

SPIRITUAL LEADERSHIP IN THE CHURCH: A CRITICAL EXAMINATION

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Abstract

Spiritual Leadership in the Church is the art of motivating a group of people to act towards achieving a common desired goal. Spiritual leadership is nothing if not linked to collective purpose; and the effectiveness of the leadership must be judged not by press clippings but by actual social change, measured by intent and by satisfaction of human needs and expectations which on the long term will be visible on the Church growth and development. Spiritual leadership is about providing guidance and direction. It does not always have to be done from the front; and it is not an easy thing to achieve. Spiritual Leadership is the ability of someone who has the style, personal qualities, charisma, values, skills, experience and knowledge to mould consensus and mobilize other people to get things done together. Spiritual leadership is defined as the ability to gain consensus and commitment to common objectives beyond organizational requirements which are attained with experience or contribution and satisfaction on the part of the working group (Oluwasegun 2005). It can also be defined as the relationship in which one person /leader influences others to work together on related tasks to meet the leadership set goals. Spiritual leadership is a means of direction, the ability of the Church management to induce the subordinates to work towards achieving the group's set goals with confidence and keenness. This paper is to critically examine spiritual leadership in the Church, the principles and characteristics of Church leadership. The findings of the study will indicate what the Church authorities need to do or incorporate into the system to ensure growth and development both in physical and spiritual dimensions. The research will also serve as a resource base to other scholars and researchers interested in carrying out further research in this field.

Key Words: Spiritual; Leadership; Church; Critical; Examination

Introduction

Spiritual leadership is leadership that comes out of our life force, our human spirit which is nurtured by a connection to the Spirit of God. This force / power controls, inspires, sustains, empowers and strengthens our human faculties as we engage in Church ministry. Spiritual leadership in the Church has an important role to play in providing strategic direction for leaders and helping them foster commitment, shared aims and accountability. It fosters

agreed and shared objectives and vision, including clarifying roles and responsibilities. These are features of effective spiritual Church leadership. The fundamental goal of governing the Church will not be compared to that of other institutions or organizations. The Church is in the business of winning souls for the Kingdom of Heaven. The Church leadership is answerable to God. God has set the goals for the Church in the Great Commission: “Therefore go and make disciples of all nations...” (Matthew 28:19). Spiritual leadership establishes accountability on both spiritual and administrative matters of the Church. This is central to the purpose and function of Church governance and management which is important for effective Church leadership.

With respect to Church leadership, it implies one who shows the way, one who guides, and one who directs and one who reprimands and develops a set objectives along with the group and resolves individual or group needs as long as Church leadership is concerned. This is perceived as the only way towards Church growth and development. Spiritual leadership means building of relationships, the process of guiding, directing and commanding others to achieve a desired goal or vision.

The real qualities of spiritual leadership according to Sanders (1987) “are to be found in those who are willing to suffer for the sake of objectives great enough to demand their wholehearted obedience”. True spiritual leadership is an internal quality of the Spirit and requires no external show of force. It requires exercise of self-control in times of testing circumstances and to muster faith and courage as not to forfeit respect and loses influence. Spiritual leadership is an embodiment of peace that recognizes the rights of every human being. It is much easier to keep the peace than to make peace where it has been shattered. An important function of spiritual leadership is conciliation – the ability to discover common ground between opposing viewpoints and then induce both parties to accept it. There are other qualities that detract from spiritual leadership, for example, an oversensitive and defensive attitude when checked or corrected. There is always an element of truth in such criticism, and self-vindication is an unproductive quality. An unwillingness to accept responsibility for failure, or the tendency to lay the blame at someone else’s door will forfeit confidence.

While always aiming at excellence, the spiritual leadership should avoid the snare of perfectionism. The perfectionist usually sets goals quite beyond his ability to attain and then entertains a false sense of guilt because of failure to achieve. Setting more modest and realistic goals would bring great release to many an idealistic perfectionist.

The vision of spiritual leadership is to prepare people to become faithful and responsible citizens for the nation, and his desire to lead them to receive

salvation in eternity is of paramount to him. There are leaders in the Church; Pastors and bishops but not all are spiritual. Spiritual leadership is not made by election or appointment by men or any combination of men, not by conferences or synods. Only God can make them. Holding position of importance in the Church does not constitute or make one a spiritual, nor taking courses in leadership, or resolving to become a leader. The only method here is that of qualifying to be a leader. Religious positions can be conferred by bishops and boards, but not spiritual authority, which is the prime essential of Christian leadership. That comes – often unsought – to those who in earlier life have proved themselves worthy of it by spirituality, discipline, ability, humility and diligence, men who have heeded the command and dedicated their lives to serving God and humanity in whatever capacity and situation they find themselves. This study is aimed at critically examining spiritual leadership in the church, the principles and the characteristics of spiritual leadership.

The Master's Master Principle for Spiritual Leadership:

Whoever wishes to become great among you shall be your servant; and whoever wishes to be first among you shall be slave of all, (Mark. 10:43-44).s

Although Jesus was not a revolutionary in the political sense, many of His teachings were startling and revolutionary, and none more so than those on leadership. The term servant in the contemporary world today has a very lowly connotation, but was not so as Jesus used it. He elevated it, equated it with greatness, and that was certainly a revolutionary concept. Most people would have no objection to being masters, but servant-hood holds little attraction.

Christ's view of His kingdom was that of a community of members serving one another-mutual service. Paul advocates the same idea; "through love serve one another" (Galatians 5:13). This loving service of course, is to spread to the needy world around us. Jesus well knew that such another-worldly concept would not be welcomed by a self-pleasing world of men. But nothing less than that was what He required of those who desired to rise to leadership in His kingdom.

Sanders (1987) says that the contrast between the world's idea of leadership and that of Christ is brought into sharp focus in Mark 10:42-43:

You know that those who are recognized as rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them; and their great men exercise authority over them. But it is not so among you. But whoever wishes to become great among you

shall be your servant; and whoever wishes to be first among you shall be slave of all.

This was a lesson James and John had not mustered. However, they took seriously the master's promise: "Truly I say to you, that you who have followed me, in the regeneration when the son of man will sit on His glorious throne, you also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel," (Mathew 19:28).

James and John in a selfish ambition used their mother in an endeavor to forestall their colleagues and preempt the prime positions in the coming kingdom. This is the common thing people even do today, placing relatives or even family members to key positions in their term of office as leaders. But Jesus would have none of it. There must be no lobbying for office. "You do not know what you are asking for", they wanted the glory, but not the shame; the crown, but not the cross; to be masters, not servants. Their request afforded Jesus the occasion to present two leadership principles of permanent relevance.

There is sovereignty in spiritual leadership:

"But to sit at my right or left us not for me to grant. These places belong to those for whom they have been prepared" (Mark 10:40). Our emphasis would probably have been, "it is for those who have prepared themselves for it". But Jesus emphasized the fundamental difference in leadership principles. "It is not so among you". "Places of spiritual ministry and leadership are sovereignly assigned by God" (Sanders, 1987). The Good News Bible translation of verse 40 is: "It is God who will give these places to those for whom He has prepared them".

Therefore, no theological training or leadership course will automatically confer spiritual leadership to qualify one for an effective ministry according to Sanders (1987). There are some who have been given sound theological and leadership training, but are spiritually deficient. Jesus later told them, "You did not choose me, but I choose you, and appointed you" (John 15:16). To be able to affirm, "I am not here by selection of a man or the election of a group, but by the sovereign appointment of God." This statement gives great confidence to the Christian worker or leader.

There is suffering involved in spiritual leadership:

"Are you able to drink the cup that I drink, or to be baptized with the baptism with which I am baptized?" (Mark 10:38). Jesus was too straight forward and honest to conceal the cost in the service of the kingdom. For the fulfillment of the stupendous task entrusted to Him, Jesus needed men and women of quality character with eyes wide open, who would follow Him to the death.

To the Lord's probing question, they returned the glib answer, "We are able". Jesus told them that they would indeed drink the cup and experience the baptism. Again, they must learn that for an influential spiritual ministry there must be a steep price to pay – and that it cannot be paid in a lump sum. In the end, it cost James his head, and John finished his years in a concentration camp. This is cost of discipleship. Recently the CAN leader paid the price with his life, a true example of spiritual leadership of our time who refused to renounce Jesus Christ in the hands of his persecutors, the Boko Haram for the sake of fulfilling the covenant between him and his Master, Jesus Christ.

James and John desired to attain leadership by "cheap means", but Jesus' words soon disillusioned them. The fundamental lessons that greatness comes only by way of servant-hood, and that first place in leadership is gained only by becoming everybody's slave, must have come as a great and unwelcome shock. This is true because of many shameful things one may encounter in the course of his leadership to obey the master (God). This is a position some leaders would not like to venture into it because of becoming a slave for the sake of others or to suffer for their sake.

It is noteworthy that Jesus once gave his disciples an example of serving as a slave; an example of true servant-hood when He washed His disciples' feet, (John 13:15). And only once did Peter say He had left an example – and that was an example of suffering (1Peter 2:21). Thus, we see in this the thoughts of suffering and servant-hood are linked, even they were in the life of the Lord.

Jesus, in stating that the primacy in leadership comes by way of primacy in servant-hood, did not have in mind mere acts of service, for those can be performed from very dubious motives. He meant the spirit of servant-hood, which He expressed when He claimed, "I am among you as He that serves".

Isaiah 42:1-5 is a Messianic passage which reveals what the spirit of servant-hood means. These verses are quoted in Mathew 12:18-21 with reference to Christ. They outline the features that would qualify the coming Messiah as the ideal servant of the Lord. The nation of Israel and her leaders, though chosen by God, they failed Him dismally at every turn. However, where Israel failed, Jesus succeeded gloriously, and the principles of His life must be the pattern for spiritual leaders. Here are some of those principles:

***i.* Dependence on God**

"Behold my servant whom I uphold" (Isa. 42:1a). This is a statement with messianic significance. Jesus, in fulfilling this prophetic intimation, voluntarily "emptied Himself" (Philippians 2:7), surrendering all privileges and the independent exercise of His will. Though possessing all the powers

and prerogatives of Deity, voluntarily became dependent upon God, His father. Though Jesus upholds “all things by the word of His power” (Hebrew 1:3), so fully did He identify Himself with the sinless infirmities of humanity, that in His manhood, He needed to be upheld. That divine paradox is one of the staggering aspects of Christ’s condescension. When we, in the same measure adopt same attitude, then, the Holy Spirit will be able to impact us to become servant leaders.

i. **God’s Approval**

The spiritual leader must be one that God has chosen and approved. “My chosen one in whom my soul delights” (Isaiah 42:1a). Gods’ approval of His ideal servant is highly reciprocated, for in another Messianic reference the Son says “I delight to do thy will, O my God” (Psalm 40:8).

ii. **Self-awareness**

Spiritual leadership should know their own strengths and weaknesses. Knowing yourself is so important. If you know your strengths, you will keep yourself focused on those things you intend to do. If you know your weaknesses, you will keep other people focused there. By not knowing yourself, you will try to do things you cannot do and you take on things you shouldn’t be taking on. Spiritual people know themselves. They are always quick to say, “I can’t do that! Someone else will have to do that because I know they will do it better.

iii. **Empathy in Spiritual Leadership**

The spiritual leader should display the spirit of empathy. “A bruised reed He will not break and a dimly burning wick He will not extinguished” (Isaiah 42:3). The Lord’s servant would be sympathetic and understanding with the weak and the erring. Failing men and women are often crushed under callous tread of their fellowmen; but not so with the ideal servant. Jesus was to specialize in mending bruised reeds and fanning the smoking wick into a flame.

Many a times some leaders, even Christian workers, ignore those who have failed and “pass by on the other side”. According to Sanders (1987), such people “want a ministry more rewarding and more worthy of their powers – something more spectacular than bearing with the relapses and backslidings of frail humanity”; but it is a noble work to reclaim those whom the world despises. Peter’s wick was burring dimly in the judgment hall, but what a brilliant flame blazed on the Day of Pentecost. Peter’s interview with Jesus after resurrection put him on the right path of spirituality.

iv. **Optimism in Spiritual Leadership**

Fear and discouragement should not be associated with any spiritual leader. “He will not be disheartened or crushed, until He has established justice in the earth” (Isa. 42:4). God’s servant would not be discouraged. A pessimist never makes an inspiring leader. Hope and optimism are essential qualities for the servant of God as he battles with the powers of darkness for the souls of men. God’s servant would be optimistic until his full objective is achieved.

v. **The Anointing of the Spirit**

The preceding five qualities would be insufficient for the ideal servant of God to function. A touch of the supernatural is required, and that is supplied through the anointing of the spirit. “I have put my spirit upon him”. Jesus of Nazareth was anointed by God with the Holy Spirit and power, and went about doing good (Acts. 10:38). The same anointing that Jesus received from God is available for anyone else who has prepared himself for it. “Until the spirit descended upon Him at His baptism, Jesus created no stir in Nazareth, but then events of world-shaking importance began to happen.

Comparison between Natural and Spiritual Leadership

Before going into the comparison between the natural and spiritual leadership/leader, let us first try to understand in a general sense as to what is “Leadership”?

Leadership in a general sense is the influence, the ability a leader possesses to influence others to the extent they accept to follow his lead. We can buttress this point by citing definitions from some men who have themselves wielded great influence on others.

Lord Montgomery (1958) once a military leader defines leadership as: “The capacity and will to really men and women to a common purpose, and the character which inspires confidence”. In the religious realm, Matthew & Mott (1934), a world leader in student circles, defines a leadership as the “ability of a man who knows the road, a man who can keep ahead, and who pulls others after him”. On the other hand, Chandapilla (1980), an Indian Student leader, defines Christian leadership as: “A vocation where there is perfect blending of qualities that are both human and divine, or a harmonized working of God and man, given over to the ministry and blessing of other people.”

President Truman on the political angle defines leadership as: “A person who has the ability to get others to do what they don’t want to do, and like it”.

Sanders on his part seemed to agree that spiritual leadership is the blending of natural and spiritual qualities. However, according to him the “spiritual

qualities are not self-produced but God-given, and therefore can reach their highest effectiveness when employed in the service of God (and humanity), and for His glory.” Although spiritual leadership partakes of those qualities, there are other elements that supplement and take precedence over them. For example, personality according to Montgomery is a prime factor in spiritual leadership. “The degree of influence will depend on the personality of the man, the incandescence of which he is capable, the flame which burns within him, the magnetism which will draw the hearts of men towards him”. Jason (2015) says “a strong leader in the non-church cannot simply walk into a church leadership role without possessing certain absolute spiritual qualities.” The person should first and foremost be called by God to lead. Without this supernatural and sovereign call, none can lead God’s people (the church) effectively. Secondly, spiritual leadership must have the power of the spirit flowing through him. Spiritual leadership is ultimately the Holy Spirit empowering a particular person for a particular task within the body of Christ. Sanders; “There is no such thing as self-made spiritual leader. The spiritual leadership should be able to influence others spiritually only because the spirit is able to work in and through him to a greater degree than in those whom he leads”. Marshall (1991) says that the spiritual leadership is the capacity and ability to deal with future. This ability or capacity to deal effectively with the future is called foresight. Foresight requires vision, in the sense of imaginative insight or ‘seeing’ with the inner eye. Vision according to Nweke (2018) is what which enables leaders to ‘see’ the possible future further and more clearly than others, to be better than others at identifying opportunities and possibilities, and knowing how to respond to forthcoming events or likely situations. Vision is an essential hallmark of all the great leaders. It marks out a Moses or a Joshua, a Samuel or a David or a Nehemiah.

The question whether “spiritual leaders are born or made” attracts variety of answers from different schools of thought. But the consensus appears to advocate that the correct answer is, “Both”. This could be so because leadership according to Sanders (1987) has been defined as an “elusive and electric quality” that comes directly from God. On the other hand, it is clear that leadership skills can be cultivated and developed. Each person from birth has been endowed to possess skills that either qualify or disqualify him for certain tasks. These skills often lie dormant until some crises call forth their exercise. They can and should be developed.

Some people appear to get into the corridors of power purely by reason of fortuitous circumstances. They happened to be available at the crucial moment and no one better qualified was on the horizon. But closer investigation will usually reveal that the selection was not accidental. Behind the scenes a hidden training had been taking place in the life of the person involved that fitted him for the position. Joseph could be a perfect example. His elevation to

prime minister of Egypt seemed to be purely fortuitous, but in fact it was the outcome of many years of rigorous, though hidden tutelage under the hand of God. The Bible says: “Joseph found favor with God, (Gen. 39:4-6, 21).

Natural leadership and spiritual leadership have many points of similarity, but there are some respects in which they may be antithetical. This is seen when some of their dominant characteristics are set over against one another. Sanders outlines the difference between natural and spiritual leader as follows:

Natural leader	Spiritual Leader
i. Self-confident	Confident in God
ii. Knows men	Also knows God
iii. Makes his own decisions	Seeks to find God’s will
iv. Ambitious	self-effacing
v. Originates his own methods	Finds and follows God’s methods
vi. Enjoys commanding others	Delights to obey God
vii. Motivated by personal considerations	motivated by love for God and man
viii. Independent	God-dependent

It is to be noted here that testimonies of those men who have served God faithfully abound both in Biblical and historical records of the past as well as of the modern times. Tozer (1962) has this conviction:

A true and safespiritual leadership is likely to be one who has no desire to lead, but is forced into a position of leadership by the inward pressure of the Holy Spirit and the pressure of external situation. Such were Moses and David and the Old Testament Prophets... I believe it might be accepted as a fairly reliable rule of thumb that the man who is ambitious to lead is disqualified as a leader. The true leader will have no desire to lord it over God’s heritage, but will be humble, gentle, self-sacrificing and as ready to follow as to lead, when the Spirit makes it clear that a wiser and more gifted man than himself has appeared.

The fact that spiritual leadership and authority cannot be explained solely on the grounds of natural ability is strikingly exemplified in the life of Saint Francis of Assisi, who on one occasion was mocked by Brother Masseo, who said: “Why thee? Why thee?” He repeated this over and over again. When Francis realized that, he asked him “what are you saying?” Brother Masseo replied “I am saying that everybody follow thee, everyone desires to see thee, hear thee, obey thee, and yet for all that, thou are neither beautiful, nor learned, nor of noble family. Whence comes it that it should be thee whom the world desires to follow?”

When Francis heard these words, he was overwhelmed with joy and praised God with extraordinary favor. He then turned to Brother Masseo and said:

Thou wishest to know? It is because the eyes of the Most High have willed it so. He continually watches the good and the wicked, and His most holy eyes have not found among sinners any smaller man, nor any more insufficient and sinful, therefore He has chosen me to accomplish the marvelous work which God hath undertaken; He chose me because He could find none more worthless, and He wished to confound the nobility and grandeur, the strength, the beauty and the learning of this world, (Burns, 1909).

Saint Francis of Assisi was not highly a learned person, was very simple and humble. In the eyes of the world, was rated amongst the lower class of people, but the anointing of the spirit in his life was much more greater that enabled him to achieve greater things for God. That is what it takes one with spiritual leadership skills to sacrifice his life for the task. William Carey (1761-1834) who was credited as the “father” of the nineteenth century missionary movement has his motto: “Expect great things from God and attempt great things for God”. Spiritual leadership does not necessarily require learned people. Whether learned or not, most times they go extra miles because of the anointing God has put upon them for the task they should accomplish in His name.

True and committed spiritual leadership in the words of Casey Treat (1989) are people who are not excited about their leadership, they don’t think about leadership or being a leader, rather, they think about where they are leading people. They think about their vision. They think about their goals. They think about their dream. They think about what they want to accomplish in life. If you ask, “Are you a leader?” they might say, “No! I am just a person who has a goal, a vision, a dream and I am committed to getting it done. These indeed are the true colors of spiritual leadership.

Spiritual leadership is a dynamic reciprocal process of personal influence by which the leadership of the Church shapes the attitudes and activities of Church members towards the achievement of the Church’s objectives. Paul in the Pastoral Letters lists the roles, responsibilities, and qualifications for Church leadership to ensure sustainable development, growth and survival of the Church, (1 Timothy 3: 1-7). These have remained the model for ages and they include: social qualifications and responsibilities; moral qualifications and responsibilities; personality qualifications and responsibilities; domestic qualifications and responsibilities; maturity qualifications and responsibilities; and mental qualifications and responsibilities. Space cannot permit us to begin to explain these one after the other. However, for any spiritual leadership to

steer the ship – the Church successfully, these roles / qualifications must be imbibed.

But experience has shown that a marked departure from Pauline list of roles and qualifications for spiritual leadership in the Church has really affected the growth of the Church. The level of understanding expected from both leadership of the Church and the followers is missing in most cases, and this has resulted in crises within the “Body of Christ.”

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According to the New Testament, the terms “Bishop” and “Elder” are synonymous. Bishop means and “overseer”, and the elders had the responsibility of overseeing the work of the Church (Acts 20:17,28; 1Peter 5:1-3). “Elder” is the translation of the Greek word *Presbyteres*, which means “an old man.” Paul used the word *Presbytery* in 1Timothy 4:14, referring not to a denomination, but to the “eldership” of the assembly that ordained Timothy. Elders and Bishops (denote same office Titus 1:5,7) were mature people with spiritual wisdom and experience to ensure spiritual decency of the Church of God. The word “Pastor” means “shepherd”, one who leads and cares for both spiritual and physical needs of the flock of God (1Peter 5:1-4).

Misconceptions about spiritual leadership:

Many a times, people conceive spiritual leadership as any ordinary leadership in the general understanding of the word. There is a clear demarcation between ordinary/natural leader and spiritual leader. Jesus’ disciples had this misconception on many occasions. For example, the request made by James and John the sons of Zebedee; “Let one of us sit at your right and the other at your left in your glory” (Mark 10:37). Again, on another occasion, the disciples came to Jesus and said “Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?” (Mathew 18:1-4).

Jesus in reply to these misconceptions from his disciples gave a clear instruction expressed in very precise but pungent words that need no grammatical analysis, (Akauni 2010). He began by referring them to what they all know:

“You know that those who are regarded as rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials (leaders) exercise authority over them. But not so with you,” (mark 10:42, 43).

Here, Jesus first recognized the system of leadership among the Gentiles – the unconverted, the uncircumcised and the worldly. He drew a line of demarcation and a boundary that is not adjustable. The boundary between two kingdoms: light and darkness. One is of the earth, the other is from heaven. Jesus made his point clear. If you belong to the kingdom of light, you cannot stand on the other side. “It shall not be so among you”(KJV).

True greatness in Jesus' expression comes in serving others. Most businesses, organizations and institutions measure greatness by high personal achievements. That is the world's way. In Christ's kingdom, however, service is the way to get ahead – the task of the spiritual leader. The desire to be on top without first becoming a servant (slave) of all will hinder the purpose for any achievement.

Peter, who was one of the disciples heard this message and expands in 1Peter 5:1-4. Peter, by writing to the elders, identified himself as a fellow elder, not a superior and asked the elders to “be shepherds of God's flock”, exactly what Jesus had told him to do (John 21:15-17). Peter was giving his own advice as he worked along with the elders in caring for God's faithful people. His identification with the elders is a powerful example of Christian/spiritual leadership, where authority is based on service, not power (Mark 10:42-45).

Peter describes several characteristics of spiritual leadership in the church:

- a. They should realize they are caring for God's flock, not their own;
- b. They should lead out of eagerness to serve, not out of obligation;
- c. They should be concerned for what they can give, not for what they get;
- d. They should lead by example, not by force. All of us lead others in some way. Whatever our role, our leadership should be in line with these characteristics.

Characteristics of Spiritual Leadership:

According to Hyatt (2020), spiritual leadership has to recognize the value of imitating Jesus and His leadership style. Jesus Christ was not a manager. His primary role was to function as a spiritual leader. However, it is true, of course, that you can have a leader who is also a good manager, or a manager who is a leader according to Marshall (1991), but the two functions are quite different and must not be confused. Management is essentially the stewardship of resources and its concern is with making the organization work effectively and efficiently. It involves itself with logistics, information, people and systems, it builds teams, controls budgets, measures performance, monitors progress, and initiates corrective action where needed. These operating functions are vital to the success of a venture but they have nothing essentially to do with spiritual leadership. These have to be entrusted into the hands of faithful god-fearing people, the example of the seven deacons (Acts 6:2-4).

We should note that, not all leaders in religious organizations are spiritual leaders. This is not a criticism as much as a distinction. Distinguishing spiritual leadership from other forms of leadership can free people from unrealistic expectations of some spiritual leaders. At the same time making

this distinction can help identify who the spiritual leaders in your organizations are. Here are six characteristics that identify most spiritual leaders according to Hyatt, (2020).

❖ **They lead others into their own encounter with God:**

One of the most effective things about Jesus' life style was that He didn't switch into another mode to introduce His disciples to the reality of God. Whether standing in the synagogue, picking wheat along the path, or interacting with the Father was so natural that others around Him could not help but do the same. Whether spiritual leadership is training a new employee or working through a difficult conflict resolution, the followers will discover their own connection to God and more deeply in the process.

❖ **They lead others to discover their own purpose and identity:**

Spiritual leadership is characterized by great generosity. A spiritual leader genuinely wants others to fully discover who they were made to be.

Workplace issues and strategic development become tools to help followers discover their own identify and overcome obstacles standing in their way. People functioning in an area of their created identity and strength will always be more productive than those who are simply trying to fill a position or role.

❖ **They lead others into transformation – not just production:**

When the goal is spiritual growth and health, production will always be a natural outcome. People function at their peak when they function out of identity. Helping your followers discover that their own transformation can happen on the job will engender loyalty and a high level of morale. Spiritual leadership fosters passion in those who follow. Passion is the ingredient that moves people and organizations from production to transformational impact.

❖ **They Impact their Atmosphere**

While we may not stop a tempest with our words, spiritual leaders recognize that they can change the "temperature" of a room, interaction, or relationship. Changing the atmosphere is likely casting vision, only it is immediate. When there is tension, fear, or apathy, a spiritual leadership can transform the immediate power of these storms and restore vision, vitality and hope. A leadership that is Spirit-driven can fill a room with love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness and gentleness, even while speaking hard things.

❖ **They help people see old things in new ways:**

Some people are stuck not in their circumstances, but in their perspectives and paradigms. The word "repent" means "to think differently, or to think in a

different way”. Jesus called people to look again at old realities through new eyes. Changing ways of thinking always precedes meaningful change.

❖ **They gain a following because of who they are – not because of a position they hold:**

Spiritual leadership can be found in secular organizations, just as managers can be found in the Church settings. Spiritual leadership influence more than they direct, and they inspire more than they instruct. They instinctively recognize that they are serving something – and someone bigger than themselves and their own objectives.

Spiritual leadership: Governance and Contributions to Nation Building:

It is generally believed that religions play an important role in society. From the facts of history we are made to know that religions according to Abdul Aziz (2013) “are the foundation for major world civilizations. Religion also functions as the mechanism to diminish the constant dreadful rivalries among human beings. Through religious worldviews, individuals (adherents) should align their characteristics and beliefs to suit these worldviews.”

Religion therefore plays an important role in the process of social and economic development. In most societies, especially in developing countries, religious beliefs strongly shape the political and economic institutions, and hence either hamper or spur overall development. Given this approach, Durkheim proposed that religion has three major functions in society: it provides social cohesion to help maintain social solidarity through shared rituals and beliefs, it provides social control and enforce religious-based morals and norms that help maintain conformity and control in society, and lastly it offers meaning and purpose to answer any existential questions.

Religion, for Durkheim, is not “imaginary” according to Bellah (1973), although he does deprive it of what many believers find essential. Religion is very real; it is an expression of society itself, and indeed, there is no society that does not have religion. Believers perceive as individuals a force greater than themselves and give that perception a supernatural face. When we express ourselves religiously in groups, this according to Durkheim makes the symbolic power greater. Religion is an expression of our collective consciousness, which is the fusion of all our individual consciousness, which then creates a reality of its own.

Having given this background let us then turn to the role spiritual leadership plays in order to make his contributions for nation building. Nation building is one area of earthly life where the church has been very much involved. The church has been able to go beyond the tripod of preach, pray, and complain when it comes to issues of governance in our nation. The word nation is being

defined as “a community of people with some common heritage”. The role of national institutions as agencies is to mobilize, aggregate and harness citizens and resources to do the will of God, and to ensure the common good of all. If this is well understood it then follows that great nations can only be built by Godly men, on Godly principles. Nations of the world including Nigeria are groping in darkness and backwardness because of absence of leaders with proper mindset, commitment and zeal to do the will of God by investing in human capital by promoting peace and development in every part of this great nation.

Nations are built by her patriotic citizens, not by foreigners. As believers in Christ and as citizens of Nigeria, there are God-given responsibilities spiritual leadership should consciously execute as their own contribution to the building of our nation.

Conclusion

The need for spirited, talented, vigorous leadership in the church today cannot be overemphasized. The world situation of our time demands a strong voice from the church and this can come only from spiritual leadership guided by God, devoted to Jesus Christ and to their responsibilities as God’s representatives on earth. Sanders has made it clear that spiritual leadership is the blending of natural and spiritual qualities; and that even natural qualities are God given and their true effectiveness can only be reached when they are used to the glory of God.

Churches grow and people are helped when the leadership is strong and doing the right things. It is always the will of God for churches to grow and to equally make their contributions to the overall development of the nation. Why some churches don’t grow is because the leadership is not spiritually equipped to spur both physical and spiritual growth level of the congregation.

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