

CHRISTIAN LEADERSHIP: IMPLICATIONS ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF PENTECOSTALISM IN NIGERIA

By

Casimir Peter, Ph.D.

Department of Religious and Cultural Studies
Akwa Ibom State University,
E-mail: uyangacasimir@yahoo.com
08033834284, 08086014463

Abstracts

Leadership in the church is the noble art of cooperatively planning and uniting to achieve the goals God has set for humankind in the life, teachings, death, resurrection and the coming back of Jesus, the Christ. This indeed is Christian leadership. However, at the heart of the success of the efforts for the development of Pentecostalism in Nigeria is effective Christian leadership. Leadership is not the private preserve of a few charismatic men or women; rather it is a process ordinary people use when they are bringing forth the best from themselves and others. Leadership is so powerful and important that it gives direction, pace and energy to people and empowers them. The main thrust of this paper is to examine the issue of Christian leadership and its implications on the development of Pentecostalism in Nigeria. It argues that the major threat to the development of Pentecostalism in Nigeria is traceable to poor Christian leadership manifesting in corruption and weak value base. This paper adopted a participant observation method for its research. It concluded that, until good Christian leadership is guaranteed, the development of Pentecostalism in Nigeria will continue to experience slow growth and development will continue to be a mirage.

Keywords: Christian Leadership, Pentecostalism, Development.

Introduction

Leadership is so crucial and important in any family, organization (social, religious, political or secular). According to Omotayo (2017) opines that leadership in the church is the noble art of cooperatively planning and uniting to achieve the goals God has set for humankind in the life, teachings, death, resurrection and the coming back of Jesus, the Christ.

This indeed, is Christian leadership. In the life of the church, leadership is far more than methods and machinery or techniques of holding an office. In essence, a leader in the church is a Christ-like personality whose wisdom, self-sacrifice and labour cooperate with others in finding and doing the will of God. The kind of leadership required by any church will depend largely on the size, membership, the nature of the community, the extent of the present programme and the range of the opportunities.

There are indispensable to be found in every successful church. These are; programmes, organization, morale and leadership; but the greatest of these is leadership. If the leaders, ministerial and lay, display vision, devotion and energy, their church will grow and prosper. If they show indifference, lassitude and lack of faith and non-reliance upon the Holy Spirit; their church will languish and fail; the securing of able, devoted trained leadership is the master key that opens every door of successful administration in a church.

Church leadership therefore, refers to all those who exercise influence, guidance and direction to those in the church towards fulfilling the church's goal. With this in mind, in order to be effective, each leader need to be; a person of vision, action, steadfastness, servant-hood, and dependence. Church leadership effectiveness requires that these God-given leadership characteristics be developed to the honour and glory of God. If God in his sovereign design determined that you are a leader in a church, you must develop the needed characteristics of such. This paper therefore examines the issue of Christian leadership and its implications on the development of Pentecostalism in Nigeria.

Conceptual Clarification

Leadership: Leadership is a broad topic that has been conceptualized in various perspectives by considerable scholars who have done wider research on the subject; but there is no universal definition of leadership. Hence, there are different meanings by scholars. Ukeje, Akabogu and Ndu (1992) posit that leadership is a process where an individual influences a group toward the achievement of group goals by planning, organizing, directing, and integrating the institutional demands and the needs of members in a way that will be both productive and individually fulfilling. Gary Yuki (2006) defines leadership as the process of influencing others to understand and agree about what needs to be done and how to do it and the process of facilitating individuals and collective efforts to accomplish

shared objectives. Lovelt Weems (1993) defines leadership as the development and articulation of a shared vision, motivation of those key with people without whom that vision cannot become a reality; and gaining the cooperation of most people involved.

In other words, leadership is a process that involves an individual or a group of persons who influence members of an organization or a society to key into the objective or goals of the organization and actively contribute their quota in achieving the goals of the organization.

Leadership is the process by which a person influences others to accomplish an objective and directs the organization in a way that makes it more cohesive and coherent towards achieving a common goal. Adefuye (2003) contends that a good leadership style is contingent on a number of other external factors and the complexity of the leadership process cannot be revealed without considering the dynamic relation and interaction between the leader and the followers. A leader has a vision which provides direction for others to achieve a goal. In light of this argument, leadership simply entails charting a course and influencing others to follow. Leadership is both a research area and a practical skill encompassing the ability of an individual or organization to lead or guide other individuals, team, or entire organizations.

Pentecostalism

The evangelical charismatic reformation movement usually trace its roots to an outbreak of tongues-speaking in Topeka, Kansas, in 1901, under the leadership of Charles Fox Parham; a Former Methodist Preacher. Parham formulated the basic Pentecostal doctrine of “initial evidence” after a student in his Bethel Bible School, Agnes Ozman, experienced glossolalia. Basically, Pentecostals believe that the experience of the 120 on the day of Pentecost, known as the “baptism in the Holy Spirit”, should be normative for all christians. Most Pentecostals believe; furthermore, that the first sign or “initial evidence” of this second baptism is speaking in language unknown to the speaker (David Horton, 1984). While responding to a question on Pentecostalism, Miller (2004) stated that Pentecostalism in Nigeria as an energetic missionary movement with hundreds of uneducated converts heading off to “Foreign Lands” to preach the gospel before Jesus Christ will return to the earth, went with their lack of theological sophistication, and their converts were able to scandalize many clergy within the mainline church denominations, communicated the gospel in

plain language; casting out demons, healing the sick and experientially making a demonstration of the truth found in the Christian gospel. This movement soon found its way into the Nigerian religious atmosphere where it has come to constitute and to become what Ojo (2008) would prefer to call a major social movement affecting millions of Nigeria in various ways. While Kalu (2008) argued that it will not be profitable ignoring the influences of some missionary activities on the Pentecostal Movement in Nigeria, he however observed that African Pentecostalism is rooted in Africa because of the roles played by some African people. Ojo (2008) however, placed these other influences referred to by Kalu to the period of the 1930s to the 1940s. This period saw the emergence of Nigerian prophets such as Joseph Babalola who founded the Christ Apostolic Church in 1941.

The wave of Pentecostal experiences took a wider and more interesting dimension from the 1970s following the incursion of this movement into the Nigerian higher institutions and among the evangelical students. Pentecostalism brought series of clashes between the established mainline churches and the proponents of this wave and yet it survived all the threats to become a significant factor in the contemporary Nigerian church experience. Information available at pew forum. Organizations suggests that one of the leaders of this Pentecostal movement and its expansion of the 1970s in Nigeria was Benson Idahosa, who founded the church of God Mission in 1972, while the Grace of God Mission was founded in eastern Nigeria in 1974. In the 1980s to the present, Nigeria has witnessed the development of some breath taking Pentecostal and charismatic churches. Pentecostalism no doubt had waded through its small and somewhat insignificant beginning and in the words of Nichol (1966), what was perceived by many as a crazy, fanatic movement of “holy rollers” had grown to become an international missionary movement. A movement that appeared despised then has become a huge attraction for many today and good numbers of these churches are administered in a pattern of sole proprietorship where the founders display enormous or absolute power in the administration of their churches. With this pattern of administration, there is a growing trend in Christian leadership succession, the trend of passing the leadership baton to a family member in succession remains one of the implications for this work.

Although speaking in tongues had appeared in the nineteenth century in both England and America, it had never assumed the importance

attributed to it by the latter Pentecostals. For instance, glossolalia occurred in the 1830s under the ministry of Presbyterian Edward Irving in London, in the services of Mother Anne Lee's Shaker movement in England and America, and among Joseph Smith's Mormon followers in New York, Missouri and Utah. The Pentecostals, however, were the first to give doctrinal primacy to the practice (David Horton, 1984).

Development

According to Hornby (2000). The term means "the gradual growth of something so that it becomes more advanced, stronger". Explaining the term in a broader perspective, Rodney (2005) observes that development in human society is a many sided process. According to him:

At the level of the individual, it implies increased skill and capacity, greater freedom, creativity, self-discipline, responsibility and material well-being. Some of these are virtually moral categories and are difficult to evaluate depending as they do on the age in which one lives, one's class, origins, and one's personal code of what is right and what is wrong. However what is indisputable is that the achievements of any of these aspects tied in with the state of the society as a whole (p.1).

In the same vein, Okoli (2012) asserts that development also involves greater human dignity, security, justice, equity, transparency and accountability, on the part of the government or the individual to achieve the desirable economic, social, political and religious growth. Thus; development in this context of the work means the gradual growth of Pentecostalism in Nigeria. But this investigation is intended to find out the implications of Christian leadership on the development of Pentecostalism in Nigeria.

Theology of Leadership

According to Adetuji (2010) leadership is one of the indispensable attributes of a ministry that transforms lives. In Christian life and pilgrimage, one must always turn to biblical belief for whatever the issue is. The Bible speaks to all of human spheres and situations and in all ages. A large part of the Bible account and the history of the church speak of God's calling people to lead in different circumstances but with the ultimate goals

of glorifying him. George Barna (1993) has found that what facilitates significant spiritual development within their people is the claim of thought of leadership by some pastors.

Leadership is a spiritual gift as it falls into the domain of management administration. The Bible is replete with people who were examples of those who held leadership positions. Many of them performed exceptionally well and with outstanding results. Joseph was governor in Egypt. His administrative and leadership acumen was great for all generations. Moses was called and commissioned by God to lead the Israelites out of the Egyptian bondage to the wilderness. He was used by God as a competent and effective leader to make Israel a theocratic state. Moses – Jethro model of judicial administrative leadership style has been a great contribution in history.

David was also one of the greater men and leaders in the Old Testament. He was a shepherd, poet, the greatest king of Israel, statesman and ancestor of Jesus Christ. He has many great qualities many leaders would want to have. He was remembered and respected for his heart for God. His greatness was described by the Bible chroniclers as “a man after God’s own heart (George Barna, 1993). He was a leader who often learned from his mistakes or the consequences that resulted from his mistakes. He was such a great leader that he was listed in the Hall of Faith in Hebrews Biblical examples of leadership.

Attributes of Leadership

- i. Leaders should learn how to listen and have passionate desire to understand the needs of followers.
- ii. Leaders should build a team by creating a strong sense of synergy, active participation and developing and nurturing followers.
- iii. A leader should inspire those that follow him/her by recognizing their needs, rewarding them where necessary and building them to full potential.
- iv. A leader should balance priorities which can be analyzed from three dimensions, personal (the individual), social (the group) and production (the job). The ability of a leader to balance these three aspects is crucial to the well-being of all players in an organization and to one’s type of leadership which Jesus exemplified in his leadership style and qualities (Olasupo, 2017).

Characteristics of Christian Leadership

- i. Effective leaders tend to exhibit the following characteristics, energy, endurance and physical stamina where leaders work for long hours in order to drive themselves and the subordinates.
- ii. The second characteristics is the ability of the leaders to focus on one's energy and to avoid wasted effort. Such leaders tend to invest energies and efforts in a single direction and are not easily distracted. A leader has to have aspects of sensitivity, which make it possible to lead and understand others.
- iii. The leader should understand the people in terms of their attitudes, interests and their needs. This factors emphasizes the importance of communication skills of the leader to the subordinate, understanding who they are; their position on the issues; and how best to communicate with and influence them Bible org: (2004).
- iv. The fourth characteristics is that of flexibility; particularly with respect to selecting various means in order to achieve ones goal. Flexibility provides the capacity to change the course of action and to be innovative, adopting new methods rather clinging to the status quo.

Leadership Qualities for Christian Leaders

- i. **Leadership is a Divine Affair:** Leadership is a divine affair and an instrument of service, but not a secular affair as misconceived. Indeed leadership is an attribute of God that has been delegated to man as a result of his image in him and must be exercised based on God's principle. More-over servant leadership is the original leadership style initiated and instituted by God based on biblical account which was distorted during the fall of man in the Garden of Eden; but was also redeemed and restored along with humanity by Jesus Christ. Therefore, the contemporary society should embrace this leadership style based on the principles of Jesus Christ to surmount her challenge.
- ii. **Leadership is for Service to God and his Creature:** According to Efeturi (2012) leadership is an instrument for service to God and his creation. Man in the image of God and his likeness, "Image Dei" was created with the primary aim of serving his creator; God and his creations (fellow human beings and the environment). Djakaminor also opined that leadership must not be seen as an

opportunity for self-aggrandizement, but an opportunity to serve. Therefore, it is imperative for all human beings to become aware of this fact and do their best to fulfill this obligation by faithfully serving their creator and his creation.

- iii. **Service is Moral Duty for all Human Beings:** Service is a moral duty and leadership is a fundamentally moral relationship dependent activity. Dzurgha (2008) also agreed that service is a moral duty which compel those in leadership to fulfill their obligation to be masses. Therefore, it is imperative for leaders to be ethically sound and morally upright to succeed in their service delivery. In leadership, morality is magnified, and that is why the study of ethics is fundamental to the understanding and practice of leadership. Land: (2017). Thus, the impact of leaders' moral lapses causes great harm to their church and moral challenges of power. It behoofs leader's to be ethically robust and morally upright to be successful in service.

Dispositions of Good Leadership

According to Mathew 24:45, the following are the dispositions a good leader must possess.

- i. A good leader is appointed, not by himself, but by vocation and mission of his master.
- ii. A good leader must look on himself, not as the master of the family, but as the servant.
- iii. A good leader must be scrupulously faithful and exact in fulfilling the commands of his master.
- iv. A leader's fidelity must be ever accompanied by wisdom and prudence.
- v. A leader must give the family their food and this food must be such as to afford them true nourishment.
- vi. A good leader must do these in its season.

There are certain portions of the bread of life which lose their effects by being administered out of proper season or to improper persons.

Implications of Christian Leadership on the Development of Pentecostalism in Nigeria

1. Authority Syndrome should be avoided

According to Mark 10: 42-45 James and John requested honoured places in Christ kingdom, the closest to the king had to have more power prestige attached to them. They wanted the highest position in Jesus Kingdom so as to control others, Jesus did not ridicule them for asking but he denied their request. Thus in order for Pentecostalism in Nigeria to develop, Christian leaders should not Lord it over them and exercise Authority Syndrome. Rather, service is the way to get a head.

2. Christian leaders should be followers

Contemporary observers of leadership also acknowledge the need for leaders to be followers. According to Smith Douglas (1997) writes along his line: “In the twenty first century organization, all levels in all situation must pay close attention to situations in which their most effective option is to follow; not because the hierarchy demands they “obey” but because performance requires them to rely on the capacity and insights of other people.

3. War between Christian leaders must be avoided

When the two brothers’ request got to the other ten disciples, a turf war broke out. The ten did not like James and John getting in front of them to receive recognition when Jesus kingdom was set up. Jesus called his disciples and laid down the ground rules” you know that those who are regarded as rulers of the gentiles Lord (Mark 10:42). Thus, there should be no war between Christian leaders if Pentecostalism in Nigeria must develop or grow.

4. Exercise authority model must be avoided

For Pentecostalism in Nigeria to grow, “exercise authority” another negative leadership model must not be adhered to. This leadership style involves using the authority of one’s position to make things happen. This concept fits James and John’s request of Jesus. They thought that if they could get the positions, they could exercise authority over others. Indeed, authority is a leaders’ vehicle of power in which he or she rides. Jesus knew leaders could misuse the authority to make innocent people do what they wanted them to do.

5. Leadership for wrong reasons must be avoided

According to Taylor (2017) Jesus uses Gentile leaders as a negative example because the Jews knew well about neighbouring pagan rulers who

often exhibited an abuse of power. The Gentiles model authority was based on arrogance and overbearing dominance. Jesus was telling his disciples that searching power for wrong reasons was a Gentile (i.e. Pagan) practice and they should avoid it. This must be avoided by Christian leaders else Pentecostalism in Nigerian will not grow or developed. Jesus prohibits this kind of relationship among his followers; instead the person who wants to be a Christian leader must be servant in the leadership position. If this admonition by Jesus to serve and not be served, is adhered to Pentecostalism in Nigeria will grow from strength to strength.

Conclusion

The heart of a Christian leadership is service. Jesus Christ teaches that service constitute greatness and leadership. Authority and greatness comes from the desire to serve. James and John, the sons of Zebedee wanted to be great, they wanted the best positions, wanted to be first and be recognized but their concept of greatness was worldly. It is expected that every leader should read the New Testament bible so as to discover those leadership styles of Jesus which has been emulated by most of the New Testament biblical scholars like Paul and Peter. True and good leadership style is based on love and senile to the needs of others. Conclusively, this work opines that if church leaders should imbibe the qualities of shepherds to Pentecostalism, the church would fulfill her mandate and Pentecostalism in Nigeria will grow and develop to great heights.

Recommendations

In order for Pentecostalism in Nigeria to develop, the following recommendations were made:

1. Nigerian leaders should be able to emulate Jesus leadership style by leading through example, that is, living an exemplary selfless service to others geared towards the development of Pentecostalism in Nigeria.
2. The leaders should strive to set goal which is a product of good governance. When position holders get goals it will help them to define where they are going and why they are going there.
3. Christian leaders should be spirit parted because it encourages unity by pleasurable interactivity. This quality helps them to maintain harmony which in turn increase bond among the lead.

4. Christian leaders should cultivate the habit of leading without partiality, partiality brings about segregation, unfairness and disobedient. If Pentecostalist leaders acquire those of Jesus' leadership principles, it would help in bringing permanent love.
5. Leaders should emulate Jesus' selfless services style which helps him to attract people from varying groups. Jesus ability to serve the disciples showcased humility and readiness to serve. It is recommended for Pentecostalism in Nigeria.
6. Leaders should show respect for right values, obedience to laws and be culturally trained. This would help them to cultivate right attitude towards issues of life; and this goes a long way in shaping the younger ones and our world.
7. Respect, fairness and openness to change are also among Jesus leadership principles that could eschew corrupt governance in Nigerian Pentecostalism, hence, it is recommended for Pentecostal leaders to emulate them for effective leadership.

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