

**LEADERSHIP FOR A SUFFERING COMMUNITY: A READING OF 1  
PETER 5:1-3 IN NORTHERN NIGERIA CONTEXT**

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**ABSTRACT**

1 Peter 5:1-3 text is a case-study that provides guidelines for addressing contexts to leadership in a suffering Christian community in Northern Nigeria. The purpose of this paper is to speak to these leaders where Christians are suffering due to religious conflicts by the Boko Haram insurgency and Herder-Farmers clashes using this text who appear tyrannical and selfish, contrary to the teachings of 1 Peter 5:1-3. The Socio-Historical method of leadership is useful in disseminating Peter's thought to these leaders. The application of this model helps in decongesting the *αἰσχροκερδῶς* and *κατακυριεύων* nature of leadership gaining ground in Northern Nigeria. Therefore, the paper seeks to supply church leaders with a better understanding of the theological message of 1 Peter 5:1-3; and how it can be used to deal with the diverse contemporary, political, social, economic and religious issues surrounding leadership.

**KEYWORDS:** Leadership, Suffering, Church, *αἰσχροκερδῶς*, *κατακυριεύοντες*, Behaviour Northern Nigeria.

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

The paper begins with an explanation of the methodology that was used to read and apply the teachings of 1 Peter 5:1-3 in the Northern Nigeria context. Secondly, the paper provides an overview of suffering and leadership in 1 Peter, the circumstance of the church and communities in Asia Minor. This is followed by an exegesis of 1 Peter 5:1-3, which calls to critically assess the implication of the *αισχροκερδῶς* (selfish) and *κατακυριεύοντες* (domineering) form of leadership in the suffering communities. Thirdly, it sought to use the text to develop a behavioural form of leadership that will stand the test of time in Northern Nigeria. Finally, the paper examined the situation of the church and communities in Northern Nigeria, paying attention to the role played by the religious and political leaders in their predicaments. The assumptions for the paper was that the recommendations were to form useful resources for addressing not only leadership but also building a church and society with a coherent vision, strategy and plan to cope with life situation as well as serving as a benchmark for peaceful co-existence in Northern Nigeria.

## 2.0 METHODOLOGY

The study, to accomplish its task, employed the Socio-Historical method developed by L. S. Vygotsky 1896 – 1934<sup>1</sup> (Felix, 2009). The socio-historical approach to a text is concerned in understanding how the historical experiences of an author and his social group, for instance, a family, a church, or any other group of persons who are united together under some conditions, have affected the presentation of the material. It is interested in learning the relationship between a literary text and the social history of its author and his or her community, thereby focusing on the meaning of the original text for the readers and its original purpose and function for those readers (Slater, 1999). The paper presupposes that leadership in the Christian community is a relational activity that engages with others called followers (Beerel, 2009). As such, leadership being a relational activity, it was necessary therefore to use the behavioural theory of leadership (Lussier, 2006) to apply the text to Northern Nigeria context.

Since the inception of the behavioural theory of leadership in the 1950s at Ohio State University and the University of Michigan, the theory explained two basic dimensions of leadership behaviour. These include task-related behaviour and relationship-related behaviour (Chance, 2013).

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<sup>1</sup>Jeremy Sawyer, Vygotsky's revolutionary theory of psychological development | International Socialist Review, 2015. <https://www.google.com/search/issue/93/vygotskys-revolutionary-theory-psychological-development>.

12/11/2018. Vygotsky's theoretical views were shaped by his own background and the social and intellectual context in which he lived and worked. Vygotsky realized that a scientific understanding of human psychology would first require a scientific theory of human society. Vygotskian psychology provides a deeper understanding of the social basis of human nature and psychology—that human needs and aspirations are satisfied in collaboration with others, and that “human” development is impossible outside of human society.

Task-related behaviour of leadership describes a leader as one who is “motivated by accomplishing tasks and concerned with the delineating roles and specific tasks for employees” (Morley, 2018, para.2). Relationship-related behaviour leadership describes a leader as one who is “primarily motivated with his or her interactions with people. Relationship-oriented leaders often act as mentors to their subordinates” (Morley, 2018, para. 2). Therefore, Behavioural Theory of Leadership considers the observable actions and reactions of leaders and followers in a given situation. The theory focuses on the study of specific behaviours of a leader and how he/she behave and also holds that good leadership is rooted in behaviour (Lussier, 2006). This behaviour is the best predictor of leadership influence and success because it concentrates on what leaders actually do rather than on their qualities. By this theory, one is hopeful to restore the lacking standard of leadership in Northern Nigeria in line with the text of 1 Peter 5:1-3.

### **3.0 AN OVERVIEW OF SUFFERING AND LEADERSHIP IN 1 PETER**

When 1 Peter was written, the church had almost the same issues as the church in Nigeria today. Scholars have spoken intensively on the right motive of leaders in discharging their duties as servants of the chief shepherd: not in a tyrannical and selfish manner that seems to be the order of the present aeon. In the 1960s, 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s several scholars (Kelly 1969; Best 1971; Elliot 1981; Grudem 1988; Davids 1990; Luther et al 1990; Marshall 1991; Goppelt 1993 and Achtemeier 1996) have recognized that the readers of 1 Peter was really facing some degree of suffering and that the letter is mainly to exhort and comfort them in such an environment where they were experiencing various types of hostility, conflict, and trials of faith. The majority of these scholars considered 1 Peter 5:1-3 as Peter’s basic instruction to the church, particularly on ‘living as church members and officers.’ Davids (1990), Kelly (1969), Best (1971) and Elliot (1981) emphasised that Christians are a flock that needs shepherding (5:1-4) and that leaders must avoid the partitions that might come from mutiny or pride as Peter wrote in 5:5.

Several scholars of the present millennium from 2000 to 2018 (Horrell 2008; Lockett 2011; Mason and Martin 2014) seem to share a common perspective that 1 Peter was written both to console those in the Christian community who are suffering and to encourage them to maintain their solidarity with one another despite their trials in Asia Minor. They observed that 1 Peter 5:1-3 is instruction and assurance, concerning patterns of relationship and leadership within the Christian community, referring to ‘elders’ (Πρεσβυτέρους) as those who bear responsibility for shepherding the flock of God. Horrell (2008) in particular, positively views it as a text that addresses or gives instructions on the subject of relationship and leadership in the Christian community. However, Horrell did not define whether it is the relationship between the shepherds and the flock or between the shepherds and the shepherds as other scholars tend to hold.

Most of these contemporary scholars fail to pay attention to the *αἰσχροκερδῶς* and *κατακυριεύω* dimension of the text, which Peter debunked in its entirety. Several scholars (Segovia and Sugirtharajah 2009; Bird 2013 and Schaefer 2018) perceive 1 Peter as a letter that presupposes the imperial and the subaltern nature. They interpreted the letter as a worldly text (an ordinary book) by engaging a critical-rhetorical analysis for interpreting it. They bespeak Peter’s audience as a

marginalized set who only experience harassment and suffering as subaltern people amid their struggle. They failed to see how the text of 1 Peter 5:1-3 is against lording over others and how he criticises any form of marginalisation in the Christian community.

A critical assessment of scholars as shown above shows that from the early 1960s to the late 1990s, 1 Peter had been considered a letter holding and revealing the suffering of the Christians in Asia Minor as a consequence of their faith in Christ. Recently in the millennium scholars such as Horrell (2008); Schaefer (2018); Mason and Martin (2014); Segovia and Sugirtharajah (2009) are also in agreement that the recipients were threatened with suffering because they are Christians. Similarly, Boring (2004) claims that the readers of 1 Peter were subject to verbal abuse and socioeconomic discrimination and not the threat of martyrdom from the Roman state. It is clear that such scholars focus most on the suffering theme of the letter but give less attention to the intricacy and the demand for good leadership as called for by Peter. Peter vehemently discards the lording over and greedy spirit of leadership that overshadows the good spirit of service as expected of leaders in suffering communities. In spite of the fact that leadership is important, the concern for the people should also be significant both in the church and community, since a leader cannot operate without followers. This calls for a methodical study of 1 Peter 5:1-3 with the hope of assimilating its original message and applying it in Northern Nigeria context, where the *αἰσχροκερδῶς* and *κατακυριεύω* form of leadership are gaining ground in the absence of good behaviour, which is the hub of this paper.

#### **4.0 LEADERSHIP IN A SUFFERING COMMUNITY**

The focus here will be on Peter as a co-leader to the elders in the suffering community verse 1 and the task of the church's leaders to their congregation verses 2-3 with the view of understanding Peter's clear message to the church's leadership in the suffering community.

##### **4.1. Peter as A Co-Leader to the Elders in the Suffering Community (5:1)**

Peter uses the conjunctive particle “οὐν” (then) to link 5:1-3 with the previous section about the suffering nature described in 4:12-19. Michaels (1988) affirmed this by explaining that the particle οὐν links the appeal at the beginning of 5:1 very closely to what has preceded in 4:12-19, on the ground that the beginning of judgment in 4:17-18 ‘from the house of God’ places unprecedented demands on any who serves as a leader in the congregation. The verb *παρακαλῶ* ‘I appeal or beseech’ (Kahler, 2005, p. 15) also links this passage to the address *Ἀγαπητοί*, ‘dear friends,’ of 2:11. Some scholars (Michael, 1988; Marshall, 1991; Goppelt, 1993 and Achtemeier, 1996) argue on the relation of 5:1-5 and 4:12-19 that the movement is from eschatological joy and glory in 4:13 to the notion of partners in glory in 5:1 and 4. However, this would not account for the whole of verses 1-5 because of the added instruction to elders in verses 2-3 and an address to the younger people and everyone in verse 5. So, Green (2007) maintains that it will be better to imagine 5:1-5 as a whole since it draws out the implications of ‘judgment from the household of God’ and ‘doing good’ in 4:18-19, which lays the bedrock for Peter's urging in chapter 5. This clearly indicates that the precarious message of 4:12-19 gave birth to the admonition of leaders and members in 5:1-5 on their service and cordiality in the community.

The word *πρεσβυτέρους* (elders) has been interpreted differently by scholars to mean elders, elderly people or the ageing people in the community, the council of elders, village officials, executive committees of priests and senior groups of different types (Trenchard, 2003; Kahler, 2005). According to Danker et al (2000), *πρεσβυτέρους* means the council of elders that is, the council of leaders in a community of Christ-followers (1 Timothy 4:14) or leaders in a congregational setting of Christ-followers (1 Peter 5:5:1, 5). They are also ranked as superior in age, older (of advantage in age over another). But Peter used it here in the sense of ‘leaders who are in charge of a congregation’ as common usage in Pauline letters and the entire New Testament (Zodhiates, 1993). The *πρεσβυτέροι* are considered as ‘shepherds or pastors’ who are involved in pastoring and overseeing (Merkle and Schreiner, 2014, p. 113). Marshall argued that the description of the leaders of the church as elders does not mean old age, but the description of their tasks in the congregation within the suffering community makes it clear that “Peter is thinking of them in their capacity as church leaders” (Marshall, 1990, p. 160). Similarly, both Donelson (2010) and Adeyemo(2006) suggest that the elders' Peter was appealing to are the church leaders who have the responsibility of watching over those God has entrusted to their care. Therefore, Peter’s focus here is on elders whose leadership position is equated with shepherds or Pastors called upon to care for the flock of God and exercise oversight over it. Peter begins by defining his paramount personal relationship with the elders of the churches in the suffering communities, which serves as the basis for his exhortation. As a leader with a purpose, Peter considered and identified himself as *συμπρεσβύτερος* (a fellow elder), *μάρτυς τῶν τοῦ Χριστοῦ παθημάτων*, (a witness of Christ’s sufferings) and *καὶ τῆς μελλούσης ἀποκαλύπτεσθαι δόξης κοινῶς* (and one who also will share in the glory of Christ at the end). Peter did not distance himself from the elders and refused to assume a tyrannical form of leadership when addressing them. Scot McKnight argues that Peter identified and assured the elders that they have three traits in common, “They are all elders, witnesses of Christ’s suffering and will partake of the future glory” (McKnight, 1996, p. 259). This action of Peter creates a stimulating atmosphere of addressing the leaders in a manner of empathy and togetherness.

The word ‘*συμπρεσβύτερος*’ (a fellow elder) is both a “statement of modesty and sympathy” (McKnight, 1996, p. 259), indicating Peter as a co-elder or leader who knows the temptations these elders encounter and the essence of the calling he needs to spell out in verses 2-3. He described himself together with the elders among his audience, as a “person involved in leadership within Christian communities” (Green, 2007, p. 164); also as someone who knows the responsibilities of their role from the inside. These again show how Peter did not put himself above others in the community; rather, he called himself a ‘fellow elder’ and deliberately included himself among the church leaders he was exhorting. This signals how Peter is the apostolic role model for his fellow elders of the Asia Minor, who are being called upon in turn to be role models for all in the Christian communities. Peter might have known or heard about their situation (1 Peter 1:1-2) and how they went through suffering, which led to his exhortation. He encouraged them that Christ had suffered for them and would sustain them and that glory always follows suffering if they submit to the Lord.

#### 4.1.2 THE TASK OF THE CHURCH'S LEADERS TO THEIR CONGREGATION (5:2-3)

In these verses 2-3, Peter pays attention to the tasks of the church's leaders to their congregations in the suffering communities. He focuses on points that are essential in providing true and godly leadership to the suffering communities. The verses (2-3) reveal three points that explain the magnitude of the leader's responsibilities, which are their ministry, motive, and manner.

##### 4.1.2.1 MINISTRY

In verse 2, Peter used the imperative *ποιμάνετε τὸ ἐν ὑμῖν ποιμνιον τοῦ θεοῦ* 'shepherd the flock of God that is in your care.' The call to *ποιμάνετε* (shepherd) the flock indicates the ministry of the leaders. The ministry here is to the congregations and "they are to function as shepherds of God's flock" (Schreiner, 2003, p. 233). Their tasks in the ministry involve leading, encouraging, feeding, disciplining and guarding the flock in all situations. The word 'ποιμνιον' means the "flock" (Danker, 2009, p. 291), a metaphor for the people of Israel, and the "congregation" (Lust et al., 2008, p. 982). This flock also means a "group of Christ's disciples and bodies of Christians" (Kahler, 2005, p. 19). In recalling the tasks of shepherding in the Scripture, the leaders are not expected to be like the shepherds indicated in Ezekiel 34:4 who treated their flock without proper care but instead treated them harshly, brutally and cared only for themselves. Peter's emphasis here is on the 'need for good leadership' (Mulholland and Osborne, 2016, p. 253) as a solution to the hostility that was experienced by the churches of the Asia Minor.

The ministry of the pastors is to provide care for the people of God. Jobes (2005) explains that it is not surprising that Peter is drawing from the shepherding motif in Isaiah 40:11 and Ezekiel 34:12, 23 here; and from his own remembrance of his reconciliation with Christ in John 21:15-19. Here Jesus asked Peter to feed and care for his sheep as a shepherd under Jesus Christ. It was then that Jesus the great Shepherd commissions him in his role as shepherd of the flock of Jesus Christ. Peter now in turn commissions fellow elders to shepherd and oversee the Christian believers in their situation. This shows that the ministry of the leaders of Asia Minor focuses on the participle 'ἐπισκοποῦντες' (overseeing) which modifies the verb 'ποιμάνετε' (shepherd), and is then further qualified by three sets of opposing qualifiers as "overseeing them not as if forced, but willingly, according to God; overseeing them not greedy for gain, but eager to be of service; overseeing them not as domineering, but being role models for the flock" (Jobes, 2005, p. 304). This further means that since the flock does not ultimately belong to the shepherd, but to God. The shepherd's job is to lead and care for the sheep, willingly, lovingly, and humbly. He or she is to strive for his or her heavenly reward by faithfully fulfilling his or her tasks as a shepherd, rather than being preoccupied with financial gain.

In every environment, the leader has the responsibility of protecting his flock. The example of David who as a shepherd (1 Samuel 17:34-37) fought with lions to protect the flock he was shepherding is worthy of emulation by leaders. According to Marshall, a true leader keeps his people from "wandering away in their stupidity; to protect them from dangers from wild animals and thieves; to feed them; to find them, even at personal risk, when they are lost; to prevent one

animal from taking advantage of others; to maintain unity within the flock, and to exercise individual care” (Marshall, 1990, p.162). Therefore, when leaders comprehend their ministry well they will ultimately have a willing heart and the right motive in discharging their duties.

#### 4.1.2.2 MOTIVE

Having the right motive in overseeing the church of God plays a vital role and brings unprecedented results in the suffering communities. The expression in verse 2<sup>b</sup> μηδὲ αἰσχροκερδῶς ἀλλὰ προθύμως (not even greedily but freely or eagerly), indicates the ‘motive’ (Forbes, 2014, p.168) behind the task of shepherding. Alikin (2010) explains that in the early Church, Church leaders were sometimes supported financially and materially to enable them to perform their clerical activities without being hampered by labour or other professional duties. This means that the desire to have money all the time by the leaders could be the reason for some leaders to serve. That was why in Peter’s era, there seem to be leaders who served unwillingly and only focused on what they would get from the flock (members). There was also an ongoing allegation against the behaviour of the moral leaders or teachers who were saddled with the responsibility of leading God’s people under their care. Keener elucidates that “charges of illegitimate gain were often made against moral teachers in the ancient world, and it was necessary for Christians to avoid even the appearance of impropriety” (Keener, 2014, p. 696). Such an attitude for illegitimate gain is capable of affecting and destroying the growth of the church, especially in the Christian suffering community. This made Peter exhort and ask them to serve the Lord with a willing heart in their suffering communities.

Jobes opines that the term ‘αἰσχροκερδῶς’ implies “a dishonest attempt to gain financially, which suggests that the leaders who oversaw the Christian community sometimes misappropriated its resources for their own gain” (2005, p. 305). Such a motive demonstrated by some leaders will definitely affect the efficacy of their profession. This explains that leaders are not supposed to be motivated by the desire for financial gain, prestige, power or promotion but by a spirit of eagerness to serve others. The emphasis here by Peter is that elders (leaders) must not in any way take a leadership position out of greed, because there is a danger for those who “resort to dishonest gain and embezzle funds in some fashion” (Schreiner, 2003, p. 234). So, they are expected to be eager to work and not to be apathetic or lazy just as Jobes further affirms that the “proper attitude of an elder is an eagerness to give, not a desire to get” (200, p. 305). This is because it will prove that they love Christ and the flock and that they do not simply have a job to do with a wrong motive but in the right manner.

#### 4.1.2.3 MANNER

The call to oversee the flock of God requires good character on the part of the shepherd. Peter rebuked the leaders for their spirit of domineering over the congregation in such a difficult time of suffering. The expression in verse 3 μηδ’ ὡς κατακυριεύοντες τῶν κληρῶν ἀλλὰ τύποι γινόμενοι τοῦ ποιμνίου (not even to exercise dominion over them but becoming an example to the flock) shows “concerns with the attitude of elders toward those in their care” (Forbes, 2014, p. 168). Peter probably takes this cue from the teaching of Jesus recorded in Mark 10:42. The manner of

leadership is the paramount concern of Peter here. The antithesis  $\mu\eta\delta'$  ὡς κατακυριεύοντες implies “subduing an enemy or an unwilling populace” (Watson and Callan, 2012, p. 235). The motive and manner for the ministry should be for elders (leaders) not to behave like a boss to others but to exemplify the character of Christ to those under their charge (Schreiner, 2003), for that is the right manner expected of every servant leader. This, therefore, explains that leadership is by example and not a dictatorship as some 21st century leaders think.

## 5.0 THE SITUATION OF THE CHURCH AND COMMUNITY IN NORTHERN NIGERIA

In considering the context of leadership in Northern Nigeria, one must confess that it is worrisome. This is because there is a picture of ineffective, selfish and domineering leadership in the religious communities and the entire country. The situation of Christian leadership in Northern Nigeria seems to be that of the quest for popularity, comfort, riches and pleasure (Danbaba, 2016) but lacking completely in integrity. Iheanacho affirms that “the level of the material quest by Nigerian Christians, especially clergymen, is radically in deviance, and inimical to the values and life of the early Church” (2009, p. 106). Such kind of leadership overtakes the desire to render good shepherding and to save the lost souls as well as bring healing to the faith of those being traumatized as a result of Boko Haram insurgency and Fulani-Herdsmen and farmers clashes in the community. It looks as if the message of 1 Peter 5:1-3 is not being understood in Northern Nigeria. Church workers in Northern Nigeria utterly “complaints of extravagance spending of the church funds by church leaders at all levels and their family members on another hand” (Paul et al, 2014, p. 189). As such, Mali (2012) explains that there is a great abuse of church leadership in Nigeria. When the church deviates from its ideals, when church leaders fail to take responsibility for internal corruption, the church begins to decay. Some Church leaders are preoccupied with money and self-aggrandizement, leading them to discontent within the Christian community. Such mode of leadership in Northern Nigeria creates a major problem and proves the fact that leaders read and taught from 1st Peter but turn a deaf ear to the comprehension of its message in most communities.

Consequently, Sulaiman (2016) expressed his displeasure on the character of religious leaders in Northern Nigeria. He elucidates that some religious leaders, despite their calling, are given to selfishness. They get closer to the Government for their personal interest in times of crisis. The selfish behaviour of some leaders has made them become silent over the killings caused by Boko Haram insurgency<sup>2</sup> and Fulani-herdsmen and farmers clashes<sup>3</sup> (Sulaiman, 2016), and one hardly hears any condemning the wanton destruction in communities. Some diverted the relief materials that are mainly for the internally displaced persons (IDPs) for their personal selfish amelioration.

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<sup>2</sup>Boko Haram means "Western" or "non-Islamic" education is a sin. It has been active in Nigeria since 2009. The group is active in the north of Nigeria, and wants to impose Islamic law as the only law in Nigeria. <https://ctc.usma.edu/boko-haram-escalates-attacks-on-christians-in-northern-nigeria>. 4/2/2019.

<sup>3</sup> The Fulani Herdsmen are a tribal group known as nomad. There are within the Fulani tribal group radical Muslims who are attacking Christians and trying to take territory. <https://www.mnnonline.org/news/could-the-fulani-herdsmen-and-boko-haram-be-related>. 4/2/2019.

According to the behavioural theory of leadership, leaders who have no relations with those they lead point to a leadership that cannot influence meaningful changes. Some leaders are fully involved with the bad politicians and have failed to confront the challenges of the time holistically because of their selfish ambition and fear. In fact, one concurs with Emma-Echiegu who pointed out that the roots of crisis, poverty, and insecurity in Nigeria are deeply political as well as religious. This is because the country is surrounded by the “narrow-minded leaders, greedy officeholders, and belly-politicians, bereft of patriotic and nation-building visions” (Emma-Echiegu, 2017, p. 7). They love to exercise authority over their congregations and communities but lack wilful power to protect their people and preach against unethical behaviour like Peter. In a ‘report warns of Christian crisis in Northern Nigeria’ the leadership of the church was intensely blamed for lack of foresight in providing leadership to the suffering communities. This was elucidated thus:

Church leaders in Nigeria have failed to produce a “coherent vision, strategy, or plan to cope with the crisis”, the authors say. They write of “a legacy of pietism from the missionary movement from the West that emphasizes the individual believer’s responsibility to follow Jesus, and prepare for heaven, and disregard their earthly circumstances... Merely being peacemakers and loving one’s enemies will not solve the Christians’ plight.” The Church must provide “a holistic vision of the Christian faith, in which personal salvation is coupled with the social transformation” (Davies, 2016, para. 3).

It is sad that this is the condition of some churches’ leadership where more is demanded from her. Instead of selfless service, tyranny and covetousness are gradually taking the lead and have massively destroyed the foundation of the Church and her leadership in Nigeria. However, this kind of situation in Northern Nigeria can be ratified only by the behavioural theory of leadership, because when leaders relate with the people they lead, this provides a meaningful change.

## **6.0 PETER’S κατακυριεύω AND αἰσχροκερδῶς IN THE LIGHT OF AUTOCRATIC AND GREEDY FORMS OF LEADERSHIP IN NORTHERN NIGERIA**

The behavioural theory of leadership as mentioned earlier focuses on the study of specific behaviours of a leader; that is, how he or she behaves. It concentrates on what leaders actually do rather than on their qualities. Being κατακυριεύω means to exercise lordship and suggests ruling in a way that is dominating, exercising dominion over someone (Harrison and Picirilli, 1992). The Κατακυριεύω in leadership occurs when the person in authority feels the need to dominate and subdue those under his or her authority rather than, provide care, guidance and service to them. Peter exhorted his recipients on that because it promotes tyranny rather than servanthood and goodliness. It gives a bad reputation to Christ and his kingdom. The Christian leader should not embrace a dictatorial attitude, because a domineering manner is “an unbridled ambition, an offensive strut, a tyrant’s talk no attitude could be less fit for one who claims to be a servant of the son of God” (Sanders, 2007, p. 49). Like the focus of Peter in 5:2-3 on the right behaviour in shepherding, there is a great need now to draw the attention of the church and community leaders in Northern Nigeria on the magnitude of their negligence to the precious flock of God under their care. The major disease that is gradually affecting leadership in the North according to Agbiji and Swart (2013), is the exercise of undue power over the people and the desire to make it in life by all

means, which is against the behavioural theory and how Peter preached it. Such attitudes and quests have developed selfish and uncaring leaders in some affected Christian suffering communities and churches in Northern Nigeria.

The αἰσχροκερδῶς (greedy or selfish) form of leadership is what Peter warned his recipients against, but it is becoming an epidemic in Northern Nigeria today. Flint elucidates that potential leaders waste their God-given abilities when they are corrupted both physically and spiritually by allowing “selfishness, greed and desire for power to drive their leadership motives. These are things that can easily result in poor results and failure both for the leader and the organization” (2011, p. 126). When leaders are becoming focused on the quest for materialism more than their primary duty, it distorts the efficacy of their vocation and promotes pseudo messages that will affect the integrity of the church. A true leader thinks on how to bring food on the table of those who are in dire need rather than take it from their table. He finds joy and fulfilment in feeding the flock rather than have the flock that is in precarious conditions feed him. Like Peter (1 Peter 5:2), it is high time for leaders in Northern Nigeria to develop and practice a behavioural theory of leadership, which is concerned with achieving the tasks through a relational attitude that portrays Christ to the outside world. They should also know the magnitude of their calling in this perilous era, and be willing to provide leadership that assures hope and tranquillity to the people rather than clamouring for material gain. There are two dangers that leaders in all walks of life must be very cautious of in providing leadership to the suffering communities.

### **6.1 The Danger of Dictatorship Leadership**

The danger of dictatorship leadership does not only affect the church but it affects the behaviour and integrity of the leader also. Instead of leading God’s people as expected of him by the chief shepherd, when a leader decides to manipulate and take advantage of the flock, he disobeys God. This will eventually affect his personal relationship with God. He will no longer hear from God because the self has become his or her model instead of Christ. Both king Nebuchadnezzar (Daniel 4:25-33) and King Herod (Acts 12:21-23) suffered the danger of dictatorship over their subjects in leadership and taking the place of God instead of imitating his examples. The leadership behaviour, power and authority leaders ought to demonstrate should certainly take after Jesus’ style of leadership that He tasked Peter in John 21:15-19, and Peter, in turn, puts the responsibility on the shoulders of the leaders of the Asia Minor churches as a message to the universal church. Dictatorship leadership over church members is clear disrespect to God who called leaders to such prestigious positions. Leaders who take the oversight of God’s people with autocracy dishonour the chief shepherd and bring shame to the body of Christ; because they are leading opposite to the mandate and principle of shepherding exemplified by Christ and taught by Peter. In my ten years of service as a pastor, I have keenly observed that when a leader becomes so autocratic in serving his people, he or she creates the following defects and complex in their lives, which was the reason why Peter admonishes on being an example to them:

**Fear:** When members fear their leaders, it degenerates them from the purpose and the power of God in them. It removes the spirit of God in them (2 Timothy 1:7) and promotes self instead of the spirit of power that dispels timidity, love and self-discipline in the Christian communities.

**Loss of Hope:** Autocracy stunts the faith of any meaningful community. Followers want to see genuine behaviour demonstrated by the leaders and hope to grow and utilise their gifts when leadership creates an atmosphere for them. It is dangerous when membership loses optimism and hope for their leaders. It kills their morale and makes them vulnerable to the enemy (1 Peter 5:8).

**Contempt for the Body of Christ:** Members will no longer have an interest in doing the things of God. They will doubt the power of God and the authority of the manifesto of Jesus in Luke 4:18 for the emancipation of the church. It destroys the zeal for the work of God in the life of the members. This would lead to the disrespect of God and leadership by the congregation since leaders fail to be an embodiment to them.

**Mediocrity Gains Ground Instead of Expertise:** This will hamper the development and empowerment of generational leaders. The talented and prospective young leaders will be afraid to speak and the wrong people will continue to be used, which in turn would result in mediocrity in leadership. An autocratic and aristocracy system will leave all young zealous members behind and abandon them altogether.

## **6.2 The Danger of Self-Centred Leadership**

Greed in leadership is an attitude directed towards embezzlement and acquisition of more possessions. In Luke 11:39, Jesus said that a good life has nothing to do with being wealthy and so he warns against greed. The Apostle Paul also warned believers to stay away from those who think godliness is a means to financial gain (1 Timothy 6:5). Peter here also was more concerned about leaders who are more interested in making money than teaching the true word of God. The proliferation of churches and the tussle for leadership in this generation is a clear indication that most leaders love money above souls, yet presume their preaching will win souls. The danger behind greedy leadership encourages the unbearable phenomenon in the church and society.

**Corruption:** Instead of being eager to serve, when a leader develops an unethical attitude of greed in overseeing the flock of God in his or her domain, it encourages corruption. Corruption kills the spirit of any good organization and promotes godlessness amongst its well meaningful members. The quest that leads to selfish behaviour, greed, and corruption, according to Rhule (2013) contributes to creating division in society, and the results are what we see in the world today. This calls for leaders to desist from undue desire and admiration for money that leads to the negligence of the service that is expected of a shepherd in the suffering community.

**Underdevelopment:** Members need the motivation to make an exploit in the expansion of the kingdom of God, but when their shepherd is greedy or selfish this hampers the vision and development of the church. Leaders are the agents of development when they eagerly serve well by disdaining greed and embrace contentment as taught in 1 Timothy 6:6; then growth and development both physically and spiritually will be witnessed in their responsibility.

**Unfaithfulness:** The chief shepherd hates unfaithfulness in all ramifications. Unfaithfulness puts the church and the community in disarray and promotes a nominal organization. It disconnects the relationship between the leaders and the followers from the chief shepherd. Leaders must disassociate themselves from greed and selfish acts that make them unfaithful before their creator and his people. They must all be leaders who have the eagerness to decolonize all forms of domination that stimulates greed or self in the oversight of their vocation in all areas of life.

## **7.0 REMEDY FOR THE DANGERS OF SELF-CENTRED AND DICTATORSHIP FORMS OF LEADERSHIP**

Both the dangers of self-centred and dictatorship leadership can be averted if leaders in Northern Nigeria will choose to develop and follow the behavioural theory of leadership which focuses on task-related behaviour and relationship-related behaviour through practising the pattern of Peter, and understand the hub of his message, which centres on humility, willingness to serve, selflessness and being an example to the flock in all ramification (1 Peter 5:1-3). To achieve that, the leader's behaviour matters a lot. Such behaviours must be seen through their ministry, motive and manner as displayed in their leadership in the suffering community just as Peter practised and called for (1 Peter 5:1-5). First, Humility in service: this is a task-related and relationship-related behaviour in leadership. A good leader exercises his or her authority by being an example (verse 3) in a spirit of humility (verse 5) (Boring and Craddock, 2004). Leaders in Northern Nigeria should embrace the spirit of humility in discharging their duties. In addressing the elders (leaders) in 1 Peter 5:1, Peter begins with humility and ends by taxing the entire church to living a humble life in verse 5. He called them *συνπρεσβύτερος* (co-elder) and placed himself in their position. Such a demonstration by Peter shows the behaviour and quality of a good leader, which is needed in all churches and communities. This is because a humble leader draws the flock close to God and guides them appropriately through his or her behaviour.

Secondly, Integrity: this is another task and relationship-related behaviour in leadership. The word integrity includes many virtues, which we often mention in our daily interactions with one another such as, honesty, sincerity, fidelity, transparency, trustworthiness, and truthfulness. When a leader becomes a man or woman of integrity, people have confidence in his or her oversight of them. This is the quality that Peter commanded the leaders to inculcate in overseeing God's people under their care (1 Peter 5:2-3). Leaders with good behaviour towards their tasks live a life of integrity and overcome the danger of self-centred and dictatorship leadership. Such leaders are sure of receiving their great reward at the end by the chief shepherd (1 Peter 5:4). They practised and encouraged Christ's attitude (Philippians 2:5-11) and his leadership principles in the Bible rather than, allowed pride to dominate them and tarnish their reputation amongst God's people. Therefore, leaders in Northern Nigeria should be men and women full of good behaviour that is shown through humility and integrity in their service to God and his people, and should forcefully like Peter discourage and decolonize the *κατακυριεύω* and *αισχροκερδῶς* form of leadership in their areas of endeavour.

## 8.0 CONCLUSION

The paper has shown that 1 Peter 5:1-3 exposes Jesus Christ as the chief shepherd who calls people to leadership positions. Through the socio-historical approach, the paper explained that Peter wrote to the Christian communities that were being exposed to suffering as a result of their faith in Christ. It has shown that 1 Peter 5:1-3 discards the *κατακυριεύω* and *αίσχροκερδῶς* form of leadership. It exposed Peter's presupposition that in as much as leadership is important, membership is also significant. The paper has shown that leaders must be role models in providing oversight devoid of hegemony, dictatorship and clamouring for financial gain while members should listen to them through submission and humility as a benchmark for cordiality and tranquillity in society. The practice of equity will enhance the cordiality of people towards one another and make the subaltern members of the church and the community feel like they belong in the body of Christ. The main objective of this paper is to help church leaders in Northern Nigeria to be proactive and visionary to their communities like in the era of Peter. They are to disdain self-centred and employ all their wealth of experience in epitomizing Christ's dedication and sacrificial service regardless of tribalism and sectionalism.

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