

## A reading of Mathew 20:20-28 and implications for local governments in Ghana

**Alice Matilda Nsiah**

Department of Religion and Human Values

University of Cape Coast

Cape Coast, Ghana

### **Abstract**

This study examined the functions of the Metropolitan, Municipal and District Chief Executives (MMDCEs) in the 1992 Constitutions of the Republic of Ghana in the light of Mt. 20:20-28 in an attempt to throw light on their duties from a Christian perspective. The researcher is interested to examine why many of the people nominated for the position of MMDCEs are later sacked by their respective government for unsatisfactory work done and what account for the protest and agitations against them from the assembly people who elected them. The philosophy behind the research is that public officers are to be selected on merit not on any political affiliations. Moreover, the Ghanaian is very religious and religion is said to permeate every facet of their life. Consequently, any Ghanaian of good will, irrespective of their religious denominations, their belief in God and their conscience should impact on their civic duty of contributing to the development of Ghana. The research concludes that MMDCEs appointed on partisan basis without the requisite qualification and working experience are among the possible results of their rejection. Among other things, their orientation and preparation for duty once appointed should include their religious responsibilities to the people.

**Keywords:** Constitution, local government, assembly, decentralization, administration.

### **Introduction**

The appointment and the functions of the Metropolitan, Municipal and District Chief Executives (MMDCEs) in Ghana is often a matter of concern to many Ghanaians. This is due to the fact that many of them are either sacked by the government that appointed them or receive protest and agitations from the assembly members that elected them. The 1992 constitution of Ghana mandates the president to appoint MMDCEs, to represent him at the local level. This makes them chief representatives of the central government in their various areas of jurisdiction. The research examines the appointments and functions of the MMDCEs in the constitution in the light of Mt. 20:20-28 and its implication for MMDCEs in Ghana. The researcher is interested to find out what goes into the nomination, election and appointment of a candidate, what are his/her functions and what account for their rejection and elimination.

## **Methodology**

The work is divided into two parts; the first part examines the appointment and functions of the MMDCEs in accordance with the constitution of Ghana as part of the process of decentralization in Ghana. It also looks at some reports and reactions on the work of MMDCEs. The second part examines Mt. 20:20-28 and draws conclusion and makes recommendations.

The primary data was mainly collected through semi-structured interviews, reports from the media, analyses of a section of the constitution, exegesis of Mt 20:20-28 and observation by the researcher.

Due to the qualitative nature and the interdisciplinary methodological approach to the study, the purposive sampling technique was used to interview ten people, though many informal interactions with other members of the assembly and the general public also took place to cross-check some of the responses from the informants.

A section of the constitution that concerns local government shall be briefly discussed below.

## **Part I: The Decentralization in Ghana**

Chapter twenty of the 1992 Constitution of the Republic of Ghana, talks about Decentralization and Local Government. Decentralization is the process of sharing authority and responsibility from the Central government to the local level. Joseph R.A. Ayee (2008, 233), suggests that Decentralization has been the preoccupation of Ghanaian governments from the beginning. This is due to the fact that the successive governments see decentralization as a viable condition for socio-economic development and also as a way of achieving their political objective. Crawford Gordon (2004, 6), thinks that even under the military regime of Jerry Rawlings, a form of decentralization was introduced in Ghana in 1983. Ayee adds that, attempts to decentralize have not been without problems as most of the time they end up recentralizing power and legitimacy. He noted that in 1988, there was a decentralization policy in Ghana that combined political administration and fiscal decentralization. This is the policy that has been endorsed in Ghana's Multi-Party system and is enshrined in the 1992 constitution.

Many Ghanaian politicians and scholars believe that the purpose of decentralization is to ensure mass participation of the decision making process at the local governance, and help restructure government institutions for effective delivery. However, it seems that the local government act of 1993, and the decentralization policy in the 1992 constitution, and other by-laws contain contradictory policies and so do not provide a clear and distinctive guidelines for effective and smooth implementation of those policies. Kuusi (2009, 13) for example, observes two competing decentralization concepts operating in Ghana. One works by divulging power to local government structures that is closer to the people while the other shares power by delegation. Kwamena Ahwoi (2010, 1) confirms that the constitutional mandate and subsequent legislations convey different meanings on decentralization and this is making actual practice very difficult. Kwame Badu Antwi-Boasiako (2010), argues that the concept of decentralization is either not well defined or not well understood in Ghana which makes government skeptical in sharing power with their subordinates. Moreover, since some regime changes have been through military coups, constitutionally elected governments are suspicious of influence of their opponents on the military to plan coup and so are careful on who they appoint to certain positions like the local government. This impedes a smooth process of power sharing as governments do not trust people who are not in their party.

It is clear then that the concept of decentralization is not clear in the constitutions and by-laws in Ghana to guarantee effective and result-oriented practice of their implementation. This is

because there is no consistent policy to be followed. Moreover, the Ghanaian terrain appears not wholly conducive and comfortable for power sharing due to lack of trust and insecurity. The next portion of this paper takes a look at how the system works in Ghana.

### **Local government**

The first part of the chapter on decentralization is dedicated to local government. The idea of local government is to enhance the decentralization process and ensure the participation of the citizenry in governance at the local level. The basic semi-autonomous administrative organ at the local level is the District Assembly (DA). For the purposes of effective administration, Ghana is divided into two hundred and sixteen districts and each district has its own district assembly.

The assembly constitutes the highest political authority in the district and possesses deliberative, legislative and executive powers (241#3). There are three types of districts, they are Metropolitan (population over 250,000), Municipal (population over 95,000) or District (population over 75,000). Each MMD constitutes its executive committee and this is headed by the District Chief Executive (Frederic Der Bebelleh and Amatus Sonviele Nababumah, 2013,15). We may now turn attention to how the MMDCE functions.

### **Functions of the MMDCE**

Article 243 of the 1992 Constitution and Act 462 of 1993 delineate the function of the MMDCE as follows: (a) presides at meetings of the executive Committee of the Assembly, (b) serves as the chief representative of the central government in the district; (b) responsible for the day-to-day administration and exercises executive functions at the MMD levels; (c) supervises the departments within the assembly, and (d) presides over District Security Councils. They add that the MMDCE's office shall become vacant by a vote of no confidence against the incumbent, supported by two-third majority of all the members of the assembly present and voting or he/she is removed from office by the president, or resigns or dies.

From the foregoing, it is clear that the MMDCE and the assembly perform the same function as the central government at the local level. The MMDCE is responsible for all developmental projects and wellbeing of the people in the juridical area. These range from provision of basic services such as education, health care, sanitation, water supply, public transportation among others. The MMDCE supervises the work of all the administrative bodies, and he/she is also responsible in ensuring security and collection of revenue.

Antwi-Boasiako notes that, the MMDCE as a public officer has the arduous task of marshalling all resources; human and material to cope with the problem facing the district. He goes on to say that to be able to manage all resources requires collective efforts of all supporting structures of the assembly. Bebelleh and Nababumah (15) confirm that MMDCEs are the key players at the district level and they have elaborate administrative structures to ensure public participation in the development process in the districts. They add that participation is an essential ingredient to ensure good governance, consensus building, accountability and transparency. Aye (245) points out that, to be able to respond to the needs of the people in the district, any planning should be subjected to public hearing before adoption. He continues that most of the time there is a rush by the MMDCE to submit their plans for acceptance from central administration that they do not have adequate time to submit them for public scrutiny. Again on few occasions that plans have been submitted, they were very unrealistic and so were discouraging. These and other factors have resulted in a general apathy on the part of the public in the activities of districts as most of them are disappointed that their expectations have not been met. Ahwoi notes that sometimes the MMDCE is caught between local autonomy and central control since he has to

satisfy the government and also fulfil local expectations. This will probably become clearer if we examine the process that leads to the appointment of MMDCE.

### **Process of Election and Appointment:**

The MMDCE is nominated by the government, elected by two-third majority of the members of the assembly present and voting and then appointed by the president. He is elected for a period of four years and is eligible for another term but not for a third consecutive term.

Other representatives in the district are one elected member from each of the electoral areas of the district, the member(s) of parliament (MP) in the district and other persons appointed by the president in consultation with the traditional leaders and other interest groups (Ohene Konadu Gifty, 2001). Kuusi adds that the district assembly consists of 70 per cent of its members elected by the universal adult suffrage and 30 per cent appointed by the president (2009, 18). Fifty per cent of the members appointed must be women, and 30 per cent from the traditional authorities. This is to ensure among others, the non-partisan nature of the appointment of MMDCEs.

A person to be appointed must be 18 years and above. That person must represent him/herself and should not represent any political party. The candidate must be a resident and committed member of the district, who pays taxes and is a registered voter (Local Government Act No 462 of 1993, section 79-80). The election is organized by the electoral commission. The election is to take place six months after presidential and parliamentary elections so that incumbent president always has the chance to work with existing MMDCEs before fresh elections are done. The election is supposed to be free with no campaign cost and candidates do not have to pay any deposit to qualify (Ahwoi, 4).

From the above, a number of issues must be discussed further. The first is that the MMDCE is appointed by the government and the government has the power to appoint 30% of the total assembly members.

In the first place, Ahwoi notes that, Ghana had always appointed MMDCEs or its equivalent from the First Republic up to the Fourth Republic. It was the 1992 constitution of the fourth Republic that mandated the district assembly to approve government nominee through election before one is formally appointed. It is to be observed that how the MMDCE emerges in a decentralized system like Ghana with a unitary political structure where the executive holds power of nominating leaders is very crucial. Sometimes the citizens have no choice but to accept the selection of the executive (Antwi-boasiako). Ahwoi observed again that probably the criterial for one to become MMDCE need to be looked at. It appears that academically, one needs only to be literate in English so that perhaps one can understand proceedings. Since there is also no cost involved officially, the position appeared to be hijacked by the urban elite and not necessarily one who is resident in the local area. It was therefore anticipated that the quality of the assembly will not be the best, hence, government was given the power to inject some expert and experienced personnel into the system by the appointment mechanism. He also points out that even by the election mechanism no matter how much one tries, one will not be able to cater for all representations in the minority groups.

Moreover, traditionally, local government had revolved round chieftaincy institutions that had played important role in offering counsel and mobilizing people for development. The chieftaincy institution is perceived to be neutral in the political landscape, and since they are still very much revered it was considered important for the institution to be represented by the appointment mechanism. Again the constitution was gender sensitive in requesting the government to consider a good representation of women in his appointment.

In practice however, Ahwoi notes that district appointees have become representatives of the political party in power. He adds that from 1994 onward, appointments have not been based on expertise and experience but on party affiliations. According to him, whenever there is a change in government, the contracts of the appointed members of the district are terminated, because they were perceived to be party members of the government that appointed them, so that the new government will bring their own people (5). He cited 2006 as example when the government sacked all government appointees who did not approved of the DCEs that were nominated. Ayece confirms this by saying that MMDCEs are not free and some of them appear to be sponsored by political parties in their high campaigning cost for the post but unofficially. This impedes progress and continuity in developmental projects.

Antwi-Boasiako (2010, 172) states that sometimes, the government appoints a person who has been rejected by the people or is a party favorite. This creates a contradiction and defeats democracy. He thinks that citizens should be allowed to elect their political leader with no interference from the central government. Ayisi (2008) notes that, decentralization has not succeeded in Ghana and appears to have some negative implications, since some districts have resisted the appointments and nominations of the DCEs over the years. Ayece points out that most of the candidates nominated, spend lots of money to campaign from house to house and it appears that those who win are those who are able to campaign (239). It is strongly suggested that assembly members are to be empowered to elect their own leaders without government intervention.

Another issue for discussion is the non-partisan local government in a partisan central government. Ayece suggests that the non-partisan element was to eliminate conflict of interest of incumbent government, in using local government institutions for political advantage. It is also to ensure consensus formation so that candidates are chosen on merit and that decisions come from the grassroots (237). Thirdly, some political parties may not have the resources to sponsor district level elections if it is politicized. Ahwoi points out that there are arguments for and against the non-partisanship of the local government system. Some of the arguments for the system is that it provides a platform for the government to build partnership with civil society organizations to accelerate development and thereby deepen democracy. Its more importantly, prevent ethnic rivalries in a multi-ethnic communities. Some of the argument against the system is that, political parties are sponsoring the candidates anyway so why not make the system partisan.

A third issue is the presence of MP in the district. Ahwoi notes that the presence of the MP in the district creates some sort of competition between the MMDCE and the MP as who can best respond to the developmental needs of the district. This is because, the impression is created that the MP is also a development agent instead of a clear distinction of his duty as a legislator. Unhealthy rivalry can result from this competition resulting in serious animosity. Sometimes this rancor is carried so far that MPs are suspected to be in the fore front agitating for the removal of the MMDCE and vice versa. It is recommended that MPs are not to be members of the district assembly.

A fourth issue is the idea that the government has the mandate to remove the MMDCE from office. The MMDCE has a maximum of two terms of four years each. It does not matter how well one performs, a government can decide to dismiss him/her without reason and the assembly can also pass a vote of no confidence in him/her This made the MMDCE office a very insecure one which makes long term planning and implementation difficult.

In view of these challenges, it is safe for one to conclude that, there is tension between a partisan central government and non-partisan local government. Government and people do not agree on candidates for local government especially in opposition territories. The candidates are not free, do not represent themselves, are un-officially sponsored by political parties especially those of the government in power. For the reasons that the president has power to hire and fire MMDCEs, the MMDCE is often tied to the apron strings of the government. This sometimes brings conflict between the MMDCE and the local people regarding priorities at the local level. Some reactions from the Ghanaian populace are produced below. It is strongly recommended that the assembly is to be given the mandate to elect their leaders through voting without interference from the government. Moreover district election is to be carried out at the same time as the parliamentary and presidential elections so that their tenure of office ends at the same time. This will give no room for a new government to dismissed legitimately appointed MMDCEs.

### **Reports and Reactions on the work of MMDCEs**

Governments, the people and the media complain and argue over the non-performance of some MMDCEs. In a release signed by the Chief of Staff and Minister of Presidential Affairs Mr. Kwadwo Mpiani in 2008 and reported by [mordernghana.com](http://mordernghana.com) in 27<sup>th</sup> December, 2013, President John Agyekum Kufour dismissed twelve (12) MMDCEs in the last lap of his administration. It was believed that his move could foster meaningful development for the people as non-performing MMDCEs would give way to industrious ones.

During the late President John Evans Atta Mills' administration, it was reported in the Chronicle Newspaper that he dismissed thirteen and ten MMDCEs in January and March respectively in 2011. His action was commended by the Regent of Tolon in the Northern Region. The Regent accused MMDCEs of performing far below expectation and described them as "sychophants" and "opportunists". He also urged the president not to spare the rod on the MMDCEs whose misconduct seeks to soil his integrity and affect the implementation of his policies.

In the current presidency of John Dramani Mahama, the Daily Graphic on the 5<sup>th</sup> July, 2013, reported that in the Agotime Ziofe District, the chiefs and people kicked against the President's re-nomination of their DCE Mr. Michael Kobla Adzaho. The reasons for the rejection include poor pace of development, nepotism, autocracy and stiffness on vital suggestions from the people. Similar incident was reported in the Daily Democrat on 2<sup>nd</sup> September, 2013, that the Adenta MCE, Hon. Nubly Kakara Van-Lare was rejected. Out of the nineteen (19) members of the assembly, she got seven (7) votes which represent 38.85%. The reasons assigned for it are: she has been disrespectful to the assembly members and lost touch with the assembly, chiefs and the people. This resulted in division in the municipality which has impeded development. On another instance, the Minister of Local Government and Rural Development, Mr. Akwasi Opon-Fosu is reported to have signed a statement in which thirty three (33) MMDCEs lost their jobs. The minister also asked regional ministers to deal with protests over confirmation of MMDCEs across the country. However, on the 7<sup>th</sup> September, 2013 the Daily Guide reported in Nkwanta North District that the president re-nominated Mr. Paul Gyato to continue as DCE for the area. Unfortunately he was rejected and in the course of the protest five official vehicles of the assembly and that of the Bureau of National Investigation (BNI) were burnt and some properties were destroyed.

This is an indication that the local people are not happy with candidates appointed by government and they agitate against them and the government is not satisfied with the MMDCEs and so removed them from office. What are not clear are the government and the people's reasons and whether the rejections are politically motivated.

It is possible that the government is implying that the candidates are in fact in-effective in public administration at the local level by the use of the phrase “non-performance”. It is also possible that these candidates were not their party members and so could not advance the agenda of the party in power at the local level or that a new central government would like to bring their own people to eliminate all suspicion and insecurity at the local level. It is to be noted however that, there is only six months interval between the presidential and parliamentary elections and that of the district. The late President John Evans Atta Mills for example became the president of Ghana by the Election of 7<sup>th</sup> December, 2008. He was sworn in on the 7<sup>th</sup> January, 2009. This means that as a president he either confirmed existing MMDCEs or appointed new once by June 2009. If he dismissed 40 MMDCEs by 2011, it means that he is dismissing the people that he himself appointed. In a similar manner, former President Kufour was a president for two terms in Ghana from December 2000 to 2008. If Kufour dismissed 12 MMDCEs in 2008, it means that he dismissed candidates that he had appointed. It is therefore possible that the government appointed his own members who could not perform to expectation and had to be sacked.

On the other hand, the people’s agitation may be a sign that a candidate is in-effective in meeting the expectations and needs of the local area, or that, one group of the assembly members such as the MP, the traditional authorities or other interest groups are not satisfied for various reasons. These reasons may range from partisan, bureaucratic to personal grudges against the MMDCE. It is also possible that the people did not get the candidate they voted for, and the government appointed the candidate they have rejected and so they stage protests. However, John Dramani Mahama was voted to power on the 7<sup>th</sup> December, 2012, and was sworn in amid controversies on 7<sup>th</sup> January 2013. From the media reports above, some of the people he re-nominated were rejected by the people. Even though the previous appointment was made by a president of the same party, the re-nominations were rejected. It is possible that the areas were those of the opposition territories or that the president nominees actually lack the experience and technical expertise needed for the office and so were rejected by the people.

### **Response to these challenges**

Consequently, press released on 20<sup>th</sup> May, 2013 by the Director of Centre for Policy Research {CPR}, Gloria Edusei encourages the president to make public, the basic criteria for decisions regarding qualification and appointment of MMDCEs, in the interest of good governance, accountability and transparency. She continues that the CPR wishes to urge the President to go beyond party loyalty, and ensure that professional qualities, proven track record, demonstrable competence are the cardinal principles and necessary conditions that will shape his appointment of MMDCEs.

She said that CPR is also of the view that, if MMDCEs are chosen on the basis of a minimum academic qualification of first degree in any field, with a working experience in the public, private or the voluntary sectors, a proof of leadership and organizational skills, and some knowledge of public procurement and administrative procedures relating to local governance, he/she would be more confident in his/her professional dealings with his/her subordinates and the technocrats, than those chosen purely based on partisan considerations. Similarly, directors of departments will also be comfortable reporting to a MMDCE generally perceived as qualified and competent. She goes on to add that CPR urges Ghanaians to take active interest in, and monitor the processes that result in the appointment of MMDCEs. This would ensure that such appointments reflect competence and the desires of opinion leaders and the citizenry who constitute our Metropolitan, Municipal, and District Assemblies in reality.

## Analysis of data

Responses obtained from members of the assembly and the general public were largely produced through semi structured interviews and informal interactions. The Interviews were transcribed and collated and analysed as follows. With regard to the question on knowledge and acquaintance with the MMDEC, 8 people out of 10 representing 80% of the people know and have interacted with their MMDCE. One person know the MMDCE from a distance and one person does not know the MMDCE, only the assembly member of his area bring information to him from the assembly from time to time. Question on the academic qualification of the MMDCE, 5 people representing 50% said first degree holders, 3 persons representing 30% after high school, 2 persons representing 20% do not know. Question on attendance of the assembly meetings, 7 people representing 70% of the members attend meetings regularly, 2 people representing 20% attended the assembly meetings once and 1 person representing 10% has never attended the assembly meetings. The question on the political affiliation of the MMDCE, all the 10 people representing 100% of interviewees confirm that the MMDCE is in the same political party of incumbent government. Question on whether any development project is going on in the area, 7 people representing 70% said yes, 2 people representing 20% said no and 1 person representing 10% does not know of any development project going on. Question on whether the selection of projects were discussed in an open forum for the participation of the citizenry. 5 people representing 50% said yes, 3 people representing 30% said no, and 2 people representing 20% have no idea of any open forum. The question on whether members follow the progress of the development projects. 4 people representing 40% are actively following the progress of the projects with other assembly members, 3 persons representing 30% have seen some projects and are very happy about them but have not followed its progress. 2 persons have not seen or heard of any development project, and one person representing 10% has heard of a project but has not seen it. The question as to whether the MMDCE is accountable, transparent and good governor. 3 people representing 30% said yes, 4 persons representing 40% said no, and 3 persons representing 30% do not know. The question on the experience and expertise of the MMDCE, 40% of the respondent think the MMDCE is experienced, 40% think the MMDCE follows instruction from the central government and not the people, 20% of respondent did not know. Members were asked to give general comment, some of our informants suggested that, what the DEC's do is to amass wealth rather than serve the people. Another informant said that their candidate does not listen to them; he is always insulting the people who go to him. Two people from the same area, commended the MCE for helping to build a library and a bore-hole for the people, but were not happy about the fact that his life style has changed in a short time that raises some concerns. Most of the informants disclosed that all the MMDCEs they have had were based on partisan lines. Through the informal interactions, it was discovered that some people expect the MMDCEs to pay their wards school fees or pay their medical bills with the common fund. Some informant also disclosed that they were promised by their candidate to give them jobs during the campaign which did not happen. A few others were satisfied with the work of their MMDCE and commended them for the good work done.

It was observed that the position of the MMDCE is very delicate. He/she must have good and diplomatic working relations with the central government, the traditional leaders, the assembly members and the general public. He/she must have some training in public administration in order to be effective. He/she must be transparent, accountable with good track records for effective delivery.

## The examination of Matthew 20:20-28

The examination of the text takes the form of analysis of the imageries used in the relevant portions of the passage. The passage consists of two main sections; the first part is the dialogue

section which is verses 20-24 and its consequence of the second part which is verses 25-28 that deals with the teaching section.

In the first part of the pericope, a mother requested a favour from Jesus for her two sons. In doing so, the mother knelt before Jesus, did him reverence and asked for good positions in Jesus' kingdom for her sons. Donald A Hagner (1995) suggests that the mother is a relative to Jesus. Her name is given elsewhere as Salome (Mk.15:40; Mt. 27:26). Again in Mark, it is the two disciples who made the request and not their mother. Substitution of the mother is suggested to be a way to tone down the ambition of the apostles, it is also suggested that the two apostles only used their mother to get what they wanted. Some scholars suggest that the action of the mother (a relative) in kneeling and paying homage to Jesus before asking for the favour is tantamount to lobbying. The lobby by the mother suggests that her sons should be the immediate co-rulers with Jesus in his kingdom. This echoes what Jesus says in Matthew 19:28 that the apostles who followed him will sit on twelve thrones and judge the twelve tribes of Israel. It can be deduced that the mother and her two sons were still depending on Jesus' promise, hence the mother's sense of urgency for the lobby of the strategic positions in the kingdom.

The response of Jesus in verse 22 indicates that he did not subscribe to the lobby. He uses metaphor of "drink the cup" to indicate the suffering and death that await him in Jerusalem and anyone to be identified with Jesus' future glory means that such a person has to partake in a kind of voluntary sacrifice for the sake of mankind. Hagner said he was not sure whether at this time if the two disciples understood the phrase "drinking the cup of Jesus" to mean their own martyrdom. Even though the two disciples responded in the affirmative and Jesus confirmed their response, he could not allocate the position of honor in the kingdom them.

The word "indignant" in verse 24 is indicative of the displeasure the ten other apostles have shown against 'the lobby' for the two brothers. They were not happy about the lobby of the two. This leads to the teaching of Jesus on greatness in the kingdom in the second part. Here Jesus took the opportunity to talk first about greatness among the gentiles in verse 25. He describes Gentile leader as *archon* which means *ruler, lord, chief, authority and prince*. Delling (1964) indicates that the *archon*, in the first instance in the passage refers to a high official who exercises authority because of his prominent position. Such an *archon* (ruler) dictates the pace of social or community development which eventually affects individual wellbeing. The word *archon* is used with *Katakurieno* which means "Lord it (over), rule, be master" (Bauer, Arndt, Gingrich & Danker, 1979, 412). This portrays a negative effect of the Gentile rulers' attitude on the subjects. The choice and the use of these words seem to paint a picture where the voice and the needs of the ruled are not always heard and met. This shows the autonomy of the Gentile rulers over their subjects. Foerster (1964, 575) thinks the word *Katexousiazō* "to exercise power over them", "implies the tendency towards compulsion or oppression which is imminent in all earthly power". If it is so, then earthly or worldly, power is like a precious mantle that one would like to possess in order to hold the ruled in subjection and master them by applying power to his or her own advantage.

When Jesus comes to the teaching of greatness in the kingdom, he makes use of the imagery of *diakonos* and *doulos* which mean servant and slave respectively (vv26-27). H.W. Beyer (1964, 88), calls attention to the fact that *Diakonos* portrays the idea of a servant of a master. In Isaiah, chapter 52 the "servant of Yahweh" was also identified with the Messiah who became the suffering servant. In the New Testament, Jesus connected himself with the tradition of servant leaders and the suffering servant of Yahweh (Luke 4:18-19). In Mark 9:33-35, Jesus prescribed for the leaders of his Church the same quality: "Those who want to be first must be the very last

and servant (*diakonos*) of all. And in John 13 he dramatically demonstrated this prescription by washing the feet of the apostles, an outstanding gesture of servanthood. The use of ‘servant’ in this context does not condemn the ambition for greatness; however, it throws light on its true parameters with regard to ones’ commitment to Jesus. It implies that in Jesus’ Kingdom, leadership calls for servanthood. Here, *diakonos* suggests various personal helps, service and support. This service presupposes humility on the part of the one who serves.

Another imagery is *doulos*. According to Bauer, Arndt, Gingrich and Danker (1979, 205), it refers to one who is a “slave to a master” in a situation where the master owns the slave depicting “a service which is not a matter of choice for the one who renders it, but something he has to perform whether he likes it or not. This is because a slave does not do what he wants but that of his master (Rengstorf, 1964, 261). This portrays the abrogation of one’s own autonomy and the subordination of one’s will to that of another. Here the emphasis on the service of the *diakonos* is that of a slave. In this light, the distinctive feature of *doulos* points to the subordination and responsible nature one exhibits in rendering his or her service to fellow human beings. The meanings of *diakonos* and *doulos* show that greatness in the kingdom of God does not involve the use of power or authority but rather service of a master.

The use of the verb “serve” in relation to the phrase *ho hois tou anthropou* specifically concerns Jesus. It identifies his own servant nature for humanity: it signifies the highest manifestation of his total life of service to both God and man (G.E. Ladd, 1974, 187). Here, the first part of verse 28 shows the practical truth in terms of who is the greatest. Looking at the phrase “and to give his life” shows a price to be paid. It portrays a spiritual greatness to be performed as a humble service for anybody.

We can infer from the text that: lobbying to a responsible position is discouraged, authoritative leadership is discouraged and servant leadership is encouraged. Moreover, one can aspire to greatness through selfless service. Again, true service involves humility and sacrifice in which the needs of the people are considered. Lastly, one in authority does not do his/her will but the will of the one who sent him.

### **Application of the text to the Office of MMDCE**

This passage is relevant with regards to the challenges that confront some MMDCEs. We can infer from the text that: lobbying to the position of MMDCE is discouraged. One can aspire to greatness through selfless service. Again, true service involves humility and sacrifice in which the needs of the people are considered. Lastly, one in authority does not do his/her will but the will of the one who sent him; in this case the needs of the people and the government. However, good Christian character alone is not enough, The government should appoint people with integral maturity, who are experienced with some form of training in public administration who can do the work. Moreover, authoritative leadership is discouraged and servant leadership is encouraged.

Again, the functions of the MMDCEs need to be streamlined, so that a clear cut policy will guide them to be accountable, transparent, result oriented and effective stewards of the people.

### **Conclusion**

Although Matthew 20:25-28 is not specifically addressed to Ghanaians, the values it expresses with regard to servant leadership has implications for people in leadership positions in general and MMDCEs in Ghana in particular. From the above discussions, it is clear that the appointment of MMDCE is not transparent and may be politically motivated for the following reasons: some of the candidates lobby for the position, they are supported by political parties

especially government in power, they may not be the experienced and expert persons needed and they are sometimes imposed on the people. The concept of decentralization is not clear. There are no clear policy guidelines to be followed by MMDCEs, and some MMDCEs are in-effective because they lack the requisite technique for the post. These and other reasons account for the constant protests against them.

### **Recommendation**

In view of the challenges and problems that confront the MMDCEs with regard to their functions and the servant leadership model seen in the text, the study comes out with the following recommendation:

MMDCEs should be chosen on the basis of at least a good first degree, with some working experience in public administration, knowledge in public procurement procedures and administrative and leadership skills. It is important that the assembly is fully empowered to elect their own leaders to deepen democracy. Moreover, MPs are not to be members of the assembly to allow the MMDCEs to do their work. Again the Constitutions mandate for the government to remove the MMDCE from office is to be reviewed. It is also important that MMDCEs (a) set priorities right in accordance to the needs of the people (b) judicial use of public funds to complete prioritized projects (c) annual mobilization of people to start and complete self-help projects that the central government cannot afford (d) annual forum to educate and deliberate on co-operate and individual business avenues that can generate into self-employment. Selfless commitment to the mission and vision by the MMDCEs to the area of their Jurisdiction will help them to be focused. A good orientation or training program for the newly appointed MMDCE will be beneficial. It is also important to educate the people in the district and get them involved in the activities of the assembly to ensure accountability and good governance.

### **References**

- Ahwoi Kwamena. (2010). Constitutional Review Series 6: Rethinking Decentralization and Local Government in Ghana- Proposals for Amendment. Ghana: Institute of Economic Affairs.
- Antwi-Boasiako B. Kwame. (2010). Public Administration: Local government and Decentralization in Ghana. *Journal of African Studies and Development*. Vol 2(7), pp166-175, oct. 2010 retrieve online [http](http://www.ijhss.org)
- Ayee, Joseph R.A. (2008). The Balance sheet of Decentralization in Ghana. Foundation for Local Governance: Decentralization in Comparative Perspective. Edited by Fumihiko Saito. Heideiberg: Physica-Verlag, 223-258.
- Baah et al (2005). Participation of women in Local Governance in Ghana: A case Study of Ashanti Region. *Journal of Science and Technology*, vol. 25, no 1.
- Bauer, W., W. F. Arndt, Gingrich, F.W., Danker, F.W. (1979). *A Greek –English lexicon of the New Testament and other early church literature*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Bebelleh, Der Fredrick and Nobabumah Amatus Sonviele. (2013). Political Decentralization and Local Participation in Ghana: Perspective from the Upper West Region. *Public Policy and Administration Research*. ISSN 2224-0972 (online) vol. 3, no. 11. [www.iijster.org](http://www.iijster.org)
- Beyer, H. W. (1964). Diakonos. *Theological dictionary of the New Testament*, Vol. 11 (Ed. G. Kittel & Ed. Trans. G. W. Bromiley) Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company.
- Crawford, Gordon. (2004). “Democratic Decentralisation in Ghana: issues and prospects”, *POLIS Working Paper* No. 9, University of Leeds
- Cullman, O. (1959). *The Christology of the New Testament* (Revised Ed.). Philadelphia, PA: The Westminster Press.
- Delling, G. (1964). Archon, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*. Vol. 1 (pp488-489). G. Kittel (Ed) and G. W. Bromiley (Ed. & Trans). Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing company.
- Ferrazzi, Gabriele. (2006). Ghana Local Government Act 1993: A Comparative Analysis in the Context of the Review of the Act. October 2006. Ministry of Local Government, Rural Development and Environment of Ghana and Deutsche Gesellschaft fur Technische Zusammenarbeit.

- Forester, W. (1964). Kataxousiazō. *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*. Vol. 11 (pp488-489). G. Kittel (Ed) and G. W. Bromiley (Ed. &Trans), Grand Rapids: MI: Wm. B Eerdmans Publishing Company.
- Hagner, Donald A. *Word Biblical Commentary* vol. 33b Matthew 14-28, ed. Ralph Martins Texas: Word Books Publisher, 1995.
- Kuusi, Suvi. (2009). Aspect of Local Self-Government: Ghana North-South Local Government Co-operation Program, The Association of Finnish Local and Regional Authorities.
- Ladd, G. E. (1974). *A theology of the New Testament*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company.
- Local Government Act No. 462 of 1993
- Local Government Act No, 656 of 2003
- Nkruma, Stephen A. (2000). Decentralization for Good Government and Development: The Ghana Experience. *Regional Development Dialogue*, vol. 21, No. 1
- Offei-Aboagye, E. (2004). *Promoting Gender Sensitivity in Local Governance in Ghana, Development in Practice*. Carfax publishing, vol. 14, November 2004.
- Ohene-Konadu, Gifty. (2001). Gender Analysis and Interpretation of Barriers to Women's Participation in Ghana's Decentralised Local System, A paper Presented at *African Gender Institute*, University of Cape Town, South Africa.
- Omoteye, Rotimi (2004). Charisma and Leadership Crisis: An Examination of the Christ Apostolic Church in Nigeria. *Religion, Leadership and Society: Focus on Nigeria*. Ade P. Dopanu and others eds Nigeria: Free Enterprise Publishers.
- Oquaye, Mike. Ed. (1995). *Democracy and Conflict Resolution in Ghana*, Accra: Gold Type Publication
- Rengstorf, K. H. (1964). Doulos. In *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*. Vol. I. G. Kittel (Ed) and G. W. Bromiley (Ed. & Trans) Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.
- Tonah, Steve ed. (2007). *Ethnicity, Conflicts and Consensus in Ghana*. Accra: Woeli Publishing Services.
- USAID. Citizen Participation in Local Government survey: 2013 Research Report of LOGODEP (Ghana Local Governance and Decentralization Program).

#### Internet and Media Sources

- <http://www.ghanadistrict.com>.
- <http://thechronicle.com.gh/?p=1626>, accessed on 27<sup>th</sup> December, 2013.
- [www.mordernghana.com](http://www.mordernghana.com), accessed on 27<sup>th</sup> December, 2013.
- Daily Democrat, 2<sup>nd</sup> September, 2013.
- Daily Graphic, Tuesday, July 30, 2013.
- Daily Graphic, 5<sup>th</sup> July, 2013.
- Daily Guide, 7<sup>th</sup> September, 2013.
- Appendix

#### INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Who is the MMDCE in your area and how well do you know him/her?
2. Any knowledge of his/her academic background?
3. Is there any opportunity to participate or attend assembly meetings or public fora?
4. Do you know whether your MMDCE belong to any political party?
5. Is there any development projects going on in your area?
6. How were the projects selected?
7. Do you have the chance and interest to monitor the progress of developmental projects in your area?
8. Will you be able to say that your MMDCE is accountable, transparent and a good governor?
9. Does he/she have the "Technical know how" for the office
10. Give a general comment on you MMDCE.