


Lifestyle and leadership according to Paul's statement of account before the Ephesian elders in Acts 20:17–35

**Author:**Christoph W. Stenschke^{1,2} **Affiliations:**

¹Department of Biblical and Ancient Studies, College of Human Sciences, University of South Africa, Pretoria, South Africa

²Department of New Testament; Biblisch-Theologische Akademie, Forum Wiedenest, Bergneustadt Gesellschaft für Bildung und Forschung in Europa, Gummersbach, Germany

Corresponding author:

Christoph W. Stenschke, CStenschke@t-online.de

Dates:

Received: 21 Nov. 2019

Accepted: 27 Mar. 2020

Published: 11 June 2020

How to cite this article:

Stenschke, C.W., 2020, Lifestyle and leadership according to Paul's statement of account before the Ephesian elders in Acts 20:17–35', *HTS Teologiese Studies/Theological Studies* 76(2), a5901. <https://doi.org/10.4102/hts.v76i2.5901>

Copyright:

© 2020. The Authors.
Licensee: AOSIS. This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution License.

Read online:

Scan this QR code with your smart phone or mobile device to read online.

In the book of Acts, the Apostle Paul provides examples of leadership and displays significant leadership skills. In the speech to church leaders from Ephesus in Acts 20, he is presented as giving an account of his approach, detailing all the challenges involved. This article analyses how the Paul of Acts understood his own leadership role, in particular, the need for integrity, emotional involvement in the process and ceaseless effort. The article also examines Paul's emphasis on the necessity for leaders to exemplify or embody in a perceptible way the values which they convey to others and demand of them.

Keywords: Paul; Acts of the Apostles; Miletus speech; Leadership; Lifestyle; Personal integrity.

Introduction

While many of the paranetical sections of the New Testament could be summarised under the heading 'spiritual formation', relatively few passages particularly address issues regarding leadership *within the Christian community*.¹ Other fields of leadership – such as Christians as leaders of civic communities – are not directly in view.² One of these passages is Paul's speech in Acts 20:17–35, which – in the portrayal of Acts – was delivered at Miletus to the elders of the Ephesian church when Paul was on his way back to Jerusalem at the end of the third missionary journey (Ac 18:23–21:16). In this speech, Paul describes his own past ministry among the Ephesians (Ac 20:18–27). It serves as a summary and statement of account of Paul's ministry among the nations before his return to Jerusalem, the place where he was commissioned for this task by the risen Christ (Ac 22:21). Paul also outlines the tasks ahead for these elders (Ac 20:28–35). Both parts of the speech are closely linked as Paul presents his own ministry as an example which the elders are to emulate. Paul's instructions are interesting when read against the notions of social status and leadership ideals in the Greco-Roman world (see Stenschke 2014).

These instructions have received much attention in New Testament studies and in quests for Christian ministry and leadership. Jacques Dupont's (1962) insightful study, *Le discours de Milet*, remains one of the classic expositions. In this article, the focus is on *the close connection between lifestyle and leadership* in the speech.

What is 'the thing' we are looking for? Both terms, lifestyle and leadership, are difficult to define. For *leadership*, we follow Peter G. Northouse, who defines it as 'a process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal'.³ In our case, the individual is Paul who influences a group of individuals: at an initial stage, his non-Christian audiences in Asia Minor, later on, his converts. In addition, in Acts 20, he influences or tries to influence a group of leaders from the Christian communities of Ephesus who represent a wider group of Christ-followers. The common goal is Christian existence as the people of God (this requires thorough re-socialisation of Gentile converts to a Christ-like lifestyle, i.e., their 'sanctification', to use a Pauline term) and the spread of the good news of Jesus Christ.

For *lifestyle*, we use the social sciences definition of Stefan Hadril (2005:46), who states that '[e]in Lebensstil ist [...] der regelmäßig wiederkehrende Gesamtzusammenhang der Verhaltensweisen, Interaktionen,

1. For an excellent survey, see Clarke (2000); for a detailed analysis, see Clarke (1993). Walton (2000) offers an overview of the contents of the speech (75–84) and a survey of the major themes of the speech (84–93; faithful fulfilment of leadership responsibility, suffering, the attitude to wealth and work, the death of Jesus).

2. A number of passages in the New Testament address the leadership (style) of non-Christians, such as the Jewish leaders in Judea and the Jewish Diaspora or Roman leaders in Judea and elsewhere in the Eastern Mediterranean world of the 1st century AD.

3. Northouse (2016:6). On pages 6–7, Northouse offers a succinct description and summary of the implications of this definition.

Note: Special collection entitled Christian Leadership, sub-edited by Wessel Bentley (UNISA).

Meinungen, Wissensbestände und bewertenden Einstellungen eines Menschen, [the overall context of regularly recurring manners of behaviour, interactions, opinions, stocks of knowledge and value judgements that a person holds].⁴

Before we start, some comments regarding our source are necessary. What we have in Acts 20 is the presentation of this speech by the author of Acts, commonly referred to as Luke.⁵ Is Paul's speech merely a Lukan piece of fine rhetoric or are we hearing something of the historical Paul after all? If one takes the so-called 'We-passages' of Acts seriously, where the author claims to have been an eye witness to the events (Ac 16:10–16; 20:5–21:17; 27:1–28:16), he was present on this particular occasion. Therefore, the speech could be Luke's summary of a longer speech by Paul. However, while this is plausible, it cannot be proven. We cannot do justice to these historical issues here. We focus on the speech as *Luke's perspective on Paul*, as Luke's summary of Paul's ministry on the verge of returning from the Diaspora to Jerusalem.⁶ What we hear is the Lukan Paul.

Luke's presentation of Paul can be and has often been compared with Paul's own statements regarding his ministry in his letters.⁷ Steve Walton's study *Leadership and Lifestyle: The Portrait of Paul in the Miletus Speech and 1 Thessalonians* indicates that 1 Thessalonians has proven to be a particularly fruitful field.⁸ Needless to say, Paul's own assertions are not fully objective either. They are part of the portrait which Paul paints of himself and his ministry to his readers and *vis-à-vis* his ever-present opponents. How *he* presents his ministry and wants others to perceive it is not necessarily what happened on a day-to-day basis. Because of the nature of the sources, we focus on the manner in which the *Lukan* Paul presents his ministry. We briefly return to issues of rhetoric and plausibility in the concluding section.

In the larger genre of Acts as a work of ancient historiography (see Keener 2012:51–165), Paul's Miletus speech adopts the genre of a *farewell speech*, a widely used genre in the ancient world and its literature.⁹ Some of the elements typical of this

4. Quoted according to <https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lebensstil>. Another definition is: Lebensstil, kultursociologischer Begriff (geprägt durch G. Simmel [1858–1918]), der die typische Art der Alltagsgestaltung von Personen (und sozialen Gruppen) bezeichnet. Gemeint sind die mehr oder weniger stabilen Einstellungen und die mit ihnen verbundenen, typischerweise auftretenden Verhaltensweisen von Menschen. Lebensstil ist weiterhin ein Mittel der Selbstdarstellung des Individuums sowie der Demonstration seiner Zugehörigkeit (bzw. Nichtzugehörigkeit) zu bestimmten sozialen Gruppen (*Zeit Lexikon 8 (Kir–Leul)*, 2005:536). For a different use of the term, see Stevenson (2006).

5. See Keener (2012:90–147, 258–319, 148–220, 402–422) for the genre of Acts, detailed discussion of the speeches in Acts and their historical reliability, of the historical reliability of Acts in general and issues of authorship.

6. On the emphases in the presentation of Paul in Acts and the methodological issues, see Keener (2012:221–257).

7. In his detailed commentary on the speech, Keener (2014:2992–3068) notes all the parallels to Paul's letters; see also Schnabel (2012:838–852) and Thomas (2019); a recent German commentary is Haacker (2019).

8. See Walton (2000). For a summary of Paul's own statements regarding leadership, see the survey by Clarke (2012). After discussing a number of methodological and hermeneutical questions, Clarke describes the titles of leaders, the status of leaders, the power of leaders, the task of leaders and the tools of leaders according to Paul. Acts 20 does not play a significant role.

9. For surveys, see Sweeney (2014), Parsenius (2014), Avery-Peck (2014) and Von Wahlde (2014) and in more detail Winter (1994:45–213).

genre appear in Acts 20. Michel (1973, cited in Von Wahlde 2014) has identified the following nine elements typical of farewell speeches:

[A]nnouncement of approaching death, parnetic sayings or exhortations, prophecies or predictions, a retrospective account of the individual's life, determination of a successor, a prayer, instructions concerning burial, promises and vows requested of those assembled that they will fulfil these requests, and final instruction of those present.¹⁰ (p. 879)

Our focus is on *Paul's retrospective account of his ministry* which, in this farewell speech, serves to indicate that *Paul has appropriately fulfilled all that was demanded by him* (a typical *topos* of such speeches, see Avery Peck 2014:882).

Lifestyle and leadership in Paul's ministry (Ac 19:17–35)

At the beginning of his address, Paul recalls his own ministry among Jews and Gentiles in some detail: he taught in public and private (Ac 20:20), proclaiming and promoting not himself but declaring the whole purpose of God (Ac 20:27), testifying about repentance towards God and faith towards the Lord Jesus or the gospel of God's grace and proclaiming the kingdom (Ac 20:24–27). Paul served the Lord (and the Ephesians) with all humility (Ac 20:19), not with the attitudes associated elsewhere with Gentile leadership.¹¹ These statements indicate Paul's understanding of his calling, his attitudes and their *embodiment in a particular lifestyle*. Paul's ministry, his lifestyle, serves as the model for his audience to follow. What is said about the nexus between lifestyle and leadership?

'How I lived among you the whole time' (Ac 20:18)

Paul's ministry in Ephesus was not one of distance or reservation: he lived among the Jewish and Gentile Christians, shared their lives and identified with them. For Paul to do so was all the more remarkable in view of the stance taken by other Jews and Jewish Christians of his day and age towards Gentiles.¹² The Christians in Ephesus could not only listen to his proclamation of the Gospel, but also observe his whole life and his interaction with them. There were no secrets or restrictions to his life among them. Paul did not intermittently appear among them and disappear again but was there the whole time of his stay in the area and committed to his task ('that I set foot in Asia').¹³

Elsewhere, Luke also emphasises the *intensity* of Paul's public ministry in Ephesus: he taught daily in the lecture hall of a certain Tyrannus (Ac 19:9). The so-called Western textual

10. Other scholars have identified up to 20 typical elements (see Avery-Peck 2014: 881–882).

11. See Luke 22:25–26 and the displays of Gentile pride and arrogance, for example, Acts 12:23 and 18:12–17. For Luke 22:24–30 as an important parallel text to Acts 20, see Walton (2000:100–117). Paul serves as an example of the humble service required by Jesus.

12. For a survey, see Gilbert (2010:670–673).

13. This recalls the charge of Jesus to the disciples in Luke 9:4: 'And whatever house you enter, stay there, and from there depart'. While his co-workers were probably active throughout the province Asia Minor (e.g. in Colossae, Hierapolis and Laodicea) during this time, Paul claims to have stayed in Ephesus from where he probably co-ordinated the missionary endeavours in the area.

tradition of Acts¹⁴ adds that Paul did so from the 5th to the 10th hour of each day, that is, from about 11:00 to 16:00.¹⁵ Probably, Paul could make use of the lecture hall during this time, as this was the hottest part of the day. According to Keener (2014), this reading is:

[A]t least a reasonable guess from someone familiar with the arrangement of ancient schools. If Paul was working throughout this period of his ministry (cf. Ac 20:34; 1 Cor 4:12), he may have worked from dawn until about 11:00 a.m. (about five hours), then devoting the next five hours to the still more exhausting business of Christian dialectic. (p. 2829)

This would have been followed from the late afternoon onwards by his 'private' ministry from house to house (Ac 20:20).

In addition, Paul worked in his trade as a tent-maker to support himself (Ac 20:34). It seems that even during this time, people had access to him and could observe him (Ac 19:12; whether Paul was aware of it or approved of it or not, they would carry off to the sick handkerchiefs or aprons that had touched his body). All this took place for about two years, 'so that all the residents of Asia heard the word of the Lord, both Jews and Greeks' (Ac 19:10). Later in the speech, Paul mentions a ministry period of three years (Ac 20:31) when he refers his audience back to his own example: 'for three years I did not cease night or day to admonish every one of you with tears' which is evidence of his 'truly untiring dedication' (Haacker 2019:343). Paul provided a splendid example 'of persistence and sincerity in teaching the church at Ephesus, again noting that he missed no opportunity and used the time fully (cf. Ac 20:20, 27)' (Walton 2000:82). He practised the admonition in Ephesians 5:15: 'Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise but as wise, *making the best use of the time, because the days are evil*'.

Paul gives an account of his lifestyle and leadership to people who witnessed and observed his life. The persuasiveness of his account of his ministry presupposes that the audience can confirm Paul's claims as they had ample opportunity to observe him carefully and knew him well. Paul's leadership was tied to a lifestyle (understood as *the overall context of regularly recurring manners of behaviour and interactions*) of full commitment to his calling and to the people he came to lead. In addition to the exceptional miracles reported for Ephesus (Ac 19:11–12 and other superhuman factors such as the Holy Spirit), this commitment will have added to the persuasiveness of Paul's ministry and to his influence on others.¹⁶

'Serving the Lord with all humility and with tears' (Ac 20:19)

Paul emphasises that he, although a leader (i.e. an *individual influencing a group of individuals to achieve a common goal*), is a

14. For discussion, see Metzger (1975:259–272).

15. For discussion, see Metzger (1975:470): 'may represent an accurate piece of information, preserved in oral tradition before being incorporated into the text of certain manuscripts', for a detailed assessment, see Keener (2014:2829–2830).

16. Paul employs the rhetorical strategy of sacrifice (see Hansen 1993:824): 'In argumentation by sacrifice, sacrifice is presented as evidence of the value of the thing for which the sacrifice is made'. Obviously, Luke's presentation of Paul's ministry and example is a fine piece of ancient rhetoric.

follower and servant himself. He serves the Lord (δουλεύων τῷ κυρίῳ). This is his identity. The Greek word *douleuein* implies dependence and obedience, though in this case not in a slavish manner. The servant derives great dignity and authority from serving *this* Lord.¹⁷

Despite his calling and commissioning by the risen Lord, the exceptional signs and wonders performed by him and his successes elsewhere and in Ephesus (19:11–12), Paul claims to have served *in humility*, not with the arrogance of some leaders in his world. Humility means relinquishing status, 'but even this could be honourable for a leader'.¹⁸ If not a word coined by early Christians, the Greek word *ταπεινοφροσύνη* was at least a word, which was (Walton 2000):

[G]iven an entirely different 'atmosphere' by its use by the earliest Christians, where it is contrasted (e.g., in Phlp 2:3) with ἐπιθία (seeking followers by means of gifts – hence ambition, rivalry) and κενοδοξία (vanity, conceit, excessive ambition). (p. 76)

Paul's emphasis on his humility is striking in a social context in which honour was a prevalent value. However, Keener (2014) notes that although:

[H]umility was sometimes associated with servility, it could also be viewed positively (especially as gentleness), and the motif of a 'humble' leader was widely valued. ... a ruler's 'humility' was often considered power under control.¹⁹ (p. 3008)

Paul does not indicate the relationship between serving the Lord and 'power under control'.

Paul also refers to his tears. Haacker (2019:339–340) notes that, in the ancient world, the suppression of tears was 'kein Erziehungsziel bei heranwachsenden Männern ... Aussagen über eigene Tränen unterstreichen die Intensität einer Zuwendung oder eines Gefühls der Verbundenheit'.²⁰ Paul's ministry was not one of professional distance from his 'clients' or one of successfully 'managing' his mission and team of co-workers, but one of high personal and emotional involvement: he was in tears *for* the Ephesians

17. In his letters, Paul often uses the verb in a positive way with clear countercultural inklings and in clear dispute with Greco-Roman practices of slavery and dependency that were expressed with this word group, see Weiser (2011).

18. See Keener (2014:3007). 'The most explicit Lukan model for a "servant" whose humility invites God's favour is Mary (Lk 1:48); in her case (1:52), as in general (14:11; 18:14; cf. 3:5), Luke values humility as a prerequisite for divine exaltation'.

19. Drawing on texts which use a common concept although it was expressed through several different terms, Keener refers to the following examples from Greco-Roman sources: Those who govern gently (πρᾶως) commend themselves to their subjects (Polyb. 1.72.3); Roman conquerors also surpassed the Carthaginians in kindness (πρᾶότητα) and so won over many of the Spaniards (3.99.7). Vespasian was praised for identifying with common soldiers (Tac. Hist. 2.5), and Vitellius increased his reputation by kissing even common soldiers (Suet. *Vitellius* 7.3). A later ruler was so 'gentle' that he ignored a spiteful thinker's verbal abuses (Lucian *Peregr.* 18). Even a statue of Zeus could convey his 'gentleness' (πρᾶτον; Dio Chrys. *Or.* 12.77). Paul's epistles cultivate not only a model of merciful leaders (2 Cor 10:1) but identification with the broken (Rm 12:16) and relinquishment of public status (1 Cor 4:10–13; 2 Cor 12:10).

20. See also Keener (2014:3008–3009). Keener notes that 'a historian might present as praiseworthy a leader able to mourn over another. It was honourable for those in power to weep over others' suffering, even that of their enemies. Luke does not clarify whether the tears here relate to Paul's trials or to his humble "serving", in which case it could involve rhetorical pathos as he beseeches hearers to respond (as in Ac 20:31). In both biblical and Greek tradition, tears were appropriate for heroes under duress' (3008–3009). Keener discusses in detail the rhetorical function of adding *pathos* by demonstrating sincerity (3009).

and *with* them.²¹ Later in the speech, Paul again recalls his emotional involvement, ‘for three years I did not cease night or day to admonish every one of you *with tears*’ (Ac 20:31).

These claims again underline Paul’s full commitment to the task. In his role as a leader in Ephesus, he served the Lord, was ready to relinquish status and to control his power and engaged emotionally with his followers.

‘The trials that happened to me’ (Ac 20:19)

In addition to situations that led to tears as he shared the lives of people, Paul’s ministry was challenged from outside. Some Jews plotted against Paul (see Ac 19:9, ‘but when some became stubborn and continued in unbelief, speaking evil of the Way before the congregation’). While appreciated and accepted by some (Paul’s followers), for others, Paul’s ministry was a riposte which had to be challenged. They attempted to restrict Paul’s influence on a group of people (Jews and Gentiles attending the synagogue of Ephesus, Ac 19:8; some people from that group had already become followers of Paul) by slandering Paul’s proclamation (‘the Way’). It is not clear whether and what kind of other plots were involved. In addition to other motives, presumably, this was also performed by Paul’s opponents to secure their own influence in the synagogue of Ephesus. Probably, there were also vested financial interests involved. Exercising and establishing leadership often leads to conflict with former leaders when followers shift their allegiance to new leaders.²²

It is noteworthy that Paul did not seek an open confrontation with these opponents and challenge their claims to influence (which may have led to unwanted official attention to the Jewish minority; see Ac 18:12–17), but withdrew from the synagogue without resistance, taking his adherents (τοὺς μαθητὰς) with him. Also, in this context, Paul displayed humility. The reference to his followers – the same Greek word is used for the followers of Jesus – underlines Paul’s success among Jews and Gentiles and indicates his leadership.

Despite these challenges to Paul’s leadership and the hostility and dangers which it involved (see the earlier accounts of Jewish hostility in Acts), Paul pursued his commission faithfully. He did not give up when facing such trials, rather he persisted.

Paul’s completed commission (Ac 20:20, 26–27)

The complete fulfilment of Paul’s task is the next theme. Paul assures his audience that he had declared to them everything that is profitable. He did not withhold any of what there was to know and that they needed to know. People, who will appear on the scene later on (in Ac 20:29, some of Paul’s opponents are in view), cannot legitimately claim that Paul’s message was wanting and needs to be supplemented.

21. The reference to tears recalls the tears of Jesus in Luke 19:41 and John 11:35.

22. Drawing on theories of religious conflict, the ‘contested domain’ in this case is influence over people or potential followers, for an excellent survey see Mayer (2013).

Paul returns to this theme immediately before he commissions the elders for their ministry (Ac 20:28–30). He affirms his innocence as he not only diligently but also fully completed his commission (recalling the Old Testament prophetic tradition, in particular, Ezk²³): ‘Therefore I testify to you this day that I am innocent of the blood of all, for I did not shrink from declaring to you the whole counsel of God’ (Ac 20:26–27), that is, ‘the whole of God’s will or mind – a complete message for all kinds of people, both Jews and Gentiles’.²⁴

Paul did not hold anything significant back or employ his superior knowledge as a means of exercising power (as greater or full knowledge or information implies power), as some of his opponents might have performed. Paul did not preserve his superior status on the basis of the superior knowledge that he had at the beginning of his ministry and so keep a distance between himself and his followers. Instead, he generously passed on his knowledge in its entirety to them. He did so publicly for three months in the synagogue, for two years in the lecture hall of Tyrannus (see above) and privately throughout his stays in houses (Ac 19:8–9; 20:20).

Paul did not refrain from ministering in public²⁵ where he could reach the whole population of the city and of the area (see the description of the result in Ac 19:10) and be observed by the whole community.²⁶ There was nothing secretive or subversive to his ministry and leadership in influencing a group of individuals to achieve a common goal. Paul was not manipulative or prone to drawing people away after him (see his explicit warning against doing so in Ac 20:30). His ministry was fully transparent to all who wanted to inquire. People knew where to find him (Ac 19:9–10).

At the same time, Paul also provided instruction in private contexts, where the range of people and their numbers were more limited.²⁷ He was not only interested in public appearance, the honour which this may have involved, and large numbers, but also came to their houses (not worrying about Jewish purity regulations, see Ac 10:1–11:18; 1 Cor 9:19–23). Paul identified with his followers or followers to be and was ready to share their lives. In this way, ‘Paul provided intimate contact for the disciples, probably knowing most of them personally until his departure in Acts 20:1’.²⁸ ‘That Paul taught both publicly ... and from house to house (i.e. privately), shows that he exploited every possible means to make his teaching available’ (Keener 2014:3012–3013).

23. For detailed analysis of this background, see Keener (2014:2028–3032).

24. Walton (2000:80). According to Haacker (2019:342), Paul refers to ‘die noch ausstehende Phase der Geschichte’.

25. In other places mentioned in Acts, Paul’s public ministry in synagogues and at the Athenian marketplace led to controversies, at times fierce.

26. Keener (2014:3013) notes that ‘The emphasis on the point that some of Paul’s teaching was public is important. ... Romans feared the potential subversiveness of private meetings, but what was public was available to all. Many in antiquity also laid claim to private, esoteric teachings for an inner circle (cf. Luke 8:9–10; but also Greek and Jewish sages)’.

27. See Gehring (2000) and Blue (1994).

28. Keener (2014:3013); adding: ‘Knowing the names of their fellow citizens could increase leaders’ popularity with the people’.

Paul had no vested financial interests in providing instruction as he fully covered his own costs of living (see Ac 20:33–35). Paul's leadership was characterised by full transparency.²⁹ In view of Paul's example, the elders' ministry is to be as unstinting and as complete as Paul's (see Walton 2000:85).

One message and one consistent standard for all (Ac 20:21)

Closely related to Paul's claim that he taught everything that there was to know, he 'testified to both Jews and Greeks of repentance toward God and of faith in our Lord Jesus Christ' (Ac 20:21).³⁰ Consistent with his calling, Paul ministered to Jews and Gentiles. While his point of departure would have been different in Jewish synagogues and on marketplaces such as in Athens (Ac 17:17), he had but *one* message. Paul did not play off Jews and Gentiles against each other.³¹ Both, Jews and Gentiles, needed to repent and would be accepted by God. Both groups were called to saving faith in Jesus. There was one consistent standard and requirement for all to become followers of Christ and followers of Paul. Paul did not favour his fellow Jews (although he emphasises his Jewish identity in some passages of Acts) nor the Gentiles, to whom he was particularly called (Ac 9:15–16; 22:21).³²

Also, in Acts 20:31, amidst the charges to the elders, Paul claims that 'for three years I did not cease night or day to admonish *every one* of you with tears'. Paul had *all* of the elders in view and did not show partiality to one of them or a particular group among them: neither to fellow Jews nor to Gentiles, neither to people of high nor low social status, neither to fellow Roman citizens among them (see Ac 16:37–39; 22:25–29; 25:11), neither to rich nor poor elders, neither to slave owners nor to slaves, neither to people of his age group nor to people from Tarsus/Cilicia (Ac 22:3) or whatever other criteria for making distinctions may come to mind. Paul did not distinguish between his followers; all of them received the same passionate ministry (being admonished with tears). As all received the same share of the apostle's attention (instruction, counselling, prayer, etc.), there was no room or need for competition in this regard. Paul's emphasis on *every one of them* laid the foundation for unity among his followers.

This principle will have added to Paul's credibility and to the readiness of people to follow him. As Paul's ministry was public (and private), the audience could affirm that Paul made no such distinctions in his ministry.

Because of the rhetorical situation, that is, a farewell speech with the typical *topos* of a retrospective account of a person's

29. See Stenschke (2019, 2020) for Paul's emphasis on financial transparency in his collection enterprise for the saints of Jerusalem.

30. That faith in Jesus Christ was an essential component of Paul's ministry was attested even by Paul's Jewish opponents in Ephesus who started injuring evil spirits by 'the Jesus whom Paul proclaims' (Ac 19:13).

31. Paul could have easily done so in view of Gentile prejudices against Jews and of Jewish prejudices against Gentiles, see Bohak (2010), Gilbert (2010) and Sim and McLaren (eds. 2013).

32. Paul would have done so out of conviction. He could be consistent because he was financially independent (see below). Paul also emphasises this in his letters to the Corinthians; for a survey of Paul's financial policy, see Briones (2013).

life and the intention to declare that Paul has appropriately fulfilled all that was demanded by him (see above), Paul appears here as the perfect role model for leadership rather than as a person of flesh and blood. Some of the rhetoric in this presentation of Paul is because of the genre and must be taken as such. Acts does not offer a neutral biography of Paul but an apology of his life and gospel written by an ardent admirer.

Constrained by the Spirit (Ac 20:22)³³

Paul has emphasised his own initiative and approach in his past ministry up to this point. Now he turns to the future. He is about to set out for Jerusalem. Despite uncertainties regarding the outcome of this journey and the risks involved ('not knowing what will happen to me there'), he is ready to set out courageously. He is obedient to the Spirit, even though he knows that such obedience will involve imprisonment and afflictions.³⁴

Despite his high calling and the generous divine affirmation of his ministry, Paul also submits to the constraints of the Holy Spirit. He is not a law unto himself nor free from such obligations. Paul's lifestyle is one of obedience to the guidance and command of the Spirit. As a leader and influencer among the Christians of Ephesus, he himself is and remains a follower of the Spirit. Some of the authenticity and authority which Paul exercised will have derived from this submission to the Spirit, even when it involved unpleasant prospects.

Not shying away from suffering (Ac 20:23)

Although not directly related to his leadership role *in Ephesus*,³⁵ Paul refers to a brave lifestyle that does not shy away from suffering and affliction: the prospect of 'the Holy Spirit testifies to me in every city that imprisonment and afflictions await me' does not deter him from starting out towards Jerusalem.³⁶ Walton (2000) states:

[P]aul's lack of detailed knowledge of the future does not produce any shirking from the way ahead, for he sees obedience to God as of greater importance than the preservation of his own life (v. 24).³⁷ (p. 77)

Walton (2000) summarises Paul's attitude as follows:

33. It is more likely that 'spirit' here refers to the divine Spirit rather than being a reference to Paul's own resolve; see the discussion in Walton (2000:88) and Keener (2014:3015).

34. In view of many past and present instances of abuse, it is noteworthy that Paul does not refer to the Spirit to bolster his own status and authority in Ephesus or his own financial interests.

35. In a wider sense, Paul served in a leadership role in his collection for the saints in Jerusalem. The enterprise involved a number of significant leadership challenges. Paul influences a group of individuals, that is, the churches which he had founded in Galatia, Macedonia and Achaia, to achieve a common goal, that is, to assist the poor Christians in Jerusalem and to express their gratitude. The task of influencing the Jewish Christian recipients to accept the money lay still ahead of him; see the analysis by Stenschke (2015, 2017).

36. Luke gives no indication of why this journey is so important to Paul that he sets out despite such announcements. 1 Corinthians 16:1–4, 2 Corinthians 8–9 and Romans 15:26–28 indicate that Paul is on his way with a larger group of representatives of churches from different areas and the collection of the Gentile Christian churches for the saints in Jerusalem.

37. For the widespread motif of bravery in the ancient world and the significance of sacrificial devotion, see Keener (2014:3018–3021).

[P]aul's attitude to suffering is twofold: there is an implied patience and fortitude in his description in verse 19; and he is utterly committed to seeing through the path of witness-through-imprisonment which awaits him as the Lord's purpose (v. 24). By implication the elders are to regard suffering similarly when they meet it, as Paul hints that they will (v. 29–30). That is why they need to keep watch and stay alert (v. 28, 31). (p. 89)

Earlier on, Paul emphasised his *commitment to his task* in other ways (Ac 20:19–21). Later in the speech, he will return to his commitment and the evidence for it. Paul underlines that a leadership role does not serve the leader's own interest or offer opportunities for maximising pleasure and profit. It means following the Spirit, even if this should involve suffering. What Paul expects of his followers, be they leaders themselves or not, he practises himself: allegiance and witness to Christ despite potential suffering.

Selfless service and finishing the course (Ac 20:24)

Paul's lifestyle and leadership are not self-serving: 'I do not count my life as of any value nor as precious to myself'.³⁸ His motivation is not to preserve or to prolong his own life or to increase its quality, for example, by accumulating status or wealth.³⁹ Rather, he is ready to serve selflessly. In doing so, Paul follows the example of Jesus, his call to follow him, and to self-denial.

Rather than serving his own purposes or self-enhancement, Paul's goal is, 'if only I may finish my course and the ministry that I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the Gospel of the grace of God'.⁴⁰ Paul is ready to invest himself in the particular task to which he was called. In doing so, he follows and embodies Jesus' call to discipleship. He is ready to lose his life to gain it. His motivation is not self-advancement but service, even if this means that he will not see again the people whom he had come to cherish and whom he served diligently (Ac 20:25).⁴¹

In his ministry and lifestyle, Paul aims at pursuing and finishing the course set before him by Christ. Paul is clear about the aim and purpose of his life. This course is not determined by himself according to his predilections and preferences but set before him by Jesus, the highest authority in the narrative. Paul the leader is a self-denying follower of Christ and ready to pursue what is set before him by Christ. As he influences and leads others, Paul is himself an

38. According to Haacker (2019:340), the announcement by the Spirit is not taken as a warning, but as a preview and challenge, which Paul bravely accepts.

39. Rather than being served by the Ephesians or taking their possessions, Paul worked with his own hands to support himself and his companions (Ac 20:33–35).

40. According to Haacker (2019:340–341), Paul 'wählt hier das sportliche Bild eines Langlaufs, den er nicht abbrechen will. Es steht hier nicht für den "Lebenslauf" im Allgemeinen, sondern für den Auftrag und die Gefahr des Versagens'.

41. Walton (2000:79) notes that Luke's Paul knew of his forthcoming death, but did not know of its particular circumstances – thus locating the open-endedness of v. 22–25 in the detail; or that he was hoping to go on to evangelise other areas, but was ready for his plans to be curtailed by suffering and imprisonment. ... we may conclude that v. 25, 38 need not be read as implying knowledge by Luke of Paul's death, but may reflect Paul's (and Luke's?) uncertainty about the future at this stage – the definite expectation is that Paul will not return to Ephesus, but it is possible that circumstances will change and that Paul may at a future time find himself again in Ephesus.

exemplary follower of Christ.⁴² His readiness to relinquish his own life for the greater prize of his calling commends Paul to his followers (see Keener 2014:3021).

Counsel about future challenges (Ac 20:29–30)

Paul foretells that, after his departure, 'fierce wolves' will come in among the audience and will not spare the flock. Even from among the elders, men will arise who speak twisted things to draw away the disciples after them. In view of these impending threats, the elders are to be alert and to remember Paul's selfless ministry. Being forewarned, they would be forearmed. To inform, counsel and warn others about future events (whether real and concrete situations at this moment or as the normal expected course of events) and to prepare them accordingly is part and parcel of the foresight which should characterise leaders. Paul shows lasting concern for the church, for those whom he leads, beyond the situation of which he currently is part or might be part in the future. An *après moi le déluge*-attitude is not part of Paul's behaviour and value judgements, rather a concept of sustainable leadership which benefits all who are involved now, and in the future.

Not for personal gain, rather supporting oneself and others (Ac 20:33–35)

Relinquishing material gain is directly addressed after Paul has spoken to the elders about the divine reward for faithful service ('an inheritance among all those who are sanctified'⁴³). Paul refers to his *own* practice of not coveting silver or gold or costly apparel, probably by not demanding and accepting payment for his service. Rather, he provided for himself and for his companions by working in his trade as a tent-maker (Ac 18:3).⁴⁴ In this context, Paul does not address his right to receive payment or his persistence on his financial independence to avoid dependency as he does in his correspondence with the Corinthians (see Briones 2013; Marshall 1987).⁴⁵

In the light of the close relation between financial interests and religious devotion previously displayed by pagan Ephesians (Ac 19:25–27) and the stunning amount of money involved in one aspect of the local pagan religion (books with magic spells worth 50 000 silver coins, referred to in Ac 19:19), Paul's disclaimer in Acts 20:33–35 is particularly noteworthy.

42. For the many parallels between Paul and Jesus in the speech, see Keener (2014).

43. The elders are commended to God and to the word of his grace, which is able to build them up (Ac 20:32). The 'word of grace' is Paul's only direct reference to the source of his lifestyle and leadership.

44. Regarding the function of these claims, Haacker (2019:345) argues that Luke's entire speech aims at demonstrating the integrity of Paul's character: 'Den Delegierten der Gemeinde von Ephesus gegenüber war das sicher nicht nötig – für das Publikum des lukanischen Werkes aber sinnvoll. Sozusagen am literarischen Vorabend des Prozesses gegen Paulus wird sein "Ethos" eindrucksvoll vor Augen gestellt'. Haacker rightly relates this portrayal to Paul's disputed collection enterprise. What Paul demanded of others, he practiced himself.

45. While Acts 18:3 speaks about Paul's manual labour as a tent-maker, Acts 18:5 notes that Paul fully devoted himself to preaching once Silas and Timothy arrived from Macedonia. They probably brought funds with them which allowed Paul to cease working in his trade and concentrate on his proclamation. Phil 4:10–20 indicates that Paul received gifts from the Philippians (in Macedonia) more than once. However, it is also possible that Paul's companions worked and set him free for preaching the Gospel; see Keener (2014:2740).

Paul did not share the material concerns of the silversmiths, but displayed true unselfishness. Weiser (1989) notes:

[A]ccording to Luke, unpretentiousness in dealing with material wealth and a high measure of social responsibility characterise the life of the Christians. This Lukan concern can be seen throughout all of Luke-Acts. He also emphasises the unpretentiousness of the messengers of Jesus and the bearers of service-offices in the Christian communities. (See Lk 12:41–46; 17:7–10).⁴⁶ (p. 321)

In addition to serving as a distinguishing mark from false teachers of the future, Paul's attitude was to serve as a model for the elders: neither are *they* to pursue material gain. Following Paul's example, they are to support themselves and others. The money-mindedness displayed by Gentiles was to have no place in the church. Preoccupation with material wealth is a recurring Lukan theme (see Lk 12:29–30; 17:27–28; Ac 16:19; 24:26). It is therefore not surprising that a gospel directed to Gentile Christians should address this concern repeatedly.⁴⁷ Joseph Fitzmyer (1986) rightly observes that:

[N]o other NT writer... speaks out as emphatically as does Luke about the Christian disciple's use of material possessions, wealth and money.... Obviously, he is not satisfied with what he has seen of the Christian use of wealth in his ecclesial community and makes use of sayings of Jesus to correct attitudes within it.⁴⁸ (p. 24)

Paul gave the church and its elders an example of *supporting the weak* (Ac 20:35). This expression refers to manual labour to care for the materially poor or socially weak, or to the teaching ministry mentioned previously for the spiritually weak, though the former is usually understood.⁴⁹ Christians have to care for these weak people. That the poor are specifically mentioned in the Miletus speech suggests that Gentile elders, following the patterns of their society, were in danger of misusing them (in creating a clientele or other relationships of dependency which they could exploit for themselves rather than providing genuine charity), overlooking or deliberately neglecting the weak as or when they were of no use to them. Jesus' assertion that 'it is more blessed to give than to receive' is the opposite of the attitude elsewhere ascribed to or displayed by Gentiles prior to faith.⁵⁰

Paul previously defined 'such work' as manual labour in Acts 20:34: 'I worked with my own hands'. On this, Bruce (1990:436) comments: 'These words occupy an emphatic

46. Pesch (1986:205) comments: 'Apparently this constitutes an important criterion of distinction over against heretics coming into the church from the outside ... as also over against heretics from within the church ... for whom selfish striving for material gain is characteristic', cf. also Roloff (1989:513–516) and the illuminating reference to Luke 16:1–8; cf. pp. 520–524 for the relevance of Luke 12:35–38, 42–47; 22:24–27 for church leaders.

47. For the readers of Luke-Acts, see Carson and Moo (2005:210–211, 301–302) and Keener (2012:423–434).

48. For a survey, see Hays (2010).

49. Weiser (1989:321): 'socially disadvantaged people'; Bauer, Aland and Aland (eds. 1988:231), list Acts 20:35 under 'economically weak, lacking resources, being in need and metaphorically used to describe religious and moral weakness' (all translations author's own).

50. Roloff (1989) rightly observed the close relation of Paul's exhortation to the Jesus tradition. The example and teaching of Jesus is the supreme standard for these Christian leaders. Luke does not indicate here how Gentiles usually treated the poor. An example is the dire treatment of the prodigal son by his Gentile 'employer' (Lk 15:16; see the different picture in Ac 10:2 and also Luke's criticism of the greed of the Jewish leadership in Lk 11:37–41; 20:47). The Christian task is genuine support ('we must support the weak'; see Lk 1:54).

position at the end of the sentence; they would be accompanied by the appropriate gesture'. This emphasis and the previous reference to Paul's work and trade ('they worked together – by trade they were tent-makers') in Acts 18:3 implicitly criticise the Greco-Roman evaluation of manual labour and economic structure, as Greco-Roman culture tended to despise manual labour.⁵¹ The description of 'vulgar tasks' by the Roman upper class gentleman Marcus Tullius Cicero (106–43 BC) is representative and includes manual labour and work by artisans in workshops:

[U]nbecoming to a gentleman, too, and vulgar are the means of livelihood of all hired workmen whom we pay for mere casual labour, not for artistic skill; for in their case the very wages they receive is a pledge of their slavery.... And workers/artisans are engaged in vulgar trades; for no workshop can have anything honourable about it.⁵²

These leaders were not to follow the values of their own society and despise manual labour, but Paul's example that embodies and expresses different values. Barrett (1985) comments:

[T]hey would do well to follow Paul's example and work for their living, in order that, far from receiving payment for their work, they may be in a position to give money away to those who are in need.⁵³ (p. 53)

Through his own labour, Paul embodies the values which he proclaims, even if they are countercultural.

This charge is motivated by a maxim of Jesus in Acts 20:35 ('remembering the words of the Lord Jesus'; cf. Lk 6:30). The elders are not to follow the values and practices prevalent in their society, but to implement fully in their lives the teaching of the Lord Jesus with whom they aligned themselves as Christians and whose authority they accept. This reminder of his Lordship divests this command of any optional character. Walton (2000:84) comments: 'the picture of Paul with which the speech leaves its readers is of one who wants the words of his Master to be remembered'.

Lifestyle and leadership: Summary and implications

What then characterises Paul's lifestyle? Paul emphasises that, for a considerable length of time, he shared the lives of his followers without interruptions or distancing himself from them. While among them, he served the Lord with all humility and great personal involvement and sincerity, including tears. His ministry entailed trials and suffering which he bore for the sake and benefit of his followers. Paul fully accomplished the task set before him – applying one

51. See Bruce (1990:391). Alexander (1986:70) notes that 'this attitude was not shared by the scientific writers, who though not craftsmen themselves, speak of the *technitai* with deep respect'. As Alexander sees Luke in this scientific tradition, our conclusion should perhaps not be overvalued. See also Strelan (1996:135–137) on the assessment of manual labour in Ephesus; see also Hauck (1950) and Schelkle (1978).

52. *De Officiis* I (42) 150. Another pertinent example is Plutarch's *Vita Periclis* 2. Paul differs from these views and follows Jewish tradition which highly treasured manual labour; for the positive Jewish evaluation of work, see the surveys of Preuss (1978) and Brocke (1978).

53. For a discussion of Paul's own references to his manual labour and the reasons for it, see Barnett (1993).

consistent standard to all of his followers. Serving the Lord, Paul eagerly follows the prompting of the Holy Spirit, even when this includes suffering. In selfless service, Paul finished the course set before him by divine will, not his own agenda. He had cared about the future situation of the elders, even though he would not be affected by it. In all of this, Paul was not seeking his own personal financial advantage. Rather, he supported himself and others through his own work. Throughout, Paul embodied in a perceptible and exemplary manner the values which he conveyed to others and demanded of them.

Before we discuss the implication of this portrait, we must briefly return to the nature of our sources. Paul's claims regarding his lifestyle and leadership in this statement of account appear in a deliberate rhetorical context, that is, in one of the many *speeches* of Acts (see Keener 2012:258–319). Luke presents us Paul's claims regarding his lifestyle and leadership during his prolonged ministry in Ephesus in the mid-fifties of the 1st century AD. As statements of account or farewell speeches are not confessions, one may ask how plausible or historically reliable this portrayal of his ministry is.⁵⁴ Paul's credibility is underlined by the reminder that he stayed among the elders and that they witnessed his ministry over a longer period of time ('You yourselves know ...', Ac 20:18b). He would lose his credibility if the audience knew or could easily point out, that his description of his ministry was inaccurate.⁵⁵ However, while they could remember his ceaseless efforts in public and private, as well as his tears, and while they could agree with his claims, on other aspects, they had to take his word. For example, they cannot verify or falsify whether Paul has declared to them *everything* that was profitable (Ac 20:20) or the whole counsel of God (Ac 20:27; their contacts with other early Christian teachers may have helped in this regard). However, all of this is within the parameters of Luke's own account. The many parallels to Paul's own letters and the general convergence in the presentation suggest that Luke has given a fair, albeit exaggerated summary (for rhetorical impact and following the conventions of the ancient farewell speech genre) of the lifestyle and leadership issues that were important to Paul. However, we must remember that we hear the voice of Paul through Luke who was an ardent admirer and had his own apologetic purposes in his portrayal of Paul.⁵⁶

What about the implications? Following Hadril, we defined *lifestyle* as the overall context of regularly recurring manners of behaviour, interactions, opinions, stocks of knowledge and value judgements that a person holds. Each element of this definition can be seen in Paul's ministry as described in the

54. For an instructive parallel, see the presentation of his character and rule by Augustus in his *Res Gestae* inscriptions; see Ridley (2003:67–241). Ridley (2003:240) notes that 'Augustus understood a fundamental truth, that there is great advantage in leaving your own version of events to guide the assessment of you by posterity'.

55. It is interesting to note what Paul leaves out of the picture. He refers to the 'fierce wolves' as a phenomenon of the future. Otherwise there are no indications that his own ministry and message were highly disputed, not only among Jews and Gentiles, but also among some Christians. This is part of the larger issue of the tendency in Luke's presentation of Paul.

56. For a survey of the issues, see Porter (1999) and Pervo (2010:149–156); for a recent analysis, see Lüke (2019).

Miletus speech. There is an observable overall context of regularly recurring behaviour; there are intensive interactions with all kinds of people (non-Christians, Christians, leaders); all of these are based on opinions, stocks of knowledge and value judgements and they are conveyed in an impressive way. In this way, Paul's lifestyle could become a model for others to follow.

What characterises Paul's leadership? Following Northouse (2016:6), we defined leadership as 'a process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal'. Precisely by living and serving in this exemplary manner, Paul influenced others and, in this way, provided leadership. Through this lifestyle and the activities which it entailed, Paul influenced the elders and Christians of Ephesus to a life committed to the gospel. These aspects cannot be separated: certain convictions and practices regarding lifestyle lead to certain leadership patterns and practices. Leadership in this sense is not a set of abstract 'management' principles regardless of attitude and behaviour but an outflow of the lifestyle of the leader(s).

Paul's address presents a model of leadership for imitation.⁵⁷ Paul not only gives an account of his own ministry, but also presents an *example* for his audience to emulate.⁵⁸ Walton (2000) rightly concludes:

[T]he elders are told to imitate Paul several times in the speech, both explicitly and implicitly, by statements about their responsibilities which parallel statements about Paul's ministry. They are to keep alert, remembering how Paul kept alert night and day for three years (v. 31). They are to keep watch over themselves (v. 28) as Paul kept watch over himself (v. 18b–19). They are to keep watch over the flock (v. 28) as Paul kept watch over them (v. 20–21, 26–27). God's word of grace is available to equip them (v. 32) as it equipped Paul (v. 24). And Paul draws the speech to a close with an explicit reference to his example 'in all this' (v. 35) – an example which he derives from the Lord Jesus. Throughout, the elders are being schooled in Pauline ministry as Luke conceives it, and thus being prepared for the exercise of their ministry after Paul loses his ability to travel freely and perhaps his life itself. They are being urged to fulfil their leadership responsibilities faithfully, just as Paul has his.⁵⁹ (pp. 85–86)

In fulfilling these tasks in 'Pauline' fashion, the elders continue Paul's ministry, share in his authority and status and may count on the same divine support: commendation to God and the work of his grace (which Paul received for his ministry), on the same divine equipping ('which is able to build you up') and the same divine reward ('and give you the inheritance...', Ac 20:32).

57. Walton (2000:200). On page 134, Walton notes that 'Paul is being presented as the ideal church leader who fulfils Jesus' commands and therefore is an example to others'.

58. This is to be expected in a farewell speech which admonishes or warns the audience against undesirable actions and instructs or directs to undertake desirable actions (see Sweeney 2014:876).

59. The portrayal of Paul's leadership in Acts needs to be placed in the wider context of Paul's own statements regarding leadership, such as, for instance, 1 Corinthians 4; for a survey, see Clarke's in-depth analysis (2012).

In the speech or its immediate narrative context, Paul's example is not relativised in any way.⁶⁰ The readers of Acts know of Paul's *special* commission by the risen Christ, his exemplary obedience and his endless efforts regardless of personal consequences. They know of God's grace in his life, the way in which he had been equipped and motivated by the goal set before him. In his letters, Paul emphasises that he was under divine compulsion to preach the gospel (1 Cor 9:16, 'For necessity is laid on me. Woe to me if I do not preach the Gospel'), insisted on his independence in many ways and apparently was not bound by marital or familial commitments.

In view of this, for his ancient and modern followers, Paul's overwhelming example is not meant to discourage them by reducing them to failure in view of an ideal that can hardly be attained. Paul's example is more nuanced: for them, he serves as an *inspiring example of leadership, not as an exact role-model to follow*. This was and is impossible because of the uniqueness of Paul's call, the circumstances of his ministry and his unique equipping by God. In view of passages such as John 13:15 and 1 Corinthians 4:16, it is noteworthy that the elders are not directly called to imitate Paul, but to shepherd the flock of God and to be alert (Ac 20:28, 31). Is Luke in this way less emphatic about Paul's example than Paul himself might have been?

There are a number of *implications* of this example of leadership in our day and age in communities, which cherish the canonical books as inspiration and guidance, including Acts 20, and beyond such confines. Paul's close nexus between lifestyle and leadership (style) is well worth pondering. In this understanding, leadership involves more than a set of techniques that can be acquired and put into practice. Persuasive leadership, that is, leaders who are actually followed by others, requires a certain lifestyle and character of the leaders, at least under certain circumstances. Leaders are to share the lives of their followers without interruptions, distancing themselves from those whom they lead for a considerable length of time. In view of their responsibility before God, they are to serve with all humility and great personal involvement and sincerity. Their task may include trials and suffering, both of which are to be borne for the sake and benefit of their followers. Leaders are to fully accomplish the task set before them and in doing so apply one consistent standard to all of their followers. They are to be receptive to the prompting of the Holy Spirit, even when this includes suffering. They have the future in view and act in a sustainable manner. In selfless service to others, they are not to pursue their own agenda or seek their own personal advantages. Like Paul, they are to embody in a perceptible

60.The following considerations derive from my own concern regarding the present-day significance of Paul's – for rhetorical purposes and because of the constraints of the genre *farewell speech* – almost superhuman example of leadership. Paul himself probably would not have had any issues with his example as portrayed in Acts. His letters indicate that he presented himself as an example for others to emulate. Without further reflection, he confidently calls believers to imitate him ('I urge you, then, be imitators of me'), as he imitates Christ ('Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ'; 1 Cor 4:16; 11:1). 2 Corinthians indicates that not all Corinthian believers were ready to do so.

and exemplary manner the values which they convey and demand of others.

Some voices in today's leadership discussion refer not to lifestyle, but to *character*. For example, in his description of servant leadership, Northouse (2016:225–256) emphasises 10 *characteristics* of a servant leader, namely, the ability to listen, empathy, healing, awareness, persuasion, conceptualisation, foresight, stewardship, commitment to the growth of people and building community (2016:227–229). Maak and Ulrich (2007:388–389) list 14 virtues that are essential for *leadership with integrity* in business contexts. Contrary to some modern debates on qualifications for leadership, Paul refers to his lifestyle and not to numbers, nor does he refer to his achievements or his competence, although he would have had much to offer in this regard. For him, *lifestyle* is more important than competence.

Examples of failed leaders and leadership because of questionable and detrimental lifestyle are numerous and quickly come to mind. Two issues suffice here: one need not look far for leaders who show favouritism among their followers by surrounding themselves with the cronies always ready to board the gravy train or who exploit others and generously line their own pockets.⁶¹

Sadly, in some instances, the atrocious record of the white colonisers' decadent lifestyle and crudely enforced rule⁶² – leadership is far too harmless a word to use for the phenomenon! – on the African continent was continued by those who followed them. Martin Meredith's (2005) enlightening survey *The State of Africa* can be read as an account of political leadership in post-colonial Africa. Unfortunately, some of it is an account of poor, at times extremely poor, leadership under which some of the peoples of the African continent have suffered and continue to suffer. In some cases, the record of leaders who confessed to being Christians was more appropriate; in other cases, it was and is not noticeably better. An examination of the track record of leaders of churches or Christian organisations in Africa will be more encouraging but would also indicate areas for improvement. Paul's charge also challenges other leaders to humility and selfless service, not to position, to status or to the self-aggrandisement that is so often associated with leadership. For both tasks, Christian leaders may draw on God and the message of his grace, a message that is able to build them up and give them an inheritance among all who are sanctified (Ac 20:32).

These references take us to a final question: can this portrayal of lifestyle and leadership be assigned to one or several styles of leadership in the current scholarly discussion (see the survey by Ledbetter, Banks & Greenhalgh 2016)? The most obvious candidate is *servant leadership*, as (Walton 2000):

61.See S. Kgatle's astute analysis of South African politics in his article 'Ethical Leadership: Alternative to the Culture of Greed among Politicians in South African Government'.

62.For a recent survey of the devastating effect of German colonial rule, see Grill (2019).

[T]here is a clear concept of Christian leadership being promulgated in Luke's work, focused on the manner and 'conditions of service' (to use a modern phrase) of leadership, rather than being taken up with considerations of 'office'.⁶³ (p. 135)

The definition of servant leadership according to Northouse (2016) fits well with Luke's portrayal of Pauline leadership:

[S]ervant leaders make a conscious choice to *serve first* – to place the good of followers over the leaders' self-interests. They build strong relationships with others, are empathic and ethical, and lead in ways that serve the greater good of followers, the organisation, the community, and society at large.⁶⁴ (p. 253)

Luke's portrayal of Paul's leadership also recalls the modern notions of *transformational* or *charismatic leadership* (for a survey, see Northouse 2016:161–193) which is defined by Northouse (2016) as:

[A] process that changes and transforms people. It is concerned with emotions, values, ethics, standards, and long-term goals. It includes assessing followers' motives, satisfying their needs, and treating them as full human beings. Transformational leadership involves an exceptional form of influence that moves followers to accomplish more than what is usually expected of them. It is a process that often incorporates charismatic and visionary leadership. (p. 161)

However, Paul's speech also recalls the principles of *ethical leadership* as described by Northouse (2016:341–349): ethical leaders respect others, serve others, are just, are honest and build community. Some of the characteristics of Paul's leadership also appear in the *trait approach* to leadership, the *skills approach*, the *behavioural approach* and the *situational approach*, as described by Northouse (2016:19–114). It is interesting to note that Luke's portrayal of Paul's leadership fits into several concepts and defies unequivocal categorisation.

63. Walton describes this clear concept of leadership as follows (135–136): For Luke, the heart of Christian leadership is to be like Jesus, and the extent to which both the disciples and Paul do and teach what Jesus did and taught – frequently using similar vocabulary – makes this clear. Such following in the way of Jesus includes servanthood (e.g., Lk 22:24–27; Ac 20:19), for Jesus, his disciples and Paul serve others at cost to themselves, including past and future personal suffering (e.g., Lk 12:4, 11; 22:15, 28, 31–32, 37; Ac 20:19–21, 22–23, 27). This is why Paul calls the elders to such costly, watchful service (Ac 20:28–31). Jesus, his disciples and Paul served in humility (e.g. Lk 22:26–27; Ac 20:19), valuing others' needs above their own (Lk 22:26–27; Ac 20:19, 21, 22, 24, 28, 34–35). They taught and testified faithfully (e.g. Lk 9:2; 12:1–53; 21:13; 22:14–38; Ac 20:20–21, 24, 25, 26–27, 31). This costly commitment drew out the affection of those they led (Lk 7:38, 44; Ac 20:37), as they saw the faithful ministry (Lk 12:42; Ac 20:20–21, 24, 27) they received. Their ministry was comparable to that of a household steward, whose leadership was real, but who was also answerable to his master (e.g. Lk 12:35–48, esp. 42; Ac 20:19, 24).

The suffering which Jesus and Paul experienced is an inevitable part of Christian leadership as Luke understands it (e.g., Lk 21:12–19, 36; 22:28; Ac 20:19, 23–24, 31), but should not be feared above God himself (e.g., Lk 12:4–7; Ac 20:24). Certainly, such suffering and threats from false teachers (e.g. Lk 10:3; 21:8–9; Ac 20:29–30) call for watchfulness (e.g. Lk 12:1, 5, 37; 21:34; Ac 20:28, 31), but in the end suffering and struggle lead purposefully to glory (e.g. Lk 13:32; Ac 20:22; Lk 22:16–17, 29–30; Ac 20:19).

The faithfulness of Paul and his master is particularly seen in their approach to money and work, where Luke portrays both men living and teaching openness, generosity to others and straightforwardness (e.g. Lk 12:13–34; Ac 20:33–35). God provides for such faithful servants as he does for the birds and the flowers (Lk 12:24, 27–28), but Paul also carries out the admonition of Jesus to provide for himself and others by working (Ac 20:33–35).

This represents far more than a collection of vague platitudes; it offers a dynamic, sharply focused model of Christian leadership rooted in Luke's understanding of Jesus, in contrast with other approaches to leadership available in the ancient world (Lk 22:25).

64. See also the contributions by Spears (2002, 2010). For a recent application of servant leadership theory to Christian leadership, see Detje (2017).

Acknowledgements

Competing interests

The author declares that he has no financial or personal relationships that may have inappropriately influenced him in writing this article.

Author's contributions

C.W.S. is the sole author of this research article.

Ethical considerations

This article followed all ethical standards for a research without direct contact with human or animal subjects.

Funding information

This research received no specific grant from any funding agency in the public, commercial or not-for-profit sectors.

Data availability statement

Data sharing is not applicable to this article as no new data were created or analysed in this study.

Disclaimer

The views and opinions expressed in this article are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the official policy or position of any affiliated agency of the author.

References

- Alexander, L.C.A., 1986, 'Luke's preface in the context of Greek preface writing', *Novum Testamentum* 28(1), 48–74. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1560667>
- Avery-Peck, A.J., 2014, 'Farewell speech IV. Judaism A. Second temple and Hellenistic Judaism', in D.C. Allison, C. Helmer & V. Leppin (eds.), *Encyclopedia of the Bible and its Reception (Essenes – Fideism)*, vol. 8, pp. 880–883, De Gruyter, Berlin.
- Barnett, P.W., 1993, 'Tentmaking', in G.F. Hawthorne, R.P. Martin & D.G. Reid (eds.), *Dictionary of Paul and his letters: A compendium of contemporary biblical scholarship*, pp. 925–927, InterVarsity Press, Downers Grove, IL.
- Barrett, C.K., 1985, *Church, ministry and sacraments in the New Testament: The 1983 Didsbury lectures*, Paternoster, Exeter.
- Bauer, W., Aland, K. & Aland, B. (eds.), 1988, *Griechisch-deutsches Wörterbuch zu den Schriften des Neuen Testaments und der frühchristlichen Literatur*, 6th edn., De Gruyter, Berlin.
- Blue, B., 1994, 'Acts and the House Church', in D.W.J. Gill & C. Gempf (eds.), *The book of acts in its Greco-Roman setting, The book of Acts in its first century setting*, pp. 119–220, Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, MI.
- Bohak, G., 2010, 'Gentile attitudes towards Jews and Judaism', in J.J. Collins & C.D. Harlow (eds.), *The Eerdmans dictionary of Early Judaism*, pp. 668–670, Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, MI.
- Briones, D.E., 2013, 'Paul's financial policy: A socio-theological approach', in C. Keith (ed.), *Library of New Testament studies*, vol. 494, Bloomsbury T. & T. Clark, London.
- Brocke, M., 1978, 'Arbeit II. Judentum', in G. Krause & G. Müller (eds.), *Theologische Realenzyklopädie (Anselm von Laon – Aristoteles/Aristotelismus)*, vol. 3, pp. 618–619, De Gruyter, Berlin.
- Bruce, F.F., 1990, *The Acts of the Apostles: The Greek text with introduction and commentary*, 3rd edn., Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, MI.
- Carson, D.A. & Moo, D.L., 2005, *An introduction to the New Testament*, 2nd edn., Zondervan, Grand Rapids, MI.
- Clarke, A.D., 1993, *Secular and Christian leadership in Corinth: A socio-historical and exegetical study of 1 Corinthians 1–6, arbeiten zur geschichte des antiken Judentums und des Urchristentums* 18, Brill, Leiden.
- Clarke, A.D., 2000, *Serve the community of the Church: Christians as leaders and ministers, First-Century Christians in the Greco-Roman world*, Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, MI.
- Clarke, A.D., 2012, 'A Pauline theology of church leadership', in C. Keith (ed.), *Library of New Testament Studies* vol. 362, Bloomsbury, London.

- Detje, M., 2017, *Servant leadership: ansätze zur führung und leitung in der kirchengemeinde im 21. jahrhundert*, Neukirchener Theologie, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, Göttingen.
- Dupont, J., 1962, *Le discours de Millet: Testament pastoral de Saint Paul (Acts 20, 18–36)*, Lectio Divina 32, Cerf, Paris.
- Fitzmyer, J.A., 1986, *The Gospel according to Luke (I–IX): Introduction, translation, notes, Anchor Bible*, 2nd edn., vol. 28, Doubleday, New York, NY.
- Gehring, R.W., 2000, *Hausgemeinde und mission: Die bedeutung antiker häuser und hausgemeinden von Jesus bis Paulus*, Bibelwissenschaftliche Monografien 9, Brunnen, Giessen.
- Gilbert, G., 2010, 'Gentiles, Jewish attitudes towards', in J.J. Collins & C.D. Harlow (eds.), *The Eerdmans dictionary of early Judaism*, pp. 670–673, Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, MI.
- Grill, B., 2019, *Wir herrenmenschen: Unser rassistisches erbe: Eine reise in die Deutsche kolonialgeschichte*, Siedler, München.
- Haacker, K., 2019, *Die Apostelgeschichte*, Theologischer kommentar zum Neuen Testament 5, Kohlhammer, Stuttgart.
- Hadrill, S., 2005, *Soziale ungleichheit in Deutschland*, 8th edn., VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, Wiesbaden.
- Hansen, G.W., 1993, 'Rhetorical criticism', in G.F. Hawthorne, R.P. Martin & D.G. Reid (eds.), *Dictionary of Paul and his letters: A compendium of contemporary biblical scholarship*, pp. 822–826, InterVarsity Press, Downers Grove, IL.
- Hauck, F., 1950, 'Arbeit A. Nichtchristlich', in T. Klauser (ed.), *Reallexikon für antike und Christentum (A und O – Bauer)*, vol. 1, pp. 585–588, Hiersemann, Stuttgart.
- Hays, C.M., 2010, *Luke's wealth ethics: A study in their coherence and character*, Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament II.275, Mohr Siebeck, Tübingen.
- Keener, C.S., 2012, *Acts: An exegetical commentary I: Introduction and Acts 1:1–2:47*, Baker, Grand Rapids, MI.
- Keener, C.S., 2014, *Acts: An exegetical commentary III: Acts 15:1–23:35*, Baker, Grand Rapids, MI.
- Ledbetter, B.M., Banks, R.J. & Greenhalgh, D.C., 2016, *Reviewing leadership: A Christian evaluation of current approaches*, 2nd edn., Baker, Grand Rapids, MI.
- Lüke, N., 2019, 'Über die narrative kohärenz zwischen Apostelgeschichte und Paulusbriefen', *Texte und arbeiten zum neutestamentlichen zeitalter*, vol. 62, Narr Francke Attempto, Tübingen.
- Maak, T. & Ulrich, P., 2007, *Integre unternehmensführung: Ethisches orientierungswissen für die wirtschafspraxis*, Schäffer-Poeschel, Stuttgart.
- Marshall, P., 1987, 'Enmity in Corinth: Social conventions in Paul's relations with the Corinthians', *Wissenschaftliche untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament II*, vol. 23, Mohr Siebeck, Tübingen.
- Mayer, W., 2013, 'Religious conflict: Definitions, problems and theoretical approaches', in W. Mayer & B. Neil (eds.), *Religious conflict from early Christianity to the rise of Islam, Arbeiten zur Kirchengeschichte 121*, pp. 1–19, De Gruyter, Berlin.
- Meredith, M., 2005, *The State of Africa: A history of fifty years of independence*, Jonathan Ball, Johannesburg.
- Metzger, B.M., 1975, *A textual commentary on the Greek New Testament*, United Bible Societies, Stuttgart.
- Michel, H.J., 1973, 'Die abschiedsrede des Paulus an die kirche Apg 20, 17–38', *Studien zum Alten und Neuen Testament 35*, Kösel, Munich.
- Northouse, P.G., 2016, *Leadership: Theory and practice*, 7th edn., Sage, London.
- Parzenios, G., 2014, 'Farewell speech II. Greco-Roman antiquity', in D.C. Allison, C. Helmer & V. Leppin (eds.), *Encyclopedia of the Bible and its Reception 8 (Essenes – Fideism)*, pp. 877–878, De Gruyter, Berlin.
- Pervo, R.I., 2010, *The making of Paul: Constructions of the Apostle in Early Christianity*, Fortress, Minneapolis, MN.
- Pesch, R., 1986, *Die Apostelgeschichte (Apg 13–28)*, Evangelisch-Katholischer kommentar zum Neuen Testament V.2, Benzinger, Zürich.
- Porter, S.E., 1999, *The Paul of Acts*, Wissenschaftliche untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament 115, Mohr Siebeck, Tübingen.
- Preuss, H.D., 1978, 'Arbeit. I. AT. 4', G. Krause & G. Müller (eds.), *Theologische Realenzyklopädie (Anselm von Laon – Aristoteles/Aristotelismus)*, vol. 3, pp. 615–618, De Gruyter, Berlin.
- Ridley, R.T., 2003, *The emperor's retrospect: Augustus' Res Gestae in epigraphy, historiography and commentary*, Studia Hellenistica 39, Peeters, Leuven.
- Roloff, J., 1989, 'Themen und traditionen urchristlicher Amtsträgerparänese', in H. Merklein (ed.), *Neues Testament und ethik*, pp. 507–526, Herder, Freiburg.
- Schelle, K.H., 1978, 'Arbeit. III.NT', in G. Krause & G. Müller (eds.), *Theologische Realenzyklopädie Anselm von Laon – Aristoteles/Aristotelismus*, vol. 3, pp. 622–624, De Gruyter, Berlin.
- Sim, D.C. & McLaren, J.S. (eds.), 2013, 'Attitudes to gentiles in ancient Judaism and early Christianity', in C. Keith (ed.), *Library of New Testament studies*, vol. 499, pp. 9–125, Bloomsbury, London.
- Schnabel, E.J., 2012, *Acts, Exegetical commentary on the New Testament*, Zondervan, Grand Rapids, MI.
- Spears, L.C., 2002, 'Tracing the past, present and future of servant leadership', in L.C. Spears & M. Lawrence (eds.), *Focus on leadership: Servant-leadership for the 21st century*, pp. 1–16, Wiley, New York, NY.
- Spears, L.C., 2010, 'Servant leadership and Robert K. Greenleaf's Legacy', in D. Van Dierendonck & K. Patterson (eds.), *Servant leadership: Developments in theory and research*, pp. 11–24, Palgrave Macmillan, New York, NY.
- Stenschke, C.W., 2014, 'Spiritual formation and leadership in Paul's address to the Ephesian Elders (Acts 20:17–35)', *Southeastern Theological Review* 5(1), 83–95.
- Stenschke, C.W., 2015, 'The leadership challenges of Paul's collection for the Saints in Jerusalem: Part I: Overcoming the obstacles on the side of the Gentile Christian Donors', *Verbum et Ecclesia* 36(1), Art #1406, 14 pages. <https://doi.org/10.4102/ve.v36i1.1406>
- Stenschke, C.W., 2017, 'The leadership challenges of Paul's Collection for the Saints in Jerusalem: Part II: Overcoming the obstacles on the side of the recipients and of Paul', *Verbum et Ecclesia* 38(1), #1693. <https://doi.org/10.4102/ve.v38i1.1693>
- Stenschke, C.W., 2019, 'The background to Paul's insistence on financial transparency in his collection enterprise for the saints in Jerusalem', *Estudios Biblicos* 77(3), 393–434.
- Stenschke, C.W., 2020, "'Transparency interdenominational": Financial transparency in Paul's collection for the saints in Jerusalem', in H. Hagelia & M. Zehnder (eds.), *The Bible and Money*, Continuum T. & T. Clark, London (in print).
- Stevenson, N., 2006, 'Lifestyle', in B.S. Turner (ed.), *Cambridge dictionary of sociology*, p. 339, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.
- Strelan, R., 1996, *Paul, Artemis, and the Jews in Ephesus*, Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft 80, De Gruyter, Berlin.
- Sweeney, M.A., 2014, 'Farewell speech I. Hebrew Bible/Old Testament', in D.C. Allison, C. Helmer & V. Leppin (eds.), *Encyclopedia of the Bible and its Reception (Essenes – Fideism)*, vol. 8, pp. 875–877, De Gruyter, Berlin.
- Thomas, J.C., 2019, *The book of the twelve: A pentecostal commentary*, Pentecostal Commentary Series 6, Brill, Leiden.
- Von Wahlde, U., 2014, 'Farewell speech III. New Testament', in D.C. Allison, C. Helmer & V. Leppin (eds.), *Encyclopedia of the Bible and its Reception (Essenes – Fideism)*, vol. 8, pp. 878–880, De Gruyter, Berlin.
- Walton, S., 2000, 'Leadership and lifestyle: The portrait of Paul in the Miletus speech and 1 Thessalonians', in R. Bauckham (ed.), *Society for New Testament studies (monograph series)*, vol. 106, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.
- Weiser, A., 1989, *Die Apostelgeschichte*, St. Benno, Leipzig.
- Weiser, A., 2011, 'δουλεύω', in H. Balz & G. Schneider (eds.), *Exegetisches Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament*, 3rd edn., vol. 1, pp. 844–852, W. Kohlhammer, Stuttgart.
- Winter, M., 1994, *Das vermächtnis Jesu und die abschiedsworte der Väter: Gattungsgeschichtliche untersuchung der vermächtnisrede im blick auf Joh. 13–17*, Forschungen zur religion und literatur des Alten und Neuen Testaments 161, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, Göttingen.