

X-RAYING OF NIGERIAN LEADERS FROM THE MODEL OF SERVANT LEADERSHIP OF THE GOSPEL OF MARK 10: 35-45 AND THE SWORN OATH OF OFFICE: ANY HOPE FOR GOOD LEADERSHIP IN NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

There is no doubt that different leadership styles have their own advantages and disadvantages that makes them a better model depending on the context. The very notion of a servant as leader, or “servant-leadership” as it has come to be known, is purposefully oxymoronic and arresting in nature. Where the leader-first dynamic is oriented to appease a personal desire for power, the servant leader looks first at how their service benefits others. According to Greenleaf’s observations, the servant leader approaches situations and organizations from the perspective of a servant first, looking to lend their presence to answer the needs of the organization and others. Servant leaders seek to address stakeholder wants and requirements as their priority, with leadership to be pursued secondarily. This contrasts with the leader-first perspective, wherein a person aims to gain control quickly often driven by the desire and prospects for material gain or influence. The study found the servant leadership model grossly lacking in Nigeria, which give cause for concern in the quest for good leadership in Nigeria. In the light of the issues in literature, the following recommendations were made; that there is need for attitudinal change targeted at imbibing relevant values that will promote selfless service amongst leaders; there is need to put some measures in place to effectively guard against flagrant abuse of the sworn oath of office by Nigerian political leaders and there should be mass education and public enlightenment campaign to educate the citizens on the importance of leadership as call to service.

Keywords: An x-ray, Nigerian Leaders, Model of Servant Leadership, Gospel of Mark, Sworn Oath of Office, Hope, Good Leadership, Nigeria.

Introduction

It is interesting to note that though the concept of servant-leadership dates back to 500BC in the writing of Lao-Tzu and the more westernized concept developed from the act of Jesus Christ washing his disciples feet, and his injunction to his disciples ‘that he who wants to be great must be the servant, and he who wants to be first must be last’, but, it was not until 1970 that the phrase servant-leadership was coined, from the essay written by Robert Greenleaf, titled ‘The servant as leader’ Greenleaf (1977) described servant-leadership this way: ‘The Servant-Leader is servant first It begins with the natural feeling that one wants to serve, to serve first. Then conscious choice brings one to aspire to lead. That person is sharply different from one who is leader first, perhaps because of the need to assuage an unusual power drive or to acquire material possessionsThe difference manifests itself in the care taken by the

servant-first to make sure that other people's highest priority needs are being served'. From the above authority, the leader first power model is about how to accumulate power, and manipulate people for personal gain, it's about the amoral use of raw power based on deceit, cunning, hiding intentions, exploiting people. Power itself is the end, and not a means to making life better for others, except the power holder and his cronies.

Keith (2008) commenting further in the book, the case for servant-leadership, said, "If pretending to care about people is good for acquiring power, the power –seeking leader will pretend to care. The leader will identify some needs, and will make promises about meeting those needs. But once in power, the leader may do little to implement those promises. In fact the leader may do just enough and only just enough to keep his or her power If the leader can gain power without helping anybody, he or she will do so'. The servant model of leadership, on the other hand, is about identifying and meeting the needs of others. To Greenleaf the servant-leader will ask, "What do people need? How can I help them to get it? What does my organization need to do? How can I help my organization to do it? Thus rather than embark on a quest for personal power, the servant leader embarks on a quest to identify and meet the needs of others'. Under the servant-leadership model, power comes from gaining the trust and support of people, and is given freely as a gift. Power is a means for helping others, and not an end in itself. It's to be exercised on behalf of others. It's only a tool, and its true test is determined by the improved welfare of people. However, sometimes it is possible to think that one is serving others, whilst really using the power model; one might have set out to serve others but become so consumed by power that one ends up having others serve him. Paradoxically others may set out on the power model, but soon discover the passion of service, and commit themselves wholeheartedly to serving others.

Servant leadership is a philosophy and set of practices that enriches the lives of individuals, builds better organizations and ultimately creates a more just and caring world. While servant leadership is a timeless concept, the phrase "servant leadership" was coined by Robert K. Greenleaf in work; *The Servant as Leader*, an essay that he first published in 1970. In that essay, Greenleaf said: "The servant-leader is servant first... It begins with the natural feeling that one wants to serve, to serve first. Then conscious choice brings one to aspire to lead. That person is sharply different from one who is leader first; perhaps because of the need to assuage an unusual power drive or to acquire material possessions...The leader-first and the servant-first are two extreme types. Between them there are shadings and blends that are part of the infinite variety of human nature. "The difference manifests itself in the care taken by the servant-first to make sure that other people's highest priority needs are being served.

A servant-leader focuses primarily on the growth and well-being of people and the communities to which they belong. While traditional leadership generally involves the accumulation and exercise of power by one at the "top of the pyramid," servant leadership is different. The servant-leader shares power and puts the needs of others first; he helps people develop and perform as highly as possible. The servant leadership philosophy and practices have been expressed in many ways and applied in many contexts. Some of the most well-known advocates of servant leadership include Ken Blanchard, Stephen Covey, Peter Senge, M. Scott Peck, Margaret Wheatley, Ann McGee-Cooper & Duane Trammell, Larry Spears, and Kent Keith.

As noted Kusamoto (2009) in Nigeria, though the phrase servant-leadership is now a part of our collective lexicon thanks to President Umar Yar'adua (may God rest his soul), little has changed at the political leadership level, within 95% of the political leadership class it's business as usual; our identity of servant-leadership is chop- i-chop. And it is against the above background that this paper sought to x-ray Nigerian Leaders from the Model of Servant Leadership of the Gospel of Mark 10: 35-45 and the Sworn Oath of Office; any hope for good leadership in Nigeria

Objective of the Study

The main objective of this paper is x-raying of Nigerian Leaders from the Model of Servant Leadership of the Gospel of Mark 10: 35-45 and the Sworn Oath of Office: Any Hope for Good Leadership in Nigeria. To the above extent the following specific shall for the goals of the study;

1. To carry out an insight on the Art of Servant Leadership
2. To explore the Origins and Best Practices Applications of servant leader
3. To highlight the Characters and Characteristics of Effective and Caring Servant Leadership
4. To itemize the Qualities of Servant-Leaders that are Lacking among Nigerian Leaders
5. To assess the Biblical Model of Servant Leader in Relation to the Sworn Oath of Office
6. To evaluate the Search for Servant Leadership within the Nigerian Experience

The Art of Servant Leadership: An Insight

Servant leaders are a revolutionary set of leaders; they take the traditional power leadership model and turn it completely upside down. This new hierarchy puts the people—or employees, in a business context—at the very top and the leader at the bottom, charged with serving the common citizens above themselves. And that's just the way servant leaders like it. That's because these leaders possess a serve-first mindset, and they are focused on empowering and uplifting those who work for them. They are serving instead of commanding, showing humility instead of brandishing authority, and always looking to enhance the development of their staff members in ways that unlock potential, creativity and sense of purpose. The end result is that performance goes through the roof and magic happens. Experts often describe the majority of traditional-minded leaders as people who mainly function as overseers of a transaction: thus only necessitating followers to maintain desired performance levels, and in exchange to receive salary and benefits. Generally, these leaders are positional leaders—they derive authority simply from the fact that they are the boss.

The servant leader moves beyond the transactional aspects of leadership, and instead actively seeks to develop and align a follower's sense of purpose with the mission and vision of the organization. Empowered followers or citizens will perform at a high, innovative level; feel more engaged and purpose-driven, which in turn increases the organization's growth and development turnover. Well-trained and trusted individuals will continue to emerge as future leaders, thus helping to ensure the long-term viability of the organization. To attain this goal, several things need to happen, experts say. Servant leadership ultimately starts with an unselfish mindset. "If you have selfish motivations, then you are not going to be a good servant leader. It has to be less about you," Falotico (2001) says. Moreover, the organization at large needs to sustain a culture in which this type of leadership can thrive. More so, there are

behaviors that the servant leaders themselves must practice on a regular basis. "As leaders, we can say anything we want, but we're going to be judged on our behavior," (Barter, 2006). And for the servant leader, behavior isn't just what gets done, but how it gets done.

This article, based on several expert and practitioner interviews and recent research in the leadership field, x-rays Nigerian Leaders from the Model of Servant Leadership of the Gospel of Mark 10: 35-45 and the Sworn Oath of Office: Any Hope for Good Leadership in Nigeria. The paper looks at philosophy and goals of servant leadership, the paucity of servant leaders in Nigeria as well as best practice guidance for those aspiring to become great servant leaders. We also take a look forward, and explore servant leadership's impact on the future of good leadership in Nigeria.

Origins and Best Practices Applications of Servant Leader

Servant leadership can be considered something of a universal concept, because it has roots in both Eastern and Western cultures. In the East, leadership scholars point to Chinese philosophers in 5th century BC such as Laozi, who asserted that when the best leaders finished their work, their people would say, "We did it ourselves" (Wikipedia.org. 2019). In modern-day leadership circles, the concept gained much currency with Robert Greenleaf's 1971 essay, *The Servant as Leader*. Greenleaf, who passed away in 1990, went on to found the Atlanta-based Greenleaf Center for Servant Leadership. Experts offer a range of best practice suggestions for top leaders who aspire to become successful servant leaders. Most experts agree, however, on one bedrock principle: successful servant leadership starts with a leader's desire to serve his or her people, which in turn serves and benefits the organization at large. And from that point, the servant leader keeps a continual focus on talent development.

This can be tricky for some leaders because they equate leadership with control and they feel they should be responsible for everything. But therein lies a paradox—leaders that are able to let go often find that they are actually in more control, because they have harnessed the resources and talents of their followers, which collectively can guide operations more effectively than one person can (Greenleaf, 1971). This is a crucial requirement for effective servant leadership, says Falotico (2001). She tells leaders to "get over yourself" and realize that organizational objectives, whatever they are, will not be reached without sharing the load and responsibility. "You are no longer an individual performer—you are a leader," she says. "Leaders are enablers. That's your work" (Falotico, 2001).

If serving the people is the bedrock principle of servant leadership, two core practices toward achieving that goal are close listening and searching questions.

Darryl Spivey, a senior faculty member at the Center for Creative Leadership (CCL) who coaches executives on servant leadership, says that asking the right questions is the "secret sauce" of great coaching, and is crucial for servant leaders. Servant leaders build relationships with followers primarily by listening closely and by asking many questions—on anything from the individual's background to detailed queries about their assessment of the organization's environment, Spivey explains. If an individual is struggling, leaders should ask questions about what might be impeding his or her progress. Even questions about smaller aspects of operations, such as the best use of time during meetings, are helpful. "The message

this sends to the individual is that their opinion does matter, and that [leaders] want their feedback," (Spivey, 2009).

And the emphasis on questions works both ways. Followers should feel comfortable asking the servant leader questions without worrying that the leader will feel badgered, threatened or implicitly criticized, Spivey maintains. Such questions help drive the development and growth of the person. Carefully asking questions is related to another crucial practice—listening to understand. This means listening to the follower silently and making an active effort to understand his or her point of view. Even if the leader feels the need to disagree or interject, they will wait until the person is finished speaking. If need be, the leader can briefly summarize what the follower has just expressed, as a way to communicate understanding. While this may strike some as merely common courtesy, listening to understand is becoming harder with the rise of technology and the decrease of attention spans. For example, a leader who keeps the iPhone on the desk, and glances at it repeatedly during conversations, is not listening to understand (Spivey, 2009).

Servant leaders can do more than listen to subordinates: they can encourage them. Indeed, in many ways encouragement is the hallmark expression of a servant leader and it is a tremendously powerful tool (Spivey, 2009). Whatever the type of interaction with subordinates, servant leaders are consistent in showing encouragement and humility with an egalitarian attitude. "They don't think of themselves as any better than anybody else," Timmes (2005) says. In practice, this means that when subordinates make mistakes, the leader isn't treating them as children who need to be scolded. Instead, the servant leader engages in respectful conversation which demonstrates trust in the individual to make the needed adjustments.

Trust is both a defining characteristic and defining outcome of servant leadership, says Covey (2002). To Covey, it's important to remember that servant leaders are both servants and leaders. "You do serve, but it still requires the other dimensions of leadership—character and competence," he says. Competence means that the leader has a track record of high ability and achieving results, with skills that are relevant. Character means that results and accomplishments are achieved with integrity and ethics.

Trust is a prerequisite for servant leaders, because the leaders must trust that the followers are worth serving, and that they, and the organization, will benefit from their service. Practicing servant leadership generates trust in the followers, who may be inspired by their leader's competence and character and convinced by their leader's serve-first practice that he or she has their best interests at heart. "Trust is one of the means to achieve servant leadership, and it is also an end that is achieved by servant leadership," Covey (2005) says.

A servant is a person who performs duties for others, especially a person employed in a house on domestic duties or as a personal attendant. Servant leadership is a management philosophy that highlights the improvement of subordinates working for your organization. A servant leader underscores the need for diligence and commitment instead of solely focusing on metrics. This mindset allows followers to offer their opinion on growing your organization. Letting subordinates voice their opinions of your organization gives them the impression that they can show authenticity at work and influence organizational decisions.

Characters and Characteristics of Effective and Caring Servant Leadership

We are advocating a rapid shift away from the more traditional autocratic and hierarchical models of leadership and toward servant leadership as a way of being in relationship with others. Servant leadership seeks to involve others in decision making, is strongly based in ethical and caring behavior, and enhances the growth of workers while improving the caring and quality of organizational life. There is a set of characteristics of the servant leader that are of critical importance. They are: listening, empathy, healing, awareness, persuasion, conceptualization, foresight, stewardship, commitment to the growth of people, and building community (National Clearinghouse for Leadership Programs, 2000).

Our fundamental understanding of character has much to do with the essential traits exhibited by a person. In recent years there has been a growing interest in the nature of character and character education, based upon a belief that positive character traits can be both taught and learned. Many people today are familiar with the *Character Counts!*^(sm) program of the Josephson Institute of Ethics. That program has been adopted by a number of schools and communities nationwide and teaches core values which they call “Six Pillars of Character.” Those six particular character values are: trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring, and citizenship. The nature of character and its relationship to leaders has also taken on increased significance in recent years. A number of noted leadership authors have looked at issues of a leader’s character. Hillman (1996), in *The Soul’s Code: In Search of Character and Calling*, describes the “invisible source of personal consistency, for which psychology today calls character. Character refers to deep structures of personality that are particularly resistant to change”.

The literature on leadership includes a number of different listings of character traits as practiced by leaders. Warren Bennis’s (1989) short list as contained in his book, *On Becoming a Leader*, in which he identifies, “vision, inspiration, empathy and trustworthiness” as key characteristics of effective leaders. Much of the leadership literature includes as an implicit assumption the belief that positive characteristics can-and-should be encouraged and practiced by leaders. Robert K. Greenleaf, the originator of the term, *servant leadership*, is someone who thought and wrote a great deal about the nature of servant leadership and character.

The servant-leader begins with the natural feeling that one wants to serve. Then conscious choice brings one to aspire to lead. The best test is: do those served grow as persons: do they, while being served, become healthier, wiser, freer, more autonomous, more likely themselves to become servants? And, what is the effect on the least privileged in society; will they benefit, or, at least, not be further deprived? (Greenleaf, 1977; 2002). With that definition in 1970, Robert K. Greenleaf (1904-1990) coined the term servant leadership and launched a quiet revolution in the way in which we view and practice leadership. Three decades later the concept of servant leadership is increasingly viewed as an ideal leadership form to which untold numbers of people and organizations aspire. In fact, we are witnessing today an unparalleled explosion of interest in, and practice of, servant leadership.

The words *servant* and *leader* are usually thought of as being opposites. In deliberately bringing those words together in a meaningful way, Robert Greenleaf gave birth to the paradoxical term servant leadership. In the years since then, many of today’s most creative

thinkers are writing and speaking about servant leadership as an emerging leadership paradigm for the 21st century. The list is long and includes: James Autry, Warren Bennis, Peter Block, John Carver, Stephen Covey, Max DePree, Joseph Jaworski, James Kouzes, Larraine Matusak, Parker Palmer, M. Scott Peck, Peter Senge, Peter Vaill, Margaret Wheatley, and Danah Zohar, to name but a few of today's cutting-edge leadership authors and advocates of servant leadership. In her groundbreaking book on quantum sciences and leadership, *Rewiring the Corporate Brain* Zohar (1997), goes so far as to state that, "Servant-leadership is the essence of quantum thinking and quantum leadership". After some years of carefully considering Greenleaf's original writings, Zohar (1997), have identified a set of ten characteristics of the servant leader that could be viewed as being of critical importance—central to the development of servant-leaders. It involves a deepening understanding of the following characteristics and how they contribute to the meaningful practice of servant leadership. These characteristics include:

Listening: Leaders have traditionally been valued for their communication and decision-making skills. Although these are also important skills for the servant leader, they need to be reinforced by a deep commitment to listening intently to others. The servant leader seeks to identify the will of a group and helps to clarify that will. He or she listens receptively to what is being said and unsaid. Listening also encompasses hearing one's own inner voice. Listening, coupled with periods of reflection, is essential to the growth and well-being of the servant leader.

Empathy: The servant leader strives to understand and empathize with others. People need to be accepted and recognized for their special and unique spirits. One assumes the good intentions of co-workers and colleagues and does not reject them as people, even when one may be forced to refuse to accept certain behaviors or performance. The most successful servant leaders are those who have become skilled empathetic listeners.

Healing: The healing of relationships is a powerful force for transformation and integration. One of the great strengths of servant leadership is the potential for healing one's self and one's relationship to others. Many people have broken spirits and have suffered from a variety of emotional hurts. Although this is a part of being human, servant leaders recognize that they have an opportunity to help make whole those with whom they come in contact. In his essay, *The Servant as Leader*, Greenleaf (1977; 2002) writes, "There is something subtle communicated to one who is being served and led if, implicit in the compact between servant-leader and led, is the understanding that the search for wholeness is something they share".

Awareness: General awareness, and especially self-awareness, strengthens the servant-leader. Awareness helps one in understanding issues involving ethics, power and values. It lends itself to being able to view most situations from a more integrated, holistic position. As Greenleaf (2002) observed: "Awareness is not a giver of solace—it is just the opposite. It is a disturber and an awakener. Able leaders are usually sharply awake and reasonably disturbed. They are not seekers after solace. They have their own inner serenity".

Persuasion: Another characteristic of servant leaders is reliance on persuasion, rather than on one's positional authority, in making decisions within an organization. The servant leader seeks to convince others, rather than coerce compliance. This particular element offers one of the clearest distinctions between the traditional authoritarian model and that of servant leadership. The servant leader is effective at building consensus within groups. This emphasis on persuasion over coercion finds its roots in the beliefs of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers)—the denominational body to which Robert Greenleaf belonged.

Conceptualization: Servant leaders seek to nurture their abilities to dream great dreams. The ability to look at a problem or an organization from a conceptualizing perspective means that one must think beyond day-to-day realities. For many leaders, this is a characteristic that requires discipline and practice. The traditional leader is consumed by the need to achieve short-term operational goals. The leader who wishes to also be a servant leader must stretch his or her thinking to encompass broader-based conceptual thinking. Within organizations, conceptualization is, by its very nature, a key role of boards of trustees or directors. Unfortunately, boards can sometimes become involved in the day-to-day operations—something that should be discouraged—and, thus, fail to provide the visionary concept for an institution. Trustees need to be mostly conceptual in their orientation, staff members need to be mostly operational in their perspective, and the most effective executive leaders probably need to develop both perspectives within themselves. Servant leaders are called to seek a delicate balance between conceptual thinking and a day-to-day operational approach.

Foresight: Closely related to conceptualization, the ability to foresee the likely outcome of a situation is hard to define, but easier to identify. One knows foresight when one experiences it. Foresight is a characteristic that enables the servant leader to understand the lessons from the past, the realities of the present, and the likely consequence of a decision for the future. It is also deeply rooted within the intuitive mind. Foresight remains a largely unexplored area in leadership studies, but one most deserving of careful attention.

Stewardship: Block (1993) in *Stewardship and the Empowered Manager* has defined stewardship as “holding something in trust for another”. Robert Greenleaf's view of all institutions was one in which CEO's, staffs, and trustees all played significant roles in holding their institutions in trust for the greater good of society. Servant leadership, like stewardship, assumes first and foremost a commitment to serving the needs of others. It also emphasizes the use of openness and persuasion, rather than control.

Commitment to the Growth of People: Servant leaders believe that people have an intrinsic value beyond their tangible contributions as workers. As such, the servant leader is deeply committed to the growth of each and every individual within his or her organization. The servant leader recognizes the tremendous responsibility to do everything in his or her power to nurture the personal and professional growth of subordinates and colleagues. In practice, this can include (but is not limited to) concrete actions such as making funds available for personal and professional development, taking a personal interest in the ideas and suggestions from everyone and encouraging individual involvement in decision-making

Building Community: The servant leader senses that much has been lost in recent human history as a result of the shift from local communities to large institutions as the primary shaper of human lives. This awareness causes the servant leader to seek to identify some means for building community among those who work within a given institution. Servant leadership suggests that true community can be created among those who work in businesses and other institutions. Greenleaf (1977; 2002) said: All that is needed to rebuild community as a viable life form for large numbers of people is for enough servant-leaders to show the way, not by mass movements, but by each servant-leader demonstrating his or her unlimited liability for a quite specific community-related group.

Qualities of Servant-Leaders that are Lacking among Nigerian Leaders

Servant leadership is servant-hood in leading people. It implies call and readiness to serve the people and to serve God above all else. It is expected of servants to be found faithful, contented and with high ethical principles. Here are some key qualities of servant leaders that are deficient in Nigeria Leaders:

- a) **Service:** A servant leader is primarily motivated by the desire to render service. Natural dissatisfaction with the status quo is the source of inspiration to seek position of leadership, and burning desire for positive change is the driving force. Leadership is nothing but opportunity to serve.
- b) **Sacrifice/Self-denial:** A servant leader is remarked for selflessness in everything. He does not serve or seek position of leadership because of the benefits of the office. Therefore, he is ever willing to make sacrifices and to deny himself comfort in order to make things work. He goes the extra mile on behalf of his subjects and does not set standards for others that he is not willing to be subject to. He is more concerned about what he can add to the system than what he can take from it. Like Nehemiah of old, he could forfeit his rights for the sake of the people.
- c) **Suffering:** A servant leader is not a fair weather servant, who serves only when service is cheap, fun, appreciated, rewarding and results in popularity. He is rather ready to serve even when service means suffering righteously, when standing for what is right means standing alone, and share in the common life of the people and not live in affluence while his subjects wallow in abject poverty.
- d) **Humility:** Humility is the hallmark of servant leader's character traits. Servant leaders do not let the power and glory of office inflict them with pride. They are able to maintain healthy relationship with the people, and receive feedback. In humility, they are open to counsel, and when they make mistakes, they admit. Without humility, leaders become despots and tyrants. Leaders have power, but power is safe only in the hands of those who are humble.
- e) **Passion for improvement:** When the situation of the people is not changing for the better, servant leaders are dissatisfied. They go the extra mile to bring about positive changes and never rests until they have delivered on their promises.
- f) **Accountability:** Servant leaders are accountable to the people. They do not waste public resources or steal and divert funds meant for projects. Contracts are awarded through due process, and not indirectly to oneself, family and friends.
- g) **Integrity:** Servant leaders are credible and trustworthy people, who are bound by their words and promises. They are honest in both private and public dealings.
- h) **Law-abiding:** Servant leaders are not above the laws of the land. They are law abiding. Their activities or leadership are subject to the provisions of the law. They do not

pervert justice to their own favour, but willingly submit to the rule of law, even when it is against them and their political ambitions.

- i) **Impartial:** Servant leaders are known for their impartiality in dealing with their subjects. They treat everyone equally and on merits, without any form of favouritism based on language, ethnic, religious or political affiliations. Fairness and justice for all is their hallmark. Their firm stands against tribalism and nepotism makes them a unifying factor for the people.
- j) **Contentment:** A servant leader lives a life of contentment with what God has provided. He is not greedy for filthy lucre and does not abuse his office to enrich himself with public funds. He is prudent with the management of available resources, and does not indulge in extravagant living.
- k) **Disciplined:** Servant leaders are not involved with riotous living and do not act rashly. They are self-controlled and disciplined in their lives and in the discharge of the responsibilities of public office (Okoh, 2021).

Biblical Model of Servant Leader in Relation to the Sworn Oath of Office

According to the gospel of Mark 10:35-45, James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came forward to Jesus and said to him, "Teacher, we want you to do for us whatever we ask of you." And Jesus said to them, "What is it you want me to do for you?" And they said to him, "Grant us to sit, one at your right hand and one at your left, in your glory." But Jesus said to them, "You do not know what you are asking. Are you able to drink the cup that I drink, or be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?" They replied, "We are able." Then Jesus said to them, "The cup that I drink you will drink; and with the baptism with which I am baptized, you will be baptized; but to sit at my right hand or at my left is not mine to grant, but it is for those for whom it has been prepared." When the ten heard this, they began to be angry with James and John. So Jesus called them and said to them, "You know that among the Gentiles those whom they recognize as their rulers lord it over them, and their great ones are tyrants over them. But it is not so among you; but whoever wishes to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wishes to be first among you must be slave of all. For the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."

In the above passage, Jesus illustrated what expectations there are of a servant leader. Explicitly and implicitly, Jesus set a tall task for aspiring leaders who traditionally place themselves above others. This model is no doubt revolutionary as it is radical because it is a total departure from what is known. No wonder there is dearth of servant leaders in our contemporary Nigerian society.

On the other hand, the oath of office for Nigerian leaders read thus; "I _____do solemnly swear/affirm that I will be faithful and bear true allegiance to the Federal Republic of Nigeria: that as President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, I will discharge my duties to the best of my ability, faithfully and in accordance with the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria and the law, and always in the interest of the sovereignty, integrity, solidarity, well-being and prosperity of the Federal Republic of Nigeria; that I will strive to preserve the Fundamental Objectives and Directive Principles of State Policy contained in the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria; that I will abide by the Code of Conduct contained in the Fifth Schedule to the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria; that in all circumstances, I will do right to all manner of people, according to law, without fear or

favour, affection or ill-will; that I will not directly or indirectly communicate or reveal to any person any matter which shall be brought under my consideration or shall become known to me as President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, except as may be required for the due discharge of my duties as President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, except as may be required for the due discharge of my duties as President; and that I will devote myself to the service and well-being of the people of Nigeria. So help me God. (Fifth Schedule of the Nigerian 1999 Constitution)

A closer look at the above oath of office one sees important elements of servant leader model, which unfortunately the so called leaders are not respecting. Both the biblical model and the oath of office leave much to be desired in the quest for servant leadership. However, in reality the present crop of leaders are nothing but self serving as the lord it over their people with impunity. It is on the above note that we proceed to explore the Nigerian experience in the search for servant leader.

The Search for Servant Leadership: The Nigerian Experience

Nigeria has been in an endless and seemingly unproductive search of servant leadership since its existence as a nation. The fact remains that the British conquest of Africa, following partitioning of Africa in Berlin in 1885, led to colonization. The British, who ruled over Nigeria, behaved as warlords and sovereign over the vassals. The amalgamation of the Northern and Southern protectorates in 1914 by Lord Frederick Lugard was without the express approval of the different independent nations that existed autonomously for centuries, until they were forced into a shallow marriage with one another. The First Republic offered Nigerian peoples golden opportunities of self-governance in a model that is service oriented, more so that through exposure of education and professional trainings overseas and locally, elite of mature leaders emerged among the people that could replace the colonialists. Inadvertently, there was exchange of leadership baton from British colonialists to Nigerian colonialists. Corruption was learnt from foreigners and perfected to a higher degree by the Nigerian leaders. The absence of true patriotism, imbalanced and non-pragmatic political education and progress has been jaundiced, while mediocrity, nepotism, and lately, religious bigotry has entered the arena of Nigeria's misrule (Okoh, 2021).

The First Republic failed, not because there was lack of true leaders, but because of the structural landmines, which hindered Nigeria's chances of making progress. The recent call for political restructuring in Nigeria towards true federalism was borne out of nostalgia of the partial success of such experiment during the First Republic. There were the charismatic and intelligent leaders such as Nnamdi Azikiwe, Obafemi Awolowo and Ahmadu Bello. But these leaders were more of champions of their respective ethnic enclaves and tribes heroes than they were of the nation servant leaders. With such disunity, it was only a matter of time before pioneering attempt at democratic rule was doomed to collapse. Chinua Achebe's 'A man of the people' literarily captures the mood and trend of corruption, exploitation and widening class gap between the "haves" and the "have nots" in society, the looting spree, as well as larger than life behaviour of political leaders during the First Republic.

Okoh (2021) further highlight that after the civil war, there emerged military and civilian governments, yet the lessons of the war appeared to have eluded the people's psyche. They have today become desperate for power and acquisition of massive wealth, to the detriment

of the poor and suffering masses. We now witness assassination of political opponents, ritual killings, sponsored armed banditry, bribery of judges, political thuggery, occult practices, stupendous embezzlement of funds and manipulated religious fanaticism.

Today, Nigeria begs for genuine leaders, who are passionate about change and progress for the common people; pragmatic leaders, capable of sacrificial service and innovative revolutions and reformatations. But the search remains endless. What Nigeria needs today is action and not rhetoric. Nigerians are yearning for such a time, when political party manifestoes define the essence of the parties. This is not the common norm Nigeria today. Rather, political thugs, financial inducements (vote buying) rigging of votes, and god-fatherism are 'the order of the day'. We are, as it were, in deep trouble, as there are hardly servant leaders at the national level that can make a difference. It behooves us to pray and hope that God in His infinite mercy will raise servant leaders who are honest, independent minded, principled and progressive.

Nigeria experienced a few servant leaders during the First and Second Republics. The examples of Chief Obafemi Awolowo, Michael Opara, Ahmadu Bello, Aminu Kano, Anthony Enahoro and Dennis Osadebay, among others, can be sited as leaders who had ideologies that are egalitarian, welfarist and grass root based. Awolowo recorded the most outstanding achievements, especially in the area of Free Education, first Television in Africa, industrialisation and employment, agriculture and road constructions. He put the Western Region ahead of others. Ahmadu Bello served the North without evidence of personal aggrandizement. Aminu Kano enjoyed support of the Talakawas (poor in society). The legacies of these servant leaders remain visible today. They are a far cry to the picture and modus operandi of contemporary political leaders, who behave without restraint. They revert to the people only when campaigning for elections. They borrow huge foreign loans they cannot repay during their tenure, and eventually pile great burden upon the public resources, to the extent that they impoverish the poor and lower class, which bear the brunt through over-taxation, unemployment and retrenchment, among others (Okoh, 2021).

To say the least, Okoh (2021) maintains that in the present fourth republic the justice system is structured to favour the rich and powerful in society. Whereas a thief who stole hundreds of Naira is jailed without hesitation, political leaders embezzle billions of Naira and are shielded from prosecution. And when they sometimes do, they opt for plea-bargaining. There are hardly servant leaders in Nigeria today. In fact, the political system alienates poor, due to the huge cost of political electioneering. Another anomaly that has become manifest is ethnic domination of political office by a section of the country in such a defiant manner that shows ethno-religious conquest. The above situation can be redressed and the quest for servant leaders can be revived, if Nigerian people resolve to embrace sincere positive change in attitude and political philosophy.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are made:

1. There is need for attitudinal change targeted at imbibing relevant values that will promote selfless service amongst leaders.
2. There is need to put some measures in place to effectively guard against flagrant abuse of the sworn oath of office by Nigerian political leaders.

3. There should be mass education and public enlightenment campaign to educate the citizens on the importance of leadership as call to service.

Conclusion

The paper set out to x-ray the servant leader from the model of servant leadership of the gospel of mark 10: 35-45 and the sworn oath of office: any hope for good leadership in Nigeria. Based on available evidence in literature and practical reality in Nigeria, political leadership is no longer seen as a thing of honour, because our traditional leadership orientation takes the form of the leadership first power model, a big hustle, where most gains are ill-gotten, and where the little guy feels the only way to get ahead is by imitating the political leaders –the big guys, it finds expression in mass looting of state resources, purchased mandate, vote rigging, money laundering, '419', cheating and cutting corners - 'the Nigerian way'.

In view of the above, the paper concludes that like changing a bad habit, changing from our leadership first power model orientation would demand a yet to be demonstrated iron clad political will and determination, at the top; and change must start from within our political leadership class - our leaders must do the right thing, being manifest by service delivery to the people, and set a good example.

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