

Administration of Schools in Ghana - Part I

Dear Friends,

My last article (September) concluded the series on Culture and Traditions that described some aspects of the community life of the people of my ethnic background. The goal was to help you understand aspects of heritage - beliefs, practices and worldviews. In *this letter & series*, my intent is to begin to describe the Ghanaian educational setting. The Ghanaian Education system is important to me on both personal and professional levels - my own background in education, my daughter who is a teacher, and of course our amazing mission school in Akrampa.

The System

The Educational System in Ghana is regulated by the *Ghana Education Service (GES)*, the Authority set up by the *Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports (MEYS)* that implements policies guiding the administration of schools in Ghana. Within this Authority is the body popularly known as the *Ghana Teaching Service (GTS)*, whose members are employed by the Ghana Education Service on behalf of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports. Until recently, all of the *Teachers* in Ghana belonged to an organization known as the *Ghana National Association of Teachers (GNATS)*.

However, some individuals who felt that the Organization wasn't fair in its representation began agitating for, and eventually set up, parallel bodies to speak to their issues. Of particular significance is one founded to presumably handle the grievances of **graduates** employed by *the GTS*. They felt that the *GNAT*, was not fair in, and hadn't been sensitive to the plight of **graduates** in its dialogues with the government with regard to conditions of service. The subsequent body formed became known as *the National Association of Graduate Teachers (NAGRAT)*. The Association has been in our system for over twenty-four years, having been founded in 1998. The original parent body, the *GNAT*, was formed in 1962 to be the Unionized body for teachers of the *Trades Union Congress (TUC)*, of Ghana.

Institutions in the Teaching System

The Teaching Service has evolved from *qualification* by ordinary certificates, to diplomas, awarded by the University of Cape Coast (UCC), to degrees, *specific to education, to teaching*. I am one of those that qualified to teach with diplomas.

The University of Cape Coast (UCC), Ghana - was set up to produce teachers to *upgrade* those who obtained certificates from the *Teacher Training Colleges* and qualified as *professional teachers*. Only those who graduate from the Teacher Training Colleges, and the University of Cape Coast are considered qualified professional teachers. Thus, one may have a Bachelor's or Master's Degree from any university, but unless it is awarded from the UCC, it is not considered a professional degree. This means that even after obtaining a Bachelor's and Master's Degree from any institution in Ghana, for one to be regarded as part of the GTS, one must have a professional teacher's certificate from the approved institution.

There are three main institutions recognized by the Ghana Teaching Service (GTS) whose certificates qualify one as a professional teacher:

1. Colleges of Education (which used to be known as *Training Colleges*)
2. The University of Cape Coast (UCC), Ghana
3. The University of Education in Winneba (UEW), Ghana

The Ghana Teaching Service

As aforementioned, members of the Teaching Service form part of the personnel of the Ghana Education Service because they are in the classroom. However, there are many others (Officers) who are not in the classroom but are a relevant part of the teaching service. These are the Supervisors, Circuit Officers, and Directors, whose responsibility is to ensure that the environments are conducive and the curriculum is followed.

In the next article I will endeavor to describe in some detail what roles the officers play.

Blessings,
Pastor Ben Wilson