

Goals of a Leader in a Multicultural Congregation

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Abstract

As vital as pastoral leadership skill is to the spiritual growth of a multicultural church, likewise it becomes a problem when leaders are not efficient in demonstrating skills in moving the church forward. The situation of some pastors or church leaders in multicultural churches who exhibited inefficiency of leadership skills which adversely affected both the spiritual growth and relationship growth of their local churches poses a challenge to this paper. It is expected of leaders in a multicultural church to preach and teach true scripture without bias for the spiritual growth of the members and also maintain biblical discipline, which is a predominant way of improving leadership skills in a multicultural church. Every church leader is expected to see him or herself as a member of all cultural groups present in the church, being as well a predominant way of improving leadership skills in a multicultural church. Leaders should avoid ethnocentrism in decision making within the church as a means of improving leadership skills in a multicultural church. Leaders should learn other languages and use them while communicating with his/her congregation as a way of improving leadership skills in a multicultural church, focusing attention on preaching and teaching true scripture without bias for the spiritual growth of the members, and also maintain biblical discipline; seeing oneself as member of all cultural groups present in the church; and understanding and respecting core value of other cultures. To achieve a desired goal, a leader is obligated to set up these goals right; reduce conflict, recognition of others, respect for cultural differences, and healthy interaction between cultures.

Keywords: *multicultural leadership skills, multicultural church, biblical discipline, pastoral leadership*

Introduction

Leadership is an important topic in many areas of life and those who lead have lasting impacts upon those being led, but the role of those who lead the people of God has eternal consequences. “Leadership in the church of Jesus Christ is an awesome responsibility because of that which is entrusted and the One who has bestowed it (Heb. 13:17)”. With this in mind, it is important to think through those aspects of leadership that are specifically Christian and those that might be considered secular. There are, of course, places where these two overlap and find common ground, as was mentioned above, but simply because some method of

management or leadership seems to work in a business or the secular world, does not necessarily mean it will be effective in a ministry context, or that it is even godly.

Benware (1999) discusses the pitfalls of using secular models of leadership to guide the church stating that “Leadership that is effective and empowered understands their role and operates under the guidelines of the Word of God” (p. 5). Benware is much more interested in what the Bible says about leadership, always focusing on a biblical perspective, which can be seen from the aforementioned quote. That is to say that the author desires to explain what leadership authority is meant to be according to God by examining the New Testament and how it presents the issue (pp. 5-7).

Benware (1999) initially begins by defining important words such as authority, power, and rule with the intent of properly understanding what the Bible teaches and how one can lead with biblical authority and honour the God of all creation (pp. 7-9). The author points out that one must be cautious not to use their authority to lord it over others or to use their authority to promote themselves (Benware, 1999, pp. 8-9). Other areas addressed by Benware have to do with submission and obedience where he states that: There is a need for submission to leadership authority if there is going to be order and stability. But careful definition and understanding of submission and obedience is needed. One of the telltale signs that authoritarianism may be present is when there is a distorted view of submission. This distortion of submission and authority has been characteristic of cultic groups. However, even some Christian groups that avoid the “cult” label operate with biblical ideas and practices (pp. 9-11).

Leadership, Administration and Management

One step in defining leadership is to make distinction among these three words: leadership, administration and management. Administration is doing things right. If there is deadline to meet, one meets it. If there is a prescribed structure, one has it. If there are stated policies and procedures, one keeps them. Management on its own is doing the right things. Management includes such long range planning, goal setting selecting priorities, time management and budgeting.

Definition

Leadership is development and articulation of a shared vision, motivation of those key people without whom that vision cannot become a reality, and gaining the cooperation of most of the people involved. Both administration and management are required for effective leadership. However, administrative and management alone do not equal leadership. One can administer and manage without vision and core values. But in leadership, it is impossible to lead without vision and core values. Leadership is always a moral act. Genuine leadership is always value-driven leadership

In a local church, leading strengthen both pastor and the people (members). The goal is to illustrate an approach to leadership which, if done well, will cause both the pastor and the congregation to feel and be strong than ever before. The key is not focus on a term or process, but on an approach to leadership that takes seriously the value, ideas, dreams and concerns of both the pastor and the people. The reality of personal and group empowerment around mission and values is what we must always seek.

Principle of Leadership

It is all about knowing self and seeks improvement to enhance good result. This should be developed by the use of leadership trait, evaluation of oneself as well as determination of one's strengths. The art and science of leadership spelled out the following principles of leadership that reveal facts about knowing and evaluating self.¹

1. Know yourself and seek self-improvement: In order to know more of oneself, a leader has to understand his being, knowing, and doing attributes. 'seeking self-improvement means continually strengthening the attributes.'² This can be accomplished through self-study, formal classes, reflection, and interacting with others
2. Be technically proficient: The leader must know his job and have a solid familiarity with the employees' tasks. Likewise in a multicultural congregation, the leader should know his duties and have solid familiarity with his members irrespective of their cultural differences.
3. The Leadership should take responsibility for his actions: Search for ways to guide the organization to new heights and when things go wrong, they always take responsibility and not blame others. Always analyze the situation, take corrective action, and move on to the next challenge.³
4. Make sound and timely decision: They use good problem solving, decision making, and planning tools.
5. Set the example: They always set good role models to their employees. They must not only hear what they are expected to do, but also see. We must become the change we want to see.⁴
6. Know the people and look out for their well being: Understanding human nature and the importance of sincere care for the workers is the ultimate of every leader.
7. Keep the workers informed: Know how to communicate not only the seniors and other key management staff, but the entire work force.
8. Develop a sense of responsibility in the workers: As a good leader, help to develop good character traits that will help them carry out their profession responsibility.
9. Ensure that tasks are understood, supervised, and accomplished: A good communication is the key to this responsibility.
10. Use the full capabilities of your organization: By developing a team spirit, the leader would be able to utilize his organization, department, section, etc to its fullest capabilities. Discover individual giftedness and strength look out for better ways to harness it to develop the church.⁵

The Dimension of Leadership

¹*The Art and Science of Leadership*: www.nwlink.com. Accessed on May 23rd, 2023.

²O.O. Oresanya "Christian Leadership: Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow." *In Effective Christian Leadership in*

³G. O. Adetunji. *Leadership in Action: A Sourcebook in Church Administration for Students and*

⁴Reginald M. McDonough. *Growing Ministers Growing Churches* (Nashville: Convention Press, 1991).

P.66.

⁵*The act and Science of Leadership*: www.nwlimk.com. Accessed on 23rdth May, 2023.

According to Kilinski and Wofforf, there are five basic dimension of leadership: Group Achievement, Personal Interaction, Dynamic Achievement, Personal Achievement, and Secure and easy Going.⁶ This implies that leadership cannot exist without people, leadership come to play in a circle of interaction, to share influence in an organization goal.

1. Group Achievement: Behaviours of a leader should be associated with team action, group leadership, and group goal and group success. Orderliness of behaviour is stressed through careful planning, good work, and systematic approach, thorough and organized approach to problems.⁷ This dimension becomes the platform for every leadership success, pastors as the leader of a church must pursue his members' achievement and not just his own success alone.
2. Personal Interaction: This is performance of a leader who desires a close, personal, cordial relationship to his people, he is informal, casual, and can be friendly. People that he leads in the group easily become his friends. It is expected of a leader to be friend to all his church members so as to get the best of them and know how to relate with their individual uniqueness.
3. Dynamic Achievement: This shows behaviours of a leader who is forceful and active. He spends little time in planning or decision making, preferring instead to be on the firing line of activity. He normally delegates authority to make their decisions and then leaves them. Alone to accomplish the desired results. He has confidence in his followers and in himself. Church leader should be an initiator of dynamism, to make the members believe in his leadership skill and aid spiritual growth and membership increment within a short period of time, people always seek something new, dynamism makes a church leader to be ahead of his members.
4. Personal Enhancement: This indicates behaviour of a leader who enjoys the use of power. He depends too much on his authority in directing members of his group. He enhances his own position in his group above that of others by trying out his ideas first, by requiring compliance to his own opinions, and by closely controlling the work of the others in line with his judgments and decision.⁸
5. Secure and Easy going: this indicates behaviour of a leader who is highly secured and free from anxieties. He doesn't express anxiety about work, about his group performance; he takes things lightly, with little concern for the consequences of the future. He does not demand much from the people he leads.⁹ A leader in the church should be a person that is free from anxiety of proposed action and avoid panic during the process of expectant for result. However, it should be noted that with some leaders these dimension operate independently with little interaction. In addition, findings with secular leaders have indicated that there is no BEST dimension of group of dimensions of leadership. The effectiveness of a particular leadership skill depends upon a combination of factors. These factors include: the characteristics of the people being led, the nature of the task performed, and the type of organization.

⁶K. Kenneth and C. J. Wifford, *Organization and Leadership in the Local Church* (grand rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Corporation, 1973). P.73-76.

⁷ibid.

⁸ibid.

⁹ibid.

The most important point is that a person should use those dimensions of leadership that are appropriate for the situation in which he is operating.

Leadership Factor

With reference to the submission of Eigen, some people are naturally born-leader. "They may emerge as leader when none exists or when a group recognizes and trust their innate ability to lead in a given situation more than a formally appointed leader. Others can acquire leadership qualities through education, coaching, mentoring, and experience."¹⁰ Knowing that, the characteristics of a good leader can help in developing those skills and help organization to cultivate leaders. There are four major factors in leadership which include: follower, leader, communication and situation.

1. Follower: According to Eigen, different people require different styles of leadership. For example, a new hire requires more supervision than an experienced employee. A person who lacks motivation requires different approach that one with a high degree of motivation. A leader must know this people. The fundamental starting point is having a good understanding of human nature, such as needs, emotions, and motivation. Church leader should be a people oriented, willing to get along with all his members.
2. Leader: According to Eigen, one must have an honest understanding of who one is, what he knows, and what he can do. It is the followers, not the leader who determine if a leader is successful or not. If followers do not trust their leader they may not be inspired to put in their best. To be successful, a leader has to convince his followers, not himself or his superiors, that he is worth of being followed.
3. Communication: "Leader leads through two communications."¹¹ Much of it is non-verbal. For instance, when set the example, that communicate to people that a leader would not ask them to perform anything that he himself would not be willing to do. What and how he communicates either builds or harms the relationship between him and his followers.
4. Situation: "What a leader does in one situation will not always work in another. Such person must use his judgment to decide the best course of action the leadership style needed for each situation."¹² For example, pastor as a church leader may need to confront his church members for inappropriate behaviour, but if the confrontation is too late or too early, too weak or too harsh, the result may prove ineffective. Various forces will affect these factors, such as, follower, leader, communication, and situation.

Leadership Techniques

Good leadership team select styles of leadership that fits their philosophy of administration and their own personality. In any case, they must always take into consideration the psychology of the people whom they are leading. Generalizing human attribute might be dangerous at times

¹⁰S. Ayokunle. *Embracing the Virtues of Effective and Godly Leadership*. The Nigerian Baptist, Vol.95. Oct. 10, 2016. P.5.

¹¹G. O. Adetunji *Leadership in Action:A sourcebook in Church Administration for Students and Ministry* (Ibadan: Baptist Press, Limited, 2010). P. 75.

¹²Ibid.

because people are differs from one and other. There are some common grounds in getting the most out of one's subordinates and church members. A good leader should try to understand what his most people (people he leads) want from him as their leader.¹³

- i. The need for recognition as an individual: Every person likes to be recognizing by others, especially their leaders. If a person is recognized as an individual by his associate, he get that most satisfying and precious feeling of security in himself. Good leaders, administrators and even pastors trying to learn about their people, their interest, their likes and dislikes etc. Dale Carnegies' first rule was to take an interest in other people. By taking a sincere interest in church members, the pastor as taking the first step towards becoming a better pastor or leader. He start to get his followers to work for the Lord when he recognizes them for their worth as individuals.¹⁴
- ii. Pride in work: Most people have a basic drive to do, to make, to achieve and to improve their environment. Satisfaction of this drive gives one a sense of mastery. If a leader can give his staff or follower a feeling of pride in their jobs, both effort and quality will go up. People without this feeling merely go through the motion of the jobs, no sense of responsibility for what they do. A good leader or pastor can help establish pride in work by:
 - Being proud of their culture and their way of life.
 - Being proud of his job as a pastor
 - Impressing his people with the achievements of the church, the staff and church members
 - Showing each church member how his or her work is important to the accomplishment of the church's mission.
 - Always making his people feel that what they are doing is worthwhile and important to the overall purpose of the church and for the lord.
- iii. A sense of belonging: people are happier and consequently efficient and cooperative when they feel that they are part of a group (or belonging team) especially an effective and successful team. Experiment by behavioural scientists have shown that when a person identifies himself with the entire group , the group gains and entire individual will work harder with great joy. 'esprit de corps'' of a crack military unity is a best example of this where everybody in the group work harder for the success.
- iv. Give people purpose: all persons in an organization should know the objectives of the firm. The same is expected of the church. Church members should know the mission and the vision of the church. It is not enough to know the objectives of their own department or ministry; they need to know also how it all fits together. Pastor should let his staff and church members know what they are aiming at accomplishing through church bulletins, brochures, personal meetings and direct communication and how well they are doing, and good to know that they are on the way to success in achieving the church's vision and mission.
- v. Fair treatment: Fair treatment is a must. A person tends to compare the treatment he gets with that given to others. This is just natural. The man or woman who is always prompt dislikes seeing others getting away with constant delay. People

¹³ G. O. Adetunji. *Leadership in Action*, (Ibadan, Baptist Press, 2010). P.35-37.

¹⁴ Ibid.

respond emotionally and not rationally to situations when their self interest is in jeopardy. The need for fair play is deep seated in the emotionally makeup of human beings. Favouritism is the greatest of all demoralizers. It destroys the feeling of security in the non-favoured. A pastor should be careful in a multi-staff church not to show favouritism to another minister, but treat them all equally. The same should be the way to treat all church members by the pastor. The favouritism should be at zero level.

- vi. A listen tradition: It is always good and effective to listen to a subordinate's gripes, grievances and complaints. Often there is no basis for them, but the fact that the subordinate feels that there is, makes it important that they be heard. Opportunity to be heard and listen to is very good and biblical (Proverbs 18:17). Fairness to all should be the watchword in all we do in the church of Christ.

Leadership Style

Leadership style includes what a leader does, says and how he acts. This is the perfect examine of a leader's approach to the use of authority and participation in decision making. A leader is a very strong factor to be considered in picking an effective leadership style (i.e. a leader himself or herself determine the leadership style). However, unless leaders are made aware of the varying styles of leadership that are available, likewise their merits, limitations and of their applicability to specific situation, they may not recognize that there is a choice that can be made. There are many styles of leadership but only five main types will be considered in the study.

- i. Laissez-faire Leadership Style: In this leadership style, complete permissiveness is allowed. The group lacks direction because the leader does not help in making decisions. Here, he merely supplies materials or contribute when asked to contribute. The group is given too many responsibilities to proceed in any direction. If this style of leadership function is allowed for a long time, it may easily develop into anarchy.
- ii. Authoritarian Leadership Style: The authoritarian leader derives vested authority through his office more than from personal attributes. He seeks very little participation from the group in terms of participation in decision making. The following become dependent on the leader, finding security in the fact that he knows exactly what is expected of him. The followers' personal development is sacrificed which should not be in an institution or organization or church. If the leader should leave, followers or subordinates are not generally prepared for promotion. Authoritarian leaders do not want to leave office after tenure's expiration. Such leaders want to stay in office by forcing themselves on the people. Examples of such leaders abound in the world especially in Africa. Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe is a bad example of this.
- iii. Bureaucratic Leadership Style: The bureaucratic style of leadership is based on a system of rules, policies and procedures to solve all problems. It is too well-organized. Many present day complex organizations are bureaucratic in nature. The leader is saddled with looking after routine activities with guidelines established by the system itself. This tends to depersonalize the organization.
- iv. Democratic Leadership Style: Democracy is generally described as the government of the people by the people and for the people. In democratic leadership style, all

policies derived from group decisions. The leader participate in the formation of policies but does not dominate the group decisions or actions the group made decide with whom they will work with and what tasks are to be done and accomplished. The formation of policies usually involves those affected by the policies. The democratic leadership style implies professional competence and personal sincerity, accountability and integrity. Individual growth is fostered through participation in all organization's operations.

- v. Charismatic Leadership Style: In charismatic leadership style, the leader focuses attention on him. Such a leader seems to possess a certain charisma (divine gift) to be inspired by supernatural powers. With the divine gift, the leader rises up to the occasion. Sometimes, this is a mask leader's style. His (leader's) powers appear to be drawn from intellectual strength and originality. His followers are converted to and champions of his cause. The types of leaders in the book of Judges could be classified as charismatic leaders.¹⁵

In all leadership styles, decision making is the main key factor, the vehicle between the planning processes and the systems administration. J.W. Singleton writes that decisions can be made in many ways that are products of leadership style. He emphasises the value of wide involvement and consultation. However, it is important that the leader realizes his personal accountability.¹⁶ Team work should be the ultimate goal of democratic leadership. This means cooperation and mutual discussion, thus typifying a democratic control at all level of aspirations. The more people feel they are participating in what directly concerns them the greater will be the spirit of cooperation throughout the vision and the group especially in the church.

Biblical Basis of Leadership

Biblical leadership takes place when divinely appointed men and women respond in obedience to God's will. They recognize the necessity of preparation, allowing the Holy Spirit to develop tenderness of heart and skill of hands. They carry out their leadership roles with a deep God's will conviction and an acute awareness of the contemporary issues they (leaders) and their followers face. Mainly they exercise leadership as servant and stewards, sharing authority with their followers and affirming that leadership is primarily ministering to others, modelling for others, and mutual membership with others in Christ's body. Most Christians would subscribe to such statements about the nature of Christian leadership.¹⁷

Leadership in the Old Testament

The early centuries of Israel's life shows how God dealt with individuals called to lead. Finding people whose hearts were right toward him, God developed within those leaders a vertical relationship that affected their horizontal relationships with others. The chief leader of the Old Testament time, especially in the Pentateuch is God himself. He rules the heaven-designed theocracy, but he shares his role with mortals, so that Moses can spell out accountability for

¹⁵ G. O. Adetunji. *Leadership in Action*, (Ibadan, Baptist Press, 2010). P.21-14.

¹⁶ Ibid

¹⁷ G. O. Kenneth. *Leadership Handbook of Management & Administration: The Meaning of Leadership*. Ed. James D. Berkley (Benin City, Nigeria: Beulahland, 2013), P.177-179.

“all of you (who) are standing today in the presence of the Lord your god, your leaders and chief men, your elders and officials, and all the other men of Israel” (Daniel 29:10)..

Abraham and Moses: for Abraham, there is no any English or Hebrew words for leader attributed to him, but certainly, he demonstrates the unique choosing by God for a special leadership task. The Lord had said to Abram, “leave your country, your people and your father’s household and go to the land I will show you. I will make you into a great nation and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all people on earth will be blessed through you” (Gen. 12:1-3). Indeed, the dominant leader in the Pentateuch time is clearly Moses. God so often remind him of his leadership task from his response “you have been telling me, lead these people, but you have not let me know whom you will send with me” (Exodus 33:12). Moses learns to share that leadership with others under the tutelage of his father-in-law, Jethro. The dynamic eighteenth chapter of the book of Exodus describes the appointment of numerous leaders. He chose capable men from all Israel and makes them leaders of the people, official over thousands, hundreds, fifties and tens. They served as judges for the people at all times. The difficult cases they brought to Moses and little ones they settled themselves.

Joshua, David and Nehemiah: as Israel expands into a monarchy, Joshua played the role of a tribal leader, assuming military command; David represents the epitome of theology of kingship; and Nehemiah shows us the typical Old Testament by lay leader, who is thrust into service without the kind of training afforded to either Joshua or David. Much has been made of the appearance of the word success in the early verses of Joshua, a term obviously connected with prosperity and material things, such as the conquest of the land. Yet the modern concept of success is quite different from biblical concept, because the bible rejects mere wealth or power as its only basis. Rather, the biblical success means discovery and doing the will of God. Further, the greatness of a nation’s leaders, their ability to conquer and control does not determine that nation’s success. The greatness of the people of God themselves must also be evident. But in the historical books of the Bible both dimensions are cleared (i.e. the physical acquisition and protection of land) and the spiritual maintenance of devotion to God.

God clearly tells Joshua, you will lead my people (Joshua 1:6), and he does so by appointing numerous subordinates referred to them as the leader of Israel (Joshua 8:10), the leader of the assembly (9:18), and the leader of the community (22:30). By the time of David, the people are quite ready for leadership role of a king. Indeed, they had asked Samuel to appoint a king for them (1 Sam. 8:5), and the old prophet did so for them (1 Sam. 12:2). Even while David was fleeing from Saul all who are in distress gathered together around him and he became their leader (1 Sam. 22:2). In 445 BC Nehemiah was serving as a cupbearer to the king, he was a noble representative of the people who had long since left spiritual leadership behind and had forgotten how God had called them to lead other nations of the world. Nehemiah responds to the call and follows through with a strong sense of mission and accomplishment.

Leadership in the New Testament

The key to understand Christian leadership is learning to lead like the Lord. In Matthew 11:25-30, Jesus describe his leadership as gentle and humble. Jesus quoted in the following chapter from the book of Isaiah 42 to describe the chosen servant as one who will not quarrel or cry out; no one will hear his voice in the streets. A bruised reed he will not break, and a smouldering wick he will not snuff out (Matthew 12:19-20). Jesus work with his disciples provides a pattern

of group leadership worth of the most diligent study, just as it found in A.B. Bruce's *The Training of the Twelve*. As James Hind says, 'If there was one modern management trait that carries Jesus Christ from nobody to somebody, it was a service to and for the benefit of others.'¹⁸

James and Barnabas are another valuable character study in the New Testament. James was a moderator of the church. He was Jesus' half-brother and the author of the epistle of James. Though he was not directly trained by his brother, Jesus. James models a participatory leadership style, able to moderate a public assembly with a broad view to the greatest possible benefit of the body of Christ. He is able to allow all viewpoints to be appropriately aired, summarizing the consensus of the assembly and preserving the unity of the saint.

Barnabas, who rises from an apparent layman's role in Jerusalem to become leader of the second New Testament church at Antioch, he affords a brilliant example of unthreatened, secure leadership in his willingness to trust others to exercise their gift. Barnabas did not defend his own turf or hold on to position for personal prestige. God moved him out of his first and only senior pastorate after a year, Barnabas started joyously to lead the first missionary journey.

Paul, Timothy and the elders. If the apostles demonstrated the practical outworking of Christ's teachings in the book of Acts it was left to Paul and other epistle writers to formulate New Testament doctrines including a biblical theology of leadership. It is impossible then to bypass Apostle Paul when considering the nature of biblical leadership. His constant activity of modelling and monitoring, encouraging and exhorting, teaching and training, exemplifies New Testament leadership at its best. He described his own leadership in 1 Thessalonians, offering a contrast to first-century pagan understandings. In 1 Thessalonians 2:1-6, Paul identifies what he did not do among the believers. Then in the next six verses he describes a process of nature and family care. These metaphors, though, uncommon to the modern North American ear, are powerful in the context of leadership.

The Concept of Multicultural Church

A Multicultural church is a church with less than 80% of any single ethnic or racial or cultural group a specific concern for and attention to its multicultural identity a vision that includes growth in diversity through congregational development and evangelism. The congregation has a Gospel-based purpose or "vision". Multicultural Ministry will not support planting separate, mono-cultural, minority congregations until the issues of dependency and separation have been evaluated to see if the model is theologically sound and will yield fruit. Although separate plants may resume, this evaluation must be deliberately pursued. The changes of the late 20th century and increasing globalization made the Episcopal Church take note of new cultures in society. This led many local to plant congregations that are made up of one culture to address the needs of other ethnic groups: for example, Hispanics or Africans. We called the result "multicultural ministry".

Within the church circle, one can easily identify the same groupings of "diversity cautious" and "diversity lovers". The "diversity cautious", responding to the growing diversity in their neighbourhood, have chosen the easy way out, viz to withdraw into close societies, homogeneous communities and exclusive congregations. Instead of rejoicing, they feel threatened and defensive, "wondering whether all this heterogeneity is not merely the babblings

¹⁸ Ibid.

of a world falling apart, rather than the blessing of a world to which God is giving birth". Among those in this camp, fear again becomes the determining factor.

But for others, the "diversity lovers", who base their view on an unwavering faith and deep conviction of God's promises, "there is no fear in love," as John teaches: "perfect love casts out fear" (1 John 4:18). So, while aware of the challenges that come with growing diversity, and while recognizing the difficulties new immigrants may bring, they understand that diversity means an opportunity for innovation, renewal and growth, in which varieties of gifts, new ideas, new cultures, and new friendships and, above all, new vision and mission opportunities flourish. The main factor here is love that drives out fear.

While recognizing the importance of cultural and national identity, people of faith in general, and the Christian community in particular, are being called to a transformed identity, an identity that transcends differences and celebrates them. According to Stephen Rhodes,

Identity based on cultural or racial origin will never be sufficient to make us spiritually mature The multicultural church, although not demeaning or negating culture, does call us to a transcendent identity in Jesus Christ, as well as a transformational citizenship that lies in the reign of God. As the scripture reminds us, our identity has been given by God; "you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people, in order that you may proclaim the mighty acts of him who called you out of darkness into his marvellous light (1 Peter 2:9).¹⁹

"Diversity lovers" envision a multicultural church that intentionally and mutually recognizes, celebrates and incorporates diverse membership that reflects the makeup of the community. This diversity must be actively reflected in three major areas of the church's life, including worship through the utilization of different languages, dance and art, various theological practices and spiritual expressions of faith. Diversity must also be reflected in power sharing, through the inclusion of all in the process of decision-making, equal representation on church sessions and on boards and in executive positions. And diversity requires holistic mission and evangelism, whereby the good news is provided in a way that respects and appreciates the racial and cultural backgrounds of the people it addresses. This holistic mission equally emphasizes spiritual transformation and sweeping social justice as two integral parts of the message of the gospel.

The development of a multicultural church is a challenge, because it requires a fusion of diverse cultural entities into a single church. Multiculturalism is not the reason for a church: but the Gospel is. The Gospel vision defines the right foundation for the congregation (Matt. 7:24-27). The inclusion of different cultures is in our birth, our DNA, not separate from it. See Acts 2:1-12. No one race, ethnicity, culture makes up more than 80% of the congregation's average Sunday attendance (ASA). Another way to say it is: At least 20% of the ASA will be comprised of people from another ethnic, racial or cultural group different from the remaining 80%. The larger group must engage the smaller group(s) to live life faithfully. See Luke 10:27-36.

The congregation intentionally fosters and cultivates multicultural membership and leadership. The Church both attracts and sustains the other cultures with intentional sharing and mutual

¹⁹S. A. Rhodes, *Where the Nations Meet: The church in a multicultural world*, (InterVarsity Press, Downers Grove), 1998, p. 46.

ministry. As with the work of stewardship, Christian formation and worship, intentionality in evangelism and spiritual growth for the members of the church is a core requirement for Christian mission. The congregation integrates contributions from the race/ethnicity/culture of the groups being served. Each culture has gifts to share. Culture affects leadership, stewardship, worship, Christian education, planning and a host of other normal church activities. Sharing and enjoying these varied gifts is a requirement of the Gospel. See the 1 Corinthians 12.

The congregation teaches and practices skills to address inter-group relationships and group conflicts. All gifts are meant “to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until all of us come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to maturity, to the measure of the full stature of Christ,” (Ephesians 4:12-13). The church can and must learn inter-cultural skills and ways of being together that serve the wellbeing of the whole Body of Christ.

Multicultural Leadership

Once the church began to spread beyond the borders of predominantly Jewish influence into the larger Greco-Roman milieu it found itself in an environment that was exceedingly more multicultural (Tenney, 2004, p. 67). One of the greatest leaders in the first-century church, the apostle Paul, was himself a product of the multicultural environment having been brought up in Judaism as well as being exposed to Greek philosophers, and being a Roman citizen from the city of Tarsus (Philippians 3:5).

Within the realm of multicultural leadership, it seems that one important characteristic a leader must have is a certain amount of cultural flexibility. This is an area that not only biblical and theological scholars believe is important but also those within the secular realm of leadership (Livermore, 2010, p. 13). This does not mean that there are no foundational groundings and leaders will be swayed by the whims of others, just that there is an understanding that some issues are related to culture and do not, in fact, impact more important issues such as morality or the gospel (Fung, 1988, p. 43; Livermore, 2016, location 4927; Galatians 1:6-10; Colossians 2:16–23). The apostle Paul, taken as an example of a biblical model for multicultural leadership, was flexible when it came to those issues that were cultural and which did not impact the Gospel while being firmly uncompromising on issues that were directly related to the Gospel.

The ability to relate to and teach another as they are living out their daily life is a biblical model; one that not only the apostle Paul utilized (1 Corinthians 4:16–17, 11:1; 2 Timothy 2:1–2) but also Jesus himself (Matthew 15:32; Mark 2:23-28, 12:43).

Davis (2003) discusses the fact that Western culture is becoming more and more diverse in the ethnic, economic, and social makeup, as well as in the range of age groups (p. 115). Davis makes the point that: In an increasingly multicultural and urban society at least four types of people do not fit into traditional homogeneous churches: interracial couples and families; ethnic people who prefer speaking English; urbanites who “appreciate living, working and ministering in the midst of ethnic diversity”; and Generation Xers who often despise racial separatism. It will take new multicultural churches to reach these groups (p. 115).

This globalization has led to many churches becoming more multicultural over time. This, in turn, has forced ministers and leaders to rethink how they lead, grow, and plant new churches.

Davis' (2003) article argues that because the world, and especially the Western world, is becoming increasingly more diverse and globalization is simply the norm, it is going to take the planting of new multicultural churches in order to reach and impact this world for Jesus Christ (pp. 115-118).

Davis (2003) examines a number of church planting models (i.e., Multicongregational, Multilanguage Satellite, etc.) in order to find which method is best for the current environment (pp. 119-125). He is not necessarily interested in presenting one and only one model that one might consider the very best in every situation, but rather to examine and explore four models and to identify their strengths and weaknesses: This century will be a golden-opportunity era for urban and ethnic harvesting. Evangelical church planters must address the complexities of North American diversity in creative and productive ways. These four models are not meant to be exhaustive, but illustrative of how dynamic urban churches are effectively building bridges and reaching out cross-culturally to others with the gospel (Davis, 2003, pp. 125-126).

Goals of a Leader in a Multicultural Church

Healthy interaction is based first upon confidence about the value of one's own culture and a sense of security that is not threatened by the encountering of difference. But important questions are often overlooked: Just what do we really want? What are we trying to achieve? I believe it is important to focus on what is often the implicit goal of ministry in our churches and move onto a set of progressive goals that can help shape or direct us in our ministry and provide the beginning for truly living out the Gospel, which calls for our "oneness" in Christ. For these entire questions to be well treated, the goal multicultural goal has to be well carried out.

Goal 1: Reducing Conflict: It is important for people engaging in multicultural ministry settings to reduce conflict. The conflict can be on two levels. It may be, and often is, between two or more groups who experience tension in their relationships with one another. The tension may show itself in resolutely avoiding one another, in competition for space and other resources, or in outright conflict.

Conflict between groups is real and very hard to reduce. Sometimes it needs to be addressed immediately with clear measures, especially if the conflict becomes violent, either verbally or physically. But such conflict cannot be treated merely as a problem to be solved. Ultimately relationships have to be formed, and building relationships takes time, patience, and a vision of where we hope to end up.

But there is another level of conflict; this is conflict within pastors or leaders of a multicultural church themselves. Most feel uncomfortable and confused about what to do. They would rather let the problems go away or hope some outside solution will present itself. Pastors, too, belong to various cultures. Many people are not totally aware of their cultures until they are confronted with cultural differences.

Goal 2: Recognition of Others: How do we enter into that complex interaction? It begins with recognition of others. In most multicultural settings, the first reaction is to try to avoid or ignore differences. This takes two forms. It sometimes takes the form of ignoring the presence of

another group, thereby rendering them invisible. The other reaction is to cover over differences with such rhetoric as, “we are all brothers and sisters in Christ.” But this rhetoric frequently ignores the realities and the tensions that intellectual interaction often brings.

The only way to unity is through acknowledging the church’s catholicity — the many tribes and tongues, peoples and nations, that constitute the church. This is important because in cultural interaction, despite efforts to ignore cultural differences, it is the differences to which we are continually drawn. Differences in accents, clothing, and social patterns are too salient to be ignored. Sometimes that difference leads to stereotyping and prejudice, to making generalizations about others. Sometimes it leads to outright hostility.

Goal 3: Respect for Cultural Differences: If recognition of the other is the beginning of the journey toward intercultural relationship, respect for cultural difference is a description of the journey underway. Tolerance may mean quietly putting up with difference, perhaps in the silent hope that it eventually will go away. Respect, however, means reaching the point where difference is valued in its own right, which adds to the richness of our relationships and to the richness of the world. Respect means coming to see the cultural difference of the other as having intrinsic value, not as deviation from some norm or a failure to reach a certain level.

Goal 4: Healthy Interaction between Cultures: The word healthy is important here, since much of the interaction between cultures is often very unhealthy. Interaction may be marked, on one hand, by stereotyping, prejudice, unwarranted suspicion, racism, and even overt verbal and physical violence. On the other hand, it may be characterized by a stifling romanticism that either glorifies cultural differences as an ideal held by one’s own culture or views the other culture as a childlike state that will eventually move up to one’s own culture.

Healthy interaction is based upon confidence about the value of one’s own culture and a sense of security that is not threatened by the encountering of difference. Healthy interaction means that two cultural groups interact so well that they can point to each other’s shortcomings. This is a very advanced state of healthy interaction.

God's Intention for Multicultural Church

There are three well-known stories of “beginnings” in the scriptures that clearly show God’s intentionality when it comes to diversity. The first talks about God’s design, or the beginning of creation. The second tells the story of the beginning of the church, and the third is a prediction of the beginning of the church hereafter. From the beginning to the end, diversity, not sameness, heterogeneity not homogeneity, has been God’s intention in almost everything God has made. After creating a diverse world, God looked at what God created and saw it was good. In the first chapter of Genesis, the phrase “of every kind” is repeated more than nine times. This is true for all living creatures, including plants, fish and animals, and it is also true for human beings, who were created male and female and were given the commission to keep and nurture the continuation of this multiplicity of God’s creation, to be “fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth” (Gen. 1:27–28).

For “diversity lovers”, the world was chaotic before the creation of this diverse universe, not the opposite. Before the creation of this diversity, the Bible tells us that the “earth was a formless void and darkness covered the faces of the deep” (Gen. 1:2). After creating this diverse world, God saw everything that God had made, and indeed “it was very good” (Gen. 1:31).

The creation of a diverse world replaced “formless void and darkness” with beauty, energy and life. Regardless of the different races God created, they all came from one single stock. The writer of the Book of Acts confirms this, saying, “From one ancestor God created all nations” (Acts 17:26). This means that people of all nations, no matter the shade of their skin or the language they speak, come from one ancestor.

The beginning of the church in the Book of Acts, chapter 2, clearly names another intended diversity designed by God. “When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place” (Acts 2:1). The beginning of the church was intentionally multinational, multilingual, and multicultural. In Acts 15, we read about the first ecumenical church gathering to deal with the first major issue the church faced at that time; not surprisingly, this issue was an issue of diversity. The question was whether the church should open its doors to include other people (the Gentiles) who were quite different in their culture and language from the predominant Judeo-Christian community of believers. Again, the “diversity cautious”, who were concerned about cultural identity and led by Peter, refused to recognize this new group unless they went through a process of assimilation, including learning the Hebrew language, memorizing the Jewish law, and circumcision. The “diversity lovers” led by Paul advocated for a full inclusion of Gentiles as partners and sharers of the promise given to the Jews. The issue was settled once and for all when the church voted to accept and include Gentiles as equal partners and members in the church, but this action would not have happened without Peter's divinely inspired dream that transformed his heart.

Peter initially would not recognize Gentiles as equal partners and sharers of God's promise unless they were assimilated to his own culture and tradition first, that is, unless they were circumcised, memorized the Jewish law, spoke the Hebrew language and followed the Jewish tradition. But Peter was transformed by a powerful vision of diversity in Acts 10 that taught him to accept people just as they are. People don't need to be assimilated to our own culture or way of life to be equal members of the body of Christ.

Like Peter before his transformation, many of our churches in North America, dominated by one mono-cultural form of worship and government, have a hard time recognizing and incorporating immigrant membership, ordination status and gifts, unless these immigrants are assimilated. Peter's transformation and his discovery that God is all-inclusive and shows no partiality must be rediscovered and claimed by all. As a result of his transformation, Peter proclaimed the Lord of all, saying, “I truly understand that God shows no partiality, but in every nation anyone who fears God and does what is right is acceptable to God. You know the message God sent to the people of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ ... he is Lord of all” (Acts 10:34–36).

Clifton Kirkpatrick made this comment as he reflected on his personal study of the Book of Acts. How different the Christian community looked by the end of Acts! It was so much richer and more alive because added to the twelve apostles were “unlikely leaders” as Paul the Pharisee, the Ethiopian eunuch, the Italian Captain Cornelius, Lydia, Priscilla and Aquila, and countless others who represented every “race, tongue, and nation.” What a wonderful story of the gift of God's rich diversity for the renewal of the church and the world!²⁰

²⁰K. Clifton, *A Celebration of the Church's Rich Diversity*, <http://www.wfn.org>. Accessed May 25th, 2023.

In the Book of Revelation we learn about God's intentionality towards the everlasting church. Just as the beginning of the church was intentionally diverse, so is the church in heaven that John saw in Rev. 7:9 as one community of diversity "from every nation, tribes, language and people". Therefore, diversity is the gift of God and the biblical promise from the beginning and to the end of God's creation and history.

Jesus' View of Multicultural Church

Jesus Christ operated a multicultural ministry while on earth, within people who were a part of Israel and those who were not. The following passages give responses of Jesus when he heard an encounter with non Jewish.

i. Discussion with the Samaritan Woman (John 4:1-42)

Christ's encounter with the Samaritan woman at Jacob's well elicits some deep theological issues. The Jews and the Samaritan were enemies. The Samaritans were descendants of the tribes that divided from the south to form the Northern Kingdom after the reign of King Solomon and were taken captive by the Assyrians in 722 B.C. Even before they were taken into captivity, they were already worshiping other gods by setting up a counter altar at Dan. A diverse group returned after captivity and settled between Galilee to the north and Judah to the south but centred their worship on Mount Gerizim. The Jews despised the Samaritans because of their claim to the inheritance of Jacob. According to the Jews, the Samaritans were Gentiles and had no part with true Israelites because of their heathen heritage and worship. Worship was a major friction point between the two groups, with both making an ethnocentric claim to superior worship. In her conversation with Jesus, the Samaritan woman attempted to draw Him into this argument. Instead Jesus redefined the worship community He is seeking. Hall (2008) points out that: In His words to the woman at the well, Jesus again made clear the type of worship assembly Jesus is calling people to. The woman said, I can see that you are a prophet. Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, but you Jews claim that the place where we must worship is in Jerusalem. Jesus acknowledged that, 'Believe me, woman, a time is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. . . . *Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for they are the kind of worshipers that the Father seeks*'" (John 4:19-21, 23). The words of Jesus make clear that God does not want His people to be exclusive and separate in their worship. At the time of the writing, the Samaritans were meeting on Mount Ebal and the Jews gathered for corporate worship in Jerusalem. God, through His Son, Jesus, was sharing that the plan was to have everyone join together for worship and that they would need to be united in spirit and that they would have to carry the same message of salvation. Jesus clearly articulated that there is no place for ethnocentricity in worship. True worship in spirit and truth demands a worship of inclusion and not exclusion.

ii. Lost Sheep of the House of Israel (Matt 15: 21-28)

Another biblical example of multicultural gathering is the lost sheep. The experience is shared in the book of Matthew of a woman of Canaan who met Jesus as he entered Tyre and Sidon. This woman of Canaan came out of the same coast, crying aloud, "Have mercy on me Lord you are the son of David; my daughter is grievously displeased with the devil." Jesus did not respond. His disciples wanted Jesus to stop her from causing a disturbance. They asked Him to send her away, for she cried after us. He looked at them and said, "I am not sent but into the

Lost Sheep of the house of Israel.” When she heard the words of Jesus, she worshipped Him, saying, “Lord helps me.” But He answered and said, “It is not good to take children’s bread and cast it to dogs”. And she retorted, “Truth Lord, yet dogs eat of the crumbs that fall out of master tables. Then Jesus answered unto her, “O woman great is thy faith, be ye unto thee even as thou wilt.” According to the biblical record, her daughter was healed immediately.

Jesus went to this great length in order to create an inclusive table fellowship. It should be noted that before this story takes place Christ was in Judea teaching His disciples and discussing with Jewish teachers. He then suddenly decides to travel past Samaria and Galilee to the Coast of Tyre and Sidon.

iii. The Dedication of the Temple (1 Kings 8:41-43.)

King Solomon first established the inclusive nature of the Temple as a house of prayer for all nations when he dedicated the first Temple for the nation of Israel. Following are some of his dedicatory words: More over concerning a stranger, that is not your people Israel, but come out of far country for you name’s sake; (For they shall hear of your great name, and of your strong hand, and of your stretched out arm.) when he shall come and pray toward this house. Hear him in Heaven your dwelling place, and do according to all that the stranger called you for, for all people of the earth may know your name, to fear you, as do your people Israel; and that they may know that this house, which I have built, is called by your name. It is clear from these statements by Solomon, that the duty and the function of God’s temple is open to all those who seek Him, regardless of ethnicity or culture.

Moreover; as Jesus came into the Temple, He took in the whole scene, He saw the unfair transaction, and he saw the distress of the poor, who thought that without the shedding of blood there, would be no forgiveness of their sins. He saw the outer court of His temple transformed into a place of unholy traffic. The sacred enclosure had become one vast exchange. Each of the Gospel writers noted the confrontation that took place between Jesus and the money changers in the temple. Christ quoted from Isaiah 56:7. Mark quoted His speech in its entirety: Jesus declared, “Is it not written, ‘My house shall be called a house of prayer for all the Nation’” (Mark 11:17 NKJV). According to the Jewish people and their leaders, the temple was their exclusive domain; their fathers expressly passed it on to them. It became their exclusive identity. As DeYoung et. al. (2003) noted, “The author of Mark understood that the last four words of that quote from Isaiah— “for all the nations summed up what caused the religious leaders to fear Jesus and look for a way to kill Him (11:18). Blount and Tisdale (2000), in the book entitled, *Making Room at the Table: An Invitation to Multicultural Worship*, writing about Mark’s understanding of Jesus messages, wrote the following: In the Gospel of Mark, Jesus is a preacher of multicultural worship. He envisioned a future that was radically different from the one espoused by the Temple Leadership of his present Jerusalem. The Temple presided over a world where non-Jewish ethnicities were condemned by the theological motifs of holiness and purity, and demonized by a narrow-minded fever of messianic nationalism. Mark’s Jesus offered a counter-Kingdom proposal: he foresaw a time when every people of every nation would call God, Temple their house of prayer. (Blount & Tisdale, 2000, p.16) Jesus had come to initiate God’s true vision for the temple. He had come to tear down its walls of exclusion and turn it into the house of prayer for all nations as God had always envisioned.

If the ministry of Jesus and later His followers included an inclusive ministry, then why, when Jesus sent them on their first missionary journey, did Jesus seemingly send them on an

exclusive mission? “These Twelve, Jesus sent forth and commanded them, saying, ‘Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and to any City of the Samaritan enter ye not: But go rather to the Lost Sheep of the house of Israel’” (Matt 10:5, 6 NKJV). Christ sends forth His disciples to evangelize with an express order not to go to the Gentiles or the cities of the Samaritans. Some have used this verse to infer that Christ was not interested in the salvation of the Gentiles, which included the Samaritans. Therefore, He focuses His ministry only on the Jews. The story of the Samaritan woman and the Canaanite woman contradict such a conclusion. For some leaders, sending the disciples to the Jews only connotes ethnocentric bias on Jesus’ part. However, I would like to suggest a different reason for Jesus’ strategy. Jesus’ action was driven not by ethnocentric bias; rather, it was based on a far more pragmatic reason. This was the first time He was sending the disciples out to preach; so, to make it easier for them, He sent them to those that they already knew. After they gained preaching experience Jesus would later send them to a Samaritan village to preach (Luke 9:52). When the right time came, following His resurrection and before His ascension, He would command His disciples to preach the message to the entire world.

Leadership in Multicultural Church

The leadership in an authentic integrated or multicultural congregation is made up of representatives of the different races in the congregation. The pastor of such a congregation has to be willing to accept the leadership of the laity.

In order for leadership to be diversified, it is important to define leadership. A leader is someone who leads. The individuals who make up a group that might be referred to as the leadership represent different functions, capacities, experience, development, organizational skills, and religious awareness. Pue (2005) argues that leaders need to 1) know where they are going, 2) know where they are, 3) be self-aware, and 4) have an intimate soul-friend (p. 31). Friedman (2007) states that there is no “quick fix” to developing leaders. He traces the stunting of leaders to the time of the Middle Ages and to the inability to follow imaginative ideas and dreams. Generally, during this time there was a lack of the spirit of adventure. According to him, the situation led to the regression and the fallacy of the concept of self.

Rost (1991) presents the regression in leadership to one without management. He argues that most writers on the subject of leadership oversimplify the complex set of relationship influences that affect the development of a leader. He talks about the leader-follower interaction and the multiple purposes of the interactions that take place.

Challenges of Multicultural Church

Pastors of multicultural churches have all attested that the ministry is not easy to handle. This is in view of the complexity of the culture, race, religious, and sometimes stereotype backgrounds that have to be addressed. It demands extra thought, work, and diversity of norms and forms from the leaders.

Sometimes, an attempt to promote public peace from the pulpit or social media platforms has been misconstrued. Of this DeYmaz²¹ has advised that the peacemaking effort must not be jettisoned even in the face of persecution, much more, when fair and balance perspective of

²¹<http://www.markdeymaz.com>. accessed today May 25th, 2023.

issues is presented. In this wise, pastors are advised to be non-partisan politically and rather focus on healing the hurts and extending loving hands to the world around. Besides, Gushiken said that, tension over cultural misunderstanding could turn the fellowship and worship to just entertainment; while decision making becomes complex when it involves main leaders. There is also the challenge of cultural preservation or maintaining unity. To him, this are time consuming and energy sapping, however, the joy of been in the centre of God's will for his church gives the joy for accomplishing this.²² Of multicultural pasturing, Swanson David opined that the pitfalls are challenging, noting that issues like anxieties of patriarchy, lack of experience with racial and ignorance about other cultures/histories, coupled with how to bridge the racial and class divisions are breath-taking.²³ It can be disappointing to a committed cross cultural minded minister, he noted, but for the nature of the Gospel.

It has also been found difficult of maintain a rigorous biblical ministry, especially on doctrinal issues in multicultural settings. This is because of the diversities of culture, backgrounds, doctrine and world view, especially in a cosmopolitan church. For the leadership, sometimes it poses the problems of which ministry philosophy to adopt, the source noted. However, as the leadership encourages patient search and careful teachings of the scriptures, this can be overcome. Another one which related to this is the issue of nominal seeker sensitivity evangelicalism, which according to this source is damaging and should not be encouraged. Care, it is said to be taken, so as not to be blown along these prevailing winds of teaching in the attempt to raise a multicultural congregation.

Conclusion

Although each multicultural church has her own peculiarity, depending on the kind of cultural group present in the church, so leader or pastor of the church should understand the peculiarity of his church and give respect to each culture. Teaching and preaching in such congregation have to be contextualized and while doing this the focus of the message should not be missed or watered away. A good leader should employ and establish good leadership skill and trait which will make his leadership be effective.

²² K. Gushiken, "Practical Wisdom for Multiethnic Ministry." www.christianitytoday.com. Accessed today May. 25th, 2023.

²³ D. Swanson, "Down with Homogeneous Unity Principle" in *Leadership Journal*. Aug. 2, 2010 accessed today May. 25th, 2023.