

DOCTORAL THESIS

Ethical Leadership in the Ghanaian Public Square

The Political and Religious Leadership Thought and Practice of William “Paa Willie” Ofori Atta (1910-1988)

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**ETHICAL LEADERSHIP IN THE GHANAIAI PUBLIC SQUARE:
THE POLITICAL AND RELIGIOUS LEADERSHIP
THOUGHT AND PRACTICE OF
WILLIAM “PAA WILLIE” OFORI ATTA (1910-1988)**

by

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ABSTRACT

This study is an investigation into the political and religious leadership thought and practice of William ‘Paa Willie’ Ofori-Atta (1910-1988), which has by and large been overlooked in studies of pre and post independent Ghana. Previous accounts of Ghana’s political discourse before the current fourth republic of Ghana have been incomplete since they mainly focus on the contributions of Kwame Nkrumah, Joseph Boakye Danquah and Kofi Abrefa Busia. Other political voices have not undergone proper investigation. Furthermore, since William Ofori Atta never became Prime Minister or President of Ghana, he might be perceived by some as being one of history’s losers in Ghanaian politics. Nevertheless, a critical analysis of Ofori-Atta’s political and religious leadership journey will reveal that not only does he play a significant role in five decades of Ghanaian political history but that he left an important legacy for politics and religion in Ghana. This investigation draws on a range of primary sources from archival research and field research interviews and seeks to provide a fresh and a more scholarly account of Ofori Atta’s political and religious thought and practice. Biography as history methodology is used to unearth the themes which encapsulate Ofori Atta’s leadership thought and practice. The main research question is: in what ways do the political and religious leadership thought and practice of William Ofori Atta substantiate the assertion that he was an ethical leader in the Ghanaian public square? The thesis of this research is that a critical examination of the political and religious leadership thought and practice of William Ofori Atta provides the evidence to demonstrate the claim that he was an ethical leader in the Ghanaian public square whose ethical leadership was undergirded by the ethical values of freedom, liberty, justice, unity, integrity, and righteousness.

Chapter one focuses on the leadership formation of William Ofori Atta and finds that he was shaped by his family heritage, educational background, professional development, political seasons, and the Christian faith with regard to his formation into a political and religious leader. Chapter two concentrates on his leadership policy principle of political democracy as national independence and multiparty governance and discovers that the ethical value at the core of his political democracy leadership principle was that of freedom. Chapter three deliberates his leadership policy principle of human rights as rule of law and civil/ political liberties and uncovers that the ethical value at the centre of his human rights leadership principle was that of liberty. Chapter four examines his leadership policy principle of socio-economic development as educational empowerment and economic progress and discerns that the ethical value at the nucleus of his socio-economic development leadership principle was that of justice. The first part of chapter five considers his leadership policy principle of social reconciliation as national conciliation and international dialogue and determines that the ethical value underlying his social reconciliation leadership principle was that of unity. The second part of chapter five assesses his leadership policy principle of personal transparency as personal honesty and personal accountability and reveals that the ethical value at the foundation of his personal transparency leadership principle was that of integrity. Chapter six explores his religious leadership principle of evangelical Christian salvation as evangelical Christian conversion and spirituality and discloses that the ethical value at the heart of his evangelical Christian salvation leadership principle was that of righteousness. Chapter seven reflects on his leadership principle of evangelical Christian mission as evangelical Christian beliefs and ministry and recounts that the ethical value vital to his evangelical Christian mission leadership principle was that of righteousness. The conclusion assesses the legacy of Ofori Atta as a political and religious leader in Ghana whose public leadership was marked by ethical leadership in the public square.

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ABBREVIATIONS

<i>AU</i>	<i>African Union</i>
<i>AFRC</i>	<i>Armed Forces Revolutionary Council</i>
<i>COF</i>	<i>Christian Outreach Fellowship</i>
<i>CPP</i>	<i>Convention People's Party</i>
<i>GCP</i>	<i>Ghana Congress Party</i>
<i>MBC</i>	<i>Maranatha Bible College</i>
<i>MUC</i>	<i>Maranatha University College</i>
<i>NAL</i>	<i>National Alliance of Liberals</i>
<i>NA</i>	<i>National Archives, Britain</i>
<i>NDC</i>	<i>National Democratic Congress</i>
<i>NLC</i>	<i>National Liberation Council</i>
<i>NLM</i>	<i>National Liberation Movement</i>
<i>NRC</i>	<i>National Redemption Council</i>
<i>NPP</i>	<i>New Patriotic Party</i>
<i>OAU</i>	<i>Organisation for African Unity</i>
<i>PMFJ</i>	<i>People's Movement for Freedom and Justice</i>
<i>PNP</i>	<i>People's National Party</i>
<i>PFP</i>	<i>Popular Front Party</i>
<i>PP</i>	<i>Progress Party</i>
<i>PNDC</i>	<i>Provisional National Defence Council</i>
<i>PRRAD</i>	<i>Public Records and Archives Administration Department, Ghana</i>
<i>SMC</i>	<i>Supreme Military Council</i>
<i>UGCC</i>	<i>United Gold Coast Convention</i>
<i>UNC</i>	<i>United National Convention</i>
<i>UP</i>	<i>United Party</i>
<i>Unigov</i>	<i>Union Government</i>
<i>WOAI</i>	<i>William Ofori Atta Institute of Integrity</i>

New International Version (NIV) Bible version used for all Bible quotes unless indicated otherwise

INTRODUCTION

1. Introduction

This study is an investigation into the political and religious life and thought of William “Paa Willie” Ofori Atta.¹ It focuses on the leadership principles that may be derived from William Ofori Atta’s political and religious leadership thought and practice in the Ghanaian public sphere. After delineating Ofori Atta’s leadership policy principles it seeks to analyse the ethical leadership value that forms the core ingredient for each of his leadership principles by using a criteria for ethical leadership based on the literature on ethical public leadership. Thus, the research moves from Ofori Atta’s leadership thought and practice, to his public leadership policy principles and then to his ethical public leadership value. Each chapter of the research will analyse how Ofori Atta’s leadership thought and practice, as well as his leadership policy principle derived from his leadership thought and practice, reflect his ethical public leadership model.

The study advances the thesis that the leadership life and thought of William ‘Paa Willie’ Ofori-Atta, which has by and large been overlooked in studies of pre-independence Ghana and post-independence Ghana, merits fresh examination and needs to be reassessed and retold. The eminent Ghanaian theologian, Kwame Bediako remarked that “there was probably no single person in Ghana who had quite as wholesome an impact on the country’s political life for more

¹ See Kwame Bediako, ‘De-sacralisation and Democratisation: Some theological reflections on the role of Christianity in nation-building in Modern Africa. *Transformation: an International Journal of Holistic Mission Studies* 12:5 1995. For literature on Christian leadership in the public sphere in Africa see Paul Gifford, *Ghana’s New Christianity: Pentecostalism in a Globalising African Economy*. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2004); Ogbu Kalu, *Power, Poverty and Prayer: the challenges of poverty and pluralism in African Christianity 1960-1996* (Trenton: Africa World Press, 2006); Terence Ranger (ed.), *Evangelical Christianity and Democracy in Africa*. (Oxford: OUP, 2008); Ebben van Zyl (ed.) *Leadership in the African Context*. (Cape Town: Juta, 2009); Dickson Mungazi, *Values in Traditional Culture in Africa*. (New York: Pater Lang, 1996).

than five decades, than ‘Paa Willie’”². In addition, the reputed Ghanaian historian Robert Addo-Fening observes: ‘Paa willie was the epitome of humility, statesmanship, integrity, courage of conviction and rare wit.’³ As a testimony to Ofori Atta’s principle centred leadership, the William Ofori Atta Institute of Integrity⁴ exists today in Ghana to promote ethical leadership in public life. This research will critically examine Ofori Atta’s political and religious leadership thought and practice to test if Kwame Bediako and Robert Addo-Fening’s assertions can be validated and if this institute deserves to be so named.

The main research question is: in what ways do the political and religious leadership thought and practice of William Ofori Atta substantiate the assertion that he was an ethical leader in the Ghanaian public square? The thesis of this research is that a critical examination of the political and religious leadership thought and practice of William Ofori Atta provides the evidence to demonstrate the claim that he was an ethical leader in the Ghanaian public square.

The three subsidiary research questions are:

1. What was William Ofori Atta’s political and religious leadership thought and practice?
2. Which leadership policy principles may be derived from Ofori Atta’s political and religious leadership thought and practice?
3. What ethical value, if any, forms the central core of each of Ofori Atta’s leadership principles when his leadership principles are evaluated using the criteria for ethical leadership established by this research?

This study argues that if William Ofori Atta was indeed an ethical leader in the Ghanaian public square, then a critical examination of Ofori Atta’s political and religious leadership life and

² Kwame Bediako, ‘Christian Witness in the Public Sphere: Some Lessons and Residual Challenges from the Recent Political History of Ghana’ in Lamin Sanneh and Joel A. Carpenter, (eds.), *The Changing Face of Christianity: Africa, The West and the World*, (Oxford: OUP, 2005) p. 126.

³ Robert Addo-Fening, ‘Farewell Paa Willie’ *Daily Graphic*, Friday August 19, 1988, p. 5.

⁴ Central University, initiated by the Ghanaian charismatic church the International Central Gospel Church, set up the William Ofori Atta Institute of Integrity (WOAI). The brochure on WOAI state that WOAI exists ‘to offer a unique platform for developing and grooming African leaders of high integrity who will evince Christian-driven incorruptibility, courage and ambition to transform the continent for the greater common good of Africans.’

thought should provide evidence for the assertion that his public leadership was that of an ethical leader.

Also, the study argues that a critical study of William Ofori Atta's political and religious leadership thought and practice reveals that his leadership in the public square was underpinned by the seven leadership principles of political democracy, human rights, socio-economic development, social reconciliation, personal transparency, evangelical Christian salvation, and evangelical Christian mission. The study furthermore argues that that an analytical study of William Ofori Atta's leadership seven leadership principles reveals that his leadership in the public square was underpinned by the six ethical leadership values of freedom, liberty, justice, unity, integrity and righteousness.

As will be deliberated on later in this chapter, in this research the following definition of ethical leadership will be used -- ethical leadership is leadership in which the values of integrity and altruism are demonstrated in a leader's character and conduct in both the private and public life of the leader so as to influence people to achieve worthwhile goals for the common good of society as well as to impact institutions in order to make them life enriching structures.

From this definition, the three criteria for ethical leadership are:

1st criterion: Are the values of integrity and altruism demonstrated in a leader's character and conduct in both the private and public life of the leader?

2nd criterion: Does the leader influence people to achieve worthwhile goals for the common good of society?

3rd criterion: Does the leader impact institutions in order to make them life enriching structures?

The above definition and criteria are shaped by the ethical leadership literature discussed below, especially by the position of Walter Fluker in his seminal work 'Ethical Leadership:

The quest for Character, Civility and Community’⁵. As will be seen below, in his research Fluker used the African American civil rights advocate and activist, Rev. Dr Martin Luther King Jr., as a model of ethical public leadership in the American public arena.

William Ofori Atta played an important role in the public life of pre independent Ghana – the Gold Coast – and post independent Ghana. The road to the independence of the Gold Coast was a rugged one. Yet it was a road that had to be traversed if independence from British colonial rule was to be a realised dream and not simply a daydream. On this road travelled the Gold Coast proto-nationalist and nationalist movements to the turning point when the Gold Coast won its independence and became Ghana on 6th March 1957. Historians of Ghana have pointed out the important role played by six of the key leaders of Ghana’s first political party, the United Gold Coast Convention (UGCC) which was established in 1947.⁶ The six leaders of the UGCC, popularly known as the ‘Big Six’, are widely regarded by historians as the founding fathers of Ghana. They are Joseph Boakye Danquah, Kwame Nkrumah, Edward Akuffo-Addo, Emmanuel Obetsebi Lamprey, Ebenezer Ako Adjei, and William ‘Paa Willie’⁷ Ofori Atta.⁸ The story of the Gold Coast nationalist journey in the 1940s and 1950s has often been written from the viewpoint of two of the six founding fathers of Ghana — Kwame Nkrumah and Joseph Boakye Danquah. As pointed out by Ghanaian historians⁹, Nkrumah and Danquah have become symbols of the radical and conservative schools of Ghanaian politics,

⁵ See Walter Fluker, *Ethical Leadership: The quest for character, civility and community*. (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2009) (hereafter *Ethical Leadership*)

⁶ See Adu Boahen, *Ghana: Evolution and change in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries*. (London: Longman, 1975) (hereafter *Ghana*); Joseph Amamoo, *Ghana: 50 years of independence* (Accra: Jafint, 2007) (hereafter *Ghana*); Roger Gocking, *The History of Ghana*. (London: Greenwood Press, 2005) (hereafter *Ghana*).

⁷ William Ofori Atta was popularly called ‘Paa Willie’ as a name of endearment and respect by the church and society in Ghana. The name ‘Paa’ is used in Ghana as a short version of ‘Papa’ or father and ‘Willie’ is a short version of ‘William’.

⁸ In 2007 the new currency notes of Ghana have the portrait of the ‘Big Six’ on them. Hence fifty years after independence, it now appears that Ghana is now acknowledging the contributions of both the conservative and radical political wings of the nation’s political history. This shows a sign of political maturity of Ghana as a nation.

⁹ See for example Adu Boahen, *Ghana*.

respectively. The contributions of the other four founding fathers — Edward Akuffo-Addo, Emmanuel Obetsebi Lamprey, Ebenezer Ako Adjei, and William Ofori Atta are often overlooked.

This thesis attempts to redress this matter by narrating the convictions and contributions of William Ofori Atta to both pre-independence and post-independence political life in Ghana. Of the six founding fathers, it was William Ofori Atta and Ebenezer Ako Adjei who outlived the other four. Such a study of Ofori Atta's involvement in pre-colonial and post-colonial Ghanaian politics will not only reveal Ofori Atta's views on politics in Ghana, but will also point out the highs and lows of Ghana's political life for the five decades that Ofori Atta was involved in Ghanaian politics. Additionally, Ofori Atta started his political journey as a politician in the conservative Danquah - Busia political tradition and ended it as a unifying politician with persons from both the conservative Danquah - Busia political tradition as well as the radical Nkrumah political tradition joining his Third Republic of Ghana political party the United National Convention. Hence, it will be significant to discover the growth and development of his political thought and activities. The political thought of Ofori Atta is examined through the lens of the political organisations he participated in – the United Gold Coast Convention, Ghana Congress Party, National Liberation Movement, United Party, Progress Party, People's Movement for Freedom and Justice and United National Convention.

2. Ethical Leadership

Joanne Ciulla espouses that ethics is central to leadership studies and that it should not be treated as an accessory.¹⁰ She says that leadership ethics is the interdisciplinary field of study of ethical matters connected with leaders/ leadership and followers/ followership.¹¹ She defines leadership ethics as ‘the study of ethical problems and challenges that are distinctive to and inherent in the processes, practices and outcomes of leading and following.’¹² Ethical leadership lies within the academic discipline of leadership ethics. Ethical Leadership may be understood as leadership that is anchored on ethical values. It is a philosophy of leadership rather than a leadership theory or leadership style. Peter Northouse defines leadership as ‘a process whereby the leader influences others to reach a common goal’.¹³ He says that ethics ‘is concerned with the kinds of values and morals an individual or society finds desirable or appropriate... ethics is concerned with the virtuousness of individuals and their motives.’¹⁴ Bringing the two together he defines ethical leadership as ‘what leaders do and who leaders are.... the nature of leader’s behaviour and their virtuousness.’¹⁵

Stephen Adei, a specialist in leadership studies in Ghana who is also an evangelical Christian, delivered the 10th William Ofori Atta Memorial Lectures in October 2003 in Accra, Ghana. In the public lecture he states that the African political/ governance, economic, social and cultural

¹⁰ Joanne Ciulla, ‘Leadership Ethics: Expanding the territory’ in Joanne Ciulla (ed.) *Ethics, the heart of leadership* (London: Praeger, 2014) pp. 4-5. (hereafter *Ethics*)

¹¹ See the following literature on leadership ethics: Michael Brown and Linda Trevino, Ethical Leadership: A review and future directions *The Leadership Quarterly* 17 (2006) pp. 595-616. David Minja, ‘Ethical practices for effective leadership: Fact or fallacy – the Kenyan Experience’ *KCA Journal of Business Management* 2:1 (2009), pp. 1-15. Christian Resick et al., ‘A cross-cultural examination of the endorsement of ethical leadership’, *Journal of Business Ethics* 63 (2006) pp. 345-359. James Kouzes and Barry Posner, Ethical leaders: An essay about being in love. *Journal of Business Ethics* 11 (1992) pp. 479-484.

¹² Ciulla, *Ethics*, p. 5.

¹³ Peter Northouse, *Leadership: Theory and practice*. (London: Sage, 2007), p. 342. (hereafter *Leadership*).

¹⁴ Northouse, *Leadership*, p. 342.

¹⁵ Northouse, *Leadership*, p. 342.

crises is a leadership crisis that can be solved through effective leadership. He adds that effective leaders build good legacies and that they have three important traits – character, competence and care.¹⁶ They have a character of integrity and trustworthiness, a competence of skills and oversight management ability, and the care of empathy for followers. Adei believes that leadership is crucial to every aspect of a nation's life and that effective leaders can bring positive change to any organisation. As such Adei, who is an economist, is of the opinion that it is possible for Ghana to have the leadership necessary to move the nation from a third world country to a first world country.¹⁷ Such leadership he contends needs to: ‘...elaborate and communicate a desirable vision and goals that give direction to national development efforts.... put together effective growth strategies translated into policies and programmes that, over time, enable the realisation of national goals.... mobilize people who are excited about changing national fortunes.... manage the difficult change entailed in transforming economies including the ability to respond to internal and external shocks.’¹⁸

Effective leaders, he observes, can cause an African renaissance in nation building.¹⁹ Richard Bolden and Philip Kirk in their research on leadership in Africa contend that leadership from the Africa perspective should highlight relationships, dialogue, communal experiences, contest authoritarian power and establish culturally relevant conduct.²⁰ This indicates leadership in Africa is to be embedded in the communitarian aspect of African culture. It may be said that

¹⁶ Stephen Adei, *Leadership and Nation Building*. (Accra: Combent Impressions, 2004) pp. 15-16.

¹⁷ Stephen Adei, *The Promise of Leadership*. (Accra: Combent Impressions, 2004) pp. 22, 24, 25, 26.

¹⁸ Adei, *The Promise of Leadership*, pp. 22, 24, 25, 26.

¹⁹ For leadership studies in Africa see also Kathleen Patterson and Bruce Winston (eds.), *Leading an African Renaissance: Opportunities and challenges*. (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017); Terri Lituchi et. al. (eds), *LEAD: Leadership effectiveness in Africa and the diaspora*. (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017); Baba Jallow (ed.), *Leadership in Postcolonial Africa: Trends transformed by independence*. (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014); Baba Jallow (ed.), *Leadership in Postcolonial Africa: Disruption of Traditional frameworks and patterns*. (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014); Ebben van Zyl (ed.) *Leadership in the African Context*. (Cape Town: Juta, 2009); Iyowu Hagher, *Leading Africa out of chaos: A God-centred approach to leadership* (Ibadan: Spectrum Books, 2002).

²⁰ Richard Bolden and Philip Kirk, ‘African Leadership: Surfacing new understandings through leadership development’, *Journal of Cross Cultural Management* 9:1 (2009) pp. 69–86.

effective leaders with an ethical ethos who harness the positive aspects of African communitarian culture should be able to initiate an African renaissance that will facilitate nation building in order to enhance the wellbeing and welfare of Africans.

The definition of the values that constitute ethical leadership is a contested issue. There is not one size that fits all. James MacGregor Burns believes that the values for ethical leadership are mutuality, choice, responsibly.²¹ He declares: ‘...first ... leaders and led have a relationship not of power but of mutual needs, aspirations, and values; second, that in responding to leaders, followers have adequate knowledge of alternative leaders and programs and the capacity to choose among those alternatives; and third, that leaders take the responsibility for their commitments – if they promise certain kinds of economic, social, and political change, they assume leadership in bringing about of that change.’²²

Manuel Mendonca and Rabindra Kanungo define ethical leadership as ‘the leader’s motives, influence strategies and character’ which are moulded by altruism.²³ They highlight altruism as the main facet of ethical leadership by declaring that the motive for ethical leadership is altruism, and not egotism, in the intent of a leader. Robert Starratt observes that ethical leadership is a type of leadership in which a leader’s principles, beliefs, values, and assumptions produce a moral lifestyle.²⁴ He remarks that the values of ethical leadership are proactive responsibility, personal and professional authenticity, and an affirming, critical and enabling presence.²⁵ Walter Fluker identifies ethical leadership as ‘the critical appropriation

²¹ James MacGregor Burns, ‘Moral Leadership’ in Thomas Wren (ed.) *The Leader’s Companion: Insights on the leadership throughout the ages*. (New York: The Free Press, 1995), p. 483. (hereafter *Leader’s Companion*).

²² Burns, *Leader’s Companion*, p. 483.

²³ Manuel Mendonca and Rabindra Kanungo, *Ethical Leadership*. (Maidenhead: Open University Press, 2007) pp. 8-9.

²⁴ Robert Starratt, *Ethical Leadership* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2004) pp. 5-7.

²⁵ Starratt, *Ethical Leadership*, p. 9.

and embodiment of moral traditions that have shaped the character and shared meaning of a people (an ethos).'²⁶ He says that ethical leaders ask themselves 'Who am I? What do I want? What do I propose to do and become? Who is the other? How am I to respond to the actions of the other on me?'²⁷ He notes that the values of ethical leadership are character, civility and community. Ethical leaders have a character of wisdom and integrity as their identity, a civility of discernment from their relationships with others which guides them in their decision making, and the building of a community of courage, justice and compassion.²⁸

In his study of African Christian ethics, Samuel Kunhiyop says that ethical values 'are underlying, fundamental beliefs and assumptions that determine behaviour.'²⁹ He adds that for some African Christians their ethical values are unchanged in spite of their evangelical Christian conversion. Such Christians are more attached to their pre-conversion ethical values especially to African traditional beliefs and practices. Kunhiyop notes that religion and ethics are intertwined in African societies. The belief in the supreme God shapes the ethical values of Africans. As such in examining the ethical values of an African leader his/her religious beliefs and practices also need to be considered. He asserts that Christian ethics should be based on the Christian understanding of the nature and works of God.³⁰ He adds that God the Father is the norm for Christian ethics, Jesus Christ is the model for Christian ethics, the Holy Spirit is the power for Christian ethics and human beings are the recipients of ethics.

Based on the above, for the purpose of this research the following understanding of ethical leadership will be used -- ethical leadership is leadership in which the values of integrity and

²⁶ Walter Fluker, *Ethical Leadership: The quest for character, civility and community*. (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2009) p. 33. (hereafter *Ethical Leadership*)

²⁷ Fluker, *Ethical Leadership* p.34.

²⁸ Fluker, *Ethical Leadership* pp.57, 175, 179.

²⁹ Samuel Kunhiyop, *African Christian Ethics* (Nairobi: Hippo Books, 2008) p.5.

³⁰ Kunhiyop, *African Christian Ethics*, pp. 51-55.

altruism are demonstrated in a leader's character and conduct in both the private and public life of the leader so as to influence people to achieve worthwhile goals for the common good of society as well as to impact institutions in order to make them life enriching structures. This definition means that ethical leadership is concretised into moral leadership in not only the personal and private sphere of life but also in the organisational and public sphere. There cannot be a privatisation of ethical leadership – it needs to be reflected and refracted in public life. Ethical leadership is both a centripetal force that moves inwards towards the inner private life of a leader and a centrifugal force that moves outwards towards the outer public life of a leader so as to nurture ethical people and ethical organisations in society. The integrity of the ethical leader is a strong devotion to moral principles and practices. The altruism of the ethical leader is a firm dedication to the welfare of other people.

Again, for this thesis it will be claimed that from a biblical angle it may be contended that Christian ethical leadership is leadership that is centred on righteousness and justice. This is because the Bible stresses the importance of righteousness and justice as key attributes of God for example: Psalm 33:5 (NIV) 'The LORD loves righteousness and justice; the earth is full of his unfailing love.'; Psalm 89:14a (NIV) 'Righteousness and justice are the foundation of your throne....' The Old Testament uses the same word – 'Tzedek' – for righteousness and justice. Biblical righteousness means a right relationship with God, oneself, people and nature. Biblical justice means incarnating God's purposes in human society.³¹ Ethical leadership is nurturing leaders who are righteous and just in terms of who a leader is (i.e., the character of a leader) and practice righteousness and justice in terms of what a leader does (i.e., the conduct of a leader). Nupanga Weanzana, Samuel Ngewa, Tewoldmedhin Habtu, and Zamani Kafang in the

³¹ Yusfu Turaki, 'Truth, justice, reconciliation and peace' in Tokunboh Adeyemo, *Africa Bible Commentary*. (Nairobi: WordAlive Publishers, 2006) p. 901.

African Bible Commentary point out that Psalm 89:14a indicates that ‘God combines almighty power with infinite goodness. His reign is characterised by righteousness and justice.... The lack of this combination in human rulers has become a source of great woe for the ruled, and a challenge that needs to be faced by those who rule in Africa.’³² From these Bible texts it may be claimed that a Christian contribution to ethical leadership discourse is that the biblical God of righteousness and justice desires ethical leaders and ethical followers who are righteous and just like the God they worship and serve. The church and society in Africa are need of such ethical leaders and ethical followers.

Can the church work together with the state in the nurture of ethical leaders? The African church has had an ambivalent relationship with the state. Jeff Haynes points out that in the early decades of independence, the church generally sided with the state even when the state was corrupt.³³ This was sometimes due to the financial and social privileges the church received from the state. The economic problems and political dictatorship of most African countries caused a popular demand for more democratic forms of government. This pressurised church leaders to take a stand against undemocratic governments and to voice out the desire of the majority of the population for democracy. The church came out of its privatised role to play a more public role. Haynes explains that the public role of the church is expressed in three strands.³⁴ One strand is the state level in terms of church-state relations. Another strand is the political society level whereby the church forms an alliance with political parties and political movements to achieve certain aspirations. A final strand is the civil society level in which the church independently or in concert with other civic groups seeks to attain set objectives in society. The African church in its pursuit of social justice has made use of all

³² Nupanga Weanzana, Samuel Ngewa, Tewoldmedhin Habtu, Zamani Kafang. ‘Psalms’ in Tokunboh Adeyemo, *Africa Bible Commentary*, p. 713.

³³ Jeff Haynes, *Religion in Global Politics*. London: Longman, 1998. (hereafter *Religion*)

³⁴ Hayes, *Religion*, pp. 6-11, 209-210.

these strands. Hence, the church refused to be a passive actor in societal matters but chose to be an active participant in engaging with society. This stance of the African church in general generates hope for African Christianity's contribution to the development of Africa, especially with regard to the development of ethical leaders in the church and society.

Good leaders enable good governance. This implies that a fundamental need of African society is good leadership. It is good leaders and good leadership that will ensure the planning, implementing, monitoring and evaluating of national plans, policies, programmes, procedures and projects that will create Africa's wellbeing and welfare. Bad leaders and bad leadership have marred national life in some African countries. They have caused political instability, economic regression, social conflict, and religious intolerance. This must change. The *status quo* cannot be allowed to continue. Why has Africa in particular been the setting for some incompetent leaders? One possible answer may be found by examining the traditional African political system of chieftaincy. Isaac Shapera, after an analysis of various traditional political systems in Africa, came to three conclusions about the nature of chieftaincy in Africa.³⁵ First, the African chief is set apart from the rest of society by special symbols of office such as clothing, headgear, bracelets and necklaces. Second, the chief is encircled by detailed ceremonies, for example the manner by which he/she is addressed. Third, chiefs possess great material wealth as compared to the rest of the community.

³⁵ Isaac Schapera, *Government and Politics in Tribal Societies*. (New York: Schoken Books, 1967), pp. 97-98.

Kofele-Kale builds on Shapera's ideas and claims that some contemporary African political leaders behave like traditional African chiefs.³⁶ Although the politician operates in a setting, which is different from a traditional chief, the chieftaincy model becomes their standard of leadership. The politician expects to be treated in a manner similar to a traditional chief. As such some African politicians use special symbols of office, arrogate to themselves special titles and expect to be the most affluent person in their country. The practice of traditional African leadership within a modern political context results in unsuccessful leadership. To correct this, Kofele-Kale calls for the establishment of institutions that will act as checks on the leaders. He points out that in traditional leadership the authority of the chief was counterbalanced by the authority of the council, the elders and the priests. Political leaders can act as if they are African traditional leaders who rule for life and are accorded some privileges due to a traditional ruler. African political leadership ought to operate in line with the systems and structure of modern African state. Political leaders in Africa have an acquired social status and not an ascribed social status.

What does a model of ethical public leadership in Africa look like? The World Bank notes that three African countries stand out when it comes to achievements in national development — Botswana, Mauritius and South Africa.³⁷ Botswana had Seretse Khama whose leadership principles of multi-party democracy and sound economic policies helped Botswana to build a strong economy. Mauritius had Seewoorsagur Ramgoolam whose leadership principles of political pluralism and sound economic policies helped Mauritius to establish social cohesion among its multi-ethnic and multi-religious society as well as develop a strong economy. South

³⁶ Ndiva Kofele-Kale, "The Politics of Development and the Problem of Leadership in Africa", *Crosscurrents* Winter (1978-9) 439-445.

³⁷ The World Bank, *Can Africa Claim the 21st Century?* (Washington, DC: The World Bank, 2000) p.54. See also Robert Rotberg, "The Roots of Africa's Leadership Deficit", *Compass: A Journal of Leadership*, 1 (2003) 28-32.

Africa had Nelson Mandela whose leadership principles of political pluralism, economic inclusion and rule of law helped South Africa to set up a “rainbow” nation. The interesting point to be made here is that various studies, such as that done by Robert Rotberg, show that their leadership model was that of ethical leadership.³⁸

Various research³⁹ studies done on the public leadership of African political leaders such as Nelson Mandela of South Africa, Seretse Khama of Botswana, Seewoorsagur Ramgoolam of Mauritius and Julius Nyerere of Tanzania reveal that their ethical public leadership was characterised by some of the following ethical values: integrity, honesty, probity, accountability, altruism, selflessness, sacrifice, service, humanitarianism, empathy, solidarity, trustworthiness, compassion, courage, humility, justice, liberty. They each differed in the specific ethical values that characterised them. Yet, Mandela, Khama, Ramgoolam and Nyerere are testimonies to the fact that ethical leadership is indigenous to Africa and also that ethical leadership may, in some instances, promote political stability, economic growth, social cohesion and religious coexistence. The preceding discussion is an illustration of ethical leadership in the African public arena.

This research examines the life and thought of an African leader who was active in political matters and who after becoming an evangelical Christian continued to be active in politics contrary to the norms of the evangelical at the time he lived. At a time of ethical malaise in

³⁸ See Rotberg, “The Roots of Africa’s Leadership Deficit”.

³⁹ See Robert Rotberg, *Transformative Political Leadership: Making a difference in the developing world*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2012), Rotberg, ‘The Roots of Africa’s Leadership Deficit’. The World Bank, *Can Africa Claim the 21st Century*, Iyowuese Hagher, *Leading Africa out of chaos*, Faan Malan and Ben Smit, *Ethics and Leadership in Business and Politics*. (Lansdowne: Juta, 2001).

Ghanaian politics William Ofori Atta lived a morally upright life in the political setting. As a political leader he did not believe that ethical leadership should be the exclusive preserve of religious organisations. The study contends that he practiced and called for ethical leaders in the political and societal spheres of national life and that his life and legacy may demonstrate the benefit of ethical leadership to political and religious life in Ghana.

3. Research on William ‘Paa Wille’ Ofori Atta and Research Methodology

Biography as history, according to Barbara Caine, uses the lives of individuals to elucidate the way the past is understood.⁴⁰ It uses the lives and stories of people to appreciate historical change, social transformation and modern-day society.⁴¹ She adds that it is able to highlight the stories of overlooked individuals and groups and share new insights into the historical period of these individuals and groups. It shares the life stories of both prominent people and ordinary people. It reveals how people shaped political, economic, and social institutions as well as how these institutions formed people in a particular era. Caine observes the biography and history have often had a contentious relationship with some historians wary of this field because they are of the opinion that political, economic and social structures should occupy the basis of historical analysis and not individuals or groups. Serie McDougal remarks that narrative analysis research method utilises biographies, letters, archival material, and interviews to tell the story of people and their lived experiences.⁴² Joanna Bornat notes that there are three approaches to biographical methods.⁴³ The biographical interpretive method

⁴⁰ Barbara Caine, *Biography and History*. London: Red Globe Press, 2019) p. 26.

⁴¹ Caine, *Biography and History*, p. 1.

⁴² Serie McDougal, *Research Methods in Africana Studies*. (New York: Peter Lang, 2014) pp. 267-268.

⁴³ Joanna Bornat, ‘Biographical Methods’ in Pertti Alasuutari et al. (eds.) *The Sage Handbook of Social Research Methods*. (London: sage Publications, 2008) pp. 345-349. See also Paul Thompson, *The Voice of the Past: Oral History*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).

identifies themes in a biographical interview, the oral history approach focuses on the orality of the interviewee's thought and verbal expressions in relation to the life story recounted, and narrative analysis focuses on the connection between a story and life in narratives.

Broadly speaking this research is situated with biography as history, but specifically is focused on biography as theology/ ethics. The research will use a methodology which the Baptist theologian, James McClendon, describes as 'biography as theology' to evaluate the political and religious thought and practice of William Ofori Atta so as to discern the ethics of his leadership. However, unlike McClendon who focuses on the use of biography as theology to construct theological doctrine, this research will use biography as theology to construct theological ethical values. The biography as theology approach is appropriate because there is an interaction between the events of a person's life and the images that interpret these events.⁴⁴ Also the thoughts of a person show his/her convictions and convictions disclose character.⁴⁵ The employment of this procedure will help to reveal the key ethical themes that undergird the leadership life of Ofori-Atta. It will enable Ofori Atta to be examined within his social and historical context.

In adopting this approach there are grounds for claiming that 'biography as theology' is consistent with biblical passages such as Hebrews 13:7 which encourages Christian believers to 'remember your leaders, who spoke the word of God to you. Consider the outcome of their way of life and imitate their faith'. This scripture is an invitation for the church to reflect on the lives of God's leaders and learn from their actions and beliefs. The text emphasizes the

⁴⁴ James McClendon, *Biography as Theology: How life stories can remake today's Theology*. (Eugene: Wipf and Stock, 1974, 1991) p. x. (hereafter *Biography*) pp. 72-73. See also James McClendon, 'Biography as theology' *CrossCurrents*, 21:4 (Fall 1971), pp. 415-431

⁴⁵ McClendon, *Biography*, pp. 14-23.

importance of Christian leaders being models by means of their ethics and doctrine. Hence, it is prudent for the church to study its heroes of faith, both the remarkable leaders as well as the ordinary Christians, who have by God's enablement made significant contributions to the building up of the Kingdom of God. The stories of the heroes of faith need to be told and retold to every generation.⁴⁶ As recounted in Psalm 78:4 "... we will tell the next generation the praiseworthy deeds of the Lord"

One of the methods of narrative theology is the use biography to do theology. James McClendon argues that doing theology biographically means "... exploring the path from current ethics to convictions to dominant images to life stories of contemporary 'saints'"⁴⁷ He points out that biography as theology is not the same as theology as biography. The former indicates that the life story of a person is used to construct theology and by so doing elicit new perspectives on theology. The latter implies that theological construction has already taken place and this theology is being put in story form to make it simpler to comprehend. Biography as theology seeks to discover major images in the lives under investigation that converges to form the vision of the subject. It seeks to derive metaphors from a life story which throw light on ethics and theology.⁴⁸ It establishes an ethics of character from which a theology of character is developed.⁴⁹ This biographical approach to theology has been critiqued in several for several reasons.⁵⁰ One is the question of whether images from a biography can adequately provide resources for the formulation of a doctrine. Another query is whether theology needs to be validated by the lives of its adherents.

⁴⁶ This is important more so in African societies where oral tradition is prevalent.

⁴⁷ McClendon, *Biography* p. x.

⁴⁸ McClendon, *Biography*, p. 69, 75.

⁴⁹ McClendon, *Biography*, pp. 2.

⁵⁰ McClendon, *Biography*, p. 75-77, viii-xi.

McClendon's response is that images have a powerful function in shaping thought and behaviour and are therefore satisfactory means for doing theology. Also, he argues that if a truth claim cannot be justified in real life, then the validity of that truth is problematic. In contrast to James McClendon who uses biography as theology to study the lives of prominent leaders, Colby Dickenson says that this method can also be used to study the lives of ordinary people in an autobiography to reveal a fresh understanding of God. He calls this process 'translation' i.e., a translation of the Scriptures from the autobiography of a person and adds that the study should be done in a critical manner. He justifies the method by declaring that the biblical narratives are a translation of God into human context as well a translation of humanity into God's context.⁵¹

Samuel Kunhiyop observes that an essential source for the study of ethics in Africa is that of stories.⁵² Storytelling is a vital feature of African culture and its is sometimes used to teach life virtues. For example, in Ghana the folklores called in the Akan language 'ananse stories' are used to teach morality to both children and adults.⁵³ 'Ananse' is a trickster spider who tries to outmanoeuvre his enemies and from the stories moral lessons can be learnt.

Joseph Healy and Donald Sybertz note that the wisdom and values of African stories, proverbs, myths, cultural symbols, local experiences and contextual realities can be used for an African narrative theology which may address the concerns of people globally.⁵⁴ African narrative theology can enrich society by its praxis theological reflection on relationships, life's meaning,

⁵¹ Colby Dickenson, *Theology as Autobiography: The centrality of confession, relationship, and prayer to the life of faith*. (Eugene: Cascade Books, 2020) pp. 2-14.

⁵² Kunhiyop, *African Christian Ethics*, pp. 11-12.

⁵³ See Georgina Tweneboah Sah, *Ananse Stories: Ghanaian folk tales* (Accra: Nti Group, 2020) and Adwoa Badoe, *The Pot of wisdom: Annase stories* (Toronto: Groundwood Books, 2008)

⁵⁴ Joseph Healy and Donald Sybertz, *Towards an African Narrative Theology* (Maryknoll: Orbis, 1996) pp. 14-16.

suffering and peace-making. Both inculturation and liberation theologians in Africa are utilising narrative theology to address Africa's challenges.

It may be said that a critique of the above theology as biography methodologies is what a person ought to do when the life story themes do not link with traditional Christian doctrines. Does the life story have authority over the Bible or does the Bible correct the life story themes? Walter Fluker's approach to theology as biography seems more promising because he searches for ethical values in the life of a leader rather than the construction of theological doctrines.⁵⁵ Fluker says that ethics is a critical examination of morality. He emphasises that ethics is a 'reflection on morality with the purpose of analysis, criticism, interpretation, and justification of its rules, roles, and relations in a society... the justification of principles brought to bear in resolving conflicts of value and of moral rules in public space.'⁵⁶ He notes that telling the story of a leader in a critical way can reveal the ethical principles of that leader which may be used for personal and social transformation. This narrative based ethics reveals the thoughts, feelings and behaviours of a leader to enable the discernment of that leader's ethical values.⁵⁷

The discernment of ethical values, instead of theological doctrines from a leader's life story resonates with the approach for this research with regard to the use of biography as theology. It may be assumed that Fluker, and this research, use the approach of 'biography as ethical values'. The biography as theology approach or 'biography as ethical values' approach will be used to analyse William Ofori's Atta's political and religious life and thought. This methodology will reveal the key ethical values that undergird his public life. The study will

⁵⁵ Fluker, *Ethical Leadership* p. 11.

⁵⁶ Fluker, *Ethical Leadership* p. 41.

⁵⁷ Fluker, *Ethical Leadership* pp. 46, 56.

examine Ofori Atta's ethical values in a systematic thematic manner. Both his life story and ideas will be investigated to articulate his ethical values.

Using a biography as theology approach, this investigation draws on a range of primary sources, from both archival and field research, and seeks to provide a fresh and a more scholarly account of his leadership life and thought. The research is an intellectual biography of William Ofori Atta's public leadership. The William Ofori Atta family private papers, the Ghana Public Records and Archives Administration Department, the Ghana Akyem Abuakwa Okyehene's palace archives, the British National Archives, the School of Oriental African Studies University of London library and the Gray's Inn law school library provided archival resources on William Ofori Atta for the thesis especially his political speeches, his political pamphlets, his parliamentary documents and newspaper articles related to Ofori-Atta. Interviews were conducted with a number of persons – family, friends, political leaders - who knew William Ofori Atta. The son of William Ofori-Atta, Bernard Ofori-Atta, provided access to the William Ofori-Atta's family papers made up of Bible study notes, written prayers, sermons, political speeches, and personal correspondence. The archives at the Okyenhene (king) palace at Akyem Abuakwa in Ghana provided additional data. Ofori-Atta's published book, *Ghana: A nation in crisis* was an important resource. The School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London provided useful references on Ghana History and African Studies.

This thesis is a contribution to ethical public leadership in politics and religion for Ghana in particular and Africa in general. In Africa religion is pervasive. Religion influences every aspect of life – both the private and the public spheres. African Christianity needs to continuously discover the identity and purpose of the Christian faith in the African church and society. The study is Christian dialogue and interaction with society and church on issues that

help to build righteousness and justice in society and the church. Sunday Agang expresses that African Christianity ought to reflect critically on the Bible and African society and minister God's healing and transformation to every sphere of African society.⁵⁸ Dion Forster says that the Christian faith should engage and reflect on both the church and society so as to exercise a positive Christian influence on society.⁵⁹ He adds that the African Christian faith needs to be 'translating' God's presence into the language used by people in every sector of African society – religious, cultural, social, economic, political. Furthermore, he claims that this endeavour is to be carried out in a manner that is biblical, multilingual, intradisciplinary, policy making oriented, prophetic, and inter-contextual. The thesis analyses the political and religious leadership thought and practice of William Ofori Atta to distil his leadership policy principles as the thematic elements of his public leadership. It is contended that his public leadership policy principles have an ethical ingredient that may contribute to ethical leadership policy making and ethical leadership practice in the Ghanaian public sphere.

The study challenges a number of assumptions about William Ofori Atta. First, the assumption that since Ofori Atta started his political journey with a Busia-Danquah tradition position in politics he ended it with this position. It will be demonstrated that at the penultimate state of his political life he evolved into a political position that mixed both the Busia-Danquah and Nkrumah traditions of politics in Ghana through his participation in and leadership of the People's Movement for Freedom and Justice and the United National Convention political movements. Then, the assumption that when in midlife he became an evangelical Christian and a zealous Christian evangelist his political life and his Christian faith did not relate to each other. It will be argued that in the political arena his Christian faith and practice influenced his

⁵⁸ Sunday Agang, 'The need for Public Theology in Africa' in Sunday Agang (ed.) *African Public Theology* (Nairobi: Hippo Books, 2008) pp. 13-14. (hereafter *African Public Theology*).

⁵⁹ Dion Forster, 'The nature of Public Theology' in *African Public Theology* pp. 16-23.

political ideas and activities. Also, in the church context his political convictions influenced his life and ministry in the Christian community. He used a theocentric approach regarding the Christian faith in political matters and a Christocentric approach concerning the Christian faith in church matters.

This study is a pioneering academic study of the political and religious thought and practice of William Ofori Atta. Previous studies of Ofori-Atta have been sparse and have not been academic in their focus. The most comprehensive published work on Ofori Atta to date is the book *Remembering 'Paa Willie' (William Ofori Atta): The Bridge to a peaceful society* which consist of Ofori Atta's funeral brochure tributes⁶⁰ plus several other articles by his mentees.

The investigation seeks to go beyond popular studies on Ofori Atta by proving a more academic investigation of his life influence and impact. The research is an intellectual biography of William Ofori Atta. It seeks to analyse Ofori Atta's political and religious leadership thought and practice in order to verify if indeed he was who he is said to be – an ethical leader in both church and state. The study has the aim of discovering the leadership policies which Ofori Atta formulated in his political discourse with regards to political, economic, and social issues. Also, his Christian experience will be examined in order to determine if his Christian faith impacted his political discourse. Did the evangelical Christian faith alter William Ofori Atta's character and conduct, or did it bring out features of his character and conduct already there in his pre-conversion life? From his political leadership thought and practice policies and his Christian faith and practice an attempt will be made to distil the leadership policy principles which undergird his political and religious leadership. Then, his public leadership policy principles

⁶⁰ Olive Adjah observes that in the Ghanaian context funeral brochures provide biographical, historical and social data on a person and if analysed critically may be useful for academic research. See Olive Adjah 'Ghanaian funeral brochures: An unexplored rich source of biographical information' in *African Research and Documentation* no. 103 (2007) pp. 33-44.

will be analysed to reveal the distinctive ethical value at the core of his leadership policy principles. As such a thematic approach, not a chronological approach, will be used to investigate the ingredients of his leadership policy principles for each chapter.

The investigation draws on a range of primary sources from archival research and field research interviews, and seeks to provide a fresh and a more scholarly account of Ofori Atta's political thought. The study relates to public theology with respect to the role of the Christian in politics. It attempts to find out if Ofori Atta's Christian faith settled into the private sphere, or if he amalgamates his faith with his politics so that his Christian faith invigorated his politics.

As the narrative of William Ofori Atta's political and religious life unfolds his leadership principles as a leader become visible. This study argues that he can be seen as a political and religious leader whose life and thought was underpinned by the following seven leadership policy principles:

- political democracy as national independence and multiparty governance
- human rights as rule of law and political/ civil liberties
- socio-economic development as educational empowerment and economic progress
- social reconciliation as national conciliation and international dialogue
- personal transparency as personal honesty and personal accountability
- Evangelical Christian salvation as evangelical Christian conversion and spirituality
- Evangelical Christian mission as evangelical Christian beliefs and ministry.

What does leadership in the public arena look like for William Ofori Atta? The definition of ethical leadership as leadership in which the values of integrity and altruism are demonstrated in a leader's character and conduct in both the private and public life of the leader so as to influence people to achieve worthwhile goals for the common good of society as well as to impact institutions in order to make them life enriching structures is used to discern Ofori Atta's public ethical leadership. Additionally, the three criteria for ethical leadership are used to

evaluate Ofori Atta's leadership policy principles to unearth the core ethical value in each leadership policy principle:

1st criterion: Are the values of integrity and altruism demonstrated in a leader's character and conduct in both the private and public life of the leader?

2nd criterion: Does the leader influence people to achieve worthwhile goals for the common good of society?

3rd criterion: Does the leader impact institutions in order to make them life enriching structures?

This research will demonstrate that William Ofori Atta's leadership thought and practice, his leadership policy principles and the ethical value that may be derived from each of his leadership policy principles are the following:

William Ofori Atta's Leadership Thought and Practice	William Ofori Atta's Leadership Policy Principle	William Ofori Atta's Ethical Leadership Value
National Independence and Multiparty Governance	Political Democracy	Freedom
Rule of Law and Civil/ Political Liberties	Human Rights	Liberty
Educational Empowerment and Economic Progress	Socio Economic Development	Justice
National Conciliation and International Dialogue	Social Reconciliation	Unity
Personal Honesty and Personal Accountability	Personal Transparency	Integrity
Evangelical Christian Conversion and Spirituality	Evangelical Christian Salvation	Righteousness
Evangelical; Christian Beliefs and Ministry	Evangelical Christian Mission	Righteousness

Leadership has its paradoxes. It may be argued that both ethical leaders and unethical leaders may promote and practice the leadership principles of political democracy, human rights, socio-economic development, and social reconciliation. However, the literature⁶¹ on ethical

⁶¹ See for example S. A. Eisenbeiß, F. Brodbeck, 'Ethical and Unethical Leadership: A Cross-Cultural and Cross-Sectoral Analysis'. *J Bus Ethics* 122, 343–359 (2014). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-013-1740-0>

leadership points out that ethical leaders use ethical means to achieve ethical ends. For ethical leaders the leadership method is ethical and the leadership results are also ethical. As such for ethical leaders the means and the ends cohere. Unethical may use ethical means to attain unethical ends or may use unethical means to reach ethical ends. For unethical leaders, the means and ends do not correspond. Also, it may be argued that ethical leaders may not automatically be effective leaders, while effective leaders may not necessarily be ethical leaders.⁶² It is possible to be ethical but ineffective in public leadership and effective but unethical in public leadership. Furthermore, it may be argued that it is unethical institutions and unethical structures in society⁶³ that need to be addressed rather than a focus on ethical individuals. Although institutions affect individuals, the converse is equally valid because individuals form institutions. Ethical institutions help to mould ethical individuals and ethical individuals help to create ethical institutions.

When Ofori Atta's seven leadership policy principles are analysed for their core ethical value using the three criteria for ethical leadership values designated by this research, it becomes clear that the leadership principles of political democracy, human rights, socio-economic development, social reconciliation have within them a core ethical value which unethical leaders do not authentically promote and do not genuinely practice unless they do so under

Paresh Mishra & Saneta Maiko (2017) Combating Corruption with Care: Developing Ethical Leaders in Africa, *Africa Journal of Management*, 3:1, 128-143, DOI: [10.1080/23322373.2016.1275942](https://doi.org/10.1080/23322373.2016.1275942)
 Tahiru Azaaviele Liedong. (2017) 'Combating Corruption in Africa through Institutional Entrepreneurship: Peering in from Business-government Relations'. *Africa Journal of Management* 3:3-4, pages 310-327.
 S. Hassan, P. Kaur, M. Muchiri, *et al.* 'Unethical Leadership: Review, Synthesis and Directions for Future Research'. *J Bus Ethics* 183, 511–550 (2023). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-022-05081-6>;
⁶² See for example Robert Rotberg, *Governance and Leadership in Africa*. (Philadelphia: Mason Crest: 2007) and
⁶³ See for example Emmanuel Martey, *African Theology: Inculturation and Liberation*. (Maryknoll: Orbis, 1993) and Joseph Donders, *Non-Bourgeois Theology*. (Maryknoll, Orbis, 1985).

false pretences. A comparison of ethical and unethical leadership in relation to Ofori Atta's six ethical values portrays the following:

Ethical Leadership Value	Unethical Leadership Deficiency
Freedom	Bondage
Liberty	Oppression
Justice	Injustice
Unity	Discord
Integrity	Corruption
Righteousness	Sinfulness

Ofori Atta is widely regarded, by both friends and foes, as a principle centred leader in Ghanaian politics.⁶⁴ During the state funeral held in his tribute after his demise, his family, the Christian church, and the state (with representatives from diverse political persuasions) gave witness to the integrity factor in his life and thought. Integrity leadership is presumed to be Ofori Atta's legacy. This portrait of Ofori Atta is illustrated by the honour given to him by the following institutions in Ghana: Maranatha Bible College awards the William Ofori Atta prize for Christian character, Trinity Theological Seminary awards the William Ofori Atta award for a holistic lifestyle, Christian Outreach Fellowship and the Evangelical community in Ghana hold an annual William Ofori Atta Memorial Lectures and Central University College have the William Ofori Atta Institute of Integrity. In 2010 the William Ofori Atta Centenary Celebrations were organised throughout the year by the Evangelical community in Ghana.

These laudable memorials to Ofori Atta make the claim for his integrity leadership. Nevertheless, from an academic standpoint the integrity leadership claim needs to be substantiated with evidence. Until this is done all that can be said is that Ofori Atta's integrity

⁶⁴ See William Ofori Atta Family Papers, Accra. *Tribute to the late Mr. William Eugene Amoako-Atta Ofori-Atta (Paa Willie) Member of the Big-Six*, Accra, 1988. (hereafter *Tribute*).

leadership is a hypothesis. It is assumed that ethical leadership was the philosophy and practice of Ofori Atta's leadership. It is postulated that Ofori Atta took the option of serving others rather than serving himself. It is taken for granted that Ofori Atta made an ethical choice against self-centred leadership and chose people-centred leadership. However, these assertions have not been investigated in a critical manner. An important factor which influences the assessment of William Ofori-Atta's political and religious leadership is the role of leadership principles. This study reasons that his leadership principles affected his political and religious outlook and was a major cause of why as a leader within the often perceived murky world of politics he became a person who is asserted to be an ethical leader in Ghanaian politics. In ethics both the means and the ends of an action must cohere. As such, in ethical leadership the goals of the leader must be ethical and the method of achieving the goals must also be ethical. The preceding understanding of ethical leadership will be used to measure if William Ofori Atta meets the criteria to be designated as an ethical leader.

To summarise, this study fills a gap in research on William Ofori Atta because there is currently no academic study on William Ofori Atta's role in Ghanaian political and religious life. Next, there is the need for research to analyse Ofori Atta's leadership thought and practice to confirm if Ofori Atta fits the criteria of an ethical leader as he popularly perceived in Ghana. Then, if indeed Ofori Atta was an ethical leader it is important to systematically investigate his specific leadership principles of his ethical leadership.

The present study attempts to address preceding gaps in the academic study of William Ofori Atta and in doing so it makes important contributions. First, the study contributes to academic research on the political and religious life and thought of Ofori Atta and its impact on ethical leadership. The study is one of the first to consider the specific leadership principles that

constitute the political and religious life and thought of Ofori Atta. Second, the research assesses the mediating role of Ofori Atta with respect to the significance of a leader's political and religious leadership thought and practice on that leader's ethical leadership. Thus, the study illuminates the mechanism through which the political and religious life and thought of a leader can influence the leadership principles of that leader and its impact on a nation. Third, no research to the best of the author's knowledge and through a search in peer reviewed data bases has explored the effect of William Ofori Atta's political and religious life and thought on his ethical leadership. Fourth, existing research on the political life and thought of a leader in Ghana has primarily focused on other Ghanaian political leaders – such as Kwame Nkrumah,⁶⁵ J. B. Danquah⁶⁶ and K. A. Busia⁶⁷ - but not on William Ofori Atta. This is one of the pioneer studies to assess the political life and thought William Ofori Atta's and its impact on his ethical leadership.

This study will add to the application of biography as theology/ethics theory in the Ghanaian context using William Ofori Atta as a case study and how it fosters and understanding of ethical leadership in the Ghanaian context. It is hoped that this research may encourage leaders in Ghanaian public life to seek to be ethical leaders in their fields of endeavour.

The limitations of this study are that this research is not a chronological historical study of William Ofori Atta but a thematic historical study of his leadership ideas and activities. It is an intellectual biography which crystalises Ofori Atta's words and deeds into his leadership

⁶⁵ See Ama Biney. *The Political and Social Thought of Kwame Nkrumah* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011) (hereafter *Kwame Nkrumah*), Kwame Botwe-Asamoah, *Kwame Nkrumah's politico-cultural thought and policies: An African-centred paradigm for the second phase of the African Revolution* (London: Routledge, 2004), David Rooney, *Kwame Nkrumah: Vision and tragedy* (Accra: Sub-Saharan Publishers, 2007).

⁶⁶ See Kwame Okoampa-Ahoofe, *Dr J. B. Danquah: Architect of modern Ghana* (New York: iUniverse Inc., 2005), Joe Appiah, *J. B. Danquah: The Man* (Accra: Academy of Arts and Sciences, 1974), L. H. Ofori Appiah, *The life and times of Dr J. B. Danquah*. (Accra: Waterville Publishing, 1974).

⁶⁷ See Anane Agyei, *K. A. Busia a symbol of democracy: exploration of his life and works*. (Accra: Ghana Universities Press, 2018).

principles as the ingredients of his public leadership. Next, the study focuses primarily on written sources by Ofori Atta and written sources about Ofori Atta. Even though interviews were conducted with Ofori Atta's family, friends, political associates and Christian associates to gain a wider understanding of him, the written sources proved more useful in accomplishing the aim of this study. As such, the oral sources are used in a secondary manner. Samuel Daly says that despite the difficulties of archival research in Africa the 'tin-trunk' collection of personal papers of a person or group are valuable resources for study. In this vein it was access to a wooden chop box containing William Ofori Atta's personal papers given to this researcher by William Ofori Atta's son, Bernard Ofori Atta, that enabled this researcher to shift from an original oral sources study of Ofori Atta to a written sources study.

Also, this research is not an ethical theories study but an ethical issues study of the ethical themes in Ofori Atta's life story. Although, it may be said that the virtue ethics method underpins the research it is not the purpose of this research to elaborate on this agent-centred approach to ethics. Samuel Kunhiyop observes that virtue or character ethics asks the question 'what ought we be?' and that unlike teleological ethical theories that focus on ethical ends and deontological ethical theories that focus on ethical obligations, virtue ethics focuses on the character traits of a person in ethical decision making.⁶⁸ Furthermore, this research is not a study in political science theories but a narration of political history with respect to Ofori Atta and its consequences for discerning his ethical values and the elements that constitute his ethical values. Finally, this study is not a detailed exposition of Ofori Atta's religious beliefs and practices but a brief examination of his Christian faith and practice and its implications for his leadership ethical values.

⁶⁸ Kunhiyop, *African Christian Ethics*, pp. 34-43.

4. Thesis outline

Chapter one is a discussion on William Ofori Atta's life story to provide a background for the thesis in relation to his family heritage, educational formation, professional development, political seasons, and Christian faith. Chapter two examines Ofori Atta's leadership principle of political democracy through the topics: a road map to Gold Coast self-government, an alternative blueprint for Gold Coast self-government, multiparty governance as constitutional democracy, and multiparty governance as multiparty democracy. Chapter three explores his leadership principle of human rights through the issues: human rights and the rule of law, the 1934 Sedition Bill, the 1958 Preventive Detention Act and the 1979 Union Government referendum. Chapter four analyses his leadership principle of socio-economic development through the subjects: the nature of 'constructive citizenship' education, implementing 'constructive citizenship' education, vocational and technical education, moral education, the nature of economic progress for 'khaki collar' jobs, agricultural development, industrialisation, local government reforms, and rural development. Chapter five investigates his leadership principle of social reconciliation through the topics: the People's Movement for Freedom and Justice coalition, the United National Convention coalition, the UNC-PNP alliance, the Progress Party and dialogue with apartheid South Africa. The same chapter also examines his leadership principle of personal transparency through the matters: personal transparency as 'my hands are clean' and personal transparency as honesty and accountability. Chapter six assesses his leadership principle of Evangelical Christian salvation through the issues: an analysis of Ofori Atta's conversion using Lewis Rambo's conversion theory, Christian spiritual growth, Bible meditation, Christian prayer, Christian fellowship, and Christian witnessing. Chapter seven considers his leadership principle of Evangelical Christian mission through the subjects:

Ofori Atta's views on the doctrine of the Bible, God, Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit, humanity, sin, salvation, the church, angels and the second coming of Christ, and his Christian ministry through Maranatha Bible College and Christian Outreach Fellowship. The thesis conclusion chapter explores his legacy as an ethical leader in the Ghanaian public square.

CHAPTER ONE

**LEADERSHIP FORMATION:
THE MAKING OF A POLITICAL AND RELIGIOUS LEADER**

1. Introduction

Leaders do not develop in a vacuum. They are nurtured and formed through their interaction with people, ideas, events, institutions and — consciously or unconsciously — with God. The lives of leaders are shaped by the preceding factors and leaders in turn influence people and impact institutions. To rightly understand leaders, it is necessary to examine their leadership formation.

The aim of this chapter is to investigate the individuals and issues which played a role in the growth and development of William Ofori Atta as a leader. It will become clear how the institutions of family, church and society provide an important context for William Ofori Atta's leadership formation. It will be shown that the key influencers of his political journey were of his father, Nana Ofori Atta and his uncle, J. B Danquah. Also, his experiences as a royal and elite were crucial to life in politics. Furthermore, his evangelical Christian conversion was a catalyst to his leadership formation.

2. Family Heritage

On the tenth day of the tenth month of the tenth year in the twentieth century, a child was born to Aaron Eugene Boakye Danquah and Oheneba Abena Obenewaa.⁶⁹ This child was William Eugene Amoako-Atta Ofori Atta. William's father originated from Kyebi and his mother from Pramkuma in the Gold Coast.⁷⁰ Both parents were from royal families. William's father later became Sir Nana Ofori Atta I, a prominent Gold Coast chief of Akyem-Abuakwa. His father was financially rich and powerful politically in the Gold Coast.⁷¹ Akyem-Abuakwa was renowned for its cocoa, gold and diamond wealth.⁷² Emmanuel Yaw Boakye and Susannah Akosua Bou Gyankrommaa were William's paternal grandparents.⁷³ Emmanuel Boakye's uncle was the king of New Dwaben, the Omanhene Asafo Agyei.⁷⁴ Akosua Bou Gyankrommaa was the first cousin of the king of Akyem Abuakwa, Okyehene Amoako Atta I (1866-1887). Her grandmother, Nana Dokua, was the twenty-third monarch of Akyem Abuakwa. This was very remarkable since the rulers of Akyem Abuakwa were all male. Her ancestor, Ofori Panin I was the founder of modern Akyem Abuakwa. She belonged to the Asona clan. Hence both of William's grandparents had a royal lineage and were held in high regard. It was in this privileged environment that William Ofori Atta was nurtured.

⁶⁹ See William Ofori Atta Family Papers, Accra. K. Y. Boafo (ed.), "A short biography of Mr. William Ofori-Atta — Paa Willie" in *Tribute*, p.13.

⁷⁰ A. E. K. Ofori-Atta, "William as a brother: a tribute to Mr. William Ofori Atta", in *Tribute*, p.30. Kyebi is also spelt as 'Kibi'.

⁷¹ K. Y. Boafo (ed.), "A short biography of Mr. William Ofori-Atta — Paa Willie", in *Tribute*, p.13.

⁷² Richard Rathbone, *Murder and politics in colonial Ghana* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1993), p 4. (hereafter *Murder and politics*).

⁷³ The account on Emmanuel Yaw Boakye comes from a depiction of his life in Robert Addo-Fening, *Akyem Abuakwa, 1700-1943: from Ofori Panin to Sir Nana Ofori-Atta*. See also Robert Addo-Fening, 'Chieftaincy and issues of good governance, accountability and development: A case study of Akyem Abuakwa under the Okyehene Ofori-Atta I, 1912-1943' in Irene Odotei and Albert Awedoba (eds.) *Chieftaincy in Ghana: culture, governance and development*, (Legon: Sub-Saharan Publishers, 2006) pp. 325-326. See also Richard Rathbone, *Murder and politics*.

⁷⁴ Richard Rathbone, *Murder and politics*, pp. 27-28.

William's grandfather, Emmanuel Boakye, converted to Christianity in 1886. He was part of the initial set of Christian converts in Akyem Abuakwa who were converted through the ministry of the Swiss Basel Mission.⁷⁵ Rev. David Asante was the head of the Kyebi Basel Mission at this time.⁷⁶ Rev. Asante baptised Emmanuel Boakye in 1876, while Susannah converted to the Christian faith in 1887 as a result of the testimony of her husband Emmanuel.⁷⁷ The Christian conversion of Emmanuel Boakye caused a break in his relationship with Okyehene Amoako Atta. This took place even though Susanna was an *odehyee*, a princess in the royal family. Boakye was deprived of his wealth and status as Chief state drummer in the palace of the king. With regard to the significance of this event, Addo-Fening points out that the decision of Boakye and Susannah to become Christians resulted not only in a strain of relationships in the Akyem Abuakwa royal family but also in the penetration of Christianity into the royal family.⁷⁸ This was later to have far reaching consequences on the relationship between church and state in Akyem Abuakwa.

Boakye became an evangelist in the Basel Mission. He experienced persecution as a result of his Christian faith and evangelistic ministry in Akyem Abuakwa. This came out of the conflict between church and state in Akyem Abuakwa. The Christian ministry of Emmanuel Boakye was not only confined to the preaching of the Gospel. He was also involved in the demonstration of the Gospel. The founding of Kyebi Middle School in 1883 and Begoro Middle School in 1885 owed much to the backing of Boakye.⁷⁹ He believed that education was a key to the development of Akyem Abuakwa. As such he facilitated the setting up of these

⁷⁵ Richard Rathbone, *Have you heard the message to my fathers?: the private consciences and public lives of two remarkable Africans: an inaugural lecture delivered on 30th May, 1996* (London: University of London, School of Oriental and African Studies, 1996).

⁷⁶ Addo-Fening, *Akyem Abuakwa*, pp.63-65.

⁷⁷ Addo-Fening, *Akyem Abuakwa*, p. 2 16.

⁷⁸ Addo-Fening, *Akyem Abuakwa*, p. 65.

⁷⁹ *Ibid*, p. 201.

institutions to make it possible for the young people of Akyem Abuakwa to be equipped for a career in teaching. Even though the former had a very short lived life span, the latter developed into a prestigious school in Akyem Abuakwa.

On 11th October 1881, Susannah Akosua Bou Gyankrommaa and Emmanuel Yaw Boakye had a son – William Ofori Atta’s father -- whom they named Kwadwo Fredua Agyemang.⁸⁰ In 1912 Kwadwo Fredua Agyemang was christened as Aaron Eugene Boakye Danquah.⁸¹ His mother passed away when he was eight years old and as such he grew up under his grandmother’s care.⁸² He also lost a younger and an older brother. Rathbone notes that Kwadwo Fredua’s difficult early life experiences of the loss of loved ones and the persecution of his family due to his father’s Christian ministry affected his outlook in life making him a stalwart person.

In 1903 Kwadwo Fredua married Ellen Kwakoa in both a traditional marriage and a church marriage.⁸³ After he became the okyenhene he had traditional marriages with other royal women. This was done to meet the customary demand for a king to establish a large family succession. In his life time, he had at least forty-four wives and over fifty-one children.⁸⁴ His enthusiasm for formal education ensured the education of most of his children. Rathbone points

⁸⁰ The narrative on Kwadwo Fredua Agyemang, later to become Nana Sir Ofori-Atta I, is based on accounts of his life in Robert Addo-Fening, *Akyem Abuakwa, 1700-1943: from Ofori Panin to Sir Nana Ofori-Atta*; Robert Addo-Fening, ‘Chieftaincy and issues of good governance, accountability and development: A case study of Akyem Abuakwa under the Okyenhene Ofori-Atta I, 1912-1943’ in Irene Odotei and Albert Awedoba (eds.) *Chieftaincy in Ghana: culture, governance and development* pp. 325-352; Richard Rathbone, *Murder and politics in colonial Ghana*; Richard Rathbone, ‘Death and politics: West Africa in the 1940s, *History Today* 43 (1993) pp. 43-49; Richard Rathbone, *Have you heard the message to my fathers?* pp. 1-15.

See also Magnus J. Sampson, *Gold Coast men of affairs*, London: Dawsons, 1969; Isaac Ephson, *Gallery of Gold Coast celebrities, 1632-1958*, (Accra: Ilen, 1969); Kumi Attobrah, *The kings of Akyem Abuakwa and the ninety nine wars against Asante*, Tema: Ghana Publishing Corporation, 1976; Anthony A. Beeko, *The trail blazers: fruits of the Presbyterian Church of Ghana, 1828-2003* (Accra: Afram Publications, 2004).

⁸¹ Addo-Fening, *Akyem Abuakwa*, p. 206.

⁸² Rathbone, *Murder and politics in colonial Ghana*, pp. 31-32.

⁸³ Rathbone, *Murder and politics in colonial Ghana*, pp. 40.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.* A personal document of William Ofori-Atta lists 46 children with William being the fifth child; see William Ofori-Atta, *The names of the sons and daughters of the late Nana Sir Ofori-Atta*. Interestingly, all the names on the list but the last name have Nana Ofori-Atta’s middle name ‘Eugene’ as a middle name for both the sons and the daughters.

out that as okyenhene, Kwadwo Fredua made use of his marriages and his children as means to strengthen his kingdom.⁸⁵ He took a wife from all the foremost towns of his state and used his children as personnel to rule his state.

Kwadwo Fredua was nurtured in the Basel Presbyterian Christianity by his parents. He was also influenced by Presbyterianism in his educational formation. In his adulthood he was faithful as a communicant and in the payment of his dues.⁸⁶ However, after his installation as *okyenhene* his Christian practice came to an end. This may have been a result of his view that some aspects of chieftaincy and Christianity do not mix together. Nevertheless, he was very favourable toward Christianity and allowed freedom of worship in his kingdom. His children received Presbyterian education and the local Presbyterian ministers visited his palace regularly to pray for him.

Addo-Fening notes that Kwadwo Fredua was seen by the British colonial government as a key counsellor to the okyenhene — both Amoako Atta II and Amoako Atta III.⁸⁷ Rathbone observes that Kwadwo Fredua had the goodwill of Amoako Atta II.⁸⁸ As such, it was no surprise when immediately after the destoolment of Amoako Atta III, Kwadwo Fredua was invested as the next okyenhene on 27th November 1912⁸⁹, with the stool name Ofori Atta I.

The rise of Nana Ofori Atta I to the throne of Akyem Abuakwa marked a turning point in the life of her citizens in particular and the Gold Coast in general. He brought to the office of the

⁸⁵ Rathbone, *Murder and politics in colonial Ghana*, pp. 41.

⁸⁶ Richard Rathbone, *Have you heard the message to my fathers?* pp. 3-5.

⁸⁷ Addo-Fening, 'Chieftaincy and issues of good governance, accountability and development', *Chieftaincy in Ghana*, p. 326.

⁸⁸ Rathbone, *Murder and politics in colonial Ghana*, p. 37.

⁸⁹ Rathbone dates the investment as 30th November, 1912. See Richard Rathbone, *Murder and politics in colonial Ghana*, p. 37.

okyenhene his rich entrepreneurial, managerial and leadership experience. Addo-Fening notes that three major challenges in Akyem Abuakwa confronted Nana Ofori Atta I — the waning of chieftaincy as an institution, economic difficulties and social problems.⁹⁰ Okyenhene Ofori Atta's response to this was to formulate and implement policies that would ensure the sustainable development of Akyem Abuakwa. Addo-Fening points out that Ofori Atta, firstly, enacted legislation for managing state affairs.⁹¹ Secondly, he set out a policy of accountability by chiefs and elders to their constituents.⁹² Thirdly, Ofori Atta promoted the socio-economic development of Akyem Abuakwa.⁹³ He had a strong passion for formal education and this was translated into the establishment of Kyebi Government Primary School, Kyebi Government Trade School, Kyebi Government Middle Boarding School, Abuakwa State College (a secondary school), and the canvassing for an Akyem Abuakwa Girls' Boarding School although this was not fulfilled. Fourthly, he created an enabling environment for social cohesion.⁹⁴ He abolished outmoded customary practices which the British government had consistently been in opposition to such as human sacrifice, judicial torture, the ritual for exposing witches and unsafe shrines. In addition, he resolved the perennial conflict between state and church in Akyem Abuakwa.

The positive leadership of Nana Ofori Atta in Akyem Abuakwa did not go unnoticed by the colonial government. From 1916 to 1943 he served as an unofficial member of the Gold Coast Legislative Council.⁹⁵ The mark Nana Ofori Atta made in educational progress, socio-

⁹⁰ Addo-Fening, 'Chieftaincy and issues of good governance, accountability and development', *Chieftaincy in Ghana*, pp. 326-328.

⁹¹ *Ibid*, pp. 329-334, 344, 346. See also Addo-Fening, *Akyem Abuakwa*, p. 212-213.

⁹² Addo-Fening, 'Chieftaincy and issues of good governance, accountability and development', *Chieftaincy in Ghana*, pp. 334-338.

⁹³ *Ibid*, pp. 338-343. See also Addo-Fening, *Akyem Abuakwa*, p. 207-212.

⁹⁴ Addo-Fening, *Akyem Abuakwa*, pp. 212-216. See also Addo-Fening, 'Chieftaincy and issues of good governance, accountability and development', *Chieftaincy in Ghana*, p. 346.

⁹⁵ Addo-Fening, 'Chieftaincy and issues of good governance, accountability and development', *Chieftaincy in Ghana*, pp. 345-346. See also Addo-Fening, *Akyem Abuakwa*, pp. 218.

economic development and good governance was credited with the award of the Commander of the British Empire by the British government in 1919 and a knighthood in 1928.

Nevertheless, everything was not smooth sailing for Nana Ofori Atta. He faced a number of internal and external challenges. Some of his sub-chiefs were unhappy with his stool lands administration policy.⁹⁶ They felt that it was a centralisation of authority and that this benefited the okyenhene and Kyebi more than the localities. Then, some of the chiefs in the hometowns of the immigrant farmers were against the submission of their citizens to Akyem Abuakwa laws. These chiefs believed that their subjects should be under their jurisdiction no matter where they lived. Also, some of the citizens of Akyem Abuakwa were of the opinion that Nana Ofori Atta used state wealth, rather than personal wealth, to educate his family members.⁹⁷ They found this to be untenable. In addition, he used a good number of his children and close relations as personnel to run the palace, was seen as nepotism by a part of the populace.⁹⁸ Furthermore, he was accused of being used by the colonial government to entrench imperialism in the Gold Coast.

To appreciate the thoughts of Nana Sir Ofori Atta I, it is helpful to examine a speech he made in the Gold Coast Legislative Council on 29th September 1942.⁹⁹ The matter at hand was a proposed motion calling for the provision of a separation allowance to British civil service officers whose wives were non-resident in West Africa. In his speech to the Council, Nana Ofori Atta argues against the motion. He recognizes the fact that the European members of the Legislature outnumbered the African members and that when a vote takes place the position of

⁹⁶ Addo-Fening, *Akyem Abuakwa*, pp 178-179.

⁹⁷ Rathbone, *Murder and politics in colonial Ghana*, pp. 39-40.

⁹⁸ Rathbone, *Murder and politics in colonial Ghana*, pp. 39-40.

⁹⁹ Nana Sir Ofori-Atta, 'We shall not hold our tongue' in H. K. Akyeapong (comp.) *The foundations of self-government: selected historic speeches on Ghana's independence by some of her past leaders*. (Accra: George Boakie Publishing Co., 1966) pp. 17-24.

the European members was certain to prevail. Nevertheless, Nana Ofori Atta firmly declares ‘we shall not hold our tongue’¹⁰⁰ and states his intention to debate the issue to its logical conclusion.

On the substance of his argument, Nana Ofori Atta emphasises the following: ‘To allow a European Government servant a separation allowance to the benefit of his wife because his emolument is not good enough to shoulder his liabilities in all circumstances must be seriously questioned.... We do not think that the Government is justified in taking out the cocoa farmer’s special contribution to the General Revenue as his war effort (the sur-tax) any portion to subsist any wife of any [European] Government official to whom he owes no obligation whatsoever’.¹⁰¹

The preceding speech by Nana Ofori Atta points out his view on two concerns. It attests the importance of African government officials vis-à-vis European government officials. Then, he defends the interest of the Gold Coast taxpayer, especially the cocoa farmer, in matters affecting the economic life of Gold Coasters. Indeed, Nana Ofori Atta does not hold his tongue. Rather, he speaks up boldly for the cause of those who contribute to the economic lifeblood of the Gold Coast.

It is this tradition of speaking out fearlessly on issues affecting the interests of Gold Coasters that William Ofori Atta may have inherited from his father Nana Ofori-Atta. Hence, from the political leadership of his father, William Ofori Atta might have cultivated the practice of

¹⁰⁰ Nana Sir Ofori-Atta, ‘We shall not hold our tongue’ in Akyeapong, *The foundations of self-government*, p.17.

¹⁰¹ Nana Sir Ofori-Atta, ‘We shall not hold our tongue’ in Akyeapong, *The foundations of self-government*, pp. 21-22.

boldness in speech. As will be seen in subsequent chapters, for the five decades of his political life William Ofori Atta boldly shattered his convictions.

Nana Ofori Atta died on 20th August 1943.¹⁰² His death left a vacuum in the stature and authority of Akyem Abuakwa on national life. His death also led to a crisis in Akyem Abuakwa in relation to the Kyebi murder case¹⁰³ which revolved around the disappearance of Akyea Mensah, the chief of Apedwa, in February 1944. Subsequently, eight members of the Kyebi royal family were charged with murder. Eventually, all eight were found guilty – three of them were hanged, four were given long term imprisonment and one passed away while in prison. The royal family viewed the matter as a set-up, the people of Apedwa saw it as ritual murder, while the colonial government regarded it as a murder case. The effect of the Akyea Mensah affair was the division of Akyem Abuakwa into pro and anti royal factions, the diminishing stature of the Kyebi royal family, and the humiliation of the Ofori Atta family.¹⁰⁴

When Susannah Akosua Bou Gyankrommaa passed away, Emmanuel Yaw Boakye married Lydia Okom Korantemaa.¹⁰⁵ On 21st December 1895 Yaw Boakye and Lydia had their first child whom they named Joseph Kwame Kyeretwie Boakye Danquah. He was educated at the Kyebi Basel Mission Primary School and the Begoro Basel Mission Grammar School. He worked as a clerk with the lawyer Vidal Buckle, a clerk in the Gold Coast Supreme Court, the secretary to the Kyebi traditional court and the chief clerk and registrar of Kyebi traditional court. He initiated the Akyem Abuakwa Scholars Union which acted as the mouthpiece of the formally educated on matters of concern in the state.

¹⁰² Rathbone, *Murder and politics in colonial Ghana*, pp. 4-6.

¹⁰³ For an in depth analysis of the Kyebi murder case see Rathbone, *Murder and politics in colonial Ghana* and also Rathbone, 'Death and politics: West Africa in the 1940s' *History Today*, Jun 93, Vol. 43, Issue 6, pp. 43-49.

¹⁰⁴ Rathbone, *Murder and politics in colonial Ghana*, chap.

¹⁰⁵ L. H. Ofosu-Appiah, *The life and times of Dr. J. B. Danquah*, (Accra: Waterville, 1974), pp. 17-21.

Joseph Danquah initially supported his elder half-brother, Nana Ofori Atta's position on indirect rule form of colonial administration in the Gold Coast. Later on, he changed his position and fought for independence from colonial rule. Danquah's significant contribution to Gold Coast politics later led to the accolade the 'Doyen of Gold Coast Politicians'. As will be seen in due course, he had a great influence on Ofori Atta's political journey.

William Ofori Atta married Mary Amoah,¹⁰⁶ popularly known as 'Auntie Mary'. Mary was born on 29th April 1921 to Nana Edumadze IV of Ekumfi Edumafar and Dinah Duncan of Ekumfi Srafa. The two towns are Fanti speaking towns in the Central Region of Ghana. William and Mary met when William was working as a teacher in the Prince of Wales College in the Gold Coast and Mary was studying for her Teacher's Certificate at the same school. William taught Mary a course on English History and some of the members of the class paid particular attention the catchy phrase "William and Mary" with respect to the topic dealing with William of Orange (later William II of England) and his wife Mary II who reigned in England, Ireland and Scotland during the late seventeenth century. The class was, therefore not surprised when William and Mary eventually got married in January 1943. Mary found William to be a witty and chirpy person.¹⁰⁷ William found Mary to be a diffident and industrious person.¹⁰⁸

The marriage of William and Mary faced several severe challenges but two endured because of the love they had for each other. William's challenge was that he had no children with Mary, yet he loved her and remained committed to her through their marriage. This was a genuine

¹⁰⁶ "Biography of the late Mary Ofori-Atta", *Burial and thanksgiving service for the late Mrs. Mary Ofori-Atta*, (Accra: n.p., 1986), p.1.

¹⁰⁷ K. Y. Boafo (ed.), "A short biography of Mr. William Ofori-Atta — Paa Willie" in *Tribute*, p13.

¹⁰⁸ "Biography of the late Mary Ofori-Atta", *Burial and thanksgiving service*, pp. 1-2.

expression of love in a culture where children are considered a necessity for every marriage. Mary's challenge was that despite the many political detentions that William went through, she loved William and stayed with him in the midst of financial hardship.¹⁰⁹ They shared their love not only within their marriage but extended it to other people.

William first child was a son, Bernard Ofori Atta, whom he had with an English lady, May Ivimy, whilst he was a student at Cambridge University in England.¹¹⁰ Bernard left his mother in England for Ghana, at the age of thirteen, to stay with his father. Mary did not hesitate to welcome Bernard into their home. She loved and nurtured Bernard who in turn regarded her as his mother. Bernard expressed his first contact with Mary as follows: 'I saw an exceedingly beautiful and gracious lady. Her conversation showed her to be highly intelligent and deeply perceptive. The result was that I was at ease with her from the start and had no misgivings at all in starting a new life with her'.¹¹¹

William's second child was a daughter, Joyce Ofori Atta who was born in 1948.¹¹² As a further demonstration of their love for people, William and Mary adopted William's younger sister, Diana Ofori Atta, when William's father died. Diana describes her relationship with William and Mary as "love at first sight".¹¹³ They helped her to grow and develop from

¹⁰⁹ "Biography of the late Mary Ofori-Atta", *Burial and thanksgiving service*, p. 2.

¹¹⁰ Interview with Bernard Ofori-Atta, 1st August, 2007. See also William Ofori-Atta, 'Answers of William Ofori-Atta to the questionnaire under the investigations and forfeiture of assets decree 1972 (N.R.C.D. 19)'. This document lists 'Bernard Ofori-Atta (37 years old) Married' under the heading 'Marital Status and Family Particulars'. His mother is not mentioned.

¹¹¹ Bernard Ofori-Atta, "Biography of the late Mary Ofori-Atta". *Burial and thanksgiving service*, p. 5.

¹¹² William Ofori-Atta, 'Answers of William Ofori-Atta to the questionnaire under the investigations and forfeiture of assets decree 1972 (N.R.C.D. 19)'. This document lists 'Joyce Ofori-Atta (24 years old) Married' under the heading 'Marital Status and Family Particulars'. Her mother is not mentioned. I find it to be an anomaly as to why Joyce was not mentioned Ofori-Atta's funeral booklet. This may imply an estrangement between Ofori-Atta and his daughter at the time of his death or possibly that Ofori-Atta could not reconcile with some of the shadows of his past life.

¹¹³ Diana Boafo, "My 'Paa' Willie: tribute by a paternal sister who was brought up by Paa Willie" in *Tribute*, pp.85-86.

childhood to adulthood. Even though William was Diana's brother, she called him "Pa" since she saw him as father figure. Diana stayed with the Ofori Attas until she was given away in marriage by William to Mr. K. Y. Boafo.

3. Educational Background

Ofori Atta's educational life contributed to shaping his attitude towards people and circumstances. His primary school education was at the Kyebi Government School.¹¹⁴ He was there from 1918 to 1925. He was nicknamed "Kwesi Smart" by one of the teachers due to his high-spirited extrovert nature and his sporting skills.¹¹⁵ He was very good in cricket. At Kyebi Government School, young William came under the tutelage of the following renowned headmasters — H. M. Grant, Sonne Akwei and Richard Akwei. They were noted for enforcing the Presbyterian tradition of a strong commitment to academic and personal discipline.

Mfantsipim School in Cape Coast was the setting for the first part of his secondary education from 1925-1928.¹¹⁶ William's father enrolled both William and his younger brother, Aaron Ofori Atta, at Mfantsipim.¹¹⁷ Mfantsipim was established by the Methodist Church of Britain. It was the first secondary school in the Gold Coast and was renowned for its academic excellence and spiritual nurture. There William made friends who would later on in life turn out to be either his political allies or his political rivals. Notable among them was Kofi Busia who became one of his closest political collaborators. Rev. R. A. Lockhart, from Ireland, was

¹¹⁴ William Ofori-Atta, 'Answers of William Ofori-Atta to the questionnaire under the investigations and forfeiture of assets decree 1972 (N.R.C.D. 19).'

¹¹⁵ K. Y. Boafo (ed.) "A short biography of Mr. William Ofori-Atta — Paa Willie", *Tribute*, p. 13.

¹¹⁶ William Ofori-Atta, 'Answers of William Ofori-Atta to the questionnaire under the investigations and forfeiture of assets decree 1972 (N.R.C.D. 19).'

¹¹⁷ K. Y. Boafo (ed.) "A short biography of Mr. William Ofori-Atta — Paa Willie", *Tribute*, p. 13-14.

the headmaster at Mfantshipim when Ofori Atta was a student. The school community saw Lockhart as a fervent Irish patriot and an anti-imperialist. It is possible that Lockhart's political convictions may have made an impression on the youthful Ofori Atta at Mfantshipim. In a political campaign speech in 1948 he expresses fond memories of his education at Mfantshipim. He says: 'I am not a stranger to Cape Coast... it was my birthplace intellectually. I was at Mfantshipim years ago – not the Mfantshipim built of today; that was at Mfantshipim built on Mount Hope looking clearly at Mount Joy.'¹¹⁸

In 1929, a new government initiated secondary school, the Prince of Wales College (later to be known as Achimota College), was established in Accra.¹¹⁹ Prior to this all secondary schools in the Gold Coast were missionary established schools. Since Ofori Atta's father, Nana Sir Ofori Atta, was part of the team that set up the school, he enrolled William and Aaron at the Prince of Wales College for the second part of their secondary education. William spent four years, 1929-1933, at the college.¹²⁰ There William met Edward Akuffo Addo, his cousin and later political ally as well K. A. Gbedemah, a life long friend who was to become initially a political adversary and later a political associate. He served as a Senior Prefect of the school.¹²¹

Ofori Atta had a privileged upbringing since his father belonged to the upper class of Gold Coast society. He had his university education at Queens's College, Cambridge University in England from 1935 to 1938.¹²² He graduated from there with a Bachelor of Arts in

¹¹⁸ William Ofori Atta 'Self-Government is Here Today Says Mr. Ofori Atta' in *The Gold Coast Observer* July 16, 1948, p. 127,

¹¹⁹ K. Y. Boafo (ed.), "A short biography of Mr. William Ofori-Atta — Paa Willie" in *Tribute*, p. 14.

¹²⁰ William Ofori-Atta, 'Answers of William Ofori-Atta to the questionnaire under the investigations and forfeiture of assets decree 1972 (N.R.C.D. 19)'.

¹²¹ L. H. Ofosu-Appiah, *The life and times of Dr. J. B. Danquah*, p. 63.

¹²² William Ofori-Atta, *Answers of William Ofori-Atta to the questionnaire under the investigations and forfeiture of assets decree 1972 (N.R.C.D. 19)*. See also William Ofori-Atta, *Draft Who's Who in the world*.

Economics.¹²³ He studied under the tutelage of the Professor Joan Violet Robinson.¹²⁴ He joined the Cambridge University Democratic Front.¹²⁵ He was active in public political debates. The eminent Ghanaian historian, Robert Addo Fening remarks: ‘Paa Willie was an active participant in student political activity. In England he showed sympathy for socialist views and often spoke on socialist party platforms.’¹²⁶ It is noteworthy that as an undergraduate student he held on to socialist political views because later on in life the influence of his uncle J. B. Danquah led him to change to conservative political views. Life at Cambridge was not always rosy for William. During his time there his father Nana Ofori Atta embarked on the establishment of Abuakwa State College and due the high cost of the project Nana Ofori Atta provided William the basic requirements for his education.¹²⁷ . After his Cambridge studies he returned to Ghana to teach at the Prince of Wales College as well as to be actively involved in party politics under the tutelage of his uncle J. B. Danquah.

The London School of Economics and Political Science became the next educational institution for William Ofori Atta in 1938.¹²⁸ There he pursued a Master of Science degree in Economics.¹²⁹ However, his studies ended abruptly in 1939 due the economic problems he faced in connection with the Second World War. Hence, his father asked him to return to Ghana and arranged for him to teach at the Prince of Wales College.

¹²³ K. Y. Boafo (ed.), “A short biography of Mr. William Ofori-Atta — Paa Willie” in *Tribute*, p. 13.

¹²⁴ In the archive of Prof. Joan Robinson, Cambridge University, Cambridge, ref. JVR/7/321 – date 1936-1938 Ofori-Atta wrote a letter to Joan Robinson expressing his appreciation for her supervision of his studies.

¹²⁵ K. Y. Boafo, (ed.), “A short biography of Mr. William Ofori-Atta — Paa Willie” in *Tribute*, p. 14.

¹²⁶ Robert Addo-Fening, ‘Farewell Paa Willie’ *Daily Graphic*, Friday August 19, 1988, p. 5.

¹²⁷ Addo-Fening, ‘Chieftaincy and issues of good governance, accountability and development’, p. 340.

¹²⁸ William Ofori-Atta, *Answers of William Ofori-Atta to the questionnaire under the investigations and forfeiture of assets decree 1972 (N.R.C.D. 19)*.

¹²⁹ L. H. Ofori-Appiah, *The life and times of Dr. J. B. Danquah*, p. 63.

4. Professional Development

Ofori Atta was a teacher at the Prince of Wales College (later to be known as Achimota College) from 1939 to 1943.¹³⁰ One of his close friends was Ephraim Amu who was a colleague on the teaching staff of the college who was a music teacher.¹³¹ This friendship was tested when Ofori Atta wrote a blunt letter to Amu expressing his disagreement with Amu's novelty in traditional African music. The following brings out the full import of Ofori Atta's thinking:¹³² 'The *Bommaa* dance is a traditional dance. It is a State Dance. Our first duty is to learn it in its purest form. Any reform or innovation may come when we have mastered it thoroughly and when we know its full value. It is a sacrilege to introduce at this stage something which is not a fundamental part of it....A minor defect was that there was an European beating of time element in it which spoilt our traditional heritage of rhythm....But another thing was sacrilege i.e., Women Beating the drums of the *Bommaa* set – one of the greatest taboos'.¹³³

This letter reveals Ofori Atta's close affinity to Akan tradition and culture since he does not want a change to form and practice of the *Bommaa* traditional dance. For someone whose father held strongly to traditional beliefs and practices this comes as no surprise. The upholding of positive traditional values was to undergird Ofori Atta's conception and practice of leadership throughout his life. Amu new initiative in African music was not because he had a low regard for it. On the contrary, it was because of his love for African music that he felt it needed to be modernised to suit the current generation of Africans. Furthermore, Amu was so pro-African

¹³⁰ William Ofori-Atta, *Answers of William Ofori-Atta to the questionnaire under the investigations and forfeiture of assets decree 1972 (N.R.C.D. 19)*.

¹³¹ For a biography of Amu see Fred Agyemang, *Amu the African: a study of vision and courage*. (Accra: Asempa Publishers, 1988) pp. 146-137. Amu was previously Ofori-Atta's teacher when Ofori-Atta was student at the Prince of Wales College. Amu was born in 1899 and died in 1995. He was, therefore 30 years old when Ofori-Atta continued his secondary education at Prince of Wales College in 1929 at the age of 19.

¹³² William Ofori-Atta, *Letter to Ephraim Amu*. See also Fred Agyemang, *Amu the African*, p.160.

¹³³ See Ephraim Amu Family Papers, Keta.

that he focused on the use of African food, clothing and language in daily life. That Ofori Atta was Amu's best man when the latter got married in September 1942 shows that their friendship accommodated a divergence of viewpoints.¹³⁴ Amu continued with his innovation in African music and is now celebrated as one of Africa's leading musicologists.¹³⁵

Amu's life philosophy was analogous to that of Ofori Atta. Both men were passionate about the dignity and capacity of African people to manage their destiny. In a sermon preached at the college chapel in July 1937 Amu showed his firm belief in the African's potential.¹³⁶ The sermon was entitled *Vision and Courage* and in it Amu declares that Africans need to receive vision and courage from God in order to venture out, overcome obstacles and attain their God ordained destiny. Amu affirms the identity and dignity of the African and sees this as a basis for the holistic development of Africa in spite of internal weaknesses and external threats. This farsighted and radical way of thinking by Amu was certainly shared by Ofori Atta as the latter's political leadership will confirm.¹³⁷

Ofori Atta was the State Secretary for the Akyem Abuakwa State Council from 1943-1944.¹³⁸ From 1944-1947 he held the position of State Treasurer at the Akyem Abuakwa State Council.¹³⁹ During the time William served as State Treasurer to his father he was made a member of the Birrim District Education Committee which was responsible for overseeing and

¹³⁴ Fred Agyemang, *Amu the African*, pp. 136-137.

¹³⁵ Fred Agyemang, *Amu the African*, pp. 186-188.

¹³⁶ Fred Agyemang, *Amu the African*, pp. 180-186.

¹³⁷ Fred Agyemang, *Amu the African*, pp. 166 notes that in later life (1979) Ofori-Atta testified on Amu's behalf in a court case in which Amu was wrongly accused of playing a part in a land conflict between the people of Peki and Tsito in the Volta Region of Ghana in which several people were killed. This is further proof of the enduring friendship between the two men.

¹³⁸ William Ofori-Atta, *Answers of William Ofori-Atta to the questionnaire under the investigations and forfeiture of assets decree 1972 (N.R.C.D. 19)*.

¹³⁹ William Ofori-Atta, *Answers of William Ofori-Atta to the questionnaire under the investigations and forfeiture of assets decree 1972 (N.R.C.D. 19)*.

advancing education in Akyem Abuakwa.¹⁴⁰ The Kyebi state treasury introduced an educational levy to support the educational needs of the state. This was used for the development of schools and to provide scholarships for needy students.¹⁴¹ Ofori Atta's work as State Treasurer faced several serious challenges.¹⁴² One was the criticism from the District Commissioner that Ofori Atta was not managing the state finances effectively, partly due to his political activities. Another was the setback Ofori Atta faced when he recommended a reduction in remuneration for the Okyeman Councillors as a result of the weak financial state of the Council. J. B. Danquah and other counsellors contested this and subsequently the Okyehene removed Ofori Atta from his position as State Treasurer.

Ofori Atta became the Headmaster of Abuakwa State College in September 1947 and occupied this position till 1952.¹⁴³ He built up this secondary school on an educational philosophy based on both African cultural values and European instructional thought. From 1952 to 1959 he returned to his former position of State Secretary at the Akyem Abuakwa State Council.¹⁴⁴ While serving in this position he took a four year leave of absence and went to study law in England.

Initially, Ofori Atta had a dislike for the law profession due to the perceived bad reputation of some lawyers with respect to integrity in the eyes of the general public.¹⁴⁵ Later on, however, he trained as a barrister in law at Gray's Inn in London, England from 1955-1959.¹⁴⁶ He was

¹⁴⁰ W. E. F. Ward, *A History of Ghana*, p. 408.

¹⁴¹ Addo-Fening, 'Chieftaincy and issues of good governance, accountability and development', p. 340.

¹⁴² Rathbone, *Murder and politics in colonial Ghana*, pp. 176-177.

¹⁴³ William Ofori-Atta, *Answers of William Ofori-Atta to the questionnaire under the investigations and forfeiture of assets decree 1972 (N.R.C.D. 19)*.

¹⁴⁴ William Ofori-Atta, *Answers of William Ofori-Atta to the questionnaire under the investigations and forfeiture of assets decree 1972 (N.R.C.D. 19)*.

¹⁴⁵ Interview with Bernard Ofori-Atta, July, 2006. I surmise that the Kibi murder case and the fact that most Gold Coast politicians at that time were lawyers could have played a role in Ofori-Atta's decision to study law.

¹⁴⁶ William Ofori-Atta, *Answers of William Ofori-Atta to the questionnaire under the investigations and forfeiture of assets decree 1972 (N.R.C.D. 19)*.

called to the bar in 1959. He practised law in Ghana at the Kwakwaduam Chambers in Accra from 1959 to 1966.¹⁴⁷ He served as National President of the Ghana Bar Association in 1967,¹⁴⁸ a position given only to lawyers with a good track record of integrity.

5. Political Seasons

William Ofori Atta's political journey was made up of four political seasons: (i) British colonial Gold Coast rule; (ii) Ghana's First Republic/ Ghana's first military regime; (iii) Ghana's Second Republic/ Ghana's second military regime; and (iv) Ghana's Third Republic. The eight political organisations Ofori Atta participated in during these four seasons were the:

- Gold Coast Youth Conference 1930s
- United Gold Coast Convention (UGCC) 1947-1951
- Ghana Congress Party (GCP) 1952-1954
- National Liberation Movement (NAL) 1954-1957
- United Party (UP) 1957-1964
- Progress Party (PP) 1969-1972
- People's Movement for Freedom and Justice (PMFJ) 1978-1979
- United National Convention (UNC) 1979-1981

The political seasons of William Ofori Atta can be sketched into four seasons based on the four eras of civilian rule during his political journey. The first political season was the pre-independence Gold Coast era. On 4 august 1947 he was a founding member of the United Gold Coast Convention first political party in Ghana. When Kwame Nkrumah broke away from the UGCC to form the Convention People's Party the UGCC metamorphosed into the Ghana

¹⁴⁷ William Ofori-Atta, *Answers of William Ofori-Atta to the questionnaire under the investigations and forfeiture of assets decree 1972 (N.R.C.D. 19)*.

¹⁴⁸ The Bar Association, in *Tribute*, p. 34-36.

Congress Party. He won the 1951 Gold Coast elections on the ticket of the GCP to become the parliamentarian for Akwatai in the Eastern Region of Ghana. He lost this parliamentary position in the 1954 elections. The GCP fizzled out after the 1954 elections and the National Liberation Movement under the leadership of Opanin Baffour Akoto became the major opposition voice to the CPP.

The second political season was the era of the First Republic of Ghana. The NLM and other opposition parties amalgamated into the United Party with K. A. Busia as leader. The UP became the opposition party to the CPP during the First Republic until the CPP declared Ghana a one party state in 1965. On 24th February 1966 the National Liberation Council composed of the military and the police overthrew Kwame Nkrumah and his CPP government in a coup d'état.

The third political season was the era of the Second Republic of Ghana. In 1969, the NLC held a multiparty election which was won by the Progress Party. K. A. Busia was the leader of the PP and he was sworn in as the Prime Minister of the Second Republic on 1st October 1969. Ofori Atta was a PP leader and he served as Minister of Education, Culture and Sports and later on as Minister of Foreign Affairs in the Busia government. The major opposition party at this time was K. A. Gbedamah's National alliance of Liberals. On 13th January 1972 the National Redemption Council overthrew K. A. Busia and his PP government in a coup d'état.

The fourth political season was the era of the Third Republic of Ghana. The NRC later evolved into the SMC. On 4th June 1979 the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council overthrew the SMC. The AFRC held a multiparty election in October 1979 which was won by the People's National Convention under the leadership of Hilla Limann. William Ofori Atta formed the

United National Convention and campaigned for the 1979 presidential elections placing third. The second place went to Victor Owusu's People's National Party which became the official opposition. The UNC and PNC were from the Danquah-Dzobo-Busia tradition while the PNP was from the Nkrumah tradition. It was widely expected by political analysts at that time that the UNC would join the PNC to form an opposition alliance since they were both from the same tradition. However, Ofori Atta for the sake of national reconciliation and reconstruction went into an alliance with Limann's PNC even though they were on different sides of the political spectrum. The PNC was refused to join the alliance and rather chose to be the major opposition party in the Third Republic. Ofori Atta was made chairman of the Council of state, and advisory body to the President. On 31st December 1981, the Provisional National Defence Council overthrew Hilla Limann and his PNP government in a coup d'état. Ofori Atta then retired from active politics.

6. Christian Faith

In the first half of his life, William Ofori Atta was a nominal Christian.¹⁴⁹ However, he became an evangelical Christian in the second half of his life. He experienced a radical conversion to Christ in 1964 when under his third political detention. His wife, Mary Ofori-Atta, played an influential role in his spiritual conversion.¹⁵⁰ She prayed constantly for his spiritual salvation and gave him a Bible to read. The regular Bible reading in prison served as the medium of his conversion.¹⁵¹

¹⁴⁹ A detailed account of Ofori Atta's Christian conversion and Christian ministry will be given in chapters six and seven.

¹⁵⁰ "Biography of the late Mary Ofori-Atta", *Burial and thanksgiving service*, p. 2, 4.

¹⁵¹ A detailed discussion of Ofori Atta's Christian faith will be undertaken chapters six and seven.

Ofori Atta was a co-founder of the non-denominational Maranatha Bible College (now Maranatha University College), a founder of the non-denominational church, the Accra Chapel Trust (now Korle Bu Community Chapel), and a founder of the indigenous missionary organisation called the Christian Outreach Fellowship (COF).

7. Life Influencers and Influences

What factors influenced William Ofori Atta's leadership thought and practice? This research claims that Ofori Atta's leadership thought and practice was influenced by his family, Western (British) education, political detentions, Akan (Twi) culture and the Christian faith. The first factor that influenced his leadership thought and practice was his family. William's funeral biography notes the impact his father and his uncle, J. B. Danquah, made on him, especially with regard to his political journey.¹⁵² Although a funeral biography is more of a hagiography than an objective historical source, it can be used as a primary source in historical research if it is read critically and compared with other sources.¹⁵³ From 1912 to 1943, William's father, Nana Ofori Atta I, served as the chief of Akyem Abuakwa State in the Gold Coast.¹⁵⁴ In 1916 his father became a member the Gold Coast Legislative Council. The cultural and political leadership positions of his father modelled for him the opportunities and challenges of active political engagement. His father Nana Ofori Atta I abolished outmoded customary practices such as human sacrifice, judicial torture, the ritual for exposing witches and unsafe shrines.¹⁵⁵

¹⁵² See William Ofori Atta Family Papers, Accra. *Tribute to the late Mr. William Eugene Amoako-Atta Ofori-Atta (Paa Willie) Member of the Big-Six*, Accra, 1988. pp. 13-19. (hereafter *Tribute*)

¹⁵³ See Olive Akpebu Adjah, 'Ghanaian funeral brochures: an unexplored rich source of biographical information', *African Research and Documentation*, no. 103 (2007) pp 42-43 .

¹⁵⁴ Robert Addo-Fening, *Akyem Abuakwa, 1700-1943: from Ofori Panin to Sir Nana Ofori-Atta*, (Trondheim: Norwegian University of Science and Technology, 1997), pp. 212-216 (hereafter *Akyem Abuakwa*). See also Addo-Fening, 'Chieftaincy and issues of good governance, accountability and development' in Irene Odotei and A. K. Awdoba (eds.) *Chieftaincy in Ghana*, (Accra: Sub-Saharan Publishers, 2006) p. 346.

¹⁵⁵ Addo-Fening, *Akyem Abuakwa*, pp. 212-216.

This shows that his father upheld some forms of human rights in Akyem Abuakwa society during his chieftaincy tenure. William's uncle, J. B. Danquah actively campaigned for the human rights, especially for press freedom, during the governance of the British colonial government in the Gold Coast from 1948 to 1957 and during post-colonial Ghana from 1957 till his demise in 1965. In February 1985 William delivered the eighteenth series of the J. B. Danquah Memorial Lectures under the auspices of the Ghana Academy of Arts and Sciences in Accra Ghana. In the lecture he mentions that: 'I was at Danquah's feet as his student for thirty-seven years from 1927 to January 1964... We were detained together in 1948 with four others. I served with him in the Legislative Assembly from 1951 to 1954 in opposition to the CPP government. I was his loving and admiring nephew.'¹⁵⁶ This quote illustrates the influence that Danquah had on him. Danquah was his political mentor and companion in early stages of his political journey.

The second factor that may have influenced William Ofori Atta's leadership thought and practice was his Western – British - education. He studied Economics at Queens's College, Cambridge University from 1935 to 1938 and the London School of Economics and Political Science (1938-1939).¹⁵⁷ He trained as a barrister in law at Gray's Inn, London (1955-1959).¹⁵⁸ It is probable that his British tertiary education enabled him to observe the advocacy and practice of human rights in British civil society. In his J. B. Danquah Memorial Lectures he said: 'We were all aware that all the great nations of the world – [such as] Great Britain... – had to pass through trials, many of which threatened to break and destroy their nations. Our nation would not be an exception.'¹⁵⁹ This phrase depicts his high esteem of British society

¹⁵⁶ William Ofori Atta, *Ghana: a nation in crisis*, The J. B. Danquah Memorial Lectures, February 1985 (Accra: Ghana Academy of Arts and Sciences, 1998) p. 1. (hereafter *Ghana*)

¹⁵⁷ William Ofori-Atta, *Forfeiture of assets*. See also William Ofori-Atta, *Draft Who's Who in the world*.

¹⁵⁸ Ofori-Atta, *Forfeiture of assets*.

¹⁵⁹ Ofori Atta, *Ghana*, p. 2.

and as an inference British values. It is highly likely that his British education influenced his human rights concept.

The third factor that influenced Ofori Atta's leadership thought and practice was his experience of political detentions. The active political life of Ofori Atta resulted in five political detentions in his lifetime.¹⁶⁰ His first political custody was at the hands of the British colonial government in 1948.¹⁶¹ The British colonial government detained six leaders of the United Gold Coast Convention (UGCC), including Ofori Atta, for agitating for political independence. The second and third detentions were in 1963 and 1964 respectively under Kwame Nkrumah's Convention People's Party during the First Republic of Ghana. The fourth political imprisonment was in 1972 by the National Redemption Council military government. The fifth confinement was by the Supreme Military Council in 1978. When reflecting on his political detentions Ofori Atta made this remark: 'I have often been asked whether if I had known that self-government would lead us in the sort of life that has been ours since independence I would still have joined the struggle.... I have lived through privations and the fears and the threats and doubts and disillusionments that have characterised our life for long periods since independence and self-government. But my answer had been a monotonous "YES".'¹⁶²

Here he affirms unequivocally that despite his political journey struggles, he remained committed to the leadership principles of liberty. He worked for the Gold Coast to gain self-government from British colonial rule and be an independent nation. He toiled for freedom of speech and association during civilian and military dictatorships. His passion for liberty, as expressed through his leadership principles of political democracy and human rights, made him

¹⁶⁰ See Bernard Marbell, "I remember Paa Willie", *Step*, vol. 4 no. 4, p. 6; See Violet Bergen, *Hold fast your ground*, p. 16.

¹⁶¹ Boafo, *Tribute*, pp. 17-19.

¹⁶² Ofori Atta, *Ghana*, p. 2

resilient in the face of political detentions. Terence Ranger notes that African countries underwent three democratic transitions from the late 1950s to the 1990s. The first liberation was the anticolonial struggle leading to political self-government in the late 1950s, and 1960s 1970s.¹⁶³ Unfortunately, most African countries did not practice democracy after independence. This led to the second liberation in Africa during the 1980s when there were widespread attempts to practice multiparty democracy. The second liberation process was intensified in the 1990s when there was widespread opposition to the attempts by some leaders to change their constitutions so as to enable them run for a third term in office. Ofori Atta's political detentions took place during the first liberation of Africa.

The fourth factor that influenced Ofori Atta's leadership thought and practice was his Akan culture. As the son of a reputable Gold Coast chief in the state of Akyem Abuakwa, Ofori Atta was nurtured in the ethos of Akan royalty. This enabled him to be well versed in Akan culture. In a 1979 speech he wrote on 'Know your constitution' he notes: 'With us Ghanaians, a free man is an *odehye*, that is a Prince, and his person, his body are sacrosanct. Any assault on his person and status as a human being is taboo. From this principle springs up the saying that "*Animguase mfata Okan ni or Ghana – ni.*" It is not becoming for an Akan or Ghanaian to do anything which brings disgrace or dishonour on him and nothing should be done to him which humiliates or degrades him as a human being, as a free person, as a Citizen as an *Odehye* of the community, as a PRINCE.'¹⁶⁴

¹⁶³ Terence Ranger, 'Conference summary and conclusion' in Paul Gifford, *The Christian Churches and the Democratisation of Africa*. (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1995) pp. 14-35.

¹⁶⁴ William Ofori Atta Family Papers, Accra. William Ofori Atta, '*Know your Constitution*'. This type written speech does not provide information to the exact date and specific audience of the speech. However, the speech refers to the 1979 Third Republic constitution of Ghana so it must have been delivered after this date. (hereafter, '*Know your Constitution*')

Ofori Atta argues that in Ghanaian Akan culture a free person is a royal person whose body is sacred. An assault on such a person is a taboo in Akan culture. The sacredness of the humanity of a royal required the upholding of the rights of the royal. Accordingly, the human rights of Ghanaians which are upheld by the constitution is not to be violated. Here culture becomes the bedrock for the upholding of ethical leadership. Kwame Gyekye points out that in traditional Akan culture the chief is both the political and the religious head of the community.¹⁶⁵ This makes the chief's position sacred. It is this Akan notion of the sacredness of royalty that Ofori Atta's appeals to in his argument that Ghanaian Akan culture prohibits the violation of the rights of a person. Kwesi Wiredu declares that Akan thought recognised some forms of human rights.¹⁶⁶ As the son of a chief who was nurtured in Akan culture, Ofori Atta held on to the Akan cultural understanding of human dignity which made an impact on his affirmation of human rights in political life.

The fifth factor that influenced Ofori Atta's leadership thought and practice was his Christian faith. In the first half of his adult life Ofori Atta described himself as a nominal Christian. However, in 1964 at the age of 54 he experienced a dramatic spiritual conversion and became an evangelical Christian in the second half of his life.¹⁶⁷ His nominal Christian faith as well as his evangelical Christian faith had a bearing on his political and religious leadership. For example, the connection between his Christian faith and human rights can be found in his exposition of two Bible passages during a 1979 speech he gave on the topic 'Know your Constitution'.¹⁶⁸ He did not make clear in his speech the audience he was addressing. He observes: 'The constitution... is the Charter of our Liberty or the Bill of (our) Rights. It is in

¹⁶⁵ Kwame Gyekye, *African Cultural Values*. (Accra: Sankofa, 1996) pp. 109- 121.

¹⁶⁶ Wiredu, *Human Rights in Africa*, pp. 257 -258.

¹⁶⁷ See William Ofori Atta Family Papers, Accra. William Ofori Atta, 'Testimony, Thank You and Praise', p. 2. (nd).

¹⁶⁸ Ofori Atta, *'Know your Constitution'*.

reality our Magna Carta and we cherish it or must cherish it because it affects our individual personal lives and liberties and our national existence and prosperity...the price of liberty is eternal vigilance... The Bible says in English: “If the Son, therefore, shall make you free, you shall be free indeed”. The Twi Bible (Akuapem) translation is: “*Enti se Oba no ye mo adehye a, mobeye adehye ampa.*”¹⁶⁹

In the public lecture on ‘Know your constitution’ Ofori Atta insists that the rule of law through a constitution facilitates the enjoyment of personal liberties. Next, he maintains that the constitution is to be valued if it is to facilitate personal liberty. Then, he challenges his audience to use the constitution to guard their personal liberties. He uses the phrase ‘the price of liberty is eternal vigilance’. Subsequently, he quotes John 8:36 where Jesus Christ says if a person receives freedom from the Son of God that person is truly free. In the *African Bible Commentary*, Samuel Ngewa commenting on the book of John notes that in John 8:31-38 Jesus Christ emphasizes the importance of spiritual or moral freedom above other forms of freedom.¹⁷⁰ Ofori Atta uses the Bible passage, John 8:36, where Jesus Christ speaks of spiritual freedom to buttress to an argument he is making for political freedom. Hence for him, political liberty – and by extension human rights – has a basis in the Bible. Jesus Christ’s provision of spiritual freedom from sin and freedom to love God is a basis for a person’s freedom from political oppression and freedom to enjoy liberty. In another section of his speech on ‘Know your Constitution’¹⁷¹ Ofori Atta uses Acts 22:29 to encourage his audience to insist on their personal rights: ‘Those who were about to interrogate him [Paul] withdrew immediately. The commander himself was alarmed when he realised that he had put Paul, a Roman citizen, in chains’. Ofori Atta reasons that just as the Apostle Paul insisted on his personal rights as a

¹⁶⁹ Ofori Atta, ‘*Know your Constitution*’.

¹⁷⁰ Samuel Ngewa, ‘John’ in *African Bible Commentary*, Tokunboh Adeyemo (ed.) (Nairobi: WordAlive Publishers, 2006) p. 1296.

¹⁷¹ Ofori Atta, ‘*Know your Constitution*’.

Roman citizen, his audience were to insist on their personal rights as Ghanaian citizens. For Ofori Atta citizens are entitled to use the nation's constitution to claim their person rights.

8. Conclusion

What influencers and influences shaped the formation of William Ofori Atta into a political and religious leader? This chapter has examined the people, movements, ideas and events that moulded Ofori Atta into a political and religious leader. The examination of the life story of William Ofori Atta has shown that his family heritage, educational background, professional development, political seasons and Christian faith contributed to his leadership formation. It was disclosed that the key influencers of his political journey were of his father, Nana Ofori Atta and his uncle, J. B Danquah. Also, his experiences as a royal and elite were crucial to life in politics. Additionally, his evangelical Christian conversion was a catalyst to his leadership formation. Thus, individuals and the institutions of family, church and society provided an important context for William Ofori Atta's leadership formation. Subsequent chapters will explore his political and religious leadership thought and practice.

CHAPTER TWO

**POLITICAL DEMOCRACY AS
NATIONAL INDEPENDENCE AND MULTIPARTY GOVERNANCE**

**‘Freedom Loving People’ and
‘A Good, Effective, Fair and Open Democratic Government’**

1. Introduction

This chapter examines the leadership thought and practice of Ofori Atta with regard to his leadership principle of political democracy. The elements of Ofori Atta’s political democracy conception will be analysed to find out if they are congruent with the definition of ethical public leadership discussed in the introductory chapter. In other words, there should be elements of Ofori Atta’s political democracy leadership principle which correspond with this research’s definition of ethical leadership as leadership in which the values of integrity and altruism are demonstrated in a leader’s character and conduct in both the private and public life of the leader so as to influence people to achieve worthwhile goals for the common good of society as well as to impact institutions in order to make them life enriching structures.

The chapter argues that political democracy was one of William Ofori Atta’s leadership principles and that he enhanced political democracy in Ghana through his two-fold political leadership policies of national independence and multiparty governance. The chapter further argues that the significance of Ofori Atta’s leadership principle of political democracy was on the one hand national independence as anti-imperialism, anticolonialism, pro self-determination, and pro self-government, and on the other hand multiparty governance as anti-one party state, anti-military rule, pro-constitutional democracy, and pro-multiparty civilian electoral democracy. It will be demonstrated that an evaluation of Ofori Atta understanding of

political democracy indicates an approach which is conservative and not radical, gradualist and not revolutionary. Ofori Atta's political democracy approach was in line with the following political movements in which he served as one of the leaders: the United Gold Coast Convention, Ghana Congress Party, National Liberation Movement during pre-independence 1940s and 1950s Gold Coast; the opposition United Party during the First Republic of Ghana; the governing Progress Party during the Second Republic of Ghana, and the opposition United National Convention during the Third Republic of Ghana.

The chapter claims that in his political discourse and activities Ofori Atta uses the term 'freedom loving people' to contend that Ghanaians are people who do not accept subjugation by colonial or a one party state or military rule. He believes that Ghanaians love freedom and will oppose individuals and institutions that attempt to curtail their freedom in political, economic, and social affairs. The chapter also claims that in his political advocacy and activism Ofori Atta uses the phrase 'a good, effective, fair and open democratic government' to refer to the need for Ghana to develop a democratic system which is not an illegitimate but a good democracy, not a defective but an effective democracy, not an unjust but a fair democracy, and not an exclusive but an open democracy. In line with the preceding he emphasises the following aspects of democracy in his words and deeds: constitutionalism, rule of law, inclusiveness, equality, individual rights and responsibility, probity and accountability, consent of the governed, voting rights, and free, fair and transparent elections. The first stanza of the Ghana's national anthem has the expression 'bold to defend forever the cause of freedom and of right.... and help us to resist oppressor's rule with all our will and might forevermore'¹⁷² This expression captures Ofori Atta's anticolonialism ideology which was a rejection of colonial rule in tandem with the acceptance self-determination. Additionally, his anti-dictatorship

¹⁷² The Ghana National Anthem as cited in the *Ghana Year Book 1977* (Accra: Graphic Corporation, 1977) p. 5.

ideology was a rejection of civilian one party state rule and military rule in conjunction with the acceptance of multiparty governance. He committed himself to resisting political oppression and pursuing political freedom for Ghana so as to establish a national independence for which political freedom issued in economic and social development.

William Ofori Atta's father, Nana Ofori-Atta I, was an example to William in the matter of political leadership. Nana Ofori-Atta I reigned from 27th November 1912 to 20th August 1943 as the *okyenhene* (king) of the Akyem Abuakwa state in the Eastern Region of Gold Coast. The sterling leadership of Nana Ofori-Atta in Akyem Abuakwa was recognised by the colonial government. From 1916 to 1943 he served as an unofficial member of the Gold Coast Legislative Council.¹⁷³ The mark Nana Ofori-Atta made in educational progress, socio-economic development and good governance was credited with the award of the Commander of the British Empire by the British government in 1919 and a knighthood in 1928. The achievements of Nana Ofori Atta served as a model to William in his political journey.

This chapter is presented in two parts. The first part focuses on political democracy as national independence and considers a road map to Gold Coast self-government and an alternative blueprint for Gold Coast self-government. The second part concentrates on political democracy as multiparty governance and explores constitutional democracy and multiparty governance.

Africa's first liberation was a liberation from European colonialism to national independence.¹⁷⁴ The decolonisation of Africa took place from the 1950s to the 1970s. Ki-

¹⁷³ Addo-Fening, 'Chieftaincy and issues of good governance, accountability and development', *Chieftaincy in Ghana*, pp. 345-346. See also Addo-Fening, *Akyem Abuakwa*, pp. 218.

¹⁷⁴ Jeffrey Herbst and Greg Mills, *Africa's Third Liberation: The search for prosperity and jobs*. (Johannesburg: Penguin Books, 2012), pp. 6, 232.)

Zerbo, Mazrui and Wondji point out that there was an affinity between nationalism and pluralism in English speaking and French speaking Africa from 1945 to 1960.¹⁷⁵ The two values were used by most nationalists in the fight for independence. The nationalist movements' values of nationalism and pluralism were aimed at overcoming the colonial values of civilisation and exploitation.¹⁷⁶ The European pluralism of liberal democracy was used as a legal basis and a political tactic by the nationalists to demand independence from their colonisers. The nationalist asserted that the equal rights, individual liberties, self-determination, and democratic pluralism which was practiced in the metropole of the colonisers should also be practiced in the colonised nations. Also, the pre-independence nationalists saw themselves as part of the continuation of anti-colonial struggles which various African resistance groups had established since the advent of European colonialism in Africa. The ideals of nationalism and pluralism were central to William Ofori Atta's perception of political democracy.

Isaac Brako and Kwame Asah-Asante define nationalism as the process of struggling for political power from a coloniser.¹⁷⁷ The natives of a society work to regain their political and economic freedom from the coloniser. The society's familiar past and similar future provide a feeling of mutual destiny to produce nationalism. There are two theories of nationalism – the integration theory and the conflict theory. The integration theory of nationalism states that nationalism is the process of bringing together different social and cultural groups to incorporate them into one national identity.¹⁷⁸ In this instance minority groups may have to

¹⁷⁵ Joseph Ki-Zerbo, Ali Mazrui and Christophe Wondji, 'Nation-building and changing political values' in Ali Mazrui (ed.), *General History of Africa vol. VIII Africa since 1935* (Paris: UNESCO, 1993) p. 469. (hereafter *Africa since 1935*)

¹⁷⁶ Ki-Zerbo, Mazrui and Wondji, 'Nation-building and changing political values' pp. 471-472.

¹⁷⁷ Isaac Brako and Kwame Asah-Asante, *Africa: from colonialism to independence*. (Accra: Black Mask, 2015) pp. 145, 147.

¹⁷⁸ See Chong-Do Hah and Jeffrey Martin 'Towards a synthesis of Conflict and Integration Theories of Nationalism' in *World Politics* (April 1975, vol. 27, no. 3) pp. 365-366. (hereafter *Theories of Nationalism*)

give up their linguistic, ethnic, and cultural identity so as to blend into the national identity, while majority groups may have to accept the minority groups and enable this blending. The theory adds that it is the modernisation process that facilitates nationalism and not culture, race, religion, or geography. The conflict theory declares that nationalism is the process of conflict among social groups for power.¹⁷⁹ The different economic, class and ethnic groups compete for the control of the national resource distributive system. The theory adds that inequity or modernisation in society facilitate nationalism. The social groups in society organise themselves to compete for the power to distribute the national resources. It will be claimed in this chapter that an evaluation of the approach to nationalism by William Ofori Atta and the conservative political group in the Gold Coast is in line with the integration theory of nationalism, while the approach of Kwame Nkrumah and the radical group in the Gold Coast fit into the conflict theory of nationalism.

Africa's second liberation was a liberation from military and civilian dictatorships to civilian multiparty political rule.¹⁸⁰ An increasing number of African countries replaced the personal dictatorships, one party state and military rule with multiparty governance.¹⁸¹ The 1990s in Africa's political scene was a liberation from civilian and military dictators who paradoxically thought of themselves as liberators while in practice they denied their country the practice of democracy. A number of factors accounted for the second liberation. One was the fall of the Berlin wall resulting in a move away from the Cold war to cordial relations between the Western bloc and the Eastern bloc. This meant that African dictators could no longer rely on

¹⁷⁹ Hah and Martin, *Theories of Nationalism* pp. 369-370.

¹⁸⁰ Herbst and Mills, *Africa's Third Liberation*, pp. 6, 232.

¹⁸¹ Nic Cheeseman, *Democracy in Africa: Successes, failures and the struggle for political reform* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015) p. 87. (hereafter *Democracy in Africa*). See also Nic Cheeseman (ed.) *Institutions and Democracy in Africa: How the rules of the game shape political developments* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018) p. (hereafter *Institutions and Democracy in Africa*) p. 3 and Greg Mills, Olusegun Obasanjo, Tendai Biti, Jeffrey Herbst, *Democracy Works: Turning politics to Africa's advantage* (London: Hurst, 2019) pp. 10-13. (hereafter *Democracy Works*).

the support of either the West or the East. Another was the economic crises of a good number of African countries which required them to seek the assistance of the International Monetary Fund and World Bank for Structural Adjustment Programmes. A conditionality for the economic aid by these institutions was that political reforms towards democracy had to take place. Another factor was the rise of civil societies which encouraged the citizens of some African countries to use civil disobedience as a means of clamouring for the right to exercise their democratic franchise. These factors contributed to the waning political loyalty through patronage and patrimonialism.

Democracy is the right of people to select their own representatives to govern them. Greg Mills, Olusegun Obasanjo, Tendai Biti, and Jeffrey Herbst define democracy as ‘a system where there is universal adult suffrage, where voting is free and fair, the outcome of which reflects the people’s choice, and there is a set of supporting institutions and freedom.’¹⁸² James Guseh and Emmanuel Oritsejafor state that democracy is ‘the right of all adults to vote and compete for public office to elect representatives and have decisive vote on public policies that truly reflect the interests and opinions of the citizens’.¹⁸³ They add that democracy has the following features -- voting rights, freedom of expression, freedom of information, freedom of association, freedom of movement, and religious freedom.¹⁸⁴ John De Gruchy identifies the following key features of the democratic system - universal adult suffrage; free, fair and transparent elections; representation of the electorate on the legislature; majority decision making; equality before the law, the rule of law; due process, independence of the judiciary and a free press.¹⁸⁵ It will become evident in this chapter that Ofori Atta’s understanding of

¹⁸² Greg Mills, Olusegun Obasanjo, Tendai Biti, Jeffrey Herbst, *Democracy Works*, p. 3.

¹⁸³ James Guseh and Emmanuel Oritsejafor, *Governance and Democracy in Africa: Regional and Continental Perspectives*. New York: Lexington Books, 2019 pp. 13-14. (= *Governance and Democracy in Africa*)

¹⁸⁴ Guseh and Oritsejafor, *Governance and Democracy in Africa*: pp. 13-14.

¹⁸⁵ John De Gruchy, *Christianity and Democracy: a theology for a just world order*. Cambridge: University of Cambridge Press, 1995) pp. 18-19. (hereafter *Christianity and Democracy*)

democracy is in line with the above definitions and that the key ingredients of his conception of democracy are constitutional democracy, rule of law, civilian rule, multiparty electoral democracy, and political/ civil liberties.¹⁸⁶

2. Political Democracy as National Independence

Although it was Kwame Nkrumah's Convention's People Party (CPP) that led the Gold Coast to national independence from British colonial rule in March 1957, it cannot be denied that the United Gold Coast Convention (UGCC), Ghana Congress Party (GCP), and National Liberation Movement (NLM) contributed to the Gold Coast's road to independence by serving as the opposition party to the Convention People's Party. William Ofori Atta played an important role in Ghana's road to national independence through the UGCC, GCP, NLM. The opposition cautioned the CPP government to tread on the path of democracy and not create a dictatorship in the Gold Coast. Ofori Atta and the opposition also provided alternative views to the CPP's policy issues. What constituted William Ofori Atta's notion of self-government? This subsection of the chapter analyses the features of Ofori Atta's understanding of self-government by examining his political writings on the issue. Some of his views are in contrast to Nkrumah's CPP and others are similar. It will be seen that in line with the integration theory of nationalism, Ofori Atta's understanding of nationalism seeks to integrate the various ethnic groups and political regions of the Gold Coast into a single national identity to campaign for self-determination and self-government.

¹⁸⁶ This chapter will examine his understanding of constitutional democracy and multiparty democracy while the next chapter will examine rule of law and political/ civil liberties.

The first feature of William Ofori Atta's understanding of the nature of self-government is that of the inherent right of a nation to self-determination. He believed that colonial rule disenfranchised people and that self-government gives people the right to self-determination, that is, the right to vote for political parties of their choice. In an article he wrote in the *Gold Coast Observer* newspaper, he declared: 'I believe that self-government is here today, for the day I received my Convention Certificate I knew that I was there and then a free man. Whilst in England, as black as I am, I was entitled to two votes: one for staying in a particular spot for six months another for being a graduate of a British University, but let me tell you that were I in my own country, I have not even got one.'¹⁸⁷

He found it to be a paradox that whilst an undergraduate student in the 1930s studying at Cambridge University in Britain – in the land of the coloniser – he was entitled to vote during British elections. However, while a citizen in his own country – the Gold Coast – he was not entitled to vote for the political authority of his choice. This anomaly may have contributed to stimulating his search for Gold Coast self-government.

Secondly, self-government for Ofori Atta meant the rejection of imperial rule and the establishment of both the right and the power of a nation to rule itself. As noted above, in 1947 he was one of the founders of the United Gold Coast Convention. Ofori Atta notes: 'The liberation movement, the United Gold Coast Convention, was born in August 1947, and was growing from strength to strength and already in February 1948 it was challenging not only to the right, but also the power of the Colonial Government to rule Ghana.'¹⁸⁸

¹⁸⁷ William Ofori Atta, 'Self-Government is Here Today' in *The Gold Coast Observer* July 16, 1948, p. 127.

¹⁸⁸ Ofori Atta, *The Challenge of Our Time*, p 1.

The third feature of Ofori Atta's understanding of the nature of self-government is that he believed that the struggle for self-government was a necessity because it was the right thing to do. As previously indicated, in their campaign for self-government, some of the leaders of the UGCC, including Ofori Atta, were placed under house arrest by the British colonial government. In a newspaper article he wrote in *The Gold Coast Observer*, Ofori Atta claims, "We were convinced that we were doing the right thing and that our people would fight for our liberation. My mother was very happy and joyful during the four weeks of my confinement because she knew that her son was doing service for this great nation".¹⁸⁹

Fourthly, how was self-government to be achieved? Ofori Atta saw the need for teamwork among the political leaders of the Gold Coast if self-government was to be achieved. He maintains: 'We have to work together, if victory is to be won'.¹⁹⁰ He assumed that those content with imperialism, whom he referred to as the 'old school', were to be bypassed in order for the UGCC to lead in the fight for self-government. He says: 'It is for us to choose between joining the Convention in the march forward rather than staying behind with the old philosophers.'¹⁹¹ He asserts that the UGCC intelligentsia provides a better path to self-governance than the traditional chiefs.

Fifthly, in his *True Pioneer* political pamphlet, Ofori Atta is of the opinion that in the search for self-governance the Gold Coast nationalists should focus on the Gold Coast only. He says that he supported J. B. Danquah's 'pan Gold Coastism' approach. Like Danquah, Ofori Atta was not in favour of the Gold Coast nationalist J. E. Casely Hayford's 'pan West Africanism' in which the nations of West Africa would unite as a single political, economic, and social

¹⁸⁹ *The Gold Coast Observer* July 16, 1948, p. 127.

¹⁹⁰ *The Gold Coast Observer* July 16, 1948, p. 127

¹⁹¹ *The Gold Coast Observer* July 16, 1948, p. 127.

entity after independence. Also, like Danquah, Ofori Atta was not in favour of Kwame Nkrumah's pan Africanism in which the nations of Africa would unite into one political, economic, and social unit after independence. Speaking of Danquah's view, Ofori Atta says: 'Dr Danquah was the first Gold Coast politician of the 20th century to lead his countrymen to concentrate on Ghana (or Gold Coast) nationalism exclusively, unmixed with any West Africanism.'¹⁹² Like Danquah, Ofori Atta favoured 'pan Gold Coastism', that is an independent Gold Coast which united the four sections of the Gold Coast – the Colony, Ashanti, the Northern Territories and Trans-Volta into one nation. In other words, Ofori Atta conceived of a self-governing Gold Coast which focused on its own political, economic, and social affairs.

Sixthly, Ofori Atta concurs with J. B. Danquah's suggestion that after independence, the name of the Gold Coast should be changed to 'Ghana.' He observes that several names – Voltarin' and 'Akan-Ga' - were considered but found to be unsatisfactory. He notes: 'Just about this time, Dr Danquah set out looking for an appropriate name for the new nation whose features were forming in his mind. Was it to be Voltarin, named after the country's great river, the Volta, or was it to be Akan-Ga a composite name of the two prominent tribes in Ashanti and the Colony who at that time held the centre of politics in the Gold Coast?'¹⁹³

Eventually, Danquah came to the conclusion that the name 'Ghana.' Danquah did a study in which he claims that today's Ghana had historical links to the former Ghana empire in the Sahel region of Africa. Ofori Atta states: 'Dr Danquah originated the "ancient Ghana" idea, and from the results of years of intensive research in Ghana and abroad, he made the name sufficiently popular and attractive to take the place of "the Gold Coast" in the hearts of the people....'¹⁹⁴

¹⁹² Ofori Atta, *True Pioneer*, p. 1.

¹⁹³ Ofori Atta, *True Pioneer*, p. 1.

¹⁹⁴ Ofori Atta, *True Pioneer*, pp. 1-2.

Seventhly, Ofori Atta affirms Danquah's tactic that a collaboration between the intelligentsia and the chiefs was the right tactic to use to overcome British colonialism. This tactic aimed at 'developing an absolute united front among the intelligentsia and the Chiefs, and it was on the shield of the unity so achieved that the ramparts of the Imperial Power's "Divide and rule" policy were eventually broken into.'¹⁹⁵ It is interesting to note that Ofori Atta wrote his *True Pioneer* political pamphlet in 1960 after the independence of the Gold Coast. By this time the political parties that he belonged to – the UGCC, GCP, and NLM - had lost the 1951, 1954 and 1956 Gold Coast elections respectively to the CPP. A major contributing factor to their loss was their focus on the intelligentsia and traditional chiefs alliance and their inability to mobilise the majority of the youth and working class to vote for them. In light of this, one would have thought that Ofori Atta would hold a different view on the intelligentsia and chiefs alliance to broaden it by adding the role of the youth and working class that the CPP mobilised to enable the CPP to achieve national independence. Yet he still clings to a failed electoral tactic. This might be due to his aristocratic, educational and class background which at that time might have made it hard for him to see their need to target the youth and the working class.

Eighthly, Ofori Atta contends that racism was an ideological factor in colonialism and that the fight against colonialism was also a fight against racism. He contends: 'At a time when the belief was widespread that the sub-Saharan African was congenitally or otherwise unfit to stand on his own feet.... Danquah was one of the first to produce... evidence of an African philosophy and culture which could not have been achieved in the Gold Coast and elsewhere otherwise than by a people imbued with high qualities of human thought and experience.'¹⁹⁶

¹⁹⁵ Ofori Atta, *True Pioneer*, pp. 1-2.

¹⁹⁶ Ofori Atta, *True Pioneer*, p. 2.

Ofori Atta was raised in a royal household and as such he was well acquainted with traditional culture. He had a positive self-concept of his African heritage and a positive attitude to Akan culture. His ire against racism was harnessed by him and challenged into the agitation for self-government.

Ninthly, he was of the conviction that national independence should produce a new nation with high moral standards as a foundation for political and socio-economic development. The post-independent Ghana First Republic presidential elections in 1960 pitted Danquah's United Party (UP) against Nkrumah's Convention People's Party (CPP). Ofori Atta in his political apology on behalf of Danquah in the 1960 plebiscite claims that J. B. Danquah was the right person to become president in the first republic of Ghana. Ofori Atta agrees with Danquah's evaluation of the state of the new nation of Ghana, and he enumerates the failures of Nkrumah's CPP government since independence. He says that Danquah cites a weak moral leadership in Ghanaian political life, poor living standards and a paucity of genuine freedom, liberty, and justice in the nation. He observes: 'Danquah... is not satisfied that Ghana has yet achieved a sufficiently high central moral authority in its government; he is not satisfied that the standard of living of the people has been pushed high ahead where it should be, and he is above all, not satisfied that there is yet available for all in Ghana, and as an example to others in Africa the enjoyment of true freedom, liberty and justice.'¹⁹⁷

The issues of moral leadership, political freedom, human rights liberty, socio-economic justice are core leadership principles that mark Ofori Atta's public leadership. It is significant that in 1960 when he was not yet an evangelical Christian, he was passionate about moral leadership in Ghanaian public life. This indicates that his ethical leadership principles were formed prior

¹⁹⁷ Ofori Atta, *True Pioneer*, p. 3.

to his conversion to evangelical Christianity. It is also noteworthy that in his pamphlet he uses the phrase ‘Dr Danquah is still fighting like St. Paul after the manner of men, “with beasts at Ephesus.”’¹⁹⁸ This Bible quotation from 1 Corinthians 15:32 correlates the Apostle Paul’s contention with his Ephesian opponents of Jesus Christ’s resurrection with Danquah’s connection with Nkrumah’s CPP government undemocratic actions. It is probable that Ofori Atta’s nominal church attendance and Bible knowledge lessons at secondary school may have made an impact on his life.

The tenth feature of Ofori Atta’s understanding of self-government is that the process of self-government requires sacrifice on the part of nationalists. He believed that true nationalists are selfless patriotic leaders who are willing to become martyrs for the nation for the cause of national independence. He saw Danquah as such a nationalist leader. He says: ‘Danquah never pauses to ask: “Where is my reward?” Our man J.B. has suffered several reverses in politics and endured many trials and tribulations but the mystery of his life is that he has thrived and continues to thrive in spite of them.’¹⁹⁹

In February 1985, after nearly 50 years of political activity, William Ofori Atta delivered the J. B. Danquah Memorial Lecture on the topic ‘Ghana: A nation in crisis’. In the lecture he stated unequivocally that despite the political crisis Ghana had gone through since independence he was strongly in favour of self-government and had no regrets about participating in the independence movement. He remarks: ‘I know that I have a lot to answer for. I was one of the foundation members of the U.G.C.C., who led the national movement in the last stages of the struggle for independence.’²⁰⁰ He believed that Ghana could still work at

¹⁹⁸ Ofori Atta, *True Pioneer*, p. 3.

¹⁹⁹ Ofori Atta, *True Pioneer*, pp. 3-4.

²⁰⁰ Ofori Atta, *Ghana: A nation in crisis*, p. 2.

achieving the goal of national independence – liberty, peace and prosperity. He stresses: ‘This is our country. We are under a stern inescapable obligation to our consciences, to our people, and to God, to live among and remain with our people in these trying times and for better and for worse until victory is won, and real liberty and peace and prosperity are restored and established in our land.’ This lecture was delivered during the military regime of Flt Lt J. J. Rawlings’ Provisional National Defence Council. Ofori Atta was unhappy with the 31st December 1981 coup d’état of the PNDC which brought the Third Republic to an end. He had spent decades advocating for the sustainability of democratic civilian rule in Ghana. In his lecture he reminisces on his pre-independent Ghana and post independent Ghana political journey and affirms that the path to national independence was the right one despite the crises post independent Ghana had gone through. He declares that he has often been questioned as to whether he would have fought for self-government if he had known previously that Gold Coast self-government would lead to some periods of political instability in independent Ghana. He answers by saying that he has suffered much as many Ghanaians have also suffered throughout the turbulent periods of Ghana’s political journey. He has faced doubts disillusionment and deprivation as a Ghanaian politician. Nevertheless, his response is an unequivocal yes to Gold Coast self-government, despite the challenges Ghana has faced since independence, he believes that just as other nations had to struggle after their political independence in order to create political stability and economic growth, Ghana by God’s grace can do the same. If the nation is united and focuses on the right goals with a strong faith in God, Ghana can be rebuilt into a prosperous nation.²⁰¹

He asserts that freedom, democracy, and self-determination were important values for Ghanaians. He remarks: ‘the national character of the Ghanaian. His instincts are for freedom

²⁰¹ Ofori Atta, *Ghana: A nation in crisis*, p. 2.

and democracy, for self-rule, for independence from foreign and dictatorial rule. We are subjugated neither by foreigners nor by our own people. We are intolerant of dictatorial methods in any form...'²⁰²

Ofori Atta in his J. B. Danquah memorial lecture postulates a number of reasons as to why he avers that Ghanaians are a freedom seeking people. He uses the symbolic meaning of the colours of the flag of Ghana to illustrate his assertion. The national flag of Ghana has three colours – red, gold, green with a five pointed black star in the middle. He explains that the red colour in the national flag ‘stands for the precious blood that our forefathers shed to win our land and out freedom and retain and sustain them. It appealed to us and those who come after to maintain our precious possessions, our land and our rights, by our extreme vigilance, and by our preparedness to bear supreme sacrifices.’²⁰³ Also, he refers to the Ghana coat of arms to buttress his assertion that Ghanaians are a freedom-loving people. He maintains: ‘Every Ghanaian citizen is free: he is not a bond slave, bound to do the arbitrary will of any tyrant. The dominant feature of our Coat of Arms is the eagle.’²⁰⁴ He explained that the eagle represents the strength and tenacity of Ghanaians to build a free sovereign nation.

3. Political Democracy as Multiparty Governance

An overview of the political democracy discourse in Africa shows that the following factors have an effect on political democracy in Africa: African traditional culture and European colonialism. Ki-Zerbo, Mazrui and Wondji note that after national independence, from 1965 to

²⁰² Ofori Atta, *Ghana: A nation in crisis*, pp. 4-5.

²⁰³ Ofori Atta, *Ghana: A nation in crisis*, p. 6.

²⁰⁴ Ofori Atta, *Ghana: A nation in crisis*, pp. 8-9.

1985, there was a waning of nationalism and liberal democracy pluralism in a majority of African countries.²⁰⁵ Some African leaders, promoted collectivism over pluralism and individualism. They claimed that collectivism was more suited to African cultural values. For example, Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana promoted African Socialism²⁰⁶ and Julius Nyerere of Tanzania promoted 'ujamaa' i.e., socialist cooperative economic development. The fact of matter was that collectivism fitted the one party state and autocracy ideology of some African leaders. From the late 1980s and early 1990s there was a renewal of liberal democratic values in Africa's second liberation. Africa's citizenship contended for multiparty democracy in politics and the denationalisation of the economy.

African traditional culture was the soil in which the seed of democracy has been cultivated in Africa. Kwame Gyekye, notes that in the traditional African political system the chief holds the central position, but in most policies his power is severely limited, and he cannot undertake any action without the consent of the people.²⁰⁷ Gyekye explains that although traditional African democracy is not direct participatory democracy, a chief is expected to be accountable to the elders who advise him and act in the interest of the community he rules over. In traditional African rule differences were settled through consensus and the people in a community were entitled to share the viewpoints with the leaders of the community.²⁰⁸

Stephen Akintoye contends that European colonialism did not contribute adequately to the positive development of democracy in Africa.²⁰⁹ Akintoye maintains that European colonial governments often practiced dictatorship and did not adequately nurture democracy in pre-

²⁰⁵ Ki-Zerbo, Mazrui and Wondji, 'Nation-building and changing political values' in *Africa since 1935*, p. 469.

²⁰⁶ See Kwame Nkrumah, *Consciencism: Philosophy and ideology for decolonisation and development with particular reference to the African revolution* (London; Heinemann, 1964).

²⁰⁷ Kwame Gyekye, *African Cultural Values*, (Accra: Sankofa, 1996) p. 121.

²⁰⁸ Gyekye, *African Cultural Values* p. 121.

²⁰⁹ Stephen Akintoye, *Emergent African States* (London: Longman, 1976) pp. 9-10.

independence Africa.²¹⁰ David Lamb observes that the thwarting of a viable political opposition in some African countries after independence encouraged military coup d'états as a means to changing a government. .²¹¹

3.1 Multiparty Governance as Constitutional Democracy

A dimension of William Ofori Atta's leadership principle of political democracy as multiparty governance was that of constitutional democracy. This is not surprising considering the fact that Ofori Atta was a lawyer by profession and was a member of the Constitutional Commission which prepared the 1969 constitution for the Second Republic of Ghana.²¹² What did Ofori Atta understand by constitutional democracy?

Firstly, he perceives Ghana's constitution as the nation's 'bill of rights' which guarantees the political and civil liberties of its citizens. In a commentary on Ghana's 1979 Third Republic Constitution Ofori Atta observes: 'The constitution of the 3rd Republic of Ghana 1979 is the Supreme Law of Ghana, expressing the will of the people.'²¹³ It is the Charter of our Liberty or the Bill of (our) Rights. It is in reality our Magna Carta and we cherish it or must cherish it because it affects our individual personal lives and liberties and our national existence and prosperity.'²¹⁴ For Ofori Atta national governance was not done in an arbitrary manner for example through military regime decrees. National governance was to be based on the nation's constitution as the highest law of the land. The constitution was to guarantee the right of

²¹⁰ Akintoye, *Emergent African States* pp. 9-10.

²¹¹ David Lamb, *The Africans* (New York: Vintage Books, 1982) pp. 110-111.

²¹² Robert Addo Fening, 'Farwell Paa Wille!' in *People's Daily Graphic* August 19, 1988, p. 5. See also Dennis Austin and Robin Luckham (eds.) *Politicians and Soldiers in Ghana 1966-1972* (London: Cass, 1975) p. 82.

²¹³ Ofori Atta, 'Know your Constitution'.

²¹⁴ Ofori Atta, 'Know your Constitution'.

citizens relative to the government. Ben Nwabueze states that the concept of constitutional government²¹⁵ is connected to the relationship between a constitutional government and the constitution.²¹⁶ He observes that the term constitutional government is likely to give the impression of a government according to the terms of a constitution.²¹⁷ The implication is that there is a formal written constitution according to whose provisions a government is a constitutional one. He says that the determining factors of constitutional government and the constitution are: does the constitution have a force of a supreme overriding law, does it impose limitations upon the powers of the government, and, if so, what is the nature and extent of the limitations, and are the limitations observed in the actual conduct of government? For Ofori Atta, Ghana's Third Republic constitution met these criteria.

Next, Ofori Atta is convinced that constitutional democracy means that civilian rule is the only valid form of government. He is strongly against military rule. He comments: 'The expressions "a return to Civilian rule" [is] a happy acknowledgement and a reminder that the rule immediately past was [not] civilian.... It was not civilian rule but military rule.'²¹⁸ The military rule of the National Redemption Council, Supreme Military Council and Armed Forces Revolutionary Council preceded the Third Republic of Ghana. These prior military regimes were not elected by the citizens of Ghana but imposed on the nation. As such they violated Ofori Atta's constitutional democracy as civilian rule precept. Nwabueze states that the concept of constitutional government is linked to the association between constitutional government and democratic government.²¹⁹ He notes that democratic government is a separate concept from

²¹⁵ Ben Nwabueze, *Constitutional Democracy in Africa: Structures, powers and organising principles*, vol. 1 (Ibadan: Spectrum Books, 2003) pp. 2-3. (= *Structures, powers*)

²¹⁶ Ben Nwabueze, *Constitutional Democracy in Africa: Structures, powers and organising principles*, vol. 1 (Ibadan: Spectrum Books, 2003) pp. 2-3. (hereafter *Structures, powers*).

²¹⁷ Nwabueze, *Structures, powers*, pp. 2-3.

²¹⁸ Ofori Atta, 'Know your Constitution'.

²¹⁹ Nwabueze, *Structures, powers*, pp. 13-14.

constitutional government and that democratic government is not a necessary constituent facet of constitutional government. He says that a government need not be a democratic one to be constitutional, and not need it be a constitutional to be democratic. A government must be both constitutional and democratic to be a constitutional democracy. It is the combination of the two concepts that is called constitutional democracy. A further clarification of the concept of democratic government is the idea of a popular basis of government²²⁰ Democratic government means that government rests upon the consent of the governed, given by means of elections at periodic intervals of time, in which the franchise is universal for all adults and that it exists for their welfare. Democratic government is distinction from monarchical, aristocratic or oligarchical government. Ofori Atta does not simply advocate for a constitutional government or for a democratic government but for a constitutional democratic government so as to have constitutional democracy.

Also, Ofori Atta is persuaded that constitutional democracy means military regime decrees are not a valid form of governance, but constitutional laws are the only legitimate structure of governance. He observes: 'The expression... "a return to Constitutional rule" [is] a reminder that the rule immediately past was... [not] constitutional.... It was not constitutional rule because those who exercised the powers of Government did not derive their power to rule from the Constitution of the land... because they did not rule or seek to rule in accordance with any Constitution.'²²¹ He stands vehemently against coup d'état military regimes that rule by military decree and not by the constitution. Nwabueze says that normally, a constitution is a formal organic document having the force of a supreme, overriding law, by which a society organises a government for itself, defines and limits its power, and prescribes the relations in

²²⁰ Nwabueze, *Structures, powers*, pp. 13-14.

²²¹ Ofori Atta, 'Know your Constitution'.

various organs with the citizen.²²² For Ofori Atta, constitutional laws have the preceding safeguards, while military decrees lack these safeguards of a constitution.

Then, Ofori Atta deems that constitutional democracy means that the sovereign power of the citizens gives them the right to select the type of constitutional government and the type of political leaders the citizens want to rule the nation.²²³ In reference to the military regimes before the Third Republic of Ghana, he notes: 'It was not constitutional rule because those who exercised the powers of Government did not derive their power to rule... from the people of Ghana and because they did not rule or seek to rule in accordance with any Constitution.'²²⁴ To him constitutional democracy required electoral democracy. Ofori Atta believes that constitutional democracy means that national sovereignty is grounded in the citizens and not in the government.

Furthermore, Ofori Atta was against the wrong use of a constitution by civilian dictators to justify a one party state. This occurred in the 1960s during the First Republic of Ghana when Kwame Nkrumah's Convention People's Party government declared a one party state in Ghana. Nwabueze insists that a constitution should provide checks and balances as well as boundaries for a government.²²⁵ However, it is possible for a constitution to be written in such a way that restrictions on a government are weak and ineffective. Such a constitution creates a fertile ground for the abuse of authority and power by a government. Although Ofori Atta was a supporter of constitutional governance he was strongly against the use of the constitution to facilitate a one party state or a no party state.

²²² Nwabueze, *Structures, powers*, pp. 2-3.

²²³ Ofori Atta, 'Know your Constitution'.

²²⁴ Ofori Atta, 'Know your Constitution'.

²²⁵ See also Richard L. Sklar, 'On the Study of Constitutional Government in Africa' in Okon Akiba (ed.) *Constitutionalism and Society in Africa* (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing, 2004)

The above five aspects of Ofori Atta's understanding of constitutional democracy form the bedrock for his practice of political democracy. He comments that the essential nature of the constitution is that all national authorities must follow the constitution and adjust their activities in line with constitutional norms. A government that operates under a constitution will be very different from a military government. Ghanaians have willingly made a choice for constitutional civilian rule and this should form the bedrock of Ghanaian political democracy.

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He says that Ghanaians returned to civilian and constitutional rule in the Third Republic because of their faith in the principle that sovereignty resides in the people of Ghana who alone have the right to choose the form of government or constitution with which they are to be ruled and also the persons who are to govern them. This section of the chapter has argued that the constitutional democracy was crucial to Ofori Atta's understanding of political democracy.

For Ofori Atta if a constitutional civilian government seeks the welfare of its citizens, it will contribute to the entrenchment of democracy in a country. He remarks that some politicians have stressed the need for decentralisation and social justice with which he is in agreement with. He is of the view that the average Ghanaian citizen will be dedicated to constitutional and civilian rule. Only if this type of governance addresses the personal needs and concerns of each citizen Ghanaians will support constitutional civilian rule if they understand that their prosperity is tied to this form of government. Hence a civilian government needs to have a closer link with the average citizen. The objectives of a civilian government should not only

²²⁶ Ofori Atta, 'Know your Constitution'.

be communicated through a government Gazette but should be translated in a language that is clear to the average citizen.²²⁷

3.2 Multiparty Governance as Multiparty Democracy

Another dimension of William Ofori Atta's leadership principle of political democracy as multiparty governance was that of multiparty democracy. What constituted the understanding of Ofori Atta regarding multiparty democracy? This question will be answered by examining the following primary sources: Ofori Atta's 1960 political tract on *The challenge of our time*,²²⁸ Ofori Atta's 1979 political speech at the inauguration of his political party the United National Convention,²²⁹ Ofori Atta's 1979 political speech on the UNC's 'Statement of Intent',²³⁰ Ofori Atta's 1985 published public lecture on *Ghana: a nation in crisis*²³¹. It will be argued that Ofori Atta's conception of multiparty democracy is made up of the following elements: democracy as parliamentary democracy, democracy as developmental democracy, democracy as good governance, democracy through elections.

On 27th January 1979 the UNC was officially inaugurated and Ofori Atta delivered a speech which highlighted the focus of the party. In his speech he paints a picture of the four decades of political challenges Ghana had faced which in his opinion necessitated the formation of a

²²⁷ Ofori Atta, 'Statement to the press by Mr William Ofori Atta Chairman of the U.N.C. on the 4th January 1980 by Mr William Ofori Atta Chairman Of The UNC' p.6

²²⁸ See William Ofori Atta Family Papers, Accra. Ofori Atta, *The Challenge of our Time*, (self-publication: 1960) p. 1. (= *Challenge*)

²²⁹ See William Ofori Atta Family Papers, Accra. 'Address by Mr. William Ofori Atta on the Occasion of the Inauguration of The United National Convention on the 27th January 1979.' (= 'Inauguration')

²³⁰ See William Ofori Atta Family Papers, Accra. 'Statement of Intent by the Chairman, Mr William Ofori-Atta of the United National Convention 5th January 1979' (= 'Statement of Intent').

²³¹ William Ofori Atta, *Ghana: a nation in crisis*, The J. B. Danquah Memorial Lectures, February 1985 (Accra: Ghana Academy of Arts and Sciences, 1998) p. 1. (= *Ghana*)

new political party to rebuild Ghana. He asserted that the dreams of the people of the Gold Coast at political independence in 1957 have over the decades turned in to the nightmares of the people of Ghana in 1979. He contends that both civilian political dictatorship rule and military political dictatorship rule have over the decades made a mockery of Gold Coast independence. This is because national economic development, personal freedom, the rule of law, and the socio-economic welfare of the people of Ghana have been side-lined and neglected by the political dictators in Ghana's history. As such there's a need to re-envision a new Ghana for Ghanaians to commit themselves to re-building a new Ghana. He claims that the U.N.C. political party have the men and women, the principles and policies, to execute the task of rebuilding a new Ghana.²³²

At independence in 1957 Ghanaians had the Ghana dream of a politically democratic, economically prosperous and socially cohesive nation. Twenty two years later in 1979 the Ghana dream had become the Ghana nightmare – political dictatorship, economic stagnation, social malaise. William Ofori Atta believed that his UNC political party could turn the Ghana nightmare into the Ghana dream if voted into power at the June 1979 election for the Third Republic. This was because the UNC had leaders of integrity and competence who could manage the nation's human and material resources in an honest and accountable manner. This background provides the context for the discussion on Ofori Atta's understanding of multiparty democracy. His conception was shaped by both the political struggles he experienced as a politician as well as by the challenges the nation of Ghana had gone through in its quest for political democracy.

²³² Ofori Atta, 'Inauguration', p. 1.

The first element of Ofori Atta conception of multiparty democracy is that of electoral democracy. He indicated that it was the right of citizens to elect the political representatives of their choice. For him it was not acceptable for a civilian government to establish a one party state, nor was it acceptable for the military to interfere in politics through coup d'états. At a UNC press conference on the philosophy of the UNC, Ofori Atta indicated that it was the aim of the UNC 'to deny the armed forces the excuse to intervene in national affairs.'²³³ Also in his February 1985 Danquah memorial lecture in Accra, he said: 'We shall never enjoy any stability and progress in our country if we allow our governments and our constitutions to be thrown out – by mere profession of good intentions. Such a state of affairs cultivates the seed of instability. Ambitious men who seek political authority or power should choose to adopt the hard and constitutional way of the BALLOT BOX and avoid taking guns to seize power.'²³⁴

As much as Ofori Atta is optimistic about democracy as electoral democracy in Ghana, there is a diversity of views by scholars on this issue. Said Adejumobi in an analysis of elections in Africa remarks that the future of elections and democracy in Africa is fragile.²³⁵ Samuel Decalo is pessimistic about democracy in Africa and thinks that if the global outlook for promoting democracy is not sustained, some African counties may backslide democratically.²³⁶ Jibrin Ibrahim has a more positive view and believes that the practice of democracy in will improve and develop.²³⁷ For Ofori Atta the seed of electoral democracy can grow in African soil if nurtured and protected. Electoral democracy, in his opinion, was central to the safeguarding multiparty democracy in Africa.

²³³ Ofori Atta, 'Statement of Intent' p. 1.

²³⁴ Ofori Atta, *Ghana*, pp. 32-33.

²³⁵ Said Adejumobi, 'Elections in Africa: A Fading Shadow of Democracy?' *International Political Science Review* (2000), Vol. 21, No. 1, 59–73. (= 'Elections in Africa')

²³⁶ Samuel Decalo, "The Future of Participatory Democracy in Africa" *Futures*, 26 (9) 1994.

²³⁷ Jibrin Ibrahim, "Democratic Transition in Africa: The Challenge of a New Agenda" in *Democratization Processes in Africa: Problems and Prospects* (E. Chole and J. Ibrahim, eds). (Dakar: CODESRIA, 1995).

The second element of Ofori Atta conception of multiparty democracy is parliamentary democracy. He favoured parliamentary democracy over executive presidential democracy. When he campaigned on behalf of J. B. Danquah in the 1960 plebiscite on the leadership for the first republic of Ghana, he theorised: ‘Time marches on. Ghana today is at the cross-roads. One of the roads leads to parliamentary democracy and true freedom, the other leads to presidential dictatorship and slavery.’²³⁸ He believed that with parliamentary democracy political power was shared between a prime minister and a titular president, while with presidential democracy political power was concentrated in the hands of one person. Elisabete Azevedo-Harman contends that African citizens make a discernible distinction between presidents and parliaments.²³⁹ She found in her research that African presidents are perceived by their citizens as being more worthy of trust and of performing better than African parliaments.²⁴⁰ In spite of their appreciation for the presidents, African citizens prefer to place limits on their functions and powers.²⁴¹ It may be that the traditional chief model in Africa makes presidential governance preferable to parliamentary governance. Robert Fatton notes that the rapid disintegration of the parliamentary democracy in Africa generated the rise of personal rule shaped by the eccentricities of the ruler instead of by democratic institutions.²⁴² He adds that patron-client relationships were formed which contributed corruption and abuse of power.²⁴³ For Ofori Atta, parliamentary democracy was critical to the entrenchment of

²³⁸ Ofori Atta, *Challenge*, p. 1.

²³⁹ Elisabete Azevedo-Harman, ‘Parliaments in Africa: Representative Institutions in the Land of the ‘Big Man’’

Journal of Legislative Studies 17(1) March 2011 65-85.

²⁴⁰ Azevedo-Harman, ‘Parliaments in Africa’ p. 26.

²⁴¹ See also Diana Cammack, ‘Understanding local forms of accountability: initial findings from Ghana and Malawi’ in Danwood M. Chirwa, Lia Nijzink. (eds) *Accountable government in Africa: perspectives from public law and political studies*. (New York: United Nations University Press, 2012)

²⁴² Robert Fatton, Liberal Democracy in Africa, *Political Science Quarterly*, Vol. 105, No. 3 (Autumn, 1990), pp. 459-460. (= Liberal Democracy)

²⁴³ See also Julius O. Adekunle ‘Political Winds of Change in Africa: Decolonization and Its Aftermath’ in Toyin Falola and Emmanuel M. Mbah, *Intellectual agent, mediator and interlocutor: A. B. Assensoh and African politics in transition* (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2014) pp. 32-50.

multiparty democracy in Africa since it curtailed the powers of the head of state while in his opinion a presidential democracy provided a fertile ground for the fostering of an autocratic head of state.

The third element of Ofori Atta conception of multiparty democracy is that democracy is intertwined with socio-economic development. He believed that it was the duty of political parties to ensure the welfare and wellbeing of their citizens through sound socio-economic development. On 5th January 1979 at a press conference, Ofori Atta made known publicly the philosophy of the UNC. He declared that: ‘The philosophy of the United National Convention is based on our desire... to promote the welfare of the people by means of government based on consensus....’²⁴⁴ Ofori Atta believed in socio-economic development within the context of political freedom. He was against developmental dictatorship whereby a government suspends the political and civil liberties in a country in order to carry out its socio-economic development plan without any opposition. Claude Ake claims that democracy provided a good environment for socio-economic development.²⁴⁵ He says that this is because democracy is able to mobilise the people of a country to willingly participate in development. He adds that despite the view of some that authoritarianism promotes economic development, because most African countries have a weak state structure coercive participation in development under autocracy does not necessarily produce effective economic development in Africa.²⁴⁶

The fourth element of Ofori Atta’s conception of multiparty democracy is that of good governance. He was of the conviction that political parties ought to practice good governance whether as the party in power or as the party in opposition. At a January 1979 press conference

²⁴⁴ Ofori Atta, ‘Statement of Intent’ p. 1.

²⁴⁵ Claude Ake, *Democracy and Development in Africa* (Abuja: Spectrum Books, 2003) pp. 119-120.

²⁴⁶ Ake, *Democracy and Development in Africa*, pp. 127-129.

on the philosophy of the UNC, Ofori Atta stated that it was the goal of the UNC ‘to consolidate and preserve national independence....to ensure good and stable government’.²⁴⁷ Robert Fatton notes that African patrimonialism is based on the corruption of autocratic presidents who give out national resources to gain the allegiance of others.²⁴⁸ There is no accountability in governance when patrimonialism exists and this breeds corruption.²⁴⁹ For Ofori Atta, good governance was critical to the preservation of multiparty democracy in Africa.

The above four elements of Ofori Atta’s conception of multiparty democracy were fashioned through nearly five decades of political activity. Ofori Atta’s political democracy journey ended in 1981 when he retired from active politics. Richard Sklar in his assessment of 1980s democracy in Africa, distinguishes the practice of four types of democracy in Africa.²⁵⁰ The first type is liberal democracy, in which there is periodic free and fair multiparty elections and the government works within the context of the rule of law..²⁵¹ Next is guided democracy which does not have multiparty elections but practices governmental accountability.²⁵² Then, social democracy which emphasises social justice in addition to governmental accountability.²⁵³ Finally, participatory democracy which emphasises the practice of democracy in both the political and social aspects of society.²⁵⁴ The above discussion has shown that Ofori Atta believed in liberal democracy. This was in spite of the fact that Ghana’s attempts at liberal democracy, from 1957 to 1981 when Ofori Atta retired from active politics, was truncated three

²⁴⁷ Ofori Atta, ‘Statement of Intent’ p. 1.

²⁴⁸ Fatton, ‘Liberal Democracy’, p. 461-462.

²⁴⁹ See also Robert H. Jackson and Carl G. Rosberg, *Personal rule in Black Africa* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982)

²⁵⁰ Richard Sklar ‘Democracy in Africa’ *African Studies Review*, Vol. 26, No. 3/4 (Sep. - Dec. 1983), pp. 11-24. (= ‘Democracy in Africa’)

²⁵¹ Sklar ‘Democracy in Africa’ p. 12.

²⁵² Sklar ‘Democracy in Africa’ p. 14.

²⁵³ Sklar ‘Democracy in Africa’ p. 15-16.

²⁵⁴ Sklar ‘Democracy in Africa’ p. 16.

times by military coup d'états on 24th February 1966, 13th January 1972 and 31st December 1981 by the NLC, NRC and PNDC military governments respectively.

4. Conclusion

On the matter of national independence, this chapter has attempted to unfold the position of Ofori-Atta with regard to his political vision for Gold Coast independence. From the chapter it can be deduced that Ofori Atta had a clear vision of what the Gold Coast was to be after national independence. It was to be an independent, democratic, multiparty Gold Coast. This vision inspired him to labour for the independence of the Gold Coast. Whether his method of achieving Gold Coast self-government through gradualism instead of radicalism was adequate or not is a matter open to debate. But that he contributed positively to the independence of the Gold Coast through the UGCC, GCP and NLM is a matter that cannot be denied. National self-government for him meant a rejection of colonial rule and an acceptance of national rule. Furthermore, it may be concluded that the leadership value of national independence as anticolonialism, self-determination, and self-government was an essential value for Ofori-Atta's political leadership.

On the issue of multiparty governance, the chapter revealed that Ofori Atta's conception of multiparty democracy was made up of the following elements: democracy through elections, democracy as parliamentary democracy, democracy as developmental democracy, and democracy as good governance. For Ofori Atta, multiparty democracy was a *sine qua non* of political democracy. Also, for Ofori Atta, constitutional democracy meant that the constitution was the nation's 'bill of rights', civilian rule was the only valid form of government,

constitutional laws – not military regime decrees - are the only legitimate structure of governance, the sovereign power of the citizens gives them the right to select the type of constitutional government and the type of political leaders they desire, and it was wrong to use a constitution to justify a one party state.

This chapter has argued that political democracy was an important leadership principle for William Ofori Atta. His conception of political democracy was made up of the elements of self-determination, self-government, constitutional democracy, and multiparty democracy.

The chapter further argued that for Ofori Atta constitutional democracy meant a rejection of unconstitutional military rule as well a rejection of authoritarian civilian rule and an acceptance of constitutional democratic civilian rule. For him, multiparty democracy meant a rejection of the one-party state as well as a rejection of the no-party state and an acceptance of a multiparty electoral democracy state. Although he was in the executive arm of government for only the Second Republic of Ghana with the PP, he played other important roles with regard to the nurture of democracy in Ghana. In the 1950s he served briefly as a legislative assembly member with the opposition UGGC, he was a leader of the opposition GCP, and he was the UK representative of the opposition NLM. In the First Republic he was a leader of the opposition UP. In the Third Republic he was the Presidential candidate for the opposition UNC and was also the Council of State Chairman. The narrative that emerges of Ofori Atta in this chapter is that of a conservative political leader who pursues change through non-violent means. He was a political gradualist, not a political radical. He was a democrat not an autocrat. He believed in both anti-colonial nationalism and liberal democracy pluralism.

A political democracy challenge for William Ofori Atta was that the Progress Party of which he served as a minister of state was not able to consolidate multiparty democracy during the

Second Republic of Ghana. The PP was only able to stay in power from September 1969 to January 1972. This was because on 13th January 1972 the National Redemption Council military government took over the reins of government from the Busia administration.²⁵⁵

This was the second coup d'état in Ghana after the 1966 NLC coup d'état which removed Nkrumah's CPP government from power to bring to an end the First Republic of Ghana. The reasons for the NRC coup d'état according to the new head of state Colonel I. K. Acheampong was that Busia's PP government had neglected the welfare of the military, the PP was a corrupt government,²⁵⁶ the Busia government had breached the human rights of some civil servants,²⁵⁷ and the PP government had mismanaged²⁵⁸ the economy.²⁵⁹ Notwithstanding the truth or falsehood of the NRC allegations, the NRC coup d'état indicates that Ofori Atta's Progress Party government was not able to entrench political democracy in Ghana and this made it feasible for a coup d'état to occur. Another democratic challenge for Ofori Atta was why he served on the Political Committee of the NLC from 1966 to 1967, and as a member of the Constituent Assembly from 1968 to 1969. Since the NLC was a military government and Ofori Atta stated his strong opposition to military rule, it was expected that he would not associate with any military government. The sources on Ofori Atta do not provide an answer to this dilemma. It may be surmised that he believed that these organisations were contributing to a return to civil rule and he may have compromised his anti-military rule stand with regard to the NLC in order to gain the bigger prize of civilian rule.

In spite of the several political challenges that he faced; on the whole it may be said that William Ofori Atta was a democratic in his politics. Ofori Atta's leadership principle of

²⁵⁵ *Daily Graphic* Friday, Jan 14, 1972 'Army takes over, Busia removed, Madjitey dismissed' p. 1.

²⁵⁶ Chapter 4 on Personal Transparency will address this allegation of corruption in the PP.

²⁵⁷ Chapter 2 on Human Rights will discuss the infringement of the rights of civil servants by the PP.

²⁵⁸ Chapter 3 on Socioeconomic Development will look at the economy under the PP.

²⁵⁹ *Daily Graphic* Friday, Jan 14, 1972 'Army takes over, Busia removed, Madjitey dismissed' pp. 1-3.

political democracy was encapsulated by several phrases he used frequently. One phrase was ‘a good, effective, fair and open democratic government’. He believed in a political democracy that was good, effective, fair, and open form of governance. Another phrase in his political discourse was that of freedom. He used the phrases such as: ‘our passionate love for freedom’, ‘every Ghanaian citizen is free’, ‘freedom-loving Ghanaians’, ‘the Ghanaian... instincts are for freedom and democracy, for self-rule, for independence from foreign and dictatorial rule...’ These phrases identify the leadership principle of ‘freedom’ as a key value for him. His vision for the Gold Coast/Ghana was that of political democracy based on political and social freedom. To sum up, Ofori Atta believed that the people of the British colony of the Gold Coast were ‘freedom loving people’ and this provided the impetus for their struggle for national independence from British colonialism in order to become the ‘freedom loving people’ of independent Ghana. For nearly five decades Ofori Atta courageously fought together with others against civilian and military dictatorship in Ghanaian politics. This led to him being imprisoned four times in his political journey for his political convictions. He wanted to create an enabling environment for the nurture of Ghanaian democratic practices and democratic institutions.

What element of William Ofori Atta’s political democracy leadership principle is congruent with the definition of ethical leadership in this thesis? From the above it may be deduced that Ofori Atta’s political democracy principle has the ingredient of the ethical value of freedom as its core basis. This is because Ofori Atta constantly used the word ‘freedom’ in his advocacy and activism with regard to his political democracy thought and practice. His political speeches and political writings advocated the ethical value of freedom. He paid the price for his ethical; value of freedom though several political detentions. He understood freedom as a political right to choose self-rule and a political right to choose the political party to rule one’s nation. He

was of the conviction that Ghanaian citizens had the right to freedom since he perceived Ghanaians as freedom loving people and he urged political parties in Ghana to uphold and defend the right of Ghanaians to live in a society characterised by freedom. His ethical value of freedom gave him a passion to fight to the national independence of the Gold Coast from British colonial rule to rule by Ghanaians. The ethical value of freedom also gave him a passion to fight for political democracy as multiparty governance.

The definition of ethical leadership in this research has integrity, influence and impact as the criteria for judging an ethical leadership value. On the criterion of integrity, political democracy may be practised by both a leader with integrity as well as a leaders without integrity. However, the above analysis of Ofori Atta's political democracy leadership principle demonstrates that the ethical value of freedom advocated and practised by Ofori Atta fulfils the ethical leadership criteria of influence and impact. Ofori Atta's political democracy leadership principle influenced people in Ghana to achieve the worthwhile goal of freedom for the common good of society. Also, his ethical value of freedom impacted political institutions in Ghana in order to make them life enriching structures. Hence, two of the three criteria for ethical leadership, firstly, the worthwhile influence of freedom for the common good of society and, secondly, the enriching impact of freedom on institutions are fulfilled by Ofori Atta's ethical leadership value of freedom with regard to his political democracy principle. The evaluation of Ofori Atta's ethical value of freedom by the definition of ethical leadership in this research, affirms the assertion that Ofori Atta was an ethical leader with regard to the ethical value of freedom. The next chapter examines Ofori Atta's human rights leadership principle.

CHAPTER THREE
HUMAN RIGHTS AS
RULE OF LAW AND CIVIL/ POLITICAL LIBERTIES

‘The Price Of Liberty Is Eternal Vigilance’

1. Introduction

The previous chapter analysed William Ofori Atta’s thought and practice on political democracy as national independence and multiparty governance. This chapter builds on his political views by examining his support for the leadership principle of human rights. The chapter attempts to answer the questions: ‘what was William Ofori Atta’s view of human rights, and to what extent were they a significant leadership principle in his political thought’? He used the phrase ‘the price of liberty is eternal vigilance’ to describe his leadership principle of human rights. It is argued that an examination of his political leadership indicates that he was both an advocate and an activist with respect to the leadership principle of human rights, of which the key elements for him were the rule of law and civil/ political liberties. It will be demonstrated that an evaluation of Ofori Atta understanding of civil/ political liberties indicates that freedom of speech, freedom of the press, and freedom of association were the essential ingredients of his human rights practice. The assessment of the thematic elements of Ofori Atta’s understanding of human rights will demonstrate his thought and practice on public leadership.

The chapter examines the leadership thought and practice of Ofori Atta with regard to his leadership principle of human rights. The elements of Ofori Atta’s human rights conception will be analysed to find out if they are consistent with the definition of ethical public leadership discussed in the introductory chapter. In other words, there should be elements of Ofori Atta’s

human rights leadership principle which correspond with the definition of ethical leadership as leadership in which the values of integrity and altruism are demonstrated in a leader's character and conduct in both the private and public life of the leader so as to influence people to achieve worthwhile goals for the common good of society as well as to impact institutions in order to make them life enriching structures.

The issue of human rights has a chequered history in Africa. Prior to political independence African nationalists contended for their rights from their respective colonial governments. They claimed the right to be free from colonialism and the right to govern themselves. Yet, after independence, some of these same leaders deprived their citizens of the personal rights due them. In response, the Organisation for African Unity (now the African Union) adopted the African Charter on Human and People's Rights (ACHPR) on 27 June 1981.²⁶⁰ The charter spelt out the ideals of the African heads of state to encourage and defend people's rights and freedoms in Africa. The ACHPR Article 4 states 'Human beings are inviolable. Every human being shall be entitled to respect for his life and the integrity of his person. No one may be arbitrarily deprived of this right.'²⁶¹ The ACHPR took as its point of departure the United Nations 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights.²⁶² However, unlike the latter the ACHPR gave equal emphasis to both individual rights and community rights. Additionally, the ACHPR placed a great deal of emphasis on the right to socioeconomic development. Furthermore, the ACHR stressed the duties of people as part of the human rights discussion.²⁶³

²⁶⁰ African Charter on Human and People's Rights, OAU Doc. CAB/LEG/67/3. The charter became effective on 21 October 1986. (hereafter ACHPR)

²⁶¹ ACHR, p. 3.

²⁶² Makua Mutua, 'The Banjul Charter: the case for an African cultural fingerprint in Abdullahia An-Na'im, *Cultural Transformation and Human Rights in Africa* (London: Zed, 2002) pp. 68-72. (hereafter *Banjul Charter*)

²⁶³ Mutua, *Banjul Charter*, pp. 80-83.

Despite these efforts, after over five decades of political independence the ACHR ideals are yet to be translated into reality in some African countries.

There are two philosophical definitions for human rights. The Naturalistic Conception views them as the rights that are inherent in each person's humanity.²⁶⁴ The Political Conception of human rights defines them according to their practical role in society. The former conception provides the foundation for human rights, while the latter stresses the duty to promote and protect human rights. The French jurist Karel Vasak, a former director of the UNESCO Division of Human Rights and Peace, classifies the global historical development of human rights into three categories which he calls 'generations of rights'.²⁶⁵ The first generation human rights focus on liberty: civil and political rights which prevent government violations of an individual's freedom. He notes that the first generation rights demand that the state is not to do anything that will interfere with such rights. The second generation concentrate on equality: economic, social and cultural rights which is required of a government in order to improve the life of its citizens. He observes that the second generation rights require the state to act with regard to their execution. The third generation of human rights centre on solidarity among nations: the right to development, environmental protection and peace. Claude Welch points out that in contrast to proponents of human right in the Global North, who stress liberty, Global South advocates link liberty, equality and solidarity.²⁶⁶ He adds that unfortunately, some Global South governments emphasise equality and solidarity at the expense of liberty.

²⁶⁴ Matthew Liao and Adam Etinson, Political and Naturalistic conceptions of human rights *Journal of Moral Philosophy* 9 (2012) 328.

²⁶⁵ Karel Vasak, "Human Rights: A Thirty-Year Struggle: the Sustained Efforts to give Force of law to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights", *UNESCO Courier* 30:11, Paris: *United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization*, November 1977. Claude Welch, 'Human Rights as a problem in contemporary Africa, in *Human rights and development in Africa* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1984) pp. 226-227. (hereafter *Human rights*)

²⁶⁶ Claude Welch, 'Human Rights as a problem in contemporary Africa, in *Human rights and development in Africa* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1984) pp. 226-227. (hereafter *Human rights*)

There are four matters of debate in Africa with reference to human rights: the relationship between human rights and culture; socio-economic development; democracy; and religion.

The first debatable issue is that of culture and human rights. Kwesi Wiredu asserts that human rights are relative to culture.²⁶⁷ He contends that the Akans of Ghana had the concept of human rights within their pre-colonial society. Akan traditional thought recognised the right of people to have a say in the enstoolment or destoolment of their chief, the right to freedom of thought and expression, the right to a trial before punishment and the right of a person to remain in or leave any locality. He asserts that the central values of Akan society endorsed human rights, even though some were not institutionalised, and not all were affirmed. Wiredu rejects the idea propounded by some African governments that the traditional African government structure was of the one-party mode.²⁶⁸ The traditional Akan system of government was neither one-party nor multiparty: the citizens could organise a pressure group to question the decision of their traditional political leaders and, if need be, demand the dismissal of a traditional political leader.²⁶⁹

Rhoda Howard holds a contrary view to that of the cultural relativist position of Kwesi Wiredu. Howard posits that precolonial African societies did not have a concept of human rights.²⁷⁰ She agrees that all societies have ideas of human dignity which are relative to that particular society but disagrees that they have a notion of human rights. She points out that human dignity is not to be conflated with human rights. For her, human rights are universal and are intrinsic in a person's humanity. They are not privileges a person receives but entitlements a person is to be

²⁶⁷ Kwesi Wiredu, 'An Akan Perspective on Human Rights' in Abdullah Ahmed An-Na'im and Francis Deng (eds.) *Human Rights in Africa: Cross Cultural Perspectives* (Washington: The Brookings Institution, 1990) pp. 257-258.

²⁶⁸ Wiredu, *Akan Perspective*, p. 259.

²⁶⁹ Wiredu, *Akan Perspective*, p. 259.

²⁷⁰ Rhoda Howard, *Human Rights in Commonwealth Africa*. (Toronto: Rowman and Littlefield, 1986) pp. 16-23.
(hereafter *Human Rights*)

given. They are not derived from a person's affiliation with a particular group or from a person's societal duties. As such, for Howard there is not a definitive African concept of human rights which is embedded in African culture. She reasons that traditional African values of the community-oriented individual, consensus political systems and economic redistribution are values which relate to human dignity in African traditional society and not human rights. Furthermore, Howard points out that African society is dynamic, and the impact of colonialism and modernisation has modified the values of communitarianism, consensus and redistribution.²⁷¹ The implementation of human rights may be relative to a particular society, says Howard, however the essence of human rights is universal. She believes that the universality of human rights negates claims by governments opposed to human rights that they can propagate their own version of human rights which does not conform to international norms.

The second debatable issue is that of development and human rights. Paul Zeleza claims that the relationship between the human rights and economic development is not straightforward.²⁷² He says that development and human rights if properly correlated have the potential of providing a life of dignity for a nation. He maintains that both development and human rights share the material and moral imperatives of organised society and the nation state, that is, to create conditions that promote human dignity. The two often use a common concept of justice and dignity and show similar interests in regulating power and participation. Zeleza declares that development denotes a process of sustainable socio-economic transformation that has the material and moral dimensions to enhance human dignity and well-being as well enhance the economic and existential welfare. But history has a contradictory guide and shows that the

²⁷¹ Howard, *Human rights*, p. 22-23.

²⁷² Paul Zeleza, 'The conundrum of development and human rights in Africa' in John Akokpari and Daniel Zimble (eds.) *Africa's Human Rights Architecture*. (Auckland Park: Fanele, 2008) pp. 24-28.

convergence between development and human rights is not inevitable, even if desirable. Zeleza states that Euro-American industrial capitalism emerged from the cruelty of slavery, genocide, and colonial conquest. Likewise, Soviet and Chinese industrial socialism was forged through the death of tens of millions of victims of collectivisation and terror. However, the failure of authoritarianism to bring about substantial economic and material gains in much of Africa meant that despotism and development were separated and were no longer regarded as suitable partners. Zeleza asserts that in some countries, development has occurred historically without human rights, yet in many others it has failed because of the absence of human rights and inhuman acts of repression.²⁷³

The third debatable issue is that of democracy and human rights. Paul Zeleza notes that the link between human rights and democracy is just as problematic as the link between development and human rights.²⁷⁴ The rule of law is violated more than observed in some African countries. He says that it is generally accepted that democracies are less repressive than autocracies. The constructive association between democracy and respect for human rights is based on the supposition that democratic leaders are more accountable to their citizens. In democratic countries, coercive agents exert less power and have fewer coercive means at their disposal. Elections supposedly provide the essential constraints on domineering governments, and democracy is seen as the better choice. Zeleza, however, points out that democracy does not always protect the human rights of marginal or minority groups. In the same vein, human rights can impose limitations on democracy (the will of the majority) to protect the rights of under-represented groups. The impact of democratisation on political repression is complex. Often repression levels may rise in new democracies because of repressive inclinations of the past

²⁷³ Zeleza, *Human Rights*, p. 26-27.

²⁷⁴ Zeleza, *Human Rights*, p. 27.

and the tendency for protest behaviour to increase at such times. Usually, when state tyranny is minimised in a democratic transition the expectations of civil society increase. An unintended outcome in democratisation is when previously inhibited voices often find articulation through ethnic cohesion with the negative consequence of ethnocentrism.²⁷⁵

The fourth area of debate is that of the relationship between religion and human rights. Does human rights need God? Charles Villa-Vicencio answers this question by pointing out that it depends on a person's God.²⁷⁶ For him the God of the architects and practitioners of injustice in Africa – such as slavery, colonialism, apartheid, dictatorship - is not the same as the God of the architects and practitioners of justice. He says that God has been used to legitimise human rights abuse by the former and to enhance human rights by the latter. Hence for Villa-Vicencio restraint is to be exercised in connecting God to human rights. A different assessment is made by Gerrie ter Harr on the issue of religion and human rights. She appeals for a dialogue between human rights and religion. She notes that religion plays a vital role in African society. Religious belief affects people's understanding of what it means to be human and what is acceptable human behaviour. In many parts of Africa, the spiritual aspect of a person is what defines human nature. For human rights to be efficacious it ought to be linked to a proper understanding of what it means to be human in a society. If human rights are divorced from a society's anthropology it can lead to fatal consequences in terms of human rights abuse such as the 1990 Rwanda genocide where some people were designated by the state as not 'real' human beings. Another example she observes is the labelling of some people as witches in Africa which results in the abuse of the human rights of such people. An underlying element in the issue of religion and human rights for her is the spiritual nature of evil which determines the way African

²⁷⁵ Zeleza, *Human Rights*, p. 28.

²⁷⁶ Charles Villa-Vicencio, 'God, the Devil, and human rights: a South African perspective' in Elizabeth Bucar and Barbra Barnett (eds.) *Does human rights need God?* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005) p. 236.

societies promote or abuse human rights. The desire to ward off evil spiritual forces and be protected from their harmful activities has a strong bearing on how human rights is expressed in African societies.

In relation to the preceding discussion on human rights issues in Africa, the rest of this chapter on Ofori Atta's human rights leadership principle will point out that on the one hand Ofori Atta states that human rights are universal. On the other hand, he believes that Akan culture has notions of human dignity which can enrich the idea of human rights. He is also of the view that human rights are not subservient to socio-economic development. He emphasises that both human rights and development are essential to national wellbeing and that the former creates an enabling environment for the pursuit of the latter. Additionally, he contends that both human rights and democracy are critical to the prosperity of a nation. A nation suffers from the deficiency of holistic prosperity if human rights and democracy are absent. Furthermore, although he does not claim a 'Christian human rights' position, he is of the view that the Christian faith can make a positive contribution to the idea of human rights.

This chapter will show that Ofori Atta adopted both a Naturalistic and a Political Conception of human rights. With reference to the three generations of human rights, Ofori Atta focused on the first generation rights, that is, liberty.²⁷⁷ Against this background, a formative experience in Ofori Atta's life – the 1934 Gold Coast anti-Sedition Bill campaign – is discussed in terms of its influence on his approach to human rights. Subsequently, two key political events that demonstrate his commitment to human rights – his stance against Ghana's 1958 Preventive

²⁷⁷ Chapters 3 and 4 of this thesis will focus on Ofori Atta's views on economic justice and social solidarity.

Detention Act and the 1979 Union Government Referendum – are analysed. The primary sources for this chapter are the private and public statements and actions of Ofori Atta.

What was Ofori Atta's definition of human rights? In his 1975 speech on 'Know your constitution' he says "...an exclamation from a person 'I am a Ghanaian Citizen' or 'I am a Ghanaian' should be enough to call upon the Police, Army, Judges, Prison Officers, vigilante groups, and all citizens to recognise and respect that person and his dignity and worth as a human being.'²⁷⁸ Ofori Atta makes an ontological claim for human rights. He understands human rights to derive from a person's worth as a human being as well as the person's dignity as a human being. Even though he uses the Bible to provide a foundation for human rights, he does not hold to a theocentric or Christocentric view of human rights. He affirms an anthropocentric view of human rights – a person's humanity and the dignity of a person are the entitlements to human rights. It is noteworthy that although Ofori Atta had a strong evangelical Christian conviction, his human rights views were mostly pragmatic rather than theological or philosophical.

From the above discussion of the influences on his human rights concept, it becomes clear as asserted previously that Ofori Atta's characterisation of human rights focused on both the Naturalistic and Political Conception of human rights. This is because for him both characterisations were essential to the human rights discussion, as the theory of human rights needs to be translated into the practice of human rights. With reference to the three generations of human rights, Ofori Atta focused on the first-generation rights, that is the right to liberty. While not discounting the importance of equality and solidarity, he did not link liberty to

²⁷⁸ Ofori Atta, '*Know your Constitution*'.

equality and solidarity. In his view the affirmation of civil and political rights was distinct from socio-economic development and social cohesion.

2. Human Rights and the Rule of Law

For William Ofori Atta civil and political liberties were to be based on the rule of law. He had a firm conviction that the rule of law is an integral part of human rights and political democracy. In a public lecture delivered on Ghana's 1979 constitution Ofori Atta declares that the rule of law is at the core of Ghana's constitutional provisions.²⁷⁹ He felt it was important for the citizens of a country to know their constitution in order for them to exert their rights and responsibilities as good citizens. In this vein, a government should make copies of the constitution available to the wider public and educate the public on the meaning of the constitution. This section of the chapter will argue that two features of Ofori Atta's understanding of the rule of law are: the rule of law is applicable to both the governed and the leaders and the rule of law as civilian constitutional rule.

2.1 The Rule of Law is applicable to both the Citizens and Leaders

The preamble of Ghana's 1979 Third Republic Constitution states that: '...in solemn declaration and affirmation of our faith in Freedom and Justice...'²⁸⁰ The principle that all

²⁷⁹ William Ofori Atta Family Papers, Accra. William Ofori Atta, 'Know your Constitution'. This type written speech does not provide information to the exact date and specific audience of the speech. However, the speech refers to the 1979 Third Republic constitution of Ghana so it must have been delivered after this date. (= 'Know your Constitution').

²⁸⁰ Ofori Atta, 'Know your Constitution'.

powers of government spring from the sovereign will of the people. The principle of universal adult suffrage without any distinction whatsoever. The rule of law, the protection and preservation of fundamental human rights, unity and stability for our nation.’²⁸¹ In a commentary on the constitution’s preamble, Ofori Atta notes that this Preamble of the constitutions says unequivocally that the rule of law is essential for Ghanaian society.²⁸² Additionally, the constitution stresses that every Ghanaian is equal before the law and the nation is to be ruled within the constraints of the laws of Ghana and not by the desires and preferences of any person or leader. The constitution is a tool for protecting and preserving the human rights of Ghanaians. This is because the constitution is enacted by the people of Ghana. It is a document to be treasured and used to guide and lead the nation as well as to protect and defend the inalienable human rights, liberty and prosperity of the citizens of the nation. Ofori Atta believes the constitution should be seen as ‘our last will and testament.’²⁸³

From the above, the following is an analysis of Ofori Atta’s understanding of the rule of law being applicable to both the ruled and the ruler. First, for Ofori Atta the rule of law is fundamental to constitutional democracy as it provides the necessary legal framework for the nurturing of democratic principles and practices. Ben Nwabueze says that the rule of law ensures that that objective laws rule a nation and not the subjective desires of a government.²⁸⁴ Second, for Ofori Atta the rule of law means that the laws of the nation are to be carefully planned laws which are codified into a constitution and not spontaneous decrees by a government. Ben Nwabueze says that the laws of a nation should be applicable from the time

²⁸¹ Ofori Atta, ‘Know your Constitution’.

²⁸² Ofori Atta, ‘Know your Constitution’.

²⁸³ Ofori Atta, ‘Know your Constitution’.

²⁸⁴ See Ben Nwabueze, *Constitutional Democracy in Africa: The pillars supporting constitutional democracy*, vol. 3 (Ibadan: Spectrum Books, 2004) pp. 19-20. (= *Pillars supporting*)

the laws are made and should not apply to past matters.²⁸⁵ This enables the citizens of a nation to know what is legal or not legal so as to be able to live by the rule of law.²⁸⁶

Third, Ofori Atta notes that the rule of law means that both the governed as well as those who govern are equal before the law. He observes that the rule of law means that each citizen is equal before the laws of the land and that no one, including the leaders of a nation, is above the laws of the nation. Ben Nwabueze says that this means that the punitive and pardoning aspects of the laws of a nation are to be applied uniformly to both the citizens and the leaders of a nation.²⁸⁷ Fourth, Ofori Atta stresses that the rule of law facilitates the upholding of the human rights of the people in a nation. He believes that the rule of law protects human rights the citizens of a nation especially when it is enshrined in the constitution of that nation.

Ben Nwabueze says that the rule of law places checks and balances on the rulers of a country so that they do not deprive the citizens of the rights due to them.²⁸⁸ It upholds the fair and just treatment of the citizens of a country. Nwabueze adds that the rule of law also allows a government to exercise its right to maintain law and order according to the just laws of the nation.²⁸⁹ For Ofori Atta, the rule of law meant that the law was applicable to both the citizens and the leaders of a nation.

²⁸⁵ Nwabueze, *Pillars supporting*, pp. 19-20.

²⁸⁶ See also Muna Ndulo, 'Constitutions: The politics of constitutional reform' in Nic Cheeseman (ed.) *Institutions and democracy in Africa: How the rules of the game shape political developments*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018) pp. 117-138.

²⁸⁷ Nwabueze, *Pillars supporting*, pp. 19-20.

²⁸⁸ Nwabueze, *Pillars supporting*, pp. 19-20.

²⁸⁹ See also Peter Vondoepp, 'The Judiciary: Courts, judges and the rule of law' in Nic Cheeseman (ed.) *Institutions and democracy in Africa: How the rules of the game shape political developments*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018) pp. 304-326.

2.2 The Rule of Law as Civilian Constitutional Rule

In another commentary on Ghana's 1979 Third Republic Constitution Ofori Atta declared that: 'The constitution of the 3rd Republic of Ghana 1979 is the Supreme Law of Ghana, expressing the will of the people.'²⁹⁰ It is the Charter of our Liberty or the Bill of (our) Rights. It is in reality our Magna Carta and we cherish it or must cherish it because it affects our individual personal lives and liberties and our national existence and prosperity.'²⁹¹ Ofori Atta observed that on the 24th September 1979, Ghanaians celebrated two great events: the return to civilian rule and the return to constitutional rule after a number of years of military rule under the National Redemption Council and the Supreme Military Council. He stated that Ghanaians returned to civilian and constitutional rule because of their faith in the principle that sovereignty resides in the people of Ghana who alone have the right to choose the form of government or constitution with which they are to be ruled and also the persons who are to govern them. He added that the expression 'a return to Civilian rule' and 'a return to Constitutional rule' imply that Ghana's immediate past rule was not civilian rule and not constitutional rule.'²⁹² The SMC government rule was military rule and not civilian rule. It was also a rule by decree and not constitutional rule because the SMC military government did not receive its power to rule from the constitution of Ghana or from the citizens of Ghana. He notes that the constitution of Ghana insists that all authority and powers in the nation are to be guided by the constitution in their policies and actions hence, for him, a government functioning under constitution should rule the nation in a manner that is different from a military government by adhering to the rule of law.²⁹³

²⁹⁰ Ofori Atta, 'Know your Constitution'.

²⁹¹ Ofori Atta, 'Know your Constitution'.

²⁹² Ofori Atta, 'Know your Constitution'.

²⁹³ Ofori Atta, 'Know your Constitution'.

From the preceding, the following is an analysis of Ofori Atta's view on the rule of law as civilian constitutional rule. First, Ofori Atta notes that constitutional rule speaks of the relationship of constitutional government with the constitution. It means that a government acquires and maintains political authority and power through constitutional means and not unconstitutional military decrees. Ben Nwabueze observes that the term constitutional government indicates that the constitution of a country has the final say on societal affairs and that the government exercises authority and power within the limits and constraints of the constitution.²⁹⁴ He notes that a constitutional government's rule should prohibit the abuse of power by the state and nullify dictatorship.²⁹⁵

Second, for Ofori Atta the rule of law as civilian constitutional rule means that a democratic government is a separate concept from a constitutional government. He believes that a constitutional government may not necessarily be a democratic government. However, a democratic government should be a constitutional government. For example, the CCP in the latter part of Ghana's First Republic was a constitutional government but not a democratic government when it declared a one-party state in Ghana. Ben Nwabueze notes that a government can be designated as a constitutional democratic government only if it practices both constitutionalism and democracy.²⁹⁶ As a constitutional government it will adhere to the provisions of the nation's constitution and as a democratic government it will ensure that there is free and fair multiparty elections in the nation.²⁹⁷

Third, for Ofori Atta the rule of law as civilian constitutional rule means that a nation's government should be a civilian government and not a military government. This is because

²⁹⁴ Nwabueze, *Structures, powers*, pp. 2-3.

²⁹⁵ Nwabueze, *Structures, powers*, pp. 2-3.

²⁹⁶ Nwabueze, *Structures, powers*, pp. 13-14.

²⁹⁷ Nwabueze, *Structures, powers*, p. 14.

the role of the military is to defend a nation and not to rule a nation. If a military person wants to participate in politics that person must retire from the military and enter politics as a civilian. The constitution of a nation places restrictions on a civilian government but a military government ruling by decrees has no such restrictions placed on it. Ben Nwabueze says that constitutional restrictions placed on a civilian government are meant to encourage it to be sensitive to the welfare of the populace.²⁹⁸ Also 'limitations upon government' refers to the restraints and checks on the exercise of power as limited in its extent as well as control and inhibiting mechanisms designed to make government responsive to the needs and wishes of people. For Ofori Atta, the rule of law meant civilian constitutional rule.²⁹⁹

This section of the chapter has argued that the rule of law was crucial to Ofori Atta's understanding of political democracy. Furthermore, two features of Ofori Atta's understanding of the rule of law are: the rule of law is applicable to both the ruled and the ruler and the rule of law as civilian constitutional rule. Ofori abhorred military rule and civilian dictatorial rule. As such he stood against the NRC and PNDC coup d'état and continued to affirm the need for political democracy in Ghana in his political journey.

3. Human Rights as Civil/ Political Liberties

This section examines a formative experience in Ofori Atta's life as a young adult with regard to human rights, the Preventive Detention Act and human right and during the governance of the Kwame Nkrumah's Convention People's Party, and the Union Government referendum

²⁹⁸ Nwabueze, *Structures, powers*, p. 14

²⁹⁹ See also Richard Sklar 'Democracy in Africa' *African Studies Review*, Vol. 26, No. 3/4 (Sep. - Dec. 1983), pp. 11-24.

and human right during the time of the Supreme Military Council. These events portray the importance of human rights in the life of Ofori Atta. Also, Ofori Atta's human right challenges will be investigated.

3.1. A Formative Experience in Human Rights: The 1934 Sedition Bill

In addition to the above factors that influenced Ofori Atta's human rights concept, an event he experienced in 1934 appears to have had an impact on the formation of human rights as his leadership principle. The significance of this event requires a detailed discussion in this section. The formative experience which nurtured Ofori Atta's human rights experience, with respect to freedom of speech, was when he accompanied his father Nana Ofori Atta and his uncle J. B. Danquah to England as part of a delegation that went to petition the British colonial government to uphold press freedom in Ghana.³⁰⁰ The Gold Coast Sedition Bill 1934 was published in February 1934 by the Gold Coast Colonial Governor Sir Shenton Thomas. It gave the Governor the power to restrict the circulation of newspapers, books and documents.³⁰¹ The bill did not refer to any criteria as to what may be classified as seditious. Other matters regarded as criminal in the bill were the intent to change the sovereignty of the Gold Coast and contempt for the King of Britain. To the Gold Coast elites, the Sedition Bill was a curtailment of the right to the freedom of speech and the freedom of the press in the Gold Coast. J. B. Danquah was the owner and editor of the newspaper *The Times of West Africa*. He set about using his newspaper to rally support from the people of Gold Coast against the bill.³⁰² Shortly after the Sedition

³⁰⁰ See Boafo, *Tribute*, pp. 13-19.

³⁰¹ Adu Boahen, *Ghana: evolution and change in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries*. (London: Longman, 1975), pp. 136-148 (hereafter *Ghana*). See also and Kofi Awoonor, *Ghana: a political history from pre-European to modern times* (Accra: Sedco, 1990)

Bill was published the Gold Coast colonial government published the Waterworks Ordinance by which residents of Accra, Cape Coast and Sekondi were to pay for the use of water in their private homes.³⁰³

These two laws were capitalised on by the Gold Coast media to evoke opposition by the public to the colonial government's action. A committee of twelve eminent persons, called the 'Committee of Twelve', was formed to head the protest.³⁰⁴ The committee won the support of the chiefs and held rallies to inform the populace of the consequences of the bills. It also sent telegrams to the Governor's office and the Colonial Office in London to complain about the bills. The West African Students' Union in London added their voice to the protest. The African Unofficial members of the Gold Coast Legislative Council - including William's father - met informally with the Governor on the issue. All these efforts did not yield fruit. The Gold Coast colonial government stood its ground with the support of the Colonial Office in London. On 20th March 1934 the Seditions Bill was passed and on 21st March the Water Rates Bill was also passed by the colonial administration.³⁰⁵

Danquah proposed that a delegation be sent to the Colonial Office to sustain the protest.³⁰⁶ This was accepted by both the Chiefs and the intelligentsia, but a cleavage arose between the political conservatives and the political radicals concerning which organisation should provide the deputation so two deputations eventually went to Britain. The conservative delegation, from the Central National Committee (CNC), an umbrella organisation of various political groups, was made up of representatives from the Chiefs and intelligentsia in the Colony and Ashanti

³⁰³ Boahen, *Ghana*, pp. 138-139.

³⁰⁴ Boahen, *Ghana*, pp. 138-139. The twelve were J. B Danquah, Nanka-Bruce, E. C. Quist, Akilapka Sawyeer, Kojo Thompson, H. F. Ribeiro, C. E. Reindorf, A. A. Ocansey, T. K. Orgle, John Buckman, S. O. Akiwumi and C. A. Vanderpuje.

³⁰⁵ Boahen, *Ghana*, pp. 138-139.

³⁰⁶ Boahen, *Ghana*, pp. 136-148.

and it travelled to Britain in June 1934.³⁰⁷ The radical delegation consisted of the Aborigine Rights Protection Society (A.R.P.S) representatives and it travelled in July 1934. Each group was sponsored with funds from various chiefs and public appeal for funds.³⁰⁸

In addition to protesting the bills, the two delegations requested constitutional changes which would allow increased African representation on the Legislative Council as well as on the Executive Council of the Gold Coast colonial administration.³⁰⁹ Each group insisted that it was the legitimate mouthpiece of the people of the Gold Coast. The British Colonial Secretary refused their demands. The Colonial Secretary met the Central National Committee but refused to meet Aborigine Rights Protection Society since the latter was considered too politically radical. It is likely that the squabbling between the two groups may have weakened their cause in the face of the British government's intransigence. Yet there was a positive outcome. This was the first occasion in which both the coastal people of the Colony and the interior people of Ashanti voiced opposition to the colonial government. Nonetheless, the lines between conservative and radical politics in Ghana were clearly demarcated. This has been a characteristic feature of Gold Coast and Ghanaian politics till today.³¹⁰

William Ofori Atta accompanied the CNC delegation that went to England in 1934. William's father took the 24-year-old William along with the delegation.³¹¹ Although Danquah was the CNC secretary, William served as his father's private secretary during the visit. At the end of the delegation's visit William's father helped him to enrol at Queens' College, Cambridge

³⁰⁷ See Boafo, *Tribute*, pp. 13-19. They were Nana Ofori Atta, J. B. Danquah, Nanka-Bruce, James Mercer, Akilapka Sawyeer, Korsah, I. K. Agyeman and Asafu-Adjaye

³⁰⁸ Boahen, *Ghana*, pp. 138-139. See also and Kofi Awoonor, *Ghana: a political history from pre-European to modern times* (Accra: Sedco, 1990) (hereafter *Ghana*)

³⁰⁹ Boahen, *Ghana*, pp. 138-139.

³¹⁰ Boahen, *Ghana*, pp. 138-139.

³¹¹ A photograph of the delegation including William Ofori Atta is printed in Boafo, *Tribute* p. 14.

University. It is likely that William's first-hand experience of his father and uncle petitioning the British Colonial Secretary for the freedom of expression in the Gold Coast left an indelible mark on him and contributed to the development of his passion to fight for his convictions regarding freedom of expression. The experience could have been a formative stage in nurturing the younger Ofori Atta for his future campaign for human rights. This assertion is buttressed by the fact that in his February 1985 J. B. Danquah Memorial Lectures he recounts the rejection by the British Colonial Secretary of the petition that his uncle Danquah, his father Nana Ofori Atta and the Central National Committee made regarding the 1934 Gold Coast Sedition Bill. Ofori Atta interprets the event as a denial of the right to freedom of the press and freedom of expression in the Gold Coast.³¹² The fact that 51 years after his father and the CNC delegation was snubbed by the British Colonial Secretary, Ofori Atta still had a lasting memory of the event shows surprisingly that the 1934 Sedition Bill petition helped to shape his views on human rights and British colonial rule. The 1934 London experience left an indelible mark in his life regarding his convictions on freedom of speech. This pursuit for freedom was to form a foundation of his understanding of human rights throughout his political career as will be seen by two key events below regarding his contention for human rights – his anti PDA position and his anti Unigov stance.

3.2. The Preventive Detention Act 1958 and Human Rights

During Ofori Atta's legal studies at Gray's Inn in London he served as the United Kingdom representative of the National Liberation Movement (NLM) from 1955 to 1959.³¹³ The NLM

³¹² Ofori Atta, *Ghana: A nation in crisis*, pp. 5-6.

³¹³ See Bofo, *Tribute*, pp. 13-19.

opposed the Convention People's Party (CPP) which was the party in government when Ghana attained independence on 6th March 1957.³¹⁴ On Ofori Atta's return to Ghana he joined the United Party (UP) from 1959 to 1964 but was not a parliamentarian. The two main political parties in Ghana at this time was the conservative political UP and the radical political CPP. The UP acted in opposition to the CPP in the First Republic of Ghana when Kwame Nkrumah was the President of Ghana. In 1964 Nkrumah declared Ghana a one-party state and all political parties were proscribed. Ghana's First republic CPP government was overthrown in a military and police *coup d'état* by the National Liberation Council (NLC) which ruled from 1966 to 1969. This section looks at his fight for freedom of speech and freedom of association during the NLM and UP posture against the PDA of the CPP.³¹⁵

In June 1958 the CPP government claimed to have unearthed a plot by some members of the opposition UP to assassinate President Nkrumah.³¹⁶ The claim was that the General Secretary of the UP, R. R. Amponsah, had purchased several pieces of military equipment which was to be used in the assassination. Shortly after this claim Amponsah was also charged with sedition when he accused the Ghana police of assisting the government in producing false voting papers to the upcoming regional assembly elections. When brought to trial, Amponsah was cleared of the sedition charge by the law court. This outcome enraged the CPP government and it chose to enact a law to curtail what it saw to be laxity in the legal process.

³¹⁴ Obed Yao Asamoah, *The Political History of Ghana (1950- 2013): The experience of a non-conformist*. (Bloomington: AuthorHouse, 2014) pp. 43-68. (hereafter *Ghana*). See also Joseph Amamoo, *Ghana: 50 Years of Independence* (Accra: Jafnit, 2007) pp. 113-149. (hereafter *Ghana*) and Awoonor, *Ghana*, pp. 161-170.

³¹⁵ Asamoah, *Ghana*, pp 43-68; Amamoo, *Ghana*, pp. 113-149; Awoonor, *Ghana*, pp. 161-170.

³¹⁶ Dennis Austin, *Politics in Ghana 1946-1960*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1970) pp. 380-382. (hereafter *Ghana*)

See also Obed Yao Asamoah, *The Political History of Ghana (1950- 2013): The experience of a non-conformist*. (Bloomington: AuthorHouse, 2014)

At this juncture, it must be remembered that the 1934 Gold Coast Sedition Bill passed by the British colonial government was the legal basis for the sedition charge against the UP General Secretary. The sedition law which Ofori Atta's father and uncle were unsuccessful in preventing its enactment now took its toll on the opposition UP of which William Ofori Atta was a leader.³¹⁷ Rhoda Howard notes: 'The idea that the African press should not be critical of the established government is a direct legacy of the colonial period.'³¹⁸ Hence the British colonial government 1934 Sedition Bill served as an example for the CPP government to enact the PDA law.

On 18th July 1958 the CPP government of President Kwame Nkrumah passed the Preventive Detention Act (PDA) 1958.³¹⁹ The key aspects of the act were that a person could be detained if the Head of State was of the view that the actions of this person threatened the security of the state or the defence of the state or the relations of the state with other states. If a PDA order is issued the detained person was to be informed of the reason for the detention within five days after which the detainee could petition in writing against the detention. The maximum period for the detention was five years; however, the detention may be extended for another three-year period if parliament deemed it necessary. A person who failed to conform to the requirements of the PDA could have the period of detention doubled at the inclination of the Head of State.³²⁰

The PDA was amended in 1962 and in 1963. The 1963 amendment was with respect to the extension of the period of detention to an additional five years after a person had served the

³¹⁷ Asamoah, *Ghana*, pp 43-68; Amamoo, *Ghana*, pp. 113-149; Awoonor, *Ghana*, pp. 161-170.

³¹⁸ Howard, *Human Rights*, pp. 122-123.

³¹⁹ Accra, PRAAD, NP 1/150, Preventive Detention Act 1958, pp. 1-2.

³²⁰ Asamoah, *Ghana*, pp 43-68; Amamoo, *Ghana*, pp. 113-149; Awoonor, *Ghana*, pp. 161-170.

first five year period.³²¹ On 22nd May 1964 the three forms of the PDA – PDA 1958, PDA (Amendment) 1962 and the PDA (amendment) 1963 – were repealed and replaced with the PDA 1964 which, in addition to detention, permitted a restriction order.³²² The restriction of movement could be applied for a period up to five years in the first instance and could be extended for up five years, making a total of ten years of restriction of movement without trial. The restriction was applicable to a person whom the Head of State believed a detention order was not suitable due to the person's health or age or any other reason. The restriction order was applicable to the restraint of a restricted person's involvement in employment or business, the curbing of the restricted person's association with other people and the curtailment of restricted person's communication with others. The PDA 1964 noted: 'A restriction order made restricting the movements of any person may impose such conditions as may be specified in the order in respect of his employment or business, and in respect of his association or communication with other persons'.³²³ The restriction order or the detention may be reduced or terminated at the pleasure of the Head of State. On 26th May 1964, four days after the PDA 1964 was issued, a *habeas corpus*, the Habeas Corpus Act 1964, followed on its heels. This allowed a person claiming unlawful detention to request a judicial investigation.³²⁴

When the axe of the PDA fell on some of the members of the political opposition, William Ofori Atta got involved in the pursuit of human rights on behalf of the UP opposition by publicly expressing his disapproval of the PDA.³²⁵ He contested for the freedom of speech, the freedom of association and the rule of law. Ofori Atta was studying law in England at this time and used the British media to speak up on behalf of the Ghana opposition. On 13th November

³²¹ Accra, PRAAD, ADM 4/1/465-495, The Preventive Detention (Amendment) Act 1963, p. 1.

³²² Accra, PRAAD, ADM 4/1/465-495, The Preventive Detention (Amendment) Act 1963, p. 1.

³²³ Accra, PRAAD, AMD 4/1/496-589, The Preventive Detention Act 1964, pp. 2-4.

³²⁴ Accra, PRAAD, AMD 4/1/496-589, The Habeas Corpus Act 1964, pp. 2-4.

³²⁵ See Boafo, *Tribute*, pp. 13-19.

1958 the British Broadcasting Corporation radio service interviewed Ofori Atta in his capacity as an official representative of the Ghanaian opposition in Britain. The interview dealt with the PDA and its effect on the political milieu of Ghana. Ofori Atta was asked about his views on the announcement by Kwame Nkrumah's government that 43 members of the opposition had been arrested and detained under the PDA for conspiring to assassinate Prime Minister Nkrumah and two of his ministers.³²⁶ Ofori Atta's response was that under a government which valued freedom, persons accused of a crime would be made to face the legal process to determine their guilt or otherwise. However, using the PDA the Nkrumah government had conveniently by-passed this judicial procedure to detain without trial persons suspected of contravening law and order. Even though the law appeared to provide a channel of appeal through the Governor-General of Ghana, for Ofori Atta such an appeal was ineffectual since the appeal was to a member of the very government that undertook the detention in the first place. In the interview he stated that '...freedom-loving people all over the world would naturally expect that the ordinary Criminal Law machinery would be set in motion to deal with the detainees so as to enable their guilt or innocence to be established. But the freedom-loving people would be waiting in vain. For the Government has made sure that it shall not be called upon to substantiate its charge, by cowardly resorting to arrest them under a recent enactment, the Preventive Detention Act of July 1958...' ³²⁷

In Ofori Atta's perception the PDA was a smoke screen for the maintenance of law and order. He felt one of the reasons for the PDA was the low opinion the public had of the CPP and the intent of the Nkrumah government to be heavy-handed in its approach to political opposition.

³²⁶ British Broadcasting Corporation Home Service transcript, Interview with William Ofori Atta, Thursday, 13th November 1958, pp. 1-3, Grey's Inn library archives (hereafter BBC transcript) Note that the underlining is in the original script.

³²⁷ BBC transcript, Interview with Ofori Atta, 13th November, 1958, pp. 1-2.

He debunked the Nkrumah government's assassination allegation.³²⁸ Ofori Atta cited the Nkrumah government's desire to curtail the activities of the political opposition as another reason for the PDA.³²⁹ Three rhetorical questions were posed by Ofori Atta in which he asserted that the legal rights, personal rights and human rights of the detained opposition politicians are being trampled on by the Nkrumah government. He says: 'the questions which all freedom-loving people are seeking now are: Is it right to detain these unfortunate 43 citizens on such a grave charge without trial, without giving them the slightest chance to establish their innocence?'³³⁰ He adds: 'And is it right for the Government to have the power permanently damnifying a citizen's reputation, his whole life, by such a grave charge without giving him a chance to establish that innocence?'³³¹ Furthermore, he asks: 'And isn't this recent act of the Ghana Government a flagrant denial of 'Freedom and Justice', the twin ideals which piously adorn the Ghana Coat of Arms?'³³²

Five days after the BBC radio interview, the Ghana High Commissioner to Britain, O. E. Asafu-Adjaye, was also interviewed by the BBC on the matter of the detained opposition politicians.³³³ Asafu-Adjaye justified the CPP government's action, claiming that the arrests were based on evidence gathered from a police investigation in which explosives were found. To avert anarchy, the Nkrumah government arrested the conspirators before they could execute their plans. Moreover, the arrested persons could have recourse to the law courts to prove their innocence. Furthermore, he claimed, the CPP had won the recent elections in the country and this was proof that, far from being unpopular, it was well-liked by the electorate. The High

³²⁸ BBC transcript, Interview with Ofori Atta, 13th November, 1958, p. 2.

³²⁹ BBC transcript, Interview with Ofori Atta, 13th November, 1958, pp. 2-3.

³³⁰ BBC transcript, Interview with Ofori Atta, 13th November, 1958, p. 3.

³³¹ British Broadcasting Corporation Home Service transcript, Interview with O. E. Asafu-Adjaye, Tuesday, 18th November, 1958, pp. 1-2.

³³² BBC transcript, Interview with Ofori Atta, 13th November, 1958, p. 3.

³³³ BBC transcript, Interview with O. E. Asafu-Adjaye, 18th November, 1958, p. 2.

Commissioner held that: ‘Far from suppressing the Opposition, the Ghana Government allows freedom of speech and action but will not tolerate the use of violence by any group of persons.’³³⁴ From the CCP government’s point of view the PDA was justified considering the periodic violent clashes between the supporters of the CPP government and the opposition.³³⁵

S. K. B. Asante notes that the PDA made Nkrumah’s CPP government unpopular and caused a *coup d’état* against the CPP. Yet he adds that in exceptional circumstances preventive detention may be a valid means to preserve democracy if it has proper safeguards: ‘Detention should be for a limited period, say for a maximum of six months, unless the authorities successfully establish that fresh facts implicating the detainee have arisen.’³³⁶

After his legal studies in England, Ofori Atta returned to Ghana in 1959.³³⁷ Whilst practising law he continued to be active in politics. He carried out his campaign for the freedom of speech, a free press, freedom of association, and the rule of law on Ghana soil. In 1963 and 1964 he was detained by Nkrumah’s CPP for his opposition to the CPP. The CPP considered his political activities to be a threat to the security of the state.³³⁸ The 1964 detention lasted until 1966 when the military and police *coup d’état* by the National Liberation Council overthrew the Nkrumah government. Political prisoners – including Ofori Atta - were then set free by the new military government. However, the National Liberation Council in turn placed the previous CPP government members in political detention. Eventually, they were tried and those not found to be guilty of corruption were set free.

³³⁴ BBC transcript, Interview with O. E. Asafu-Adjaye, 18th November, 1958, p. 2.

³³⁵ Asamoah, *Ghana*, p. 49.

³³⁶ S. K. B Asante, ‘Nation building and human rights in emergent African nations,’ *Cornell International Law Journal* vol 2.1, (1969) pp. 98-100.

³³⁷ See Boafo, *Tribute*, pp. 13-19.

³³⁸ K. Y. Boafo, (ed.), “A short biography of Mr. William Ofori-Atta — Paa Willie” in *Tribute*, p. 17-19.

Ofori Atta opposed the PDA because he was of the conviction that it abused the human rights of a person taking away a Ghanaian citizen's rights to freedom of movement, freedom of association, freedom of speech, the right to a fair trial and the rule of law. The preceding discussion on the demerits and the merits of the PDA highlights the tension between human rights and human security. It is a dilemma which leaders in public life are required to deal with. Akokpari is of the opinion that the two must go hand in hand - human rights needs human security and human security needs human rights. He explains the three categories of human rights as civil and political rights, economic and cultural rights and human development rights and environmental development rights.³³⁹ He describes the three aspects of human security as averting the dangers of conflicts and terrorism, combating hunger and poverty, and promoting an empowering and inclusive decision making that develops human life. The security of people and the human rights of people should converge in order for human life to flourish.³⁴⁰ It appears that Ofori Atta's and the opposition UP's campaign against the PDA focused on the human rights infringement aspect of the PDA, while Nkrumah and the CPP government focused on the human security benefits of the PDA. Neither side in this instance sought to balance the competing interests of human rights and human security.

Why is freedom of association important? John Inazu provides four arguments for the necessity of freedom of assembly.³⁴¹ First, freedom of assembly should be available to both normative groups and countercultural groups in society. Second, religious and social groups should have freedom of association in the same way that political and business groups enjoy this freedom. Third, freedom of assembly safeguards the nature and function a group. Fourth, freedom of assembly allows a group to communicate its purpose to society. Ofori Atta's concept of

³³⁹ Akokpari, *Human Rights and Human Security*, pp. 68, 69. 78

³⁴⁰ Akokpari, *Human Rights and Human Security*, pp. 68, 69. 78

³⁴¹ John Inazu, *Liberty's Refuge: the forgotten freedom of assembly*. (Yale: Yale University Press, 2012) p. 4.

freedom of association in the preceding narrative aligns with the first and fourth arguments. Ofori Atta believed that freedom of association should extend to opposition political parties and not only the government's political party, and freedom of association is linked to freedom of expression since the coming together of groups entails that these groups be given the platform to express their ideas.

This section has highlighted Ofori Atta's quest for freedom of speech and freedom of association through the NLM and the UP opposition political parties. He spoke and acted against the CPP's withdrawal of the freedom of speech and the freedom of association.

On freedom of association, Ofori Atta further claims that every citizen is entitled to the right to associate with other like-minded people.³⁴² the freedom of association is made up of the freedom to associate politically, the freedom to associate for religious worship, the freedom of workers to associate with trade unions, and the freedom to associate in social groups. He emphasises that 'the price of freedom is eternal vigilance' as such the citizens of a nation must protect their civil rights and freedom. He is of the view that if freedom of association is denied to people, then other civil rights and freedoms will also be denied subsequently. As such, the citizens of a nation need to treasure and protect their freedom to associate politically, religiously, industrially and socially. He stresses that civil society should watch out and stand firmly against those who would want to withhold the freedom of association because of their lust for power and their desire autocratic leadership.

³⁴² Ofori Atta, *Yes or No? How I see the referendum.*) pp. 2-3.

3.3. The 1979 Union Government Referendum and Human Rights

The Second Republic of Ghana from 1969 to 1972 brought into government the Progress Party (PP) led by Prime Minister Kofi Busia in which Ofori Atta served as the Minister of Education, Culture and Sports and later as Minister of Foreign Affairs.³⁴³ In 1972 a military *coup d'état* by Colonel Kutu Acheampong and the National Redemption Council (NRC) brought the governance of the PP to an abrupt end. The NRC ruled from 1972 to 1975. It then metamorphosed into the Supreme Military Council (SMC) from 1975 to 1979 and was led by General Kutu Acheampong. Ofori Atta was the leader of the political pressure group the People's Movement for Freedom and Justice (PMFJ) from 1978 to 1979 which opposed the SMC's idea of a Union Government made up of civilian and military leaders. The Armed Forces Revolutionary Council overthrew the Supreme Military Council and held elections to usher in the Third Republic of Ghana (1979-1981). Ofori Atta was the Presidential candidate for the United National Convention (UNC) in the Third Republic elections. The election was won by the People's National Party which went into an alliance with Ofori Atta's UNC. During the Third Republic he held the position of the Chairman of the Council of State which was an advisory body to the President. In 1981 a military *coup d'état* by the Provisional National Deference Council brought the Third Republic to its demise. At this point Ofori Atta retired from active politics.³⁴⁴ This section looks at his contention for freedom of speech and freedom of association during the PMFJ's stance against the Union Government idea of the SMC.

³⁴³ Mike Oquaye, *Politics in Ghana: 1972 – 1979* (Accra: Tornado, 1980) pp. 67-110. See also Asamoah, *Ghana*, pp. 176-293. See also Amamoo, *Ghana*, pp. 150-218 and Awoonor, *Ghana*, pp. 224-235.

³⁴⁴ Oquaye, *Ghana* pp. 67-110. See also Asamoah, *Ghana*, pp. 176-293; Amamoo, *Ghana*, pp. 150-218; Awoonor, *Ghana*, pp. 224-235.

From 1972 to 1979 Ofori Atta resisted the military rule of the National Redemption Council (NRC) – which later evolved into the Supreme Military Council (SMC).³⁴⁵ His opposition to this military dictatorship resulted in two cases of political detention.³⁴⁶ His passion for freedom caused him to work with other likeminded leaders to form the People’s Movement for Freedom and Justice (PMFJ) which opposed the undemocratic NRC/SMC military government. On idea that motivated Ofori Atta to fight for human rights and democracy was That of the need for responsible citizenship. He notes that ‘George Jacques Danton a French revolutionary said once that when the edifice is on fire we are likely to observe three types of men on the scene:³⁴⁷ those who just look on as spectators while the fire destroys the edifice, those who steal the furniture they appear to rescue, and those who extinguish the fire’. He exhorts the people of Ghana to make a choice to be part of those who put out the fire by putting the welfare of the nation of Ghana above their personal welfare whether they vote ‘no’ or ‘yes’ in the Unigov referendum.³⁴⁸ He quotes Edmund Burke, a British statesman who declares: ‘The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing.’³⁴⁹

The SMC planned to introduce a so-called new form of government called “Union Government”. The Union Government (Unigov) was a concept which made room for the possibility of merging civilian and military rule in one administration. It was felt by the SMC that such a form of government would help stem the tide of coup d’états in Ghana in particular and Africa as a whole. Concerning Unigov Ofori says: ‘I understand the concept of union government to mean that under it there will be no parties and that no person or group of people will be allowed to organise an association or party to promote a programme different from that

³⁴⁵ Asamoah, *Ghana*, pp. 235-249. See also Amamoo, *Ghana*, pp. 185-197 and

³⁴⁶ See Boafo, *Tribute*, pp. 13-19.

³⁴⁷ Ofori Atta, *Yes or No? How I see the referendum*. p. 14.

³⁴⁸ Ofori Atta, *Yes or No? How I see the referendum*. p. 14.

³⁴⁹ Ofori Atta, *Yes or No? How I see the referendum*. p. 14.

of the government of the day'.³⁵⁰ He explains that the Unigov proposal would make it constitutionally illegal for anyone to organise an opposition group to the government. This for Ofori Atta would eventually lead to a one party state in which those who prefer multi-party politics would be seen as rebels against the union government and be executed. He queries: 'Is the S.M.C. government expecting a miracle of transformation among all the opponents of union government should it be accepted? Or are the supporters relying on coercive legislation to force the opponents to gladly accept union government? Will the government ban all attempts of these opponents to continue to educate their fellow-citizens to see the evil of union government and seek a change before the inevitable disaster is brought on our heads.'³⁵¹

Ofori Atta served as the chairman of the PMFJ which opposed the Union Government concept. The PMFJ believed that it was a smoke screen for the perpetuation of military rule in Ghana by the SMC. The PMFJ organised street protests and strikes by workers to protest against the Union Government idea. Ofori Atta debunked the idea the Unigov had a basis in Ghanaian culture as claimed by the SMC. Ofori Atta asserts: 'It is claimed that Union Government will be like our traditional form of government.'³⁵² I must say that union government does not seem to me peculiarly Ghanaian or African. We have shown in earlier statements that even if union government were nearer our traditional form of government that would be no sufficient reason for it. What is required at this time is a search for the form of government that will be suitable for twentieth century Ghana, made up of many and diverse states, tribes, interests, goals, needs, resources; a form of government suitable for a Ghana which lives closely to and in competition with highly developed communities.'

³⁵⁰ Ofori Atta, *Yes or No? How I see the referendum*. p. 2.

³⁵¹ Ofori Atta, *Yes or No? How I see the referendum*. p. 2.

³⁵² Ofori Atta, *Yes or No? How I see the referendum*. p. 9.

The SMC military government organised a referendum on Union Government, hoping by this to win Ghanaians over to the proposal. Ofori Atta led the PMFJ to convince Ghanaians to vote “no” to Union Government. When the SMC realised that the consequence of the referendum would be a “no” to Unigov, they distorted the results and declared that the majority of Ghanaians has voted “yes” to Unigov.³⁵³ To the military government the results of the referendum was a ‘yes’ to Union Government, but to Ofori Atta’s PMFJ it was a rigged referendum. Ofori Atta enumerates four reasons why the People’s Movement for freedom and Justice was formed. ³⁵⁴ Firstly, the PMFJ First, the PMFJ believes that the debate on Unigov or party politics is to be resolved by the citizens of Ghana as such the PMFJ would see to it that people against Unigov are given the right to freedom of expression and allowed to campaign against union government. Next, the PMFJ would inform the public on the alternative to Unigov. Then. the PMFJ would educate the nation on making an informed choice on whether so vote ‘no’ or ‘yes’ to Unigov. Finally, the PMFJ would encourage Ghanaian society to debate the Unigov issue in a free and fair manner.

In January 1977 at the 5th anniversary of the NRC/SMC coup d’état the Head of State and Chairman of the SMC, General I. K. Acheampong, set up a 14-member ad-hoc committee to collect views from Ghanaians on the Union Government concept.³⁵⁵ The committee was under the chairmanship of the Attorney General and Commissioner for Justice and included representatives from civil society, traditional rulers, the police and the armed forces. At the celebration of the 20th anniversary of Ghana’s independence in March 1977, Acheampong put forward the view that Unigov would ensure national unity since it would not be characterised

³⁵³ Oquaye, *Ghana* pp. 67-110. See also Asamoah, *Ghana*, pp. 176-293; Amamoo, *Ghana*, pp. 150-218; Awoornor, *Ghana*, pp. 224-235.

³⁵⁴ Ofori Atta, *Yes or No? How I see the referendum*. p. 9.

³⁵⁵ *Ghanaian Times*, January 11, 1977, p. 1. See also Asamoah, *Ghana*, pp. 235-249

by the strife, factionalism and violence entailed in multi-party politics.³⁵⁶ Regarding the Unigov referendum, Ofori Atta asserts that the PMFJ would make the referendum more meaningful to the populace and will not disrupt the referendum. He notes: At a PMFJ press conference in Accra on 19th January 1978 made the following statement: ‘We seek to make the referendum more meaningful, for clearly there are two sides to the question.... We therefore call on the S.M.C. government to extend to us the same facilities, opportunities, and freedom to assemble and organise rallies and campaigns as have been accorded to such bodies as the Peace and Solidarity Council, African Youth Command.... We condemn the one sided manner in which the union government debate is being conducted.’³⁵⁷ The PMFJ insisted that the SMC government should allow both sides of the Unigov debate to take place in a cordial atmosphere.

The SMC military leader, General Acheampong, felt that Unigov would engender a sense of national belonging, which he termed ‘one nation, one people, one destiny’, as well as harness the human resources of the nation for economic and social development. He claimed that this form of government would allow the Armed forces and the Police to contribute their quota to national development and stability as partners with the civilian populace.

At the 17th Anniversary of Ghana’s republic day in July 1977, Acheampong made public the government’s plan to hold a referendum as to whether the future type of government for the country should be a Union Government.³⁵⁸ The referendum was to be followed by the drafting of a constitution, elections and the transfer of power from the military government to whichever type of government the nation chose.³⁵⁹ Other merits which Acheampong saw in Unigov were

³⁵⁶ *Ghanaian Times*, March 7, 1977, p. 1, 4.

³⁵⁷ Ofori Atta, *Yes or No? How I see the referendum*. p. 9, 13

³⁵⁸ *Ghanaian Times*, July 2, 1977, p. 1.

³⁵⁹ Oquaye, *Ghana* pp. 67-110. See also Asamoah, *Ghana*, pp. 176-293; Amamoo, *Ghana*, pp. 150-218; Awoonor, *Ghana*, pp. 224-235.

that it would eliminate ethnic based political parties, provide for an authentic Ghanaian political system of government which was not based on foreign concepts and engender stability and peace in the nation.³⁶⁰ Ofori Atta rebuts Acheampong's claim that Unigov would prevent future coup d'états in Ghana. He argues that if a military government struggles to combat coup d'état by other soldiers against it, how then could a Unigov government prevent a coup d'état. He queries: 'What then stops army officers from waiting to stage a coup against a government under Unigov with only a sprinkling of military men? Are we not opening a way by which soldiers who seek election and lose will themselves become disgruntled against the successful ones and the government?' ³⁶¹

Ofori Atta and the PMFJ campaigned against the Unigov concept, he contends: 'A "no" vote means that you want parties to be free to develop clearly defined policies so that whenever there is an election the people know what they are voting for.'³⁶² The S.M.C. has so arranged it that the meaning of a "No" vote and the results following from a "No" majority are not clearly shown. I therefore declare what a "No" vote means. It means a vote in favour of freedom to associate for political **purposes** and form political parties and if necessary to oppose a government in power is a basic element of democracy'.

It is open for debate as to whether Union Government concept or those who opposed the Union Government concept were right. Some proponents of the Union Government concept felt that such a form of government was much closer to African traditional political systems than

³⁶⁰ *Ghanaian Times*, September 30, 1977, p. 1.

³⁶¹ Ofori Atta, *Yes or No? How I see the referendum*. p. 8.

³⁶² Ofori Atta, *Yes or No? How I see the referendum*. p. 5.

Western parliamentary democratic forms of government. Furthermore, since African countries had a history of both civilian and military rule, it was believed that a merger of these two forms of government may help stabilise the political climate in Africa. Yet, the question arises as to who determines the makeup of a Union Government and how the ordinary citizen can play a part in political governance in such a type of government. For Ofori Atta, the Unigov concept has too many flaws to make an acceptable and workable concept in Ghana. He notes: 'Freedom in every community is a very precious God-given possession, and the community, therefore, generates a number of institutions and bodies and forces, particularly in a democratic society, as pillars or watchdogs of freedom, to protect and guarantee it, I list below the names of such bodies as forces: - ³⁶³ political parties, especially opposition parties, the (Judicial) Bench, the press (a free enlightened responsible press), religious leaders (and their associations of councils), the police, the Bar, the T.U.C. (or the industrial unions), natural rulers (particularly the national and regional Houses of Chiefs), the Civil Service, Mothers' and Women's Councils, independent and student bodies, public opinion (informed and responsible), professional associations (individual associations and the united body of professional associations).' He believed that these organisations are the pillars of freedom in a society since they carry out the role of advocating for freedom and rights in a society as well as monitoring the integrity and accountability of national leaders. He contends that civil society groups through their individual and collective efforts should serve as the guardians and advocates of human rights in a society.

³⁶³ Ofori Atta, *Yes or No? How I see the referendum*. pp. 13-14.

On 4th June, 1979 the third *coup d'état* in Ghana took place.³⁶⁴ This *coup d'état* was different from previous ones. This time it was a *coup d'état* against a sitting military government, the SMC regime. It was organised by Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC) which appointed Flight Lieutenant Jerry John Rawlings as its chairman. Since elections towards the Third Republic was near Rawling's AFRC ruled for only three months and handed over power to the democratically elected People's National Convention (PNC) in September 1979, led by Dr Hilla Liman.³⁶⁵

Ofori Atta argued that voting against the concept of Unigov would promote free speech in Ghana. He declares: 'A "no" vote means that you want political parties to be free to oppose and criticise the government of the day. I have had the occasion to tell some members of the S.M.C government that the most unfortunate incidence of their long rule of six years is the absence of any organized body or group in opposition to them, bringing out their actions into public light and to the full view of the sovereign body, the people of Ghana.'³⁶⁶ He gives several examples of the value of freedom of speech in Ghanaian history. He remarks: 'From 1951 to 1954 I was in the National Assembly with Dr Danquah and a few others in opposition to Dr Kwame Nkrumah's government.... We could identify government policies and actions which were influenced by what we had said.'³⁶⁷ He adds further: 'when Dr Busia declared that his Government would search for opportunities for 'dialogue', the opposition in Parliament ...took the Government to task. By reason of the lively debate in Parliament and the challenge to us to defend dialogue, our pronouncement on dialogue matured and became refined through the fiery process of Parliamentary debate between the government side and the opposition side. At Addis

³⁶⁴ Asamoah, *The Political History of Ghana*, pp. 235-249. See also Kevin Shillington, *Ghana and the Rawlings factor*. (London: Macmillan, 1992) 21-31.

³⁶⁵ Oquaye, *Ghana* pp. 67-110. See also Asamoah, *Ghana*, pp. 176-293; Amamoo, *Ghana*, pp. 150-218; Awoonor, *Ghana*, pp. 224-235.

³⁶⁶ Ofori Atta, *Yes or No? How I see the referendum*. pp. 5-6.

³⁶⁷ Ofori Atta, *Yes or No? How I see the referendum*. pp. 5-6.

Ababa our statement on dialogue [with apartheid South Africa] in 1971 was one which even the radical elements in the O.A.U. could not fault.³⁶⁸ Hence, for Ofori Atta the freedom of association and the freedom of speech are essential human rights which are to be sustained in a democratic society.

Why is freedom of speech important? Eric Barendt provides four arguments for a free speech principle.³⁶⁹ First, freedom of speech is important because it allows people to share their views on matters in society for the consideration by others in order for diverse voices to be heard in society. As such governments should promote and not prohibit free speech except when it may lead to violence in society. Next, freedom of speech provides a platform for questioning and examining various societal issues in order to validate the truthfulness or falsehood of an issue. When people are given the freedom to speak, listen, read and write what they think and believe it facilitates the wellbeing of both individuals and society. Also, freedom of speech allows citizens to express various opinions of political and other matters in a nation and the enhances the participation of citizens in a democracy as well allowing citizens to make a government accountable to the people. Finally, the curtailment of freedom of speech by a government often makes the populace suspicious of the veracity of government communication on societal matters even if in the opinion of the government there may be a good reason to control free speech.

The preceding discussion on Ofori Atta's human rights concept indicates that for him the major reason for free speech is that of the argument from citizen participation in a democracy. He believed that free speech enhanced political democracy. The importance of free speech to Ofori

³⁶⁸ Ofori Atta, *Yes or No? How I see the referendum*. pp. 5-6.

³⁶⁹ Eric Barendt, *Freedom of Speech* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005) pp. 6-21.

Atta is reiterated in the following political speech he made in 1979 for the PMFJ campaign against Unigov: ‘At the press conference on 27th January organised by the People’s Movement [PMFJ] I referred to a principle I learned during my school days at Mfantshipim from one of the books of the Professor L.P. Jacks.³⁷⁰ He said that in worldly matters of fallible non-omniscient men there are usually three sides to any question: a. My side b. Your side c. The right side.’ Ofori Atta adds that freedom of speech means that although a person may have a position on an issue, that person should be open to hearing the other side of the issue so as to weigh both sides of the issue in arriving at a final position. This in his view circumvents political fanaticism and political violence in society as people are given the right to express their views on societal matters.

He argues further using Ghanaian Akan proverbs to buttress his conviction for freedom of speech: ‘And the Akan man says ‘Eti koro nko agyina’ (meaning many different heads are better than one).³⁷¹ The Akan man sums all this up saying, “onipa a otwa okwan no nnim se n’akyi akya” (the man who is cutting a path through the bush does not know the line behind him is crooked: he needs another to point this out to him).’ Ofori Atta believes that freedom of speech is based on the understanding that one person does not have total control of wisdom and that the expression of different ideas on an issue enables the wise option to be sifted out for the betterment of society.

This section has highlighted Ofori Atta’s pursuit of freedom of speech and freedom of association though the PMFJ’s opposition to the SMC’s Union Government idea and

³⁷⁰ Ofori Atta, *Yes or No? How I see the referendum*. pp. 5-6.

³⁷¹ Ofori Atta, *Yes or No? How I see the referendum*. pp. 6-7.

referendum. He wrote, spoke and took practical action for civil society to have the rights to political and civil liberties during the anti-Union Government campaign.

3.4 Ofori Atta's Human Rights Challenges

William Ofori Atta faced several human rights challenges during the Second Republic that question his credentials as a human rights defender. The Second Republic of Ghana Progress Party government led by Prime Minister K. A. Busia had several controversies during its tenure. Ofori Atta served as Minister of Education, Culture and Sports as well as Minister of Foreign Affairs in this government. A controversy which dented the human rights credentials of Ofori Atta was the dismissal of 568 workers in the civil service and public corporations by the Progress Party government.³⁷² This incident was later to be nicknamed “Apollo 568” since it coincided with the period around which the United States of America launched an Apollo space mission. One of reasons given by the government for the dismissal of the civil servants was the allegation that they were inefficient workers. However, this allegation was not substantiated with hard evidence.³⁷³ Another reason proffered was that the civil servants were in alliance with the previous First Republic of Ghana government to stall the governance initiatives of the of the Second Republic government.³⁷⁴ There was bad blood between the leaders of the two republics because during the First Republic a number of the leaders of Busia's government were detained with trial by Kwame Nkrumah's government. Consequently, for all its claim to democratic credentials the Busia government failed to follow

³⁷² Dennis Austin *Ghana Observed: Essays on the politics of a West African republic*. (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1976) pp. 153-154. (hereafter *Ghana Observed*)

³⁷³ Austin, *Ghana Observed*, pp. 153-154.

³⁷⁴ See K. Yeboa – Konadu, ‘Aftermath of the purge of public service’ in *The Ghanaian Times* Tuesday, March 3, 1970, p. 6.

due process in the case of the dismissed workers. The ‘Apollo 568’ controversy tarnished the human rights policy of William Ofori Atta since he was a Progress Party cabinet member when the decision was made. Even though there is no evidence as to whether Ofori Atta was for or against the dismissal, the fact that he did not publicly oppose it made him culpable for the decision.

Another human rights challenge for Ofori Atta was the controversial Alien’s Compliance Order, passed by the PP government, by which illegal immigrants in Ghana were given only two weeks to regularise their stay or be deported. Most of those affected happened to be citizens of neighbouring West African countries such as Nigeria. The PP government claimed that illegal aliens constituted a good number of the person carrying out criminal acts the country as such there was the need to ask them to return to their countries of origin.³⁷⁵ Critiques of the law question the time period given to the aliens to depart and the means by which illegal aliens could be identified since some people from neighbouring West African countries had migrated to Ghana during the colonial period when such residence documents were not strictly enforced.³⁷⁶ Also, the Alien’s Compliance Order was seen by some as a stand by the PP government against African unity.

³⁷⁵ *The Ghanaian Times* Thursday, October 29, 1970, p. 6. ‘Aliens Compliance Order not intended to hurt any state’, an interview granted by the Minister of Information, Mr T. D. Brodie-Mends, to a Nigerian journalist Mr Bola Aloba of *The Lagos Morning Post*

³⁷⁶ Bernard Marbell. Interview by author, 9th July 2007 and 31st July 2007. In an interview with Bernard Marbell, a mentee of Ofori Atta and a former principal of Maranatha Bible College, Marbell asserts that Ofori Atta stated explicitly to him in later life that he regretted not taking a public stand against these two human rights infractions by the PP.

4. Conclusion

The human rights conception of Ofori Atta can be summarised by the following comment about human rights by the Ghanaian political scientist, John Akokpari. Akokpari points out that rights are inborn and unchallengeable since they are basic to human dignity.³⁷⁷ He adds that they are natural rights that are core to human existence and are owed to every human being no matter the person's gender, race or faith. The state does not give human rights to people as privilege. Rather it is the duty of the state to protect the human rights of people. Akokpari notes that, although human rights are equally and universally owed to every person, the history of humanity shows that they often have to be fought for due to various kinds of oppression: political, economic, social, military, and the like.

The above discourse on William Ofori-Atta's indicates that in spite of the several human rights challenges that he faced, he was overall a person dedicated to upholding the leadership principle of human rights. The influences on his human rights principles and practices were his family, education, political detentions, Akan culture and Christian faith. He was an advocate and practitioner of the rule of law, freedom of expression and the freedom of association. For him the human rights of a person were ontological and transcended the authority of state. He upheld the worth, dignity and individuality of every person within a community. This conviction drove him to fight for the cause of human rights in both colonial Gold Coast and independent Ghana. His battle for human rights saw him, in collaboration with other human rights advocates and activists, take on Nkrumah's Preventive Detention Act 1958 and Acheampong's 1978 Union Government proposal. Despite the influence of his Christian faith

³⁷⁷ John Akokpari, "Human Rights and Human Security in Post-9/11 Africa" in John Akokpari and Daniel Zimble (eds.) *Africa's Human Rights Architecture*. (Auckland Park: Fanele, 2008) p. 69. (hereafter *Human Rights and Human Security*)

in shaping his human rights concept, he pursued human rights from an anthropocentric grounding and a pragmatic basis. This position enabled him to work with a broad political sphere in the quest for human rights in Ghana. However, his pursuit of human rights did not extend to women's rights. Although Ghana was a patriarchal society during Ofori Atta's lifetime, there is no clear evidence that he publicly contested for the women's equality in Ghanaian society. His focus was on civil and political rights.

What element of William Ofori Atta's human rights leadership principle is compatible with the definition of ethical leadership in this thesis? From the above it may be deduced that Ofori Atta's human rights principle has the ingredient of the ethical value of liberty as its core basis. Ofori Atta constantly used the phrase 'the price of liberty is eternal vigilance' in his advocacy and activism with regard to his human rights thought and practice. By this he meant the people of Ghana were to carefully watch over their liberty and not allow any government to abuse their liberty. He understood liberty as the possession of political, economic and social rights by the citizens of a nation. In both his words and deeds, he campaigned for the right of Ghanaians to enjoy their political, economic and social liberty. His ethical value of liberty was expressed through his pursuit of the rule of law, political liberties and civil liberties. He placed an emphasis on liberty as freedom of speech, freedom of the press, and freedom of association. He was of the conviction that Ghanaian citizens had the right to liberty since he upheld the traditional Akan Ghanaian belief that Ghanaians were of royal blood with a God given dignity and a God given right to liberty. He implored on Ghanaians to fight for their liberty and be vigilant in preserving their liberty.

The definition of ethical leadership in this research has integrity, influence and impact as the criteria for judging an ethical leadership value. The above analysis of Ofori Atta's human rights

principle demonstrates that the ethical value of liberty was the core ingredient of his human rights principle. Liberty may be practiced by both an ethical leader and an unethical leader. Nevertheless, Ofori Atta's ethical value of liberty fulfils two of the criteria for ethical leadership used in this research. His ethical value of liberty which he advocated and practised influenced people in Ghana to achieve the worthwhile goals of freedom of speech, freedom of the press and freedom of association for the common good of society and also impacted political institutions in Ghana to institutionalise freedom of speech, freedom of the press and freedom of association in order to make them life enriching structures in Ghana. Hence, two of the three criteria for ethical leadership – worthwhile influence and enriching institutions - are fulfilled by Ofori Atta's ethical leadership value of liberty with regard to his human rights principle. The next chapter will examine his leadership principle of socio-economic development.

CHAPTER FOUR

SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AS EDUCATIONAL EMPOWERMENT AND ECONOMIC PROGRESS

‘Constructive Citizenship’ Education and ‘Khaki Collar’ Jobs

1. Introduction

The previous chapter investigated William Ofori Atta’s thought and practice on human rights as the rule of law and political/ civil liberties. This chapter examines his understanding and practice of socio-economic development. To what extent can it be said that William Ofori Atta advanced socio-economic development in Ghana? The following factors provided a background to Ofori Atta’s input with regard to Ghana’s socio-economic development. In the educational sphere, Ofori Atta taught at the Prince of Wales College (Achimota College), he worked as headmaster of Abuakwa State College (a secondary school), and he served as the Minister of Education, Culture and Sports in the Second Republic of Ghana. In the economic sphere Ofori Atta had a bachelor’s degree in economics, he served as the President of the Akyem Abuakwa Farmers Association in the Eastern Region of the Gold Coast in the late 1940s, and he served as the Chairman of the Cocoa Marketing Board during the tenure of the National Liberation Council in the mid-sixties.

This chapter argues that socio-economic development was one of Ofori Atta’s leadership principles and that he advanced socio-economic development in Ghana through his twin political leadership policies of educational empowerment and economic progress. The chapter further argues that the significance of Ofori Atta’s leadership principle of socio-economic development (which he termed ‘constructive citizenship’ education and ‘khaki collar’ jobs)

was educational empowerment through ‘constructive citizenship’ education, moral education, and vocational technical education; as well as economic progress through ‘khaki collar’ jobs, agricultural development, industrialisation, land reform, and rural development. Ofori Atta was of the view that if the preceding was implemented, Ghana would produce empowered citizens who would enable the country to progress in its socio-economic development.

It will be demonstrated that an evaluation of Ofori Atta’s understanding of educational empowerment indicates an attempt to emphasise vocational technical education in addition to academic education and a desire for moral education to be the basis for education. Also, an evaluation of his economic progress view indicates an effort to highlight employment opportunities for working class people and the economic development of rural areas and not only employment for the middle class and the economic development of urban areas. The first section of this chapter will examine his socio-economic development as educational empowerment policy and the second section his socio-economic development as economic progress policy.

This chapter examines the leadership thought and practice of Ofori Atta with regard to his leadership principle of socio-economic development. The elements of Ofori Atta’s socio-economic development conception will be analysed to find out if they correspond with the definition of ethical public leadership discussed in the introductory chapter. In other words, there should be elements of Ofori Atta’s political democracy leadership principle which correspond with the definition of ethical leadership as leadership in which the values of integrity and altruism are demonstrated in a leader’s character and conduct in both the private and public life of the leader so as to influence people to achieve worthwhile goals for the

common good of society as well as to impact institutions in order to make them life enriching structures.

Africa's third liberation is the need for a liberation from economic underdevelopment to economic development.³⁷⁸ Greg Mills and Jeffrey Herbst insist that for contemporary Africa to grow and develop economically, there is the need for African governments to make economic issues take precedence over political issues.³⁷⁹ They note that African countries are gradually moving away from foreign development aid to internally generated funds for economic growth and development. This trend has been facilitated by human capital educational development, an increase in commodity prices, institutionalising economic reforms, good governance, efficient trade, open markets, macroeconomic stability, fiscal conservatism, and the input of local entrepreneurs in various African countries.³⁸⁰ Still, Mills and Herbst assert that African countries need to fairly distribute their economic gains to benefit the national populace and not just an elite few, as well create an enabling environment for the private sector to be the engine of national economic growth.

John Martinussen notes that there are about ten concepts of development.³⁸¹ Development as modernisation in which development was seen as a process of change in order to conform to the economic conditions of Western countries. Development as economic growth is a process by which there is both an increase in the real per capita income and a decrease in poverty and inequity in a country. Development as increased welfare and human development deals with the enhancing of choices people have to improve their social, economic, and political life.

³⁷⁸ Herbst and Mills, *Africa's Third Liberation* pp. 6, 232.

³⁷⁹ Herbst and Mills, *Africa's Third Liberation* pp. 7-9.

³⁸⁰ Herbst and Mills, *Africa's Third Liberation* p. 220-2.

³⁸¹ John Martinussen, *Society, state and market: A guide to competing theories of development*. (London: Zed Books, 1997) pp. 35-45.

Development as the elimination of dependency saw development as the realisation of a nation's independence and a self-directed economic advancement which may result in either a fairer allocation of development gains or the initiation of socialism. Development as dialectical transformation sees a dialectical relationship between tradition and modernity in a society which results in a modification of both trends and an eventual fusion of the two. Development as capacity building seeks to build the autonomous capacity of a society to make and implement decision effectively. The development-by-people approach sees the empowerment of a community at the local level so as to be involved in development matters as the goal of development. Sustainable development is a development approach that meets the current needs of a society while taking into consideration the needs of future generations. Development as human security relates to the provision of a context in which individuals and marginalised groups can freely and safely exercise their rights in order to improve their wellbeing. Development as history perceives development as a culturally conditioned process in which a cultural community determines its own development objectives and priorities. It will be argued that a critical analysis of William Ofori Atta's thoughts on economic development will reveal that the concept of development as modernisation forms the backdrop for his conception of economic development.

William Ofori Atta's father, Nana Ofori-Atta I, was an example to William as to how socioeconomic development was to be formulated and implemented. Nana Ofori-Atta I reigned from 27th November 1912 to 20th August 1943 as the *okyenhene* (king) of the Akyem Abuakwa state in the Eastern Region of Gold Coast. The rise of Nana Ofori-Atta I to the throne of Akyem Abuakwa marked a turning point in the life of her citizens in particular and the Gold Coast in general. He brought to the office of the *okyenhene* his rich entrepreneurial, managerial and leadership experience. The eminent Ghanaian historian, Robert Addo-Fening, notes that three

major challenges in Akyem Abuakwa confronted Nana Ofori-Atta I — the waning of chieftaincy as an institution, economic difficulties, and social problems.³⁸² Okyenhene Ofori-Atta's response to this was to formulate and implement policies that would ensure the sustainable development of Akyem Abuakwa. Addo-Fening points out that Nana Ofori-Atta I, firstly, enacted legislation for managing state affairs.³⁸³ Secondly, he set out a policy of accountability by chiefs and elders to their constituents.³⁸⁴ Thirdly, he promoted the socio-economic development of Akyem Abuakwa.³⁸⁵ Nana Ofori-Atta I had a strong passion for formal education and this was translated into the establishment of Kyebi Government Primary School, Kyebi Government Trade School, Kyebi Government Middle Boarding School, Abuakwa State College (a secondary school), and the canvassing for an Akyem Abuakwa Girls' Boarding School although this was not fulfilled. His push for a girls' secondary school at this period of Gold Coast history was significant since secondary school education was not widespread and education of the girl child not a priority for many. William followed the example of his father on the matter of socio-economic development.

³⁸² Addo-Fening, 'Chieftaincy and issues of good governance, accountability and development', *Chieftaincy in Ghana*, pp. 326-328.

³⁸³ *Ibid*, pp. 329-334, 344, 346. See also Addo-Fening, *Akyem Abuakwa*, p. 212-213.

³⁸⁴ Addo-Fening, 'Chieftaincy and issues of good governance, accountability and development', *Chieftaincy in Ghana*, pp. 334-338.

³⁸⁵ *Ibid*, pp. 338-343. See also Addo-Fening, *Akyem Abuakwa*, p. 207-212.

2. Socio-Economic Development as Educational Empowerment

2.1 The Nature of ‘Constructive Citizenship’ Education

For William Ofori Atta educational empowerment meant providing students with the knowledge, attitudes and skills which will enable them to become what he termed ‘constructive citizens’. In Easter 1946 Ofori Atta delivered a speech at the second reunion of the Begoro Old Boys Association in the Eastern Region of the Gold Coast entitled “Constructive Citizenship”.³⁸⁶ He was the State Treasurer of Akim Abuakwa State Council at this time.³⁸⁷ Secondary school education in 1946 Gold Coast was not widespread. As such those who had secondary school education were considered a privileged class. In his speech he stated that the possession of secondary school education placed the old boys of Begoro Secondary School at a level of education which was higher than that of others in the Gold Coast and this placed a big responsibility on them to be ‘constructive citizens’. He remarked: ‘As an association your responsibility is incalculable especially... as you are educated, possessing a standard of education higher than the average in the state’.³⁸⁸ This notion of ‘constructive citizens’ was one which summed up in a nutshell Ofori Atta’s educational philosophy.

Ofori Atta elaborated on the essential features of ‘constructive citizenship’ education. A purpose of education was to make people autonomous intellectuals. He told his audience: ‘Your education has made you as every sound education should do, independent thinking persons.’³⁸⁹

Another was that education was to enable people to be useful citizens. He pointed out to the

³⁸⁶ William Ofori Atta, ‘Constructive Citizenship’ in *The Gold Coast Observer*, May 24, 1946, p. 26. (hereafter ‘Constructive Citizenship’). The lecture was published in *The Gold Coast Observer*.

³⁸⁷ See William Ofori Atta Family Papers, Accra. ‘Answers of William Ofori Atta to the questionnaire under the investigations and forfeiture of assets decree 1972 (N.R.C.D. 19)’. (hereafter ‘Answers to questionnaire’)

³⁸⁸ Ofori Atta, ‘Constructive Citizenship’, p. 26.

³⁸⁹ Ofori Atta, ‘Constructive Citizenship’, p. 26.

association: ‘Your education has qualified you for the maximum contribution expected from a complete citizen.’³⁹⁰ Next, education was to facilitate problem solving skills which will develop society. He contends: ‘... you can therefore, from your vantage ground, contemplate with full understanding the problems and issues that confront your community, and contribute your instructed judgement to the common good.’³⁹¹ In addition, education was to empower people. He asserted: ‘Education, we all know, is a Power. You therefore hold a Power, and in modern Gold Coast where the great mass is illiterate, your power is immense...’³⁹² Furthermore, educated people are to perceive of themselves as stewards who have been given a trust to tutor others and serve others. He stressed: ‘But your power is a power held in trust and therefore held upon conditions and two of the most important of these conditions are: (i) that you should instruct your less fortunate brothers and sisters and (ii) that you should serve the community in which you live.’³⁹³ From the above, Ofori Atta believed that ‘constructive citizenship’ education is necessary to empower people so that they can be, as he terms it ‘constructive citizens’ who will enhance their personal potential as well as contribute to making society better.

Ofori Atta served as the Progress Party Minister of Education and Culture from 1969 to 1970 in the Second Republic of Ghana.³⁹⁴ In March 1970 he delivered a nation-wide broadcast on the eve of the 13th anniversary of Ghana’s independence to the student population of the nation.

³⁹⁰ Ofori Atta, ‘Constructive Citizenship’, p. 26.

³⁹¹ Ofori Atta, ‘Constructive Citizenship’, p. 26.

³⁹² Ofori Atta, ‘Constructive Citizenship’, p. 26.

³⁹³ Ofori Atta, ‘Constructive Citizenship’, p. 26.

³⁹⁴ In a National Assembly debate he remarks: ‘Mr Speaker ... My name is William Ofori Atta. I won the Akwatia constituency election and on Progress Party ticket and I beat my N.A.L opponent, the P.A.P opponent and the U.N.P opponent.’ See PRAAD RG 8/2/280 Parliamentary Debates Second Series – Volume 1 The First Session Of The First Parliament Of The Second Republic Of Ghana – First Year Of The Republic Session 1969 3 October 1969, pp. 20-21.

This speech expanded on his idea of ‘constructive citizens’.³⁹⁵ In the speech he said that a properly educated person – in other words a ‘constructive citizen’ – is characterised by moral qualities of patriotism, diligence, self-help, loyalty, and honesty. He noted: ‘Our present task is to make our new freedom meaningful and worth fighting, living and dying for. There is a great need for a massive co-operative effort of all of us to pull ourselves out of the mess in which we are. This calls for hard work, self-help, honesty, loyalty and patriotism.’³⁹⁶

Most of Ofori Atta’s speech focused on a survey of Ghana’s pre- and post-independence history which he used as an illustration to show the students what being a ‘constructive citizen’ meant. He asserts: ‘...never again shall we allow our freedom to be abused, justice to be denied, and human dignity desecrated... we have produced a Constitution which sets out to guarantee the enjoyment of the maximum freedom by every Ghanaian... the constitution cannot guarantee our freedom unless we ourselves are prepared to work for our prosperity and to stand up and fight for our rights.’³⁹⁷ The theme of freedom and justice, the official motto of Ghana, runs through Ofori Atta’s speech to the students. He argues for political freedom and economic justice. The leadership principles of freedom and justice are articulated in his policy of self-government, multiparty democracy, and education for development. It is significant that the issues Ofori Atta discussed in his broadcast to the students are several of the key issues that his political leadership revolved around, namely political democracy and human rights. It is pertinent that he began his speech with the phrase: ‘My young friends, pupils and students, future hope and leaders of Ghana:’³⁹⁸ It appears that through the broadcast he wanted to share

³⁹⁵ *The Ghanaian Times*, Monday, March 9, 1970, p. 4. The text of Ofori Atta’s speech was published on page 4 The Ghanaian Times newspaper while a report on the speech by the newspaper’s journalist appeared on page 3 of the same edition.

³⁹⁶ *The Ghanaian Times*, Monday, March 9, 1970, p. 4.

³⁹⁷ *The Ghanaian Times*, Monday, March 9, 1970, p. 4.

³⁹⁸ *The Ghanaian Times*, Monday, March 9, 1970, p. 4.

his hope of a better Ghana in the future and the need for students to see themselves as the next generation of leaders for the nation's development.

In his broadcast, Ofori Atta laments about the fact that although the majority of Ghana's population live in the rural areas, educational empowerment and economic development in colonial and post-colonial Ghana have tended to focus more on the urban areas. He makes the case for 'constructive citizens' education that will empower people to be willing to live and serve in the rural areas of Ghana so as to contribute the socio-economic development of the rural areas: 'Our Government is committed to redressing this social injustice not only for the good of the people in these areas but for the good of the entire nation. We cannot, however, do this if our young men and women refuse to serve in these neglected rural areas.'³⁹⁹ He calls on the students of Ghana to answer the call of serving in the rural areas: 'Our Government is determined to improve the conditions in these areas as fast as possible but we still need men to go to these areas. There is work to be done there. This is the challenge to our generation. Are we prepared as graduates, teachers, and other public servants to accept this challenge?'⁴⁰⁰ For him, constructive citizens are to help in improving the welfare of rural people. It is significant that he ends his speech with an invocation for God to bless the nation of Ghana: 'May the Almighty God continue to multiply His Grace unto this nation and make it a nation under God, A God fearing nation of people. Long live Ghana in freedom, justice and prosperity.'⁴⁰¹ At the time Ofori Atta delivered his speech to the nation's students he was an evangelical Christian and he unashamedly asks for divine blessings. However, since Ghana is a religiously plural country with Christianity, Islam, and African Tradition Religion, he mentioned 'God', and not 'Jesus Christ' so as not to offend the adherents of other religions. This shows that in his political

³⁹⁹ *The Ghanaian Times*, Monday, March 9, 1970, p. 4.

⁴⁰⁰ *The Ghanaian Times*, Monday, March 9, 1970, p. 4.

⁴⁰¹ *The Ghanaian Times*, Monday, March 9, 1970, p. 4.

leadership Ofori Atta. was a religiously sensitive Christian and respectful of the religious convictions of others.

2.2 Implementing ‘Constructive Citizenship’ Education

During his tenure as the Minister of Education, Sports, and Culture in Ghana’s Second Republic, Ofori Atta took concrete action to implement his idea of ‘constructive citizenship’ education especially through placing an emphasis on vocational-technical education and moral education. William Ofori Atta took a number of practical steps to implement ‘constructive citizenship’, that is, an empowering education which produces freedom, justice, economic development and morality in society. From 1969 to 1970 during the Second Republic, Ofori Atta worked at putting into action his educational empowerment policy in a number of ways.⁴⁰² First, he worked at eliminating the wasteful use of educational resources. In a speech in the National Assembly on 3 December 1969 he pointed out that: ‘It has been found that in a certain area, it is possible to have about five, six, or seven educational units, all operating in that area.’⁴⁰³ This has been found to be wasteful, and the policy of my Government is that we should make judicious use of all our resources.’ Secondly, he attempted to decentralise the educational sector so that ‘the managers or the supervisors in these educational systems to continue to serve... as a result of the decentralization policy....’⁴⁰⁴ The educational officers at the local level could now make some decisions without recourse to the educational head office since the local educational officers were the people on the ground with a local understanding of issues.

⁴⁰² See William Ofori Atta Family Papers, Accra. ‘Who’s Who in the World questionnaire’

⁴⁰³ PRAAD RG 8/2/280 *Parliamentary Debates Second Series – Volume 1 National Assembly The First Session of the First Parliament Of The Second Republic of Ghana* 2nd October 1969 – 12th December 1969, p. 377. (hereafter *1969 Parliamentary Debates*)

⁴⁰⁴ Ofori Atta, *1969 Parliamentary Debates*, p. 377.

Thirdly, he made clear his intention to work with religious groups which had mission schools and shared his appreciation of such schools: ‘we are in consultation with those religious bodies to ensure... the particular interest of these bodies - and we acknowledge that they have done great service to the nation in education....’⁴⁰⁵ When he discussed the contribution of religious groups to education in Ghana he claimed that the Progress Party government of which he was the Minister of Education, was made up of people who were devoted to God. This caused an uproar from the opposition parties. Rather than buckle down, Ofori Atta asserted: ‘the churches know that this Government, which is a God-fearing Government – (*shame!*) – When I mentioned God-fearing the other members opposite said, “shame, shame!” May I say this, that I am not ashamed that I acknowledge that I am God-fearing man.’⁴⁰⁶ It is significant to note that once again Ofori Atta is unashamed of his Christian faith and publicly declares this is a parliamentary session.

Fourthly, Ofori Atta sought to improve the facilities and equipment of schools especially those in the rural areas. In a debate in parliament 18th May 1970, he declared: ‘The Minister of Education is very grateful to the National Assembly for the interest it has taken in the standard of equipment and buildings of the primary and middle schools.’⁴⁰⁷ He stressed the need for special attention to be given to schools in rural areas since they were facing more difficulties than those in urban areas: ‘the Government... can go to the assistance of poor local authorities to provide better buildings and better equipment for the schools which they cannot cater for... to improve the quality of buildings and equipment of these schools and we are finding ways by which we can come to the aid of poor local authorities.’⁴⁰⁸ Fifthly on the issue of the

⁴⁰⁵ Ofori Atta, *1969 Parliamentary Debates*, pp. 377-378.

⁴⁰⁶ Ofori Atta, *1969 Parliamentary Debates*, pp. 377-378.

⁴⁰⁷ See William Ofori Atta Family Papers, Accra. *Parliamentary Debates*, Volume 3, 12th May – 26th June 1970, p. 65. (hereafter *1970 Parliamentary Debates vol 3*)

⁴⁰⁸ Ofori Atta, *1970 Parliamentary Debates vol 3*, p. 683

government taking over private schools built by a community to make them state schools, while commending such community initiative he expressed caution on the matter: 'I am quite sure that in considering the future needs of districts and regions of the country with regard to the absorption of private secondary schools into the public system, the case... will be seriously considered. My Ministry is however not in a position, at the moment to announce a precise date for a possible takeover.'⁴⁰⁹ Sixthly, concerning the upgrading of secondary schools into sixth form schools he enumerated a number of criteria that needed to be met: 'the location of the school, which should be such that it can service as many other schools in the region as possible;⁴¹⁰ ...the school must have certain basic facilities that should enable it to mount sixth-form classes without much difficulty... the possession of qualified staff and equipment for the training of the students....'⁴¹¹

Seventhly, his Progress Party government established the National Service Corps as a vehicle for the general population, especially the unemployed and students who had completed their education, to serve the nation. The expectation was that through the Corps, students would demonstrate in a practical way their patriotism and show appreciation for the taxpayers' money spent on their education. Ofori Atta's March 1970 broadcast to students highlighted his opinion on this new venture. He claimed: 'The spontaneous and overwhelming response accorded to the invitation for the National Service Corps augurs well for the nation.'⁴¹² This is convincing evidence that all of us, students and pupils, workers and unemployed, professional persons, and men and women of leisure, old and young, are all ready to serve Ghana, to help ourselves and to do things for ourselves.'

⁴⁰⁹ Ofori Atta, *1970 Parliamentary Debates vol 3*), p. 683.

⁴¹⁰ Ofori Atta, *1970 Parliamentary Debates vol 3*), pp. 683-684.

⁴¹¹ Ofori Atta, *1970 Parliamentary Debates vol 3*), pp. 683-684.

⁴¹² *The Ghanaian Times*, Monday, March 9, 1970, p. 4.

The expectation of the PP government was that the National Service Corps would make possible the mobilisation of people to assist in the economic reconstruction of the nation. The Ghanaian Times journalist reporting on Ofori Atta's speech wrote: 'Ofori-Atta said no responsible government of men who feel passionately for their own people and who regard their brothers as themselves could look on the shocking spectacle of misery without taking immediate steps to remove the stigma of poverty and unemployment.'⁴¹³ The National Service Corps is one of the significant legacies Ofori Atta left when he served as the Minister of Education in the Second Republic since it is still operating today in Ghana.

Eighthly, the setting up of memorials of past national historic figures was another means by which Ofori Atta believed the youth of Ghana could be educated. This, he felt, would remind the younger generation of the need to follow in the footsteps of previous generations in building the nation. In a parliamentary debate, during the second republic, on the creation of a memorial for J. B. Danquah he observed: 'In Ghana we bury our dead. In other countries they do not bury their dead. I say this because in Ghana when a man dies, after six months, three months or one year, he is forgotten: he is buried forever.'⁴¹⁴ He suggested the establishment of a national hall of fame to display the portraits of the great men and women of Ghana's past as a means of educating young people on the nation's history as well as motivating the young to become 'constructive citizens'.⁴¹⁵

⁴¹³ *The Ghanaian Times*, Monday, March 9, 1970, p. 3.

⁴¹⁴ William Ofori Atta Family Archives. Parliamentary Debates Wednesday, 25th February 1970 Volume 2 No. 6 (hereafter *1970 Parliamentary Debates vol 2*)

⁴¹⁵ Ofori Atta *1970 Parliamentary Debates vol 2*

2.3 Vocational and Technical Education

One of Ofori Atta's most important contributions to education in Ghana was in the area of vocational and technical education. He sought to reform the educational system in Ghana to make it more suited to the developmental needs of the nation by emphasising vocational-technical education or as he aptly calls it education for 'khaki collar' jobs. In Ghana at this time a good number of workers in the lower rung of the economic ladder wore brown khaki uniforms. The phrase 'khaki collar' job was created by Ofori Atta to differentiate it from a 'white collar' job. The former was focused on practical jobs which require the training of 'the hands' of students, while the latter was focused on office jobs which require teaching the 'heads' of students. The former emphasised skills education, while the latter emphasised knowledge education. By emphasising 'khaki collar' education Ofori Atta was not demeaning practical skills-oriented jobs. Rather, his concern was for education to provide the complete array of the knowledge and skills that were essential for an economically developing nation such as Ghana to grow in socio-economic development.

This policy of education and training of human resources for 'khaki collar' jobs followed a two-prong approach to education. On the one hand, Ofori Atta was a strong believer in academic tertiary education which he saw as necessary if Ghana was to produce the human resources requisite for the political, economic, and social development of the nation. On the other hand, Ofori Atta argued strongly for vocational and technical education due to his realisation that the majority of Ghanaian youth did not get the opportunity to continue their education to the tertiary level and more importantly Ghana also needed trained people to manage the middle and lower level human resource needs of the nation.

In June 1970 *The Ghanaian Times* newspaper reported on Ofori Atta's new vocational technical education policy stating that vocational-technical education would provide as more balanced approach to education in Ghana: 'The government is adopting a new educational policy in an effort to off-set the educational imbalance in the country.'⁴¹⁶ It is significant that Ofori Atta made this speech when he went on a working visit to the Northern and Upper Regions of Ghana because these were the two financially poorest regions of Ghana at that time and they were the two regions to gain most from the new educational policy. Ofori Atta explained that vocational-technical education would train students for practical skilled work: "The new policy, Mr Ofori-Atta said, would enable the schools to prepare pupils not for 'white collar' jobs but for what he described as 'khaki collar' jobs."⁴¹⁷ At the time he made the proposal for educational reform Ofori Atta made known that the government spent a quarter of the national resources on education and that the PP government intended to improve on the educational facilities in the Northern and Upper Regions. The newspaper commented that Ofori Atta declared: 'the Government was aware that in the country today, there were so many children of school going age who could not go to school because of lack of educational facilities in their respective areas. The next target of the Government, the Minister said, 'will be universal secondary school for all.'⁴¹⁸ It is significant that in 1970 Ofori Atta had a vision of universal secondary education for every Ghana student after the completion of primary education. In 2017, the politically conservative New Patriotic Party under the leadership of President Nana Akufo-Addo implemented the policy of free senior high school education for all Ghanaian students completing junior high school. It took 37 years for Ofori Atta's visionary policy to be implemented. As a point of interest, William Ofori Atta is the uncle of President Nana Akufo-Addo.

⁴¹⁶ *The Ghanaian Times*, Monday, June 22, 1970, 'Govt plans new educational policy', page 7.

⁴¹⁷ *The Ghanaian Times*, Monday, June 22, 1970, 'Govt plans new educational policy', page 7.

⁴¹⁸ *The Ghanaian Times*, Monday, June 22, 1970, 'Govt plans new educational policy', page 7.

In September 1970, *The Ghanaian Times* newspaper reported on Ofori Atta' educational reform as follows: 'A new educational policy for the country is to be introduced during the next academic year.'⁴¹⁹ This will ensure permanent literacy in the country's languages as well as in English. Reliable sources hinted in Accra yesterday that unlike the former policy which only sought to produce literates without reference to the country's manpower needs, the new policy will first seek to encourage every child to remain in the school system up to the age of 16.' Ofori Atta's proposed new educational policy balanced academic education with vocational technical education. Its aim was to... 'provide a wide variety of training programmes that will enable the youth to acquire essential pre-vocational and other skills through which they could find gainful employment after school.'⁴²⁰ Another focus of Ofori Atta's educational reforms was the provision of vocational guidance and counselling for secondary school students and the teaching of agriculture and business studies in all secondary schools. This was to ensure that secondary school students are given training in practical subjects which would enable them to pursue a profession if they chose not to continue with university studies.⁴²¹

Ghana's current Junior Secondary School/Junior High School educational system with its mixture of both academic and vocational-technical education owes part of its origin to the initiation by Ofori Atta in the Second Republic for vocational-technical education to be placed on an equal footing with academic education.

All was not smooth sailing for Ofori Atta as the Minister of Education. Some teachers went on strike during his tenure. Primary school teachers in government schools went on strike over the

⁴¹⁹ *The Ghanaian Times* Tuesday, September 1, 1970, 'New educational policy to be introduced', p. 8.

⁴²⁰ *The Ghanaian Times* Tuesday, September 1, 1970, 'New educational policy to be introduced', p. 8.

⁴²¹ *The Ghanaian Times* Tuesday, September 1, 1970, 'New educational policy to be introduced', p. 8.

government's withdrawal of a subsidy for their workplace uniform. Ofori Atta said the subsidy was withdrawn in order to have more funds available for rural development since it was the rural folks who provided the majority of the nation's internally generated finances.⁴²² Also some university teachers at the University of Science and Technology in Kumasi went on strike over wages.

In a 1970 address to District Education Officers at Saltpond in the Central Region of Ghana, Ofori Atta emphasised the need for a relevant educational system in Ghana which was free from colonial vestiges. The *Ghanaian Times* newspaper reported him as saying: "On education policy, Mr. Ofori-Atta said it was vital that the curriculum for all levels in schools and colleges in the country should relate to the realities and needs of the nation. He observed that the present educational system was still related to the type of education given 'us by the imperialists who introduced it to suit their taste at the time.'"⁴²³ 'Constructive citizenship' education was Ofori Atta's idea of an indigenous educational system that was free from colonialism and relevant to the socio-economic needs of post-colonial Ghana..

2.4 Moral Education

The moral element of education was very important to William Ofori Atta. A means to achieve empowering education for Ofori Atta was through moral education. He saw moral education as the foundation of education on which knowledge, attitudes and skills were to be built on. Ofori Atta believed that religious institutions had an essential role to play in moral formation.

⁴²² *The Ghanaian Times*, Monday, June 22, 1970, 'Govt plans new educational policy', page 7.

⁴²³ *The Ghanaian Times* Tuesday, January 27, 1970 'New move to check dishonest teachers'

He is reported in the *Ghanaian Times* newspaper as making the following comments on this issue: ‘Religious organisations... should not only concern themselves with the spiritual needs of the people, but also assist to inculcate sound moral values in our society.’⁴²⁴ He believed religion should be a way of life and not just dogma: “he observed that ‘religion is a life to be lived and not merely a set of precepts... let the purposes of God be demonstrated in our ordinary lives.’⁴²⁵

Ofori Atta believed that parents and guardians had a crucial role to play in the moral formation of children. In May 1970 the *Ghanaian Times* newspaper reported: ‘Parent and guardians in the country have been advised to help activity in remoulding character of the youth.’⁴²⁶ ...He said most parents seemed to be shifting their responsibilities on teachers and schools for the reformation of their wards. He appealed to parents to take some responsibility for some of the things that go wrong with their children...’ Ofori Atta exhorted parents to supervise the life development of their children more closely in order to minimise child delinquency. He also encouraged students to practice lifelong learning and not just learn to pass examinations only. He stressed that ‘... Ghana he said, ‘needs men of integrity, men of dedication, men with high sense of responsibility, men who could be trusted to take charge of the problems facing her’.⁴²⁷

It is noteworthy that Ofori Atta’s appeal was made at Ahmadiyya Secondary School in Kumasi, Ghana which is a Muslim school. This shows that he was of the view that the ability to educate students in morality was not restricted to Christians but could be done by other religions. Also,

⁴²⁴ *The Ghanaian Times* Tuesday, January 27, 1970 ‘New move to check dishonest teachers’

⁴²⁵ *The Ghanaian Times* Friday, October 30, 1970, ‘Give meaning to what you preach’.

⁴²⁶ *The Ghanaian Times* Tuesday, May 5, 1970 ‘Help remould character of youth – Minister’ p. 7.

⁴²⁷ *The Ghanaian Times* Tuesday, May 5, 1970 ‘Help remould character of youth – Minister’ p. 7.

for him the moral formation of children was the responsibility of the home, the church/religious organisation and the school.

The eminent Ghanaian diplomat, K.B. Asante, holds to the view that religious instruction in schools does not necessarily produce morally upright students.⁴²⁸ He believes that societies' leaders need to be role models if the youth are to be nurtured with proper moral behaviour. He says that it is when religious instruction in schools is linked to exemplary societal values in the lives of leaders in society, that the youth can be formed with virtues and values for nation building. He adds that society should reward ethical behaviour and punish unethical behaviour so that young people find it an incentive to choose to live by ethical principles.

3. Socio-Economic Development as Economic Progress

3.1 The Nature of Economic Progress for 'Khaki Collar' Jobs

William Ofori Atta emphasized the nature of economic progress through an economic progress programme and 'khaki collar' jobs for colonial and post-colonial Ghana. In his address to the Begoro Old Boys Association in the Eastern Region of the Gold Coast in Easter 1946 Ofori Atta, in addition to speaking on 'Constructive Citizenship', also spoke on 'The real Crises' in connection with the economic challenges of 1940s Gold Coast.⁴²⁹ He warned of the possibility of crises for the Gold Coast in light of fast changing world events after the two world wars. One of the crises that Gold Coast faced at that time was that of economic development. Ofori

⁴²⁸ K.B. Asante, 'Religious instruction in schools' in *Voice from Afar: A Ghanaian Experience* (Accra: Graphic Packaging Ltd, 2003) pp.35-38.

⁴²⁹ William Ofori Atta, 'The Real Crisis' in the *Gold Coast Observer* May 24, 1946, p. 26. (hereafter *The Real Crisis*)

Atta cautions: ‘the real CRISIS is that changes are taking place at such a terrific pace that if we do not begin now to study these changes and to bring our ideals and thought and attitudes and actions up to date, if we do not now begin to come together and co-operate in action to co-ordinate our forces that can avert the impending or threatened disaster, the problems will be out of hand and uncontrollable and even unintelligible.’⁴³⁰

One of Ofori Atta’s proposed solutions to the economic crisis of Ghana is revealed in an article on economics entitled ‘We have No choice But’. Ofori Atta states his economic vision as follows: ‘Economics is principally a science of how to deal with scarcities.’⁴³¹ We have a problem when we find that certain things essential to our lives are scarce or are, in relation to our needs, insufficient. Economics lays down a hard rule that in such a situation whether we like it or not we have to choose our priorities. Since our goods are not sufficient to meet all our needs, we have to choose the needs we want to or have to satisfy with our scarce resources.’ Ofori Atta proposed a four step process to resolve Ghana’s economic crisis.⁴³² First, establishing prudent economic and financial priorities for the nation to focus on for its economic development. Next, a dedication and commitment to the economic and financial priorities by national leaders. Then, effectively communicating the economic and financial priorities to the general public so as to build a consensus between national leadership and the citizens on the priorities for economic development. Finally, persuading the citizens of the nation to be willing to sacrifice in order to implement the economic and financial priorities for the economic development of the nation.

⁴³⁰ Ofori Atta, *The Real Crisis*, p. 26.

⁴³¹ Ofori Atta, *The Real Crisis*, p. 26.

⁴³² Ofori Atta, *The Real Crisis*, p. 26.

From the above, Ofori Atta notes that when a country is going through economically difficult times there is the need to establish guidelines for effective economic management. His recommended guidelines are wise decision making, focusing on the important over the urgent, discipline in implementing the priorities, dialoguing with the populace on the relevant priorities so as to win the hearts and minds of the populace, and choosing short term sacrifice for long term gain. This view indicates that Ofori Atta believed in the need for economic austerity in times of economic crisis.

In an address on the occasion of the inauguration of the United National Convention on the 27th January 1979 William Ofori Atta explained the UNC economic strategy. First, he contends that a good economic policy should have at its core the welfare of the people: ‘I remember quite clearly the hopes and dreams of those of us who fought for the independence of this country. Those hopes, those dreams, were based on the need to liberate the country both economically and politically with the welfare of the people of Ghana as the government’s main concern.’⁴³³

Second, he reminisces about the economic potential of the Gold Coast which in his view has been squandered since Ghana came into being due to poor governance. He laments: ‘Ghana today is hardly recognisable as that infant which was born in 1957 with a silver spoon in its mouth. Ghana, the star of Africa, the pace-setter for black African states, is now a ridiculed bankrupt with the second highest inflation rate in the world. Thus our dreams of 1957 have turned into the nightmares of 1979. The welfare of the people is utterly neglected because of the failure of the economy.’⁴³⁴

⁴³³ Ofori Atta, ‘Inauguration of the United National Convention’.

⁴³⁴ Ofori Atta, ‘Inauguration of the United National Convention’.

Third, he affirms that the UNC had the know how to rebuild Ghana's economy. He contends: 'my colleagues are men and women of the highest probity and intelligence. ...we know that Ghana's economy is viable and will respond to direction by an expert and stable government. Knowing that merely, we can promise to make the lot of the worker and producer that much easier both in terms of actual income, also in terms of purchasing power and the acquisition of health and sanitary amenities especially in the neglected areas of this country.'⁴³⁵

Fourth, he said that the UNC has clear economic goals to achieve: 'We all know the amenities which are required: - a better health and education service, rural electrification and the supply of pipe born water, and more road-worthy transport and transport-worthy roads.'⁴³⁶

Fifth, he signalled that the UNC had an action plan to achieve its economic goals: 'It is easy to promise these things, but not so easy to explain how they are going to be paid for or distributed. As to the distribution, we believe that it is unrealistic to so over-centralise everything in this connection as to cause bottle-necks and iniquity. De-centralisation will not only ensure in a fair and more informed services but will also tend to reverse the trend towards the concentration of the such power into too few hands.'⁴³⁷ Sixth, he asserted that the integrity of the UNC leadership would make a difference to national reconstruction if elected on the July election date: 'When Ghana is in the hands of professional men of high integrity that is to say after the 1st July, 1979, the economy will more and more be able to sustain these items of expenditure, which in themselves, by building up the necessary infrastructure and by introducing the element of incentive, will generate more income to the state and more purchasing power to the Ghanaian

⁴³⁵ Ofori Atta, 'Inauguration of the United National Convention'.

⁴³⁶ Ofori Atta, 'Inauguration of the United National Convention'.

⁴³⁷ Ofori Atta, 'Inauguration of the United National Convention'.

consumer.’ It is significant that Ofori Atta declared that his political party leaders were women and men of integrity. This indicates that he did not just believe in only individuals being people of integrity but also organisations having leaders of integrity.

In a ‘Statement of intent’ as to the economic policy of the UNC Ofori Atta observes that the UNC intended to establish an economic welfare state grounded on social justice. He declares: ‘The philosophy of the United National Convention is based on our desire... To consolidate and preserve ... social justice;⁴³⁸ To develop a strong national and modern economy; In the sphere of the material welfare of the people, the promise of consistently rising standards of the living for the great majority of our countrymen and women has not been fulfilled....’ He emphasised that the UNC economic policy aimed at increasing the economic productivity of the nation, searching for new sources of energy, improving the remuneration of workers, and seeing to it that the economic development of the nation is done in a fair and just way to benefit every region of the country. As such he felt there was a need for a reform of the tax system in order to generate the wealth needed for national development.⁴³⁹

Ofori- Atta added that the social policy of the UNC would be on administrative decentralisation, educational development, improved health care, and rural development. He states: ‘Our social policy will reflect the pressing need to bring administration close to the people in the villages and towns.⁴⁴⁰ In the context of the general decentralisation of administration, particular attention will be focused on the provision of educational and health facilities, water and electricity as a foundation for the broadening of the economy and the distribution of national wealth.’ Furthermore, a U.N.C. government will work at a health

⁴³⁸ Ofori Atta, ‘Statement of Intent’ of the United National Convention, p. 1. (hereafter *Statement of Intent*)

⁴³⁹ Ofori Atta, *Statement of Intent*, p. 1.

⁴⁴⁰ Ofori Atta, *Statement of Intent*, p. 1.

policy, which will eradicate malaria and improve on sanitation, as well as a transportation policy which will rehabilitate roads in the rural and urban areas.⁴⁴¹ Rural development would be a key priority of a U.N.C. government through the provision of the amenities needed by rural areas that would make it possible for them to make a significant contribution to national development.

The issue of decentralisation has been a challenge in Ghana's socio-economic development. Giles Mohan in a study on Ghana's decentralisation found that despite the conversation on decentralisation in practice there was still a great deal of control of local government by central government.⁴⁴² Also, the human and financial resources available to local government were limited and as such the practice of decentralisation was often ineffective. He suggests that decentralisation should be centred on the needs of people in a community.

In 1979 the Report of the Independent Commission on International Development Issues (the Brandt Commission) called for a new approach to North-South development issues particularly with respect to international finance and development of the monetary system in order to achieve global freedom, justice, and solidarity.⁴⁴³ During the Third Republic of Ghana, the Brandt Commission came out with twelve bold recommendations which it believed could radically transform North-South development issues. It significant that Ofori Atta's preceding economic progress proposals were in tandem with the Brandt Commission proposals. The Brandt Commission called for a socio-economic programme of action to help the poorest countries in the areas of water management, health care, re-afforestation projects; solar energy

⁴⁴¹ Ofori Atta, *Statement of Intent*, p. 1.

⁴⁴² Giles Mohan, "The State and the paradox of decentralisation: perspectives from Ghana", PhD thesis (University of Liverpool, 1993) p. 362-365.

⁴⁴³ Report of the Independent Commission on International Development Issues, *North-South: A programme for survival*. (London: Pan Books, 1981) pp. 282-292.

development; mineral and petroleum exploration; industrialisation, transport and other infrastructural investment.⁴⁴⁴ Next, hunger and food insecurity ought to be addressed through agricultural development, agrarian reform, initiating an international food financing organisation, food aid, agricultural trade liberalisation and expansion of international agricultural research bodies. Then, the Global South has a crucial role to play by reallocating national resources to aid the poor; strengthening the capacity of the informal sector for economic development; innovating appropriate technology for development; enhancing the management of the economy through the mobilisation of local financial resources, an effective taxation regime, an efficient public sector, a workable taxation system; decentralising national government and shoring up voluntary organisations; promoting regional and sub-regional socio-economic cooperation and integration; fostering preferential South to South trade arrangements. Also, commodity trade by the Global South needs to be advanced by an enabling environment for them to process, market and distribute their products. Furthermore, the industrialisation of the Global South should be strengthened by fair world trade principles and practices, removal of protectionism, improvement of their commercial infrastructure and appropriate technology transfer. Subsequently, transnational corporations working in the Global South require an investment regime which is controlled by effective national and international codes of conduct so as not to be detrimental to Global South nations. Finally, a new method for development finance was called for in which there will be an increase the quantum of development finance as well as a greater voice for Global South countries when borrowing from international financial institutions. Ofori Atta's local level economic strategy for Ghana converge with the Brandt Commission's global strategy.

⁴⁴⁴ *Ibid*, p.282.

3.2 Implementing an Economic Progress Plan for ‘Khaki Collar’ Jobs

It appears that an economic development programme which starts from the bottom and moves to the top of the socio-economic strata of the nation was favoured by William Ofori Atta. He believed that if ‘khaki collar’ economic activities in the areas of peasant farming, cottage industries and rural development were carried out, this will become the backbone of large-scale farming and large-scale industries and urban development. Since that majority of Ghanaians lived in the rural areas, to him it was logical to mobilise and develop this human resource potential of the nation if Ghana was to make headway in its economic redevelopment. This reasoning runs counters to the prioritisation of urban development as practised by many governments in Ghana.

The Second Republic Progress Party government of Kofi Busia to which Ofori Atta belonged had a capitalist oriented economic programme in the late sixties and early seventies.⁴⁴⁵ This was in contrast to the socialist economic programme of Kwame Nkrumah’s Convention People’s Party during the First Republic in the early and mid-sixties. The PP government undertook IMF reforms in order to liberalise the economy. The country faced the economic challenge of an increase in the physical deficit and a reduction in economic growth and devaluation of Ghana’s cedi currency. The economic challenge faced by Ofori Atta’s PP government provided a scenario for a military coup d’état in January 1972 which overthrew the democratically elected PP government. William Ofori Atta emphasised agricultural development, industrialisation, local government reforms and rural development as some of the important practices for the economic progress of colonial and post-colonial Ghana.

⁴⁴⁵ Agustin K. Fosu and Ernest Aryeetey. ‘Ghana’s Post-Independence Economic growth: 1960-2000’ in Ernest Aryeetey and Ravi Kanbur (eds.) *The Economy of Ghana: Analytical Perspectives on Stability, Growth and Poverty* (Woodbridge: James Currey, 2008) pp.49-50.

3.3 Agricultural Development

At the Watson Commission deliberations in May 1948, William Ofori-Atta presented a memorandum on two subjects. The first subject was 'Swollen Shoot'.⁴⁴⁶ The major cash crop export for the Gold Coast at this time was cocoa. Unfortunately, a disease called the swollen shoot disease, which was spread by the mealy bug insect, was ravaging the cocoa industry in the Gold Coast. Ofori-Atta was concerned that if a productive policy on this problem was not formulated and implemented soon the cocoa industry in the Gold Coast would eventually be extinct in a decade or two. He agreed that the only cure for the disease at that time was cutting the diseased cocoa trees. However, he argued that the money to be used for the cutting and replanting project might better be spent in diversifying the agricultural industry of the Gold Coast. He proposed that rice and rubber could be substituted for the diseased cocoa crops. The Commission questioned the feasibility of rice and rubber replacing cocoa since these crops were produced more cheaply elsewhere. Ofori-Atta reiterated that he was not an agricultural expert but was of the view that a technical committee should deal with the matter. A summary of Ofori-Atta's view was: '... if cutting out was found, after some quite neutral scientific investigation to be the only cure, the question should be asked, before cutting out was adopted as a positive policy, how much this was going to cost the cocoa industry and agricultural experts together with economic experts should be asked whether the money could not better be spent in finding an alternative crop.'⁴⁴⁷

⁴⁴⁶ *Gold Coast Commission of Enquiry Informal Discussions*, PRAAD SC 22/15/9, p.1-9.

⁴⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 3.

A side issue that cropped up under the Swollen Shoot Disease memorandum was that of the Cocoa Marketing Board.⁴⁴⁸ This Board was in charge of the marketing of cocoa in the Gold Coast. Ofori-Atta was in favour of the cocoa farmers being represented by a cooperative on the board. This he believed would minimise the role of middlemen and profiteers in the cocoa business. But he expressed concern over the inadequacy of the farmers' representation on the Board. He was of the view that the farmer's representation should not be nominated by the government or the chiefs. He was in favour of the farmers themselves electing their own representation to the Board. If this was done the voice of the farmers would be heard properly on the Board.

Another side issue that came up during the Swollen Shoot Disease memorandum discussion with the Commission was that of small scale industries.⁴⁴⁹ The small-scale industries he had in mind were the production of preserved fruit, edible oil, canned fish, canned tomato, soap, furniture, and jewellery. Ofori-Atta favoured the establishment of a cocoa bank which would grant loans to cocoa farmers at a moderate rate of interest. In addition, the bank would support small scale industries in the cocoa growing areas. It is significant that in the mid-sixties the Agricultural Development Bank was established by the CPP government to promote the financing of the country's agricultural development.

Ofori Atta claims that if agriculture is to be a priority in Ghana, then all Ghanaians would need to make sacrifices to fulfil this objective: 'The sacrifices to be borne by reason of placing Agriculture on the highest priority should affect all sections of the community or most sections. They should be seen to affect the ministries or the projects relegated to lower priority levels.

⁴⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 3-4.

⁴⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, pp.4-6

They should be seen to affect the lifestyle of the ministries, of Ministers, and the general public.’⁴⁵⁰

3.4 Industrialisation

The second subject of Ofori-Atta’s memorandum was ‘Agriculture and Industrialisation.’⁴⁵¹ He was of the opinion that large scale industrialisation must be initiated by the government. The large-scale industries could be resourced with capital from internal subscription by the people of the Gold Coast and also from external borrowing at a sensible interest rate. He preferred a central industrialisation board which would have subcommittees for specific industries. The industries were to be publicly owned so that the negative side effects of industrialisation could be properly managed. He insisted that in this top-down approach to management: ‘Care must be taken that the little man was not left with no voice at all. This would make the Board irresponsible. With education and general development interest would be created, and people’s understanding of general progress would be increased. They would then demand and see that the Board accepted responsibility.’⁴⁵²

Even though he sided with the government’s control of industries, Ofori-Atta deemed it necessary for the government to create an enabling environment for private enterprises. He stated that the government was to be the initiator of industrialisation so as to provide a model for private entrepreneurs to initiate privately owned industries. He advocated protectionism in Gold Coast commerce in order to provide a climate for disadvantaged industries in the Gold

⁴⁵⁰ William Ofori Atta Family Papers. William Ofori Atta, ‘We have No choice But’, pp. 1-2. The date and occasion of this article is not made known in the article.

⁴⁵¹ Ofori Atta, ‘We have No choice But’, pp.6-9.

⁴⁵² Ofori Atta, ‘We have No choice But’, p. 8.

Coast to grow and develop. But he added that after an industry was standing on its feet, protectionism should be removed, and that industry be made to compete with international industries. If an established local industry failed to compete successfully at the international arena, then the financial resource for that industry is to be relocated to another productive enterprise.

An important industry which the Gold Coast nationalists contended for was the Volta scheme aluminium industry.⁴⁵³ They proposed the damming of the Volta River at Akosombo in order to generate hydro- electric power for an aluminium smelter industry. The Gold Coast had a rich deposit of bauxite but the conversion of bauxite to alumina required a large amount of electric power. Ofori-Atta was of the opinion that the Volta scheme ought to be sponsored by the government rather than by the private sector. He acknowledged the risks involved in such a gigantic project but still felt the project should go ahead. One particular risk was the monopoly that the Global North had over the production and distribution of alumina which could incapacitate the Volta scheme's aluminium industry by rendering it uncompetitive. Another risk was the possibility of insufficient capital generation from internal subscription. Nevertheless, Ofori-Atta observed if the scheme could produce inexpensive electric power for the aluminium smelter industry, then it could be viable. Also, he believed that Gold Coast farmers would be willing to buy shares in the Volta scheme company so as to provide the internal component for financing the aluminium industry. Owing to the size of the Volta scheme's aluminium industry he felt that a separate industrial board should be set up to manage the project.⁴⁵⁴

⁴⁵³ Ofori Atta, 'We have No choice But', pp.7-8.

⁴⁵⁴ Ofori Atta, 'We have No choice But' pp. 7-8

3.5 Local Government Reforms

The availability of land for economic development in the Gold Coast and Ghana was a major stumbling block to economic development. As such Ofori Atta felt the land tenure system needed to be reformed with respect to local government. In 1951 Ofori-Atta was elected as one of the two Legislative Assembly members for Akim Abuakwa on the ticket of the United Gold Coast Convention.⁴⁵⁵ The UGCC had a minority in the Legislative Assembly while the Convention People's Party had a majority. As such the latter formed the government. In the November 1951 session of the Legislative Assembly the CPP government presented the Local Government Bill which sought to place the management local administration, including Stool land, under local authorities instead of the chiefs.⁴⁵⁶ The government argued that some chiefs had misused the trust given to them by their citizens to be caretakers of Stool land and of revenue generated from the land. Instead of seeking the interests of their populace, some chiefs had become self-centered. As such, Local Councils, which the chiefs were to be part of, will be better managers of local administration.⁴⁵⁷

The opposition did not take kindly to this. The reference to "ritual murder" was an insinuation cast on the Ofori-Atta family regarding the murder of a sub-chief which took place after the death of Nana Sir Ofori-Atta I. J. B. Danquah in his contribution to the debate on the bill, on behalf of the opposition, started by referring to some members of the house who "reduce everything to a low level of abuse and personality"⁴⁵⁸ He continued by reminding the assembly

⁴⁵⁵ Austin, *Ghana*, p. 145.

⁴⁵⁶ *Legislative Assembly Debates*, Session 1951, Issue No. 4 (volume I), pp. 93-121.

⁴⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 96.

⁴⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 106

that institutions, especially chieftaincy, were important for the development.⁴⁵⁹ He challenged the notion that Akim Abuakwa State funds have been misused by the Okyenhene. He added that although the idea of local government was good in principle, part of the bill dealt more with undermining the institution of chieftaincy. He opposed the addition of the management of Stool lands to the bill and felt that the Stool lands issue should be dealt with separately. Furthermore, he pointed out it was unfair for the bill to transfer some national government responsibility to local authorities yet keep most of revenue collection power at central government level.

Educational empowerment is tied to economic development. As part of its Accelerated Development Plan, the CPP government made a policy on the takeover of mission schools by the government from January 1952.⁴⁶⁰ In as much as this meant that the mission schools as assisted non-government educational institutions would now receive government subsidy, Ofori-Atta was not completely happy with the policy. In his input to the debate on this policy he queried the Minister of Education and Social Welfare as follows: ‘It is a fact that before you transfer a school from one authority to another, you have to satisfy yourself that the first authority was mismanaging or was not running the school satisfactorily? The question is this, before you made your policy to transfer these schools from the Mission to the Local Councils, have you known that you were increasing the cost of education or you were economising in the cost of education?’⁴⁶¹

The Minister of Education and Social Welfare skirted the question in his answer by responding that the majority in the Assembly had made a policy as such he had nothing further to say. The

⁴⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 106-114

⁴⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 42-43.

⁴⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 43.

stance of Ofori-Atta on this policy seems to imply that he was concerned about quality education. To him it was not good management for the mission schools to be taken over by the government if the mission churches were running the schools efficiently and effectively. In addition, it was not sound economics to increase the cost of government expenditure on education if the mission schools were capable of funding themselves.

3.6 Rural Development

William Ofori Atta served in Prime Minister K. A. Busia's Progress Party government during the Second Republic of Ghana and this government made rural development a pivotal policy. In March 1970 Ofori Atta gave a speech at the Commonwealth Conference on Education at the University of Ghana, Legon, in which as Minister of Education, Culture and Sports he highlighted the necessity for rural development in Africa. The *Ghanaian Times* newspaper reported: 'The minister deplored the manner in which developing nations concentrated all their efforts in developing the urban areas to the neglect of the rural areas which produced the bulk of the country's export earnings. He said that the Government of Ghana had decided to correct this anomaly, and to achieve this, it had established a Ministry of Youth and Rural Development to tackle at the same time, the problem of the large number of unemployed youth and the stagnation in the countryside.'⁴⁶²

Nine years later in an address to his political party the United National Convention supporters in the Western and Central Regions of Ghana in February 1979, Ofori Atta promised that a

⁴⁶² *The Ghanaian Times*, March 24, 1970, 'Neglect of rural development deplored', p. 3.

UNC government would make rural development a priority. He contends: ‘Our approach to the need for an agricultural revolution is different from the traditional approach.’⁴⁶³ We shall not shout or repeat slogans. Our rural populations are practical human beings, who do not live or thrive on slogans. We shall provide amenities in the rural areas, such as roads, water, health clinics, schools, loans facilities, fertilisers – the things which make life worth living in the village. We shall also ensure that the farmer gets such a reward from his produce as to enable him to raise his standard of living to a degree commensurate to with his contribution to the wealth of the nation.’

He also pledged to ensure equity in the development of the regions. This was important since the Northern and Upper Regions of Ghana at that time were less developed in terms of infrastructure and economic activity than the southern half of Ghana. This had been the case since colonial times. He states: ‘In the great exercise of building a united cooperative community, we shall be concerned to develop the Regions evenly, so that each Region shall be proud that it is part of a rich and prosperous nation. Not only shall we ensure that the Regions develop evenly, but we shall also ensure that the development within each Region shall also be even.’⁴⁶⁴

Ofori Atta’s political journey covered the rural development ideas of the 1950s to 1980. Rural development was a cornerstone of Ofori Atta’s economic development policy. He was of the view that investment in agricultural development in rural areas of Ghana would contribute to the economic development of people living in rural areas. Ofori Atta’s Progress Party

⁴⁶³ William Ofori Atta Family Papers. ‘Western Region and Central Region UNC Rally, The Address of William Ofori Atta, Chairman of The U.N.C. on the occasion of the rally held at Takoradi (Cape Coast) inaugurating the Convention in the Western Region (Central Region) on 10th February 1979 and 11th February 1979, p. 3. (hereafter ‘Western Region and Central Region UNC Rally’)

⁴⁶⁴ Ofori-Atta, ‘Western Region and Central Region UNC Rally’, p. 3.

government placed an emphasis on rural development. During the PP government's tenure, it undertook the construction of rural portable water provision, rural electrification, and rural road construction. However, Ernest Aryeetey points out that the PP government was unable to connect its rural development programme into a national economic development output.⁴⁶⁵ The rural development activities did not meaningfully contribute to the growth of the national economy. While the CPP government of Ghana's First Republic emphasised economic production, the PP government of the Second Republic emphasised infrastructure development. The PP government was unable to enhance manufacturing during its tenure in office.

4. Conclusion

In this chapter a case has been made that William Ofori Atta advanced educational empowerment and economic progress as the ingredients of his socio-economic development leadership principle. His policy of educational empowerment aimed at producing 'constructive citizens' who will create economic growth and development in society. He saw education as both an inward journey in which people's potentials are developed as well as an outward journey whereby the educated empower others by developing the potential of others. He was a strong believer in education which he believed was tied to the economic development of the nation. To him education for development was necessary if Ghana was to produce the human

⁴⁶⁵ Ernest Aryeetey. 'Structures and Institutions in a Postcolonial Economy', Ivor Agyeman-Duah (ed.) *An Economic History of Ghana: Reflections on a Half Century of Challenges & Progress*. (Banbury: Ayebia Clarke Publishing, 2008) p.78.

resources requisite for the political, economic, and social development of the nation. One of the means by which he sought to implement his education for development policy was through vocational and technical education due to his realisation that the majority of Ghanaian youth will not get the opportunity to continue their education to the tertiary level and more importantly Ghana also needed trained people to manage the basic level of human resource needs of the nation. In addition, he emphasised the need for moral education in order for education to be holistic and thereby train the whole person. For Ofori Atta, education for development and moral education were the means for an empowering education which resulted in a 'constructive citizen'.

His policy of economic progress focused on 'khaki collar' jobs, agricultural development, industrialisation, land reform, and rural development. He believed that an enabling economic environment should be provided for the working class with 'khaki collar' jobs. He advocated for the development of small-scale agriculture in addition to large scale agriculture, the development of small-scale industries (cottage industries) in addition to large scale industries, and for rural development in addition to urban development. He held to a mixed economy position as the means for Ghana's economic development. He did not back a purely capitalist economic development position nor did he back a socialist economic development strategy. His approach combined both capitalism and social welfare. He sought to create a fairer society in which people were able to work to meet their needs and contribute meaningfully to national economic development

What element of William Ofori Atta's socio-economic development leadership principle is compatible with the definition of ethical leadership in this thesis? From the above it may be presumed that Ofori Atta's socio-economic development principle has the ingredient of the

ethical value of justice as its core basis. Ofori Atta constantly used the words ‘justice’ and ‘fairness’ as well as the phrase ‘social justice’ in his advocacy and activism with regard to his socio-economic development thought and practice. His political speeches and political engagement focused on establishing socio-economic justice in Ghanaian society. As an economist he was of the view that Ghana had the economic potential to become an economically developed nation which provided for the necessities of its citizens in a fair and equitable manner. He understood justice as creating an enabling environment for the citizens of a nation to have a fair access to education and employment in order to provide for the material needs of people in the nation. He abhorred the lack of educational and employment opportunities in Ghana for people in the rural areas. He was of the conviction that Ghanaian citizens had the right to justice since he believed that the socio-economic wellbeing and welfare of Ghanaians was paramount in the process of national development. He constantly re-iterated that the motto of Ghana which is ‘freedom and justice’ meant that every political party in government must ensure that each individual Ghanaian is treated in a fair and equitable manner for the progress of the nation.

The definition of ethical leadership in this research has integrity, influence and impact as the criteria for judging an ethical leadership value. Justice may be practiced by an ethical leader or by an unethical leader. Yet, the above analysis of Ofori Atta’s socio-economic development principle demonstrates that the ethical value of justice advocated and practised by Ofori Atta the other two criteria of ethical leadership as worthwhile influence and enriching structures. This is because Ofori Atta’s ethical value of justice influenced people in Ghana to achieve worthwhile goals of educational empowerment and economic progress for the common good of society and also impacted political institutions in Ghana in order to make them life enriching structures with respect to educational empowerment and economic progress. Hence, two of the

three criteria for ethical leadership in this research are fulfilled by Ofori Atta's leadership value of justice with regard to his socio-economic development principle. The next chapter examines his social reconciliation and personal transparency leadership principles.

CHAPTER FIVE

SOCIAL RECONCILIATION AND PERSONAL TRANSPARENCY

‘Broad Based Politics the Best’ and ‘My Hands Are Clean’

1. Introduction

The previous chapter examined William Ofori Atta’s thought and practice on socio-economic development as educational empowerment and economic progress. This chapter explores his understanding and practice of two leadership principles -- social reconciliation and personal transparency. The chapter contends that social reconciliation and personal transparency were important leadership principles for William Ofori Atta. It is argued that Ofori Atta advocated social reconciliation in Ghana through national conciliation and international dialogue. It is also argued that he practised personal transparency through personal honesty and personal accountability. The chapter further argues that the significance of Ofori Atta’s leadership principle of social reconciliation was the promotion of the political ideology of centrism in the Ghanaian political landscape as a means to actualising reconciliation in Ghanaian society. Additionally, the significance of Ofori Atta’s leadership principle of personal transparency was that leaders in Ghana were challenged to model and practice honesty and accountability in the public sphere. It will be demonstrated that an evaluation of Ofori Atta’s understanding of social reconciliation indicates a move from a conservative political ideology to a centrist political ideology, which he terms ‘broad based the best’. Also, an evaluation of his understanding of personal transparency indicates that honesty, which he terms ‘my hands are clean’, was a vital character trait for him, his leadership team and for Ghanaian society. The first part of the chapter examines Ofori Atta’s leadership principle of social reconciliation, and the second part of the chapter explores his leadership principle of personal transparency. The chapter outline is as follows: social reconciliation through national conciliation, social reconciliation through

international dialogue, personal transparency as ‘my hands are clean’, and personal transparency as accountability and honesty.

This chapter examines the leadership thought and practice of Ofori Atta with regard to his leadership principle of social reconciliation and the leadership principle of personal transparency. The elements of Ofori Atta’s social reconciliation conception and personal transparency conception will be analysed to find out if they are congruent with the definition of ethical public leadership discussed in the introductory chapter. In other words, there should be elements of Ofori Atta’s social reconciliation leadership principle and personal transparency leadership principle which agree with the definition of ethical leadership as leadership in which the values of integrity and altruism are demonstrated in a leader’s character and conduct in both the private and public life of the leader so as to influence people to achieve worthwhile goals for the common good of society as well as to impact institutions in order to make them life enriching structures.

William Ofori Atta contributed to minimising civil strife and societal corruption in Ghana. He was vocal and unequivocal about reconciliation and transparency in Ghana. It is interesting that the names of three of the political movements that Ofori Atta belonged to have the word ‘united’ in their name. In the colonial era of the Gold Coast, Ofori Atta was a leader the United Gold Coast Convention, during Ghana’s First Republic he belonged to the opposition United Party and in Ghana’s Third Republic he was the Presidential candidate for the United National Convention. It is not clear what role he played in the names of the political parties with the word ‘united’ in their names, but what is clear is that reconciliation was important to him. William Ofori Atta’s father, Nana Ofori-Atta I, was an example to William on the need for social reconciliation in society. During Nana Ofori-Atta reign as the Akyem Abuakwa state in

the Eastern Region of Gold Coast he created an enabling environment for social cohesion.⁴⁶⁶ He resolved the perennial conflict between the traditional state and the church in Akyem Abuakwa. He served as a peacemaker in Akyem Abuakwa affairs. William followed the footsteps of his father in the matter of social reconciliation.

2. Social Reconciliation through National Conciliation and International Dialogue

This section will discuss William Ofori Atta's concrete achievements in enhancing social reconciliation as national conciliation through his leadership in the People's Movement for Freedom and Justice (PMFJ) coalition, the United National Convention (UNC) coalition and the UNC-PNP alliance. It will also discuss his role in the Progress Party's controversial position of dialogue with apartheid South Africa during the Second Republic of Ghana. Ofori Atta acknowledges the fact that political rivalry and conflict leading to political violence has marred Ghana's political history. He narrates: 'I am not unaware that in the early days of independence some excesses and abuses and even violent acts were committed in the name of party politics.'⁴⁶⁷ My own brother died through it, my uncle Dr Danquah died through it, and our family was violently ripped into two opposing camps. I myself was stoned on many occasions, sometimes good humouredly, and I earned the title 'OGYABOO' and I was imprisoned.... But these excesses were part of our preparation to strengthen the basis of party politics. Besides, the excesses were not peculiar to party politics.'

⁴⁶⁶ Addo-Fening, *Akyem Abuakwa*, pp. 212-216. See also Addo-Fening, 'Chieftaincy and issues of good governance, accountability and development', *Chieftaincy in Ghana*, p. 346.

⁴⁶⁷ Ofori Atta, *Yes or No? How I see the referendum* p. 8.

However, he was of the opinion that multiparty politics in Ghana had gone through a period of maturation with the result that political violence was now minimal in Ghanaian politics. In his view although parliamentary debates maybe contentious, after the debates, parliamentarians on both sides of the parliamentary divide were generally friendly with each other. The acts of political and social conflict which produced political and social violence as a result of party politics rivalry and ethnic social rivalry in Ghana was a motivation for him to be an advocate and activist for the cause of social reconciliation in Ghana.

2.1 The People's Movement for Freedom and Justice (PMFJ) Coalition

A practical way in which Ofori Atta expressed his social reconciliation policy was through the formation of the People's Movement for Freedom and Justice (PMFJ).⁴⁶⁸ The PMFJ was formed by Ofori Atta and other political leaders from both the conservative political group and radical political group of Ghana's political traditions. The two traditions put aside their political differences in order to oppose the proposal of the concept of a Union Government (Unigov) by the Supreme Military Council (SMC) in 1976. The Unigov idea was an amalgamation of both civilian politicians and the military to rule Ghana. The PMFJ saw it as a subtle attempt to entrench military rule in Ghana and campaigned against the idea. The SMC arrested prominent Unigov opponents including William Ofori Atta and put them in jail. Eventually, Acheampong was removed as head of state by his military colleague General Fred Akuffo in an internal palace coup d'état. Akuffo released persons imprisoned because of the Unigov matter, including Ofori Atta. Akuffo lifted the ban on the formation of political parties and announced an election for the formation of the fourth republic of Ghana.

⁴⁶⁸ Amamoo, *Ghana*, pp. 179-186.

Tshepo Masipa points out that a party-coalition is formed before an election and refers to the agreement between political parties to work together in government on the basis of the election outcomes.⁴⁶⁹ Based on this understanding it can be observed that the PMFJ was a coalition to convince the Ghanaian populace to reject the Unigov proposal by the SMC military government.

2.2 The United National Convention (UNC) Coalition

Another practical way in which Ofori Atta expressed his social reconciliation policy was through the formation of the United National Convention (UNC) political party in January 1979. At the twilight of the military rule of the Supreme Military Council government, Ofori Atta and other political leaders had formed the People's Movement for Freedom and Justice to campaign against the Union Government proposal of the SMC. The PMFJ was composed of leaders from both sides of the political divide in Ghana – the political right Danquah-Busia-Dzobo tradition and the political left Nkrumah tradition. Leaders who hitherto would not have contemplated collaborating on national issues were now working together to rid the country of the military government Union Government proposal.

When the SMC withdrew the Union Government idea and multiparty elections was restored, the PMFJ folded up since it had accomplished its mission. However, some of the PMFJ leaders felt that rather than go back to the two existing political traditions a new way forward was required in which the unity shown in the fight against the Union Government concept should

⁴⁶⁹ Masipa, *Coalition and Party Alliances* p. 60.

be redirected in the fight against Ghana's political, economic and social challenges. Hence, the United National Convention (UNC) was formed with leaders from the two Ghanaian political traditions.

In a statement dealing with the intentions of the UNC, Ofori Atta explained that the UNC was a 'broad based' political party made up of leaders who were representatives of the nation's diversity yet united in purpose. He notes; 'We, the men and women of this country, have formed this party in response to the lessons of our recent history and to the needs of our people and as a commitment to the responsibility of the future. We are a new party that is broad-based, in terms of the spectrum of ideas, age of membership and national coverage.'⁴⁷⁰ Next, he claimed that the UNC was formed with the intent that ethnocentrism and intolerance in Ghana's politics would be overcome. He stated: 'The philosophy of the United National Convention is based on our desire to avoid tribal politics and ideological fanaticism.'⁴⁷¹

Then, the UNC would in its international affairs 'consolidate the independence of African countries, to assist in the liberation of Southern Africa from racism and imperialism and to promote African unity. We shall also play a decisive role in international forums to promote peace and understanding among the peoples of the world.'⁴⁷² It is significant that unlike the Second Republic Progress Party government in which Ofori Atta as the Minister of Foreign Affairs implemented the PP government policy of dialogue with apartheid South Africa, in the Third Republic he asserts that the UNC would follow the Organisation of African Unity's policy which opposed dialogue but affirmed the isolation of apartheid South Africa.

The UNC held rallies in the Western Region and Central Region of Ghana at which

⁴⁷⁰ Ofori-Atta, 'Statement of Intent,' p. 1.

⁴⁷¹ Ofori-Atta, 'Statement of Intent,' p. 1.

⁴⁷² Ofori-Atta, 'Statement of Intent,' p. 1.

Ofori Atta acknowledged that the United National Convention was aware of the difficult nature of Ghana's political, economic and social recovery programme. He declared 'We, of the United National Convention, are aware that the tasks ahead are formidable. Looking at the vastness of the problems alone, many have become depressed and have concluded that the task of rebuilding Ghana is an impossible one.'⁴⁷³ Nonetheless Ofori Atta pointed out to the rally audience that with God's help and with the mobilisation of Ghana's human capital Ghana could be rebuilt. He confidently asserted: 'But that is reckoning without our God and the incalculable resources and quality of men and materials available to us. With God on our side and the millions of willing hearts and bands of Ghanaians we can face the future coolly, courageously, and confidently.'⁴⁷⁴

He promised a united Ghana in which the citizens lived together in a spirit of reconciliation. The vindictiveness, revenge, discord which a new government usually unleashed on supporters of the previous government would not take place. Rather, a spirit of reconciliation and unity would be promoted by a UNC government. He declared: 'The U.N.C. will go all out to ensure that Ghanaians shall live in the atmosphere of freedom, peace, harmony and hope. No Ghanaian, of whatever tribe or party, or class, or profession, or occupation, civilian or military, shall live in fear under the rule of U.N.C. Government.... Instead, we shall build a united Ghana, a Ghana in which all shall live in peace and harmony, a Ghana in which all shall be inspired to regard no sacrifice too great in the service of Ghana.'⁴⁷⁵

On the social front he pledged an inclusive party in terms of ethnicity, gender, class, and political ideology. Such a pledge was significant since previous political parties in Ghana's

⁴⁷³ Ofori Atta, 'Western Region and Central Region UNC Rally', p. 1.

⁴⁷⁴ Ofori Atta, 'Western Region and Central Region UNC Rally', p. 1.

⁴⁷⁵ Ofori-Atta, 'Western Region and Central Region UNC Rally', p. 1.

history usually were supported by specific ethnic groups rather than by a broad base of ethnicities. He claimed: ‘We go much further than mere tribal representations. We are concerned to ensure that the two sexes, that all classes of persons, the old and the young, the students, the professors, the professionals (sic) including the nurses, teachers, doctors, lawyers, surveyors, accountants, pharmacists, engineers, craftsmen, such as carpenters, sculptors, carvers, painters, bricklayers, cooks, weavers, farmers and fishermen, workers of all classes, manufacturers, traders, bakers public servants, soldiers and police, including the retired, are also effectively represented.’⁴⁷⁶ He notes that the United National Convention coalition is made up of former members of previous political parties in Ghana’s political history such as the Convention People’s Party, and the United Party in the First Republic of Ghana as well as the National Alliance of Liberals, Justice Party, and the Progress Party in the Second Republic of Ghana. He contended that the U.N.C. was a political party which was open to men and women who had the welfare and wellbeing of Ghanaians at heart, and who were willing to serve in the national interests.

On the political front, he promised a Ghana which was characterised by the rule of law, tolerance, and prosperity. He contended the UNC would nurture a Ghana which would allow ‘people to live in an atmosphere of freedom, peace, harmony and hope. No Ghanaian of whatever tribe or party, or class of profession or occupation, civilian or military shall live in fear under the U.N.C. rule.’⁴⁷⁷

On the economic front he assured the rally audience that the UNC would stimulate the nation’s citizens to work sacrificially for Ghana and take care of the welfare of the citizenry.

⁴⁷⁶ Ofori-Atta, ‘Western Region and Central Region UNC Rally’, p. 2.

⁴⁷⁷ Ofori Atta, ‘Western Region and Central Region UNC Rally’, p. 2.

He stated: 'we shall be inspired to live to work and even to die for Ghana, a Ghana in which we shall be inspired to join in a co-operative endeavour to save Ghana and to promote the welfare of all. Consistently Rising Standard of Living and Welfare of all, particularly the Low (sic) [lower] income Group of our people shall be the Goal of our Economic and Social Policy.'⁴⁷⁸

What was Ofori Atta's conception of 'broad based' politics? At the February 1979 UNC rallies in the Upper Region of Ghana, Ofori Atta explicated the 'broad base' politics of UNC. Once again he stressed that the 'broad based' UNC policy was a policy to ensure that every sector of society is represented in their political party – women and men, young and old, students and workers, non-retirees and pensioners, working class and middle/ upper class, artisans and professionals, public sector and private sector, civilians and soldiers, conservative political group politicians and radical political group politicians, ethnic diversity and regional diversity. He explains: 'The United National Convention is the Broad Based Party because the founders and the leaders go out, as a matter of policy, as a matter of urgent consideration, to seek to make it, broadly based in all essential aspects.... When we say that the Broad Based Party is the best we mean to say that the national affairs affect all the citizens of Ghana and that they should be the concern of all.'⁴⁷⁹ This shows that Ofori Atta's concept of a 'broad based' political party as well as a 'broad based' government underscored his policy of social reconciliation.

⁴⁷⁸ Ofori-Atta, 'Western Region and Central Region UNC Rally', p. 2.

⁴⁷⁹ William Ofori Atta Family Papers. The address of William Ofori Atta Chairman of the United National Convention at the rallies held at Bolgatanga, Navrongo, Sandema and Bawku, held on 16th, 17th, 18th And 19th February, 1979, pp. 1-2. (hereafter 'Upper Region UNC Rally')

2.3 UNC-PNP Alliance

Tshepo Masipa says that coalitions allow a minority coalition partner to push for some of its policies to be implemented by the majority coalition partner as well as enable the minority partner to make the majority party accountable in its governance.⁴⁸⁰ Party-coalition should preserve diversity, a dynamic range of opinions and approaches. Some party coalitions have undoubtedly contributed to consolidating a country's initial steps towards democracy and peace, through power-sharing arrangements, others have however been characterised with ideological identities and unprincipled.

In the interest of national conciliation and reconstruction, the United National Convention of William Ofori Atta went into alliance with the People's National Party (PNP) of Hilla Limann during the Third Republic of Ghana. The PNP won the Third Republic elections and it decided to form an alliance with the UNC to increase its vote share in parliament. In a letter to President Limann, Ofori Atta deliberated on issues related to the alliance which clarifies the terms of the alliance from the UNC point of view.⁴⁸¹ The UNC-PNP alliance was practical evidence of Ofori Atta's social reconciliation leadership principle.

Tshepo Masipa notes that an alliance is established before an election and a coalition is formed after an election.⁴⁸² The UNC-PNP conciliation was formed after the Third Republic elections and in line with Masipa's definition should be classified as a coalition; however, Ofori Atta calls it an alliance. He was clear that it was not a coalition and gives a number of reasons for his position. The first reason Ofori Atta sees the relationship as alliance and not a coalition is

⁴⁸⁰ Masipa, *Coalition and Party Alliances* p. 60.

⁴⁸¹ William Ofori Atta Family Papers. William Ofori Atta, 'PNP-UNC Alliance'.

⁴⁸² Masipa, *Coalition and Party Alliances* p. 60.

the fact that the UNC-PNP alliance was cooperation with President Hilla Limann's government and not a merger between the UNC and the PNP. Ofori Atta asserts: 'The UNC remains a separate Party, it has not merged with PNP. It has not been submerged or swallowed up by the PNP. In the agreement it was made absolutely clear that the UNC will not support the Government if it introduces measures or propagates principles or ideologies which are strange to the UNC and are against our objectives and ideals.'⁴⁸³

The second and most important reason why Ofori Atta's UNC went into an alliance with the PNP was to entrench democratic civilian rule in Ghana so as to prevent a future coup d'état taking place. Ofori Atta was strongly against military rule because of his democratic credentials. He asserts: 'Our motives for the PNP-UNC Alliance remain unchanged. We joined the alliance so that the PNP and UNC may become united to support Dr Limann's Administration, as also civilian administration. We have not been backward in saying that in our present crisis, it is not the PNP or Dr Limann who is on trial but civilian administration. And we mean it: our support is not for the People's National Party but for Dr Limann's Administration or for civilian administration.'⁴⁸⁴ Prior to the Third Republic there had been two military coups in Ghana by the National Liberation Council in 1966 and the National Redemption Council in 1972. Later on in 1981 there was to be another coup d'état which removed the Third Republic PNP government from power.

Thirdly, Ofori Atta notes that the UNC was composed of politicians from both the politically conservative Danquah-Busia tradition and the politically radical Nkrumah tradition which made it a 'broad based' political party. These two traditions have dominated Ghana's political

⁴⁸³ Ofori Atta, 'PNP-UNC Alliance', p. 1.

⁴⁸⁴ Ofori Atta, 'PNP-UNC Alliance', p. 1.

landscape from pre-independent to post independent Ghana as at the time of the Third Republic. As such the UNC could lend its support to the PNP even though the PNP was solely a radical Nkrumah tradition political party. He contends: 'There are many persons in Ghana who agree that Nkrumah did a lot for Ghana.'⁴⁸⁵ But there are also many of these same persons who think he was also the cause of many of our troubles.... I take a broad view of Nkrumah without bitterness, but this does not mean that I shall be unconcerned about the re-introduction of the ideas and practices of Nkrumah's Government against which I struggled in the past and which were responsible for my imprisonment and privations and those of many good men of Ghana.'⁴⁸⁶

Fourthly, Ofori Atta's spirit of social reconciliation was geared towards reconciling the nation of Ghana by forming a centrist political party, the UNC, which would bring together the political conservative group and the radical political group voters in the nation. He asserts: 'The UNC was formed deliberately to bring the bitter opposing camps together, to heal the old wounds, and to unite the nation. The slogan, Broad Based, was not a mere vote-catching slogan.'⁴⁸⁷ He adds that the UNC was composed of leaders who were previously part of the following political parties: the First Republic of Ghana's politically conservative United Party and politically radical Convention People's Party, the Second Republic of Ghana conservative Progress Party and radical National Alliance of Liberals. as such the UNC did not form an alliance with the PNP to propagate the views of the CPP's Kwame Nkrumah.⁴⁸⁸

Fifthly, Ofori Atta underlines the need for an alliance in light of the political, economic. and social national crises that Ghana was facing: 'We joined with your people because we believed

⁴⁸⁵ Ofori Atta, 'PNP-UNC Alliance', p. 1.

⁴⁸⁶ Ofori Atta, 'PNP-UNC Alliance', p. 1.

⁴⁸⁷ Ofori Atta, 'PNP-UNC Alliance', p. 1.

⁴⁸⁸ Ofori Atta, 'PNP-UNC Alliance', p. 2.

that the empty Treasury, the insecurity, the food situation and the other problems required Ghanaians to be solidly behind the Government, the Limann Administration'.⁴⁸⁹ He added that the enormity of the nation's crises meant that one political party alone could not solve them. He noted that the government would need to make tough decisions in order to reconstruct the country and a large pool of knowledgeable leaders were required for this course of action.

Sixthly, he notes that in his position as Council of State Chairman he has seen a measure of goodwill from diverse sections of the nation which highlighted the need for national unity in addressing the nations' crises. He remarks: 'The Council has had a round of talks with a large number of persons, members of various bodies and organisations in Ghana.'⁴⁹⁰ I am impressed by the conduct of the leaders of the political parties which I regard as being responsible and commendable. I have also been impressed with the quality of the leadership of the Recognised Professional Bodies, TUC, GNAT, ACSG, Moslems, Catholics, Christian Council, and the Chiefs. There is a commendable fund of goodwill ready for the service of Ghana.'⁴⁹¹

Seventhly, he pledged his support for the PNC Limann government if it trod on the path of national reconciliation: 'I wish Ghana well. I wish civilian administration well if you continue to cherish the Constitution, to practise what you have often referred to as participatory democracy, to aim at encouraging "national integration without discriminating and fostering a feeling of belonging and of involvement among the various peoples of Ghana to the end that loyalty to Ghana shall override sectional, ethnic and (all) other loyalties"'.⁴⁹¹

⁴⁸⁹ Ofori Atta, 'PNP-UNC Alliance', p. 3.

⁴⁹⁰ Ofori Atta, 'PNP-UNC Alliance', p. 5.

⁴⁹¹ Ofori Atta, 'PNP-UNC Alliance', p. 5.

Finally, he pledged to pray for Ghana to experience God's blessings in its journey toward national reconstruction: 'I shall be with you in the service to the nation and in my prayers to my God. May God bless you.'⁴⁹²

In December 1979 as the nation prepared for the new year, Ofori Atta shared a new year message with the nation in which he accentuated his concern that the UNC-PNP alliance should not dissolve the two parties into a single political party. He did not want a coalition government. He wanted to maintain a political alliance due to the heterogeneous political ideological background of the UNC as against the homogeneous political background of PNP government. He explains: 'The UNC is as determined to maintain its identity as we believe the PNP is, and within the ranks of both parties there are those whose prejudices mar their appreciation of the alliance. The alliance will not be kept in being a day longer than is justified by the security situation of the sincerity of the PNP. The UNC will never shelve its policies for the sake of the alliance. For us the alliance is not a matter of political opportunism as some allege, but of responsible statesmanship'.⁴⁹³ He stressed that the nation needed conciliation and not conflict and that was why the UNC had gone into alliance with the PNP in order to work towards developing a better Ghana for future generations.

The UNC-PNP alliance was a clear example of the conciliatory attitude of the older Ofori Atta. After many decades of political disagreements in his political journey he reaches a point where he saw the need for a national coalition as the means to solving Ghana's intractable problems. This alliance with Hilla Limann's PNP, a political party from the radical tradition of the

⁴⁹² Ofori Atta, 'PNP-UNC Alliance', p. 6.

⁴⁹³ William Ofori Atta Family Papers. 'New Year Message from Chairman of United National Convention', p. 4.

Ghanaian political divide, rather than an alliance with Victor Owusu's PNC, a conservative political tradition party akin to Ofori Atta's past political right tradition, cost Ofori Atta dearly. He makes the following comments of the UNC-PNP alliance: '... the U.N.C. is determined to continue as a Party, even as a separate identity in the period of alliance with the P.N.P. Besides, whatever may be the strength or length of an alliance with the P.N.P. or with any other Party, we shall continue to cherish, stand by and advocate all these moral, political and social principles which clearly identify us and for which many Ghanaians voted for us in the elections.'⁴⁹⁴ Ofori Atta ends his political new year message to the nation on a Christian religious note. He remarks: 'May our Lord God, the giver of all good and perfect gifts, multiply His grace, mercy and peace upon all Ghanaians and establish our Ghana as His blessed nation for all times.'⁴⁹⁵ He insisted that the UNC core leadership principles would be maintained during the UNC-PNP alliance.

Ofori Atta received criticism from both sides of the political spectrum – some on the radical political approach were suspicious of his intentions, others on the conservative political approach felt betrayed by him. However, this reading of the political climate fails to understand the fact that the UNC was not a political party belonging to the right of the political spectrum. It is true that Ofori Atta had been on the political right in his political journey up to that point in time. Nevertheless, the experience of the PMFJ, a movement with both sides of the political divide, may have birthed in Ofori Atta a new political tradition – politics from the centre. It may be construed from the preceding that the UNC brought to existence a new political tradition in Ghana, a political tradition which was neither to the conservative political approach

⁴⁹⁴ Ofori Atta, 'Statement to the press by Mr William Ofori Atta Chairman of the U.N.C. on the 4th January 1980' p. 6.

⁴⁹⁵ Ofori Atta, 'Statement to the press by Mr William Ofori Atta Chairman of the U.N.C. on the 4th January 1980' p. 6.

nor to the radical political approach but one that was a mixture of these two political approaches. Ofori Atta felt that that political season of 1979 Ghana demanded such a political tradition in order to heal the nation of past hurts after twenty years plus of political independence so as to move forward in national reconstruction.

There are four issues which the groups forming an alliance or a coalition need to concur on states Masipa.⁴⁹⁶ They are communication, consultation, consensus-building, and compromise. The PMFJ coalition and the UNC coalition were strong because they incorporated these four issues into their operation. But the UNC-PNC alliance fell apart because of problems related to the four issues. Charles Villa-Vicencio notes that political reconciliation is to be based on moral compromises, accountability, tough negotiations, and difficult policy making.⁴⁹⁷ The actors in the reconciliation process need to focus on establishing a new future rather than the painful past. Political reconciliation should be in tandem with addressing the social economic political and religious causes of conflict. In the African context reconciliation should have a community approach and not an individualistic approach. Villa-Vicencio says that in a reconciliation and reconstruction process, the opposing groups may need to change their political strategy to one in which an identity of democratic participation overcomes an identity of resistance and conflict.⁴⁹⁸

Ethnicity plays an important role in Ghanaian and African political discourse. Ethnicity is sometimes manipulated by politicians in their quest for political power with the possible disastrous consequence of civil strife and societal corruption. Jeffrey Conroy-Krutz says that it is important for the citizenry of African countries to be provided with the requisite information

⁴⁹⁶ Masipa, *Coalition and Party Alliances* p. 62.

⁴⁹⁷ Charles Villa-Vicencio. *Walk with Us and Listen: Political reconciliation in Africa*. (Washington: Georgetown University Press, 2009) pp. 4-5, 156.

⁴⁹⁸ Villa-Vicencio. *Political reconciliation in Africa*

that will enable them to make democratic choices based on objective criteria rather than on ethnicity.⁴⁹⁹ This can contribute to reducing civil strife and societal corruption.

One of the challenges William Ofori Atta faced with respect to social reconciliation was an accusation that the Progress Party government in the Second Republic, of which Ofori Atta was a cabinet minister, was a government that practiced tribalism by favouring the Akan ethnic group. In a parliamentary debate on 16th June 1970 on the issue of the 568 public servants dismissed by the PP government, the Leader of the Opposition parties, G. K. Agama, alleged that those dismissed were mainly Ewes, Gas and other ethnicities. The PP government was constituted mainly of Akans and this ethnic group appeared to be a minority among the dismissed persons. Agama observes: ‘an analysis of the list of persons dismissed supports the view that the people were dismissed for being suspected to be one of the following. First, for being Ewes; secondly for being Gas.... or for being sympathisers of the National Alliance of Liberals.’⁵⁰⁰

Ofori Atta’s response to this allegation was: ‘... my own personal secretary is an Ewe, and he is known to have been Dr Agama’s agent during the elections. He was not affected by this exercise and he is still my secretary.’ Agama gave several examples to support his contention and added: ‘The point I want to make is what appears to be the tribal and political basis of the dismissals which is extremely revolting and must be condemned in no uncertain terms.... The event of the dismissals seems to indicate that this Government is a tribal Government led by a tribal Prime Minister.’⁵⁰¹ Ofori Atta counteracted and went into the issue of semantics by

⁴⁹⁹ Conroy-Krutz, Jeffrey. ‘Information and Ethnic Politics in Africa’ in *British Journal of Political Science*, April 2013, vol 43, no. 2 pp. 345-373.

⁵⁰⁰ William Ofori Atta Family Papers, *Parliamentary Debates*, Volume 3, 12th May – 26th June 1970, pp. 765-766. (hereafter *Parliamentary Debates*)

⁵⁰¹ *Parliamentary Debates*, Volume 3, 12th May – 26th June 1970, pp. 767-768.

addressing the Speaker of the House: “May I ask you, Sir, for your ruling on the word ‘tribal Government’. I do not know whether the Leader of the Opposition means that it is a Government of several tribes or a Government of one tribe? What does he mean by ‘tribal Government’?”⁵⁰² Agama’s response was that a tribal government was a government that practised tribalism.⁵⁰³ It appears that domination of the PP government by the Akan ethnic group and the domination of the dismissed public servants by non-Akan ethnic groups made some people form the perception that the PP was a tribalistic party that favoured the Akans over other ethnicities.

In July 1970, in an address to delegates on the occasion of his election as national vice chairman of the Eastern Region branch of the PP, the *Ghanaian Times* newspaper reported that Ofori Atta held that ‘... it was the wish of the Government to uproot all traces of tribalism within the community. He asked delegates not to regard party elections as tribal conflicts.’⁵⁰⁴ Here then is a clear assertion of his position on the matter of tribalism.

Togbe Afede insists that for national reconciliation to take place, Ghana must address the issue of ethnocentrism since ethnicity is sometimes used to bring division in society.⁵⁰⁵ He says that society should be educated to practice understanding, tolerance and respect among Ghana’s different ethnic groups. He adds that the government needs to be considerate of the views of ethnic minorities in national decision making. He claims that if the nations’ resources are distributed in a transparent manner and not in an ethnocentric manner, national reconciliation

⁵⁰² *Parliamentary Debates*, Volume 3, 12th May – 26th June 1970, pp. 767-768.

⁵⁰³ *Parliamentary Debates*, Volume 3, 12th May – 26th June 1970, pp. 767-768.

⁵⁰⁴ *The Ghanaian Times* Tuesday July 21, 1970, p. 7.

⁵⁰⁵ Togbe Afede XIV. ‘Ethnicity and National Reconciliation’ in *Public Forum on Reconciling the Nation*. (Accra: Ghana Academy of Arts and Sciences (GAAS) Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (FES), 2005) pp. 6-8.

and cohesion will be experienced by Ghana. In his view, the traditional chiefs have an important role to play in creating inter-ethnic harmony in the nation.

As much as Ofori Atta was in favour of social reconciliation he was not in favour of unity that was established on coercion instead of a common purpose. During the SMC military government Union Government debate Ofori Atta accused the SMC of using coercion to build a false unity on the Unigov concept. Ofori Atta asserts: 'The supporters of union government, particularly the Head of State and other members of the S.M.C. have one popular argument in favour of union government, that is, it will unite the nation.⁵⁰⁶ Unity is good, and it brings peace, but unity is not obtained by a coercive constitution or legislation or force. Further I do not see how the brutal, coercive, and divisive methods being used now by the S.M.C. government can bring about peace and unity. If we are divided now on a number of issues, we do not see how waving the magic wand of Unigov will bring about unity'. He contends that multiparty politics has unity as his democratic basis and not uniformity. Political parties may have different views on issues that they should allow the political parties that disagree with them to express their views without the fear of molestation or imprisonment. The participants in multiparty politics should be united in their commitment to agree to disagree on various national issues without resorting to coercing others towards their viewpoint. If this is not done, they may be violence and anarchy in society with regards to political matters.

Hence for Ofori Atta social reconciliation should lead to a unity of consensus and not of coercion. He believed that in the late 1970s after the overthrow of two civilian governments by the military, there was the need for a government of national unity for the upcoming Third

⁵⁰⁶ Ofori Atta, *Yes or No? How I see the referendum*. p. 7.

Republic of Ghana. As such he and some of his colleagues formed the United National Convention political party to campaign for social reconciliation and unity in the Third Republic. He explains: ‘We announced that one of the main motives for forming the new Party was to give all Ghanaians an opportunity to participate in transforming Ghana into a stable, progressive, modern, welfare state based on... liberal democracy....’⁵⁰⁷ We saw that our plans for rebuilding Ghana required substantial unity in the nation, and a massive co-operative effort in an atmosphere of peace and unity.’ He asserted that the political party that won the third republic election would require a level of support from the other political parties in order to ensure a progressive and peaceful society which would nurture civilian constitutional rule. In his view for civilian constitutional rule to work it was necessary to establish a government of national unity so as to nurture social reconciliation in the nation. He stresses that the UNC went into an alliance with the PNP in order to form a broad-based alliance which would entrench constitutional rule in Ghana so as to create the environment for the socio-economic development of the nation.

2.4 Social Reconciliation through International Dialogue: The Progress Party and dialogue with Apartheid South Africa

On the international level William Ofori sought social reconciliation through international dialogue. However, his foreign policy of international dialogue caused a political storm during the Second Republic of Ghana on the matter of dialogue with apartheid South Africa. The Busia Progress Party government took a decision to pursue dialogue with apartheid South Africa when the rest of Africa had called for an international isolation. The PP government’s policy

⁵⁰⁷ Ofori Atta, ‘Statement to the press by Mr. William Ofori Atta Chairman of the U.N.C. on The 4th January 1980 by Mr William Ofori Atta Chairman Of The UNC’ p. 5

was similar to that of President Felix Houphouet Boigny of Cote D'Ivoire at that time. At the 1971 Organisation of African Unity meeting in Addis Abba, Ethiopia, Ofori-Atta as the PP Minister of Foreign Affairs caused an international uproar when he tried to defend his PP government's position on the apartheid South Africa issue.

During a Second Republic of Ghana parliamentary debate, Ofori Atta as the Minister of Foreign Affairs pointed out that both he and the PP government were totally against apartheid.

He asserts: 'I am happy that both sides of the House have used the occasion to condemn apartheid.'⁵⁰⁸ Apartheid is a great evil. It is an evil which is against our race and against humanity. It is a new barbarism and an enemy. It threatens the very life of civilisation and the very art of living together as human beings. And as demonstrated here it arouses deep emotions and hatred and animosity, and it undermines international peace and order. I think we are right in recording that the arrests in South Africa and in other parts of south-western Africa – imprisonments, shootings, barbarous treatments, denial of elementary human rights, propagation of the theory of the superiority of one race and the inferiority of another – all these things tend to blacken this chapter in the modern annals of our history'. He contended that racial discrimination, apartheid and racial humiliation was not simply an internal matter for apartheid South Africa but also a concern for Africa and the whole world as such there was a need to find an effective way to dismantle the apartheid system in South Africa.

Ofori Atta gave another speech in the Second Republic parliament in which he presented the PP government's case for dialogue with apartheid South Africa.⁵⁰⁹ He argued that '... in the opinion of this House, dialogue based on the philosophy underlining the Lusaka Manifesto, is

⁵⁰⁸ Ofori Atta, *Parliamentary Debates Official Report* – Second Series Volume 6 23rd February 1971 – 5th May, 1971.

⁵⁰⁹ William Ofori Atta Family Papers. 'The speech of honourable William Ofori-Atta, Minister of Foreign Affairs in the National Assembly debate on dialogue.' [n.d.] (hereafter 'Dialogue')

one of the weapons which could be employed in the struggle to eliminate apartheid and thereby create the necessary conditions for the establishment of majority rule in a multi-racial society.’⁵¹⁰ It should be noted that he referred to dialogue as a ‘weapon’ which means he sees dialogue as a ‘verbal warfare’ tool in the same way others saw armed struggle as a military warfare tool. Dialogue may be used as a tool to gain advantage over one’s opponents. To him ‘verbal warfare’ or diplomacy may be just as efficacious as military warfare. Though the means may differ the ends are the same – the dismantling of the apartheid system in South Africa. It appears to me that Ofori Atta saw dialogue as soft power which could add to the hard power of armed struggle.

He also pointed out that ‘...there is some good fortune in this debate because this particular date, 22nd, March is the second day of the International Year for Action Against Racism; and the Action itself calls for greatness and the Action itself condemns pettiness and narrowness. It calls upon all of us to rise above the claims of cheap popularity.’⁵¹¹ Ofori Atta made a case for the Progress Party policy of dialogue with apartheid South Africa when he attended the Organisation for African Unity meeting as Ghana’s Minister for Foreign Affairs. However, when he faced a strong opposition at the OAU meeting, he backed down and said that the PP government would toe the line of the majority of African countries and reject the position of dialogue with apartheid South Africa. Ofori Atta’s leadership principle of social reconciliation through international dialogue made him defend the PP government’s position of dialogue with apartheid South Africa, even though it was not a popular position in Africa at that time. History has shown that it although armed struggle contributed to the fall of the apartheid South African

⁵¹⁰ Ofori Atta, ‘Dialogue’, p. 1.

⁵¹¹ Ofori Atta, ‘Dialogue’, p. 1.

government in early 1990 it was dialogue that eventually facilitated the transition to a post-apartheid South Africa.

3. Personal Transparency as Personal Honesty and Personal Accountability

On the occasion of the first anniversary of William Ofori Atta's United National Convention (UNC) political party on 5th January 1980, Ofori Atta delivered an address to the nation through a newspaper advertisement and printed pamphlets. Even though he did not win the presidency of the Third Republic, he emphasised that the UNC was still insisting on personal transparency in national life. He demarcated accountability in leadership as one of the key features of the UNC. He maintained that the UNC aims were: 'to promote the welfare of the people by means of an open and honest government based on consensus and the principle of public accountability.'⁵¹² In a separate statement to the press in connection with the UNC's first anniversary Ofori Atta underscored once again the importance of accountability to the UNC: 'We assured the nation that our Government will not only be broad-based but that it will also be clean and open, and that we shall insist on the principle of accountability characterizing the life and conduct of all public officers, starting with the Head and his Ministers. We promised to do clean politics, and to do politics in accordance with the best rules and traditions of the game.'⁵¹³

After Ofori Atta's retirement from politics in December 1981, he delivered the Ghana Academy of Arts and Sciences lecture named the J.B. Danquah Memorial Lectures in 1985. In

⁵¹² Ofori Atta, 'U.N.C. Anniversary Message by Mr William Ofori Atta Chairman of the UNC' pp. 1-2. See also Daily Graphic, Saturday January 5, 1980, 'U.N.C. Anniversary Message', p. 6.

⁵¹³ Ofori Atta, 'Statement to the Press by Mr. William Ofori Atta Chairman of the U.N.C. on the 4th January 1980 by Mr William Ofori Atta Chairman of the UNC', p. 6.

his lecture Ofori Atta asserted that the traditional ‘Ghanaian character’ was one that believed in living a noble life. He remarked: “all life, conduct, attitude or work, which is disgraceful, mean shoddy, ignoble, does not become a Ghanaian. They are taboos; they are foreign to his character. We therefore pledged to build an ‘undefiled heritage’.”⁵¹⁴ He also asserted that the traditional ‘Ghanaian character’ was one which preferred death to the shame of unethical behaviour. He declared: ‘to see in the national character a feeling that one would rather lose one’s life than to be associated with a disgraceful act (*Aninguase dee, famyam owuo!*), is to see a people who are reaching out for the very pinnacle for moral excellence.’⁵¹⁵ He lamented that the traditional ‘Ghanaian character’ of morality seemed to be waning in the nation and there was the need to retrieve it in Ghana’s public life. Ofori Atta’s exemplary public life made him a worthy speaker for the Ghana Academy of Arts and Sciences lecture series. This section examines Ofori Atta’s personal transparency leadership principle as expressed through the phrase ‘my hands are clean’ as well as his passion for honesty and accountability. in Ghanaian national life.

3.1 Personal Transparency as ‘My Hands are Clean’

An issue that makes it possible for African public leaders not to practice transparency is that of a lack of accountability in public life. Elizabeth Carlson reckons that when politicians channel national resources exclusively for the benefit of their ethnic group it often leads to corrupt practices in political leadership.⁵¹⁶ The matter of ethnicity played an important role in

⁵¹⁴ Ofori Atta, *Ghana: A nation in crisis*, pp. 6, 9, 13, 17, 19.

⁵¹⁵ Ofori Atta, *Ghana: A nation in crisis*, pp. 6, 9, 13, 17, 19.

⁵¹⁶ Elizabeth Carlson, ‘Ethnic Voting and Accountability in Africa: A Choice Experiment in Uganda’ *World Politics* Volume 67, Issue 2, April 2015 pp. 353-385.

Ghana's politics, yet as will be shown below, Ofori Atta believed that character and competence were the criteria Ghanaians should use to elect political leaders. Hence, he spent most of his political campaign for the Third Republic elections urging the nation to focus on the integrity of leaders of his United National Convention political party. This section and the next section will examine his political speeches to demonstrate the importance of personal transparency to Ofori Atta.

In the Third Republic elections the campaign slogan of William Ofori Atta's United National Convention was 'my hands are clean'. This was a reference to the integrity of Ofori-Atta as a politician in nearly five decades of Gold Coast and Ghana politics. He took this slogan from verse 4 of Psalm 24:3-5 (NIV): 'Who may ascend the mountain of the LORD? Who may stand in his holy place? The one who has clean hands and a pure heart, who does not trust in an idol or swear by a false god. They will receive blessing from the LORD and vindication from God their Saviour.'

The political symbol for the UNC was a raised hand with the clean palm of the hand shown boldly. This was to show that Ofori Atta and the UNC leaders were honest political leaders who would use the nation's resources to develop Ghana. In a political speech by Ofori Atta on the occasion of the inauguration of the United National Convention in January 1979 he posits that the leaders of the UNC were people marked by probity, clean politics, honesty and selflessness. He claimed: 'my colleagues are men and women of the highest probity and intelligence.... the underlying concepts upon which this party is based are... the practice of clean politics, a striving for the welfare of all the people.... the Ghanaian of today is mature, basically honest and vitally concerned with the welfare and future of Ghana.'⁵¹⁷

⁵¹⁷ Ofori Atta, 'Inauguration of the United National Convention'.

In a 1979 statement regarding the intentions of the UNC, Ofori Atta said that the UNC intended to practice clean and noble politics, honest service, anti-corruption, and efficient administration: ‘We seek to promote a clean and noble game of politics devoid of animosities and character assassination.... for honest service to our people... The body politic has been infested with corruption and gross errors of administration; and life for the ordinary Ghanaian has been reduced to confrontation with a harsh fate.’⁵¹⁸ At a 1979 UNC rally in the Western and Central Regions of Ghana, Ofori Atta uses the Akan Twi language phrase ‘eye clean’, that is ‘it is clean’ to refer to the UNC claim of anticorruption and honesty in politics: ‘The response to the shout Convention is “EYE CLEAN” and “EHO TE PAA.” It is the expression of our determination to give Ghana a clean government, a government manned by men of proven excellence in integrity and intelligence. It is also the expression of our determination to give Ghana clean politics, free from violence, intimidation, character assassination, mudslinging....’.⁵¹⁹

On the campaign trail in the Upper Region of Ghana in 1979 he shared principles on which the UNC stood including the fact that the UNC would be a party of selfless leaders who aim to serve the nation. Also, the UNC would not just be a promise making political party but also a promise keeping party. He claimed: ‘We believe that political parties exist to serve the interests of the nation, that is, to serve interests of the people who make the nation. And they will be judged solely by the standard, quality and extent of their performance in the promotion of the

⁵¹⁸ Ofori Atta, ‘Statement of intent by the chairman, Mr William Ofori-Atta of the United National Convention’

⁵¹⁹ Ofori Atta, ‘Western Region and Central Region UNC Rally The Address of William Ofori Atta, Chairman of the U.N.C. on the occasion of the rally held at Takoradi (Cape Coast) inaugurating the Convention in the Western Region (Central Region) on 10th February 1979 and 11th February 1979’, p. 2.

welfare, happiness, and advancement of their people.... we cannot afford to indulge in the wild and irresponsible game of making promises which are incapable of being honoured.’⁵²⁰

At the Northern Region 1979 UNC rally, the UNC pledged a government which would be noted for its honesty, probity, credibility, accountability, humility, compassion, competency, servanthood, and service. Ofori Atta argued that both individual integrity and institutional integrity were essential for the nurture of integrity in the Ghanaian society. He declared: ‘There is one thing which holds us together and that is that unless our broad-based leadership is honest, above reproach and humble, we cannot meet the challenges that are ahead of us. That is the need for an honest, competent and humble leadership, that will set an example of incorruptibility at the top, so that it can percolate downwards throughout our society’.⁵²¹

In the Volta and Eastern Regions of Ghana, Ofori Atta in his 1979 campaign speech once again drew attention to the credibility and accountability of the UNC politicians whom he said were knowledgeable people who would practice transparency in governance. He claimed that the UNC is ‘open to all good men and women of Ghana who wish Ghana well, who share our faith in Ghana and her people, who are ready and dedicated to work for and to spare no endeavour which is our will for the welfare of our people. ... The U.N.C. offers you the opportunity for public spirited service to Ghana.’⁵²² He added that Ghanaians should be willing to take personal responsibility for the political, economic and social crises of the nation as well as personal responsibility for rebuilding the nation: ‘Ghanaians have far too long enjoyed the luxury of sitting back and blaming the events of our time. Let us all begin now to accept some

⁵²⁰ Ofori Atta, ‘Upper Region UNC Rally The Address of William Ofori Atta Chairman of the United National Convention at The Rallies Held At Bolgatanga, Navrongo, Sandema And Bawku, Held On 16th, 17th, 18th And 19th February, 1979’ pp. 2-3,

⁵²¹ Ofori Atta, ‘Northern Region UNC Rally UNC Rally by Mr. William Ofori-Atta’, pp. 3-4.

⁵²² Ofori Atta, ‘Statements to be made at the U.N.C. Regional Rallies at Ho on 3/3/79 and at Koforidua 4/3/79’

responsibility for what has happened and what is happening. It is only when we do this, when we accept that we have been part of the problem, that we can ungrudgingly accept responsibility for working together to remedy the situation.’⁵²³ Furthermore, he pledged that if elected the UNC would establish an open government in which the public would have access to governance matters. The freedom of information would enable citizens to hold the government accountable and facilitate transparency in national governance. This in turn would stimulate the populace to have confidence in national leadership and work at national reconstruction. He states that the UNC government ‘...will be an open government. We shall confide in our people, and inform and acquaint them of the true facts of each situation. We believe that we can challenge and motivate our people to constructive and productive action only if we confide in them and get them to have confidence in our direction of affairs. It is only in such an atmosphere that we can mobilise our full potential of physical and human resources for full employment of these resources’.⁵²⁴

In a June 1979 national broadcast on radio and television, Ofori Atta said that ‘the character of a government at any particular moment in a nation’s history must reflect the pressing needs of that moment.’⁵²⁵ He saw the needs of Ghana at that time to be that of transparent leaders with the character and competence to mobilise the populace to rebuild the nation. He went on to state that the lack of probity and integrity in politicians were contributory factors to the nation’s crises: ‘There are good reasons why you must vote for the United National Convention. Ghana’s failure as a nation today has also been due to lack of probity and integrity in the majority of persons who have been entrusted with authority.’⁵²⁶ He also diagnoses the many ills of the nation. He believed that a lack of transparency in national affairs and a lack of credibility

⁵²³ Ofori Atta, ‘Statements to be made at the U.N.C. Regional Rallies at Ho on 3/3/79 and at Koforidua 4/3/79’

⁵²⁴ Ofori Atta, ‘Statements to be made at the U.N.C. Regional Rallies at Ho on 3/3/79 and at Koforidua 4/3/79’

⁵²⁵ Ofori Atta, ‘Nationwide Radio and TV Address by Mr William Ofori Atta on 7th June 1979’

⁵²⁶ Ofori Atta, ‘Nationwide Radio and TV Address by Mr William Ofori Atta on 7th June 1979’

of national leaders were fundamental causes of the nation's' ills: 'nepotism, bribery and corruption and, on occasion, downright irresponsibility have caused appointment of incompetent and incapable persons to high office which has resulted in the dissipation of our plentiful resources.'⁵²⁷ Ofori Atta committed himself as leader of the UNC to remedy the nation's ills through the practice of anticorruption measures and honesty in national life so as to create a moral foundation for national governance and avoid subverting 'fundamental social and individual liberties'.⁵²⁸

He then commits himself and the UNC to be a government which is characterised by sensitivity, reliability, productivity, probity, integrity, honesty, responsibility, humility, liberty, accountability, sincerity, fidelity, stability, capability.⁵²⁹ He declares: 'What this nation needs now is a man who can provide clean and honest government, a man which can ensure stability, a man tolerant enough to make the Constitution a living document and to maintain democracy, a man who is respected at home and abroad, and above all a man with the experience and ability to command the loyalty of an able team that will manage the economy efficiently. I have the duty and pleasure to say that the United National Convention have the man and the team you are looking for.'⁵³⁰

Ofori Atta was 69 years old in 1979 at the time of the Third Republic elections. Some sections of the media and populace felt that he was too old to be the president of Ghana. His reply to this was that he was healthy and as a sage his life experience was an asset to national development: 'I am happy and proud to say also that I am in good and sound health to lead the

⁵²⁷ Ofori Atta, 'Nationwide Radio and TV Address by Mr William Ofori Atta on 7th June 1979'

⁵²⁸ Ofori Atta, 'Nationwide Radio and TV Address by Mr William Ofori Atta on 7th June 1979'

⁵²⁹ Ofori Atta, 'Nationwide Radio and TV Address by Mr William Ofori Atta on 7th June 1979'

⁵³⁰ Ofori Atta, 'Nationwide Radio and TV Address by Mr William Ofori Atta on 7th June 1979'

nation. Truth, integrity and trustworthiness are timeless. Age does not subtract from them; it adds to them.⁵³¹

In another political party broadcast in July 1979 Ofori Atta observed that the moral and economic walls of Ghana needed to be rebuilt and based his assertion on the Bible text Isaiah 62:6-7 ‘I have set watchmen upon thy walls, O Jerusalem, which shall never hold their peace day nor night: ye that make mention of the LORD, keep not silence, And give him no rest, till he establish, and till he make Jerusalem a praise in the earth’ (KJV). He asked Ghanaians to pray for God to rebuild the nation, and insisted that God fearing leaders are those qualified to rebuild Ghana. It is significant that in a national political broadcast, Ofori Atta unashamedly makes reference to a Bible quotation to illustrate his view on the state of the nation and calls for national prayer. This is pertinent in light of the fact that the broadcast makes mention of his UNC Vice Presidential candidate Alhaji Mahama Idrissu who was a Muslim. He boldly and openly asserts in his broadcast ‘The U.N.C. is God-based. That is its unique character.’⁵³² Hence, it is clear that following his evangelical Christian spiritual conversion, Ofori Atta did not hide his Christian convictions but made it known even when he was in the public square. However, it should be noted that he used a theocentric Bible reference and not a Christocentric Bible reference. In his political discourse he refers to God and not Jesus Christ. This may have been done to find a common ground with people of other faiths in Ghana. This is significant because it indicates that although his evangelistic preaching in the church context was centred on Jesus Christ, when it came to the political context, his religious pronouncement was centred on God.

⁵³¹ Ofori Atta, ‘Nationwide Radio and TV Address by Mr William Ofori Atta on 7th June 1979’

⁵³² Ofori Atta, ‘8th July 1979 Fellow Ghanaians’, p. 4.

Ofori Atta mentions in his broadcast that UNC was a party that practiced leadership by example. He asserted that the exemplary lives of the UNC leadership in probity and integrity would inspire others in the nation to also choose to live a life of probity and integrity. He declared: 'The public life of the leaders of the U.N.C. shall set the pattern and place for revival in morals. It is our firm belief that this is the best way to inspire those in the public service and those outside to choose the road of probity and integrity. Our nation needs leaders whose lifestyle will set a pattern for probity and public service, leaders who will live close to the people, think with them, plan with them, build our nation together'.⁵³³

According to Ofori Atta the voting populace should vote for the United National Convention political party in order to ensure that there is probity and integrity in Ghanaian political life. He claimed that one of the major reasons for Ghana's social, economic and political failure was the lack of probity and integrity in national leadership. He asserted that irresponsibility, nepotism, bribery and corruption have led to the appointment of incapable and incompetent people to national leadership. A UNC government would be a clean and honest government which would ensure that probity and integrity was a norm in national leadership.⁵³⁴

The issue of integrity in leadership was not only communicated by Ofori Atta in his campaigns and media broadcasts. In a speech to the UNC national executive in July 1979 after he lost the presidential elections for the third Republic, he reviewed the political message of the UNC and affirmed the party's unshakable commitment to its ethical values despite their election defeat. He comments: '...we have placed very high in the hierarchy of values the establishment of an open, clean, honest and efficient government in which public accountability, social justice, and

⁵³³ Ofori Atta, '8th July 1979 Fellow Ghanaians', p. 4.

⁵³⁴ Ofori Atta, '8th July, 1979 Fellow Ghanaians' pp. 1, 3-6 .

liberal democracy will be some of the guiding lights.... Under the slogan of ‘clean politics’ we said that we seek to promote the clean and noble game of politics devoid of animosities, character assassination and violence.’⁵³⁵

3.2 Personal Transparency as Honesty and Accountability

The ethical lifestyle and habits of a person was of concern to William Ofori Atta throughout his political life. The ethical value of personal transparency as honesty and accountability was a core feature of Ofori Atta’s personal and private life and an ethical value which he advocated from his young adult years till his death. At the age of 36 in an address on ‘Constructive Citizenship’ delivered at the second reunion of the Begoro Old Boys Association in the Eastern Region of Gold Coast in Easter 1946, Ofori Atta identified a ‘constructive citizen’ as one whose life is marked by a high degree of morality and a practical commitment to nation building. He stated that a ‘constructive citizen’s’ life is a life of ‘splendid living and magnificent contributions to the common good....’.⁵³⁶ In an explanation of Matthew 22:15-22 he reminded his audience of the need for Christians to get involved in the affairs of the state. He observed that in Matthew 22:15-22 Jesus Christ does not prohibit Christians from participating in affairs as wrongly interpreted by some Christians. He notes: "There are many factors responsible for this lack of interest in the State.... There is a tendency on the part of the Church members to think that when Jesus Christ said “Render unto Caesar’s the things that are Caesar’s and unto God the things that are God’s” he meant the Christians should have nothing to do with Caesar or the State. On the contrary he expects us to play our part as a citizen....’⁵³⁷ He asserted that

⁵³⁵ Ofori Atta, ‘The address by Mr. William Ofori Atta Chairman of the U.N.C. to the National Executive at the headquarters on 19/10/79’, pp. 1, 4-6.

⁵³⁶ Ofori Atta, ‘The Real Crisis’, p. 26.

⁵³⁷ Ofori Atta, ‘The Real Crisis’, p. 26.

Christians are to be agents of transformation who influence and shape state affairs on through Christian ethical principles. He noted that Jesus Christ ‘...expects us to play our part as a citizen, to make the Christian light shine at the deliberations of the State Councils so as to ensure that the basis of their resolutions, decisions, and policies should be solidly on Christian Ethics. That is our responsibility as Christians.’⁵³⁸ Hence, the public life of a ‘constructive citizen’ is to be built on an ethical foundation, which for Christians means a Christian ethical foundation. It is of significance that Ofori Atta used the phrase ‘solidly on Christian ethics’ in his ‘constructive citizen’ speech since in Easter 1946 when this address was delivered, he was by his own account a nominal Christian and not yet a ‘born again’ Christian. This implies that the Presbyterian Church upbringing as well as the mission school education of Ofori Atta shaped his life and thought and instilled in him some degree of Christian ethics.

For Ofori Atta, Gold Coast citizens can contribute to the common good by cooperating with other people of goodwill to tackle the political, economic, and social challenges of the Gold Coast in an ethical manner. He acknowledges the fears of the dangers of public life involvement which some may have but encourages his audience to overcome their fears and get involved in state affairs. he remarks: ‘I think it is fair to remark that many of us are anxious to play our part in public life, but are afraid of the dangers. We are afraid of criticism, of the Police and of the Government. But why should we fear?’⁵³⁹ He iterates that the life and message of Jesus Christ is an example for Christians to emulate and a model for constructive engagement in the pursuit of ‘truth and goodness’ in Gold Coast public life without fear or favour. He observes: ‘If we are Christians, then we have pledged ourselves to truth and goodness. If our Christ had to shut his mouth, if he had been afraid to challenge on occasions the ruling authority, he would have

⁵³⁸ Ofori Atta, ‘The Real Crisis’, p. 27.

⁵³⁹ Ofori Atta, ‘The Real Crisis’, p. 27.

probably lived up to the ripe old age of Methuselah but a Methuselah, not a Christ; a man famous for his age, not as a sage'.⁵⁴⁰ It is significant that in 1940s Gold Coast Ofori Atta is calling on Christians to get involved in state life since at that time some Christians believed that politics was morally dirty and as such Christians should keep away from it in order not to be corrupted by politics. Ofori Atta's Christocentric discourse is also significant since this speech was not made in a Christian church context but in a public setting.

Furthermore, even though he recognised the enormous power of the British colonial government, nevertheless he urged bold positive criticism and civil disobedience as tools for making the government responsible and accountable for its stewardship. He contends: 'We must remember that the power which a modern Government controls us is formidable, But its power, like any other power, is held in trust and upon conditions. We as citizens, must obey the State because our certain convictions that the Government is genuinely seeking the common good of the country. If it fails to do so, or if we honestly think that it has failed to do so, then we have a moral duty to inquire into the grounds of failure. If the results of our iniquity support our suspicions that the Government is not seeking the common good, then we have the moral duty as citizens to take action, to express boldly criticism and even as a last resort to suspend loyalty'.⁵⁴¹

The undertones of his view on government resonates with what the apostle Paul says in Romans 13:1-7, where government has God's blessing only if it works for the common good of its citizens. This insight into the Bible which is linked to 'constructive citizenship' and Christian

⁵⁴⁰ Ofori Atta, 'The Real Crisis', p. 27.

⁵⁴¹ Ofori Atta, 'The Real Crisis', p. 27.

political engagement by Ofori Atta shows his grounding in Christianity before his evangelical conversion, notably in relation to the Christian and politics.

As Minister of Education, Culture, and Sports in the Second Republic, he encouraged churches to exert a moral influence in society. He challenged the Christian church to actively work at installing moral values in Ghanaian society. The Ghanaian Times newspaper reported Ofori Atta's assertion that Christians 'should not only concern themselves with the spiritual needs of the people, but also assist to inculcate sound moral values in our society... religion is a life to be lived and not merely a set of precepts... churches and other religious bodies would seek through their handling of difficult problems, to give meaning to what they preach and teach and let the purposes of God be demonstrated in our ordinary lives'.⁵⁴²

When Ofori Atta was the Minister of Education, Culture, and Sports in the Second Republic he acted in a case where education officials were accused of corruption. The allegation was that some teachers had to pay a bribe before they could request for a transfer to another work location. He met the regional education officers to inform them of the matter and also set up a committee to investigate and make recommendations.⁵⁴³ Another case in which Ofori Atta acted against corruption was with regard to the dishonest practices of some teachers who misappropriated the monies they collected for the sale of government school textbooks to students. He pointed out that the teachers were to be exemplary leaders in the community to students and others and that systems and structures had been put in place to curb the corrupt

⁵⁴² The Ghanaian Times Friday, October 30, 1970 'Give meaning to what you preach'

⁵⁴³ *The Ghanaian Times* Saturday, December 5, 1970 'Allegation against education officials police to probe charge'.

practices of the teachers in question. He charged the district education officers to honestly discharge their supervisory duties.⁵⁴⁴

Kwame Ninsin contends that the creation of exclusive institutions instead of inclusive institutions is one of the key causes of corruption in Ghana.⁵⁴⁵ Exclusive institutions are political and economic state agencies which the ruling political elite monopolize and use to their personal advantage instead of for national development. Exclusive institutions do not have the checks and balances needed for accountability. They facilitate the arbitrary use of power by the elite leading to the practice of corruption. Inclusive institutions have accountability structures and are grounded on effective laws. They control the misuse of power for personal advantage and facilitate the quest for national, economic, and political development. This chapter indicates that Ofori Atta's political journey was an attempt to build inclusive institutions which have the accountability systems and structures requisite to curb bribery, corruption, abuse of authority and institutionalise personal transparency.

Louise Kretzschmar says that moral leadership is energised by goodness and meets the needs of others. On the issue of morality in leadership in the South African context she insists that for moral leaders to be formed in society there was the need for a change in the mind, heart, will, relationships and actions of individuals.⁵⁴⁶ She adds that Christians moral formation involves allowing God to change one's mind, heart, will, relationships and actions to conform to biblical morality. She says that through Christian discipleship the moral formation of

⁵⁴⁴ *The Ghanaian Times* Tuesday, January 27, 1970 'New move to check dishonest teachers'

⁵⁴⁵ Kwame Ninsin. *The Corrupt Elites: Anatomy of power and wealth in Ghana*. (Accra: Gavoss Education, 2018) pp.44-46.

⁵⁴⁶ Louise Kretzschmar, 'The Formation of Moral Leaders in South Africa: A Christian-Ethical Analysis of Some Essential Elements' *Journal of Theology for Southern Africa* 28th July 2007 pp. 18-36. (hereafter *The Formation of Moral Leaders*)

Christians can be realised.⁵⁴⁷ Kretzschmar's views resonate with Ofori Atta's personal transparency value. This chapter shows that Ofori Atta strongly believed that Christians could be changed by God and be formed into persons with a high degree of morality.

William Ofori Atta faced a personal transparency challenge during the Second Republic. One of the reasons for the 13th January 1972 National Redemption Council coup d'état was the NRC's accusation that the Progress Party government of Ghana's Second Republic was corrupt. The NRC military government claimed that the Members of Parliament had not declared their assets and the PP government members had stolen state funds.⁵⁴⁸ It is significant that in spite of the accusation by the NRC that the Busia PP government was corrupt, the NRC was not able to discover any adverse findings against William Ofori Atta. The NRC promulgated a decree N.R.C.D. 19 the Investigations and Forfeiture of Assets Decree and set up a Committee to investigate politicians in the Second Republic. Ofori Atta appeared before the committee and presented a document of his assets to the committee.⁵⁴⁹ After his arrest by the NRC he was later released since no charges of corruption could be brought against him. A similar event took place after the 31st December 1981 PNDC coup d'état in which Ofori Atta was arrested and later on released without any charges of corruption against him. When Ofori Atta died his peers on both sides of the political divide attested to the fact he was a man of integrity in private and in public.⁵⁵⁰ The PNDC military government that removed from governance the Third Republic of which Ofori Atta was a part affirmed at his state burial: 'One thing that stands to Paa Willie's credit is that he brought to politics a new breath of sincerity, modesty and honesty. Such were the qualities of the man that he went through the rough and

⁵⁴⁷ Kretzschmar, *The Formation of Moral Leaders*, pp. 18-36.

⁵⁴⁸ *Daily Graphic* Friday, Jan 14 1972 'Army takes over, Busia removed, Madjitey dismissed' p. 3.

⁵⁴⁹ William Ofori Atta Family Pares. 'Answers of William Ofori Atta to the questionnaire under the Investigations and Forfeiture of Assets Decree 1972 (N.R.C.D. 19)'.

⁵⁵⁰ K. Y. Boafo (ed.) "A short biography of Mr. William Ofori-Atta — Paa Willie", *Tribute*, pp. 21-22.

tumble of party politics with equanimity and a sense of humour. He never abandoned his principles, even in the face of defeat and adversity.’⁵⁵¹

Ofori Atta’s integrity was affirmed by the anti-corruption investigation committee set up against him. He was a man of honesty and accountability and as such he could boldly call for honesty and accountability in Ghanaian public life. For Ofori Atta no leader was to be allowed to exercise absolute power since that would lead to the corruption of leadership. He points out: ‘Again, there is a universal truth, expressed in the famous dictum that (in the world of fallible non-omniscient men of the race of Adam) POWER CORRUPTS AND ABSOLUTE POWER CORRUPTS ABSOLUTELY.’⁵⁵² It does not matter who holds power, there will always be the tendency to want to take more power. There will always be the temptation for those in power to love power increasingly and to lose their sense of responsibility and justice, and their commitment to the people and their welfare, the people whom the state exists to serve’. He contends that to ensure honesty and accountability in national governance there was a need to have an organised political opposition through multiparty politics. The political opposition helps to ensure that the political party in power does not abuse its power to govern. An organised political opposition also helps to disclose corruption in national governance in order to build transparency in national leadership.

In a democratic political governance, there are systems and structures that enable the leaders to be challenged to practice personal transparency. For Ofori Atta multiparty politics facilitates checks and balances on political leaders. Furthermore, in his view, ethical leadership strengthens political democracy in a nation. He remarks: ‘We have travelled a hard and difficult

⁵⁵¹ K. Y. Boafo (ed.) “A short biography of Mr. William Ofori-Atta — Paa Willie”, *Tribute*, pp. 21-22.

⁵⁵² Ofori Atta, *Yes or No? How I see the referendum*. p. 7.

road to the Third Republic and it is our duty to protect and defend it.⁵⁵³ Democratic Government is a very challenging process but on the light of our experiences particularly in the last seven years it is preferable to any other system of Government. Obviously, the greatest responsibility for the success of the Third Republic rests with the Government. **Our experience has shown that corruption, nepotism, oppression and arrogant abuse or exercise of power undermine the democratic tradition and invite violent changes of Government.** Experience again shows that inefficient management of the affairs of state leads to similar result'. He declared that his UNC political party would monitor the PNP government in order to ensure that the PNP governed in a way that was honest, fair and just. He added that the UNC would distance itself from the PNP if the PNP acted in a way that was unethical and undemocratic. He believed that there was a need for a positive and pragmatic national goal of rebuilding the nation of Ghana in an ethical and democratic manner.

4. Conclusion

This chapter has argued that William Ofori Atta demonstrated his social reconciliation policy through the PMFJ political alliance and the UNC political coalition. Both the PMFJ and the UNC brought together some leaders from the conservative political group and the radical political group in Ghana to fight for a common cause. This was no mean a feat since politics in Ghana up to that time had been divisive and is still today. The chapter postulated that this combination of two political ideologies created a centrist political party in Ghana – a new tradition in Ghanaian politics at that time. The political ideology of centrism was one of Ofori

⁵⁵³ Ofori Atta, 'New Year Message from the Chairman of United National Convention'

Atta's contributions to Ghana's political journey. Though a minority position in Africa at the time, he sought to enact the Progress Party position of international cooperation through dialogue with apartheid South Africa. This was an attempt to try to convince the apartheid South African government to end apartheid through diplomatic means. Also, this chapter has argued that William Ofori Atta expressed his personal transparency through accountability and honesty. He held to the conviction that every person can choose to impact society for good by upholding the principle of integrity. The principle of integrity was a *sine qua non* of his public life and thought. He also sought to create a political institution that was founded on the integrity principle through his UNC political party. Hence to him integrity in leadership was to be expressed through individuals, ideology, and institutions.

In January 1970 Ofori Atta was part of group national leaders who facilitated the reconciliation of two prominent Pentecostal churches in Ghana – the Apostolic Church and the Church of Pentecost after a 17-year period of disharmony.⁵⁵⁴ The matter was related to the breaking away of a group of leaders from the Apostolic Church in Ghana to form the Church of Pentecost. The two churches had an unhealthy relationship after the church split up. Ofori Atta's national stature as an evangelical Christian statesman and his reconciling ability contributed to the reconciliation pact. Thus, Ofori Atta's leadership principle of social reconciliation was applied in the church context in addition to that of society.

What element of William Ofori Atta's social reconciliation leadership principle is congruent with the definition of ethical leadership in this thesis? From the above, it may be deduced that Ofori Atta's social reconciliation leadership principle has the ingredient of the ethical value of unity as its core basis. Ofori Atta constantly used the phrase 'broad based politics is the best'

⁵⁵⁴ *The Ghanaian Times* Tuesday, January 27, 1970 'New move to check dishonest teachers'

and the words ‘unity’ and ‘united’ in his advocacy and activism with regard to his social reconciliation thought and practice. It is significant that three of the political parties he belonged to have the word ‘united’ in their name, that is, the United Gold Coast Convention, the United Party and the United National Convention. This shows his concern for social reconciliation with the ethical value of unity. He comprehended unity harmony, concord, conciliation and reconciliation in a society. He was of the conviction that Ghanaian citizens had the right to live in unity since he perceived Ghanaian society as a peaceful society. He relentlessly asserted that national development flourishes in an atmosphere of a peaceful society and not a violent society and as a result pursued the ethical value of unity.

The definition of ethical leadership in this research has integrity, influence and impact as the criteria for judging an ethical leadership value. Unity may be trumpeted by both a leader of integrity and a leader without integrity. Still, the above analysis of Ofori Atta’s political leadership principle of social reconciliation demonstrates that the ethical value of unity advocated and practised by Ofori Atta influenced people in Ghana to achieve the worthwhile goal of social reconciliation for the common good of society and also impacted political institutions in Ghana in order to make them life enriching structures with regard to social reconciliation. Hence, two of the three criteria for ethical leadership as defined in this research are fulfilled by Ofori Atta’s ethical leadership value of unity concerning his social reconciliation principle.

With regard to William Ofori Atta’s personal transparency leadership principle, which element is consistent with the definition of ethical leadership in this thesis? From the above it may be concluded that Ofori Atta’s personal transparency principle has the ingredient of the ethical value of integrity as its core basis. Ofori Atta constantly used the words ‘honest’, ‘integrity’,

‘credibility’, ‘probity’, ‘accountability’ in addition to the phrase ‘my hands are clean’ in his advocacy and activism with regard to his personal transparency leadership thought and practice. It is very significant that both his political allies and his political opponents testified verbally and in writing that Ofori Atta was a leader of integrity. In Ofori Atta’s public life transcending five decades no one was able to bring a charge of bribery and corruption against him. He was of the conviction that both the leadership and citizenry in Ghana should seek to live a life of integrity. He understood integrity as uprightness, honesty, probity, and accountability.

The definition of ethical leadership in this research has integrity, influence and impact as the criteria for judging an ethical leadership value. The above analysis of Ofori Atta’s personal transparency leadership principle establishes that the ethical value of integrity as advocated and practised by Ofori Atta influenced people in Ghana to achieve worthwhile goal of personal transparency for the common good of society and also impacted political institutions in Ghana in order to make them life enriching structures which are marked by personal transparency. Hence, all the three criteria for ethical leadership – integrity/ altruism, worthwhile influence and enriching impact - are fulfilled by Ofori Atta’s ethical leadership value of integrity in connection with his personal transparency principle. The next chapter will examine the leadership principle of evangelical Christian salvation.

CHAPTER SIX

EVANGELICAL CHRISTIAN SALVATION AS EVANGELICAL CHRISTIAN CONVERSION AND SPIRITUALITY

‘Jesus is the only Mediator between the holy God and sinful man’

1. Introduction

The previous chapter analysed William Ofori Atta’s leadership thought and practice on two leadership principles – social reconciliation as national conciliation and international dialogue and personal transparency as personal honesty and personal accountability. This chapter considers his leadership principle of evangelical Christian salvation. Ethical leadership is based on key values that shape a leader’s attitudes and actions. An examination of William Ofori Atta’s life story from his written personal reflections⁵⁵⁵ and from the testimonies in his funeral brochure⁵⁵⁶ indicate the importance of the evangelical Christian faith to his post mid-life adult years. In addition, Ofori Atta is widely acknowledged by the Ghanaian public to have been an evangelical Christian. What evidence is there to substantiate this widely held notion that he was an evangelical Christian, or to use the popular term in Ghana a ‘born again Christian’, and how did his evangelical conversion experience affect his outlook in life? Evangelical Christian conversion is defined here as ‘turning to Christ and finding a relationship with him’.⁵⁵⁷

⁵⁵⁵ See William Ofori Atta Family Papers, Accra. William Ofori Atta, ‘Christian Literature Reflections, Book 10’ (nd). (hereafter ‘Reflections’).

⁵⁵⁶ See William Ofori Atta Family Papers, Accra. ‘Tribute to the late Mr William Eugene Amoako-Atta Ofori-Atta (Paa Willie) Member of the Big-Six’, Accra, 1988. (hereafter ‘Tribute’).

⁵⁵⁷ Ian Randall, *What a friend we have in Jesus: the Evangelical tradition* (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 2005), p. 26.

This chapter argues that William Ofori Atta understood Christian salvation as evangelical Christian salvation. It contends that Ofori Atta's Christianity was of the evangelical Christian stream of Christianity in which spiritual conversion through repentance and faith in Jesus Christ was a *sine qua non*. The chapter further argues that the significance of Ofori Atta's leadership principle of Christian salvation which he termed 'Jesus is the only Mediator between the holy God and sinful man' was that he took an exclusivist position on the relationship between Christianity and other religions. To him only Jesus Christ could provide salvation from sin and a relationship and fellowship with God. It will be demonstrated that an evaluation of Ofori Atta's understanding of Christian salvation indicates an evangelical approach to salvation. The evangelical approach believes that spiritual conversion involves an encounter with Jesus Christ in which a person is presented with the Christian gospel of salvation leading to repentance from sin and faith in Christ. Additionally, an evaluation of Ofori Atta's Christian spirituality indicates that he practiced a disciplined spirituality through the Christian disciplines of Bible meditation, prayer, fellowship, and witnessing.

The chapter starts by sketching the development of Christianity in Ghana with emphasis on the churches and Christian organisations which shaped Ofori Atta. Then, the chapter narrates Ofori Atta's conversion experience and analyses the key issues involved using Lewis Rambo's theory of conversion. This chapter examines the leadership thought and practice of Ofori Atta with regard to his leadership principle of Christian salvation. The elements of Ofori Atta's Christian salvation conception will be analysed to find out if they are compatible with the definition of ethical public leadership discussed in the introductory chapter. In other words, there should be elements of Ofori Atta's Christian salvation leadership principle which correspond with the definition of ethical leadership as leadership in which the values of integrity and altruism are demonstrated in a leader's character and conduct in both the private and public life of the leader

so as to influence people to achieve worthwhile goals for the common good of society as well as to impact institutions in order to make them life enriching structures.

2. Evangelical Christian Conversion

In this section, a very brief background to Christianity in Ghana will be provided as the context for William Ofori Atta's conversion to Christ. Ofori Atta's spiritual conversion will be analysed using Lewis Rambo's conversion theory. This is because Rambo's theory is one of the most insightful theories on religious conversion.

2.1 A Sketch of the Development of Christianity in Ghana

The first wave of Christian influence in Ghana began with the advent of the mission instituted churches such as the Presbyterian Church (1828), Methodist Church (1835), Evangelical Presbyterian Church (1847), Roman Catholic Church (1880), Seventh Day Adventist Church (1896) and Anglican Church (1904).⁵⁵⁸ The second wave involved the African Instituted Churches (AICs), which were often started by persons expelled from the mission instituted churches because they were manifesting the charismatic gifts of the Holy Spirit. The third wave included mission instituted churches with core evangelical beliefs and practice, namely the Salvation Army (1922) and the Ghana Baptist Convention (1947) as well as classical

⁵⁵⁸ For a history of Christianity in Ghana, see Asempa Publishers (ed.), *The Rise of Independent Churches in Ghana* (Accra: Asempa Publishers, 1990) pp. 6-11 (hereafter *Independent Churches*) and Cephass Omenyo, *Pentecost outside Pentecostalism: A study of the development of Charismatic Renewal in the Mainline Church in Ghana*. (Zoetermeer: Boekencentrum, 2006) pp. 42-75 (hereafter *Pentecost*). For the development of overseas parachurch movements in Ghana, see Samuel Adubofour, *Evangelical Parachurch Movements in Ghanaian Christianity, c. 1950 – early 1990s*. Ph.D. thesis University of Edinburgh 1994.

Pentecostal churches such the Assemblies of God (1931) and Apostolic Church (1935). The fourth wave involved evangelical overseas parachurch organisations including the Scripture Union (SU), Child Evangelism Fellowship (CEF), Youth for Christ (YFC), the Ghana Fellowship of Evangelical Students (GHAFES) and the independent neo-Pentecostal/Charismatic churches.

Cephas Omenyo conducted an analysis of the Charismatic movement in Ghana and created a typology for them. His study covered the following Ghanaian churches: the Roman Catholic, the Anglican Church, the Presbyterian Church, the Methodist Church, the Evangelical Presbyterian Church, and the Baptist Church.⁵⁵⁹ In Ghana these churches are referred to the ‘mainline churches’ or the ‘tradition churches’ due to the fact that they have a longer history than some of the newer churches in Ghana. Other Ghanaian church typologies are the Pentecostal churches, the Independent Charismatic churches and the ‘spiritual churches. The ‘spiritual churches’ are those who blend the Christian faith with Ghanaian Traditional Religion and are viewed as syncretistic by evangelicals in Ghana. Another manner of categorizing Ghanaian churches are the terms ‘mission churches’ to refer to churches with origins from outside Ghana namely Europe and North America and ‘African Instituted Churches’ (AIC) to refer to churches which have Ghanaian or African origins.

The religious scene in Ghana has been greatly impacted by the African Instituted Churches (AICs) whose blending of Christianity with Ghanaian culture has made them contextually relevant to the ordinary Ghanaian – despite their sometimes doctrinal shortcomings. A case in point is the Church of the Lord Aladura which played a role in Ofori Atta’s spiritual conversion story. This church is an AIC of Nigerian origin with branches throughout West Africa. Harold

⁵⁵⁹ Omenyo, *Pentecost*, pp. 220-246.

Tuner observes that the Church of the Lord Aladura started as a prayer group in the Anglican Church in Nigeria and later broke away to become a church in 1922.⁵⁶⁰ The church is renowned for its strong emphasis on prayer and spiritual healing. C. G. Baëta, a Ghanaian theologian, in his study on AICs in Ghana points out that the word *aladura* means ‘owners of prayer’ and is used in reference to a number of prayer-healing AICs.⁵⁶¹ Kofi Asare Opoku observes that the main reason why the AICs grew numerically in Ghana was due to their synthesis of African traditional religion and Christianity.⁵⁶² This eliminated the ‘strangeness’ of Christianity and adapted it to the African context. Also, AICs provided a sense of security in becoming a Christian since some of the familiar practices of African culture – such as music style and musical instruments - were integrated into Christianity. Additionally, AICs proved that a Christian society can be established on the basis of African society. AICs have currently spread throughout Africa and the African diaspora.

David Bebbington, a leading scholar of evangelicalism, says that Evangelical Christianity is marked by four key features: ‘biblicism’, ‘crucicentrism’, ‘conversionism’ and ‘activism’.⁵⁶³ Evangelical Christianity affirms the authority of the Bible as God’s Word to humanity and as the determinant of Christian faith and practice. Secondly, it regards the death of Jesus Christ on the cross for the sins of humanity as the core of the Christian gospel message, that is salvation is by God’s grace through faith in Jesus Christ. Thirdly, it requires a spiritual conversion of repentance from sin and faith in Jesus Christ in order for a person to become a

⁵⁶⁰ Harold Turner, *African Independent Church*, vol. 1. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1967)

⁵⁶¹ C. G. Baëta, *Prophetism in Ghana: A study of some ‘spiritual’ churches*. (London: SCM, 1962) p.121. (hereafter *Prophetism*)

⁵⁶² Kofi Asare Opoku, ‘A brief history of Independent Church Movements in Ghana since 1862’, in [Anonymous author] (ed.), *The Rise of Independent Churches in Ghana* (Accra: Asempa Publishers, 1990) pp. 19-21.

⁵⁶³ David Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain: A history from the 1730s to the 1980s* (London: Unwin Hyman, 1989), pp. 5-17.

‘born again’ Christian. Finally, it encourages believers in Jesus Christ to be active in Christian service and share their faith in Jesus Christ by word and deed.

Evangelical Christianity in Ghana has existed since the early European missionaries planted churches in Ghana in the nineteenth century, but it became prominent in the mid twentieth century through the influence of evangelical mission instituted churches, Pentecostal churches and evangelical overseas parachurch organisations. Scripture Union was the foremost ministry that contributed greatly to Ghanaian evangelicalism. This ministry also played a role in Ofori Atta’s conversion story in that the evangelical Christian atmosphere in which he experienced his conversion was by and large engendered by the Scripture Union. The Scripture Union was started in the mid-1950s by several British evangelicals working in the Gold Coast. It organised Christian camps for young people. Later on it established Scripture Union groups in secondary schools and teacher training colleges in Ghana and published Bible reading devotional books for young people and adults.⁵⁶⁴ The aims of the Scripture Union were to share the Good News about Jesus Christ to children, young people and families as well as to promote daily Bible reading and prayer.⁵⁶⁵ This was to be done in cooperation with churches since Scripture Union was a parachurch organisation. The response of some church denominations in Ghana to Scripture Union was initially cold since it seemed to be a threat to their youth groups and it practised a fervent spirituality alien to them.⁵⁶⁶ However, from the late 1960s most denominations welcomed the organisation and no longer felt it undermined their churches. The evangelical Christian stance of Scripture Union influenced the young people who joined the Scripture Union groups. They in turn passed on Evangelical Christianity to the youth groups of their churches. By so doing evangelical Christianity permeated a good number of Christian

⁵⁶⁴ Peter Barker and Samuel Boadi-Siaw, *Changed by the Word: The story of Scripture Union Ghana*. (Accra: SU Asempa ACP, 2003) (hereafter *Scripture Union*).

⁵⁶⁵ Barker and Boadi-Siaw, *Scripture Union*, p. 188.

⁵⁶⁶ Barker and Boadi-Siaw, *Scripture Union*, p. 148-168.

denominations in the country. With time some of the Scripture Union students became Gospel Ministers in their denominations and this gave an additional push to evangelical Christianity in Ghana.

SIM ⁵⁶⁷ is an international missionary organisation with its origin in the United States of America. In 1952 SIM began its missionary work in Ghana by sending the American couple, John and Violet Bergen, to Ghana.⁵⁶⁸ The Bergens had previously worked in Nigeria. Their missionary work consisted of literature evangelism. They were responsible for a Christian bookshop called Challenge Bookshop as well as for distributing a Christian magazine called *Africa Challenge* which had an educational, evangelistic and pastoral outlook. With time the work of SIM grew to include a cine-van film ministry, the establishment of Maranatha Bible College and church planting, especially in northern Ghana. SIM's John Bergen played a role in the post conversion life of Ofori Atta. In 1972 Ofori Atta and John Bergen co-founded Maranatha Bible College and this will be discussed further in the next chapter.

In Ghana today, evangelical and charismatic Christianity has become a dominant stream of the Christian terrain. It exhibits the six characteristics of what Stephen Offutt terms 'new centers of evangelicalism'.⁵⁶⁹ Ghanaian evangelical and charismatic Christianity is an 'exporter of religion' as its missionaries, worship style, Christian music, Christian theological distinctive and Christian literature moves overseas through Ghanaians in the diaspora. Next, it has 'big organisations' with the requisite human resources and financial resources to operate on the international level. Also, it has 'hierarchical social networks' of small, medium and large

⁵⁶⁷ "SIM" initially denoted Sudan Interior Mission, then Society for International Ministries and now Serving in Mission.

⁵⁶⁸ See Violet Bergen, *Hold fast your ground*. (Escondido: Bervine Publishers, 1992), pp. 9-14 (hereafter *Hold fast*).

⁵⁶⁹ Stephen Offutt, *New Centers of Global Evangelicalism in Latin America and Africa*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), pp. 11-13.

Christian ministries which may operate locally or nationally or globally. Then, it has ‘shifting belief systems’ which go beyond the traditional Evangelical concern with only heavenly matters to a concern for both spiritual prosperity and material prosperity via the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Additionally, it shows an ‘increasing social engagement’ by addressing the social issues such as poverty alleviation and HIV/AIDS because of a more holistic view of the Christian Gospel. Lastly, it has an ‘integrated political engagement’ by means of active involvement in political parties and the political process. These current features indicate that Ghanaian evangelical and charismatic Christianity has come a long way since the mid twentieth century when the major focus was on proclaiming the Good News to a developmental stage where it is concerned with both proclaiming the Good News and doing good works. This sketch of evangelical and charismatic Christianity in Ghana provides the context for William Ofori Atta’s conversion.

2.2 An Analysis of Ofori Atta’s Conversion using Lewis Rambo’s Conversion Theory

Lewis Rambo, a leading scholar of religious conversion, has advanced a theory in which he describes conversion as involving a seven stage process.⁵⁷⁰ He perceives conversion as a process rather than a specific event. Conversion is facilitated through people, aspirations, incidents and groups. He defines conversion as ‘a process of religious change that takes place in a dynamic force of people, events, ideologies, institutions, expectations, and orientations’.⁵⁷¹ He notes that conversion has multiple causes and not a single cause. His seven stages of conversion are context, crisis, quest, encounter, interaction, commitment and consequences.

⁵⁷⁰ Lewis Rambo, *Understanding religious conversion*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993) pp. 5-19 (hereafter *Conversion*).

⁵⁷¹ Rambo, *Conversion*, p.5.

Rambo's study has received wide spread affirmation by scholars of religious conversion⁵⁷², as such his conversion theory will be used to analyse William Ofori Atta's conversion story. The conversion narrative of Ofori Atta can be examined from five sources which include his own as well as that of family and friends. The internal evidence comes from his Christian literature reflections in his family archives while the external evidence is from his funeral brochure, his wife's funeral brochure, a Christian magazine and a Christian book.⁵⁷³

The first stage of conversion according to Lewis Rambo is context. He says that the context of conversion is dynamic, and it may aid or hinder the conversion process.⁵⁷⁴ The context affects the structure and means of conversion. The macro context refers to political, economic, social and religious factors that impinge upon conversion. The micro context is the impact of family, friends, ethnicity, religious group and neighbours on conversion. In chapter one, we discovered that although Ofori Atta's father's religious affiliation lay with Ghanaian traditional religion, he encouraged his children to be part of the local Presbyterian Church in Kyebi. Additionally, Ofori Atta's grandfather and grandmother were evangelical Christians and his grandfather served as an evangelist with the Basel mission.

A source for Ofori Atta's conversion narrative is his Reflections books which contain his Bible study notes and gleanings from the Christian literature he read. At the age of 73, five years before his death, Ofori Atta reminisces about his church involvement from his childhood to adulthood in a letter he wrote to the Pastor of the Presbyterian Church in Abeka, Accra. He describes his pre-conversion life as follows: 'At the age of 13 in 1923, I was asked by my father

⁵⁷² See Richard Burgess, *Nigeria's Christian Revolution: The Civil War Revival and the Pentecostal Progeny: 1967-2006*. (Regnum Paternoster: Milton Keynes, 2008) p. 112; Grace Milton, *Shalom, the Spirit and Pentecostal Conversion: A Practical-theological Study* (Leiden: Brill, 2015).

⁵⁷³ See William Ofori Atta Family Papers, Accra. William Ofori Atta, 'Testimony, Thank You and Praise', p. 2. (nd). Also, Funeral Brochure of Mary Ofori Atta (unpublished), and *Step Magazine*.

⁵⁷⁴ Rambo, *Conversion*, pp. 20-43.

to join my senior brothers who were going to be baptised, and in 1923 I was baptised. I did not know anything beyond the fact that I could attend communion. I therefore continued to live as I was living before....⁵⁷⁵

The micro context for Ofori Atta's conversion to Christ was that of nominal Christianity. As a nominal Christian he was an occasional church attender but did not have an evangelical conversion experience. He was baptised as a Presbyterian but this did not cause any significant change in his life. As discussed in chapter one he attended Mfantsipim School, run by the Methodist Church, for the first part of his secondary education where he was required to attend both morning and evening Sunday churches services as well as take a course in Bible Knowledge.

The macro context for Ofori Atta's conversion was that of political detention. As indicated in the previous chapter, due to his vocal opposition to the one-party rule of President Kwame Nkrumah's CPP government he underwent incarceration. Ofori Atta's second political detention was in 1963 and the third was in 1964. The former was a short detention but the latter was a longer detention. It was during these two political detention periods that his evangelical conversion process began.⁵⁷⁶

The second stage of conversion is crisis. According to Rambo, a religious or psychological or cultural or political crisis normally takes place before conversion.⁵⁷⁷ The timing of the crisis is subject to debate – it may take place before or after interaction with a proselytizer. Usually

⁵⁷⁵ See William Ofori Atta Family Papers, Accra. William Ofori Atta, 'Application for membership to join Abeka Presbyterian Church', 5th September, 1983, p. 1. (hereafter 'Application for membership')

⁵⁷⁶ In some accounts on his conversion Ofori Atta claims to have experienced his spiritual birth in 1963, the year in which his second imprisonment took place. However, other accounts of his conversion he avers that he was converted in 1964, the year of his third imprisonment.

⁵⁷⁷ Rambo, Conversion, pp. 44-55.

converts plays an active part in the conversion process because they have the right to accept or reject conversion. According to Rambo the catalysts for crisis are mystical experiences, near-death experiences, illness and healing, dissatisfaction with life, desire for transcendence, altered states of consciousness, a search for meaning and a desire for fulfilment.⁵⁷⁸ In his *Christian Literature Reflections* William Ofori Atta narrates: 'In 1964 the Lord blessed me with two verses in my detention then. I recall them for their relevancy. They are 'The punishment you gave me was the best thing that could have happened to me, for it taught me to pay attention to your laws. They are more valuable to me than millions in silver and gold.' Psalm 119:71-72. And 'I would have despaired and perished unless your laws had been my deepest delight.' Psalm 119:92 and so we bear testimony that 'Those who trust in the Lord are steady as Mount Zion, unmoved by any circumstances.' Psalm 125:1'.⁵⁷⁹

From Psalm 119:71-72 Ofori Atta interprets his political detention as an act of God's sovereignty. For him a human act may have caused his political confinement but a divine hand used this for his spiritual enlightenment. Psalm 119:92 shows the importance of God's laws for Ofori Atta, which for a person with legal training and who was a professional lawyer, may have resonated with law related issues in his legal practice. Psalm 125:1 expounds the need for trust in 'the Lord' as an anchor no matter the situation a person may face.

The crisis that engendered Ofori Atta's conversion was his political detention. During his second and third detentions he began to read the Bible since it was one of the books, he was able to access. This shows that his crisis took place before an interaction with a proselytizer

⁵⁷⁸ Rambo, *Conversion*, pp. 44-55.

⁵⁷⁹ See William Ofori Atta Family Papers, Accra. William Ofori Atta, 'Testimony, Thank You and Praise', p. 2. (nd).

and that he played an active part in his conversion process. The catalysts for his crisis were a desire for transcendence, a search for meaning and a desire for fulfilment.

The third stage of conversion is quest. Rambo states that the quest of conversion is the search for meaning and purpose in life.⁵⁸⁰ The quest is made up of three factors. One factor is an active or passive response style to the quest for conversion. Another factor is structural availability which gives the convert freedom to leave a former religious community or emotional attachment or intellectual attachment and become part of another religion. Family, friends, employment, religious group, emotional availability (emotional attachments) and intellectual availability (intellectual framework) determine structural availability. These structures may encourage or discourage the quest for conversion. Another factor is motivational structure which affects religious change. This includes the need for transcendence, the need for power, the need for self-worth, the need for positive relationships, the need to experience pleasure and circumvent pain and the need for a theoretical scheme.

In addition to the Bible, the Aladura Church played a part in Ofori Atta's conversion by giving him a prophecy about his release from detention and by offering intercessory prayers to God on his behalf while he was in prison.⁵⁸¹ Ofori Atta's conversion testimony indicates that while in prison he engaged in an active quest for a more meaningful and purposeful life and pursued this quest through Bible reading. This formed the motivational structure for his conversion quest. The quest was further enhanced by the prophecy given to him in prison by representatives of the Aladura Church which was fulfilled when he was released from detention. Ofori Atta's wife Mary, who was an active Christian, provided the structural

⁵⁸⁰ Rambo, *Conversion*, pp. 56-65.

⁵⁸¹ Ofori Atta, 'Application for membership', p. 2. It must be pointed out that Ofori Atta had only a brief fellowship with the Aladura Church since he returned to the Presbyterian Church shortly after his release from detention.

availability to leave his nominal Christian life and become an Evangelical Christian. Her support gave emotional attachment and intellectual attachment for his conversion process.

The fourth stage of conversion is encounter. According to Rambo, as part of the conversion process an encounter occurs between the person on the quest and the advocate of the new religion.⁵⁸² Advocates influence their converts and converts influence their advocates.

In Ofori Atta's conversion encounter the main advocates were his wife Mary who gave him a Bible to read, his Catholic sister, and the Aladura Church. One source for Ofori Atta's spiritual birth is a letter he wrote to Rev. C. Gyan-Duah, the pastor in charge of the Presbyterian Church in Abeka, Accra in connection with an application for his wife and him to become members of the church.⁵⁸³ The letter includes a detailed account of his conversion experience and the role as advocates played by his wife, Mary, his Catholic sister, and the Aladura Church. Ofori Atta declares: 'In 1963 President Nkrumah detained me for two weeks at the Police Cell in Mamprobi. While in prison, my wife and my Catholic Sister, Dr Susan Ofori Atta, supplied me with religious books, the Bible, prayer books, and books on prayer. I read them all and became interested. After my release I joined the Aladura Church at Nima. I was drawn to it because of a message about my release I received five days before my release. Then in January 1964, I was arrested again and detained for 10 days in James Town Police Station and subsequently in Nsawam Medium Security Prison up to 24th December of that year'.⁵⁸⁴

Another source for Ofori Atta's conversion story comes from Violet Bergen who may have received the narration from Ofori Atta himself in the late sixties after the conversion

⁵⁸² Rambo, *Conversion*, pp. 66-101.

⁵⁸³ Ofori Atta, 'Application for membership', p. 2.

⁵⁸⁴ Ofori Atta, 'Application for membership', p. 2.

experience.⁵⁸⁵ She provides a very intimate account of Ofori Atta's conversion experience which she says he shared with her. Ofori Atta narrates the following: 'Suddenly I was again arrested and detained in Jamestown police station where I had nothing else to do, I was now easily reading through the Bible. Two verses in Psalm 119 explained to me why I had been detained. 'It is good for me that I have been afflicted; That I might learn Thy statutes, Unless Thy law had been my delight, I should have perished in my affliction.' (Psalm 119:71, 72).'⁵⁸⁶

A detailed explanation of Ofori Atta's conversion in his own words in the following narrative. He starts by highlighting the role of scripture in his Christian conversion and declares: 'The authorities transferred me to Nsawam Maximum Security Prison where, for several days, I was not permitted to have a Bible. Later a devotional book called my attention to Psalm 55:22. I meditated on the words; 'Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and He shall sustain thee;' Then the Holy Spirit of God revealed to me that this meditation was not enough. He seemed to say, 'Read the entire verse.' So I finally obtained a Bible and my spectacles and read, 'He shall never suffer the righteous to be moved.' '⁵⁸⁷ He then emphasises the role of the Holy Spirit in his spiritual conversion by asserting: 'With these final words the Holy Spirit convicted me of my sin. I had been praying and meditating, but I was not righteous. I became so miserable that

⁵⁸⁵ Bergen, *Hold fast* pp. 15-19. Violet Bergen's version of Ofori Atta's spiritual birth confirms the position of the third imprisonment in 1964 as the year of his conversion. In her book about Maranatha Bible College, entitled *Hold fast your ground*, she narrates:

'William Ofori-Atta,' he said as he greeted John with a hearty hand shake. 'I have come to meet the man who distributes the *African Challenge* magazine from Ussher Fort prison.'

Mr Ofori-Atta explained that he was held as a political prisoner. 'While in prison,' he said, 'I was not allowed to listen to the radio, read the daily newspapers, or any magazine except the *African Challenge*. I read every copy on file in the prison library. Some copies I read many times. I have come to thank you. I have also come with many questions....

Her story notes that after his release from prison in 1963, Ofori Atta became part of a Bible class to aid his spiritual growth. With time he was invited to share in the Bible teaching, however his law practice made it difficult for him to make time to prepare for his Bible lessons. He indicates that as a corrective to this God allowed him to undergo his third detention in 1964. Since this was longer detention, he had time on hand to study the Bible and read Christian literature. This subsequently led to his conversion experience.

⁵⁸⁶ Bergen, *Hold fast*, pp. 17-19.

⁵⁸⁷ See Bergen, *Hold fast*, pp. 17-19.

for several days I refused my Bible and spectacles. I tried to lock out my brain so that the thoughts would disappear, but they kept on coming. Like a slow motion camera, every sin I had ever committed, or even thought, was shown to me. Day and night I was not only in prison, but also in mental hell created by the conviction of sin in my life'.⁵⁸⁸ Lastly, he stresses his act of confession to God as follows: 'Then the Holy Spirit led me to read the story of the penitent thief. Suddenly I realised that even at the last moment he obtained salvation. This gave me new light, a new life and a new joy. Straightaway I confessed all my sins, asked God to forgive me and after that I was a new man entirely. Then it did not matter what they did to me in prison. I had a new joy and a new faith which could not be taken away'.⁵⁸⁹

A further source for Ofori Atta's conversion was chronicled by one of the Christians Ofori Atta spiritually mentored. Rev. Bernard Marbell, the Principal of Maranatha Bible College, Accra wrote an article on Ofori Atta in the Christian magazine, *Step*, to assess the impact of Ofori Atta's life on the Christian community in Ghana. Again, this shows the important role as advocate played by Mary, his wife, when she supplied him with a Bible during his detention. Marbell states that Ofori-Atta... 'was converted in prison in 1964 when he was detained by President, Dr Kwame Nkrumah. While at the Nsawam maximum security prison, Auntie Mary, his wife, sent him ... a Bible.... Paa⁵⁹⁰ said he read the Bible and re-read it. He discovered, for the first time, that the Bible was practical and addressed issue affecting him personally. He realised how sinful he was, how he had gone astray after his own desires, and how he needed to know God. He repented, asked for God's forgiveness, and accepted Jesus Christ as his Saviour'. Marbell continues the narration as follows: 'Although I was in prison,' he often said, 'spiritually my chains fell off and I was a free man. My dungeon flamed with light and I was

⁵⁸⁸ See Bergen, *Hold fast*, pp. 17-19

⁵⁸⁹ See Bergen, *Hold fast*, pp. 17-19

⁵⁹⁰ Ofori Atta was often referred to as 'Paa Willie' by the Ghanaian public. 'Paa' is an abbreviation of 'Papa' and shows respect for a person. 'Willie' is an abbreviation of 'William'.

transferred from darkness into the marvellous kingdom of light of God's dear Son.' Paa said he wished everyone had the B.A. (Born Again). The second time he was detained he took an oversized Bible along and really studied it. 'I was never the same after I got so close to God through the reading of the Bible and prayer.'⁵⁹¹

Once again Ofori Atta's conversion is described as a dramatic life change. Ofori Atta saw himself as spiritually free even though he was physically in chains. God's revelation of himself to Ofori Atta through the Bible brought new light and a new life to him.

These accounts show the influence of Ofori Atta's wife, Mary, on his conversion experience. From the previous chapter, it can be inferred that as an advocate Mary had a similar ethnicity, class and economic background to Ofori Atta. Though their religious beliefs were not exactly the same - Mary was a Methodist and Ofori Atta a Presbyterian – their beliefs were similar since both of them came from a mission instituted church background.⁵⁹² Mary did not offer Ofori Atta any inducements and her motivation seemed to be that of doing God's will for her husband. Her strategy was voluntary conversion and she may have received spiritual and psychological gratification in the conversion encounter.

The fifth stage of conversion is interaction. Rambo declares that the interaction stage in conversion is where the encounter between the potential convert and the advocate deepens as the convert continues to contact the advocate or the advocate continues to contact the convert.⁵⁹³ There are four elements in the interaction. Relationships form emotional bonds to

⁵⁹¹ See William Ofori Atta Family Papers, Accra. Bernard Marbell, 'I remember Paa Willie', *Step*, vol. 4 no. 4, (not dated but possibly written in the 1980s) pp. 7-8. (hereafter 'I remember Paa Willie'). Marbell also attributes Ofori Atta's conversion to his third incarceration in 1964 rather than his second in 1963.

⁵⁹² In some Ghanaian communities the Presbyterian and Methodist Churches hold joint worship services.

⁵⁹³ Rambo, *Conversion*, pp. 102-123.

the religious community and establish the daily requirements of the new faith. Rituals provide a holistic way of identifying with and relating to the new religious lifestyle. Rhetoric provides a language for interpreting the convert's transformation in order to guide the convert in the new religious journey. Roles consolidate a convert's participation a religious community by offering a special mission for the convert to fulfil.

As alluded to above Ofori Atta's wife Mary played an influential role in Ofori Atta's spiritual conversion.⁵⁹⁴ The biography of Mary's funeral brochure reads: 'She never stopped praying for Uncle Willie, and a great moment in the William and Mary saga was when Auntie Mary turned up at Nsawam Prison with... a Bible... the Bible was sent in to Uncle William. He read and studied the Bible as though he was going to be examined in it. He was, and in Nsawam Prison he gave his life to the Lord.'⁵⁹⁵

The preceding indicates that the interaction between William and Mary was not limited to the Bible Mary gave William. Mary continued the interaction by praying for William as well as by being a devoted wife who stood by her husband through thick and thin. Additionally, Ofori Atta for his part continued the interaction by developing a passion for Bible reading during his confinement.

The sixth stage of conversion is commitment. Rambo says that a commitment takes place as a part of conversion.⁵⁹⁶ This is the turning point of the conversion process. There are five features of this stage. Decision making is a key act and it may be a painful experience. The choice to

⁵⁹⁴ See William Ofori Atta Family Papers, Accra. "Biography of the late Mary Ofori-Atta" in Burial and thanksgiving service for the late Mrs. Mary Ofori Atta, Accra, 1986 pp. 2, 4. (hereafter 'Mary')

⁵⁹⁵ See William Ofori Atta Family Papers, Accra. "Biography of the late Mary Ofori-Atta" in Burial and thanksgiving service for the late Mrs. Mary Ofori Atta, Accra, 1986 pp. 2, 4. (hereafter 'Mary')

⁵⁹⁶ Rambo, *Conversion*, pp. 124-141.

turn away from a previous lifestyle and turn to a new lifestyle may be agonising but when the decision is made the convert usually becomes joyful. Second, rituals help to cement the decision by enabling the convert to overtly say ‘no’ to the old life and ‘yes’ to the new life. For the convert rituals are a public testimony of the commitment made to the new religion and for the religious community rituals are a means to sustain the convert’s loyalty. Third, the feature of surrender – which is an inner experience of closure to the old life and commencement of the new life – is crucial to the commitment stage. Surrender involves desire, conflict, relief, liberation, and sustenance. The fourth feature of the commitment stage is sharing the conversion story through testimony which consists of biographical reconstruction and language transformation. Lastly, motivational reformulation which means that there are varied motivations for conversion and the motivation for conversion may change with time.

The spiritual change in Ofori Atta’s life from a nominal Christian to a ‘born again’ Christian is attested to in the following quotes which he wrote in his *Reflections* book – ‘I was born in 1910 and born again in 1963’⁵⁹⁷ and ‘I was born 57 years ago and born again 4 years ago’⁵⁹⁸. These statements have several implications. One implication is that he believes in two kinds of birth – a physical birth and a spiritual birth. Physical birth takes place through a person’s human parents, while spiritual birth is a work of God, the divine parent. This spiritual birth is what he refers to as being ‘born again’, a term drawn from the encounter Jesus Christ had with Nicodemus, a member of the Jewish ruling council in John 3:1-21. Another implication is that for Ofori Atta his life can be divided into two parts – his life before Christ and his life after Christ. He declares: ‘At Nsawam I was reading regularly and profusely the Bible. I prayed often. It was during a prayer session that the Lord revealed Himself to me and I found that I

⁵⁹⁷ Ofori Atta, ‘Reflections, Book 10’, p. 22.

⁵⁹⁸ Ofori Atta, ‘Reflections, Book 10’, p. 2.

was a great sinner with no compensating virtue. I surrendered to The Lord, and accepted Him as my Lord and Saviour. On the 24th December, I was released. I went back to the Church of the Lord Aladura and continued until my wife and I found it impossible to continue.’⁵⁹⁹

The above narration by Ofori Atta shows clearly that he made a commitment to evangelical Christianity. The commitment features of decision making, surrender and testimony are evident in Ofori Atta’s conversion experience. However, the ritual feature is absent. In the context stage of conversion, it was pointed out Ofori Atta stated that at age 13 he was baptised into the Presbyterian Church. He does not make it known if after his evangelical Christian conversion, he went through another ritual of baptism. Since he is silent on the matter it may be inferred that he did not.⁶⁰⁰

The seventh and final stage of conversion is consequences. Rambo notes that the consequences of conversion may be religious, ethical, affective, intellectual, social and political.⁶⁰¹ He remarks that after the initial personal conversion there is still another facet of conversion which is a continuing process of transformation as the convert participates in society. The consequence of conversion may be a dramatic conversion or a gradual sense of purpose and mission or a quiet sense of security and peace. There may possibly be a negative aspect to conversion where the convert comes to the realisation that the new religious experience is not what was desired or that the advocate manipulated the convert.

⁵⁹⁹ Ofori Atta, ‘Application for membership’, p. 2. The above detailed conversion narrative situates his conversion in 1964, his third confinement.

⁶⁰⁰ In Ghana some members of churches which practice paedobaptism sometimes undergo believers’ baptism by immersion after their ‘born again’ conversion since they believe that their baptism before conversion does not have a biblical basis.

⁶⁰¹ Rambo, *Conversion*, pp. 142-164.

A testimony of some of the consequences Ofori-Atta experienced after his release from prison is illustrated by the following statement by Ofori Atta: ‘I discovered that without any effort I lost my taste for drink and all the related activities except smoking. I used be a very hard smoker. It seemed that in every book I read, someone was writing against smoking. And suddenly, without a struggle, my smoking habit was gone.’⁶⁰² From the preceding it becomes clear that the consequence of Ofori Atta’s conversion was a decisive and dramatic life change. The resultant effect was an experience of God’s forgiveness and a new sense of spiritual freedom. It was a change from human righteousness to Christ’s righteousness.⁶⁰³ The account here indicates that this experience changed his personal habits and shaped a new moral outlook in his life. It seems that Ofori Atta’s conversion had dramatic effect on his lifestyle. Once again, his spiritual quest appears to have included an intellectual component in which Bible reading and reading Christian literature served as catalysts for his conversion. As will be seen later in this chapter and also the next chapter, the Bible and Christian literature played a vital role in his spiritual growth as well as his Christian service.

To be put in detention for one’s political convictions may lead a person to despair. Was it out of despair that Ofori Atta turned to faith in Christ? Or was it out of a clear sense of a spiritual vacuum which needed to be filled that his spiritual conversion took place? It may be surmised that it may have been both. His second and third detentions appear to have been difficult times. A statement in Mary Ofori Atta’s tribute bears this out: ‘Particularly trying were the two

⁶⁰² See Bergen, *Hold fast*, pp. 15-19.

⁶⁰³ William Ofori Atta Family Papers, Accra. E. S. Aidoo, ‘A Tribute by the Evangelical Association’ in ‘Tribute’ p. 27. Another source of Ofori Atta’s spiritual birth comes from the Evangelical Association in Ghana. At the funeral of Ofori Atta the association read a tribute which noted:

Uncle Willie was not always a Christian. In his youth... he was by most acceptable standards, a good man – a lovable one.... he eventually got imprisoned. But God’ eye was on him. For there, Uncle Willie listened to the Gospel of Jesus Christ and studied the Bible.... The unselfish life of our beloved Uncle Willie from his fifties when he became a Christian.

This account makes a note of his pre conversion life and the part Bible reading played in his spiritual birth. It also bears out that fact that the conversion experience took place in the fifth decade of his life.

periods of detention in Nsawam Prison during the Nkrumah regime. Auntie Mary had to call on all her resources of courage and faith to keep going.’⁶⁰⁴ No matter his motivations, which are hard to read anyway, what is obvious is that he had an encounter with God which he terms ‘being born again’. In a testimony, possibly written in the latter stages of his life, Ofori Atta expresses his appreciation to his relations, friends and Christians who stood by him during his various imprisonments. He remarks: ‘Thank You To All God’s People, Friends & Relations Matt. 25:34-40. I was imprisoned, and you prayed for me and my wife, you visited me and you visited my wife, and provided for our needs and goods. In my court application for Habeas Corpus, four of my brothers at law led by Mr Justice Reindorf volunteered to prosecute my case, and they did it excellently. Some of you came to court to see me and to give me moral support. To all you God’s people we pray our Lord, the Giver of all good and perfect gifts, give you the blessing of Matt. 25:34. We conclude by praying our gracious Lord to add to your blessings those contained in Psalm 20:1-5...’.⁶⁰⁵

Ofori Atta’s Nsawam prison conversion experience finds a parallel in the conversion experience of Frederick Chiluba, a former president of Zambia. The Zambian government of Kenneth Kaunda imprisoned Chiluba for his political activities against the government. Whist in prison an evangelist, Christopher Ngoma, shared the Christian gospel with Chiluba who made a commitment to Christ.⁶⁰⁶ Chiluba affiliated himself with the Pentecostal and charismatic wing of the church in Zambia. In 1991 he became president of Zambia under the auspices of the Movement for Democratic Change and caused a controversy during his presidency when he declared Zambia a ‘Christian nation’.

⁶⁰⁴ See Mary, p. 2.

⁶⁰⁵ William Ofori Atta Family Papers, Accra. William Ofori Atta, ‘Testimony, Thank You and Praise’, p. 2.

⁶⁰⁶ Isabel Phiri, ‘President Frederick Chiluba and Zambia: evangelicals and democracy in a ‘Christian Nation’ in Terence Ranger (ed.), *Evangelical Christianity and Democracy in Africa*, (Oxford; Oxford University Press, 2008), pp. 100-101. See also Paul Gifford, *African Christianity: its public role*. (London: C. Hurst, 19198). I will compare Chiluba’s thoughts on democracy with Ofori Atta’s in a later chapter.

Richard Peace in a survey of denominational views on conversion says that the Mainline Protestant Churches construe conversion as a process of nurture which begins with infant baptism and continues with Sunday school teaching, confirmation, and acts of service in the church.⁶⁰⁷ Evangelical Christians regard conversion as an encounter with Jesus Christ in which a person is presented with the salvation plan so as to repent of sin and place one's faith in Jesus Christ. The Pentecostal position on conversion is similar to the evangelical Christian position in which there is repentance from sin and faith in Jesus Christ, but for Pentecostals there is usually an emphasis on 'signs and wonders' and evangelistic zeal. The preceding discussion on Ofori Atta's conversion experience indicates that he started this Christian faith with the Mainline Protestant Church understanding of conversion through socialisation but later on in his life he took the Evangelical Christian and the Pentecostal Church understanding of conversion through personal decision. . Cyril Okorochoa asserts that religious conversion in the African context is essentially a power encounter between two religious systems and that the religious system with the greater power is the one African converts turn to as their religion.⁶⁰⁸ Also, religious conversion in Africa, says Okorochoa, is holistic and needs to meet both the physical and spiritual needs of the convert. Ofori Atta's conversion account seems to indicate that for him it was solely the spiritual benefits of Christianity that made the Christian faith attractive to him. Jon Kirby in his study of conversion in Ghana contends that religious conversion in Africa involves both continuity and change.⁶⁰⁹ He believes that unless the old form of African Traditional Religion is understood the new form of Christianity cannot be properly understood. Ignoring the former for him makes conversion to the latter questionable.

⁶⁰⁷ Richard V. Peace, "Conflicting understandings of Christian Conversion: A Missiological Challenge", *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* 28, 1, 8-14, 2004, 8-14 (= IBMR)

⁶⁰⁸ Cyril Okorochoa, 'Religious Conversion in Africa: Its Missiological Implications', *Mission Studies*, vol. IX-2, 18 (1992) pp. 174-176.

⁶⁰⁹ Jon Kirby, 'Cultural change and religious conversion in West Africa' in Thomas Blakely et. al. *Religion in Africa: Experience and Expression*. (London: James Currey, 1994), pp.57, 66-68.

Even though conversion stories may accentuate discontinuity between the old and the new form of religion, careful analysis may point to both continuity and discontinuity between the old and new religions. He says that the old religion provides identity and cultural authenticity for the new religion. He adds that it is possible to undergo a religious conversion without going through a cultural conversion. This may indicate that for Ofori Atta his family background in African Traditional Religion, which his father upheld, may have had a covert impact on his Christian faith even though he does not overtly express it.

In 1979 Ofori Atta declared in a political tract he wrote that he was of the conviction that Ghanaian society needed more than political, economic and social reformation. He said that was convinced that the fundamental need for Ghanaian society was for a spiritual life transformation through the Gospel of Jesus Christ. He contends: 'Having said all that I have said in favour of party politics... I am not to be taken that I believe... that a good constitution... will solve all our problems.'⁶¹⁰ The Bible teaches that you expect the impossible if you expect a bad tree to bear good fruit. I agree with the Christian Council, the Catholic Secretariat and the whole host of Christians who have said that what is wrong with Ghana is the people of Ghana, not so much the constitution, and that we are transformed into new men with new hearts, new desires, new attitudes, new goals of life, with a heaven-ward and God-ward outlook, our nation will continue to be riddled with problems; and that God's judgement will continue to be upon us'. He continues by exhorting the Christian community to share the good news of Jesus Christ for the spiritual transformation of society. Her remarks: 'I believe therefore, that there is a great burden upon the church and the religious leaders and all in the light to preach the Gospel of Christ fully and faithfully with the knowledge and power from

⁶¹⁰ Ofori Atta, *Yes or No? How I see the referendum*. pp. 14-15.

above. I have been called to the ministry of the Gospel and my first loyalty is to the Gospel. I confessed at the press conference on 19th January that I shall seek no election to Parliament and I shall seek no office however elevated. I am a bonds slave of Christ and I shall, by the Lord's grace, be unseduceable by any high office or honours. It is enough for me that I see the Invisible and I have a long sight with regard to an eventual and eternal recompense'.⁶¹¹

For Ofori Atta, the Christian spiritual conversion of a person transforms a person heart and mind through the Gospel of Jesus Christ to produce a new creation in Christ who is to bear the fruit of the Holy Spirit and be Christ like in both private and public life. This was God's means to creating a fundamental change in human life leading to the creation of a better human society.

3. Evangelical Christian Spirituality

The Evangelical Christian theologian, Alister McGrath, defines Christian spirituality as 'the quest for a fulfilled and authentic Christian existence, involving the bringing together of the fundamental ideas of Christianity and the whole experience of living on the basis of and within the scope of the Christian faith.'⁶¹² From this definition, Christian spirituality comprises of both the inner life and its expression in daily living.

The theologian, Kenneth Boa, in his book *Conformed to his image: Biblical and practical approaches to spiritual formation*, proposes twelve kinds of Christian spirituality.⁶¹³ William

⁶¹¹ Ofori Atta, *Yes or No? How I see the referendum*. pp. 14-15.

⁶¹² Alister McGrath, *Christian Spirituality* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1999), pp. 1-7.

⁶¹³ Kenneth Boa, *Conformed to his image: Biblical and practical approaches to spiritual formation* (Grand Rapids, Zondervan, 2001), pp. 4-6.

Ofori Atta's evangelical spirituality falls under Boa's 'disciplined spirituality'.⁶¹⁴ Boa's discourse of this facet of spirituality will be used to analyse Ofori Atta's spirituality and Christian growth.

This section observes the manner in which Ofori Atta nurtured his newfound faith through four Christian disciplines - Bible meditation, Christian prayer, Christian fellowship, and Christian witnessing. Subsequent to his conversion to Christ, Ofori Atta matured spiritually as he studied and meditated on the Bible, which he regarded as the word of God, and engaged in prayer. He became very active in Christian fellowship and ministry, not only in his local Presbyterian Church, but also in the wider evangelical and ecumenical Christian communities in Ghana. A leader of the Evangelical Association of Ghana remarked: 'His relationship to God from then [i.e., after his conversion] was always characterised by obedience, by trust, by joy. Uncle Willie, a friend once remarked, was the only person he knew who freely chuckled when praying to God our Father. He was now a loving person, growing daily to maturity in Christ.'⁶¹⁵ Ofori-Atta's spiritual maturity was enhanced through his friendship with Rev John Bergen, an American missionary with SIM. Bergen was the manager of Challenge Enterprise, a Christian literature ministry in Ghana.⁶¹⁶ Ofori-Atta and Bergen met regularly for Bible study. Bergen found him to be an engaging person and the two formed a friendship which lasted throughout their lives.

Spiritual growth, for Ofori Atta, was a work of God's grace in a Christian – 'the modern Pharisee is the one who believes that he can do it all by himself and not by grace'.⁶¹⁷ For Ofori

⁶¹⁴ Boa, *Spiritual formation*, pp. 75 – 97.

⁶¹⁵ William Ofori Atta Family Papers, Accra. E. S. Aidoo, 'A Tribute by the Evangelical Association' in 'Tribute' p. 27.

⁶¹⁶ See Bergen, *Hold fast*, pp. 15-19.

⁶¹⁷ Ofori Atta, 'Reflections, Book 10', p. 19.

Atta, just as God's grace enables a person to experience spiritual birth, the same grace of God makes spiritual growth possible. He always regarded himself indebted to God as a result of what God's grace had done in his life through his conversion to and maturity in Christ.

In a study on Bible characters, Ofori Atta highlights the righteous living of Noah's great grandfather, grandfather and father and observes: 'Righteous ancestors: Enoch – (i) translated (ii) walked with God ... Methuselah – longest life.... Lamech – faith in warning Noah'.⁶¹⁸ This reference to righteousness is in my opinion a key spiritual concept that underlies his spirituality. As will be detected from his practice of the spiritual disciplines, the concept of righteousness holds his spirituality together. As such it may be inferred that for Ofori Atta righteousness comes from God when by God's grace people put their faith in God and righteousness continues as a person lives a life for God.

It is also interesting to note in this quotation that he refers to the Bible characters as 'ancestors', a Ghanaian cultural term, rather than 'saints', the usual evangelical Christian term. It should be remembered that he grew up in a chief's palace where he was well-versed in Akan traditional concepts and as a Christian, he maintained his identity as a *Ghanaian (African)* Christian. In my view Ofori Atta felt it was possible to be fully Christian and fully Ghanaian (African) and that one did not need to take on the European/North American features of Christianity.

It is noteworthy that during his political campaign in the late 1970s against the SMC military government concept of union government, Ofori Atta calls on Christians on both sides of the political divide to pray for God's purpose on the issue to be established in Ghana, even though personally he was against the concept of Union Government. He reasons that as intercessors

⁶¹⁸ Ofori Atta, 'Reflections, Book 8', p. 1.

for Christ, Christians need to take the concerns of the nation to God in prayer. He contends: ‘There is a need for all of us, whether for or against union government, to seek God and pray for Ghana.’⁶¹⁹ The Lord God is speaking to us through Isaiah 62:6-7, and I reproduce it from the Amplified Bible, substituting Ghana for Jerusalem. ‘I have set watchmen upon your walls, O Ghana, who will never hold their peace day or night, you (are His servants and by your prayers) put the Lord to remembrance (of His promises) keep not silence, And give Him no rest until He establishes Ghana and makes it a praise in the earth.’ He exhorts Christians to be witnesses for Christ no matter their political affiliation. He declares: ‘There are God’s people on both sides of the controversy and even many who are yet undecided either way. We must pray God to strengthen all of us in the faith and to empower us to bear testimony both in private councils and in public deliberations that we are children of light’.⁶²⁰ Lastly, in light of the fact that is now a senior citizen, he expresses his desire to be with the Lord Jesus Christ in heaven. He remarks: ‘I know that very soon I shall, in the words of St. Peter, ‘put off this tabernacle’ and be with the Lord and my constant prayer at my age is and should be that in my remaining few years or months or days or hours, I should try by His grace and enablement live only for the Lord, grow daily into maturity, and be able at my death-bed to say with Paul (in 2 Timothy 4:7-8): ‘I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day and not to me only but unto all them also that love His appearing’.⁶²¹

⁶¹⁹ Ofori Atta, *Yes or No? How I see the referendum*. p. 15.

⁶²⁰ Ofori Atta, *Yes or No? How I see the referendum*. p. 15.

⁶²¹ Ofori Atta, *Yes or No? How I see the referendum*. p. 15.

3.1 Bible Meditation

The first spiritual discipline practised by Ofori Atta pertaining to his spiritual growth was Bible meditation. Kenneth Boa points out that the discipline of Bible meditation does not mean the emptying of a person's consciousness but the filling of one's soul with God's Word. He notes that meditation is important for renewing a Christian's mind so as to enable a Christian to think and act appropriately in the light of God's Word. Meditation enables Christians to nourish their souls by rooting their lives on the person and work of God so as to bear fruit upward. It engenders positive biblical thinking and Christ-like living.⁶²²

A crucial issue for Ofori Atta in relation to the Bible was obedience to God's Word. He believed that he was not only to hear God speak to him through the Bible but also had to obey God. In his Reflections books, Ofori Atta writes most of his thoughts in English, but in particular instances he uses the Ghanaian language Twi instead of English. It is not clear why he did so but if it is assumed that a person's mother tongue expresses deeply felt thoughts, convictions and feelings then perhaps he uses his mother tongue for issues of great importance to him. An instance is where he writes the words of Exodus 15:26 in Twi as well as in English in his Reflections book.⁶²³ In Exodus 15:26 God tells Moses: 'If you listen carefully to the LORD your God and do what is right in his eyes, if you pay attention to his commands and keep all his decrees, I will not bring on you any of the diseases I brought on the Egyptians, for I am the LORD, who heals you'. Ofori Atta makes the following observations on the text: 'God expects from us one thing – obedience... Hearken, Do, Give Ear, Keep... Read Exodus 15:26 seven times each day for seven days and do just what it says – Deut. 7:12-15.... (a) Diligently

⁶²² Boa, *Spiritual formation*, pp. 83-84, 91-93.

⁶²³ Ofori Atta, 'Reflections, Book 10', p. 4.

hearken to the voice of my God. (b) Do that which is right in his sight. Give ear to His commandments. (c) Keep all His statutes.’⁶²⁴

He then goes on to rewrite Exodus 15:26 in the first person singular in order to personalise the text. In an apparent reference to Deuteronomy 11:18-21, he notes that God’s word is to be cherished in a Christian’s heart, taught to children, talked about in the daily activities of life, written and sent out to others.⁶²⁵ He also makes reference to 1 Kings 18:36 and stresses the phrase in Elijah’s prayer ‘and I have done all these things at thy word.’⁶²⁶ Additionally, he quotes Proverbs 1:24-26 which warns of the consequences for those who do not listen to wisdom. The foregoing shows his strong yearning to live in obedience to God through God’s Word and make to the Bible a way of life.

The African theologian John Mbiti stresses the importance of the Bible translated into African languages in order to enable Africans to have direct access to the Word of God and eliminate the need for pastors and missionaries as intermediaries.⁶²⁷ When this occurs the Bible becomes alive to the African Christian as it is heard and understood with a person’s whole being. Also, since the African traditional world and the world of the Bible are similar the Bible serves as a mirror to reflect the African’s lived experiences.

For Ofori Atta, the Bible is not a history book but a book with a message from God for today. Hence, he devoted himself to Bible meditation and application to the Bible message to his life. In line with Kenneth Boa’s comments above, Bible meditation and obedience to God’s Word

⁶²⁴ Ofori Atta, 'Reflections, Book 10', pp. 5-6.

⁶²⁵ Ofori Atta, 'Reflections, Book 10', p. 18.

⁶²⁶ Ofori Atta, 'Reflections, Book 10', p. 15.

⁶²⁷ Mbiti, *Bible*, p. 26.

enabled Ofori Atta to focus his mind, affections, and will on God and his words. His communion with God through Bible meditation nurtured in him a fruitful Christian life.

3.2 Christian Prayer

The second spiritual discipline practised by Ofori Atta relating to his spiritual growth was Christian prayer. Boa refers to prayer as intimacy and dialogue with the living God'.⁶²⁸ Prayer enables a Christian to rely on God and not on oneself. It builds a Christian's communion and intimacy with God. It helps Christians to focus on the person and works of God. Ofori Atta's prayer list in his Bible study book had 53 specific topics. His prayer topics included his nuclear family, extended family, in-laws, neighbours, Christian friends, friends, newly married Christians, friends with marriage problems, churches, para-church organisations, Bible colleges, university Christian fellowships, legal practice, Akyem Abuakwa state, the government, political groups, detainees, prisoners, refugees, law courts, National Union of Ghana Students, teachers, nurses, medical services, professional bodies, Trades Union Congress, the press and Ghana.⁶²⁹

The Christian churches on his prayer list included the Presbyterian Church of Ghana, Kibi Presbyterian Church, Calvary Methodist Church and Accra Chapel (an independent evangelical non-denominational church at Korle Bu, Accra of which he was one of the founding members and which serves mainly nurses, doctors and their families at the Korle Bu teaching Hospital). The Christian para-church organizations in Ghana on his prayer list were

⁶²⁸ Boa, *Spiritual formation*, p. 83, 93-96.

⁶²⁹ Ofori Atta, 'Reflections, Book 3', pp. 26-27..

Child Evangelism Fellowship, Ghana Evangelism Committee, Christian Outreach Fellowship, Challenge Enterprise, Maranatha Bible College, Scripture Union, Hour of Visitation Choir and Evangelistic Association, Bible Society, Wycliffe, SIM, Navigators, Campus Crusade, Christian Council of Ghana, Catholic Secretariat, Christian Service College, United Bible Societies, University Christian Fellowships – Legon, Cape Coast, UST, Apra Services and Prison Ministries. This list gives an insight into his spiritual fervour for God's purposes to be established in the institutions of the family, the church, the community, and society. It also show his passion for Christian mission and evangelism, Christian discipleship and pastoral care, Christian theological education, Christian ministry to university campuses, Bible translation, Christian social action and Christian community development. Thus, he had a wholistic approach to the Gospel and culture interface since he prayed for the Gospel to impact every area of society.

In his Reflections book, Ofori Atta defines prayer as '... meditative communion with the Divine presence for the sake of a present communication from God to the soul.'⁶³⁰ He writes:

'I must try never to mention my problems to anyone but Jesus for 6 months. I must get my mind off 'I' and get it on Jesus, for Jesus is the burden-bearer. Set aside one whole day each month for prayer and fasting. Make it a rule not to eat my evening meal until I have prayed through and felt God's presence. If I tithe my time, I shall find that I have to give God at least 2 hours 24 minutes to prayer & meditation & Bible Reading.'⁶³¹

This extract discloses his disciplined lifestyle with regard to prayer. He sought to be dependent upon God and made communication with God a high priority in his daily living. His zeal for

⁶³⁰ Ofori Atta, 'Reflections, Book 3', p. 3.

⁶³¹ Ofori Atta, 'Reflections, Book 10', pp. 8,10.

God made him develop a structured and rigorous prayer life. He also made spiritual fasting a part of his prayer regime, possibly as a means of enhancing his prayer life.

To maintain a clear conscience before God he used as a prayer of self-examination Psalm 139:23-24 'Search me, God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting'.⁶³² He indicates willingness for God's searchlight to shine on every part of his life and was open to correction by God.

At his seventieth birthday, Ofori Atta wrote four prayers which he called 'The Praises and Prayers of a Septuagenarian'. The first prayer called 'The Praises of a Septuagenarian' stated: 'I asked for life, and my Lord gave me long life, even everlasting life. I will praise His power. I will proclaim His goodness and constant love. I will praise only Him, my Lord God'.⁶³³ The second prayer A Prayer of a Septuagenarian declared: 'O God, you have taught me from my youth; and hitherto have I declared your wondrous works. Now that I am old and my hair is grey, do not abandon me, O God. But be with me while I proclaim your wonderful power and might to all generations to come. (Ps. 71:17-18)'.⁶³⁴ The third prayer The Expectation of a Septuagenarian professed: 'We expect a bright tomorrow, All will be well; Faith can sing through days of sorrow, All will be well; On our Father's love relying; Jesus every need supplying; Or in living or in dying; all will be well'.⁶³⁵ The fourth prayer The Thanks of a Septuagenarian and His Wife stated: 'My wife and I join together to thank you for the great affection you have for us, for the great wishes you have for our lives, and the great

⁶³² Ofori Atta, 'Reflections, Book 10', p. 14.

⁶³³ William Ofori Atta Family Papers, Accra. 'Prayers', p. 1.

⁶³⁴ William Ofori Atta Family Papers, Accra. 'Prayers', p. 1.

⁶³⁵ William Ofori Atta Family Papers, Accra. 'Prayers', p. 1.

encouragement your own life, your words, and your prayers give us. May the Giver of all good gifts multiply His grace, mercy and peace unto you and all your dear ones'.⁶³⁶

In the 'prayer of praise', Ofori Atta's expresses his adoration to God for both the physical and the spiritual life that God gave him. God's attributes of love, goodness and power are especially important to him. In the 'prayer of a septuagenarian', he uses Psalm 71:17-18 to make a request for God's abiding presence throughout his old age. In the 'prayer of expectation of a septuagenarian', he uses the third verse of the lyrics of the hymn 'Through the Love of God our Saviour' by Mary Peters to express his anticipation of God's blessings in life as well as in death as he continues his walk of faith in God in times of suffering and joy. He sees God as the God of love who through Christ provides his needs. In the prayer of 'thanks of a septuagenarian and his wife', he and his wife convey appreciation to their family and friends for their love and support and request for God's blessings for their family and friends.

At the beginning of 1981 he wrote what he termed 'The Wishes and Prayers of William and Mary Ofori Atta for you for the year of our Lord one thousand nine hundred and eighty one'. In the prayer he called on Ghanaian society to receive God's gift of Jesus Christ in order to experience eternal life. He states: 'i. Christmas 1980 To us a child is born, to us a Son is given. Let us make sure that we have the Son. He who has the Son has life, and that life is life everlasting'.⁶³⁷ Next, he calls on the Christian community to proclaim God's word to Ghanaian society. He quotes Habakkuk 2:2: 'ii. The Word of God to Habakkuk. Write my word on a billboard, large and clear, so that anyone can read it at a glance and rush to tell the others. (Hab. 2:2)' ⁶³⁸ Then he calls on Christians to meditate on and obey God's word each day. He quotes

⁶³⁶ William Ofori Atta Family Papers, Accra. 'Prayers', p. 1.

⁶³⁷ William Ofori Atta Family Papers, Accra. 'Prayers' p. 2.

⁶³⁸ William Ofori Atta Family Papers, Accra. 'Prayers' p. 2.

Joshua 1:8: ‘iii. Constantly remind the people about these laws (My words) and you yourself must think about them every day and every night so that you will be sure to obey all of them. For only then will you succeed. (Joshua 1:8)’⁶³⁹ Lastly, he proclaims God’s blessings on the church and society of Ghana. He quotes Psalm 20: 1-5: ‘iv. In your day of trouble, may the Lord be with you! May the God of Jacob keep you from all harm. May He send you aid from His sanctuary in Zion. May he remember with pleasure the gifts you have given him, your sacrifices and burnt offerings. May he grant you your heart’s desire and fulfil all your plans. May there be shouts of joy when we hear the news of your victory, flags flying with praise to God for all that he has done you. May he answer all your prayers! Amen & Amen!’⁶⁴⁰

In these scripture prayers Ofori Atta prays for the assurance of salvation for others, the proclamation of God’s Word, the meditation on God’s Word day and night and God’s help for those in trouble. The fourth prayer which is from Psalm 20:1-5 was used by him in another prayer as a ‘Thank You to All God’s People, Friends and Relations’: ‘We conclude by praying our gracious Lord to add to your blessings those contained in Psalm 20:1-5’⁶⁴¹ This may indicate that Psalm 20 was one of his favourite scripture prayers.

In a sermon on ‘The uniqueness of Christianity’ Ofori Atta notes the importance of the prayer for salvation that the penitent thief crucified with Jesus prayed and he says: ‘I cannot remember where I first came across this little gem but it inspired me greatly. The writer pointed out that the prayer ‘JESUS, SAVE ME’ contains seven good Articles of Faith, namely....’⁶⁴² Next he lists the seven articles of the salvation prayer, namely: ‘It is a declaration that I believe in

⁶³⁹ William Ofori Atta Family Papers, Accra. ‘Prayers’ p. 2.

⁶⁴⁰ William Ofori Atta Family Papers, Accra. ‘Prayers’ p. 2.

⁶⁴¹ William Ofori Atta Family Papers, Accra. William Ofori Atta, ‘Testimony, Thank You and Praise’, p 2.

⁶⁴² William Ofori Atta Family Papers, Accra. William Ofori Atta, ‘The penitent thief, pp. 47-48.

Jesus... that he hears me... that I am in need of saving...that there is a way in which I can be saved ...that I cannot save myself... that Jesus has the power to save me; and...that Jesus has the desire to save me...' ⁶⁴³ Lastly he highlights the prayer of the penitent thief: 'The prayer of the penitent thief was similar: 'LORD, remember me when you come into your kingdom. This prayer shows the basic belief in the true God, the God who has the power and the desire to take the penitent up into his kingdom'. ⁶⁴⁴

The above extract shows Ofori Atta's Christocentric position on the matter of salvation. For him salvation was only through faith in Jesus Christ.

Another concern of his was missions and evangelism. He uses the second verse of Charles Wesley's hymn 'O for a thousand tongues to sing' as a prayer for global missions and evangelism: 'Our prayer therefore is: My gracious Master and my God, Assist me to proclaim, To spread through all the earth, The honour of Thy Name.'⁶⁴⁵ A further topic in his prayer agenda was God's past, present and future work in people and the nation. He declares: 'By reason of what God has done and is doing in us and for us and our nation – let us conclude ... with a Hymn of Praise to our glorious Lord for the strengthening of our faith. We sing ... George Keith's hymns (sic): How firm a foundation, ye saints of the Lord, is laid for your faith in His excellent Word. What more can He say than to you He hath said you who unto Jesus for refuge have fled?' ⁶⁴⁶

⁶⁴³ William Ofori Atta Family Papers, Accra. William Ofori Atta, 'The penitent thief, pp. 47-48.

⁶⁴⁴ William Ofori Atta Family Papers, Accra. William Ofori Atta, 'The penitent thief, pp. 47-48.

⁶⁴⁵ See William Ofori Atta Family Papers, Accra. 'The uniqueness of Christianity: The reasons for our faith' in 'Tribute' p. 75. (hereafter 'Uniqueness').

⁶⁴⁶ Ofori Atta, 'Uniqueness', p 75.

Ofori Atta believed that Christian spiritual fasting was an important Christian spiritual discipline for Christians to practise. His views on the what, why and how of Christian spiritual fasting is stated as follows: ‘Fasting = abstaining from food for some spiritual end.... Fasting = repentant humbling of the soul before God.... Fasting really means voluntary abstention for a time from various necessities of life, such as food, drink, sleep, rest, association with people, etc.... Removing for the time being other things which in themselves may be both permissible and profitable... God speaks to us more at this time’.⁶⁴⁷ To him Christian spiritual fasting was a means of humbling oneself before the Lord in order to know and obey God’s purposes.

In my estimation, although he had a brief association with the Church of the Lord (Aladura), the spirituality of this church may have influenced his views on prayer and fasting. John Mbiti points out that the Church of the Lord (Aladura) have six commands which members are required to follow – prayer, fasting, alms giving, preaching and Bible reading.⁶⁴⁸ In a twenty four hour period the church members are obliged to pray every three hours. This expectation may have contributed to the development of Ofori Atta’s prayer life when he was a member of this church. C. G. Baëta, in his study of the Church of the Lord (Aladura) in Ghana, points out the importance of prayer for this church and describing the fives times daily prayer, testimony services, prayer vigils, healing services and their prayer attire.⁶⁴⁹

⁶⁴⁷ Ofori Atta, 'Reflections, Book 13', pp. 117-119.

⁶⁴⁸ Mbiti, *Bible*, p. 68.

⁶⁴⁹ Baëta, *Prophetism*, pp. 123-124. Baëta shares the following quotation from the church’s constitution:

It is very important that every member of the local churches in the organisation shall attend the Means of Grace regularly, that is say: Daily Prayers – Five Times: a. 5:30 am or 6 am being the first hour of the day; b. 9 am being the third hour of the day; c. 12 noon being the sixth hour of the day; d. 3 pm being the ninth hour of the day; e. 6 pm being the twelfth hour of the day; f. 9 pm being the first watch night; g. 12 midnight being the second watch night; h. 3 am being the third watch night; Testimonial service shall be held once on the last Saturday of each calendar month at 6 pm; j. Service on the Mount shall be held on the first Friday of the month or as occasion may require.

There shall be Vigil service on Wednesday commencing at 9 m or at such other time in the evening as circumstances permit. Also Friday in the week shall be regarded as Healing day. Prayers shall be said in the evening at 6 pm for spiritual and temporal healing ... All Worshippers, too shall put off their shoes from their feet during all or any services of the Churches in this Organisation....

The Organisation believes in water-cure, and water shall be consecrated for general purposes and uses during the services of the Church or at any other times.

Mbiti traces the root of prayer fervour in African Christianity to the importance of prayer in African Traditional Religions (ATR).⁶⁵⁰ He discerns prayer to be the heartbeat of African Traditional Religions and notes that these prayers are addressed to God as creator and father. Since African traditional reality acknowledges a spiritual world of divinities, spirits and ancestors the prayers highlight overcoming the evil forces linked with witchcraft, magic and curses. The content of ATR prayers is that of entreaties dealing with protection, prosperity, healing, health, festivals, purification, birth, puberty, marriage, fertility, death and the afterlife.

In the African worldview sicknesses and diseases are believed to have both a physical and a spiritual aetiology. As such Mbiti asserts that African-instituted Churches (AICs) practice exorcising evil spirits and faith healing in addition to seeking medical assistance in order to cure sicknesses and diseases.⁶⁵¹ The AIC Christian moves seamlessly from the African traditional worldview to the Biblical worldview. Christian prayer in AICs affords African Christians the opportunity wage spiritual warfare against the mystical realities in the African context in the name of Jesus Christ. Prayer in the name of Jesus, Mbiti observes, is the major means by which Jesus Christ is mediated to the AIC Christian. Unlike ATR prayers where the name of God does not have much authority in AICs the name of Jesus has the authority and power to protect a person from both malevolent spirits and physical calamities as well as to provide for both spiritual and temporal needs.⁶⁵²

It is of utmost necessity that Prayer Gowns (an essential uniform of the Organisation) must be worn by both Ministers and members (male, female and children) at all the Services of the Church be it within or without the House of Prayer.⁶⁴⁹

⁶⁵⁰ John Mbiti, *Bible*, pp. 84-86.

⁶⁵¹ John Mbiti, *Bible*, pp. 72-81.

⁶⁵² John Mbiti, *Bible*, pp. 84-86.

Kwabena Asamoah-Gyadu points out that for African Pentecostals prayer is regarded as authority and power for change and transformation. For them, life's difficulties can be resolved through prayer. This concept of prayer is based on the Gospel accounts of Jesus Christ using prayer to cast out demonic spirits and healing the sick. Pentecostals believe that Jesus gave his authority to the church to continue this prayer ministry today. As such special times of prayer are organised such as seven days of prayer, twenty one days of prayer and forty days of prayer for Christians to receive their 'breakthrough' in life, i.e. to receive God's supernatural blessings. An examination of the above prayers of Ofori Atta shows the influence of the Pentecostal concept of prayer on his life.⁶⁵³ Like Pentecostal movements in Ghana at this time, he believed in the power of fasting and prayer as a means for God to transform a person's life through God's work of deliverance and healing. This Pentecostal/ Charismatic influence may have been through his brief attendance of the Aladura Church after his conversion as well as through his participation in the Scripture Union as a patron.

In the early 1970s/ 1980s the Scripture Union in Ghana facilitated the charismatic view of Christianity.

The above prayers of Ofori Atta reveal him to be a man with a passion for God and compassion for people. His desire was for him and others to experience God's love, grace and mercy and be used by God to show love and care for other people. The preceding discloses that Ofori Atta sees prayer as communion with God. Ofori Atta sometimes added spiritual fasting to his prayer life. Boa observes that 'fasting is abstention from physical nourishment for the purpose of spiritual sustenance.'⁶⁵⁴ This definition correlates with Ofori Atta's understanding of fasting. Another important feature of Ofori Atta's prayer life was spiritual warfare prayers. Boa places

⁶⁵³ Kwabena Asamoah-Gyadu, *Contemporary Pentecostal Christianity: Interpretations from an African context*. (Akropong-Akwapem: Regnum Africa, 2013), pp. 56-57.

⁶⁵⁴ Boa, *Spiritual formation*, p. 85.

this type of prayer under Warfare Spirituality which seeks to use prayer to overcome the works of Satan and demons.⁶⁵⁵

3.3 Christian Fellowship

The third spiritual discipline practised by Ofori Atta which enhanced his spiritual growth was Christian fellowship. Boa stresses the need for Christian fellowship to be a delight and not a discipline.⁶⁵⁶ He observes that coming together in community stands in contest to an individualistic culture. Christian fellowship engenders edification and mutual encouragement for Christians.

In the previous chapter, it was observed that two causes for Ofori Atta's Presbyterian upbringing were his father who even though a chief ensured that his children were brought up as Presbyterians as well his grandfather who as a Basel Mission evangelist played a crucial role in the growth of the Presbyterian church in Akyem Abuakwa. Regarding pre-conversion church experience Ofori Atta writes: '... I went to Mfantsipim [School] at Cape Coast. Therefore attendance at church service at the Wesley Church was compulsory. I became a little familiar with Methodist form of worship.... At Achimota School I attended an inter-denominational service on Sunday evenings... In all my five years [in England] I attended church services not more than four times.... I returned to teach at Achimota School.... I attended the evening services as usual. I even conducted House prayers as a Housemaster'.⁶⁵⁷

⁶⁵⁵ Boa, *Spiritual formation*, p. 339-363.

⁶⁵⁶ Boa, *Spiritual formation*, p. 85-86.

⁶⁵⁷ Ofori Atta, 'Application for membership', p. 1

From the preceding it seems that whereas the church was foundational for Ofori Atta's post conversion spiritual journey, church life had little importance for him in his pre conversion life. After his conversion to Christ, he regularly attended the Presbyterian Church and sometimes worshiped at the Methodist Church with his wife until both of them eventually decided to join the Presbyterian Church at Abeka in Accra. In 1983, nearly twenty years after his spiritual conversion, he narrates his dilemma regarding church membership in an application for membership with the Presbyterian Church at Abeka, Accra. The first dilemma he faced was that he was a Presbyterian whilst his wife was a Methodist. He states: '... my wife had continued with her worship with the Methodist to which she and her relatives belonged. I joined her service when I was not engaged anywhere but I could not join her church. I had gone home, to Kibi, and joined the Presbyterian Church there. I realised that I belonged there.'⁶⁵⁸ The next dilemma was that even though he was a Presbyterian he enjoyed the worship style of the Methodist church more than that of the Presbyterian church. He declares: 'Sometime later I conducted a Revival service there for week, and I felt I really belonged there. But even at Kibi I was a stranger for most of the parts of the service; their hymns and other matters were new to me: I did not know them and I did not feel as comfortable as I did when I attended with my wife at the Methodist Church.'⁶⁵⁹ Then another dilemma was that even though he enjoyed the worship style of the Methodist church he did not sense God's peace to join the Methodist church. He remarks: 'I couldn't for some reason, join the Methodist Church, but I had to drive to that church for her worship. I looked round at the Presbyterian Church in the neighbourhood of Calvary Methodist to see if I could join any one on them. But the injunction was clear that my wife and I should belong to one church congregation.'⁶⁶⁰ Lastly, he and his wife resolved his church membership dilemma by mutually deciding to join the local

⁶⁵⁸ Ofori Atta, 'Application for membership', p. 2-3.

⁶⁵⁹ Ofori Atta, 'Application for membership', p. 2-3.

⁶⁶⁰ Ofori Atta, 'Application for membership', p. 2-3.

Presbyterian church near their area of residence that is the Presbyterian church at Abeka in Accra. He comments: 'I could not therefore join any of the Presbyterian Churches. But I could not ask my wife to leave her church because: (I) She had been for a long time loyal to her church and (II) She was doing a mighty work with the young girls in her Girls Fellowship. But recently we have both felt very strongly that we should take a bold decision. We have decided to apply for membership of your church....' ⁶⁶¹

This extract portrays his quandary in coming to terms with a church where both he and his wife could join as members. For many years he and his wife were members of different churches even though they usually attended church together and were both active in church life. His wife's church ministry focused on mentoring the young girls in her Methodist Church. The Abeka Presbyterian church proved to be a local church where both of them felt at home.

As a member of the church of God, Ofori Atta's served God with his money. In his letter of application for membership of Abeka Presbyterian church he mentions that 'I must add that I belong to the Kibi Church and I pay my dues regularly'.⁶⁶² He was faithful as a steward of God's financial resource, he says: 'If God is not on my side, I put my money into bags with holes (Hag. 1:6). If I am on God's side he gives me wealth (Deut. 8:18). He leads me by the Spirit (John 16:13). He will prosper me in all I do (Ps. 1:3).'⁶⁶³ He looked up to God as the ultimate source of financial and material provision. In accord with Kenneth Boa's remarks on Christian fellowship, Ofori Atta placed a high value on community over individualism. He practiced Christian fellowship with his local church as well as ecumenically with other Christian churches and para-church organisations.

⁶⁶¹ Ofori Atta, 'Application for membership', p. 2-3.

⁶⁶² Ofori Atta, 'Application for membership', p. 3.

⁶⁶³ Ofori Atta, 'Reflections, Book 10', p. 12.

3.4 Christian Witnessing

The fourth spiritual discipline observed by Ofori Atta in connection with his spiritual growth was Christian witnessing. Boa states that the Christian discipline of service focuses on the needs of other people rather than on that of oneself. Service is to be carried out without seeking recognition. It is motivated by love for Jesus and an aspiration to follow the footsteps of Jesus in helping others.⁶⁶⁴

Ofori Atta witnessed about Jesus Christ by word and deed. Ofori Atta was of the view that as a Christian his lifestyle was to be a witness to Jesus Christ. He declared in his Reflections: ‘The Book of William Ofori Atta – I am writing it or the Lord is writing it every moment.’⁶⁶⁵ For this reason, Christian witnessing for Ofori Atta was not only by word but was also by character. He notes: ‘I must not let the sun go down on my anger.’⁶⁶⁶ He was of the opinion that the Bible required him to resolve relational difficulties and deal with any anger that may arise out of this. He aspired to be a witness for Christ by how he lived as well as by what he said. Ofori Atta laments the fact that no one, including pastors, made any attempt to witness to him about the Gospel of Jesus Christ: ‘Both during my school days and in my teaching days at Achimota, there were at least 4 Pastors on the staff but I never heard the Gospel message, and nobody was concerned about my soul.’⁶⁶⁷ He felt deep sorrow about the neglect of witnessing by the pastors he came across before his spiritual birth. This may have been a motivating factor for his zeal for evangelism and discipleship throughout his post-conversion life.

⁶⁶⁴ Boa, *Spiritual formation*, p. 87.

⁶⁶⁵ Ofori Atta, 'Reflections, Book 8'.

⁶⁶⁶ Ofori Atta, 'Reflections, Book 10', p. 12.

⁶⁶⁷ Ofori Atta, 'Application for membership', p. 1

For Ofori Atta to become a Christian a person needs to ‘... believe that ... Jesus is God ... He died for your sins and was buried ... He rose again, iv. He wants to come into your life & be your Saviour and Lord’.⁶⁶⁸ Regarding assurance of salvation he states: ‘Three-fold confirmation that Jesus is in our lives (i) Trustworthy Word (ii) Confirming Holy Spirit (iii) Changed life.’⁶⁶⁹

In her narrative of Ofori Atta’s Christian life, Violet Bergen writes that he witnessed to the ‘saving power of Jesus Christ’ through Christian literature and his personal testimony. According to her account, his change in lifestyle ‘visibly stirred’ both Christian and non-Christian communities and his message to those he spoke to included a ‘plea to forsake sin, read the Bible and accept Jesus Christ as Saviour’.⁶⁷⁰

Ofori Atta sees faith in God as crucial for Christian witnessing and remarks: ‘No man is fit for God’s service who is filled with doubts’.⁶⁷¹ He defines evangelism in the following manner: ‘Evangelism: tell people about Good News... Help them receive Jesus... Help them grow in his knowledge of Jesus Christ’.⁶⁷² To him evangelism is proclamation of the Good News of salvation by God’s grace through faith in Jesus Christ. It is worth pointing out that he does not mention good works or social action as constituting evangelism. As will be discovered in the next chapter his position is that evangelism and social action are distinct and that priority should be given to evangelism over social action. In his judgment, salvation is solely a work of God’s grace and not due to the effort of a Christian witness. He asserts: ‘No one has authority to say

⁶⁶⁸ Ofori Atta, ‘Reflections, Book 1’, p. 2.

⁶⁶⁹ Ofori Atta, ‘Reflections, Book 1’, p. 2.

⁶⁷⁰ Bergen, *Hold fast*, p. 20.

⁶⁷¹ Ofori Atta, ‘Reflections, Book 15’, p. 22.

⁶⁷² Ofori Atta, ‘Reflections, Book 11’, p. 46.

so & so was converted through me. The work of grace in a soul is a chain. True. It is God & God alone who gives the increase. (1 Cor. 4:7 & Ps. 115:1).'⁶⁷³

One of his greatest passions was the evangelism of children. In his Family Papers, he writes: 'I should think that we should consider it the greatest abomination to see a child who does know Jesus and to let him pass by without doing anything.'⁶⁷⁴ A reason for this may have been the fact that as a child no one witnessed to him about Jesus Christ's salvation message. Ofori Atta served as a volunteer worker and a Council member of Child Evangelism Fellowship of Ghana (CEF). He spells out the qualities of a child evangelist as follows: '(i) The Evangelist must know Xt [sic] as his own personal Saviour. (ii) He should have genuine love for Jesus & for the child. (iii) He should love God's Word and know how to use this Sword of the Sprit. (iv) He must believe that the Saviour wants that little child to come to Him & that the child is capable of coming.'⁶⁷⁵

An area of Christian service in which Ofori Atta was very much involved was itinerant Christian preaching ministry in various churches and para-church ministries. He was a highly

⁶⁷³ Ofori Atta, 'Reflections, Book 10', p. 16.

⁶⁷⁴ William Ofori Atta Family Papers, Accra. 'Quotations by Paa Willie' in 'Tribute' p. 12.

⁶⁷⁵ Ofori Atta, 'Reflections, Book 10', p. 17. One of the tools Ofori Atta used for his child evangelism was the Wordless Book. This book had various colours to represent an emphasis of the gospel of Jesus Christ and the child evangelist would show a child a particular colour and then explain the meaning of the colour in relation to the gospel. He writes:

1st page is black (signifying his life of sin)

2nd page = Red (signifying Jesus shed blood to put away his sin)

3rd page = White (signifying his cleansed heart & reception of the righteousness of Xt (sic))

Last page = Gold (signifying his home in heaven)

The book has a green cover which points to Xt growth

Ofori Atta, 'Reflections, Book 10', p. 17-18. On a personal note, I used the wordless book in my late teens as a Christian and I found the use of the colour black to refer to sin very problematic since the Bible refers to sin as scarlet and not black. In addition, it conveys, in my opinion, a negative portrayal of the colour black and a positive depiction of the colour white which by association could convey the wrong message to children that black people are sinful and white people are righteous. Isaiah 1:18 reads: "'Come now, let us settle the matter,' says the LORD. 'Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red as crimson, they shall be like wool.'" Images can convey powerful messages which can be constructive or destructive.

sought after speaker in Ghanaian Christian circles. He mentioned in his application letter for membership of the Presbyterian Church in Abeka that he would be unable to be present at all the worship services since he was regularly invited to minister in other churches. He states that ‘... because of my work and past unattached long period [to a particular church] I am often asked by many churches in and out of Accra for my services. You may not find me present at all services unless you put a ban on my free movement.’⁶⁷⁶

After his evangelical conversion, Ofori Atta developed a passion for God. His chief aim in life was to grow and mature in his love for God which is the mark of Boa’s devotional spirituality. He also developed a compassion for people. He believed that his primary calling in life was to evangelise and disciple others for Jesus Christ and this is the trait of Boa’s nurturing spirituality. In concord with Boa’s deliberation on Christian service, Ofori Atta gave himself to serve others. He was assertive in sharing his faith about his new life in Jesus Christ. In affirmation of Boa’s comments on Christian service, Ofori Atta put the needs of those he witnessed to above his own. His love for Jesus motivated him to serve others by sharing the Gospel of Jesus Christ with them.

4. Conclusion

At the beginning of this chapter, evangelical conversion was defined here as ‘turning to Christ and finding a relationship with him’.⁶⁷⁷ The above discourse spells out the relational nature of conversion for William Ofori Atta or to put it in another way the importance of right

⁶⁷⁶ Ofori Atta, ‘Application for membership’, p. 1

⁶⁷⁷ Ian Randall, *What a friend we have in Jesus: the Evangelical tradition* (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 2005), p. 26. At the end of this chapter I will review this definition of conversion in the light of Ofori Atta’s understanding of conversion.

relationships. For him, conversion or spiritual birth means a right relationship with God through repentance towards God the Father and faith in God the Son. Spiritual growth implies growing deeper in a right relationship with God and people. His spiritual beliefs are predicated on the Bible as humanity's guide to initiating and maintaining a right relationship with God and people, on Jesus Christ as the mediator of a right relationship with God, on the Holy Spirit as the one who helps a person to sustain a right relationship with God and people and on humility as in need of a saviour to restore humanity's broken relationship with God.

In light of the above discourse on Ofori Atta's conversion, it may be postulated that the core dimension of Ofori Atta's existence in the second half of his life was the spiritual dimension and this was expressed through the biblical value of 'spiritual righteousness', which for him was a right relationship with God, people and oneself.⁶⁷⁸ This relational and threefold understanding of righteousness is implied in an address to he gave at the eighteenth series of the J. B. Danquah⁶⁷⁹ Memorial Lectures in February 1985 in Accra, Ghana on the topic 'Ghana: A nation in crisis'. In the lecture he stresses the threefold relational dimensions of the duty of Ghanaians towards God, people and themselves with respect to nation building: 'This is our country. We are under a stern inescapable obligation to our consciences, to our people, and to our God, to live among and remain with our people in these trying times and for better and for worse until victory is won....'⁶⁸⁰

Christian spiritual righteousness is central to Ofori Atta's Evangelical Christian conversion. Ofori Atta's spiritual conversion experience is predicated on Christian righteousness. His

⁶⁷⁸ I will develop this concept of 'spiritual righteousness' further in chapter 10.

⁶⁷⁹ In chapter one it was pointed out that J. B. Danquah was Ofori Atta's uncle who had a great influence on Ofori Atta's pre conversion political life and thought. Chapter three will examine in detail Danquah's political philosophy and practice.

⁶⁸⁰ William Ofori Atta, *Ghana: a nation in crisis*. (Accra: Ghana Academy of Arts and Sciences, 1988), p. 2.

understanding of righteousness is relational. Christian spiritual righteousness, for him, denotes the necessity of a right relationship with God through spiritual birth by God's grace through faith in Jesus Christ.

What element of William Ofori Atta's Christian salvation leadership principle corresponds with the definition of ethical leadership in this thesis? From the above it may be determined that Ofori Atta's Christian salvation principle has the ingredient of the ethical value of righteousness as its core basis. As explained previously, Christian righteousness is a right relationship with God, oneself, people and creation through the life, death, and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. Ofori Atta constantly exhorted people to establish a right relationship with God through faith and repentance in Jesus Christ in his ministry as a Christian witness and a Christian evangelist. He was of the conviction that, as he often quoted, 'Jesus Christ is the only Mediator between the holy God and sinful man'. Consequently, people who had not yet come to faith in Christ ought to decide to experience God's salvation from sin and salvation for a righteous life in Jesus Christ in order to receive God's righteousness. The righteous God through Christian spiritual conversion imparts his positional righteousness to believers in Jesus Christ for Christians to practice experiential righteousness.

The definition of ethical leadership in this research has integrity, influence and impact as the criteria for judging an ethical leadership value. The above analysis of Ofori Atta's Christian salvation principle demonstrates that the ethical value of righteousness as advocated and practised by Ofori Atta influenced people in Ghana to achieve worthwhile goal of salvation in Jesus Christ for the common good of society and also impacted Christian and societal institutions in Ghana in order to make them life enriching structures by means of God's salvation message. Christian righteousness has integrity as a core component of God's

salvation. The Bible declares that the holy God wants his people to be holy. Hence, all of the three criteria for ethical leadership – integrity/ altruism, worthwhile influence and enriching institutions - are fulfilled by Ofori Atta's ethical leadership value of Christian righteousness with regard to his Christian salvation principle. The next chapter examines his leadership principle of evangelical Christian mission.

CHAPTER SEVEN

EVANGELICAL CHRISTIAN MISSION AS EVANGELICAL CHRISTIAN BELIEFS AND MINISTRY

‘As my Father hath sent me, even so send I you’ John 20:21 (KJV)
‘And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable people who will also be qualified to teach others.’ 2 Timothy 2:2 (NIV)

1. Introduction

The previous chapter examined William Ofori Atta’s evangelical Christian salvation experience. This chapter considers his understanding of Christian mission. The chapter argues that William Ofori Atta may be regarded as a *Christian* political activist with firm Christian convictions which explicitly shaped his Christian service in the church through the ministries of theological education and cross cultural evangelism. The chapter uses an analysis of Ofori Atta’s Christian beliefs and practices to show that his brand of Christianity was that of evangelical-charismatic Christianity and not liberal Christianity. A comparison is made between Ofori Atta’s beliefs and the Maranatha Bible College and Christian Outreach Fellowship statements of faith to demonstrate that Ofori Atta’s beliefs shaped the MBC and COF statements of faith.

The previous chapter on evangelical Christian salvation pointed out that William Ofori Atta’s evangelical conversion and spiritual growth had a remarkable effect on his life. A Christian is saved by God’s grace in order to serve God by God’s grace. Faith is to be expressed in works. This was the view of Ofori Atta with regard to God’s ministry call on Christians. What were the Christian convictions and ministry practices of Ofori Atta that formed the bedrock for his thought and practice of Christian leadership? The first part of this chapter will examine his

beliefs on the major doctrines of the Christian faith – namely the doctrines of the Bible, God, Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit, humanity, sin, salvation, the church, angels, and future things. From this analysis, it will be established that his Christian beliefs lie within the evangelical and charismatic branches of Christianity.

In the second part of the chapter, it will be observed that the mode of Ofori Atta's Christian ministry was of a holistic model of Christian ministry since he served God and humanity in both the spiritual dimension and the social dimension of Christian service. To his credit, Ofori Atta left two enduring institutional legacies in his public life – Maranatha Bible College (MBC) and Christian Outreach Fellowship (COF).⁶⁸¹ He co-founded both institutions and played an active role in their growth and development. Mentoring was one of Ofori Atta's passions and from the time of his Christian spiritual birth he devoted his time, energy and money to mentoring Christians to fulfil God's purpose for their lives. Also, in the area of corporate governance, he contributed to the progress of numerous para-church Christian organisations in Ghana as a board member. These ministries were mostly evangelistic in outlook, but a few had social action as an additional focus. This chapter examines how he served God and the church with regard to the use of his Christian spiritual gifts and natural talents in relation to MBC, COF, mentoring and corporate governance.

This chapter examines the leadership thought and practice of Ofori Atta with regard to his leadership principle of Christian mission. The elements of Ofori Atta's Christian mission conception will be analysed to find out if they are congruent with the definition of ethical public leadership discussed in the introductory chapter. In other words, there should be elements of Ofori Atta's Christian mission leadership principle which correspond with the definition of

⁶⁸¹ A detailed information on MBC and COF will be provided in the second half of this chapter.

ethical leadership as leadership in which the values of integrity and altruism are demonstrated in a leader's character and conduct in both the private and public life of the leader so as to influence people to achieve worthwhile goals for the common good of society as well as to impact institutions in order to make them life enriching structures.

2. Evangelical Christian Beliefs

Theology in Africa has the following five major branches – African Evangelical Theology, African Pentecostal/Charismatic Theology, African Inculturation Theology, African Liberation Theology and African Reconstruction Theology. These theological branches are trans-denominational and may be found in the various church denominations in Africa – the Roman Catholic Church, the Ethiopian/Eritrean Orthodox Church and the Protestant Churches.

African Evangelical Theology focuses on the '*evangel*', the Gospel of Jesus Christ. It emphasises the person and work of Jesus Christ, 'born again' conversion experience, biblical authority, Bible devotions, holiness and missions.⁶⁸² African Pentecostal/Charismatic Theology is centred on the manifestation of the gifts of the Holy Spirit for the church today. It accentuates the person and work of the Holy Spirit, prayer, fasting, speaking in tongues, deliverance, healing, victorious living and evangelism.⁶⁸³ African Inculturation Theology seeks to interface the Gospel with culture so as to make the Biblical message meaningful and relevant to its cultural context. It highlights God's work in and through culture and the significance of the African worldview, African cultural values, African philosophy, African rites of passage,

⁶⁸² See Tokunboh Adeyemo, (ed.) *African Bible Commentary: a one volume commentary*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2006.

⁶⁸³ See Kwabena Asamoah-Gyadu, *African Charismatics: current developments within Independent indigenous Pentecostalism in Ghana*. Leiden: Brill, 2004.

African music, African festivals, African symbols for the church's mission.⁶⁸⁴ African Liberation Theology aims to use the Gospel to free society from political, economic, social cultural and religious oppression. It stresses that God is the Liberator and as such the church is to pursue a struggle against injustice – classism, racism, ethnocentrism and sexism – in order to establish justice in society.⁶⁸⁵ African Reconstruction Theology aspires to use the Gospel to renew the church and to rebuild society. It sees God as the God of Reconstruction and it concentrates on the reconstruction of Africa in its totality using biblical patterns of reconstruction, for example the Ezra-Nehemiah paradigm in the Old Testament.⁶⁸⁶

As will be shown below, an examination of Ofori Atta's Christian beliefs indicates that they fall within the purview of evangelical Christianity and Pentecostal/Charismatic Christianity. In light of this it is pertinent to ask: what did William Ofori Atta believe with regard to the major Christian doctrines? What were his views on the doctrine of the Bible, God, Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit, humanity, sin, salvation, the church, angels and the second coming of Christ? The notes Ofori Atta made in his Christian literature reflection books and his sermons in his funeral brochure give a clue as to his Christian beliefs. In my analysis of Ofori Atta's Christian beliefs, comparisons will be made with the Maranatha Bible College and Christian Outreach Fellowship statements of faith to see if his beliefs were similar to or different from that of the two institutions in which he exerted his strongest influence as a Christian leader. It will be seen through this analysis that Ofori Atta's beliefs as well as MBC and COF doctrinal affirmations fall under the conservative evangelical branch of Christian theology. However, Ofori Atta goes

⁶⁸⁴ See Kwame Bediako, *Theology and Identity; the impact of culture upon Christian thought in the second century and in Modern Africa*. Oxford: Regnum Books, 1992.

⁶⁸⁵ Itumeleng Mosala, *Biblical Hermeneutics and Black theology in South Africa*, Grand rapids: Eerdmans, 1994.

⁶⁸⁶ See Jesse Mugambi, *The Church and Reconstruction of Africa*. Nairobi: AACC, 1997.

further than the MBC and COF doctrinal statements by also embracing the Pentecostal/Charismatic branch of Christian theology.

2.1 The Bible

William Ofori Atta's view of the Bible is that the Bible is the word of God. In an essay on 'The uniqueness of Christianity: The reasons for our faith', Ofori Atta asserts: 'Christianity claims that its book, the holy Book of authority for doctrine and practical living, is the WORD of GOD. It does not merely contain some words of God, it is the Word of God (2 Tim. 3:16 and 2 Pet. 1:20). Paul says in 2 Tim. 3:16 that all Scripture is inspired by God, that the whole bible from Genesis to Revelation was given to us by inspiration from (sic) God and Peter adds in 2 Peter 1:20 that no prophecy recorded in Scripture was even thought up by the prophet himself and that it was the Holy Spirit within these godly men who gave them true messages from God.'⁶⁸⁷

He further adds: 'The whole design of the Bible is to lead us into mature knowledge of God and out faith ... (Ephesians 4:14)'.⁶⁸⁸ Thus Ofori Atta takes the position that the Bible is God's revelation to humanity and affirms the inspiration, infallibility, inerrancy, and illumination of the Bible. When examined from the diverse theological strands within Christianity, this view of the Bible is a conservative evangelical approach to bibliology.⁶⁸⁹ This is in contrast to a Roman Catholic theological strand where church tradition has the same authority as Scripture and the liberal theological strand which emphasizes experience and

⁶⁸⁷ Ofori Atta, 'Uniqueness', p 72.

⁶⁸⁸ Ofori Atta, 'Uniqueness', p 72.

⁶⁸⁹ See Derek Tidball, *Who are the Evangelicals: Tracing the roots of today's movements* (London: Marshall Pickering, 1994), pp. 79-97. (hereafter *Evangelicals*)

modern scientific thinking over the authority of the Bible as God's revelation. A danger of the conservative evangelical approach is that it may sometimes come close to bibliolatry (i.e., placing then Bible on a n equal footing with God) if care is not taken to maintain the fact that Jesus Christ, the Word of God, is the sole focus of Christian worship, not the Bible.

The MBC and COF doctrines of the Bible are contained in the following statements of belief:

MBC: 'The Holy Scriptures as the fully and uniquely inspired Word of God, infallible, trustworthy, sufficient and the supreme authority in all matter of faith and conduct.'⁶⁹⁰

COF: 'The Holy Scriptures, the fully and uniquely inspired Word of God, infallible, trustworthy, sufficient and the supreme authority in all matters of faith and conduct.'⁶⁹¹

The doctrine of the Bible contained in the preceding doctrinal affirmations indicate that MBC and COF hold to the Reformation principle of *sola scriptura*. The phrases 'fully and uniquely inspired', 'infallible, trustworthy, sufficient', 'supreme authority' point towards the high regard MBC and COF have for the Bible. MBC and COF believe that the biblical writers were influenced by God in writing the Bible, that since all the original words of Bible have a divine source they are without error, that the Bible gives most trustworthy revelation of God which and that the Bible's absolute truth is to establish what a person believes and how a person lives. The MBC and COF perspective on the Bible is in contradistinction to the view that the Bible is solely a human product or the Bible contains God's Word and is only a human witness to God or the church traditions and the Bible are equal in authority. The MBC and COF position on the Bible falls within the purview of that upheld by Ghanaian evangelical Christians.

⁶⁹⁰ 'MBC constitution', p. 1.

⁶⁹¹ 'COF constitution', p. 1.

Matthew Michael in *Christian Theology and African Traditions* analyses the doctrines of the evangelical movement in Africa in order to derive insights peculiar to African Christianity.⁶⁹² He observes that African evangelicals hold the Bible in high regard and see as authoritative for solving life's problems.⁶⁹³ Cephas Omenyo in *Pentecostalism outside Pentecost* analyses the doctrines of the Ghanaian charismatic movement.⁶⁹⁴ With regard to the Bible he observes that they have a strong devotion to the Bible and are of the view that an evidence of the Baptism of the Holy Spirit is the cultivation of a lifestyle of Bible devotion.⁶⁹⁵ They believe that as God's inspired Word the Bible is to be interpreted literally and obeyed fully. The authority of the Bible is seen as irrefutable. They are convinced of the Bible's validity and reliability on matters of faith and practice. They are against the view the Bible is a historical document dealing with past issues and is to be critically examined as any other literature. The Bible serves as powerful weapon in prayer to overcome the forces of evil and release God's temporal and eternal blessings.

2.2 The Trinitarian God

Ofori Atta affirms a Trinitarian understanding of God; however, a key attribute of God for him is God as the Healer of spiritual, psychological and biomedical illnesses – the God who heals holistically: spirit, soul and body. He refers to a number of God's attributes in his writings. For example, in a sermon on 'The penitent thief' in Luke 23-32-43 he mentions the following

⁶⁹² Matthew Michael, *Christian Theology and African Traditions*. Cambridge: Lutterworth, 2013. (hereafter *Christian Theology*).

⁶⁹³ Michael, *Christian Theology*, p. 63.

⁶⁹⁴ Omenyo, *Pentecost*, pp. 220-246..

⁶⁹⁵ Omenyo, *Pentecost*, pp. 221-223.

attributes of God: ‘The God of the penitent thief is merciful, considerate, majestic and powerful.’⁶⁹⁶ However, and secondly, an essential belief of Ofori Atta was in God as the healing God. When he wrote his reflections on Exodus 15:26 in the Ghanaian Twi language another issue he emphasised was the blessing promised in the text ‘... I will not bring on you any of the diseases I brought on the Egyptians, for I am the LORD, who heals you’ (NIV). Ofori Atta links Exodus 15:26 with Isaiah 53:3 and he stresses: ‘God’s name is JEHOVAH-RAPHA, meaning the Lord is our Healer. ‘I am the Lord that healeth thee’. Yesterday His Name was Jehovah-Rapha. Today His Name is Jehovah-Rapha. And tomorrow His Name will be JEHOVAH-RAPHA. He is not I WAS or I WILL BE but His Name is still I AM...’⁶⁹⁷

He then goes on to rewrite Isaiah 53:3 in Twi, which is possibly an indication of how strong he felt about the text. It appears that reflecting on God in his mother tongue is important to him. The preceding quotation points to Ofori Atta’s belief in God as the God who heals. For him God’s name as *Yahweh Rapha* was an important attribute of God. This is significant. On the one hand, this view of God by an evangelical Christian belonging to the Presbyterian Church of Ghana is surprising in that it is not the usual Presbyterian understanding of God. It is a belief that is attributed to Ghanaian Pentecostals.⁶⁹⁸ On the other hand it is not a surprise since the Presbyterian Church in Ghana at this time had Bible Study and Prayer Groups which held such a belief which were charismatic in outlook. Thus, the text points to his affirmation of a core belief by Ghanaian Charismatic Presbyterians – the understanding of God as healer.

The concept of God as Healer was not simply an intellectual affirmation by Ofori Atta. He was sometimes in poor health with asthma and for someone who was an energetic and activist

⁶⁹⁶ William Ofori Atta Family Papers, Accra. William Ofori Atta, ‘The penitent thief, pp. 47-48.

⁶⁹⁷ Ofori Atta, ‘Reflections, Book 10’, pp. 7-9.

⁶⁹⁸ See Emmanuel Larbi, *Pentecostalism: The eddies of Ghanaian Christianity*. Accra: Centre for Pentecostal and Charismatic Studies, 2001.

Christian this may have occasionally hindered the pace of his activities. In a letter to his spiritual and adopted daughter, Georgina Adei, he writes: 'I am well. Asthma gives me no trouble. There is still a little palpitation but He who has controlled the asthma has the palpitation also in his programme.'⁶⁹⁹ In the same letter he discusses a demonic case: '(Name of person)⁷⁰⁰ – The parents succeeded in taking him to Ankaful but he soon came back with a report that he has been discharged. Well, I have my own mind about this. It is a real demonic possession and I believe the doctors have no cure. The evil spirit which controls his actions must be cast out. Sometimes his interval is long until something moves the devil in him to act. (Name of person's) deliverance group has offered to pray for him next Friday.'⁷⁰¹

Therefore, for Ofori Atta belief in *Yahweh Rapha* was more than a creedal statement – it was an existential issue. He believed in a God who had the ability to heal him of his biological illnesses as well as heal others of their psychological illnesses. He viewed the agency of prayer as God's tool for freeing people with psychological illnesses. His doctrine of God falls in line with evangelical and charismatic streams of Christian theology or as succinctly put by Derek Tidball 'the charismatic permutation of evangelicalism'.⁷⁰²

The MBC and COF doctrine of God state:

MBC: 'One God, eternally existent in three persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.'⁷⁰³

⁶⁹⁹ William Ofori Atta Family Papers, Accra. 'Letter to Georgina and Nana Amoako' (nd) p. 5. Georgina Adei was one of the many spiritual children of Ofori Atta and was a teacher by profession. However, Georgina was special in that Ofori Atta regarded her as his adopted daughter and she spent part of her life living with him. She married Stephen Adei, another spiritual child of Ofori Atta. The Adei are prominent evangelical Christians in Ghana who have a national ministry focused on marriage and family life called Family Life Mission. The next chapter will elaborate on Ofori Atta's spiritual children.

⁷⁰⁰ I have withheld the name of this person for confidentiality.

⁷⁰¹ Ofori Atta Family Papers, Accra. 'Letter to Georgina and Nana Amoako' (nd) p. 11. For ethical reasons I have withheld the names of persons in the quotation in order to protect their identities. Ankaful is a town in the Central region of Ghana which has a psychiatric hospital located there.

⁷⁰² Tidball, *Evangelicals*, p. 53.

⁷⁰³ 'MBC constitution', p. 1.

COF: 'One God, eternally existent, in three persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit, who out of nothing created heaven and earth and all that is in them and governs all by His eternal providence.'⁷⁰⁴

MBC: 'The eternal Father of the Lord Jesus Christ, Who out of nothing created heaven and earth and all that is in them and who governs all by His eternal providence, and Who is, for the sake of Christ His Son, the Believer's God and Father.'⁷⁰⁵

COF: 'The eternal Father of the Lord Jesus Christ, who is, for the sake of Christ, the believer's God and Father.'⁷⁰⁶

Like Ofori Atta, MBC and COF affirm the Trinity of God, his eternal attribute, his work of creation and his sovereignty. On the one hand, this Trinitarian view stands in opposition to a Unitarian view of God in which God is understood to be one person and not three in one. On the other hand, the Trinitarian view stands in contrast to Tritheism where God is understood to be three gods. While Unitarianism contradicts the three persons of the Godhead, Tritheism rejects God's oneness. MBC and COF assert that all the three persons of the Godhead – Father, Son and Holy Spirit – are eternal, that is have no beginning and no end. COF explicitly states that God created the world *ex nihilo* and that he is sovereign and rules everyone and everything in creation by means of his wise guidance and care. The MBC and COF understanding of God perceives God as the 'Father of the Lord Jesus Christ' and this sets the Christian God apart from the understanding of God in other religions by grounding the doctrine of God in Christology.

⁷⁰⁴ 'COF constitution', p. 1.

⁷⁰⁵ 'MBC constitution', p. 1.

⁷⁰⁶ 'COF constitution', p. 1.

Michael notes that for African evangelicals God is a living God who interacts with them in the everyday affairs of life.⁷⁰⁷ Omenyo observes that although Ghanaian charismatic Christians confess the attributes of God held by their respective churches, they are attracted to God's attribute as a loving parent who supplies the spiritual and physical needs of his children.⁷⁰⁸ God provides the needs of his children by natural and supernatural means. Additionally, God as a parent God guides his children and empowers them to deal with the forces of evil.

2.3 Jesus Christ

Ofori Atta confesses Jesus Christ as the only Saviour from sin and as the one who reconciles humanity to God the Father. In addition, he confesses Jesus Christ the Healer of sicknesses and diseases. He enunciates: 'Christianity is a person. That person is the Lord Jesus Christ; the Son of God. This Jesus is the same everywhere and at all times.... Hebrews 13:8.'⁷⁰⁹ Here again we ascertain his Christocentric belief. If there is one Christian doctrine which constitutes the centre of his spiritual beliefs then that doctrine is Christology.

Ofori Atta declares that a claim Christianity makes: '...is that the founder of Christianity and the Head of it, is the Second Person of the God-head, Jesus Christ our Lord. To the Christian, this solemn fact, not a fancy or conjecture. Christianity is founded on upon this claim, a claim which was also made by the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. If Jesus Christ is not God, then Christianity is a fraud, and its founder is a liar, a blasphemer, or at best a lunatic or deluded person, and all who worship him are blasphemers.... No religion makes these two claims, that

⁷⁰⁷ Michaels, *Christian Theology*, pp. 64, 70.

⁷⁰⁸ Omenyo, *Pentecost*, pp. 223-224.

⁷⁰⁹ Ofori Atta, 'Uniqueness', p 75.

its Holy book is the WORD OF GOD and that its founder is the son of God or is the Godhead. None, no religion or body can truthfully make these claims.’⁷¹⁰

In same manner that God the Father is Healer, Ofori Atta believes that God the Son is the Healer. He believes that the death of Jesus Christ not only provided atonement for sin but also proved healing of sicknesses and diseases: ‘But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed. (Say it over and over until it reached my heart). (i) He was wounded for my transgressions. (ii) He was bruised for my iniquities (ii) the chastisement of my peace was upon him. With his stripes I am healed.’⁷¹¹ He not only understood with his mind that Jesus Christ was the Saviour and Healer he also trusted with his heart and preached this to others.

The centrality of spiritual transformation of people in order to transform society is a strong conviction avowed by Ofori Atta. He argues as follows: ‘We Christians believe that revolutions achieve nothing if they merely set out to change or destroy structures and leave unchanged the men and women that run them. We believe and we assert that only Jesus has power to change

⁷¹⁰ Ofori Atta, ‘Uniqueness’, p 72.

In his sermon, ‘Uniqueness’, p 73, Ofori Atta makes twelve assertions concerning Jesus Christ which may be seen as the elements of his belief in the person and work of Jesus Christ:

(a) Christianity claims that the final revelation of God was made by Jesus and in Jesus. Heb. 1:1-2....

(b) In the matter of our salvation, our greatest need, the Bible claims that:

(i) Jesus came to seek and to save those who are lost (Luke 19:10);

(ii) Jesus came to save his people from their sins (Matt. 1:21);

(iii) Jesus is the only Saviour (Acts 4:12);

(iv) Jesus is God’s ordained and perfectly acceptable Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world (John 1:29);

(v) Jesus is life and he gives eternal life (John 14:6 and 1st John 5:11-12);

(vi) Belief in Jesus Christ saves the believer from perishing and provides him with eternal life (John 3:16);

(vii) Jesus is the propitiation for our sins, the one who has made personal atonement for our sins (1st John 2:2);

(viii) Jesus is the only Mediator between the holy God and sinful man (1 Tim. 2:5);

(ix) God was in Jesus Christ personally reconciling the world to favour with Himself (2 Cor. 5:19);

(x) Jesus is the only way to God, His Father (John 14:6);

(xi) Jesus is the truth, and life (John 14:6)

(xii) God Himself declared concerning Jesus ‘This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased: hear ye Him. (John 17:5). None of the world’s religions can make such claims for itself or for its Founder, Jesus Christ

⁷¹¹ Ofori Atta, ‘Reflections, Book 10’, pp. 7-9.

man's nature and to make him able to change his own society.'⁷¹² This conviction manifests in Ofori Atta's belief that changed individuals should produce changed institutions. In other words, people who have undergone a spiritual change by conversion to faith in Jesus Christ are better able to change the communities they live in. He believed that faith in Christ gave a Christian the assurance of salvation and Christ's peace for daily living: 'Is Jesus in my ship of life? (Mark 4). If he is, there is a marked difference. His peace is different... John 6:16-18.'⁷¹³

The above beliefs about Jesus Christ by Ofori Atta is both an evangelical Christian view and a charismatic Christian view. Evangelicals believe in Jesus Christ as Saviour from sin⁷¹⁴ and Charismatics also believe this as well as the fact that Jesus Christ is the healer of sicknesses and diseases. A query some evangelicals might raise against Ofori Atta's Christology (and soteriology) is whether the atonement of Jesus Christ can be used as a basis for the claim that Jesus Christ is the Healer.

In their statements of belief, the MBC and COF state the following:

MBC: 'Our Lord Jesus Christ, God manifest in the flesh, His Virgin Birth, His sinless human life, His divine miracles, His vicarious atoning death, His bodily resurrection, His ascension, His mediatorial work, and His personal return in power and glory.'⁷¹⁵

COF: 'Our Lord Jesus Christ, God manifest in the flesh, His virgin birth, His sinless human life, His divine miracles, His vicarious and substitutionary atoning death, His bodily resurrection, His ascension, His mediatorial work and His personal return in power and glory.'⁷¹⁶

⁷¹² William Ofori Atta Family Papers, Accra. 'Quotations by Paa Willie' in 'Tribute' p. 12.

⁷¹³ Ofori Atta, 'Reflections, Book 10', p. 14.

⁷¹⁴ See Tidball, *Evangelicals*, pp. 116-136.

⁷¹⁵ 'MBC constitution', p. 1.

⁷¹⁶ 'COF constitution', p. 1.

The above doctrinal affirmations of Ofori Atta, MBC and COF point towards the Reformation principle of *solus Christus*. In the Christology of MBC and COF the deity of Jesus Christ is uncontested and through the incarnation God became human. The virgin birth points to the humanity of Jesus as well as to his deity of Jesus. The miracles of Jesus confirmed him as God's revelation to humanity as well his authority over nature. The sinlessness of Jesus meant it was not necessary for him to perform a sacrifice for himself and consequently he could sacrifice his life in place of and for the benefit of sinful humanity. Jesus' bodily resurrection is a testament to the future bodily resurrection of persons who are 'in Christ' and a validation by God the Father of Jesus life and death. The ascension of Jesus re-exalts him and commences his intercessory ministry for the church. The mediatorial work of Jesus makes him, as the God-man, the intermediary between God and humanity in order to reconcile the two. The second coming of Christ in grandeur is averred by COF and MBC.

For both institutions Jesus Christ is more than an ethical teacher or a prophet – his is the Son of God and the Son of man. Michaels says that African evangelicals affirm both the deity and humanity of Jesus Christ.⁷¹⁷ They confess him as the Saviour of the world. Omenyo declares that in Ghanaian charismatic churches Jesus is thought of as Saviour, Deliverer, Healer, Baptiser, Intercessor, Companion, and King.⁷¹⁸ An emphasis of their Christology is Jesus as the Baptiser who immerses Christians into the Holy Spirit and this experience enables Christians to exercise the charismatic gifts. As the Deliverer and Healer the name of Jesus and the blood of Jesus are used in praise and prayer for spiritual warfare and for invoking God's blessings. The name of Jesus is believed to drives away Satan and evil spirits heal people of

⁷¹⁷ Michaels, *Christian Theology*, pp. 157-164.

⁷¹⁸ Omenyo, *Pentecost*, pp. 224-227.

their sicknesses and diseases and release God's blessings into the lives of his people. In addition, the blood of Jesus is recognised as a defensive spiritual weapon to purify people and objects as well as an offensive spiritual weapon to destroy the stronghold of Satan and evil spirits on people and objects. Omenyo criticises a frequent overemphasis on God the Son and God the Spirit to the neglect of God the Father by Ghanaian charismatics as well as a tendency to use the name of Jesus as if it is a magical formula.⁷¹⁹

2.4 The Holy Spirit

Ofori Atta believed that the Holy Spirit is the one who sustains Christian living. He declares: 'I must open my heart to the Holy Spirit. I must let Him be at home. My body is his temple (1 Cor. 6:19). I must let Him search every room. I must let Him talk, pray through and build up my faith in the Lord. I must let Him work out God's will in my life.'⁷²⁰ He believed in absolute surrender to God's Spirit by the Christian. He understood that a Christian's body was to be a sanctuary for God's Spirit to inhabit and control. He supposed that materialism and people pleasing prevents a Christian from living a Spirit led life: 'We are too enslaved to materialistic considerations and to social ties to obey the dictates of the Spirit of Christ.'⁷²¹

The following prayer expresses his view of the Holy Spirit's work in a person: 'Let us therefore pray God to make us feel the Presence of the Holy Spirit to make us feel the Power and Presence or indwelling of the Holy Spirit to open our eyes so that we may see the wondrous things of

⁷¹⁹ Omenyo, *Pentecost*, pp. 224-227.

⁷²⁰ Ofori Atta, 'Reflections, Book 10', p. 12.

⁷²¹ William Ofori Atta Family Papers, Accra. 'Quotations by Paa Willie' in 'Tribute' p. 12.

His life in us so that we may [be] filled by the Holy Spirit and guided to the Truth of the words of God.’⁷²²

To Ofori Atta, the Spirit of God’s presence, indwelling, filling, power and guidance are to the sought after by Christians. He asserts that there is a spiritual energy crisis in the church and the answer to this is the Baptism with the Holy Spirit. In his Reflections, he states: ‘Jesus is the Baptiser Matt. 3:11, Mk 1:8, Luke 3:16... Then Acts 1:4... Acts 11:15... The Head of the Church is the Baptiser. Go to Him for the Baptism... Holy Spirit is already in you. You must have Him upon you for power... Tongues (i) of men (ii) of angels 1 Cor. 13... Jesus did two mighty works after the H. [Holy] Spirit had come upon Him. You can’t do any mighty works unless the H. [Holy] Spirit comes upon you. (Acts 10:38 Acts 1:8 Luke 24:49). In filling is different – It is overflowing. Baptism is ‘On’ not ‘In’. The well in you. The fire outside. The Fire heats the Water inside. Immerse me in the Spirit in then Gory of God... Baptiser is Christ = seal Eph. 1:8 Rom 8:9.’⁷²³

He places emphasis on the person of the Holy Spirit above the gifts of the Spirit and says Christians ought: ‘...Not talk about the gifts of the H. [Holy] Spirit. Let us talk about the Giver of the Gifts.’⁷²⁴

From the preceding, it may be said that just as for Ofori Atta John 3:16 (Jesus as the Saviour from eternal damnation) is very important, Luke 3:16 (Jesus as the Baptiser with the Holy Spirit) is also important. This implies that he holds on to both an evangelical and a charismatic perception of the doctrine of the Holy Spirit.⁷²⁵ He believes in the evangelical view of Spirit

⁷²² Ofori Atta, 'Reflections, Book 1', p. 1.

⁷²³ Ofori Atta, 'Reflections, Book 4', pp. 32-33.

⁷²⁴ Ofori Atta, 'Reflections, Book 4', p. 31.

⁷²⁵ See Tidball, *Evangelicals*, pp. 52-53.

in-filling as well as the charismatic view of Spirit Baptism. Here again a theological question some evangelicals might ask Ofori Atta is whether Spirit Baptism takes place at conversion rather than as a second blessing after conversion. The private and public documents on Ofori Atta do not indicate when and how he became a charismatic Christian. It may be surmised that his initial association with the Aladura Church after his conversion or the Presbyterian Bible Study and Prayer Group may have had an influence.

The MBC and COF statements of belief on the doctrine of the Holy Spirit state:

MBC: 'The Holy Spirit as a divine person, the third person of the Trinity. We believe that He was sent from the Father by the Son to convict the world, to regenerate and indwell those who trust in Christ, to baptise them into the Body of Christ, to seal them for the final day of redemption, to guide them into truth, to fill them for a life of holiness and victory, and to empower them for witness and service. We believe that he gives spiritual gifts to believers for the proper functioning of the body of Christ, which is the Church.'⁷²⁶

COF: 'The indwelling of the believer by Holy Spirit, enabling him to live a holy life, to witness, and work, for the Lord Jesus Christ.'⁷²⁷

The pneumatology of Ofori Atta, MBC and COF acknowledge the deity and personhood of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit in his fundamental nature is God and relates to God the Father and God the Son within the Trinity. The Spirit's work is convicting, regenerating, indwelling, baptising, sealing, guiding, filling and empowering people. Additionally, the Spirit equips Christians with spiritual gifts for serving God's church. The COF statement refers to the indwelling and enabling work of the Spirit in a Christian for godliness and service.

⁷²⁶ 'MBC constitution', p. 1.

⁷²⁷ 'COF constitution', p. 1.

African evangelicals view the Holy Spirit as the third person of the Trinity, according to Michaels.⁷²⁸ God's Spirit is believed to be different from the impersonal spirits of African spiritual cosmology. According to Omenyo, Ghanaian charismatic churches advocate the availability of the Holy Spirit's power and gifts for the church today in the same way it was available to the New Testament church.⁷²⁹ The Holy Spirit links Christians to God the Father through God the Son. The Spirit enlightens the Christian to properly interpret the Bible. The authority and power of the Holy Spirit helps Christians to triumph over the Devil and evil spirits as well to heal people of sicknesses and diseases. Most Ghanaian charismatics understand the baptism of the Holy Spirit as a 'second blessing' subsequent to the new birth in Christ. The MBC statement of faith has a counter position in that it asserts that the Spirit's baptism places a person into the Body of Christ and as such is not a 'second blessing'. Though the baptism of the Holy Spirit charismatic Christians claim they receive the power to manifest the spiritual gifts in 1 Corinthians 12:8-10. The immediacy attributed to the spiritual gifts in 1 Corinthians is what distinguishes charismatic Christians from their non-charismatic counterparts in the same denomination. Unlike most Pentecostal Christians, a good number of Charismatic Christians are of the opinion that *glossolalia*, 'speaking in tongues', is one of the evidences of the Holy Spirit's baptism and not the initial evidence. As such all Christians baptised in the Holy Spirit need not speak in tongues. A positive contribution of the charismatic renewal in Ghana, Omenyo observes, is highlighting of the 1 Corinthians spiritual gifts as available for all Christians and not only Pentecostals. A negative outcome is the perception some Charismatics have that manifestation of the spiritual gifts is an indication of spiritual maturity.

⁷²⁸ Michaels, *Christian Theology*, p. 198.

⁷²⁹ Omenyo, *Pentecost*, pp. 227-231.

2.5 Humanity and Sin

Ofori Atta's Christian view of humanity and sin is based on both the dignity and the depravity of humanity. He stated that humanity is created in God's image and also added that humanity is sinful and separated from God. In his *Reflections*, he wrote: 'God says all have sinned and He must know. He does not say all have sinned except William Ofori Atta.'⁷³⁰ He further added: 'Two wrongs of dealing with our sin (a) we justify ourselves – excuses (b) we condemn ourselves'.⁷³¹ He admits his sinful nature and says that pride and pity are not the right ways to respond to sin. To him humanity is not just corrupted but totally depraved: 'Sin is infinitely evil and it requires an infinite sacrifice to destroy and wipe out its damning consequences. In the eyes of God sin is an abomination. It affects human nature in such a way as to make it unreformable, unimprovable, and incorrigible. In the eyes of God, human nature which has not been favourably affected by Christ's atoning death is totally depraved and 'every imagination of the thoughts' of a man with such a nature is 'only evil continually' (Gen. 6:5). In the judgement of God, man drinks iniquity like water and even his righteousness is like filthy rags (Job 15:16 & Ps. 64:6).'⁷³²

Ofori Atta regarded Jesus Christ as the answer to the human dilemma of how to deal with sin. On the matter of a transformed human nature, he stated: 'But Jesus went to the root of what was wrong with man. He came to destroy the works of the devil (1 John 3:8), to change the evil human nature, also called the Adamic nature, and to replace it with a new nature which,

⁷³⁰ Ofori Atta, 'Reflections, Book 10', p. 17.

⁷³¹ Ofori Atta, 'Reflections, Book 13', p. 192.

⁷³² Ofori Atta, 'Uniqueness', p 73.

makes the sinful man a new creature, hating the old sinful ways, and transforms him into God's workmanship for good works ("[sic] Cor. 5:13; Eph. 2:10).'⁷³³

In Ofori Atta's judgement, Jesus Christ is God's only answer for solving the riddle of sin. The purpose of the incarnation, crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension of Christ is to overcome the Devil and sin in order to recreate a new humanity. Hence his doctrine of sin is that humanity is characterised by both dignity and depravity. This aligns with the evangelical position of the Christian faith.⁷³⁴ Michaels notes that for African evangelicals human beings are created in the image of God.⁷³⁵ However, as a result of the Fall human beings are sinful beings. Omenyo notes that Ghanaian charismatics stress the sinfulness of humanity created in the image of God in their proclamation of the gospel.⁷³⁶

2.6 Salvation

Ofori Atta believed in salvation by God's grace through faith in Jesus Christ. In one of his writings, he stated: 'Christians have a precious faith, a precious possession. Our faith is not a product of human wisdom: it is a gift from God.'⁷³⁷ He perceived salvation as God's priceless gift which cannot be earned by good works. This is reflected in the following excerpt from his writings in which he declares: 'Jesus Christ is God's provision of salvation from sin and the Devil. But Jesus went to the root of what was wrong with man. He came to destroy the works of the devil (1 John 3:8), to change the evil human nature, also called the Adamic nature, and

⁷³³ Ofori Atta, 'Uniqueness', p 74.

⁷³⁴ See Tidball, *Evangelicals*, pp. 100-102.

⁷³⁵ Michaels, *Christian Theology*, pp. 123-124.

⁷³⁶ Omenyo, *Pentecost*, pp. 239.

⁷³⁷ Ofori Atta, 'Uniqueness; p. 71.

to replace it with a new nature which, makes the sinful man a new creature, hating the old sinful ways, and transforms him into God's workmanship for good works ("[sic] Cor. 5;13; Eph. 2:10).'⁷³⁸

For Ofori Atta, the basis of salvation is the cross of Jesus Christ which revealed Jesus to be God's substitutionary sacrifice for sin. He contends: '... our Lord is God's supreme and final provision for man particularly for man as a sinner needing not only forgiveness and salvation but also fellowship with, and a drawing near to, God; that His once for all sacrifice for sin is the only complete, perfect and final atonement for sins, that this sacrifice and death abolishes and cancels or outdates or makes unnecessary all other sacrifices for sin the best of which were introductory and emblematical of Christ's death and sacrifice; that Christ's death and sacrifice is therefore the perfect, completely satisfying, and final sacrifice.'⁷³⁹

For a person belonging to a royal family in Ghana, Ofori Atta was conversant with Ghanaian traditional religion where animal sacrifices were carried out to appease God, the spirits and the ancestors. Consequently, the penal substitution model of the atonement must have struck a chord with him. He goes on to illustrate his argument about the importance of Christ's death for sin using the hymn 'Nothing but the blood' by Robert Lowry and places emphasis on the phrase 'nothing but the blood of Jesus'. He rephrases the hymn as follows: 'What can take away my stain? Nothing but the blood of Jesus. What can make me whole again NOTHING BUT THE BLOOD OF JESUS...OH, Precious is the flaw (sic) That makes me white as snow. NO OTHER FOUNT I KNOW, NOTHING BUT THE BLOOD OF JESUS'⁷⁴⁰

⁷³⁸ Ofori Atta, 'Uniqueness; p. 71.

⁷³⁹ Ofori Atta, 'Uniqueness', p 73.

⁷⁴⁰ Ofori Atta, 'Uniqueness', p 73.

Ofori Atta enumerated several consequences of salvation. One benefit of salvation is the forgiveness of sin: 'No provision for forgiveness of sin is made in any other religion apart from the cross of Jesus Christ.... Christianity makes provision for man's basic need – the forgiveness of sin.'⁷⁴¹ For him God's pardon for sin can only be found in the Christian faith. Another consequence of salvation is the death of the old life without Christ and the birth of a new life in Christ. In his *Reflections*, he wrote: 'Not enough that self dies. Something else must happen. Christ must live... It is in proportion as self dies in us that Christ can live in us.'⁷⁴² A Christ-centred life is in his opinion a *sine qua non* for true Christianity. A further benefit of salvation is the restoration of humanity's broken relationship and fellowship with God: '... man's greatest need is a restoration of fellowship with God, but his sin separates him from the holy God. He therefore needs remission for his sins, and only the Blood of Jesus Christ secures this, for God's inflexible law is "No shedding of blood, no remission of sin".'⁷⁴³

Accordingly, Ofori Atta's affirm an evangelical doctrine of salvation⁷⁴⁴ with the penal substitution model of the atonement where Jesus Christ voluntarily takes the place of sinful humanity on the cross to satisfy God's justice.⁷⁴⁵ Additionally he affirms the Christus victor model based on his reference to 1 John 3:8, where Christ defeats the Devil by his death on the cross.⁷⁴⁶ The Christus victor model aligns with a charismatic soteriology.

According to their statements of belief, the MBC and COF doctrine of salvation state:

⁷⁴¹ Ofori Atta, 'Reflections, Book 1', p. 2.

⁷⁴² Ofori Atta, 'Reflections Book 3', p. 2.

⁷⁴³ Ofori Atta, 'Uniqueness', p 74.

⁷⁴⁴ See Tidball, *Evangelicals*, pp. 98-115.

⁷⁴⁵ Thomas Schreiner, 'Penal substitution views', in *The nature of the Atonement: Four views*, ed. James Beilby and Paul Eddy (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press), 67-98 (p. 68). (hereafter *Atonement*).

⁷⁴⁶ Gregory Boyd 'Christus Victor view' in *Atonement* 23-53 (p. 24). Two other models of the atonement are 'Healing view' and 'Kaleidoscopic view'. The former regards the atonement as bringing healing to humanity and the latter considers the atonement to best understood through the diverse models with none having a priority over the other.

MBC: 'The salvation of lost and sinful man through the shed blood of the Lord Jesus Christ, by grace through faith, and regeneration by the Holy Spirit, apart from works.'⁷⁴⁷

COF: 'The salvation of lost and sinful man through the shed blood of the Lord Jesus Christ, by grace through faith, (apart from works), and regeneration by the Holy Spirit.'⁷⁴⁸

The doctrine of salvation of Ofori Atta, MBC and COF correspond to the Reformation principles of *sola gratia* and *sola fide* in Christ's salvific work. Humanity is perceived as having lost its way to God and is in a depraved state without God. As a consequence, people are unable by their good works to find their way to God. God takes the initiative in salvation by sending his Son Jesus Christ to atone for sin in order to help humanity find its way back to God. Jesus' atonement is sacrificial and substitutionary. It is sacrificial in that Jesus lovingly and willingly surrendered his life in for humanity. It is substitutionary in that Jesus' sacrifice was not for himself but for humanity. God's grace is a foundation for salvation and faith is a means for salvation. Salvation is an act of God's grace in which humanity responds to God by faith in Jesus Christ's sacrificial death on humanity's behalf. God's Spirit gives new life to saved persons and enables them to be 'born again' into God's family.

African evangelicals affirm salvation through Jesus Christ's substitutionary death and victorious resurrection.⁷⁴⁹ Jesus saves humanity from sin and the consequences of sin. Salvation can only be found in Jesus Christ. For African evangelicals salvation is holistic and embraces both the spiritual dimension of humanity but also encompasses the physical dimension of human life. Ghanaian charismatic Christians stress the need for a new birth.⁷⁵⁰ This position is based on biblical texts such as John 3:1-36 and 1 Peter 1:23 where the concept

⁷⁴⁷ 'MBC constitution', p. 1.

⁷⁴⁸ 'COF constitution', p. 1.

⁷⁴⁹ Michaels, *Christian Theology*, p. 187.

⁷⁵⁰ Omenyo, *Pentecost*, pp. 238-240.

of being ‘born again’ is emphasised. The salvation message for African evangelicals and charismatics consists of admitting of one’s sinfulness, recognising that Jesus Christ paid the price for one’s sin, renouncing sin and surrendering one’s life to Jesus, and living a new life of obedience to God through Jesus Christ. Omenyo criticises a tendency for some ‘born again’ Christians to classify Christians they perceive not to be ‘born again’ as second-class Christians while born-again Christians are regarded as spiritual elites.

2.7 The Church

Ofori Atta perceived the church as the people of God. Christians, as the people of God, are to grow in their love for God and their neighbour.⁷⁵¹ Christians are to be different in their lifestyle from the prevailing culture but Christians are not to separate themselves from society. He observed that Christians ‘... are to remain in society as salt and light – they are to keep society from putrefaction and from falling to pieces and they are to be its light.’⁷⁵² The church is to nurture Christians to live a holy life through Bible reading, prayer, fellowship, and witnessing.⁷⁵³

The MBC and COF doctrine of the church says:

MBC: ‘The spiritual unity of all who believe in our Lord Jesus Christ and who, therefore, are the Church, the Body of Christ, of which He is the Head.’⁷⁵⁴

⁷⁵¹ Ofori Atta, ‘Reflections, Book 6’, pp. 91-92.

⁷⁵² Ofori Atta, ‘Reflections, Book 6’, p. 93.

⁷⁵³ Ofori Atta, ‘Reflections, Book 9’, p. 74.

⁷⁵⁴ ‘MBC constitution’, p. 1.

COF: 'The spiritual unity of all who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and who therefore are the Church, the Body of Christ, of which He is the head.'⁷⁵⁵

Ofori Atta's understanding of the Church, which is shared by the MBC and COF, regards Jesus Christ as the head over the church which is his body. As such the Church is the people of God, an organism more than an organisation. A mark of the Church is the spiritual unity which comes from belonging to the one head, Jesus Christ. Omenyo notes that the understanding of the Church by Ghanaian charismatics has little variation with that of non-charismatics in their denominations.⁷⁵⁶ Unlike some Christians who after experiencing the baptism of the Holy Spirit choose to leave their mainline churches and join Pentecostal churches, Charismatic Christians commit themselves to reviving and renewing their mainline churches. Some Charismatics who belong to churches that practice infant baptism may choose to undergo believers' baptism by immersion – secretly or openly – but will still remain in their denomination. For some Charismatics the Lord's Supper/Holy Communion is believed to have healing power through the blood of Jesus Christ which is represented by the wine.

As the people of God, Christians are to serve God. As noted previously, Ofori Atta was passionate about the need for Christians to be witnesses for Jesus Christ by word and by deed. He stated that the truths of the Gospel '...are not ours to joke with or to compromise with in periods of trials or to give away even under severe pressure. But they are ours to proclaim boldly to the whole world, to every nation, to every creature at home and abroad even to the uttermost parts of the world.'⁷⁵⁷

⁷⁵⁵ 'COF constitution', p. 1.

⁷⁵⁶ Omenyo, *Pentecost*, pp. 240-242.

⁷⁵⁷ Ofori Atta, 'Uniqueness', p 74.

The MBC and COF doctrine of Christian service state:

MBC: 'The necessity for each Christian to be a witness of Jesus Christ to all men by word and deed.'⁷⁵⁸

COF: 'The necessity for each Christian to be witness of Christ to all men by word and deed.'⁷⁵⁹

Witnessing, according to Ofori Atta, MBC and COF, is the duty of every Christian. Although not all Christians are evangelists (Eph. 4:11), when it comes to witnessing, all Christians are to be witnesses for Jesus Christ (Acts 1:8). The strong emphasis on witnessing is not surprising since as was seen in the last chapter Ofori Atta was passionate about sharing the Gospel of Jesus Christ with everyone. Furthermore, the concept 'maranatha' in Maranatha Bible College and 'outreach' in Christian Outreach Fellowship clearly delineates the evangelistic passion of both ministries. Michaels points out that for evangelicals in Africa, the church is God's new community and it is bound together through the blood of Jesus Christ.⁷⁶⁰ Hence the church is to be a place where ethnocentrism gives way to unity in Christ. According to Omenyo, Ghanaian charismatic Christians are of the opinion that humanity needs to be made spiritually new through Jesus' atoning death on the cross and this new humanity needs to live a life of service to God.⁷⁶¹ As a new humanity Christians in turn must use evangelism and discipleship to help others experience the new humanity in Christ. Also, the anticipated second coming of Christ serves as a stimulus for missions and evangelism by Charismatics.

⁷⁵⁸ See Maranatha Bible College Archives, Accra. 'Constitution of Maranatha Bible College 2nd edition', n.d., p. 1. The first edition of the MBC constitution did not have doctrinal affirmation number 10, it was added to the second edition of the MBC constitution. The AEA statement of faith does not have this doctrinal statement.

⁷⁵⁹ 'COF constitution', p. 2. ,

⁷⁶⁰ Michaels, *Christian Theology*, p. 201-202.

⁷⁶¹ Omenyo, *Pentecost*, pp. 239, 243-245.

2.8 Angels

Ofori Atta's view on Satan and angels is that Satan is a personal being who opposes God and that the good angels follow God while the bad angels follow Satan. From Isaiah 14:12-14 he noted that Satan was an angel who fell out of fellowship with God and was cast out of heaven.⁷⁶² Satan deceptively parades himself as an angel of light, 2 Corinthians 11:13-14.⁷⁶³ The aim of Satan is to attack God's children through temptations as well as deprive us of God's blessings.⁷⁶⁴

The MBC and COF doctrine of Satan state:

MBC: 'The personal existence of Satan, whose intent is to supplant God and frustrate His purposes, and whose ultimate end is consignment to eternal punishment.'⁷⁶⁵

COF: 'The personal existence of Satan, whose intent is to supplant God and frustrate his purposes, whose ultimate end is consigned to eternal punishment.'⁷⁶⁶

The doctrine of angels of Ofori Atta, MBC and COF acknowledge Satan as a person and not an impersonal evil force. The purpose of Satan is to oppose and hinder God's plans. The destiny of Satan is God's judgement of everlasting punishment. Omenyo points out that belief in the Devil and evil spirits is pervasive in Africa due to the African world view. With this scenario, Ghanaian charismatic Christians stress the need to overcome Satan and the forces of darkness with power of Jesus Christ.

⁷⁶² Ofori Atta, 'Reflections, Book 12', p. 26.

⁷⁶³ Ofori Atta, 'Reflections, Book 13', p. 171.

⁷⁶⁴ Ofori Atta, 'Reflections, Book 12', pp. 101, 110.

⁷⁶⁵ 'MBC constitution', p. 1.

⁷⁶⁶ 'COF constitution', p. 1.

2.9 Future Things

Ofori Atta believed in the imminent second coming of Jesus Christ. In his *Reflections*, he wrote: 'His coming is imminent. Might appear at any time.... There will be a great separation (Matt. 24:40-41)... There will be suffering (Matt. 24:21) Tribulation... Judgement – all men are going to stand in judgement. The saint = at the judgement seat of Christ. Sinner = at the great white throne judgement... Every soul has a destiny, Heaven or Hell (John 3:18)... Second Death = eternal hell. It is not annihilation.'⁷⁶⁷ For Ofori Atta, the second coming of Christ should raise two questions for Christians: 'Am I ready for His coming? Have I done my best to win loved ones to Christ?'⁷⁶⁸ His view of the second coming follows the evangelical perspective and deals with the tribulation, judgements, and eternal state.⁷⁶⁹

The MBC and COF doctrine of future things state:

MBC: 'The resurrection of the saved and the lost; they that are saved unto the resurrection of life, and they that are lost unto the resurrection of damnation.'⁷⁷⁰

COF: 'The resurrection of the saved and the lost; they that are saved unto the resurrection of life, and they that are lost unto the resurrection of damnation.'⁷⁷¹

Ofori Atta's doctrine of future things asserts the bodily resurrection of every person at the *parousia*, the second coming of Jesus Christ. People who have been saved by Jesus Christ from their sins will enjoy eternal life in God's presence, while those who are lost from God's

⁷⁶⁷ Ofori Atta, 'Reflections Book 15', pp. 2-6.

⁷⁶⁸ Ofori Atta, 'Reflections Book 15', p. 3.

⁷⁶⁹ See Tidball, *Evangelicals*, pp. 137-155.

⁷⁷⁰ 'MBC constitution', p. 2.

⁷⁷¹ 'COF constitution', p. 2.

purposes will endure eternal punishment away from God's presence. This belief is shared by MBC and COF.

African evangelicals are eager for the second coming of Jesus Christ.⁷⁷² This expectation causes some evangelicals to be so other-worldly that they do not concern themselves with earthly matters. However, other evangelicals believe that Christ's second coming does not preclude working towards the transformation of society. For Ghanaian charismatics, Omenyo notes an enthusiasm for the second advent of the Jesus Christ.⁷⁷³ He adds that this expectation is expressed through phrases such as 'maranatha', 'Jesus is coming', 'we shall see him face to face' and 'Come Lord Jesus'. In light of the expected coming of Christ Charismatics are motivated to live a holy life. With the passing of time, the anticipated return of Christ wanes among older charismatic renewal groups. As previously noted, it was because of the conviction of Ofori Atta and John Bergen about the second coming of Jesus Christ that as co-founders they gave the name 'Maranatha' to Maranatha Bible College.

3. Evangelical Christian Ministry

William Ofori Atta translated his Christian beliefs into his Christian ministry notably through Maranatha Bible College and Christian Outreach Fellowship. He was a co-founder of Maranatha Bible College and also one of the key founders of Christian Outreach Fellowship. Both institutions are a testimony to his institutional legacy. David Bosch's mission models will be used to analyse Ofori Atta's ministry through MBC and COF.⁷⁷⁴ It will be shown that

⁷⁷² Michaels, *Christian Theology*, pp.220-221.

⁷⁷³ Omenyo, *Pentecost*, pp. 244-245.

⁷⁷⁴ See David Bosch, *Transforming Mission: paradigm shifts in Theology of Mission*. Maryknoll: Orbis, 1991.

MBC fits into Bosch's Mission as Theology model and COF is in line with Bosch's Mission as Evangelism model. This is because MBC is a theological institution which aims to provide its students with theological knowledge and ministry skills to enable them to carry out the biblical mandate for Christian mission. While COF is an indigenous Christian mission organisation which seeks to carry out the mission task of evangelism by evangelising the unreached areas of Ghana.

3.1 Maranatha Bible College

In 1972 Ofori-Atta co-founded Maranatha Bible College in Accra, Ghana with Rev. John Bergen.⁷⁷⁵ Maranatha teaches and trains men and women to serve as bi-vocational and vocational Christian leaders in church and society. Ofori-Atta served as a council member of MBC and for a brief period as a part-time faculty member. Violet Bergen describes the genesis of MBC as follows: 'Uncle Willie had an intense love and concern for young people. One day he phoned from his office. 'John,' he asked, 'could you come down to my office right away?' After greetings John sat down and to hear what Uncle Willie had to say. He leaned back in his chair as if deep in thought. Finally, with carefully measured words he spoke. 'John,' he asked, 'why don't we start a Bible College? You teach small groups of people each week. We need a Bible school where young men and women from all Ghana can come and study. They could then be sent to serve a pastors and evangelists.'.... Uncle Willie proved himself to be a man of vision, undoubtedly a long way ahead of us in time.'⁷⁷⁶

⁷⁷⁵ Kwame Bediako, 'Ofori-Atta, William Eugene Amoako-Atta' in Gerald H. Anderson, (ed.), *Biographical dictionary of Christian missions*, (Grand Rapids: Erdmanns, 1998), pp 504-505. (hereafter *Biographical*)

⁷⁷⁶ Bergen, *Hold fast*, pp. 21-22.

The name ‘maranatha’ was chosen from 1 Corinthians 16:22 (KJV) ‘If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema, Maranatha’. According to John Bergen ‘we could enhance the teaching of the second coming of Christ Jesus through the name, Maranatha Bible College.’⁷⁷⁷ The motto of Maranatha is based on 2 Timothy 2:2 ‘And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others.’

Donald Guthrie, in his commentary on 2 Timothy states that in chapter 2:1-7 the Apostle Paul urges Timothy to be strong in the midst of opposition to the gospel, however, Timothy’s strength is to come from God’s grace and not from his own ability.⁷⁷⁸ The ‘many witnesses’ in the text may refer to eyewitnesses who knew what Paul had taught Timothy. The qualifications for those who were to pass on Paul’s teachings are faithfulness and teaching ability. The persons who taught God’s Word were to be carefully monitored to ensure that only qualified people served as Bible teachers. The Apostle Paul uses the metaphors of soldier, athlete and farmer to indicate the need for perseverance in times of difficulty: a soldier has a clear focus, an athlete follows the rules and a farmer works hard. Pheme Perkins notes that in the text the Apostle Paul urges Timothy to be a courageous witness for the Gospel.⁷⁷⁹ Also Timothy was to ensure that there was a ‘chain of authoritative teachers’ passing on the Gospel from one generation to another. From the preceding it is clear that MBC aims to teach and train in each generation faithful and capable Christian leaders who will teach and train others to share the Gospel even in the midst of suffering. In other words, MBC seeks to nurture a ‘chain of authoritative ministers of the Gospel’.

⁷⁷⁷ Bergen, *Hold fast*, pp. 52.

⁷⁷⁸ Donald Guthrie, ‘2 Timothy’, in *New Bible Commentary*, ed. By D. A. Carson and others (Nottingham: InterVarsity Press, 1994), 1304-1311 (p. 1306). (hereafter *NBC*)

⁷⁷⁹ Pheme Perkins, ‘2 Timothy’ in *Eerdmans Commentary on the Bible*, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003), 1439-1442 (p. 1440). (hereafter *ECB*)

Maranatha's aim is to educate and train 'the head, heart and hands' of students for Christian service and this is reflected in the MBC's purpose, mission, philosophy and goals. The college's mission statement states: 'The primary purpose of the College is to make available to Christians, sound Biblical and Bible-related training in Ghana. (Ephesians 4:11-14; Hebrews 5:11-6:1). To this end, the College seeks to train men and women who are fully committed to the Lord Jesus Christ to win souls and make them disciples and disciplers; to work or co-operate with other colleges or bodies in Ghana or elsewhere with similar aims.'⁷⁸⁰

MBC mission statement is as follows: 'Maranatha Bible College exists for the education and training of men and women that they may competently and effectively proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ in whatever capacity they may minister in society.'⁷⁸¹ MBC's educational philosophy is as follows: 'Underlying the educational philosophy of the College is the conviction that the Bible in its original manuscripts is the verbally inspired and authoritative Word of God. Consequently, a study of the Bible constitutes the most significant discipline for the student. The Bible, therefore, is the central integrating factor of the total curriculum. All truth ultimately is related to and unified by the revealed Word.'⁷⁸² MBC's statement of goals is: 'Maranatha Bible College seeks to accomplish its mission through a holistic preparation for ministry which relates to students pursuing excellence in Ministry skills, Bible knowledge and Christian character as reflected in 2 Timothy 2:2.'⁷⁸³ The above indicates that MBC offers a holistic type of education which not only focuses on the acquisition of knowledge but also

⁷⁸⁰ See Maranatha Bible College Archives, Accra. 'Constitution of Maranatha Bible College', (nd), p. 1. (hereafter 'MBC constitution').

⁷⁸¹ See Maranatha Bible College Archives, Accra. 'Maranatha Bible College Prospectus', 1995, p. 1. (hereafter 'MBC prospectus 1995').

⁷⁸² 'MBC prospectus 1995', p. 2.

⁷⁸³ See Maranatha Bible College Archives, Accra. 'Maranatha Bible College Prospectus', 2000, p. 1. (hereafter 'MBC prospectus 2000').

character and skills development. This ties in with Ofori Atta's devotional spirituality and nurturing discussed in the previous chapter.

In 1979, several graduates of MBC played a role in the formation of the Accra District Methodist Prayer Group, a charismatic group within the Methodist Church in Ghana.⁷⁸⁴ They met regularly to pray for a revival in the Methodist Church and out of their effort and in cooperation with several prayer groups of Kumasi Diocese of the Methodist Church the Methodist Prayer and Renewal Programmes was born which served as the umbrella organisation to the charismatic movement in the Methodist Church.

As an institution, Maranatha has progressed into an accredited institution which offers a programme in Theology and Ministry. Prior to 2000 MBC was linked with the Accrediting Council for Theological Education in Africa, a wing of the Association of Evangelicals in Africa. In 2000 it was accredited by the National Accreditation Board of the Ghana Government and it also affiliated with the University of Cape Coast in Ghana. In August 2006 Maranatha Bible College became Maranatha University College (MUC) and now offers additional programmes in Business Administration and Guidance and Counselling. The university college has the same vision and mission as the Bible College with the proviso that the subjects taught have been broadened to include courses other than theology. The MUC's vision statement is as follows: 'The vision of Maranatha University College is to be an institution of excellence in innovative tertiary education with a Christian worldview.'⁷⁸⁵ The mission is for the education and development of men and women that they may competently

⁷⁸⁴ Cephas Omenyo, *Pentecost outside Pentecostalism: A study of the Development of Charismatic renewal in the Mainline Churches in Ghana* (Zoetermeer: Boekencentrum, 2006), p. 157. (hereafter *Pentecost*)

⁷⁸⁵ See Maranatha University College Archives, Accra. 'Maranatha University College Prospectus', 2006, p. 2. (hereafter 'MUC prospectus').

and effectively integrate biblical principles in whatever capacity they serve so as to transform society.’⁷⁸⁶

It appears that by becoming a university college MUC is fulfilling Ofori-Atta’s vision and mission of developing men and women with a Christian worldview who will use the Gospel to transform every aspect of culture – the religious, social, economic and political. By so doing God’s builds and extends his kingdom. With reference to Bosch’s models of mission, Ofori Atta’s ministry through Maranatha Bible College employed the Mission as Theology approach to facilitate the mission of God. For MBC, theological education is both theology as theory and theology as practice. MBC strives to maintain a holistic approach to theological formation by putting weight on both the academic formation of students and the ministerial formation of students.

3.2 Christian Outreach Fellowship

The second institutional legacy of Ofori Atta is the missionary organisation Christian Outreach Fellowship (COF). The COF sends missionaries to the un-evangelised areas of Ghana and other parts of West Africa.⁷⁸⁷ Ofori Atta served as the first director of COF and a Council member. COF is a Ghanaian initiated Christian missionary organisation which began in 1974. It is regarded as the first interdenominational missionary society in Ghana.⁷⁸⁸ The motto of COF is centred on John 20:21, ‘... Jesus said, ‘Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am

⁷⁸⁶ ‘MUC prospectus’, p. 2.

⁷⁸⁷ Bediako, ‘Ofori-Atta, *Biographical*, pp. 504-505. See also L. H. Ofosu-Appiah, *The life and times of Dr. J. B. Danquah*, pp. 63-64.

⁷⁸⁸ See Christian Outreach Fellowship Archives, Accra. ‘Christian Outreach Fellowship Strategic Plan’, [n.d.] p. 1. (hereafter ‘COF plan’). The first Trustees were William Ofori Atta, Regina Bentsi-Enchill, Daniel Gyane, N. D. Sodzi.

sending you.’ Donald Guthrie, in his commentary on John points out that in John 20:21-23 Jesus’ gift of peace is linked with Jesus’ commission to his disciples and that Jesus’ commission from God the Father becomes a basis for Jesus’ commission to his disciples.⁷⁸⁹ Martin Scott adds that in this text Jesus breathes life into his disciples in order for them to experience a rebirth before setting out to fulfil Jesus’ commission. For COF only persons who have experienced a rebirth through faith and repentance in Jesus Christ and have the presence of God’s Spirit are qualified to serve as missionaries and proclaim Christ’s message of forgiveness of sins. Such reborn Christians have peace with God and as such can share the gospel of peace with others.

How did COF begin? In 1974 an evangelical ‘Easter House Party’ conference was held in Aburi in the Eastern Region of Ghana at which the participants were made aware of the true state of the evangelisation of Ghana. They realised: ‘(1) that there were still vast areas and communities of people in Ghana who have never heard the Gospel of Christ; (2) that if the direction and progress of evangelistic activity in the country at that time continued, millions of Ghanaians would still be unreached with the Gospel at the close of our generation.’⁷⁹⁰

This revelation made them concerned about the grave state of missionary work in Ghana. Some of the participants saw it as a mandate from God for action on their part. They felt that ‘... the present generation of Ghanaian Christians are the products of missionary outreach of Western Europeans and Americans, initiated nearly 200 years ago. We should now be God’s instruments to complete His work in our land.’⁷⁹¹ Hence for the founders of COF indigenous missionary

⁷⁸⁹ Donald Guthrie, ‘John’, in *NBC*, p. 1064.

⁷⁹⁰ ‘COF plan’, p. 1.

⁷⁹¹ ‘COF plan’, p. 1.

work was the way forward. COF set for itself the following aims and objectives. A key vision of COF was to build a network of Christians who were passionate about indigenous missions and were committed to praying fervently for the growth and development of indigenous missions. The COF vision states: ‘The aim of the Fellowship is to provide an opportunity for concerned Christians in Ghana to more adequately fulfil Christ’s commission (Matt. 28:19) to go and make disciples of all nations. In pursuit of this aim the COF will 1. Make it its business to stir up missionary interest wherever possible and bring together in common endeavour all believers who have a burden for promoting Christian missionary service in Ghana and abroad. 2. Pray for and encourage existing prayer circles to pray for missionary work in progress and yet to be done, and for the formation of Fellowship and missionary groups throughout the country to pray for and support this endeavour.’⁷⁹² Another key vision of COF was to communicate the need for indigenous missions to the Christian community in Ghana and overseas, research on the areas where missionary work was most needed, raise financial support for indigenous missions and liaise with other Christian ministries involved in indigenous missions. The COF vision states: ‘3. Seek and spread information about areas of need and possible avenues of service as manifested by missionary work in Ghana and abroad. 4. Seek to discover and be sensitive to areas where missionary work is needed and supply this need. 5. Raise financial, prayer and other support for the training and up-keep of missionaries. 6. Co-operate with other missions and groups working for Christ in Ghana and elsewhere with a similar aim.’⁷⁹³

With the passage of time COF has grown to become a key Ghanaian missionary organisation with fruitful results to justify its existence. From 1996 to 2011, a 15 year period, COF produced:

⁷⁹² See Christian Outreach Fellowship Archives, Accra. ‘Constitution of Christian Outreach Fellowship’, 1983, p. 1. (hereafter ‘COF constitution’).

⁷⁹³ See Christian Outreach Fellowship Archives, Accra. ‘Constitution of Christian Outreach Fellowship’, 1983, p. 1. (hereafter ‘COF constitution’).

107 missionaries, 153 Field Assistants, 2,501 Church Planters, 4 office personnel, 238 leaders under training and 221 trained leaders.⁷⁹⁴ With reference to Bosch's models of mission, Ofori Atta's ministry through Christian Outreach Fellowship used the Mission as Evangelism approach to mediate the mission of God. COF proclaims the Good news of salvation through Jesus Christ with a proclivity for the not yet evangelised people groups.

3.3 Christian Mentoring

In addition to his involvement in MBC and COF, Ofori Atta served the Christian community in many capacities notably in the area of mentoring individuals as well as mentoring institutions. Mentoring is acting as an adviser and guide in order to grow and develop an individual or a group or an organisation in set goals. Ofori Atta helped a number of Christians to grow and mature in their Christian faith. Additionally, he contributed to the development various Christian ministries.

Bob Garvey, an academic and practitioner in mentoring and coaching and a member of the European Mentoring and Coaching Council, defines mentoring as 'a relationship between two individuals with learning and development as its core purpose'.⁷⁹⁵ He adds that trust, commitment, and emotional engagement are essential qualities for mentoring. In mentoring the mentor is required to listen, question, challenge and support the mentee. The mentors assist mentees to realise their dreams. Often a friendship develops between mentor and mentee since the relational aspect of mentoring is central to the mentoring process and intimacy and mutual

⁷⁹⁴ See Christian Outreach Fellowship Archives, Accra. 'COF 1996-2011 Statistics', p. 1.

⁷⁹⁵ Bob Garvey, 'Mentoring in a coaching world' in Elaine Cox, Tatiana Bachkistrova and David Clutterbuck, *The Complete Handbook of Coaching* (London: sage, 2010) p. 344.

dependence becomes features of the mentoring relationship. It is important in mentoring to create a social context in which the mentoring relationship is truly supportive and helpful rather than abusive and manipulative. The giving of advice is normally not part of mentoring, but if the mentor decides to give advice this should be done in the form of choices for the mentee so as to build empathy and credibility with the mentee. Garvey insists that mentoring ought to help a person realise her/his potential in the area the mentoring process focuses on.

With regard to individual mentoring, Ofori Atta shared his life experiences with his mentees. He worked at nurturing them in their spiritual and life development. He served as a role model for his mentees. One method he used in mentoring individuals was Christian literature distribution. He made it a habit to buy Christian literature and distribute them to his mentees. Violet Bergen comments on Ofori Atta's Christian literature distribution activity as follows: '... Mr. Ofori Atta visited us often and walked out with *African Challenge* magazines, Bibles and books which he bought for his friends. He radiated an inner joy, was usually in a hurry and always left us with a choice thought to ponder.'⁷⁹⁶ In his 'Reflections' Ofori Atta wrote the names of 43 men and women whom he considered as his mentees and next to each name he wrote the title of the Christian book he had bought for that person.⁷⁹⁷ The list, for me, looks like a 'Who is Who' of Ghanaian Christianity today since many of the persons in the mentoring list are the current senior leaders of evangelical Christianity in Ghana.

One of Ofori Atta's mentees was Bernard Marbell, a former Principal of Maranatha Bible College. In an article entitled 'I remember Paa Willie' in the Ghanaian Christian magazine *Step* he refers to Ofori Atta as 'a man after God's own heart' and makes the following observations

⁷⁹⁶ Bergen, *Hold fast*, p. 19.

⁷⁹⁷ Ofori Atta, 'Reflections, Book 16', pp. 97-99.

about Ofori Atta. First, he perceived Ofori Atta as characterised by the qualities of love, humility, peace and servant leadership. Marbell states: 'He loved people – whether in prison or outside – and desired to share his life with them. His humble spirit endeared him to many. His humble spirit endeared him to many people.... Another quality that stood out in Paa Willie was his harmonising spirit. He loved peace without compromising on fundamental issues. As a servant leader he inspired many young leaders in this country. This quality led to his being sought after by many groups to lead them....' ⁷⁹⁸ Next Marbell points out that Ofori Atta and his wife Mary were a model Christian couple who loved and obeyed the Bible. Marbell remarks: 'Paa Willie's woman was Auntie Mary.... they were a model Christian couple who inspired many young men and women. Another quality which readily comes to mind is Paa Willie's humility.... Paa was a man of the Bible.... it governed his life and he lived it so naturally that it became pervasive to those around him.... to those who walked with him and learnt from him he showed us practical ways to live for the Lord.' ⁷⁹⁹ Furthermore Marbell contends that Ofori Atta was a man of strong Christian convictions and principles yet he respected the views of those who differed with him on religious and political issues. Marbell comments: 'Of course, Paa wouldn't compromise on fundamental issues such as whether or not Jesus is the Son of God. Yet his consideration for others made him preach his faith without undermining other people for what they believed... Paa was a man of principle who, in order to please God, did not fear what man did or said.... Paa loved to share his faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and he did it so naturally that it motivated us to do the same.' ⁸⁰⁰

Although Marbell as Ofori Atta's mentee may be accused of being biased in his estimation of Ofori Atta, nevertheless his testimony about him cannot be overlooked. It gives an insider's

⁷⁹⁸ Marbell, 'I remember Paa Willie', pp. 8-9.

⁷⁹⁹ Marbell, 'I remember Paa Willie', pp. 8-9.

⁸⁰⁰ Marbell, 'I remember Paa Willie', pp. 8-9.

view of Ofori Atta and delineates his love for God and people and his desire through the Gospel of Christ for people to enter into a right relationship with God and with other people.

3.4 Christian Corporate Governance

In the area of corporate governance, Ofori Atta served as a board chairman or board member of diverse Christian organisations in Ghana. Firstly, he governed institutions focusing solely on evangelism and missions in the following capacity: Council member of Child Evangelism Fellowship, Vice President of Scripture Union, President of the Bible Society of Ghana, Council Chairman of Ghana Evangelism Committee of the Christian Council of Ghana and Chairman of the Board of Trustees of Challenge Enterprises of Ghana. Secondly, he governed institutions focusing on both evangelism and social action in the following capacity: lay preacher in the Presbyterian Church of Ghana, Chairman of the Board of Trustees and Executive Committee of the Ghana Institute of Linguistics, Literacy and Bible Translation, and Council Chairman of World Vision International, Ghana.

The Christian para-church organisations that Ofori-Atta served were not chosen arbitrarily. They reflected his passion for the evangelism of children, for the promotion, distribution and reading of the Bible, for Bible translation and literacy, for ecumenical cooperation in evangelism, for literature evangelism and for Christian social action. The main issue here is neither the number of Christian organisations he served nor the positions he occupied, but the fact that he led these Christian ministries to experience fruitful growth and development. For

example, his vision for the Bible Society Ghana was that it should become self-supporting with resources from Ghana instead of overseas, as well as assist weaker Bible Societies in other parts of the world. He led the Ghana Institute of Linguistics, Literacy and Bible Translation to move forward with translation work on 23 out of 60 Ghanaian languages and to train 20,000 adults in literacy by 1987.⁸⁰¹

4. Conclusion

From the above study it may be contended that William Ofori Atta's Christian beliefs fall under the evangelical and charismatic branches of Christian theology. Also, his approach to Christian ministry corresponds to Bosch's Mission as Theology and Mission as Evangelism models. It may be surmised that a central core of Ofori Atta's Christian beliefs and Christian service was Christian spiritual righteousness. Ofori Atta's Christian spiritual beliefs underscored his evangelical and charismatic Christian credentials which may be summarised by the idea of Christian spiritual righteousness. His Christian spiritual righteousness beliefs were that the Bible is God's word, God the Father is the Healer, God the Son is the Saviour, God the Spirit is the Enabler and human beings are sinners in need of God's salvation. This shows that Christian righteousness is a bedrock of his Christian beliefs.

In addition, Christian righteousness was an underlying value of his Christian service. This is because his purpose in Christian service was for MBC and COF to help people to enter into both a right relationship with God through Jesus Christ as well as a right relationship with other people. The theological education of MBC, the missions and evangelism of COF, his personal

⁸⁰¹ Ghana Institute of Linguistics, Literacy and Bible Translation, "Tribute to Paa Willie" in 'Tribute', p. 61.

mentoring and his corporate governance were all geared towards facilitating the work of God in making righteous people out of sinful people and by God's grace believers in Christ will live in harmony with other people.⁸⁰² This is summed up by the following quote: 'The motivating force of his life was service — service to his neighbours and to the nation often at great personal discomfort and detriment to himself.'⁸⁰³ This quote by the family of William Ofori-Atta at his funeral sums up a key ingredient of Ofori-Atta's life — that of leading by serving, that is serving God and serving people.

Regarding his Christian spiritual beliefs Ofori Atta stresses: 'These are the bases and the pillars of our faith. They are not ours to joke with or to compromise with in periods of trials or to give away even under severe pressure. But they are ours to proclaim boldly to the whole world, to every nation, to every creature at home and abroad even to the uttermost part of the world.'⁸⁰⁴

From the above discussion it might be said that Ofori Atta may be regarded as a twentieth century Christian activist with firm Christian convictions. Nevertheless, he exercised religious tolerance in his Christian service in light of the multifaith Ghanaian context. It is noteworthy that his vice presidential candidate for his Third Republic of Ghana presidential campaign under the auspices of the United National Convention political party was a Muslim — Alhaji Mahama Idrissu. Ofori Atta was one of the pioneers in Ghanaian politics in having a Muslim as a vice presidential candidate.

What element of William Ofori Atta's Christian mission leadership principle is consistent with the definition of ethical leadership in this thesis? From the above it may be deduced that Ofori Atta's Christian mission principle has the ingredient of the ethical value of righteousness as its

⁸⁰² I will develop this concept of 'spiritual righteousness' further in chapter 10.

⁸⁰³ K. Y. Boafo (ed.), "A short biography of Mr. William Ofori-Atta — Paa Willie" in 'Tribute', p. 13.

⁸⁰⁴ Ofori Atta, 'Uniqueness', p 74.

core basis. The righteous God in the Bible commands Christians to share the Good News of salvation in Jesus Christ so that the righteous God recreates humanity in his righteousness. Ofori Atta asserted that Christians need to obey God's call to proclaim and demonstrate the gospel of Jesus Christ by word and deed. He frequently quoted the Bible text John 20:21 'As my Father hath sent me, even so send I you' (KJV) to inspire Christians to share the Good News of Jesus Christ with the not yet Christian. He also often quoted 2 Timothy 2:2 'And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable people who will also be qualified to teach others' (NIV) to motivate Christians to make disciples for Jesus Christ. As discussed previously, these two Bible texts are undergirded by the understanding of Christian righteousness. He believed that the righteous God through the Good News about Jesus invites humanity to experience a right relationship with God, with oneself and with other people. The righteous God is at work to make his creation righteous.

The definition of ethical leadership in this research has integrity, influence and impact as the criteria for judging an ethical leadership value. The above analysis of Ofori Atta's Christian mission principle demonstrates that the ethical value of righteousness advocated and practised by Ofori Atta influenced people in Ghana to achieve worthwhile goal of Christian righteousness for the common good of society and also impacted Christian and societal institutions in Ghana in order to make them life enriching structures through God's righteousness. Christian righteousness requires Christians to live a life of integrity according to the Bible. Hence, all of the three criteria for ethical leadership – integrity/ altruism, worthwhile influence, enriching structures - are fulfilled by Ofori Atta's ethical leadership value of Christian righteousness with regard to his Christian mission leadership principle. The next chapter is the concluding chapter and it will evaluate Ofori Atta's political and religious leadership in the Ghanaian public square.

CONCLUSION: THE LEGACY OF AN ETHICAL LEADER

1. Introduction

On the 6th of March 1957, the British colony of the Gold Coast, on the coast of West Africa, won its independence and was renamed Ghana. It became the first sub-Saharan African country to gain independence from a colonial power. Ghanaians had high hopes for a bright future. They were inspired by their national motto of “freedom and justice”. Yet after political independence Ghana went through several decades of political instability, economic regression, and social tensions. Along this journey the Ghana dream sometimes became a nightmare, the Ghana vision every now and then became an illusion. Today Ghana is enjoying several decades of political stability, economic progress and social cohesion. The experience of Ghana has been replicated in many other sub-Saharan African countries. For many Africa countries, the optimism of political independence gave way to the pessimism of economic dependency. What went wrong? Why did the expected social, economic, and political prosperity not materialise? Why are religious tension, political flux, economic regression, social conflict and personal corruption time and again features of some African counties instead of religious tolerance, political stability, economic growth, social cohesion, and personal honesty being the norm? Both Africans and non-Africans have advanced many reasons as to the aetiology of the African condition and its alleviation. Most of the causes and cures are said to be political, economic, and social; a few will add religious. This study claimed that ethical leadership was an important factor to consider in helping to remedy Africa’s challenges. This implies that a fundamental need of the African condition is ethical leadership. The growth and

development of African nations may be enriched by ethical leaders practicing ethical leadership in the African public square.

What role is there for religion, notably Christianity, in African public life and in the formation of ethical leaders in Africa who will positively contribute to the continent's political and socio-economic development? Andrew Walls points out that the shift in the centre of gravity of Christianity from the North to the South has great implications for the future of Christian life and thought.⁸⁰⁵ It means that the Global South, especially Africa, will more and more determine the agenda of Christianity. Walls asserts that African Christianity will become archetypal for Christianity in the third millennium. He comments that the "characteristic doctrines, the liturgy, the ethical codes, the social applications of the faith will increasingly be those prominent in Africa."⁸⁰⁶ If indeed African Christianity is to be a dominant model of Christianity for the 21st century the question arises as to whether African Christianity can play a significant role in the socio-economic and political development of the African continent in particular and the rest of the world in general. Will African Christianity be a progressive factor in world Christianity, or will it be a retrogressive factor? This research contends that the political and religious life of William Ofori Atta reveals that African Christianity can be a positive influence for the nurture of ethical leaders for the African public square who will concretise Africa's political and socio-economic development.

⁸⁰⁵ Andrew Walls, 'Africa in Christian History — Retrospect and Prospect', *Journal of African Christian Thought*, 1:1 (1998) 2-15. (hereafter *Africa in Christian History*)

⁸⁰⁶ Walls, *Africa in Christian History*, p.2.

2. William Ofori Atta's Ethical Leadership

This study is related to the subject of leadership in the Ghanaian public sphere. It advanced the position that a critical examination of William Ofori Atta's political and religious life and thought provides the evidence to demonstrate the claim that he was an ethical leader in the Ghanaian public square. Moreover, the study reasons that based on an examination of Ofori Atta's words and deeds it may be contended that his ethical values shaped his political and religious leadership. This explains why he is asserted to be an ethical leader in Ghanaian public arena by the church and society in Ghana. In a letter to the President of the Third Republic of Ghana, Ofori Atta asserted: 'I would like to die still serving my nation and my God. I would like to die still holding on to the principles which I held dear in my youth, principles which have not only been updated but upheld.'⁸⁰⁷ This thesis has attempted to distil the leadership principles and ethical values that shaped his political and religious thought and practice. As he expressed in the preceding quote, some of his principles were nurtured in him during his youth, while other principles – for example his Christian values - were added later on in his life to augment his earlier principles. The eminent Ghanaian theologian, Kwame Bediako remarked that "there was probably no single person in Ghana who had quite as wholesome an impact on the country's political life for more than five decades, than 'Paa Willie'"⁸⁰⁸ This investigation has confirmed Bediako's affirmation of the positive legacy that Ofori Atta left with regard to Christian witness in the public sphere in Ghana.⁸⁰⁹ Additionally, the prominent Ghanaian historian Robert Addo-Fening remarked that '...Paa willie was the epitome of humility, statesmanship, integrity, courage of conviction and rare wit.'⁸¹⁰

⁸⁰⁷ Ofori Atta, 'PNP-UNC Alliance', p. 5.

⁸⁰⁸ *Ibid*, p. 126.

⁸⁰⁹ Kwame Bediako, 'Christian Witness in the Public Sphere: Some Lessons and Residual Challenges from the Recent Political History of Ghana' in Lamin Sanneh and Joel A. Carpenter, (eds.), *The Changing Face of Christianity: Africa, The West and the World*, (Oxford: OUP, 2005) p. 125-130.

⁸¹⁰ Robert Addo-Fening, 'Farewell Paa Willie' *Daily Graphic*, Friday August 19, 1988, p. 5.

As shown in the thesis, in Easter 1946 Ofori Atta at the age of 36 delivered an address on the topic ‘Constructive Citizenship’ to the Begoro Old Boys Association. It may be argued that his definition of a ‘constructive citizen’ in this address formed the basis of his understanding of ethical leadership. To Ofori Atta an ethical leader is a person whose life is marked by ‘splendid living and magnificent contributions to the common good’.⁸¹¹ The character of an ethical leader is ‘splendid’ and the conduct of an ethical leader is a ‘magnificent contribution to the common good’. In this address he made the case for Christian involvement in the public square using a Bible quotation and life of Jesus Christ as an example. He contended that the reason for the involvement of Christians in the public square is to bring Christian ethics to the public arena. Ofori Atta asserts: ‘Let us turn to the state and we find that our contribution to State life is less edifying. There are many factors responsible for this lack of interest in the State, but I will mention only one tonight. There is a tendency on the part of the Church members to think that when Jesus Christ said “Render unto Caesar’s the things that are Caesar’s and unto God the things that are God’s” he meant the Christians should have nothing to do with Caesar or the State. On the contrary he expects us to play our part as a citizen, to make the Christian light shine at the deliberations of the State Councils so as to ensure that the basis of their resolutions, decisions, and policies should be solidly on Christian Ethics. That is our responsibility as Christians.’⁸¹²

The preceding indicates that right from his young adult years to the end of life, ethical leadership was important to him. Additionally, the use of a Christocentric Bible quotation and illustration to justify Christian ethical leadership in politics demonstrates that his Christian

⁸¹¹ Ofori Atta, ‘The Real Crisis’, p. 26.

⁸¹² Ofori Atta, ‘The Real Crisis’, p. 27.

convictions influenced his political convictions. Furthermore, the quotation shows that his evangelical Christian faith was not the genesis of his ethical leadership as is generally perceived by Ghanaian society. Before he became an evangelical Christian, his Christian nurture in the Presbyterian Church provided him with Christian worldview and ethos that shaped his political life in the direction of ethical leadership. It is noteworthy that at a time in the 1960s and 1970s when most evangelical Christians were apolitical, Ofori Atta was actively involved in the political life of Ghana. Thus, it may be argued that his Christian life and political life shaped each other.

This research asserted that ethical leadership is one of the factors required to manage the challenges faced by some African countries in terms of social conflict, economic regression, and political flux so as to move on to a state of social cohesion, economic growth, and political stability. Biography as theology, or more appropriately ‘biography as ethics’, was the methodology used to examine Ofori Atta’s leadership principles. The leadership thought and practice of Ofori-Atta was examined through the lens of the political organisations he participated in – the Gold Coast Youth Movement, United Gold Coast Convention, Ghana Congress Party, National Liberation Movement, United Party, Progress Party, People’s Movement for Freedom and Justice and the United National Convention.

Ofori Atta’s leadership was marked by service above self and a selfless devotion to God and people. He had his share of weaknesses and failures as has been pointed out in this research. For example when the Second Republic Progress Party government in which he served as a member of parliament and a cabinet minister dismissed 568 workers in the civil service and public corporations based on the allegation that they were ineffective workers as well as the inhumane manner in which the Alien’s Compliance Order was implemented to deport illegal

immigrants in Ghana. Nevertheless, Ofori Atta transcended them to leave a legacy which has more assets than liabilities in the Ghanaian public life. The thesis has enumerated the factors which played a role in the growth and development of William Ofori-Atta as a leader. The institutions of family, church and society provided an important context for William Ofori Atta's leadership formation. Several key influencers of his political journey were his father Nana Ofori Atta and his uncle J. B Danquah. Furthermore, his experiences as a royal family member, a Cambridge University educated elite, a teacher and later a lawyer, an evangelical Christian, an evangelical Christian evangelist were crucial to his leadership thought and practice.

This investigation found out that William Ofori Atta's seven leadership principles were, political democracy, human rights. socio-economic development, social reconciliation, personal transparency, evangelical Christian Salvation, and evangelical Christian Mission.

His leadership principles were expressed as follows:

- political democracy as national independence and multiparty governance
- human rights as rule of law and political/ civil liberties
- socio-economic development as educational empowerment and economic progress
- social reconciliation as national conciliation and international dialogue
- personal transparency as personal honesty and personal accountability
- Evangelical Christian salvation as evangelical Christian conversion and spirituality
- Evangelical Christian mission as evangelical Christian beliefs and ministry.

From his leadership principles the study analysed the ethical value which formed the core ingredient of each leadership principle to reveal the values of freedom, liberty, justice, unity, integrity, and righteousness. The following table is a summary of his ethical leadership conception:

William Ofori Atta's Leadership Thought and Practice	William Ofori Atta's Leadership Principle	William Ofori Atta's Ethical Leadership Value
National Independence and Multiparty Governance	Political Democracy	Freedom
Rule of Law and Civil/ Political Liberties	Human Rights	Liberty
Educational Empowerment and Economic Progress	Socio Economic Development	Justice
National Conciliation and International Dialogue	Social Reconciliation	Unity
Personal Honesty and Personal Accountability	Personal Transparency	Integrity
Evangelical Christian Conversion and Spirituality	Evangelical Christian Salvation	Righteousness
Evangelical; Christian Beliefs and Ministry	Evangelical Christian Mission	Righteousness

Chapter one of the thesis presented the life story of William Ofori Atta. The examination of the life story of Ofori Atta has shown that his family heritage, educational background, professional development, political seasons and Christian faith contributed to his leadership formation. It was disclosed that the key influencers of his political journey were of his father, Nana Ofori Atta and his uncle, J. B Danquah. Also, his experiences as a royal and elite were crucial to life in politics. Additionally, his evangelical Christian conversion was a catalyst to his leadership formation. Thus, individuals and the institutions of family, church and society provided an important context for William Ofori Atta's leadership formation.

Chapter two of this thesis showed that William Ofori Atta used the phrase 'freedom loving people' to describe his leadership principle of political democracy. For him this phrase implied that historically and contemporaneously Ghanaians are a people who love freedom and are willing to struggle to overcome obstacles to achieve freedom for their nation. Ofori Atta was a democrat and not an autocrat because of his principles and practice of democracy. An appraisal of Ofori Atta's understanding of political democracy shows that political democracy to him

was expressed through national independence and multiparty governance. He regarded national independence as anticolonialism, self-determination, and self-government. His anticolonial ideology was a rejection of colonial rule in tandem with the acceptance self-determination, while his self-governance practice was the establishment of a national independence for which political freedom issued in economic and social development. He believed that multiparty governance was made up of constitutional democracy, civilian rule, and multiparty democracy. He was firmly against one-party state rule and military rule. He had a conservative political ideology in his young adult and middle adult years. However, in his senior adult years he shifted to a moderate political ideology unifying both the conservative political group and he radical political group into a mixture of these two political positions through the People's Movement for Freedom and Justice political pressure group and the United National Convention political party. The ethical value that formed the core ingredient of his political democracy leadership principle was discovered to be that of freedom.

In chapter three it was revealed that the expression 'the price of liberty is eternal vigilance' was used by Ofori Atta to describe his leadership principle of human rights. By this he meant that the populace of a nation was to fight for their human rights and work hard at carefully watching over and maintaining their human rights. He was both an advocate and an activist with respect to the leadership principle of human rights, of which the key elements for him were the rule of law and civil/ political liberties. An evaluation of Ofori Atta's understanding of civil/ political liberties indicates that freedom of speech, freedom of the press, and freedom of association were the essential ingredients of his human rights practice. He was a human rights defender and not an opponent of human rights. The ethical value that constituted the core component of his human rights leadership principle was found to be that of liberty.

Chapter four demonstrated that Ofori Atta used the terms ‘constructive citizenship’ education and ‘khaki collar’ jobs to describe his leadership principle of socio-economic development. For him the term ‘constructive citizenship’ education meant a holistic approach to education in which a student’s ‘head’, ‘heart’ and ‘hands’ are educated through academic knowledge formation, character formation and skills formation respectively. Such citizens are the human resources needed for national development. The term ‘khaki collar’ job was in reference to the need to create jobs for the working class (in Gold Coast times some of the working class wore khaki uniforms to work). The working class formed the majority of the Ghanaian populace and as such job creation for them meant the mobilisation of the majority of the human resources of the nation for national development. He advanced the policies of educational empowerment and economic progress. An evaluation of the significance of Ofori Atta’s leadership principle of socio-economic development demonstrates that for him socio-economic development was manifested through educational empowerment through ‘constructive citizenship’ education, moral education, and vocational technical education; as well as economic progress through ‘khaki collar’ jobs, agricultural development, industrialisation, land reform, and rural development. He initially started out with a capitalist economic position for socio-economic development in his younger years but shifted to a mixed economy policy in his older years. This was because in his older years he built an alliance between the conservative political group and the radical political group through his UNC political party. The ethical value that formed the core ingredient of his socio-economic development leadership principle was discovered to be that of justice.

In chapter five the slogan ‘broad based the best’ was used by Ofori Atta to describe his leadership principle of social reconciliation. He used this phrase in his later years because he

believed in harnessing the human resources of the conservative political group voters/ leaders and the radical political group voters/ leaders to build a coalition for national development. An assessment of his social reconciliation leadership principle indicates that he advocated social reconciliation by means of national conciliation and international dialogue. The pursuit of social reconciliation led him to make a major shift from his conservative politics to centrist politics. His political ideology of centrism was a significant landmark in the Ghanaian political landscape because it prompted other political leaders to consider political centrism as an option in Ghanaian politics. In his mature years he moved from a hard-line conservative political group ideology to reconciliation with the radical political group for the sake of entrenching democracy in Ghana and in the interest of nation building in Ghana. He reconciled rather than alienated in matters dealing with the national interest. The ethical value that constituted the core component of his social reconciliation leadership principle was found to be that of unity.

Also, in chapter four the slogan ‘my hands are clean’ was used by Ofori Atta to describe his leadership principle of personal transparency. This term which he took from the Bible (Psalm 24:4) portrayed the need for Ghanaians to choose leaders who were honest and also for Ghanaian citizens to be honest people. An appraisal of his personal transparency leadership principle indicated that he practiced and preached personal transparency through personal honesty and personal accountability. He insisted unequivocally that leaders were to model and practice honesty and accountability in private and public life so that their followers would emulate them. He was not a corrupt leader but a principled and morally upright leader. The ethical value that formed the core ingredient of his personal transparency leadership principle was discovered to be that of integrity.

Chapter six established that Ofori Atta used the term ‘Jesus is the only Mediator between the holy God and sinful man’ to describe his leadership principle of evangelical Christian salvation. He believed that Jesus Christ was the only means by which a person could connect with God. An evaluation of his understanding of Christian salvation confirms that he took an exclusivist position on the relationship between Christianity and other religions. He did not believe that all religions provide salvation to God. He believed in the evangelical Christian stream of Christianity in which spiritual conversion to repentance and faith in Jesus Christ was essential. To him only Jesus Christ could provide spiritual salvation from sin and a relationship and fellowship with God. Additionally, he practiced a Christian disciplined spirituality through the Christian disciplines of Bible meditation, Christian prayer, Christian fellowship, and Christian witnessing. Ofori Atta was a nominal Christian in the first half of his life and become an evangelical Christian in the second half of his life. The ethical value that constituted the core component of his evangelical Christian salvation leadership principle was found to be that of righteousness.

In chapter seven it was shown that the Bible texts 2 Timothy 2:2 ‘And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable people who will also be qualified to teach others.’ and John 20:21 ‘As my Father hath sent me, even so send I you’ were used by Ofori Atta to describe his leadership principle of evangelical Christian mission. His leadership principle of Christian mission had a twofold expression – evangelical Christian beliefs and evangelical Christian ministry. His beliefs were a foundation for his ministry. He was not a theologically liberal Christian after his evangelical conversion to Christ. His beliefs regarding the Bible, Jesus Christ, humanity, sin, salvation, the church and future things connect him with evangelical Christianity. But it is very significant that his beliefs on the doctrines of God, the Holy Spirit, and angels connect him with charismatic Christianity. This is because at

the time he held to his charismatic beliefs he was a member of the Presbyterian Church of Ghana and also the charismatic movement was not widespread in 1970s Ghanaian Christianity. With regards to Christian ministry two important evangelical Christian ministries for him were theological education and cross cultural missions. He was one of the founders of both Maranatha Bible College (MBC) and Christian Outreach Fellowship (COF) in Ghana. MBC provides non-denominational theological education for Christians to become bi-vocational or vocational Christian ministers. COF is a pioneer indigenous Christian mission and sends missionaries to the parts of Ghana not yet evangelised. Based on the preceding, it can be said that an evaluation of Ofori Atta's understanding of the ministry aspect of evangelical Christian mission was that of mission as theology and mission as evangelism respectively. The ethical value that formed the core ingredient of his evangelical Christian mission leadership principle was discovered to be that of righteousness.

3. William's Ofori Atta's Legacy

To what extent did William Ofori Atta's Christian conversion, Christian spirituality, Christian beliefs and Christian service shape his political, economic, social and personal policies as politician. The evidence that may be adduced from this thesis is that Ofori Atta's upbringing in the Presbyterian church from childhood and the Christian religious studies in secondary school contributed to forming Christian faith and practice in his life as a nominal Christian. However, it was his dramatic evangelical Christian conversion experience in his midlife that accentuated the influence of the Christian faith in his private and public life. In his public political life, he sometimes referred to Bible texts in his parliamentary debates, political speeches and political writings. He used the Bible texts to illustrate the arguments he was

making on political matters. He did not explicitly use the public political setting to proclaim the Christian gospel. In his public political life, he aimed to live an exemplary Christian life and use his lifestyle example as a Christian witness. He was tolerant and respectful of other religions in his public political life. When it came to the church setting, he explicitly proclaimed the Christian gospel and urged other Christians to do the same. He did not push his political ideology on the Christian community, rather he encouraged Christians to choose to support the political party of their choice. He was very active in evangelising the unreached and discipling Christians in the church and para-church contexts. He was ecumenical in his approach to Christian ministry and did not allow denominations to be a barrier in fulfilling the Christian great commission. He believed that church and state were separate but the two should cooperate for the establishment of righteousness and justice in society. He held strongly to the conviction that people needed a Christian spiritual conversion through repentance toward God and faith in Jesus Christ. Such ‘born again’ Christians are to be used by God to transform the family, church and society. He was convinced that permanent life transforming change in a person’s character and conduct could be found only through a personal relationship with God through Jesus Christ as mediator in the power of the Holy Spirit. He was a politically tolerant political leader as well as a religiously tolerant Christian leader.

If there is a word that can summarise William Ofori Atta’s principle centred leadership, it is the word ‘integrity’. His leadership in both society and the church embodied the principle and practice of integrity. He paid the price for his integrity by not acquiring wealth through corrupt means, by living a financially moderate lifestyle, by being placed in political detention several times for his democratic and human rights convictions and activities, by taking a stand for the difficult but necessary action plan for Ghana’s socio-economic development, by enduring disparagement for his insistence on reconciliation in the Ghanaian political landscape, by

facing censure for his advocacy of transparency by means of probity and accountability, and by accepting criticism for his unashamedly evangelical Christian view of salvation by grace through faith in Jesus Christ alone, evangelical/ charismatic Christian beliefs and practices and passion for evangelical Christian evangelism and theological education. This is an example of integrity leadership by word and deed in the public square. It is an example of costly integrity leadership and not cheap unprincipled leadership. Ofori Atta's integrity is reflected in one of his favourite Bible verses:

Psalm 24:3-5

Who may ascend the mountain of the LORD?

Who may stand in his holy place?

The one who has clean hands and a pure heart,
who does not trust in an idol or swear by a false god.

Ofori Atta was indeed a man of 'clean hands' and a 'pure heart'. His evangelical Christian spiritual conversion and devotional spirituality practices formed in him a pure heart through his faith in Jesus Christ for justification and sanctification in Christ. His family nurtured principles, Akan culture morals, Christian mission school education, Presbyterian church discipleship formed in him 'clean hands'. This research defined ethical leadership as leadership in which the values of integrity and altruism are demonstrated in a leader's character and conduct in both the private and public life of the leader so as to influence people to achieve worthwhile goals for the common good of society as well as to impact institutions in order to make them life enriching structures. Ofori Atta's leadership life and thought has proven to be an example of principle centred leadership. His leadership was marked by integrity and altruism. Nevertheless, the research did not provide sufficient evidence for the assertion that he was an ethical leader in the Ghanaian public life. Further research will need to be done to substantiate this assertion. What the research did reveal was that the leadership principle of

personal transparency as personal honesty and accountability highlighted his propensity for ethical leadership.

In 1985, Calvary Baptist Church, a leading Baptist church in Ghana, held a special service to honour William Ofori-Atta as 'Man of the Year' as a result of his fruitful contribution to the life of the church and the state in Ghana. Since Ofori Atta's demise a lecture series called 'The William Ofori-Atta Memorial Lectures' is organised periodically in his memory by the Ghanaian evangelical Christian community to promote his ideals for use in the family, church, professional, business, and political life of Ghana. The following institutions stand today as testaments to his institutional legacies - Maranatha University College, Christian Outreach Fellowship, and Korle Bu Community Chapel. In an endeavour to sustain Ofori Atta's ideals and to promote integrity in the Ghanaian public square and marketplace Central University in Accra has set up the William Ofori Atta Integrity Institute. The many lives that he touched, especially the people he mentored, are living testimonies to his legacy. As a principle centred leader he made a positive influence on individuals and a positive impact on institutions in Ghana.

In February 1985, after nearly five decades of political activity, William Ofori Atta delivered the J. B. Danquah Memorial Lecture on the topic 'Ghana: A nation in crisis'. He said in his lecture: 'My call at the end of these talks will be a familiar call. "Let us all rise up and build the broken walls of Ghana so that we be no longer a reproach"'⁸¹³ He quotes from Nehemiah 2:17 to challenge Ghanaians to work at overcoming the political, economic, and social crises of Ghana in order to rebuild the nation. It is principle centred leaders and citizens like Ofori Atta who will make a significant impact in nation building. In 2010 the William Ofori Atta

⁸¹³ Ofori Atta, *Ghana: A nation in crisis*, p. 2.

Centenary Celebrations were organised throughout the year by the evangelical community in Ghana to mark 100 years since his birth and to encourage Ghanaians to practice integrity as Ofori Atta did.

4. Conclusion

This study has postulated that a prime cause of the contemporary African predicament, with Ghana as a case study, is that of egocentric individual/ group leadership and decadent institutions and furthermore an important factor in a solution to the Ghanaian dilemma is ethical leadership and ethical institutions in Ghanaian public life. The investigation used the political and religious life and thought of William ‘Paa Willie’ Ofori Atta as a case study in addressing Ghana’s leadership deficit. William Ofori Atta’s life was like a rainbow with many colours made up of the family man, friend, educationist, economist, lawyer, politician, statesman, and evangelist. The research used the biography as theology/ ethics methodology to refract and reflect the interwoven colours of his life into themes which constitute his leadership principles and subsequently to analyse his ethical values.

The intention of this research has not been to write a hagiography. Ofori Atta would be the first person to acknowledge his imperfections and shortcomings and his leadership challenges have been pointed out in this thesis. Notable leadership challenges for Ofori Atta were the inability of his Second Republic Progress Party to entrench political democracy in Ghana since the PP government was overthrown by a military coup d’état, the violation of the human rights of 568 workers in the civil service and public corporations by the Progress Party government through the unjust dismissal of these workers contrary to legal norms, and the controversial Alien’s

Compliance Order, passed by the PP government, by which illegal immigrants in Ghana were given only two weeks to regularise their stay or be deported. Nevertheless, based on the research evidence it may be said that Ofori Atta was an ethical leader. The thesis examined Ofori Atta's life story to show that he was an ethical leader who served his family, church, society, and nation. Thus, it may be contended that Ofori-Atta is a fresh voice, as well as a Ghanaian voice, to the conversation on public leadership and that he provides insights about principle centred leadership in the Ghanaian public square in particular and the African public square in general.

This research focused on the ethical leadership values of Ofori Atta. An area for further research is how using the biography as theology methodology his life story can be used to provide themes for a Christian theology of servant leadership. Also, a comparative study can be done to compare William Ofori Atta's leadership thought and practice with that of J. B. Danquah representing Ghana's conservative political group and Kwame Nkrumah representing Ghana's radical political group. Then, there is a need for additional archival research and additional field research to record Ofori Atta's life story and its impact on the church and society. Furthermore, Ofori Atta's influence in the areas of family life, religion, education, economics, law, and politics require additional academic investigation. It is hoped that others will undertake both academic and popular studies on his life and thought to create a large corpus of William Ofori Atta studies to enhance ethical leadership in Ghana.

In 2005 the former Organisation for African Unity, which is now the African Union, formulated the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) a strategic plan developed for Africa's socio-economic and political development.⁸¹⁴ The African Union in May 2013 at the

⁸¹⁴ NEPAD, *The New Partnership for Africa's Development*, October 2001, pp. 3-6.

golden jubilee celebration launched *Agenda 2063 The Africa we want*.⁸¹⁵ This is a 50 year strategic sustainable development plan to build Africa as a future global powerhouse. Both NEPAD and Agenda 2063 spell out key values that undergird good leadership — transparency, accountability, and integrity. These are qualities that are vital for African leadership. If Africa is to break away from the leadership failures of the past, she has to nurture a new breed of leaders. This research has contended that Africa's new breed of leaders should be principle centred leaders. The people of Africa must turn away from egocentric leaders and follow ethical leaders. Ethical leaders characterised by integrity are the kind of leaders required for the African Union *Agenda 2063* to be realised.

⁸¹⁵ Africa Union Commission, *Agenda 2063 The Africa we want*, September 2015.

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FIELD RESEARCH INTERVIEWS ON WILLIAM OFORI ATTA

Interviews with Family Members

Mr. Bernard Ofori-Atta 23/7/07
Mr. Bernard Ofori-Atta 1/8/07
Mrs. Georgina Adei 10/8/07
Mr. Ken Ofori-Atta 20/8/07
Ambassador K.Y. Boafo 21/8/07
Ambassador K.Y. Boafo 28/8/07

Interviews with Church and Christian Ministry Associates

Rev. Bernard Marbell 9/7/07
Rev. Bernard Marbell 31/7/07
Mr. Patrick Gomashie 25/7/07
Prof. Stephen Adei 7/8/07
Mr. Yaw Oppong 14/8/07
Mrs. Yaw Oppong 14/8/07
Mr. Ross Campbell 27/8/07

Interviews with Political Associates

Hon. Peter Ala-Ajetey 9/8/07
Mr. Sam Okudejeto 28/8/07
Mk. Nti Frempong 1/9/07

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS ON WILLIAM OFORI ATTA

Personal Identification

What were William Ofori Atta's registered names, baptismal names, kinship names, nicknames?

The Family Background

What were the names of William Ofori Atta's mother, father, siblings, and grandparents?
What was his ethno-linguistic group, nationality/citizenship?
Which social class did he belong to?

Life Story

What was William Ofori Atta's date of birth and place of birth?
Did he have any unusual birth events or exceptional childhood experiences?
What was his domestic routine?
What were his favourite meals?
How was his relationship with his parents?
Which type of family activities was he involved in?
Who were his friends?
What were his hobbies?
What languages did he spoke?
Where did he reside?
What sort of community and social life did he have?

Education

Which educational institutions did he attend for pre-school, primary school, secondary school and tertiary education?
What were his academic interests and social interests at school?

Marriage and Family

Who was William Ofori Atta's wife (or wives)?
What were the names of his children and grandchildren?
What were his marital relationships, family relationships, home life and family activities?

Profession

What was William Ofori Atta's s early life career, mid life career and later life career?
What were his achievements, challenges and opportunities for each stage of his career?

Politics

What were William Ofori Atta's political motivation, political ideology and political affiliations?
Which activities and experiences made up his pre-independence politics, independence politics, post- independence politics, and retirement from active politics?
What were the political affiliations of his parents, siblings and friends?

Religion

What was William Ofori Atta's church affiliation?
What were his parents and siblings church affiliation?
What were his parents and siblings church activities?
What was his childhood, youth and adult life religious experiences and activities?
When and how did his conversion to Christ occur?

How did he mature in the Christian faith?
What kind of Christian service was he involved in?
What were his theological convictions?
What were his ethical values?
What was his involvement in Maranatha Bible College?
What was his involvement in Christian Outreach Fellowship?
What was his involvement in Christian organizations governance?

Later Life

When did he retire and what did he do during his retirement?
How was his health during retirement?
When and how did he pass away?
What was his funeral like?

Legacy

What was his family legacy, professional legacy, political legacy, Christian service legacy, and other legacies?

Other Relevant Information

Is there any other relevant information you wish to share?