



## **GHANA AT FIFTY YEARS OLD: A CRITICAL REVIEW OF THE HISTORICAL GENESIS OF WHY GHANAIS ARE WHERE THEY ARE TODAY**

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### **ABSTRACT**

*The 1950s saw political activities aimed at freeing Ghanaians from British colonial shackles. Osagyefo Dr. Kwame Nkrumah's love and passion for Ghana's freedom set the process of liberation in motion. Nkrumah wanted independence with little or no bloodshed. The struggle for freedom, according to Nkrumah, was to be as peaceful as possible. When the battle for independence was won, Nkrumah was elected the first post-colonial President of Ghana in 1957. This successful struggle for political independence brought with it encouragement, hope, and great expectations for positive transformation of the socioeconomic status of Ghana. Yet for fifty years Ghanaians have been less successful in transforming their country into a developed nation state. This reality forces one to ask the question: "Why has fifty years of development planning, policy making, program development, project design, and implementation not led to a better quality of life for Ghanaians?" It is argued in this paper that the primary reason why Ghanaians have been less successful in making their development efforts work is the prevalence of severe human factor decay. Until positive human factor is developed in Ghanaians, they will not break the back of poverty and its attendant problems.*

### **RÉSUMÉ**

*Dans les années 1950, le Ghana a connu un foisonnement d'activités politiques dont le but déclaré était de libérer le pays du joug colonial. L'amour et la passion de Dr. Osagyefo Kwame Nkrumah pour la liberté du Ghana ont été le moteur du processus de la lutte de libération. Kwame Nkrumah voulait l'indépendance sans effusion de sang. Selon lui, la lutte*



*de libération devait être aussi pacifique que possible. A l'issue de la lutte pour l'indépendance, Nkrumah fut élu en 1957 premier président du Ghana indépendant. Le succès de cette lutte pour l'indépendance politique était une source d'encouragement qui ouvrait de grandes perspectives de transformation socio-économique du pays. Cependant, force est de constater qu'au bout de 50 ans, les Ghanéens n'ont pas réussi à transformer leur pays en un état prospère. Devant ce constat, on doit se poser la question suivante : pourquoi 50 années de politique de développement n'ont pas conduit à une amélioration de la qualité de vie des Ghanéens? Le présent article soutient que l'échec évident des politiques de développement est essentiellement dû à l'état avancé de dégénérescence du facteur humain. La pauvreté et tous les problèmes qui s'y rattachent continueront de miner la société ghanéenne aussi longtemps que les dirigeants ignoreront l'impérieuse nécessité de développement de caractéristiques positives du facteur humain.*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Ghana's struggle for independence intensified in the late 1940s through the late 1950s. During this time various Ghanaians engaged in nationalistic activities to take the Gold Coast from British control (MacFarland, 1985). The struggle for independence yielded the expected fruit of political freedom. The attainment and consolidation of political independence provided a requisite opportunity for Ghanaians to embark on a massive program of development and nation building (Rothchild, 1991, Huq, 1989, Kaplan, 1971, Green, 1967, and Kimble, 1963). Ghanaian leaders at the time had the glorious opportunity to move the nation forward. Yet this opportunity did not yield the expected results. This reality leaves us with the desire to uncover the various reasons why the experience of citizenship development and nation building failed.

The primary objective of this paper is to discuss the historical genesis of Ghana's social, economic, political, and educational plight and the reality of underdevelopment using empirical evidence gathered from primary as well as secondary sources. A synoptic profile of Ghana's social, economic, political, educational, and technological challenges is presented. It is argued that the primary reason why Ghanaians have found it too difficult to advance at all fronts is severe human factor decay. Adjibolosoo (1995, p. 33) defines the human factor as:

The spectrum of personality characteristics and other dimensions of human performance that enable social, economic and political institutions to function and remain functional, over time. Such dimensions sustain the workings and application of the rule of law, political harmony, a disciplined labor force, just legal systems, respect for human dignity and the sanctity of life, social welfare, and so on.



As is often the case, no social, economic or political institutions can function effectively without being upheld by a network of committed persons who stand firmly by them. Such persons must strongly believe in and continually affirm the ideals of society (Adjibolosoo, 1995, p. 33).

Empirical evidence that substantiates the reality of severe human factor decay is highlighted. It is concluded that until Ghanaians engage in programs that facilitate the development of positive human factor, they will find it impossible to make any advancement in sustained economic growth, human-centered development, and improved quality of life. Detailed attention is paid to specific human factor problems in Ghana and the diversity of challenges they pose to national development.

Recommendations are made for public policy to show Ghanaians how they must go about dealing with the challenges of development. Attention is paid to what the long-term implications would be when Ghanaians pursue education programs that develop positive human factor. Directions regarding possible bright spots for future advancement are highlighted.

The remainder of this paper is organized in the following manner. While section 2 presents a brief overview of the people of Ghana and the historical genesis of the current state of conditions in the country, section 3 presents empirical evidence that underscores the problems severe human factor decay has unleashed on Ghanaians. Section 4 emphasizes the orthodox and human factor-based solutions to the challenges Ghanaians face. Section 5 deals with the conclusion and recommendations for public policy.

## 2. GHANA: THE PEOPLE AND HISTORICAL GENESIS

Modern Ghana is made up of the former British colony of the Gold Coast and the former mandated territory of British Togoland. It is bordered by Côte d'Ivoire on the west, Burkina Faso on the north, Togo on the east, and the Atlantic Ocean on the south. The coastal region and the far north of Ghana are savanna grassland. Sandwiched between these two zones is the forest region. The largest river in Ghana is the Volta. In 1964 the Volta River was dammed to produce hydroelectricity for the nation. The building of this dam at Akosombo (1964) created the Lake Volta, the largest human-made lake in the world. After the Gold Coast became independent, its name was changed to Ghana. At the same time the capital city was moved from Cape Coast to Accra. Other cities of great significance in Ghana include Tema, Kumasi, Ho, Sekondi-Takoradi, Tamale, Sunyani, Bolgatanga, and Koforidua.

The population of Ghana is composed of several ethnolinguistic groups including the Akan (Ashanti and Fanti), Mole-Dagbani, Ewe, and Ga-Adangme. The official language of business, education, and government is English. There are multiple religions in Ghana.



Since the Ghanaian economy is mostly agrarian, a larger percentage of the population earns its living through industrial as well family-based agricultural activities. Ghana's primary cash crop is cocoa. The production of staples crops such as rice, cassava, corn, pineapples, plantain, bananas, sweet potato, yam, as well as other vegetables is a significant part of the Ghanaian economy. Fishing and lumbering are of great significance to the economy. Ghana produces a variety of minerals of which the most important are gold, industrial diamonds, manganese, bauxite, and aluminum.

The key industrial activities in Ghana are cocoa processing, food production, the manufacturing of beverages, and aluminum smelting. Construction and cottage industries contribute a tiny percentage of the gross domestic product. Ghanaians export commodities such as cocoa, minerals, tuna, and timber. Petroleum, consumer items, technological equipment, educational machinery, vehicles, and other types of equipment are imported. Among Ghana's major trading partners are Great Britain, the United States, Germany, Nigeria, and Japan. In recent years Chinese and Indians have begun to make their economic and technological presence felt in Ghana. They are visible in such areas as construction, international business, education, and other professions.

Since the implementation of the 1992 constitution Ghana remains a republic based on a multiparty democratic system. Ghana's unicameral parliament is a 200-seat national assembly. The President and the legislature are elected for a four-year term. The president's tenure spans a minimum of four years and a maximum of two four-year terms. Ghana has ten administrative regions.

Prior to the colonial era the geographical location referred to today as Ghana was made up of smaller independent nation states. These states included the Ashanti who inhabited the interior region, the Gonja and Dagomba dwelled in the northern area of the country, the Fanti states that covered the south-western part of Ghana, and the Ewes who lived in the most easterly section of the nation. In 1482 the Portuguese became the first Europeans to build forts and castles at Elmina. The establishment of these forts and castles initiated and promoted trade in gold and slaves. The profitability of these trading ventures led to the creation of fiercely extensive competition among Europeans. When the slave trade declined in the nineteenth century, the European nations that still held forts and castles in the Gold Coast were the British, Danes, and Dutch. When the Danes withdrew in 1850, the Dutch soon followed in 1872.

The British stayed and waged wars of conquest on the Ashanti nation, the most powerful and expansionist group at the time. By teaming up with the states of the Fantis the British defeated and subjugated the Ashanti state in 1874. It was after the demise of the Ashanti nation that the British established the Gold Coast as their colony. The Ashantis came under full British control in 1901. The Northern Territories became British protectorate in 1901. The German colony of Togoland became a British mandate after the first World War and was administered as part of the Gold Coast colony.



The period between the First and Second World Wars saw the sprouting of the activities of nationalism on the part of indigenous people. The intensity of nationalism exacerbated after the Second World War. The Convention People's Party (CPP) led by Dr. Kwame Nkrumah became the most vocal and effective nationalistic group. When the British permitted the crafting of a new constitution in 1951 and held general elections, the CPP won the majority of the seats. Nkrumah was released from jail to become the first Prime Minister of Ghana.

### **2.1. The Struggle for Independence and Development**

In the 1950s the race to free Ghana from the colonial shackles of British control intensified. Osagyefo Dr. Kwame Nkrumah, driven by his love and passion for the freedom, entered the race to free Ghana. He left no stones unturned as he worked to break the shackles of colonialism. Gaining success, Nkrumah led Ghanaians to political freedom and independence in 1957 (Austin, 1970). The struggle for independence came to a climax when Nkrumah was the overwhelming choice of the people of the Gold Coast to be the first President of the new republic in 1960.

Since achieving political independence fifty years ago, Ghanaians have struggled for the last five decades to achieve and sustain economic freedom. Ghanaian leaders from one government to another and from one period to another tried to place this nation on the path of accelerated economic growth and development (Huq, 1989, *Ghana: Five Year Development Plan, 1975/76-1979/1980*, and Green, 1967). The experience of Ghana's fledgling political styles varied between civilian and military forms of government; with the military administrators having had many more years in political leadership of the nation than civilian leaders who often got placed in office through popularly held elections. Yet regardless of the extensive shuffling of the political leadership of Ghana between these two groups of leaders, the journey toward sustained economic growth and human-centered development has not been as successful as had originally anticipated.

From the beginning in 1957 Nkrumah and his team of political leaders pursued an aggressive socialist agenda of development. During their term of office Ghanaians were offered work through the Civil Service, free medical care, and education. The national leaders established elementary schools, secondary schools, teacher training colleges, technical institutes, vocational and commercial colleges, universities, and workers' colleges. Numerous literacy programs were implemented with the primary objective of assisting any Ghanaian who wanted to read and write. During this initial period of Ghana's evolutionary journey, the mood in the country was positive and propelling. Hard work was expected to bring happiness and higher quality of life for all. The Nkrumah government developed certain key infrastructure to be used to facilitate the socioeconomic development of Ghana. The building of a road network was aimed at facilitating



the transportation of people, goods, and services from one location to another to promote the development process (Cairncross, 1962).

An international airport was built in Accra. Kumasi and Tamale had smaller airports for domestic travel and transportation of items. The Akosombo Dam was built to supply hydroelectric power for domestic as well as industrial use. The new township of Tema and its harbor were built to serve as the second international harbor and a model city in Ghana. The Takoradi harbor was a legacy from the colonial administrators. A new housing scheme was initiated in Tema. Through this effort planned residential communities were developed in Tema to provide accommodation for Civil Servants as well as industrial workers. Nkrumah's achievements within a short period of time were second to none among African leaders.

Writing about and praising Nkrumah for his achievements toward Ghana's repositioning and development, Amanquanor (2007, p. 31) observes:

Nkrumah suppressed sectionalism and tribalism in Ghana and brought a sense of national unity among Ghanaians. He infused the spirit of oneness and pride into Ghanaians. Nkrumah and the CPP [Convention People's Party] were popular in all the ethnic areas of Ghana. The national unity which he forged was to be the envy of other African states. No one accused Nkrumah of tribal favoritism while the governments which came after him in Ghana have faced this accusation. Internationally, Nkrumah relentlessly pursued his idea of Pan Africanism and emphasized the need for African Unity. This greatly contributed to the formation of the OAU in 1963. The first to lead his people to overthrow colonial power in black Africa, Kwame Nkrumah lit a torch which inspired all Africa to free the continent of foreign domination. He thus placed Ghana on the world map. His commitment to liberation in Africa was total and was demonstrated by the financial and military aid he gave to African freedom fighters. Despite these achievements, Nkrumah incurred the displeasure of many Ghanaians at the time of his overthrow in 1966.

It did not take too long to wake up to the realization that Ghana's development train did not have sufficient fuel to get it to the final destination, the city of ongoing economic growth and sustained human-centered development. By the mid-1960s the moving parts of the engine of this train began to wear and fall off. Its speed and momentum were grinding to a halt in midstream. The music for the dance of happiness was gradually tapering off as the throbbing of the hide of the drums of freedom and justice got weakened, leading to the lessening of the drumbeats and the strength of the dance. Worst of all, the winds of change and expectations of a better quality of life for every Ghanaian grew dim and silent.



These signs of the beginning of the end came to a climax when Nkrumah was removed from office on February 24<sup>th</sup> 1966. Before the smoke cleared, every sign of progress in Ghana had disappeared to the utter surprise and dismay of expectant Ghanaians.

Through a referendum held in 1964 Nkrumah outlawed all opposition parties. He had arrested every one he considered to be a critic of or a threat to his political leadership and nation building agenda. By subscribing to and pursuing policies of anti-colonialism Kwame Nkrumah's nation building program and path of economic development followed the Socialist path and scorned that of Western Capitalism. The declining world price of cocoa and lack of adequate financial resources to propel the Socialist development agenda created chaotic and unbearably hard economic difficulties for Ghanaians. His government was deposed in 1966 and replaced with military administration. Those involved in the *coup d'état* created the National Liberation Council (NLC) as the main administrative organization through which the nation was ruled until a civilian administration was put back in office in 1969.

This popularly elected government was led by Dr. K. A. Busia. Ghanaians experienced significantly higher levels of inflation during this regime. The national currency was devalued. Difficult labor problems finally led to the overthrow of Dr. K. A. Busia's administration in 1972 by Col. I. K. Acheampong in a bloodless *coup d'état*. The National Redemption Council (NRC) took over the administration of Ghana. During this period of time the pursuit of nonaligned policies helped reduce the magnitude of Ghana's external debt. This result was achieved through austerity measures that led to the minimization of imports and interest rate controls. The Government increased its interests in foreign-owned timber and mining companies at the time.

Acheampong's government was brought to its knees through a palace *coup d'état* led by certain military officers in 1978. The Ghanaian economy was plunged again into a tumultuous state through strike actions, high unemployment rates, and low wages. Though the ban on political parties was lifted in 1979 in preparation for the establishment of a civilian rule, this plan was not to be. On June 4<sup>th</sup>, 1979 Flight Lt. J. J. Rawlings deposed the government and ruled the nation for four months. During this brief period of time the corrupt were pursued and forced to cede to the nation those financial resources and other property they looted from the state of Ghana. Rawlings' return of Ghana to civilian rule under the leadership of Dr. Hilla Limann did not last for long. On December 31<sup>st</sup> 1981, Rawlings returned to rule Ghana through military *coup d'état*. Faced with severe economic problems and suffering, the Rawlings' government opened the doors to the World and the IMF to come in to help Ghana break the back of its pertinent economic problems in the 1980s (Rothchild, 1991). Through the new constitution of 1992 Rawlings' was elected President of Ghana. His second mandate commenced in 1996.



## 2.2. Some Preliminary Observations

In the election of December 2000 John Agyekum Kufuor of the New Patriotic Party was elected President. Regardless of these transitional stages on the Ghanaian political scene little has changed in terms of the people's quality of life. Ghanaians continue to struggle to obtain the basic necessities of life. Arguably the wresting of political leadership from the British in the 1950s has actually not advanced the quality of life for Ghanaians. Fifty years after Ghanaians had attained political independence their development train is off its rails. It has been unable to continue successfully on to the intended destination of economic growth and sustained human-centered development.

The relentless trials of a countless number of plans, policies, projects, and programs (*the 4Ps Portfolio*) have failed to open and permanently secure the doors to sustained economic growth and human-centered development for Ghanaian. As a result of this failure fifty years of political independence have not led to any long-term noticeable improvements in the people's quality of life. This reality is empirically validated as the presentation in section 3 reveals.

## 3. GHANA'S DEVELOPMENTAL OUTCOMES: THE EMPIRICAL EVIDENCE

For fifty years after having fought for and gained political freedom from the British, Ghana has served as a vital research laboratory and testing ground for development theories conceived in research and educational institutes in the developed countries. Theories regarding capitalist and socialist ideologies suggesting how Ghana must go about to achieve and sustain economic growth and development are hatched in the developed countries and tested at the social, economic, political, and educational arena in Ghana.

The belief in the potency of externally crafted and theoretical solutions was so strong that when Ghana, for example, became independent in 1957, Dr. Kwame Nkrumah, the first President of Ghana in one of his maiden speeches made it clearer to Ghanaians as well as the rest of the global community that his primary goal was to accelerate Ghana's agricultural, industrial, and economic development process to heights equivalent to those of the developed countries (DCs). Nkrumah's desire was to catch up with the DCs and if possible surpass them. His plan was to take less time to arrive at comparable levels of development when compared to the people of the DCs. Nkrumah as well as other Presidents of African countries (ACs) at the time were convinced that they could improve the prevailing social, economic, and political conditions. In the 1960s the positive mood that circulated among African leaders led them to create a Charter of association aimed at pulling together Africans. This Charter was primarily aimed at forging a continent-wide union—the Organization of African Unity (OAU).

The post independence development programs in ACs emphasized basic primary education regarding reading, writing, arithmetic, literacy activities, healthcare,



agriculture, economic growth, and development, and population control through family planning methods.

With the exception of few Ghanaian leaders most of the other leaders in addition to their henchmen and accomplices have engaged in embezzlement, mismanagement, and misappropriation of their country's scarce foreign and domestic funds. These financial resources were earmarked for development programs. The resources of Ghana most frequently end in private hands and placed in either domestic or foreign banks. Political administrators as well as civil servants engage in prodigality when the opportunity emerges for checks to be signed and funds drawn from government's bank accounts. The degree of intensity and pervasiveness of corruption, favoritism, negligence, inefficiency, deceit, and cronyism is crippling. A tropical country such as Ghana, rich in numerous natural resources, is unable to make economic progress because its opportunities are destroyed by its own leaders and citizens. It is often not easy to trace and punish those involved in gross mismanagement and corruption.

Like the experience of Roman citizens of ancient time, corrupt leaders in Ghana today dupe the state as well as their own citizens. In ancient times, Roman leaders did whatever was possible to pauperize their subordinates. In certain cases the dispossessed was either assassinated or silenced. This reality brought fear to anyone who might want to blow the whistles. These realities are revealed in the trial proceedings of a crooked ruler of ancient Sicily by name Verres. In his Second Speech Against Verres, Cicero, the prosecuting lawyer, leveled a barrage of charges against Verres. These charges were so heinous and overpowering that the unjust and crooked Verres was convicted. Writing down the evidence he collected for the trial of Verres, Cicero (1948, pp. 29-30) writes:

Indeed, if our success and reputation mean anything to us, we must ask men to accept service under us in the provinces, not hand appointments around as favors. But you Verres, invited your friends to consider your province as a hunting ground, and either joined them in plundering it or let them do it for you, and presented them in public with gold rings. Did it ever occur to you that you might have to account not only for your own actions, but also for those of your friends? The court trials which Verres staged and carried through with his retinue brought him huge sums. Later, he discovered rich sources for further extortion. We all know that safety of private property depends on those who control the courts and their decisions. We all know that none of us can keep possession of his house, his farm, or his inheritance, if someone else has a claim to them. Now a dishonest praetor, whose actions cannot be challenged, can instruct a corrupt judge to give whatever sentence he bids him. The situation is still worse if the praetor arranges the trial in such a way that even an experienced judge, like Lucius Octavius Balbus, has the decision forced on him; ... All legal procedure in Sicily was like this for three years, while Verres was praetor. For example, "If a man will



not accept what you assert is the amount of your debt to him, indict him; if he sues you, put him in prison.” This very thing happened to Caius Fuficius, to Lucius Suettius, and to Lucius Racilius. The composition of the courts was equally illegal. Roman citizens functioned as jury, when, according to the laws, Sicilians ought to have done so; and vice versa [Cicero was born on January 3, 106 B. C. and murdered on December 3, 43 B. C.].

The human condition and practice has not actually changed for the better since the times of old. The degree of intensity of corrupted behavior of political leaders and civil servants has not declined. And as long as our life on Planet Earth is not terminated, the practice of fraudulence and corruption promises to remain with us. This is a somber thought because it is likely to lead us to believe that we are unable to improve our quality of life by transforming the human quality for the better.

It is not surprising that Africans as well as others from the developing world find it too difficult to make any sustainable progress. A natural conclusion is that these countries may have misused their development opportunities and henceforth are unable to improve their economies. The evidence to date corroborates this belief. In our recent history as a nation state certain Ghanaian political leaders as well as military dictators have spent scarce national resources on themselves. They disregard what it takes to achieve and sustain long-term economic growth and sustained human-centered development (Todaro, 1989, Killick, 1978, Higgins, 1968, Hanson and Brembeck, 1966, and Rostow, 1960 and 1971).

Ghana provides a vivid example of a nation in which severe human factor decay, the absence of integrity, honesty, responsibility, and accountability permeates the entire social fabric from the time of political independence. Just as it was the case with crooked Roman leaders of ancient times, so it is with our Ghanaian leaders for the last fifty years. For the whole duration of half a century Ghanaians have continued to experience severe deterioration in their living standards and quality of life. In the 1970s this reality compelled a large proportion of highly academically trained and skilled personnel to emigrate elsewhere to seek greener pastures. This phenomenon has continued. At the time of independence in 1957 the level of infrastructure and co operant factors for development were sufficiently in existence to launch the country onto the path of economic progress. The opportunity was misused as infrastructure was left to deteriorate without adequate maintenance. This apparent abuse of position was cited as a major reason for the coups d'état which overthrew the government and established a military regime in 1966.

Ghana since 1966 has experienced many *coup d'état* which have merely destabilized the country and discouraged the inflow of foreign capital. It contributed little to economic progress. It retarded the development process. This reality is common to most African countries. The lack of positive human factor resulted in loss of opportunities for economic development in Africa. Severe human factor decay



paves the highway for crooked habitual practices. These behavioral practices cripple any plans and policies for progress. Edmund Mingle (2007a, p. 4) observes:

The Ghana Water Company Limited yesterday uncovered mass illegal water connections at Nima, in Accra. A disconnection task force found that many houses in Nima have made some form of illegal connection, thereby using water without paying for it. Pipes which were found connected to huge water tanks to store water for sale, have been laid through bedrooms and obscure places, making it difficult to detect. In addition, many of the houses which sell water have installed booster pumps that draw all the water in the main lines to their side, thereby depriving other households of water. The task force which was accompanied by the police and journalists disconnected the illegal pipe lines and seized six of the suction pumps. Some of the owners claimed they did not know that the installation of the pumps was illegal.

Certain farmers are in the habit of illegal water connections (Frimpong, 2007, p. 30). They erect illegal pipelines and tap into the main water lines of the Ghana Water Company Limited and channel water to secret storage locations for their private use without having to pay for it. Four individuals have been arrested by the East Legon Police in Accra for selling water they had tapped illegally on February 8, 2007. These individuals stored the water in tanks at home and sold it at will to tanker drivers who in turn retailed the water to residents (Mingle, 2007b, p. 4).

Ghana is a nation occupied by people who brandish acts of fraudulence and live lifestyles of lawlessness (Anyima-Ackah, 2007, p. 8). Writing on the indiscipline of Ghanaians Asare-Kumah (2007, p. 9) opines that:

I have always held the view that generally we Ghanaians are just not disciplined. Right from our homes to our offices our acts of indiscipline keep painting the picture we are all witnessing today—filth, filth, filth. Only a couple of days ago I encountered a young man who gave me a good *dressing down* for questioning why he threw the empty water sachet out of *tro-tro* instead of dropping it in the car. “Are you the one paying those who sweep our streets, *kwasia*, if you have been employed to check people go and stand at Makola,” he said topping it up with a heavy dose of spittle. I looked at him pitifully because straightaway I was imagining the room he slept in and how such a person will bring up his children but above all I wished I knew his doctor . . . It is shameful that our own attitudes are killing us. Now we have become so dirty that it is no longer news to find used sanitary towels lying about anyhow



and I shudder to think that in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century some Ghanaian ladies living not just in Accra but in areas regarded as *middle class* do not even know how to dispose of their sanitary towels, but these are the same people, some of whom we find all dressed up and thronging to the big offices, churches and mosques ... Along the stretch of grassland at the Ashiaman side of the Tema motorway our brothers, fathers, sons, boyfriends and husband throw all decorum to the dogs and shamelessly pull down their underpants and *freely range* in the area in the full glare of the public especially those who use the motorway. Does it mean that we no longer know what is right or wrong or even know no shame?

Indiscipline in Ghana is as visible as the color red seen from afar! The rare strand of nation-wide indiscipline found in Ghana is disturbing and destabilizes development efforts. Writing about this same problem in Kumasi, Ochere (2006, pp. 1 & 4) observes:

Illegal developers of waterways and other restricted natural reserves in the Kumasi Metropolis are reported to be applying all sorts of tricks to circumvent the enforcement of building regulations by the city authorities. As part of the tricks constructional work on building projects are done mainly at the weekends and in the night, apparently to avoid the attention of building inspectors of the Kumasi Metropolitan Assembly (KMA). *Times* investigations indicated that developers have resorted to the tricks in a desperate effort to go round the recent order by Otumfuo Osei Tutu II, the Asantehene, for a halt to the encroachment of rivers and other water bodies in the metropolis. Though a good number of unauthorized buildings under various stages of construction have been identified and marked, “stop work, produce permit” by building inspectors, work is said to be progressing on them at odd hours. The most affected areas are Patasi, Ahodwo, TUC junction and Nhyiaeso West. *Times*, however, learnt that some of the “stop work, produce permit” notices are written by the developers themselves to outwit the metropolitan authorities and continue with the project, giving the impression that they have gone to see the authorities and been given the go-ahead to continue.

Speaking to the syndrome of gross institutionalized indiscipline in Ghana, Akordor (2007, p. 7) observes:

Indiscipline has inflicted enough damage on this country and destabilized its development efforts and the evidence is all around



us. Take our approach to duty. There are many public workers who leave the home with a farewell message to their families that they have gone to work. Many never reach their workplaces. Some may reach but very late. Others may get to their offices but do very little. In the end the burden of carrying out the company's or ministry's work may rest on the shoulders of a few dedicated ones whose efforts may not even attract recognition. Enter an office for business which should not take more than 15 minutes to execute but the schedule officer is either late or not at post at all. If that hurdle is cleared, one may have to wait for the signature of the almighty boss, who could be the minister, the chief director or someone even far down the line. It could take days, weeks or months. Sometimes it is a dead end and, out of frustration, it is easier to abandon the mission.

I personally experienced this form of delay and waste of time a countless number of times. I have been to certain ministries to perform certain functions only to be delayed for hours. In the end I was told on several occasions to go and come back the next day. Worst of all, whole application files containing valuable documents got lost and new ones had to be submitted. These experiences are not unique. They are the typical Ghanaian way of performing civil service functions and tasks. Writing about incivility in Ghana, Quarcoo (2007, p. 11) observes:

The mood was solemn in a Chapel in Accra during a funeral mass. Then a high-pitched sound intruded on the mourners' attention. A phone belonging to one of the mourners sitting on the front row rang. He answered it and talked for a few minutes. We were taken aback. We could not believe it ... During a program at the National Theater, the cell phone of a lady who was sitting in front of me rang. She carried on a telephone conversation. Everybody around her was in shock. Somebody tapped her on the shoulder and she just blew them off. She held her hand like *I am talking*. Some cellphone users seem to have the sense of entitlement, when you are that level with an individual, nothing else matters. They just matter. Cell phone users have gotten so oblivious about the rights of others in whose presence they are standing.

Giving a detailed report on financial fraudulence, Yeboah (2007, pp. 1 & 3) writes:



The Bureau of National Investigation (BNI) has rounded up a ring at the Controller and Accountant-General's Department (CAGD) suspected of stealing ₵722 million, with the connivance of some senior officials at the Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning. The alleged fraud is said to involve six workers, some of them senior officers, and an unspecified number of collaborators at the ministry. A source at the Auditor-General's Department, who disclosed this to *the Daily Graphic* yesterday, said preliminary investigations pointed to the ₵722 million but indicated that the actual amount involved exceed one billion Cedis.

Reporting on an expensive financial scandal that transpired recently Aklorbortu (2007, p. 1 & 3) writes:

The Ghana Cement Company (GHACEM) and the Customs, Excise and Preventive Service (CEPS) have been hit by a scandal involving ₵5.2 billion suspected to have been stolen by a clique of four. Police sources in Takoradi told *the Daily Graphic* that two officials of CEPS and an employee of GHACEM connived with a clearing agent to steal the money which had accrued from duties on imported clinker. The suspects were said to have succeeded in cashing various cheques issued in the name of CEPS with the help of an official of the Ghana Commercial Bank for a fee of ₵100 million after each deal ... The Western Regional Police Command has charged the four with the offences of conspiracy to steal and stealing. Upon interrogation, Angoe admitted his involvement and said he had received ₵1.7 billion of the said amount, while Yevo, Blankson, and Djameh denied any involvement but said they would help pay the money.

These financial scandals are not rare in Ghana. They are ubiquitous throughout the whole nation. I had an extended conversation with a successful business man in Accra. He gave me an example of an experience that reveals the depth and enormity of the corrupt practices of civil servants. He said he submitted and won a bid to supply some goods to a department at one of the ministries. He was paid part of his charges and did some amount of work. But for the longest time the work was stalled. He later learned through a business associate of his that his job was being re-contracted out to another company. When he went to the ministry to check he learned that his bid was deemed to be too expensive at the Accountant General's Department. The total amount billed to the Accountant General's Department was three hundred million Cedis. It was at this point he gave an actual copy of his budget of one hundred sixty-one million Cedis to the Accountant General's Department and they realized right away that the government's engineers



at the Architectural and Engineering Services Limited (AESL) had inflated it. The Accountant General's Department then put in process investigations to discover who was behind the over-billing.

By January 2007 places requiring extensive repairs include: Tamale Teaching Hospital, the Nurses and Midwifery Training College, Sekondi (See *Ghanaian Times* of Wednesday, February 7, 2007); Peduase Lodge, and others. Fire outbreaks are commonplace phenomena (*Daily Graphic*, Wednesday, February 2, 2007, p. 20; *Daily Graphic*, Thursday, February 8, 2007, pp. 7 & 20). There was a record of 1986 fire outbreaks in Ghana in 2006 (*Daily Graphic*, Thursday, February 8, 2007, p. 20). Ghanaians experience acute perennial water and electricity shortages. Electricity has been rationed on a continuing basis for several decades. Water shortages are now part and parcel of Ghanaian life. The problem is so pervasive that it has become an accepted part of life. People do everything possible to either accommodate or develop ingenious quick-fix measures and accommodation techniques. Speaking to this problem, Boateng (2006, p. 16) observes:

Hadiza, a young, energetic middle-income earner, has everything going for her except how to access the most basic necessity of life—water! At 29, she has lived at Madina, near Accra, for a greater part of her life and for all that time she has never seen water flowing through the taps at home. The situation, according to her, makes her forget to use the taps when she visits her sister's flat at the Airport Residential Area, where water flows through the taps ... Hadiza's situation is similar to many Ghanaians who do not have access to portable water. For Mr. Eric Quartey, a husband and father of four who lives at Ashalley Botwe, the routine of fetching water in gallons and barrels and putting them in his Toyota Hilux pickup has become a challenge, coupled with his daily schedule as a director of a public agency. And it is a challenge which he does not relish at all.

Nkrumah (2007, p. 17) opines that "Poor and irregular access to portable water all over the country may not only be a source of misery to Ghanaians but also strike many as a mystery; from Wa through Kumasi to Cape Coast and Accra, what has been boldly trumpeted as 'a right' comes to some as 'a rare luxury', even in the midst of plenty."

According to Akrasi-Sarpong (2007, p. 7), the Civil Service in Ghana is weak and unproductive. Civil Servants are hardly ever creative, innovative, industrious, and patriotic. Civil Servants are excessively corrupt, undisciplined, lawless, and productivity diminishing. They are unable to serve the general public effectively and efficiently. Their concept of time is horrible and its use is pathetic. National leaders, educators, Civil Servants, and Ghanaians from all walks of life have a warped concept of time. Official programs, meetings, and personal



appointments are hardly ever made on time and according to schedule. People arrive at their scheduled appointments hours late. They show neither shame nor remorse for their lateness to official functions. A great deal of productivity is lost through this unorthodox use of time. This attitude has been deplored by concerned Ghanaians including the Ashanti Regional Minister, Mr. Emmanuel Asante Owusu-Ansah (Asare, 2007, p. 20). There is the lack seriousness among Ghanaian leaders in terms of understanding the concept of time, its value, and use. They have successfully infected the whole population with their bad attitudes about honoring commitments to and carrying out their official duties on time.

Since there is hardly any consistent practice of preplanned maintenance management programs, much of the infrastructure in Ghana experiences decay and dilapidation. Castles and forts are falling into ruin (Adzei-Boye, 2007, p. 5). “An official of the Ghana Tourist Board told the *Times* that the Western Region has *the lion’s share* of forts and castles, yet most of them have never seen any major rehabilitation since the departure of the colonial traders” (The Editorial, *The Ghanaian Times*, Tuesday, January, 30, 2007, p. 4). Decades of total neglect have now unleashed the waves of infrastructure decay and ruin. Roads are relapsing into a sordid state of disrepair. Roads scheduled for rehabilitation are listed on pages 18-23 of *The Ghanaian Times* of Tuesday, January 30<sup>th</sup>, 2007. The Tamale Metropolitan Assembly has embarked on a massive road rehabilitation program worth €100 billion (Alhassan, 2007, p. 29).

These roads have either already become destroyed or the potholes have rendered them dangerous death traps. It is unconscionable to treat vital infrastructure the way Ghanaians do. It is disturbing to behold the state of miles of badly damaged road infrastructure in Ghana. Public hospitals and their infrastructure are hardly functional. Dwelling units across the whole country have slipped into their final stages of decay. In cities such as Accra, Tema, Takoradi, Kumasi, Ho, Hohoe, Kpandu, Sunyani, Techiman, and Tamale, there is the devastation of infrastructure. The enormity of the signs of city-wide decay is indescribable. The feverish rush to construct new dwelling units hardly makes the decay of the old pale in comparison. A visitor to the nation is traumatized by the sight of the state of hopelessness Ghanaian infrastructure finds itself today.

From the smallest village to the largest cities litter made up of assorted non-biodegradable plastic bags covers the whole landscape. The filth and the stench of rotting garbage are incredible across the whole nation (Jafaru, 2007, p. 29). Mpintsin residents of the Shama Ahanta East metropolis are noted for dumping refuse indiscriminately (Aklorbortu and Agular, 2007, p. 21). The refuse is dumped along a segment of the Takoradi-Accra highway passing through the town. This illegal dumping place is only one hundred and fifty meters away from the official refuse dump! Traders at the Kaneshie Complex Market in Accra operate in conditions of filth and squalor (Bilson, 2007, p. 3).

Garbage is left uncollected for long periods of time. It overflows and serves as a dangerous health hazard to every one. Traders display their wares for sale along the railway lines at Kantamanto in Accra. In doing so the messy conditions



they create through the garbage and filth left behind are indescribable (Amoo, 2007, p. 27). Yet these examples of environmental filth and health hazard are not outliers in Ghana. These are excellent representations of this problem throughout Ghana where the management of sanitation is nonexistent. Lack of effective urban planning and excessive rural-urban migration produces stress and over utilization of utility services in the urban centers (Fuseini, 2007, p. 21).

Almost every Ghanaian complains about the prevailing lawlessness in the country. Some of these people get together and lament helplessly about the rottenness in the attitudes, behaviors, and actions of civil servants and national leaders. Yet few Ghanaians are actually interested in taking any nonviolent civic action to force their political leaders and civil servants to do the right thing in terms of national administration. Few community members care about the cleanliness of their environment or the health of the people. They are hopelessly paralyzed and immobilized by their own inaction. The excessive passivity of the Ghanaian is a destructive reality. It poses serious hazard to economic progress and the health and welfare of every citizen.

Almost visible at any location in the nation but especially in the big cities are excessive congestion, traffic jam, hawkers engulfing streets and walkways, gutters filled to the brim with refuse. Traffic lights hardly ever work. Those that work are hardly ever obeyed by motorists (Blay-Morkeh, 2007, p. 11). Speaking to the pervasive problem of traffic violations in Ghana, the Editorial of the *Daily Graphic* observes:

There is no doubt that majority of Ghanaians want something drastic to be done to deter irresponsible driving and bring about sanity on our roads. Indeed, most of the fatal road accidents are attributable to human error and are thus avoidable ... Those who want drastic action have always yearned for stiffer penalties against motor traffic offences, particularly reckless driving on the shoulders of the road ... The intention of the law is to ensure sanity on our roads. That requires the strict enforcement of road traffic regulations and the close monitoring of the police personnel responsible for motor traffic and transport. Particularly because of the huge fines involved, ranging between €6 million and €12 million, there is the need to monitor the police to avert any abuses. Indeed, if care is not taken, deviant motorists will conspire with corrupt police officers to undermine the law. There is also the possibility of police officers baselessly arresting drivers, mindful of the fact that such drivers will be more vulnerable and thus easily predisposed to negotiate a settlement outside the formal court system. Even with the court system, there could be abuses, as was alleged last year when some court officials were said to have colluded with some police



officers to deny the state of huge sums from fines for motor traffic offences (*Daily Graphic*, Friday, January 19, 2007, p. 7).

With these realities the rottenness in Ghanaian attitudes, behaviors, and actions in general is undeniable. This nation is not able to make any progress because of the severe human factor decay it experiences. Few people are committed to a lifestyle of transparency, honesty, integrity, fairness, and compassion. Ghanaians have made up their minds to live their lives through crooked and dishonest means. And since few actually care, there is hardly anyone ready and willing to have the Ghanaian way of life transformed for the better.

Members of the whole civil service are rotten to the core. Even the few Ghanaians who speak to the existing problems and desire to see positive transformations rarely take any actions to correct the anomalies. Their only delight is in complaining about the observed problems. Ghanaians have behaved in this manner for the last fifty years. This reality makes one ask the question: “When will Ghanaians stop being hypocritical complainers and take the right actions to change their nation and quality of life for the better?” They engage in corrupt practices and the general saying: “physician, heal thyself” is in place. It is a huge problem *when the pot calls the kettle black*. Until Ghanaians see themselves as the cause of their own problems severe human factor will bring this nation on to its knees.

Osabukle (2007, p. 3) reports on how certain residents of Nungua, a suburb of Accra, took it upon themselves to clean the open drain filled with sand, paper, plastic bags, human excreta, and rotting food items.

Innocent Appiah (2007, p. 3) reports that two cargo truck drivers were arrested under the suspicion that they under-invoiced the items being trucked from Takoradi to Accra. Realizing the difficulties ahead and wanting to beat the law enforcement agents they offered a bribe of one hundred thousand Cedis to the police. When the police refused to accept this amount, they offered another amount of five hundred thousand Cedis. The total amount of the goods they were trucking was five hundred million Cedis (*The Ghanaian Times* of Monday, January 15, 2007, p. 3). The impounded goods have been handed to the Revenue Agencies Governing Board for re-examination.

I expect one of three outcomes by the time this case is completed. The first of these is that the goods will either disappear and no one can account for their whereabouts. Second, either the drivers or the owners of the merchandize will pay some amount of money under the table to the officials of the governing board and the lower officers would be ordered to release the goods. Thirdly, a mutual friend or family member will serve as a go between the governing board and the owner of the goods. It is this person who receives the bribe money to be distributed as desired and the goods will be released.

Regardless of which of these scenarios pans out, the taxpayer is still the loser because the Internal Revenue Service will not receive a pesewa. And yet



this was the real reason for the arrest in the first place. The Ghanaian problem and inability to make and sustain progress can be delineated as follows:

The wild vine of corruption in Ghana is present and flourishes everywhere. It is long and winding. Its tendrils emerge with lightening speed. Like the speed of an eagle in snatching its unsuspecting prey this vine descends and engulfs its victims even long before they perceive their plight of hopelessness. It grabs indiscriminately any other vegetation on its path and either destroys its resistance or converts it into its ally. It leaves in its trail bareness and hopelessness. Ghanaians have turned their sense of conscience and feeling away from the moral north they knew previously. Their sense of integrity is marred by the whisperings of a goddess of treachery, dishonesty, and corruption. After having tasted the wine of lying and fraudulence most people are guided by the vine of corruption. Few dare to disobey the leading of the goddess. Their conscience and ability to reason are badly marred because they are unable to utilize the five physical senses. They have lost track of the sense of truth, beauty, goodness, love, grace, compassion, and forgiveness. They forsake their principle-centered conscience and pursue empty lifestyles. The members of the emerging middle class are not problem solvers. Instead, they accommodate the problems. For example, to deal with the lack of flow of water they erect huge water tanks on either the roof or a structure built to hold the barrels. And since they get their water through these barrels they do not care whether the nation's water supply system is functional or not. In addition, they have portable electric generators at home. When the Ghana Electricity Corporation is unable to provide power, these people crank their generators for power. And since they are happy and contented with this arrangement and manner of life they hardly ever care about what the Ghana Electricity Corporation does. This attitude, unfortunately, carries into everything they do—avoid problem-solving. Their new solution techniques, quick fixes, and problem accommodation procedures are nothing more than broken cisterns and leaking containers. They lead to hopelessness and death (Personal Musings—February 22, 2007).

A people who have found themselves in such a sordid state need a physician. But this cannot be any ordinary physician. This doctor must know the prognoses and be equipped to succeed in solving the problem. Since they are sick with the virus emanating from the vine of corruption they can only be cured by those who have not yet succumbed to the leading goddess of the times.



As I conducted my research and gathered information from primary sources to write this paper, I interviewed a countless number of Ghanaians, both the youth and adults alike. My interviews brought me into face-to-face contact with district assemble men and women, educators, parents, teachers, students, and business people. The evidence regarding excessive corruption and lack of good performance on the job is overwhelming. During these face-to-face interview sessions with individuals as well as groups, I learned a great deal from members of the local communities I visited. Here are just two samples of the nature of responses I came across. When posed the question: “What are the primary challenges to progress in your community today?” one educator responds as follows:

I am sick and tired of the people I work with in my office. I am supposed to be their leader to guide and assist them to do their daily jobs. Unfortunately, people never do their assigned tasks as expected. They come to work very late and leave early. They cover up for each other. When new ideas are to be implemented people are not too interested to participate and contribute to successful implementation. They think mostly of the financial gains they can derive from the implementation of the program. Those who feel that there are no personal financial gains or favors to be derived from the activity do not participate in it at all. At best they do everything to oppose the implementation process. Few people listen and take instructions. Personal envy is at its peak. Your subordinates are more interested in making you fail as a leader than to assist you to succeed and be praised or receive honors for your achievements. Few have the desire to see progress in their own communities. They are contented with the suffering and squalor they see around them and live in. I do not see any positive future for this community. Even when foreigners come in to help us we do our best to frustrate them to the degree that forces them to retreat. Whatever great program ideas they bring to us never get implemented. Even in cases where these people succeed in implementing their ideas and programs they fail and move away in less than no time. And when they leave telling us that they would be back we never see them again. When representatives of foreign NGOs come Ghanaians have the wrong idea that these people have brought huge sums of money to them to share. This is one of the reasons why every one does his or her best to reposition themselves to receive as many of the financial resources as possible for personal use ... Oh, let me tell you that we will always lag behind until we change our views and certain practices we have cherished for generations. Until we do so I don't believe that any



group of foreigners can just come in and improve our quality of life for us.

A civil servant in one community opines:

In our community today it won't be too long before everybody becomes a contractor. The business of contracting has now become profitable. This is one of the main reasons why there are too many people running around from one government office to another claiming to be contractors in vocations such as carpentry, masonry, welding, and mechanics. The only assets and tools these peoples have to work with are their brief cases and sweet tongues to lie about what they can actually do! The most disturbing thing happening these days is that civil servants set up their own contracting businesses in their various places of work. They allot government jobs to themselves through fake and fishy bidding processes. Government procurement officers are either members of or collaborators. They are the key people who over-invoice purchases made on behalf of government. They inflate the prices for commodities purchased and services received on behalf of the people. They pay the right amount of these commodities and services to the providers and then distribute among themselves the excess money they had billed to government chest. This act of dishonesty grows in intensity each year. Until those who engage in this practice are arrested, prosecuted, fined, and jailed it is impossible to stop these cynical behaviors and shoddy practices. But I am not sure whether it is actually possible to stop it since almost every civil servant is involved in this practice in one way or the other.

The rationing of electricity has been a problem-accommodation solution Ghanaians have used for the last fifty years. The Internal Revenue (IRS) has estimated that it lost a total of one hundred and forty billion Cedis in uncollected taxes in 2006 (See *The Ghanaian Times* of Monday, February 19, 2007, p. 3). People seldom pay their utility bills. Illegal installations are made to tap and use electricity and water without having to pay for them.

These realities bring to me a series of questions Cicero posed to Verres when he was being tried for his corrupt practices when he was Praetor of Sicily. It is befitting to pose these same questions to the citizens of Ghana and their leaders; especially, the leaders and civil servants. Outlining the bad deeds of Verres, Cicero observes:

Verres, on the other hand, refused to appoint the jury according to Rupilian Law, and chose five men agreeable to him. What



can be done with such a man? Is any punishment severe enough for his lawlessness? The rule for appointing juries among Sicilians was laid down for you, Verres, by a law based on the ruling of a commanding general, the authority of ten well-known commissioners, and a decision of the Senate. By this decision, Publius Rupilius was to use the findings of his commission to set up laws for Sicily. Before you came as praetor, everyone had strictly observed these Rupilian Laws in all cases, especially in the matter of the composition of the courts. How did you dare override this solemn tradition to get booty for yourself? Do the laws not exist for you? Had you no scruples, no care for your reputation, no dread of judgment? Had you no regard for authority? Was there no rule for you to follow? However, as I was saying, once the five jurymen were illegally appointed according to Verres' caprice, not to give a considered verdict but a foreordained dictum, on that day nothing more was done. The parties were ordered to appear the next day (pp. 33-34).

The unruly nature of Ghanaians has become like a speedily rolling snowball of vipers of corruption doing their best to destroy this nation. The practice of problem accommodation techniques has now peaked. Ghana's problems are at a point where there seems to be no viable solution. The climax of the nation's demise may be reached any moment. The nature of the kinds of suffering being unleashed on this nation is devastating. It is crippling!

To avoid this imminent phenomenon it is imperative for Ghanaians to spring to action by taking their leaders to task. Worst all there are too many hideous skeletons in the Ghanaian social, economic, political, educational, and technological closet. These cast an overpowering shadow over the hope of achieving and sustaining development. One of such skeletons is about the gross abuse of under age school girls by teachers. My conversational interviews with certain individuals revealed that certain male teachers carry on sexual relationships with grade school children. More often than not, some girls become pregnant and there is little done to discipline the teachers who have committed such heinous crimes. Some girls die by using crude methods of abortion to get rid of their pregnancies. This problem is pervasive across the whole country. It is a crisis situation that demands an immediate solution. As a general national problem a large number of children in grade school cannot read. We have discovered at the Human Factor Leadership Academy that certain children in class six, junior secondary school years 1, 2, and 3 are unable to read. The gross dishonesty of adults is being passed on to children even before they enter into their pre-school programs. Arguably Ghanaian children are being crippled by their parents as well as other adults. These children just absorb the good, the bad, and the ugly. As much as financial swindling is common among adults so also it is among the children and youth. Truancy is pervasive across first



cycle educational institutions all over the country. Parental abuse is commonplace phenomenon.

The challenge is Herculean because the people are soundly asleep and they have been lured into such a state by their habitual practices and lifestyles. They have lost track of what the moral north is. Like a team of sailors lost on a vast sea and being tossed to-and-fro by a furious gale, Ghanaians are like a feather in the palms of an angry goddess that is bent of destroying them. Ghanaians need help from those who have what it takes to slay the vine of corruption and the goddess of treachery and dishonesty.

#### 4. GHANA'S ARCHILLE'S HEEL

The social, economic, political, educational, and technological problems that face Ghanaians today are complex and intimidating. These problems are so pervasive that most people have accepted and taken them as part of their daily cultural practices. The thought that these problems are unsolvable leads almost every Ghanaian to withdraw from any insinuation of action. Passivity rules the day in Ghana. The only hope most people have is in relation to how they can feed, clothe, and house their own family members. Ghanaians think daily about leaving legacies for their children and grandchildren in terms of landed property and financial wealth. Most people do not actually care about how this goal is accomplished. They will do anything regardless of the morality of the means being used to achieve the goal. In Ghana today, you are better off when you see nothing, hear nothing, say nothing, and do nothing.

The nature and degree of the severity of Ghanaian apathy is akin to that described by LaHaye and Noebel (2000) regarding school daze in the United States. Painting a picture of severe apathy on the part of Christians in the United States regarding the loss of their freedoms as the secular humanists take over politics, LaHaye and Noebel (2000, p. 3) observe:

Since we moved here in 2010, I've worked in the high-tech industry, where the rules shift faster than the speed of light. I know things can change in a blink of an eye, and I was OK with that. I made a decent living, and my family and I enjoyed a comfortable lifestyle. That's why I never paid much attention to politics and all that. Life is so complicated that you have plenty to do just trying to build a good life for yourself. Let those who know what they're doing take care of that political stuff! Besides, I didn't want to tell other people how they ought to live. "Live and let live."—that's always been my motto.

The contents of the foregoing quotation describe exactly the situation on the ground in Ghana.



Those who are supposedly educated and expected to build this nation have found ways and means through which they are too contented to think and pursue long-term solutions to national problems. They make decent livings. They have colleagues in higher places. They get everything they want for themselves, loved ones, and family members. They make ends meet. Why should they waste their time and life thinking solutions to problems that do not actually impact their quality of life? Top on their daily agenda is how to get by through the applications of problem-accommodation techniques. Members of the upper and middle classes in Ghana are wrapped solely in themselves. They are lost in the tropical forest of their own needs, goals, ignorance, dishonesty, and greed. They have neither the desire nor the willingness to tackle the problems facing the whole nation. They are bound like Egyptian mummies by their fear of losing their source of livelihood and opportunity to embezzle, misapply, and mismanage scarce public economic resources. The unspoken adage among members of these classes is: “Illegally take as much as possible of public scarce resources and make sure that you are not caught!” Since few Ghanaians believe that long-term positive changes can happen in the social, economic, political, educational, and technological spheres, they seek not the interest of the wretched poor. Sadly, they live and work for themselves.

One of the most foundational causes of underdevelopment in Ghana as well as other developing countries is the distorted view of ownership or a sense of entitlement. Ghanaians with a perverted sense of entitlement find reasons to justify their acts of selfishness, greed, and corruption. These individuals usurp other people’s property without taking their constitutional as well as human rights into account. These individuals placed in positions of trust “choose to steal, manipulate, and otherwise take from others because of their belief that the world owes them. They fail to see their own negligence in considering alternative ways of thinking and living” (Peck, 1997, pp. 53-54). The oppression, exploitation, and violation of people’s rights are the most insidious crime one person or group of people can commit against others. Such practices destroy the effort toward community building. The desire to express this tendency must be minimized through proper thinking. There is a crisis of disordered thinking in Ghana. This has in turn produced character disorder.

There are too many insidious kinds of illusions under which Ghanaians live. While few are good ones the larger proportion of them is bad and destructive. Examples of these kinds of illusions include the following actively held beliefs and the foundation of behavioral practices in all of Ghana:

1. When I pay the bribe expected from me by either the crooked police person or civil servant my requests will be honored in a timely fashion.
2. When I take government property for my personal private use no one will be hurt because the item belongs to no particular individual.
3. Government has to find jobs for every citizen who wants one.



4. It is just fine to shirk at work and take time off during the week to attend to other personal matters.
5. If I squander any amount of money entrusted to me to be passed on to another person that is ok because I need money right away. I can pay the person later.
6. It is ok to not tell the truth to people because what they do not know will neither hurt nor be held against me.
7. It is just fine to ration electricity in Ghana because we must work together to protect the Akosombo Hydroelectric Dam.
8. I can drive anyway I want since I have to get to my destination as quickly as I please.
9. I can drop plastic bags, empty water sachets, and garbage anywhere I want because no one owns such places.
10. I am in politics for myself, my family, and friends.
11. If you want some service to be performed on your behalf by a civil servant who is paid to do so, you have not committed any criminal offence when you give a good sum of money to speed up the process on your behalf.

For fifty good years most Ghanaians have held and cherished these illusions and others like these. These illusions now interfere with our plans, policies, programs, and projects. It is almost impossible to make any progress in Ghana. Nothing is working as effectively as expected. The social as well as government institutions are not functioning efficiently. They have been choked to death by excessive and pervasive corruption.

The nation is being strangled by people who live their lives according to the dictates of these vicious illusions. Lifestyles based on these illusions have birthed and perpetuated disordered thinking and character disorders. Though we are fifty years old as a nation we still continue to act like toddlers. Isn't it just about the time for us to discover what it is we must be doing to grow up? In the words of Peck (1997, p. 60 and p. 61) it is arguable that:

Our persistent neurosis and character disorders are crippling if not dealt with. They can grow and become like boulders that totally block our way ... When we avoid the legitimate suffering that results from dealing with problems, we also avoid the growth that problems demand from us. It is for this reason that in chronic mental illness we stop growing, we become stuck. And without growth, without healing, the human spirit begins to shrivel.

There is no way Ghanaians can successfully overcome the diversity of social, economic, political, educational, and technological problems they face today. There is hardly any synchronized and concerted effort being made to solve the prevailing problems. Ghanaians are too much caught up in activities aimed at



earning their personal livelihood. The members of the so called middle class are lethargic and only interested in their own comfort. They never have the desire to act with integrity for the betterment of the whole nation. Ghanaians are too simplistic in everything they do to problem solve. *Quel Dommage!* Arguably, Peck (1997, p. 83) is right on when he notes that:

Simplism is inefficient and the lazy way out. No progress is possible when illegitimate shortcuts in thinking are taken in order to avoid the legitimate effort and suffering that accompany the discipline of problem-solving. Not only is simplism a means by which to harbor the illusion that there are easy answers, it is a sure path to becoming rigid and stuck.

The primary question one may ask is: “Where do we go from here?” Undeniably if Ghanaians truly desire to break the back of their pertinent problems they must make the resolve and commit themselves to engaging in appropriate lifestyles that can move this nation forward. Otherwise the next fifty years will be worse of than the last fifty years.

#### 4.1. Empirically-Based Observations

The empirical evidence regarding Ghana’s problems is overwhelming and speaks for itself. Ghana’s problems are identifiable. Since independence in 1957 Ghanaians have committed the destructive blunder of permitting the quality of the human factor to decay. Since independence Ghanaians neglected the task of assessing and developing the quality of their human factor. Unknowingly they opened the doors and the problem of severe human factor decay crept in. Ghana’s Achilles’ heel is severe human factor decay. The primary implications of Ghana’s Achilles’ heel include:

1. Forsaking the way of principle-centeredness and embroiling ourselves in lifestyles that are scornful of the dictates of universal principles.
2. Becoming wedded to the practice of devising quick-fix techniques and applying problem accommodation measures as permanent solutions to the social, economic, political, educational, and technological problems that face us.
3. Being averse to effective maintenance management activities because we prefer to see infrastructure become dilapidated to the point of non-usability before weak and frantic efforts are made to rehabilitate.
4. Getting wrapped in ourselves to such a degree that we live only in the present without any reflective thought about the future. The specific outcome of this lifestyle is a rare form of passivity



that places us in a world where we see, hear, feel, and say nothing. Our ears are waxed. Our mind is dull! Our eyes are shut. Our mouths are sealed. Our feelings are numb.

5. Adopting a cavalier way of life that plunges us into mediocrity in everything we do.

Now that we possess the knowledge about what our primary problem is, we have the opportunity to do something about it or decide not to care and let things deteriorate further. Let us now turn to various ideas and suggestions that bring relevant insights to what it is we must be doing to transform Ghana for the better within the next fifty years.

## 5. INDIGENOUS PRACTICES: BREAKING WITH THE PAST

Every nation requires material as well as skilled human resources to make social, economic, political, educational, and technological activities functional. The success of any nation is dependent upon the quality of the human factor of its citizens and any other people who come to assist them. This is the primary reason why the quality of the national labor force must be improved. To achieve and sustain this objective, Ghanaians must concentrate their scarce resources on developing a new generation of leaders. It is this group of people who will move the nation forward in a positive direction within the next fifty years.

### 5.1. Developing a New Generation of Leaders

Ghanaians have experienced serious difficulties in the last fifty years. They have made numerous attempts to overcome these problems. Yet these attempts have failed to solve the problems. If Ghanaians expect to achieve and sustain human-centered development, it is imperative that they pursue programs aimed at developing positive human factor. Any successes achieved in this venture will lead to changes in the crummy attitudes, behaviors, and actions Ghanaians have engaged in the last fifty years.

The human factor approach to development must be applied to minimize the intensity of severe human factor decay. The procedure for the human factor model requires that people be:

1. Assisted to identify problems quickly whenever they occur. This requires moments of personal and group reflection. During these moments ideas will be born, discussed, shared, and implemented.
2. Prepared to acquire the tools for dealing with problems successfully. These are the tools of critical thinking and problem solving.
3. Educated and mentored to alter their existing mind-sets and culture that militate against successful problem solving. This is education that zeros-in on developing positive human factor.



4. Educated to take responsibility and learn to do whatever they can at the right time. This requires getting people together and giving them the opportunity to think critically about what each person must do to play a role in the program of national development. People must commit to discharge their responsibilities and must hold each other accountable.
5. Assisted and encouraged to not indulge in any types of attitudes, behaviors, and actions that create the environment for imminent problems to surface. To achieve this goal brainstorming sessions must be instituted and used as perennial forums for dialogue as to acceptable and unacceptable behavior. Those involved must list prescribed as well as proscribed behaviors and actions. Each person must give his or her word to see to it that personal promises of performance are delivered.

There is a set of lessons Ghanaians must learn from the development experiences of the Japanese and Chinese. Examples of these lessons include:

1. The process of development has no known short-cuts. It is a long-term process that cannot be easily facilitated as orthodox economic theorists make us believe.
2. The attainment of development does not happen by merely wishing and romanticizing progress inhibiting cultural practices. It requires a well-disciplined, dedicated, honest, and compassionate workforce who is willing and ready to put in all its energy to make it happen.
3. Development is not a thing that the citizens and global humanitarians of one country do for those of another. Every group of people who desires to achieve economic growth and industrial progress has to realize that its team members must fashion their own technology and techniques to be employed to make the process happen.
4. The process of development requires visionaries who possess the right ideas about what they want to happen in their society and how they will go about to make it occur. These visionaries must possess positive human factor and be prepared to engage in constructive dialogues to create the required environment for progress to ensue.

By learning and applying these lessons Ghanaians have a greater chance at attaining sustained human-centered development. When they fail to improve the quality of their human factor, they will be stuck and regress rather than advance within the next fifty years. When Ghanaians are successful in their human factor development programs, there is nothing that can stop them from initiating and

accelerating the pace of social, economic, political, educational, and technological advancement.

Ghanaians can regain the ability to advance by learning and applying lessons from the recommendations of the human factor model of development. Some of these include the following:

1. Acknowledging the fact that it is important to concentrate on business and economic activities that raise the production of domestic staples for local use. This is aimed at conquering hunger first and working to enhance the quality of life.
2. Developing the potential to turn things around through positive human factor development. Every relevant and humane means of socialization must be employed toward the honing of positive human factor in citizens.
3. Abandoning externally focused plans, policies, programs, and projects and concentrating the available financial resources, effort, energy, and time on internal economic and business activities aimed at the attainment of self-sufficiency. External focus must be aimed solely at activities that lead to tapping into and benefiting from the forces of globalization (Adjibolosoo, 2004).
4. Utilizing national resources for the benefit of all citizens rather than leaving them in the hands of a few corrupted and devious civil servants. Use the human factor model to groom honest and compassionate leaders. Plant these people in the right places to ensure that the checks and balances work well.
5. Supporting programs that facilitate the flow of international financial resources as well as technical assistance into the nation to be used to facilitate citizenship development and nation building process.
6. Thinking and making good on the continuity of plans, policies, programs, and projects. Too often succeeding government leaders abandon the projects they inherit from the foregoing government. They dump out the baby with the bath water. It is critical to keep the baby while the bath water is being disposed off. Otherwise the required momentum will never be maintained for sustained national development.
7. Quarantining cultural practices that are inhibitory to local and national museums. A team of honest, responsible, and accountable people must be assigned the task of accomplishing this.

Today the needs of Ghanaians far outstrip their available scarce economic resources simply because most of these resources are either embezzled or misappropriated or misapplied. To make a positive and veritable turnaround Ghanaians must face the demons that force them to concentrate on excessive corruption, problem accommodation, quick fixes, and apathy. There is the need



for a group of honest and compassionate leaders to emerge to guide the rest of the population toward principle-centeredness. Plans, policies, programs, and projects must be developed and implemented according to principles. Those who do not want to perform must be relieved of their posts and duties.

## **POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION**

A critical review of the history of nations reveals that people have never made any progress based solely on the existence of huge reserves of natural resources. And, if indeed natural resources are the primary source of development, few countries would remain underdeveloped today. As empirical data reveal there is overwhelming evidence that substantiates the truth that as often as there are nations that have developed without possessing any wealth of natural resources, there are nations that have failed to develop despite their affluence in natural resources. A thorough study and analyses of each of these two categories of countries reveals that the critical factor that either facilitates or hinders progress is the quality of the human factor of the citizens and others with whom a people interact. When the percentage of those who exude positive human factor exceeds that of those who possess negative human factor, the chances are higher that a particular nation will experience sustainable progress. Alternatively, when these proportions are reversed, nations fail to develop regardless of the quality and quantity of their natural resources.

This empirical observation leads to the conclusion that human factor development must precede any attempts to improve a people's quality of life. No nations have ever made progress without a larger proportion of their society who possess positive human factor and adheres to the laws of the nation. Human factor development is a necessary and sufficient condition for ongoing economic growth and sustained human-centered development. Ghanaian leaders, civil servants, and other citizens must return to their roots and recommence a program of activities aimed at honing positive human factor. A people rich in positive human factor will initiate and establish sufficient momentum through which to move the process of development forward. It is this group of citizens who will lead and mobilize the rest of the population to work toward social, economic, political, educational, and technological advancement.

The conditioning Ghanaians have transitioned through within the last fifty years has brought negative outcomes. It has produced severe human factor decay. Some of the specific symptoms of severe human factor decay in Ghana include avid personal greed, inordinate passion for property acquisition, excessive levels of embezzlement, mismanagement, misapplication of funds, apathy, lawlessness, and environmental degradation. Lawlessness is evident through the attitudes, behaviors, and actions of motorists, civil servants, ministers, politicians, district chief executives, the police, professors, teachers, and the youth. Few people are exempted from lifestyles that reflect severe human factor decay in Ghana.



The severity of personal fraudulence and lawlessness is evident in the sale and purchase of real estate and the occupation of top civil service positions. A particular property is often sold to more than one person at a time. A family member sells family property to a prospective buyer and receives the full amount of money from the buyer. Sooner or later this same unscrupulous person or another family member sells the same landed property to another unsuspecting buyer. This practice leads to bitter and costly legal battles. In certain cases one party hires and sends thugs to break any walls being put up by one of the many people who lay claim to the landed property. In certain parts of Accra, for example, the fight for the right of ownership has led some people to hire vigilantes to guard their property. The thoughtless and indiscriminate sale of property has created social and financial difficulties. When building houses, people commence their building projects without having obtained the proper legal permits. This is one reason why as one walks through certain neighborhoods one sees a countless number of new buildings under construction with the following words written boldly on them in red ink: *Stop work. Produce permit. By Order.* Undeniably, the lack of respect for the law in every sphere of Ghanaian life cripples the social, economic, political, educational, and technological lives of citizens.

Those who have been honored by being placed in top civil service positions become corrupted as they get into the driver's seat. They do everything possible to amass personal wealth illegally. They use the power and authority of their public positions to enrich themselves, family members, and friends. Their associates, secretaries, and assistants do likewise. Every civil servant is out to milk the national cash cow in any form possible. The whole civil service system is choked with the corrupted from the top to the bottom. There is not a single exemption. This explains the gross inefficiencies and non-performance of civil servants.

The severity of human factor decay has diminished the degree of personal as well as group responsibility and accountability. The existing systems of checks and balances have little effect. Yet Ghanaians are not ignorant of the degree to which people who lived in the ancient kingdoms of Dahomey, Oyo, and Benin made the most effective use of checks and balances (Osae and Odunsi, 1973). The use of checks and balances in these kingdoms were effective because those assigned the task of and responsibility for enforcing these checks and balances performed their mighty duties effectively without the fear of the fellow citizens who violated the laws. The *Oyo Mesi*, the council of state, provided a powerfully effective check on the authority and power of the ruler of the Oyo Kingdom of the Yoruba (Osae and Odunsi, 1973). The authority and power of the *Oba of Benin* was under the keen surveillance and check by the *Uzama* and palace chiefs. These individuals worked together with great integrity and respect for the laws of the land to ensure that neither leaders nor individual citizens abused their authority and the rights and privileges of other citizens.

The systems of checks and balances were put to the best use because they were in the hands of people with positive human factor. Their love for the



progress and prosperity of the homeland was so strong that they sacrificed their own self-interests for the promotion of the common good. Contrary to popular opinion, it is more the integrity of the custodians of the systems of checks and balances that deterred people from engaging in fraudulent acts and corrupt practices, rather than the mere existence of these. The reason was that those who might have desired to misappropriate and mismanage public property were keenly aware that those who managed the systems of checks and balances would not give any reprieve to those who violate the laws of the land and abuse scarce public resources.

The existence of excellent security systems, technology, and laws based on sound moral principles and ethical standards are not sufficient in themselves alone to prevent fraudulence and corruption in Ghana where cultural conditioning, institutional arrangements, and habitual practices lead to the flourishing acts of lawlessness. The existence of institutions and property rights is insufficient for either preventing or minimizing lawlessness and corruption. It is not surprising that the custodians of the social institutions never make any sustainable progress. Governmental organizations such as the Military, Police, Civil Service, and the Judiciary are non-functional because they are led and managed by people who suffer from severe human factor decay. Gross inefficiency and ineffectiveness prevail in every one of these governmental as well as non-governmental agencies.

As Hendry, Arthur, and Jones (1995, p. 100) notes:

People are the actors through whom strategy unfolds, as a result of which firms succeed or fail ... People act, among other things, as owners, as entrepreneurs, as sources of skill and expertise, as collaborators, as participants in network and learning activities, as agents of their own careers ... People as entrepreneurs are credited with special qualities, such as strengths in judgment (Casson, 1982), a “will to conquer” (Schumpeter, 1934) or a “need for achievement” (McClelland, 1961), through which they succeed in founding new firms ... Economic renewal depends then on the rise to leadership of *new men [and women]* (Schumpeter, 1934—also quoted in Adjibolosoo, 1999, p. 212).

Those who underemphasize the significance of the quality of a person’s human factor in the process of nation building are doomed to failure. As I have discussed elsewhere, institutions are inanimate. They are not able to run themselves. Instead, they are run by people. Their life and quality are reflective of the quality of the human factor of those who run and manage them.

This is the primary reason why people who recognize the significance of positive human factor and assist their citizens to develop it make and sustain long-term progress. These are the people who succeed in the exploitation of their existing natural resources to their optimum advantage. Yet those who are unable to hone positive human factor never achieve any social, economic, political,

educational, and technological progress. These people struggle to meet their basic needs. They expect and wait for handouts from global humanitarians and the employees of the global soup kitchen.

Ghana's advancement within the next fifty years rests in people who possess positive human factor. Until Ghanaians work hand-in-hand in developing and applying their individual and group positive human factor, the social, economic, political, educational, and technological advancement they so desperately desire will elude them.

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