the Gospel.² It is also distinctive in its cultural sensitivity, in its focus on the truly poor and disadvantaged, and in its ultimate goals, far more than mere economic betterment.

The contrasts of poverty and wealth which creates the longing for development also raise questions of justice. Contemporary Ghanaian societies are gradually losing the instinctive respect for human life which was the foundation of stable traditional societies; violence and injustice have become commonplace at both individual and institutional levels according to Nana Agyeman Fredua Pambu.³ Justice is however ultimately inseparable from both the knowledge of God and from harmonious social life, hence the Church, if it is to be faithful to the Gospel, cannot avoid championing the course of the poor and oppressed in society.

Christians share in the one mission of Christ Jesus and should strive to actively exercise this in love and solidarity, in the diversity of gifts and endowments. The concern of the church in development is to help make the conditions that support authentic human existence the criterion for evaluating development policies and programmes.⁴ It is therefore important that in addition to the prophetic mission, Christians work together to bring Christian social virtues into the centre of everyday life in its various facets i.e., homes, families, church, politics, traditional leadership, vocation, and professions.

¹ Peter A. Schweizer, *Survivors on the Gold Coast*. (Accra: Smartline Publishing, 2000).

² John Stott, *Issues Facing Christianity Today*. (London: Marshall Pickering, 2006).

³ Excerpts of an Interview with Nana Fredua Agyeman Pambu on Enhancing Development Through Traditional Leadership May 6, 2021.

⁴ Stott, *Issues Facing Christianity Today*

Jesus Christ did not only come to preach the gospel but also was concerned with the total needs of humans e.g. food, shelter, health, etc. In light of this, the church needs to get involved in activities that will make the individuals responsible, know their rights and obligations, and be able to work hard to earn a living and help others in difficulties.⁵ The churches have a contribution to make to the development of the nation. This must be undergirded by such kingdom values as sacrificial love, righteousness, justice, truth, freedom, reconciliation, and peace. If one is liberated in Christ, one respects others' views, has a spirit of tolerance, and selects people on their merit and ability. These virtues can influence others in the communities.⁶

The Church as the body of Christ called into existence to continue the life-giving work of Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit is aware of its mandate to bring Christian perspectives to bear on all aspects of life. Faith in the one sovereign God means that God is interested in the way Christians harness their human and natural resources for development for the well-being of the people of the nation. This affirmation reminds believers that human origin, dignity, vocation, and destiny come from God. This belief is the basis on which Christians participate in the national development efforts of the country which also is guided by government policies such as expressed in the Sustainable Development Goals etc. Development must not only be infrastructure, buildings, roads, water, electricity, etc. but an intertwined fabric of moral and spiritual perspectives based on the teachings of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. The motivation of the church in wealth creation must however derive its perspectives at all times from Public Theology.

METHODOLOGY

As a qualitative in its approach, the study focuses on available library information and interviews on wealth creation on some key personalities who are private entrepreneurs, academics, managers of some state enterprises, traditional leaders, and also key actors in church developmental projects.

Jesus and Human Needs

The Christian community has no option but to join Christ in the fight for human dignity. John Stott has opined that it is for this purpose that Christ overcame all powers, principalities, and death so that he might make all things new.⁷ To suggest that Jesus Christ's ministry was purely spiritual, as some tend to think, is to fail to appreciate the nature of God and humankind as revealed in the Bible. Jesus in some instances even spoke and acted on the physical conditions of people before he went to deal with their spiritual needs. There are numerous examples of these in the Bible. The Samaritan woman at the well (Jn. 4), the man born blind (Jn. 9), the feeding of the five thousand (Jn. 6), and the raising of Jairus' daughter (Lk 8) are some of them. The Lord identified with the outcast, sinners, and disadvantaged of the day. This was in line with the prophetic tradition in the Old Testament. God revealed in the Bible is not unfeeling or neutral. Rather he is active in human history, taking sides with the weak and exploited.

If God remained aloof from human affairs, Christianity would be devoid of meaning, and the Bible reduced to a relic of a superstitious era. God cares and acts in human affairs to judge, redeem, and restore his people to health.⁸ He saw, he heard and he knew about the sufferings of his people in Egypt and he went down there through the instrumentality of Moses to rescue them. This is the God the church worships in Jesus Christ, who accomplished a far greater Exodus than that of Moses through his death and resurrection. He has commanded his followers to walk in his footsteps saying 'as the Father sent me, so I send you'. His presence in the Church through the Holy Spirit guarantees the

⁵ Opuni-Frimpong, "Christian Advocacy Ministry in African Christianity," 57-67.

⁶ 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.

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⁷ Stott, *Issues Facing Christianity Today*.

⁸ Stott, *Issues Facing Christianity Today*.

wisdom and insight the Church needs in order to carry out Christ's mission in the world in obedience to him.

If the church keeps true to its calling it is destined to play a significant role in shaping the character and values of societies. It can do this meaningfully only on the basis of a proper understanding of its theology on the one hand and of correct identification of issues where its influence and action contribute to a more human and healthier community on the other. Prominent among such issues are questions relating to such areas as development, wealth creation, poverty, and justice.

The Bible and Wealth Creation

The first mention of the term 'wealth' in the Bible was when it was said of an individual, Abram that 'Abram had become very wealthy in livestock and in silver and gold' (Gen 13:2). The question is how did Abram who later became Abraham acquire his wealth? The simple answer may be God gave him the ability to create the wealth he had acquired over the years (Dt. 8: 17-18). It is the basic understanding that it is God who gives the power and the might to make wealth that also shapes the attitude of mankind towards the creation of wealth. God is the source of wealth. Individuals, families, communities, and nations then must utilize it to improve upon the standard of living and the living conditions of the less privileged.

It is important to note that the Bible does not condemn wealth as such. What the Bible condemns is the wrong ways of acquiring wealth. In fact, God blesses his followers with wealth. It was made clear that the reason why Abraham was blessed was that he walked with God (Gen 13:2). Job was blessed with great wealth (Job 42:10). He blesses the work of the hands of his people as he gives them the power to create wealth (Ps 90:17).

Divine Imperatives on Development

Development is more than the passage from poor to rich, from a traditional rural economy to a sophisticated urban one. It carries with it not only the idea of economic betterment but also of greater human dignity, security, justice, and equality.⁹ Christian involvement in development is a divine imperative. A human person is a totality. What affects the body equally affects the soul, and vice versa. In 1 Thessalonians 5:23 Paul prayed for the believers to be blameless. The complete sanctification however includes the spirit, soul, and body. 'May God himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through. May your whole spirit, soul, and body be kept blameless at the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ.'

There is therefore no question of ministering to or ignoring the one without affecting the other. Issues of development are in light of this, integral to the very meaning of the Christian Gospel. This is not to overlook the fact that not all that is done in the name of development by everyone everywhere can qualify as God's will for his people. The Christian community, acting as the salt of the earth, must however bring Christian teachings, attitudes, and values to bear in otherwise 'saltless' secular situations in order to redeem them. Jesus prayed for his disciples not to be taken from the world, but to be kept safe from the evil one. Their presence in the world was to act both as a preservative and a spice to society.

Undergirding all Christian social action is a prior commitment to the Lord who, by redeeming his people, lays a burden of love and concern on their hearts. He bids them go out and share this with the needy in ways that would uplift their lives physically, emotionally, and spiritually. As there are many forces for dehumanisation, exploitation, oppression, and murder, the Christian community should be a force with an alternative design for rescue, healing, restoration, and reconciliation.¹⁰

⁹ Excerpts of an Interview with Dr Tony Oteng Gyasi on Young People, Unemployment and Entrepreneurship January 9, 2020.

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

Wealth and Wealth Creation

Wealth creation is the act of making a family, country, group, or person richer and more successful. The understanding is that there must be an activity that increases money, profits, property, goods, education, skills, and quality of attitude of the individual or country for wealth creation to take place. The act of making a person more skillful in carpentry, weaving, engineering, medicine, agriculture, etc. is wealth creation and that is the essence of being more successful. Esther Ofei Aboagye has pointed out that wealth creation also involves increasing attributes of love, kindness, goodness, honesty, patience, and gentleness. Moreover, wealth creation involves a distributive dimension, permeating all of its stages from the generation process, the outcome, and the use for and allocation within consumption and investment.¹¹

The wealth of a nation is the total natural, human, and physical assets. Natural assets include land, forests, fossil fuels, and minerals. Human asset is the population's education and skills. Physical (manufactured) capital includes such materials as machinery, buildings, and infrastructure. Wealth creation is therefore the conscious building up of the natural, individual, and physical resources. Wealth creation is the accumulation of assets over a long period of time. Normally wealth is created by an individual or a nation when they are able to produce or save over and above what they need to survive. Wealth so created is a surplus that can be turned around over a long period of time to continue to increase the surplus so created.¹²

Christian Attitudes Toward Wealth Creation

There are different Christian attitudes toward wealth and wealth creation. The various views include those who consider wealth as an offence to God. Such a position relies on Jesus' caution that it will be difficult for a rich person to enter into the Kingdom of God (Mark 10:23-27). But in the passage even though it is difficult for a rich person to enter into the Kingdom of God, there is nothing impossible for God. In other words, it is still possible for a rich person to enter into the Kingdom of God based on the way they treat their wealth. Another passage worth stating here is Mark 6:8-9, where Jesus sends his disciples and commanded them that they should take nothing for their journey, 'save a staff only; no scrip, no bread, no money in their purse' (Mark 6:8; Luke 10:7). The instruction, it is believed was given so that the disciples will not be distracted by material goods in the mission into which they have been sent. It does not mean that the disciples were supposed to live in poverty.

A closer look at the passage further suggests that even though they were not supposed to take anything along, they were to receive what they were given, meaning that even though they did not take anything along, in their line of duty they could come back full of blessings. This instruction that Jesus gave to the disciples may have been the reason for Paul's saying that a worker is worthy of his wages (1 Timothy 5:18). It implies that once a person is faithful to his/her call or faithful in the gift or talents that God has given, they are bound to be blessed by God through their ministries. Beneficiaries of such gifts and ministries are expected to bear the responsibilities of such messengers. It is not a call for rejection of wealth and wealth creation.

Moreover, there is the assumption that opines that wealth is an obstacle to the Christian faith and walk in Christ e.g. Jesus' encounter with the rich man in Mark 10:17-31. Jesus asked the rich man to go and sell all he had in order to come and follow him. The wealth of the rich young man became an obstacle. In 1 Timothy 6:9, 'people who want to get rich fall into temptation and are trapped into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge men into ruin and destruction'. Paul concludes in 1 Timothy 6:10 therefore that the love of money is the root of all evil. The passage talks about the love for money and not that money itself is the root of all evil. Another passage that is used is where Jesus said that 'we should not store for ourselves treasures on earth where moths and rust destroy, but rather we should store for ourselves treasure in heaven where it will not be destroyed. Jesus also added that where our treasure is there will our hearts also be.' (Matt 6:19-21). Wealth creation here on earth is,

¹¹ Excerpts of an Interview Esther Ofei Aboagye on Setting National Priorities September 17, 2020.

¹² Excerpts of an Interview Esther Ofei Aboagye.

therefore, seen as an affront to the will of God. Some Christians in this category, therefore, take a vow of poverty in order not to be distracted by material goods.

There are some Christians who see wealth as blessings from God to Christians. This is at times referred to as the prosperity gospel or health and wealth gospel. The prosperity theology is known to have started in America against those who teach that luck and hard work will lead to riches. They believe that hard work plays a role in one becoming wealthy, but God is the one who eventually makes one wealthy and not chance. According to this school of thought, the Bible teaches that wealth is the lot of people who come to Christ for salvation. Salvation, they claim is the transformation of the whole person into the likeness of Christ, and since Christ as God is rich (2 Cor.8:9), those who come to him must also be rich as observed by Paul Gifford.¹³ The attitude unfortunately has opened the door for most contemporary Christians to accumulate wealth at all costs and by all means. Failure to be a wealthy Christian throws a question mark on one's faith in God, and one is at times looked down upon as not having faith at all, or not being saved if one is not aiming to be rich. As a result of this, some Christians try to be rich at all costs.

Jesus in his earthly ministry, showed no indication that he was against the rich in society even though he was overwhelmingly supportive of the poor. Jesus was born in a poor environment, grew up with a poor family, and brought salvation to the masses, but more especially to the poor (Lk4:18). He knew that people with empty stomachs and diseased bodies needed to be liberated and he did all he could in his earthly ministry to liberate the whole person – feeding the poor and healing the sick and demon-possessed (Mk 1:34; Matt 4:24; 8:16; 17:14:21). He engaged with the lepers, cripples, the demon-possessed, the blind, the deaf, the prostitutes, tax collectors, women, and children. Though he was God, and therefore rich, he became poor in order to make many rich. This means that he became poor to liberate the world of sin and suffering in order to make them rich towards God.

Jesus taught that 'blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of God (Lk 6:20). He also taught that Lazarus, a poor person went to heaven into Abraham's bosom, while the rich man went to hell (Lk 9:16-31). He affirms that he had no place to lay his head (Lk 9:58, Matt 8:20) and during his ministry, he had a money-bag, kept by Judas to collect enough donations for their ministry (John 13:29), even though he had the power to command money into existence.

Meaningful Development

Meaningful development needs to take into consideration a people's culture. What society considers important is largely conditioned by its cultural values and norms. In almost all the various Ghanaian cultures people come first. There is a need to appreciate that culture is life. Technology, on the other hand, is a tool that can be used to serve and enrich such people. The people involved should therefore have a say when the projects intended to serve human needs are designed, regardless of their knowledge of the kind of technology to be used.

Very often people think of development in terms of tangible material prosperity. The acquisition of wealth has therefore become for most people the yardstick for measuring success and a person's worth in society. The word of God has a lot to say about this kind of attitude that people must have toward development. It warns that where one's treasure is, there will be one's heart and that Christ's disciples cannot serve God and money. Inordinate love for money brings along with it many spiritual and emotional problems that can choke the soul and give materialism a false ultimate value that it does not possess.

The Christian community will need to guard against any tendency to make the results of development and technological achievements end in themselves. The church's challenge to this understanding of development will consist in demonstrating, through its commitment and life, that God's purpose for humanity transcends the present life. It is eternal. As Christians try to be compassionate and careful to apply themselves to good deeds, in ministering to the needy and the

¹³ Paul Gifford, *Ghana's New Christianity*. (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2004).

hurting, it will at the same time be realised that the ultimate goal of development is that fallen humanity will be reconciled to God and to one another and go on to grow into ‘mature people, reaching to the very height of Christ’s full stature’.

People-Centered Development

Development implies a thoughtful attempt to assist a community of persons to achieve an existence in which the economic, social, and spiritual domains are brought together at a level befitting the dignity of an individual as one made in the image of God. It has to do with the quality of a people’s life. It means doing something with whatever means are available and appropriate.¹⁴

Development is people. It seeks to help people to become all God wants them to be. Christian development will be carried out by Christians who are spiritually mandated, motivated, and oriented and who act with God’s love toward all people. Development should not be seen in the narrow economic sense. Social and moral developments are factors that also must be stressed.¹⁵ If individuals are developed by the church this will be a contribution to the human resources development for national development. A country’s greatest asset is its people. The first project then is the development of the human being. People must be developed to be willing to work.

The church has always contributed to the holistic development of Ghana.¹⁶ It involves moving the witness of the church into the public arena. For some people, the issue of development is the province and preserve for the government, the politicians, and the economist and as such would like to exclude religious and other bodies from commenting on it. As noted by Oteng Gyasi, “When it gets to the economy, wealth creation, and development we need other hands than only the specialist.”¹⁷ The church must always surmount prejudice. It is legitimate for the church to originate and contribute to planning toward development. This is because though governments initiate, plan and execute developmental plans, development is a matter of and for humanity. It must therefore not be abstracted, contracted, and awarded to governments without the voice and face of humanity which is ably represented by Christ and his body the Church.

The church must have a holistic rather than a simply socio-economic understanding of development. It must impart this understanding to the nation. The word development has had various definitions indicating its own positive development. It is often said to be a sequence of positive systematic changes. At a time, such changes came to be equated to technological improvement. Thus, technology was seen as an indicator of a nation’s growth. Technology that obeys and speaks the language of man and does not speak the language of God can be destructive, and selfish and moves humanity unto destruction.¹⁸

The technology that speaks the language of God, which is love, is creative, productive, and sustaining as God himself is what the church must encourage. Development is not concerned simply with economic improvement in the material conditions of life, through improvement in economic infrastructure and increase in annual per capita income. Development must affect the totality of man’s existence i.e., social, political, cultural, spiritual, moral, etc. It must simply be both qualitative and quantitative.¹⁹ If development involves improvement in living standards it must be accompanied by decreasing inequality of income distribution. Economics and development are about life and not only about money and wealth. It is therefore stressed that economics must be centred on how life can be sustained and made to flourish including areas like identity, morals, social justice, education, politics, and leadership according to Ofei-Aboagye.²⁰

¹⁴ Excerpts of an Interview with Dr Tony Oteng Gyasi.

¹⁵ Excerpts of an Interview with Dr Tony Oteng Gyasi.

¹⁶ Excerpts of an Interview with Emmanuel Asante on Religion, Peace and Security in Ghana October 21, 2019.

¹⁷ Excerpts of an Interview with Dr Tony Oteng Gyasi.

¹⁸ Excerpts of an Interview Esther Ofei-Aboagye.

¹⁹ Excerpts of an Interview Esther Ofei-Aboagye.

²⁰ Excerpts of an Interview Esther Ofei-Aboagye.

Motivation for Wealth Creation

Motivation for the creation of wealth is as important as the created wealth itself. If absolute consumption is the sole purpose of the creation of wealth, the road to poverty is already chosen. Selfishness, pride, abuse of others, and irresponsible consumption are easily associated with wealth if its sole purpose of creation is for consumption. The parable of the rich fool as told by Jesus points to the fact that the purpose of wealth creation must extend beyond consumption.

The needs of others must be a key motivation for people to create wealth and not just their self-gain. Paul instructed the church in Corinth to use the spiritual gifts that they have received for the common good. Similarly, all other gifts that are received must be for individual benefits but above all for the common good and the ultimate glory of God. John Wesley the father of Methodism was an advocate of wealth creation. In his view, Christians must earn all they can, save all they can and give away all they can. In Proverbs 13:22 'A good person leaves an inheritance for their children's children.'

The understanding is that there must be activities that increase money, profits, property, goods, education, skills, and quality of attitudes of the individual country for wealth creation to take place. Wealth creation involves a distributive dimension, permeating all of its stages from the generation process, the outcome, and the use for and allocation within consumption and investment. They are therefore intrinsically interrelated.

Wealth creation is very important, not only for Christians but for all people in every walk of life. This is so because everyone's future is so important that preparation for it is very necessary. According to John Ofori Tenkorang, 'having a meaningful retirement plan is of crucial importance to everyone.'²¹ But where a Christian accumulates wealth at the expense of the poor and innocent in society, then the creation of such wealth is unacceptable to God. One of the Prophet Isaiah's criticisms of Israel dealt with unethical business practices. Isaiah complained; 'your silver has become dross, your wine diluted with water' (Isa 1:22). The Bible instructs 'You shall not commit unrighteousness and injustice in measures of length, weight, or volume. Just scales, just weights, just dry measures, and just liquid measures you shall have' (Lev 19:39-36). Christians are free to invest in the future through hard work, but must make sure that they don't accumulate wealth in a dubious manner, or at the expense of the poor in society. Christians are stewards of what God gives and are called upon to be generous. The more generous they become, the more blessings he bestows on them (Lk 6:38).

Integrity and Wealth Creation

Wealth creation as a major strategy in reducing poverty is a central concern to many churches, governments, organizations, and individuals. The church encourages and supports its members and the wider society to engage in wealth creation and poverty reduction activities. Many churches and Christian groups are promoting wealth creation by equipping individuals and groups with basic skills, farming, weaving, and batik making. They are also enhancing access to credit through the promotion of cooperative credit unions and micro-finance. Moreover, several churches are engaged in motivating their members to improve upon their socio-economic conditions through preaching, teaching, seminars and conferences.

There have been widespread concerns about corruption and the lack of integrity in the various sectors of national life. Some of these concerns have focussed on corruption in political and high offices. Corruption, however, occurs at both high and lower levels of society. The church's role in fighting corruption and ensuring integrity becomes even more important due to the majority of Christian numbers. The churches must not only encourage and support believers and others to engage in wealth-creation activities as most of them are already doing, but they must also ensure that there is integrity in efforts by governments and citizens to create wealth.

As part of its mission and ministry, the church has a duty to empower the people of God to engage in activities aimed at reducing poverty and creating wealth. The recognition that the fallen

²¹ Excerpts of an Interview with Dr John Ofori-Tenkorang on Old Age and Meaningful Pension March 12, 2020.

nature of humanity can lead to a distortion of the process of wealth creation as it is manifested in unethical practices toward the natural environment; the dispossession of the weak of their right to a fair share of resources and the wealth created from them; as well as the temptation to be corrupt and compromise integrity bestow other responsibilities on the church. It has the responsibility to empower and motivate God's people to recognise and accept their calling to uphold integrity in life and business, as well as calling the government and big business entities to order when they seem to grow insensitive to the plight of the vulnerable. Christians are called upon to be different by exhibiting a superior way of life, which reflects God's righteousness and justice, even in their attempt to create wealth and it is the church's responsibility to empower them to fulfil this task.

Work as a Vocation and Service to God

Poor attitude towards work is a cultural deficit that must be addressed. It does not mean just hard work. Ghanaians are generally hard-working people and whenever the people have the right initiative and stimuli they respond very well. Sound work ethics is how work is conceptualized. In simple terms the way the people approach work and understand what is expected of them. Work ethics for some workers have been ruled by a subsistent philosophy, which sees work more in terms of survival rather than what they can contribute to nation-building.²²

To reach national goals and visions like the Sustainable Development Goals there is the need for a radical reorientation of work ethics which will emphasize contributions more than rewards. It is through such a work philosophy that people become active participants in creating and moving the country toward its goals and visions. This means that work ethics should in real terms, most people are not doing what is expected of them or not doing enough to justify their positions and rewards.

The church must rediscover the Christian work ethic based on vocation as service to God and society. The Christian understanding is that the work is a contribution to God's continuous creation that helps to sustain lives. Work in all aspects of life is of interest to God, because God cares about work, and how duties and responsibilities are discharged.

Wealth Creation and Planning

Wealth creation goes with proper planning, effective implementation, and evaluation. Part of the planning process is to, first of all, survey the market and found out job opportunities or businesses that are available for engagement in wealth creation. Initial planning is extremely important and this cannot be over-emphasized as pointed out by Kwasi Kwafu Adarkwa.²³ Proper planning in seeking God's wisdom and direction is extremely important for anyone who wants to find the right way to wealth creation. As indicated in the book of Proverbs 'commit to the Lord whatever you do, and your plans will succeed' (Prov. 16:3).

Public Theology and Wealth Creation

Public Theology refers to the application of Christian beliefs and principles to social, economic, and political issues in the public sphere.²⁴ In the context of wealth creation in Ghana, Public Theology plays an important role in shaping the values, attitudes, and practices of individuals, institutions, and society as a whole. It places emphasis on social responsibility, justice, and the common good in the efforts towards wealth creation. Public theologians facilitate the promotion of a more holistic and sustainable approach to wealth creation that takes into account the well-being of all members of society and not just the wealthy few. The approach involves advocating for policies and practices that promote economic growth, while also addressing issues of inequality, poverty, and corruption.²⁵

²² J.N. Kudadjie and R.K. Aboagye-Mensah, *Christian Social Ethics* (Accra: Asempa Publishers, 1992).

²³ Excerpts of an Interview with Prof Kwasi Kwafu Adarkwa on Strategic Planning and National Development March 5& 9, 2020.

²⁴ Opuni-Frimpong, "Doing Public Theology in African Christianity," 190-200.

²⁵ Opuni-Frimpong, "Christian Advocacy Ministry in African Christianity" 57-67.

Public Theology further promotes ethical business practices and values that prioritize integrity, honesty, and accountability. By emphasizing the importance of these values, public theologians counteract the culture of corruption and self-interest that have sometimes undermined economic development. They point to biblical principles such as sacrifice, stewardship, hard work, and generosity as important values supporting economic growth and development. The church has a critical role to play in promoting wealth creation consistent with these stewardship principles. This might involve supporting small businesses and entrepreneurs, investing in community development projects, and advocating for policies that promote social and economic justice.²⁶

Public Theology in Ghana, as in many other African countries, is concerned with the relationship between faith and the wider society, including social justice, economic development, and political governance. When it comes to wealth creation, Public Theology seeks to address questions about the role of faith communities and religious leaders in promoting economic growth and reducing poverty. One of the key challenges faced by Public Theology is how to address the structural inequalities and systemic barriers that can prevent many Ghanaians from accessing opportunities for wealth creation. While some churches and religious leaders have been effective in promoting entrepreneurship and business development among their members, others have struggled to address the broader social and economic factors that contribute to poverty and inequality due to the fact they don't consider that as part of their core ministry and mission. To effectively address these challenges, Public Theology needs to engage with broader social and economic issues, including access to education and healthcare, job creation, and economic policies that promote inclusive growth. Church leaders and faith communities must play an important role in advocating for policies that promote social and economic justice, and in supporting initiatives that provide opportunities for wealth creation and economic empowerment.²⁷

While there are opportunities for Christians to engage in economic development and entrepreneurship as part of their faith practice, there is also a need for critical reflection and dialogue about the role of wealth and economic power in the church and society. Wealth creation and economic development must be grounded in social and economic justice that seeks to address the root causes of poverty and inequality in the country. The promotion of Christian values such as honesty, integrity, and social responsibility in business and economic activities must remain core values for public theologians in advocating for wealth creation.²⁸ While the Christian faith provides important values and principles to guide wealth creation and economic development, it is important to ensure that these principles are applied in a way that promotes social justice and equitable economic growth for all members of society. Public Theology has the potential to be a powerful force for promoting responsible and sustainable wealth creation in Ghana. By providing ethical guidance, promoting values of social responsibility and community development, and challenging dominant narratives around wealth creation, it facilitates the creation of a more equitable and prosperous society for all.

SUMMARY

The study is an examination of the place of Public Theology in the church's participation in wealth creation. The article argues that wealth creation that serves the common good must be motivated by perspectives informed by Public Theology. The study admits that wealth creation is a major strategy for reducing poverty and it is a central concern for many churches, governments, organizations, and individuals. Selfishness, pride, abuse of others, and irresponsible consumption are however easily associated with wealth if its sole purpose of creation is for consumption and self-glorification. In the instance where people accumulate wealth at the expense of the poor and innocent in society, the

²⁶ Excerpts of an Interview with Tony Oteng Gyasi

²⁷ Opuni-Frimpong, "Doing Public Theology in African Christianity", 190-200; Opuni-Frimpong, *Christian Advocacy Ministry in African Christianity* 57-67.

²⁸ Opuni-Frimpong, "Christian Advocacy Ministry in African Christianity," 57-67.

creation of such wealth becomes unacceptable according to biblical perspectives and does not serve the common good. The study submits that the motivation for the church's participation in wealth creation must be adequately informed by Public Theology. It recommends that Public Theology must shape the values, attitudes, and practices of churches, individuals, institutions, and society as a whole in wealth creation. It places emphasis on social responsibility, human dignity, justice, and the common good in the efforts towards wealth creation. Public theologians must facilitate the promotion of a more holistic and sustainable approach to wealth creation that takes into account the well-being of all members of society and not just the wealthy few. The approach involves advocating for policies and practices that promote economic growth, while also addressing issues of inequality, poverty, and corruption.

CONCLUSION

Wealth creation that serves the common good must be motivated by perspectives informed by Public Theology. The study admits that wealth creation is a major strategy for reducing poverty and it is a central concern for many churches, governments, organizations, and individuals. Selfishness, pride, abuse of others, and irresponsible consumption are however easily associated with wealth if its sole purpose of creation is for consumption and self-glorification. In the instance where people accumulate wealth at the expense of the poor and innocent in society, the creation of such wealth becomes unacceptable according to biblical perspectives and does not serve the common good. The study concludes that the motivation for the church's participation in wealth creation must be adequately informed by Public Theology. It recommends that Public Theology must shape the values, attitudes, and practices of churches, individuals, institutions, and society as a whole in wealth creation. It places emphasis on social responsibility, human dignity, justice, integrity, and the common good in the efforts towards wealth creation.

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