

LEADERSHIP

LEADERSHIP CRISIS: THE GHANAIAN PERSPECTIVE

The issue of leadership in present day Ghana is a war cry in the daily lives of every Ghanaian. The myriad problems confronting the nation include poverty reduction, the ineffective management of our nation's human and material resources, drug menace, other petty crimes, and the establishment of the rule of law. Effective solutions to the above problems would lead to peace and prosperity. The problems constitute a major source of worry for every Ghanaian in the present world of social, economic, and religious strife. The question nagging the minds of most Ghanaians then is, "How can we overcome our present leadership crisis?" The solution lies in the right leaders - how to identify, encourage, challenge, and develop such persons.

Introduction

There is a leadership crisis in Ghana just as in the whole world. This has doubtless been the direct result of the lack of integrity on the part of our leaders coupled with corrupt practices within all spheres of our society. This lapse, in leadership has led to poverty, indiscipline, the very slow pace of national socio-economic development, and endemic corruption. Fingers are being pointed all over at our leaders in government, business, religion, tradition, youth, education, and families. This is a recipe for crisis and a breakdown of the rule of law and order.

The objectives of this paper are to identify the inherent causes of the leadership crisis in Ghana from the social, spiritual, political, and economic dimensions; to draw the attention of readers to this cancer and to attempt to offer suggestions as to the way forward. We also intend to provoke discussion on this most important issue confronting our nation, Ghana.

In a speech, read on his behalf, at the commemoration of the 10th anniversary of the

Ebenezer Oasis of Love Church at Ahodwo in Kumasi on 4th December 2006, President John Agyekum Kufuor was reported to have said, among other things, that:

"Corruption borders on morality and as such the citizenry needed to make a conscious effort at upholding good moral principles. As an emerging economy, the nation needs to adopt a multi-sector approach to campaign against corruption in all its forms and manifestations that had permeated all segments of the society to facilitate the nation's bid to attain a middle income status by 2015. We should, at all times, try to practice what we preach to salvage the society from evil deeds whilst improving upon the standard of morality in the country."

Professor Ankrah Badu, a consultant at the Korle Bu Teaching Hospital, is reported to have stated on 27th August 2006 that the lack of integrity was the major cause of the numerous problems facing the African Continent. He observed that Africa, though the second largest continent and the most resourced, had become the poorest due to poor governance and blatant corruption. He added: *"We are saddled with high infant mortality; low life expectancy; low quality of life; widespread civil unrest and large, refugee population."*

According to Prof. Badu, good governance should identify people, who would help to build nations and not people who would bootlick or work for personal interests. He mentioned drug abuse, drug trafficking, homosexuality and lesbianism, visa fraud, cyber fraud, pedophilia, '419 scam', and "sex tourism" as vices that bred corruption and social disorder. He advised the youth against them. He called on the graduates to intervene with prayer to halt the economic and moral degeneration as part of the spiritual solution. He stated that:

"You will have to demonstrate a high sense of integrity in your work places. With time and with the support of the Holy Spirit you will change the work ethics of your colleagues."

Our problems have many varied dimensions as discussed below.

The Social Dimension

1. The child in the home - who acts as the spokesperson of his/her siblings - is the 'Joseph' in the house. He has the ears and eyes of mummy and daddy and usually it is through this child that requests to the parents are made. This child is a (potential) leader who must be trained to be truthful. The Bible states, 'Train the child the way that he should go and when he grows he will not depart from it.' Truth therefore becomes an essential part of a child's upbringing which when maintained leads to a leader of integrity.
2. The youth (teenager) at home, at school, at other gatherings and among his/her peers in the social group may be a leader. These are the most vulnerable and easily manipulated if a solid positive foundation is not laid by parents or guardians in their upbringing. In the political arena, they are the best recruits (foot soldiers) as experienced in conflicts world-wide where child soldiers are used in military combats. The history of the Red Guards in China and the Young Pioneers in Ghana should not be lost on us.
3. The father and mother at home. They are the best teachers, pastors, mentors etc. that a child and, especially, the youth may have in molding their future as useful citizens. They must be available when needed and must be the measuring rods for every social, political, economic and spiritual activity. Corruption begins at home when parents are not men/women of integrity. Parents are best mentors positively or negatively.
4. The chief, as head of a traditional area and custodian of the people's heritage. There is hardly any traditional home or community which does not boast, with pride of the good deeds and exploits of their past leaders. Chiefs are therefore, the best source of leadership especially in the area of the protection of the environment

and moulding the lives of the youth, and the aged alike, for the development of the nation beginning from his traditional area.

The Spiritual Dimension

1. The teacher, by his/her style and the seriousness with which he/she carries out his/her duty, affects the lives of the children and youth that pass through his/her hands every week and during youth camps. These children are gullible and virtually believe whatever these teachers teach them. It is a well known fact that in the olden days, teachers in mission schools worked together with parents and social leaders to affect lives of pupils at school and within the community.
2. The fellowship groups or other religious groups are good grounds for teaching good citizenship, good moral values, family life, proper business, and social ethics; not the religious fundamentalism that goes against the progress of the country and the world at large.
3. Religious leaders, who, by heeding the voice of their calling could be agents of change for good and peaceful governance of the nation. They are the best catalysts for good and moral governance and have the opportunity to affect the lives and destiny of the people of this nation.

The Political Dimension

1. The Head of State, Cabinet Ministers, Parliamentarians and Members of District and Municipal and Metropolitan Assemblies: The Constitution of the Republic of Ghana puts the management of the human and material resources of this nation into the hands of these people. Every nation's prosperity depends on the honest and prudent management of these people i.e. the integrity of this class of people.

2. Leaders of Political Parties: They are the types of leaders whose activities will ensure peace and tranquility or otherwise in the nation.
3. Officers and Men within the Military, Police and other security agencies: They are leaders charged with the responsibilities of keeping order, enforcing the laws of Ghana, preventing crime, and protecting the people and the borders of Ghana from external (and internal) aggression. A well trained and disciplined army and police force is a recipe for peace and tranquility for the people.
4. The Honourable men and women of the bench and the bar: This group of men and women of the judiciary and Bar Association are the interpreters and dispensers of justice. They are expected to be leaders of utmost integrity living exemplary lives worth emulating within the society.

The Economic Dimension

The economic advancement of every nation, of course, depends on good social, spiritual and political policies and values. The performance of leaders under the economic dimension, therefore, cuts across.

1. The Chief Director, Heads of Department, Agencies etc. within the Public Sector: There are clear, written guidelines to direct their duties and performance, which when followed should bring progress and sanity in the management of the nation's assets within the civil and public services.
2. The Private Business Community. This includes the board, executives and management of businesses within the various sectors of the economy. The conduct of all these businesses are governed by laws reposed in the office of the Registrar of Companies. The

performance and the integrity of men and women managing these companies also impact the prosperity of our nation.

What are the Expectations of these Leaders?

According to Emmanuel Asante in his Book Stewardship, authority is an avenue for service. Asante cites Bernard Zylstra as saying:

"Authority is an office that is a channel for the realization of divine norms in social relationship."

He adds that, we must exercise all authority for the welfare of those subject to it. He emphasizes that, 'According to the Bible, civil rulers are God's servants for the good of the governed. Politicians and public office bearers are to execute their executive, legislative, judicial or administrative offices only for the good of the citizen.' He is of the view that "abuse of power is the outcome of lack of realization that human authorities, be they civil or religious, derive from God and are subservient to Him. When people in power fail to realize the relative nature of their civil or ecclesiastical power in relation to God, they arrogate to themselves absolute power; a usurped power which, in the hands of the mortal being corrupts the wielder while, dehumanizing subjects. A usurped absolute power gives birth to tyranny, dictatorship, and irresponsible governance'.

Expectations within the Social Dimension

The Child: In the past, the extended family members and the community collectively played active parts in the upbringing of a child. Every person, within the community, noted the family from which a child who behaved or misbehaved came from. In most cases this served as a yardstick with which marriage unions were agreed upon. Unfortunately, the current practice is to delegate the upbringing of children between house helps and part-time teachers. Most of these people are not professionals and have no personal stake or commitment to the development of the child.

The Youth: The behavior of the youth in secondary and tertiary educational institutions leaves much to be desired. The occult and other satanic groups have taken advantage of the lack of moral and

religious education by parents and society. This unfortunate situation is leading to homosexuality, drug abuse, indiscipline and the like into our educational institutions.

There are alarming and increasing reports of occultism, teenage pregnancy, examination malpractices and other acts of indiscipline among pupils and students in the country. These seem to have created a "huge monster" that is giving authorities of the Ghana Education Service (GES) nightmares.

The situation is worrying and the GES must revise the existing code of conduct or develop new ones for the schools to deal with these highly disturbing issues.

There is the strong fear that there is more to be done to prepare these leaders of tomorrow to take their rightful place in society than the mere revision of the existing code of conduct for the schools. All parties must play their appropriate roles.

It is now often said that parents have abdicated their parental roles as a result of many difficulties they face. These difficulties include single parenthood, economic hardships, and loose moral education and practices. There is the absence of family planning and education which has affected the upbringing of children. The educational system has deteriorated to such an extent that there are only a few committed and professional teachers in the system. Social support, in most communities, has collapsed as a result of broken-homes and single parenting. These leave the children and the youth at the mercy of pornographic and other negative activities. The civic and moral education programmes that used to be organized within the Community Centres are things of the past.

Chiefs appear to have lost their roles in leading the communities in good, socially disciplined and morally upright manner. A few of them are involved in all sorts of negative economic activities which have brought them to face to face with the laws of the land. The role of *nkosuohene* (development chiefs) are positive additions to the chieftaincy institution but unfortunately, of late, wrong people have found themselves on stools

and skins which have rather retarded the expected roles of chiefs. The idea of establishing and documenting the criteria for qualification, process for occupying stools and skins by the national House of Chiefs is long overdue.

The 1992 Constitution of Ghana has placed assembly men and women in the position to organize unit committees to galvanize their areas in community service and development. A few of these are discharging their duties effectively and enhancing the social lives of their communities. Many of them however have rather turned themselves into contractors, local lords, and politicians. The ideal situation is to find assembly men and women directly involved with the social development programmes of the neighbourhood which they represent through the District Assemblies. From there, and with the experience gathered, they could be elected to the national assembly to represent the area where they are located.

When talking about sports we immediately think of the development of mind and body, by bringing people from different ethnic and social backgrounds through activities guided by fair play. Sadly, the recent developments in Ghana's local football scene, where clubs 'cooperated' to score up to 31 goals during one game, is without a doubt a stark reflection of the depth of the craze to win by fair or foul means in our nation. This craze has got to the extent that many people in all areas of our society have put on the garment of blindly justifying or even glorifying corruption – petty or grand.

Expectations within the Spiritual Dimension

Religious bodies, are normally expected to spearhead the spiritual, economic, and social development of the nation through sound religious and moral teachings and practices. In the past, the mere wearing of religious garments confers on the wearer great respect and honour. What we see presently is rather religious fundamentalism, immorality, and lifestyles unbecoming of religious leaders. Instead of preaching holy and righteous living, the religious houses have now become extortion clubs, completely contrary to the

teachings and directives of any true religion. Some religious leaders are even bold enough to state that, 'do what I say not what I do'.

Religious groups are supposed to be grounds for training in good citizenship and family life but today, some of these have become grounds for immoral activities, cheating, stealing, and drug trafficking. The leaders are as equally guilty as the ordinary members.

Expectations within the Political Dimension

The President of the nation swears an oath of office to uphold the tenets of the Constitution of Ghana which mandates the rule of law, the observation of human rights, separation of powers, equitable distribution of the resources of the nation etc. What do we see and hear these days?

Ghana's situation may be summed up in the following statement by Rev. Kofi Owusu, The General Secretary of the Bible Society of Ghana,

"Our country stands in great need. We are faced with many challenges and engulfed with many vices. A wind of moral decadence is sweeping over the nation. It expresses itself in many ways, including indiscipline, corruption and lack of integrity in private and public lives. These tend to undermine our stability and the future of our community and life."

With regard to party politics, the expectations of many Ghanaians are that issues bordering on the development of the nation should be addressed on non-partisan basis. Unfortunately however, the hawks in the political parties have not allowed this to happen because of the desire to always score cheap political points. The current energy crisis and the implementation of the Representative of the People's Amendment Act (ROPAA) are issues that should have been discussed rationally, dispassionately, and on bi-partisan basis to move the nation forward. However, what actually happened is a disgrace to the long cherished concept of multi-party democracy. Political disagreements or different, alternative opinions and even suggestions are now routinely deemed as "politicising". We are being forced to speak with

one voice and in praise of any policies of the government. The one side want to behave as if what the other side is advocating is tantamount to treason.

Expectations within the Economic Front

Imposition, payment and collection of taxes are areas that virtually every Ghanaian is to be blamed. Very few people, with exception of the salaried workers, regularly pay taxes. Some corporate bodies and some officials of Customs & Excise Preventive Services (CEPS), Internal Revenue Services (IRS), Value Added Tax (VAT) Service, and Ghana Immigration Services (GIS) are often reported as colluding to under-invoice or over-invoice, as the case may be. The reported collusion is to enable the taxpayer to significantly reduce their taxes due to the state, which is the main source of financing education, health, and other development programmes. Many Ghanaians, especially individuals who live in affluence hardly pay any tax. How then can the government or the nation achieve its goals of national development? Ironically, some of these people are the very vocal on the radio, TV, and the print media criticizing and offering solutions to some of the problems that they are directly responsible for creating.

Many citizens often wonder why it is only the non-security sector employees of the civil service, public service, government-subsidized departments, agencies, and offices that must go on strike to demand or get their rightly deserved better conditions of service. It is well known and an unfortunate fact that a person's rights end at the doors of any of the ministries. It is often reported that to get any thing out of the trays at most of the ministries depends on the mood of the officer or the minister in charge. It is deemed a privilege, indeed a favour to get something done routinely and on time at most of our public sector establishments. The Ministries are supposed to deliver efficient quality government services. These would have yielded good returns to the government chest, which would in turn affect the remuneration of the staff. Unfortunately these staff wants the best conditions of service while providing the most horrible services to the

taxpayers and visiting foreign investors.

Composition of Boards of Directors of both private and public entities in Ghana seems to be the exclusive preserve of a very few privileged well-placed and connected individuals. This is in spite of the abundant stock of well qualified and competent human resources in Ghana. Some Ministers of State and Chief Directors reportedly serve on as many as seven boards at the same time. How effective can they be? Most of them may just be there just to pick the perks and allowances that go with the positions, but not necessarily for their competency. It is not surprising than some of these entities are soundly mismanaged. Some of these people could honourably be honest enough to decline the offer or else deliver quality service of governance.

The latest disturbing development in Ghana is the now global notoriety of the nation as a hub for consuming, exporting, or transshipment of hard and illegal drugs to other countries. The sad aspect is the reported involvement of the Ghana Police Service, which is legally expected to seize and confiscate the drugs and arrest and prosecute the offenders, is now reportedly deep in the collaborating with and assisting the drug dealer and barons.

Commentaries on Lack of Integrity Resulting in Corruption

In reaction to the reported high incidents of widespread corruption and other social vices in he nation, some government officials are reported to have indicated that the government is working towards wide-ranging reforms in its anti-corruption drive. The reported reforms include the expansion of the mandate of the Serious Fraud Office (SFO), whose ambit now only focused on economic loss to the state.

The anticipated fight against corruption must not be the concern of only the government but must be a national preoccupation. It must be a long-term concerted effort, not a photo opportunity event. We have to go about it with law and order, sound administrative procedures, transparency, accountability, and eschewed impunity.

The most important thing is that the fight against corruption should be fought at all levels, in the area of sports, health, law, education and in the private sector.

Ghanaians from all walks of life are demanding good governance, quality education, good health facilities, and good nutrition to enhance the total development of the nation. The nation is demanding accountability and transparency from technocrats, political, religious, and traditional leaders. The media must play a positive, neutral, role by drawing attention to issues that affect the well-being of all citizens.

Writing under the theme 'Time to wage war on corruption', Kwadwo Boateng observed that:

"Miserably, corruption is a plague that has attacked and infected many developing countries today. Corruption is widespread and part of everyday life. Corruption respects no borders, knows no economic distinctions and infects all forms of government. Corruption comes in many guises such as bribery, extortion, fraud, (currency and human) trafficking, embezzlement, nepotism, etc.

.... evidence suggests that corruption retards economic development, shrinks production, undermines competition and denies the poor access to basic services. Corruption diverts resources from the poor to the rich, distorts public expenditures and deters foreign investors."

Professor Henrietta Mensah-Bonsu, the Dean of the Faculty of Law, of the University of Ghana, in a lecture at the St. Peter's Seminary of the Catholic Church in Cape Coast in April 2007 is reported to have observed that corruption could best be eliminated if people faced up to it and stripped it of the undeserved 'dignity' conferred on it with fond names. She expressed regret that people approved of petty official corruption and coined names for such acts on a daily basis. She pointed out that corruption, particularly in high places, placed the poor at a disadvantage and raised the cost of transaction. She conceded that, 'We ourselves participate in such practices in order to secure advantage for ourselves or cause officials to short circuit systems for our benefit'. She wondered

aloud about how the Church "...can end corruption in the country if we ourselves are quick to pay bribe and lead delegations to influence our parishioners in positions of responsibility from doing their duties or encourage them to bend the rules in favour of a friend or relation?"

Professor Mensah-Bonsu expressed utter dismay at the fact that the canker had become so acceptable that even prefects in secondary schools took bribes from students who broke school rules and called on Ghanaians to help wage a war against corruption.

Conclusion

It is a fact that many of our leaders have diminished fervour to exhibit integrity in their leadership roles. This results in corruption in every area of our society. We have all directly, partially, or passively contributed to this.

This disease is cancerous and is getting to its terminal stage. We have to start now and from all fronts. We must never throw our hands up in despair but begin the process of change immediately. The new generation of leaders and our descendants would be the beneficiaries of the change for the better. This requires our commitments to begin from the child in the womb to the aged to resolve to do what is right and upright.

We must simplify the laws on corruption and make them easily available to the public. We must develop effective anti-corruption messages in brochures, manuals and other publications for distribution.

We must address this issue of inefficient and incompetent leadership, poor integrity, and rampant corruption now. The issue of morality must be tackled first, since it is the foundation of character development. We must utilise both the legal and moral approaches at our disposal to compact the growing menace facing us in Ghana. ■

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