

## LEADERSHIP INSIGHTS: ANALYZING THE CHURCH LEADERS'S ROLE IN MANAGING GOD'S WORK USING A BIBLICAL AND THEOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

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### *Abstract*

*This study examined Church leadership, mostly vividly the role of Church leaders in governing the work of God through a Christocentric lens. The Christocentric approach promotes a servant-hood mentality in leadership as opposed to a power and dominance style. This study argues that, true leadership is one that firstly involves a call of the Lord and secondly one that provides guidance, empowering and winning souls to Christ. A biblical and theological framework from a Christian perspective was used to demonstrate how Church leaders should execute their leadership role in order to advance the gospel of Jesus Christ. The findings of the study support the Servant-hood approach which was implemented by Christ in His ministry. Christ led and taught in humility and was submissive to authority. The role of Church leaders should emulate Christ's approach in order to render effective and transformational service. The results also reveal that in following a Christ-centred approach, Church leaders can have a positive influence in the Church and in societies. The elimination of self-reliance and exercising full dependence on God can amplify the gospel of Jesus Christ.*

**Keywords:** Leadership, biblical and theological approach, Church leaders, Jesus Christ, Servant-hood

### INTRODUCTION

Leadership is very essential in life whether in a social or theological context. In the theological context, the Church continues to be in need of proficient and committed leaders to executive the work of God.<sup>1</sup> Church leaders are called to lead and guide the Church both spiritually and strategically in fulfilment of God's commission.<sup>2</sup> Leadership has varying facets and was popularized by secular structures like businesses, politics and education.<sup>3</sup> It is a concept which is typically Christ-centred particularly in the Christian tradition.<sup>4</sup> Secular structures involve privileged intellectuals and academic social groups in societies.<sup>5</sup> Vorster refers secularism to variations between the Church and the State particularly in the development of modern democracies. It is associated with people neglecting religious belief systems and turning away from God's standards.<sup>6</sup> Biblical narratives reflect on a number of

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<sup>1</sup> Brent D. Ruben, and Ralph A. Gigliotti, *Leadership, Communication, and Social Influence: A Theory of Resonance, Activation, and Cultivation* (UK: Emerald Publishing Limited, 2019)

<sup>2</sup> Montgomery, W. *Exploring How Church Leadership Strives for Effective Ministry by Developing a Viable Leadership Training Program at a Small Nondenominational Church in Scranton*, (2024:1).

<sup>3</sup> Black.S. *Are Contemporary Concepts of Leadership Relevant to Christian Ministers in UK Baptist Churches?* 2023:564.

<sup>4</sup> Davids. P. H. *The Christo-Centric Ideal*, 2017.

<sup>5</sup> Berger, P. *Secular Theology and the Rejection of the Supernatural: Reflections on Recent Trends*, Theological Studies Journal. 2008.

<sup>6</sup> Vorster, J.M. 'Christian ethics in the face of secularism', *Verbum et Ecclesia* 33(2), Art. #730, 2012.

prominent leaders both in the Old Testament and New Testament like Jesus Christ, Moses, Joshua, and the Apostles of Jesus Christ who occupied different leadership positions (John 13:13-17; Acts 20:28; Eph. 4:11-13; Ex. 3:1-20; Prov. 11:14). Siang-Yang and Ortberg (2019) define Church leadership as a biblical and theological approach in leading and managing Church affairs by individuals. These individuals are referred to Church leaders. According to Montgomery (2024:14) Church leaders are individuals who are called into different Church ministries and they participate in strategic and influential roles within the work of God. These are men or women who are supposed to uphold biblical standards, caring, loving and have biblical hermeneutical competency (1 Timothy 3:3). Church leaders include pastors, deacons, elders and others serving in different ministries. Karthikeyan (2024) posits that the leader must be activated. Theologically, this activation is a calling that comes from God.<sup>7</sup>

The book of Ephesians 4:11 plainly states that some people are called to be pastors, apostles, evangelists, teachers and prophets. When God calls people into ministry, He is essentially assigning them the role of leading others (Gen. 12:1-3; Exodus 3: 1-4; Gal. 11:15; 1 Sam. 1-14). As much as these roles differ in execution, the importance of these offices is the same in God's eyes.<sup>8</sup> Wooldridge (2008) defines the call of the Lord as a celestial invitation to accept and follow Christ in readiness for the envisioned eschatological end of things.<sup>9</sup> God wants His people to follow Him in order to inherit His promised Kingdom. While Church leaders are seen as important figures in Ministry, Siang-Yang and Ortberg argue that all Christians have been called to be followers or disciples of Jesus Christ; surmising that fellowship and servant-hood are more essential than leadership itself.<sup>10</sup> Modelling Church leadership requires an understanding of what the Church entails. Tangen (2023) relates the Church to a unifying and Triune God illustrated in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.<sup>11</sup> The Bible views the Church as the Body of Christ (Rom. 12:4-5; Corinth. 12: 12-27; Eph. 1:22-23). Subsequently, the Church comprises of people who follow Christ and adhere to His standards. These followers of Christ are called Christians (Acts 11:26). If the Church is the Body of Christ, then Church leaders must follow the example of Christ in their leadership roles. Christ had a servant-hood approach, leading, training, convincing and guiding in humility (Matthew 20:26-28). A servant-hood leadership is a leadership approach that exemplifies Christ. This approach prioritizes serving and caring for the laity over the self-interest of the leader.<sup>12</sup> While there are other leadership styles, this paper adopts the servant-hood leadership style. Closely associated with this style is the transformational style which relates to inspirational motivations and influence aimed at bringing conviction or change in people's lives.<sup>13</sup> When combined, these leadership styles can help satisfy the missionary nature of the Church of Christ.<sup>14</sup>

The purpose of this paper was to examine theological leadership in the Christian tradition in order to help Church leaders understand their role in the mission and Kingdom

<sup>7</sup> Karthikeyan, C. *An Exploratory Study on Leadership Insights from Biblical Hermeneutics. International Journal for Innovative Research In Multidisciplinary Field*, 2024.

<sup>8</sup> Khumalo, M. *Exploring the Celestial Transformation. Calling and Provision*, 2024.

<sup>9</sup> Wooldridge. *Christian Spiritual Transformation: God's Calling, Provision and the Human Response*, 2008.

<sup>10</sup> Siang-Yang and Ortberg. *Shepherding God's People: A Guide to Faithful and Fruitful Pastoral Ministry*, 2019.

<sup>11</sup> Karl Inge Tangen. *S-E-R-V-E: A theoretical framework for Christian leadership*, 2023.

<sup>12</sup> Montgomery, W. *Exploring How Church Leadership Strives for Effective Ministry by Developing a Viable Leadership Training Program at a Small Nondenominational Church in Scranton, South Carolina*, (2024).

<sup>13</sup> Tim Gregory. *Transformational Pastoral Leadership. Journal of Biblical Perspectives in Leadership* 9, no. 1 (Fall 2019), 56-75. 2019.

<sup>14</sup> Slabbert. *A Framework For Church Leadership*, 2012.

work of Christ. The paper argues that Church leaders must firstly be called into ministry and secondly emulate Christ in order to be effective in their leadership roles. Effective Church leadership is mostly concerned with the growth of the Church.<sup>15</sup> This paper contributes in the body of Christ by exploring Church leadership using a canonical context and literature review and emphasises that Church leaders must be called by God in order to render leadership acceptable to God. Christ went about serving the people, empowering them through teaching them about the Kingdom message, healing the sick and helping those who were vulnerable (Matt. 4:23-24; Luke 4:38-41; 1Peter 2:24). He raised Lazarus from the death, fed 5000 people using two fishes and two loafs of bread (John 11:38-44; Matt.14:13-21). Christ performed many miracles which benefitted many and through His servant-hood mentality He worn many unto Himself. While He knew that He was the Son of God and essentially God, His message was not one of control, power and dominance. But his approach was one of humility and not to humiliate people and He allowed Himself to be humiliated by inferior mortal beings. Church leaders ought to follow that Christ-centred mentality in their leadership roles.

Leadership has ancient roots and is a phenomenon that was instigated by God in His role as leading in the creation of all things. The creation narrative has strong connotations of an act of divine leadership (Genesis 1:1). In the Hebrew records, the word, *bĕrēšît*, translated to ‘*in the beginning*’ generally summaries the whole essence of leadership observed in the creationist theory. This word *bĕrēšît*, is derived from the Greek work, *roš*, meaning ‘*the head*’ and this term is normally used to refer to someone who is leading in a particular setting or circumstances.<sup>16</sup> God called all things into existence by the power of His might ensuring that all His creation was perfect through a step by step process (Genesis 1:1-31). After He created the heavens and the earth He ensured the perfection of His creation through executing every step in perfecting created order of things. Bringing order, started with the separating of the waters from waters obligated by the formless of His creation. The Bible in Genesis 1:2 speaks of this formless and void earth. The text in Genesis 1 discloses that there was darkness which covered the surface of the waters and God’s Spirit was hovering over the surface of the waters. So God had to lead in perfecting His creation. After the separating of waters from waters, He created all plants, animals and all other spheres necessary for the sustainability of His immaculate designs (Genesis 1:11-31). God’s role as the leader strongly features in the creationist theory particularly when God created man and bestowed leadership authority to the man. For example, in verse 26 of Genesis 1, the leadership bestowed authority was transliterated when God entrusted the man to be the guardians of the earth.<sup>17</sup> According to the Genesis narrative, human beings were to be stewards, to lead and rule over the earth (Genesis 1:26). This bestowed authority was displayed when He instructed Adam to name all the animals (Genesis 2:20). God was the main leader in the creationist theory. Interestingly, the creation narrative in Genesis 1:26 portray God as having a discussion with others. Verse 26 states as follows:

*‘And God said, Let us create man according to our image, after our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the fowl of the air and over the cattle*

<sup>15</sup> Rajiman, Andrianus, Sirait., Alon, Mandimpu, Nainggolan and Delpi Novianti. *Church and Science: Developing Missionary Leadership in the Digitalization Era*. Jurnal Kepemimpinan Kristen dan Pemberdayaan Jemaat. 2023; (95-109).

<sup>16</sup> Jacques R. Doukhan . *Leadership in the Creation Narrative Leadership in the Creation Narrative..* 2023.

<sup>17</sup> Emilio Chuvieco. *Religious approaches to water management and environmental conservation*. Water Policy, 14 (2012) 9–20.

*and over the whole earth and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth (Genesis 1:26 KJV)'.*

This scripture suggests that He was having a discussion with others. Biblically, God is portrayed as a Triune. The Triune motif is better understood in light of God being three in one, God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.<sup>18</sup> Hence, it can be construed that this discussion was between the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit (John 1:1–5; Psalm 29:3–11). There are many hermeneutical interpretations of this *Genesis 1:26* chronicle.<sup>19</sup> But perhaps the logical conclusion inclines towards God having a discussion with the other units of the Trinity. Different scholars have varying perspectives on the Triune motif.<sup>20</sup> While the Triune aspect of God is not broadly embraced across all religious domains, the Bible seems to support the plurality of God (1 John 5:7). In the gospel of John, Jesus was document saying *'I and my Father are one. He who has seen me has seen the Father'* (John 10:30). This is a clear statement supporting the plurality and unity of God. Prior to His departure on earth, Jesus told His disciples that He was not living them alone, but with the Holy Spirit who is the comforter (John 14:16-18). The Holy Spirit is a part of the Triune God (Mark 1:9–11)). Some scholars tend to argue that, there is nowhere is scripture where it clearly validates the Holy Spirit as God or even the Son for that matter.<sup>21</sup> While there are constant debates among scholars, the Bible notes that the Holy Spirit was not yet revealed because Jesus Christ was not yet glorified (John 7:39). The glorification of Christ is a precept that was only realized through the death and resurrection of Christ.<sup>22</sup> Even before the New Testament's reflections of the Holy Spirit, the existence of the Spirit was a prominent feature in creation. The Bible states that the Spirit was hovering upon the deep (Gen. 1:2),

The acceptance of the Triune motif is perhaps negated by the variations in recognizing Christ as God by different religions. Some religions are sceptical, to validate Christ as God, with others portraying Him as only a prophet.<sup>23</sup> His glorification then becomes a debatable subject. If Christ is not recognized as the Son of God, His death is not viewed in light of atoning sin and availing redemption in these anti-Triune religions. However, in Christianity, Christ is clearly acknowledged as the Son of God who died and rose again (1Th. 4:14). The Bible in the book of Ephesians 1:20-21, specify that He is seated at the right hand of the Father where He intercedes for the Church. The whole of the New Testament revolves around Christ validating Him as the way and the truth and the life. Similarly, John 14:6 states that no one goes to the Father except through Christ. Christ's incarnation instigated a new way of worship whereby the acceptance of Christ as the Lord and Saviour paved a way to the Father. This suggests that without accepting the Son, acceptance by the father is slim or non-existent. An article by Our Daily Bread Ministries (2025) suggests that not all people believe that Christ is the Son of God. In actual fact some are against the notion that there is a superior religion. According to the article, any faith that sees itself as superior to the next is viewed as practising spiritual racism. Christianity believes that Christ is the Son of God and He is a true and influential leader (Luke 1: 35).

Broader leadership considerations were entangled or rather expanded in the signing of treaties among kings in Ancient theology common in the Ancient Near Eastern myths

<sup>18</sup> Sabbath Afternoon. *The Triune God*. Produced by the General Conference Office of Adventist Mission. 2011.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., p.2.

<sup>20</sup> Cooper P. Abrams. *Understanding the Biblical Doctrine of the Trinity (Godhead)*, 2014.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

<sup>22</sup> Jennifer Slattery. *Christ's Glory through His Death and What this means for Us*. Nov, 14, 2019.

<sup>23</sup> Vezentan. *Jesus Not Just A Prophet. Jesus Christ, Son Of God In Hebrews 1:1-14*. (2020).

(Dhonodt, 2020). These treaties like the parity treaty (*agreements between equal parties*) and the Suzerain-vassal treaty (*agreements between a greater and a lesser party*) were agreements made between parties (Richter, 2008). In essence these treaties symbolized covenants. Historically, the first covenants were those given through Adam and later with Noah. In the Noahic phenomenon God made a covenant with Noah assuring him never to destroy the earth using the flood again. This was an international covenant binding for generations to come (Gen. 6:17-18; 9:9-11). Biblically, a covenant is more concerned with establishing an agreement between parties and establishing a nation (1 Sam. 18:3; Gen. 21:27 1 Kings 5:12). In these agreements parties made promises under oath to perform or abstain from some actions agreed upon. The term *covenant* is derived from the Greek word '*berit*' which means '*covenant*'. In the Greek Old Testament this Hebrew word is translated as "*diatheke*". Both *berith* and *diatheke* have connotations of solid agreements.<sup>24</sup> In signing these treaties the kings were acting based on their leadership authority entrusted upon them.

Another prominent covenant made by God was to Moses and this was a national covenant directly associated with the people of Israel. This is recorded in the Pentateuch narratives (Ex. 3:3-22; 19:3-40; Numb. 33). In Mount Sinai God gave laws for the people of Israel to enhance the leadership motif. Covenants were later renewed on the plains of Moab (Deut. 30). The context of the covenants narratives at Mount Sinai and the plains of Moab parallel the features of the Near Eastern Treaties whereby kings signed agreements establishing nations.<sup>25</sup> The treaties illustrations present a governance approach in leadership. Church corporate governance is concerned with leadership mechanisms by which religious organisations are controlled and directed.<sup>26</sup> It deals with the distribution of decision making rights, rules and responsibilities. Corporate governance ensures that leadership roles and responsibilities are clearly outlined and understood in order to bring order in Church.<sup>27</sup>

In analysing the Mosaic bestowed authority, it is perceived that God had to appear in what theologians call a theophany (God's appearance).<sup>28</sup> In this theophany, God gave Moses the exact instructions of what to do and also promised to be with him. God knew that it was not going to be easy to accept Moses as the leader and thus He gave him a stick to be used as sign of his newly appointed authority (Exod. 4:2-5). In his leadership role, Moses relied on God who constantly appeared to him to give due guidance (Gen. 19:16-19; Exod. 33:20). It is witnessed that in the biblical perspective, leadership is instituted by God and He guides and supports the leader (Psalms 78:72; Prov. 11:14; John 13:13-17). Ultimately, Church leadership separate of God's guidance is bound to have flaws.

## METHODOLOGY

This exploratory descriptive study utilizes a biblical and theological framework which aims to examine the role of Church leaders in implementing effective Church leadership. A descriptive method was seen to be appropriate for this study because it allows an in-depth exploration of theological, biblical and scholarly literature to address the subject matter.<sup>29</sup> Data

<sup>24</sup> Meek, R. *The Suzerain Vassal Treaty (Covenant) in the Old Testament*. 2020.

<sup>25</sup> (Tim. *Take My Word-Covenants and Treaties in the Bible*. *Shepherds Theological Seminary*, 2025).

<sup>26</sup> Katja Rost. *Emerging Trends in the Social and Behavioral Sciences*. Robert Scott and Marlis Buchmann (General Editors) with Stephen Kosslyn (Consulting Editor), 2017 John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

<sup>27</sup> Beck & Kieser. *The complexity of rule systems, experience and organizational learning*. *Organization Studies*, 24(5), 793–814, 2003.

<sup>28</sup> Pereira, G, C. *The Application of the Exodus Divine-Presence Narratives as a Biblical Socio-Ethical Paradigm for the Contemporary Redeemed*, 2010..

<sup>29</sup> Atheru, K. J. T., & Gichohi, P. *A Review of Literature on Theological Perspectives and Discourse Regarding Domestic Water Scarcity with a Reflection of the Tigania West Constituency*, Kenya, 2025.

was obtained from secondary sources which include biblical records, theological literature and academic papers. The results are merged into two main themes. The first one deals with the importance of learning the servant-hood approach from Christ. The last one addresses the challenges associated with Church leadership. Biblical records provided insights into Church leadership, the servant-hood leadership approach and the challenges associated with the role of Church leadership.

### **Learning leadership from Jesus Christ**

In examining true leadership, it is pragmatic to note that leadership skills are transferred from the one with the necessary leadership skills. Christ's attitude of leadership was inherent from the Father God who is the ultimate leader and the one who instituted everything. God as the creator learns from nobody but Himself.<sup>30</sup> As the one who is the beginning and the end, from everlasting to everlasting, He is the ultimate guide from whence mortal beings can learn from. As the son, Jesus learnt from His father and now has authority to transfer that inherent authority to humanity (Matt, 11:27). Christ's approach to leadership was mostly servant-hood approach of which such style was transferred to the Apostles preparing them to lead the work of the Christian dogma. He trained, convinced, supported, guided with humility and acted as an example for all. The whole text in the New Testament is Christocentric with the last book (Revelations) being eschatological. Needless to say, the book of Revelations greatly features the Christology theology (Revelations 1:1-2). The New Testament begins with firm attestation that it is all about the life of Christ reflecting past genealogy of the family of Abraham of which his son was David the father of the incarnated Christ (Matthew 1:1). John in his ministry emphasized that Christ was coming and He was going to redeem God's people (John 1:7; 29). Paul and the other apostles continued to spread the Christ dogma even after His death soldering the idea that the New Testament is Christ-centered. The work of Christ is magnitude reflecting leadership, spirituality and has different hermeneutical temperaments. Work of such magnitude involving the spreading of the gospel across the globe cannot be attained through self-reliance. It requires many interconnections and support from various structures. Christ appointed Apostles to train them about the good news of the gospel (Matthew 10:1-4; Mark 3:13-19; Luke 6:12-16).

The literature reveals that leadership begins with the appointing of the potential leaders. Among Christ's first roles as a leader He appointed servants, trained them with the purpose to eventually release them to practice their acquired skills. Just as He was incarnated to redeem the lost and also impact the knowledge of the Father, the role of Church leaders should also entail training others for the continuation of the work of the Father (Galatians 1:4; Ephesians 1:7). He did His work in humility and gave choices to the potential candidates. Above everything else, He identified skills not already visible through the naked eye. Through the guidance of the Father, Christ was able to identify the right candidates for the mission. Firstly, it is observed that His choice of the Apostle was not based on merit or their spirituality. In all actuality, it would appear that He chose those who were not even respected in society. For example, the choice of a fisherman in Peter would appear as a questionable choice mostly predominately because there were already prominent leaders whom He could have chosen. It is safe to surmise, that in Christian leadership, guidance of the Spirit in appointing other leaders is key. The role of the leader is rooted in His ability to discern the spiritual realms. At core, the heart of a fervent leader must seek to emulate Christ's approach of servant leadership model

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<sup>30</sup> Lalgee, Lalgee, J, C. *The Functional Authority of Scripture in the Church. One Church Ministries*. 6102 39th Ave. Kenosha. Available from: [www.onechurchministries.com](http://www.onechurchministries.com).

instead of applying an approach of dominance and power.<sup>31</sup> Apart from learning from Christ and guidance by the Holy Spirit, Church leaders must be trained in order to fully grasp the hermeneutical skills necessary in leading God people and be acquainted with the various facets of Church leadership.<sup>32</sup> The mission work requires informed leaders who are committed and loyal to God. Their commitment and loyalty to God enables the leaders to be able to serve others in love and humility.<sup>33</sup>

The life of Jesus Christ is a symbol of humility (Philippians 2: 3-4; Isaiah 53:7-9). While He was the Son of God, He was born in a manger a place where animals ate and His humility proceeded right up to His crucifixion (Luke 2:7; Colossians 1:15; Luke 23:44-47). He never lived a fancy life and He denied Himself many luxuries enjoyed by the scribes and Pharisees. Christ never fought with anybody and He was always humble. Even when He perceived that Peter was going to betray Him, He remained calm. He was also calm when He was falsely accused and brought in the presence of Pilate. These attributes can be a very good example for Church leaders to emulate. Similarly, the role of Christ was to go around teaching the people about the Kingdom of God. In emulating Christ, the leaders' role should also be to teach, convince, empower, encourage others and win them to Christ. In His teaching adventures, Christ also demonstrated God's power through doing miracles like healing the sick and driving out devilish forces. Similarly, Christ was an advocate of prayer. He prayed for a prolonged periods of times and was fond of praying on mountain tops or the wilderness. Biblically, a mountain can be used to symbolize a challenge or dryness. So going to the mountain can be synonymous to speaking to the mountain commanding it to move. Prayer breaks every yoke and the leader's role is to praise, worship and pray without ceasing for Himself, the Church and nations. Christ never just interceded only for Himself, but He pray for all things.

### **Challenges in Church leadership**

Church leadership is naturally not an easy task. Just like secular leadership, Church leaders are overwhelmed with myriads leadership challenges emanating both within the Church and from society. Church leaders face a lot of societal scrutiny based on assumed expectations of how Church leaders should handle themselves.<sup>34</sup> The secular world closely monitors the life of the saints to determine if they are truly portraying the life they profess.<sup>35</sup> The challenge is rooted in the fact that, the haters put their own expectations based on limited understanding of theological or biblical guides of how Church leaders should present themselves. The ridicule could be based on one scripture reference with unfounded biblical hermeneutics. This is a societal pressure which poses a lot of frustration to the clergy. McDonald (2019) argues that is very difficult to do the right thing particularly if the right thing is unknown or taken out of context. The challenge of assumed right versus wrong intensifies the dilemma for Church leaders. The challenge of fully ascertaining right from wrong is a historic struggle drawing its roots from Adam and Eve who were tempted in the Garden of Eden.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> Hwa Yung. *Leadership Or Servant-hood? Walking in the Steps of Jesus*, 2021.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., p.1.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., p. 15.

<sup>34</sup> Sandness, E. *Falling From Grace: Addressing Power, Leadership and Abuse In The Church. Article*, 2020.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., p.1.

<sup>36</sup> McDonald. K. *The Foundation of Self: A Biblical Context of Leadership Development*, 2019.

Church high expectations are not only a product of the secular world, but also within the very body, the leader is leading. In closer analysis of such expectations, it becomes evident that it is to be theologically expected (Luke 12:48). The Bible states that the leader must be someone who is without reproach (1 Timothy 3:3). The text 1 Timothy demands a high caliber of Church leadership qualities. Genesis further amplifies on a quality of holiness. Christ is holy and thus his followers are expected to be holy in imitating Him (Leviticus 21:2-15). While this requirement applies to all who follow Christ, there is a tendency to expect the leader to be more holy than the rest. Man falls short of the glory of the Lord and man is prone to sin. The narratives of Romans 3:28 validate sin as imminent by stating that no man is without sin. Isaiah's scenario is one account which portrays the sinful nature of humanity. He said 'Woe is me! For I am lost; for I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people with unclean lips; for my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of Hosts (Isaiah 6:5). Instantly, the sinful nature of man is parallel to something as unclean speaking. Through the language the leader can sin. Often times, one does not realize that his speech was offensive to the next person and can be construed as sin.

Biblical narratives do not hide the hardships associated with following Christ (John 16:33; Matthew 7:14). The Lord Jesus Christ Himself explicitly told His disciples that whoever intended to follow Him must first deny himself and then take up his cross and follow Him (Matthew 16:24). The reference of scripture to the cross suggests hardship. Christ's bearing of the cross was by no means an easy task. The carrying of the cross was accompanied by intense lashings, insults and hate. This was a scourging encounter for Christ and was meant to redeem His people from sin (Ephesians 1:7; Hebrews 9:15). The whip used for His flogging was coated with heavy thongs which cut deep into His subcutaneous tissue (Myers, 2025). This biblical punishment and the eventual crucifixion was hard hitting such that Christ even felt forsaken by the Father God (Matthew 27:46). He was treated like a criminal and humiliated for doing nothing wrong. However, Christ understood that a leader must endure impending hardship in his drive to attain victory and attain respect. Biblical annals in the book of Matthew 11:28-30 present a different aspect in a statement that seems to be contradictory to the cross narrative. In Matthew scripture says:

*"Come to me all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light," (Matthew 11:28-30)'.*

To some, this statement can indeed sound contradictory to the cross reference documented in Matthew 16:24. To understand the difference, it is imperative to first understand what a yoke is. A yoke can be understood to be a wooden beam or a device used to join two animals together to help them work together when pulling a load or plowing.<sup>37</sup> It was widely used in the agricultural practices where animals were used for cultivating the land. Theologically, a yoke can be sometimes used metaphorically to describe the weight of a task or an obligation (Leviticus 26:13; Isaiah 58:6). In interpreting the text of the yoke in the context of being yoked to Christ, the easiness of the yoke is justified. When you are yoked to Christ, He provides sustenance in the midst of dire circumstance and supplies the leader's needs according to His riches in glory. He sustains, guides, purifies and embellishes a faithful servant. For the Church leader, being yoked to Him enhances leadership qualities. He makes the role of the leader to be easy and manageable. Literature and biblical records affirm that there is victory, peace, joy and everything required for handling the leadership position if the leader is yoked

<sup>37</sup> Brannon Deibert. *What is Yoke in the Bible? Meaning of Jesus' Teaching*, 2024.



to Christ (Rom. 15: 13). The leader's role then is to keep his or her eyes fixed on Christ to attain unending and undeniable supply and avoid exhaustion. In essence the leader must operate in what biblical narratives call faith. Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things unseen (Heb. 11:1). When leaders only rely on acquired educational knowledge or biblical exegesis skills, they eliminate the concept of faith and faith works best in not knowing.<sup>38</sup> When you don't know, you trust that the one who called you knows the way and he is going to show it to you.

Amidst all other challenges Church leaders face, lies the reality of technological advancements. While technology has positively influence Church operations, technology also poses many threats to Church leadership. There are many ethical considerations that pastors have to deal with like data protection, cyber related crime and cyber bullying and belittling directed to Church leaders.<sup>39</sup> Virtual Church has posed a lot of challenges for Church leaders particularly because they are unable to lay hands on the sick as directed by scripture. Virtual Church also eliminates the practice of water baptisms which is an aspect that cannot be conducted virtually. Technology also increases the number of fake Church leaders who hold a sermon on social media platforms, promising congregates miracles in exchange for money. Such fake pastors negate the ministry of the true clergy who are called by God. Modern Church leadership requires the establishment of ethical standards to protect the Church from slander.<sup>40</sup>

## CONCLUSION

Biblical narratives expound on the importance of Church leadership drawing leadership founding roots to God who was the one who instigated leadership. The creationist theory portrays Him as a true leader who created all things and ensured that perfection of systems, structures and all spheres. The servant-hood leadership approach mostly portrayed in the New Testament promotes a spirit of serving others with confidence rooted in humility. Christocentric leadership repel dominance and selfish ambitions in leadership and strongly supports or requires that the leader must be called into the leadership role. Firstly, the leader must be someone who has a relationship with Jesus Christ and upholds His standards. The call of the Lord opens up different leadership roles within the body of Christ including clergy roles and other support ministries like music ministry, youth ministry, social protection ministry, ushering and prayer support group leadership roles. In all these position, the Holy Spirit plays a pivotal role in guiding and comforting the leaders ensuring that they are not overwhelm by the work. The findings of this study revealed that reliance on Christ and the Holy Spirit are essential in bringing transformation and spreading the dogma of Christ as mandated by God. It can be concluded that a fruitful leadership approach in the Church is one centre around Christ with a servant-hood temperament. The role of the Church leader is to first serve Christ and draw strength and direction from Him and eliminate the self-sustenance and self-ability mentality in leading the people of God.

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<sup>38</sup> T, D, Jakes. *Trusting Beyond Knowing*. The Potter's house Dallas, Texas, 2022, USA.

<sup>39</sup> Jason L. Rankin (2024) Implications of digital church for Christian leaders, *Cogent Arts & Humanities*, 11:1, 2408868, DOI: 10.1080/23311983.2024.2408868

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, p.5.

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