

# The Church in The Public Space: Lessons from The Exodus Church in Jürgen Moltmann's Theology of Hope

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## **Abstract**

*The ecclesial community's call to duty and ability to carry out its mission is centered on how relevant it must become to the existential realities of those living in the public sphere. Jürgen Moltmann makes what can only be considered as a concise statement when he states that, to make Christianity accessible to the masses, theology must openly uphold the universal concerns of God's coming Kingdom. The church, following its own faith principles, must demonstrate "general concern in the light of hope in Christ for the kingdom of God" by becoming "political in the name of the poor and the marginalized in a given society, by thinking critically about the religious and moral values of the societies in which it exists." Christian theology continues to be the mouthpiece of the church. This article's goal is to discuss Jürgen Moltmann's straightforward explanation of the church's public relevance in helping people remember why it exists in all forms of human sociality. This article's reflections aim to highlight the fact that the Christian church can only be seen to be fulfilling its mission when it is perceived as the voice of the voiceless, bringing God's fullness to human flourishing, and providing true meaning to human tranquillity in a difficult and uncertain world.*

**Keywords:** Christianity, civil society, public church, public theology, modern society, kingdom of God.

## **Introduction**

Exodus church is an analysis by Jürgen Moltmann which is based on the entreaty by the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews (Hebrews 13:13-14) for Christian faithful who are identified as having no continuing city in the present world to seek one to come. Jürgen Moltmann was a German Reformed theologian, a Professor of Systematic Theology at the University of Tübingen, Germany. A foremost theologian who became popular through his work of the Theology of Hope from which the sub-title, the "Exodus Church" became the focus of our reflection. Moltmann passed on at age 98, on June 3rd, 2024. His legacy and theology cannot be summarized into one sentence as also has been reiterated by Janna Gonwa of the Martin Marty Center of the University of Chicago Divinity School, USA. We could state for the purposes of this article that, his theological treatises critically emphasized a Christocentric theological reflection, bringing into focus the humanity of God through Jesus of Nazareth. The calling of Christians who live on the eternal hope of Jesus the Christ and who are born into the community of the life of the people, must always recognize the mission of Christian theology; to critical identify with the plight of the ordinary people and nature crying

for redemption and hope in the dying world of nature. Moltmann was forever convinced that, Jesus Christ presented the human face of God to the world, for the redemption and reversal of human alienation because of sin and disobedience.

In this probe, Moltmann seeks to delineate the import of the eschatological theme vis-à-vis the social character of Christianity. Moltmann therefore adapts the euphemism to draw attention to the reality of Christianity as the pilgrim people of God. From the Old Testament narrative, it can be inferred that Israel's exodus had ramifications for Egypt's productive workforce and social outlook. Considering that Biblical Israel's exodus from Egypt had considerable influence on the social structure of the latter, this nomenclature of an 'Exodus church' is relevant for such enquiry within the social ethics of 'modern society'. The critical enquiry to be undertaken in this part of the research is the question of the 'publicness' of theology or the question of what 'public' the Christian Church must engage or is invited to engage society with the future of God for all humanity. In other critical discourses, Moltmann had insisted that theology for God's sake is always kingdom-of-God theology and as "theology of God's kingdom, it has to be public, critical and prophetic complaint to God-public, critical and prophetic hope in God."<sup>1</sup> The point is further reiterated that, the public character of theology must be constitutive of the hope of the people in the expectation of the kingdom of God. For theology to fulfil that dream, it must have its institutional liberty, and a place in the open house of the wider community, scholarship and the sciences that is the place of the public, civil society and the wider culture of the people. The demand on the church and for that matter Christian theology is a long-term commitment to promotion and support of economic justice, human rights, social justice, compassionate love and charity.

The problem is that the church must define its relevance in a modern society and public life. The church does not exist on her own; it exists in the reality of the calling of God to participate in the mission to save the world of downs lidding morality, hopelessness and misery. This world of the church, as Moltmann would assert, is governed by the sphere of public life, which is governed by consumption and commerce, the realm in which the relations between man and man is determined by the things of business world and by the businesslike approach. The modern world of the church and society, overly controlled by the advancing science and technological exchanges, presents a challenge to the church. Both the modern world and the church enjoy the fruits of these scientific and technological advancement and finds it difficult to deal with the many infractions and negativities to both life and culture.<sup>2</sup> The Christian church was trimmed to focus on the spiritual upliftment of the faith community and to the relegation of the socio-cultural aspirations of the people in the political economy solely to the responsibility of the political class.

Modern industrial society's information superhighway, technological-artificial intelligence and tailored high-definition cinematic experiences, exert great influence on the political economy, society and the family life of people beyond measure. There is the possibility of society navigating towards the movie center of the modern civilization of science and technology, characteristically considering itself to be neutral to religion and the significance of faith to the value of life and the promotion of the quality of life. This has the

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<sup>1</sup> Jürgen Moltmann, *God for a Secular Society: The Public Relevance of Theology* (England: SCM Press, 1999), 5-23.

<sup>2</sup> Sebastian, Kim C. H, *Theology in the Public Sphere: Public Theology as a Catalyst for Open Debate* (London: SCM Press, 2011), 57-62.

propensity to, on the part of modern industrial civilization, withdraw itself from religious traditions and orders and the various institutions created therefrom. Additionally, it seeks to absolve Christianity of the responsibility of serving as society's moral compass and remove it from its place at the core of integration.

Jurgen Moltmann poses the question; "What are the social roles in which this modern society places faith, the congregation, the Church and finally Christianity?"<sup>3</sup> Humans are social beings as well as religious beings, linked to the creator and the created order that allows for human flourishing. Religion and the church cannot be removed or wished away from their true essence of living together in the created order of life, at least not in any given human reality. History favors the Christian religion's significance in the public space of society. From Emperor Constantine right into the 19<sup>th</sup> century, as noted by Moltmann, besides its several challenges, the Christian Church had occupied a definite position in the public social life of the people.

"The place and function of the Church were firmly established. Everyone knew what was to be expected of."<sup>4</sup> The church became the protector and the preserver of the dignity of human persons, for the common good of the people, it wanted it a supreme duty on the part of the public to venerate the Divine order of life for the ultimate end of life for all-the highest goal of society is the true veneration of God. The church is defined as an important player and contributor to all issues bordering on the public of the people. The Christian Church defined and informed by her Christological principles and convictions of faith that characterizes contemporary public life. According to Kim Sebastian<sup>5</sup>, there should be a reciprocal critique between the public and the Church. This emphasizes that the objective shouldn't be to just advocate for one way of life over another, but rather to carefully and critically examine the many options. The Christian Church regains her reputation as a public church that engages in public life and social activities. She also continues to critically examine people's real-life issues that confront them on daily basis, driven by her religious beliefs, promotes the intellectual, spiritual, and cultural life of the larger community.

This article seeks to delve into the relevance of the Christian Church in the public space as Jürgen Moltmann's work on the "Exodus Church" in his masterpiece; the *Theology of Hope*, published in 1967 has been our focus.<sup>6</sup> The fact that Christian principles and their pervasive impacts on the justice of the people's economic and sociocultural lives are the focus of our reflection in this essay is also important to mention.

The article has the African (Ghana specific) experience of religion as the penetrating evidence of hope and aspirations of life. In Ghana, from the 2020 population census and Housing survey, 71% of the 32 million population are Christians. The problem however is that the church in Ghana, has in many instances limited itself to the preoccupation of church-life within the walls of the church, functioning in many instances as a confessional church rather than a church in exodus, whose eschatological expectation has implications for the social order. It is our hypothesis that in the first place, the overwhelming numbers of Christians in

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<sup>3</sup> Moltmann, *God for A Secular Society: The Public Relevance of Theology* (London: SCM Press, 1999).

<sup>4</sup> Moltmann, *Theology of Hope: On the Ground and Implications of a Christian Eschatology* (New York and Evanston: Harper & Row Publishers, 1967), 306.

<sup>5</sup> Kim, Sebastian and Katie Day, (eds), *A Companion to Public Theology* (Leiden: Brill, 2017).

<sup>6</sup> Moltmann, *Theology of Hope*, 306-308.

Ghana implies that the Christian religion is a penetrating religion and the lifeworld of the people, in terms of cultural aspirations, socio-economic life and the political choices of the populace. A second implication of our hypothesis is that the socio-religious milieu in Ghana places the Christian Church in a position of responsibility towards contributing to the quality of life of the people. Thus, it is critical for Christian principles and faith practice to engage with all manner of public discourses and dialogue to influence the quality of life of the Ghanaian people.

## Christianity in The Modern and Civil Society Public

### Christianity

Christianity, per the Reformed tradition of Luther inter alia, is represented via 'church' and 'congregation', and by Christians at their worldly callings and in their social roles. This definition is followed by Moltmann.<sup>7</sup> The observation by Moltmann in describing what he asserts as defining Christianity, is in reference to their calling in the Church. Christianity then could be defined from both its institutional characteristics and the communal nature of their organization. Communal nature is defined and informed by their congregation around the world and sacrament in the fellowship of worship and service. Christianity as an institution must also recognize their worldly calling in life obedience to their principles of faith and order of life in the social realities of the people. Moltmann decries the notion of worldly callings of Christians waning in modern evangelical church context as sociologically explicable, yet theologically unintelligible.<sup>8</sup> The Christian life realities must clearly define its significance in respect of the extent of relationship and impact it must bring to bear on the particular realities of the people and also on the changing expectations on life.

### Modern Society

As a consequence of modern industrial systems, modern society is the sphere of public life governed by the conduct of business, production, consumption and commerce. Such society has the characteristic of considering itself emancipated from religious and traditional influences.<sup>9</sup> In principle, it emancipates itself from all presuppositions regarding the orders of human life as laid down by historic tradition and finds its content solely in the constant and consistent nature of man's needs. The religious center which in pre-modern times integrated people religiously to form a society resulted in such images of the church as the crown, the healing center and the inner principle of society.

Unlike, Western societies, many African societies still maintain their religious center in governance and daily life. Classical view of society, however considered a religiously neutral government which restricted itself to the improvement of peace and worldly wellbeing as lunacy. The nature and power of modern western society however was attained precisely through liberation from the religious center. Subsequently cries of the loss of a center in a disintegrating society are seen in modern society as expressions of a longing for a pre-modern religious society.<sup>10</sup> For Africans however, government must necessarily facilitate the

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<sup>7</sup> Moltmann, *Theology of Hope*, 304.

<sup>8</sup> Moltmann, *Theology of Hope*, 305.

<sup>9</sup> Moltmann, *Theology of Hope*, 305.

<sup>10</sup> Moltmann, *Theology of Hope*, 307.

religious center because religion constitutes an integral aspect of African life. African societies actively contend liberation of the religious center to prevent moral ineptitude and disintegration of societal mores. It could be argued that Africans are averse to witnessing their values languishing in the abyss of modernity and its post-modern offspring.

### Civil Society

Civil Society is also portrayed by Moltmann as the immense power that entangles man and makes him to serve it as the conduit of all that he may accomplish<sup>11</sup>. Alluding to Hegel's approach of the age of universal conformity, mediocrity and mass organization, Moltmann indicates that an individual, whose aim is their own self-interest, becomes the subject or citizen in civil society.<sup>12</sup> The idea of the freedom of all men therefore coincides with the subjection of the individual to the society. This is attributed as a consequence of the abstract, non-historic character of the industrial revolution, where all other life relationships are relieved of social necessity and where man counted because he is man and not because he is Catholic or Protestant, German or Italian.<sup>13</sup> This is because, need and labor when elevated to such universality, create a powerful network of interdependence and community within themselves.<sup>14</sup>

From the analysis of Hegel's approach, Moltmann clarified that the age of individuality was also, dialectically, the age of mass organization. To wit, the age of conformity and mediocrity offers people a vast array of personal preferences, judgements, and opinions, allowing the most haphazard assortment of unofficial groupings to exist within the major organization's constant bureaucratic uniformity. Accordingly, the era of unprecedented conformity in behavior, is simultaneously the era of the unique discovery of the individual soul and intellect, thus the trend of weakening social bonds is what births conformity and individualism.<sup>15</sup>

The development of civil society as an age of conformity and individuality warranted reflection from Moltmann on what became of the Christian church in its social significance. He offered that both religion and culture become functionless when they can no longer acquire social relevance and thus become breeding ground for many ineffectual ideas and viewpoints.<sup>16</sup> This aligns with functional theory of religion argued by Durkheim.<sup>17</sup> Moltmann identified that contrary to New Testament theological outlook, Christianity during the nineteenth century became a private cult (*cultus privatus*) instead of a public cult (*cultus publicus*), the cult of the absolute which once was protector and preserver of public ceremonials (*sacra publica*). The old accord between church (*ecclesia*) and society (*societas*) was now dented by the rise of industrial revolution. Thus, religion was private; inwardly beneficial and edifying to its adherents as the religiosity of the individual while ceasing to be a public social duty.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Moltmann, *Theology of Hope*, 308.

<sup>12</sup> Moltmann, *Theology of Hope*, 308.

<sup>13</sup> Moltmann, *Theology of Hope*, 308.

<sup>14</sup> Moltmann, *Theology of Hope*, 308.

<sup>15</sup> Moltmann, *Theology of Hope*, 309.

<sup>16</sup> Moltmann, *Theology of Hope*, 310.

<sup>17</sup> Pippa Norris and Ronald Inglehart, *Sacred and Secular: Religion and Politics Worldwide*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed (London: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 8.

<sup>18</sup> Moltmann, *Theology of Hope*, 310.

Consequently, civil society as a society of needs, effectively emancipated itself from religious needs of the masses. Moltmann emphasized that many revivalists and pietist movements furthered this emancipation. The church in modern society accordingly developed a theology of pastoral care akin to its self-consciousness as a custodian of character for a materialist society. After Christianity lost its public function in modern society, it was absolved of its responsibility to integrate the core of modern society and to stand for the supreme duty or highest goal of society, which is the adoration of God. Notwithstanding, Christianity in modern society still offers limitless chances for self-improvement and self-propulsion of the individual. Duly, it can perform dialectical functions of offering relief for people in modern society even despite the widespread social immobility imposed on Christianity as a matter of religion.<sup>19</sup>

## Public Role of Religion in Modern Society

### Religion as the Cult of New Subjectivity

Moltmann reflects that modern industrial society expects religion to be effectual as the cult of the new subjectivity after religion's transition from the cult of the absolute. Alluding to Weber's claim that rationalization has disenchanting the world, Moltmann concedes that secularization has stripped the cosmological world of its gods, claiming the gods of cosmological metaphysics are dead.<sup>20</sup> To wit, the divine in the sense of the transcendent has disappeared from the world of nature, history and society. He accepts Heidegger's metaphysic of subjecthood,<sup>21</sup> in which the world of objects is submitted to planning by human subjects. Identifying the category of individuality as a product of society<sup>22</sup>, the category of personality is subsequently regarded an institution in the single instance.<sup>23</sup> The world thus surrendered to the reason of man becomes material for technical reshaping by man. Herein appears in the view of Moltmann the doctrine of faith, which he identifies as a theology of existence, the relation of man to himself. This faith is the receiving of oneself from God and assigns its home in that subjectivity and spontaneity of man.<sup>24</sup> Faith localizes in the ethical reality determined by man's decisions and encounters rather than by social behavior and rational laws of economic circumstances.

The Christian ethic within this cult of new subjectivity is then reduced to an ethical demand to accept oneself and take responsibility for the world in general. It is however no longer able to give pertinent ethical instructions for ordering social and political life, thus quitting the realm of justice and social order. Justice, social order and political righteousness once rendered void in the cult of the new subjectivity are understood positivistically as pure organization of jurisprudence in law and power.<sup>25</sup> This localized faith is therefore considered as socially irrelevant due to its non-committal character - its attitude of refusing to take sides in socially irrelevant faith disputes. It is thus a religion void of decision with no binding character in social life. Hence such theology threatens to become a religious ideology of

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<sup>19</sup> Moltmann, *Theology of Hope*, 311.

<sup>20</sup> Moltmann, *Theology of Hope*, 312.

<sup>21</sup> Moltmann, *Theology of Hope*, 312.

<sup>22</sup> Moltmann, *Theology of Hope*, 315.

<sup>23</sup> Moltmann, *Theology of Hope*, 315.

<sup>24</sup> Moltmann, *Theology of Hope*, 314.

<sup>25</sup> Moltmann, *Theology of Hope*, 315.

romanticist subjectivity, a religion within the sphere of individuality relieved of all social obligations.

### Religion as the Cult of Co-Humanity

Modern society further expects religion to be effectual as the cult of co-humanity. True human community is that in which man finds himself surrendering himself to the other, community between man and man. Society however is an artificial, arbitrary arrangement between men for practical and businesslike purposes, with the dominant factor being its rational purposefulness, convention and businesslike approach rather than the will to be a self. Hence society per Moltmann's analysis is a pseudo-community, an antithesis of community.<sup>26</sup> He alludes that the idea of community was expounded in *Communist Manifesto*, the revolution with the goal of free association of free individuals. The revolution sought to counter the effect of capitalist society towards a future in which man is the premier being, and individuals reciprocate love only for love, trust only for trust, towards the holistic reclamation of man.

The idea of community is further present in the socially critical and socially therapeutic teaching of the Catholic church. The Catholic social teaching, *Mater et Magistra* emphasizes the need to present the form and substance of a true community wherein individual members are considered and treated as persons and encouraged to take an active part in the ordering of their lives. It further stresses that for every enterprise, private or public, every effort should be made to ensure the enterprise is a community of people. This is to facilitate precious contribution to the formation of a world community in which all members are conscious of their duties and rights, working on the basis of equality for the bringing about of the universal common good. It is significant that the Catholic church has a well-developed and clearly articulated teaching on human community which aims to safeguard a world community premised on egalitarian principle of equality and the utilitarian vision of universal common good. Conversely, it is disconcerting that many Pentecostal Charismatic churches in the present time lack a clear well-articulated vision of what entails a community of people.

Noting that the ideal community was however hampered by progress of industrial revolution, Moltmann avers that it was also an age of small specialist groups with confidential relationships within narrow circles.<sup>27</sup> Accordingly, Alexis de Tocqueville observed of those in the American democracy in the 1940s that one's children and private friends constituted for them the whole of mankind and thus existing only for oneself without noticing or touching other fellow citizens.<sup>28</sup> Sadly, not only has this aspect of American democracy's tendency of narrow social circles remained over time but has traversed across many nations, including communal African communities, mutilating the rich tapestry of inclusive social ties. Moltmann is nonetheless optimistic in differing with notions that the small social ties of intimate groups combine to form a sort of cement for the total structure of society as not constituting the full picture.

On the contrary, Moltmann avers that between the small intimate groups the church as a congregation can have its place and function as a refuge of the inner life, away from the

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<sup>26</sup> Moltmann, *Theology of Hope*, 317.

<sup>27</sup> Moltmann, *Theology of Hope*, 319.

<sup>28</sup> Alexis De Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, vol. II, trans. Henry Reeve, (Boston, MA: J. Allyn, 1876), 318-579.

supposedly soulless world of affairs. Moltmann posits that Christian groups and communities can become islands of genuine co-humanity and authentic life, a kind of Noah's ark in the rough sea of social estrangement.<sup>29</sup> Thus the church fulfills a social role by becoming a rallying point for integration. Though it may not alter the stern reality of the loss of the human in society, it offers a dialectical compensation and a disburdening of the soul for man to cope with his official existence in the alternating rhythm of community and society, private and public. Various persuasions of Christian theology viewing the true church as a genuine community; as "spiritual church" (R. Sohm), "spiritual community of persons" (E. Brunner), "community of faith" and "community in the transcendent" (R. Bultmann), are according to Moltmann, in harmony with the social significance of community.<sup>30</sup> The church is thus portrayed as an absolutely non-worldly phenomenon in contrast with the premeditated concept of society. Within this co-humanity, the responsibility of the Christian Church for the world becomes conspicuous, nonetheless it cannot alter the official activity of society.<sup>31</sup>

### Religion as the Cult of the Institution

A third role in which modern industrial society expects religion to be effectual is in its official claims as an institution. Moltmann observed that post-Enlightenment culture in the global West consolidated itself in new institutions. The institutionalization of official, social life stems from mankind's permanent need of security and thus relieve man of the permanent pressure of decision to which man is subjected in times of uncertainty.<sup>32</sup> Moltmann claimed institutionalization of public life in highly industrialized societies produced a perceptible disappearance of ideologies. It must be emphasized that institutions are established upon predominant ideologies, thus the seeming disappearance of ideologies in society might be attributed to elimination of trivial ideologies. Accordingly, Moltmann posits Christian religion was left unopposed on the field of ideologies and world views, thus Christian confessions strongly countered ideologies like Darwinism.<sup>33</sup> Christian theology then assumed a position to assert a neo-dogmatism, positing things which could neither be proved nor contested on the ground of real experience.<sup>34</sup>

Within this setting, mankind delegates to the church as an institution, problems regarding one's own believing decision, leaving detailed questions to theological specialists. Matters of theological disputes are therefore seen as confessional witch-hunting and banished from public life.<sup>35</sup> Ecclesiastical institution of religious modes of conduct also acquire a new social significance resulting in a general non-committal recognition of the religious institutions as the guarantors of life's security in general. The institutionalization of the church albeit its non-committal outlook however has the effect of becoming an ultimate institution overshadowing the institutional security of life and from which security is expected against the ultimate fears of human existence.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> Moltmann, *Theology of Hope*, 320.

<sup>30</sup> Moltmann, *Theology of Hope*, 321.

<sup>31</sup> Moltmann, *Theology of Hope*, 321.

<sup>32</sup> Moltmann, *Theology of Hope*, 321.

<sup>33</sup> Moltmann, *Theology of Hope*, 322.

<sup>34</sup> Moltmann, *Theology of Hope*, 323.

<sup>35</sup> Moltmann, *Theology of Hope*, 323.

<sup>36</sup> Moltmann, *Theology of Hope*, 323.



## Christianity in View of the Kingdom of God

Consequently, Christian religion as prescribed by its social milieu observed by Moltmann was socially axiomatic in its respective roles as cults of subjectivity, co-humanity and the institution. This is neither due to the good nor ill will of individual persons, nor to theologies determined by historical ideas but as Moltmann alludes, a new Babylonian exile necessitating an exodus<sup>37</sup>. He rightly asserts that Christianity must breakout of these static social roles to serve a different purpose in hope of the one whom Christianity believes. He proposes Christianity's resistance as a group incapable of being assimilated in the modern integration of everything with everything else. This does not imply a violent resistance but a dialectical tension of Christian hope with the conditions of arbitrary society. God's kingdom objective is a reminder to all humans that his interest in the things that border on humanity's total life will not be dried up by human weaknesses and limitations. His presence shall always be in the experiences of his revelation and humanity must respond appropriately.

Dirk J. Smit buttresses the point further that, Christians have a moral responsibility to God by revealing God to human history according to the pattern of Jesus.<sup>38</sup> Christian theology has its central theme that is focused on Christ Jesus as the symbol of hope for the eminent revealing of God's reign to be established in the history of human existence.

For instance, in recent years, the issue of illegal small-scale mining known in Ghanaian local parlance as *galamsey*,<sup>39</sup> has been a national canker, devouring vast swathes of arable land and polluting major water bodies from which the Ghana Water Company relies on to distribute water across the nation. This development is endemic to the health of the Ghanaian populace. Rooted in this eco-theological menace are the persistent problematic of extensive disregard for human dignity, discipline, and corruption. Throughout this blighting scourge of national life, the zest the church exhibited in canvassing monetary support for the controversial National Cathedral project<sup>40</sup> while endorsing and advocating for the project was comparatively lacking in intensity and momentum towards combating *galamsey*. It must be noted that the National Cathedral project is a brainchild of Ghana's outgoing President Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo Addo as his personal vow to God towards becoming president. The project which was bedevilled with strife and controversy from the onset, nonetheless, enjoyed massive support from the church. However, it was eventually inundated with massive corruption allegations even though it was originally anticipated that only private funds were to be expended towards the project. This alarming situation evokes public debate in the nation about whether the church in Ghana seems more interested in superficial religiousness than tackling real-life challenges that hamper the flourishing of human souls and developing the soul of the nation. The Ghanaian church must neither be silent nor inactive amidst this grave eco-theological crises threatening this generation. Consequently, the Ghanaian church must necessarily shun its tendencies of being solely a confessional church to

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<sup>37</sup> Moltmann, *Theology of Hope*, 324.

<sup>38</sup> Dirk J. Smit, *Essays in Public Theology* (Stellenbosch, South Africa: Sun Press, 2007), 198.

<sup>39</sup> Michael Eduful et al., "The Illegal Artisanal and Small-scale mining (Galamsey) 'Menace' in Ghana: Is Military-Style Approach the Answer?," *Resources Policy* 68 (October 2020), <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.resourpol.2020.101732>.

<sup>40</sup> Kent Mensah, "Can of Worms: In Ghana, two more trustees resign from scandal-hit national cathedral," *The Africa Report.com* October 26, 2023 <https://www.theafricareport.com/325930/in-ghana-two-more-trustees-resign-from-scandal-hit-national-cathedral/> accessed: September 25, 2024.

becoming a church for the world, that concerns itself with the scathing issues plaguing Ghanaian social and economic life and positing serious addresses from the pulpit to the pews, and the corridors of power.

It is in this conflict laden context that Moltmann envisages a fruitful partnership with society wherein Christianity communicates its own hope to society. He clarifies however that the task of Christianity is not to oppose societies ideological glorification of things but to resist the institutional stabilization of things by raising the question of meaning. The intent is to make things uncertain and keep them moving and elastic in the process of history. This is necessary in Moltmann's narrative because hope alone keeps life, both public and social, flowing and free.<sup>41</sup>

Christianity's break from the static social axiomatic then enables it to exist beyond itself. This can only be done by considering its aim and why it exists. The existence and modes of behavior in Christianity could be grasped through an enquiry into its mission while its essence could be fathomed through enquiry into the future on which Christianity sets its hopes and expectations.<sup>42</sup> Wendel Ellis asserts that, the ethics of Jesus' proclamation of the kingdom of God is not just a call to repentance or a demand on the people to bring about a perfect society, but a response material to the experience of the goodness of God to all humanity for their peace and tranquil relationships.<sup>43</sup> To this end, Moltmann, conceptualizes the church via New Testament theology as the community of eschatological salvation, consisting of a gathering in and sending out of this community in terms of eschatological expectation.<sup>44</sup> Thus, the risen Christ calls, justifies, sanctifies, and in so doing gathers and sends men into his eschatological future for the world. Hence, the church perpetually exists in expectation of the risen Lord not merely for itself but also for the world.<sup>45</sup> Christianity therefore subsists within the horizon of eschatological expectation of the kingdom of God.

As a result, eschatological orientation of the church is seen in everything for which and from which the church lives.<sup>46</sup> For example, Moltmann recognizes eschatological tenets of already and not yet within sacral things as the word of God, baptism and the Lord's Supper. For instance, the word of God is presented as an eschatological gift within which the hidden future of God for the world is present in the form of promise and awakened hope. Here, the word of God by which the church lives, is open for the future as the proclaimed word which is still outstanding although it is coming to pass. Likewise, baptism is also eschatological in nature because through it, people who are baptized into the past death of Christ are sealed for the future of the kingdom that is being brought by the risen Christ. Only an eschatological church therefore has the right to perform baptism as a judicial and creative act which derives from its openness towards that which is yet only on the way. The Lord's Supper is also viewed eschatologically rather than as a cult and mystery. The congregation at the Lord's Supper are not yet in possession of the sacral presence of the Absolute but are expectantly waiting, seeking communion with the coming Lord.

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<sup>41</sup> Moltmann, *Theology of Hope*, 324.

<sup>42</sup> Moltmann, *Theology of Hope*, 325.

<sup>43</sup> Wendel Willis, *The Kingdom of God in the 20<sup>th</sup> century Interpretations* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1987), 73.

<sup>44</sup> Moltmann, *Theology of Hope*, 325.

<sup>45</sup> Moltmann, *Theology of Hope*, 325.

<sup>46</sup> Moltmann, *Theology of Hope*, 325.

Christianity therefore from Moltmann's narrative is essentially a community of those who premised on the resurrection of Christ wait for the kingdom of God and whose life is determined by this expectation.<sup>47</sup> It receives itself and nature always in expectation and hope from the coming of the Lord. Its suffering, work and action in and upon the world must also be determined by its hopes for the world. The Christian Church which follows Christ's mission to the world must also follow Christ's service to the world. It has its nature as the body of Christ only when in specific acts of service, it is obedient to its mission to the world. Its existence is completely bound to the fulfilling of its service. It is nothing in itself except in existing for others. The Church then is the Church of God where it is a Church for the world.<sup>48</sup>

Notably, since Christ's mission to the world was witnessed in various acts of compassion and social justice, the Ghanaian church must transition from proclamation or evangelism only to inculcate mercy and social justice in the mission of the church. This holistic or integral mission advocated by Rene Padilla<sup>49</sup> was further affirmed in June 1983 by the Consultation on the Church in Response to Human Need.<sup>50</sup>

Church for the world implies that personal faith, fellowship of the congregation, and church as an institution loyally fulfills the social roles modern society expects to be useful. It does not however mean a solidarity bereft of ideas, or co-humanity devoid of hopes but service and work in the world as and where God expects it.<sup>51</sup> Thus the will and expectation of God are voiced in the mission of Christ and the apostolate, and the church lays claim to the whole of humanity in mission within the eschatological expectation of the coming kingdom of God, righteousness, peace, freedom, and dignity of man. The Church serves the world in order that the world transforms itself from what it is to what it is promised to be. Ultimately, church for the world implies church for the kingdom of God and renewing of the world.<sup>52</sup> Aptly, Christian Church conveys the society in which it lives into its own horizon of eschatological expectation of the fulfillment of justice, life, humanity and sociability. It communicates in its own decisions in history, its openness and readiness for this future and its elasticity towards it.<sup>53</sup>

Missionary proclamation of the gospel is one of the ways the church brings society into its own horizon. Through missions the church infects people with hope; the hope of the coming kingdom of God that transforms the earth, which braces people for action and suffering.<sup>54</sup> Thus, the church through missions does not aspire to become a cult of the absolute, claiming sovereignty for itself and officials, rather the whole body of Christians engages in apostolate of hope for the world. It is through this that the church realizes its essence as that which makes it the church of God, not constituting salvation for the world so that conveying

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<sup>47</sup> Moltmann, *Theology of Hope*, 326.

<sup>48</sup> Moltmann, *Theology of Hope*, 327.

<sup>49</sup> Rene Padilla, "The Mission of the Church in Light of the Kingdom of God," *Transformation: An International Journal of Holistic Mission Studies* 1 (1984): 16-20, <https://doi.org/10.1177/026537888400100206>.

<sup>50</sup> Lausanne Movement. "Transformation: The Church in Response to Human Need." *Lausanne Movement*. June 12, 1983. Accessed September 2, 2024.

<https://lausanne.org/content/statement/transformation-the-church-in-response-to-human-need>.

<sup>51</sup> Moltmann, *Theology of Hope*, 327.

<sup>52</sup> Moltmann, *Theology of Hope*, 328.

<sup>53</sup> Moltmann, *Theology of Hope*, 328.

<sup>54</sup> Moltmann, *Theology of Hope*, 328.

the world into the church (churchifying the world) would not necessarily imply the salvation of the world.<sup>55</sup> The church which exists as an instrument and a servant of the kingdom<sup>56</sup> is identified by Moltmann as an arrow sent out into the world pointing to the future, coming salvation.<sup>57</sup> Vorster agrees with Moltmann that the church is the spear point of the kingdom<sup>58</sup>. It must be noted that an arrow equally strikes as it points; thus, it can be adduced further to the arrow metaphor that the church as an arrow strikes the target of the kingdom of God. Hence the church wholly surrendered in the hands of the risen Lord whom it believes, can be a dynamic conduit making ready a people for the coming kingdom.

Accordingly, eschatological background of Old Testament prophecies assume fulfillment in the Christian mission of hope where Jews and Gentiles, slaves and free, come to faith obedience and attain human dignity and eschatological freedom. Reconciliation with God (forgiveness of sins and abolition of godlessness), as the goal of Christian mission therefore extends individual rescue from the evil world, salvation of the soul and comfort for troubled conscience.<sup>59</sup> It also signifies realization of eschatological hope of justice, humanizing and socializing of humanity and peace for all creation.<sup>60</sup>

Christianity's historical underrating of this other side of reconciliation, according to Moltmann, is due to Christians no longer understanding themselves eschatologically and neglecting such eschatological expectations to fanatics and sects.<sup>61</sup> Nonetheless, it is exclusively in this eschatological expectation that Christianity ditches its social relief functions expected by society to offer lively impulses that shapes social, public and political life of man. By turning these expectations into present activity through the power of love which unites strong and weak, slaves and free, into a new community, Christianity embraces the twofold horizons of faith obedience among Gentiles, in addition to Old Testament eschatological hopes of righteousness, peace, blessing and fullness of life.<sup>62</sup>

### The Calling of Christians in Society

Consequently, Christian mission is not merely the propagation of faith and hope but the transformation of life since hope and expectation have a bearing on life, action and suffering in the history of society. It will not suffice to conceive that kingdom of God only has to do with individual persons in light of the abstract idea of an a-social human personality. This is because the righteousness and peace of the promised kingdom are terms of relationship which have an import on relationships of people to each other and things. Thus, the life of the body to be offered as a sacrifice in daily obedience (Romans 12:1) also includes social and public life. Further not to be conformed (Romans 12:1) is not the mere transformation in

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<sup>55</sup> Moltmann, *Theology of Hope*, 328.

<sup>56</sup> Padilla, "The Mission of the Church in Light of the Kingdom of God." See also Art McPhee, "The Kingdom Life and the Witness of the Church," *The Asbury Journal* 71, no. 1 (2016): 7.

<sup>57</sup> Moltmann, *Theology of Hope*, 328.

<sup>58</sup> Jakobus Marthinus Vorster, "Kingdom, Church and Civil Society: A Theological Paradigm for Civil Action," *HTS Teologiese Studies/Theological Studies* 71, no. 3 (April 2015): 2, <https://doi.org/10.4102/hts.v71i3.2816>.

<sup>59</sup> Moltmann, *Theology of Hope*, 329.

<sup>60</sup> Moltmann, *Theology of Hope*, 329.

<sup>61</sup> Moltmann, *Theology of Hope*, 329.

<sup>62</sup> Moltmann, *Theology of Hope*, 329.

oneself but transformation in opposition and creative expectation in the face of the world in which one believes, hopes and loves.<sup>63</sup> The hope of the Gospel therefore has a liberating relation not only to religions and ideologies but to the factual, practical life of men and the relationships in which life is lived.<sup>64</sup> A comprehensive approach to a life of transformation is necessary because believers are expected to fulfil the purpose of Jesus Christ, which is to save the world. The kind of metamorphosis that heralds a favourable influence on people's lives, readying them for the present and future of our salvation—the reason Christ took on human form and entered the world. Put another way, the promise of a fulfilled kingdom in Christ can only come to pass when converted followers of the faith start acting as instruments in God's hands for the ongoing transformation of the world. Thus, whereas preceding decades of global evangelicalism emphasized personal transformation, it is expedient that Christians respond to their calling in Christ the Lord and liberator of all creation to transform the *cosmos*, the ordered creation wherein man lives and flourishes in view of the horizon of the kingdom.

Accordingly, Christian hope seeks opportunities of bringing history into better correspondence with the promised future. It therefore endeavors to lead modern institutions away from their immanent tendency towards stabilization and historicize them, making them uncertain and open to the future it hopes for. This is done through practical opposition to all things, calling them into question as they are for creative reshaping. Christian hope according to Moltmann raises the question of meaning in institutionalized life because it cannot put up with abstract relationships of modern social life and finds the beneficial unquestioning of life as a new form of vanity and death. What it means from the perspective of Moltmann is that a true search for meaning must dwell in a true sense of realistic relationship between faith and emerging social life issues confronting the people on a daily basis. Thus, Christian hope is in search of other institutions because it expects true eternal life and dignity of man as well as truly just relationships from the coming kingdom of God.<sup>65</sup> This is what Moltmann elucidates as the calling of Christians in society. Consequently, the reformation's emphasis on the universal priesthood of all believers, implied humanity's earthly undertakings acquired new theological significance. Everyone who believes and hopes had to offer their life in the service of God, the work of His kingdom, and the freedom of faith since the Gospel call is issued to all.

Accordingly, through earthly callings in services, commissions and charismata towards the church and human society the mission and call of the church takes place.<sup>66</sup> Earthly service becomes the means through which the Lordship of Christ and freedom of faith penetrates the world as the city of Christ in which he displays his kingdom. The Christian life no longer consisted of fleeing the world and spiritual resignation from it but engaged in attack upon the world and a calling in the world.<sup>67</sup>

Progressively, however, revolutionary social movements caused reformers to neglect discipleship in the freedom of faith to concentrate on concern for order and preservation.<sup>68</sup>

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<sup>63</sup> Moltmann, *Theology of Hope*, 330.

<sup>64</sup> Moltmann, *Theology of Hope*, 330.

<sup>65</sup> Moltmann, *Theology of Hope*, 330.

<sup>66</sup> Moltmann, *Theology of Hope*, 331.

<sup>67</sup> Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Ethics*, trans. Neville Horton Smith (New York: Macmillan, 1955), 223.

<sup>68</sup> Moltmann, *Theology of Hope*, 331.

Thus it became obscure within the reformation who appoints earthly callings. This new idea of callings led to the doctrine of two kingdoms. Thus, certain abiding basic orders such as marriages and family, church and state are called God's 'created orders', 'preserving orders', 'mandates', 'fundamental ordinances or institutions given along with human nature. The place of call then was seen as predetermined so that the call and obedience of faith can only bring inner modification in the predetermined vocational role. This vocational role in society had in terms of theology of creation or history to be accepted as God-given.<sup>69</sup>

Accordingly, the Confession of Augsburg XVI noted that the Gospel brings no new laws and ordinances into the world neither does it dissolve economic and political orders but mainly demands both the preservation of the ordinances of God and the exercise of charity in all such ordinances.<sup>70</sup> This set a highly conservative stamp on the vocational ethics of Protestantism. The determination of the concrete historic form of the above-mentioned orders was left to the prevailing powers. The vocational ethics of Protestantism postulated a second call subsequent to the inner call of God heard in the gospel.<sup>71</sup> Thus the call to our calling comes from both voices together; the call of God in the gospel of Christ, and from the call of the God of history. Emil Brunner remarked of providence as the place of the action, and here and now the place given by God.<sup>72</sup>

The call to discipleship of Christ as Moltmann observes is however not aimed at faithful and loving fulfillment of our calling under prescribed conditions but on the contrary joins in working for the kingdom of God that is to come.<sup>73</sup> He emphasizes that the call according to the New Testament is once for all, irrevocable and immutable, and has its eschatological goal in the hope to which God calls us. Our callings are, however, historic, changing, changeable, temporally limited, and are therefore to be shaped in the process of being accepted in terms of call, hope and love. Moltmann emphasizes that the call always appears in the singular, yet the callings, roles, functions and relationships which make a social claim on man always appear in an open multiplicity. Since modern society lays open to man a multitude of chances and demands of him elasticity, adaptability and imaginativeness, the point of reference for man therefore is his call which gives him identity and continuity, and for which he seeks to live.<sup>74</sup> Thus the criterion for the choice of a calling and acceptance and shaping of the process of socialization is constituted solely by the mission of Christian hope.

The eschatological horizon of expectation of the kingdom of God, righteousness, peace, freedom and humanity for all men, with its formative effect on the present leads a man in missionary hope to oppose and suffer under the inadequacies of the present, brings man into conflict with the present form of society.<sup>75</sup> Only Christians who no longer understand their eschatological mission as a mission for the future of the world and of man can identify their call with the existing circumstances in the social roles of their callings and be content to fit in. Where the call is seen in the horizon of the eschatological expectation, believing

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<sup>69</sup> Moltmann, *Theology of Hope*, 331.

<sup>70</sup> Moltmann, *Theology of Hope*, 331.

<sup>71</sup> Moltmann, *Theology of Hope*, 332.

<sup>72</sup> Emil Brunner, *The Divine Imperative*, trans Olive Wyon (Philadelphia, PA: The Westminster Press: 1937), 200.

<sup>73</sup> Moltmann, *Theology of Hope*, 333.

<sup>74</sup> Moltmann, *Theology of Hope*, 333.

<sup>75</sup> Moltmann, *Theology of Hope*, 334.

obedience and discipleship must then be understood as creative discipleship and creative love.

### Creative Discipleship

Creative discipleship consists in the theoretical and practical recognition of the structure of historic process and development inherent in the situation requiring to be ordered and thus of the potentiality and the future of that situation. Creative discipleship when constituted in love which institutes community, set things right and puts them in order, becomes eschatologically possible through the Christian hope's prospect of the future of God's kingdom and of man. It constitutes in the open-ended history of man, the appropriate counterpart to that which is promised and is to come.<sup>76</sup> Bloch refers to that kind of creative expectation as presentative eschatology, hope which sets about criticizing and transforming the present due to its openness to the universal future of God's kingdom.<sup>77</sup> Accordingly, Christian hope finds new resolution for the persistent problematic of 'man and society', or 'freedom and estrangement' or 'man and work' and Moltmann consequently, he postulates it is not transcendental reflection that restores man with possibilities and freedom but rather hope which leads man to expend himself, simultaneously grasping continually new possibilities from the expected future<sup>78</sup>.

Aptly, the Ghanaian church needs an overhaul of its discipleship dynamics towards creative discipleship that reorients Christians in Ghana towards the practical recognition of defective religious, social, economic, political, health and environmental structures rife with malaise and practically empowers Christians to be agents of change advancing new, bold, and effective propositions to the persistent problematic of the extensive disregard for human dignity, discipline, corruption among others.

### Creative Hope

In this venture, Moltmann emphasizes that human life must be risked, expending itself if it would be won to gain firmness and future. Aptly, the horizon of expectation which makes expending oneself meaningful is that which embraces the areas and realms in and for which the work of self-expending takes place. Thus the social institutions, roles and functions are only means to this self-expending that is to be shaped creatively by love in order that men live together in more just, humane, and peacefully in mutual recognition of their human dignity and freedom.<sup>79</sup> Thus social institutions, functions and roles are not to be taken as reliefs, estrangement or numbing of life but as ways and historic forms of self-expending, events and processes that are open towards the future of God. Consequently, creative hope, which upholds both faith and love, is what historicizes these conditions and opposes their immanent tendencies toward stabilization and beneficial unquestioning of life.<sup>80</sup>

Subsequently, in believing viewpoint, hope in God's future frees this present world from all attempts at self-redemption or self-production through labor and becomes open for loving self-expending in the interests of humanizing conditions and realization of justice in

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<sup>76</sup> Moltmann, *Theology of Hope*, 335.

<sup>77</sup> Ernst Bloch, *Tübingen Introduction to Philosophy II* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp Publishing, 1964), 176.

<sup>78</sup> Moltmann, *Theology of Hope*, 335-337.

<sup>79</sup> Moltmann, *Theology of Hope*, 337.

<sup>80</sup> Moltmann, *Theology of Hope*, 338.

light of the coming justice of God. Hope of resurrection must therefore bring new understanding of the world as neither the heaven of self-realization advocated in idealism nor the hell of estrangement purported by romanticism and existentialism.<sup>81</sup> The world according to Moltmann is not yet finished but engaged in history, it is therefore a world of possibilities in which we can serve the future, promised truth, righteousness and peace. The reasons that the glory of self-realization and misery of self-estrangement both arise out of hopelessness. Moltmann thus asserts that this is an age of diaspora, of sowing in hope, self-surrender and sacrifice because it stands in the horizon of the future<sup>82</sup>.

The age of diaspora therefore fashions for us, a portrait of the church as a diaspora community. The idea of the Ghanaian church as an exodus church therefore can be stressed as the church in diaspora community. By this is implied that the redeemed people of God in the nation of Ghana, are tasked to disclose not only to Ghanaians but the present world the horizon of the future of Christ as it exists as the church in the world. The disclosure of this hope must steer clear from false assurances of escapism and disillusioned pretexts of heaven on earth. Creative hope should induce in Christians the persuasion of sowing in hope and sacrifice while surrendering to God in anticipation of the new horizon of the coming kingdom which is already inaugurated by Christ and not yet consummated.

### **Transformative Ethics of hope and Christian Mission**

In Ethics of Hope, Moltmann further asserted a Christian transformative ethic, which is neither a separatist flight out of the world nor conformist responsibility in the world.<sup>83</sup> Thus totality of salvation is grounded in a testimony of the Christian mission in which salvation encompasses the soul and body both of individual persons and human community, and creation. In this respect, salvation functions alongside four interconnected social dimensions. They are the dimension of struggle for economic justice against human-human exploitation, struggle for human dignity against political oppression, struggle for solidarity against alienation, struggle for hope against despair in individual life.<sup>84</sup> Nonetheless, the different gifts and responsibilities of Christians imply that diverse situations require different priorities. Noting that there is one Spirit and one salvation, Moltmann rightly specified that salvation becomes all-embracing if Christians embrace the world with the heart of Christ.<sup>85</sup>

Ultimately, Moltmann recognized the Christian community as a moral agent that actively changes the plight of the suffering rather than conforming to the world or fleeing from it. He states that Christian eschatological ethics of hope, which expects the future in light of the resurrection of Christ uses the knowledge of change to specify transformative action which anticipates the new creation promised by God and initiated by Christ.<sup>86</sup> Key themes in this transformative ethics include justice for the poor, liberation of the oppressed, healing of the sick and exalting the humiliated. Moltmann differentiates this transformative ethics from apocalyptic Lutheran ethics because it incorporates principle of responsibility for the word in

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<sup>81</sup> Moltmann, *Theology of Hope*, 338.

<sup>82</sup> Moltmann, *Theology of Hope*, 338.

<sup>83</sup> Jurgen Moltmann, *Ethics of Hope* (London: SCM Press, 2012), 40.

<sup>84</sup> Moltmann, *Ethics of Hope*, 37.

<sup>85</sup> Moltmann, *Ethics of Hope*, 37.

<sup>86</sup> Moltmann, *Ethics of Hope*, 41.



Christian life and activities.<sup>87</sup> It is also distinct from Christocratic Reformed ethics because it incorporates principle of resistance in its transforming anticipations of Christ's advent. Moreover, it is distinct from quietist Anabaptists ethics because it incorporates principle of an alternative life in the active intervention in the social and public processes of life.

Reflecting on modern society's decline into poverty, Moltmann emphasizes social and psychological causes premised on the ideology of growth within modern society's pursuit of progress. Moltmann observed overpopulation as responsible for plunging entire regions into poverty. In this context of overpopulation, poverty is regarded as the worst form of pollution that plagues people.<sup>88</sup> Also, the ideology of political capitalism with its assertion of a deficit in material goods was responsible for driving people into existential anxiety because they are made to clamor for those goods in keeping with their social prestige.<sup>89</sup> This fear-based approach in turn drives competition in which solidarity is abandoned, stimulating social struggles. Thus, what should be shared across by the members of society is considered as something to be unduly grasped without repercussions. Accordingly, society becomes bereft of both public spirit (commitment to common good and solidarity) and trust.<sup>90</sup> The loss of these is attributable to society's discrimination against rich and poor, impoverishment of citizens of supposed third world states, and differences between present and future generations. Such consequences as Moltmann rightly discussed are not inevitable but can be rehabilitated, asserting that it is possible to have another world devoid of this malady of political capitalism which privatizes profits and socializes losses.<sup>91</sup>

The reality of poverty in Ghana conforms to Moltmann's elucidation of the maladies of capitalism and its inherent deprivation of socialized losses and privatized wealth. The greed of a few individuals is usually at the apex of the social pyramid, be it political elites, government appointees, captains of industry, religious leaders, and all who are privileged to be positioned at the top of the social ladder often results in amalgamation of national resources to be expatriated through foreign investments, thus skyrocketing inflation which leads to rippling effects of many untold economic hardships. As envisaged by Moltmann, there could be a recovery from such nemesis of poverty crippling many Ghanaians socio-economically. Herein lies the task of the church to be a church of the poor<sup>92</sup> by situating itself in the plight of the poor and exercising its prophetic role for the welfare of all Ghanaians, particularly the poor in the nation.

Accordingly, the idea of community shaped by solidarity was postulated by Moltmann as a qualitative alternate to the problem of poverty and wealth.<sup>93</sup> In such a community, rich in trusting relationships, people support each other through grassroots initiatives rather than bureaucratic sources. Though Ghanaian community tends to exhibit solidarity in social life, it falters in demonstrating same in economic and political life.

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<sup>87</sup> Moltmann, *Ethics of Hope*, 41.

<sup>88</sup> Moltmann, *Ethics of Hope*, 50.

<sup>89</sup> Moltmann, *Ethics of Hope*, 47-48.

<sup>90</sup> Moltmann, *Ethics of Hope*, 48.

<sup>91</sup> Moltmann, *Ethics of Hope*, 48.

<sup>92</sup> Gustavo Gutiérrez, *A Theology of Liberation: History, Politics, and Salvation* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1988). See also Jon Sobrino, *Jesus the Liberator: A Historical-Theological Reading of Jesus of Nazareth*, trans. Paul Burns and Francis McDonagh (Maryknoll, NY: Burns & Oates; Orbis Books, 1994). <https://doi.org/10.5040/9781472549877>.

<sup>93</sup> Moltmann, *Ethics of Hope*, 66.

Humanity, as Moltmann claimed however only has a future if it entails a common future<sup>94</sup>. Life's richness therefore emerges when people collaborate towards a common purpose of mutual help.<sup>95</sup>

Notably, citizen action groups, co-operatives and trade unions originated as spontaneous associations in convenient groups before evolving into professional bureaucracies. In a community of solidarity, poverty can be conveniently lived when it is justly shared by all in mutual terms, as people in the same boat support each other.<sup>96</sup> Erosion of equality thus marks the end of this form of mutual help; hence injustice is responsible for the distresses of poverty and just anger is provoked with dissolution of community.<sup>97</sup> The reverse of this community in solidarity the emphasis on individuality which makes society susceptible to manipulation, via *divide et impera*, the Roman dictum of divide and rule.<sup>98</sup> Against this, it is argued that the shared life of community in solidarity consolidates the power of the group to create a common good to which each has an equitable entitlement. As such dictatorships, oppression, and injustice tumble when people amalgamate as *we are the people*. Similarly, churches come of age when Christian believers amalgamate as *we are the church*.<sup>99</sup>

Ghana's rich communal solidarity poignantly showcased at festivals, funerals, marriage ceremonies, child naming and other elements of social life must extend to the civic realms of political and economic orders which influences the social order. Once again, the Ghanaian church will have to utilize its influence in this regard. Through its social teaching, public discourse, press releases and advocacy, amidst its life of moderation and *koinonia*, the sharing together in all things, the church will be able to influence the political and economic paradigm towards the expectation of the kingdom of God.

## Conclusion

The article has established that, church within the horizon of the public sphere is relevant in the modern age even though advances in globalization, characterized by technological-artificial intelligence, capitalist market and political economy threatens the church in the public space. The *ecclesia* which lives within the horizon of expectation of the kingdom of God, as a *cultus publicus* influences *societas*. This community of eschatological salvation, per New Testament theology gathers in and sends out people anticipating an eschatological future for the world. As a result, the exodus church, which lays claim to all of humanity in its mission, is nothing in itself except it exists for others as the Church of God when it is a Church for the world in service and work to all humanity, particularly, the oppressed and marginalized.

In dialogue with Moltmann, it is the assertion of the authors that the Ghanaian church must transition from confessionalism to pragmatism, by adapting holistic ministry that utilizes advocacy, mercy and social justice instead of solely resorting to proclamation and evangelism. This is imperative owing to the overwhelming numbers of Christians in Ghana

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<sup>94</sup> Jürgen Moltmann, *The Church in the Power of the Spirit: A Contribution to Messianic Ecclesiology* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1993), 167.

<sup>95</sup> Moltmann, *Ethics of Hope*, 66.

<sup>96</sup> Moltmann, *Ethics of Hope*, 66.

<sup>97</sup> Moltmann, *Ethics of Hope*, 66.

<sup>98</sup> Moltmann, *Ethics of Hope*, 66.

<sup>99</sup> Moltmann, *Ethics of Hope*, 66.

which makes Christianity a penetrating religion and the lifeworld of the Ghanaian people, in terms of cultural aspirations, socio-economic life and the political choices of the populace. Accordingly, Moltmann's theology has affirmed our hypothesis that the socio-religious milieu in Ghana situates the Christian Church within the locus of responsibility for contributing to the quality of life of the people. Therefore, application of the transformative ethic of Christian faith, principles and practice in all spheres of public life can be influential in improving the quality of life of the Ghanaian people both in terms of poverty eradication, conservation of the environment and safeguarding the health of the populace. By so doing, the church in Ghana serves as a church in diaspora, a church for the world whose ongoing exodus transforms various strata of public life in Ghana, mainly political and economic life in expectation of the kingdom of God.

Accordingly, the eschatological orientation of the church is witnessed both ontologically and epistemologically, in everything for which and from which the church lives. Consequently, the word of God becomes open for the future as the proclaimed word which although coming to pass, is still outstanding. This necessitates for the exodus church, creative forms of discipleship that precipitates creative hope towards discovery of new solutions for the persistent problematic of 'man and society'. This creative discipleship premised in love is sacrosanct. New forms of creative discipleship therefore need to be advocated for the church to transform both theoretical and practical dimensions of structures of modern life requiring to be ordered synchronously within the new horizon of the kingdom.

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