



Impact of Church Leadership and Governance on the Church Missions

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Abstract

Jesus defined leadership as service (Matt. 10:1ff). To aspire to leadership in God's kingdom requires us to be willing to pay a price higher than others are willing to pay. The toll of true leadership is heavy and the more effective the leadership the higher it goes. The purpose of this paper the emphasis is on the impact of Church leadership and governance on church mission. In any Church, the governance/leadership system fulfills a set of core functions: assuring security, delivering basic spiritual services efficiently and effectively and generating financial needs. Church missions vary in terms of how well or how poorly their leadership system fulfils these functions. A descriptive method was adopted to carry out this research. It was found that the impact of Church leadership and governance on church missions needs to be on the positive side and should be improved. The paper put some measures of recommendation; such as meeting the needs of the church missions, maturing the numbers, taking charge during difficult times, multiplying workers and encouragement of the followers. The essence of leadership is to create an opportunity to influence the lives of others to be conformable to the norms acceptable to the missions work.

Keywords: Church Leadership, Church Missions, Church Organization, Governance, Yeshua

Introduction

The Christian Church was born in the Roman Empire (Harry 1976). Roman Empire was the Jewish background of the Church. The center of the empire was the city of Rome and in Rome, all the power of the government was in the hands of the emperor. The foundation of the Church can be deeply traced into the history and religion of Israel. Jesus



confirmed it in John 4:22 that the salvation came from Jews. Jesus also said in Matt.:17 that he chose not to destroy the law but bring it into fulfillment. The earliest Church was wholly Jewish, Jesus was a Jew and the whole New Testament was probably written by Jews.

According to Harry Boer, it was in Palestine the historic land of Israel that the church of the New Testament first appeared in history. It is difficult to set a date for its beginning. If we say the church began at Pentecost, we leave out of consideration the life and ministry of Jesus. If we say that the church began with him, we must remember the fact that the ministry of Jesus grew out of the life of Judaism. It is therefore best to say that the Church arose out of the life and work of the Lord and became a universal witness to him at Pentecost.

Boer clarified whatever confusion about the foundation of the Church. In ecclesiology, Christian Church can be defined as the true body of Christ or the original Institution established by Jesus. A Christian Church is not a building but a body of believers united in Christ. Church can also be defined as a type of Christian Organization which emphasizes the Bible as its behavioral standard and focuses on the inerrancy of the Bible.

The Church, both on Earth and in Heaven, is composed only of true Christians, those who are fully conformed to Christ (Eph.4:12-13, 5:26-27, Heb. 12:22-24, 1 John 3:2-3, Rev.19:7-8). The relation between Christ and the Church is set forth in these New Testament figures:

- i. The Shepherd and the Sheep (John 10)
- ii. The Vine and the Branches (John 15)
- iii. The Cornerstone and Stones of the Building (1 Cor.3:9, Eph.2:19-22, 1 Pet.2:5)
- iv. High Priest and the Kingdom of priests (Heb. 5:1-10, 1 Pet. 2:5-9, Rev. 1:6)
- v. The Head and many members Body (1 Cor. 12:12-13, Eph. 4:4)
- vi. The Last Adam and the New Creation (1 Cor. 15:22, 2 Cor.5:17)
- vii. The Bridegroom and the Bride (John 3:29, 2 Cor. 11:2, Eph. 5:25-33, Rev. 19:7-8).



The church's mission is to preach the gospel of the kingdom of God and making disciples throughout the world, teaching them exactly what Jesus taught (Matt. 28:19-20) while church leadership is a task to serve other members following Christ interests so that they can see and accomplish God's purpose for them in the world.

Identifying Leaders

There are two ways of identifying leaders in a group/church. The first is by "self-reporting", where you ask members whom they regard as the most influential in directing the affairs of the Church while the second is by "observation". This you do by asking for the person who seems to exert influence over their fellow members more than others. However, something that is common to the two methods is the influence, which the individual has on his fellows.

Consequently, those occupying leadership positions can either be classified as official or actual leaders depending on how they influence their followers. An example of this classificatory paradigm is that of Saul and David. For a period of over forty days, Saul could not muster his army to respond to the challenge from Goliath, the Champion of the Philistines, that anyone from the army of Israel should come and face him in a combat. It was when David, who previously had been "secretly" anointed King by Samuel came, he challenged and defeated Goliath. David's action thereby confirms the assertion that actual leaders emerge when official leaders refuse to discharge their responsibilities (1Samuel 7:1-54).

Governance presupposes a power structure with its own hierarchical categories, incorporating the economic, social, cultural, and political tensions within the society and thus displaying the inherent dynamism which absorbs the ebbs and flow of pressures towards ensuring peaceful solutions to existential problems confronting the citizens within the society. The means of arriving at such peaceful solutions to existential problems and the implementation of such solutions into purposeful actions make up what is called "the Governance process" (Olatunji, et al 2016).



As it is in the Federal, State and the Local Government, so also governance serves the same purpose among the Church Leadership. Church Leaders have the hierarchical power structure to incorporate how the people in mission will not suffer the tensions brought by the economic, social, cultural, and political within the society or mission field.

Field Marshal Montgomery said that his war experience taught him that the staff must be the servant of the troops and a good staff officer must serve his commander while remaining anonymous himself. In his book, *Training of the Twelve*, Alexander Bruce wrote: “In other Kingdoms they rule, whose it is to be ministered unto. In the Divine commonwealth, they rule who account it a privilege inister”. The Son of God became the servant of God in the mission of God. That image provides the pattern for mission societies, Churches and individual believers to fulfill their God given mission. The true leader is concerned primarily with the welfare of others, not with his own comfort or prestige. He shows sympathy for the problems of others, but his sympathy fortifies and stimulates, it does not soften and make weak. A spiritual Leader will always direct the confidence of others to the Lord. He sees in each emergency a new opportunity for helpfulness. When God chose a leader to succeed Moses, it was Joshua, the man who had proved himself a faithful servant (Exodus 33:11)

Leadership and Ministry

The term “Leadership” can be understood in more than one way. Some see it as a synonym for “ministry”, so that anyone engaged in Christian service is referred to as a leader. Others consider the term to be more restrictive in its meaning and to relate a functional description of someone in ministry whose role is to equip and release others into ministry. There is a definite world of difference between ministry and leadership though it may be possible for some to combine the two depending on the level of their engagement with either of them.

The Greek word “*Diakonia*” translated ministry in the New Testament means one who attends or waits on another, a servant or one who serves



in menial jobs. Ministry is doing things that rightly meet the need of the people while leadership is making people doing the right things so that not only the present need is met but their future is secured. The church leadership of today has failed by turning their responsibility upside down. Church Leadership is expected to serve the Church mission but Church mission is serving Church Leadership. “And as ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand. Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils: freely you have received, freely you give” (Matt. 10:7-8). Jesus and His disciples focused on the mission works instead of getting things in return unlike this generation.

“Self-sacrifice must be paid daily. A Cross stands in the path of spiritual leadership, and the leader must take it up. Jesus Christ laid down his life for us and we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers (1 John 3:16). To the degree the Cross of Christ is across our shoulders and over our backs, so the resurrection life of Christ is manifest through us. No cross, no leadership” (Olatunji, et al 2016). In this Century, we can count the numbers of the Church Leaders who sincerely laid their lives for Christ. Self-Sacrifice is becoming a taboo to the Church leadership in the ministry. Fulfilling the purpose of self-sacrifice leadership in the ministry bring about tremendous blessings to such leader.

In 1 Cor.12:1-6, Paul the Apostle discusses on spiritual gifts which help every believer to locate his rightful place and peculiarity in the plan and programme of God. He categorized the gifts and associated particular ones to each member of the Trinity (1Cor.12:4-6). A true picture emerges of how the gifts complement each other in ensuring that every Christian and body of Christ fulfills their calling.

Qualities of Church Leadership

“And he said unto them, look unto me, and do likewise: and behold, when I come to the outside of the camp, it shall be that, as I do, so shall you do” (Judges 7:17). Gideon led an army of just three hundred (300) men to face the host of Midianites that were in hundreds of thousands. As the leader and commander of the Army of Israel under God, he had to set himself as an example for the rest to follow. The qualities are:



- (1) *Outstanding*: Looking at Gideon example, a leader is someone who is act of outstanding influences other members or policies of the group than all the others. It will suffice to say the presence of each member of the group affects all the others to an extent. However, when the right of leadership is conferred on any, it stands a better chance of influencing the decision making process of the group more than others. A leader is the person who is in the front or goes first. He is the person who guides or directs a group of movements. Conclusively, the Leader is the one who is in the front and can boldly say unto the rest of the group “look on me and do likewise”.
- (2) *Executive Order*: James Burns said “Wesley had a genius for organization that he founded because he was such a gifted executive, his movement was unshaken when death deprived it of his presence and guidance. His judgement of others, his skill in deploying them to the mission’s best advantage and to win their loyal submission, amounted to genius and spread the moment from disasters that others experienced”. Wesley was divinely called and equipped. Leadership shapes the goals, ideology and structure of the group. Leadership is an activity that directs and facilitates the mission to a great extent. A leader is the one directing, controlling or governing the affairs of the group. Leading includes doing such things as planning, decision-making, personnel section and vision-setting.
- (3) *Ability*: A leader cannot translate vision into mission without executive ability. “The Lord is a God of judgement.” The word ‘judgement’ means order, so God is orderly. God requires of his stewards that all things be done decently and in order. The duty of church leadership is to reflect the orderliness of God in all that he does. Church mission is not a matter of organizing people into the kingdom, but neither is it justified in careful planning. Church mission depends on the power of God and The Holy Spirit, leading converts to salvation, despite the fact of depending on God and the



Holy Spirit, leaders must also plan and act on his plans for the sake of gospel research.

- (4) *Listening ear:* A leader must develop a listening ear at all times. Leaders should listen more than talking. A listening leader always more influence over his followers. It is difficult for any leader to know the root of the problems brought to him without mastering the art of listening but genuine listening seeks to understand another without pre-judgement (Oswald 1967). Leaders who want to show sensitivity should listen often and long and talk short and solemn. A lot of church leaders in the 21st century are too busy to listen.
- (5) *Education:* The ability to know how to read and write is highly important in church leadership. The position of leadership involves a considerable amount of correspondence. Apostle Paul has a moral integrity, intellectual honesty and we have the understanding of his spiritual life from his letters than from any other source. Anytime he found himself in trouble or challenges, he took his pen and paper in tears and sorrow not in suicide. If Paul had no education, it would have been difficult for him to write. A lot of those who are governing the church mission are called but not trained. They lack education. Saul of Tarsus is better known to us in Christendom as Paul. He was born to Jewish parents in a thoroughly observant home in Tarsus. His father was a Jewish community leader and a Roman citizen (Atowoju, 2010). Paul of Tarsus is one of the most influential figures in the world, who followed Jesus Christ's legacy and influence. Tarsus was known as a center of culture, philanthropy, trade, sport and education. Education was one of the major tools that brought about the influence of Pauls' leadership in his mission work. Letters formed an important part in Pauls' programme of follow up in the mission. When a leader is educated, writing spiritual letters and tracts for the mission would be easier. Clear language would be important in our letters but more importantly is the right spirit. Letters are an unsatisfactory medium of communication.



- (6) *Discipline*: Discipline is yet another responsibility of Church leadership, a duty often unwelcome. Any Christian society requires godly and loving discipline to maintain divine standards in doctrine, morals and conduct. Paul describes the spirit required in leaders who exercise discipline. “Brothers, if someone is caught in a sin, you who are spiritual should restore him gently but, watch yourself, or you also may be tempted’ (Galatians 6:1). The fundamental ingredient in all discipline is love. “Warn him as a brother” (2 Thessalonians 3:15). “I urge you, therefore, to reaffirm your love for him” (2Cor 2:8). The person who has faced up to his or her own problems and weaknesses is best able to help another in a way both loving and firm. The spirit of meekness will achieve far more than the spirit of criticism. Discipline in love is a forgone issue among the Church leadership because of personal gain.
- (7) *Providing guidance*: This is another area of Church leadership responsibility. The leader must go before his flock. Jesus gave us the pattern. “When he has brought out all his own, he goes on ahead of them, and his sheep followed him because they know his voice” (John 10:4). I follow the example of Christ (1 Cor. 7:1). Paul knew he was following, where he was going and he could challenge others to follow him there. It is not easy to guide people, even mature Christians, who have strong opinions of their own. The leader cannot assert his will recklessly.

There are various leadership styles but since our focus is mainly on the impact of the Church leadership governance on Church missions, I will briefly mention them;

- a. *Lordship leadership*: Theocracy 1Sam 8:7; Monarchical rule 1Sam 8:10-17 and at the extreme end is dictatorship. Lordship leadership should not be practiced in the Church mission because such a model gives us the leadership situation of which much was said in the time of the rule of judges in ancient Israel (Judges 17:6, 18:1, 21:25).



- b. *Partnership leadership*: This in the ideal sense finds an expression in the principles of Communism. The early Christian practiced something similar to this system by sharing and having everything in common (Acts 4:32). The democracy system of governance is akin to this type of leadership style. This understanding is derived from the Prophecies of Daniel and that of Apostle John in the book of Revelations.
- c. *Servant Leadership*: This style of leadership was taught and demonstrated by the Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus set an example in leading through serving. He washed his disciples' feet (John 13), something they found inappropriate and Peter was uncomfortable with this. This action does not reduce Jesus's authority, but increased it by this servant attitude. Jesus came to this world not to rule but to serve (Matt. 20:20-28; 1Kings 12:7; John 13: 1-16).

Recommendations

The Church Leadership has great impact on Church mission. Every member governing the Church influences the activities of the Church mission. Those in leadership outstandingly affect the Church mission. Being a Leader confers on mission the power or right to perform certain acts without impediment. The general purpose of leadership is to promote order in Church mission and its highest use is in serving others as Christ stated. "In this world the Kings and great men order their slaves around, and the slaves have no choice but to like it! But, among you, the one who serves you best will be your leader. Out in the world the master sits at the table and is served by his servants but not here! For I am your servant" (Luke 22:26-27).

Christians when given the opportunity to lead in any capacity should use the authority given to them well to the glory of God and benefit of those around them. Such appointment must be seen as emanating from God



in order to influence the work or mission for good. From my findings, and research the following recommendations are raised:

- i. *Manage the affairs of the Church mission:* The Church leadership should start coordinating the activities of the Church mission, trusting the Holy Spirit who is the Chief Administrator for further help. As the Church mission gets bigger, the function and roles get bigger. There are two communication patterns that affect the effectiveness of the leadership. The first is the “Wheel Net” pattern where every member of the Church tries to maintain a face to face line of communication with the Leader. Second type, is the “Circle Net” Pattern where the Church mission is broken down into smaller groups and coordinated by leaders at their various levels. This is good for larger groups as it allows for a better coordination and delegation that allows others to be actively involved in leadership. The leader should learn to delegate duties by giving clear instructions on duty assigned to every subgroup.
- ii. *Maturing the members:* The duty of Christ-like leaders is to prepare members for ‘in-reach’, ‘up-reach’, and ‘outreach’. In-reach is when a Christian is fully grounded in his/her faith in Christ. Up-reach is when a Christian has grown up in fellowship with God that it is easy for him/her to discern the leadership of the Holy Spirit. Outreach is when we are able to understand and take on ourselves as followers of Christ the responsibility to share the gospel with those are without Christ. The task of edifying members so that they will be matured in the right proportion in all these three areas lies with the leadership. The spiritual state of the Church mission is the responsibility of the leader. The leader is often distinguished as a source of readily available information and skills.
- iii. *Meet the need of Church Mission:* Church leadership is expected to meet with the spiritual and material needs of Church mission. “The desired result of administrative-economic governance is that state produces and/or provides the types of services at the level of quality and quantity that are generally agreed upon by at least a majority of citizens as a State responsibility. Service provision meets basic need



that require some degree of state involvement and provides economic opportunity through rules-driven and transparent policy making regulation, fiscal arrangements, partnerships and Civil Service system” (Olatunji, et al 2016). The above quote also implies to the governance of Church mission. Church leadership must be able to morally govern the Church mission to provide effective and efficient service delivery.

- iv. *Make Charge during difficult times:* As the priests carried the ark in the Old Testament, Church Leaders are expected to help and support the Church mission through hard times to possess the possessions. Church leadership must be seen as a Fatherly figure that serves as a perfect focus for the positive emotional feelings individuals. This Fatherly figure role to some extent accounts for the power of certain leaders in special circumstances. Paul to the Corinthians says, “For though you might have ten thousand instructions in Christ, yet you do not have many fathers; for in Christ Jesus, I have gotten you through the gospel. Therefore, I urge you, imitate me” (1Cor 4:15-16).
- v. *Multipling Workers:* Leaders have the primary responsibilities of teaching and edifying the members so that the faithful ones can also be trusted with the work of ministry (2Timothy 2:2, Exodus 18:13-26, Acts 11:22-26). The duty was important that the Apostles made it a priority (1Peter 5:1-4, Acts 6:2-4). The Leader should also have the ability to reward members in order to motivate them for a better performance (Numbers 27:18-23, Phil 2:19-20).
- vi. *Encouraged his followers:* Leaders complete the work by encouraging the heart of those who share the vision. David did this by caring for them as persons and not as pawns. David himself being encouraged by the Lord brought the same encouragement to others. Though, as a King, David never lost contact with his people and knew how to encourage them in difficult situations, He recognized the contribution of others. After victory over the Amalekites, He appreciated the role of both those who fought and could not fight (1 Samuel 30: 21-25). He grieved the loss of a warrior, though a rival



(1Samuel 30:33-37). David sent a delegation to attend the funeral of a neighboring King, they treated them as spies and humiliated them by shaving part of their head. When David heard this, he commanded them to stay there until their hair was fully grown and showed no mercy to those who humiliated his followers (11 Samuel 10:4-5).

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