

## **An Evaluation of the Impact of Disciple-Making on the Work Ethic of Ghanaian Christians: A Case Study of The Church of Pentecost – Ghana**

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### **Abstract**

This study aimed to assess the extent to which the disciple-making processes within Ghanaian churches have contributed to the development of a positive work ethic among their members, specifically focusing on The Church of Pentecost, Ghana. Through a comprehensive review of literature and empirical data, the research revealed that many Christians and churches experience a dichotomy between the sacred and the secular, a lack of intentional discipleship, and the negative influence of certain cultural traits in Ghana, among other factors. The findings indicate that a cohesive and holistic disciple-making strategy – which encompasses all aspects of life – is essential to address these challenges. Within The Church of Pentecost, the Workers' Guilds serve as a valuable platform to equip members with a positive work ethic, ultimately aiming to transform the workplace.

**Keywords:** Disciple-Making, Work Ethic, Work Ethics, Discipleship, Theology of Work.

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### **Introduction, Background and Motivation**

This study aimed to assess the extent to which the disciple-making process within Ghanaian Churches has contributed to transforming the lives of their members, particularly in terms of their positive work ethic in the marketplace, with a specific focus on The Church of Pentecost, Ghana (CoP). The motivation for this research stemmed from a desire to understand and address the apparent disconnect between the high Christian population and the perceived limited impact on society, particularly in the workplace. It sought to evaluate the disciple-making process to determine whether it could account for this incongruence. This inquiry was further motivated by the May Day speech delivered by the former President of Ghana, Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo, on May 1, 2017, during the Workers' Day celebrations in Accra, where he expressed concern about the attitude of the Ghanaian public worker:

... we arrive at work late and then spend the first hour in prayer; we are clock-watchers and leave in the middle of critical work because it is the official closing time. Everything comes to a stop when it rains, and we seem to expect the rest of the world also to stop.... We have no respect for the hours set aside for work...we pray, we eat, and we visit during working hours. We spend hours chatting on the telephone when customers are waiting to be served, thereby increasing our labour costs. We take a week off for every funeral. And then we wonder why we are not competitive. There is the petty stealing of paper, envelopes, tea, milk and other equipment. There is the reckless use of office vehicles. Employees show no inclination to protecting the things that are in the offices and factories and extreme reluctance to stand up for what we know to be right in our workplaces in general.<sup>1</sup>

The attitudes highlighted by the president—such as tardiness, petty theft, poor customer service, and a disregard for time—do not accurately reflect the demeanour of Christians who have undergone proper discipleship. These traits, echoed in various forms by different public officials, are not representative of Christians, who are called to be the “salt of the earth and light of the world” (Matt. 5:13–16). Consequently, the aim of this study is to examine and clarify the apparent disconnect between the large Christian population and its seemingly minimal influence on society, particularly in the workplace. Could the issue stem from a lack of intentional disciple-making? The concept of work ethic may be used to validate this, particularly in light of complaints regarding the poor work ethic observed among Ghanaians. Both religion and culture significantly influence key economic factors, including attitudes toward work and productivity, saving and investment practices, entrepreneurship, and governance.<sup>2</sup> Specifically, Christianity affects development in three crucial areas: its impact on culture, its influence on mental models, and its effect on work ethic.<sup>3</sup>

The study was structured into seven chapters. Chapter one provided a comprehensive overview of the research, highlighting the necessity of the study and outlining the methodology employed. It also presented the background of the research, formulated the research questions, delineated the purpose of the study, and detailed the design and methodology. Chapter two offered a review of the field of practical theology, which was relatively new to the researcher. This chapter established practical theology as a valid and credible theological discipline, similar to other fields. It became evident

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<sup>1</sup> Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo, “May Day Celebration Speech” (speech, Accra, Ghana, May 1, 2017), accessed February, 20, 2020, [www.presidency.gov.gh/index.php](http://www.presidency.gov.gh/index.php).

<sup>2</sup> Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, trans. Talcott Parsons (London: Routledge, 1930); Stephen Adei, “Religion, Culture and Development,” in *Religion and Government in Africa: A Christian Response*, ed. Delanyo Adadevoh, 249-267 (Accra: ILF Publishers, 2009).

<sup>3</sup> Stephen Adei, “The Impact of Christianity on National Development with Special Reference to the Role of Pentecostalism” (presentation, Christ Apostolic Church International, Second Public Anim Memorial Lectures, Accra, Ghana, 2015).

that practical theology plays an essential role in the effective dissemination of the Gospel throughout Africa.

Chapter three, titled “Biblical and Contemporary Foundations of Disciple-Making,” aimed to outline the process of disciple-making within the church. The chapter explored the definitions, significance, and characteristics of both disciples and disciple-making churches, as well as the factors that contribute to the effectiveness of any disciple-making system. Additionally, it provided historical evidence of the church’s involvement in disciple-making in Ghana, specifically highlighting the efforts of the Methodist Church and the Assemblies of God Church. The Church of Pentecost served as the central case study, detailing its humble beginnings, the origins of its disciple-making initiatives, and the various structures, manuals, personnel, and training programs established to enhance disciple-making efforts. The chapter suggested that, as a key institution providing a prophetic voice in a nation where over 70% of the population identifies as Christian, the church could significantly impact its sphere of influence if Christians are effectively disciplined within the local assembly.

In chapter four, the research delved into the theology of work, work ethic, and the various dimensions of work ethics, as well as the significance of these constructs for Africa. The chapter highlighted the challenges and contributing factors associated with them. Drawing on literature evidence from the Ghanaian context, it was noted that both work ethic and work ethics in Ghana do not align with the strong Christian profession found within the community. This discrepancy is largely attributed to a lack of effective disciple-making efforts within the churches. Consequently, there exists a stark contrast between the highly professed Christian faith and the deeply lacking Christian expression of that faith in Ghana.

In chapter five, a comprehensive analysis of the qualitative data gathered through semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions is presented. Utilising Atlas.ti for data analysis, the chapter systematically categorises responses derived from a rigorous coding process. The interview questions explored several critical themes, including participants’ interpretations of disciple-making, the defining characteristics of a disciple, the attributes of a disciple-making church, and concepts surrounding work ethic. Specific focus areas included the nuances of Ghanaian work ethic, distinctions between Christian and secular work ethics, and the influence of Ghanaian culture on work ethic perceptions. Additionally, the chapter examines various factors that affect work ethic, the role of the church in shaping work ethic, and the contributions of disciple-making to work ethic development. The analysis also delves into the rationale for incorporating lessons on work ethic into discipleship curricula, alongside recommendations for specific content to be included in church discipleship manuals. The twelve thematic areas served as a framework for analysing the generated data. The individual perspectives were integrated to form a cohesive

understanding of both similarities and differences, along with their implications for work ethic and the state of disciple-making in shaping that ethic. Participants generally concurred that the Ghanaian work ethic is lacking, attributing this to cultural influences, technological advancements, and the role of the church. However, they expressed confidence in the church's disciple-making initiatives as a means to transform the negative work ethic into a positive one. These insights provided the foundation for the discussions and observations presented by the researcher, which are elaborated upon in chapter six.

In chapter six, the data collected in relation to the literature reviewed in chapters three and four were analysed. The findings indicated that the work ethic among Ghanaians is low despite a significant Christian population. The chapter identified several contributing factors, including the dichotomous views many Christians hold regarding sacred and secular matters, a lack of intentional discipleship within the churches, and the negative influence of certain aspects of Ghanaian culture. Additional factors included the churches' inadequate focus on transformation, poor remuneration for workers, and the absence of effective monitoring structures in the workplace. A pressing concern highlighted was the potential church attendance fatigue experienced by many members of The Church of Pentecost, attributed to an overload of activities occurring almost every day of the week. It was noted that leadership is actively working to limit activities and designate some days for reflection on teachings received, allowing members to engage more meaningfully with their spheres of influence. Chapter seven provided a summary, conclusions, and recommendations for the entire study.

### **Methodological Baselines**

The research conducted was qualitative in nature. In the study, interviews were carried out with five (5) Presiding Elders and five (5) discipleship group leaders from five (5) Pentecost International Worship Centres (PIWCs) in Ghana. The PIWCs serve as English-speaking and cross-cultural ministries of the Church of Pentecost, primarily established for individuals of non-Ghanaian cultural backgrounds, as well as for Ghanaians who prefer to worship in a multicultural environment. Currently, there are forty-three (43) PIWCs across Ghana. The selected centres were from the Greater Accra Region (PIWC Sakumono and PIWC Accra), Ashanti Region (PIWC New Tafo and PIWC Asokwa), and Eastern Region (PIWC Koforidua). These congregations were chosen for several reasons, including their English-speaking nature, which facilitated the interview process, the fact that most members belong to the working class in both public and private sectors, the effectiveness of their disciple-making processes due to abundant human resources, and the presence of resident pastors, unlike many other local assemblies.

The sampling procedure employed was purposeful sampling, which allowed the researcher to select participants based on predefined characteristics pertinent to the study. This method enabled the researcher to identify individuals who could provide the most relevant and insightful responses to the research questions, thereby fulfilling the objectives of the interviews. A total of five Christian leaders in Ghana were selected through this procedure, contributing to a broader perspective on the research topic. In total, the research involved fifteen (15) interviewees. Furthermore, three focus groups were convened at PIWC Asokwa to gather the experiences and opinions of Christian workers from the public sector, private sector, and entrepreneurial backgrounds concerning specific issues closely related to the research questions. The value of conducting focus groups lies in their capacity to deliver in-depth insights within a constrained timeframe, fostering an environment where participants feel comfortable sharing their thoughts and feelings on matters of mutual interest.<sup>4</sup>

## Research Findings

In the context of this research, work ethic is defined as the virtues or moral principles related to hard work and diligence.<sup>5</sup> Miller, Woehr, and Hudspeth describe work ethic as encompassing a spectrum of beliefs and attitudes that are reflected in workplace behaviours.<sup>6</sup> Consequently, work ethic can be viewed as a collection of values, principles, attitudes, and behaviours that arise from individual beliefs, motivating and guiding the execution of work tasks. While some individuals may exhibit a work ethic that is not explicitly Christian, it can still act as a motivating force.<sup>7</sup> Thus, a strong work ethic is a fundamental component of an individual's personal values, rooted in the belief in the intrinsic value of work, rather than merely its rewards. Although it is primarily secular in nature, it may occasionally have its origins in religious principles, as exemplified by the Protestant work ethic, which emphasises hard work and frugality as expressions of one's faith.

The research distinguishes between "work ethic" and "work ethics." Work ethic refers to the belief that one should diligently work beyond minimum expectations, striving for excellence in all aspects of labour. In contrast, work ethics pertain to the "ethics of

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<sup>4</sup> Paul D. Leedy and Jeanne E. Ormrod, *Practical Research: Planning and Design*, 11th ed. (Essex, England: Pearson Education Limited, 2015), 283.

<sup>5</sup> Ramona Pučėtaitė and Anna-Maija Lämsä, "Developing Organizational Trust through Advancement of Employees' Work Ethic in a Post-Socialist Context," *Journal of Business Ethics* 82, no. 2 (2008): 325-337, cited in Joseph Ankamah-Lomotey, *Ghanaian Work Ethic under the Microscope: A Comparison of Ghanaian Work Ethic in American Multinational Companies and Ghanaian Companies in Ghana* (Saarbrücken: Academic Publishing, 2017), 20.

<sup>6</sup> David J. Miller, Debrah J. Woehr, and Natasha Hudspeth, "The Meaning and Measurement of Work Ethic: Construction and Initial Validation of a Multidimensional Inventory," *Journal of Vocational Behavior* 60, no. 3 (2002): 5.

<sup>7</sup> Louise Kretzschmar, "Religious and Secular Moral Value Systems for Professional and Business Ethics," in *Ethics for Accountants and Auditors*, ed. Sophie Wanjogu et al. (Cape Town: Oxford University Press, 2012), 2.

the workplace” and are generally understood today as a set of moral standards applicable to various trades, professions, or job classifications.<sup>8</sup> Thus, work ethic is primarily intrinsic, while work ethics are extrinsic. For example, an individual with a strong work ethic would maintain a positive attitude regardless of whether the work environment has established ethical codes.

Thus, a person with a strong work ethic exemplifies genuine work ethics, while someone who merely adheres to work ethics may not truly possess a strong work ethic; they might simply be following organisational rules. Individuals who exhibit work ethics without a foundational work ethic often require close supervision to perform at their best. A solid understanding of the theology of work can instil in Christians a robust work ethic, as they recognise their work as a calling—an opportunity to fulfil God’s Kingdom purpose. Such individuals believe that their work contributes to an eternal inheritance by serving Christ and their neighbours through their daily tasks (Col. 3:23–24). With this belief, they are likely to show diligence, honesty, integrity, and excellence, regardless of whether anyone is observing them.

The work ethic observed in Ghanaian workplaces has, unfortunately, not been exemplary, leading to criticism from several prominent figures at various levels.<sup>9</sup> Research indicates that the Ghanaian work ethic is marked by issues such as tardiness, a lack of ownership over tasks, insufficient diligence, the misappropriation of working hours, and the misuse of workplace resources for personal purposes without permission. Additionally, there tends to be a tendency to make excuses for avoiding work, along with a concerning lack of integrity and honesty, among other challenges. These findings pose a significant challenge to the Christian community in Ghana, a country with a majority of its population identifying as Christian. It appears that Christians have not sufficiently embodied a positive work ethic that could effectively permeate and transform the workplace, reflecting the kingdom values they are taught in church.

The empirical part of the research aligned well with the literature. Overall, all interviewees indicated that the work ethic among Ghanaians is relatively low, despite the country’s significant Christian population. Several factors were identified as contributing to this perception, including the dichotomy between the sacred and the secular that many Christians uphold, the lack of intentional discipleship within the

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<sup>8</sup> CAPS Module 2, “Describe Work Ethics,” Temple University, accessed March 24, 2025, <https://education.temple.edu/sites/education/files/documents/02CAPS.pdf>.

<sup>9</sup> A. Abongo, “Ghana: Minister Demands New Work Ethic from GWCL Workers,” AllAfrica, October 19, 2009, <https://allafrica.com/stories/200910190076.html>; Emmanuel Kwesi Aning, “An Overview of the Ghana Police Service,” *Journal of Security Sector Management* 4, no. 2 (2006): 1-37; S.N. Woode, *Values Standards and Practices in Ghanaian Organisational Life* (Accra: Asempa Publishers, 2012).

churches, and the adverse effects of certain cultural aspects in Ghana. Additional contributing factors include insufficient focus from churches on personal transformation, inadequate compensation, and the absence of effective monitoring structures in the workplace.

The interviews indicated that churches in Ghana have influenced work ethic in both positive and negative ways. On the positive side, it was observed that some churches encouraged their members to embody Christ-like principles in their workplaces and acknowledged and rewarded those who excelled professionally. Conversely, the interviews also revealed that certain churches contributed to a decline in Christian standards by overloading their members with numerous programs and activities on holidays, as well as frequent prayer meetings almost every day. Some of their weekday activities take place at various times, prompting many members to leave work before the official closing time to attend or to stop by briefly before reporting late. Furthermore, the prosperity gospel is believed to have negatively influenced work ethic, as it promises wealth without stressing the importance of diligence and excellence in one's efforts. A notable drawback of the churches' impact on the work ethic in Ghana is their insufficient focus on cultivating genuine discipleship.

### **Evaluating the Disciple-making in The Church of Pentecost**

The research assessed the disciple-making system of the CoP, and the following observations were made:

- a) **Integrated Discipleship Curriculum:** It has been noted that the current manual of the CoP is organised around the annual themes, which have served the church effectively. However, a significant challenge arises in that individuals who join the church at a later date may miss out on the material that has already been studied. The study highlights the necessity for the CoP, aligning with standard disciple-making practices, to develop a comprehensive, sequential manual that is interconnected with the primary themes of discipleship and accessible to all members of the CoP.
- b) **Defining the Portrait of a Disciple:** One of the essential characteristics of a disciple-making church is its provision of a clear definition and representation of a disciple. This clarity ensures that everyone uses a common and accurate framework to assess who qualifies as a disciple. The study revealed that the CoP currently lacks this definition and will need to establish one to improve its effectiveness in disciple-making.
- c) **Synchronisation of Disciple-making Structures:** The research revealed that the disciple-making systems within the CoP operate independently, without

coordination with other groups. Additionally, all discipleship groups are open, allowing new members to join at any time. The key challenge arising from this openness is that when new members join the group, it may impact the group's intimacy. Existing members may hesitate to share personal issues due to uncertainties regarding the confidentiality of new participants. To address this, the CoP should synchronise all disciple-making groups, including Home Cells, Bible Study Groups, New Converts, and Ministries.

- d) **Intentional Development of Disciple-making Leaders:** The research highlighted that effective training for Discipleship Group leaders poses a challenge. It noted that the current system of weekly and monthly training sessions is not yielding satisfactory results. Issues such as a lack of coordination, improper prioritisation, and work overload have contributed to low commitment among some ministers and lay leaders, which hampers the effectiveness of preparatory classes and participation from certain leaders. Additionally, there is a significant absence of a leadership manual for training disciple-makers. This gap in the disciple-making process within the CoP needs to be addressed through the development of a comprehensive training plan for those involved in disciple-making.
- e) **The Place of The Pentecost Workers Guilds (PEWG):** The PEWG is one of the ministries of the church under Vision 2023, the CoP's five-year vision document from 2018-2023.<sup>10</sup> The purpose of forming the Workers Guilds is to mobilise and unite church members from various professional backgrounds, creating a platform for training and mentoring. This initiative aims to equip members to reform their respective workplaces with the values and principles of the Kingdom of God while performing their duties with professionalism and diligence. Research has shown that the rationale behind the PEWG's formation provides an excellent framework for the Church of Pentecost to instil a positive work ethic in its members, ultimately transforming the workplace.

## **Recommendations**

To ensure that disciple-making in the church positively affects the work ethic of Christians in Ghana, particularly within The Church of Pentecost, the following recommendations were made based on the research:

- a) To position disciple-making as a core ministry of the Church, it is essential to build all aspects of ministry to revolve around this objective. This integration requires a cohesive framework where personal devotions, pulpit ministry, discipleship cohorts, and age-specific ministries operate in a synchronised manner. Such

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<sup>10</sup> The Church of Pentecost, *Pentecost Workers Guild Document* (Accra: The Church of Pentecost, 2019).



alignment will enhance the Church's overall effectiveness in fostering spiritual growth and community.

- b) To integrate and synchronise all ministries – Children, Youth, Women, and Men – particularly in the area of curriculum development. This approach will facilitate a long-term vision that takes into account the needs of each group in relation to the others, with each preceding group laying the groundwork for the subsequent one.
- c) To create space for members to engage with other spheres of their lives, it is essential to recognise that while our understanding of ecclesiology has expanded to acknowledge the Church as both 'gathered' and 'scattered,' this has not been fully integrated into our church activities. Although the doctrinal aspects of our ecclesiology are evolving, this change has yet to translate into practical applications within our church life. Currently, as indicated by the data, many church activities are centred solely on the church premises, which limits opportunities for members to attend to other facets of their lives and ministries.
- d) To intentionally mentor and disciple future disciple-makers with a well-structured curriculum designed to equip them with essential disciple-making skills. The current preparatory class model lacks effectiveness and intentionality in their training.
- e) To intentionally enhance the family life ministry as a centre for equipping the next generation in purposeful discipleship. This may involve empowering parents to serve as conduits of blessings for their children and providing families with devotional materials that encompass all aspects of their lives, suitable for use by the entire family.
- f) To review and refocus the Pentecost Workers Guilds, providing it with a dedicated space within the local church for the intentional equipping of Christian workers with Kingdom values to effect change in the workplace. A manual could be developed for their meetings as part of the disciple-making ministry. For example, the various guilds could come together once a month during the Discipleship Group meeting at the church to discuss the challenges they face in being 'salt and light' in their communities.
- g) To establish a Christian Education Unit for the Church of Pentecost, it is essential to recognise that intentional disciple-making churches around the world often have dedicated units for full-time staff who are wholly committed to driving the disciple-making vision. This demonstrates a strong commitment to the church's mission. Without such a unit, the responsible team may struggle to devote their full attention to the demands of this core ministry.

- h) To review the curriculum of the Pentecost School of Theology and Mission (PSTM) to emphasise intentional disciple-making and a theology of work as essential components in the training of ministers. This focus will equip them to effectively lead the disciple-making vision when they are assigned to congregations. Additionally, PSTM might consider integrating the training of church officers and operating as a “local church-based seminary” throughout the year, with facilitators available at the district level. This approach would promote continuous leadership development on a weekly or monthly basis at locations convenient for church workers.

## **Conclusion**

This research aimed to assess the impact of discipleship on the work ethic of Ghanaian Christians. The findings indicated that, despite a significant Christian population, the work ethic among Ghanaians remains low. Several contributing factors were identified, including the dichotomous perception many Christians hold regarding attitudes toward sacred versus secular matters, the lack of intentional discipleship practices within churches, and the adverse effects of certain aspects of Ghanaian culture. There is a noticeable lack of focus on transformation within churches, alongside issues such as inadequate remuneration and the absence of effective monitoring structures in the workplace. This thesis suggests that if churches were to prioritise intentional discipleship, meaningful change could occur. For those in the Church of Pentecost who are somewhat committed, the Pentecost Workers Guild offers a promising opportunity to enhance members’ work ethic and drive transformation in the workplace.

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