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Religion as a tool in strengthening the democratic process in Ghana

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Recent elections in Ghana bear witness to the extraordinary power of religion to affect social and political change. This paper illustrates a few varieties of this power through case studies which examine the role of religious leaders in promoting peaceful elections, the way inter-faith dialogue enhances civic duties and fosters peace by bolstering values of justice, forgiveness and cooperation, and the State's active use of religion to promote domestic agendas, such as government's 'courting' religious groups ostensibly for their votes, and international relations.

Key words: Religion, peaceful elections, democratic process, national development agenda, social and political change, inter-faith dialogue, domestic agendas, international relations.

INTRODUCTION

Religious interrogation of state and civic life is not new in Ghana's body politic. Pobee (1988), delves into the relationship between President Kwame Nkrumah and the Protestant Churches in Ghana at the threshold of independence and thereafter. As required, religious groups take an overt, almost confrontational approach to politics. One such example is the Christian Council of Ghana and the Ghana Catholic Bishops' Conference's stance against the PNDC Law 221, entitled "Religious Bodies (Registration) Law 1989", which was enacted on 14th June 1989. Oquaye (1995: 566) argues from a human rights perspective that such a law was quintessentially an infringement on citizens' basic right to "freedom of religion and association". What is more, the Ghana Catholic Bishops' Conference and the Christian Council of Ghana saw in the law an attempt to "coerce the church to derive its existence and validity from the state" (Oquaye, 1995: 566), a repressive resolve repugnant to the churches. In the end the mainline Churches "refused to comply" with the law, which was subsequently "repealed after the inauguration of the Fourth Republic" (Gifford 1994: 258).

At other times religious groups' involvement with the

state in Ghana comes through a covert form of the provision of social services. Indeed, the link between the spiritual and the material have a long history in Africa (Hastings, 1994: 275-278). We argue in this paper that religion has become a tool in strengthening the democratic process in Ghana. This research has been generated by interrogating the interaction between religion and the democratic process as played out in the Ghanaian public sphere, particularly through the media.

Ghana is host to various religious group groupings such as African Traditional Religion, Christianity, Islam and others. In their specific ways all of them leave their mark on the Ghanaian public sphere. In African Traditional religion, for example, the position of the chief is of absolute importance. Not only is the chief an embodiment of the ancestors and a political figure, he also plays a religious function of leading his people in religious rituals. In this light the chief can speak on behalf of his people to avert any actions of any individual(s) that would jeopardise the harmony of the community. Consequently, traditional leaders can and do make pronouncements regarding the welfare of the community, such as calling for peaceful elections. In the same vein, Christian and Muslim leaders wield a lot of moral authority and social influence that enable them to make public calls for the common good. It is not uncommon, therefore, for politicians to seek counsel from or lobby religious leaders ostensibly to win their favour, and by

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extension, that of their followers.

While politicians on campaign trails quite openly pay courtesy calls on traditional leaders, for example, rumours are rife that some politicians consult traditional religious leaders such as *juju men* or *malams* to assist them with spiritual support particularly during election campaigns and ultimately help them win elections. But also a lot of media coverage is at pains to substantiate accusations regarding the role of a Pentecostal Pastor, T. B. Joshua¹, in the life of President John Atta Mills. For example, the latter is said to have visited the former's Synagogue Church of All Nations (SCOAN) in Lagos, Nigeria, on 11th January 2009 to give thanks for winning the elections (Tawiah, 16 September 2010). The pastor is said to have prophesied accurately that President Mills would win a closely contended election (Jackson, 15 July 2009). Consequently, in his capacity as special spiritual advisor, the Pastor is purported to wield a lot of influence over the president. All this is played out in the Ghanaian public sphere, indicating the continued pivotal role religion plays in the Ghanaian body polity.

This paper will not engage with rumours; it will engage with newspaper statements that, to our knowledge, have not been challenged or refuted by those individuals or groups to whom they are attributed. The study will also not deal with the role and influence of traditional religion in advancing the democratic process in Ghana. That is an area to be explored in another study. The present one will concentrate on how the Christian and Muslim religious influence can be considered a tool in strengthening the democratic process in Ghana². The main reason for this is that, compared to traditional leaders, the role of Christian and Muslim leaders is much more visible as exhibited in their calls for peaceful elections, which the media report widely. The paper argues that Christian and Muslim religious leaders vie for socio-political influence in Ghana particularly because they have large constituencies that politicians cannot ignore, certainly not during elections.

The 7th December 2008 presidential and parliamentary elections in Ghana, with the presidential runoff on 28th December 2008, bear witness to the extraordinary power of religion to affect social and political change in Ghana. The increasing intervention of religion in Ghana's political life may well be due to a felt-insecurity of a deepening but not yet mature democratic process. The anxiety that such a process could be derailed still lurks in the minds of the citizenry who have witnessed too many coups d'état in the past, and long for a peaceful and stable environment in which to live their lives. After all Ghana has had six

military regimes spanning different eras between 1966 and 1992, which have mostly trampled upon citizen's human rights and stifled development (Okyerefo, forthcoming).

Gyimah-Boadi (2007: 107) contends that much of Ghana's 50 year quest for the ideals of "prosperity, democracy, and national unity" was "dominated by false starts as well as twists and turns", with the "lofty dreams of life after independence turned largely nightmarish in much of the first thirty years of Ghana's nationhood". It is only with the inception of the fourth republic in 1993 that the country can be said to have enjoyed a fairly stable democratic process for 17 years within which two governments have transferred power to opposition parties. If this is great progress, compared to the first 43 years since Ghana's independence in 1957 as well as the experience of other countries in the region, then the sentiments often expressed in the Ghanaian public sphere regarding elections articulate the fear that such growth could easily slip through the fingers of the Ghanaian people. It is in this vein that religious groups of different persuasions have become the most vociferous in guarding the gains made. Since these sentiments are mostly carried through the media, this paper will draw on this medium (mostly through the Ghana News Agency – GNA – since it collates news from all the print media in Ghana) to examine the messages played out in the public sphere bearing on religion's role in building the democratic polity in Ghana.

METHODS

This paper employs content analysis of news paper reports on the electoral process in Ghana around the December 2008 presidential and parliamentary elections. It deploys a descriptive analysis of messages, sermons and seminars by religious leaders in Ghana on a broad theme of peaceful elections. The analysis was done on themes that were widely reported by the media regarding peaceful elections, working towards successful elections, and the expectations regarding the comportment of citizens before, during and after the elections. Further, the study explored how these broad themes fit into the contribution of religious groups toward the national development agenda, which, in the context of Ghana, means promoting peace and security through which stability of governance and the provision of infrastructure and social amenities can be achieved. Today, the national development agenda in Ghana verges on the total well-being of the citizenry, which the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) wish to accelerate.

Christian and Muslim religious leaders form the core of those whose views were openly expressed and reported in the media, although traditional religious leaders such as chiefs also played a role in admonishing their subjects to keep the peace that Ghana enjoys in a democratic dispensation. The method, thus, employed aimed at teasing out from the various religious discourse on how inter-faith dialogue enhances civic duties and fosters peace by promoting values of justice, forgiveness and cooperation in the said religious discourse as widely publicized in the Ghanaian media. The promotion of these values would ultimately culminate in social capital, in the sense in which Putnam (1994) popularizes the concept, for Ghana's development. Putnam defines social capital as "features of social organization, such as networks, norms, and trust, that facilitate coordination and cooperation for mutual benefit.

¹ Prophet T.B. Joshua, General Overseer of the Synagogue Church of All Nations (SCOAN) in Lagos, Nigeria, is reputed to be the personal spiritual adviser of the President of the Republic of Ghana, Prof. Evans Atta Mills.

² We use "democratic process" here to mean peaceful, free and fair elections, acceptance of elections results by majority of Ghanaians and the international community, a smooth transition of power, and peaceful coexistence of members of the population before, during and after the elections under the rule of law, fostering values such as tolerance, freedom and justice.

Social capital enhances the benefits of investment in physical and human capital" (Putnam 1994: 6-7). He draws lessons from regional governments established in Italy in the 1970s to suggest that those which succeeded in good governance had at the core of their 'civic heritage' "rich networks of organized reciprocity and civil solidarity" such as "guilds, religious fraternities, and tower societies for self-defence in the medieval communes; cooperatives, mutual aid societies, neighbourhood associations, and choral societies in the twentieth century".

He argues that those regional governments that prospered "did not become civic because they were rich"; they became "rich because they were civic". Therefore, Putnam concludes, the "social capital embodied in norms and networks of civic engagement seems to be a precondition for economic development, as well as for effective government" (Putnam 1994: 9). Thus, he sees social capital as a "public good" that can be transmuted into financial capital and by implication human capital. Individual choice in the collective engagement social capital affords makes people acquire the right connections to improve upon themselves, although some "forms of social capital can impair individual liberties (Putnam 1994: 19). This means there can be a dark side of social capital as the media, for example, can be selective in its reporting. That notwithstanding, we argue in this paper that the messages subjected to content analysis here forge democratic values in Ghana.

CALLS FOR PEACEFUL ELECTIONS

The call for peaceful elections was a dominant theme among religious groups in the months and weeks leading up to the general elections in December 2008. The Christian Mothers' Association of the Catholic Church asked the Electoral Commission (EC) to enforce all electoral laws and conduct the elections transparently (GNA 7th October 2008). Speaking on the same issue, Rev Emmanuel Kojo Osei, Minister in charge of the Presbyterian Church at Nkoranza, said it was important for the EC to ensure absolute transparency because the 'voice of the people is the voice of God' (GNA 20th October 2008).

Perhaps the EC itself saw religion as a means to calm fears and anxieties, so the commission organized a prayer session for peaceful elections. Religious bodies as well as representatives of the various political parties were present at the prayer session (GNA 20th November 2008). Prayer sessions and prayer meetings were a common occurrence in the month prior to the election in December 2008. The Central Ghana Conference of the Seventh Day Adventist Church organized a four-day prayer meeting in Kumasi under the theme 'Prayer for a Peaceful Election, Unity and Stability for Mother Ghana'. Sometimes prayers were combined with a peace march, as was done by the Local Council of Churches in the Upper East Region, which climaxed its peace march in Bolgatanga with a prayer for peace in the Jubilee Park. At this prayer meeting, a minister of religion asserted that God had already chosen the leader for the country so there was no need to engage in acts that would mar the electoral process.

This call to the Ghanaian electorate to ensure that the

elections proceeded in a peaceful and orderly manner came from various religious leaders. It normally came in the form of admonishing citizens to act responsibly during the elections. Sometimes even politicians, using the kind of religious language typical of pastors, would make similar calls. In the Daily Graphic (18th November, 2008: 24), for example, former president Flt Lt J.J. Rawlings "advised Ghanaians to revere the electoral process as the will of God and preserve its sanctity as a right that must not be toyed with". He said this in a meeting with some members of the National Peace Council (NPC) at his residence in Accra.

Such advice occasionally came with specific instructions about what to do on the day of elections. A Deaconess of the Apostolic Church of Ghana, Madam Sophia Rita Monney, urged women to aid the electoral process by thumb printing the ballot papers correctly (GNA 11th November, 2008). By the same token, during a religious service, Rev. Fr. Emmanuel Abbey-Quaye of the Saint Theresa's Catholic Seminary at Amissano advised the electorate in the following words:

"After casting one's vote on December 7, the voter should quietly leave the scene and go home to wait for the results to be declared... There is no need for anybody to do things that would mar the peaceful atmosphere and derail Ghana's young democratic dispensation" (GNA 26th November 2008).

The call on Ghanaians to ensure a peaceful election was sometimes directly made to politicians. For example, the Rev Daniel Bruce of the Evangelical Presbyterian (E.P.) Church at a breakfast meeting in Accra sent a warning to politicians to shun any attempts at deliberately fomenting trouble (GNA 23rd November 2008). This admonition to politicians was reiterated by other religious leaders. For instance, Bishop Peter Kojo Sackey of the Church of Christ in Mankesim appealed to politicians to explain their plans to Ghanaians rather than resort to insults and acrimony (GNA 2nd October 2008). Some other religious figures asked politicians to put the national interest first, rather than their personal or partisan interests, (GNA 14th November 2008). Still others called on the political parties to focus on issues that would promote the growth of the country and its citizens (GNA 3rd October 2008).

Members of religious communities were also admonished to maintain the peace. Christians were asked to promote peace and unity before, during and after the elections. Rev Barima Appiah-Dankwa, a minister of the Presbyterian Church, preached against 'disturbing events' that attended the voters' registration exercise, and asked Christians to pray for the sustenance of the peace that 'the Lord had given the country'. He also extended the call to Christian leaders to sensitize their members on the necessity for free and fair elections (GNA 3rd September 2008). The Western Regional Missionary of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Mission, Nasir

Ahmad Kahloon, also asked Muslims to ensure peace during the elections in order to erase the erroneous impression that Islam was a violent religion (GNA 30th September 2008). Sheikh Abdul Mournin Haroun, Deputy Ashanti Regional Chief Imam, specifically warned Muslim youth not to engage in unruly behaviour and other acts that violate the electoral laws of the country. He said this at the Central Mosque in Akwatia, Kumasi, when he led an open air prayer under the theme 'Unity, Peace and Violent Free Elections' to mark the Eid-UI-Fitr festival.

Religious leaders were themselves also requested to ensure that the election was conducted in a peaceful and fair manner. These calls often came from political leaders. A traditional leader, Nii Adjei Kraku II, Chief of Tema, asked religious leaders to preach violence-free elections in their sermons, while continuing to pray for peace and harmony to prevail during the elections (GNA 15th November 2008). At other times, the call for religious leaders to promote the electoral process came from their fellow religious leaders. Prophet Michael Lebene, Founder of the Harvest Grace Ministries in Ho, asked religious leaders to be neutral and to refrain from recommending political parties or politicians to their congregations, since '[y]ou are supposed to be moderators and must behave as such, and pray for all political parties'. He also said that it was the 'unique presence of God' in Ghana that will ultimately bestow a peaceful election on the country (GNA 1st September 2008).

Working towards successful elections: 'No church service'

Sometime before the 2008 general elections, concerns were raised about the fact that the election day fell on Sunday, which was the day of worship for most Christians. There were fears that many Christians would not be able to exercise their franchise since most of them would be in church at that time. Consequently, some groups and individuals appealed to the Christian Council of Ghana to compel churches to hold their church service on Saturday. However, the Chairman of the Council, Rt Rev Dr. Yaw Frimpong-Manso, said it could only urge but not prevail upon churches to organize their services in the early hours of the Sunday in question to afford their members the opportunity to vote afterwards (GNA 29th October 2008). In an unprecedented move, the Ghana Catholic bishops granted "a general dispensation", urging "priests and faithful to ensure the celebration of the Eucharist of Sunday December 7, 2008 was held on the evening of Saturday December 6, 2008" (Ghana Catholic Bishops' Conference 2008: 5). This was to take advantage of universal Catholic liturgical norms that grant that the observance of Sunday or Solemnities begins with the evening of the preceding day.

A number of other churches voluntarily issued statements that they were not holding any church

services on election day. Churches which cancelled services on Sunday because of the elections included the Apostolic Church of Ghana, the E. P. Church, the Victory Bible Church International and the Living Grace Ministry Church. The General Overseer of the Living Grace Ministry Church, Rev Dr. Richard Owusu Akyeaw, asked his congregation members to use the Saturday service to pray for a peaceful election, and called on political parties and their supporters to ensure a peaceful election (GNA 28th November 2008). Such show of solidarity with the state to ensure the success of elections is an unparalleled act of religious groups in Ghana.

The 28th December runoff

The invocation of the direct involvement of God in the nation's affairs increased after it became obvious after the 7th December elections that a run off was imminent. For instance, the Rt Rev Dr. Livingstone Buama of the E.P. Church asserted that the first round of elections had been successful because the country 'had pushed God's agenda' (GNA 21st December 2008). The Bishop of the Cape Coast diocese of the Anglican Church also asked Christians to accept the authority of the E.C. in declaring a winner, as whoever would emerge winner was 'the choice of God'. He also bemoaned the resort to ethnic politics in the campaigns of political parties after the first round of elections (24th December 2008).

The plea to ensure peaceful elections was widespread in the build up to the 28th December run off. Appeals were made to politicians to employ decent campaign messages, which were free of provocative statements. Bishop Emmanuel Arongo of the Aglionby Memorial Anglican Cathedral asked the leadership of the National Democratic Congress (NDC) and New Patriotic Party (NPP) who were going to contest in the runoff, to make their messages devoid of tribal politics, saying that:

"We should cherish our differences and let them be a source of strength and unity rather than disunity; there is no need for tribal politics, we need to see ourselves as one people in Christ Jesus (GNA 25th December 2008)."

The Ghanaian public was also tasked to do their part to ease the tension building up before the election runoff. Rt Rev Francis Benjamin Quarshie of the Anglican Church in Koforidua asked the electorate to go to the polls in 'love and hope...despite the tension and uncertainties associated with it' (GNA 25th December 2008). Ghanaians were asked to ensure that the results of the presidential runoff were both credible and acceptable (GNA 19th December 2008). Speaking at the Winneba Branch of the A.M.E. Zion Church at a special pre-election service, Rt Rev Dr Zomelo appealed to the electorate to exhibit a high sense of responsibility on the election day (GNA 27th December 2008).

Politicians and their followers were also cautioned

about acts that were likely to cause disturbances after the runoff. Maulvi Raghieb Zia Ul Haq, Greater Accra Regional Missionary of the Ahmadiyah Mission, made an appeal that the defeated party in the runoff should accept the results of the polls (GNA 8th December 2008). Primate Seth Adofo also urged supporters of political parties to exercise restraint in their reactions to the results of the elections. He especially asked those who would emerge winners to celebrate their victory in a way that did not provoke the losers to a violent reaction (GNA 26th December 2008).

After the 2008 elections

The quest of the religious community in the country to promote peace and harmony continued after the 2008 presidential and parliamentary elections. After the declaration of the winner of the elections, the Christian Council of Ghana issued a statement congratulating the NDC and NPP for the tolerance and peace they displayed during the elections, and for the handing over of power from the NPP to the NDC (GNA 8th January 2009). Later in 2009, the Catholic Church convened an international workshop with the purpose of promoting religious tolerance in Africa. Alhaji Hamza Danjumah, Volta Regional Chief Imam, attended the workshop, and said that it was a very good initiative to promote cross religious dialogue³. Anticipating objections which some might raise against his attendance, he claimed that nobody 'on whatever grounds can fault him for attending' the workshop.

NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The foregoing is evidence enough regarding the involvement of religious groups in promoting peaceful elections by means of sermons, messages and seminars. These words were backed by action as well.

Actions by churches

The Peace and Justice Commission of the Catholic Church in Ghana, for example, organized elections observers over the period to oversee the process. The Church believes that the development of the nation can only be achieved when there is peace and tranquility, which should be attained in dialogue with other people and faiths. Inter-faith dialogue enhances civic duties and fosters peace by bolstering values of justice, forgiveness and cooperation. As a result, apart from elections, religious organizations in the country have generally actively attempted to insert themselves into the national

development project of the state, as explained earlier. Thus, religious bodies contribute to national development through the provision of social institutions such as schools and hospitals as well as by influencing the Ghanaian public sphere through discourse that hummers on peaceful coexistence and the need to undertake civic duties. This sometimes takes the form of religious leaders calling on the state to ensure that the right things are done. For instance, at a special church service in Accra to begin the 52nd Legal Service Year of the judiciary, Rev Prof Andrews Seth Ayettey, the Chaplain of the Ghana Medical School, appealed to the Chief Justice and the entire judicial service to ensure the maintenance of peace and justice by upholding the constitution and rule of law, and to work for the cause of the disadvantaged in society (GNA 4th October, 2009). The Fountain Gate Church also issued a communiqué on peace and development to the Upper East Regional Coordinating Council, asking government to act firmly against law breakers and to ensure the rule of law in the violence-prone Bawku district (GNA 8th November, 2009).

Sometimes, the challenge has been thrown to the religious communities themselves, as when the Founder and Bishop of the Living Faith Church (Winners Chapel), David Oyedepo, challenged Christians to stand in the forefront of the fight against corruption and stem the tide where 'unfortunately, the canker of corruption is now gaining grounds even in the churches where people can no longer be trusted' (GNA, 23rd November, 2009).

Churches have also asked for a more direct involvement in the developmental agenda of the state. Although noting that political interference often frustrated the projects that churches have been embarking on to alleviate poverty, the catholic clergy in the Northern Region asked government to see churches as development partners (GNA 19th November 2009). The call for this partnership has also come from outside the church. Dr. Esther Offei-Aboagye, Director of the Institute of Local Government Studies, argued for church-state collaboration in national development in order to ensure that the poor are better catered for, so that no one is left out in the country's poverty reduction strategy. She noted that 'the church and the state have done well, but a change in policies towards the poor in society will improve their lives tremendously' (GNA 31st October, 2009).

Sometimes, politicians set out their plans for the development of the nation in dramatic religious idioms. During the launch of the 2008 manifesto of the NDC, Prof. Atta Mills, the then flag bearer, declared that 'God is on our side' and declared that it is only a God fearing man like him who can bring about the development that is needed in the country (GNA 6th October, 2008). As president today, Atta Mills' religiosity, sometimes calling on the entire nation to 'pray', has met with massive critique from citizens expecting him to rise to the occasion to solve the nation's problems. Nevertheless, prayer sessions, such as the one organized by the Atta

³ Cross religious dialogue is not the central issue in this paper rather than various religious groups addressing a common concern.

Mills' government to thank God for peaceful elections, provide an occasion for political leaders to affirm their belief in diversity and religious tolerance. The state's intervention in the Muslim Hajj is a typical case in point.

The Hajj and Eid celebrations

Religious festivals and celebrations are normally marked with messages of goodwill sent from government officials and other political leaders. For instance, in the 2009 Eid celebrations, President Mills sent all Muslims in the country his message of peace and goodwill (myjoyonline.com 27th November 2009). Political parties in opposition also take advantage of these celebrations to reach out to the religious communities. For instance, during these celebrations, Mr. Mahmud Khalid, the Upper West Regional Minister, tasked Muslim leaders to preach peace (peacefmonline.com 27th November 2009). The flag bearer of the opposition NPP, Nana Akufo-Addo, sent his best wishes to Muslims in Ghana and expressed his belief in the cohesiveness of the country in spite of religious plurality:

"I believe in the possibility of the overflow of old boundaries when wholehearted devotion to one's own faith is matched with a devout respect for the faith of others and I call on all our Muslim brothers and sisters to demonstrate continually this sense of unity and oneness in the years ahead. (myjoyonline.com, 27th November, 2009)."

Muslim leaders have also sometimes gone ahead and asked for the involvement of government in the smooth running of activities associated with their celebrations. In 2008, Alhaji Hamza Danjuma, Volta Regional Chief Imam, made a call on government to intervene in the organization of the Hajj if those contracted to organize it fail to act efficiently. This call was made against the backdrop of several years of troubled organization of the Hajj in which many pilgrims have been stranded at the airport, waiting to join flights that did not show up. Government actively stepped in during the 2009 Hajj, and for the first time in many years, the arrangements proceeded smoothly. Unlike in the past when pilgrims got stranded at the airport in poor sleeping places and unsanitary conditions, this time they were provided with air-conditioned tents, had access to a health post and neat eateries (GNA 21st November 2009). The Vice President, John Mahama, was at the airport to see the first batch of pilgrims off to Mecca (GNA 11th November 2009).

The Muslim Hajj to Mecca provides a good example of a state's active use of religion to promote domestic agendas and international relations. Ghana's sponsorship of Hajj 2009 is unprecedented in the history of the nation.

There is no doubt that by sponsoring and organizing the Hajj successfully, which has notoriously been consistently fraught with a lot of difficulties, the government seeks to foster good relations with the Muslim community. It would not be surprising, as a reciprocal benefit, for a good number of Muslims to be willing to vote for a party in power that has shown it is benign toward their cause. What is more, the organization of the Hajj also certainly is a pivotal point in promoting good relations between Ghana and the Muslim world, particularly Saudi Arabia.

CONCLUSION

The obsession with peaceful elections, as depicted in the religious messages reviewed perviously, smacks of an inherent fear regarding the derailment of Ghana's nascent democratic system. In a pastoral letter issued by the Ghana Catholic Bishops' Conference two months ahead of the elections (Ghana Catholic Bishops' Conference 2008: 1), the success of the democratic process for the previous sixteen years in Ghana were said not to be due to the "*grace of the triumph* of a few people; it was the grace and triumph of the Ghanaian people who with the help of God demonstrated a mature and dedicated commitment to democratic governance". The italics here, which do not derive from the original, are meant to underline the fact that so long as the success of the system is deemed not to rest on social actors without reference to God, religion cannot be withheld from the elections process. In fact, religion has become a tool to guard and strengthen the democratic process in Ghana. In the same vein, religion has become an opportune means for the state to promote domestic agendas and international relations as the case of the Muslim Hajj illustrates.

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