

**PAULINE WISDOM AND CHRISTIAN LEADERSHIP: AN EXEGETICAL STUDY
OF 1 CORINTHIANS 3:18-23 AND ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR LEADERSHIP IN
KAZO ARCHDEACONRY, NAMIREMBE DIOCESE**

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Declaration

Declaration

I, Asimwe Jeremiah, declare that this dissertation is my original work and has not been submitted to any other institution for the award of a degree or any other academic qualification. All sources consulted have been duly acknowledged.

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Dedication

This work is dedicated to the glory of God and to the faithful leaders of Kazo Archdeaconry who serve the church with commitment and perseverance.

I dedicate this work to the faithful church of Kazo Archdeaconry for their commiment and perseverance in ministry they are called to do. Glory be to God

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Abstract

This study analyses leadership in light of 1 Corinthians 3:18-23 and explores how the theological insights of this passage can inform leadership practice within Kazo Archdeaconry in Namirembe Diocese, Church of Uganda. The study is motivated by the need to reflect on Christian leadership within contemporary church contexts using biblical and theological foundations.

The research employed the Tripolar Exegetical Method, which engages the world of the text, the world behind the text, and the world of the reader. Through this method, the study first conducted an exegetical analysis of 1 Corinthians 3:18-23 in order to understand Paul's teaching concerning wisdom, leadership, and belonging within the Corinthian church. The passage reveals Paul's concern about divisions in the community caused by allegiance to particular leaders and by reliance on worldly concepts of wisdom.

From this exegetical analysis, the study identified several leadership principles, including cruciform wisdom, vigilance against self-deception, rejection of boasting in human leaders, authority as stewardship, identity rooted in belonging to Christ, and leadership oriented toward corporate maturity. These principles provide a theological framework for understanding leadership within the church.

The study then analyzed leadership practice within Kazo Archdeaconry in light of these principles. The findings indicate that while leadership within the archdeaconry operates within well-established Anglican structures that promote accountability and order, ongoing theological reflection remains necessary to ensure that leadership practices remain aligned with the biblical vision articulated by Paul.

The study concludes that 1 Corinthians 3:18-23 provides a valuable theological framework for Christian leadership, emphasizing humility, service, and faithfulness to Christ. When these principles are integrated into leadership practice, they contribute to the strengthening of the church's unity and the spiritual maturity of the Christian community.

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CHAPTER ONE

1.0 Introduction

This chapter introduces the study and outlines its foundational components. It presents the background of the study, situating the research within both its biblical and ecclesial contexts. It then articulates the statement of the problem, identifying the theological and contextual issues that necessitate the research.

The chapter further sets out the general and specific objectives of the study, followed by the research questions that guide the investigation. It also clarifies the scope and limitations of the study, defines key terms where necessary, and describes the research methodology employed. Together, these elements establish the conceptual, theological, and methodological framework upon which the subsequent chapters are built.

1.2 Background of the Study

Leadership has remained a central concern in Christian theology and ecclesial practice throughout the history of the church. Within the New Testament, leadership is not primarily conceived as an administrative or managerial function, but as a theological reality grounded in God's redemptive purposes in Christ. Questions of authority, wisdom, identity, and communal maturity are therefore consistently framed in relation to Christ's lordship and the transformative work of the Spirit.¹

In the contemporary church, however, leadership is exercised within complex and dynamic social contexts that increasingly shape how ministry is perceived and evaluated. Criteria such as educational attainment, communicative competence, institutional expansion, and public visibility frequently function as indicators of effective leadership.² While such attributes may contribute meaningfully to ecclesial life, they also introduce a critical theological tension

¹ Andrew D. Clarke, *Ministry in the New Testament Church* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2017), 15–22.

² Stanley E. Porter and Andrew W. Pitts, *Christian Leadership: Foundations and Practice* (Leiden: Brill, 2017), 45–52.

concerning the extent to which contemporary evaluative standards reflect or distort the biblical vision of leadership.³

The First Epistle to the Corinthians provides a significant theological response to precisely such tensions. Writing to a divided community shaped by competing allegiances and culturally embedded notions of wisdom, the Apostle Paul redefines leadership through the paradox of the cross. In 1 Corinthians 3:18-23, he exposes the danger of self-deception, rejects boasting in human leaders, and reorients ecclesial identity toward belonging to Christ under divine sovereignty.⁴ In doing so, Paul challenges any framework in which leadership authority is grounded in human evaluation rather than in divine revelation.

Within the Church of Uganda, and particularly in Namirembe Diocese, leadership is exercised within an ordered episcopal structure encompassing archdeaconries, parishes, and synodical governance. Kazo Archdeaconry functions within this ecclesial framework, carrying out pastoral and sacramental ministry in an urban and socio-economically diverse environment. As in many contemporary ecclesial contexts, leadership within such settings does not operate in isolation from broader cultural influences. Expectations related to education, visibility, institutional growth, and personal influence may, at times, shape perceptions of ministerial effectiveness in ways that require theological scrutiny.

This study emerges from the intersection of Pauline theology and contemporary Anglican practice. It seeks to critically examine how Paul's theological redefinition of wisdom, authority, and belonging in 1 Corinthians 3:18-23 may provide a biblically grounded framework for evaluating and reorienting leadership practice within Kazo Archdeaconry.

1.3 Statement of the Problem

Leadership within Kazo Archdeaconry operates within a well-established Anglican framework under Namirembe Diocese, characterized by theological training, ordained ministry, and

³ Michael F. Bird, *Paul and the Christian Life* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2020), 103–110.

⁴ Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), 304–312.

canonical governance. These structures provide institutional stability and ensure continuity within ecclesial life.

At the same time, leadership is exercised within an urban and religious environment in which ministerial effectiveness is often evaluated, both formally and informally, through criteria such as educational attainment, rhetorical competence, administrative capacity, numerical growth, financial stability, and personal charisma. While such indicators may contribute meaningfully to ministry, they also risk functioning as dominant evaluative standards for spiritual authority and maturity.

When these evaluative patterns are not subjected to sustained theological reflection, a significant distortion may emerge within the understanding of Christian leadership. Leadership legitimacy may gradually become associated more with performance than with faithfulness. Congregational identity may shift from Christ-centered belonging toward personality-oriented allegiance. Authority may increasingly be measured in terms of visibility and influence rather than humility and spiritual discernment. Over time, this reorientation risks redefining the church's understanding of wisdom, moving it from theological conformity to functional success.

Paul's teaching in 1 Corinthians 3:18-23 directly challenges such tendencies. By redefining wisdom through the paradox of the cross, warning against self-deception, rejecting boasting in human leaders, and grounding identity in belonging to Christ under divine sovereignty, Paul offers a theological framework that resists culturally derived criteria of leadership evaluation. His argument calls for a reorientation in which leadership is assessed not by human standards, but by alignment with divine revelation.

Despite the presence of structured Anglican leadership within Kazo Archdeaconry, there remains a lack of an explicitly articulated and biblically grounded framework through which leadership practices may be theologically evaluated in light of Pauline teaching. This absence creates a conceptual gap between ecclesial practice and scriptural normativity.

This study therefore addresses the need for a clearly defined theological framework, derived from 1 Corinthians 3:18-23, through which leadership within Kazo Archdeaconry may be

critically examined and constructively strengthened. By grounding leadership evaluation in the theological logic of the text, the study seeks to safeguard cruciform wisdom, reinforce leadership as humble stewardship, and re-anchor ecclesial identity in belonging to Christ.

1.4 Research Objectives

1.4.1 General Objective

To examine 1 Corinthians 3:18-23 in order to develop a theologically grounded framework for evaluating and strengthening leadership within Kazo Archdeaconry.

1.4.2 Specific Objectives

- i. To exegete 1 Corinthians 3:18-23.
- ii. To examine the leadership context of Kazo Archdeaconry.
- iii. To analyze leadership practice within Kazo Archdeaconry in light of 1 Corinthians 3:18-23.

1.5 Research Questions

- i. What theological understanding of wisdom, humility, authority, and belonging does Paul articulate in 1 Corinthians 3:18-23 within its historical and literary context?
- ii. What is the leadership context in Kazo Archdeaconry?
- iii. How do the leadership principles derived from 1 Corinthians 3:18-23 evaluate and inform leadership practice within Kazo Archdeaconry?

1.6 Research Thesis

This study argues that 1 Corinthians 3:18-23 presents a theological framework in which wisdom is defined by the cross, authority is understood as derivative and accountable, and the church's identity is grounded in belonging to Christ and ultimately to God. When this Pauline theology is brought into dialogue with leadership practices within Kazo Archdeaconry, Namirembe Diocese, it provides a biblically grounded lens for evaluating how wisdom, authority, and ministerial identity are understood and embodied. Such evaluation can strengthen Anglican leadership by

deepening its alignment with Scriptural principles of humility, accountability, and divine ownership.

1.7 Scope of the Study

This study focused on the exegetical analysis of 1 Corinthians 3:18-23 and its implications for Christian leadership within Kazo Archdeaconry, Namirembe Diocese, Church of Uganda. It specifically examined Paul's teaching on wisdom, humility, authority, and belonging as a theological framework for evaluating leadership practices in the archdeaconry.

The study adopted a qualitative, library-based approach using the Tripolar Exegetical Method and relied on secondary sources such as biblical commentaries, theological books, and scholarly journals.

Geographically, the study was limited to Kazo Archdeaconry under Namirembe Diocese.

1.8 Theoretical Framework

Pauline Theology of Wisdom

This study is grounded in the Pauline Theology of Wisdom, which functions as the central theoretical framework for interpreting leadership in 1 Corinthians 1-4 and reaches its theological climax in 3:18-23. Within this section, Paul articulates a fundamental contrast between worldly wisdom (σοφία τοῦ κόσμου) and divine wisdom (σοφία θεοῦ), the latter revealed paradoxically through the cross of Christ.⁵ This contrast is not merely conceptual but deeply contextual, as Corinth was a city shaped by philosophical traditions, rhetorical performance, and systems of social prestige that significantly influenced how leadership and authority were perceived.⁶

Paul's response directly challenges these cultural assumptions by demonstrating that God's wisdom subverts human evaluative categories and redefines leadership in terms of humility,

⁵ Gordon D. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987), 70–75.

⁶ Craig S. Keener, *1–2 Corinthians* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 21–30.

unity, and dependence upon divine revelation rather than human accomplishment.⁷ In this sense, Pauline Theology of Wisdom provides not only a doctrinal perspective but also a critical hermeneutical lens through which leadership may be theologically assessed.

At the center of this framework is Paul's warning in 1 Corinthians 3:18: "Let no one deceive himself." Here, self-deception refers to a misalignment between perceived wisdom and true wisdom as defined by God. It occurs when leadership and ministry are evaluated according to human standards such as eloquence, status, influence, or intellectual sophistication.⁸ For Paul, such markers of worldly wisdom are fundamentally inadequate for sustaining authentic Christian leadership because they generate pride, competition, and division within the community.⁹ In contrast, true wisdom is inseparable from humility, submission to God's purposes, and conformity to the gospel of Christ crucified.¹⁰ This theological contrast forms the basis of Paul's corrective vision of leadership.

The selection of Pauline Theology of Wisdom as the primary theoretical framework is deliberate. Unlike purely sociological or organizational models of leadership, this framework enables the study to evaluate leadership not only in functional terms but in theological and Christological categories. It allows leadership practices to be interpreted as either expressions of divine wisdom or manifestations of worldly wisdom, thereby providing a normative standard rooted in Scripture.

Applied to the contemporary church, this framework reveals that many leadership challenges are not merely organizational deficiencies but theological distortions arising from misplaced evaluative criteria. Leaders may be tempted toward self-promotion, personality-driven ministry, or reliance on visibility and influence. Through the lens of Pauline Theology of Wisdom, such tendencies are understood as forms of self-deception that stand in tension with the logic of the cross.¹¹ The framework therefore emphasizes that authentic Christian

⁷ Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), 144–150.

⁸ Richard B. Hays, *First Corinthians* (Louisville: John Knox Press, 1997), 54–58.

⁹ David E. Garland, *1 Corinthians* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2003), 109–115.

¹⁰ Michael F. Bird, *Paul and the Christian Life* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2020), 95–102.

¹¹ Andrew D. Clarke, *Serving the Church: Paul's Vision of Ministry* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2015), 67–74.

leadership flows from participation in God's wisdom, produces humility, and fosters unity, whereas worldly wisdom elevates human achievement and ultimately leads to division.¹²

Furthermore, this framework directly informs the analytical task of the study. It provides a coherent theological basis for evaluating leadership practices within Kazo Archdeaconry by identifying areas of alignment and tension between contemporary practice and Pauline teaching. In this way, the framework does not remain abstract but functions as an evaluative and interpretive tool guiding the dialogue between text and context.

Through this theoretically grounded approach, the study remains firmly anchored in Scripture while offering a critical and constructive framework for the theological assessment and renewal of Christian leadership.

1.9 Literature Review

1.9.0 Introduction

The themes of wisdom, leadership, and communal identity in Paul's First Epistle to the Corinthians have generated extensive discussion within New Testament scholarship. Scholars widely recognize that the divisions within the Corinthian church reflect more than interpersonal disagreements; they reveal deeper theological tensions concerning the nature of authority, the meaning of wisdom, and the criteria by which Christian leadership is to be evaluated. Within this broader argument, 1 Corinthians 3:18-23 functions as a pivotal text, bringing Paul's critique of worldly wisdom to its theological climax while redefining the foundation of Christian belonging.

Thiselton argues that Paul's discussion of wisdom must be situated within the cultural and intellectual environment of the Greco-Roman world, where philosophical discourse and rhetorical excellence shaped perceptions of authority.¹³ Similarly, Winter demonstrates that Corinth was a context deeply marked by social systems that valued prestige, public recognition,

¹² Nijay K. Gupta, *Paul and the Language of Faith* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2020), 88–94.

¹³ Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), 90–110.

and persuasive ability.¹⁴ Within such a setting, intellectual sophistication and rhetorical performance were not merely admired but functioned as primary indicators of wisdom and leadership legitimacy. Consequently, when these cultural assumptions influenced the Corinthian church, believers began to evaluate leaders according to these same standards, resulting in factional alignments around figures such as Paul, Apollos, and Cephas.¹⁵

While these scholars convincingly situate the Corinthian problem within its socio-cultural context, their analyses also point to a deeper theological issue: the transposition of cultural categories of wisdom into the life of the church. Paul's response does not merely correct behavior but challenges the underlying epistemological framework through which leadership is understood. By presenting the cross as the definitive revelation of divine wisdom, Paul subverts prevailing assumptions about power, status, and authority within the community of believers. As Bird and others observe, this redefinition is not peripheral but central to Paul's theology, establishing humility and dependence upon God as the defining characteristics of authentic Christian leadership.¹⁶

At the same time, contemporary studies of church leadership often approach ministry through practical and organizational frameworks, emphasizing leadership skills, strategic planning, and institutional development. While such approaches offer valuable insights for ecclesial administration, they frequently lack sustained engagement with the theological foundations of leadership as articulated within the New Testament.¹⁷ This divergence reveals a significant gap within the literature: biblical scholarship tends to prioritize historical and theological interpretation, whereas leadership studies often prioritize practical application without adequate theological grounding.

This study positions itself within this gap by integrating exegetical analysis with contemporary leadership reflection. By examining 1 Corinthians 3:18-23 as a theological framework for leadership evaluation, the study seeks not only to interpret Paul's teaching but to extend its

¹⁴ Bruce W. Winter, *After Paul Left Corinth: The Influence of Secular Ethics and Social Change* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001), 35–52.

¹⁵ Nijay K. Gupta, *Paul and the Language of Faith* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2020), p.116

¹⁶ Michael F. Bird, *Paul and the Christian Life* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2020), pp.133-137

¹⁷ Stanley E. Porter & Andrew Pitts, *Christian Leadership: Foundations and Practice* (Leiden: Brill, 2017), 45-67

implications into contemporary ecclesial practice. In doing so, it contributes to ongoing scholarly discussions by demonstrating how the wisdom of the cross may function as a normative criterion for evaluating leadership within the church, particularly within Kazo Archdeaconry in Namirembe Diocese.

1.9.1 Pauline Theology of Wisdom

Recent Pauline scholarship has placed renewed emphasis on the theological significance of wisdom within Paul's writings. Scholars increasingly argue that Paul's discussion of wisdom in 1 Corinthians is not merely rhetorical but reflects a fundamental theological contrast between human systems of evaluation and God's redemptive purposes revealed through Christ.

Bird observes that Paul's argument in 1 Corinthians deliberately challenges the cultural assumptions of the Corinthian community. Within the Greco-Roman world, wisdom was commonly associated with intellectual sophistication, philosophical insight, and persuasive speech. Paul, however, redefines wisdom through the paradox of the cross, presenting what appears foolish within human systems of evaluation as the true expression of God's wisdom.¹⁸ This redefinition not only critiques prevailing cultural norms but also establishes a new theological basis for understanding leadership.

Similarly, Gupta emphasizes that Paul's language of wisdom must be understood within the broader framework of his theology of revelation. For Paul, genuine wisdom cannot be achieved through human reasoning alone but is revealed through God's saving action in Christ.¹⁹ This perspective significantly reshapes the basis upon which authority is recognized within the Christian community. Leadership is therefore no longer grounded in intellectual prestige or rhetorical skill, but in faithfulness to the gospel and participation in God's redemptive work.

Taken together, these perspectives highlight that Paul's critique of worldly wisdom is ultimately a critique of self-reliance within the Corinthian church. The tendency to evaluate leadership according to culturally defined standards reflects a deeper theological misalignment

¹⁸ Bird, *Paul and the Christian Life*, pp.135-136

¹⁹ Gupta, *Paul and the Language of Faith*, pp.142-144

in which human achievement is privileged over divine revelation. By encouraging believers to “become fools” in order to become wise (1 Cor 3:18), Paul calls the community to abandon systems of self-promotion and to embrace a posture of humility before God.

Within this theological framework, wisdom is inseparable from humility, dependence upon God, and alignment with the message of the cross. This understanding not only addresses the situation in Corinth but also provides a critical lens for examining contemporary approaches to Christian leadership that may unconsciously reproduce similar patterns of self-reliance and status-oriented evaluation.

1.9.2 Factionalism and Leadership in the Corinthian Church

A second major area of scholarship concerns the problem of factionalism within the Corinthian community. Scholars widely agree that the divisions addressed in 1 Corinthians were not merely social in nature but were closely connected to the way believers perceived and evaluated leadership within the church.

Studies of Pauline ecclesiology indicate that the Corinthian believers had begun to identify themselves with particular leaders, forming factions that reflected patterns of allegiance characteristic of Greco-Roman society. Within that cultural environment, individuals often aligned themselves with prominent teachers or patrons as a means of enhancing social status and identity. This socio-cultural pattern appears to have significantly influenced the Corinthian church, where some believers claimed allegiance to Paul, others to Apollos, and others to Cephas.²⁰

While such interpretations rightly emphasize the social dynamics underlying factionalism, they also point to a deeper theological issue. The formation of factions reflects not only cultural influence but also a distorted understanding of leadership and belonging within the Christian community. By adopting patterns of identity rooted in human association, the Corinthians effectively displaced Christ as the primary basis of communal identity.

²⁰ Nijay K. Gupta, *A Beginner's Guide to New Testament Studies* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2020), pp.114-116

Paul's response therefore challenges the entire framework within which leadership was being understood. Rather than allowing the community to define itself through allegiance to particular leaders, Paul insists that all believers ultimately belong to Christ. By declaring that "all things are yours" (1 Cor 3:21-22), he reverses prevailing assumptions about ownership and authority. Leaders are not figures who possess the church; rather, they are servants who belong to the community and participate in God's work within it.²¹

This theological reordering of belonging has significant implications for understanding Christian leadership. By situating authority within God's sovereign purposes, Paul undermines any attempt to treat leaders as sources of prestige, status, or identity within the church. Instead, leadership is redefined as a form of service oriented toward the building up of the community rather than the elevation of the individual.

1.9.3 Pauline Perspectives on Christian Leadership

Scholars further emphasize that Paul's critique of boasting in human leaders forms part of a broader theological vision of Christian leadership grounded in humility and service. In contrast to leadership models shaped by competition, status, or personal distinction, Paul consistently portrays ministry as stewardship entrusted by God for the benefit of the community.

Recent studies of Pauline ministry highlight that leadership in the early church was fundamentally understood in terms of service rather than authority as domination. Leaders are presented as co-workers participating in God's mission rather than as figures who command personal allegiance. This perspective is clearly reflected in Paul's agricultural metaphor in 1 Corinthians 3, where he describes himself and Apollos as servants who plant and water while God alone gives the growth.²² Such imagery deliberately shifts attention away from human agency to divine activity as the true source of ecclesial life and development.

While these interpretations underscore the servant nature of leadership, they also point to a significant theological reorientation. Paul's understanding of leadership challenges hierarchical

²¹ Andrew D. Clarke, *Ministry in the New Testament Church* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2017), 60-85

²² Clarke, *Ministry in the New Testament Church*, 70-82

models that equate authority with control, power, or personal prominence. Instead, leadership is redefined as participation in God's ongoing work of building and nurturing the community of believers. Authority, within this framework, is derivative rather than autonomous, and is exercised in dependence upon God rather than in self-assertion.

Within this theological vision, the purpose of leadership is not personal advancement but the spiritual formation and corporate maturity of the church. This perspective not only addresses the situation in Corinth but also provides a critical lens through which contemporary models of leadership may be evaluated, particularly where authority is implicitly associated with status, influence, or institutional success.

1.9.4 Contemporary Studies on Christian Leadership

In addition to biblical scholarship, a growing body of literature examines leadership within contemporary Christian communities. Studies of early Christian leadership consistently emphasize the importance of servant leadership, character formation, and relational accountability as foundational to pastoral ministry.²³ These themes reflect a broad consensus that authentic Christian leadership is rooted not merely in function but in spiritual formation and ethical integrity.

Recent leadership research further underscores that effective church leadership requires more than administrative competence or organizational skill. Porter and Pitts argue that leadership within the Christian tradition must be grounded in integrity, humility, and spiritual maturity rather than technical expertise alone.²⁴ Similarly, Gorman describes Christian leadership as fundamentally “cruciform,” emphasizing that it reflects the self-giving pattern of Christ, whose authority is expressed through service rather than domination.²⁵ Taken together, these perspectives reinforce a theological vision of leadership that is shaped by the character of Christ rather than by institutional or managerial paradigms.

²³ Todd D. Still and Jason A. Myers, eds., *The Apostles and Their Legacy in the Early Church* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2020), 140–148.

²⁴ Stanley E. Porter and Andrew W. Pitts, *Christian Leadership: Foundations and Practice* (Leiden: Brill, 2017), 55–72.

²⁵ Michael J. Gorman, *Participating in Christ: Explorations in Paul's Theology and Spirituality* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2019), 125–132.

At the same time, contemporary scholarship raises critical concerns regarding the influence of non-theological frameworks on church leadership. Gupta observes that modern leadership models often draw heavily from corporate management structures, which can unintentionally reshape ministerial priorities and values.²⁶ In a similar vein, Malcolm argues that when leadership is evaluated primarily through visible success, rhetorical ability, or institutional growth, it risks reinforcing the very cultural assumptions that Paul sought to overturn in Corinth.²⁷ These critiques highlight a growing tension within contemporary ecclesial practice, where leadership may be shaped as much by societal expectations as by theological conviction.

While these studies provide valuable insights into both the strengths and challenges of modern leadership approaches, they also reveal an underlying gap. Much contemporary leadership literature affirms the importance of theological principles such as humility, service, and Christ-centeredness, yet often lacks sustained engagement with specific biblical texts as normative frameworks for evaluation. As a result, the relationship between biblical theology and practical leadership models remains insufficiently integrated.

For this reason, scholars increasingly emphasize the need to ground leadership practices more explicitly in Scripture. Clarke argues that New Testament leadership must be understood within the framework of service, community formation, and faithfulness to the gospel.²⁸ Likewise, Peppiatt contends that authentic Christian leadership emerges from participation in the life of Christ and is sustained through humility and dependence upon God.²⁹ Within this context, Pauline theology—particularly in 1 Corinthians—offers a crucial resource, as it directly connects leadership to the message of the cross and to the formation of a unified Christian community.

1.9.5 Summary of Gaps and Contribution

The literature reviewed above demonstrates that substantial scholarship exists both on Pauline theology and on the subject of Christian leadership. Pauline scholars have explored in depth the theological implications of wisdom, boasting, and belonging within the Corinthian

²⁶ Nijay K. Gupta, *Paul and the Language of Faith* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2020), 101–108.

²⁷ Matthew R. Malcolm, *Paul and the Rhetoric of Reversal in 1 Corinthians* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 110–118.

²⁸ Andrew D. Clarke, *Ministry in the New Testament Church* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2017), 210–218.

²⁹ Lucy Peppiatt, *Rediscovering Scripture's Vision for Women* (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2019), 60–66.

correspondence, while contemporary leadership studies have examined the practical and organizational challenges facing ministry within modern church contexts.

Despite these contributions, a significant gap remains between exegetical scholarship and contemporary leadership discourse. Biblical studies have tended to prioritize historical and theological interpretation of the text, often without extending their insights into concrete leadership contexts. Conversely, leadership literature frequently emphasizes practical strategies and organizational effectiveness, sometimes with limited engagement with the theological foundations of leadership as articulated in Scripture.

This disjunction reveals a lack of sustained integration between biblical theology and contemporary leadership practice. As a result, leadership within the church may be shaped either by historically grounded exegesis that remains insufficiently applied, or by pragmatic models that lack explicit theological anchoring.

This study addresses this gap by bringing the exegetical analysis of 1 Corinthians 3:18-23 into deliberate dialogue with contemporary discussions of church leadership. By examining Paul's redefinition of wisdom, authority, and belonging, the research develops a coherent theological framework through which leadership practices within Kazo Archdeaconry may be critically evaluated.

In doing so, the study contributes to Pauline scholarship by extending exegetical insights into the realm of applied ecclesial practice. At the same time, it contributes to contemporary leadership studies by providing a biblically grounded evaluative framework that moves beyond purely functional or managerial approaches. Ultimately, the research demonstrates how the wisdom of the cross may serve as a normative criterion for shaping and assessing leadership within the modern church.

1.10 Research Methodology

This study adopts a qualitative, library-based research design and employs the Tripolar Exegetical Method as its primary interpretive framework. This approach is appropriate for a theologically oriented study that seeks to engage biblical texts in relation to contemporary

ecclesial practice. As a qualitative method, it allows for in-depth textual analysis and theological reflection rather than empirical measurement, thereby enabling a nuanced exploration of meaning, context, and application.

The Tripolar Exegetical Method provides a balanced and integrative approach to biblical interpretation by engaging the text across its historical, literary, and contemporary dimensions. It facilitates a structured dialogue between the world of the text and the world of the reader, ensuring that Scripture is interpreted both responsibly within its original context and meaningfully within present-day settings.³⁰ In doing so, the method avoids the limitations of purely historical-critical approaches, which may remain confined to the past, as well as purely applicational approaches that risk detaching interpretation from its textual foundations.

In this study, the Tripolar Method is particularly appropriate because the research seeks not only to interpret the meaning of 1 Corinthians 3:18-23 within its original context but also to explore how Paul's teaching can inform leadership practices within the Kazo Archdeaconry. Through this approach, the study aims to develop a theological framework that is both biblically grounded and contextually relevant for leadership within Kazo Archdeaconry.

The Tripolar Method consists of three interrelated interpretive movements: Distantiation (World of the Text), Contextualization (World of the Reader), and Appropriation (Dialogue Between Text and Context). Each of these interpretive stages contributes to a fuller understanding of the biblical passage and its implications for contemporary Christian leadership.

1.10.1 Distantiation (World of the Text)

The first pole of the Tripolar Exegetical Method, distantiation, focuses on interpreting the biblical text within its original historical, cultural, and literary context. In this study, this stage

³⁰ Jonathan A. Draper, *The Bible as Text and as Social Discourse: Contextual Interpretation in Africa* (Pietermaritzburg: Cluster Publications, 2015), pp.40-65

is undertaken in Chapter Two (2.1-2.1.6), where First Epistle to the Corinthians 3:18-23 is examined through a structured exegetical process.

The analysis begins with the historical setting of the letter, including authorship, date, and occasion, in order to situate the text within Paul's missionary context. It then explores the socio-cultural environment of Corinth, with particular attention to its philosophical traditions, rhetorical culture, and honor-shame dynamics that shaped perceptions of wisdom and authority.

This is followed by an examination of the ecclesial situation within the Corinthian church, especially the problem of division and allegiance to particular leaders. The passage is then located within the broader literary argument of 1 Corinthians 1-4, highlighting key theological themes such as wisdom, boasting, and the nature of Christian leadership.

Finally, a detailed exegetical analysis of 1 Corinthians 3:18-23 is conducted, focusing on its structure, key terms, and theological emphasis. Through this multi-layered analysis, the study establishes the original meaning of the text and identifies its central theological claims.

This stage therefore provides the foundational interpretive basis for the study, ensuring that subsequent theological reflection and contextual application are grounded in a historically and textually responsible reading of Scripture.

1.10.2 Contextualization (World of the Reader)

The second pole of the Tripolar Exegetical Method, contextualization, focuses on examining the contemporary context in which the biblical text is received. In this study, this stage is applied in Chapter Three, where the leadership context of Kazo Archdeaconry in Namirembe Diocese is analyzed.

This stage shifts attention from the world of the text to the world of the reader by exploring the ecclesial structures of the Church of Uganda within Kazo Archdeaconry, including episcopal oversight, parish leadership, and synodical governance. It also considers the socio-cultural environment in which the archdeaconry operates, particularly the influence of urban dynamics,

communal expectations of leadership, and the value placed on authority, visibility, and institutional effectiveness.

Through this process, the study examines how leadership is practiced, perceived, and evaluated within Kazo Archdeaconry, identifying key patterns and areas of tension related to wisdom, authority, and identity. These observations provide a contextual foundation that prepares for the theological dialogue between the biblical text and the contemporary situation in the appropriation stage.

1.10.3 Appropriation (Dialogue Between Text and Context)

The third pole of the Tripolar Exegetical Method, appropriation, focuses on bringing the biblical text and the contemporary context into deliberate theological dialogue. In this study, this stage is carried out in Chapter Four, where the exegetical insights derived from First Epistle to the Corinthians 3:18-23 are critically engaged with the leadership context of Kazo Archdeaconry.

Building upon the findings of distantiation (Chapter Two) and contextualization (Chapter Three), this stage moves beyond description to theological evaluation. It systematically examines leadership practices within Kazo Archdeaconry through the key principles derived from the text, namely: cruciform wisdom, vigilance against self-deception, rejection of boasting in human leaders, authority as stewardship, identity rooted in belonging to Christ, and leadership oriented toward corporate maturity.

Through this structured engagement, the study assesses the extent to which contemporary leadership practices correspond to, diverge from, or are challenged by the theological vision articulated by Paul. This process enables the identification of areas of alignment as well as points of tension requiring deeper theological reflection.

The appropriation stage therefore serves not merely as application, but as critical theological dialogue in which Scripture functions as the normative framework for evaluating leadership. In this way, the study develops a biblically grounded understanding of Christian leadership that remains faithful to the text while addressing the realities of contemporary ecclesial practice.

1.11 Data Sources and Analytical Process

This study relied exclusively on secondary sources, including biblical commentaries, peer-reviewed journal articles, theological texts, Greek lexicons, and scholarly works on Pauline theology and Christian leadership. These sources were selected on the basis of their scholarly credibility, relevance to Pauline studies, and contribution to contemporary discussions on Christian leadership.

The analytical process was structured according to the three poles of the Tripolar Exegetical Method. In the first stage (distantiation), the study engaged in close textual analysis of 1 Corinthians 3:18-23, examining its historical context, literary structure, and key theological concepts through critical interaction with primary biblical texts and scholarly interpretations. Particular attention was given to significant Greek terms, thematic patterns, and the broader argument of 1 Corinthians 1-4.

In the second stage (contextualization), the study examined the leadership context of Kazo Archdeaconry by drawing on theological literature, ecclesial documents, and contextual studies of Anglican practice and African Christianity. This stage focused on identifying patterns of leadership, prevailing evaluative criteria, and socio-cultural influences shaping ecclesial life.

The third stage (appropriation) involved the integration of exegetical findings with the contemporary context through critical theological reflection. At this stage, the principles derived from 1 Corinthians 3:18-23 were systematically applied to the leadership practices identified in Kazo Archdeaconry in order to evaluate areas of alignment, divergence, and tension.

Findings from each stage were then synthesized to produce a coherent theological interpretation of the passage and its implications for contemporary church leadership. This integrative process ensured that the analysis remained both textually grounded and contextually relevant.

By employing the Tripolar Exegetical Method in this structured manner, the study ensured a balanced and responsible interpretation of 1 Corinthians 3:18-23. The methodology enabled the

research to remain faithful to the biblical text, attentive to its historical setting, and critically engaged with contemporary ecclesial realities. Through this approach, the study contributes to a deeper theological understanding of Christian leadership rooted in humility, shaped by divine wisdom, and oriented toward the unity and maturity of the church.

1.12 Limitations of the Study

This study adopts a qualitative, library-based approach and relies primarily on biblical exegesis, theological scholarship, and secondary literature rather than empirical fieldwork conducted within Kazo Archdeaconry. Consequently, the evaluation of leadership practices is undertaken through theological reflection rather than through interviews, surveys, or observational methods. The findings therefore emerge from interpretive engagement with Scripture and ecclesial structures rather than from statistical or ethnographic data.

A further limitation arises from the textual focus of the study. Because the research centers on 1 Corinthians 3:18-23, its theological conclusions are necessarily bounded by the scope of that passage. While the text offers a rich framework for understanding wisdom, humility, authority, and belonging, it does not address every dimension of church leadership. As such, the interpretation remains focused rather than comprehensive, and alternative scholarly readings may highlight different theological emphases.

The study is also limited by its contextual scope. Although it engages leadership within Kazo Archdeaconry under Namirembe Diocese, it does not provide a comprehensive institutional analysis of all parishes, clergy experiences, or administrative structures. The evaluation is therefore theological rather than empirical or diagnostic in nature. In addition, Anglican leadership operates within broader diocesan and provincial frameworks of the Church of Uganda, which are not examined in detail within this study.

Finally, time and resource constraints limit the range of sources consulted. Although significant effort has been made to engage major Pauline scholarship and relevant African theological perspectives, some voices and perspectives may remain underrepresented. These limitations

do not diminish the validity of the study but rather define its scope and clarify the interpretive nature of its conclusions.

1.13 Research Ethics

This study adheres to rigorous academic ethical standards. As a literature-based exegetical project, it does not involve human participants, interviews, or primary data collection requiring formal ethical clearance. Nevertheless, ethical responsibility is maintained through accurate citation, proper acknowledgment of intellectual property, and a sustained commitment to academic integrity. All interpretations of Scripture and engagement with scholarly sources are conducted with care, ensuring that arguments are represented faithfully and without distortion or selective use of evidence.

In applying the findings to leadership within Kazo Archdeaconry, the study avoids reference to specific individuals, parishes, or offices. The aim is constructive theological reflection rather than critique of particular leaders or ministries. This approach recognizes the pastoral sensitivity inherent in discussions of leadership and seeks to engage the subject in a manner that is responsible, respectful, and edifying.

Accordingly, the study frames its conclusions and recommendations in a way that promotes unity, humility, and theological renewal rather than accusation or division. Ethical integrity is therefore maintained not only in the handling of sources but also in the manner in which the research is applied, ensuring that the study contributes positively to leadership formation and the broader health of the church.

1.14 Time-Frame

The research was conducted over a period of six months, organized into structured phases to ensure systematic progress and coherence.

Month 1 focused on preliminary reading, refinement of the research problem, and the identification and collection of key exegetical and leadership sources. Month 2 was dedicated to the distantiation stage of the Tripolar Method, involving historical and literary analysis of 1

Corinthians 3:18-23, including detailed engagement with the Greek text, thematic development, and comparison of scholarly interpretations.

Month 3 addressed the theological synthesis of the text, consolidating key doctrinal themes such as wisdom, humility, authority, and ecclesial identity. Month 4 focused on the contextualization and appropriation stages, examining how Pauline insights informed contemporary leadership practices within Kazo Archdeaconry.

Month 5 involved drafting and revising the full dissertation, incorporating feedback from supervisors and ensuring coherence across chapters. Month 6 was dedicated to final editing, formatting, proofreading, and preparation for submission.

This structured timeline ensured that the research was conducted in a systematic and coherent manner, allowing for thorough engagement with both the biblical text and its contemporary application within the academic requirements of a master's program.

1.15 Dissertation Structure

Chapter One presents the background of the study, the statement of the problem, research questions, objectives, significance, and the methodology employed.

Chapter Two provides an exegetical analysis of 1 Corinthians 3:18-23 using the Tripolar Exegetical Method, establishing the theological foundation of the study.

Chapter Three examines the leadership context of Kazo Archdeaconry, focusing on its ecclesial structures, practices, and socio-cultural influences.

Chapter Four analyzes leadership practices within Kazo Archdeaconry in light of the theological principles derived from the exegetical study of 1 Corinthians 3:18-23.

Chapter Five concludes the study by summarizing the key findings and offering recommendations for leadership development within the church.

1.16 Conclusion

This chapter has established the conceptual, theological, and methodological foundations of the study. It has articulated the research problem, clarified the objectives and questions guiding the investigation, and identified the need for a biblically grounded framework for evaluating leadership within Kazo Archdeaconry. Through engagement with relevant scholarship and the adoption of the Tripolar Exegetical Method, the study has been positioned within both Pauline theology and contemporary leadership discourse.

With these foundations in place, the study now proceeds to an exegetical analysis of 1 Corinthians 3:18-23. Chapter Two examines the text within its historical, literary, and theological context, providing the basis for the development of leadership principles that will inform the subsequent contextual and theological evaluation.

CHAPTER TWO.

EXEGETICAL ANALYSIS OF 1 CORINTHIANS 3:18-23

2.0 Introduction

This chapter presents an exegetical analysis of 1 Corinthians 3:18-23 using the distantiation stage of the Tripolar Exegetical Method as outlined in Section 1.10.1. The focus is to interpret the passage within its original historical, cultural, and literary context in order to establish its meaning within the Corinthian setting.

The chapter examines the historical background of the Corinthian church, the socio-cultural environment of Corinth, and the literary context of Paul's argument. It then provides a close exegetical analysis of the passage, focusing on its structure, key concepts, and theological emphasis.

By establishing the meaning of the text within its original context, this chapter provides the exegetical foundation for the subsequent contextual analysis in Chapter Three and the theological dialogue in Chapter Four.

2.1 Authorship, Date, and Occasion of 1 Corinthians

Most contemporary New Testament scholars affirm that the First Epistle to the Corinthians was written by the apostle Paul. This attribution is supported both by the internal evidence of the letter itself, where Paul identifies himself as the author (1 Cor 1:1), and by early Christian tradition. According to *Paul: A Biography*, the letter reflects Paul's pastoral relationship with the Corinthian church, a community he had founded during his missionary activity in the city.³¹ His continued engagement with the church demonstrates his concern for its spiritual growth, unity, and doctrinal stability.

³¹ N. T. Wright, *Paul: A Biography* (New York: HarperOne, 2018), 221–226.

In terms of date, most scholars situate the writing of 1 Corinthians in the mid-first century, approximately A.D. 53-55, during Paul's extended ministry in Ephesus. This dating is based on correlations between the letter and the narrative of Paul's missionary journeys in Acts, as well as references within the epistle itself (1 Cor 16:8).³² Writing from Ephesus allowed Paul to maintain communication with the Corinthian church while addressing emerging issues within the community.

The occasion for the letter arises from a combination of reported problems and direct inquiries from the Corinthian believers. According to *A Beginner's Guide to New Testament Studies*, Paul received reports, likely from members of Chloe's household, concerning divisions, disputes, and moral challenges within the church (1 Cor 1:11).³³ In addition, the Corinthians had written to Paul seeking guidance on various matters related to church life, worship, and ethical conduct (cf. 1 Cor 7:1).

A central issue prompting the letter was the problem of factionalism, as believers began to align themselves with particular leaders such as Paul, Apollos, and Cephas. This situation reflects the influence of Greco-Roman social patterns, where allegiance to prominent figures could serve as a source of identity and status. Paul addresses this problem by correcting the Corinthians' understanding of leadership, emphasizing that all ministers are servants of God and that the church's identity is grounded in Christ rather than in human leaders.³⁴

Thus, the authorship, date, and occasion of 1 Corinthians together provide the historical and pastoral context necessary for interpreting the letter. They reveal that Paul's writing is a deliberate theological response to concrete challenges within the Corinthian community, particularly those concerning division, leadership, and the nature of true wisdom.

2.2 Corinth as a Social and Cultural Setting

³² Nijay K. Gupta, *A Beginner's Guide to New Testament Studies* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2020), 68–70.

³³ *Ibid.*, 70–72.

³⁴ Michael F. Bird, *Paul and the Christian Life* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2020), 130–138.

The city of Corinth played an important role in shaping the circumstances addressed in Paul's letter. Located on the isthmus connecting mainland Greece with the Peloponnese, Corinth was a major commercial center characterized by economic diversity, cultural interaction, and social mobility. The city attracted merchants, travelers, and migrants from many parts of the Mediterranean world, creating a highly diverse urban environment.³⁵

This cosmopolitan setting exposed the Corinthian church to a variety of philosophical ideas, religious practices, and social structures. Public life in Corinth was strongly influenced by traditions of rhetoric and public debate, where skilled speakers could gain recognition and influence. In such a culture, intellectual ability and persuasive speech were often associated with wisdom and authority.

These cultural expectations appear to have influenced the way some Corinthian believers evaluated leadership within the church. Scholars note that the admiration of eloquent teachers such as Apollos may have contributed to the formation of factions within the community. Rather than recognizing leaders as servants of God's work, some believers began to treat them as figures of prestige whose followers competed for status within the congregation.³⁶

Paul's response to this situation challenges the assumptions underlying such behavior. By emphasizing that leaders are merely servants through whom God works, Paul redirects attention away from human achievement and toward God's sovereign activity in the life of the church.

2.3 Philosophical and Religious Influences in Corinth

The socio-cultural context of Corinth plays a crucial role in shaping the issues addressed in the First Epistle to the Corinthians. Located on the isthmus connecting mainland Greece with the Peloponnese, Corinth functioned as a major commercial and administrative center within the Roman Empire. According to David A. deSilva, the city was characterized by economic diversity, extensive trade networks, and significant social mobility, attracting merchants, travelers, and

³⁵ David A. deSilva, *Honor, Patronage, Kinship and Purity* (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2017), pp.102-108

³⁶ Nijay K. Gupta, *Paul and the Language of Faith* (2020), pp. 110-115

migrants from across the Mediterranean world.³⁷ This resulted in a highly cosmopolitan urban environment marked by cultural diversity and social stratification.

Within this setting, public life was deeply influenced by Greco-Roman traditions of rhetoric, philosophy, and honor-seeking behavior. Skilled orators and teachers could gain recognition, patronage, and social influence through persuasive speech and intellectual display. Consequently, qualities such as eloquence, philosophical sophistication, and rhetorical ability were widely regarded as indicators of wisdom and authority. These cultural values shaped not only civic life but also the expectations brought into the Christian community.

Scholars argue that these socio-cultural dynamics significantly influenced how the Corinthian believers perceived leadership. Nijay K. Gupta observes that admiration for eloquent figures such as Apollos likely contributed to the emergence of factions within the church, as believers began to align themselves with particular leaders.³⁸ Rather than understanding leaders as servants participating in God's work, some members of the community appear to have interpreted leadership through the lens of prestige, competition, and social status.

This development reflects the broader honor-shame framework of Greco-Roman society, in which association with prominent figures could enhance one's social identity. Within the Corinthian church, however, such patterns resulted in division and a distortion of Christian identity. Leadership became a basis for rivalry rather than a means of serving the unity and maturity of the community.

Paul's response directly challenges these cultural assumptions. By presenting leaders as servants through whom God works (cf. 1 Cor 3:5-9), he redefines authority in theological rather than cultural terms. In doing so, he redirects the Corinthians' focus away from human achievement and rhetorical excellence toward God's sovereign activity as the true source of growth within the church. This socio-cultural context therefore provides an essential

³⁷ David A. deSilva, *Honor, Patronage, Kinship and Purity* (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2017), 102–108.

³⁸ Nijay K. Gupta, *Paul and the Language of Faith* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2020), 110–115.

background for understanding both the problem of factionalism and Paul's theological redefinition of wisdom and leadership.

2.4 The Corinthian Church and the Problem of Boasting

One of the central concerns addressed in the opening chapters of the First Epistle to the Corinthians is the problem of boasting within the Christian community. Some believers had begun to take pride in their association with particular leaders, treating these relationships as a source of honor and identity. According to David A. deSilva, such behavior reflects broader patterns of social competition within Greco-Roman society, where individuals sought recognition and status through affiliation with influential figures.³⁹

Paul strongly rejects this form of boasting because it undermines the unity of the church and redirects attention away from God's work. In 1 Corinthians 3:18-23, he responds by reminding the Corinthians that all things belong to them through their relationship with Christ. Instead of boasting in human leaders, believers are called to recognize that leaders themselves are gifts given for the benefit of the community rather than objects of allegiance or sources of identity.

This theological perspective fundamentally reverses the hierarchy assumed by the Corinthians. Rather than elevating leaders as sources of prestige, Paul emphasizes that both leaders and believers ultimately belong to Christ, and Christ belongs to God. As Nijay K. Gupta observes, this reorientation shifts the basis of identity from human association to divine belonging, thereby dismantling the competitive structures that had shaped the community.⁴⁰ Through this reordering of relationships, Paul establishes a framework in which leadership is understood as service within God's redemptive work rather than as a basis for competition or personal recognition.

2.5 Literary Context of 1 Corinthians 3:18-23

Understanding the literary context of First Epistle to the Corinthians 3:18-23 is essential for interpreting Paul's argument. The passage forms part of Paul's extended response to divisions

³⁹ David A. deSilva, *Honor, Patronage, Kinship and Purity* (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2017), 110–115.

⁴⁰ Nijay K. Gupta, *Paul and the Language of Faith* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2020), 110–115.

within the Corinthian church in 1 Corinthians 1-4. According to Nijay K. Gupta, these divisions were rooted in a deeper theological problem: the Corinthians had begun to evaluate leaders according to cultural standards of wisdom, rhetoric, and prestige.⁴¹

Within this broader argument, Paul contrasts two forms of wisdom: the wisdom of the world and the wisdom revealed through the cross. The Greek term σοφία (sophia), central to this discussion, commonly denoted philosophical insight and rhetorical sophistication in the Greco-Roman world. However, as Michael F. Bird argues, Paul redefines wisdom in relation to the cross, presenting God's wisdom as that which appears foolish by human standards.⁴² This redefinition is reinforced through the paradox in 3:18, where believers are called to become μωροί (mōroi), "fools", in order to become truly wise, reflecting Paul's rhetorical strategy of overturning conventional assumptions about honor and status.⁴³

Paul's use of κόσμος (kosmos) further sharpens this contrast. As David A. deSilva explains, κόσμος often represents the present social order shaped by values of competition, honor, and self-promotion.⁴⁴ Paul's warning against being "wise in this world" therefore challenges the Corinthians to reject these cultural standards as a basis for evaluating leadership.

Literarily, 1 Corinthians 3:18-23 functions as the climax of Paul's argument against factionalism. The passage gathers key themes; wisdom, boasting, and leadership and brings them to theological resolution. Paul's warning against self-deception (v.18), supported by scriptural citations (vv.19-20), exposes the futility of human wisdom. The concluding affirmation (vv.21-23) then reverses the Corinthians' assumptions by declaring that all things, including leaders, belong to believers in Christ.

This culminates in the statement: "you belong to Christ, and Christ belongs to God," which establishes the proper order of authority within the Christian community. Leadership is thereby redefined not as a source of status but as participation in God's work. The literary context therefore demonstrates that 1 Corinthians 3:18-23 is not an isolated teaching but the decisive

⁴¹ Nijay K. Gupta, *Paul and the Language of Faith* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2020), 90–94.

⁴² Michael F. Bird, *Paul and the Christian Life* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2020), 132–136.

⁴³ Nijay K. Gupta, *A Beginner's Guide to New Testament Studies* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2020), 90–94.

⁴⁴ David A. deSilva, *Honor, Patronage, Kinship and Purity* (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2017), 116–120.

conclusion to Paul's argument, in which he dismantles boasting in human leaders and reorients the church toward a Christ-centered understanding of wisdom, identity, and authority.

2.6 Exegetical Analysis of 1 Corinthians 3:18-23

The passage of 1 Corinthians 3:18-23 represents the climax of Paul's argument concerning divisions within the Corinthian church. Throughout chapters 1-3 Paul addresses the problem of factionalism that had developed among believers who aligned themselves with particular leaders such as Paul, Apollos, and Cephas. In this section Paul confronts the underlying assumptions that produced these divisions by challenging the Corinthians' understanding of wisdom, authority, and belonging within the Christian community.

Paul's argument unfolds through a sequence of exhortation, scriptural citation, and theological conclusion. Rather than simply correcting behavior, Paul seeks to transform the Corinthians' framework for evaluating leadership by grounding their identity in the message of the cross.

2.6.1 Structure of 1 Corinthians 3:18-23

The passage can be understood as consisting of three interconnected movements that develop Paul's argument against boasting in human leaders.

First, Paul issues a warning against self-deception and calls believers to abandon claims to worldly wisdom (v.18). Second, he provides a theological explanation supported by scriptural citations demonstrating that human wisdom is ultimately futile before God (vv.19-20). Finally, Paul applies this theological principle directly to the situation in Corinth by rejecting boasting in human leaders and affirming that all things ultimately belong to believers through Christ (vv.21-23).

This structure reveals that Paul's concern extends beyond correcting a particular dispute within the church. Instead, he addresses the deeper worldview that shaped the Corinthians' attitudes toward leadership and prestige.

2.6.2 Verse 18: Warning Against Self-Deception

Paul begins the passage with a direct exhortation:

“Let no one deceive himself. If anyone among you thinks that he is wise in this world, let him become a fool so that he may become wise.”

The opening phrase μηδεις εαυτον εξαπατατω (“let no one deceive himself”) employs a present imperative, indicating a continuous or ongoing warning directed to the community. The verb εξαπαταω intensifies the notion of deception, suggesting not mere error but thorough self-delusion. Paul therefore identifies self-deception as a central problem within the Corinthian church, particularly in relation to their understanding of wisdom.

The phrase “wise in this world” introduces the term σοφός, derived from σοφία, which in the Greco-Roman context commonly denoted intellectual sophistication, rhetorical skill, and philosophical insight. As Michael F. Bird notes, such qualities were widely associated with authority and social prestige, especially in cities like Corinth where public discourse and rhetorical performance were highly valued.⁴⁵ Paul, however, challenges this cultural framework by exposing its inadequacy as a measure of true wisdom.

This challenge is expressed through a deliberate paradox: those who consider themselves wise must become μωποί (“fools”) in order to become truly wise. This reversal reflects Paul’s broader theological argument concerning the cross, in which divine wisdom is revealed in forms that contradict human expectations. By calling the Corinthians to “become fools,” Paul is not advocating irrationality but demanding a renunciation of culturally defined standards of wisdom.

Thus, the exhortation functions as both a warning and a theological reorientation. It calls the community to abandon self-reliance and the pursuit of status, and to embrace a posture of humility grounded in the gospel. In this way, Paul establishes that true wisdom is not achieved

⁴⁵ Michael F. Bird, *Paul and the Christian Life* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2020), 135–139.

through human achievement but received through alignment with God's redemptive purposes in Christ.

2.6.3 Verses 19-20: The Futility of Worldly Wisdom

A Paul reinforces his argument in verse 19:

“For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God.”

The phrase ἡ σοφία τοῦ κόσμου (“the wisdom of the world”) intensifies the contrast between human systems of understanding and God's redemptive purposes. In Pauline usage, κόσμος often denotes the present social order shaped by values of honor, competition, and self-promotion. As Nijay K. Gupta observes, wisdom formed within this framework reflects assumptions that stand in direct tension with the message of the cross.⁴⁶ Paul therefore exposes worldly wisdom not as neutral, but as fundamentally inadequate when measured against divine revelation.

To support this claim, Paul appeals to Scripture:

“He catches the wise in their craftiness.”

This citation (from Job 5:13) situates Paul's argument within the wider biblical tradition, demonstrating that the limitation of human wisdom is not a new idea but a consistent theme in God's dealings with humanity. The term “craftiness” further suggests that human wisdom, rather than being purely intellectual, is often entangled with self-interest and manipulation.

Paul continues this scriptural reinforcement in verse 20:

“The Lord knows the thoughts of the wise, that they are futile.”

The concept of futility reflects the idea expressed by the Greek term μάταιος, which conveys emptiness, worthlessness, or lack of lasting value. Paul's argument does not reject human reasoning in itself, but rather exposes the insufficiency of reasoning that is grounded solely in human assumptions and detached from divine revelation.

⁴⁶ Nijay K. Gupta, Paul and the Language of Faith (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2020), 95–99.

Within the Corinthian context, this critique directly challenges the tendency to evaluate leadership according to intellectual ability and rhetorical skill. As David A. deSilva notes, admiration for eloquent teachers and socially prominent figures likely contributed to the factional divisions within the church.⁴⁷ By emphasizing the futility of human wisdom, Paul dismantles the criteria by which the Corinthians were assessing authority and reorients them toward a theological understanding of leadership grounded in God’s activity rather than human performance.

Taken together, verses 19-20 function as a decisive theological correction. Through scriptural validation and conceptual contrast, Paul demonstrates that worldly wisdom is both limited and unreliable, thereby preparing the way for his rejection of boasting in human leaders and his redefinition of authority within the Christian community.

2.6.4 Verses 21-23: The Reordering of Leadership and Belonging

Having exposed the inadequacy of worldly wisdom, Paul turns to its practical implication for the Corinthian community:

“So then, let no one boast in human leaders.”

The verb *καυχᾶσθαι* (“to boast”) carries the sense of deriving identity, status, or confidence from a particular source. Earlier in the letter, Paul has already challenged boasting rooted in human achievement; here, he extends the critique specifically to allegiance to leaders. The Corinthians had begun to define themselves in relation to figures such as Paul, Apollos, and Cephas, reflecting patterns common within Greco-Roman society, where followers aligned themselves with respected teachers or patrons for social recognition. As Nijay K. Gupta observes, such identification reflects a misplacement of identity, shifting it from Christ to human agents.⁴⁸

Paul’s response, however, does not merely prohibit boasting—it radically reverses the underlying framework. In verses 21-22 he declares:

⁴⁷ David A. deSilva, *Honor, Patronage, Kinship and Purity* (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2017), 118–123.

⁴⁸ Nijay K. Gupta, *A Beginner’s Guide to New Testament Studies* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2020), 80–83.

“All things are yours, whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas or the world or life or death or the present or the future—all are yours.”

This statement overturns the Corinthians’ assumptions about leadership and belonging. Instead of belonging to leaders, believers are reminded that leaders themselves belong to the community as instruments of God’s work. Paul, Apollos, and Cephas are not sources of status but servants through whom God nurtures the church. As Michael F. Bird notes, this reversal extends beyond human leadership to encompass all realities; life, death, and the future, emphasizing the comprehensive scope of God’s redemptive purposes.⁴⁹

The argument reaches its theological climax in verse 23:

“And you belong to Christ, and Christ belongs to God.”

This affirmation establishes the ultimate framework of authority and identity within the Christian community. Believers belong to Christ, and Christ is oriented toward God, thereby situating all relationships within the larger movement of divine sovereignty. Within this ordered structure, leadership cannot function as a basis for competition or personal prestige, since all authority is derivative and accountable to God.

Thus, Paul resolves the problem of factionalism not simply by condemning division, but by redefining the very basis of belonging. Leadership is no longer a marker of status but a form of participation in God’s redemptive work. The community is therefore called to abandon allegiance to human prestige and to embrace a Christ-centered identity grounded in divine ownership and purpose.

2.7 Summary of Exegetical Findings

The exegetical analysis of 1 Corinthians 3:18-23 reveals that the passage functions as the climax of Paul’s response to divisions within the Corinthian church. First, Paul exposes the danger of

⁴⁹ Michael F. Bird, *Paul and the Christian Life* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2020), 147–150.

self-deception in relation to worldly wisdom, calling the Corinthians to abandon prevailing cultural assumptions and to reconsider the basis of true wisdom.

Second, he demonstrates the limitations of human wisdom before God, emphasizing through scriptural support that systems of thought grounded in the κόσμος are ultimately insufficient for understanding divine purposes.

Third, the passage directly addresses the issue of boasting in human leaders, showing that allegiance to particular figures reflects a misunderstanding of the nature of Christian identity and community.

Fourth, Paul redefines the relationship between leaders and believers by presenting leaders as servants within God's work rather than as sources of status or division. Finally, the passage establishes a theological framework of belonging, in which believers are situated in relation to Christ, and Christ in relation to God, thereby ordering authority within the community. Taken together, these findings demonstrate that within this passage, Paul reshapes the Corinthian understanding of wisdom, leadership, and identity in accordance with the logic of the cross.

2.8 Leadership Principles Derived from 1 Corinthians 3:18-23

The exegetical analysis of First Epistle to the Corinthians 3:18-23 reveals several key theological principles that inform an understanding of Christian leadership. These include: (1) leadership grounded in cruciform wisdom, (2) vigilance against self-deception, (3) rejection of boasting in human leaders, (4) authority understood as stewardship under God, (5) identity rooted in belonging to Christ, and (6) leadership oriented toward the corporate maturity of the community. These principles, derived from the text within its historical and theological context, provide the foundation for the evaluative framework applied in Chapter Four.

2.9 Conclusion

This chapter has examined 1 Corinthians 3:18-23 through the distantiation stage of the Tripolar Exegetical Method, situating the passage within its historical, cultural, and literary context. The analysis has shown that Paul addresses divisions within the Corinthian church by redefining wisdom, challenging self-deception, rejecting boasting in human leaders, and grounding

identity in belonging to Christ under God's sovereignty. These exegetical insights establish the theological framework of the study and provide the basis for engaging the contemporary leadership context in the subsequent chapter.

CHAPTER THREE

CONTEXTUAL LEADERSHIP OF KAZO ARCHDEACONRY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the contextualization stage of the Tripolar Exegetical Method as outlined in Section 1.10.2. Building on the exegetical findings of Chapter Two, the study now turns to the world of the reader by examining the leadership context of Kazo Archdeaconry in Namirembe Diocese.

The purpose of this chapter is to analyze the ecclesial structures, cultural influences, and leadership dynamics that shape how leadership is practiced and understood within the archdeaconry. It explores patterns of authority, perceptions of effectiveness, and the broader socio-cultural environment that informs leadership.

Through this analysis, the chapter identifies key patterns and areas of tension within the contemporary context. These observations provide a contextual foundation that prepares for the theological dialogue between the biblical text and the contemporary situation in Chapter Four.

3.1 The Context of Kazo Archdeaconry

Kazo Archdeaconry is situated within Namirembe Diocese, one of the oldest dioceses in the Church of Uganda. Namirembe Diocese traces its origins to the late nineteenth-century missionary expansion of Anglican Christianity in Buganda through the work of the Church Missionary Society. Over time, the Diocese developed a structured episcopal system consisting of archdeaconries, parishes, and local congregations governed by the Provincial Constitution and Diocesan Canons of the Church of Uganda.⁵⁰ Kazo Archdeaconry operates within this canonical framework under episcopal oversight, with clergy and lay leadership participating in synodical governance and parish councils.

⁵⁰ Church of Uganda, *The Constitution and Canons of the Church of Uganda* (Kampala: Church of Uganda Provincial Secretariat, 2016). pp. 2-3

Geographically, Kazo Archdeaconry lies within an urban-peripheral environment influenced by the continued expansion of Kampala's metropolitan region. The area reflects characteristics of both established urban settlements and emerging residential communities. This setting creates a complex ecclesial environment shaped by mobility, demographic diversity, and varying socio-economic conditions.

Socio-economically, the archdeaconry serves congregations composed of civil servants, small-scale entrepreneurs, informal sector workers, professionals, and families navigating the pressures of urban life. Economic fluctuations, employment uncertainty, and rising living costs affect parish stability and congregational expectations. In such contexts, church leadership is often expected to provide not only spiritual guidance but also social support, moral direction, and practical assistance.

Religiously, the region reflects Uganda's broader Christian landscape, where Anglicanism coexists with Pentecostal, evangelical, and independent charismatic movements. These parallel expressions of Christianity frequently emphasize visible growth, charismatic authority, and experiential spirituality. Such influences can shape congregational perceptions of effective leadership, success, and spiritual maturity, even within Anglican structures.⁵¹ Within this environment, leadership in Kazo Archdeaconry carries layered significance. Ordained ministry reflects Anglican ecclesiology and sacramental theology, yet it also operates within broader Ugandan cultural expectations that value hierarchy, respect for seniority, and public recognition of authority. Scholars of African Christianity note that many African churches integrate biblical faith with inherited cultural patterns of leadership honor and communal respect.⁵² This interaction between ecclesial structure and cultural expectation creates a dynamic context in which theological reflection on authority, wisdom, and belonging becomes particularly necessary.

⁵¹ Asonzeh Ukah, *African Pentecostalism and World Christianity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), pp. 75-82

⁵² Stan Chu Ilo, *African Theology and the Future of Christianity* (Eugene: Cascade Books, 2020), p. 130-138

3.2 Leadership, Authority, and Boasting in Kazo Archdeaconry

Although specific academic studies focusing exclusively on Kazo Archdeaconry are limited, its leadership structure reflects the broader episcopal and canonical framework of the Church of Uganda. Authority within the archdeaconry operates under the oversight of Namirembe Diocese and is governed by the Constitution and Canons of the Church of Uganda.⁵³ Clergy serve within parishes under episcopal supervision, assisted by lay leadership structures such as parish councils and synod representation. Leadership, therefore, is not informal or personality-driven by design, but institutionally ordered and theologically grounded.

At the same time, ecclesial leadership does not function in isolation from cultural context. In Ugandan society, respect for office, seniority, and hierarchical order remains deeply embedded. These values naturally reinforce Anglican ecclesiology, which affirms ordained ministry and episcopal oversight. Clergy are often regarded not only as administrators of sacraments but also as moral authorities and public representatives of the church.

However, studies of African Christianity observe that contexts that place strong symbolic weight on leadership may also experience subtle tensions related to authority, visibility, and public recognition.⁵⁴ Within parish life, vitality may sometimes be informally assessed through attendance patterns, development initiatives, institutional expansion, or the perceived effectiveness of clergy leadership. While such indicators may reflect faithful stewardship, they may also shape perceptions of ministerial success in ways that emphasize measurable outcomes rather than theological categories such as humility and accountability.

Within such a setting, attachment to particular leaders may naturally develop. Loyalty to a parish priest or ministry style can express healthy pastoral relationships and communal belonging. Nevertheless, this dynamic reflects a pattern in which attachment to leaders may shape communal identity, raising important questions regarding leadership and belonging within the church.

⁵³ Church of Uganda, *Constitution and Canons* (2016), pp. 18-22

⁵⁴ J. Kwabena Asamoah-Gyadu, *Contemporary Pentecostal Christianity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019), pp. 60-66

3.3 Self-Deception and Spiritual Maturity in Kazo Archdeaconry

Paul's warning, "Let no one deceive himself" (1 Cor 3:18), introduces a deeply personal and theological concern. Self-deception in Paul's argument refers to a misalignment between perceived wisdom and true wisdom as defined by God. It is not ignorance but misplaced confidence an assumption of spiritual maturity that has not been measured against the standard of the cross.

Within Kazo Archdeaconry, as within the wider Church of Uganda, Christianity is socially embedded. Anglican parishes are long established, liturgically ordered, and structurally integrated into community life. Regular participation in worship, involvement in parish activities, confirmation classes, and synod structures all reflect visible expressions of faithfulness.

However, this situation raises important questions concerning the nature of spiritual maturity within Kazo Archdeaconry. Visible participation in church life does not automatically guarantee alignment with divine wisdom. Spiritual maturity cannot be reduced to attendance, familiarity with liturgy, or association with respected clergy.

Recent scholarship on African theological reflection notes that communal contexts that prioritize harmony and respect for authority may sometimes discourage critical theological self-examination.⁵⁵ Within Anglican parish life, strong respect for ordained leadership and established structures can foster unity, yet it may also reduce opportunities for critical theological reflection. This dynamic suggests the importance of humility and openness to theological self-examination within leadership and congregational life.

3.4 Scripture, Authority, and the Anglican Reader in Kazo Archdeaconry

The Church of Uganda affirms the authority of Scripture as foundational for doctrine, worship, and moral guidance. Within Namirembe Diocese and Kazo Archdeaconry, the Bible is read publicly in liturgy, expounded in preaching, and used in catechetical formation and pastoral

⁵⁵ Stan Chu Ilo, *African Theology and the Future of Christianity* (2020), pp.140-145

care. Anglican identity itself is historically shaped by a commitment to Scripture, reflected in the constitutional framework of the Church of Uganda.⁵⁶

Yet interpretation always occurs within specific cultural and ecclesial settings. Scripture is received through preaching traditions, theological education, and communal expectations. In the Ugandan context, themes such as blessing, moral order, and communal harmony often resonate deeply with congregational experience.

This perspective introduces an important consideration regarding the foundation of authority and identity within the church. This raises an important consideration regarding whether leadership and ecclesial identity are understood primarily in institutional or relational terms

3.5 Points of Tension Between Text and Context

When 1 Corinthians 3:18-23 is read within the Anglican context of Kazo Archdeaconry, several theological tensions emerge. These tensions do not indicate dysfunction but demonstrate Scripture's capacity to examine and refine ecclesial practice.

A key tension emerges between leadership evaluated through cultural standards and alternative understandings of wisdom within the Christian tradition. Educational attainment and administrative competence rightly contribute to effective ministry. This raises an important question regarding whether prevailing standards of leadership adequately reflect deeper theological understandings of wisdom.

A second tension concerns the extent to which leadership identity may become closely associated with particular individuals or offices. Respect for clergy and established authority is doctrinally and culturally reinforced. This raises a critical tension regarding the extent to which leadership identity may become centered on particular individuals or offices. A third tension concerns the grounding of authority and identity, particularly whether these are understood in institutional or relational terms. Authority becomes stewardship rather than possession.

⁵⁶ Church of Uganda, *Constitution and Canons* (2016). Pp. 20-15

These tensions indicate areas that require further theological engagement in order to understand their implications for leadership and ecclesial life.⁵⁷ Within the context of Kazo Archdeaconry, these tensions provide a starting point for constructive theological reflection on leadership, wisdom, and belonging.

3.6 Conclusion

This chapter has examined the leadership context of Kazo Archdeaconry as part of the contextualization stage of the Tripolar Exegetical Method outlined in Section 1.10.2. It has analyzed the ecclesial structures, socio-cultural influences, and leadership dynamics that shape how authority, effectiveness, and spiritual maturity are understood within the archdeaconry. The study has identified key patterns, including the influence of cultural expectations, the use of measurable indicators in evaluating leadership, and the potential for strong attachment to leadership figures. It has also highlighted areas of tension concerning the understanding of wisdom, authority, and identity within the contemporary context. These findings provide a descriptive and analytical foundation that prepares the way for the theological dialogue between text and context to be undertaken in Chapter Four.

⁵⁷ Gerald O. West, *The Stolen Bible* (Leiden: Brill, 2016), pp.95-102

CHAPTER FOUR

ANALYSIS OF LEADERSHIP PRACTICES WITHIN KAZO ARCHDEACONRY IN LIGHT OF THE PRINCIPLES DERIVED FROM 1 CORINTHIANS 3:18-23.

4.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the appropriation stage of the Tripolar Exegetical Method as outlined in Section 1.10.3. Building on the exegetical insights of Chapter Two and the contextual analysis of Chapter Three, it brings the biblical text and the contemporary context into deliberate theological dialogue.

This chapter therefore analyses leadership practices within Kazo Archdeaconry through six theological lenses derived from the exegetical study of First Epistle to the Corinthians 3:18-23 in Chapter Two. These lenses—cruciform wisdom, vigilance against self-deception, rejection of boasting in human leaders, authority as stewardship, identity rooted in divine belonging, and leadership oriented toward corporate maturity—constitute the key leadership principles identified through the distantiation stage of the Tripolar Method.

These principles, identified in Chapter Two, provide the normative criteria for evaluating leadership practices in this chapter. By analysing leadership in this way, the chapter moves beyond description to critical theological evaluation, identifying areas of alignment as well as areas requiring deeper reflection in light of Paul’s theological vision.

4.1 Leadership Practice in Light of Cruciform Wisdom

The first leadership principle derived from 1 Corinthians 3:18-23 concerns Paul’s redefinition of wisdom through the paradox of the cross. In 1 Corinthians 3:18, Paul warns the Corinthians against self-deception and calls those who consider themselves wise “in this age” to become μωρός (“foolish”) in order to become truly wise. This statement must be understood within the broader argument of 1 Corinthians 1-2, where Paul contrasts human wisdom with the wisdom revealed through the crucified Christ. In Paul’s theological framework, wisdom is not measured

by rhetorical skill, social prestige, or intellectual recognition, but by alignment with God's redemptive purposes revealed through the cross.⁵⁸

When this principle is considered in relation to leadership practice within Kazo Archdeaconry, it raises important questions concerning the criteria by which leadership is evaluated within the church. Within Kazo Archdeaconry, leadership is often evaluated through visible indicators such as institutional growth and public influence. In light of Paul's theology, this reveals a tension between culturally shaped criteria of success and the cruciform understanding of wisdom. These elements are not inherently problematic; indeed, theological education and organizational competence play an important role in responsible church leadership. However, Paul's argument reminds the church that these markers cannot serve as the ultimate standard for determining wisdom within Christian leadership.

Within Namirembe Diocese, clergy are typically formed through formal theological training and ordained within the canonical structures of the Church of Uganda. Such training equips leaders with biblical knowledge, pastoral skills, and administrative capacity necessary for ministry. Scholars of contemporary Christian leadership note that theological education provides important tools for interpreting Scripture, guiding congregations, and sustaining ecclesial structures.⁵⁹ Nevertheless, Paul's teaching suggests that leadership wisdom cannot be evaluated solely through intellectual preparation or professional competence. Wisdom in the Pauline sense is fundamentally theological and relational, grounded in humility before God and fidelity to the message of Christ.

In the context of Kazo Archdeaconry, leadership practice reflects both Anglican ecclesial structures and broader cultural expectations concerning authority. In many African contexts, leaders are often expected to demonstrate decisiveness, public confidence, and visible success within their communities.⁶⁰ Such expectations may influence how congregations perceive effective leadership, sometimes equating spiritual maturity with institutional expansion or

⁵⁸ Michael F. Bird, *Paul and the Christian Life* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2020), pp.133-140

⁵⁹ Stanley E. Porter and Andrew W. Pitts, *Christian Leadership: Foundations and Practice* (Leiden: Brill, 2017), pp. 142-148

⁶⁰ Stan Chu Ilo, *African Theology and the Future of Christianity* (Eugene: Cascade Books, 2020), pp.135-145

social influence. While these expectations may reflect legitimate desires for stability and growth within the church, they may also unintentionally reinforce criteria that differ from Paul's theological understanding of wisdom.

Paul's exhortation to "become a fool" therefore challenges both leaders and congregations to reconsider the foundations of leadership legitimacy. The paradox of cruciform wisdom suggests that authentic leadership is characterized not primarily by prominence or visibility but by humility, sacrificial service, and dependence upon God's grace. Contemporary Pauline scholars emphasize that the cross functions as the decisive hermeneutical key for understanding authority within the Christian community. Rather than reflecting systems of prestige common within the surrounding culture, Christian leadership reflects the self-giving pattern embodied in Christ.⁶¹

Therefore, leadership within Kazo Archdeaconry must be evaluated primarily in terms of humility, faithfulness to the gospel, and conformity to the pattern of the cross rather than visible success. Leadership that embodies these characteristics aligns closely with Paul's theological vision, even when it does not conform to conventional markers of success.

At the same time, the Anglican structures present within the Church of Uganda already provide institutional safeguards that encourage theological reflection and accountability. Ordination vows, episcopal oversight, synodical governance, and pastoral accountability structures all contribute to sustaining leadership that is accountable to the wider church.⁶² When interpreted through the lens of cruciform wisdom, these structures can serve not merely administrative purposes but also theological ones, encouraging leaders to exercise authority as a form of service rather than personal distinction.

The principle of cruciform wisdom therefore invites ongoing discernment within Kazo Archdeaconry. Leadership must continually be evaluated according to the theological pattern

⁶¹ Nijay K. Gupta, *Paul and the Language of Faith* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2020), pp. 100-106

⁶² Church of Uganda, *The Constitution and Canons of the Church of Uganda* (Kampala: Church of Uganda Provincial Secretariat, 2016), pp.15-25

established by Christ rather than by the cultural expectations of prestige or achievement. By grounding leadership identity in the wisdom of the cross, the church preserves the integrity of its ministry while remaining faithful to the theological vision articulated by Paul in 1 Corinthians 3:18-23. This demonstrates how the principle of cruciform wisdom provides a theological basis for evaluating leadership practices within Kazo Archdeaconry.

4.2 Leadership Practice in Light of the Danger of Self-Deception

A second leadership principle emerging from 1 Corinthians 3:18-23 concerns Paul's warning against self-deception. The apostle begins the passage with the admonition μηδεις εαυτον εξαπατατω ("let no one deceive himself"), indicating that the most immediate danger facing the Corinthian community was not external opposition but internal misjudgment. The Corinthians believed themselves to be σοφοι ("wise") according to prevailing cultural standards, yet Paul argues that such confidence could obscure genuine wisdom grounded in God's revelation through Christ.⁶³

Paul's concern therefore extends beyond intellectual misunderstanding to a deeper spiritual condition. Self-deception occurs when individuals or communities evaluate themselves according to criteria that do not correspond with God's purposes. In the Corinthian context, this misalignment produced factionalism, pride in particular leaders, and misplaced confidence in rhetorical skill and philosophical sophistication. Contemporary Pauline scholarship emphasizes that Paul's warning functions as a call to theological self-examination, urging the community to evaluate its assumptions in light of the cross.⁶⁴

When this principle is considered within the leadership context of Kazo Archdeaconry, it highlights the importance of ongoing self-reflection and accountability in Christian leadership. The high level of trust and recognition accorded to clergy within Kazo Archdeaconry creates conditions in which leadership may operate with limited critical evaluation. Clergy are often regarded not only as spiritual guides but also as moral authorities and community representatives. This respect for leadership can strengthen communal stability and trust within

⁶³ Michael F. Bird, *Paul and the Christian Life* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2020), pp. 140-146

⁶⁴ Nijay K. Gupta, *Paul and the Language of Faith* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2020), pp. 104-110

the church. However, it may also create circumstances in which leaders receive limited critical feedback regarding their decisions or ministry practices.

Scholars of Christian leadership frequently observe that positions of authority may unintentionally encourage self-affirmation if leaders become insulated from constructive critique.⁶⁵ Without deliberate structures of accountability, leaders may gradually rely on personal confidence, institutional position, or congregational approval as indicators of effectiveness. Such dynamics can resemble the situation addressed by Paul in Corinth, where confidence in human wisdom obscured deeper theological discernment.

Within Kazo Archdeaconry, Anglican ecclesial structures already provide important mechanisms designed to mitigate such risks. Episcopal oversight, clergy fellowship gatherings, parish councils, and synodical processes all offer opportunities for collective reflection and shared responsibility. These structures reflect the Anglican commitment to ordered leadership and communal discernment.⁶⁶ When functioning effectively, they encourage leaders to remain accountable to both the wider church and the communities they serve.

Nevertheless, Paul's warning in 1 Corinthians 3:18 suggests that structural accountability alone is insufficient unless accompanied by spiritual humility. Self-deception arises not only from the absence of external critique but also from the internal tendency to interpret success through personal or cultural expectations. Leaders may assume that growth in attendance, financial stability, or visible institutional development automatically indicates spiritual health. While these indicators may reflect positive developments within a parish, Paul's argument reminds the church that genuine wisdom must always be evaluated in relation to God's redemptive purposes.

This demonstrates that leadership within Kazo Archdeaconry must be intentionally structured to resist self-deception through sustained accountability and theological reflection. Leaders

⁶⁵ Stanley E. Porter and Andrew W. Pitts, *Christian Leadership: Foundations and Practice* (Leiden: Brill, 2017), pp. 145-152

⁶⁶ Church of Uganda, *The Constitution and Canons of the Church of Uganda* (Kampala: Church of Uganda Provincial Secretariat, 2016), pp. 20-30

are invited to examine their motivations, assumptions, and ministry practices in light of Scripture and the example of Christ. Such reflection does not undermine leadership authority; rather, it strengthens it by ensuring that authority remains aligned with God's purposes.

In practical terms, this approach may involve cultivating habits of collective discernment, open dialogue within parish leadership structures, and continued theological formation among clergy and lay leaders. Scholars of African Christianity emphasize that leadership characterized by humility and accountability contributes significantly to the spiritual maturity of Christian communities.⁶⁷ When leaders remain open to correction and committed to learning, they model the very wisdom that Paul describes as essential to Christian maturity.

Thus, Paul's warning against self-deception remains highly relevant for contemporary leadership contexts. In Kazo Archdeaconry, the principle serves as a reminder that leadership must continually be examined through the lens of the gospel. True wisdom emerges not from confidence in human achievement but from humility before God's revealed purposes. This analysis demonstrates that the principle of vigilance against self-deception derived from First Epistle to the Corinthians 3:18-23 provides a theological basis for evaluating leadership practices within Kazo Archdeaconry

4.3 Leadership Practice in Light of the Rejection of Boasting in Human Leaders

A third leadership principle emerging from 1 Corinthians 3:18-23 concerns Paul's rejection of boasting in human leaders. In 1 Corinthians 3:21, Paul states clearly: μηδεις καυχασθω εν ανθρωποις ("let no one boast in human beings"). The verb καυχασθαι refers not merely to casual pride but to a form of identity-forming allegiance. In the Corinthian church, believers had begun to identify themselves with particular leaders such as Paul, Apollos, and Cephas. These affiliations gradually created divisions within the community and shifted the focus of belonging from Christ to human personalities.⁶⁸

⁶⁷ Stan Chu Ilo, *African Theology and the Future of Christianity* (Eugene: Cascade Books, 2020), pp.140-150

⁶⁸ Michael F. Bird, *Paul and the Christian Life* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2020), pp.138-144

Paul rejects this pattern of allegiance because it distorts the theological foundation of the church. Christian identity is not derived from association with prominent leaders but from belonging to Christ. Contemporary Pauline scholarship notes that Paul's critique of boasting reflects a broader concern that human authority can easily become the center of communal identity if it is not continually subordinated to the lordship of Christ.⁶⁹ By insisting that believers should not boast in human leaders, Paul reorients the church toward a Christ-centered understanding of belonging.

When this principle is examined within the context of Kazo Archdeaconry, it invites reflection on how leadership relationships function within parish life. Within the Church of Uganda, parish priests occupy a visible and influential role in the life of local congregations. They preside over worship, administer the sacraments, provide pastoral care, and often serve as key figures in community leadership. As a result, strong personal relationships frequently develop between clergy and congregants. Strong relational attachment between clergy and congregants, while pastorally valuable, may create conditions in which leadership becomes a focal point of communal identity.

However, the Pauline warning in 1 Corinthians 3:21 suggests that these relationships must be carefully understood within a theological framework that preserves the primacy of Christ. In many Christian communities, including Anglican contexts, congregational loyalty may sometimes become closely associated with particular leaders or ministry styles. Congregants may express strong attachment to clergy whose preaching, pastoral care, or leadership style resonates with them. This reveals that leadership within Kazo Archdeaconry must actively resist identity formation centered on individual leaders and instead direct communal belonging toward Christ

Scholars of contemporary Christian leadership observe that personality-centered leadership cultures can unintentionally develop when congregational identity becomes linked to the

⁶⁹ Nijay K. Gupta, *Paul and the Language of Faith* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2020), pp. 106-110

charisma, visibility, or perceived success of particular leaders.⁷⁰ In such circumstances, leadership can gradually shift from being a form of service within the community to becoming a focal point of communal identity. Paul's teaching challenges this tendency by emphasizing that leaders are not the source of the church's identity but participants in God's work within the community.

Within Kazo Archdeaconry, Anglican ecclesial structures provide important safeguards that discourage the development of personality-centered leadership. Clergy operate under episcopal oversight, and parish governance structures such as parish councils and synod representation encourage shared responsibility in leadership.⁷¹ These structures reinforce the understanding that leadership within the church is not a personal possession but a ministry exercised within the wider body of Christ.

Nevertheless, Paul's warning remains relevant because leadership dynamics are shaped not only by institutional structures but also by cultural expectations. In many African contexts, leaders are often accorded significant respect and social recognition.⁷² While such respect reflects deeply rooted cultural values concerning authority and community order, it may also create conditions in which leaders are elevated in ways that unintentionally shift attention away from Christ.

The theological insight of 1 Corinthians 3:21 therefore calls both leaders and congregations to maintain a clear distinction between appreciation for leadership and the formation of identity around particular individuals. Leadership should serve to guide the community toward Christ rather than to become the center of loyalty itself. When leaders understand their role as directing the community's attention toward Christ, the risk of personality-centered leadership diminishes significantly.

⁷⁰ Stanley E. Porter and Andrew W. Pitts, *Christian Leadership: Foundations and Practice* (Leiden: Brill, 2017), pp. 150-158

⁷¹ Church of Uganda, *The Constitution and Canons of the Church of Uganda* (Kampala: Church of Uganda Provincial Secretariat, 2016), pp.22-32

⁷² Stan Chu Ilo, *African Theology and the Future of Christianity* (Eugene: Cascade Books, 2020), pp. 154-155

In this way, Paul's rejection of boasting in human leaders provides an important framework for evaluating leadership practice within Kazo Archdeaconry. Leadership relationships remain essential for pastoral care and community formation, yet they must always be oriented toward strengthening the church's identity in Christ. By maintaining this theological orientation, the church safeguards both the integrity of leadership and the unity of the Christian community.

4.4 Leadership Practice in Light of Authority as Stewardship

Another leadership principle derived from 1 Corinthians 3:18-23 concerns Paul's understanding of authority as stewardship rather than possession. After warning the Corinthians not to boast in human leaders, Paul introduces a striking theological reversal in 1 Corinthians 3:21-22, declaring that "all things are yours, whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas." This statement relocates leaders from being the objects of allegiance to being gifts given to the community. Rather than belonging to leaders, the church receives leaders as instruments through whom God carries out His work.⁷³

This reversal reflects a broader Pauline understanding of leadership as service within God's redemptive purposes. Earlier in the chapter, Paul describes himself and Apollos as servants through whom the Corinthians came to believe (1 Cor 3:5), emphasizing that while leaders may plant or water, it is ultimately God who gives the growth (1 Cor 3:7). Leadership authority therefore remains subordinate to divine agency. Contemporary scholarship notes that Paul's argument consistently reframes leadership in terms of stewardship within God's mission rather than control over the community.⁷⁴

The Greek structure of 1 Corinthians 3:21-22 reinforces this theological perspective. By listing leaders among the realities that belong to the church, Paul emphasizes that leadership exists for the benefit of the community rather than for the elevation of individual leaders. Authority is therefore functional and relational, directed toward the growth and maturity of the church.

⁷³ Michael F. Bird, *Paul and the Christian Life* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2020), pp.135-142

⁷⁴ Nijay K. Gupta, *Paul and the Language of Faith* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2020), pp. 102-108

When this principle is examined within the context of Kazo Archdeaconry, it provides an important framework for understanding the exercise of authority within Anglican leadership structures. Within Kazo Archdeaconry, ordained leadership carries significant authority within ecclesial structures. These responsibilities carry genuine authority within the life of the church and are exercised within the canonical structures of the diocese.

However, Paul's teaching suggests that such authority must always be understood as entrusted stewardship rather than personal ownership. Leaders do not possess congregations as personal domains; rather, they serve as caretakers of communities that ultimately belong to Christ. Scholars of Christian leadership emphasize that when authority is understood as stewardship, leaders recognize their role as facilitators of communal growth rather than controllers of ecclesial life.⁷⁵

Within Kazo Archdeaconry, several institutional structures support this understanding of leadership. Episcopal oversight, clergy accountability, parish councils, and synod processes all reinforce the idea that leadership operates within a shared system of responsibility rather than individual control.⁷⁶ These structures encourage leaders to exercise authority collaboratively, ensuring that ministry remains oriented toward the wellbeing of the community.

At the same time, cultural expectations surrounding leadership may influence how authority is perceived within congregations. In many African societies, leaders are traditionally associated with responsibility, decision-making power, and public recognition.⁷⁷ Such expectations can shape how congregations interpret pastoral authority, sometimes placing leaders in positions where they are expected to provide decisive direction in both spiritual and social matters.

While such expectations can strengthen respect for leadership, Paul's theology reminds the church that authority must always be exercised with humility and accountability. Leadership

⁷⁵ Stanley E. Porter and Andrew W. Pitts, *Christian Leadership: Foundations and Practice* (Leiden: Brill, 2017), pp. 148-156

⁷⁶ Church of Uganda, *The Constitution and Canons of the Church of Uganda* (Kampala: Church of Uganda Provincial Secretariat, 2016), pp.18-28

⁷⁷ Stan Chu Ilo, *African Theology and the Future of Christianity* (Eugene: Cascade Books, 2020), pp. 140-150

authority exists not to elevate leaders but to serve the spiritual formation of the community. When authority is understood as stewardship, leaders remain conscious that their role is temporary and entrusted, not absolute.

Therefore, authority within Kazo Archdeaconry must be exercised as entrusted stewardship rather than personal control, with leaders functioning as servants of God's work within the community. Leaders who view their authority as stewardship are more likely to cultivate participatory decision-making, encourage the development of lay leadership, and remain attentive to the needs of the entire congregation. Such practices align closely with Paul's vision of leadership as cooperative service within God's work.

Therefore, the leadership structures present within Kazo Archdeaconry can be strengthened when interpreted through the theological lens provided by 1 Corinthians 3:21-22. By emphasizing stewardship rather than possession, Paul's teaching reinforces a model of leadership that remains accountable to God and oriented toward the spiritual growth of the community.

4.5 Leadership Practice in Light of Divine Belonging

The final theological affirmation of 1 Corinthians 3:23 provides the climax of Paul's argument: "you belong to Christ, and Christ belongs to God." In Greek, the structure reads ὑμεῖς δὲ Χριστοῦ, Χριστὸς δὲ Θεοῦ, establishing a clear relational ordering of belonging. The community belongs to Christ, and Christ belongs to God. Through this formulation, Paul situates the identity of the church within a hierarchy of divine sovereignty that transcends all human structures of leadership.

This declaration completes Paul's response to the divisions that had developed within the Corinthian church. Earlier in the passage, believers had identified themselves with particular leaders such as Paul, Apollos, or Cephas. By affirming that the entire community belongs to Christ, Paul redirects attention away from human leaders and toward the ultimate source of authority within the church. Contemporary Pauline scholarship emphasizes that this theological

ordering functions as a safeguard against the elevation of human authority beyond its proper place within the life of the church.⁷⁸

Within this framework, leadership must always be understood as operating within divine ownership. Leaders do not exist as autonomous figures whose authority originates from personal ability, popularity, or institutional position. Instead, their authority derives from participation in God's work through Christ. In this sense, leadership remains fundamentally derivative, grounded in the sovereignty of God rather than in human structures.

When this principle is examined within the context of Kazo Archdeaconry, it highlights the importance of maintaining a Christ-centered understanding of leadership identity. Anglican ecclesial structures within the Church of Uganda already reflect a hierarchical framework in which parishes function within archdeaconries, archdeaconries operate within dioceses, and dioceses remain accountable to the broader provincial church. These structures provide administrative order and continuity within the life of the church.⁷⁹

Within Kazo Archdeaconry, this theological framework redefines leadership identity by locating authority within the lordship of Christ rather than institutional or personal structures. While the archdeaconry belongs institutionally to the diocese, and the diocese to the wider Anglican communion, Paul's argument reminds the church that all such structures ultimately exist under the lordship of Christ. Leadership authority therefore remains accountable not only to institutional governance but also to the theological reality that the church belongs to Christ.

This requires leaders within Kazo Archdeaconry to ground their authority explicitly in belonging to Christ, ensuring that leadership remains accountable to divine rather than institutional priorities. Scholars of Christian leadership frequently note that when leadership identity is grounded in belonging to Christ, authority becomes oriented toward service, humility, and

⁷⁸ Nijay K. Gupta, *Paul and the Language of Faith* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2020), pp.140-148

⁷⁹ Church of Uganda, *The Constitution and Canons of the Church of Uganda* (Kampala: Church of Uganda Provincial Secretariat, 2016), pp. 22-25

accountability rather than toward control or prestige.⁸⁰ Leaders recognize that their role is to guide the community in faithfulness to Christ rather than to become the focal point of the community's identity.

This theological orientation also strengthens the unity of the church. Because all believers belong to Christ, the community shares a common identity that transcends differences in leadership style, personality, or ministry role. Paul's emphasis on divine belonging therefore addresses not only the problem of boasting in leaders but also the deeper issue of communal identity. By rooting identity in Christ rather than in human authority, the church preserves its unity and theological integrity.

Within Kazo Archdeaconry, this principle encourages leadership practices that continually direct the attention of the community toward Christ as the ultimate head of the church. Preaching, pastoral care, and congregational life are therefore oriented toward strengthening the church's relationship with Christ rather than reinforcing dependence on particular leaders.

Furthermore, the recognition that Christ belongs to God situates the entire life of the church within the broader purposes of God's redemptive work. Leadership within the church therefore participates in a mission that extends beyond local structures or institutional boundaries. Leaders serve not only their congregations but also the wider purposes of God's kingdom.

Thus, Paul's affirmation of divine belonging provides an essential theological framework for evaluating leadership practice within Kazo Archdeaconry. By recognizing that the church belongs to Christ and that Christ belongs to God, leaders are reminded that their authority remains accountable to God's sovereign purposes. Leadership is therefore exercised not as an expression of personal control but as faithful participation in God's ongoing work within the church.

⁸⁰ Stanley E. Porter and Andrew W. Pitts, *Christian Leadership: Foundations and Practice* (Leiden: Brill, 2017), pp. 152-160

4.6 Leadership Practice in Light of Corporate Maturity

Another important leadership principle emerging from Paul's discussion in First Epistle to the Corinthians 3 concerns the role of leadership in promoting the corporate maturity of the Christian community. Earlier in the chapter, Paul rebukes the Corinthians for their spiritual immaturity, stating that he could not address them as spiritually mature people but as infants in Christ (1 Cor 3:1). Their jealousy and division reveal that they continue to operate according to worldly patterns of rivalry and competition. This context provides the necessary background for Paul's argument in 1 Corinthians 3:18-23, where he addresses the theological distortions that sustain such divisions.

Paul's concern in this section is fundamentally communal rather than individualistic. His use of metaphors such as agriculture and construction emphasizes collective growth under divine direction. By describing himself and Apollos as servants working in God's field and as builders in God's structure (1 Cor 3:5-9), Paul deliberately shifts attention away from individual prominence to God as the source of growth. The concept of οἰκοδομή (building up) further reinforces this communal orientation, indicating that leadership is directed toward the strengthening and maturation of the entire body.

This perspective carries significant implications for understanding Christian leadership. In Pauline theology, leadership is not oriented toward the elevation of individual leaders but toward the formation of a mature and unified community. Ministry is framed in cooperative rather than competitive terms, with leaders functioning as co-workers within God's mission. Leadership authority is therefore relational and functional, existing for the benefit of the community rather than as a means of personal distinction.

When this principle is examined within the context of Kazo Archdeaconry, both areas of alignment and areas of tension become apparent. On the one hand, existing parish structures, ministries, and participatory frameworks provide meaningful opportunities for communal formation, discipleship, and shared responsibility. These structures reflect an implicit

alignment with Paul's vision of leadership as oriented toward the growth of the whole community.

On the other hand, certain leadership patterns may reveal subtle tensions with this theological vision. Where leadership effectiveness is primarily interpreted through visible outcomes such as institutional growth, numerical expansion, or public recognition, there is a risk that leadership becomes indirectly oriented toward performance rather than communal maturation. While such indicators may reflect positive developments, they do not, in themselves, constitute evidence of spiritual maturity in the Pauline sense. This suggests that some evaluative frameworks within the archdeaconry may not fully correspond to the theological criteria established in the text.

Furthermore, Paul's critique of division underscores the danger of leadership practices that unintentionally reinforce fragmentation within the community. In Corinth, allegiance to particular leaders disrupted communal life and hindered spiritual growth. This indicates that leadership which allows identity to become centered around personalities, ministry styles, or institutional visibility risks undermining the very maturity it seeks to cultivate.

Within Kazo Archdeaconry, maintaining a genuinely communal orientation requires leadership practices that intentionally foster collaboration, shared responsibility, and participatory engagement. While Anglican governance structures—such as parish councils, synodical participation, and clergy fellowship—provide formal mechanisms for collective leadership, their theological effectiveness depends on the extent to which they cultivate genuine communal discernment rather than procedural compliance.

Contemporary scholarship on Christian leadership further supports this perspective, emphasizing that communities flourish when leadership actively cultivates the gifts of all members. Such an approach resonates with Paul's vision of the church as a participatory community in which growth is distributed and sustained through mutual edification. Leadership, therefore, functions not as centralized control but as facilitation of the community's collective development under God's direction.

When interpreted through the lens of 1 Corinthians 3, these insights reinforce a theology of leadership grounded in cooperative labor under divine sovereignty. Leaders plant and nurture, but the ultimate growth of the community comes from God. This theological orientation redefines leadership success, shifting it away from measurable performance toward the long-term spiritual formation and unity of the community.

This analysis demonstrates that the principle of corporate maturity derived from 1 Corinthians 3:18-23 provides a critical theological framework for evaluating leadership practices within Kazo Archdeaconry. Leadership that prioritizes unity, participation, and the spiritual development of the entire community aligns closely with Paul's theological vision, while leadership that gravitates toward individual prominence or performance-based evaluation reflects a divergence from it. In this way, the section directly fulfills the analytical aim of Objective 3 by applying exegetical insights as normative criteria for assessing contemporary ecclesial leadership.

4.7 Conclusion

This chapter has engaged in the appropriation stage of the Tripolar Exegetical Method by bringing the theological insights of 1 Corinthians 3:18-23 into critical dialogue with the leadership context of Kazo Archdeaconry. Through the lenses of cruciform wisdom, vigilance against self-deception, rejection of boasting in human leaders, authority as stewardship, identity rooted in divine belonging, and leadership oriented toward corporate maturity, the study has evaluated contemporary leadership practices within the archdeaconry.

The analysis demonstrates that while existing Anglican structures provide a valuable framework for ordered and accountable leadership, these structures must continually be interpreted and exercised in light of the theological vision of the text. Leadership is therefore to be understood not in terms of status or personal authority, but as humble participation in God's work, grounded in belonging to Christ and directed toward the growth and unity of the community.

Taken together, these findings establish a theologically grounded framework for Christian leadership within Kazo Archdeaconry. They indicate that leadership must be continually shaped by the wisdom of the cross, sustained through accountability, and oriented toward the corporate maturity of the church. In this way, the chapter demonstrates the enduring relevance of Paul's teaching for guiding leadership within the contemporary ecclesial context

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction

This chapter presents a summary of the study, outlines the main conclusions drawn from the analysis, and proposes recommendations for leadership within Kazo Archdeaconry. The study has examined 1 Corinthians 3:18-23 using the Tripolar Exegetical Method, engaging the biblical text (Chapter Two), the contemporary context (Chapter Three), and the theological dialogue between the two (Chapter Four). This final chapter brings these elements together in a focused manner without introducing new arguments.

5.1 Summary of the Study

The study was guided by three main research objectives. The first objective was to examine 1 Corinthians 3:18-23 through exegetical analysis in order to understand Paul's teaching concerning wisdom, leadership, and belonging within the Corinthian church. The second objective was to identify leadership principles that emerge from the passage. The third objective was to analyse leadership practice within Kazo Archdeaconry in light of those theological principles.

Chapter One introduced the study by presenting the research problem, objectives, and methodological approach. The chapter explained the relevance of the passage to contemporary leadership challenges within the church and outlined the Tripolar Exegetical Method as the primary interpretive framework guiding the research.

Chapter Two focused on the exegetical analysis of 1 Corinthians 3:18-23. Through historical, literary, and theological examination, the chapter demonstrated that Paul addresses the issue of division within the Corinthian church by challenging their understanding of wisdom and leadership. Paul warns believers against self-deception, rejects boasting in human leaders, and emphasizes that the community ultimately belongs to Christ and to God.

Chapter Three identified six leadership principles derived from the passage: cruciform wisdom, vigilance against self-deception, the rejection of boasting in human leaders, authority as stewardship, identity rooted in divine belonging, and leadership oriented toward corporate maturity. These principles provided the theological framework for analysing leadership within the contemporary church.

Chapter Four then applied these principles to the leadership context of Kazo Archdeaconry. The chapter examined leadership practices within the archdeaconry and analysed them in light of Paul's theological insights. Through this analysis, the study explored both areas of alignment and areas that invite further theological reflection within leadership practice.

5.2 Recommendations

In light of the exegetical insights from First Epistle to the Corinthians 3:18-23 and the analysis of leadership practice in Kazo Archdeaconry presented in Chapter Four, the following recommendations are proposed:

First, in relation to cruciform wisdom (Section 4.1), the study recommends Kazo Archdeaconry to strengthen ongoing theological formation for both clergy and lay leaders, with particular emphasis on the Pauline understanding of wisdom as revealed through the cross. Such formation could help ensure that leadership is evaluated not primarily by visible success or influence, but by humility, faithfulness, and alignment with the gospel.

Second, with regard to the danger of self-deception (Section 4.2), the study suggests that the archdeaconry may consider enhancing existing structures of accountability and reflection, including clergy fellowships, parish councils, and mentoring relationships. These structures could provide opportunities for leaders to engage in ongoing theological self-examination in light of Scripture.

Third, in reference to the rejection of boasting in human leaders (Section 4.3), it is recommended for Kazo archdeaconry to encourage teaching and leadership practices that consistently direct attention away from individual personalities and toward Christ. This could

support the development of a Christ-centered identity within congregations and reduce the risk of personality-based allegiance.

Fourth, in view of authority as stewardship (Section 4.4), Kazo Archdeaconry may continue strengthening its existing Anglican structures of shared leadership and oversight. Emphasizing leadership as stewardship rather than possession could further reinforce accountability and service within ministry.

Fifth, according to identity rooted in divine belonging (Section 4.5), the study further suggests promotion of discipleship initiatives that emphasize the theological affirmation that believers belong to Christ in the archdeaconry. Such teaching could help shape congregational identity in ways that are less dependent on human leadership and more grounded in Scripture.

Sixth, in light of leadership oriented toward corporate maturity (Section 4.6), Kazo archdeaconry may consider encouraging more collaborative and participatory approaches to leadership. Increasing the involvement of lay members in ministry and decision-making processes could contribute to the growth, unity, and maturity of the church.

5.3 Areas for Further Research

Although this study has explored leadership principles derived from 1 Corinthians 3:18-23, further research could expand the scope of investigation in several ways.

Future studies may explore additional Pauline texts that address leadership, such as 1 Corinthians 4, Philippians 2, or 1 Timothy 3, in order to develop a broader theological framework for Christian leadership.

Further research may also examine leadership practices within other archdeaconries or dioceses within the Church of Uganda, providing comparative perspectives on how biblical principles are applied in different contexts.

Finally, interdisciplinary research integrating biblical studies, practical theology, and leadership studies could provide deeper insights into how churches can cultivate leadership

models that remain faithful to the biblical witness while responding effectively to contemporary challenges.

5.4 General Conclusion

This study examined the theological significance of First Epistle to the Corinthians 3:18-23 and its implications for Christian leadership within Kazo Archdeaconry in Namirembe Diocese. Using the Tripolar Exegetical Method, it engaged the biblical text, the contemporary context, and the theological dialogue between them to develop a coherent framework for evaluating leadership.

The exegetical analysis showed that Paul confronts a fundamental distortion in Corinth: the tendency to evaluate wisdom and leadership according to cultural standards of status and rhetorical ability. In response, he redefines wisdom through the cross, warns against self-deception, rejects boasting in human leaders, and grounds the church's identity in belonging to Christ under God's sovereignty. Leadership, therefore, is understood not as personal distinction but as participation in God's work.

The contextual analysis revealed that leadership in Kazo Archdeaconry operates within strong Anglican structures, yet remains influenced by cultural expectations regarding authority, visibility, and success. The theological engagement demonstrated that Paul's teaching provides a critical lens for evaluating these patterns, revealing both areas of alignment and points requiring deeper reflection.

This study concludes that Christian leadership is fundamentally theological, shaped by the wisdom of the cross rather than by cultural models of success. It is expressed through humility, stewardship, and service, and is oriented toward the unity and maturity of the church.

Accordingly, this research contributes to both Pauline scholarship and contemporary ecclesial practice by demonstrating the enduring relevance of Paul's theology for leadership today. It is hoped that these findings will encourage leadership that is biblically grounded, contextually aware, and faithful to the transformative vision of the gospel

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