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JOSEPH DOMFEH-BOATENG

Selection and Faith/Spiritual Formation of Catholic Public School Lay Principals in Ghana

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INTRODUCTION

This study explores issues relating to the selection, appointment, and faith/spiritual formation of Catholic public school lay principals in Ghana. The study is based on data collected a decade ago, but key findings remain relevant today. The selection of leaders is “too important to be left to the serendipity or chance” since “ineffective leaders; particularly at the top, can be extremely costly to an organization, and unfortunately, leaders fail all too often.”¹ Hiring “an unprepared person to lead a Catholic school … undermines the aims of Catholic education.”² There have been long-standing concerns among the Ghana Catholic Bishops about their limited ability to Catholic public schools given the role played by the Ghana Education Service in operating the schools (which are funded by the state). Before delving into the nuts and bolts of the selection, appointment, and faith/spiritual formation of lay principals in Catholic public schools in Ghana, let’s first review a few concepts and terminologies.

Catholic education aims to develop the cognitive domain (that is, acquisition of knowledge and intellectual faculty) and affective domain (that is, moral and character formation of students). Catholic education is a Christian education packaged, informed, and directed by the Catholic Church’s traditions and its anthropological view of the human person. In its broad sense, Catholic education is an integral part of the Church’s investment in the formation and socialization of the human person from childhood to adulthood.³ It begins at home, continues in Catholic schools and higher institutions of learning, and then matures through one’s involvement with other people in the Church and society. However, in this paper, Catholic education is used in its more restricted sense to mean teaching and learning that take place in Catholic educational institutions. For this article, Catholic education and Catholic school refers to the same thing.

In Ghana, the Catholic Church established schools to contribute to its evangelization efforts. However, the Church today operates two types of schools: Catholic public and private schools. This is because many schools were absorbed into the public school system in part due to ever-increasing operational costs. Catholic public schools operate for the most part like other public schools and they receive a subsidy from the government. The Ghana Education Service has a supervisory role in managing the schools. By contrast, Catholic private schools are staffed and managed by the Church with substantial autonomy, even if they are subject to regulations from the Ghana Education Service as all schools in the country are.

**BRIEF HISTORY OF CATHOLIC EDUCATION IN GHANA**

Catholic and, more broadly, religious education in Ghana has a checkered history. The first Catholic school in Ghana was opened in Elmina in 1529 by Portuguese chaplains at King John III of Portugal’s behest. The school was established to provide reading, writing, and religious teaching to the African children. The purpose was in part to train children who would help propagate the Catholic faith while also advancing European trade in the Portuguese colony. The first school was short lived. In 1572, four Augustinian Friars, also from Portugal, reopened the Elmina school, but it was closed again four years later. Later Capuchin priests opened two Catholic schools, one in Elmina and the other in Axim. These schools flourished until Dutch merchants captured the Portuguese forts in 1642 and expelled Portuguese officials and their chaplains from the Gold Coast, as it was then named. Catholic educational institutions closed.

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In 1880, the Catholic faith was re-introduced when Fathers Auguste Moreau and Eugene Murrat were assigned to the colony as the first SMA (Society of African Missions) missionaries. They opened a Catholic school for boys in 1882. In 1883, with Our Lady of Apostle (OLA) religious sisters’ arrival, a Catholic school for girls was opened at Elmina. In 1890, the OLA Sisters opened a school for girls at Cape Coast.

Today, the government of the Republic of Ghana and religious bodies have a partnership in the management of faith-based schools. The 14th principle of the Governor Gordon Guggisberg Education Act that governs this partnership states that the government and mission schools will collaborate with the schools to be subsidized for education purposes. The 1961 Education Act brought all educational activities in Ghana, including Catholic schools, under the Ministry of Education’s auspices. Article 27 of the 1961 Education Act allowed the state to provide “grant-aid” to mission schools while the religious bodies that founded these schools handled their management and administration. Currently, the Ministry of Education, through the Ghana Education Service, manages a large number of Catholic public schools.

Overall, as of 2019–2020, the Catholic Church had 2,097 Catholic public elementary schools, 1,396 junior high schools, 82 Catholic public senior high schools, 29 technical/vocational schools, 13 Catholic public colleges of education, 13 nursing training colleges, and one private Catholic university college.8

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

In this study, the researcher explores issues relating to the selection, appointment, and faith/spiritual formation of Catholic public-school lay principals in Ghana.

The selection and appointment of school principals across Ghana, including Catholic public schools, are “generally based on a long service or seniority” rather than an education degree. The Ghana Education Service has assumed the right of appointing leaders to head Catholic public schools and other mission schools in the country. But laypersons who are appointed by the Ghana Educational Service to head Catholic public schools may not be knowledgeable in Catholic literacy, nor may they be able to advance the mission of Catholic education. These principals may not have any formal training in educational administration, which makes them unprepared to deal with the demands of their job as school leaders. This study investigates the problem relating to the selection and the formation of laypeople who head Catholic public schools in Ghana. In particular, the study examines how school lay principals in Catholic public schools are selected, trained, and appointed. The study concludes with recommendations as to how to mitigate these challenges.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The study attempts to answer the following research questions. (1) How are the lay principals selected, trained, and appointed to head Catholic public schools in the Brong Ahafo region of Ghana? (2) In what ways, if any, do new principals in Catholic public schools in the Brong Ahafo region of Ghana learn about the vision and mission of Catholic education? (3) How do formative spiritual programs help prepare the lay principals to exercise their duties as spiritual leaders in Catholic public schools in the Brong Ahafo region of Ghana? And (4) in what ways do lay principals in Catholic public schools in the Brong Ahafo Region, Ghana, promote their schools’ Catholic identity?

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DESIGN OF THE STUDY

Scholars have expressed various views on how school leaders are selected, trained, and appointed in Ghana. This study provides a voice for the lay principals in Catholic public schools in the Brong Ahafo Region of Ghana to describe in their own words how they were selected to head their schools. How did faith/spiritual formation programs prepare them to deliver the mandate of their job? How did these formative programs help them work as spiritual leaders in Catholic educational institutions, and what kind of support did they get from the diocesan officials and their local pastors?

The researcher used qualitative methodology to elicit data from the participants regarding the challenges they face in their work. The qualitative method was used because “reality is constructed by individuals interacting with their social world.” Furthermore, the nature of the study requires that the researcher goes to his participants’ settings to observe their actions, because “action can be best understood when it is observed in the setting in which it occurs.” The approach used enabled the researcher to understand the challenges that Catholic education faces in Ghana, making research-based recommendations to policymakers, evaluators, spiritual and professional developers, and stakeholders of Catholic education in Ghana.

The researcher used personal interviews, observation, document analysis, and field notes to garner data on the selection, training, and faith/spiritual formation of principals in Catholic public schools in the Brong Ahafo Region. The researcher collected the data a decade ago, but the challenges investigated remain the same today. The Ghana Education Service still selects and appoints leaders to Catholic


public schools, and many principals are not given ongoing faith/spiritual formation and professional development programs.

RESEARCH SAMPLE AND QUESTIONNAIRE

Although the researcher could not study the entire group of Catholic public school lay principals in the Brong Ahafo region, he selected a few key participants, using purposeful sampling. The number of the participants depended “on the questions being asked, the data being collected, the analysis in progress, the resources you have to support the study,” since what is needed in a research sample is “an adequate number of participants, sites, or activities to answer the questions posed at the beginning of the study in the form of the purposing statement.” The researcher studied eight Catholic public school lay principals. The purposive selection of the participants was based on the following criteria on the chart below.

Table 1: Purposive Sample of the Study by the Criteria Used in their Selection

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catholics</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Catholics</td>
<td>2</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attended Catholic College</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attended Non-Catholic College</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newly Appointed: Under 3 years</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Veterans: Above 3 years</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural location</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban Location</td>
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<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Author

While gathering data, two additional participants, the Regional Manager of the Catholic schools in the region and the General Manager of Catholic schools in Ghana, were added for their expertise. For confidentiality, pseudonymous names were assigned to the eight schools visited: St. Peter’s, Pope John Paul II, St. Mary’s, St. Joseph’s, Martyrs of Uganda, St. Rose’s, Pope Pius XI, and St. Agnes’. The sample was small but provided valuable insights. Overall, there were equal numbers of Catholic and non-Catholic lay principals in the study. The strong presence of non-Catholic principals is an indication that the local bishops in the region have lost control as to who is to be appointed to head their schools.

Findings are garnered from participants’ responses to open-ended interview questions. The researcher developed thirty-two open-ended interview questions. Ten interview questions centered on the process of the selection and appointment of the lay principals to head Catholic public schools in the region, their academic qualifications, their religious affiliations, and the role of the local bishops or their delegates and the District Director of Education in the selection process. Eleven interview questions focused on the training and faith/spiritual formation of the lay principals, their relationship with their local pastors, and how spiritual capital informs and directs the life, work, and leadership practice of the lay principals. The remaining eleven interview questions investigate how the lay principals cultivate, nurture, and promote their schools’ Catholic identity.

**FINDINGS OF THE STUDY**

On the appointment of the heads of Catholic public schools, five principals indicated that they were appointed by the District Director of Education in consultation with the Regional Manager of Catholic schools in the region. On his selection and appointment, the principal of Pope John Paul II maintained that:

...[T]he Regional Manager sometimes appoints principals to head Catholic public schools in our regions; my case was different. I was appointed by the
Regional Manager in our district. I am not sure whether the District Director of education was consulted or not my appointment.15

Three participants, the principals of St. Joseph’s, Pope Pius XI, and St. Agnes, revealed that they were appointed to head their schools by the District Director of Education. They were not sure of any involvement of the Regional Manager of Catholic schools. The researcher interviewed the Regional Manager of Catholic schools in the region and the General Manager of Catholic schools in Ghana to verify the proper method of selecting and appointing teachers to head Catholic public schools. The General Manager told the researcher that the policy for selection and appointment of Catholic school lay principals states that only practicing Catholics should be appointed to head Catholic schools. However, he admitted that some Regional Managers and District Directors of Education do not follow this policy. The Regional Manager told the researcher that he sometimes presents non-Catholic candidates to the District Director of Education to be appointed to head Catholic public schools based on the recommendations from their local pastors, parents, and teachers: “This is something I do not like to do, but sometimes the prevailing circumstances, such as lack of a qualified Catholic, force me to recommend non-Catholics to head our schools.”16

The protocol for selecting and appointing Catholic public school lay principals urges the Regional Manager to recommend qualified candidates to the District Director of Education. The protocol further states that all District Directors of Education should consult the Regional Manager in appointing principals to head Catholic public schools. The study’s findings revealed that this “laid-down procedure” has not been followed, as noted above. Some District Directors of Education transfer schoolteachers and principals from one school to the other without consulting the Regional Manager. But also of note is the fact that the Regional Manager of Catholic schools sometimes proposed non-Catholics to the District Directors to be appointed to head Catholic schools.

On how participants learned about the mission and vision of Catholic education,

15 Interview, April 20, 2010.
16 Interview, April 27, 2010.
almost all told the researcher that the dioceses in the region do not have any systematic formative programs that prepare and introduce them to the Catholic education’s mission and philosophy. Three non-Catholic principals indicated that they learn from their colleagues who are Catholics. Five principals said their local pastors are very supportive and learn a lot from them. On the same question, the General Manager maintained that his office does not deal directly with the lay school leaders’ training and faith/spiritual formation. Ongoing training and formative programs are to be done at the regional level. Participants indicated a critical need for faith/spiritual formation and professional development programs to equip and initiate them to the Catholic educational philosophy. For instance, St. Peter’s school’s principal expressed this need when she said,

I am not a Catholic. Even though I have the goodwill to cultivate, nurture and promote the Catholic character of my school, as the Regional Manager once suggested, how can I do this when I don’t know anything about the Catholic Church and its official teaching on education. Some of us are ready to learn, but no one is interested in giving us the tools we need for our work.\(^\text{17}\)

The study further revealed that most principals drew on the experiences they gained as students in Catholic schools, which were staffed by well-trained religious and lay personnel. For instance, the principal of Martyrs of Uganda, a non-Catholic principal, said his experiences of Catholic education were gained when he was in a Catholic school and a Catholic college. However, as the principal maintained, one needs to know the basic tenets of Catholic theology to live it. At the regional level, the Regional Manager is supposed to organize ongoing orientation courses regularly to initiate Catholic public-school principals into the mission and goals of Catholic schools. However, the data collected indicated that most dioceses do not provide such formative programs.

In response to the question “whether their religious affiliation plays any significant role in their selection and appointment,” some principals answered affirmatively. For instance, the principal of St. Agnes’ reported that “being a practicing Catholic

\(^\text{17}\) Interview, April 22, 2010.
is critical in one's selection and appointment to head a Catholic school in our region.” The principals of St. Mary’s, St. Joseph’s, St. Rose’s, and Pope Pius XI also maintained that being Catholic was significant in their selection and appointment. On the other hand, other principals said religious affiliation didn’t play a part in their appointment. For instance, the principal of Pope John Paul II argued that religious affiliation doesn’t matter in the process of selection and appointment to lead Catholic public schools in the region.

On the issue of cultivating and promoting a Catholic identity in their school, almost all participants have the good intent to nurture their schools’ character. They try to make Christ present in their school communities by celebrating the Eucharist and following the directives to make every Catholic educational institution “a place to encounter the living God who in Jesus Christ reveals his transforming love and truth.”

In addition, they make their schools sacramental places by participating “in the Church’s overall ministry of sanctification.”

As part of promoting their schools’ Catholic identity, participants ensure that students receive instruction in Catholic doctrine and practice through regular celebrations of the sacraments. But the schools in urban centers do a better job at exposing their students to Catholic faith practices than schools in rural areas. While faith practices take a variety of forms, principals in the “city schools” reported that the local pastors celebrate the Eucharist with their school communities every other week. In contrast, the rural schools have Eucharistic celebrations twice a semester. Acknowledging that participation in the Eucharist as a measure of contact with Catholic ritual life takes shape against the backdrop of other sacramental and para-liturgical practices that might also facilitate such exposure, this evidence is suggestive of a marked difference between urban and rural educational settings. One Catholic principal indicated that he must be Christ-like in all his dealing. Thus, he tried to exhibit a public witness to the way of Christ as the Church teaches. But most of the

18 Benedict XVI, Encyclical Letter Spe Salvi of the Supreme Pontiff Benedict XVI to the Bishops, Priests, and Deacons, Men and Women Religious, and All the Lay Faithful on Christian Hope (Rome: The Vatican, 2007).

principals pointed out that the dominant presence of non-Catholic students poses a challenge in their efforts to promote the Catholic identity in their schools. Participants maintained a good working relationship with teachers, non-teaching staff, and parents. But data revealed a lack of local pastors’ interest with consequences for the principals’ efforts to cultivate, nurture, and promote their schools’ Catholic character.

ENCOURAGING PRACTICES

The following themes emerged through the data analyses: (1) Recruitment of Catholic public school lay principals; (2) spiritual orientation and professional development; (3) principals’ relationship with their local pastors; and (4) building of their schools’ Catholic identity; and (5) servant leadership.

Recruitment of Catholic Public School Lay Principals

Participants presented conflicting reports on how Catholic public school lay principals are selected and appointed to head schools. Some principals indicated that the Regional Manager of Catholic schools appointed them. Others reported that they were appointed by the District Directors of Education of their districts. Upon verification with the Regional Manager and General Manager, the study found that the right of the local bishops to select and appoint heads for their schools is not always respected. Sometimes, principals are appointed with little or no input from the local bishops or their delegates. The Ghana Catholic Bishops Conference has noted its concern for these practices.

Spiritual Orientation and Professional Development

The Second Vatican Council Documents articulated the relevance of ongoing faith/spiritual formation for leaders in Church-related institutions. The conciliar fathers called on laypeople to participate in the mission of Christ. Giving suitable instructions to religious leaders—including lay leaders—enables them to reclaim and relive the charisma of the founders of their institutions.20

20 See Gerald A. Arbuckle, Out of Chaos: Refounding Religious Congregation (New York: Paulist Press, 1988) and Gerald A. Arbuckle, From Chaos to Mission: Refounding Religious Life Formation
Yet another significant theme is the lack of ongoing training and faith/spiritual formation programs for school administrators. For example, the principal of St. Peter’s school pointed out that the Regional Manager spoke to her about the expectations of Catholic education on the day of her appointment. However, she was not given any literature or anything since. The two principals from the Catholic Diocese of Goaso separately expressed similar concerns about the need for in-service training and formation in the Catholic faith and practices.

The principal of St. Agnes Junior High School in the Catholic of Sunyani expressed the need for ongoing faith/spiritual formation:

Our bishops are fighting the Ghana Education Service over who has the ultimate authority or power to appoint principals to our Catholic public schools, but nothing is being done to equip us to work effectively. They often say that as Catholic public school leaders, we should promote the distinguishing marks of Catholic education. But if you ask me what constitutes these distinguishing elements, I don’t know. We should be learning the Catholic education’s philosophy.21

**Principals’ Relationship with Local Pastors**

Principals’ relationships with their local pastor also emerged as a theme in analyzing the data. Some principals succeeded in creating vibrant working relationships in their schools, eventually yielding a true school community, one of the hallmarks of a Catholic school.22 In narrating their relationships with local pastors and the support from the Church as an institution, all principals maintained that they had excellent working relationships with their local pastors. This supported the views in Canon Law that the local pastor is responsible for and plays a significant role in

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21 Interview, April 15, 2010.
the pastoral care of the entire parish, including the parish schools.\textsuperscript{23} The principal of Pope Pius XI pointed out that his pastor was very instrumental in getting a new roof for one of his classrooms. Likewise, the principal of St. Rose’s said her pastor helped her build a borehole (well) that provides potable water for the school community.

Non-Catholic principals also had good working relationships with the local pastors. For instance, the principal of Martyrs of Uganda pointed out that it was through the recommendation of the local pastor that he was appointed to head his school. He always seeks the pastor’s counsel, especially in matters regarding the Church’s doctrines since he is not a Catholic.

\textbf{Building Catholic Public School’s Catholic Identity}

Addressing Catholic educators at the Catholic University of America, Pope Benedict XVI declared that “the Catholicity of a school does not consist in the number of Catholic students, but in the convictions of the educational community.”\textsuperscript{24} He argued that these convictions are expressed through liturgical celebrations, sacramental prayer, acts of charity, concern for justice, and respect for God’s creation. This assessment guided the researcher in analyzing the study’s data, given that Catholic public school principals play a crucial role in cultivating, nurturing, and promoting their schools’ identity.

Principals of the schools visited indicated they had a duty and privilege to introduce their students to the rudimentary elements of the Catholic Church. The study found that the students at the schools received instruction in Catholic doctrine and practice. Additionally, local pastors celebrate the Eucharist regularly with the students. Through these celebrations, the principals led their school communities to the person of Christ.

The findings further showed the principals’ commitment to making their school


\textsuperscript{24} Benedict XVI, Address, Conference Hall of the Catholic University of America in Washington, D.C. on Thursday, April 17, 2008.
communities become “sacramental places,” where the school communities “participate in the Church’s overall ministry of sanctification.” However, not all principals placed such emphasis on distinctively Catholic sacramental formation. The principal of St. Mary argued that she cultivates the Catholic identity of her school by making the school a place where her students are seen as children of God, helping each other respond to their divine calling. The principal of John Paul II indicated that he cultivates and sustains a Catholic school community through the caring love he accords to his students. He argued that his students feel protected in his school because “We love them. We display this love in how we deal with them and our commitment to helping them succeed. As a result, we have seen much improvement in their academic performance and their social and religious lives.”

The principal of Pope John Paul II maintained that his efforts to cultivate, nurture, and promote his school’s Catholic identity include his insistence that all teachers and students, both Catholics and non-Catholics, respect Catholic beliefs and practices. Throughout the study, by perusing official documents and conducting personal participant observations, the researcher found the Catholic identity in these schools to be encouraging. Principals maintained that they have the extra responsibility of articulating Catholic beliefs and practices, thereby infusing them into their school’s curricula. At the same time, the evidence suggests that both the methods and ends of student formation and liturgical participation may be up for debate in Ghanaian Catholic public schools.

**Servant Leadership**

The concept of servant leadership emerged as another important theme. Participants exhibited a high sense of service in their work as Catholic school leaders and administrators. They described their work as “a vocation” or “ministry.” They were committed to their work as Catholic educators. They were the first to arrive at the school premises and the last to leave. Their leadership styles reflect Jesus’, who did not come to be served, but to serve and to lay his life as a ransom for many.  

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25 Interview, April 20, 2010.
principals spent a significant part of their time serving members of their school community.

Caring is a critical aspect of the concept of servant leadership. The act of caring can transform institutions and individuals alike. Moreover, caring leaders inspire their followers to achieve impressive results, which would not be possible in situations that lack this aspect of leadership. Through an active working relationship with their school community, the principals often motivate faculty to enhance teaching and learning. For instance, the principal of St. Mary claimed that she encourages and empowers her teaching staff by making sure important information is available to them. She maintained that “once the teachers know what is going on and the direction we are heading, they give their maximum support. They feel empowered because they see themselves as part of the decision-making body in the school” (May 10, 2010).

PROBLEMATIC AREAS

The study also identified the following more problematic findings.

Lack of Observance of Established Protocols

The interviews and review of pertinent documents suggest that the Ghana Education Service and the Diocesan Education Unit in the Brong Ahafo Region do not always follow the established procedures when selecting and appointing Catholic public lay principals. In appointing principals for Catholic public schools, the District Directors of Education should consult with the Regional Managers of Catholic schools. In addition, the officials of the Diocesan Education Unit should be on the panel when screening possible candidates for principal in Catholic public schools. However, the study found that in most districts, the District Directors of

Education do not consult the Regional Manager of Catholic schools when assigning lay principals to Catholic public schools.

The study also discovered that the Regional Manager had in some circumstances circumvented or ignored the protocol by presenting non-Catholic teachers to the District Directors of Education to be appointed to head Catholic schools in the region. The study further found that some District Directors of Education do not always invite the officials of the Diocesan Education Unit to sit on the panel which makes the final decision as to who becomes a principal in a Catholic public school. Given failures on the part of key personnel in the governing systems of the Catholic public schools and the absence of consequences, Catholic public schools may suffer.

**Inadequacy of Spiritual Orientation and Professional Development Resources**

The three Catholic Dioceses in the region don’t provide adequate faith/spiritual formation, or professional development programs for lay principals. Answering the question “how do you learn about the mission and philosophy of Catholic education?”, most participants pointed out that they depended on their local pastors to gain insight into Catholic education. Others said they learned from their colleagues. Inadequate faith/spiritual formation makes it difficult for some school leaders to articulate the Catholic education’s mission and vision to their school communities. Again, the lack of ongoing formal faith/spiritual formation and professional development programs means these leaders may not be equipped with current spiritual and educational skills that reflect ongoing research findings to deal with modern-day challenges.

**Enhance the Spiritual Capital of Catholic Public Lay Principals**

Another finding is the insufficient presence of spiritual capital among Catholic school lay principals in the region. Developing the spiritual capital of Catholic public lay principals does not mean they escape from the material things of this world. Instead, it has to do with the very roots of life. Authentic Christian leadership emerges from one’s relationship with God because “one’s relationship with...
God infuses and transforms one’s ways of being a leader.” 28 Thus, enhancing the principals’ relationship with God through regular faith/spiritual formation programs would increase their sense of security, empowerment, compassion, peace, and graciousness, enabling them to perform their duties as administrators in Catholic public schools. The principal of St. Peter’s elucidated this assertion when she said, “I rely on God’s help to do my work. I need to listen to him daily for him to take me through difficult times. I am never overwhelmed even in the face of difficulty or setbacks because I trust he will guide me through.” 29

The local churches in the region will benefit from these lay school leaders if they harness and sustain the spiritual capital already present in these leaders. Though the school leaders seem to be on the right track, they still need to be guided on their spiritual journey to play the spiritual dimension of their leadership as they participate in the evangelizing mission of the Church.

CONCLUSION

Based on the insights gained in the study, a few recommendations can be made.

**Recommendation 1:** Reinvigorate a comprehensive protocol with accountability codes regarding the selection and appointment of lay principals of Catholic public schools. The study recommends that the Catholic Bishops in Ghana should assume their right to appoint principals for Catholic public schools. The bishops must be part of the ultimate decision-making for appointing principals for Catholic public schools in their dioceses. They must insist that the laid-down protocol is respected so that practicing Catholics knowledgeable in Catholic educational ethos are appointed to lead the Catholic public schools in Ghana. Getting the right person for leadership in an organization is critical. 30

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29 Interview, May 10, 2010.
The terms and conditions upon which the Church and state entered the partnership to provide quality education should be adhered to through a sustained and ongoing dialogue with officials of the Ghana Education Service. The study further recommends that efforts be made to reinforce system thinking and collaborative work in selecting and appointing Catholic public school lay principals in the region. Such efforts will create awareness among all those who play a vital role in the recruiting and appointment of Catholic public-school principals. In addition, the key players should be reminded that they are part of a system that aims to create human capital for the country’s development.

The research data revealed that the local pastors, the Regional Manager, and the District Directors of Education in the region exhibit a keen interest in providing quality education by recruiting “highly qualified” teachers to head Catholic public schools when the principal position becomes vacant. However, some key individuals who select and appoint Catholic public school leaders are not working as part of the system. Therefore, the study recommends that those who choose and appoint Catholic public-school principals should be reminded that they are interconnected and interrelated in providing a holistic education, which is vital to the Catholic Church and the state alike.

**Recommendation 2:** Empower the Diocesan Education Council to become more effective.

The study recommends that the bishops in the Brong Ahafo Region formulate a diocesan education policy to guide the Diocesan Education Council. This council, which is comprised of committed and well-informed lay Catholics, religious, and clergy, can become an effective vehicle for promoting spiritual and educational orientation and professional development for Catholic educators and administrators in the region.

**Recommendation 3:** Establish a diocesan spiritual and educational leadership orientation and professional development center.

Laypersons need ongoing training and formation in Catholic literacy. The spiritual/faith formation of Catholic school lay principals is critical because they share in
the great commission of making Jesus known and are, therefore, called to “share with the faithful the faith of our Christian community.”\textsuperscript{31} The Catholic school is “a place of integral formation by means of a systematic and critical assimilation of culture and faith” where leaders must be given the appropriate and relevant spiritual/faith formation to enable them to make a Catholic school “a privileged place in which, through a living encounter with a cultural inheritance, integral formation of next generation of adult Catholics occurs.”\textsuperscript{32} Five key areas on which faith/spiritual formation of Catholic school lay leaders should focus can be suggested: “knowledge in theology and philosophy of Catholic schooling, knowledge of religious instruction taught in Catholic schools, community building, service programs, and creating Catholic school environment.”\textsuperscript{33} Catholic school lay principals’ spiritual/faith formation programs will strengthen their religious convictions and values. Consequently, formation should aim at providing the participants with an opportunity for spiritual growth and a better understanding of the Catholic faith, which forms the underpinnings of the philosophy of Catholic education.

\textbf{Recommendation 4:} Expose future schoolteachers and administrators to fundamental theories and practices of educational administration.

In collaboration with the Catholic University College of Ghana, the Catholic Colleges of Education should expose future schoolteachers and administrators to the theories and practices of educational administration while they are under formation. Courses taught to future school leaders should include school leadership and administration principles. Once these institutions give their students the basic foundations, the Diocesan Education Office in the Brong Ahafo Region can build upon them. Thus, the Diocesan Education Office in the region should liaise with the Faculty of Education of the Catholic University College of Ghana in organizing spiritual and education orientation and professional development.


In conclusion, the study examined the selection and appointment of Catholic public school leaders, their faith/spiritual formation, and their ongoing professional development in the Brong Ahafo Region, Ghana. The key findings and recommendations could serve as a springboard to creating a renewed awareness of the importance of appointing qualified lay people to lead the Catholic schools in the region. Additionally, the Catholic school leaders must give the appropriate faith/spiritual formation and regular professional development courses to help them succeed as Catholic educators.

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