

Moses' Leadership Model as an Impetus for Spiritual Growth in the Mission Field

Emmanuel G. M. Kollie
Adventist University of West Africa, Liberia

Abstract

There is potential for spiritual growth and expansion in the Seventh-day Adventists' mission field for pastors. However, one identified challenge is that most Church members are easily discouraged and quick to relinquish their Christian zeal due to the strife of African pastoral leadership authority. This study affirms that the inability to apply the best biblical principles and application in the election of pastoral leaders leads to all kinds of unbiblical manipulations. The misguided steps for leadership authority are not for the Gospel Commission's success but for self-aggrandized realities and other vices. This paper proposes the Mosaic Leadership Model as a case study for applying best practices for appointing pastoral leaders in Africa. The Mosaic leadership par excellence focuses, among others, on the leadership traits of humility, empathy, power sharing, vision, tenacity, heroism, self-reflection, patience, charisma, wisdom, compassion, and perseverance.

Introduction

The appointment of pastors as leaders in the Adventist Church enhances successful pastoral ministry. It provides the opportunity to develop and equip men and women of character, endurance, and

commitment with the vision of a soul-winning mission.¹ Thus, the appointments of pastoral leaders need to be given due diligence in Africa. Misguided steps in appointing pastoral leadership may result in the fragmentation of pastoral responsibilities with divided objectives for soul-winning. The author believes that one of the reasons for the pastoral leadership challenges in Africa is the avoidance or underplaying of the process of identifying the biblical qualities each mission leader should possess.

The Bible serves as a guide resource book for mission leaders' appointments. It has the potency to illuminate the mind for best leadership practices. Those charged with appointing pastoral leaders should seek to identify biblical recommended qualities in the aspirants for the assignments in the mission field. In other words, pastoral leaders must possess biblically acceptable leadership qualities.² George R. Knight, an Adventist historian, quoted James White, who wrote as far back as 1847, asserting that "the Bible is a perfect and complete revelation and that it is the only rule of faith and practices."³ Therefore, Adventists pastoral leaders in Africa

¹ Cindy Tutsch, "Ministry in Motion: Exploring Best Practices for your Ministry, Spirit-driven leadership: A perspective from Ellen G. White", *Ministry*, (February 2010). The role of the pastor includes proclaiming the Word of God; shepherding, nurturing, and protecting the Church; managing and administrating the work of the Church. But most especially, the training of the saints in the work of ministry (Eph 4:12). Peter Botross, "How Do Churches Equip Their Disciple-Makers? A Case Study of Four Baptist Churches in Victoria, Australia." *Christian Education Journal*, 19, no. 2 (2022): 297-312. See also Kellemen, Robert W., "Equipping Counselors for Your Church." (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2011). Accessed June 2, 2023, <https://www.rpmministries.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/07/Chapter-One-More-Than-Counseling.pdf>.

² Here is a trustworthy saying: Whoever aspires to be an overseer desires a noble task. Now the overseer is to be above reproach, faithful to his wife, temperate, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, not given to drunkenness, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money. He must manage his own family well and see that his children obey him, and he must do so in a manner worthy of full^[a] respect. (If anyone does not know how to manage his own family, how can he take care of God's Church?). He must not be a recent convert, or he may become conceited and fall under the same judgment as the devil. He must also have a good reputation with outsiders so that he will not fall into disgrace and into the devil's trap (I Tim 3:1-7, NIV).

³ George R. Knight, R. *A Search for Identity: The Development of Seventh-day Adventist Beliefs* (Review and Herald Pub Assoc, 2000), 58.

who borrow the principles of leadership prescribed by the Bible create a predisposition for a successful Gospel mission agenda.

According to Abramson, people whose lives have documented successful leadership records have drawn heavily from the Bible. For example, Martin Luther King Jr, a black American Baptist minister, and activist; Henry David Thoreau, an American essayist, poet, philosopher, abolitionist, naturalist, and tax resister; James Baldwin, a black American novelist, playwright, and activist, drew from the leadership model of Jeremiah.⁴ In addition, many successful political scientists have relied on the Bible to gain insights into how to solve political conflicts and other political difficulties. Their successes were exceptional because they studied and applied Joseph and Moses's leadership styles and principles.⁵

The above suggests that a conscious effort of under-studying and applying any leadership model prescribed by the Bible leads to a thriving mission-work environment. It would enhance physical and spiritual growth for both pastors and laity. The leadership qualities of biblical heroes such as Moses, Joshua, David, and Nehemiah, to mention a few, are great examples of excellence. The author employs the leadership model of Moses (Mosaic Leadership Model) as an impetus for spiritual growth in the mission field.

Mosaic Leadership Model

Born into a Jewish family of three siblings (Aaron, Miriam, and Moses), Jochebed and Amram raised their son in fear of God (Exo 2:3; 4:14). Moses grew up to be a successful role model of spiritual leadership. Despite some shortfalls, Moses' leadership qualities resulted from lifelong character development through moral discipline.

The Mosaic Leadership Model has become a leadership model par excellence. It "exemplifies the best model of a king, philosopher, legislator, priest, and prophet."⁶ This assertion aligns with the

⁴ Paul R. Abramson, *Politics in the Bible* (New Jersey: Transaction Publishers, 2017), xiii

⁵ Abramson (2017), xiii.

⁶ Ibid.

View of Ellen G. White about leaders. She mentioned that “a true leader represents God, His character, and His purpose to those they are called to lead.”⁷

The Mosaic leadership skill is a masterpiece to emulate because Moses possessed the traits of “humility, empathy, power sharing, vision, tenacity, heroism, self-reflection, patience, charisma, wisdom, compassion, and perseverance.”⁸ With these qualities highlighted in Moses, he was willing to endanger trust in his support team, inspire others, resolve conflicts, push people beyond their boundaries, delegate responsibilities, and speak truth to power.

The Mosaic Leadership Model teaches humility and empathy. Despite the ills and negative emotions exhibited against Moses, he was always willing to reach out to God, pleading for mercy when the people disobeyed the commandments of God. “Then Moses pleaded with the LORD his God, and said, LORD, why does Your wrath burn hot against Your people whom You have brought out of the land of Egypt with great power and a mighty hand” (Exo 32: 11, NKJV).

At another time, Moses interceded for Israel, “The next day Moses said to the people, you have committed a terrible sin, but I will go back up to the LORD on the mountain. Perhaps I can obtain forgiveness for your sin” (Exo 32:30, NLT). There was no trace of self-aggrandizement in the life of Moses. God promised to destroy Israel and increase Moses’ generation as a mighty nation. Moses disregarded the opportunity and empathized with the people instead.

God told Moses, “I have seen these people, and indeed they are a stiff-necked people. Let Me alone, that I may destroy them and blot out their names from under heaven; and I will make of you a nation mightier and greater than they” (Deut 9:13-14).

⁷ Cindy Tutsch further explains Ellen White’s view of Moses in his article “Spirit-driven leadership: A Perspective from Ellen G. White.” Cindy Tutsch, “Spirit-driven Leadership: A Perspective from Ellen G. White,” *Ministry* (February 2010),19-22.

⁸ Wolak, A. J., *Religion and Contemporary Management: Moses as a Model for Effective Leadership* (London : Anthem Press, 2016), 31-32.

In his pleading to God, Moses said to the people, “And I fell before the LORD, as at the first, forty days and forty nights; I neither ate bread nor drank water, because of all your sin which you committed by doing wickedly in the sight of the LORD, to provoke Him to anger. For I was afraid of the anger and hot displeasure with which the LORD was angry with you, to destroy you. However, the LORD also listened to me at that time” (Deut 9:18-19, NKJV).

Moses also became empathetic toward his sister, Mariam, after she opposed and developed hatred against Moses' wife. God afterward punished Mariam. Her skin was leprous. Aaron pleaded with Moses for forgiveness and said, “Please do not let her be like a stillborn infant whose flesh is half consumed when he comes out of his mother's womb” (Num 12:12). “So Moses cried out to the LORD, Please, God, heal her.” (Num 12:13).

The leadership model of Moses keeps Records of Past Successful Events. The Mosaic Leadership Model encourages the followers to appreciate past successes to serve as a means of faith for the present and future. His leadership model continually exhorted the people to remember the significant events of Israel's history to energize them to do mighty things.

In the future, when your son asks you, “What is the meaning of the stipulations, decrees, and laws the LORD our God has commanded you? Tell him: We were slaves of Pharaoh in Egypt, but the LORD brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand. Before our eyes, the LORD sent signs and wonders great and terrible on Egypt and Pharaoh and his whole household. However, he brought us out from there to bring us in and give us the land he promised on oath to our ancestors. The LORD commanded us to obey all these decrees and to fear the LORD our God so that we might always prosper and be kept alive, as is the case today. Moreover, if we carefully obey all this law before the LORD our God, as he has commanded us, that will be our righteousness (Deut 6:20-25).

The leadership model of Moses does not exhort self. Moses guided the people to look to God as their sole deliverer. He answered the people, “Do not be afraid. Stand firm, and you will see the deliverance the LORD will bring you today. The Egyptians you see today you will never see again” (Exo 14:13, NIV). He admonished the people to identify with the holiness of God in all their activities and helped them appreciate God’s unselfish love (Deut 7:7-9). He also taught the people to see God as their only source of strength and support rather than trusting any person (Deut 7:6).

The Mosaic Leadership Model encourages adhering to counsel and sharing power among able, God-fearing individuals. Like any good leader, Moses did not appoint due to acquaintances, self-interest, or by emotional cacophony. He yielded to the wise counsel of his father-in-law (Exo 18:24, NKJV). He fairly distributed authority across the various sub-units of leaders he selected. He allowed by appointing God-fearing individuals to serve as heads of committees and leaders of multiple groups. In other words, Moses relied on scriptural guidelines for spiritual leadership. He applied biblical governance principles and procedures. He tracked the records of men in the camp of the Israelites to enable him to make appointments without sentiments.

You shall select from all the people able men, such as fear God, men of truth, hating covetousness, and place such over them to be rulers of thousands, rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens. Moreover, let them judge the people at all times. Then it will be that every great matter they shall bring to you, but every small matter they shall consider. So it will be easier for you, for they will bear the burden with you. If you do this thing, and God so commands you, then you will be able to endure, and all these people will also go to their place in peace (Exo 18:21-23, NKJV).

Moses adopted the system of adhering to counsel and power sharing. Through these, he empowered numerous people to function in their respective subdivided unit and relied on God for wisdom. His kind of leadership encouraged learning opportunities

among unit leaders. It promoted an option whereby the leaders were subject to learning new ways of doing the job to a dynamic and acceptable scriptural standard.

The old leaders worked to create new leaders in a circular process rather than a linear leadership process.⁹ The author believes that whereas the circular leadership model makes more leaders and makes an easy transition, the linear leadership model empowers oneself for continuity and dependability of the institution on the prime leader. Moses taught the people to acknowledge that their successes have not been through one person's effort but by the hard work of joint efforts. Moses derived satisfaction from sharing the success story with his co-workers rather than claiming all the honor as the principal leader "...If you do this thing, and God so commands you, then you will be able to endure, and all these people will also go to their place in peace." (Exo 18:23, NKJV)

The Mosaic Leadership Model is tenacity, visionary, and heroism-oriented leadership. Moses verbalized the expectations of God for the Israelites so that they accepted for themselves the goodness of the Lord. "The people all responded together, 'We will do everything the LORD has said'. So Moses brought their answer back to the LORD" (Exo 19:8; 24: 3, NLT).

The ability of Moses to trust those he chose as his co-leaders so that they would make the right decision for the people showed his tenacity. Moses demonstrated that a visionary leader encourages his followers when they make mistakes. An innovative leader encourages when a team member feels like giving up. Moses "challenged his team members to live up to their highest potential as human beings created in God's image."¹⁰ Moses also celebrated with his team members when they succeeded. Besides, Moses

⁹ Dong Nguyen, Alma Harris, and David Ng, "A Review of the Empirical Research on Teacher Leadership (2003–2017): Evidence, Patterns and Implications." *Journal of Educational Administration* 58, no. 1 (2020): 60-80. See also John R Nicholls, "Congruent Leadership," *Leadership & Organization Development Journal* (1986).

¹⁰ Norman J. Cohen, *Moses and the Journey to Leadership: Timeless Lessons of Effective Management from the Bible and Today's Leaders*. (Woodstock, VT: Jewish Lights Publishing, 2009), 20.

showed high confidence and heroism in his mission. His act of heroism moved him to proceed to pressure Pharaoh to let Israel go.

In some instances, “Moses lashed out at God, chastising the divine by saying to God “Why, Lord, why have you brought trouble on this people? Is this why you sent me? Since I went to Pharaoh to speak in your name, he has brought trouble on these people, and you have not rescued your people at all” (Exo 5:22-23, NIV). A heroic leader with vision and tenacity will always push for excellence.¹¹

The Mosaic Leadership Model is a risk-taking model. Moses was willing to endanger his assignment by trusting his support staff to produce an excellent result. He was confident and did not mind risking his job by entrusting his talented colleagues with significant responsibilities. Through training and engagement principles, he was optimistic that his team leaders would make the right decision on behalf of the people. Moses was not discouraged by the mistakes because mistakes are part of the learning process. He was willing to share the blames and mistakes of his co-leaders.

Conclusion and Recommendation

The Mosaic Leadership Model impels effective pastoral togetherness and growth. It creates an environment for successful Gospel missions. When applied, hurtful feelings together with low morale among pastors in Africa would minimize. As an Impetus for Spiritual Growth, the Mosaic Leadership Model strongly recommends pastoral success in the mission fields in Africa. The desire for soul-winning activities will increase if pastoral leaders become disinterested in conforming to self-aggrandize attitudes. Individual strength would harmonize with other pastors to advance confidence in team members, illuminate hope, and resolve conflict. It would move the laity into action for soul-winning in Africa. It would encourage the delegation of responsibilities with no partiality.

¹¹ Ibid, 28.

Like Moses, pastors are not immune in sinful tendencies. However, if pastors allow, employ, and accept scriptural counsel in the appointments of pastoral leaders, their ministries will flourish and exemplify the best practice for a successful Gospel mission in Africa.

If the Mosaic model is employed, it will guide against strife and grief among pastors in Africa. It would encourage the laity to keep their Christian zeal for successful Gospel ministry.