

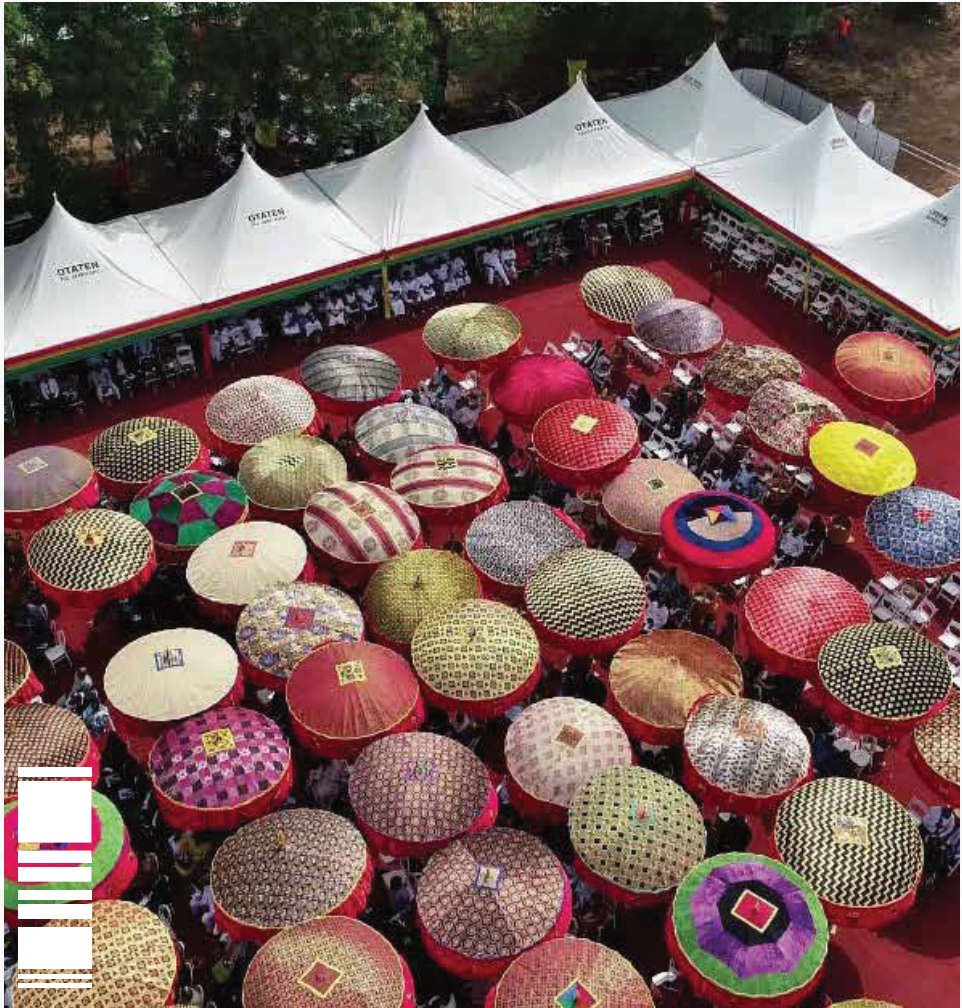
NATIONAL CATHEDRAL

UPDATE NEWS FROM THE SECRETARIAT OF THE NATIONAL CATHEDRAL OF GHANA

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UNDERSTANDING THE NATIONAL CATHEDRAL: A PROGRESS REPORT



The National Cathedral, designed by the leading Ghanaian-British Architect Sir David Adjaye OBE, is both an iconic infrastructure and a convening platform. As an infrastructure, the Cathedral is a national landmark that addresses a “missing link in the nation’s architecture” by providing a “great church for national purposes” where Ghanaians of all denominations gather to worship, reflect, celebrate, and mourn. It will serve as a venue for formal state occasions of a religious nature such as Presidential Inaugural Services, State Funerals, National Thanksgiving Services, amongst others. . It includes a 5000-seater auditorium, expandable to 15000; baptistery; chapels; conference center, and Africa’s first Bible Museum and Documentation Center. As a convening platform, the National Cathedral will be a unifying monument around which to elevate shared conversations on the role of the Christian faith and values in nation building.

The National Cathedral is the vision of the President, Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo, and involves close partnership between the State and the Ghanaian Christian community, for its development. The role of the state in the partnership includes the appointment of the Architect; setting up the Secretariat; the land and its preparation; and Seed Money. This partnership between the state and the Christian community builds on the rich history of the Church’s involvement in National development, and reflects the social partnership envisaged to foster participatory development of the country as a collective goal.

Administratively the Chief of Staff is the coordinator of the project at the Presidency. A Board of Trustees made up of leading clergy across the major church denominations, is established to mobilize support, including fundraising, for the Cathedral; and oversee its management once completed. The day-to-day strategic and operational coordination of the work on the National Cathedral is under a Secretariat, headed by an Executive Director with administrative, mobilization and thought leadership responsibilities. The Secretariat also supervises the Project Management Office (PMO) of the Cathedral project, coordinates the Cathedral’s national & international institutional relations, and represents the Cathedral to the public.

THE NATIONAL CATHEDRAL UPDATE

The *National Cathedral Update* is a quarterly Newsletter from the Secretariat of the National Cathedral of Ghana, and forms part of the Public Education functions of the Secretariat.

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The eve of our country's 63rd independence, March 5, 2020, witnessed one of the most significant groundbreakings in our country's history. Seated under colorful royal umbrellas representing the roof of the National Cathedral, representatives of the state, the church, business, the chiefs, civil society, diplomatic corps, and the media, joined the President to lay the foundation stone - flown in from Jerusalem the night before - to mark the formal start of the construction phase of the National Cathedral.

Technically, the sod cutting of March 6, 2017— our 60th independence anniversary - was a 'statement of intent' by the President for a National Cathedral – a sacred infrastructure - for the nation. The groundbreaking, on the other hand, moves the sod-cutting into the world of "buildability". In between the sod cutting and the groundbreaking has been an intense period of work to operationalize the vision of the President. In this issue of the *National Cathedral Update*, we introduce some of the concrete products of this period.

As explained in the introductory remarks at the groundbreaking ceremony,

our overall strategy for the operationalization phase has been to take the bold vision of the President for a Sacred National infrastructure, link it to the path-breaking design of iconic Architect Sir David Adjaye OBE, and organically anchor these in world class programs

- including Africa's first Museum of the Bible whose development is supervised by Cary Summers, the founding President of the Museum of the Bible in Washington DC. Throughout this phase, we have engaged the very best of Ghana with the very best in the world. The construction and operations of the National Cathedral will involve the same strategy.

Overall, the result of the integration of the vision, design, and programming is an iconic infrastructure that provides a sacred space for the nation, attracts pilgrims and tourists, and includes a built-in economic engine for financial sustainability. For pilgrimage, the foundation stone from Jerusalem and the biblical gardens provides a symbolic spiritual link to the birthplace of Christianity. For tourism, a special link to the African Diaspora is created in the National Cathedral's Museum of the Bible to provide a "Beyond the Year of Return" engagement with the African Diaspora that is mediated by "faith". For financial sustainability, the National Cathedral includes an economic engine consisting of multi-purpose rental spaces, restaurant and cafes, bookshop, musical and educational programs, and a world-class fundraising infrastructure.

BUT, the National Cathedral does more than provide the country with a sacred national infrastructure that also attracts pilgrims and tourists to the country.

To *really* understand the National Cathedral and its roles, it has to be located within a vision for Ghana's transformation that ascribes primacy to God in our nation building project. The Cathedral thus represents a practical, infrastructural response to the aspiration expressed by our National Anthem: "God Bless our Homeland Ghana!" Finally, the Cathedral responds to the yearnings of the President, powerfully expressed in his keynote address at the 2019 US National Prayer Breakfast at the Washington Hilton on February 8, 2019:

"... I want Ghana to be on God's side, and we will be an example to the black peoples of the world of what a free, dedicated, innovative people, who believe and trust in God, can do to build a nation the equal of any, anywhere on the face of the planet."

The National Cathedral, in essence, is a practical response to this aspiration for Ghana!

Paul Opoku-Mensah, PhD
Editor



"AN ACT OF THANKSGIVING TO THE ALMIGHTY"

H.E Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo
President, Republic of Ghana

The President, Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo, on March 5, 2020, laid the foundation stone for the commencement of the construction phase of the National Cathedral.

Invoking the name of "the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost", the President laid the stone brought from Jerusalem through the instrumentality of the Israeli Ambassador to Ghana, H.E. Shani Cooper. In laying the foundation with a stone from Jerusalem, the National Cathedral of Ghana follows in the tradition of the great Cathedrals in providing what is a symbolic, spiritual link to the birthplace of the Christian faith (The foundation stone for the Washington National Cathedral, for instance, was brought from Bethlehem to Washington).

In his address before laying the foundation stone, the President reiterated his position that the National Cathedral will be more than another national monument adorning the skyline of Accra. He reaffirmed his position that the National Cathedral will be the fulcrum to unite the Christian community in worship, prayer and to promote deep national conversations on the role of faith in the country's transformation. And, "it will house a Bible Museum and it will be an iconic infrastructure for national cohesion and

international pilgrimage and tourism."

For the first time, the President indicated that the National Cathedral would also serve as a **"Monument to Religious Liberty"**.

Joined at the groundbreaking site by Eminent Clergy; the Vice President and Second lady; Members of the Council of State; Chief of staff of the office of President; Minister for Finance; Greater Accra Regional Minister; Minister of Religious and Chieftaincy Affairs; Minister for Trade & Industry; Deputy Ministers of State; Municipal Chief Executives, including for Klottey Korley Municipal Assembly; the Chairperson and Members of the Board of Trustees and Fundraising Committee of the National Cathedral project; Nii Osu Mantse, President of the Greater Accra Regional House of Chiefs, and other Traditional rulers; Members of the Diplomatic Corps - including the US, Israeli and Burkina Faso Ambassadors to Ghana; the Business sector; Civil Society; and the Media, the President began his address with the *key moments* of the National Cathedral:

The process for the construction of the National Cathedral began with my announcement on 6th March 2017, our 60th independence anniversary. In March 2018 on our 61st independence anniversary I unveiled the compelling design by David Adjaye for the Cathedral. On the eve of our Nation's 63rd anniversary, on 5th March 2020, I am here at the groundbreaking ceremony signaling the commencement of the construction of the National Cathedral.

The President reminded the gathering, and the nation, about the reasons for the National Cathedral. Paramount among these reasons, is a collective gesture of national thanksgiving to God for his blessings on the nation. This theme of the National Cathedral as an act of national thanksgiving has been the President's most consistent and recurrent. From the sod cutting through all the key milestones, the President has been unequivocal about God's blessings on Ghana. As He explained in more basic terms elsewhere,

"God has blessed Ghana. We have some of the most dramatic, natural scenes on the planet. We have, almost, every mineral that mankind lusts after, and which is required to run a modern economy. We have an abundance of arable land, and a young, enterprising, hardworking population." (Address at US National Prayer Breakfast, February 7, 2019)

Expanding on this key motivation for the National Cathedral project at the groundbreaking ceremony, the President explained:

Since gaining our freedom and independence from the British colonial power 63 years ago tomorrow on 6th March 1957, Ghana has so far been spared civil war, famine and epidemics. We are certainly no better than the other nations in our neighbourhood who have been confronted with these challenges. But I believe that it is by the grace of God that we have been preserved and sustained. And the construction of the National Cathedral will be an act of thanksgiving to the almighty for his blessings, favour, grace and mercies on our nation.





In addition to the act of thanksgiving, the President reaffirmed his position that the building of the National Cathedral will help unify the over 70% of Ghana's population who adhere to the Christian religion, and through this, promote national unity and cohesion – a position affirmed by the Supreme Court in granting approval for the project.

The third, and final reason for the National Cathedral, the President stressed was to enable him redeem a pledge to "Almighty God that if he was gracious enough to grant my party the New patriotic party and I victory in the 2016 election after 2 unsuccessful attempts, I will help build the Cathedral to his glory and honor."

Expressing his conviction that the National Cathedral's construction "deserves the full support of the nation", the President expressed "deep appreciation" to those at the forefront of the implementation of the project, including Members of the Board of Trustees; the members of the Fundraising committee; and the "brilliant world-renowned Ghanaian Architect, knighted by the British Queen for his services to world architecture, Sir David Adjaye".

In what has become his signature at National Cathedral events, the President ended his address thus:

Just as God prospered Nehemiah to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem, I am confident that He will prosper us and make us succeed in our endeavor!



THE NATIONAL CATHEDRAL AND OSU TRADITIONAL COUNCIL

Paul Opoku-Mensah, PhD (CEO, National Cathedral).

The Chieftaincy institution plays a significant role in our nation. It was the dominant pre-colonial civilization of our traditional societies, and *still* enjoys considerable institutional and normative legitimacy in our modern democratic state. Indeed, for many ethnic groups in pre-colonial Africa, chieftaincy constituted the axis for the exercise of executive, legislative and judicial powers. However, from the colonial authorities to the various post-independent governments, attempts have been made to influence the authority and role of chiefs. There have been significant changes, therefore, in the powers of chiefs both at the local and national levels as a result of these frequent central government interventions as well as changes in the chieftaincy institution itself. The current democratic constitution bars our chiefs from active politics.

While the political roles of chiefs and other traditional authorities might have been curtailed, their role as custodians of the country's linguistic and cultural heritage has remained, and in some instances actually increased.

While the political roles of chiefs and other traditional authorities might have been curtailed, their role as custodians of the country's linguistic and cultural heritage has remained, and in some instances increased. The institution is the custodian of the cultural heritage of our societies, and in most parts of the country, the allodia owners of the land. And if all cultures have been prepared to receive the Christian gospel, as some theologians argue, (ref. *praeparatio evangelica*), chieftaincy is certainly the receptor institution in our context. Central aspects of the gospel, including the central message of salvation, find their parallels in the chieftaincy institution with examples of Chiefs who willingly laid down their lives to save their societies.

It is not an accident then, that in seeking cultural inspiration for the design of the National Cathedral, it is to the chieftaincy institution that the Architect, Sir David Adjaye OBE, looked to. The result of this inspiration is a national monument whose distinguishing feature, the roof, is patterned after the royal umbrellas of the chieftaincy institution – with the altar directly under the highest point of the roof, the tallest umbrella of them all, reserved for Jesus the great Paramount Chief!

Given this importance of the Chieftaincy institution, and as part of preparation towards the groundbreaking for the National Cathedral, on February 28, 2020 a delegation from the National Cathedral, led by the Chairman of the Board of Trustees, Most Rev Samuel Asante Antwi was at the palace of the Osu Mantse, **HM Nii Okwei Kinka Dowuona VI**, the Paramount Chief of Osu Traditional Council, who also doubles as the President of the Greater Accra Regional House of Chiefs. The delegation was made up of the following:

- Most Rev Dr. Samuel Asante Antwi, Chairman, NCG Board of Trustees
- Hon. Ishmael Ashitey, Regional Minister, Greater Accra
- Nii Adjiri Blankson, Member, Council of State (former Mayor, Accra)
- Hon. Nii Adjei Tawiah, Municipal Chief Executive (MCE), Klottey Korley
- Rev Victor Kusi Boateng, Member/Secretary, NCG Board of Trustees

The visit was to formally introduce the National Cathedral to the Osu Mantse and the Osu Traditional Council, under whose traditional jurisdiction the Cathedral is situated, and who are also the allodial owners of the land acquired by the State for the National Cathedral.

The Osu Mantse and the Traditional Council were informed that following three years of preparatory work, the President will be laying the Foundation Stone on March 5, 2020 for formal commencement of construction. The delegation explained the delayed visit was a response to a significant number of preparatory issues, including a legal challenge to the project at the Supreme Court, which had to be resolved before the formal visit to the palace.

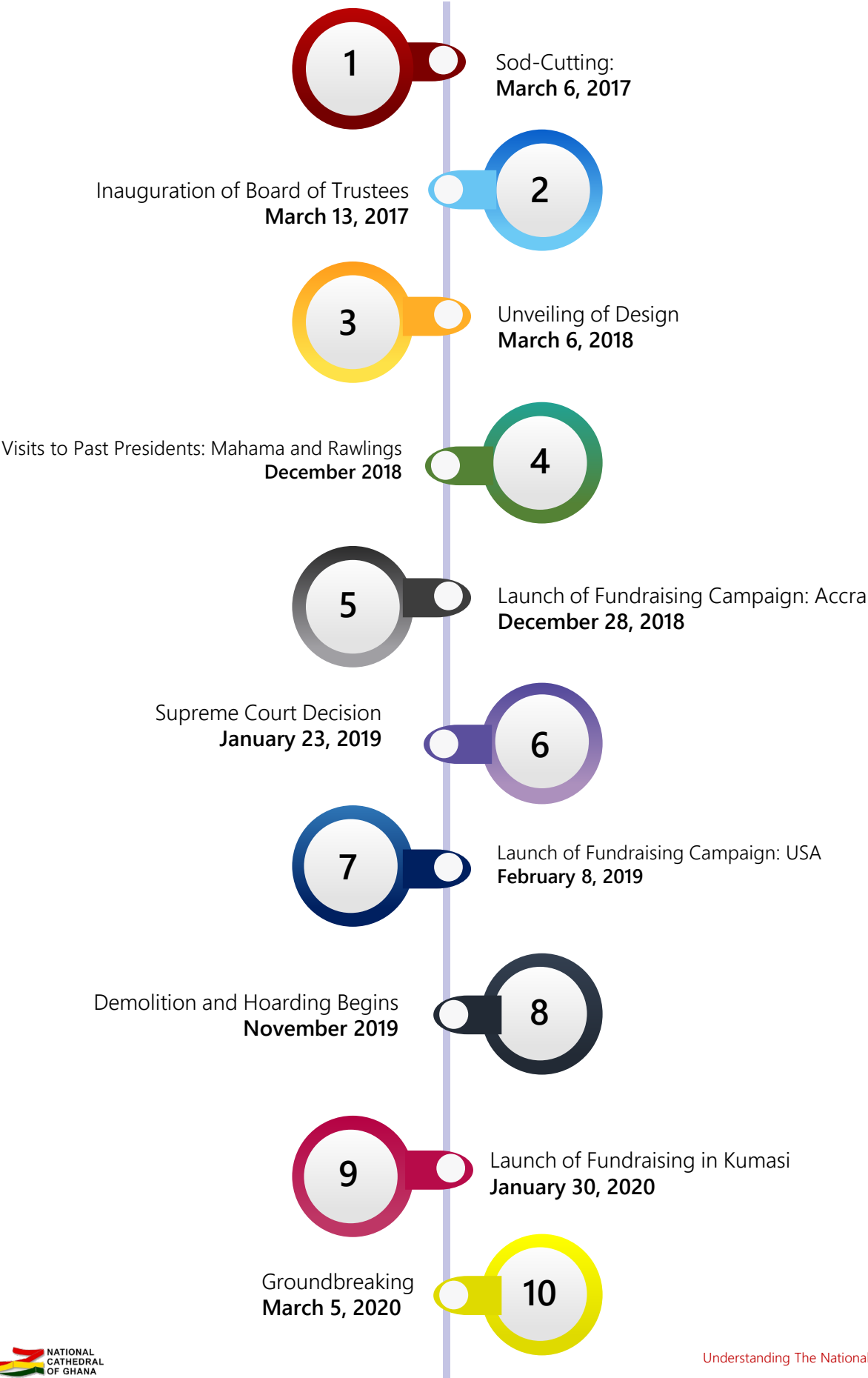
The delegation also informed the Osu Mantse that the development of the National Cathedral includes a Museum of the Bible which will tell the history of Christianity in Ghana, and the African continent. Given the role of Osu in the development of the Christian presence in Ghana, the plan is to include a special exhibit on Osu's influence on the church in Ghana.

The Osu Mantse, in his response, expressed initial dissatisfaction with the delay to formally inform him and the Osu Traditional Council about the project, but welcomed the visit. Issues of concern, including i) compensation to the Osu Traditional Council for the land; and ii) formal acknowledgement of Osu in the National Cathedral documentation, were brought out and discussed.

After candid discussions, the Osu Mantse and the Traditional Council promised to be present at the groundbreaking, more so as the project was the vision of their "Son-in-law", the President of the Republic.

The Osu Mantse kept his promise and led a high-powered delegation from the Traditional Council to the groundbreaking ceremony on March 5, 2020. The National Cathedral Secretariat made a symbolic donation of 10 of the royal umbrellas used for the groundbreaking to the Osu Mantse.

From Sod Cutting To Groundbreaking: Key Milestones





Groundbreaking In Pictures



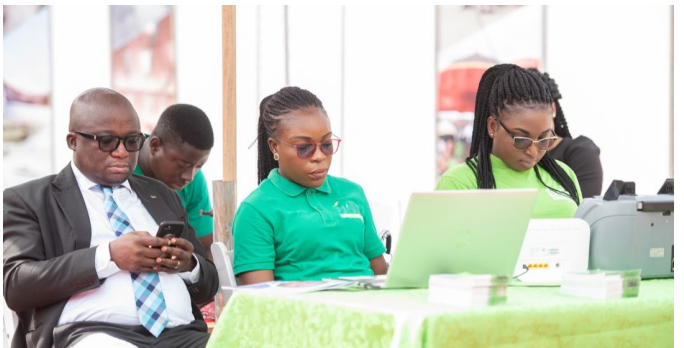










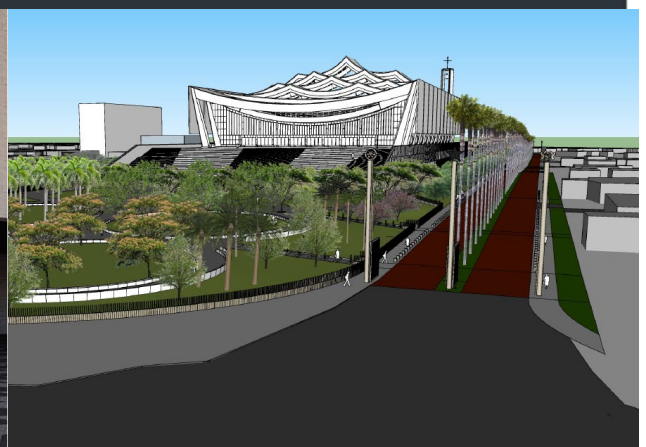


Understanding The National Cathedral

A PROGRESS REPORT

The period between the Sod and the Groundbreaking has seen remarkable work aimed at operationalizing the vision of the President for a national sacred infrastructure.

In this section, we review the state of the Cathedral beginning with the design by Sir David Adjaye; the Bible Museum by Cary Summers; the framework for Economic Sustainability; the anchorage and embeddedness in the church, through relationship building with the churches; and national mobilization through the development of a national prayer network for the Cathedral project.





"We often underestimate a monument's ability to instill pride and civic belonging."

A SACRED INFRASTRUCTURE & MONUMENT FOR THE NATION: A DESIGN UPDATE

Q & A with Sir David Adjaye OBE
Principal, Adjaye Associates

At the sod cutting on March 6, 2017, the President described the National Cathedral as the "missing link in our nation's architecture". How has your design of this National Church, a traditionally core religious space, addressed this and serves as multipurpose in your eyes?

The "missing link" is the idea of a monumental core that should exist in the capital city. At the moment, this monumental core in Accra is made up of Parliament, International Conference Centre, and the cemetery of heroes (Osu Cemetery). The siting of Cathedral on the other side of the cemetery of heroes establishes a sacred dimension of death and spirituality that completes this core.

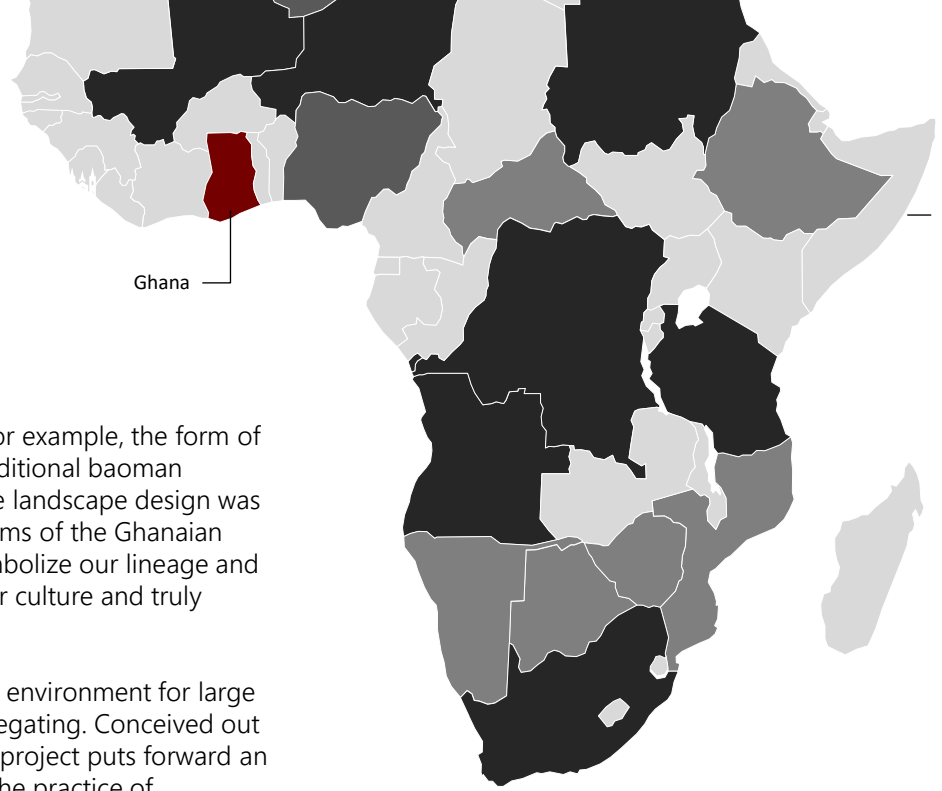
We have about 30,000 churches in Ghana so the cathedral is about cultivating a state space that will be used for spiritual life of the nation *and* provide opportunities for education, music, cultural engagement, artistic exhibitions, learning centres, and a museum.

The premise of the project is based upon elements that can bring dignity to the infrastructure of the state with regard to spirituality. And, also a vision of the future, something to communicate the democratic modernity that has been built upon since independence with an eye toward the future.

A traditional cathedral often takes the form of Gothic Architecture. You've indicated that your design breaks from this tradition. What are the specific elements of the National Cathedral that represent a break from this traditional design?

When you see cathedrals around the world—whether it's the Cathédrale Notre-Dame in Paris, St. Paul's Cathedral in London, Duomo di Milano in Milan, St. Basil's in Moscow or La Sagrada Familia in Spain—they are understood as the result of a developed capital. We often underestimate a monument's ability to instill pride and civic belonging. What makes the National Cathedral an exception from these traditional designs is how the design itself embodies the spirit and cultural heritage of Ghana.

The building is meant to be a symbol *of* and *for* the nation and so the team's research was crucial to ensuring that the design is an embodiment of these principles. While Gothic style cathedrals or typical Christian exported via colonial structure, the design of the National Cathedral of Ghana is borne out its own traditions of spirituality and belief in



divinity through kinship. For example, the form of the roof references the traditional baoman umbrella structure, and the landscape design was inspired by shapes and forms of the Ghanaian adinkra symbol. These symbolize our lineage and familial togetherness in our culture and truly encourage a new

Ghanaian atmosphere and environment for large scale gathering and congregating. Conceived out of its national context, the project puts forward an entirely new typology for the practice of architecture in the building of religious buildings in which the material form of culture and traditions are manifest in the final form.

Could you speak about the interior organization of the cathedral? It is organized into four separate layers but is there a specificity to the way you've structured each floor? Do the uses blend into each other?

Yes, the Cathedral itself is organized into four separate layers: basement, ground floor, mezzanine and sanctuary.

Each level preserves a sense of autonomy while still folding gracefully into one another to create a journey like experience. At the ground level, visitors are introduced to the Grand Hall which is adorned with details that reflect Ghanaian crafts. Also on the ground floor, visitors will find a series of intimate spaces such as prayer chambers, baptisteries and chapels. Layer to that, you will also find an event centre, a museum dedicated the story of Christianity on the continent, and cafeteria. Rising above that are back of house offices for management of the cathedral as well as education facilities such as a theological library and a music school. Finally, the main chamber—the Sanctuary—is the highest point in the building and the main space for spiritual activity. The Sanctuary features a 5,000-seat auditorium at the top of the structure with the capacity to expand externally on an elevated plinth to accommodate an additional 15,000 people.

Can you speak to the materiality of the building and the use of local materials?

Leveraging our country's abundant resources, we've extracted timber from Lake Volta—the world's largest man-made lake where submerged trees live within the lake. These trees provide a fantastic resource that would otherwise have been lost at the bottom of the ocean thus contributing to the radical sustainability to the project. This timber is used throughout the Cathedral for furniture, fittings and linings and will be seen throughout the entire experience of visiting the building

To create robust surfaces for the visitors that will endure the Cathedrals numerous annual visitors, the main circulation and gathering spaces will be made with exposed concrete finishes to express the structure, along with board marked concrete. The use of local concrete was essential in reducing the carbon footprint of the structure where a minimum use of concrete, travel and construction methodology will be used. To punctuate the different spaces throughout the building, we've used varying shades of locally sourced terrazzo.

What is the symbolic or functional purpose of the bell underneath the cross at the south entry of the building?

The bell honours our ancestors in the way that it memorializes our cultural calling for the communities to gather and to hear crucial information. In the past, the sound of the bell would signal significant events across villages and various kingdoms. We felt it was important to incorporate this into the design to both represent the past and evolve within future conditions.

For me, this points towards a translation that allows Ghanaian Christianity to use its vernacular and elevate it into its new architectural form. We've taken these legacies from the cultural and civic sphere of our ancestors and brought them into the contemporary world, resonating from their original presence. This is a translation I see as pertinent, not just within the sphere of nation-building and culture-building, but in the realm of architecture.





BIBLE MUSEUM OF AFRICA ARCHIVES & CONFERENCE CENTRE

"The Bible Museum of Africa and the Biblical Gardens of Africa will offer to the globe a world-class museum showcasing the history of the African's role in the Bible and its distribution globally."

AFRICA'S FIRST MAJOR BIBLE MUSEUM AND BIBLICAL GARDENS

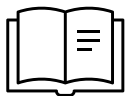
Cary Summers



**The Bible has
had the biggest
influence on our
world**

The Bible has had the biggest influence on our world, literature, cultures, governments, education, human rights, art, music, architecture, families, ministries, and health. It has more influence than any other book ever written. The first printing press, the Gutenberg press, inaugurated a revolutionary method of putting words on paper by printing the Bible and thus began the global distribution of what we call the Holy Bible. There are many well-known stories of the Bible's movement in the middle-ages throughout Europe and then to the west and eventually the whole globe. There are stories of missionary movements, Bible societies, translators, and how the Bible changed people's lives and regions and countries. However, there is one story of tremendous importance which has not had the recognition that is warranted, and that is the role of Africa, and Africans, in the Bible. The time has now come for this amazing story to be told and it will be told through the first Bible Museum of Africa which will be located in Accra, Ghana in conjunction with the development of the National Cathedral of Ghana and the Biblical Gardens of Africa.

The Bible Museum of Africa and the Biblical Gardens of Africa will offer to the globe a world-class museum showcasing the history of the African's role in the Bible and its distribution globally. This museum will be built at a level of excellence in construction, exhibits, academic credibility, visitor engagement, and enjoyment that is rarely found today. It will be a museum that incorporates ancient Biblical artifacts and manuscripts woven together with cutting edge technology that will be inviting for all age groups and interest levels. The museum will occupy over 100,000 square feet (over 10,000 square meters) of floor space of the National Cathedral of Ghana complex. Both the Cathedral and the Museum will be complemented with the Biblical Gardens of Africa.



The Bible Museum of Africa: Topics

The Bible Museum will occupy three levels and will feature the formation of the Bible, the history of the Bible, the Jesus follower movement that is the New Testament, the Africans role in the Bible, The African's story and the Bible, the impact of the Bible involving Africans, translations and transmission of the Bible, children's area, special temporary exhibits, and special long term exhibits.

These various topics will be featured on three levels. Each of the subject matters will be housed in a thematic setting allowing the atmosphere to contribute to the artifacts and the historical material being presented. This not only increases learning and interest levels but combines several museums into one.

Different from the old-fashioned museums where one simply views stagnant pieces, this museum will bring old manuscripts and artifacts to life. It will inspire, be beautiful, and full of excitement. It will help guests experience the Bible as they have never done before and they will learn and be inspired about the role of Africans and the Bible.

Technology

The use of cutting-edge technology will be found throughout the museum. The purpose of this technology is to allow all guests, from leading academics to the guest who knows little about the Bible, to create a memory worth repeating. No matter how much a person knows about the Bible they will be able to tour the museum at a level of learning that is comfortable for them. The technology will consist of:

*Touch Tables so the guest can interact with the subject matter

*Electronic geographical maps so the guest can gain an understanding of the Land of the Bible

*Mini-theatres where short films will be viewed to enhance the enjoyment of learning about the Bible

*The use of RFID technology so that each guest can create their own customized tour and dig deeper into various topics. It will also allow the guest to “adopt a historical person” and learn about that person’s point of view on the key topics.

* The ability for guests to receive automatic updates from the museum on topics they desire.

* The ability for guests to participate in on-line learning (all ages) and be part of world-class lectures both in person or electronically.

Special Features

- As guests enter the museum, they will be greeted by a special focal point created by an African artist. The entrance art piece will be chosen from submissions from African artists and will be featured on a one-year rotation.
- Located on the ground floor will be a 200 seat special effects theatre featuring the story of “Africa and the Bible”. This will be a must-see 20-minute film which will immediately inspire the guest and will set the stage for their museum experience. This film can also be used as a VIP film for special visitors to Ghana who may not have time to experience the whole museum.
- Located on the B1 level will be the “Walk Through the New Testament”. This is a 30-minute experience which will take guests on an immersive experience of walking through the New Testament starting from the birth of Jesus, John the Baptist, the followers of Jesus, Jesus’ teachings, the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus, the travels of Paul, and ends on the Island of Patmos where John shows us the Book of Revelation and the guest is enveloped into the new heavens and earth. This show will command global attention and will be an experience that has never been seen before.
- Located on Level one, guests will be transported into a thematic experience of a Galilean Fishing Village on the Sea of Galilee from the first century. Many may never get to go to Israel, so we are bringing the experience of the Israel that Jesus knew to the guests. The docents in the village will share the lifestyle, customs, and the atmosphere of the first century and will share selected teachings of Jesus.

- The children's area will feature interactive play that features the characters of the Bible. This area is not only fun but educational for the children and their families.
- The Gutenberg Press has been considered one of the greatest inventions that impacted the world. People of all ages, with the help of "Mr. Gutenberg", print a sheet of Biblical text as it would have been done originally. This is a highly educational experience and one that explains why the Bible had such an explosive growth in distribution in the middle-ages.
- **Illuminations Africa** is a special area that will feature a copy of each of the Bibles printed in African languages. This area will also provide a visual of how many African languages (and global languages) still do not have a Bible and what the global status of completing all Bible translations will be. This area will be in conjunction with a Bible touch table(s) which will show real-time global Bible engagement.

Illuminations Africa will also serve an advocacy platform to promote the translation of the full Bible into all African languages where there is a need.



The President at the Illumination section of the Museum Of The Bible, Washington

The Formation of the Bible will feature artifacts dating to the time of Abraham and will capture the stories found in the Book of Genesis, the lifestyle of the people, how writing came into being and how God used the people of the day to form the foundation of the Bible. We will explore how the Jewish nation came into being and how Moses led the Jews out of Egypt (Africa). The guests will learn about the influences that formed the written languages, how the Hebrew and Greek languages came into being, and will see some of the key artifacts that helped open the door to understanding the formation of the Bible. This area will feature several mini theatres where the Bible will come to life. This area will also have easy to understand geographical maps to assist the visitor in a better understanding of the land of the Bible. Many of the artifacts will be on loan from other institutions.

The History of the Bible will explore some of the earliest Bibles, as well as how and who decided what went into the Bible (the canonization). Such topics as the Dead Sea scrolls, early Greek and Hebrew manuscripts, periodic updates of the Bible, and why Bibles differ in their content will be presented so that many of the lingering questions people have about the Bible will be answered. The guest will explore the writers of the Bible, the format by which the Books of the Bible were written, the timeframes of when the various Books of the Bible were written, the key focus of each Book, the cohesiveness of the Books of the Bible, and the linkages between the Old and New Testaments. The rules by which the Bible was copied by hand and the accuracy will be demonstrated. We will compare ancient text with our Bible of today and explain the amazing accuracy of preserving the original text.

The Jewishness of the Bible and the New Testament is a fascinating exploration that every Christian and those desiring to understand the totality of the Bible will want to dive into. Many today do not understand that Jesus was Jewish, and His teachings are founded upon the Hebrew text (Old Testament). The museum will show how Jesus reflects His Jewishness; when did the identity of being a Christian come about; what were His key teachings and why; what evidence do we have that Jesus really existed; who were His followers; how did the culture and rulers of the day reflect in His teachings; and how do we grasp the depths of His teachings. There are two very special features found in the museum that will help the visitor wear the sandals of the first century and be immersed into the time of Jesus. The “Walk Through the New Testament” will take the guest on a journey of the New Testament from Creation to the Book of Revelation. The “First Century Galilean Village” will immerse the guest into a first-century village to see why the land had such an influence on the teachings of Jesus. Some call the land where Jesus walked the “Fifth Gospel”.

Both of these special exhibits, coupled with the artifacts and the solid academic research on the life of Jesus, will become a definitive touch point for visitors from around the world.

Africa's Story and the Bible portion of the museum will be heralded as the most exhausted study and creative presentation to be found anywhere about this largely untold story. This segment of the museum will be located on the main entrance level and will feature the 200 seat special effects theatre showcasing this story. The story is too large for one level and will be subdivided to occupy space on the other two levels of the museum. The breadth of this story will be captured via artifacts and excellent academic presentations covering such topics as: the role of Africa and Africans found in the text of the Bible; the history of the Bible in Africa and the Bible movement; the missionary movement; the Bible and the African Diaspora; the history of African theology; the role of Africa in the 2033 celebration of the 2000th anniversary of the resurrection of Jesus and the role Ghana can play; and the global impact Africa will have on the role of Christianity in the future. There will be special sections allocated to the impact of the Bible through Africans featuring both global and regional topics such as the impact on communities, music, art, theatre, human rights, Bible translations, Bible societies, Bible transmission, governments, education, compassion ministries, individual lives, worship, and businesses.

The special exhibit areas of the museum are designed to accommodate multi exhibits at one time. The exhibits will be both short term and long term. Some of the exhibits will be generated via the museum staff while others will be created by lending institutions. The central theme of the exhibits will deal with some aspect of the history of the Bible, the stories of the Bible, or the impact of the Bible.

These exhibits may carry an additional entrance fee depending upon the nature, the lenders, and the scope. The special exhibits would all have a top-notch lecture series as part of the program. The goal would be to have at least one special exhibit always open.

A key aspect will be an Africa Diaspora Initiative involving exhibits and a lecture series that addresses the impact of the Bible in the making of the African Diaspora. This includes the misuses of the Bible in the making of the Diaspora, such as the **Slave Bible**, which has, among others, some books and all references to "freedom" removed to manipulate the slaves in the West Indies. The initiative will also include the impact of the Bible as an emancipatory tool in the making of the African Diaspora, including the US civil rights movement.

THE BIBLICAL GARDENS will be located in one of the two garden areas of the Cathedral complex. The Bible refers to many plants, trees, flowers, and herbs that are found in the land of the Bible. Due to the climate of Ghana, many of these species can be grown in the complex area. The guests will learn the important role these species played in the stories of the Bible and why they were singled out in the ancient writings. Jesus used many agricultural references in His examples of lessons to learn.

The Hebrew text is also filled with references to agricultural settings by using examples of foliage and animals to set the stage of explaining how God worked among the people. The gardens will have the various plants marked and a booklet will explain the importance of each. This is an area of the complex that will be both beautiful and educational.

The use of the museum and grounds is being designed to accommodate the various levels of interest among the guests. The design is very conducive to group tours, education groups, church outings, academic studies, VIP tours, and individuals of all ages. The museum content and high repeatability of the exhibits can create a multi-day experience or one of a few hours. The RFID technology will allow for a self-guided individual customized tour and group tours. The museum visit can be packaged with the tour of the Cathedral, the Biblical gardens, lectures, special exhibits, and the restaurant found next to the Cathedral.

The grounds of the complex will also host special seasonal events such as celebrations for Easter, Christmas, and nationally celebrated holidays. The path-breaking and iconic design of the complex combined with world-class special events will be a must-see for the world to attend on these special occasions.

The complex will also have academic study facilities, a specialized library on African Christianity, a VIP boardroom for special meetings, and a lecture hall equipped with audiovisual equipment to host global lectures and other convening initiatives. Through these facilities, the National Cathedral and Bible Museum would be developed into a Centre of excellence whose fellows will use the facilities and make contributions to the study of African Christianity. The National Cathedral and Museum will collaborate with leading Ghanaian, African and global institutions in its work. At the national level, Ghana has developed a depth of expertise in African theological thought and Biblical exegesis in institutions such as the Akrofi-Christaller Institute (ACI), Trinity Theological Seminary (TTS), University of Ghana etc. At the global level, the National Cathedral will collaborate with the Galilean Institute as the Africa point for the 2033 celebrations.

The overarching goal of the Bible Museum of Africa is to provide a must-see museum that:

- Glorifies God
- Showcases the importance of the role of Africans and the Bible
- Has the ability to positively impact the lives of those visiting
- Is engaging, inspiring and academically acclaimed as a world-class experience
- Is a must-see for those who are just curious about the Bible or well versed in it
- Is an economic generator for Ghana and West Africa
- Is sustainable and can always stay relevant
- Elevates the experience of Ghanaians, and their sense of pride about the National Cathedral complex

Progress Report

Since the groundbreaking ceremony of the National Cathedral of Ghana on March 5, the work on the museum and gardens continues at a rapid pace. The Nehemiah Group, working with the Secretariat of the National Cathedral and Consultant Architects, Adjaye Associates, has created the outline of the exhibits and themes to be found in the museum. This also includes working with Adjaye Associates to develop the space requirements for the museum, guest flow, amenities, guest services, the correlation between the Cathedral and the Museum, and the construction requirements for the museum. The staffing plan has been developed for the operation of the complex, as well as the job descriptions for the leadership positions.

The fundamental operating plans have been developed, the core revenue streams outlined, and the potential capacity limitations for guest visitation has been calculated. The cost analysis of the exhibits design, fabrication, and installation has been estimated. The next steps in the design portion is to define the academic requirements for artifacts, work with the potential institution who will loan the necessary artifacts required to tell the stories, develop the academic information required for the guest to understand the elements of the museum, and finalize the technology that will be used in the museum to engage the visitors. Once this is completed, we move into the fabrication of the exhibits and finally the installation. Once the final designs are approved, it will take about 18 months to build and install the museum exhibits.

Once the exhibits have been agreed upon, the color schemes of the museum will be developed, as well as the exhibit signage, directional signage, display case placards, and thematic overlays. A full strategic plan is also underway which will show the economic benefits to Ghana and the region resulting from the complex. The plan also includes a marketing strategy, a competitive analysis, the resulting tourism that will be generated and the sustainability requirements for the complex.

The list of species has been developed for the Biblical gardens as well as the relationship to the Bible references. Once the final selection is made, the visitor’s guide to the gardens will be written.



First Bible translation in Ghana



Cary Summers is Founding President and President Emeritus of Museum of the Bible Washington D.,C., He is also the founder of the Nehemiah Group who is overseeing the development and operations of the Bible Museum of Africa and the Biblical Gardens of Africa.

"A key aspect of the President's vision for the National Cathedral is that, although a National Monument, it would not place undue financial burdens on the state."

THE NATIONAL CATHEDRAL AND ECONOMIC SUSTAINABILITY

Cary Summers and Paul Opoku-Mensah



A key aspect of the President's vision for the National Cathedral is that, although a National Monument, it would not place undue financial burdens on the state. The operationalization of this intent has been the development and implementation of a fundraising strategy that has both national and international components. In addition, the National Cathedral, Bible Museum and Biblical Gardens have each been developed with an economic engine that contributes to the economic sustainability of the complex. Each area of the National Cathedral is designed to be an attraction for Ghanaians, Africa and for much of the world, thus attracting both domestic and foreign tourists.

There are several elements in the facilities that will produce income which will help sustain the world class quality that is being built into the structures and content. The Cathedral will not only host worship services but can also be used to host concerts and other entertainment venues. These can be both domestic-based entertainment, or entertainment from outside the local market. There can be an entrance fee for such shows. The main 5000-seater auditorium, as well as the chapels and prayer rooms, would also be rented by the churches, para-church organizations for conventions, thanksgiving services, prayer services etc.

The uniqueness and iconic nature of the Cathedral, Museum and the Gardens combined with the quality of the structures and content will help stimulate tourism, which brings revenue through tourists spending money at hotels, restaurants, retail stores, entertainment venues, and transportation. It will also be an attraction for domestic and foreign pilgrimages. The operations of the complex will have a marketing, group sales and church relations departments to maximize the potential pilgrimage attendance. The resulting tourism and pilgrimage spending are expected to bring in substantive amounts of new money into the Ghanaian economy. Tourism and the resulting economic impact, is one of the best forms of increasing revenues to stimulate and sustain an economy. If the tourism is from the global market, it can bring many other long-term benefits to the country and region. These financial inflows are not regurgitating existing in-country dollars but rather provide a fresh new source of economic stimuli.

The garden area is also planned to accommodate special events in which an entrance fee will be charged. These can be seasonal celebrations or special events. The garden area has the opportunity to have a world class Christmas presentation that will attract visitors from far distances. The combination of an outstanding and highly creative outdoor exhibit combined with special cathedral services, special exhibits in the museum, tours of the Biblical gardens and special menus in the restaurant could provide the catalyst for tourists to come to Accra for Christmas. This can be packaged into a one- or two-day experience that would command a paid reservation. This is one example of the potential in-built revenue streams involving all aspects of the complex.

Bible Museum: As indicated earlier, the Bible Museum of Africa will be the first museum in the world that will focus on the African's role in and through the Bible. It will include many rare artifacts, some dating to the time of Abraham all the way through the time of Jesus, the Middle Ages and through the early 1900's. The museum will occupy over 10,000 square meters and will be located on three levels. The three levels will represent the New Testament, the Old Testament and the largest floor will be the story of the African's role in the Bible and the African church. There will be a children's area, special exhibit area with exhibits about the Bible supplied via other museums and institutions from all over the world, and special lectures in the beautiful Lecture Hall - some having an admission fee. There is also a permanent art and music gallery featuring the accomplishments of Africans in those fields. There will be demonstrations of how printing came about and the importance of the Guttenberg press, the history of Bible translations in Africa, Africans global influence from human rights to governments to science through the diaspora, and the development of the African church.

There are three very special galleries one on each level: (1) The Walk Through the New Testament – a 30 minute-special effects walk through presentation of the Books of the New Testament from the birth of Jesus to the end of the Book of Revelation. (2) The tour of the Galilean Village at the time of Jesus will be recreated inside the museum where the guest is enveloped into the teachings of and about Jesus as they walk the streets of this first century village. (3) The 20 minutes+ film exclusively made for the museum – Africa and the Bible, is an exciting film that captures the essence of the museum and the factual and emotional linkage of the Africans role in history and the Bible.

All three of these galleries will be award winning in design and content and will be designed by proven experts in their field of guest engagement, storytelling and Biblical subject matter.

A special **African Diaspora** initiative will be developed to boost tourism and pilgrimage from the African Diaspora. Conceived as a “Beyond the Year of Return” initiative, it addresses the impact of the bible in the making of the African Diaspora. This includes the misuses of the Bible in the making of the Diaspora, including the case of the **Slave Bible**, which has, among others, all references to “freedom” removed to manipulate the slaves in the West Indies. But the initiative will also include the impact of the Bible as an emancipatory tool in the making of the African Diaspora. This will tap into the already established year-of-return pool of Diaspora visitors, as well as develop new streams of Diaspora pilgrims and tourists to the country. Ultimately, this initiative will introduce the hitherto unexplored dimensions of Faith and Spirituality in the relations between Africa and its Diaspora.

The museum will have an admission entrance fee and special pricing for groups, children, and seniors. There will also be available special memberships which are popular in major museums. The museum will have a gift shop where the guest can purchase memorabilia and replicas of some of the unique items found in the museum exhibits.

Restaurant, Coffee Shop, Rental Spaces: An important part of the built-in economic engine includes a restaurant, coffee shop, bookshop, and rental spaces. The restaurant will probably be operated by a local or regional restaurateur. There are multi-purpose, gathering rooms to be rented to organizations who wish to hold special dinners and celebrations. These areas and their capacities are specified below:

- 1) Main Restaurant – **316 seats inside, 56 seats outside in the courtyard**
- 2) Coffee Shop – **50 seats**
- 3) Chapels – **250 people in each chapel**
- 4) Prayer Rooms (2) – **78 persons in each room**
- 5) Multi-purpose spaces –
 - 1247 for seated lectures
 - 1000 people for a standing social gathering
 - 500 people seated for a banquet
- 6) Specialized Library – 51 (not including office and reception)
- 7) Specialized Conference Hall for the Bible Museum – 216 people

There is special catering available for events via the restaurant and the special catering kitchen



THE BIBLICAL GARDENS will be a special place of learning and represents the plants, herbs, flowers, and trees of the Bible. There will be special tours available to explore the gardens and how the foliage is represented in the Bible. The Old Testament and the New Testament uses many examples of foliage to convey various teachings. The guest can purchase tickets for the guided tours, or the tour can be self-directed.

When taking into consideration the many programs and special events that require a purchase of a ticket combined with the restaurant, gift shop, admission fees to the museum and the various usages of the facility by groups - the complex will generate a revenue stream which will help sustain the operation.

Donations: The other revenue stream which is vital is via donations. All the major Cathedrals and Museums have a constant flow of donations which come from individuals, foundations, corporate sponsorships, civic and religious organizations, churches, and special granting organizations. These gifts combined with the revenue generated by the National Cathedral complex will sustain the annual operating cost, upkeep, and provide funds for research and special exhibits. The outside funding would be part of the operation team's responsibility to obtain and will be an integral part of the

long-term success of the National Cathedral project. For purposes of Donations and Fundraising, a development group would be established as part of the operations team of the National Cathedral and Bible Museum. This development group will be a team that collaborates to raise awareness and funding from domestic sources, global foundation grants, corporate sponsors, individuals globally and would administer the museum annual membership programs. This department would also oversee any professional third-party fundraising organization.

This formula noted above for sustainability is used in its various forms by all major Cathedrals and Museums. Due to the uniqueness of this undertaking and the resulting powerful impact, much of the initial and on-going support will also be received from the global community. Even with all these plans, our reliance rest upon the Lord, hard work, dedicated involvement by many and the knowledge that God blesses those who bless Him.

The National Cathedral of Ghana, the Bible Museum of Africa and the Biblical Gardens of Africa are designed to be efficient in operations, flexible to accommodate many people under many different venues and attractive and educational to garner global attendance and financial support.



COVERING THE NATIONAL CATHEDRAL IN PRAYER: UPDATE

Rev Dr Joyce Aryee, Trustee and Co-Chair, Prayer Committee

As part of the development of the National Cathedral, the Trustees have established a Prayer Committee with representatives from the major denominational networks --- the Christian Council of Ghana (CCG); Ghana Pentecostal & Charismatic Council (GPCC); National Association of Charismatic Christian Churches (NACCC); Women's Aglow International, etc. The Prayer Committee with its related sub-Committees are expected to act as the spiritual liaison for the successful completion of the National Cathedral project. They will give spiritual guidance by understanding the desires of God for the project and all those associated with the project.

The Prayer Committee, chaired by Rev Prof Emmanuel Martey, with Rev Dr Joyce Aryee as co-chair, has the following mandate:

1. Coordinating of special prayers for the Nation, the President, Board of Trustees concerning the National Cathedral project, the committee and the subcommittees.
2. Design a series of prayer events and come up with a prayer calendar that will ensure constant communication with God through prayers for the successful work of the Board of Trustees, the Committees and all others associated with the National Cathedral project.
3. Identify key people and groups in the various denominational churches to pray consistently for the successful completion of the project.
4. Anticipate challenges and serve as intercessors to counter any challenges pertaining to the work of the Board of Trustees and the Committees
5. Collaborate with the other committees to include prayers in the meetings and work of the committees.
6. Organize special prayers for God's wisdom and integrity for all those associated with the project especially the Board of Trustees and the Committees
7. Perform all other prayer and worship related functions as directed by the Board of Trustees



The National Committee will also be responsible to establish Regional Prayer Committees, who in turn will be responsible to establish District and Local Prayer Committees. Ultimately the goal is to establish a National Prayer coalition that will provide the prayer cover for the National Cathedral project.

As part of preparations towards the groundbreaking ceremony, the Prayer Committee organized a prayer Marathon, a 12-hour Prayer- Chain Walk in March 4, 2020 at the site of the National Cathedral. The 12-hour Prayer- Chain Walk, organized a day before the Groundbreaking from 6am and 6pm, was to secure the site, cover the project in prayer, as well as create awareness of the ongoing project.

The Prayer-Chain Walk, made up of a 1-hour prayer engagement with participants offered a 12-point Prayer Bulletin to pray around the Project site a couple of times based on the participants own ability. Invitations to the prayer walk was sent to Churches and the general public. Among the Christian organizations that attended included members and staff of Scripture Union (SU) led by Mr Francis Ashietey; the Christian Council of Ghana (CCG) represented by its General Secretary, Rev Dr Cyril Fayose; the Ghana Pentecostal & Charismatic Council (GPCC) led by Aps James Kofi Abbrey; the National Association of Charismatic Christian Churches (NACCC) officially represented by Aps James Nii-Amponsah; Women's Aglow International led by Mrs. Sandra Florence Whyte; Ghana Fellowship of Evangelical Students (GHAFES) led by Mr. Victor Gyabaah; and Ghana Evangelical Committee (GEC), Mrs. Petsy Konadu. From the Presidency, the Secretary to Cabinet, Mrs. Mercy Debrah-Karikari, participated in the prayer walk.

The Co-Chair of the National Prayer Committee, Rev Dr Joyce Aryee; the Chairman of the Board of Trustees, Most Rev Dr. Samuel Asante-Antwi; the Member/Secretary, Rev Victor Kusi Boateng were all present at the Prayer Marathon.

The scriptures chosen for the Prayer Walk included; Exodus 25:1-9; 2Chronicles 2:1-6; 11-12

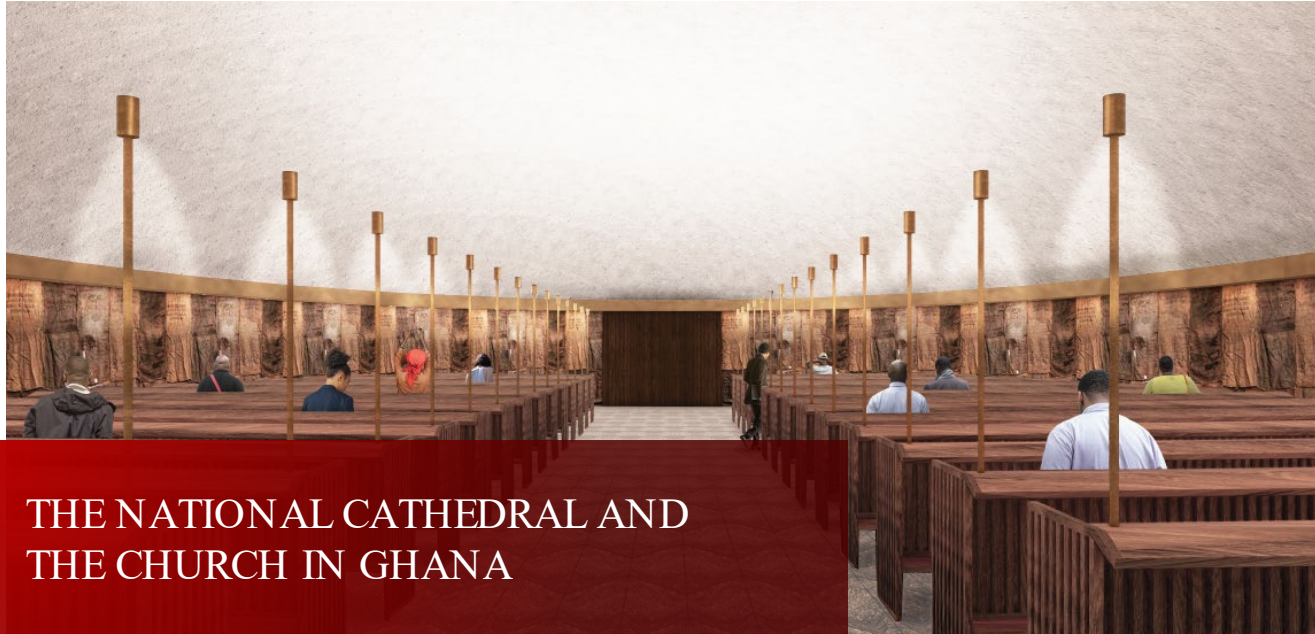


and Zachariah 4:6-7. The 12-point prayer topics covered these areas:

Praise and thanks to God for the life and reign of the President, Nana Akufo Addo and for the direction given him to build a National Cathedral.

1. National Cathedral to reflect godliness in the nation and bring about unity and revival among Ghanaians.
2. National Cathedral to be a point of intimate relationship with God as well as foster national unity.
3. God's favor and help upon the project to facilitate its completion within schedule and projected allocation.
4. Wisdom for the Board and Architect, all Committee members to provide direction and leadership for the project.
5. God's hand on workers on the project to receive wisdom, strength and skill to deliver excellent work.
6. Divine protection, blessings and guidance for the provision and use of materials and equipment each day as construction of the Cathedral commences.
7. God to raise people and nations to support and provide competent skill on the project.
8. God's favor on the Cathedral upon its completion.
9. Victory overpowers of darkness that might attempt to contend or frustrate the advancement of the project.
10. 11. Confidence, as in Joshua 1:3, to take possession of all the land on which the Cathedral is situated for Christ Jesus and for Christians.
11. 12. Faith to break down all walls of opposition and resistance against the building of the Cathedral.

Following the successful prayer marathon, the Prayer Committee has begun the development of monthly prayer bulletins to encourage national corporate prayer for the National Cathedral.



THE NATIONAL CATHEDRAL AND THE CHURCH IN GHANA

Paul Opoku Mensah and Eben Ameyaw

The National Cathedral is conceived as a partnership between the State and the Church, with the (ultimate) goal of embedding the National Cathedral vision in the church. While the National Cathedral, primarily, addresses a sacred infrastructural gap in the country – a Church for National Purposes, - it also provides the fulcrum around which to unite the church, and provide an interdenominational national platform to celebrate the contributions of the church to the country. To operationalize this vision of embedding the development of the National Cathedral in the Church in Ghana, a number of initiatives have been developed, including i) the establishment of a Church Relations Unit at the National Cathedral Secretariat; ii) the involvement of representatives of the various apex bodies of the churches in the working committees; iii) the development of the newsletter – the *National Cathedral Update* – to provide information to the churches; as well as iv) other ad-hoc initiatives aimed at consolidating the involvement of the churches in the project.

As part of this overarching goal of church ownership of the National Cathedral project, the Church Relations Unit of the NCG Secretariat has developed a program

of relationship visits to Churches and their leadership across the country.

The first set of visits involved the Ghana Catholic Bishops' Conference (May 21, 2020); Christian Council of Ghana (May 27, 2020); Christ Apostolic Church (May 27, 2020); Presbyterian Church of Ghana (May 27, 2020); Methodist Church Ghana (May 28, 2020); Independent Council of Churches (June 2, 2020); Perez Chapel International (June 9, 2020); Church of Pentecost (June 10, 2020); Ghana Baptist Convention (June 10, 2020); The Apostolic Church (June 18, 2020); and Royal House Chapel International (June 24, 2020).

The key issues discussed at the relationship meetings include i) a recap, and further elaboration of the vision for the National Cathedral, its roles, and the implications for the church; ii) an update on the development of the components of the National Cathedral such as the main auditorium, chapels, prayer rooms and multi-purpose spaces; iii) clarification of the purpose for the National Cathedral's Bible Museum, Biblical Gardens, and documentation center / Library; iv) operationalizing the state-church partnership for funding the National Cathedral, and v) governance issues.

In relation to the Vision, it was explained that while the National Cathedral provides a sacred infrastructure for the nation, it also has a special place for the church. In our highly denominationalized church context, it offers a national ecumenical platform that unites the church and contributes to building cohesion in the country. The Bible Museum is also, partly, a celebration of the contributions of the church to the nation. In relation to the partnership, the leaders were informed of the state's contributions which includes i) the land and its preparation; ii) the Architect and Design cost; iii) the Secretariat; and iv) Seed Money.

In the ensuing discussions on the role of the church, a number of proposals were made including i) the extension of the launch of the fundraising in all parts of the country, and the diaspora; ii) the possibility of setting aside one Sunday every month, or quarterly, in the church calendar to raise funds for the project; iii) a Business initiative where the Church leaders would mobilize Business men and women from their churches to support the Cathedral project; and iv) other initiatives including mobile numbers which will be communicated to the general public to support with their widow's mite.

Governance issues, particularly the representation of the churches in the decision-making structures of the National Cathedral, was a major concern of the church leaders. It was explained that in proposing the National Cathedral, the President appointed a Board of Trustees made up of leading clergy, but in their personal capacities, to help operationalize and implement the vision. Currently the Working Committees provide an entry point to involve the churches, their leadership, and their apex bodies, in decision making on the Cathedral. Part of the ongoing work of the Trustees, and the Secretariat, is to develop the framework, including the statutes for the operations of the National Cathedral.

This will include proposals for the representation of the various denominations and their apex bodies in the decision-making architecture of the National Cathedral. A draft of these

proposals would be sent to the church leaders for their feedback and input. Other proposals discussed included the secondment of skilled professionals from the Churches to support the work at the Secretariat of the National Cathedral.

Throughout these visits, there was affirmation of the President's vision for the National Cathedral; and a declaration of support by the church leaders to contribute their part to make this a reality.

As the President of the Catholic Bishops' conference put it:

"The goal of the National Cathedral to unite the 71% Christians in Ghana is a very laudable idea and must be supported. The President, Nana Akufo-Addo, is full of courage to build such an edifice to the honour and glory of God. This project when completed will promote ecumenism and should be used to address the polarization of the country." ----- (Most Rev Philip Naameh, President of the Ghana Catholic Bishops' Conference, May 21, 2020).

To the Chairman of the Christian Council:

"This Relationship Meeting is very good, as it affords the Church the opportunity to dialogue with the Vision, Trustees and the Secretariat. This is the beginning of the ownership message. We pledge our fullest support." (Rev Dr Paul Boafo, Chairman, Christian Council of Ghana, May 28, 2020).

The Trustees and Secretariat were however charged to speed up work on the Statutes as it will have a bearing on the support of the churches. In addition, the church leaders expressed their expectation that the national character of the project would be protected, and the implementation done within a truly national framework devoid of the partisan political bickering that sometimes characterizes these national projects.

The relationship meetings are continuing and will be held in all the regions of the country.

RELATIONSHIP MEETINGS WITH CHURCHES



Christ Apostolic Church, International



Ghana Baptist Convention



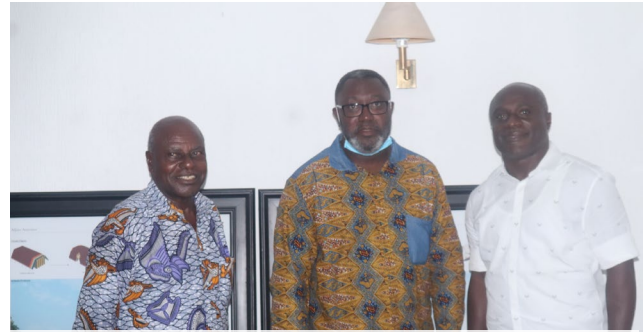
Christian Council of Ghana



Ghana Catholic Bishops Conference



Church of Pentecost, Head Office



Independent Council of Churches



Perez Chapel International



Presbyterian Church of Ghana



NATIONAL CATHEDRAL OF GHANA:

Advancing God's unchanging mission in a changing world.

Dr Yaw Perbi

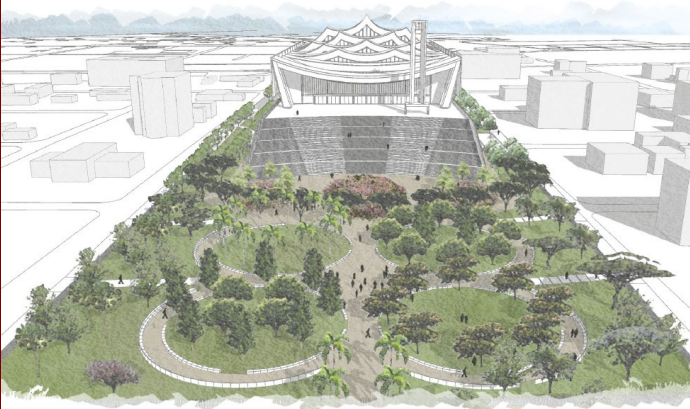
While the three-fold mission of God in the world itself (*missio Dei*) never changes, there are seismic spiritual shifts among the nations in nearly every generation which redefine socioeconomic and other key realities. The National Cathedral Ghana venture is one that is in tandem with, and part and parcel of, such seismic spiritual shifts in our world today.

It has been argued that Africans are 'incurably religious' and *spirit takes the first place; for nature, the state, and man are all spiritual* (Abraham 1970, 50-51) thus that centrality of faith must be expressed. Some have even gone to the extent of claiming,

"The African is a radically religious person, religious at the core of his or her being. Africans' communal activities and their social institutions are inextricably bound up with the spirit world" (Pobee & Ositelu II 1998, 9).

It is not surprising then that since embracing the Christian faith we have sought to incorporate the Triune God in our body politic. "God bless our homeland Ghana" are the very opening words of our national anthem. However, when the president of the Republic of Ghana announced that he had plans to put up a national cathedral, I wasn't excited initially, basically because of the cost of this venture in the light of the myriad socioeconomic challenges the nation faces.

"The African is a radically religious person, religious at the core of his or her being.





Since then, I have made the time to research the matter, and I have become convinced that the National Cathedral Ghana venture is Godly, timely and defining, even above and beyond the cogent reasons the President proffers.

There is so much more going on in the world of faith and religion that makes the idea and timing of this cathedral so iconic that I seek to elevate this conversation beyond partisan politics and above the utilitarian rhetoric.

1. THIS IS OF GOD, THE MISSIONARY GOD

The missionary God forms nations (Acts 17:26) for His three-fold purpose to:

1. Glorify Himself through their image-bearing and obedience, praise and worship;

2. Bless creation, especially human beings (who are made in His likeness)
3. Vanquish evil and establish His kingdom of righteousness, justice and equity on earth forever, as it is in Heave

The Christian God forms nations for His glory to be eternally displayed in and through them to the extent that even at the end of time, when the new and heavenly Jerusalem is revealed, the nations bring their leaders and unique glories into the eternal city (Revelation 21). What will Ghana(ians) bring?

I see G-H-A-N-A as an acronym: God Has A Nation Ahead. There is so much yet to be actualized in this great land. The National Cathedral Ghana can easily become a Tower of Babel repeat if it does not fulfill God's three-fold mission delineated above. Those people who settled on the plains

of Shinar and became Babel ('a people of confused noise') sought glory for themselves and not the Most High God and did not want to be dispersed to spread God's glory and be a blessing to the whole earth. The moment our sense of nationalism overtakes God's global mission and our pride gets in the way of His purposes, you can be sure this project and its people will be scattered, and the venture aborted too. The National Cathedral Ghana is a significant missiologistical statement, that the Kingdom of God has more fully come in Africa and from here, Ghana as the geographical centre of the earth, will radiate it to all the nations of the earth.

2. AFRICA LEADS TODAY

Throughout history God has moved the centre of his missionary activity: Jerusalem, Antioch, Constantinople, Rome... He has particularly done so when His people lose mission vision. While the East was at the helm in the first 1,000 years after Christ's ascension, the West led *missio Dei* for the next 1,000 years in sheer numbers as well as missionary activity. In this 21st century, everything has changed. Missiologists the world over agree: *The centre of gravity of Christianity has shifted from the Global North to the Global South* i.e. to Africa, Latin America and Asia. For the first time, the top two continents with the most Christians are Africa and Latin America, breaking a 1,000-year record Europe held.

The year 2018 was the first time recorded with more Christians in Africa than on any other continent. That a continent once called 'dark' with barely 9 million Christ followers at the beginning of the 20th Century would now host over 650 million in 2020 is marvelous! Shall the region leading the world in the Christian faith not have a place to celebrate, symbolize, embody and consolidate this and from there be a launch pad of evangelism to the rest of the world? Let this cathedral stand for the dawning of this new era of African leadership of the global mission of God and symbolize the celebration of this epoch!

3. MISSING LINK: CHRISTIAN STRUCTURES & SYSTEMS

Ironically, one of my biggest problems is these large numbers of professing Christians in Africa yet with such shallow discipleship and inadequate positive impact on society. While desperately working on the issue of discipling people, we also have an equally important duty of *discipling the structures and systems* on the continent. Europe and North America disciplined their societal structures and systems to the effect that today, even atheists and agnostics *ethically behave like Christians* on account of the Judeo-Christian influence over the centuries. We have the opposite in Africa, where there are so many nominal Christians, but our societal systems and structures are inadequately disciplined.

Sir David Adjaye, the architect of Ghana's national cathedral, passionately speaks about understanding the monumental core of Ghana's capital, all a walking distance from the Independence Square: there are the cemeteries where our ancestors (heroes) are buried, then the State House, Parliament and International Conference Centre but what has been missing is the faith space, a "missing link in the nation's architecture." For an 'incurably religious' people, therefore, the National Cathedral finally becomes that omitted sacred space.

Going even further, I like that we are structuring and systematizing what we believe in beyond the cathedral as *concrete* (hardware) to the idea of the cathedral as *convenor* (software) of crucial national conversations regarding faith and public life. It will be a mistake to construct a physical cathedral without building an internal one as a people, etching what a cathedral symbolizes into our national psyche, attitudes and values. On the other hand, it is equally erroneous to say all we need to do is "build the cathedral within" without an outward expression of an inward and spiritual reality. This isn't either/or but both/and.

We are building a nation here, a cohesive entity that must have spirit; not just a conglomeration of social services! May the distillation of our Christian values and ethics into the physical cathedral structure and the centering of it in the monumental core of our national capital be a daily reminder and constant inspiration to *think* "freedom and justice" and all that is right/true and then to *practice* same always, to the glory of the God of Heaven.

4. AFRICA'S COME OF AGE

While the demolition of a few colonial buildings at the cathedral site is of sad note in a sense it has also been a statement that Ghana is cutting her teeth in this unavoidable intersection of gospel and culture, this grand undertaking of a national cathedral embodies the coming of age of African Christianity. Some white missionaries' insistence on discarding our rich African traditions, the substitution of our meaningful local names with European ones like George (so-called 'Christian names'), the condescending attitude towards our dress and manner of life etc. give just cause for rebellion against the faith they brought. But the missionary God Himself who made all people and is the originator of all that is good in all cultures has revealed Himself in every culture so that all humankind may reflect Him and be drawn to Him. He has expressed Himself through our approximately 80 languages in Ghana that He may be seen, understood and worshipped in our heart language.

With the coming of age of African Christianity, the National Cathedral Ghana is a welcome discontinuation of European cathedral forms of the past, especially gothic architecture. Rather than spirals and bells, all that rings true and good in our old African culture, like the expression of divinity through umbrellas, has been adopted for this edifice. If Jesus Christ the King were to take on flesh in a Ghanaian culture, paramount chief of all of Ghana, how would that be expressed?

The roof of the cathedral is wavy like the tapestry of royal umbrellas in durbars with the highest umbrella (highest point of the roof) being where Christ the King 'sits,' at the altar. This is one of the essential missiological thrills of the national cathedral.

For indeed, in the words of Kenyan theologian John S. Mbiti, "Christianity is always a beggar seeking food and drink, cover and shelter from the cultures and times it encounters in its never-ending journeys and wonderings" (Mbiti 1970, 438). Finally, **there is an edifice of national stature that has offered the proverbial Ghanaian hospitality to the Christian faith in a deeply symbolic way. Christianity has taken on the cover of Ghanaian culture and has become authentically African.** This is *our* cathedral to the God of all the earth and of all flesh!

5. A LIGHT TO THE NATIONS

Ghana, like ancient Israel, has apparently been selected by God as a covenant people to be a light to the nations. As the lode star of Africa, the "Black star of hope and honour to all who thirst for liberty," neither our geographic or population size should warrant the prominent place we hold in Africa as the first country south of the Sahara to achieve independence from colonialism or any other accolade we've been showered with. Whether it's our consummate idea of a united, free and prosperous Africa or producing a United Nations Secretary-General, Ghana has throughout her history captured the imagination of Africans and the world at large. It is remarkable then that now, a landmark of Christian ideals and worship and a site for pilgrimage in Ghana will draw nations to our light.

Among the sites within the National Cathedral Ghana will be **Africa's first Bible Museum and Documentation Center** and replicas of significant places in the Bible like the walls of Jerusalem

and the Garden of Gethsemane, right where we are, without a flight to 'the Holy Land.' The stone from Jerusalem that was brought in as a foundation stone during the groundbreaking has symbolically brought Jerusalem to Accra. Emmanuel! If God is with us, Jerusalem stone or not, then our land too, Ghana, has become holy ground.

6. STATE-CHURCH PARTNERSHIP

Today, postmodern Ghanaians cannot seem to understand why the government of the day will support a clearly Christian venture even despite the fact that there are more Christians in the country now than there were when our founding fathers clearly stated their vision for a nation built on Christian ideals (Aggrey 1927, Amu 1960, Danquah 1963). Meanwhile, the government of Ghana knows that without the Church's partnership in agriculture, education, health etc. it cannot even run the country and Ghana's President looks forward to what he aptly terms a "historic coalition" in this cathedral venture. Some have criticized the 'amorphous' state-church partnership in the putting up of the National Cathedral Ghana. While the government is only gifting the land and seed money, the body of Christ in Ghana is to raise the full amount for the project. If truly, the majority of Ghanaian Christians are not in favour of building a national Christian monument of this stature to the glory of God at this time then this project should die a natural death because there will be no funds from the government to complete it. If truly "the gracious hand of God" is upon the project, however, then the heavenly King will provide what is necessary to build and complete.

This state-church partnership is a bold move by the government of Ghana in an era where many misunderstand the idea of 'separation of church and state.' The Executive branch of government's decisive step in this direction was affirmed by the recent Supreme Court ruling to have the state associate herself with the Christian community while providing the congenial environment for all other faiths to practice and even flourish. Ghana's Supreme Court's ruling that *"The State is free to lend support or aid to a religious group if it deems such beneficence to be for the good of the nation"* is in order.

According to the ruling, "Obviously, secularism in the context of the Ghana Constitution must be understood to allow, and even encourage State recognition and accommodation of religion and religious identity."

Increasingly Ghanaians want to claim Ghana as a purely secular state yet continue using the name of Almighty God in the national anthem, national pledge and the Bible in swearing-in of national officers, including the President. It is a good thing that this project is not solely a government one without the Christian community in Ghana having skin in the game and a sense of ownership. On the other hand, it is a very welcome thing for the government to provide a logistical head start, legal framework and leveraging its convening power on behalf of the body of Christ. Indeed, the European missionary thrust of the 15th to 19th Century could not have been accomplished at the rate and scope it was without royal backing and government resources.

Today, in the postmodern secularization of governments and 'separation of church and state' we also forget the things that made the countries we call "great" and "developed" today what they are: their Judeo-Christian roots. *Even they* forget the Christian ethos from which they were hewn! Shall we at least copy their foundations for the next 150 years and develop too and not buy into their current memory loss? The idea of a "Great Church for National Purposes" that was "non-sectarian and nondenominational" was not an afterthought in the *Plan of the Federal City* developed in 1792 for Washington DC and discussed with George Washington, America's first president.

7. LEADERSHIP LINK

The most multinational church in the world today (with 108 nationalities) is pastored by a Ghanaian. Church denominations have originated from Ghana and established presence in over 100 nations of the world and the Global Christian Forum is headed by a Ghanaian too. Several of the heads of churches that have spread from Ghana to multiple nations are leading this cathedral effort as

advocates and trustees. The head of the largest and most global denomination in the country, Apostle Eric Nyamekye of the Church of Pentecost, says unequivocally: "Let's unite behind the national cathedral." Could all these seasoned, godly leaders of different persuasions of the Christian faith wrong about the national cathedral?

Unity is key to all missions, particularly in the mission of God who is Himself completely one—Father, Son, Spirit. The Church has no mission without love and unity. Although there seems to be disagreement among a section of Christians about the relevance and priority of this colossal project in some quarters, I have never seen the various denominational leaders in the country as united in their diversity over one thing like in this endeavour. Historically, Ghanaian Christians have never really been united enough to have one authoritative voice but take a look at the board of trustees of the National Cathedral Ghana and you will see an unusual confluence of the heads of the Evangelical, Pentecostal and Sacramental persuasions in our Republic at the table. We look to the leadership of those Jehovah has placed over us in this dispensation and trust that we can follow them as they faithfully follow Christ.

CONCLUSION

We Africans are the descendants of those who built gigantic pyramids to honour *dead* pharaohs; do we now not have what it takes to build a monument to the glory of the Most High *living* God? The postmodern notion that faith has no place in the public space is scandalous,

There are seismic spiritual shifts among the nations in nearly every generation which in turn redefine socioeconomic and other key realities and Ghana and Africa are in the midst of one such colossal change right now. Be warned that the smartest, most logical, most professional and other such respectable 'voices of reason' in a modern democracy do not all necessarily have the spiritual ability to discern the presence and activity of the Holy Spirit of God in our midst.

I reiterate: to the extent that a National Cathedral advances God's three-fold mission on earth as it is in Heaven, it is worthy of the support of all who call on the name of the LORD and are called by the name of His Christ. **History is being written right now by the missionary God. O that we, the Ghanaian people, might be a stylus in His firm grip to write with!** I am convinced: *"The God of heaven Himself will prosper us; therefore we His servants will arise and build"* (Nehemiah 2:20).



NOTE

This is a redacted version of a trilogy that was first published on www.yawperbi.com. The writer is a Ghanaian physician, Global CEO of The HuD Group, president of International Student Ministries Canada and a Catalyst for the Lausanne Movement. He has graduate education in the area of practical theology that deals with the mandate, message and mission of the Christian church (missiology).



“CONVERSATIONS ON THE NATIONAL CATHEDRAL”

with
Most Rev Peter Kwasi Sarpong, Archbishop
Emeritus of Kumasi

The National Cathedral *Update* is beginning a series of “**conversations**” with ecclesiastic, state, civil society and business actors – to reflect on the National Cathedral and its roles. The conversations will be used first for the National Cathedral Newsletter; as well as archived for the Bible Museum of Africa, that is going to be located in the National Cathedral and will document the history and the impact of the church in Ghana/Africa. In this first “conversation”, the editor and CEO of the National Cathedral, Paul Opoku-Mensah, interviews one of the key, “*Church Fathers*” in Ghana/Africa, **Most Rev Peter Kwasi Sarpong (AKS)**, Archbishop Emeritus of Kumasi, on a set of issues related to the National Cathedral, and Christianity in Ghana, and the African continent. We bring you **excerpts** from this conversation.

POM: Archbishop, let’s start from the beginning. Why did you become a Priest? And as a priest, what has been your aspiration for Christianity in Ghana and Africa?

AKS: For me the Priesthood gave me the chance to be like Christ by following and imitating him in his triple roles as Priest, Prophet, and King.

- Christ is first of all a Priest. A priest is one who patches his differences with God and tries to patch up the differences between God and His creatures. A priest seeks holiness for himself and for his brothers and sisters. A priest loves is people by praying for them and by suffering for them. This is exactly what Jesus did. He prayed for us even on the cross, when he said – “Forgive them Father, they don’t know what they are doing. The same Cross stands for his suffering for us.

- Secondly, Jesus was a Prophet. A prophet is one who represents God and tells the people what God wants them to tell them, welcome or unwelcome. Therefore St. Paul could say ‘woe unto me if I don’t preach the gospel (1 Cor. 9.16) and told Timothy “Preach the Word; be instant in season and out of season’ (2Tim. 4:2). I became a Priest because God chose me to do exactly that; to warn my people against their bad deeds. The Prophet Ezekiel puts it more clearly:

When I say unto the wicked, you will certainly die; and you do not warn him or speak out to tell him to turn from his wicked way to save his life, that same evil man will die in his sin but you will be responsible for his blood (Ezk. 3:18).

- Thirdly, one of the things Jesus did which I have tried to imitate is the role of the King. It is not the role of an ordinary worldly king but a King who is a good shepherd. A good shepherd is the voice of the voiceless, the strength of the weak, the defender of the oppressed, the legs of the lame, and the eyes of the blind. The Good Shepherd lays down his life for his people. He is not afraid of the wolf. Jesus called the Pharisees, ‘vipers’ and ‘serpents.’ Most people in positions in Ghana are like that. They commit bribery and corruption, they embezzle money, oppress and cheat for nothing. Some have houses and they want to add more houses. One car is not sufficient for them, two or even three are not sufficient for them. They want everything for themselves and for their beloved ones. They are pure vipers or even worse, which bites for the sake of biting. Christ as King or Good shepherd does not approve of this.

Because of my desire to follow Christ, there were four areas in my priestly life – Faith; Peace and Justice; Christian Unity; and Inculturation -- that I concentrated on without in any way neglecting the many others.

1. The area of Faith. A believer must believe in God and be inspired by God in whatever you do. My aim therefore has been as much as possible to explain the faith to my people.
2. The area of Justice and Peace. In this respect, I considered education from kindergarten to University as crucial to the Christian message. I have also considered Social welfare. I set up a Fund for needy children to be able to study. I have done my best to help in the provision of certain basic necessities. I tried to build Health Facilities, Orphanages, Hospitals, Clinics, Public toilets, portable water, pharmacies, etc.
3. It has also been my duty to do something about unity among all human beings in my territory. Unity between Christians and Non-Christians. Unity among Christians and Moslems. Unity between Christians and followers of traditional Religion. In this area of unity since I became a Bishop in 1970, we have made strides at the village, community, diocesan, and national levels. For instance at the level of the Diocese, we have cooperated in building inter-religious schools. At the National level, since 1960s Catholics and Protestants have established the “Committee of Cooperation” of which I was a co-chairman for 20 years, and which met 4 times a year. All the Catholic Bishops in Ghana meet the Christian Council once a year to discuss matters of importance concerning the Nation. The Catholic Bishops Conference and the Christian Council often write joint letters, and send joint delegations to the government to discuss matters of crucial importance to the Nation. We organize Interdenominational services for the nation. The situation 50years ago when Catholics were enemies of Protestants and Protestants considered Catholics as intruders of evangelization is gone forever!

POM: Your fourth area of priestly ministry has been the Africanization of Christianity – or “Inculturation” - as you prefer to put it. What exactly do you mean by this, and what has been your journey and/or contributions to this process?

4. **AKS:** Yes, one of my big concerns has always been Africanizing Christianity. It is my view that the Christian religion as founded by our Lord Jesus Christ is trans-ethnic. It is not meant for any one ethnic group. And since the time of the Apostles, Christianity has spread throughout the world and taken on different cultures. You may put it like this – the Christian message took on a European envelope when it reached Europe. Thus, Christianity should be given an African envelope too. We should be able to worship God our own way, use Asante drums for worship, write our prayers, write Asante songs, make the Christian religion feel at home in Asante. I am convinced that inculturation within all the three dimensions of religion – faith, morality, worship (liturgy) – is the key to producing better Asante, Ghanaian, and African Christians. There has been considerable success in this area. The initial misunderstanding and cynicism about inculturation have disappeared. For instance, at the liturgical level, the practice of *dancing to put in the collection*, which was tried for the first time at St Mary’s parish in South Suntreso, Kumasi is now adopted by all churches, parishes and communities in the country...We now use traditional drums and bands in Catholic funerals, a thing unheard of at the time I became Bishop. Overall, the idea that inculturation is at the heart of Christianity, and central to evangelization, is now accepted in African Christianity.

POM: The National Cathedral, which the President has proposed to address the lack of a sacred infrastructure for the nation, is in the spirit of inculturation as it is designed as an Architectural expression of African Christianity. What does it mean to you, for the country to have such a National Cathedral?

AKS: The National Cathedral is obviously a Christian concept. Christianity on the other hand is the offshoot of Judaism. So, to understand the National Cathedral and its role in the Nation, one has to begin with Judaism and the Old Testament conception of a Temple as the House of God, signifying the perpetual presence of God among His people. At the beginning of Judaism, there were no edifices for God. But all the people around Israel all had temples for their gods. When Israel was moving from Egypt to the Promised Land, they did not have abodes for their God. Instead God was carried in a box-- the Ark of the Covenant. The ark was put in the Tabernacle when the Israelites settled. But David, the second King of Israel desired to build a house to the Lord. He declared that it was not fit that he, the King, should dwell in a palace of cedar while the Sanctuary of God was but of a tent. But the Lord spoke through Nathan the prophet declining the proposed offer because David had shed too much blood and that he was not the person to build him a temple but his son. He was however permitted to gather the building materials for his son, Solomon, to build the edifice.

The building of the Temple of Solomon was an epoch-making event not only in Israel but in the whole world. The edifice was simply fantastic. It is from every angle, one of the most remarkable buildings in history. Yet the glorious prominence of this splendid structure was of brief duration. 34 years after its dedication, and 5 years before the death of Solomon, the Temple began to

decline and finally to become an actual desecration. Solomon had been led astray by the wives of idolatrous women and his wayward ways had fostered iniquity in Israel. The temple soon lost its sanctity and Yahweh would withdraw His protective presence from the place, as it was no longer holy. Both Assyria and Babylon attacked and destroyed the temple completely. Under the friendly rule of Cyrus and Darius (Ezra 1 & 6), a new one, the temple of Zerubbabel, which was inferior in richness and finishing, compared to the temple of Solomon, was built. Herod commenced the reconstruction of the decayed temple of Zerubbabel. Many incidents of the early life of Jesus are associated with the temple of Herod. Jesus was opposed to the degraded and commercial uses of the temple, yet he considered it the House of the Lord. He foretold that it would be destroyed, and in AD 70, the temple was utterly destroyed by the Romans.

To sum up, the idea of a temple is, and has always been, that of a place set apart for service and regarded as sacred. In a more restricted sense, a temple is a building constructed for and exclusively devoted to sacred rites and ceremonies. In its literal sense a temple is a House of the Lord.

The Christian Cathedral, like the temple of Judaism, signifies a place of holy abode of God and the unification of all human beings as children of God. **In the Catholic tradition, the term Cathedral applies only to a Church that seats the Bishop of a Diocese.** The history of Cathedrals starts in the year 312 when the Emperor Constantine adopted Christianity and initiated the Peace of the Church. Indeed, in strict terminology, there could not have been Cathedrals before that as before the 4th century, Bishops were never seated when leading congregational worships.

A National Cathedral, however, has a much wider scope as it unifies and invites the whole Nation as one family of God, all non-residents who come into the country to their home, since all human beings have the same father. **In a National Cathedral, the Bishop is God himself, stretching his fatherly hand over the Nation and its inhabitants and guests.**

Accordingly, the National Cathedral should never be the cause of dissension but the cause of unity. It is surely the inspiration of the Good Lord that made our President, Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo decide that we should have a National Cathedral.

POM: What specific functions should the National Cathedral play in our National Life?

AKS: Right from the beginning, Cathedrals have played roles which have remained distinctive Cathedral functions:

- Religious roles, including regular cycle of prayer
- Providing a forum for civic leadership
- A commitment to higher learning, and the promotion and dissemination of music
- Cathedrals as Landmarks and sites for pilgrimage

The benefits of the National Cathedral for Ghana derive from these historic roles of Cathedrals.

- Religiously, the role of a Cathedral is chiefly to serve God in the community. The Cathedral, its clergy and dignitaries have traditional functions that are mostly religious in nature and presence. The building itself by its physical presence symbolizes the glory of God and the Church. It unites all Ghanaians under the tutelage of the one Creator whether we call Him God, Allah, *Onyankopon*, or *Atta Naa nwomo*, *Mawu* and so on. **The National Cathedral is, therefore, a unifying force for Ghana.**
- The National Cathedral is also a place where one can go and bury oneself in the presence of the Lord. It reminds all of us that we have one supreme God and whatever we do, we must find out what His will is. The fact that different religions and different denominations of the same religions have different ways of serving God is not an excuse for opposing this wonderful gift to the nation. It is primarily a sacred place of worship, a place where humans meet to give thanks. The real conception of a cathedral covers every aspect of life.

- The National Cathedral stands for God’s care, and a symbol of God’s providence. It is indeed the center, the very core of our lives as Ghanaians. The Cathedral exhibits the best in our cultural life everywhere, anytime we see it. It is indeed the epitome of Ghana’s ethos. It is a place where we don’t allow any ephemeral quality to dominate us.
- Many Cathedrals are also places of pilgrimage for the faithful, and non-believers. The National Cathedral could serve as such a place for pilgrimage and tourism.
- Cathedrals also have civil and social functions. Formal Cathedral services are linked to the cycle of the year. Sometimes Cathedrals hold services of thanksgiving, marriages etc. They mark times of national and local celebrations. The funerals of those famous within the community are held in Cathedrals. People who have served the community or church are often buried there and commemorated by memorials. Another civil function of the Cathedral is to impact civil information.
- Finally, those who question the need and urgency for Ghana to have a National Cathedral therefore have missed the point. **There are forces operating outside our sphere of existence whose laws human beings operating on the level of the scientific have not yet been able to understand. The National Cathedral draws our attention to such powers.**

That is why Ghana owes a debt of sincere gratitude to our President Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo for discerning the will of God and relying on Him to implement it. May His insightful decision to build a National Cathedral, be a reward for Himself, his team and the whole Nation.

POM: The National Cathedral is also conceived as a Convening Platform for conversations on Faith and National Life. How do you view this, and what are some of the key issues that should frame these national (faith) conversations?

AKS: The Cathedral as a Convening platform draws attention to the question of the church and national life, and the prophetic role of the church. The role of the church has always been prophetic, which means the church must be the mouthpiece of God. The church should be able to speak as Jesus would speak. The aim of every society or state or nation is the attainment of what in Thomistic Scholastic terminology is called the *Bonnum Commune*, the common good of all. The key motive for the formation of a nation is that through concerted efforts, temporal peace and temporal prosperity, security and abundance, justice and welfare, protection and development, public order and progress may be realized. It contradicts the very concept of a true society for the masses of the people to be deprived of the most basic commodities, and treated as second-class citizens, when a few privileged people continue avariciously amassing wealth with the avidity of a hungry lion beholding a piece of meat.

Politics is the language in which we discuss the way people live together in society, and under acceptable leaders strive together after the common good. In point of fact, politics is every citizen’s business, as political decisions affect everybody. Therefore, as citizens, if as nothing else, the church and its leaders have the inalienable right, and even in many cases the obligation, to concern themselves actively in politics.

The church does not relate to abstraction but deals with human beings situated in concrete human conditions. The subject of the church’s concern is not a truncated being who is now moral, then political, at another time economic. No, man is moral, religious, social,

cultural, spiritual, psychological, economic, political, intellectual, corporeal – all these and more at one and the same time. The Church’s mission, therefore, is to man, the human being, who is a composite of soul (spirit) and body. The church, therefore, cannot stand aloof when national issues are being discussed.

If the Church, for the simple reason that it might be accused of being hungry for temporal power, should not enter the arena of politics, then how does it defend her own rights, such as freedom of worship and assembly and freedom to educate her members in her religious tenets?

How does she defend the rights of her members and the rights of the whole of humanity for which she stands? If such a promotion of the dignity of the human person is dabbling in political issues, then the task of the church is political, and she is proud to perform it.

The issues for the National Cathedral’s convening platform, therefore, should include all these issues – religious, economic, political, social - that affect citizens of the nation.

POM: The National Cathedral Complex also includes Africa’s first Bible Museum that, among other issues, will look at the role of Africans in the Bible, and the impact of the Bible in Africa. What should go into such a Museum?

AKS: The idea of a Museum dedicated to the Bible and Africa’s role in Christianity, as part of the National Cathedral project, is a noble one. To be successful and relevant, we have to go back to biblical times, and the key role Africa has always played. As Christianity is the religion that sprang from Judaism, to understand Africa’s role, we must begin in the Old Testament with Joseph, who was sold by his brothers to Africa (Egypt). It was here

in Africa that he did wonderful things for his own people, until the time of Moses, who brought the Israelites from Egypt to Israel. It was Africa who brought up Moses, who then led his people into freedom. Given that the history of Israel as a nation dates from the Exodus, Africa played a critical formative role in this process of Israel’s nationhood. **Africa nurtured the Israelites and helped establish the basis for their nationhood.**

And when Jesus was coming into this world, he himself did not leave out Africa. After his birth Herod wanted to destroy him. Where did he seek shelter? In Africa! He came to Africa and sought shelter. After he had gone, done his work and gone to heaven the church spread very quickly into Africa. The role of the African continent in the spread of the Christian community cannot be over emphasized, as it were. So in the beginning, right from the word go the church spread over the length and breadth over north Africa. We had Greek schools of Alexandria, school of this and school of that, great men like saint Augustine, who to me, was the most important theologian we have ever had. There are other great Africans from the school of Alexandria who all influenced Christianity in its early years. And then Christianity went through 3 waves to reach where we are now on the continent.

So the National Cathedral’s Museum of the Bible must, first, provide an authoritative, and comprehensive history of Christianity in Africa, focusing on the different eras, and on the history of the different denominations: Presbyterians, Methodists, Catholics, Pentecostals, Charismatics, and Independents. **It must be a redemptive museum that captures the history of Africa, and Africans in the Bible, and in the Christian story.**

POM: Beyond history, what concrete artefacts should go into the library and Museum?

AKS: On the spur of the moment let me mention these:

The Bible; different types of Bibles in different Ghanaian and African languages.

The Bible in the original languages: Hebrew, Greek, Latin.

First editions of the Bible into the metropolitan languages German, English and so on.

Journals, theses etc from the theological Departments of Ghanaian and African Universities; Theological Seminaries in Ghana and the African continent.

Then we must ask the different Churches to give us their history for the library.

We can think also of the Men who brought Christianity into the country. For Catholics, I will mention two – Fr. Moreau and Fr Murat.

There are also gallant missionaries who came from the Protestant Churches even long before the Catholic ones came. Methodists have their key missionaries such as John Rhodes Dunwell, key figures like Rev. S.H. Amissah and Paul Adu. Also, Bishop Angloby and Rev Thomas Thompson are famous for the Anglican Church.

There can also be books on people like the Protestant reformer, Martin Luther. Some great personalities like Pope St. John Paul II who visited Ghana 40 years ago.

You can think of famous churches as well: like St Peters Cathedral Basilica, Notre-Dame Cathedral Basilica, Our Lady of Lourdes Cathedral Basilica.

We must also try to get sculptures of famous missionaries. Each Church should be able to indicate personalities and places and things that should be considered.

Certain portraits of leaders when Christianity came to Ghana or of the missionaries themselves.

POM: A final word?

AKS: My hope is that this National Cathedral becomes a blessing to us, and the presence of God himself in this country.





EBENEZER – THUS FAR HAS GOD BROUGHT US!

The groundbreaking ceremony for the National Cathedral on March 5, 2020 was a grand occasion with the theme: **Ebenezer! Thus Far has God brought us.** Welcoming the President to the groundbreaking grounds – the site of the National Cathedral – was a humbling but historic reminder that exactly three years ago, on March 6, 2017 the President cut the sod to launch the work on the National Cathedral – at the same Cathedral site!

The presence, at the groundbreaking ceremony, of the Osu Mantse, **HM Nii Okwei Kinka Dowuona VI**, who is also the President of OSU traditional council, as well as the President of the greater Accra regional house of chiefs and his entourage was also historic! Their presence was made possible through the instrumentality of the Honorable Regional Minister for Greater Accra, Ishmael Ashithey; Mr. Stanley Nii Adjiri Blankson, a member of the Council of State and former mayor of Accra; and Nii Adjei Tawiah, the MCE for Klottey Korley municipality. The presence of the Osu Mantse, and the Osu Traditional Council, the allodial owners of the National Cathedral land, was an expression of their support and blessing for the National Cathedral project. We are deeply grateful for this support!

In my welcome address at the groundbreaking ceremony, I informed the President and the gathering about the structure of the National Cathedral Secretariat: We have an administrative structure, headed by our indefatigable Executive Director, Dr. Paul Opoku-Mensah. We have Working Committees through which the Trustees do our work.





This includes a Prayer Working Committee headed by Rev Prof Emmanuel Martey and Rev Dr Joyce Aryee. On the day before the groundbreaking, March 4, 2020, the Prayer Committee organized a prayer walk around the site of the Cathedral from 6am to 6pm. There is a Finance and Fundraising committee headed by Archbishop Nicholas Duncan-Williams, with Messrs. Fred Oware and Eric Kutortse as Co-Chairs. There is the Procurement Committee headed by Most Rev Titus Awotwi-Pratt; the Research Committee headed by Apostle Prof Opoku Onyinah; and finally, a Project Group headed by the young man amongst the Trustees, Rev Victor Kusi-Boateng. Collectively, the Secretariat and the Working Groups have worked tirelessly these past years and am deeply grateful for their work. For their work on the groundbreaking, Rev Victor Kusi-Boateng and Dr Paul Opoku-Mensah deserve special commendation.

The National Cathedral involves a historic partnership between the Church and the State. While the state fulfills its commitment to the project, the Trustees are also committed to doing our part to mobilize the church in Ghana, and in the Diaspora, in support of the project. We have done 3 fundraising events: Accra (Dec 28, 2018); Washington DC (Feb 8, 2019); Kumasi (in Jan 30, 2020). To ensure the national character of the Cathedral, fundraising would be launched in all the regions of the country. For the groundbreaking, we brought representatives from all the regions in this country and assured them of this fact.

As Trustees, we are confident that the same Ebenezer, who has brought us this far, will be with us to the completion and dedication of the National Cathedral – to His glory and Honour.

Most Rev Dr. Samuel Asante Antwi,
Chairman, Board of Trustees, NCG.

The National Cathedral

Envisioned by Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo Addo, President of Ghana, to serve as a great church for national purposes, the National Cathedral holds a unique place in Ghana, connecting spiritual and civic life.

National Cathedral

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