

## **Christian & Muslim Leadership in Ghana: Maintaining a Creative Balance between Fellowship & Followership.**

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### **Abstract**

Put together, Christians and Muslims in Ghana constitute over eighty percent of the population. Leadership and its constituent element of followership are vital concepts for the development of any society. Thus leadership in churches and mosques is important for shaping the overall development of Ghanaian society. The crux of all church and mosque activity is spirituality, with the Bible and Qur'an as guiding principles. At the heart of this spiritual leadership is the desire to create the space for the adherents of the two religions to fellowship together. After all, Christianity is a fellowship (*koinonia*) while Muslims are a community (*ummah*). However, there is too much emphasis on fellowship and spirituality in Christian and Muslim leadership models in churches and mosques in Ghana. This has led to a virtual neglect of followership, which is a vital component of leadership. This paper discusses this leadership deficit in Ghanaian churches and mosques, using specific examples from selected churches and mosques. This paper further suggests ways of addressing this imbalance between fellowship and followership, so as to ensure a creative balance in leadership that is spiritual, exemplary and iconic.

**Keywords:** Fellowship, Followership, Leadership, Christians, Muslims.

## 1. Introduction

In John 1:29-43 there are instances where the disciples are called by Jesus to follow him. In verse 38, *Akolothesanton auto* (they followed) is stated. But Jesus himself issues the command in John 1:43 by saying, *akolouthei moi* (follow me). Peter of his own volition, through the prompting of his brother decided to respond to Jesus' *akolouthei moi*. It was therefore in response to Jesus' *akolouthei moi* that Peter became his disciple. So Peter was one of the followers of Jesus who was called as a disciple to follow Jesus. The disciples were convinced that Jesus was a person worth learning and associating with. In the same way, the Prophet Muhammad is reported to have admonished Muslims to obey and follow their leader even if he is a slave with hair like raisin (Bukahari: Vol V: 192). Thus, "becoming a follower basically means total allegiance and pupilage" (Anum, 2008: 130).

According to Christian scripture, somewhere along the line, Peter denied being a follower and Jesus came back to restore him to his status as a follower. This is what we see in John 21, where after the resurrection of Jesus, Peter is asked three times by Jesus as to whether he loves him. The question of Jesus to Simon Peter "do you love me?" and Jesus' command "feed my sheep" is a new call to fellowship as well as a restoration to being a shepherd (Anum, 2008). Perhaps that was why Jesus used *akolouthei moi* (follow me) at the ending of John 21:19 to indicate a call to a new fellowship where we see Peter taking back his leadership role as a shepherd.

In the Islamic sense, the Prophet Muhammad is the bridge (*barzakh*) that leads to God. To follow God is to follow Muhammad and vice versa (Q: 3:31). That is why the sayings and practices of Muhammad constitute a source of law in Islam. However, one cannot claim to be a follower of Muhammad as an individual. Followership is a communal affair. In other words, followership is equal to fellowship and vice versa. Thus when Muhammad wrote the Madinan charter, he inserted the clause that stated that from then on, all individualism was erased and all tribal identities were erased. All were to glory only in the fellowship of Islam.

In the same vein, Jesus' restoration of Peter to love is equated to fellowship and a restoration to followership which in this case was equated to feeding the lamb or being a shepherd. This paper therefore explores the concepts of followership and fellowship and their relationship to leadership in church and mosque administration in Ghana.

Two churches in Cape Coast and two mosques in Accra have been purposively sampled for this study. With the churches, one mainline church and one charismatic church have been chosen in order to reflect the two major varieties of Christianity practiced in Ghana. These are the Ola Presbyterian Church and the Calvary Charismatic Church. The mosques in Accra have also been chosen to reflect the two dominant varieties of Islam practiced in Ghana. These are the Tijaniyya *sufi* order and the reformist Wahabiyya sect. The Salawatiyya mosque in Ashongman is a Tijaniyya mosque, while the Islamic Research mosque in Nima is Wahabi oriented.

The purpose of this study is to find out the kind of leadership that is being practiced in these churches and mosques, and whether or not the kind of leadership that is practiced in these churches and mosques maintain the critical balance of fellowship and followership. This study also aims to point out the shortcomings of leadership practices in churches and mosques in Ghana and to suggest ways by which the leadership of churches and mosques can be improved for the benefit of leaders and followers alike.

## 2. Fellowship

According to James Dunn the word fellowship which is usually linked with the Greek term '*koinonia* ("participation/sharing in") is employed by Paul in his letters in a certain manner. Dunn argues that the import of Paul's view on *koinonia* comes out clearly in

1Corinthians 10: 14-22 “in the sequence of words which speak of “sharing,” “partners,” “partake of.” The concentration of these words is exceptional in Paul’s letters” (Dunn, 1998:616)

Dunn further states that ‘fellowship (in the usual sense) grew out of common participation in the one Spirit’ (Dunn, 1998:616). So for Dunn the most important ingredient in fellowship is the act of *sharing* together as a vehicle of and for building a community. The most common place is the word communion which is closely related to the Eucharistic meal that Christians partake. For example, the essence of sharing a common meal in most religions is related to people who owe allegiance to a particular divinity in a particular way. They therefore ‘fellowship with one another’ by affirming their common bond in offering to one another and also to others (who they are keen to incorporate into their fold) as beneficiaries of their communion. This may be in the form of hospitality, welfare or some kind of support both spiritual and physical. In reverse form, it could also be related to enjoying or accepting some share of common support offered to people from a religious community. Dunn (1998) also stresses that the motivation for fellowship was:

*not a common entity (like the congregation), but the subjective experience of the Spirit as something shared. The point is, then that what draws and keeps believers together for Paul was not simply a common membership of the congregation, but the common experience of the Spirit. It was the awareness that their experience of the Spirit was one which others had also shared which provided the bond of mutual understanding and sympathy (561-562).*

Thus when the Prophet Muhammad drew the Madinan charter establishing the community (*ummah*) of believers, he outlined a long list of things which he said were part of establishing the communion of believers.

The believers shall leave none of their members in destitution without giving him in kindness what he needs...all pious believers shall rise as one man against whosoever rebels or seeks to commit injustice, aggression, sin or spread mutual enmity between the believers, even though he may be one of their sons...no believer shall assist an unbeliever against a believer...all believers are bonded one to another to the exclusion of other men (Haykal, 1976: 180-181).

So it is expected that the discovery of and utilisation of common grounds to communicate with God should lead to breaking common grounds among believers. In the Christian context, it implies that there is supposed to be a development of mutual love between Christians which not only shows in being in the same room together singing, praying or participating in Bible Studies but also visiting one another and being there for one another whenever one is in trouble. This may also include extending that same hand to reach out to others outside the Christian community just as the Madinan charter stated that “any Jew who follows us is entitled to our assistance and the same rights as any one of us, without injustice or partisanship” (Haykal, 181).

Expressions of love like this are not to be limited to known and familiar believers but are commended and encouraged when they are demonstrated toward strangers (traveling missionaries) too (Smalley, 1978). That is why the Qur’an stipulates that the compulsory alms tax (*zakat*) shall be for the wayfarer and strangers in need (Q: 9:60).

### 3. Church and Mosque

This communion of love between believers (Christian and Muslim) is best enacted within the Church or Mosque. The Mosque and the Church are the theatres of love. When Muhammad migrated to Madina, the first edifice he built was a mosque (Haykal, 1976). Attached to the mosque, he built his place of residence and also a living quarter for the poor and destitute who had no homes to live. Thus the Prophet's mosque in Madina was the center of his administration. It was within the court yard of the mosque that he mediated between people, interacted with the *ummah* and conducted day to day business. It was thus within the precincts of the mosque that he fellowshiped with the *ummah*; it was within the precincts of the mosque that he led and it was within the precincts of the mosques that he governed the *ummah*.

Regarding the role of the church in leadership fellowship and followership, Dairo (2004) argues that

*as a fellowship, the congregation or institution functions on the basis of opinions, values, and relationships that exist between people, and the more a Church functions as a fellowship, the more necessary are the consensus-type actions required to the group (120).*

However, as Churches grow and become large fellowships, other complexities due to the sheer numbers set in and thus it becomes very difficult to enjoy that mutuality and love. No wonder in the 1970s there were town fellowships in Ghana. These were para-Church organizations which evolved out of the evangelical movement in Ghana which were related to the University Christian fellowships and the Scripture Union. When they were going to meet they said that they were going to fellowship. When they were small movements, there were few problems but as they started growing in numbers, they started disintegrating and today we do not hear of the town fellowships any more.

This paper argues that one of the main reasons for the decline of the town fellowships was lack of followership. In fact, these fellowships came to being because the mainline Churches at that time also lacked effective fellowship and so they filled in the gap for the mainline Churches in that respect. Even though the Mega Churches and their vibrant fellowshiping techniques have swallowed up the town fellowships, this paper puts forth the thesis that a continued over-emphasis on fellowship will eventually lead to the demise of these churches just as has happened to the town fellowships.

A number of church buildings in Europe have closed down in recent years. Hitherto, these church buildings were a bee hive of activity. So what happened? Sometime ago, Christian leadership was seen as a good counterpart in governance. So why do only few people trust Christian leadership in Europe?

In Ghana most mosques do not have a centralised or organised followership. People only come to the mosque to observe the five daily ritual prayers and disperse to their homes and businesses. In the time of the Prophet Muhammad, his mosque in Madina not only served as the hub of all activity, but it was the platform on which followers paid allegiance to him. There was even a group of followers called the *ashab-ul suffa* (the people of the bench) who were permanently sitting on benches in and around the mosque and learning the tenets of the religion from the Prophet Muhammad. Among the *ashab-ul-suffa* was the famous Abu Huraira, the man credited with reporting the greatest number of Prophetic sayings.

*Sufism* (Islamic mysticism) also brought a new dimension to the mosque as a hub for leadership and followership. The brotherhoods that emerged out of the *sufi* orders emphasised unalloyed obedience to the *shaykh*. The famous *sufi* saying that "he who has no shaykh will have the devil as his shaykh" was a strong mobilising principle for followership in the mosques. In recent years however, the crusading activities of the Wahabiyya reform

movement has dealt a huge blow to this mobilising principle in mosques in Ghana. There is therefore a huge deficiency in followership in the mosques in Ghana.

At this point, this paper will discuss in greater detail, the issue of followership as a leadership model which is a counterpart to fellowship.

#### **4. Followership.**

Followership can be defined as, “the act of following the opinions or teachings of another or the act of one who imitates another person.” So ‘religious followership’ means an art of adherents of any religion patterned according to the teachings or opinions of a religion or religious leader” (Odumuyiwa, 2004: 311-316). With specific reference to Islam and Christianity therefore the kind of leadership given to Muslim and Christian followers will produce the desired kind of Christian and Islamic followership. Interestingly, as more Churches and Mosques are planted, as more FM stations churn out Christian and Muslim programs, as more huge Auditoriums are being built, the more there is the involvement of Christian and Muslim leaders in all kinds of immoral and corrupt practices which sometimes occupy the front pages of news papers. Like Ghana, perhaps there are similar situations in Nigeria. That is why Odumuyiwa, in his *A Religious but Criminal Society: Any Remedies?* has catalogued the reasons for bad followership in religious practice in Nigeria.

Among other things, he identifies the lack of religious and moral instructions in schools, colleges and even the universities in the country, negligence on the part of parents to train their children in religious norms, various acts of commissions and omissions by religious leaders and parents as being responsible for the lack of followership in churches and mosques. He argues further that the tenets of the religions practiced in Nigeria are not followed strictly. Commercialization of religion, religious intolerance, extortion of religious followers, injustice, lack of integrity of some religious leaders and embezzlement of funds and many other disgraceful practices by adherents of Islam and Christianity are largely responsible for the huge deficit in followership.

One can identify all of these with recent happenings on the Ghanaian religious landscape and even more. It is a fact that one cannot plant apples and reap grapes. So whatever we plant is what we shall reap. Whatever kind of Christian or Muslim leadership we cultivate shall produce the kind of influence that we shall reap. So could it be that there is a weakness in the theological formation of Christian and Muslim leaders that needs to be addressed?

Years ago when one of these researchers was a student at the Trinity Theological Seminary, there were many clubs on the campuses and students who got themselves involved in these clubs tried to acquire leadership skills. However, most of them operated as power bases rather than service fraternities. People talked with so much authority. There was no stewardship but mainly a warm fellowship with a macho leader. There were no leadership courses offered to the students to help them try out their leadership skill more effectively. In other words, what kind of followership program is in place for the seminarians to use as a measure in practising leadership in the respective clubs? The point is that there is no uniqueness about the management of clubs in seminaries or theological institutions.

Leadership, like most academic concepts, has several definitions. For the purpose of this paper however, we shall cite Daniel Wambudta one of the great Old Testament scholars in Africa. He defines leadership as

*the art of reciprocal interplay between the led and the leader; leadership takes place in a space which is circumscribed and conditioned by certain features, be they geographical, ecological, historical or cultural. Leadership emerges within time identified with particular circumstances*

*because the leader is able to give answers to problems conditioned by the space and time on hand (Wambutda, 1991: 17).*

Indeed this definition shows clearly the relationship between the leader and the led which indicates the close relationship between followership and leadership. In this paper, followership is being explored in the context of the interaction between the one in charge of a group and the group members. In other words, how does one create a good followership program that would ensure effective operation of the group for transformation and positive self extension to both insiders and outsiders?

After the death of the Prophet Muhammad, Abu Bakr was elected to take charge of the affairs of the Muslim community. His very first address to the *ummah* is important for exploring the relationship between leadership and followership. Among other things he said:

*O my people, I have been appointed to govern you but I am not the best among you. If I am good in governance, support me: but if I am deficient, correct and guide me. Truth is a trust as untruth is a betrayal. I will protect the interest of the weak among you until he secures his rights...Obey me so long as I obey Allah and his messenger; but if I disobey Allah and his messenger, I do not deserve your loyalty... (Hassan, 2000: 92).*

From the above address, Abu Bakr basically set the pattern for Muslim leadership. This model of leadership establishes a clear relationship between leadership and followership. He sets criteria of leadership by example, where he encourages the people to do their duty to him as followers so long as he continues to earn their trust. This trust must be premised on adherence to the communion that binds all of them to Allah and his messenger.

We would here like to explore the concept of followership in the context in which Jesus identifies himself as 'the good shepherd' in John 10:4 with identified flock as the sheep. 'That is a much clearer indication that Jesus Christ saw himself as a leader with definite but open-ended followership' (Mackenzie, 1978: 803).

The famous Psalm 23 in the Old Testament is quoted by most Ghanaians to indicate that the Lord God is the Shepherd of the people of Israel. God is the one who leads the flock to greener pastures, water, and safety. He protects them and delivers them from the hands of wicked attackers. John L. Mackenzie (1978) notes that

*In ancient Near East, the title shepherd was applied both to kings and the gods. Lipit-Ishtar of Ism is the wise shepherd, the humble shepherd, and Hammurabi is the shepherd of the people. The god Shamash is addressed as shepherd. The Old Testament theological use of the title, however, shows a variation from the Mesopotamian use. The king of Israel is never called a shepherd directly (803).*

However, the Lord Jesus called himself the good shepherd and some other persons also recognized him as such (Heb.13:20). The imagery of the shepherd here is that of a guardian who takes good care of people. In one of the sayings of Muhammad as reported by Abdullah bin 'Umar, the Prophet is reported to have said that,

*All of you are guardians and responsible for your wards and the things under your care. The Imam (i.e. ruler) is the guardian of his subjects and is responsible for them and a man is the guardian of his family and is responsible for them...a servant is the guardian of his master's belongings*

*and is responsible for them...all of you are guardians and responsible for your wards and the things under your care (Al-Bukhari, n.d: Vol II: 8).*

Thus both in Islam and in Christianity, leadership connotes being a shepherd and having guardianship responsibility for your flock.

The question here is what type of guardianship is being suggested. Indeed, it denotes a type of quality of leadership. In this regard, one of the key tenets of followership is the concept of exemplary leadership. Jesus showed exemplary leadership, not just by talking about it or calling himself 'a humble servant' but he demonstrated it as he led them. Some of the instances when Jesus exhibited this type of leadership were:

*Jesus will not discriminate against non-Jews ( Mt. 15: 21-28 and Mk. 7: 24-30); He would not allow people to kill a sinner, but asked the sinner to repent (Jn.8:3-11); he discouraged hypocrisy by placing mercy and compassion above religious legalism (Mt.12:9-14. Mk.3:1-6; Lk.13: 10-17, Jn 7: 20-24). And the disciples saw that he often prayed and asked Him to teach them how to pray. (Lk.11:1-4 and Mt.6: 7-15)*

What we lack today are iconic leaders who are role models that we can follow. Indeed we have so many powerful charismatic and flamboyant preachers but we do not have many whose life styles we can follow. One charismatic preacher once said to a group of young students that they should not copy him or try to do the things he or any other Christian leader says or does. They should look up to God alone to direct them because most leaders have nothing to offer in the area of exemplary leadership.

Such teaching cannot be said to be in tandem with either the teachings of Jesus or Muhammad. Just like Jesus, Muhammad's sayings and doings are an essential part of Islamic canon. The Qur'an states that Muslims have in the Prophet, an excellent example of conduct (Q: 21:33).

Secondly, Jesus taught (trained, educated) his disciples on what Godly leadership should be. He started by washing the Apostle's feet and then, explained his actions to them by saying;

*Do you understand what I have done to you? You call me Master and Lord, and rightly, so I am, If then, I the Lord and Master have washed your feet, you should wash each other's feet. I have given you an example so that you may copy what I have done to you. (Jn. 13:12-15).*

By washing the disciple's feet Jesus taught that leadership is not about lording it over the people, but serving the followers. As J.L. Mckenzie notes, this point was demonstrated by Jesus in the course of settling a dispute among the disciples over who is the greatest amongst them.

The Lord astonished the disciples:

*You know that among the pagans the rulers lord it over them, and make their authority felt. This is not to happen among you. Anyone who wants to be great among you must be your slave and anyone who wants to be the first among you must be your slave; just as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give life as a ransom to many. (Mt.20:25-28; Mk.10:42-45) (Mackenzie: 803).*

Thus, as far as Jesus Christ was concerned leadership implied self-sacrifice. That was the kind of training he gave to his disciples. Judging by the accounts of his life, he

demonstrated altruism not only in words but in deed. In relating this to the Church, we must remind ourselves that the Church cannot separate itself from Jesus Christ because ‘the Church constitutes His organised and structured followership’ (McCord, 1977: 10).

However, in contrast to Jesus’ model of leadership, what pertains in our churches today is self-centered leadership. It has become a machinery for controlling the lives of people by amassing wealth and using all sorts of power structures to win souls and then milk them so as to enjoy life. Contrary to this mode of living by today’s men of God, Jesus said that Foxes have holes and the birds have nests, but the son of man has nowhere to lay his head (Lk 9: 57-58) which is a lesson in modest living.

As Peter J. McCord observes, this is in sharp contrast with the conduct of many Bishops, Pastors, Prophets and Evangelists, who maintain courts or headquarters with aides and domestic servants. McCord concludes that it is hard to combine servant-hood or love, as advocated by Jesus, with power. While Jesus Christ denied Himself acquisition of power and earthly wealth, most Christian leaders in our part of the world (Africa), have administrative authority with which rightly or wrongly, they seek for and control funds (Abioje, 2004).

The Prophet Muhammad is reported to have said that “poverty is my pride.” Once he addressed his followers saying, “By Allah, I am not afraid of your poverty but I am afraid that you will lead a life of luxury as past nations did, whereupon you will compete with each other for it, as they competed for it, and it will destroy you as it destroyed them” (Al-Bukhari: Vol IV: 253-254). The wife of the Prophet, Aisha reports that when the Prophet died, there was nothing in her house that a living being could eat, except some barley lying on a shelf (Al-Bukhari, n.d: Vol: IV: 214).

Amr bin Al-Harith also reports that “the Prophet did not leave anything after his death except his arms, a white mule and a piece of land which he had given as *sadaqa* (alms)” (Al-Bukhari, n.d: Vol IV: 214). Once the beloved daughter of the Prophet Fatima asked him for a slave girl from his war booty to serve as a domestic help for her. The prophet replied her saying, “shall I inform you of something better than what you ask for? It is *Allahu Akbar* (Allah is the greatest), *Alhamdu Lillahi* (All praises are for Allah) and *Subhana llah* (Glorified be Allah)” (Al-Bukhari, n.d: Vol IV: 214). Thus when leadership of Muslim congregations compete among themselves for wealth and earthly possessions one wonders whether they are indeed heirs of the Prophet.

Let us now turn our attention to selected churches and mosques in Ghana for their views.

## **5. Leadership models in Ghanaian Churches and Mosques**

Members of the Ola Presbyterian Church in Cape Coast contend that the leadership model on which the church operates is the model of the Apostolic Practice and Reformed Traditions. Under this model, a person is elected according to the principles of the Bible (Interview with Church members). Here when leadership was mentioned the mind of members immediately went to the elders of the Church and not the Minister. When the OLA Bethel Presbyterian Church members talk of the Bible they specifically mean 1 Timothy 3:2-7 which is mentioned in their constitution as ‘Schedule 1’ (Constitution of the Presbyterian Church of Ghana, 1998: 81). However, they indicated that the leadership of the Church is in the hands of the congregational session. This according to them comprises of the Agent (Pastor), the Catechist, the elected member, who they referred to as presbyter. The congregational session or council is responsible for the spiritual oversight of all members of the congregation, the maintenance of Christian Order and discipline, and the administration of the temporal affairs of the Church.

Furthermore, they arrange for public worship and observance of the sacraments, examine and admit members to the congregation and supervise all the groups in the congregation. They also manage, maintain and take care of all the properties of the Church including administration of Church funds among others.

Individual responsibilities within the church include, assisting the Pastor Agent in the discharge of his duties, standing in witness at the Baptism of Children on behalf of the Church, taking an active part in the conduct of services, visiting and reading to the sick to comfort them and helping to settle quarrels which may arise between individuals, within a family or families.

The logical question to ask is how people train in order to take up these roles. Ola Presbyterian Church has a long list of conditions for qualification as leader. These are, accepting the Lord Jesus Christ as one's Lord and Personal Saviour, being baptised and confirmed as a member of the church, attendance to the Lord's Supper, participating in the work and mission of the Church through worship and men's fellowship, paying tithes and other contributions for the upkeep of the Church, reading the Bible and seeking to find God's will for his/her living, living an acceptable life in the society so that the name of God and the Church is not brought into disrepute and finally that one should preferably be married.

A person so nominated as candidate for leadership is vetted and a background check is done. When found capable, he/she is presented to the congregation who votes on the candidates to become Presbyters. According to the congregation there is no specific training for people to take up leadership. They simply become leaders by watching others or sometimes leading in the men or women's fellowship. In comparing their style of leadership to that of Jesus, members of the congregation noted that unlike Jesus' style of leadership there is no follow up on the leaders to make sure they discharge their duties effectively after they have been elected or appointed. Jesus exercised supervisory authority over his followers.

Looking at the leadership model here, it seems a lot of emphasis is put on the team leadership and not on individual leadership. The minister or pastor is here mentioned only and his lifestyle, his input is very minimal in this type of model. In terms of followership, there is very little in terms of modeling or being an icon to others. It seems he has certain duties to perform and he has to set himself/herself apart in order to be able to perform his/her duties properly. There is nowhere stated the issue of servant hood in practice. Christian leadership has become task-oriented and sometimes can become a burden for some of the leaders. They have to do them because they have been elected to do so and not necessarily because it is Jesus' example of mission to the other in self-sacrifice and servant-hood.

Perhaps the situation is worse in our mosques. Islam has no concept of 'priesthood' as such. The most important aspect of 'priestly' duties in virtually every religious tradition is directing and leading the process of worship. Priests are the guardians of religious lore. In most religious traditions, to become a 'priest', one has to undergo months or years of specialised training in order to qualify for such 'priestly' duties. In Islam, the person who directs and leads the ritual prayer among other duties is called an *Imam*.

Islam does not necessarily impose a strict regime of learning and training on its adherents before they can qualify to direct and lead the ritual prayer. In Islam the person who directs and leads the ritual prayer is relative to the congregation that is gathered to perform the ritual prayer at any one particular time.

*Narrated by Ibn Mas'ud: Allah's Apostle said, the one of you who is most versed in Allah's most high book (Qur'an) should act as Imam for the people in prayer; but if they are equally versed in reciting it, then the one who has the most knowledge regarding the sunna (standard practices of the Prophet); if they are equal regarding the sunna, then the earliest of*

*them to emigrate ; if they emigrated at the same time, then the oldest of them... (Ibn Hajar, n.d: 92).*

In a related saying of the Prophet, he specifically states that his heirs are the knowledgeable. Hazrat Abu Darda relates that he heard the Holy Prophet say: "...the learned are heirs of the Prophets, and the Prophets do not leave any inheritance in the shape of dirhams and dinars (wealth), but they do leave knowledge as their legacy..." (An-Nawawi, n.d: 658-659).

In mosques of *sufi* (*sufis* are Muslims with a mystical orientation) inclination, there is a charismatic leader to whom the adherents pay allegiance. Even so, this allegiance does not result in a dedicated and committed followership that makes the mosque a rallying point for faithfuls and devotees. At the Salawatiyya mosque in Ashongman in Accra, the figure of the towering and charismatic Imam Hasain Rashid looms large over the mosque and its faithfuls. However, its followership is limited basically to the Friday worship and the *wazifa* (communal chanting of Allah's name) sessions on Fridays. Most of the faithfuls interviewed said that they were attracted to the mosque because Imam Husain has an intercessory relationship with Allah and therefore when they have social and economic problems he is able to intercede with God on their behalf. Thus in periods of relative social and psychological stability, followership is a theoretical phenomenon.

Now, the issue of follow-up and preparation for leadership comes in here. How is the formation done to prepare people to take up leadership in the Church and in the mosque in Ghana? If it is teambuilding and teamwork, how are they trained to take it up? The followership model suggests a leader who has a lot to offer in terms of being a role model and is equipped to do so in practical terms. Is there any theological package for instance to train elders to be able to counsel his/her followers? Are the leaders able to display lifestyles and models of life that their members will always be proud of? These days we hear of congregations wearing red arm bands and demonstrating against the leadership of the Church or Mosque due to one grievance or another.

Due to the increase in the FM radio stations, we see publications of quarrels and fights between overseers of Church and Mosque administration and some of their members. We also hear of 'shit bombing' (smearing human excreta on human dwellings) by congregational members. In all these scenarios, what role does the Pastor, Catechist or Imam play in these situations where emphasis is put on the team work? Coupled with this situation we also have elders who are also very enlightened. Some of them have sophisticated secular models of leadership which they bring on board to the leadership. So what kind of profile should an agent of the Church or Mosque in Ghana have so as to be able to utilise the followership model of leadership in our world today? What kind of theological input is needed to equip the Catechist, Minister or Imam to meet these challenges? This is because we are seeing situations where people are good preachers but they are not able to lead Churches and Mosques successfully.

The Calvary Charismatic Church in Cape Coast is a breakaway church from the Assemblies of God Church. Here the Minister in charge said that he left the Assemblies of God Church to found the Calvary Charismatic Church because of the Assemblies of God Church's deficiency in leadership policy. According to him, the church is his church. In other words, he largely dictates the direction and governance of the church. In terms of decision making, the church has a prayer force that also doubles as its leadership. So for them to take a decision, it is the prayer group that prays to seek God's face' and whatever God communicates through the prayer is what they do (Interview with Head Pastor of the Church).

The church lays certain conditions for qualification for leadership. First of all, one must be filled with the spirit and baptised in the spirit. Furthermore any potential leader of the

church must be prepared to do things that are in tandem with the vision and mission of the leader. The Calvary Charismatic Church justifies this style of leadership by the argument that Jesus selected his own followers based on the Holy Ghost conviction. Thus who becomes a leader in the Calvary Charismatic Church is entirely the choice of the Head Pastor.

There is no elaborate training programme for grooming leaders except through the routine preaching and teaching services of the leader. According to the Head Pastor, “when I preach and teach in the Church, then I am preparing my members to take up leadership based on the biblical principles that I teach them” (Interview with the Head Pastor of the Church). The church generally frowns on the concept of voting as a method for electing leadership. Indeed the Head Pastor left the Assemblies of God Church because of its practice of using voting as a method for electing leaders. He argues that voting could throw unqualified people into leadership positions because members might not know the people vying for the positions well enough. According to the Head Pastor, he does not like grooming young pastors because they might start building their own kingdoms which might result in power struggles within the church. “Young pastors do not hold positions; they are just there to preach and assist whenever I ask them to do so” (Interview with the Head Pastor). As to the future, in terms of followership, he argues that there is no need to worry, for once the congregation is happy and God is doing mighty works, they can see it for themselves. “Any structures like the mainline or Assemblies of God ones will quench the spirit” he added.

Looking at the model at Calvary Charismatic Church, just like the case of the Salawatiyya Mosque in Accra, leadership is centered on the head who is the all in all who takes all the decisions and sees to their implementation through those he deems fit. An Associate Pastor of the church said he is convinced that with a strong, vibrant and charismatic leader, the church is capable of creating an equally charismatic and vibrant fellowship where people’s spiritual needs are attended to by the pastor. He however admitted that because of the lack of theological training by the Head Pastor he tended to use certain leadership strategies that are not supported by the Bible.

He also said that because they belong to the charismatic type of churches that put emphasis on individual ministries, the issue of team building is not emphasised. The Head Pastor sees the Church as ‘my ministry’ or ‘my church’. So everything is centered around him; all the offertory that is collected is accounted to him and him alone. When he travels, his wife takes over the running of the Church. According to him in the charismatic churches in Ghana, the idea is that you attach yourself to ‘their ministry’ to assist them in just preaching and doing things they ask you to do. There is no mentorship because of the fear that others might start competing with them. If they realise that one has a gift that they do not have then they will find ways of making one feel so uncomfortable that one would have to leave (Interview with Head Pastor of the Church).

The situation at the Wahabiyya Mosque in Nima in Accra is different from what pertains at either the Calvary Charismatic Church or the Salawatiyya Mosque. The Wahabiyya Mosque in Nima is popularly called Research. This is because it has a Research Institute attached to it where it trains leaders for the community and for the Wahabi ideology. It also runs a secretariat complete with staff about 200 meters across the road from the mosque. Thus in the case of the Wahabiyya Mosque, there is an elaborate training program for grooming leaders for the mosque.

The problem however is that, there is no corresponding nurturing of followership. Indeed the Wahabi ideology itself is to blame for this state of affairs. The Wahabi movement is a puritanical reformist movement, which condemns in the strongest possible terms, excessive veneration of shaykhs and religious leaders. In fact Wahabis even condemn the excessive veneration of the Prophet Muhammad that takes place in mosques such as the

Salawatiya Mosque. Thus emphasis at the Wahabi Mosque is on teaching and preaching. There is no conscious effort to nurture a followership, because it is feared that they might begin to venerate the leadership of the mosque. However, the Wahabiyya Mosque is more team oriented than the Salawatiyya Mosque, whose strength lies in the charisma and personal charm of Imam Husain Rashid.

In the same vein, the Presbyterian Church in Ola is more team orientated, than the Calvary Charismatic Centre which is Pastor-oriented. Both Churches are struggling with fostering a model that will ensure effective followership but while the Presbyterian Church puts a lot of emphasis on organisational structures, the Calvary Charismatic Church puts emphasis on receiving convictions from God. So even though there is the potential in the Presbyterian Church for tapping and developing followership, this is not tapped and it is also not monitored to ensure that there is an ongoing program to develop servant leaders. The Calvary Charismatic Centre sees the development of followership type of leadership only in terms of energising and ensuring that the sheep remain sheep and receive from the shepherd through the regular teaching and preaching from the pulpit.

## **6. Empirical and Theoretical Foundation**

Two theoretical considerations underline this paper. The first is the rational choice theory of religion. The rational choice theory of religion assumes that people approach religion, religious belief and affiliation with the same attitude and mindset that they approach the choice of goods and services. Thus people's participation in a religious congregation is done consciously and for good reason. Thus, people will often vary their religious preferences in significant ways, including even switching religions altogether (Iannaccone, 1997). People will vary their religious preferences depending on what satisfaction they perceive that their association with the religion or religious denomination gives them.

This study postulates that, the kind of leadership that churches and mosques offer is an important determinant of whether or not these churches and mosques succeed in retaining the loyalty of their followers or whether indeed the congregation continues to thrive or it fades away with time. According to Iannaccone, "the combined actions of religious consumers (followers) and religious producers (leaders) form a religious market which, like other markets, tends toward steady-state equilibrium" (Iannaccone: 27).

From the way the Salawatiyya Mosque, the Nima Research Mosque, the Bethel Presbyterian Church in Cape Coast and the Calvary Charismatic Church also in Cape Coast are being run, it will not be long when these churches and mosques will die off for their inability to hold to a followership that is enduring. Our thesis stems from a study of past churches that have died off completely and many present day Ghanaians are not even aware that any such churches existed in the past. A typical example is The Church of the Twelve Apostles This church was set up in 1914 by a Liberian Prophet called William Wade Harris, who visited Ghana for that purpose. Indeed it is considered the first of the spiritual churches in Ghana (Baeta, 1962). In Ghana the church revolved around Grace Tani and quickly 'scattered all over Ghana' (Baeta: 9). At a point the church had 100 branches across Ghana. Today, the church no longer exists. This is largely because, there was no conscious effort to nurture a followership for the church. Everything was centred around the prophet, who did not account to anybody. Thanksgiving offerings were simply kept by the prophet without any accountability whatsoever (Baeta: 11). Therefore, leadership styles are important in determining the satisfaction of members of a religious congregation and determines whether the members are sustained as a followership for a long time.

The second theoretical framework within which this study has been conducted is the exchange theory. According to Homans, this theory "envisages social behavior as an exchange activity, tangible, and more or less rewarding or costly, between at least two

persons” (Homans, 1961: 13). Homans argues that people would repeat an activity only when it is rewarding for them. Thus in a religious congregation or organisation, people would opt out when they perceive that they continue to invest in the congregation while they gain nothing in return. Homans argues that “for all actions taken by persons, the more often a particular action is rewarded, the more likely the person is to perform that action” (Homans: 16). This study therefore seeks to argue that the leadership styles in churches and mosques in Ghana is stimulus either for satisfaction or dissatisfaction. If people are dissatisfied with the leadership style in their church or mosque organisation, they would likely adopt a lukewarm attitude towards the organisation or quit altogether as the case of the Church of the Twelve Apostles has shown.

Many other spiritual churches have suffered the same fate. They all had strong charismatic leaders with branches scattered around the country. With time however, their followership started diminishing. Some of them now barely exist beyond a single branch in the entire country. Others simply do not exist any longer. These hitherto strong churches include, The Musama Disco Christo Church, The Memeneda Gyidifo (The Saviour Church), The Apostles Revelation Society, The Church of the Lord Aladura and The African Faith Tabernacle Church.

Jibrail Bin Yusuf recounts how leadership crisis in a Wahabi (Ahlu Sunnah) mosque in Cape Coast has prevented the mosque from being able to hold a permanent followership together. He recounts that;

*Leadership crises in Ahlu Sunnah mosques have created various divisions within congregations. For example, in the Central Region, a power struggle between the Imams at the regional level in 2010, led to leadership crisis at the Abura Central Mosque in Cape Coast and this disrupted daily prayers on several occasions. For over a month, two contending Imams were leading two groups in prayers simultaneously (Bin Yusuf, 2012: 22).*

Considering the fact that the mosque that has been chosen for this study is also an Ahlu Sunnah (Wahabi) mosque, one will be empirically grounded if one were to suggest that except the Nima Research Center also changes its mode of leadership and do things that will consciously nurture a followership, it will not be long when it will also fall into the crisis that has hit its counterpart mosque in Cape Coast.

## **7. Summary and conclusion**

One of the researchers of this paper managed the Organization of African Instituted Churches (OAIC) as General Secretary for a number of years in the early 1990s. In that organization, there was a course called ‘Spiritual Leadership for Bishops.’ That course perhaps had the greatest single influence on East African Instituted Churches. An evaluation of the TEE programs of the organisation revealed that the course caused a lot of transformation in leadership in churches.

The Bishops acknowledged that even though they were spiritual in every sense, they lacked the skills for effective leadership and they were humble enough to accept theological input in that respect. Looking at the Presbyterian model for example, where team building is emphasised, it means one needs a type of minister who is well trained to fit into that set up. Moreover, there is the need to train the elders also to understand the concept of followership. This is a theological task. By this is not meant a retreat to teach them church policy or orientation to enable them manage the Church. By this is meant preparing them to lead exemplary lives practically and also to be equipped to deliver and move their churches forward.

Perhaps the task is even more daunting in the case of Islam in Ghana. Islamic theological training in Ghana is still very much restricted to topics relating to the five fundamentals of Islam. Islamic theological curriculum in Ghana does not include courses that will equip Muslim leaders with appropriate leadership tools for managing people and congregations.

Within Christendom, the main churches are losing the youth to the Charismatic Churches not only because of vibrant music, but also among others factors, the appalling and sometimes bankrupt and corrupt leadership. Here there is an over emphasis on fellowship and not followership. The Calvary Charismatic Church pastor for example is ready for love and commitment as instruments of performance in the church but is not interested in empowering people to take up leadership in the church. He is not comfortable with the organisational set up that will grow leaders who will one day take over from him.

There used to be very vibrant Pentecostal churches like the Divine Healers Church, with such charismatic figures like Brother Lawson. Today, their fellowship has declined and they have become virtual unknown quantities on the Christian religious landscape because there was no followership model to sustain them. Buildings are put in the name of family members with the resultant mixing up of church property with family ones. These churches also tended to create hereditary family leadership structures which were without basis.

This is the same fate that has befallen the Tijaniyya Sufi Brotherhood in Ghana. The Tijaniyya *Sufi* Brotherhood was centered around the charismatic Abdallah Maikano. Every year, adherents of the brotherhood from across the length and breadth of Ghana went on pilgrimage to his mosque in Prang in the Brong Ahafo region to celebrate the birthday of the founder of the Tijaniyya Sufi Movement, Shaykh Ahmad Tijani. Abdallah Maikano did not make any conscious effort to nurture a leadership that will continue to attract the allegiance of the followership that he had generated by his personal charisma and charm. Today his children are struggling to keep the tradition alive but they are barely able to attract the allegiance of the followership that their father attracted.

Perhaps we should end with Robert Townsend's saying that "a leader is a person with a magnet in his heart and a compass in his head" (Jezegou, 2008). There is therefore the need for a combination of a heart of fellowship and a head of followership. Both Islamic and Christian leadership in Ghana have a difficulty in not having a followership plan and a succession plan. Motivational speakers on leadership using the Charismatic model can only create a strong self-identity and a sense of direction in pursuing one's career goals but it has very little to do with growing leaders with a heart to serve humanity and to multiply in that effect.

It is therefore important for Christian and Muslim leaders to bear in mind that when people attend church or mosque, they do so as a rational choice decision and besides the spiritual fulfillment, they also expect, as postulated by the exchange theory, to gain some social and physical benefit. If these are not forthcoming, they would not have the motivation to stay as members of the congregation or if they stay, they would become only passive participants and this does not augur well for the development of a strong followership as far as Christian and Muslim leadership in Ghana is concerned. Thus, as the exchange and rational choice theories stipulate, people are wary of making a full commitment to Ghanaian churches and mosques, because they are not getting as much as they are putting in the church. Their relationship with their Imams and Head Pastors are not reciprocal and do not produce goods that are mutually beneficial to the producers of religious goods (leaders) and consumers (followers).

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