

**CAN YOU BE
GOD'S
TRANSFORMATIONAL
LEADER ?**

**YES YOU
CAN!**

JAMES YAMOA

THE AUTHOR



James Yamoah, is an ordained servant of the Lord Jesus Christ. He holds degrees in B.Sc. (Hons, Biological Sciences) from Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST), Ghana, B.A. (Hons, Biblical Studies), from Ghana Christian University College (GhanaCU), and M.A. in Religion (OT Biblical Studies) from Cincinnati Christian University (CCU), OH, USA, where he received the prestigious international award; Stone-Campbell Journal Award

for Promising Scholar. Currently, James is studying for his PhD and is expected to complete in 2014. His marriage to Florence is blessed with Jemima, Emmanuel, and Joseph. James is a Lecturer of OT and Biblical Hebrew and Dean of Students at GhanaCU.

Copyright

2012 by James Yamoah

FIRST PRINT 2012

ISBN: 93865205699764

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored a retrieval system or transmitted in any form or by any means-electronic mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise - without the prior permission of the author and the copyright owners.

PUBLISHED BY CLASSIC GRAPHICS

KUMASI - GHANA

E-MAIL: classicimage22@yahoo.com

**CAN YOU BE
GOD'S
TRANSFORMATIONAL
LEADER?**

**YES YOU
CAN!**

JAMES YAMOAHA

FOREWORD

Jesus demonstrated that leaders are important for the stability and spread of an enterprise. He chose ordinary men from the ordinary realm of life and transformed them into fearless leaders who turned the world upside down. James has written a piece that suggests that the Christian leader is critical in advancing the agenda of the Kingdom of God. The leaders perceive that they are agents of transformation and that the blind cannot lead the blind.

These leaders must be seen as transformational. They must raise transformational leaders who together with them encounter social, economic, political and moral domains in order to point to Christ as the unifying and redeeming symbol for humankind.

Critical for transformational leadership advancement are the exemplary practices that transformational leaders advance or influence in their followers. The first exemplary practice is the ability of the leader to model the way. Exemplary leaders aim to achieve high standards in order to achieve both organizational and follower transformation. Exemplary leaders must be models of the behavior they expect of others if they want to gain commitment and achieve high standards. They must set examples through daily actions that show they are committed to their beliefs.

The second exemplary practice is to inspire the vision. Exemplary leaders paint the picture of how things could be in the future. They envision for themselves and their followers "exciting and ennobling possibilities." They express their excitement about the vision that it is for the common good of advancing the will of the creator in his kingdom. The third exemplary practice is their ability to lead their followers to challenge the process. Exemplary leaders are willing to set out into the unknown. They search for opportunities to innovate, grow, and improve. They are willing to experiment and to take risks because they believe in their mandate from the Lord.

They try, fail, and learn. They learn from their failures as well as their successes and make it possible for others to do the same. The fourth exemplary process is their ability to enable

others to act. They enable others to act to get extraordinary things done. This enabling process involves enhancing team work. Exemplary leaders must foster collaboration and build trust. They must make it possible for others to do good work strengthening everyone's capacity to deliver on promises they make. Most people must trust their leaders, and each other, the more they take risks and make changes to advance the kingdom and the lives of others.

The fifth exemplary practice is to encourage the heart. Exemplary leaders must encourage the heart of their constituents. Exemplary leaders must constantly encourage the heart of their followers to carry on, as often, they are tempted to give up. Exemplary leaders must show appreciation for people's contribution and create a culture of celebrating values and victories. James Yamoah encourages us to begin accepting the challenges of becoming transformational agents of the kingdom. He notes that although the information in the book is not necessarily new, the explanations provided on the subjects are very insightful and helpful. Any person desiring to pursue genuine transformational leadership should be prepared to know about God and his ultimate plan for humanity. I implore you to engage with this text if you really desire to sign up to be a co-worker with God. You will guarantee the Heavenly good of your earthly work.

Dr. Manual Budu Adjei (President)

Ghana Christian University College (GhanaCU), Accra, Ghana

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I cannot overlook the contribution made by a great number of people towards my life in general and the production of this book in particular. The number consists of my family: parents, siblings, uncles, aunts, cousins, nephews, nieces; and in-laws; educators; spiritual family; etc., who are the fundamental tools of God for shaping my life from birth till now.

Within these general groups are specific people whose names constantly ring bells in my spirit; Madam Mary Nyarko (my mother), Messrs Francis Gyamera Akwaw (of blessed memory) and Peter Yamoah Akwaw (my uncles), Mrs. Rose-Vida Danquah and Ms. Georgina Achiaah (my aunts), all my siblings (Maggie, Big Joe, Emma, Maame Joe, Esther and Martha), all my cousins (Tommy, Aggie, Joan, Ellen, Angie, Linda, Dr. Francis Yamoah, Gifty, Eunice, Yvonne, Francisca, Richmond, Richard) and the entire family, especially Nana Osei Bonsu, MD, Bethesda Printing Press, Kumasi, and his family, Mr. Peprah (Tema), Mr. & Mrs. Obiri-Yeboah, Mrs. Rita Amakye-Ansah (a very dedicated Christian mother), Mad. Charity Nyarkoah (my mother-in-law) and her family. To these I would like to express my gratitude for their support as well as that of others in every way has laid the foundation for me to come this far.

A very important group worthy of appreciation also comprises the following; Rev. Charles Soso, all Ministers, elders, deacons and deaconesses, and entire members of Christ Resurrection Church, Ghana, whose tall list I cannot provide here. I can never forget to appreciate you and the galaxy of Christian leaders and countless number of friends and acquaintances in whose hands I passed to this humble height. Among these are Mr. Kojo Badu & Mrs. Gertrude De-Bruce Smith (Columbus, USA), Rev. Martin Obeng (Trinity Theological Seminary, Accra), Rev. Eastwood Anaba (Founder, Fountain Gate Chapel Int.), Mrs.

Rosina Offei-Addo (USA), Ms. Cecilia Boateng (USA), Pastor Joseph Boakye Danquah, (USA), Dr. & Mrs. Okoh, Mr. Nii-Noi Adumuah (Former MCE, Adentan) and family, Mr. Opere Hammond (Former MP, Adenta), Pastor and Mrs. Dunyo (USA), Pastor & Mrs. Offe-Gyamah, Pastor & Mrs. Akosah, Pastor & Mrs. Yeboah-Mantey (Niger), Pastor & Mrs. DeJoy Amankwah, and Messrs Amo-Larbi and Stephen Acheampong. Also included are the many friends in the Pastoral ministry, the youth I have mentored, especially James Avoca and all my foster children, whose list is not here but embedded deeply in my heart. I appreciate God for placing you under my care during a certain stage of your lives and wish you the best of God's blessings.

Special thanks go to the vessels without whose interest in my education and ministry, I would not have reached this point: Dr. Elder Christian Adjei and family, Dr. Manuel Adjei, (President, Ghana Christian University College, GhanaCU, Accra) and family, Mr. Joseph Nsiah (Vice President, GhanaCU) and family, other executives, administrators and all known past and present faculty of GhanaCU, especially Dr. & Mrs. Rife, Miss Dorothy Eunson, Mrs. Akua Eghagha, Mr. & Mrs. Kalb, Mr. & Mrs. Bright, Dr. & Mrs. Jennings, Mr. & Mrs. S. Ahlijah, Mr. & Mrs. Willingham, Rev. & Mrs. Dadzie, Mr. & Mrs. Kudadjie, Rev. Dr. Johnson Assibuo, Dr. & Mrs. Afaglo, Mr. Hanson Nyame, Dr. Augustine Tawiah, Pastor Enoch Nyador (FAME, Ghana), Mr. Yaw Boama, Mr. & Mrs. Annan, Mr. & Mrs. Avorgah, Rev. & Rev. (Mrs.) Lartey, Ms. Caroline Aggrey-Fynn, Mr. & Mrs. Nii-Nortey, and Messrs Eric Ofor-Attah, Francis Asante, Frank Akuwayo, Samuel Qain, Mr. Victor Dagadu, Mr. Eric Kuada, Kenneth Quarshie, Fred Amponsah, Samuel Dzokoto, Joe Cephas, Charles Adoboe, Wilfred Agbwornu, Yaw Afakule, and all other Lecturers and staff, students, and graduates of this great academic institution.

I am very much indebted to all professors of Cincinnati Christian University (CCU), Ohio, USA, who specifically became

my mentors and friends, especially, Dr. Jon Weatherly, Dr. & Dr. (Mrs.) Weber, Dr. & Mrs. Roadcup, Dr. (Mrs.) Sarah Fudge, Dr. Tom Thatcher, Dr. Mark Ziese, Professors Dan Dyke, James Lloyd, and Bill Baumgardner. I can never forget the contribution of my guardians at CCU campus, Mr. & Mrs. Puricelli, my study partner who became like a sister to me, Marla Parrish, and Mr. and Mrs. Fay who were my host outside of campus. Also deserving special mention are the honorable supervisors of my Ph.D. studies: Dr. Annang Asumang and Dr. Bill Domeris. I am grateful to all of you for your support in Ghana and abroad both in and out of the classroom.

Special thanks go to those who specifically donated money and any form of logistics towards the production of this book, particularly, Mr. Robert Aboagye, and Madam Josephine Dadson (Women's Aglow, Tema), and Pastor Raphael Amefhanu (Tema), Ghana. Also deserving special mention is a team without whose contribution this volume would never have become completed. I am grateful to Ms. Afua Frimpong-Kore, Pastors Bruno Nyarko and Francis Menyi, and some of my students, for their great editorial work.

I would like to narrow the scope further down to my core family of Mrs. Florence Yamoah, whose comforting presence gave me the most needed encouragement to produce this work, and my children; Jemima, Emmanuel (who did a lot of the typing), and Joseph. Their interactive presence kept me awake to finish this project, and they constituted the immediate 'power-house' behind this book. I pray God's abiding presence with them eternally.

Above all, I am forever grateful to my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ for always being there for me in accordance with the promise, "...Great is His faithfulness" (Lam. 3:22-23). To Him alone is the glory, Amen.

James Yamoah

DEDICATION

To:

All my Mentors and Mentees
in the ministry of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Foreword 2

Acknowledgement 3

Dedication 6

Table of Contents 7

Introduction 9

Chapters and their pages

1. Urgently needed: transformational leaders 12
2. Failure of God's initial transformational nation 23
3. God's ultimate transformational nation 34
4. God's expectation of the Church is transformation 45
5. To see transformation, you need a change of mind 52
6. You have to understand Leadership-related issues 60
7. Church leaders are strategic transformational agents 78
8. You can learn from Samuel's transformational prowess 91
9. You have to be well equipped for transformation 102
10. You must endeavor to develop other leaders 124
11. You need to promote God-directed characteristics 132
12. Allow the Holy Spirit to lead your ministry 143
13. You must stir up the gifts of the Holy Spirit 152
14. You have to encourage other people's giftedness 166
15. You can adopt Ezra and Nehemiah's strategies 183

- 16. You must practice and preach holiness 192
- 17. You can overcome all forms of evil 199
- 18. You need to pursue membership-related characteristics 216
- 19. Encourage small-group and outreach ministries 230
- 20. You have to bridge the generation gap: train the youth 241
- 21. You must be disciplined and submissive 256
- 22. Make effort to resolve conflicts and promote reconciliation 266
- 23. You can overcome your enemies with God on your side 278
- 24. Yes, you can do all things 286

Endnotes 293

References 298

INTRODUCTION

In 2 Chronicles 16:9, scripture says: "...For the eyes of the Lord ran throughout the earth to strengthen those whose hearts are fully committed to him..."¹ This text speaks volumes of what the title of this book is meant to portray. In the last few centuries, it has been observed globally that a lot of changes are going on; socio-cultural, economic, political, educational, religious, climatic, etc., with many associated challenges. Some of these changes require critical thinking in order to have any proper engagement with the realities and propose viable solutions. Thus, lots of people: opinion leaders, scholars, politicians, farmers, economics, monarchs, clergy, etc., of different persuasions, and even atheists, are doing all they can to meet the demands of the changing circumstances.

In the arena of Christianity, many new churches are springing up each passing minute on the globe, though majority of the existing ones are not experiencing any appreciable qualitative and quantitative growth. As a matter of fact, a lot of our current churches can only be diagnosed as either *sick* or *stunted* in terms of development and some are on the verge of *b-r-e-a-k-i-n-g down*. Thus there is the urgent need for total transformation of these churches in order for the process to spread accordingly. But the question is who is prepared to engage in this call? The onus actually lies mostly on all leaders to address the challenges that have come with these changes, particularly from Christian perspective.

The more I analyze issues at the front of the larger Christian community, the more they offer the challenge to pen down some pertinent points and propose effective solutions to them. Fortunately, a deep understanding of scriptures, coupled with practice and experience in ministry have given me some insights into the dynamics of transformation in relation to the growth and

development of Churches. The aim of this book is “to bring the needed transformation to society as God has proposed.” This will be in pursuit of transformation in fulfillment of the prayer of the Lord Jesus Christ; “...Your will be done on earth as it is in Heaven” (Matt. 6:10). God’s heart-beat is that all societies, beginning with the Church, will experience the blessedness of His kingdom and radiate His glory. This means that His Kingdom should be established in all nations, governments, tongues, communities, places of work, homes, families, and in every life.

It is against the above backdrop that I feel much challenged to unearth for discussion some of the important issues that are essential for the transformation of individual as well as that of both physical, and more importantly, spiritual growth of lots of churches. This volume, **Can you be God’s Transformational Leader? Yes You Can!** is expected to inspire and bless every reader, particularly those who are aspiring to transformational leadership roles in life, whether adult or youth. If God raised Abraham and transformed untrained people like Peter and John to become powerful agents to also impact other people, He can do same with anybody who avails self. He is still inviting people to come from a life of conformation to a walk that will transform them from mere followers to leaders, and from that of ordinary to experiences that are extraordinary, that of true God’s agents.

The book also provides a special diagnosis of the major factors militating against the proper growth of churches and spells out a general pattern and necessary processes of transformation that will no doubt be positive. It is designed to meet the needs of serious minded leaders desiring “hundred and eighty degrees” turn in their lives, churches and ministries. Therefore, every area that is mentioned brings a lot of revelations concerning things that leaders can apply to better their churches and make them healthy. Momentarily, it is like witnessing the church spring out from its present spiritual bankruptcy into a vibrant and progressive

one. Some of the sections have lots of keys to unlock doors to developments that will make the congregation have a sense of joy at coming to church. All the areas treated in this book are very essential. Although the information in the book is not necessarily new, the explanations provided on the subjects are very insightful and helpful.

The message of this book will inspire anybody who accepts this task to become **God's transformational agent**. Such a person is not only pursuing a transformational, but also a development oriented ministry, aimed at improving society, in order that God's name is glorified. The role of such a person is helping in the establishment of God's will in the live of humanity. Fortunately, that person is nobody but you. Yes, you are not just a child of God, but more than that, a special vessel chosen to bring transformation to this world, beginning from any corner you are. So why not come out from your small enclosure to God's hall of fame? This book will definitely challenge, equip, and lead you there. This is the needed of the moment. Your response should be now.

Yes you can!

CHAPTER 1

URGENTLY NEEDED: TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERS

President Barack Hussein Obama, the 44th President of the United States of America will go down in history as one of the greatest champions of the slogan, “Yes we can.” He was the presidential candidate of the Democrats against John McCain of the Republicans in the 2008 elections. During the campaign sessions, Obama’s slogan became one of the loudest on the land. His campaign was pivoted one strong word, “change,” and contained promises of transformation of the United States. In the end his slogan inspired the hearts of majority of America, particularly the youth, and it catapulted him to victory. For me, President Obama’s victory in the election was due to one reason; the majority of American’s were looking for a transformation which he promised to offer.

But more than 3400 years before President Obama, two great personalities, Joshua and Caleb, who were among the men sent by Moses to explore the Promised Land and bring a report on it, had championed this same slogan (Num. 13:30; 14:6-9). Scripture reveals that these two men stood in front of the whole covenant community of Israel and championed the slogan “...We can certainly do it,” in contrast to the report that ten of the spies had brought after the exploration. The effort of the duo was aimed at transformation. Their stance was to transform the faithless and flippant mentality of the Israelites towards God’s purposes. They demonstrated much zeal in order to inculcate in their brethren a sense readiness that was needed to confront the giants on the Promised Land and conquer them.

In the end, their optimism, though did not receive approval by 'human electorates,' rather had a divine nod. They were rejected by the Israelites whose spirits had been dampened by the unfavorable report of ten of the spies and were nearly stoned for their position. Yet their zeal yielded great dividends. The Most High God himself gave them the endorsement that took them to the Promised Land and made them the leaders of God's approved generation. Such a "can do spirit" that was testified of by God himself (Num. 14:24) is the master key that any person who is inspired to champion transformation should possess. It should be a trait of any person desiring to effect quality transformation. Yes, that's the spirit God is looking for, and the kind of people the world and the body of Christ need now. For in Christ, it is always yes (2 Cor. 1:19).

Yet, only few people possess transformational traits. Such people are very ready to challenge the status quo where others prefer not to confront it. They are the ones that are able to achieve success because they are often ready to take the bull by the horn or bite the bullet. The character of a transformational leader is that which says yes, while all others are saying no! It is a character that moves while others have stopped; that charts a way, while others say there is no way; that sees victory while others are already defeated; that does not look at the majority before it acts; and never retreating. Transformational leaders are adventures at all times.

What is transformation?

Transformation comes from two words which are joined together; "trans," which means "to change, move from, alter, etc.," and "form," which means "appearance, shape, structure, etc." To transform simply means to change appearance of something (or someone) or to move from one form to another.

It will make a lot of sense if one sees the old (or first) form as good but the new (or second) form as better. It is like closing the chapter of life in order to begin another. Both are very challenging but the latter is greater. Thus change has often been difficult to handle, especially when it also results in some undesirable outcomes. But it is a necessary step to confront if one has to move to the next stage.

The next important thing worthy of notice is that transformation is a process; it begins from somewhere and continues till a certain preferred stage. It is a change that is triggered by a desire and willingness not to conform to certain standard(s) or status quo; but 'a hundred and eighty degrees turn to begin something new.' Thus when the expected and preferred state is not achieved the process should not be halted; it should be allowed to continue. The last thing to mention about transformation is that the process may happen both automatically, or can be initiated when the need arises. This is to drum home the point that when transformation is not happening in our situation we must not just sit down and wait; we should pursue it.

Transformation happens in people's lives when they put trust in God's promises. The process of is best illustrated by Jeremiah's passage in chapter 18:1-6. Historically, Jeremiah became a prophet from 627-587 BC and preached from King Josiah through Zedekiah. In one of his messages, the prophet was instructed by God to go to the potter's house and wait for His message there. Upon arrival, the prophet saw how the potter used clay soil for his products. Clay has fine particles and can hold water, but has less humus, air, and soil organisms. Thus, it is not a good soil for plant life. However, a potter is able to use it for a worthy purpose. He/she can fashion pots out of it. Thus, God's message to Jeremiah in the potter's house reveals transformation from clay soil into

various types of ceramic pots or earthenware. The process involves the following:

- i. There is collection of the raw soil and removal of unwanted matter like stones, soil macro-organisms, dry leaves, roots of plants, etc.
- ii. There is grinding and mixing with water to make it sticky.
- iii. There is molding of the softened clay into the desired shape of a pot, vessel, or earthenware.
- iv. There is baking in fire and regular checking until the pot is well baked.
- v. Then, there is decoration of the product to add more value to it and advertisement for appreciable price.

Now, if ordinary clay soil can be transformed into a worthy product as in above illustration, then God can do same with the human being. God said through the Jeremiah, “Like clay in the hand of the potter, so are you in my hand...” (Jer. 18:6). In fact, there are many areas of a person’s life where transformation is expected, and God is ready to make it happen for any person who surrenders to Him (Tim. 2:20). Transformation brings about a total change to ensure new beginning (Prov. 12: 27): new state, purpose, function (Rom. 12:2; Tim. 2:8), and new value (Prov. 12:27).

It is to transform society in general and those who surrender to God specifically, that He raises some agents of change in every generation. Two types of transformational leaders will be distinguished in our discussion: Secular and Christian (or Bible-based) transformational leadership.

Christian (or Bible-based) transformational leadership

Transformation can be looked at from many angles; hence transformational leadership can be defined in a broader sense.

However, two main categories of transformational leadership; Secular and Christian (or biblical) have been distinguished:

Secular transformational leadership refers to transformational leadership which does not declare a Christian or biblical approach to leadership, and makes little if any reference to Biblical leadership or biblical texts...A core feature of secular transformational leadership is *influence* which necessitates that the leader has '*charisma*,' that is, the leader must have the ability to persuade people about where an organization needs to go, and must be a competent *strategist* by looking for the best way in which a plan may be made to work...The purpose of influence is to achieve long-term *goals* which are said to be *shared by* the leader and followers.²

On the other hand:

Christian transformational leadership is leadership which declares a biblical or Christian foundation, or is specifically directed to the Church. It holds that a leader's vision, character, persuasiveness, and ability to strategize guarantee that he or she will be influential (or transformational) to achieve shared goals.³

The objective of the discussions in this book is to inspire leadership in the church of God and para-church organizations or institutions in order to bring qualitative and quantitative growth. Attention will therefore be focused on Christian transformational leadership, which satisfies our purpose. And even within this main category, there are several Christian leadership theories. For example, one source provides as different leadership forms under the broad area of Christian transformational leadership. They include: Connective leadership; Courageous leadership; Relational leadership; Servant leadership; Spiritual leadership; Ternary leadership; and Transforming leadership⁴ (and other similar types). Thus

the discussions will harness various issues of these theories in order to present a holistic approach to the propositions mentioned therein.

The Bible based-transformational leader should by all means be a Spirit-filled Christian who is prepared to:

- Appreciate God's desire for perfection as revealed in His Word. In other words, he/she should acknowledge God's design for creation and submit to His sovereign *will* in dealing with any person, family, tribe, or nation.
- Understand God's covenant principles in the Bible, know and appreciate the moral values presented therein, and strongly desire to obey its messages in order to deepen his/her relationship, first with God, then humanity.
- Confront the negativities of God's covenant community, i.e., the Church, and society in general, and accept the significance of the emancipation of humanity from the clutches of sin and Satan through the power of the Holy Spirit in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ.
- Receive the vision of the transforming power of God for the Church and society from Scripture, and develop the skill of applying such power to overcome contemporary life challenges.
- Bring the Church, Christian organizations, and larger society to the understanding of God's dealing with mankind as revealed through Scripture, and promote God's sovereign plan in dealing with any person, family, tribe or nation, at all times.
- Challenge God's covenant community and society to live a life of holiness based upon His dealing with mankind as revealed through Scripture, and help believers and the larger society to press on till the day when the whole earth will be consummated with the *will*, praise, and glory of the Living God.

God's transformational leader is one that is ready to reason and team up with Him to bring His perfect will to pass in this world. He should possess the same can do spirit of God.

God is the initiator and perfectionist of true transformation

Transformation is not achieved by just drumming the idea into people's mind. The reason is that the process is not like adding one to two to become three. It involves some issues that are beyond the manipulations by any human being. So it is not all those who are championing transformation that will succeed. That is, not everyone who talks about transformation is a transformational agent or can bring about the process. It is like saying that not all medical doctors know how to take care of their health, or not all bankers know how to handle money, or not all who teach hygiene practice acceptable sanitary habits or not all who are called to be ministers of the Most High are right with Him. In fact, any human-centered transformation process that is not engineered by God is bound to fail.

Therefore, any person desiring to pursue genuine transformation should be prepared to know more of God and His ultimate plan and "good, and acceptable, and perfect will" for humanity. Thus any transformational process that is led by the Spirit of God and based on His principles has an excellent chance of achieving its objectives. It is only with God that all things are possible (Luke 1:37). God himself is **the Master transformer** of whatever He created, so He knows how to fix each part of creation when the need arises. In fact, the whole of creation shows God's master-plan and ultimate drive for transformation right from the events of Genesis to that of the book of Revelation. The first few verses of Genesis 1 and Revelation 21 respectively read:

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters. And God said, "Let there be light," and there was light. God saw that the light was good, and he separated the light from the darkness.

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea...for the old order of things has passed away. He who was seated on the throne said, "I am making everything new!" Then he said, "Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true."

God demonstrated His transformational prowess when He brought everything that now exists into perfection, and His creation of a new heaven and a new earth shows that He is still in the transformation business. When God called the earth and the heavens into being, the earth, the scene of his crown creation, was described as "formless," that is, it was without any pattern and of no order. It was also described as "empty," that is; it was uninhabited but only full of "deep waters and in darkness." The Genesis account therefore is a description of God's creation of things for the first time in an original chaotic earth. But this is where the totality of the Godhead is revealed in the whole process of transformation. As God the Father was unfolding the creative master-plan, God the Holy Spirit was engaged in some of the creative activity by moving in to prepare the earth for total transformation, "...And the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters" (Gen. 1:2).

Out of nothing, God the Word (i.e., Jesus), working in consonance with both the Father and the Holy Spirit, began to reorder the creation. The method used was by the spoken word- the logos (John 1:1-14; Col. 1:15-17). Thus, after six days of creative duties, the Triune God, out of nothing, unveiled a really transformed and beautiful planet, the earth, together with the heavens. *God* is indeed a *Transformer*. In fact, the author of the first book of the Bible, without wasting words, presented the fact that the heavens and the earth were finally evaluated as perfect, "God saw all He had made, and it was very good" (Gen. 1:31). According to a team of scholars, God's evaluation of the creation as mentioned above means

everything was perfect in its kind, useful in its purpose, i.e., doing just what the Creator designed it to do and entirely subject to His holy laws.⁵ The human being who was the zenith of earthly creation was put in charge of it and was mandated to procreate and thus continue the process of transformation.

Set-back to God's transformational process

In the Genesis account, the transformation process set into motion by God which was to be continued by humanity was disrupted by sin. The effects of man's disobedience caused the entry and spread of sin into the world (Rom. 5:12-19; Isa. 53:6; Gal. 3:10). Adam and Eve were brought to a full realization of what they had done. Now, they longed to escape his presence (Isa. 59:2). Sin sets into motion a chain of separations:⁶

- Between humanity and God: That is, the fellowship between humanity and God was broken. This is what God meant by man will surely die, i.e., "spiritual death."
- The unity of humanity now ceased to exist and a person could no longer hold himself/herself together.
- Humanity from each other: Right in the garden, Adam and Eve were separated from one another – the man began to pass blame on the woman. Soon siblings (Cain and Abel) were to be separated from each other, and the trend continued.
- Humanity was separated from nature: That is, the man and his wife lost full dominion over nature, and the fruit of the latter became a means of judgment on mankind- thorns, thistles, harsh weather and floods!

The first couple now had the added task of reacting to the abnormal behavior of any future fellow human being. This developed in humanity a sense of disquiet, shame, and spiritual unrest (Gen. 3:8-10). They could not face their God face to face

anymore. In spite of the fall of man God has not rested from his move to transform the fallen standard of creation from Adam.

God reorders transformation: Abraham and descendants

In response to the failure of the first couple, a fresh move had to be initiated by God. This involves transformation of the community of humanity including both the environment and mankind in particular. This kind of transformation should affect the totality of the human being; body, soul, and spirit, as well as that which will fulfill God's desire for creation; to make humanity enjoy fellowship with both God as well as social life. In relation to Himself, God set into motion a selfless fellowship of love and devotion between Him and humanity, and among human beings themselves, and a sense of interaction within the community of both living and non-living parts of creation. This is because social life could be meaningful when all the things that combine to help people meet their basic human needs for food, shelter, maintenance of health, security, etc., are met.

Usually, God makes sure His purpose is revealed to one person who is committed to Him. For example, His plan of transformation is the main reason why He narrowed His focus on only one person, Abraham (formerly, Abram), in order that through him the whole world would become transformed. Thus *Abraham became God's agent of transformation to the world*. His call marks the beginning of the Patriarchal age as far as Israel's patriarchs are concerned. Genesis 12:1 says:

The LORD had said to Abram, "Leave your country, your people and your father's household and go to the land I will show you." I will make you into a great nation and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you (Gen 12:1-3).

The precise manner in which God contacted Abraham is not given. However, it is quite probable it was accompanied by an appearance of the Lord, something Abraham would enjoy quite often. The place of his call was his native home, Ur, in Shinar (Acts 7:2, 3). Through God's direction, as noted above he was to settle in a Promised Land. God's responsibility was to effect series of blessings for Abraham's response of obedience. Abraham's response to the call was in faith but with some compromise as he clung to members of his family (Gen. 11:31; cf. 12:1-3), and did not go straight to the Promised Land. Consequently, he suffered a five year delay at Haran due to the presence of his father, Terah (which means "delay"). Finally, he left Haran and settled in Canaan.

The significance of Abraham's call was that God now singles out a man from whom the chosen nation was to spring. This was taking place in view of the utter depravity of man.

Abraham will surely become a great and powerful nation, and all nations on earth will be blessed through him. For I have chosen him, so that he will direct his children and his household after him to keep the way of the LORD by doing what is right and just, so that the LORD will bring about for Abraham what he has promised him (Gen. 18:18).

In that wise, Abram (as he was formally called) which means, "Exalted father," was to be Abraham, which means, "Father of many nations."

Thus, the redemption nation, the nation of Israel that was chosen to champion God's worldwide transformation, was conceived through Abraham. But how did the nation of Israel fare after it was born? Why and where did it fail to measure up to God's expectation as His of transformational agent for the world? The next chapter will discuss Israel's failures.

CHAPTER 2

FAILURE OF GOD'S INITIAL TRANSFORMATIONAL NATION

The previous chapter ended on the note that through Abraham, the Nation of Israel became the chosen nation for championing a worldwide transformational vision, i.e., Israel was God's agent of transformation. There are clear indications of God's expectations of Israel which no doubt also constituted the Old Testament (OT) church on earth. God's design for the biblical covenant community of Israel was to make them a special people reflecting His glory as the Creator and only True God worthy of worship, and through whom He would reveal lasting peace and prosperity. God was going to achieve His divine purposes through special terms and conditions that He would lay down. God also set down consequences of breaking these conditions.

The idea of God separating a special group of people out of all the nations of the world; a kingdom of priests and a holy nation, was to get a community that He could call His own. They would be a group that He could dwell among and reveal Himself through to the rest of the world, if they would accept to be His people. In fact, God's ideal government for His Covenant nation, Israel, was Theocracy, which simply means "a state or people under the rule of God." This is the form of government in which God, and not any human being on earth, is the Supreme ruler. God himself claims the first allegiance of all members of the nation concerned, and He makes the final decisions. It is really an earthly manifestation of the spiritual that God has at all times.

God was the head and ruler of this human system of organization and demanded absolute allegiance. God was to

be the center of interest for the people; the focal point of their lives and the highest object of their attention and worship. A man's responsibility was first and foremost to God. A man sinned when he did not live according to God's ideal. For this reason it was the highest form of government or Kingdom organization possible, and the most pleasing to God. It also fulfilled all the requirements for a sound and healthy Kingdom living.

There are four main requirements for establishment of every kingdom, government, or rulership. These are first, a geographical area (or land). In relation to God and the people of Israel, the area is Palestine, promised to, and now possessed by the people. The second requirement is subjects (or people); and here it is the peculiar race of descendants promised to Abraham by Yahweh, the covenant-keeping God. The third requirement of every kingdom is rules (or regulations) to govern the people of the land or subjects. With respect to Israel, it was the commandments. Last, but not the least, is the ruler (or leader, head, president, or king); for Israel, the ruler was God himself. This was so by means of heritage, choice, and by divine plan of the Creator Himself.

God is represented by the Priesthood

God also made provision for men who were to be His ambassadors in His theocratic design. There were usually outstanding national leaders or ambassadors God would use. The first among them was the High Priest. He provided oversight at the sanctuary, and was also in charge of all other religious personnel. Still, divine sovereignty was to be recognized in every aspect. The other religious personnel consisted of male members of the tribe of Levi who had been claimed by God for himself. Within the tribe, two divisions were made; priests and helpers of the priests. They lived in

designated cities scattered throughout the tribes. These were the Levitical cities, and the priests were concentrated there so that they could perform their functions among the people.

The priests were to act as instructors of the law by teaching both the old and the young to obey the stipulations of the covenant. Besides the availability of the law as God's guidebook of his will, the Urim and the Thummim used by the High Priest helped the people to know God's *will* in certain situations. They also sanctioned the prescribed sacrifices and offerings both for individuals and for the whole community. These served two purposes: First, they helped both individuals and the nation to remain acceptable to God. Second, they helped foster sense of national unity under God as they came together for observance of these offerings. It was the responsibility of all the Israelites to make life easy for these personnel as they performed their duties. So they were required to offer parts of their sacrifices and tithes to the priests by bringing these to the Tabernacle or Temple.

Other leaders of the people

Sometimes there was a sole National Leader who was a God-filled individual with outstanding qualities in rallying the people for military, civil and religious pursuits. He did not serve as priest, e.g. Moses, Joshua, the Elders and Judges. Besides, there were other national leaders who played a more civil and military roles. They were another form of earthly representatives or ambassadors of God used in His theocratic government. These included the elders who were men in the communities responsible for settling certain civil infractions of the law, e.g., manslaughter and family problems (Deut. 19:12; 21:18-20; 22:15; 25:7), etc.

Then also were the court personnel, who were in charge of the several local courts which decided on minor cases, but

all harder cases were brought to the Tabernacle (or later, temple) which served as their Supreme Court (Deut. 16:18; 17:8-13). These civil personnel thus maintained social order through settling of cases. However, in this function they were still carrying out divine activity because God had not made any distinction between civil and religious aspects of a person's life. God had planned this theocratic rule for his nation with great potential for blessings and benefits. The people abused their privilege of voluntary obedience to God's requirements. Because of its nature, no enforcement organization or authority lay outside of God to control the state of sin and disobedience (Deut. 17:6; 18:1; 19:1; 21:25). God's plan of control and revival of the system was to use foreign oppression with a view that the people would come back to God and thus the continuation of the unique theocratic government with its blessings.

Failure of the transformational nation

The book of Judges is one of the main sources of discussion on the subject of backsliding of God's congregation after they settled in the Promised Land. The book provides a description of the historical records of events from Joshua's death to the time of Israel's latest judge, Samuel. The concern was to account for, as well as describe, the political, moral and religious decline during the period and to demonstrate its effect on the people. This book is known in Hebrew as *Shophetim* meaning "Judges," same as Saviors or Deliverers (Judges 2:16). Lots of the issues that happened during the period of the Judge have been discussed, some of which would be mentioned in this section.⁷ The religious and political conditions prevailing after Joshua's death and before the institution of the monarchy are set forth in the whole book. The book demonstrates the people's unfaithfulness to God's covenant thus each doing what was pleasing in his own eyes (1-3:6;

17:6; 18:1; 19:1; 21:25). This culminates in the rejection of God's rulership for a king just like other nations (1 Sam. 8:4-7).

Causes of failure of God's agent

What causes God's congregation or Kingdom to fail and sometimes experience breakdowns? Reasons that might emerge from this question are likely to be the same that have brought lots of division in the church of God over the years. In the book of Judges, many reasons are seen for the failure of the commonwealth of Israel. There was a repeated cycle of disobedience and defeat by enemies and then deliverance by the Lord after a sorrowful denunciation of sin.

The failures of the priesthood; Eli

The weakness demonstrated by one of the High Priests, Eli, is a typical example of the weakness of the priesthood that affected God's covenant community greatly. Eli was a descendant of Aaron through his son, Ithamar (1 Chron. 24:1-2; 1 Kings 2:27; 2 Sam. 8:17). He was certainly a man who knew his job. He was always at the entrance of the Tabernacle. He had concern for the state and problems of the worshippers- as shown in his dealings with Hannah. He was however not fully disciplined to his calling and its responsibilities especially as he grew older. As a High Priest he fulfilled religious responsibility over God's people as High Priest, hence leader of the religious personnel of Israel (Judges 2:12- 4).

Additionally, Eli fulfilled a major civil responsibility as a Judge (4:18); settling and overseeing civil justice, and sometimes providing military leadership. He might have proved his worth to be acclaimed as judge at a time they faced the fierce Philistines. But Eli faced rejection of his judgeship and priesthood. Among the reasons for his rejection are the fact that he had weak supervision of priestly duties and personnel.

General moral breakdown in the priesthood

As a result of Eli's weak supervision of the personnel, there was degeneration of tabernacle service and a general moral breakdown. Scripture reveals that there were lots of weaknesses in the priesthood and his sons particularly had greatly degenerated. In this he had allowed degeneration in the Tabernacle service such that the service was organized like pagan temple services. There was profanation of the sacrifices and sexual perversion. His sons were guilty of the following:

- (a) They had no regard for the Lord and valued Belial over and above Jehovah (1 Sam. 2:12);
- (b) They stole God's offerings and harassed the Tabernacle worshippers (1 Sam. 2:14);
- (c) They were involved in temple prostitution (1 Sam. 2:22);
- (d) They portrayed a bad image of God and the priesthood (1 Sam. 2:14, 24).

Consequently, Eli's sons did not promote the honoring of Jehovah (1 Sam. 2:29), and Eli was blamed for exhibiting weak parental oversight (1 Sam. 3:13). He would not restrain his children in spite of the terrible abominable practices and the numerous complaints. The results of Eli's weakness were very devastating. The first blow occurred with the defeat by the Philistines at the battle at Aphek and when the Ark of Covenant was captured and taken to Philistine territory. This was followed by the death of Hophni and Phinehas which occurred during the battle, Eli also dies upon hearing of the news of the Ark and of his sons.

Finally, Phinehas' wife also died upon hearing of the news and gave premature birth to a son named Ichabod, meaning, "No glory," or "lost glory," meaning the glory of the Lord has departed. Such dishonoring of the things of God and the profanity of the Tabernacle still occur in different forms in some churches today.

Failures of other leaders and groups

There has never been a perfect leader apart from our Lord Jesus Christ. All others have had their shortcomings, and so do we. Since we cannot have a perfect system in our world till Christ comes, we should find a way of dealing with problems in the Church when they arise. In trying to look at possible causes of many church problems, one finds that many of the problems arise from the personnel of the ministry. For example there are other causes such as unauthorized priestly functions (Judges 17:4-13; 18:19, 20, 30). Unauthorized migration of the Levites (Judges 17:7, 8) and of the people belonging to the tribe of Dan (Judges 18) is exemplified nowadays in unstable believers or believers' drift experienced in most churches.

Generation Gap

Failure to train and raise people during the period of their youth is a recipe for a culture of irresponsible adulthood. This is exactly what happened to the people of Israel after they settled in the Promised Land. According to the book of Judges, the cycle of sin of the covenant community in the land began after the death of Joshua and all the generation of elders who knew the Lord and were brought up in His ways.

What this means is that the adult generation failed in their duty to train the younger generation that came after them. This led to a generation that grew up without much information of the workings of God among the people of Israel. Rather, they grew up being exposed to the practices of the surrounding nations. This new generation turned their backs to God and followed the gods of the Amorites on the land of Canaan.

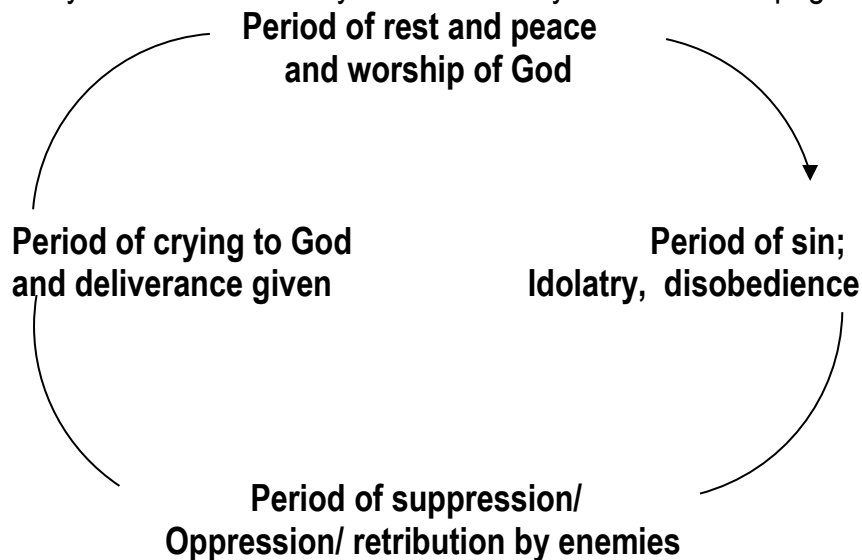
Failure to uproot the surrounding nations

God had by divine decree given all of the land to the people of Israel through a covenant He established with their

forefathers; Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Thus He directed that they were to fully occupy the land without leaving alive any of the inhabitants (Exod. 24:33; 34:11-16; Deut. 7:1-5). The Lord warned them about (1) compromises with regard to allowing the inhabitants to stay in the land; (2) compromises with regard to obedience to the law. Any acts of disobedience to these warnings would lead to profane and abject immorality just as practiced in the other nations. In reality this did not happen and much land suffered partial or no occupation (Judges 1:19-36).

Life cycle of the Israel in the Judges time

The life of the Israelites revealed very interesting features as shown by the following in a repeated cycle. This repetitive lifestyle is summarized by a clock-wise cycle on the next page.



A clock-wise representation of life of Israel revealed by the book of the Judges

Period of sin and rebellion: The book of Judges presents a picture of Israel, which contrasts the plans God had for the

nation. Why was God justified in punishing Israel whenever they sinned against him? God has reasons for punishing his people (Rev. 3:19). The primary sin was idolatry, which led to religious, social and political disintegration. There were also typical examples of sexual immorality, which showed the level to which sin engulfed the covenant community of the OT Israel. For example, a custodian and teacher of the law had a concubine who was a harlot. The men of Gibeah were homosexuals (Judges 19:22; cf. Lev. 18:22), etc.

Israel's failures brought face to face with the influences and dangers God had predicted. The first of these is intermarriage (Exod. 34:15-16; cf. Deut. 7:3; cf. Judges 3:6). The sin of intermarriage was greatly evident. This brought with it the danger of pagan influences and loss of pure-blooded identity. Another is the adoption of Canaanite worship. The Lord had variously warned the people against all forms of idolatry with respect to the inhabitants of the land and elsewhere (Lev. 20; Deut. 13). The people at this time were heavily involved in it and thus courted God's anger as predicted (Judges 2:1-5; 11-15; 3:7-8; 6:28-30; 8:33). There was the establishment of private sanctuary (Judges 17; cf. Deut. 12:4-14; 16:1-7); image worship (Judges 18; cf. Exod. 20:4); and improper priesthood practices (Judges 18:9).

The social fiber of the community revealed a general breakdown or a tendency towards disintegration (Judges 17:6; 18:1; 19:1; 21:25). The guilty were readily defended, and there was also a low respect for human life- demonstrated in the treatment of the concubine of the Levite, and the almost total annihilation of the Benjamites. There was serious violation of personal rights and respect for another's property, revealed in the various incidents of stealing (Judges 17, 18).

Period of servitude and grief: What does the Bible mean when it says, “God sold His people...”? How does it feel like to be sold by God unto the hands of the enemy? Have you ever experienced a situation when you felt God has sold you? In the book of Judges, scripture narrates how Israel, in their state of sin, courted the Lord's anger. Then God in his sovereignty would use the surrounding heathen nations to oppress and thus punish the sinful nation he had groomed to be a show-piece of holiness and prosperity. The Lord thus sold them into the hands of their enemies who would torment and harass them for a good period of time. Upon their success, they even forced Israel into servitude (vs. 14-15), and thus distressed the nation greatly. The fact that God used only some particular nations out of the surrounding nations shows that in God's plan they were the most suitable for the job at hand.

Period of deliverance: The compassion of the Lord is great and He honors genuine repentance and sorrow. Then Israel, the covenant congregation of God would cry as a result of the cruel treatment from their enemies who oppressed them severely. But the issue is whether Israel's main reason for always crying to God and drawing closer to Him was good enough. Nevertheless, God always has compassion for His people. But God probably does not save Israel immediately they repented and called for his deliverance at first. What really moved God to save them might be their works or fruit of repentance (Matt. 3:8, 10)?

The Almighty would appoint a judge or deliverer for them; one who was endowed with power from above. Such a person would bring peace to the nation as long as he lived. He would encourage obedience to the Lord. But whenever the person died, the people would return to their old evil and stubborn ways.

Period of restoration, peace, and piety: After the people have been delivered by the Judge, the land would enjoy some good years of peace. The cycle shows that during this period, the people turned back to the worship of God throughout the lifespan of the Judge and that generation. It is apparent here that repentance on the part of God's people leads to bridging of broken relationship and consequent blessing from the Lord. Thus, life would return to normal and they would enjoy the fruit of their labor from the farming and pasturing business. But this life of peace would end after the death of the judge and the life cycle would begin again.

On the whole, the people of Israel did not learn from some of the hardships they suffered, thus indicating that their rejection of God's rule and requesting for a king was without redress (1 Sam. 8:5-9). Rejection of the theocratic rule for a monarchy brought about instability in the kingdom that was initially established, leading to a split. Not even the hardship of the captivity of both Northern and Southern Kingdoms could restore the remnant as God's transformational community. Their failure led to disintegration in political, religious, social, and family affairs, and it also led to increase in immorality as revealed in most of the books of the Old Testament.

But God remained faithful to His covenant, preserving the Israel in spite of their repeated infidelity. His reason for the preservation is that out of their root would emerge the ultimate transformational nation, the Church, but under a new covenant. It was to be championed by the Son of God, the Lord Jesus Christ, himself. Through the Church, God would also raise up transformational leaders who would continue with Jesus' revolution, as would be seen in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 3

GOD'S ULTIMATE TRANSFORMATIONAL NATION

In Matthew 16:17-19, scriptures say, "... I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven ..." (KJV). According to this text, even before the advent of the Israelites, God had devised a plan that in the fullness of time, all true descendants of Abraham would be trained and raised as God's true Transformational leaders. God himself chose Abraham as an agent to continue the process of bringing His Kingdom on earth (Gen. 18:19). The role of such agents of transformation is a major requirement for the progress of God's plan throughout the ages. Thus, people of all classes, in various positions and ranks, and in various capacities have been used by God as agents for divine purposes.

The responsibility of a transformational leader is not for any particular individual to complete God's purpose all alone, but to make sure what God has inspired is carried out. As examples of the discussion, Moses was used as a liberator of Israel from slavery in Egypt and to construct the Ark of Covenant between God and Israel (Exod. 25:8). King Solomon was used for the building of the first Temple in Jerusalem (1 Chron. 17:11-12). Others include Emperor Cyrus of Persian who ruled from 539-530 BC. He was one such person mentioned in the Bible (Ezra 1:1-4). He was inspired by God to make sure the Second Temple of God is built in Jerusalem. Also, reconstruction and renovation works on the wall of Jerusalem were done by Nehemiah (Neh. 2:3-5); and the repair and purification of the temple by King Hezekiah and Josiah (2 Chron. 29:1ff); and the list continues.

Believers as ultimate Transformational leaders

For God's vision of an ultimate transformational nation to be fulfilled, He had to chart the path of true transformation through the Lord Jesus Christ who was born between 6-4 BC. His title, "Christ," in Hebrew, means "Messiah," and in Greek means "the anointed one." In the Old Testament, prophets, priests, and kings were literally anointed with oil to consecrate them for special service or to signify the endowment of the Spirit of God (Lev. 4:3; 8:12; 1 Sam. 10:1, 6; Ps. 105:15; Is. 61:1). These practices pointed to the promised arrival of God's Anointed One, who would fulfill all three offices as the Prophetic, the Priest, and the King. Christ's birth is usually referred to as "Christmas," from two words; "Christ," and "mas." The former means, "the Anointed One" and the latter means "to send." Thus Christmas means "to send the Anointed One." Details of Christ's birth are recorded in the beginning chapters of the first four books of the New Testament, also known as the gospel. But there is not much mentioned about Jesus' early life except being at the Temple at age twelve (12), until His baptism that ushered Him into the ministry of divine transformation.

The Lord practiced what can best be described as "holistic ministry." This involved all areas of service to humanity: teaching, preaching, healings, praying, provision of basic needs like food to His followers, restoration of hope and joy to His believers, etc. Various groups and individuals were involved in His ministry. For example, Jesus picked twelve of His disciples for a closer and specific ministry. These were later referred to as Apostles. Besides Jesus' named disciples, there were many other people or followers including members of His own family, some priests, rich men, publicans (gentiles), who played various roles in His earthly ministry. Jesus' ministry was almost spent around Galilee, the northern part of Palestine,

though some of the time was also spent in Jerusalem, in Judea where His crucifixion also took place.

Overall, many Jews rejected Jesus as the Messiah because He came as a humble spiritual Savior and not a conquering political ruler. Thus they falsely accused Him before the Roman authorities and He was executed by nailing Him to the cross. Jesus was crucified in AD 29 on the Passover day, and His resurrection occurred three days later. After the resurrection, there was 40 days of the Lord walking around and appearing to some people including his Disciples and many others. Then He ascended to be in Heaven until the promise of His return is fulfilled.

God's ultimate Transformational nation is born

Ten days after Jesus' ascension to Heaven, on the Day of Pentecost, i.e., 50 days after the Passover, the Church the Lord Jesus Christ promised to build was born. The Church of the First Century was indeed born through a baptism of "fire" on the Day of Pentecost at Jerusalem. It was born at this point in time when there were about 15 nationalities represented at the Feast of Pentecost in Jerusalem (Acts 2). At this celebration, with all the different people, the apostles were baptized in the Holy Spirit, and they were given a special gift to 'speak in new tongues.' They were also given the power to work miracles. They could speak in the languages of all the different people, and thus communicated with all the different people. Indeed, the first-century world also responded positively. It was a world unified by language, culture, and politics, and by its spiritual hungers. Such was the arena that the Christian missionaries ventured with the message of Jesus Christ.

The Day of Pentecost marked the introduction of a large number of new converts into the First Century Church. But what was it that brought thousands and ultimately millions to faith

in Christ? Was it just the power of a better idea or that of a superior theology? As we read Acts and the New Testament epistles we realize that at least two major factors attracted first-century men and women. First, the Christian message was vibrant with hope. God in Christ broke into mankind's world and demonstrated His love and power, and in the resurrection revealed an endless triumphant life which Christ offers to humanity. Second, there was a major influence as the message of Christianity created communities of love. According to Acts 2:41, about 3,000 people (souls) were baptized and added on that day to the Church, and Acts 4:4 mentions 5,000 more men who were added at another, when Apostle Peter addressed the people.

The first century, like our own age, was an age of isolation and loneliness. How attractive this new community was to the lonely men and women of the first century, who lived as we live today, fractured, isolated lives? To know Christ, and to experience His love through others, was more than millions could resist. The Gospel was shared, in word and indeed, and through such means the world of the first century was won. As a result of these, those who believed were together and did many things as a unit. The main practices of the First Century Church are spelt out in Acts 2:41-47. Two of these practices are the Lord's Supper and baptism, i.e., immersion of a believer (someone old enough to know how to repent, believe, accept responsibility, and is accountable for personal actions).

The First Century Church was composed of floor members (or laymen), from the Greek, "laikos," which literally means, "people," and the Apostles and other leaders or office holders. Philippians 1:1 reveals that there are two offices in the Church; deacon, from the Greek word "diakonos," literally means "servant," and elder, from the Greek word "presbuteros." The first deacons were appointed in Acts 6, and qualifications

are spelt out in 1 Timothy 3:8-13. Some Bible translations refer to the Elder as Bishop or Overseer, e.g., in Acts 20:17; 28 (KJV), it uses “Elders,” while in verse 28, the same version uses “Bishop,” in Acts 20:17, NIV uses “Elders” while in verse 28, the same version uses “Overseers.” The title, “Elder,” refers to the dignity of the position; a position that carries much respect. The Presbyters or Elders were the leaders of a local congregation while the Deacon’s were people who are to assist with the needs of people in the church (the term “deaconess” basically stood for female deacons, while some people would even argue that “deaconess” simply meant wife of a deacon).

What is the Church?

The name “Church,” associated with God’s main institution on earth, has come through various backgrounds. Its development from the OT to the NT is clearly revealed in scriptures. In the current chapter, attention would be given to some of these as used in the NT, and then it would be appropriately connected to the OT in subsequent chapter(s).

By simple definition, the Church is the unified body of Christ upon the earth. It is not a human structure like a political or social institution. Rather, it is a divine organism with a divine founder and head; the Lord Jesus Christ. The Church “consists of all those in every place that profess their faith in Christ and obedience to Him in all things according to the scriptures, and that manifest the same by their tempers and conduct, and of none else can truly and properly called Christians.”⁸ In fact, all those who are led by the Spirit of God constitute this one unit of Christ called Church. The oneness of the Church in essence is seen in its spiritual body, hope, profession of faith, and also in baptism of the saints (Eph. 4:4-6).

The word that the Lord Jesus chose to describe this single unit of believers was an ancient Greek word, “ecclesia,” which

in Hebrew, is “gahal.”⁹ The term “ekklesia,” comes from two words; “ekk” which means “out of” and “lesia” which means “to call.” Together, the word is “to call out,” meaning that the Church stands for “the called out ones.” The word originally designated the regular assembly of the citizens in a free city state. The citizens were “called out” by the herald to transact the public business. In other words, the church represents those who have been called out from among other people of the world. Hence, the word “ecclesia,” i.e., the called out ones, is used for the church which is composed of those who have been called out of sin into righteousness; out of the world into God’s kingdom.

The English word “church” (and the cognate form “kirk”) are derived from the Greek word “kyriakon,” which means “belonging to the Lord.”¹⁰ Apostle Peter expresses this thought in 1 Peter 2:9, But ye are an elected race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, and a people for God’s own purpose...who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light. Clearly then, the Christian has been called through the gospel to come out from the world (2 Cor. 6:7, 18) and into Christ for the purpose of doing God’s biddings on earth. Therefore, the congregation of every church is God’s possession on earth for as long as they continue to live for God through the Lord Jesus.

Terms which refer to the Church

In Matthew 16:18-19, it is evident from the use of the terms such as “church” and “kingdom” that these terms might be quite interchangeable. “Church” and “kingdom” are used in a similar way in Colossian 1:13, where Apostle Paul speaks of the “kingdom of His dear Son.” Then in verse 18, without a break in thought, describes the same entity as “the body, the church.” These terms therefore denote the same body of people. It is the Lord Jesus who said, “I will build my Church...”

(Matt. 16:18); therefore the Church is His, and He is the builder of it. As a building, the church is composed of living stones with Christ himself as the Chief cornerstone (Acts 4:11, 12; Eph. 2:19, 20). Apostle Paul calls this building “the Church of the Living God” (1 Tim. 3:5).

The Church is also referred to as “the Bride of Christ” (Matt. 9:14, 15) which has been saved, sanctified and waiting for Christ, the Bridegroom (Eph. 2:25ff). The Church is also known as “the body of Christ” with many parts performing different functions, Christ Jesus himself being the Head of this body (Eph. 1:22, 23; 4:12; Col. 1:18; Rom. 12:5). Christ himself fills up this body because He purchased it with His own blood (Acts 20:28ff; 1 Pet. 1:18, 19). The church is also called “the flock of God,” with Jesus as the Good shepherd of the flock or Overseer of it (John 10:14). The first epistle of Paul to Timothy 3:15 refers to the church as “the household of God.” Here, it is seen a family and thus reminds the members that God Himself dwells among His people, because “the members of this family are all His sons, through faith in Christ...” (Gal. 3:26, 27).

Additionally, because the Lord Jesus was deemed by the early Christians to be the epitome of the God of Israel, the people called unto Him are referred to as “the people of God,” “a Holy nation, “Kingdom of priests,” with Christ Jesus himself as the High Priest (1 Pet. 2:9-10). Again, the believers are regarded as the people among whom God is present to an unprecedented degree and are therefore “the Temple of God’s Spirit” (1 Cor. 3:16:2; 6:16). Finally, the Church is described as “the Branches of the vine” where the Lord is the True vine, and the Father is the Gardener (John 15:1-6).

Generally, the ethical and pastoral significance of the Church varies according to the terms in which it is conceived or described, and the history of Christian reflection upon these terms has given rise to corresponding behaviors. In the NT, the

church had both local and a general significance. It referred both to the individual congregation and to the worldwide community of God's people. In Acts 5:11, it speaks of the church in Jerusalem. The term "church" may also however, refer to many congregations similar to the situation where Luke writes "...so the Church throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria had peace, being edified..." (Acts 9:31).

Often, Apostle Paul would address small groups as Christians meeting in people's homes (Rom. 16:3-5; Col. 4:15; Philemon 2). Yet Paul speaks of the Church in its broader sense: "Give no offense either to Jews or to Greeks or to the church of God..." (1 Cor. 10:32, NAS), and, "...But in case I am delayed, I write so that you may know how one ought to conduct himself in the household of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and support of the truth (1 Tim. 3:15, NAS). Thus, each congregation is a church in its community and also an integral part of the entire fellowship of Christians, merited to be referred to by any of the terms mentioned so far.

The Church spreads to the rest of the world

From the Day of Pentecost, when the Apostles and the other disciples received the promised Holy Spirit, the Church was born. They immediately accepted their role as God's agents of transformation and began to exert great influence. It became stronger and spread throughout in Jerusalem, and probably the whole region of Judea. It was at this time that the Jewish persecution of the Christians began. The conversion of Paul, which is mentioned about three times in the Bible occurred during the period of the Jewish persecution. Paul made at least three missionary journeys; first journey AD 47-49 (Acts 13:1-14:28); second journey AD 51-54 (Acts 15:40-18:22); and third journey AD 54-58 (Acts 18:32-21:19). An estimate is that between the death of Christ at AD 33 and 100

the Church grew from 120 disciples to about 500,000. This is a lot, but it was still only a fraction of the whole Roman Empire whose estimated population was about 100 million at the time.

From the Judea in the Middle East regions of Palestine through Asia and Europe, the transformational drive of the Church continued to speed up in spite of the numerous persecutions and serious challenges through the Dark ages and found its way into Africa and America. Now, the Church was permeating every culture of the many countries of the world in accordance with the Great Commission of Matthew 28:18-20. For a brief moment attention will be focused on the West Africa, particularly, Ghana, which is fast gaining grounds as 'the star of Christianity in Africa.'

The Church spreads to West Africa and beyond

The introduction of Christianity into the religious arena of the west coast of Africa by various transformational agents, missions, and organizations began even before her colonial years. But from the middle of the 20th Century, their influxes into this region and their activities have increased tremendously. They were powered by the zeal of God for transformation. The earliest known contact of Christianity with West Africa, particularly to the Ghana (then Gold Coast) and Nigeria is associated with the arrival of Prince Henry the Navigator (AD 1394-1460) in opening up some of the Coast of Africa, especially the west.

As a result of that earlier bold attempt to explore Africa, other Portuguese also sailed across the Atlantic and landed at the shores of Ghana in 1471, as a follow-up. They were then followed by the Dutch. Most of these early Europeans came as Christian missionaries and merchants. But Christianity did not have its desired impact as a result of several negative factors, notably, the high incidence of malaria. However the missionary

zeal was rekindled at the turn of the nineteenth century with groups like the Basel Mission, the Bremen Mission, and the Wesleyan Methodists, and later, the Roman Catholic missions, but they also had to leave because of similar difficulties.

The efforts of the early overseas missionaries were supplemented by those in the sub-region. Of particular mention is the work of 'Prophet' William Waddi Harris, whose transformational efforts led to the establishment of many spiritual churches. These became known as the Independent Churches, though some of these churches were established by the indigenous people themselves. According one source, Wade Harris, a Liberian, preached in Ivory Coast (now, Cote D'Ivoire), and that 100,000 were baptized through his work. He spent three months in southwestern Ghana in 1914 and converted 8,000 people.¹¹ As a result of this work, a number of Faith-healing churches were established.

There are clear indications that the Independent Church movement in West Africa and Africa in general represents a substantial development of Christianity quite different from the three main traditions of Christianity: Protestant, Roman Catholic, and Orthodox. By and large, this movement stresses an expression of Christianity within the African culture. "They affirm faith in Christ in traditional African forms."¹² There are also clear indications that majority of the indigenous churches and the independent churches still recognize the operation of the Holy Spirit's miraculous gifts, and there is no clear distinction in the use of the two testaments of the Bible.

Around the middle of the twentieth century saw the emergence of the Pentecostal Churches which came under the name of Apostolic Church. This later broke up into the various existing Pentecostal churches; the Church of Pentecost and the Apostolic Churches. It was within this context that missionaries from the Independent Christian Churches and Churches of

Christ which constitute the Restoration Movement (RM) also arrived. The last to enter the Christian arena in Ghana (not the least) is the Independent Charismatic Churches, which continue to spring up with each passing day. The spiritual situation of Ghanaians during the visit of one missionary is described as showing a spirit of happiness, enthusiasm for Bible study, financial independence and zeal for evangelism."¹³ It is from the premises described above that the church in Ghana developed.

But what is the general expectation of the church in the overall transformational purpose of God for humanity? Is the current church well positioned to perform such responsibility? Should the church itself undergo transformation in order to serve perform same role to the rest of the world? Are there some people who should accept the challenge to spearhead God excellent vision? The next chapter will delve into these questions.

CHAPTER 4

GOD'S EXPECTATION OF THE CHURCH IS TRANSFORMATION

In the previous chapter, lots of issues were discussed about the Church and terms that refer to it, some of which reveal or describe God's intention for its establishment. The establishment of the Nation of Israel is indicative of these two important elements; that God's Kingdom should come, and the need for His will to be done on earth even as it is in Heaven. In teaching His disciples how to pray, and even in His prayer, the Lord Jesus Christ did not miss the opportunity to show the covenant community of NT believers the need for the two elements. God's objective was going to materialize through the process of transformation that the Lord himself would bring. Thus, the mission of John the Baptist was to prepare the way for a smooth take-off of God's Kingdom on earth; that of the Lord Jesus was to bring it into reality. Since the time of the Lord, the Kingdom He established is still growing and advancing and so it shall continue to be until it is fully ready for eternal inheritance by the great King.

Relationship between the OT Israel and the NT Church

In relation to the NT Church fully established from the Day of Pentecost, the OT Covenant community of Israel constitutes the Church of God in the era. Stephen, one of the deacons, referred to the children of Israel in the OT as God's assembly or congregation in the wilderness (Acts 7:35). Just as the Israelites were called out of Egypt to become God's chosen people, so the church today is a type of Israel in the wilderness, called out for God's purpose. Quite a lot of comparison could be made between these two congregations.

While the OT community of Israel was born on a covenant based on circumcision of the flesh, Apostle Paul argues that the NT Church of the Lord Jesus Christ constitutes the circumcision that worships God in the spirit (Philip. 3:3).

Thus the OT covenant community can be equated to or is equivalent to the NT covenant community called “the Church.” For example, Deuteronomy 23:1-2 refers to the covenant community of Israel as God’s congregation, and this has no reference to heaven. Also, both congregations were saved by a blood sacrifice; the OT Church by the year-old lamb on the eve of the Passover in Egypt and the NT Church by the Lamb of God, Jesus Christ, on the eve of Passover celebration at Jerusalem. For both, a special covenant was established; the Sinai covenant between God and Israel (Exod. 20; Num. 10:10) and the NT covenant between The Lord Jesus Christ and the disciples on the eve of His crucifixion (Matt. 26:26-28; 1 Cor. 10:23-26). Therefore persons in all these groups could have been redeemed by turning to God and meeting His demands like others.

God has never turned down a penitent sinner of these classes or any other. He loves the whole world and will save all who turn to Him with all their hearts, repent and call upon His name...¹⁴ This group of persons were those referred to in transformational terms as the “salt” and the “light” when Jesus was describing the character of His followers in Matthew 5:13-16:

You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled by men. You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let

your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven (Matt. 5:13).

In the objective of the Lord Jesus Christ, His believers and followers were nothing but the true transformational agents of God to the world. Of course, the Church has played this role over the years. Unfortunately, it has been grappled with lots of challenges that are militating against the ultimate purposes of God, and the 21st Century Church is no exception.

Diagnosis of some churches today

Over the centuries, the advancing transformational agents of the Kingdom of God have met lots of challenges from the opposing kingdom of darkness. This notwithstanding, the continuous excellent work of the Spirit of God has kept the Church on her forward march till date. God's transformational plans have always provided clear awareness of the situation of His people and a call for a revival to reestablish the Kingdom vision, mission, and principles. Usually, the common cycle of development pattern of the covenant community is: revival, growth, a state of plateau, a decline and back to the beginning. This picture is not different from what happened with the covenant community of Israel, i.e., the Church, in the OT times.

As discussed in the earlier chapters, both the OT and NT Churches are covenanted community of people that God has chosen for Himself (the difference lies in the types of covenants; in fact the Old has given way to the New). Like the OT Church, there are so many NT developing churches in many communities of the world that are faced with a lot of challenges that have greatly affected their proper growth patterns. In the light of such a cycle, there is pressing need for transformation for a lot of our churches. But before any such attempt, there is need for such general assessment and

diagnosis of the current situation before any genuine and positive changes and proper transformation can be effective.

While majority of orthodox churches today exist as branches of either the Roman Catholic or the mainline Protestant churches, quite a good number of present day churches sprang up as a faction group from such bodies, as a result of various reasons, or were begun through effort of some individuals as supposedly led by God. There are some that began from grassroots either in the capitals or through the formation of branches which begun in some of the regional and district capitals of the country. Irrespective of their beginning, quite a number of these churches are undergoing transformation the world over, using West Africa and particularly Ghana as a typical case. Lots of these churches these churches which begin in the capital cities make great strides in terms of qualitative and quantitative growth before they expand to the hinterland.

On the other hand, the roads to progress for some of the churches have been plagued by series of difficulties and a myriad of negativities. Thus, these churches, whether in urban and rural communities which are not experiencing the needed growth. For some years, they hardly experience any measurable qualitative and quantitative growth. That is, the state of these community churches does not portray a healthy growth. Like Israel in the period of the Judges, some leaders will recall amidst joy and pains the kind of vision, zeal, and commitment with which their churches and ministries began and the kind of sacrifices that have been demonstrated so far in the pursuit of their vision. Calculating from the amount of money, time, energy, and other resources invested in some of the churches and ministries till date, many should have been streets ahead of the present.

Sometimes, with the exception of the very early years of their establishments, some of the churches never witness any measurable growth and expansion, or their rate of growth is relatively slow. Such churches cannot boast of strength in terms of congregation, material resources or facilities, or economic background or ties, and any genuine estimation should reveal that some of such churches are several years behind progress. Furthermore, they usually show heavy signs of decline and the way forward seems quite bleak. Majority of such churches are not able to disentangle themselves from their predicaments such that they remain sick, stunted, and suffer cracks over a longer period of time.

One of the reasons is that some of the churches have a very weak financial base and limited resources to run effectively. Consequently, there is very little motivation for paid staff, no zeal in the volunteer team, and a gradual loss of enthusiasm in the members. Additionally, some of the spiritual issues that are discussed and emphasized during Bible study or preached to the congregation do not translate into increase in membership strength of the branches. It is therefore not surprising that some of the branches of such churches have seen static numbers over a long period of time. One cannot conclude that the mentioned characteristics are only peculiar to one church; they are issues which the Bible is not silent on, but mentions them as a form of 'cancer' that can affect any church anywhere and anytime.

It is also appropriate to mention here that some of the churches are never able to wean themselves of such negativities as common in the "world." For example, there have been series of leadership-leadership, leadership-membership, and most often membership-membership divisions rather than cohesion. In some churches nowadays it is not uncommon to find nepotism being practiced. Other vices such as factionalism,

bickering and petty squabbles, backbiting and the like, which war against unity and harmony of all human societies are very common in the churches nowadays.

A major weakness of some of the churches is their unpreparedness to launch out with strategies to bring about a turning point for better. Maybe, there are certain specific methods which the church has not identified in order to bring the needed growth and expansion. Though the years are passing by and the clock of life continues to tick yet there is very little progress to be proud of. It is only those without spiritual eyes that will not see that the zest in some churches and ministries is fading and that something has to be done to save the situation. It is a little wonder that some churches which might be celebrating twentieth anniversaries cannot boast of a total membership of even two-hundred at their branches. In some cases one is tempted to believe that the leaders involved appear to be content with the state of the church. The reason is that very little attempts are made to lift the church from its present slumber.

Unfortunately, some of these situations have not been helped by the whole church since things appear as if there is a general lack of ideas to push the church forward; at worse, there appears to be some kind of complacency. Honestly it is hard for some leaders to tell what stage of metamorphosis their churches have reached in its life-cycle after many years. Most probably, those with “eyes of excellence” can help with a diagnosis of the situation and direction of their churches. That is, most of the churches in our communities have become stunted, sick, and are at the brink of **b-r-e-a-k-i-n-g**. But the truth is that the shine in the dynamic process of some churches or ministries have began to dim.

The unhealthy situations of some of the churches continue to make some leaders of churches and related institutions feel quite uneasy and more often than not, become disappointed. The end point is that some churches and ministry have come to a stage in their journey which can be likened to the Israelites in the wilderness; spending many years in a journey that could have been made in a relatively short time, as a result of their lack of a “can do spirit.” Only God understands the feelings of the leaders of such ministry and what they wish to achieve. But such desperation cannot continue forever.

There is need for the Church to wake up!

It is quite surprising that irrespective of the numerous challenges, a big plus for most of today's churches is the faith and hope of the members for a future progress. In fact, most leaders, and even entire congregations of churches are very optimistic that ‘one day’ the Lord will turn things around for their churches to see growth and expansion. Most congregations continue to hope for a period when things will improve and plans piled from the numerous church leadership meetings to be implemented. The church has now reached a situation where transformation to the next level of its development is not negotiable; it is a must.

God's expectation for the body of Christ on earth is for it to undergo the changes that will satisfy His purposes. But the question is, ‘when will the expected transformations happen and how? The answer is simple; “there is an urgent need for someone to bring about real transformation of the Church.” It begins when somebody is prepared to accept the challenge to become God's transformational leader. It begins with the mind.

CHAPTER 5

TO SEE TRANSFORMATION, YOU NEED A CHANGE OF MIND

The biblical idea of transformation is what the Spirit of God through Apostle Paul communicated to the Church in his Letter to the Romans. In chapter 12:2, it reads: “And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God” (KJV). For a Christian, therefore, understanding core issues related to transformation is very important in order to enjoy “the good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.” For the passage in the context to become meaningful there are some issues that have to be understood. The Bible emphatically mentions that the whole process of transformation begins with the mind. When this part of the body is transformed it affects the entire body. It is the same for every unit or organization; when the leader(s) set transformation in motion it permeates the whole system.

No matter the present situation of any person, church, or organization, Bill Hull brings some message of hope. He believes that such an institution can be transformed into a growing and a healthy one if people (possible referring to the leadership) commit themselves to a set of convictions and strategies.¹⁵ We need to strengthen ourselves and be determined in the mind to transform our situations, in accordance with the saying that “where there is determination failure cannot dismantle the flag of success.” What the church needs are just the necessary ingredients that can lead to change, a positive one, the kind of change that will transform the image of people totally. The change we are expecting is not

just for the sake of it. It is the type that will make the church a healthy place for the members to experience spiritual fulfillment, and every aspect of the church has to be affected by this change.

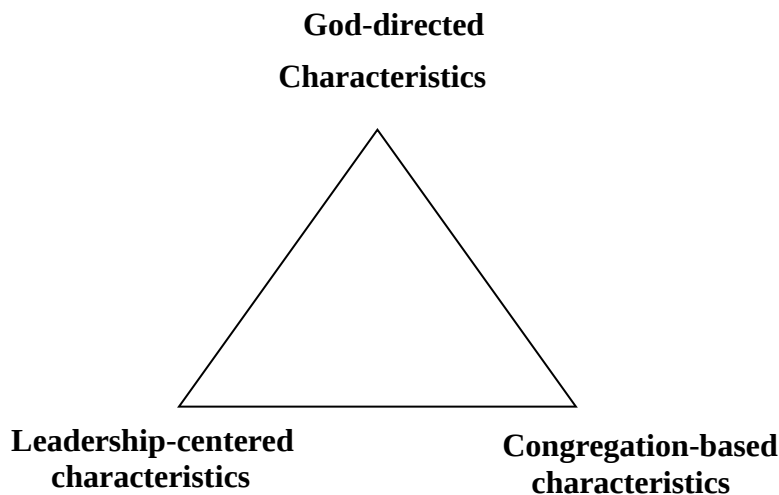
Thinking of a child, what parents do to make it grow is that their regular provision of nourishment, care, nurture and discipline, and the protection that it needs. With these essential ingredients, growth of the child becomes a normal process. Christian A. Schwarz calls this type of natural growth “all by itself,” and implies that every church has the potential for a similar growth if it will let “God's growth forces” within to flourish.¹⁶ When the church is doing the things taught in Scripture, the church will grow.

What makes a growing and healthy church?

To begin our journey towards change, the question of what a healthy church is should be well understood. Then attention will be shifted to a detail discussion of some of the major characteristics of an unhealthy church with the aim of transforming them into healthy ones. It shall be, because “with God all things are possible” (Matt. 19:26). A healthy church is not one with a large congregation of say, 25,000, or over, or one that worships in a large auditorium with modern facilities. It is not the one that is able to pay or support its staff (or workers) with large sums of money. Neither is it the one which is very popular in a community nor one with facilities to broadcast their programs statewide (or nationwide). All the above might not singly qualify a church as healthy.

It is positive transformation that makes a church healthy. Schwarz describes some quality characteristics which can bring about church growth and health. For purposes of easy elucidation and assimilation, some of the characteristics to be

considered have been grouped into three major areas; God-directed characteristics, Leadership-centered characteristics, and Congregation-based characteristics.¹⁷



The relationship among the three areas mentioned by Schwarz in a Healthy Church

The diagram on the previous page shows how the three areas the bring transformation relate to one another in a healthy church. Together, these areas serve as the three-prong solution. The first and second will be treated in the subsequent chapters respectively; the last will be treated in a latter chapter. But before these are well understood, the mind which is the center of action must be rightly oriented in accordance with Romans 12:2.

Be prepared to confront the situation

Any mind that appreciates transformation also accepts that all organizations can be boosted up only through the institution of certain pragmatic measures. Scripture says: "The people who know their God shall be strong and do exploits" (Dan. 11:32, KJV). God's design to transform the world was to

begin with one person and through him a whole nation as a showcase to all other nations. Similarly, what should challenge anybody in leadership position or confronted by negative situation and wants to rise up to the occasion, is readiness to bring out hope from a near hopeless situation. Such a one can begin to see a very bright future in the situation (church ministry or any institution), irrespective of how the present condition is. People who demonstrate in practice their willingness to envisage and pursue transformation are to be greatly admired.

There is the need to do a thorough investigation of some important issues of every church or Christian organization. For example, its greatest area of strength as an organization, its strategic vision and mission, membership strength, whether decision taken and implementation does not lie in the domain of just a single individual or a body, its financial strength, etc. Other important areas which require proper attention in order for any church to grow well and become healthy must also be analyzed for proper positive action. That might be the genesis of how God's transformational agents emerge. What is important is to map out steps in order to implement the key characteristics discussed in this book. I know it will not be easy, but with right application of what are outlined in this book, backed by the power of the Holy Spirit and determination, anyone who accepts the challenge can make a difference.

There is hope for your ministry

For a start, see yourself as God's transformational leader. Indeed, that is just what you are. Just accept the challenge and **prepare your mind for action**, as Apostle Peter advises (1 Pet. 1:13). Note also that different methods, styles, and behavior patterns have been evolved by people in dealing with life problems. There are people who acknowledge problems but will not confront them. Such people for lack of

boldness and means to face and overcome these problems tend to overlook them and behave as if they do not exist. Some are able to identify the problems but prefer to sweep them under carpet where others will not see that they exist. Still, others make attempts to solve such life problems but choose cheap or mediocre processes so that their comfort zones are not affected. There are other approaches.

Whatever there may be, one of the best approaches is the one that usually confronts the situation head-on. Confrontation is one of the means by which a lot of people seek clarity of issues that affect them. It is a key that opens the door of awareness and subsequently leads to transformation. Thus people should think of it as an important tool in shaping society. Confrontation is not shouting at people or venting of one's spleen on another, or writing anonymous letters to tarnish somebody's hard-won reputations. Rather, it seeks to bring order, and is a tool for transformation and development. Confrontation usually comes with assertiveness. Thus, some people think that not being confrontational means one is a person of peace and unity. Therefore, some see those who confront issues as rubble-rousers and trouble-makers, and perceived them as not being team players. But it is not so.

The Bible is replete with confrontations. Many issues of the Bible are meant to confront the sin and lives of mankind. God confronted Adam and Eve on what they have done (Gen. 3:11-19); God confronted Cain when the latter did not understand why his offering has been rejected, (Gen. 4:6-7); Moses was sent to confront Pharaoh, the king of Egypt in order to set the Israelites free, (Exod. 3:10); David confronted King Saul for seeking to destroy him without a cause, and King Saul consequently repented of his mischief and withdrew (1 Sam. 24:1-22); Prophet Nathan confronted King David after the King impregnated Bathsheba, the wife of Uriah, and master-

minded the death of the man (2 Sam. 11-12); Prophet Elijah confronted King Ahab for the death of Naboth, the Jezreelite (1 Kings 21:1-28); Samuel, Daniel, Ezra, Nehemiah and a host of other true prophets of God. Fact is the Old Testament is replete of examples of people who confronted the challenging situations of their day.

Even in the New Testament (NT), the Lord Jesus Christ himself, the Master revolutionary, had to confront a lot of situations in His days; He confronted all the inhuman applications of Judaism, the hypocritical practices of the Sanhedrin, Herod, those who were materially rich but not towards God, and even demons that had taken control of people. As a matter of fact, confrontation is one of the effective trademarks of the Lord's ministry, because He confronted every order that challenged the perfect will of God for mankind. It also became a necessary tool for upholding the principles of the Church of the apostolic age. For example, Apostle Paul openly confronted Peter, who was a senior in the apostolic call because the latter had not behaved appropriately towards the gentile brethren in the presence of the circumcision team that had come from James (Gal. 2:11-21).

People who fail to confront issues but at the same time turn round to complain can best be described as hypocrites. They want to be perceived as good, peace-makers, team-players, very understanding, accommodating, and the like. Such people are usually interested in taking a compromised position. However, one scholar on why Christians must be ready to confront issues that are perceived to be unclear to them said, "...Those who are prepared to confront should also be prepared for the cost because confrontation does not come without a price."¹⁸ If people realize that you are positively confrontational, they either hate you because they are not prepared for change or love you for it.

No doubt, the Lord is looking for people who will not just compromise and concur. He has not given believers the spirit of weakness, timidity, but that of boldness so that they can confront irrespective of the fact that it is costly. In order to see change in our workplaces and church, there is the need for a change of the status-quo. The aim is to overcome the problem in the most excellent way, and striving for excellence therefore becomes the over-riding factor. It's been observed that in most of such cases, the overall effect of any excellent confrontation is a series transformation. Little wonder, it has been observed that transformational leaders are those who are able to meet challenges boot-for-boot and never give up until they overcome. In such head-to-head collision there is bound to be a casualty, and in this circumstance the weaker of the two.

Though different people confront their challenges in very peculiar ways, yet there appears to be a general trend that runs through the approach. That is, people realize the need for God's direction or intervention, prompting the leadership to the need for activeness, and calling on the people for change. The first and the third have common features; the objects of the action do not offer resistance. Seeking God's will and favor in the midst of challenging situations is a common characteristic of people who are sensitive to His sovereignty in the affairs of men. God has always been willing to transform humanity for good and is always in that business. Thus, every true Israelite who had respect for God's covenant with the patriarch was sensitive to this need. In like manner, such sensitivities should be felt, and even much more by believers of the NT dispensation who have the benefit of scriptures as a guide. On the other hand people will always accept a call for change provided it is positive enough to reflect in their lives.

Unfortunately and not surprisingly, the challenge on leaders to change has turned out to be quite a difficult task

because of the personalities involved. It is not uncommon for people in leadership position to resist change, especially, if it is not their brainchild. If such call for change even comes from co-leaders, it is sometimes relevantly considered. But if the prompting is from down to top, then it becomes an affront. While a few who understand the complex web of transformational developments may welcome such calls, others may resist or ignore it, and even try to make scapegoats of such attempts. To them, being a leader means they should be seen as leading in everything. But this position is wrong, as was excellently revealed by Elihu in Job 32:6-10. God can use anybody to initiate transformation. For a good number of churches, the slogan should be “transformation now or never.”

As a matter of fact, being ready to face life’s challenges is where the call for transformation becomes paramount. Lots of leaders who love to enjoy the fruits of transformation and experience the benefit of it would never rest until their expectations are fulfilled. As have been stressed already, positive transformation begins with the mind to confront existing unacceptable situations. With the mind made up, the next step would be the need for the person to understand leadership-related characteristics as would be seen in the subsequent chapter.

CHAPTER 6

YOU HAVE TO UNDERSTAND LEADERSHIP-RELATED CHARACTERISTICS

No proper transformation can occur in any institution without effective and proper leadership. Therefore, much attention would be turned to the importance of identifying and empowering the leadership of institutions, particularly churches and para-church organizations. The attempt is to relate the ongoing discussion to the transformation of their lives and that of their ministries. Concrete evidence of transformations in people's lives and organizations occur only under effective leadership and proper understanding of the role of leadership.

It is a common observation that those that follow other followers most likely end up as followers, but those who follow some type of leaders are likely to be transformed into the same. Since iron sharpens another iron, it is little wonder that the leader you follow today will surely determine what and who you are and will be tomorrow (Num. 13:25-14:2). This is what the Lord himself said about some leaders and why people should be careful when following them: "...You must obey them and do everything they tell you. But do not do what they do, for they do not practice what they preach...Everything they do is done for men to see...they love the place of honor..." (Matt. 23:2)

It's been observed that God doesn't hold only the leadership responsible but also the people "who love to have them." What this means is that people are held responsible for following a particular type of leader. What the Lord was and still communicating to believers from the above text is that they should be careful who they choose to follow in life as their leader(s). While some leaders are genuine; others are hypocrites. Commenting on the attitude of leaders, one Bible

teacher described the hypocritical characteristics of some leaders as follows:

...They demand respect; seek praise of men; parade their religion; seek chief places in church; glory in titles; are zealous to win men to their sect and not to God; profess to be the only guide in religion, but are blind to truth and practical Christianity; propagate those parts of religion from which they receive most personal gain and honor...¹⁹

When it comes to discussion of measures to transform any institution like the church into a growing and healthy one, the issue of leadership must be at the center. As such, it is very important to devote considerable attention to the subject of who a leader is and what is expected of them.

What is Leadership?

Are you a leader? Before answering this question it is important to understand who a leader is and why there is the need for leaders. Who is a leader and how do leaders evolve or emerge? Leadership may be defined in various ways. Let us consider the following definitions by some scholars.²⁰

- Banks and Ledbetter: Leadership involves a person, group, or organization who shows the way in an area of life—whether in the short- or the long-term—and in doing so both influences and empowers enough people to bring about change in that area.
- Barna: A leader is one who mobilizes; one whose focus is influencing people; a person who is goal driven; someone who has an orientation in common with those who rely upon him for leadership; and someone who has people willing to follow them.
- Engstrom: The concept of leader...means one who guides activities of others and who himself acts and performs to bring those activities about. He is capable of performing acts which

will guide a group in achieving objectives. He takes the capacities of vision and faith, has the ability to be concerned and to comprehend, exercises action through effective and personal influence in the direction of an enterprise and the development of the potential into the practical and/or profitable means.

- Everist and Nesson: Leadership [is] the art of mobilizing people to make progress on the hardest problems.
- Hunter: [Leadership is] the skills of influencing people to enthusiastically work toward goals identified as being for the common good, with character that inspires confidence.
- Maxwell: Leadership is influence—nothing more, nothing less.
- Munroe: Leadership is the capacity to influence others through inspiration motivated by a passion, generated by a vision, produced by a conviction, ignited by a purpose.
- Wright: Leadership is a relationship—a relationship in which one person seeks to influence the thoughts, behaviours, beliefs or values of another person.
- Blackaby and Blackaby: Spiritual leadership is moving people on to God's agenda.
- Clinton: Leadership is a dynamic process in which a man or woman with God-given capacity influences a specific group of God's people toward His purposes for the group.

With the exception of the last two definitions, the rest give a general insight into what leadership means. But from all the, Christian leadership can be narrowed and defined simply as the process by which a person or group of persons influence another to achieve goals that will satisfy God's purposes.

There are people everywhere but not leaders; i.e., leaders are not everywhere. Leaders are not just born or made; leadership is a decision (Matt. 4:19, NLT). They are people who have decided to truly transform themselves in order to do things differently from other people.

People who cultivate the decision to perform better usually become leaders. But not every successful person is a leader because leadership is more than just success. Thus success is not an index of leadership. Leaders are persons of character, i.e., people who decide to live on their character. This means that leaders do not stand on their feet but on their character. Character is so important in leadership because leaders chart the course for their followers. To be a leader, you must be a follower. Great leaders are people who are great followers.²¹

For example, fishermen like Peter, James, and John, who were unschooled (Matt. 4:18-20; cf. Acts 4:13) and other ordinary people who genuinely responded to the Lord's call, "Come follow me" ended up being transformed to continue the process of transformation.

There is also a perception that leadership is linked to birth, however it has not been easy to discover a particular trait that solely establishes people to be leaders. This is to say that people qualify as leaders under different circumstances. Different categories of leaders may be mentioned here. These include:

- Leaders by people's choice (people's leaders): these are people who are called or chosen by men to be their leaders in society. That is a natural thing that happens in life every day.
- Leaders by birth (born leaders).
- Leaders by training (trained leaders).
- Leaders by "Special calling" (called leaders). This category represents people whose leadership roles are understood as by divine direction. Such leaders are usually common in religious organizations.

Leadership, according to one Bible teacher may also be defined as follows:

- Positional leaders.
- Situational leaders.

It is important to note here that not everybody can be a positional leader but everybody can be a situational leader.²²

Nations, institutions, churches, families, etc., all have their kind of leadership they demand. Generally, it is leadership that seals the destiny of people (Num. 14:22, 23). Leadership has always been recognized by society as necessary functionary part for effective organization and fruitful results. A nation, church, or any institution rises or falls through its leadership (Jer. 12:10, 11). In the scheme of God, therefore, the role of leaders has always been an important integral part of His relationship with mankind. In life it is prudent for everyone to consider himself/herself as a potential leader and begin to function as such in any small way. Such a bold step sets the stage for the person to begin nurturing and developing leadership qualities and matures in it, bearing in mind the saying that “once a leader, always a leader.”

Which leadership category do you belong to? It is important to note that each of the categories may have its own strengths and weaknesses so every leader should be able to assess his or her leadership basis. It has been observed that three factors promote leadership; the leader, follower, and the situation. Depending upon whichever factor of these that increases, it will enhance the performance of the leadership. In the same way, if any of these fails it will negatively impact upon the performance of the leader.

Mathematically:

$$\textbf{Successful Leadership = Leader + Followers + Situation}$$

This notwithstanding, the most important aspect of the leadership is its ability to bring about a transformation that can be evaluated as ‘positive.’ Transformational leadership is what God and the human society is looking for and they are the

types that bring blessings to the Church in particular and mankind in general. Such leaders seek to empower others for continuity of their vision or duties.

Types of leadership: bad and good ones

Leadership can be looked at from different angles; the leader's point of view and that of the follower. Whichever way one looks at it, there are good leaders as well as bad ones depending upon the way a person does the leading. Spiritual leaders are not appointed by God to exercise autocratic powers over the Church or group. In fact, leadership is not Lordship but service (1 Peter 5:2-3).

A good leader is concerned with feeding the flock (Jer. 3:15; 23:3, 4); a bad one is concerned about fleecing the flock (Micah 3:10, 11). A godly leader seeks responsibility whereas a wicked leader seeks authority. Examples of good leaders in the Bible are Abraham, Joseph, Moses, Joshua, David, Daniel, Paul, Barnabas, etc. Examples of bad leaders in the Bible are King Saul, King Ahab, King Rehoboam, Judas Iscariot, etc. Apostle John discussed the issue of bad leadership by the example shown by Diotrephes (3 John 9-11). The "Diotrephes spirit" is the spirit that won't receive other brethren, that is, those outside one's church or group. He is the kind of a leader who always seeks to dominate. Such people should not be encouraged; believers are under no obligation to follow an evil leadership. One of the ways God disciplines erring leaders is when discerning people stop following them.

Another example of bad leadership is revealed in the life of Abimelech, the son of Gideon, one of the Judges of Israel (Judges 9:1-57). He was not a judge in the style presented in the Bible book of Judges and therefore did not deliver the country from any oppressor. His life showed that God's choices and actions bring peace whilst man's choices and actions

without God's spirit bring anarchy and utter destruction. Perhaps, inspired by his father's kingly lifestyle, and convinced that he had to inherit his father because of the name he was given, Abimelech took steps to fulfill his personal ambitions of being a king: he got his relatives' support and used them to convince the leaders of Shechem to look to him for leadership rather than the other sons of Gideon. He engaged in a ritual murder of 69 sons of Gideon at Ophrah. Abimelech's reign was a big disaster for Israel and is a typical example of wrong people that are raised up and thrust into leadership positions.

After the United Kingdom of Israel became split into two; the Northern Kingdom (Israel) and the Southern one (Judah), a lot of people ascended the throne as their kings. In the case of the former kingdom, none of the kings was evaluated as good. In fact, all of them, from Jeroboam who set up two shrines at Dan in the northern part of the Kingdom and Bethel at the south to the last king, Hoshea, under whose reign the Northern Kingdom was taken into captivity by the Assyrian, demonstrated bad leadership before God. The reason is that these kings did not bring any positive transformation in the covenant relationship that God had established with the people. For the Southern Kingdom, only the ones who directed their efforts at bringing the covenant people back to obedience to God were acknowledged by the scriptures as good because they "walked in the ways of the Lord and followed David their father." Examples are Jehoshaphat, Hezekiah, and Josiah.

In the New Testament church, a typical example of a right leader is Timothy. In Philippians 2:19-23, Apostle Paul testified about Timothy that he has a sense of responsibility, cared for the people, never sought his own interest but those of the people of God, and did not seek for pompous titles and prestige but looks for opportunities to serve. Another example of a good leader is Demetrius. John, the beloved Apostle, wrote

about Demetrius that he has a spirit that shows acceptance and willingness to promote God's people and not personal or family interest (3 John 12). This is a demonstration of good leadership.

Choice of leaders

Is the choice of leaders God's will or by a man's plan? Because of lack for values and understanding of the important position and role of leaders, a lot of such people are pushed for leadership positions to serve the personal interest of others, particularly, of those who pushed them up. True leaders are ordained and appointed by God Himself; His choice of leaders should not be done through clear demonstrations of nepotism. God uses His own appointed leaders to direct His people; the church. Looking at the case of the United Israel in the Bible, even though it is the people who at a point in time requested for a king, the choice of the one was made by God Himself. Prophet Samuel, fully assured from the Lord that Saul was to be Israel's first king, anointed him at Ramah. At a religious gathering summoned by the prophet at Mizpah, lots were cast which fell on Saul by tribe, clan, family and house. The Lord gave public demonstration of what he had already decided; to remove any doubts and complaints about the divine choice.

Saul was presented to the people as their king after being pulled from his hiding place among the supplies. At this all the people including worthy and mighty men whose hearts God had touched acclaimed him king and presented him with gifts. The valiant men accompanied him to his headquarters in Gibeah. Only some worthless men rejected him and showed their disapproval by open contempt and by refusing to bring gifts to the new king (1 Sam 9-10:20-27). Such skeptics were later proved wrong after King Saul's first victory by saving

the people of Ramoth-gilead. Though the reign of King Saul became a disaster yet none can question the divine choice.

Values of leadership

Leaders are stewards of the values and the basic assumptions of the group the person leads. Values here are the factors that are considered to be important and necessary for the well being of a person, a group or an organization. In most cases, the values are written, but sometimes they are not. It is apparent that what almost every organization and people in general expects to see in a person cuts across many areas. Whether written or not, values like faithfulness, integrity, a good sense of responsibility and accountability, and an acceptable moral standard, etc, are generally accepted as necessary ingredients required for productivity and the creation of a healthy culture everywhere. Whether it is a church, educational institution, or a business organization, some of these values cannot be compromised, and any attempt to do so might lead to a collapse of the organization.

God also requires the same kind of values from people in their roles as His stewards of creation. One of these, being mindful of and able to deal with time, is a great mark of any transformational leader. Life is time and time is life. Thus the Bible talks about how time has to be discerned and used wisely by redeeming or making the most of it in life (Eph. 5:15-16). On the whole, a major characteristic of leadership is the issue of principles. The truth is every leader should be guided by some principles. For the Christian, these should never be personal ones but biblical. No matter what principles they may be, they should sum up and model that of the Lord Jesus Christ. He is the only perfect example for everyone, at every time, and everywhere.

Another important value is boldness (or courage). It is one of the greatest challenges to leadership; that is, the ability to speak or defend the truth always. The reason is that most leaders are not bold to confront truth so they usually find themselves not telling the truth. It is prudent to ask yourself whether you are a transformational leader or praying to become one, and whether you are a leader by God's choice or by man.

Cost of Leadership

It is prudent for every individual to assess the weight of a responsibility before any attempt is made to bear it. This will help you to overcome surprises, complaints, and/or disappointments along the way (1 Chron. 21:23-24; Luke 9: 63; 14:28-30). Leadership in general is expensive because it involves everything about the organization. Every organization rises and falls on leadership. For church leaders, it involves being in charge of the life of priceless souls; saints who have been redeemed only by "the precious blood of the Lamb." It is not surprising that people who do not realize how much leadership will cost them often fail.

Let me ask a very personal question here, "Did you realize how much it would cost you before you accepted leadership role?" Your answer will reveal your perception of leadership and help you to appreciate this discussion. Cost in leadership here means the price one has to pay, or a sacrifice that one has to make, or areas one might incur losses. Possible areas that cost most leaders include their intellectual abilities, money or material resources, time (or availability) and interest, natural strength or energy (manpower), self-respect or self-importance, relationship and association, etc. For faithful leaders, their service to the Lord should cost them to the greatest extent, or to the point of fullest satisfaction, or better still to the point of producing results as required by God.

Leaders also pay the price of their commitments when they pursue a definite vision and don't just follow or chase the wind. Such people usually come against great opposition for following a certain course of action but they do not give up until they follow through with their excellent visions successfully. Leaders pay the price of their commitments to God when they see every sacrifice as part of the treasures they are laying up in heaven. The investment you do in people today may come to you tomorrow (Matt. 6:19-21; Eccl. 11:1-2). As there is always value for a good investment, so whoever does not reap after sowing has suffered a loss (Ps. 126:5-6). Thus leaders should be able to see results coming out of their hard labor in ministry. To be a leader is not an easy thing but an expensive responsibility, however with determination of purpose the demands of the service can be fulfilled no matter the cost.

Attitude of leadership

Right attitude, no doubt, is a requirement of any true transformational leadership. The saying goes that a person's attitude in life ultimately determines his or her altitude. Attitude is connected to character and clearly it is the former that reveals the latter. While character is a hidden trait attitude is the opposite; what a person shows outside. Attitudes mostly have to do with the mind; it is a person's mental conceptions that give birth to bodily actions. In fact, scripture says that "as he (i.e., a person) thinks within himself, so is he" (Prov. 23:7, NAS), i.e., a person's thoughts control his or her behavior. Attitude can be positive or negative. Thus people's gifts and abilities can lift them up to high levels but character and attitude are important ingredients to maintain them there.

Every leader's thoughts and behavior to ministry will have a bearing on the extent of success because people's attitude towards life usually determines their extent of success.

In fact, a leader's attitude to ministry is a very important tool for shaping the skills and abilities of his followers (Philip. 4:13; 3:14). The type of leader one is today will determine the kind of people he or she will raise tomorrow. So how do leaders function? Is a good leader the one whose attitude is to succeed alone, or the one who combines the strength of others to succeed?

In order to fully pay the price of leadership (i.e. meet the cost of leadership) a person should have the attitude of opening up to other people to receive help. Example is what Moses demonstrated when the Israelites, upon crossing the Red Sea, were engaged in a battle with the Amalekites (Exod. 17:8-14). Moses trusted other people, Joshua, Aaron, and Hur, to help him overcome these very experienced wilderness fighters. This example tells leaders that it is selfish to try to do God's work alone, and it is advisable to share your dreams and vision with people to bring them in. They usually use a team and don't build a one-man-theatre.

One attitude of leadership worthy of emulation is a deep desire for qualitative and measurable change. Such people have been able to overcome the eight-word sentence of most conservatives, "This is how we have been doing it always," in the light of imminent changes. Holding on to tradition can be both a blessing and a curse. Rather, being ever ready to accept criticism they embrace changes and ideas that meet the challenges of the modern world.

Having the prescribed attitude within a particular situation is vital for positive impact in one's life and that of others. For example, being able to confront challenging situations and taking bold decisions, being able to carry the vision of God through to the end, and having the nerves to effect necessary changes are all qualities of leadership that can bring good results or lead to the desired destination. A typical example is

the case of the twelve (12) leaders that Moses sent to spy out the land of Canaan and bring report to the congregation of Israel (Num. 13 and 14). One should be able to contrast the attitude of the ten (10) spies with that of the two (2), Joshua and Caleb, and make a choice. After God's dealing with them over a period of time He was expecting a change in attitude in them, but they disappointed Him (Num. 14:22-23). Ten (10) of the twelve spies failed as leaders and what they did had a bearing on their followers.

Leaders must realize that not all attitudes help in ministry. Some of the best attitudes that can help you to succeed in Christian ministry are:

- **A Servant mental attitude**, i.e., a servant-leader: The ability to serve others starts with mastering to see and accept others as better than ones' self. Thus a good leader serves others and does not demand service unnecessarily.
- **A positive mental attitude**, i.e., a winning mind: This has to do with assuring yourself of victory continuously (Num. 13:30). A steadfast mental attitude, i.e., a faithful mind. This has to do with holding on to your beliefs or principles (Acts 21:22-24).
- **A focused mental attitude**, i.e., a stable mind: This has to do with overcoming all disruptions and having only the goal in mind (Philip. 3:13-14; cf. Matt. 14:28-31). Focus on solving today's challenges by the day while at the same time looking for opportunities for tomorrow. It is important to set achievable goals that are guided by deadlines.
- **A determined mental attitude**, i.e., an unyielding mind: Determination comes from two words; "de" and "terminate," that is, to prevent stoppage of a process. Thus, it has to do

with pressing on in spite of difficulties, to the end. It is sealed up by a popular saying that, "Where determination reigns, no amount of failures can ultimately dismantle the flag of success." Thus, though it takes faith for a person to step out it is rather determination that keeps the one going. In life in general and leadership in particular, determination is a great tool for success. This quality is all that Ruth needed to turn her initial and temporal failure into a success story (Ruth 1:15-18).

- **A humble mental attitude**, i.e., a modest mind: This has to do with acknowledging your unimportance and weakness and relying on God. That also means not overestimating your value but submitting of your ego before God and man (Philip. 2:5ff). Transformational Leaders accept that humility is not timidity; weakness in speech and lack of self-confidence; boldness in speech and being un-confrontational. It is not easy to develop a mental attitude of success in the face of current spiritual opposition. But Transformation leaders should set the pace with a 'no retreat no surrender' slogan, knowing that God is with them.
- **A grateful mental attitude**, i.e., an appreciative mind. Gratitude, it is said, is an attitude that will determine a person's altitude. Since no one becomes a leader in vacuum, it follows that a person's demonstration of gratitude to those who helped him to climb will likely maintain him at that level. It is advisable that no matter the differences that might arise in the course of time, a good sense of appreciation remain as part and parcel of relationships.

Leadership and the use of power

Another important aspect of leadership worth noting is the appropriately use of power, especially, how it is used to

deal with difficult people. Both of these are issues which every person with transformational interest must get deeper understanding of so as to be able to handle them well. It should be understood that leaders who wield power should see themselves as mere channels through which the power from a certain source is flowing to accomplish a particular purpose, and that the source of all power, ultimately, is God. If all leaders should get such understanding, they will never think of holding on to it.

Any good leader will delegate his authority, (that is, power) to some of his subordinates. A good leader is a steward, not of power (or authority) of position or expertise but of personal power. Position power is the type one enjoys as a result of where the person occupies in the place of work. It usually ends where the person's role ends, while expert power makes people seek one out because of the person's expertise or knowledge. On the contrary, personal power is the one that makes people become attracted to the one who possesses it. It is the power which makes a person able to influence others through love and concern for others. It is usually longer lasting than all others.

Ironically, the more leaders empower those under them the more such leaders become powerful, since the combinative effect of what their subordinates achieve tend to enhance their position as leaders. Unfortunately, some leaders tend to hold on to power for many reasons; insecurity, the enjoyment of power, the feeling of importance, lack of trust in other people or those below them, selfish ambition, etc. One should be able to conclude that God wants man to be involved in His plans to make life worth living on earth and therefore sees the need to empower him. Thus no persons should hold on to the power that God has given them by striving to enslave their subjects.

It is obvious that transformational leaders are channels of continuity of God's purpose. So they rather make sure to unite with their subordinates to form a team. Though decision making is a firm part of such leaders, a mark of a team leader is when decision making becomes democratic and not a one-man show. It is necessary to listen to others, be they part of the top or the bottom. In fact, leadership is also about listening to other people because it is wrong for those at the top to assume that decision-making is their prerogative. Since no man is the epitome of knowledge or wisdom, listening to the views of others can be helpful.

Risks and mistakes in leadership

A very important issue to consider in life is taking risk. One saying has it that, "Life without risk is not worth living because success in life can be connected to the extent of risk that a person is ready to take." Risk taking is never a comfortable step. A lot of people are afraid to do so because of the high percentage of failure that goes with a lot of them. But failure to take risk is worse than taking risk that leads to failure. That is, it is better to act and fail than not to act at all. Sometimes, the kind of treatment which are meted out by some people to others when their risk-taking efforts lead to failures and losses are enough reasons for others not to try it at all. This is not acceptable; leaders should be able to accept the failures of their subordinates even if their endeavors were risky, and should be prepared to correct them to do better.

Additionally, leadership involves not only exercising of authority, but also full acceptance of responsibilities for any delegated mission. Unfortunately, many leaders find it hard to forgive people for mistakes while performing assigned duties. This should not be the case. Good leaders rather accept responsibility for failures and make finding solutions a higher

priority than placing blames on others. It should gladden every heart in life that even God does not always chastise people for their inabilities, failures, negativities (Ps. 103:10). The reason is simple; through these some lessons are learnt in the hope that one of future attempts would produce the required results. No doubt, there is greater joy in a person for a successful result after some failures. On a rather good note, leaders should not hesitate to praise people in public, and if possible, criticism in camera. These are great truths that leaders must uphold.

Harness God's leadership gifts for effective transformation

We also need to understand that good leaders are a gift of God. Ephesians 4:11-16 says that it is the Lord Jesus who gives leaders to His Church. God gives apostles, teachers, evangelists, prophets and pastors for specific purposes of the ministry as shown in the table below.

What is giving	Text	Reason
Church Leaders	v. 11	"various leadership roles"
Plans are stated	v. 12	"to train others to do"
Goals are given	v. 13	"Unity of the faith" "to know more about Jesus"
Standards are stated	v. 13	To measure up to the standard/ maturing of Jesus

We should understand from the breakdown in the table above that the primary role of the leader is not to do all the ministry work of the church, but to train and develop people to also engage in God's work. The result of God's giving of right leaders according to Ephesians 4:11-16 is to ensure that there is sound leadership, good plans, and proper goals that will produce results as shown below.

Believers are no longer children	v. 4
Believers would speak the truth in love	v. 15
Believers will grow in all aspects into Christ	v. 15
Believers will build up other believers	v. 16

To raise the quality of our leaders and also infuse effectiveness into the leadership of the church, the above scriptural principles should be studied in details at a workshop to be organized by the church. Copies of the tables above should be given to all to encourage further studies until all leaders understand the biblical principles well.

In fact, the whole leadership of the Church should be taken through regular disciplines which will usher them into the anointing in order to experience great visitations of God's presence. Through these visitations it is hoped that the lost will be saved, the saved will be growing, people would be touched to move out, unity would be achieved in the church, financial-giving would be unparalleled, the Church will grow, and there would be openings for outreach and missions as well.

CHAPTER 7

CHURCH LEADERS ARE STRATEGIC TRANSFORMATIONAL AGENTS

There are some sayings that are common to the society; behind every successful man is a special woman; behind every successful medical doctor is a super nurse, etc. It is not out of place therefore to also say, 'behind every successful transformation of a church is a great spiritual revolutionary.' Indeed, when it comes to the church, it is God who gives good leaders to oversee it and to make it grow healthy. With both the OT and NT covenant community, transformational leaders are used by God to achieve His purposes.

Though church transformation might be initiated from many angles by any member of the body, the role of the main minister of the church; the Pastor (or General Overseer, Bishop, or any appropriate title), as the main transformer for the both OT and NT believers is very important. Clear evidence is revealed in the life of Israel during the period of the Judges. Scripture reveals that when the priests failed in their responsibilities after the covenant community of Israel had settled in the Promised Land of Canaan and Joshua and all the other leaders of his generation have died, the congregation entered into apostasy. The situation was caused by the failure of the spiritual leaders to uphold the principles of the theocratic government that God established when the people finally settled in Canaan.

As the head controls the rest of the body so is the role of the minister-in-charge of an assembly. Such people, no doubt, may qualify for the main transformers of the Church. To ensure excellence of service, when God chooses a person for His work the person is also prepared by Him.

Importance of the minister (Pastor) in the Church

As the leadership goes, so does the church. There is no more important priority in one's life and ministry than the cultivation and nurture of a personal daily walk with Jesus Christ. One's entire ministry flows from this connection. "A good leader is a thermostat that determines the heartbeat of the church."²³ If he/she is slow the church will be slow; if effective the Church will be effective; if prayerful the Church will be prayerful; if lazy the Church will also be lazy. Thus, the main leader of every church whose function needs thorough insight and understanding, and of course, charts the path of transformation is the Minister-in-charge, most commonly referred to as the Pastor.

Pastors occupy an awesome position in the church of Jesus Christ. They have the joy of seeing new people born into the kingdom of God, and the privilege of helping new believers mold their lives into the image of Christ. Ephesians 4:11-14 clearly states:

It was him who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers; to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up...and become matured, attaining to the whole measure of fullness of Christ. Then we will no longer be infants...

Thus, the office of Pastor, specifically, is ordained by God to provide direction and training for the people of God who are to be in the ministry for Jesus Christ in the sphere of influence.

Terms that define church leaders

To be able to understand the exact role of the Pastor, one has to consider the root meaning of the title "Pastor" from the scriptures. The NT Greek word used for pastor is "poimen"

which is literally translated as “a helper,” “feeder of sheep” or “shepherd,” which in Latin is “Pastor.” Thus, the English usage is a carryover of the Latin meaning of a shepherd. “Poimen” appears eighteen (18) times in the NT but surprisingly, it is only translated once in the NT, in Ephesians 4:11, as Pastor.

The other seventeen (17) times “poimen” appears in the NT it is usually translated as shepherd (Mk. 6:34; 9:36, Acts 20:28). Other Greek words which have often been used to designate the “pastoral office” are; the word for presbyter, “presbuteros” which is usually translated as elder. It occurs 28 times in the NT (Acts 20:17; 1 Pet. 5:1; 2 John 1; 3 John 1), and “episkopos” which is translated as bishop (or sometimes as overseer). It occurs seven times in the NT (Acts 20:28; 1 Tim. 3:2; Titus 1:7; 1 Peter 2:25; 5:2). Although “poimen” applies commonly to a senior elder of a church or group of churches, it is sometimes used interchangeably with pastor.

In defining the word “Pastor,” however, the Webster’s Dictionary states, “Originally a shepherd, and later a clergyman or priest in charge of a church or congregation.”²⁴ Thus, the true picture of a pastor is that of one chosen and trained by God who is set in a place of care over His local church. The pastor stands in the place of Christ in the church as he or she shepherds the congregation and sees them grow up in Christ in the church.

The acceptable character of God’s agents

The office of the Minister, referred commonly as Pastor, carries with it heavy responsibilities. In the real sense, the Pastor stands responsible before God Almighty for all that his church does or fails to do. Because of his responsibility of having to exercise sincere concern for the church, the Pastor has to be a person of acceptable character. The same goes for all who see themselves as God’s agents of transformation.

Apostle Paul gave some details of what should be expected of such a person's life.

This is a true saying, If a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work. A bishop then must be blameless...Moreover he must have a good report of them which are without; lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil. Likewise *must* the deacons *be* grave, not doubletongued, not given to much wine, not greedy of filthy lucre... (1 Tim. 3:1, KJV)

According to the Apostle, the Pastor (Bishop, Overseer, Presbyter, etc,) must be one of noble character; full of love for people, joy for the work of God, great patience in dealing with all issues, very kind, full of goodness and showing a great deal of faithfulness, gentleness, self-control, and experiencing the peace of God. His goal is to nurture, admonish, and encourage the people of God to grow and develop in the Lord and sometimes to administer the church in general in terms of organization and function.

For a Pastor to earn respect in any community from both Christians and pagans, it means that both his spiritual and moral life is worthy of emulation. If unmarried, it means he is living an unquestionably pure Christian life and setting up a good example to others in words of speech, in conduct, and in his Christian faith and service. If the pastor is married it means, beside the above qualities, he is able to take good care of his family, as well as the church. It also means that the pastor is serviceable to the community and not only to the church; such that the community can fall on his services anytime they have the need arising. This means that such a pastor should always be on the alert because he can be called upon to render service both to his church and also to the community at anytime. The above is the situation I want to put myself.

Still on character, the minister or pastor should be a person of integrity in all his/her duties. To be a person of integrity is to be honest, reliable, and ready to fulfill one's duties and responsibilities. For the pastor, it is being able to preach and teach God's Word properly, counsel the flock, mentor and train them through delegation of authority and supervision. Pastors of integrity act as parents or shepherds of God's sheep, and are ready to sacrifice their pleasure for the needs of the church. They are those who can also be good husbands to their wives and good fathers to their children, and so on. In all these areas, especially in the few which have been discussed so far, it is expected that the person who accepts to serve the Lord as a pastor of His church will remain faithful to God to the end (1 Tim. 4:7).

According to Romans 15:2-7, no leader of a ministry should please himself or herself only but endeavor to please others. When leaders treat their subordinates well, it leads to harmony in the body of Christ and prevents breaks. Any minister who respects other leaders is a minister who is humble, and in the same way any minister who shows lack of respect for his leaders is not a humble minister. Leaders in the same way should respect their ministers since it is the same leader who has called both. Building God's Church involves having relationship. Relationship means being in one way or the other connected to another.

A very important character of any transformational leader is one's loyalty to God's call to His service. This is by proving to be trustworthy or faithful or truthful to God, other leaders, and the whole body of Christ at any point in time. Every minister is required to be loyal to the body of Christ in general in accordance with God's word. A loyal minister is prepared to sacrifice himself/herself in order to promote God's work. In most cases, if the church realizes that the minister is

loyal to God and other leaders, the body becomes interested in him/her. As a transformational leader, the minister trusts and puts his/her confidence in others, because he/she knows that such people can be relied upon for support at all times even in times of crisis. A loyal minister wins the favor of God, his/her congregation, the larger Christian community, and society in general.

Know your responsibilities as a church leader

Many roles of leadership exist. The role of Ministers of the church, as main leaders, encompasses all others and as such very difficult to outline. Thus many Ministers (or Pastors) of churches decide to define some specific ones in order to use them to exercise general oversight of the rest. This is how people who see themselves as God's agents of transformation must understand their roles; very difficult to define.

Sharing God's Word through Preaching and Teaching: As mentioned earlier, a major area of every leader's work is to be able to lead the people by way of God's word, that is, to feed them with proper spiritual food from the word of God. This ensures taking care of the souls of God's people by feeding them or providing for their spiritual nourishment and protecting them. It is related to a shepherd-sheep relationship (John 10:1-15; Ps. 23). It is very important for the pastor to recognize this and to allow nothing to rob his or her time and attention to the study and preparation God's word to his congregation. This must be the pastor's first priority. Of course there will be times when some unavoidable circumstances will interfere with Bible study and sermon preparation. But every pastor should guard his study and preparation time carefully in order to bring out nothing but the "best" for the church through preaching, Bible studies, or counseling.

The object of preaching is to motivate the listeners to action. At the completion of a sermon, people should have a clear call set before them that demands action on their part. Good preaching spurs action such as to repent, to stop sinning, to study the Bible more, and to deal with anger, lust or greed, and so on. Every pastor who preaches should strive for excellence in content, completeness, form of delivery, accuracy and clarity of speech. The pastor must preach or speak boldly and authoritatively. According to scripture, "...If anyone speaks, he should do it as one speaking the very words of God...he should do it with the strength God provides, so in all things God may be praised" (1 Pet. 4:11).

Closely linked with preaching is the responsibility of teaching his or her people, which the pastor must endeavor to do (to some extent) if the church is to develop well. The difference between preaching and teaching is that while the former motivates the members to act, the latter explains more clearly how every action should be done. The object of teaching by the pastor is therefore to bring to the understanding of the congregation or listeners the what, how, when, which, where, why and so forth of a piece of scripture. As one source says, "Through teaching, the pastor tells his/her congregation how to start living a Christ-like life, how to overcome the enemy, and how to overcome the various sins of life."²⁵

Counseling by God's Word: This is another basic function of the pastor. It is natural for Christians to seek the counsel and direction of their pastor for the personal problems in their lives and families. However, not all pastors are able counselors and therefore nobody should assume the gift or area of counseling just because he or she is a pastor. While some are more naturally able than others, good counseling is a skill that must be learned through prayer, study and experience. It is advisable

that the pastor never counsels a person of the opposite sex alone or in unsupervised conditions in order not to give sin an opportunity to sometimes develop between the counselor and the counselee.

Also, a good pastor who does counseling should be very careful never to air from the pulpit, or reveal to anyone, what he or she learned in counseling. In so doing, the pastor destroys the very foundation of successful counseling which is the sense of confidentiality, and so brings discredit to him or her and the office. However, the pastor should never be disappointed when people reject or fail to follow his or her counseling because only those who desperately want victory will be eager to obey very good counsel and word of God.

Encouraging various ministries of the church: Every pastor must understand that the body of Christ has different offices all of which must function in order to make the church grow. Therefore, he must honor the various offices and gifts that the Lord has blessed the church with by helping these areas to function properly. He must alert to the other ministries in the church and should be willing to incorporate them into a unit, although they may function differently. For example, the ministries of youth, children, adult, and music and so on, should be recognized and nurtured to function properly by the pastor. Leadership in these ministries should be set up and encouraged to function in various capacities in order that the efforts of the pastor could be complemented and facilitated in all areas of the church.

In as much as the pastor has the specific call to shepherd the church, such a person should also recognize that he/she also has a shepherd, the Lord Jesus. Thus, the pastor should always identify himself/herself with the needs of the members in submitting to God in prayer. In spite of being

a strategic transformational leader, he/she should recognize that he/she may have weaknesses like all other believers and is therefore liable to sin. Such consciousness will help a pastor to deal patiently with those who through certain weaknesses fall prey to the power of sin. By so doing, the pastor also sets himself/herself up as a minister who can always identify himself with the congregation in seeking the face of God concerning their needs and weaknesses. The benefit here is that the congregation will not think of their pastor as somebody without human limitations but as their fellow human being whom they can easily approach.

It is worthwhile to mention that the pastor must endeavor to avoid some of the errors which can bring his/her office into disrepute. Such errors include the tendency or habit of using the pulpit to talk about issues which under normal circumstances the pastor can never have the courage to talk about outside the pulpit. Another area of error is rebuking individuals from the pulpit. The pastor should only do so after extensive talk to the person in private without any sign of repentance or positive change (1 Tim. 5:1-2, 19-20). As a transformational leader, the pastor should also guard against provocative words in his speech, using the pulpit to criticize or to exalt himself (or his favorites), or using the pulpit for personal advantage. Rather, he/she should try as much as possible to exercise all ministerial duties without favor or partiality (1 Tim. 5:21).

If any pastor does as discussed above, he/she will be obeying the instruction that Apostle Paul gave to Titus, who was believed to be the pastor (overseer) of the churches of Crete thus: "In everything set them an example by doing what is good. In your teaching show integrity, seriousness and soundness of speech that cannot be condemned, so that those

who oppose you may be ashamed for having nothing bad to say about us” (Titus 1:5; 2:7, 8).

Delegation of responsibilities: Encouraging various ministries goes hand in hand with delegation of responsibilities. There should be other people trained up to help him continue other programs. Church programs should not be centered on the pastor, and he/she should not also worry much about being absent from duty. This will give the leader the full attention needed to concentrate on other issues at stake. Pastors who are able to mentor some people normally complete the training process of such people by delegating to them the authority necessary to do what their talents and training enable them to do. With time, one of such mentees would emerge as the most reliable to take charge when the pastor is absent. While the pastor must try to delegate authority and services to some people he/she must be aware that the ultimate responsibility of the success and completion of the work lies on his/her shoulders.

On the whole, the strategic transformational leaders see themselves as better placed in terms of resources needed to fulfill ministry and so help the delegate by meeting the resources needed to perform. Thus, “God will credit the pastor for successful work of delegation and also hold the same responsible for unchecked failures.”²⁶ Typical examples include Jesus and five thousand people (Mark 6:34-37), and Paul and his fellow workers (Acts 20:33-35).

Constant evaluation of performance: Leaders in general must be able to assess and know whether they or people in responsible positions are performing their roles excellently or not. Especially with regards to the people they lead, there should be regular assessment of how they are faring. Proverbs

27:23-27 has this advice for leaders: “Be sure you know the condition of your flocks; give careful attention to your herds; for...the lambs will provide you with clothing, and the goats with the price of a field...” Thus, periodic evaluation of work, acceptance of objective criticism, and implementation of laudable recommendation, should form part of every leadership lifestyle. It is important that a leader identifies his/her area of operation and his strongest and weakest spots so that he could work on them to achieve good results.

Summary of ministerial duties

In a presentation to the faculty and staff of Ghana Christian University College during a continuous professional development program, Nelson Ahlijah, Dean of School of Theology, threw some light on the subject “Understanding and giving attention to the context.”²⁷ Summarizing his views on what church ministers actually do, he mentioned that their main role is to lead and manage the human, financial, and material resources of the church to accomplish God’s objectives. In the area of leadership ministries, he mentioned that ministers perform such functions as organizers, Sunday school superintendent or department superintendents, planners, home group leaders, missions’ coordinators, committee chairmen, Christian education directors, church administrators, etc. He said ministers also serve in educational ministries where they perform some functions such as Bible teachers, workshop leaders, youth ministry directors, retreat speakers, researchers, church library overseers, seminar leader, adult classes, children's ministries directors, Sunday school teachers, Bible school instructors, teachers of new believers, etc.

According to the dean, Christian ministers also play major roles in prayer and healing ministries organizing areas such as intercessory prayers where they might involve in

anointing with oil, prayer breakfasts, seeing to various prayer groups, engaging in hospital calls and praying by phone, conducting prayer chain, and being involved in fasting and counseling programs. Under outreach ministries, he mentioned such roles which the ministers are involved in as child evangelism, bus ministry, organizing drama, high school and college ministry, crusades, Television and radio programs, street witnessing, organizing coffeehouse ministries, men's and women's ministries, door-to-door witnessing, vacation Bible school, Bible and literature distribution, etc.

The ministers are also engaged in office help, preparing mailings, church kitchen help, nursery work, custodial work, child care, financial support, DVD/CD ministry, and handling registration, and so on. He also mentioned such areas as advertising, organizing sports and recreational programs, organizing weddings, and overseeing work groups, and involving in caring ministries such as hospitality, hospital visitation, prison visitation, street ministry, assisting retarded people, and assisting abused people, the handicapped, and needy. He concluded that all other ministry positions in the local church are under the pastor's leadership.²⁸

Some of the special roles of ministers have been subsequently defined for those who want to experience real transformation in their churches.

- Prays and grows in relationship with God so that what is undertaken by the congregation reflects the leading of God (Acts 1:14).
- Oversees teaching and preaching of God's word (2 Tim. 2:2; 4:2) and be responsible for development of worship themes and services.
- Establishes ministries that seek to insure that every member and prospective member is cared for in a Christ-like manner.

- Trains up God's people into leadership positions of the church by equipping, empowering, and supporting them in their God-given ministry and supervises other staff of the church to keep the ministry in a common direction aligned with the vision.
- Focuses on his family welfare to insure that they are cared for spiritually, emotionally, and physically (1 Tim. 3:4, 5).
- Seeks God's vision for the church and provides spiritual direction for the operation of the congregation (Acts 13:1ff).
- Oversees the development of the stewardship of the members to insure financial, time, and talent support for the ministry of the church and school.
- Strives to maintain the unity and peace by through counseling and conflict resolution (Eph. 4:3), or refers people to other Christian counseling agencies.
- Administers the sacraments (1 Cor. 4:1), and conducts occasional services, weddings, funerals, anniversary recommitment, and private baptisms when call upon and such services bring glory to Christ.
- Oversees the youth and adults and prepares for membership follow-up in the church.
- Screens materials that are sent to the congregation to see that they are appropriate with the vision of the ministry and also oversees the preparation of all correspondence of the church.

Generally therefore, the major responsibilities of a minister can be spread up to cover all areas of the church. It follows that when a person in such a strategic position fails as a transformational leader, it affects the progress of the church.

CHAPTER 8

YOU CAN LEARN FROM SAMUEL'S TRANSFORMATIONAL PROWESS

From the discussion so far, it has become clear that God has had His own way of dealing with failing situations of leadership over the years. This chapter deals with the fact that God can out-rightly remove failing leaders and raise special ones to deal with the situation. The instance in point here is that of the High Priest Eli and his sons on one hand and Samuel on the other.

Biblical information about Samuel is mostly found in the book that bears his name, and presupposes that him to be the author. But there are a lot of internal evidences which are cited to deny Samuel authorship of the book. Critics generally allege that there are various parallel accounts, incongruities, and apparent discrepancies. As a result, they argue in defense of multiple sources which were allegedly put together by an editor or various editors. But others quote Jewish tradition which ascribes the work to Prophet Samuel: "Samuel wrote the book that bears his name and the book of Judges and Ruth."²⁹

Background of Samuel

Samuel was a son to Elkanah and Hannah. His name might mean one of the following; "name of God," i.e. (Heb. *Šēm-ēl*), "his name is God" (Heb. *Šemo-ēl*), or "heard of God" (Heb. *Šemûā-ēl*).³⁰ His father was from the family of Levi (1 Chron. 6) but he was probably stationed and serving in one of the Ephraimite cities, (1 Sam. 1:1; cf. 1 Chron. 6:33-35). Elkanah, like Gideon (Judges 8:30-31) and Jair (Judges 10:3-4), was a polygamous Levite because he had two wives;

Hannah and Peninnah (1 Sam. 1:2). In spite of this, Elkanah ensured that the whole family recognize and maintain regular fellowship with Jehovah by observing the Tabernacle sacrifices. They did this by travelling from their home base in Ramah to Shiloh, year after year. Samuel's mother, Hannah, had been barren and suffered constant irritation from her rival, Peninnah.

In Hannah's frustration for a child, she turned to the Lord in travailing prayer. On one occasion, she buttressed her prayer with a vow to present the child back to God. She left the Tabernacle full of expectancy, because Eli, the High Priest, who initially mistook Hannah for a drunkard woman, was moved by her desperate prayer to pronounce blessing on her. The birth of Samuel was therefore as a result of earnest prayer and a miracle (vs. 8-18). It was because the Lord answered the prayer of Hannah and opened up her womb. In response to her vow, Hannah duly sent baby Samuel to Eli in Shiloh, when Samuel was weaned, that is, after about two or three years and fully dedicated the young boy to the service of the Lord as a Nazirite.

The training of Samuel began at a time when the word of the Lord was rare; there was neither vision nor prophecy. Samuel grew up by providing a contrast between himself and the sons of Eli (2:18; 2:26; 3:1). He had good preparations for living a godly life; his parents' example and instruction from aging and experienced Eli. He refused to be corrupted by the depravity surrounding the Tabernacle service at this time. The Lord also used Eli to prepare Samuel for the Priesthood. As he grew up, Samuel developed the humility to serve when other Levites were lording themselves over God's people. With time, he also matured and built up enough courage to start off as a true prophetic voice to sinful Israel and one ready to demonstrate good leadership and unwavering zeal for the Lord.

Young Samuel had a lot to his character worthy of emulation; his humility, tenderness of heart, emphasis upon righteousness, submission to God, and concern for his people, Israel. Samuel was ripe to be launched out to public ministry. Unfortunately, his time to mount the scene was the death of his mentor, Eli, whose demise was not because of the defeat of the Israelites by the Philistines or the death of his two sons Hophni and Phenias, but as a result of the capture of the Ark of Covenant (1 Sam. 4:13, 17-18). For Samuel, the tragedies were not only news of great losses but what happened became the very circumstances that called him into action and opened the door for him to prove his ministry. At this juncture, he had to brace himself up for the challenges that had confronted him.

The challenges Samuel encountered

Samuel might have had a tough time because he was faced with challenges both spiritually and physically. It was a religious and a political challenge. He was brought into the picture of the High Priestly office as a result of the failure of Eli and his children. Now, there are some measures that he put up to mitigate the situation of the nation. These measures helped to reverse and restore a lot of things which had gone from bad to worse.

One of the major challenges he faced was how to restore the morale of the people in the face of disaster. Why? The Ark of the Covenant which showed the presence of God in the midst of the Israelites had been captured by the Philistines during the war at Aphek (1 Sam. 4:11). More so the Philistines left Israel with no weapons. The Philistines, also called “people of the sea” destroyed all what metal industry the Israelites may have had, making the Israelites completely dependent on the Philistine smith services (1 Sam. 13:19-22). These had made the people desperate. At such a time, obviously Israelites’

morale could only have been extremely low. It has seriously declined before this because of the deficient religious conditions, but this would have reduced it still more, crushing people's spirits to the point of despair."³¹

Politically, Israel was no more independent and the center of the political and religious activities had been destroyed that is why Samuel probably went back to his home town at Ramah (1 Sam. 7:17). Religiously, Samuel encountered a lot of unhealthy malpractices among the people. Their faith in Yahweh had seriously declined because of the deficient religious conditions. The people had turned away from God under the regime of Eli and his sons to the worship of other gods of the land; Ashtoreth and other foreign gods (1 Sam. 7:3). To aggravate the situation, not even the priests were faithful to the dictates of their holy office; their moral life had collapsed completely. They neglected their work of teaching or explaining the ways of God and were probably involved in unprofessional practices. For example, some of the priests were idol worshippers, and some were even paid to be private priests to individuals (Judges 17:1-13). Not only did they profane the sanctuary through debauchery, some even fought over concubines, (Judges 19).

Thus they became wicked, perverting the ritual at the Tabernacle and treated the Lord's offerings with contempt (1 Sam. 2:12-17). These acts made even the faithful among the people to abhor worship of Yahweh at the Temple.

Samuel's multiple offices

The above issues and many more that the Bible does not enumerate were the challenges he encountered. For almost 20 years Israel was under the dominion of the Philistines. Nevertheless, this herculean task to turn the hearts of the people back to God and to repose the confidence of the people

back in the priesthood and into the tabernacle service was tackled by Samuel. However, how he was able to accomplish these, the Biblical records were silent on but only showed the result. Present-day transformational leaders should learn some lessons from how he strategically accepted and overcame these challenges.

As a priest: One of Samuel's first measures and priestly duties is likely to have begun with the relocation of the Tabernacle from Shiloh to Nob. This move was necessary because after the battle of Aphek, the Philistines had taken territory as far as Shiloh, flattening Israel (Jer. 7:12; 26:6).³² It is most likely that they were making further incursions into the territory of Israel. Scriptures reveal that the Philistines placed control garrisons in strategic places in Israel and destroyed all metal industry (1 Sam. 10:5; 13:3, 19-22). Samuel would have had to give attention to the reestablishment of the Tabernacle ... to spare the structure from the oncoming enemies.³³ Therefore, the Tabernacle was moved from Shiloh to Nob before it could be destroyed (1 Sam. 21:1-9).

The movement of the tabernacle from Shiloh to Nob was probably followed by the institution of the right sacrifice and offerings to God. With this done, he might have encouraged the Levites to take up their post anew with vigor. Thus the people's morale might have heightened. After twenty years, it showed the people had really repented of their prostitution with the gods of the land. This they professed when they confessed their sins at Mizpah. They actually renewed their hearts towards their God. Hence they did away with religious malpractice. Consequently, Samuel left Shiloh to settle at Ramah. On various occasions, scripture points out that Samuel fulfilled the priestly function of offering sacrifices.

As a Judge: Besides his call to the prophetic office, all Israel recognized Samuel as a judge. During all those 20 years, Samuel was probably moving from town to town to make the nation sensible to their sins against God and urged them to abandon their idolatrous practices if they desired a return to independence and peace (1 Sam. 7:15, 16). He went on such regular circuit visit to interact with the people and to settle and judge their disputes. In fact, scripture says that year after year, Samuel went on a circuit from Bethel, Gilgal, Mizpah and back to Ramah, his home base judging Israel.

Samuel's efforts paid off with the assembly at Mizpah where he urged to put away their idols and turn to the Lord in fasting and then he interceded for them (1 Sam. 7:4-13). Besides settling disputes, he also provided military leadership as indicated in the battle of Mizpah against the Philistine threat. In this day the Philistines who wanted to stop the Israelites from meeting were thundered by the Lord when Samuel and the people were crying to the Lord in a confession prayer session. Samuel himself led in the battle against the Philistines and followed them killing them all the way till Eben-ezer where the Philistines were completely subdued. That battle gave victory to the Israelites throughout Samuel's lifetime.

As Kings-maker: Samuel also served as a kings-maker because he was the one who anointed the first two kings of Israel. He was largely responsible and credited for the smooth transition from the rule of the judges to the monarchy. In Samuel's old age, representatives from the people came to him to request for a king which action constituted a rejection of divine rule over them (1 Sam. 8:1-21). They actually rejected the rule of God, Theocracy, and demanded a Monarchy.

This dramatic turn was not without reasons. The first book of Samuel chapter 8 gives some of these. First, Samuel's two

sons have failed to meet the requirements for judgeship. As a result of their weak morals, their father had posted them to Beersheba, far from the Tabernacle, to serve as Judges. Another reason was that the people wanted a king “like the other nations” who during those days were led by kings. Additionally, the neighboring Amorites kept on breathing a lot of threat to the people of Israel.

But a more unfortunate reason for the people’s request for a king was that Samuel himself was old and clearly had reached the time of retirement from active priesthood. The lower limit for the active ministry was 30 years (Num. 4:1-3, 23, 30), though the age was later reduced to 25 years (Num. 8:24), and even reduced further to 20 years (1 Chron. 23:24-27; 2 Chron. 31:17). But the upper limit was firmly fixed at 50 years and was never changed (Num. 4:1-3, 23, 30; 8:25). Unlike the current trend in Christian ministry where some ministers try to change the constitutions of their churches to perpetuate their stay in the helm of affairs, Samuel obeyed the rule. This is a principle that current ministers should emulate; to leave the scene quietly when their time is due.

Thus, Samuel consulted God on the issue of monarchy and God allowed him to appoint a king for them so as to fulfill their wish and also face the consequences. He was able to surmount the people’s demand for a king (1 Sam. 8). As a principled and obedient leader, he accepted to hand over the baton of leadership peacefully and continue his godly service in another way. He therefore anointed the first king in the person of Saul and Israel’s second king, David. In so doing, Prophet Samuel became the one that God used to establish the leadership of the prophetic office as representatives of God to ensure that the theocracy prevailed over the kingship. He became the watchdog of the whole nation and did well by

correcting religious malpractice, maintaining national morale in the face of disaster, and promoting return to faith in God.

As a Prophet: The Bible clearly reveals the corrupt spiritual state of the OT Church, Israel, in the book of Judges. In the First book of Samuel, some additional and specific information about the period is added. One of the important issues mentioned appear thus, “The boy Samuel ministered before the LORD under Eli. In those days the word of the LORD was rare; there were not many visions” (1 Sam. 3:1).

Samuel as Prophet

Generally, the people went to God through the priests and sacrifice. But God made provision where He would communicate with them through prophets that He would call (Deut. 13: 1-4; 18:18ff). Thus the prophets of Israel worked with the priest hand-in-hand. Samuel fulfilled Moses’ description and qualification of a true prophet:

- He was called by God.
- He announced a miracle/sign/wonder to Eli.
- He turned the heart of Israel back to God.

Samuel was able to change this situation even before the onset of his ministry as Eli’s successor such that “all Israel from Dan to Beersheba recognized that Samuel was a prophet” (1 Sam. 3:19-21). No doubt, this all-in-one man came to relieve the land of Israel of the great famine of prophetic voice. As true a prophet, Samuel led the people to a religious revival. He demonstrated hatred for leaders who disobey God’s word by pleading and or pronouncing judgment on them when necessary. This he did by the way he confronted King Saul on a number of occasions. He crowned his prophetic ministry with the anointing of David as one who would take over the mantle of kingship from King Saul.

Samuel's visionary exploit

One of the most important things Christian of today can benefit from Samuel's prophetic foresight is his vision for extension and expansion of God's work. Samuel perpetuated the prophetic ministry and expanded it through the following:

- He set up the school of prophets.
- Most probably, he encouraged others to accept God's call.
- He trained the young prophets.

Samuel was indeed a man of vision. This is seen even after his retirement from his role as the High Priest and Judge. He decided to spend the rest of his days continuing to raise people who will continue the prophetic ministry he had come to revive. He took steps to ensure that prophets would always abound. This he did with the initial training group possibly set by him. It is most likely that he set up a training program for young people who were pious, intelligent, and studious. It is very probable that this group comprised both the sons of the Priests and Levites who would automatically end up in the Tabernacle service and those who might have had the prophetic call in their lives (1 Sam. 19:20). No doubt, as they communed with God and studied His word and works, wisdom from above was added to their natural talents.

This group possibly grew and most likely served as the beginning of the establishment of the School of the Prophets (or the Prophetic guild or band). This, no doubt, became an immediate refinery for the priests that Samuel needed for transformation he had begun and ultimately became the grounds for training of prophets. The relevance of this prophetic school was to check the corruptions in the priesthood (or ministry of God in general) and the Israelite community during the days of the Judges and the Monarchs. It was also to enforce Yahweh-Israel covenant faithfulness, and ensure professionalism in the prophetic ministry and a continuity of it.

The group developed through three stages; the first was the sons of the prophets or the prophetic guilds. Then there were the individual non-writing or non literary prophets, and finally, the individual literal prophets. It spread out to other places and Prophets like Elijah and Elisha were connected with some of the later schools of prophets at places like Jericho, Gilgal, Mizpah, Bethel, Samaria, Ramah, etc. (1 Kings 20:35-37; 2 Kings 2:1-15; 6:1-7; Amos 7:14). The prophetic guilds really performed well and probably gave rise to many of the non literal and literal prophets. The schools might have faced a lot of challenges but it still survived and ran. These guilds might have continued even to the days of Prophets Isaiah and Amos (Isaiah 8:16; Amos 7:14). Thus Samuel laid the foundation for the operation of both individual as well as group prophetic ministry.

You can be the ‘Samuel’ of today

Using the relevance and the establishment of the school of the prophets (prophetic guilds) in the OT period, leaders of the church today must see the significance of ministerial training to the total transformation of the Twenty-first century Church. Clearly, the significance of such training now can be likened to that of the sons of the prophets or the prophetic guilds (or schools) in the life of the nation of Israel. This is because ministerial training is serving as grounds for waiting and maturing for people called into the God’s ministry, and also as foundation for true ministers to be trained as God’s mouth-piece to society. There was definite need to encourage God’s people to trust only in God, to remind society that safety and blessedness depended upon their faithful adherence to the God’s covenant, to increase believers’ knowledge in respect of the present and future plans of God should never be left in the hands of unprofessional ministers. Thus ministerial

training schools serve as grounds for separating true from false ministers of God.

Doubtless, Samuel was the Master-revivalist and his life offers a lot of challenges to any current leader or people aspiring to leadership positions, whether adult or the youth. His readiness to confront situations and deal with challenges is enough to let ministers know how much God expects them to brace up for the tough challenges ahead in the ministry. Thousands of years back, Prophet Samuel was able to discern the importance of such a vision and took pains to pursue it. Current ministers and Church leaders must never relent in their efforts to get qualified personnel to continue God's work. Even though ministerial education might face some challenges it must still be encouraged to run.

There are challenges that God prepare men to meet; there are others that God use to prepare men. Whichever way believers must be ready to accept the will of God. What is your situation? Are you prepared to be the Samuel of your ministry or organization? Yes you can!

CHAPTER 9

YOU HAVE TO BE WELL EQUIPPED FOR TRANSFORMATION

Whatever the leader is usually reflects in his/her organization; if it is a church, the situation is not different. For any Church to become a healthy one, “the church leaders themselves should be people who are pursuing health in their personal lives and their shared leadership capacities.”³⁴ This, according to scriptures, should begin with the care and feeling of the interior world of the leaders (Eph. 4:13-16).

Build inner spiritual strength

The leaders of churches should understand that God is calling all believers, especially, leaders to experience growth in the spiritual being. The reason is that leaders have been called not only to serve, but also to be examples of the Lord. So it is important for the leader to develop the inner man (or the inner core). The heart and soul of a ministry depends on the spiritual life of the leader. Just as in building a bank, the most important thing to consider is the vault, so it is that in building a healthy church, the overflow of the leader’s life is very important for the progress of it. It encompasses areas like the spouse, children, education, influence, reputation, and health.

The inner core of a person’s life is the spiritual center of his or her relationships to Christ and, it is a significant place of personal depth. It is described as the “compass” of one’s life, the mother board in a computer and an individual’s personal gyroscope (on sub-marines) that keeps the person well focused and balanced.³⁵ It is the holder of all life values, morals, ethics, dreams, personal integrity and personal purity. It is the leaders (or believer’s) greatest joy and deposit of wounds. Paul called it

the “Inner man” of a person (Eph. 3:16), while Solomon refers to it as “the wellspring of life” (Prov. 4:23).

Due to the importance of a person’s inner core (or interior world), it must be intentionally nurtured. The attention that one gives to his inner life will serve as spiritual girdles for his life, and a help to avoid cave-ins. The ministry of any person comes from the overflow of the person’s relationship with Christ. In their book, The Servant Leader, Ken Blanchard and Phil Hodges, place a premium on the inner man when they state that, “Effective leadership start on the inside.”³⁶ We need to understand that God is more concerned with the workman than the work.

One’s personal life and growth is critical to God than what he or she will do in life. One Christian leader, Henry Blackaby, is quoted thus: “Spiritual leadership flows out of a personal vibrant intimate relationship with God. You cannot be a spiritual leader if you are not meeting God in profound, life-changing ways.”³⁷ This statement is true because before one can feed another person, he has to be well fed. A hungry person has nothing to feed others with. No leader can empower another if the leader is powerless just as a person cannot lead another to places of spiritual depth the former has not been.

For the leaders of any church to be able to effectively raise the church to healthy standards they must be keenly aware of keeping themselves spiritually well fed, healthy and strong in Christ. To do this, all our transformational leaders must be spiritually disciplined through the practice of constant study of the Word of God, daily prayer, journaling, meditation, fellowship, fasting, regular practice of solitude, rendering of good service, stewardship, proper time management, enduring suffering for the sake of Christ, etc. Where possible, quarterly retreats should be organized to evaluate and reinforce our

practice of these disciplines. All these measures are calculated to deepen the leaders' spiritual relationship with Christ.

Be filled with God's power; the Holy Spirit anointing

The Holy Spirit is the third person of the Trinity who is now at work in believers of Christ in the building of God's kingdom, since the ascension of Jesus Christ. The work of the Holy Spirit is to manifest the active presence of God in the church and the world. Generally, there are two basic aspects of the work of the Holy Spirit; the work with regards to new birth (John 3:3-6), and the work of the spirit in the believer's daily or continuous living (Gal. 5:25).

God gives power for church growth by His Spirit (Zech. 4:6). The power of the Holy Spirit is available to us as Jesus received (Luke 4:14). God's main reason is for the receiver to be strengthened with power in the inner-man (Eph. 3:16). The given power does the work through us, as revealed by Ephesians 3:20, "Unto him that is able to do...according the work of His power." Yes, Church Leaders should make God's power and presence central in the life of the church. Without the power of the Spirit, our ministry will be like building on sand: it has no foundation. The whole work will become ministry of the flesh. But with the Spirit's power, the ministry will be like building on a solid ground or rock.

The coming of the Holy Spirit into the believer's life did not begin in the New Testament. In fact, it began in the Old Testament, but under a different form. Here, people or things were specifically anointed. To anoint is to apply oil to a person or a thing (Ps. 23:5-6). The three main types revealed in scriptures are:

- Ordinary: as body lotion and perfume (Songs of Sol. 1:3), and also for burial or mourning (2 Sam. 14:2).

- Medicinal: for treating wounds or healing (Ezek. 16:9; Luke 10:34).
- Sacred: for dedication to God (where the oil represents the Holy Spirit). This found application in a variety of areas:
 - i. The oil was put on earlobes or the thumb or large toes for ritual purification or cleansing (Lev. 14:17).
 - ii. For consecration of people and things for divine use (Exod. 30:22-29).
 - iii. For exaltation or promotion into an office, e.g., as a leader or king (1 Sam. 16:13; 2 Kings 9:6).
 - iv. For healing and deliverance, i.e., yokes to be broken and burdens to be lifted from people's shoulders. This happens when the person becomes overwhelmed by the anointing or becomes 'fat' (Isa. 10:27; James 5:14).
 - v. For power or ability to perform. In the OT, the Holy Spirit frequently empowered people for special service. He empowered Joshua with leadership skills and wisdom (Num. 27:18; Deut. 34:9), and empowered the Judges to deliver Israel from their oppressors (Judges 30:10; 6:34; 11:29; 13:25). The Holy Spirit came mightily upon Saul to arouse him to battle against the enemies of Israel (1 Sam. 11:6), and when David was anointed as king, "the Spirit of the Lord came mightily upon David from that day," primarily to empower him for service and to do greater works (David, 1 Sam. 16:13). The Holy Spirit also endowed the Apostles with power, when He came upon them on the day of Pentecost, for the fulfillment of the Great Commission the Lord gave them (Acts 1:8; 2:1). It is evident from the records of Acts of the Apostles that whenever boldness and zeal were needed by the believers in order to overcome the threats of persecution that came upon the church in the Apostolic era, the Holy Spirit was present to provide and equipped them with their needs (Acts 4:8, 31; 10:37-38).

- vi. One is empowered to make wealth (Deut. 8:18). As a result of God's anointing on David: "You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows" (Ps. 23:5), he got more than he needed in life. David became so rich that he handed over great wealth towards the building of the Temple in Jerusalem, and left a huge estate for his son and successor, Solomon (1 Chron. 28-29). Then Solomon too, as a result of his anointing as king, God blessed him with the ability to make wealth (1 Kings 1:31).

The Lord Jesus Christ himself had to be anointed and empowered by the Holy Spirit in order to fulfill His ministry on earth effectively (Matt. 3:16; Luke 3:22). So, having laid the foundation for salvation, the Lord also promised the coming of the Holy Spirit to fulfill this reconciliation He came to begin and to continue it. The Spirit came on the day of Pentecost and this gave birth to the Church of Jesus Christ. His coming introduced in the Church of Christ the manifestation of spiritual gifts. While there is unanimity of opinion on the role of the spirit on the issue of new birth, there is however a lot of diversity of opinions concerning any additional work of the Holy Spirit after the experience of new birth, especially, with regards to the baptism of the Spirit. Notwithstanding, the pouring out of the Holy Spirit on the Church at Pentecost, which represented the fulfillment of God's promise concerning the working of His spirit in the latter days, was also the anointing and the beginning of the fully expected work of the Holy Spirit in the last days.

Just as the Apostles and those who believed on the Lord were anointed and empowered to perform, so the transformational leader and in fact all Christians also needs the anointing in order to perform. To make the leaders of the Church depend solely on the power of God, much awareness and interest should be generated through teachings on the

work of the Holy Spirit in the early Church. The aim is to make them depend on the power of the Holy Spirit to bring positive change in the Church. God's power comes through His anointing or special unction. The anointing is the moving and empowering of the Holy Spirit to produce more and sometimes unexpected results for the kingdom. People who do not realize the value of the anointing on them mess up the anointing. In the Old Testament, the anointing was given through diverse ways and was lost through willful disobedience.

In the New Testament, the anointing of the Holy Spirit is given to those who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and for different purposes. It can be accessed through a deep self-soaking spirit-to-spirit prayer, to experience God (Eph. 6:18-20), or by saturating oneself with the word of God on a regular basis (Heb. 4:20), or by devoting oneself to a period of regular fasting, prayer, and waiting on God (Matt. 4:2). Believers can also tap it through the discipline of obedience (John 14:15). This means that if there is sin or corruption in a person's life, it will be a hindrance to prayer, resulting in failure of the anointing. Accordingly, "if prayer sparks your spiritual engine, the word of God heats your spiritual engine up, but fasting takes you off into action or motion."³⁸

Since the power of the Holy Spirit is real, available, and still at work in the church today, every part of the body that wants to experience transformation have to move for it. It is usually associated with those who communicate regularly with God through studying scriptures, prayer, and waiting in fasting.

Study the scriptures; know God's Word

Being well equipped for transformation by building inner spiritual strength and being filled with God's power, the Holy Spirit anointing, are achieved on the basis of knowing Scripture, the word of God. The Bible is God's manifesto to any person

He calls, the life manual for the Christian, and the basic tool to the fulfillment of all transformational dreams in life. The “Bible” in Greek is *biblia* which means “books.” But the name is believed to have originated from Byblos, an ancient Canaanite city along the Mediterranean coast of Palestine that was well known for the production of papyrus, a material on which information was written. It was also commonly applied to any collection of papyrus with information. Little wonder, when the “book of books” was finally constituted between the 4th and 5th Century AD, it received the title, *biblia*, i.e., “Bible,” since paper from which book is produced is itself a product of papyrus from Byblos.

The Bible is the historical record of God's plan of salvation for mankind. It reveals a carefully told story of the relationship between God and creation, with its focus on humanity, and reports His momentous interventions in history. The Bible explains the origin of the universe, the entire ‘milky way,’ affirms the uniqueness of mankind on the earth and God’s mandate to humanity, accounts for the presence of evil and suffering in our world, unveils the future of the righteous and the destiny of those who rebel against the *will* of God, and thus calls humanity to faith in God.

The Bible, without doubt, has been translated into more languages than any other book in history. Though other religions boast of sacred books, none compares with the Bible. It has been honored over the centuries as the only book that claims inspiration by God himself (2 Tim. 3:16), containing timeless principles for all spheres of life and for all human beings everywhere. It is a collection of 66 works, i.e., both Old and New Testaments, by about forty different authors, written and compiled over a span of nearly 1,600 years. The Bible reflects the personalities of its inspired authors and the literary styles and cultures of their times. It contains historical

events, poetry, philosophy, proverbs, instruction and teaching for godly living, and predictions concerning the future.

Often referred to as scriptures, because of its inspiration, it is every soul's guide to all the rich resources of God. Studying and being careful to obey its teachings is all that one needs to experience complete transformation and also receive God's approval as an excellent transformational leader (2 Tim. 2:15). It makes the person able to lead acceptable life and hold on to the right doctrine (1 Tim. 4:16). Apostle Paul emphasized the importance of studying the word of God when he encouraged Timothy, to devote himself to public reading of Scripture, and to preaching and teaching (1 Tim. 4:13). To be successful, then, the leader should feast on Scripture not only through studying and meditating upon it but also confessing and daily practicing what it says.

Cultivate Prayer lifestyle

When a child is born, every member of the family rejoices. A relationship begins to develop with parents and other members of the family. So is everyone who is born again into the kingdom of Christ, Christendom. The best way for any Christian to develop his relationship with the Lord is by talking to Him and the Lord talking back to the one. This is what is known as prayer. Simply put, then, prayer is a conversation with God. That is, talking to God and allowing Him also to talk back through His Word. It is the basis of the father-child relationship and a platform of interaction which brings satisfaction to both father and child.

Importance of prayer

Prayer brings lots of benefits to the believer, especially, those who want to see real transformation in their lives and

experience breakthrough in their endeavors. Some of these are discussed below.

Prayer is a communication with God: Prayer is a relationship of performance which is maintained through communication. Strictly on a give and take basis, it compares with consulting a fetish or a medium (Bible forbids this, Deut.18:9, 10). But why do we need to talk to God and how do we do it? (Matt. 26:41; 1 Peter 5:8, Luke 22:40) What does God say to our prayers and what can prevent God from answering your prayers? (Matt. 21:22; John 16:24; James 1:6-7; 4:3; Mark 11:25; Ps. 66) Why is prayer so important for the growth of the Christian?

There are two main reasons. The first reason why prayer is important is that it brings about the total transformation of a person's life. Through prayer, sinners have their deepest conviction of sin and repent, experience the peace of God as a result of His forgiveness, see the miracles of new birth and deliverance and healing, and receive assurance of salvation. The second reason is that through this discipline believers receive power to witness and bear testimony to the truth (Acts 18), and enjoy a release from captivity (e.g. witchcraft and other occult practices). It is also a means where break with the sinful past (Rom. 7:15-25). By prayer the Christian receives power to grow from one degree of glory to another (2 Cor. 3:18).

It is the effective prayer life that makes it possible for the leader to obtain the holiness without which no one will see the Lord (Heb. 12:14), and receives a revelation (guidance, messages, etc.) from God) to continue living. Every leader should thus strive to growth in prayer by showing increase, improvement, and maturity in the prayer discipline. It involves improvement in the art of praying (i.e., in the method of praying) which yields a mature Christian life, and may therefore be

observed in the art, (shown as different elements) and the effects of prayer in the life of the Christian. God talks to us through His Spirit and Word and we also talk to Him (prayer).

Prayer helps to deal with sin: With respect to sin and spirituality there are three kinds of men: the carnal, natural, and spiritual. There are different characteristics or fruits of each of these people. Having known the relationship that has to exist between God and the Christian, the leader must strive to maintain this relationship in order to enjoy it. Whilst there are lots of things that can rob you from the joy you should have in the Lord, there is only one way by which you can have your joy restored and that is being forgiven through the blood of Jesus Christ. God has forgiven us but it requires our faith to complete it (1 John 1:9). This is the only way by which we can restore our relationship, according to 1 Corinthians 2:14-33.

Christians are supposed to be spiritually minded people and are called to a life of holiness which suggests getting rid of sins in the right way so that we can enjoy fellowship with God. But a Christian may find himself in sin but should not make it a habit or be satisfied with that condition (1 John 2:1-2). How can you be sure that you have been forgiven? (1 John 1:9) And for strength to overcome sin we need to be empowered by the Holy Spirit which is what you will learn in another study. We are forgiven when we have to accept the basis of forgiveness in faith. What does the Bible say about how to handle sin? Simple!

- First accept that you are a sinner, repent and confess every known sin (Ps. 51:1-12).
- Accept forgiveness by faith (1 John 1:7-9).
- The next step is to be prepared to refrain from it and to practice a life of holiness.

Prayer is a tool for warfare: Having known how to talk to God through prayer is not enough, the Christian needs to grow in it because he/she has to use it as a tool to overcome life challenges. One of the reasons why prayer is important, and growth in it should be an absolute necessity is that Christians have enemies, the devil and his host of demons (fallen angels) to fight and resist.

Scripture reveals that man was created in the image of God, but of dust from the ground (Gen. 2:7) and given responsibility; to keep God's creation. That was probably one of the duties originally performed by Lucifer before his fall. Satan, our enemy, was a prominent angel of God who rebelled against God and was cast down and demoted (Ezek. 28:11-19; Isa. 14:12-15; Rev. 12:7-12). Lucifer, now turned into Satan, has been man's arch enemy since. He works hard with his myriads of demon servants (also fallen angels) to keep men and women from entering the kingdom of God, i.e., becoming children of God. Satan is continually deceiving Christians with his major weapon of lies.

Thus God has given humanity the authority to overcome Satan, but this is achieved through the medium of prayer. In order to fight and conquer this enemy of the soul, the Christian needs to put on the whole spiritual armor of God. In Ephesians 6:10-20, it is clearly seen that the complete armor is made of seven parts, five of which are defensive: truth, righteousness, gospel of peace, shield of faith, helmet of salvation; and the remaining two weapons are offensive: the sword of the spirit (word of God), and prayer. The Bible is replete with references to great prayer warriors. It makes reference to the art of praying and the effect of prayer. For example, Romans 8:26 says, "...The spirit helps us in our weakness..." when we engage in prayers, probably, by given us more strength to pray.

Opportunities for Prayer

The Christian needs to pray and to grow in prayer because he has to fight and overcome a personal enemy, the devil. Opportunities for prayer include the following:

Quiet Time: One of the best ways to develop in prayer and fellowship with God is regularly communication with Him is by observing a Quiet time. Seeing the need to talk with God and learning how to talk to God are these two things that can be combined during the period of quiet time. Thereafter the believer also learns how to fellowship with other believers. What then is quiet time? Why is it necessary to have quiet time? (Ps. 40:29-31) When and where should we have Quiet time? (Mark 1:35; Ps. 5:3) What are some of the problems you are likely to encounter in having a Quiet time?

What are the indices of Quiet time? A study of the Bible shows a number of indices to effective Quiet time which could be grouped into seven (7): (i) the time of the day and duration, e.g. The Lord Jesus Christ chose early morning devotion (Luke 6:12), and all night prayers (Mark 1:35); (ii) Intensity of prayer (e.g., The Lord prayed three times in the garden of Gethsemane (Matt. 26:36-46); (iii) The accompaniment of fasting: for example, Mark 9:14-29 emphasizes prayer and fasting; (iv) Planning for the place and time; (v) Endurance or degree of agonizing (The Lord agonized in Gethsemane: Matt. 26:36-46); (vi) The structural balance or content of the prayer - (e.g., the Lord Jesus' prayer in John 17; and Luke 11:2-4); (vii) The element of faith demonstrated, for without faith it is impossible to please God.

Regular fellowship with the Holy Spirit: With regards to the Holy Spirit, there are pertinent questions that need answering. Such questions include: Who is the Holy Spirit? Where does the Holy Spirit come from? What are some of the attribute of

His personality? Why does the Holy Spirit come to do in a believer's life?

The Holy Spirit is the last expression of God to mankind. Some of the important questions include the following: The Holy Spirit comes into the individual's life when he accepts Christ, so all Christians have the Holy Spirit (Joel 2:28, 29; 1 Thess. 5:16-18, 19-22; Eph. 4:30; John 15:26-27; 16:13; Acts 1:8). The baptism of the Holy Spirit is a phenomenon which occurs when one totally surrenders to God and asks in faith for His Spirit. Baptism of the Holy Spirit begins at conversion. The work of the Holy Spirit at conversion produces the fruits of the spirit, while after baptism of the Holy Spirit the Christian is given the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

For a believer to be controlled by the Holy Spirit there is the need for proper heart preparation by sincerely desiring to be controlled by Him (Matt. 5:6) and giving each area of one's life to Him (Rom. 12:1-2). It can be achieved when one confesses all known sin and asks God to fill him or her with the Holy Spirit. Christians are to mark our lives as spirit-filled people (Gal. 5:22-23). That is, to be controlled by the Holy Spirit as a regular inhaling process or spiritual breathing. This we do by faith in the promise of our God that He will give to all who ask Him for the Holy Spirit (Luke 11:13).

Be strong in spiritual warfare

The Christian is constantly in battle against the forces that pitch themselves against Him. But some Christians are ignorant of the existence of such a battle and its sources. It is not sufficient to know how our enemies are and how to deal with them. Christians must continue to grow by knowing how to handle sin and how to be controlled by the Holy Spirit (1 John. 4:4). The Christian welfare is a lifelong process. But never despair, every Christian has enough weapons for

engaging in spiritual warfare (2 Cor. 10:4-5; Eph. 6:10-17). Thus victory belongs to the Christian (Eph. 1:18, 19; Phil. 4:13; 1 John 4:4; 1 Cor. 10:13).

The Holy Spirit is the one who helps the Christian in spiritual warfare. That is, since the Holy Spirit empowers and controlled us, He makes us to become equipped for any spiritual warfare. For a victorious Christian life continue to be controlled by the Holy Spirit. A person with transformational leadership vision needs to be filled with the Holy Spirit because strength is needed to fight these areas:

- The flesh (Gal. 5:17-21): The solution might be found in passages like Galatians 5:16 and Romans 13:14.
- The world (1 John 2:6): The solution might be found in passages like 1 John 2:15, 17; John 16:33.
- The devil (Ezek. 28:14; Isa. 14:12-14; 2 Cor. 4:4; Eph. 2:2; John 10:10): The solution might be found in passages like Ephesians 6:10-17; 1 Peter 5:8, and James 4:7.

Christian leaders should know that there is no end to spiritual warfare; the Christian grows through it. Despite the fierceness of those enemies and the subtlety of the tricks they enjoy, we know victory has been won for us on the cross. We can trust the Lord Jesus to keep us going because, "Greater is he that is in you than he that is in the world."

Back your prayers with faith

For leaders to be taken seriously by those they lead, a lot of demonstration of faith must be seen in them. In order to overcome the negativities in ministry, one must consider the following carefully:

- When you want to overcome negativities, see yourself greater than every challenge you face, because it is not by your power or might; it is the Lord's (David and Goliath,

1 Sam. 17:45). Thus, do not let any situation in life be magnified above what God can do, (Num. 13:33). Do not belittle yourself. Statements like, “we are like grasshoppers” (Jer. 32:27), “who are we to do this” (Luke 1:27), etc., are not testimonies of positive thinkers.

- Leaders must stand upon God's word and not the words of ordinary human beings (we cannot go when God had said so). They do not go with the majority because the latter are not always right (Num. 14:6-30).
- Transformational leaders sometimes do things that are contrary to human reasoning. That is, they are risk-takers. Never fear to take risk or to adventure because God is an adventurous God (Num. 8-9; 14). “Risk is a faith-step to a Christian.”
- Transformational leaders are prepared to step forward in faith, for a journey with a thousand miles begins with the first step, “Let us go quickly...for God is with us,” as both Caleb and Joshua said about the step of faith needed to move to the Promised Land (Num. 13:30; 14:6-9).

Develop prayer partnership with trusted believers

Another important development in the life of every effective transformational leader is to become spiritually connected. This can be achieved through the medium of prayer. It is by using dependable prayer partner (s). Many people may be very valuable in the leader's life. But listening to an audio visual version of one of the powerful speakers and authors of books on Leadership on the topic, “The Pastor's most valuable partner,” a deep sense of the importance of partnership in prayer dawned on me. According to Maxwell, many people may qualify to be the most valuable partner like the following: the pastor's wife, the associate pastor(s), the greatest financial supporter, the most faithful to the pastor in services, and many

others. But the most valuable person to the pastor is “The one who dedicates self to pray always for the Pastor.”³⁹

In fact, such a person may be the pastor’s own wife, he may be a lay person, he may not be financially powerful person, he may not be one of the church leaders, he may not be a very influential person in the church or society, he may not be any other that people may easily notice. But in Maxwell’s own words, “the prayer partner is the one who changes the spiritual atmosphere for the pastor to operate,” and that “both the one who goes to the field and the one who stays behind to pray or take care share the victory that comes out.”⁴⁰

By using the Israelites and the Amalekites battle as example (Exod. 17:8-16) the person should take note of the following:

1. Godly leaders come under attack, especially after a victory has been won. The devil knows when to attack, an opportune time, so leaders need constant prayers.
2. Godly leaders cannot win the battles alone. The mistake some Pastors make is that most of the time they underestimate the support of others.
3. Godly leaders are to inspire the people always. The role that leaders play is an inspiration to the church; when down the whole body is affected and vice versa.
4. Because godly leaders are still human, sometimes the willingness to remain for God exists, but there is no strength. Even the Lord Jesus himself once said “the spirit is willing but the flesh is weak.” This is where they should go to God in prayer.
5. Godly leaders plus prayer partners bring the victory. Every leader’s victory is shared by those who support him in prayer (1 Sam. 30:24).

The ongoing discussion thus emphasizes that every Pastor, spiritual leader, or minister of the gospel should be able

to address questions like, is there a need for a prayer partner in ministry? Do I have a prayer partner in ministry? Is my prayer partner a reliable one? What will prevent me from finding one? There might be many important reasons why every spiritual leader minister or minister of the Gospel would need a prayer of spiritual partner. There are many ways to initiate and develop prayer partnership with a reliable person(s):

- Understand the value of the person who has agreed to be your prayer partner.
- Ask God to give you a prayer partner and know how to develop your partnership after God leads you to one or directs one to you.
- Ask your prayer partner to keep close to your side or be in regular touch with you, and do well to take your partner on a spiritual journey with you.
- Regularly give your prayer partners information on your prayer needs.

Let me testify here that besides my wife who is my lifetime prayer partner, there is another person who has partnered me in prayers, retreats and waiting sessions (sometimes in fasting), and has been very faithful with me since November 1991.

Practice regular waiting on God

Waiting on God is a period set aside to have intimacy with God, or to draw closer to God and know him and for him to also come closer to you (James 4:8) to have personal encounter with God through drawing closer to Him in solitude. Waiting on God is spending quality time before the Lord in prayer for an ultimate relationship. It is a time or period of time a person or persons has ultimate encounter with the Lord. It is also a time a person or persons pours out their heart before or to the Lord in prayer for any type of answers:

direction, encouragement, breakthrough and or anointing for victorious living, and or successful ministry. Without purposeful waiting on God, the believer is bereft of spiritual power, since it is usually done by effectual fervent prayer with or without fasting. It can be the long time period when one lives with the hope God is doing something in his life (Job 14:14; Hab. 2:1-2).

For every Christian and more especially for leaders waiting on God is an important need. It is not a time wasting session or an unproductive period in a believer's life. A true Christian life begins and ends with a full dependence on God. This means that this dependence will require intimate relationship with the Lord. This means transformational leaders must make room for God in their life and have the Holy Spirit work in and through them. This intimate relationship will also depend upon one's knowledge of God. Therefore this desire to know him will come from how much closer we get to him. Leaders would know God well, understand Him well and walk with him well only by the quality of or her relationship with Him through continuous waiting (Isa. 40:28-31; Ps. 27:14).

Waiting is usually initiated by a desire by the believer(s) to know, hear or to be directed by God. It is a practice that helps one to be spiritually in tune with God, that is, to be abreast of God's direction or to make one's way pleasing to God (Ps. 63:1-8; Hosea 10:12). It is a deep sense of spiritual thirst for God (Ps. 42:1) because of emptiness (Jer. 29:13). Waiting can be either individual or corporate waiting. These are some of the forms in which waiting is done. Short time waiting might be that period of lying quietly and patiently before the Lord after prayer, for an answer or responds from the Lord. It is allowing the Lord time to speak to you after the prayer.

But long time waiting requires setting aside a period of time and going to a solitary place or hide out to pray or fast and for purpose or purposes. That might be a long period set

aside purely with fasting to wait on him (Dan. 9:3) or that quiet period after a prayer especially during long prayer (quite short). Moving closer to God require waiting on him and for him. During such waiting times, one has to make sure to lay aside all that will abstract his/her attention for God. Let God know that you are consciously waiting for Him. These conscious decisions will move the leader into the spiritual atmosphere for total spiritual blessings. This is because there are many things waiting on God will achieve in the life of every believer.

- **You are not a domestic fowl:** A certain story illustrates the victorious outcome of waiting by both the transformational leader and the subject of his transformation. It is about a hunter who went hunting in a forest. Along the way, he chanced upon a relatively large brown egg and brought it home. His immediate plan was to cook it and eat but his instincts prevented him. Upon a second thought, he decided to incubate it in order to find out what bird hatches out of it. Since some of his domestic fowls were in the process of incubation, he added the strange eggs to those of one fowl.

The incubation of the egg from the unknown bird lasted a little longer. But it was successful, and produced a very strong little bird, among the chicks. Not perturbed by the difference in the birds, the hunter decided to nurture them together. He will always spread chicken feed on the ground and the chickens including the strange bird will rush to it and start feeding. But as they were growing, he realized that the wings of the strange bird grow faster than that of the chicks. Its features revealed that the egg had come from an eagle, and that the young bird was an eaglet. Consequently, he purposed to prune its wings in order to prevent it from flying away.

He continued to rear the birds together until one day, a friend of the hunter visited him. During the period of feeding of

the birds, the friend spotted the strange bird and immediately realized that it is an eaglet. When he mentioned to the hunter he admitted knowledge of it. The friend wondered why the friend would ever try to rear an eagle among chicken. But the hunter insisted that it was possible, and up till that period he had succeeded. By this time, the wings had been pruned, and its claws and beaks had become very blunt from scratching the ground and picking food respectively. Surprise at that, the friend insisted that he could make the bird fly away but the hunter doubted him. So the friend caught the young eagle, lifted it up, and addressed it. He said, "You are not a chick, but an eagle, the strongest among birds and king of the sky. So, stretch yourself and soar to where you belong..."

As one with transformational mind, he kept on inspiring the eaglet to fly. Just then, the hunter brought out some chicken feed and threw it on the ground. Immediately, the eaglet jumped from the friend's hand and began to feed on the food among the chicks. The hunter laughed and said, "Did I not tell you that I have turned it into a chick?" The friend was still beside himself with disappointment that a bird as strong as an eagle had been domesticated into a domestic fowl. He left for home a sad person.

- **You are an eagle:** Being a person with transformational objectives, the hunter's friend found it hard to accept that an eagle could be domesticated like a chicken. So undaunted by his failure, and being quickened by 'a never-give-up spirit,' he friend planned another visit. But he allowed some months before the second visit. When he came, the eaglet had matured into an eagle but had its wings pruned and was still feeding among the domestic fowls in the compound of the hunter. So he challenged the hunter and said, "Look, you boast of succeeding in turning this eagle into a domestic fowl. If only

you will permit me to have my own way with this bird for a short period, I will prove you wrong.” He accepted responsibility for anything that will happen to the bird should his transformational experiment fail.

Thus, with permission from the hunter, the visitor locked up the eagle in a special part of the coop, secured it with a lock and kept the key to himself throughout the period of the visit. During the brief period of his visit, he ensured that the eaglet is not supplied with any food, water, or be attended to in anyway. Satisfied with the progress of his experiment, he left for home with the instruction that his experiment with the eagle be allowed to continue till he returns. Then he went away for a while.

As the days turned into weeks and months, series of transformations began to be observed in the bird. It began to lose weight and slim in the abdominal region but with the breast muscles showing prominently, thereby making the bird looking very active in the process. Without the usual pruning, its wings began to stretch as it kept on growing new feathers which appeared very interlocking, and its feathers also growing well and becoming elongated. It kept on hopping from one place to another, and spreading its wings as if looking for opportunity to fly out of the coop. It became extremely sensitive to the slightest movement in its environment because it was always on the lookout. Its hooked bills and curved claws grew in size and strength, and it occasionally will scratch these on the floor of the coop. With time, it became fierce and began to make a quacking sound.

About three months later, the friend returned to the hunter. Desperate to prove his point, and win the contest, he visited the coop to convince himself that the eagle has responded to his treatment. In the full glare of the hunter and all around, he opened the coop, brought the eagle out and placed

it in his hands. Then he repeated his earlier address to the bird, this time very confident that the bird will respond positively:

Today, I want you to know, accept, and prove to all that you are an eagle, the strongest among birds and king of the sky, and not a domestic fowl. You are the chief predator that thrives only on what are flesh, and never a scavenger dwelling among fowls and pecking from the ground. Therefore, stretch yourself and soar up to where you belong...

Upon this inspiration, the eagle began to stretch itself, positioning its body as if ready to fly. The hunter, realizing the new behavior of the bird, immediately dashed to his storage and brought out chicken feed and threw it on the ground. But this time the eagle did not jump from the friend's hand to feed on the food among the chicks. It turned towards the sky.

The friend of the hunted realizing that the bird has not tasted the sky banked his bet on three attempts to make the bird fly. At the first attempt at lifting the eagle into the sky, the bird managed to flap the wings but could not fly up to any higher height and fell down. At the second attempt, the eagle flapped its wings and flew to an appreciable height but once again, it fell down. Now, the stage was set for the last try. By this time, the bird had exercised a little for a final showdown. It was ready to have its freedom and reclaim its status as a real eagle, "the strongest among birds and king of the sky, the chief predator that thrives only on what are flesh, and never a scavenger dwelling among fowls and pecking from the ground." It began to stretch itself, spreading its wings and looking in the direction of the sun. At the third lifting, the eagle soared up into the sky, and, 'holalaa,' it never returned.

The friend of the hunter won the challenge. His self-imposed transformational assignment succeeded. He proved that an eagle can never be tamed if it is prepared to assert itself and live by the standards set for it. He is credited with the

fact with determination no number of failures can dismantle the flag of success. Putting it in our context, he demonstrated that with a 'can do spirit,' every task is surmountable. Elijah's unyielding spirit that stirred him up to instruct his servant to go seven times and observe the sea for any sign of a coming rain shows that if you try and fail, do not give up, just try again. For, 'quitters never win, and winners never quit.' Transformation is possible for all who would want to pursue it wherever.

Additionally, the eagle story above illustrates how the devil has managed to trap some believers and bogged them down with food, pleasure, unproductive business, etc., in order for them to become spiritually ineffective and harmless. They have become completely immobilized like the eaglet. Such people need transformation. It is about time believers with transformational visions desired to wait on the Lord in order to be spiritually strong and lead the transformation of others as Moses did. As a result of his waiting on the LORD, he was empowered to fulfill his mandate. On two different occasions, Moses waited on the LORD for forty days and night (Exod. 34:28; cf. Deut. 9:8-9; 18-19). No wonder, he was able to lead over two million Israelites amidst signs and miracles.

As a purpose-driven transformational leader, you have to be well equipped for your task. The anointing of God that will empower you needs to be sought through constant waiting on God in prayer and fasting. As a result, you have to do regular self-evaluation to see whether you are well equipped to positively affect your ministry. If you become very strong in your spiritual life you will definitely be in a position to develop other leaders as would be discussed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 10

YOU MUST ENDEAVOUR TO DEVELOP OTHER LEADERS

Within the context of Ephesians 4:11-13 and 2 Timothy 2:1-2, one of the most important responsibilities every strategic transformational leader has is to train some members to take up responsibilities. One of the best ways to achieve this is through mentoring. Mentoring is, “being an appropriate and loyal guide (i.e., advisor and teacher) to other less matured Christians.” This is where the leader creates enthusiasm in other members of equal (team mates) or unequal (followers) ranks such that they begin to look up to him in order to perform or reach greater heights. The leader is seen here as a mentor working on the mind of the mentee. The whole process is a teacher-student relationship. The aim is to raise the followers to reach maturity like the “master.”

In the Bible, Moses and Joshua (Deut. 31:8), Elijah and Elisha, or Paul and Timothy (2 Tim. 1:6), are typical examples. Observations from the ministry of some leaders especially Ministers of the Church indicate that the supporting staff or and their development is a very important area, since a well developed staff forms the pillars of the success of one’s ministry. The Lord Jesus Christ himself, the Good Shepherd and Pastor of the early disciples and of the Church in general, is a typical example of a teacher who trained His disciples, (John 13:12-17). He demonstrated excellent leadership and pastoral qualities including the following; humility (John 13: 4-14), love and compassion (John 13:34), vision (Acts 1:7-8), courage and ability to speak with others (Matt. 7:28-29), delegation of roles (Luke 10:1-12), etc.

The Lord Jesus Christ spent about three years developing the leaders who will take over and continue the work. The Lord didn't see it as a waste of time. Similarly, a Pastor should be bold, creative and motivated enough to inspire others and not see it as unimportant.

Train others through Mentoring and Coaching

Every transformational leader of any Christian institution, such as a local church should be on the lookout for potential people, or leaders, who have a call to ministry and who could be trained to take up certain responsibilities, or even deputize for the pastor when the need arises. He should make it a practice to train these people. He or she should spend time with them, teach and encourage them. Such trained people can also be delegated to do certain works when the pastor's attention has been engaged by other commitments. At the appropriate time a pastor should put them in positions of ministry. To be able to mentor and set precedents for members to follow, a lot of leadership abilities and qualities should be demonstrated. This also calls on the leader to set steps that others can follow and guides them to do so.

One of the most challenging transformational leaders in the Bible was Joshua. He inherited his leadership abilities after studying under Moses, and later, accepted the responsibility of taking the Israelites into the Promised Land. His strong pastoral exhibits enabled him to complete his task of sharing the Promised Land among the tribes. Thus, the pastor should be able to see, know, and understand what God wants him to do, and be willing to lead the church to do likewise. He should be able to fully fulfill his responsibility of being a good mentor to his members by imparting his vision to them. In this manner, it is easy for the pastor to enlist co-workers and empower those who are ready to help him bring the vision of the church to

pass. Empowerment here is not the act of training a person to acquire of knowledge but the provision of relevant information, needed support, and material resources in order for the person to perform excellently.

The quality of the leaders of any church or organization will determine the success and kind of growth of the church. For quite a number of churches the core team comprise; the head pastor (and sometimes associate pastors), some office workers, and the elders. These usually constitute the paid staff. However, some of the churches might be able to have only the pastor-in-charge as the only paid staff because of financial constraints. If such is the case, the church should endeavor to recruit committed and mature Christian brethren to form a volunteer team to serve as elders, deacons, ministry leaders, and Bible study leaders, etc. These therefore constitute the leadership team.

The nature of the job of the minister, pastor (or every paid staff), that is, the job description, should be communicated on paper and should be discussed in details by the leadership team vis-à-vis their own plan to govern the church (and any institution) or to execute specific jobs. This should be done one-on-one basis. Church ministers should not be too young or too old in the Lord. The minimum level of education of all our ministers should be a certificate from a recognized ministerial institution, and a qualified minister should be a family person or one with plans for marriage. The pay and benefits should be presented to each person in a letter which states salary, allowance, and any benefits the minister will enjoy. To ensure proper welfare, and also for protection and for reporting purposes, each staff member would be assigned a committee for accountability.

It's been observed that quite a number of churches use elders to deputize for their pastor(s), and they are also

delegated to perform important church assignments. Therefore, persons who are to be recruited for such pastoral roles must possess certain qualifications. The leader should be sure that people to be considered desire the work. Any person who qualifies for an elder must be available at meetings and also show availability for assigned responsibilities. Each leader has to pass the specific tests of Christianity and be committed to Christ, and should be at home with the philosophy, direction, and vision of the church. The leader must be very sure to make plain the work involved in each position. Only people who show teachable spirit and a readiness to learn should be considered for the church volunteer team.

However, the overall leader or leaders should try to involve as many influential persons as possible; they are found in every church. From much experience, one writer on church Leadership advises that, "if we spend time influencing the influencers they, in turn, will influence other people for us."⁴¹ This means that if such people are won over, it will be a big booster for prompt support of any positive step to be taken. If the recruit is married, spousal agreement in the role and readiness to support should be sought. Afterwards, the selected people should be given a job description and a list of expectations for their work. Financially, the elders, and if possible, each worker, would be encouraged to be committed to the church through special regular levies to strengthen the church finances.

Two of the current writers on Church Leadership, Blanchard and Hodges, make another important statement on leadership training that, "the quality of your service will be a direct result of your spiritual preparation."⁴² So to inject efficiency into the work of the paid staff(s) and the whole leadership team a leadership assessment and appraisal retreat should be organized regularly. The purpose of this program is

to straighten up the paid staff through thorough scrutiny of the criteria for their employment.

Regular group retreats are necessary

Transformational leaders are sensitive to regular assessment and development of their working force. The key areas of assessment of any person should be character, that is, the person's level of growth in the Lord and spiritual testimony. A person's chemistry, that is, whether the person fits well with other staff members; and competency, whether the person can do the work without any training, (the one who can go on without training is better after training) are also equally important. The nurture and training of the paid staff, elders and all other volunteers should go on all year long in various forms. Training of staff and all elders should include at least one seminar a year that should apply primarily to their spiritual development and work. Efforts should also be made to organize, at least, two annual elders retreats (first just for elders and the second with their spouses), and at least one for all the other volunteers.

The main purpose for retreats is to inform, teach, and introduce plans of the church and to brainstorm for new ideas. Such retreats also open doors for fellowship and relationship building, reading and discussion of books or resources together. Resource persons will be invited to help challenge the elders and the other volunteers. Wilson suggests seven simple steps for the training of volunteers (but it can be applied to all others). It is as follows:

- Identify expectation
- Assess learning needs
- Determine objectives
- Develop program content
- Design the learning experience

- Obtain instructional resources
- Conduct training sessions.⁴³

At regular intervals, a “day away” program should be encouraged by leaders, during which each person will be encouraged to spend time to do intensive Bible study, pray, planning, journaling, etc., on a particular day of the month. Provision would be made for monetary allowances to all the staff for these staff spiritual development programs. On regular occasions the leader should organize Christian dinner, or say monthly, quarterly, or yearly dinner with their wives and special sessions on other holidays, fun days, etc. All efforts should be made to get to know their families, and they will also be encouraged to make regular visits to the senior minister’s house.

Again, at regular meetings, the leadership should discuss criteria for continuity when improvement has been made, and also what needs to change in light of the problems. The leader should ensure that the church secretary writes all matters of discussion and puts everything in prints to be kept in the church records. Each staff should have a personal copy and a copy placed in the person’s file (for future or legal purposes).

Motivation is important

A major problem for some ministries is loss of motivation and interest by the working staff. It is the duty of the Head Pastor to ensure that all the church leaders are well motivated and given the needed encouragement to deliver. To ensure effective transformation, senior pastors should have firsthand knowledge of their welfare, especially, at church and even beyond. This is one leader’s comment: “The supervisor leads in motivating the workers - unleashing those inner spring in the workers which cause them to want to do what they need to do.”⁴⁴ Motivation can be achieved through constant interaction

with staff, if possible visitation to their homes, one-on-one chats to create a healthy relationship for maximum understanding, trust in the service, and freedom to serve. Other means to motivate the staffs, like small gifts, invitation for lunch, etc, should be sought. Motivation of colleagues is a great tool for transformation. Use it!

CHAPTER 11

YOU NEED TO PROMOTE GOD-DIRECTED CHARACTERISTICS

All church matters are God directed because the church is the body of Christ, with Him as head, and the believers form its body. Since it is God who is building His own Church, scripture says that without Him we can do nothing, so He decides everything about the Church. However, there are specific areas of church development which are related to God's direct role in the affairs of the church. These are the *will*, purpose, mission, and vision of God that a church must have, and the need for total dependence on God.

Seek God's *will* for the Church

The first verse of the first Psalm of the Bible reveals a curse that is placed on any believers who "walks in the counsel of the ungodly..." Thus when it comes to issues regarding which direction God wants a person or the church to tow, it is completely out of place for the Christian to confer with ordinary persons, let alone the unbeliever. Much as church leaders have to confer with others on matters affecting their leadership responsibilities, they will do a great service and bring much transformation if they cultivate the habit of waiting on God. One major key for Christian organizations to grow is for the leadership to know God's *will* for such bodies. Knowing the *will* of God in life situations can bring the needed confidence to act on them without subjecting everything to human guidance and counseling.

The church is not just any organization, rather a living one which breathes life from Jesus for growth. "...If a man

remains in me and I (i.e., Jesus) in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing” (John 15:5). Any church that grows does so according to the will of God and by the Power of God (1 Cor. 3:7). Again, Colossians 2:19 says that “the church grows with a growth which is from God.” There can be a type of growth in a church that may not come from God, like growth due to entertainment or the type based on overemphasis on miracle, etc. But the church does not need such; they can collapse easily since they have little foundation on God’s purpose.

God makes the body of Christ grow healthy by giving out quality leaders, and the success of the body will depend on the quality of leaders we have. The reason leadership is very important in church development is that “as the leadership go, so the church goes.”⁴⁵ This is because man is the tool or conduit that God uses to fulfill His divine purpose in growing the church. God uses the hands, feet and other resources provided for men to fulfill his will- both men and women (2 Cor. 5:16-21). God teaches through man’s teaching and gives, touches, appeals, etc., through the instrumentality of man. The reason is that man is God’s ambassador to fulfill his will. The giftedness of the body of Christ is through God’s giving. The work of God in the churches cannot be successful without good leadership.

Be obedient to God’s *will* for the church

A lot would be discussed about the need for certain positive qualities of any transformational agent, particularly, the pastor, or church leader. Every step that a person takes should be based on concrete reasons. Some of the reasons may be contested while others are negotiable. The same cannot be said about a directive from God; it cannot be compromised, negotiated, contested, or whatever. Many people have tried to reason with God concerning His instructions but could not

prevail; Moses, Samuel, Jeremiah, to mention some examples. The Apostle Paul is very excellent example of people who accepted and acted on *the will of God* against that of a person or a group. Faced with the dilemma of the will of God against that of man, Apostle Paul took a positive step and later wrote in one of his epistles to the churches, "When it pleased God...and He called me...I conferred not with flesh and blood..." (Gal 1:15-17, KJV). This is probably the Apostle's simplest way of saying he did not take his decision to serve God based on what people around him might wish to say.

Truly, if Paul had gone to some of his colleagues he would have received a lot of advice; with one person saying this and another that, and some even trying to contrast others. To cut matters short the Apostle took the best way to get the needed answer(s). To wait on God in some desert area in Arabia, so he could come clear of exactly what God wanted him to do. Of course, there were lots of Apostles and leaders who had come ahead of him in God's call. But he just refused to be influenced by any person (vs. 17). Moreover, just when everybody thought Paul's ministry was reaching the peak in Asia Minor and the then known European world, the Apostle called a leadership assembly one day and informed them of God's purpose for him to return to Jerusalem.

It was probably as shocking and heartbreaking as an announcement of his death could be. But such is how our God does His work; no one can question His divine design except the ignorant. The leaders tried all they could to dissuade him but he persisted in obeying *the will of God* as testified by scriptures: "And when we heard these things, both we, and they of that place, besought him not to go up to Jerusalem...And when he would not be persuaded, we ceased, saying, The will of the Lord be done" (Acts 21:12-14, KJV). Yes, the Apostle wanted to be responsible for his own decision. Without any

controversy, the issue of loyalty to service required of God's ministers is as important as the very blood that flows through their arteries and veins. Some people have understood the issue of loyalty to their leaders and organization to be so paramount that it is beyond any compromise. Yes, such an unadulterated commitment is important for healthy good results at all times.

It must however be noted that any agents of God (and for that matter, any believer's) should possess a kind of loyalty to *the will* or dictates of God surpassing that to any particular leader, church, or Christian organization. In fact, from the point of scriptures a person's loyalty to leadership and society should remain intact for as long as it is not contrasted by the whims and the capricious instructions of people. That is, when any direction or instruction runs contrary to the leading of God's Spirit the minister's priority should be to obey the voice of God. The *will of God* should always prevail and never be compromised. This is the situation the Apostles faced that led to the multi-million dollar statement: "If it is right in the sight of God to obey you [human beings] more than God you should judge for yourselves. For we cannot do otherwise than to obey what we have seen and heard [from God] (my emphasis) (Acts 4:19-20).

People who put the will of God at the pinnacle of their lives should always be encouraged for their devotion. A typical example is Joseph who refused the attractive advances of the wealthy mistress of Potiphar because it was against *God's will* and Moses also rejected the privileges of a prince Egypt for a prophet of the Most High God. The OT prophets of God refused to shut up because they knew it was *His will* to speak against the vices of the society. In fact, not even man's own will should come between him and the *good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God*, which only the mind which has been

renewed through transformation can prove (Rom. 12:2). Thus the Lord Jesus himself, when confronted by his will and that of the Father, said, "...not my will but your will be done" (Luke 22:42).

The Purpose of the Church

Purpose may be defined in simple terms as what has to be accomplished. Purpose-driven people have a real clear strong sense of understanding of what they want to achieve in life. They know where they are going, they have a plan of how to get there, and they work hard to get there. It is said about many cultures that if 2% of the people are committed to a common clear objective they can sway the other 98%. Every person in this life should have a clear purpose in order to succeed. The Lord Jesus made His purpose clear to the disciples when He said that He came to seek and save the lost (Luke 13:32-33).

Apostle Paul's final statement on his purpose driven life was well communicated to his fellow workers and listeners in Philippians 3:12-15. Generally, institutions and people with clear sense of purposes accomplish their goals. The reason is that there is power in purpose. The saying goes that, "The main thing is to keep the main thing as the main thing." This is to say that the purpose of a church has to be well defined, it should be clear to every member of the church in simple and understandable form, and every member must make efforts to make it work.

Commenting on the issue, a scholar of the Bible writes, "Every church is driven by something."⁴⁶ Most of the churches think their purpose is to meet the needs of the members; instead it is only a fraction that believes the purpose of the church is to win the world for Jesus Christ. Such Churches are driven by the needs of their members and other factors like

tradition, personality of the minister, finances, buildings, events, etc. Most of the current community churches should be able to overcome these and be driven by only our purpose, that is, it must be purpose-driven.

The purpose of the church must come from the heart of God, so the primary leader should take a long period off to seek the face of God concerning His purpose for the Church. The purpose must be clear, specific, and must conform to scripture. This means that it must satisfy the general purpose God has given to the church in the Great Commission to win the lost for Christ. It is to be proactive, inspiring, and quite challenging. The purpose must provoke the members to action. The leadership must understand the purpose of the church well and it must also be communicated to the entire membership! This practice is quite recommendable and acceptable to quite a number of Church Leaders. For example, one Bible commentators has this advice to give: "Leaders and members need continually to clarify the purpose of church and to keep that purpose before people in and out of the church fellowship."⁴⁷

The Mission of the Church

The purpose of any church is 'what' it is supposed to accomplish, but the Mission is how that church is going to make it happen. In other words, Mission is how one accomplishes his or her purpose. Mission is the strategic plan of action that a church put down to fulfill God's purpose for that church. The mission of every church is usually contracted into a simple, appropriately, and single sentence, the Mission statement. It is usually seen as the Great Commission restated. Such a statement falls in line with what the President of the 59th National Missionary Convention of Christian Churches and Churches of Christ said, "The Church should have a 3-leg stool in order to fulfill Christ's commission; to gossip about Christ,

disciple people, and to send people to the mission field.”⁴⁸ Apparently, the Mission statement is the ‘radar’ of the church, “a description of the general accomplishments of a church and the umbrella of everything a church does.” Any church without a mission statement can be likened to a soccer team that is playing without any strategy or like working mathematics without a formula.

In light of the above, most of the churches need to define or redefine their mission in order to reflect Christ’s purpose. The mission statement should be a single phrase like, “To convert, nurture, and send.” After that we have to come out with a set of achievable goals to fulfill the mission. The goals are the pillars that hold the mission statement. In other words, they are the major segments through which the life and programs of the church are executed. Major goal areas include worship, discipleship, evangelism and missions, support, and fellowship, and they are executed through the various ministries.

The last step must be to come out with a set of objectives, each of which should describe the activities that should be put in place to fulfill set goals. Ministry leaders may work these out. The procedure to arrive at our mission statement, goals and objectives should follow these steps:

- The senior pastor should have at least a drafted mission statement in mind.
- A Mission Statement drafting committee (or all key leaders of the church including ministry leaders) should be appointed and informed of their assignment, various parameters and possible options to choose from should be given.
- A retreat should be planned for the draft team to meet and work it out and a pastor, an elder, or any responsible volunteer should be chosen to coordinate the program.

- A circular should be passed on to inform all members of an agreed venue, date, time, and with other details clearly spelt out. A place of solitude is preferable.
- Provision should be made for resource materials like stationary, enough food, drinks and snacks, provision for kids, etc.
- On the appointed date, the team should complete its work, and the outcome should be well documented and presented to the senior pastor and the church board for endorsement. Here, building consensus is quite essential.
- Then the Mission statement, set goals (or targets) to fulfill the mission, and all the objectives (or programs) to fulfill the individual goals will be communicated to the whole church, and publicized through all available means. Copies spelling out the designated goal and detail objectives should be given to ministry leaders.⁴⁹

The Vision of the Church and leadership

A leader who is worthy of following is the one with a vision and not just the one who talks and engages in some work. Vision is very important in life. Living a life without a specific vision is like making a journey without knowing the destination; it is like a ship that is travelling on the sea without a compass. In fact, it is like searching for a pin in complete darkness. Vision is light and an important determining factor for a successful life in this dark world. It is people's visions that direct and define their lives. The possession of vision by different people makes them perform better in life.

Vision has to do with the eyes and is connected to the sense of seeing. Vision is the mental picture of one's purpose; it is the mental description of what the leader or the church wants to achieve in a particular ministry area. Having a vision is the ability to see what is not yet there, or the ability to see what

could be. In life, a person's ability to see is his or her main sense of guidance or direction for every situation. In a sense, vision is important to everybody for engagements in many issues of our everyday life. "Visions," it is said, "form in the hearts of those who are dissatisfied with the status quo." In a more practical sense, vision may be defined as "the ability to see the opportunities within your current circumstances."⁵⁰

The kind of vision that directs leaders enables them to perform differently. In relation to vision of leadership, this is what the Lord Jesus himself said about some leaders: "...They are blind leaders of the blind; and when one blind man leads another, both fall into a ditch" (Matt. 15:14). This clearly indicates that not every leader is worthy of following. Some leaders can lead you to a fruitful destination; others cannot. After a period of following a particular people have to evaluate where they have reached. Not only that, they also need to find out where next they are being directed to. This is because visions can grow, i.e., become bigger, greater and clearer as one travels successfully on the path of fulfillment. The issue of vision, including all the types like dreaming and foresight, has been extensively dealt with under God-directed characteristics in a previous chapter.

Generally, people with good visions are likely to be good leaders. Christ, the Lord himself came to the earth with a vision; i.e., to fulfill a definite mission and not just to work. Thus, a good vision for life is essential to every person especially leaders; it helps them to direct the church well by making healthy choices and avoiding mistakes. The issue of vision is central to the proper functioning of any particular church. A visionless church can never satisfy the purpose for which Christ set it up. In fact, vision is necessary for any ministry of God. In the ministry of many Bible characters, vision plays a prominent role.

A very great teacher of the Bible at Cincinnati Christian University, Ohio, U.S.A., who is one of my mentors, David Roadcup, quotes a respected Christian leader, Joe Ellis, as follows: "A purpose driven church becomes effective when its purpose is focused into a mission that can be cast before people as a vision, and which can be actualized through well planned strategies."⁵¹ Scripture says that where there is no vision (or insight, understanding, knowledge, etc.) the people perish (Prov. 29:18; Joel 2:28; Gen. 37:5-10; Num. 14:29; 1 Tim. 4:12; 5:1; Eccl. 11:9-12:1). For many churches, it appears like there is no clearly defined vision presently because there is loss of our sense of direction. There is the need for a redefining of our vision.

For any particular church, it is the responsibility of the primary leader to set the vision. What needs to be done is for the primary leader to take a long period off to seek the face of God concerning His *will* and vision for the church. One sure way to catch God's vision for a church is for the pastor and his leadership to pray so as to know what to do at any time and how to do it. The vision must be clear, specific, scriptural, and it must be discussed with the rest of the leaders, in order to have leadership buy-in. The vision of the pastor thus becomes contagious and spreads rapidly among his followers. All who are around easily catch the vision.

The redefined vision of the most churches, for example, should be to use the capital cities where most of the churches are located as initial springboards. These churches could be used to establish healthy branches in all other places over a certain specified period. The purpose, mission statement, and vision of the church should be adequately communicated to the membership in a very understandable way, and be continually repeated to the church (possibly, every month). The churches should be able to use avenues like the pulpit to explain it on a

regular basis; it should also be written boldly on a sign board or around the wall of the church building; and it must be posted on the church web site, on letter heads, envelopes, etc.

Thus, the question of how a church can grow and stay healthy has a simple answer: “It depends on the sovereignty of God,” that is, what He has purposed to do and those that will be used as instruments. What this means is that if the leader(s) wait on God for specific direction for the purpose, mission, and vision for the church, the next most important thing is to trust God for the progress of the Church. Total dependence on God by the vision-driven transformational leader is the pivot for a meaningful and healthy church growth; it is the number one.

CHAPTER 12

YOU HAVE TO ALLOW THE HOLY SPIRIT TO LEAD YOUR MINISTRY

The coming of the Lord Jesus Christ ushered the world into the new dispensation before God, called the dispensation of grace or of the Holy Spirit. It represents the period within which God through the perfect sacrifice of His son, Jesus Christ, is reconciling mankind unto himself. All that one needs to do is to repent from his/her old ways, confess his/her sins unto God, and put his/her faith in the finished work of Jesus on the cross by accepting Him as Lord and Savior, and finally becoming baptized in the name of Jesus Christ to begin a new life. After this process, a person who hitherto was alienated from God now becomes a son of God, and a member of the body of Jesus Christ, i.e., the Church. The person also receives the Holy Spirit in response to the promise of the Lord and the power to live in the name of Jesus Christ.

The fruit of the Spirit

The coming of the Holy Spirit upon the Church was accompanied by the bearing of the fruit of the Holy Spirit by the believers and the power to witness Jesus to the world. Another importance which the coming of the Holy Spirit A major work of equipping by the spirit is in the area of working in the believer as a form of spiritual nourishment for the believer to grow and produce fruit. Just as a good source of water with nutrients, air, and sunlight, is required for a tree to survive and develop well, so also the Holy Spirit helps the believer to overcome hardships and difficulties, and to bear fruit to glorify Christ.

When believers bear the fruit of the spirit, others see in the believer the likeness of Christ and become attracted or

give glory to God. Every seed sown produces a tree that gives out fruit containing similar seeds as the one sown. Thus, the Holy Spirit helps or equips believers to develop God's character of holiness, love, faith righteousness, patience, longsuffering, meekness, and so on. These Christ-like characters are marks that the Holy Spirit develops in the believer for him to attain the full measure of perfection in Christ (Gal. 5:22-23).

Unlike the gifts of the spirit, the fruit of the spirit is not divided among believers. Instead, all Christians should be marked by the fruit of the spirit because scriptures talk about the fruit and not fruits of the spirit. Since any tree bears the same fruit, in the same way the Holy Spirit is the source of all the fruit in the believer's lives. Additionally, the spirit equips believers to put to death whatever is contrary to godliness (Col. 3:5). As the Spirit supplies the nourishment for good fruits to be produced, it suppresses the work of the flesh because it cannot give it any nourishment, thereby killing it (Gal. 5:24). Fruit of the Spirit like righteousness and truth which believers bear, together with others weapons like knowledge of the word of God (as sword of the spirit), faith in God (as helmet), are tools which the believer needs to overcome demonic principalities, powers, rulers of the darkness of this world, and spiritual wickedness in high places (Eph. 6:10-18).

But while there has been very little controversy over the bearing of fruits of the Holy Spirit such as love, joy, faith, etc., as listed in Galatians 5:22, there have been very great controversies over the manifestation or demonstration of the Spiritual gifts in the Church. The bone of contention here is whether the spiritual gifts which were demonstrated in the apostolic church are still in operation today or not.

Definition and kinds of spiritual gifts

Simply stated, the New International Dictionary of the Bible defines spiritual gift as “divine endowment of special ability for service upon a member of the body of Christ that comes through the grace of God.”⁵² This might be a generalized definition since there are particular references to it depending upon the application. Nevertheless, the meaning can be inferred from the etymology of the word itself. For example, the word “spiritual gifts” is translated from two Greek words: *Pneumahilon* which means “a supernatural gift” as related to the Holy Spirit, and *Charismatikon* which means “a gift as a demonstration of divine grace” or “divine enablement.”⁵³

There are many kinds of spiritual gifts in the Bible which the Holy Spirit has giving to the Church of Jesus Christ. A list of the gifts as found in the scriptures is as follows: dreams and visions, prophecy, preaching, teaching, service, exaltation, giving, leadership, mercy, wisdom, knowledge, faith, healings, miracles, distinguishing between spirits (discernment), divers kinds of tongues and interpretations of tongues, prophesy, apostles, gift of administration (Joel 2:28; Rom. 12:3-8; 1 Cor. 12:8-10, 28 -30; Eph. 4:11).

Of the many epistles that throw light on the gospel, none explains it more fully like Paul's letter to the Romans. In it, God's justice is revealed when he declares that everybody, whether Jew or Gentile, is guilty before Him. But God still remains righteous when He justifies those sinners who believe in Christ because of His atonement on the cross, and calls them into the body of believers, the church. Having saved us, the Lord through Apostle Paul, in Romans 12, tells us (believers) what to do, in order to use the grace and the gift of the Holy Spirit which He showers on His Church to relate to one another in practical unity.

Using himself as an example of one who have benefitted from the grace of God which came upon him to save, transformed, and make him acceptable as an Apostle for God's service, Paul opens his discussion with a call to humility. He explains that under this general headings, humility is a peculiar sort (vs. 3-8), the type of humbleness of mind which teaches a man to fill his own place according the ability which God has bestowed upon him.⁵⁴ He further exhort that no believer should think that he can do everything or attempt to occupied a place he is not fit for, for every member of the body has a peculiar function. Thus each should soberly find out what he can do best, and address himself accordingly. This exhortation has always been needed in the church, and if it is heeded it will go far in building it up in peace and harmony.

Apostle Paul speaks of the body and its members which for him are spiritual realities (vs. 4-5). We really are one body, one great spiritual organism in which Christ is the head and all believers are members of it in our mutual relationship. But Paul explains that if there is oneness in Christ that does not abolish manifoldness and differences. For the body to function properly as a unit with many differences, Paul lays down some precepts for the member from which every member should measure himself or herself. There should be no exaggerated notion of one's own importance. One should always remember that it is by God's grace that a person becomes a member of Christ's body and enjoys the benefits thereof.

However, if anyone thinks and believes he/she is better than others, such a haughty thought which is sinful will spoil the body. Nothing can destroy the body of Christ more quickly than the sin of pride. The whole church include all living people who belong to Christ and constitute the body (Eph. 1:23), and therefore in every local body Christ is the head while all the Christian are the different parts of the body.⁵⁵ Thus, since each

part of a man's body has something to do to make the body work properly, it is the same in the church. All members of the body thus depends upon each others, they are joined by an interdependence of both functions and disabilities when all part function normally, the compactly united body enjoys good health and soundness, if any member malfunction the whole body suffers (Eph. 4:16).

Beginning from the verse 6, Paul enumerated seven forms of Christian ministry (or gifts) vital to the congregational function. They are: prophecy, service, teaching, exhortation, giving, leadership and acts of mercy. For each of these gifts there is a quantified grace to help the believers to function well.

The equipping work of the Holy Spirit

One major work of the spirit in the church is the equipping of some of the members to operate in ministry areas as Apostles, Prophets, Evangelists, Pastors, and Teachers. These are special areas that the Holy Spirit designates people on a minimum scale to occupy and function for the establishment of God's church. The purpose of this special equipping work of the spirit is as follows:

...To prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in faith...and become mature...Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves...Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into him who is the Head, that is, Christ (Eph. 4:12-15).

Besides these areas of service, the Bible teaches that every redeemed person is given at least a gift by the Holy Spirit for proper functioning of all parts of the body, "But to each one is given the manifestation of the spirit for the common good (1 Cor. 12:4, 7). Thus, God will hold believers responsible for

the way we use the gifts we have, which have been given out by the Holy Spirit as part of the tools needed for service. It is the Holy Spirit who chooses who gets which gifts and so dispenses them at His good pleasure and places the gifts under their control (1 Cor. 14:32). Apostle Paul says that the purpose of the spiritual gifts is for the equipping of the saints for different kinds of service (1 Cor. 12:5), “for the common good of believers.” In other words, God has given each believer a task to do, and supernatural gifts are given to equip the believers for the task to be done successfully.

Every church will be able to grow and function as it should when some people have been equipped to function in their transformational ways; to teach, evangelize, give inspired messages of instruction or convicts sinners of sins, plant and shepherd churches. But believers are not to use the gifts for their selfish interest. Instead, believers are to use them to help each other. The divers kinds of gifts include gifts of faith, wisdom, knowledge, working of miracles, healing, discernment, tongues speaking, interpretation of tongues, prophecy, and various gifts of administration (1 Cor. 12).

The gifts are also a form of equipment to help the body of Christ maintain her unity. Apostle Paul urges believers to be “diligent to preserve the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace,” and this can be achieved only when the gifts listed above are put to good use. The spirit distributes the gifts as a form of binding force to write believers, for, “there is one body and one Spirit, just as also you were called in one hope...and one Father who is over all and through all and in all” (Eph. 4:3-6). In fact, it is the Holy Spirit who equips believers to even pray according to the will of God, and with such fervency as God desires (Rom. 8:26).

The baptism of the Holy Spirit

To be “baptized” means to be placed into, or immersed in something. Thus, the baptism of the spirit may be considered as that moment where the believer is completely overwhelmed by the Holy Spirit as like being immersed into Him. That is, the life of the person becomes God’s, that is, the will of the believer submits while God’s Spirit fully takes control and leads its over whereas the person. The first epistle of the Apostle Paul to the Corinthians 12:13 have this to say, “For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body...and we were all made to drink of one Spirit.” The scriptures say here that the Holy Spirit takes all believers and places them into one body, the body of Christ, where hopefully, they can quit self centeredness and selfish interest (or freshly interest), and begin to enjoy the Lord’s and other believers fellowship and interest.

The message of 1 Corinthians 12:13 refutes the view of some who believe that the baptism of the Spirit is enjoyed by only a selected few individuals. The passage seems to indicate that all believers are baptized by the Spirit into one body at the moment of salvation (or new birth). This also means that the Spirit indwells every believer who is a member of this one body, and that “not possessing the indwelling Spirit indicates an unsaved condition.”⁵⁶ Salvation and baptism of the spirit are therefore deeply connected and it is impossible to be saved without the work of the Holy Spirit. It is clear from the passage that not only are all believers baptized by the Spirit, but that all who become members of the body of Christ do so because they are baptized of the Spirit.

The phrase “baptism of the Spirit” is used to describe the experience of the Holy Spirit which always occurs at the initiation of a divinity – humanity relationship. Accordingly, the passage of first Corinthians 12:13 can also be translated as, “for by the means of the Spirit were we all baptized into one

body.” The Spirit was an instrument to bring about the baptism of believers into the Church, which is the body of Christ. Thus, by the Spirit, every true believer is consciously joined to the head (Christ), and the several members are held together rather by inward than by outward bonds (Eph. 4:4). In the one act of salvation, baptism represents being born of the Spirit into eternal life (John 3:3-8), receiving the earnest of the Spirit (Eph. 1:4), and being sealed with the Spirit of God, or indwelt by the Spirit (Eph 1:13; 4:3; Rom. 8:8-9).

The subject of the spirit baptism of the Holy Spirit was first predicted in the OT passages. The prophet Joel rightly predicted in Joel 2:28-32 the pouring out of God’s Spirit upon all flesh which the Apostle Peter also referred to as being fulfilled on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:14-21). At Pentecost, the Holy Spirit did not only descend on all the believers at the time to abide with them but to fully baptize them with power and spiritual gifts, and anoint the disciple for service. This in essence is the full meaning of the baptism of the spirit. It was the enthronement of the Spirit when He assumed all the various offices in the life of the Church. It was also a simultaneous event of the entrance of the spirit into the church, and the assumption of full control by the spirit in the believers lives. The Pentecost event and others in the book of Acts make it safe to conclude that believers are baptized either at the point of conversion as in Acts 10:44 or in the course of their spiritual life typified by Acts 2:1-4 and 8:14-17, where the power for service and that to live godly life is received by members of the body.

Again, it could be inferred that the Holy Spirit baptism is experienced by all believers in this dispensation, and this is supported by 1 Corinthians 12:13 which clearly states that “all have been baptized just as all have been made to drink of the spirit.” The “all” here mean every believer, without any discrimination. Ephesians 4:4-6 which says “There is only

one body and all (in the body) have been called to one Lord, one faith and one baptism” is also a supporting text to the aforementioned position. The Holy Spirit baptism occurs at salvation where the believer is joined to the body. Therefore, the Holy Spirit baptism might be an initiation or Christening of a person into the body of Christ, and not only the manifestation of the Spiritual gifts, which may also occur. The baptism of the spirit is for all who believe though the manifestation of His gifts might occur in separate individuals at later periods and on different occasions.

But contemporary Pentecostal association of baptism of the spirit with the experience of tongues as evidence of having been baptized adds to the confusion.⁵⁷ This is because although tongue speaking became a clearer manifestation of spirit baptism, it is not the only manifestation of the baptism. It is therefore wrong for one to expect that once a person is baptized in the spirit the one should speak in tongues. Other gifts of the spirit baptism like knowledge, faith, wisdom, administration listed in 1 Corinthians 12 can be received but may not become manifested like tongues. Because of the wrong beliefs initially associated with tongues speaking, the writer of 1 Corinthians 12:30 poses a question, “Do all speak in tongues?” The obvious answer is, No!

Consequently, leaders with the right balance in spiritual issues will be very sensitive when enforcing or discouraging the operation of the Holy Spirit in the body of Christ. While it is prudent to seek the presence of the Holy Spirit for the Church and fan into flames the accompanying gifts, care should be taken in order that there are no abuses in the operation of the gifts. Because of the importance attached to this issue, it would be dealt with in greater details in the subsequent chapter.

CHAPTER 13

YOU MUST STIR UP THE GIFTS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

The presence of the Holy Spirit in the Church as discussed in the previous chapter necessitates the operation of the gifts of the Spirit in the church. Although God's gifts are distributed by the same Holy Spirit, there are some variation in their areas and methods of operation (1 Cor. 12:5-6). This chapter will elaborate on some of them so that the transformational leader easily identifies them and encourage their operation.

The Prophetic gifts: Paul begins his discussion on the gifts in Romans 12:6 (cf. 1 Cor. 12:10) with that of *Prophecy*. The prophets in the OT told the people what God wanted them to do and what God was also going to do. There were also prophets in the early church who could felt what would happen in the future. Prophecy primarily means forth-telling, but less often foretelling inspired word of God. However in this very situation Paul's usage of the office of the prophet here was in reference to those who besides foretelling, could preach or speak God's words to the people. Apostle Paul cautions believers to serve the Lord fully by speaking the word of God according to the level of faith given them by the grace of God (as they are led by the Holy Spirit). But according to 1 Corinthians 14:31, all believers may exercise this gift at some time as the spirit will, although some have it as a special gift. The purpose of this gift is to edify, exhort and comfort believers.

Dreams are usually associated with the revelatory gifts and it is the ability to see into the spirit when one is sleeping. Its other form is vision (Joel 2:28) which takes place even when man is awake. Both gifts give direction or instruction and also give understanding into event in life (Acts 16:9).

The gifts of **wisdom** and sometimes **word of knowledge** (1 Cor. 12:8) are components of supernaturally imparted gift of grace to somebody to know what to say or advice somebody to do in any given situation. Usually, it is not a natural, academic or wisdom gained from an experience, and has nothing to do with age (Job 32:7-8). The one who has the gift of word of knowledge (1 Cor. 12:8) is able to give certain facts and information which was previously on known to him and is not easy to gain. It is usually employed in scriptures to uncover sin (Acts 5:1-11), to give guidance and direction and also give insight into future events (11:27, 28), or hidden things (1 Sam. 10:22).

Special gift of **faith** (1 Cor. 12:9) is the endowment given by God to someone to take special steps which others dare not. It appears like God supernaturally removes any doubt from the person during that period of exercising the gift and fills him with enough faith to accomplish the fact in spite natural contradictions (Joshua 19:12-14).

The **healing** and the gift of **working miracles** (1 Cor. 12:9-10) operate supernaturally to heal certain diseases and infirmities which are usually hard to cure by physical means. The one who exercises this gift (or these gifts) does not have the ability to heal all sort of sicknesses and at all times (1 Cor. 19:11). Additionally, the one who has the gift of working of special miracles (1 Cor. 12:10) is endowed with power to reveal the glory of God through special demonstration when the need arises. In most cases is so overwhelming that it brings changes to the situation. These special miracles are such that no human efforts can make them happen (Exod. 7:4-10; 8; 14:21-22).

The gift of **discernment** (or distinguishing) of spirits (1 Cor. 12:10) helps one the believer to know the origin or the source of operations of certain deeds, manifestations, operation, etc. that have been inspired by Spirit beings. It is

through the one operating it can see into the spiritual realms, to distinguish between spirit of Satan and that of God, and that of man. If this spiritual gift is in use, it is not easily for the devil to make counterfeit gifts to confuse believers because they will be revealed (Act 13:8-11).

The gifts of tongues: This gift is shown in different ways (1 Cor. 12:10). Two of the operations are as devotional tongues to edify the user and as a prophetic gift of tongues which is used in conjunction with the gift of interpretations of tongues can be used as prophecy to edify, exhort, the church. Thus, tongues in public assembly should be accompanied by interpretation (1 Cor. 14:5, 13) so that it benefits their hearers else the speaker must speak in silence (1 Cor. 14:28). Paul exhorts that public speaking of tongues should be limited to the maximum of three speakers with interpretations.

The gift of interpretation of tongues (1 Cor. 12:10) is the companion gift to the speaking of tongues, and is always used in conjunction with it. Generally, interpretation is the special enablement to bring the tongue into the known language of the believers. It should be noted that it is not translation because the interpreter does not have any previous understanding of the tongue spoken. Thus, the interpretation is just as supernatural as the tongue.

The gift of love: From verse 9 of 1 Corinthians 12, Apostle Paul turns his attention to the gift which according to 1 Corinthians 13 is the greatest; love. He says that love must be genuine not a form of roll-playing. We should show brotherly love so much so that we should hate evil and hold on to what is good. This presupposes before one can have a firm grip of all that is good, he has to completely and totally release any thing that is evil from his hands. This also means a complete turn to face good with the back towards evil. All the virtues of Love

listed in 1 Corinthians 13 must be applied here in dealing with one another in the body of Christ. Sometimes people can cover up hatred by acting as if they have real love. For example, Judas according to Matthew 26:48, kissed Jesus but it was a sign of betrayal.

True love does not mean that one should allow his brother to continue to sin, because God hates all evil. Rather, "true love leads to the betterment of our brother." Paul sums verses 9-10 up in a simple but a powerful statement; "Honor someone above yourself." In the words of Guthrie; "the attitude of the Christian under the rule of Love must be one of mercy, the very opposite of retaliation."⁵⁸ According to him the words of the scriptures that; "You will heap burning coals upon his head..." means the Christian will give his persecutor or detractor a burning sense of shame. He makes a reference to an Egyptian ritual in which a man purge his offense by carrying on his head a dish containing burning charcoal on a bed of ashes to support the idea that the evil doer will be over much more through good deeds.

On his part, Guthrie states; "the best way to overcome an enemy is to turn him into a friend."⁵⁹ Indeed love seeks harmony in all personal relationship and it is the bridge on which all members of the Christ's Church will pass over the evils of this world into heaven. This is because God's perfect plan of man's redemption was executed through love, according to John 3:16. Additionally, one writer, J. W. MacGorman also comments: "The world at its worst returns evil for good and at its best returns good for good and evil for evil, but the follower of Jesus Christ is commanded in verse 21 of Romans 12 to return good for evil."⁶⁰ Indeed, what the world needs from Christians is a demonstration of Christ-like love towards it, and what the body of Christ needs is for the members to relate to one another in practical unity.

Touching on the believer's attitude to work, Apostle Paul encourages believers not to be lackadaisical in their attitude towards work especially that which touches our Christian commitment and our spiritual up-liftment. The believer should burn in the spirit and do well to maintain his hope in the Lord (vs. 12; cf. 1 Cor. 1:27), the hope that the Lord is always with us and will come back for us since this will help us to be patient when we are faced with troubles, while still keeping watch in earnest prayer (Philip. 4:6).

The gift of administration: Apostle Paul's first letter to the Corinthians 12:28 mentions the divine grace to manage public or business affairs, i.e., the day to day running of an institution, e.g., the church, in a more fruitful and progressive manner. The special gifts listed in Ephesians 4:11 are usually involved in shepherding the believers of God to grow with nourishment from the scriptures (Acts 6:2).

Apostle Paul calls those who have the special grace to serve as leaders to be willing to work hard in the body (1 Thess. 5:12). Still on the issue of leadership, scripture shows that somebody with the leadership gift (Rom. 12:8) should be able to exercise special qualities when there is the need for organizing or mobilizing people for a special service and takes oversight of people through exhibition of special skills in communication and otherwise with them.

Those who have the gift of offering special help to people in trouble should do it cheerfully (2 Cor. 9:7). The one who shows mercy usually always understands the problems of others more than anyone else and is usually moved to make unusual sacrifices to help others. Such a person(s) sometimes have a heart that feels for others, i.e., empathy, irrespective of their ties. They are always looking for means by which other people would have their needs met, and usually do so quietly.

The helping gifts: Those who have the gift of teaching Paul advises to continue to teach the word to the understanding of their hearers while those who have been blessed with the gift to able to comfort and encourage others in depressed situations should also do so to the benefits of the brethren (vs. 7-8a). In addition to these, even though all believers can give their material substance to the Lord, Paul mentioned that these are those who have been given the special Grace to give without grumbling at anytime, anywhere. These he exhorted to give with simplicity and with a joyful heart (Matt. 6:1; cf. Rom. 12:8b). There are those who have the gift of service and these Paul exhorts to do so as not unto men but God (Col. 3:17), nothing less than the standard and that will please God.

The gift of service mentioned in Romans 12:7 enables a believer to devote the self to do manual work in church wholeheartedly and most cases voluntarily. A teaching gift gives believers special understanding of the scripture to teach correctly, and also teach in a way that become easy to understand (Acts 13:7). The one who exhorts or encourages has that special ability to stir up, comfort, and challenge believers using scriptures at all times and especially during periods of trouble (Rom. 12:8; Acts 4:36). The gift of giving enables a believer to have the desire to give whenever the need arises without grudging, i.e., whole-heartedly (Rom. 12:8).

The Holy Spirit equips believers in many divers ways such as helping the believer with what to say when faced with a trial (1 Cor. 2:13), where to go and where not to go (Acts 16: 6-7), special counseling and direction, or even reminding believers of what they might have forgotten (John 14:26).

How the gifts relate to one another

On the relation of the gifts to one another in practical unity, Paul turns His attention to the believer's relationship not

only with the brethren but also with all people from Romans 12:14-21. Thus Paul did not lose sight of people who will turn to disagree. The Apostle exhorts that believers show genuine love to all men through healthy association and by identifying with joys and the sorrows of other members. In fact, to identify with a person in sorrow is sometimes easier than to identify with the person in joy because we rarely envy the grief of others, but it is easy to envy what make people joyful.

When the various ministry gifts listed in passages like Romans 12:6-8, 1 Corinthians 12, and Ephesians 4:11 are in full operation in a cooperate manner, the church will grow together in unity, everyone will be helped in the assembly and no one will be seeing himself as better or worse than the other. To keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of brotherly love, Paul exhorts, not only those who have the spiritual gifts of helping the poor brethren, but all believers to be ready to share what we have with those who are in need (vs.13). This was the practice of the early apostolic church which led to the flow of God's power to confirm their testimony with signs and wonders (Acts 4:33-24).

Paul therefore encourages believers to bless those who persecute them and never to curse them or repay them evil for evil (vs. 14, 17). This agrees with the teaching of Christ against retaliation (Matt. 5:38-42) and it is a means to ensure that there is a minimum friction within the body. On the contrary, believers, in order to promote unity and understanding in the body, are to take thought for what is noble in the sight of all men (vs. 17; cf. Prov. 3:4). In so far as it depends upon believers, we are to live peacefully with all, according to Paul.

Mar-Gorman believes that at times, the best efforts of believers ends in failure and leads to troubles. According to him, when another person chooses to misinterpret our actions in the worst possible way and then turns to persecute us, it

hurts a lot. It even tempts us to renew our resentment and to seek vengeance.⁶¹ But we may be helped by realizing that God never withholds his peace from us because of another's wrong. Therefore, believers are to endeavor to keep themselves from all thoughts of taking revenge because evil cannot be conquered by evil. The fact is, "If hatred is met with more hatred, it is only increased; but if hatred is met with love an antidote for poison is found."⁶² Thus by always surrendering to God Christians allow him to take up their case for them.

Are the spiritual gifts relevant in the Church today?

When the Bible speaks of the Church, many people usually think of a building where Christians congregation for worship service. It has already been mentioned that the church represents "the people called out ones," i.e., individuals who are sanctified and purified by the blood of the Lamb of God and therefore to God through Jesus Christ by faith. Thus even though people become believers individually, they cannot live as separate entities afterwards but as part of a body (Acts 2:44-47).

According to Apostle Paul, the NT Church is part of "the body of Christ" to which everybody belongs. Therefore, anybody who becomes a member enters into fellowship with all others (1 Cor. 12:24-27; cf. Heb. 10:25). It is for a major reason, the proper functioning of this body, that Christ gave out the spiritual gifts (Eph. 4:12-23):

- The perfecting of the saints.
- The work of the ministry.
- Edification of the body of Christ, till we all come into the unity of the faith.
- Into the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.
- To be able to speak the truth in love.

Therefore Christ meant that the spiritual gifts be used for the church to continue her work. But the major problem that arose with it is the abuse in the usage of the gifts. The reason for this position is that people who are skeptical about the manifestations and operations of the Holy Spirit, especially with regards to the speaking in tongues and demonstrations of the gifts. To avoid being entangled in the confusion, many tend to ignore the subject of the Spirit's baptism and hardly talk; they rather focus all attention on the water baptism. Paul's letter to the church of Corinth gives an indication to such abuses in chapters 12-14. Such abuses and misuses definitely brought about chaos in the church which necessitated those chapters in some of the epistles.

There are records of abuses such as speaking in tongues in public gathering without interpretations, and by more than one person at a time, then the personalization of the gift by individuals and boasting of whose gift is the greatest, the believe that all should speak in tongues or even be able to exercise common gifts, the misunderstanding in diverse operation of the gift which are similar, and perhaps the concept that those who have the gift were better and more spiritual believers than those who do not manifest it.

These likely abuses created chaos which alarmed Apostle Paul to step in with divine directions to the uses. Also there were individual who crept in unaware using counterfeit gifts from the devil, all in the name of God, a situation which led Paul under the guidance of the Holy Spirit to write that the manifestations be judged by others. Paul never stopped the church from operating the gift because of misuse but he corrected them and encouraged the correct use of them to the glory of God and to bring order in the body of Christ (1 Cor. 14:29-31; 1 Thess. 5:19-21).

As to whether the gifts ceased with the apostolic age and that they were no longer needed, there have been great scholastic conflict and debate over the past years. Many differing views have been given by scholars as the reasons for the discontinued operation of these spiritual gifts. There are two schools of thought concerning the operation of the spiritual gifts. One of the schools suggests that all these gifts were bestowed on the church as a permanent endowment while other stresses that the miraculous gifts were particularly related to the apostolic period prior to the completion of the New Testament canon.⁶³

Other Bible believers also posit that miracles in the Church of the First Century resulting from the spiritual gifts were given because the Church was in its infant days and the Bible was not yet written. It was therefore necessary that such miracles as healings, speaking and interpretation of tongues, raising the dead etc. should be practiced so that credence could be given to the message and the messengers of God. However, now that we have the complete NT, there is no longer the need for that which was designed for the church when it was in its infant days.⁶⁴ Some of the scholars who believe that the operation of the gifts have ceased give other reasons for their position. For example, a scholar like Griffith holds the view that the spiritual gifts were testimony to Israel of the Messiahship of Jesus and became inoperative after the end of Acts of the Apostles when Israel had refused the Gospel.⁶⁵

No single reason seems to be generally accepted and there are still many other arguments to explain some of the positions. The further the discussion goes the longer the trail of people's views become. But there is some sort of congruence in the position of some key scholars on the issue. They argue that the spiritual gifts were given for the authentication of the apostles as messengers of God and that one of the gifts of an

Apostle is the possession of those gifts and the power to confer them on other believers, and thus gradually ceased with the death of those whom the Apostles conferred.⁶⁶

In support of the above view is the argument that spiritual gifts are no longer in operation because there are no apostles now to impact them since they were inspired men and they saw Jesus and that God has revealed all the needed truth now through the complete Bible for instruction and blessings.⁶⁷ According to McArthur, F. F. Bruce agrees that any additional revelation is false whether these claims are embodied in books which aimed at super-ceding or supplementing the Bible.⁶⁸

But there are quite a number of scholars who also argue in favor of the spirit's operation in the current dispensation. These believers see the spiritual gifts as the tools to fulfill our second call which is the call to service. Without them, the believer cannot do much profitable service. This argument is supported by the fact that Jesus Himself had to receive the Holy Spirit grace or gift to do His ministry, "You know of Jesus of Nazareth, how God anointed Him with the Holy Spirit and with power, and how He went about doing good, and healing all who were oppressed by the devil; for God was with Him" (Acts 10:38, NAS).

Scripture shows that the church benefits when the gifts are in full operation and lack of their operation usually deprive the Church of some benefits (1 Cor. 12:7, 21-26; Acts 4:32-37; 5:12-16). One scholar writes that God through the Holy Spirit was given a spiritual gift to Christians who should make every effort to find out what the gift is, develop it, and use it to the glory of God.⁶⁹ Another who argues in favor of the current operation of the gift, defines the spiritual gift as coming from the Greek word "charisma" which is related to "charis," i.e., grace. Thus, a spiritual gifts is due to grace and that since grace continues to abound today so are the gifts.⁷⁰

Along this line of argument, some pertinent questions about the importance of and operation of the spiritual gifts for the Church are that if the spiritual gifts are not important would God promise it to the Church as found in Joel 2:28:

And it will come about after this that I will pour out My Spirit on all mankind; And your sons and daughters will prophesy, Your old men will dream dreams, Your young men will see visions.²⁹ And even on the male and female servants I will pour out My Spirit in those days (Joel 2:28, NAS).

Now let us consider the following question: Why would Jesus confirm the promise in Acts 1:8, and fulfill His promise concerning it in Acts 2:33 and Ephesians 4:7, 8? Why would God want believers to know their operation as discussed in 1 Corinthians 12:1, and to desire them and ask for them, according to 1 Corinthians 12:31; Luke 11:13? Again why would God through Apostle Paul not want believers to neglect them as indicated in 1 Timothy 4:14, and why would God want them to be kindle and use as mentioned in 2 Timothy 1:6?

The New Bible Dictionary writes that there is strong evidence for the performance of the spiritual gifts in the church as found in Corinthians 13:8-12 where Paul envisages them as continuing to be manifested until the "parousia," i.e., the "arrival."⁷¹ The arrival here may suggest the second coming of Jesus. In that case, their intermittent appearance in latter history may have been affected by the fluctuating faith and spirituality of the church and by the sovereign purpose of the Spirit who distributes the gifts as He wills (1 Cor. 12: 11).

Apparently, scriptures show that the Spiritual gifts are important for many reasons including the following: to establish the saints and the Church (Rom.1:11); for witnessing (Acts 4:38); for Church growth and expansion (Acts 5:12-4; 19:1); for perfecting and equipment of the saints (Eph. 4:12); and for

direction and instruction and knowledge (Prov. 29:18; Hosea 4:6). The gifts also help in areas such as teaching, exhortation, edification, discernment (1 Cor. 14:3); healing and deliverance, etc. (1 Cor. 12:10; Acts 19:12). The role of spiritual gifts in the church from the period of the first century till now cannot be underestimated. It is about time Christian leaders who have relegated the operation of the Spiritual gifts to the background began to immerse themselves in them by desiring them and also allowing their operation in the churches so as to encourage others to do same.

The forgone arguments, notwithstanding, "It is a safe conclusion, however, that though we may not command or claim these spiritual gifts, the Spirit donation may still be looked for as and when "He" himself decides."⁷² On the back cover of Mighty Manifestations, Reinhard Bonnke, one of the renowned Evangelists of the 20th Century, also comments on the operation of the Holy Spirit. He writes:

The Holy Spirit manifests His power in the life of men and women of God so that they may do what He wants. Therefore the gifts are not given so that we may congratulate ourselves or polish up our chord's image but to endorse the preaching of the Gospel to those around us.⁷³

In this light the conclusion that can be drawn is that it is absolute essential that these gifts continue to operate if the church is going to accomplish her full mission and destroy the work of the devil, and that whether there is Bible or not the gifts are important. God still speaks and performs miracles today by the Holy Spirit and also through the written Word. There is the capacity in God to speak to us through the Holy Spirit directly and there is in us the capacity to hear through our spirit when He speaks. Once man is spirit, soul, and body (1 Thess. 5:23),

the inner spiritual man is God-conscious even today as in the time of old.

A key defender of the Wesleyan perspective writes that the significant of the baptism with the Holy Spirit at the inauguration of the Christian church, as in the life of Christians in “every subsequent age” lies in the manifestations and demonstration of the infinite power of God.”⁷⁴ Accordingly, therefore, even, though there are abuses in the uses or its operations today, it still can be that the correct use of the gifts can be revived and stressed just Paul did to the Church of Corinth. The gifts must be operated as stipulated in the scriptures: The gifts are not personal use they are not for show of power or over spirituality. They should not be considered to be criterion for judging others, higher or lower spirituality.

Personally, I know from scriptures that before the advent of the spiritual gifts in the NT church, some of the gifts were still in operation, i.e., the Holy Spirit. Why didn't these gifts cease when the new dispensation began but rather became intensified? I am of the view that the promise of God given through the prophet Joel 2:28 was for the whole of the dispensation of grace (or Holy Spirit) in which we are. I believe that since the dispensation of grace did not end with the apostles, so do the spiritual gifts. It also stands to reason that the equipping work of the Holy spirit are unlimited and continues today in the church in order for the church to perform it's task of being a witness for Christ and to continue resisting the work of the kingdom of darkness, and also to shaping the church to meet the standard of Christ.

Transformational leaders will surely encourage the operation of the Holy Spirit just as Paul did while at the same time teaching the body of Christ to operate it according to the laid down regulation by the Lord Jesus.

CHAPTER 14

YOU HAVE TO ENCOURAGE OTHER PEOPLE'S GIFTEDNESS

It is quiet common to see how some leaders become so obsessed with their position as founders, presidents, directors, chairpersons, managers, general overseers, bishops, etc., of countries, institutions and organizations, including churches. They become so possessive that they would do everything to hold on to their post even when it is clear that they are failing. Some of such people in their efforts to hold on to office begin to attack anybody they consider a threat to their post. Sometimes, they succeed by some means to overpower their perceived opponents. Some even go to the extreme by plotting to completely annihilate potential opponents. These practices, though very dirty and unfortunate, are happening live in some places including the church, which is supposed to be the body of Christ.

But such practices are not limited to the contemporary time; there are historical records of many in the times past, some of which are recorded in the Bible. For example, King Saul did all he could to kill David because he saw him as a potential threat to his throne. King Solomon also sought to destroy Jeroboam for daring to speak on behalf of the overburdened and over-taxed people of Israel. These are not God's ways of promoting leadership and bringing about meaningful institutional transformation. He has a divine way of dealing with failing situation of leadership over the years. For example,

- (I) He chose to replace persecutors with the persecuted when their terms of office ended. This is the case of King Saul and David, or King Solomon and Jeroboam.

- (II) He out-rightly removed failing leaders and raised special ones to deal with the situation, as was the case of the High Priest Eli and his sons on one hand and Samuel on the other.
- (III) He allowed a whole system to deteriorate until it was finally destroyed. This is the case of the captivity of the Northern Kingdom of Israel.
- (IV) He could also allow a system to experience a temporal collapse and distress until it was almost grounded. Then He raised it up under a completely new leadership. This is what happened with the Southern Kingdom of Judah when they suffered captivity under corrupt leaders and were later revived under a new form of leadership.

In our current discussion, the focus will be on the situation where God side-stepped the failing leaders; the priest, Levites, tribal and family heads, etc., and raised new leaders whom He endowed with special gifts and abilities to deal with the failing situation in Israel. This was the case of the Judges in Israel after the nation settled in the Promised Land. This is the kind of solution offered by the book of Judges. Judges demonstrate the sovereignty of God in the use of His anointing on some chosen leaders which makes them different and gives them special qualities to perform (3:10; 6:34; 11:29; 14:6). In subsequent chapters, some of the other situations will be dealt with.

The book reveals God's long-suffering in hearing the cry of the sinful people and giving them another chance as it were. The oppression and affliction the Israelites suffered under the oppressing nations was so distressing that they would realize that this was a direct consequence of sin and violation of their covenant relationship. They were led to repentant sorrow and would cry to the Lord for deliverance. Then God would empower individual, judges, to come to their rescue.

The first of their peculiarity is in the particular use of the term “Judges” (Heb. *Shaphat*). The term is used in a distinct sense when referring to these men. It describes one who served or provided leadership in either a civil or military nature or both, (as supported by its use among other nations of the Fertile Crescent). His rulership or leadership was distinct from a monarchical rule. The second area of their peculiarity lay in their equipping and qualification for ministry and leadership. First, these men were chosen and raised up by God. Secondly, God's spirit on these men gave them their power for ministry such that even the credit for their successes goes to God.

The Judges were used in God's service for a divine assignment in his dealings with his chosen nation. He granted the judge the necessary qualities for this service and brought about the required response on the part of the people. His leadership was recognized as a manifestation of unique endowment from the Lord. In their service they provided the following: They acted in rallying the people to remove sin from their midst. Foreign oppression had come because the nation sinned and rejected God's requirement and rule. The Judges were empowered by God to remove the oppression and restore peace.

Is there need for specially anointed people today?

The major lesson from studying the role of these is that besides the roles of the pastors and associated leaders, God sometimes empowers certain people with special abilities to perform in the churches. Such people are usually raised in the churches to supplement or revived the existing ministries. There are fourteen judges listed in the book. They include Othniel, Ehud, Deborah, Gideon, and Jephthah. The rest are Shamgar, Tola, Jair, Ibzan, Elon and Abdon. The Judges primarily effected defeat and deliverance from an oppressing

enemy and brought significant period of peace. But Samuel and Eli are classified as Judges not probably for military activities per se rather for distinctive functions during that period. Each of the judges was used by God to save the covenant community of Israel when the congregation had betrayed their trust in God and gone wayward.

God would allow the people to suffer some setback, and upon their realization of mistakes and cry for help, He would save them by the instrumentality of the judge. Considering the background of each judge, the nature of God's call on the person, and the strategy adopted to overcome the challenge and save the situation, one might be tempted to categorize the Judges. The next few paragraphs show such groupings and how God empowered them in one way or the other to stand for His congregation and save them from specific oppressive situations. But all the Judges can be considering generally as transformational leaders because of the positive changes they were able to effect. Such OT personalities have been discussed for the perusal of those of us who are concerned with progress of our church.

People of courage

In every organization, there is the possibility of having a person who is so courageous that he/she is always ready to confront any issue for clarity and/or redress. Such extreme boldness might be considered as the person's gift. This class of specially gifted people includes Judges such as the following:

Othniel: The first on the list was half brother of Caleb through another father by name Othniel. He had proved himself an able and honorable soldier by the remarkable victory over the terrible Anakim at Debir. It was a task whose difficulty is indicated by the attached victory prize (Jos. 1 5:13-17). God

noticed him to be **a person of courage**. God also noticed the humility of Othniel because he did not take advantage of his victory at Debir to advance his desires as prompted by his wife.

The above qualities coupled with the fact that he knew the Lord and feared Him placed him at the disposal and use of God. The oppressive nation was Mesopotamian (Judges 3:7-11). It is very likely that the oppression of these fierce and ruthless fighters probably extended to the south of Israel, a Judah. It would have been very severe considering the nature of these attackers! But due to his courage and tactfulness, Othniel was able to win the battle for the Lord against the fearsome Mesopotamian invaders and brought on 40 years of peace and godliness to Israel.

Jael: Though some people might misunderstand her for using deceit and trickery in aiding Israel, her demonstration of bravado cannot be overemphasized. She was a Kenite but her husband had separated from the Kenites who were related to Israel by descent from Abraham and by other ties. She gave Sisera the assurance that the peace treaty between them would be honored (Judges 5:24).

However, she took the courageous decision of siding with Israel against Canaan by ending Sisera's life. She acted well by driving a tent peg through his head as he lay asleep in her tent and killed him (5:24). **Jael's courageous deed** earned her great commendation from the Lord, and Deborah sung of her praise. Definitely, God can lead many current believing women or wives to perform certain feats in His house that will help crush the devil operation in the Church.

God is surely looking for the Othniels and Jael's of our day to lead in breaking down the oppression of Satan and the kingdom of darkness against God's people so that the Church will be free to grow and become healthy.

People who are tacticians and strategists

This class of specially gifted people includes Judges such as **Ehud** (Judges 3:12-30). He is said to be son of Gera, of the tribe of Benjamin. He was unorthodox, a left-handed man, something that was peculiar with the Benjamites (Judges 20:15, 16). This was a help in the plan he devised to get rid of the Moabite king, Eglon. Moab evidently had gained significance and dominance in the Transjordan at this time and had already dealt with the Reubenites and Gadites. With the help of the nearby Ammonites and Amalekites, the people of Moab extended their territory across the Jordan into mainland Canaan. During this period, Gilgal and Jericho were used as her strongholds (vs. 14, 17). For 18 years, the Moabites exacted heavy tributes from Israel which had to be sent to the Moabites court by an important emissary.

The fact that Ehud was chosen to deliver the tribute indicates he had come into prominence both as a military leader and one whom the Lord was with. It can be said to his credit that he is God's chosen vessel who acted in wartime emergency and exigency. He was a man with the best tactics and strategies to get rid of an enemy. The greatest lesson from Ehud is that he showed great courage and determination to take high risks both for his people and for the Lord's cause. Today, God is prepared to use people who show great courage and determination to take risks for him and His kingdom-work!

People who can take risk

This class of specially gifted people includes Judges such as **Shamgar**. This Judge definitely had some qualities to his credit which made him fit for God's use in this particular Philistine threat. The Philistines had in an earlier migration settled in South Western Canaan along the Mediterranean coastline. They determined to keep this area as theirs and

settle there (Gen. 21:32, 34; 26; Exod. 13:17). They even had intentions of taking over more lands along the Mediterranean coastlands.

It is likely that this encounter with Shamgar was one of their early attempts at gaining inroads into the mainland. He was definitely a strong man, courageous, **one ready to take risks** without much consideration of the danger to his life. He showed a great readiness to improvise as evident in his use of an unconventional weapon to effect the Philistine defeat (Judges 3:31). An ox-goad made of hard wood, about 8 feet long, and had a thick end was used to prod and drive oxen is all that this wise judge needed to fight and overcome the Philistines.

Are there any lessons from Shamgar's life? Yes! There definitely are a good number of such people who are eating and drinking and engaged in a lot of merry-making in the house of God while the enemy keeps on threatening to tear God's church apart. If some of the congregation will be a little sensitive and arise in the spirit that moved him; courageous and readiness to take risks, then through prayer and a sense of direction from the Holy Spirit the gates of hell shall be given a deadly blow and a lot of captives will be saved for Christ. Until church leaders identify such people among the members and begin to assign them special responsibilities the enemy shall continue to plunder the church and the expected transformation might linger.

People who are militants

To be militant is to demonstrate aggression or force towards something. People of such nature are easily identified with revolutions wherever they are found. In the Bible, this class of specially gifted people includes Judges such as **Barak**. The fact that Barak was most probably a renowned

military man could be deduced from the way God instructed Prophetess Deborah to summon him to lead the battle against the Canaanites strong forces (Judges 4:8-9). The Lord recognized Barak as **a militant man** and thus was ready to use him. The people also recognized his capability to effect a military victory and this is indicated by the way they responded to his call.

But underlying his military prowess was extreme humility. This is revealed in his quick responds to Deborah's call. But Barak accepted his call to duty on a condition; that Prophetess Deborah accompanied him. Though this action demonstrated humility, his reluctance to accept this call caused the honor of the victory not to be his but would go to a woman. Nevertheless, Barak obeyed and went into the battle. He fearlessly marched against Sisera. Aided by divine activity in using the torrents of the Kishon (Judges 5:20), he caused the defeat of this great army commander and the liberation of Israel from Canaanite control.

People with experience in their field

There is a saying that experience is the best teacher. Indeed, people's personal experiences can not only teach them better lesson than lengthy talks, such experiences can be tapped when the need arises. **Jephthah** is one person who belongs to this class of people. He might be rightly referred to as "The Disowned Judge" because of some of the experiences he went through at the hands of his own people. But in the end he became a very useful tool for God to destroy the enemy.

Jephthah was a Gileadite, and his mother was an ex-harlot (a strange woman) and for that reason was hated by his half brothers. He was thus neglected of the family and clan because of his birth and was eventually driven away from home to safeguard their inheritance rights (Judges 10:6-12:7). His

rejection was however used by God as a preparatory act for his rise to prominence. The **experience he acquired** made the leader of a group of adventurers. This helped him gain the ruggedness of a man of valor (1 Sam. 22:2).

Around this time, Israel had sunk to its lowest of apostasy and the Lord allowed their enemies to subjugate them so hard that there was a general clamor not for any available god but Jehovah (Judges 10:6). The oppression involved two powerful groups; the Philistines in the mainland and the Ammonites in the Transjordan. The Ammonites made occasional inroads into the mainland of Israel (Judges 10:7-9). This was a very severe and distressing oppression because of its motives. The Ammonites were intent on reclaiming the territory lost to Israel. The Philistines on the other hand had already taken more territories in the mainland and were pressing for more (Judges 10:8, 9; cf. 10:16; 11:13).

The people came to a realization that their plight was due to covenant disobedience. When they cried before the Lord, they received a rebuke which drives them to do what they should have done a long time ago; to remove all the foreign gods. It was necessary to test their sincerity. Thus God's deliverance did not come at once. One way God answered the people's cry for deliverance was to revive in them the pride of national identity and the boldness to defend their God-given land. In their preparation for battle, they realized the need for a capable leader. God raised up a deliverer for them a mighty warrior. It turned up to be the stone the builders rejected, Jephthah; he now became the head of the corner. He that was rejected was later sought after when the need arose by the very people who rejected him.

Whether the brethren and people of Israel sinned by casting him away from them or not, in a spirit of humiliation, the Gileadites recalled him and he requested of them headship for

his leadership in battle against the Ammonites. As to whether it was necessary for him to make any demand at all only God knows. Maybe, that was important as an assurance. Accepted by a group which initially rejected him, he went about in a diplomatic way to find peace for Israel from their tormentors. But when his approach failed he resorted to war. In desperation for victory he made a vow which he fulfilled in a hard way. He tried to settle issues by diplomatic means. He sent messengers to challenge Ammon's right for unprovoked attacks and to explain Israel's claim to the Land. Israel's God had given them the land just as the Ammonite's gods had given theirs. All issues and claim to any land should be left to Divine settlement. His diplomatic efforts were spited. In the spirit of the Lord, he led Israel to defeat them.

What is the lesson here? Simple! There are a good number of people in the churches today that have been rejected and relegated to the background by the leaders of the churches for one reason or the other. But these people are not useless after-all; God can use them just like Jephthah provided they could be identified and assigned the appropriate responsibilities. In the hand of God, 'useless is useful.'

Real mothers of the people

This class of specially gifted people includes Judges such as **Deborah**. Mentioned as the wife of Lappidoth, Deborah was leading Israel at that time of the Canaanites oppression (Judges 4:1-5:31). Can you imagine her role as a Judge and why **the Bible referred to her as a mother** (5:7)? Deborah is presented as being a prophetess. This was not strange, as Miriam had served that office some two centuries before (Exod. 15:20). However, how she gained prominence as a judge might probably be as a result of her outstanding

qualities, particularly her ability to rally the people to seek the Lord. She was obviously a nationalist.

For two generations, Israel had remained faithful to the Lord. Thus the land knew peace for over 80 years. However, soon, she fell into sin and this led to social, political, military and religious disintegration. This prevailing condition gave the Canaanites up North, under Jabin and Sisera, confidence to liberate their brothers who had been subjected to forced labor and also exact revenge on the “wicked intruders” (Jos. 16:10; Judges 1:30, 33, 35). They were very successful for twenty years counting on their better and well-equipped army.

Israel was thus devastated during this period. She summed Israel's shameful plight in her song (vs. 5). She no longer could travel the highways; she was using by-passes because of her enemy: why should God's people be reduced to such shamefulness? The fear of the enemy had driven the few who lived in the lowlands to seek habitats in the hill countries. Those who dared and had courage to stand up against the enemy had no weapons. The enemy might have disarmed them! There was apathy on the part of some of the tribal heads to their brothers and to God (vs. 8, 17).

It was during such a time that Deborah arose as a mother and demonstrated great concern for Israel's religious and political life. As a prophetess, she was probably acting in a number of ways to restore religious purity. As a mother, she was concerned about the political and social plight of her people. In the course of time, God instructed Deborah to call up Barak son of Abinoam, from Kedesh in Naphtali and inform him that God had chosen him to be the instrument of deliverance for the people (4:6). God through the prophetess instructed Barak to organize an army from his tribe, and Zebulon, one of the closest tribes at Mt. Tabor. And that He (God) “will lure Sisera, the commander of Jabin's army, with his chariots and

his troops to the Kishon River and would give victory over them to Barak (Judges 4:7). She assured Barak of her willingness to be by his side as a means of encouragement, and the fact that victory would come divinely (4:9, 14).

Do present-day mothers still exist in the house of God? Yes, there are. In fact, there may be many. The unfortunate truth is that many women in the churches are not prepared to rise up to the ultimate call and responsibilities like Deborah. There are a good number who are prepared to perform but do not get the needed support to operate. Though the Bible is silent, there is no doubt that Deborah's husband, Lappidoth, might have been a strong encouragement to her. This can pass as a great challenge to the husbands in the church of God today; to give maximum encouragement and the needed support for their wives to serve God creditably.

People who challenge the status-quo

This class of specially gifted people includes Judges such as **Gideon**. The Bible records how once again the Israelites sinned against God and how He allowed the Midianites to oppress them (Judges 6:1-8:35). This time round, Gideon, said to be the youngest son of Joash, of the clan of Abieser, from the tribe of Manasseh, was the man God prepared and used as the deliverer of His people. Now, the way God prepared Gideon, who was initially a fearful and doubting person into the daring commander, gives a lot of lessons to the way He is interested in the believers' warfare.

Gideon's call to service included a personal visitation from Jehovah himself involving a theophany; the appearance of an angel of God was for a definite reason. This took place while he was preparing the family's harvest for hiding, i.e. a period when the problem was evident! The greeting was strange. At a time when the nation was at its lowest and weakest of spirit and

Gideon himself was acting in the general cowardly way, he was greeted as a man of valor! This was not out of place, however, for it seems Gideon and his brothers might have been noble men and warriors (Judges 8:18, 19). God used the appearance to call Gideon into remembrance! But that was the right opportunity Gideon was looking for as **he challenged God on a lot of issues** which proved fruitful.

Gideon's immediate response was designed to blame the Lord for their present plight, which obviously speaks of God's rejection of his people, is rather strange and shows a misunderstanding of the issues involved. They had God's warning that covenant disobedience would bring about these things. This had been confirmed by the unknown prophet. Gideon received his commission to deliver the nation with some hesitancy and asked for a sign of confirmation that God would grant his victory. This was given in the way the food offering he brought was consumed by divine fire!

Gideon's encounter with God brings to the fore some issues about the way God communicates with His people. For example, the consuming fire did convince Gideon that the man was an angel (Lev. 9:24). God revealed himself in sacrifices by coming as a fire that consumed it (1 Kings 18:37, 38; Exod. 3:2; 19:16-18; Gen. 15:17). Second, many believers do not support the idea of the fleece or test that Gideon put up to God. However, Judges 6:17 might be an indication of how Gideon requested for a sign in order to be convinced that the message was from God. It was necessary for the Lord to assure Gideon that he shouldn't be afraid because he was not going to die (vs. 23). Third, God devised many methods to speak to Gideon that night (vs. 25). But God really spoke to Gideon in a way he would understand. It is likely that on this occasion, God spoke through a dream (vs. 13). That is why its interpretation in verse 14 affected Gideon in a great positive way. Comparing this

second encounter of God communicating with him, one can arrive at a certain conclusion about the way God speaks to his people; it is not by only one means. But in the end, Gideon was convinced that the LORD had given him a divine assignment.

Gideon first response was to destroy the household gods. He craftily carried out the instructions in the night because he was afraid of his family and the people of the town. The next move was to attack the Midianites. Biblically, the Midianites were a group of people who might have gained prominence in the Transjordan (Judges 6:1-25; cf. Gen. 25:1-6; Num. 25). They appear to be quite powerful and influential enough to enlist the help of other nomads and residents in this region, namely Amalekites and the “Children of the East”-desert people to the East of Southern Canaan (Judges 6:3, 33; 7:12). The main concentration of their oppression was in the Esdraelon plain (Valley of Jezreel) but extended both north and south (Judges 6:3, 4). The oppressive plan of the Midianites was to eat up the produce of the Israelites and appropriate for themselves their cattle and all livestock. The oppression was therefore seasonal occurring at harvest times but their attacks were so devastating that they are compared to locusts.

For seven years, what Israel did was to use silos in dens which were in mountains, caves and the strongholds. But in the end, God used Gideon to overcome their oppression. Verses 16 and 17 of chapter 7 reveal the tactics God showed Gideon to overcome the enemy. Again, God sent him to the Midianites’ camp that night in order to boost his assurance (vs. 15), and to clear his fears and doubts (vs. 10a). Further God instructed Gideon to reduce an army of 32,000 to 300, so confirm the statement that ‘by the strength of man shall no man prevail and that a small number with God is stronger than a huge multitude without Him.’ Thus, according to verse 22, the overall driving force behind Gideon’s victory was God.

Being tactful as a leader and being able to confront the status quo are characteristic of transformational leader. In addition to Joshua's tactics which led him to conquer Ai (Jos. 8:3-8) believers as soldiers have to learn from Gideon, despite his mistakes, in order to overcome Satan. God is raising a lot of people in the spirit of Gideon to deal with the spiritual Midianites that are oppressing the Church. He is still breathing confidence into the spirit of believers so they could engage in spiritual warfare.

People with moral weakness are still useful

This class of specially gifted people includes Judges such as **Samson**. The story of Samson teaches some lessons about the role of parents and leaders regarding their children in fulfilling God's purpose. He was from the tribe of Dan, one of the closest to the Philistines. The plan of God for Samson was revealed to his parents with instructions of the way he was to be kept (Judges 13:1-24; cf. Lev. 10:9ff). When Samson was about twenty years, the "spirit of the Lord began to stir him." The understanding of this and how does it happens is hard to explain. Sometimes it is very hard for parents to know exactly what God would make of their children much in the same way as leaders do not know what God would use individual members of the church for.

How should we treat people when we are not sure they are acting under the influence of God's spirit? How do we judge a right action done under the influence of the Spirit of God from those under the will of man? In fact, great care has to be employed whenever some actions and inactions of some members of the church come under consideration. Apparently, Samson's experience reveals how God's dealings with man happen. Though his parents were made aware of what God

would use him for, they were completely ignorant of how God would bring the whole process about.

Samson is one of the men of scripture who has been condemned by many critics. Though he was physically strong, yet he demonstrated a lot of uncontrolled moral weakness, particularly towards the opposite sex, and suffering as a consequence. Yes, Samson had a great weakness; a special disposition for women. But not many people realize how God also planned to use him to deal with the Philistines. Despite Samson's weakness, the anointing of God was able to inspire him to perform a very important task in accordance with His divine plan. God did not reject Samson. He was able to perform his duty as a judge to the end and is listed among the 'heroes of faith' in the book of Hebrews chapter 11.

There are some people who are not morally strong, but who with the right support might be used of God to achieve great feat in His Kingdom, the Church. Transformation leaders should be able to identify such people among the body of believers and prop them up so that they can be used of God to fulfill His divine purposes.

Everybody is important to the body

What lesson can we learn from all the above illustrations? They show that there are a good number of people that might be used by God to help deal with some of the challenges of our churches. God is still raising and empowering such people in contemporary times in churches whose leaders are sensitive to their falling spiritual growth and development, and are thus looking for transformation. He is still using such anointed and transformational instruments to bring the church back into growing, healthy, and winning ways. But some leaders have failed to realize the hand of God behind the scene to use such people. Thus, many of them are discouraged and

sometimes prevented from playing effective roles or thrown from the churches in very strange circumstances. Anybody who has downplayed the importance of every single individual in the body of Christ should get in touch with the “Love Revolution” messages being championed by key founders of the Fountain Gate Ministries International (Ghana); Eastwood and Rosemond Anaba.

It is about time our churches became aware that no part of the body is useless and that every single member of the church should be helped to perform the God-called function to the glory of God and the blessing of the church. Of course, after the Lord has completed the task with a particular leader He reserves the discretion to take the person out of the scene.

CHAPTER 15

YOU CAN ADOPT EZRA AND NEHEMIAH'S STRATEGIES

Poor organizational and administrative structures, unfair treatment, improper leadership transition, suspicion between contesting groups, unsatisfied desire etc., are all identified cause of conflicts in the churches (Acts 6:1; 1 Cor. 1:10ff; James 4). Though there are solutions to these problems, they appear to be far-fetched to some people who are in the helm of affairs of some institutions including churches. For example, many church leaders have read through the books of Ezra and Nehemiah time and again but few are able to figure out the strategies they adopted to complete the task that God laid on their heart.

Administrative and organizational leaders are needed

Which of the problems of your church have you identified and which is your priority or are you concerned about? Why do you think the solution you have identified to the problem is important? Upon careful analysis of the past and the present predicament of some churches, and considering the larger future interest of God's Kingdom, one should be convinced to conclude that what most of our community churches need presently is not just any minister or many pastors. Rather, the churches need leaders with competent administrative or organizational abilities or both to direct and advice other leaders on the day-to-day running of the church.

This step has become necessary because over the years a lot of churches or and Christian organization have only been run by pastors (or ministers) who have very little knowledge and experience as administrators but have only

tried to administer it with the support of their elders and others. The situation is quite unhealthy when such leaders double up as sole administrators, finance bosses, welfare directors, head of outreach units, etc. While it is necessary to appreciate their efforts, it is equally expedient to acknowledge that the 21st Century church is growing in the mist of so many technological and developmental challenges. Therefore any form of mediocre management would lead to *collapsing*, *sick*, and or *stunted* situations. In this chapter, a few more tips can be picked from the experience of Ezra and Nehemiah for the benefit of our drive towards church transformation.

Ezra as an excellent administrator

Ezra was son of Seraiah, a Levite, and was a teacher and expert in the Law of God. He was a priest who dedicated himself to God's work during the Babylonian captivity (7:1-10). In the close of his 6th year, King Artaxerxes Longimanus, the emperor of the Mede-Persians who ruled from Susa in Persia (465-425 BC), gave directive permitting Ezra and those willing to go up and offer sacrifices to God in Jerusalem and see to matters concerning the temple worship. Ezra was an excellent choice for the king's transformational plans in Jerusalem because he "had devoted himself to the study and observance of the Law of the LORD, and to teaching its decrees and laws in Israel" (7:10).

Ezra and his company of about 1,500 returnees set forth in the 1st day of the 1st month of the 7th year of Artaxerxes, i.e., 458 BC, and arrived in the 5th month. He was sent by the king with a mandate to fulfill specific assignments in Jerusalem (7:14). As an assurance from the emperor, the leaders in Jerusalem were to provide Ezra's needs and give him their full support (7:21-23). Besides granting Ezra the permission to return home, the specific assignments of the

king to Ezra, i.e., his job description, among others, included the following:

- i. To lead in sacrifices in the temple in Jerusalem (7:17).
- ii. To receive financial assistance of gold and silver, freewill offering, and financial assistance from the treasury of the trans-Euphrates for all the purchases that would help him to execute his duties.
- iii. To organize all the resources in God's house and provide for the needs of all the priest and temple workers (7:18-23).
- iv. To teach God's Law to the returnees.
- v. To appoint administrative officials and other leaders to help in the duties of the temple (7:25).
- vi. All who oppose God's *will* are enemies of God and should be dealt with (7:26). So Ezra was to discipline anybody who would not obey God's word (7:26).

Ezra stepped forward and accepted the king's challenge and returned to Jerusalem. Upon arrival, he rolled out his strategies to satisfy his transformational program. Some of these are revealed in chapters 9 and 10 as follows:

- i. He led the returnees in Jerusalem to sacrifice burnt offerings to the LORD.
- ii. He spent some time appraising the religious situation of the people. His findings revealed that the people, led by their officials and some of the Levites, had corrupted themselves by intermarriage.
- iii. He humbly admitted their sins and openly declared some days of mourning. The people were affected by his prayer and confession and also joined in seeking God's mercies.
- iv. He called a general assembly to discuss the way forward.
- v. He did not sweep their mistakes under any carpet. Rather, he instituted an investigative council of elders into the cases of all the people and had them solved within three months.

At the end of Ezra's painstaking actions, there were ample testimonies to his success and enough demonstration of his prowess. Applying SWOT analysis to Ezra's success as a transformational administrator, i.e., looking at his strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats, it would be realized that he was someone who knew what he was about.

First, his strength was pivoted on three main issues. These are:

- i. Ezra devoted himself to the study of the Law of the LORD. This brings to the fore the importance of acquisition of knowledge, and emphasizes the role that education plays in ministry. With the right education, somebody is fed with appropriate information for effective delivery. Education also equips the person with the needed skills for excellent performance. The person's mind becomes properly oriented to approach all issues critically and provide cutting-edge solutions. The person is taught to tackle every assignment by engaging in adequate brainstorming sessions, and coming out with time-bound and achievable missions and clear visions. It all these are rolled out before the person puts his/her hand into the plough, the success of such a person is greatly guaranteed. Thus, any person who downplays or ignores ministerial training does so at his/her own detriment.*
- ii. Ezra observed what he had studied from the Law of the LORD. This is what is called 'leadership by example.' He was a pacesetter in living what he read from the scriptures. Transformational leaders do not say one thing and do otherwise; they walk the talk.

*Note: A lengthy discussion on the importance of ministerial training is provided in Part IV of the book, Pacesetters of Divine Ministry: Let us learn from them by the same author.

- iii. He did not only study and observe what is spelt out in the Law but he also found it incumbent on him to teach others. He saw the importance of such a step; little wonder, it was credited to him (Ezra 7:10). Ezra's ability to elucidate the issues that have plagued God's covenant community to the understanding of the people opened them up to fully support him (Ezra 10:4, 12). Being able to teach people to accept your mission and follow your vision is a positive trait of transformational leaders.

Second, Ezra recognized that as human, it would be suicidal to embark on any venture let alone expect a fulfillment his laudable transformational program. An undeniable fact of life is that humanity is generally weak, irrespective of our natural abilities and capabilities. Scripture undergirds this fact when it says that no person can succeed by human abilities (1 Sam. 2:9). Acknowledging such weaknesses compelled Ezra to trust God's strength in all his endeavors. He humbled himself before the Lord and sought divine counsel in the steps he took (Ezra 9:5-15; 10:3).

Third, 'Opportunity,' it is said, 'comes, but once.' One of the greatest opportunities would be an occasion to address the lapses in the beliefs, cultures, and traditions of any group of people. Ezra strategically positioned himself for such an opening, and behold, it came his way. And when such a door was opened by the king, he never hesitated in entering it to fulfill his aspiration. Unfortunately, not many people dream of such opportunities let alone prepare to grasp them. But people with transformational minds are always on the lookout and well prepared to seize appropriate opportunities when such come their way.

Last, but not the least is how Ezra dealt with his threats. Any person who ignores the fact that humanity has enemies is living in his/her self created paradise. But those

who acknowledge the threats of such foes seek appropriate ways to deal with them. Ezra realized that there were physical as well as spiritual enemies who were great threat to the fulfillment of his mandate. He did not underrate the harm that these enemies could inflict on him and his team. He took the right step. He called for divine intervention. So, scripture says that the divine hand of the Lord was on them in response to their call for His help through fasting and prayer (8:21-24).

Ezra was indeed a leader who understood his call as an administrator and worked to fulfill his mission and vision. On top of his achievements is the claim by some scholars that he led the collection and compilation of the OT canon. According to one source that cites Josephus, Ezra lived long enough to accomplish this great feat (Ant. XI vs. 5).⁷⁵ He is believed to have been supported in this job by a council of elders, the Great Synagogue, a council of 120 members which he set to reorganize the religious life of the people, as established by Jehoshaphat (cf. 2 Chron. 19:8-10). Ezra's steps are worthy of emulation by transformational leaders.

Nehemiah as an excellent organizer

Nehemiah's book has a lot to reveal about the way this man of God handled all these questions; his reaction to the news about the state of Jerusalem and also about some of the steps he took to ensure the rebuilding of the wall. Nehemiah was the cupbearer of the same king who sent Ezra to Jerusalem, King Artaxerxes Longimanus, the Medo-Persian emperor, as mentioned already. In the 20th year of the emperor's reign, Nehemiah received news about the poor state of the land and the broken walls of Jerusalem. His attitude to the news was a demonstration of a person with transformational sensitivities.

Although Nehemiah was living in comfort in Susa, one of the capital cities of the Mede-Persians, he demonstrated enough transformational qualities by his unyielding concern for Jerusalem and the people that dwell there. As a man of prayer, determination, and great trust in Jehovah, Nehemiah demonstrated his concern by not only inquiring about them but quickly turning to the Lord about the report he received. He gained the king's favor and was not only given right to go and rebuild the walls of the city but also with royal escort and all the needed financial support. Within three days of his arrival, he moved straightaway to implement his strategy.

Studying the life of Nehemiah should convince everyone that he was a master strategist. From the information he received, one realizes that Nehemiah understood the exact problem at stake; the wall of Jerusalem was broken down so (Neh. 1:1-4; 2:17-22). These are some of the strategies he devised to execute his business:

- i. Firstly, Nehemiah went on nightly inspection to acquaint himself with the work to be done and also formulated his plans.
- ii. Secondly, he got the leaders of the people together and challenged them concerning the work at hand. This step was necessary in order to secure everybody's involvement, especially the other leaders. Team work is important.
- iii. As a result of the people's willingness to do the work, he came in with the third step by organizing different portions of the work under various families so that the people set to work with all their hearts. This is where division of labor is adopted in order to maximize labor force, ensure speed, and secure every skill and resources. Little wonder, within a short time, half the height was reached.

Nehemiah was not ignorant of the devil's devices so his fourth step was to deal with the opposition from Samaritan

governors; Sanballat, Tobiah, and Geshem. These enemies of the returned Jews employed various tactics from mere ridiculing and warfare to methods of influencing some of the leadership and some false prophets to attack the people. Fear gripped some of the people but Nehemiah was not to be intimidated; he was firm. It is important that church leaders learn some of the factors that enabled the people to successfully build the wall.

- He turned to prayer to invoke the help of God.
- He took some steps to win the people's favor.
- He encouraged the working team to prove equal to the task.
- He organized the people into a working army. Some were to be guards; the workers were to work in readiness for battle, with full armament in hand.
- He reversed laws against the poor. The poor were suffering and had given up fields, property and children for loans and to pay heavy taxes. He ordered a reversal of these.
- He provided leadership by example. He fed the people at his table freely; he did not tax them to support and maintain his governorship. He fed himself and his men from his own resources.

The people were thus challenged to continue in spite of the opposition and in fifty-two (52) days the whole project was completed. The opposition and the surrounding nations were astounded because they realized the Lord had been at work! As a further check on these opponents, Nehemiah put his brother, Hanani, and a military officer, Hananiah, in charge of the city. Thereafter he supervised the dedication of the completed wall to the Lord. Although Nehemiah spent a total of 12 years as governor he returned to his service in Susa (13:6). As an excellent organizational leader he saw the need to return years later as a follow-up to the work.

Lessons from Ezra and Nehemiah

Are there any genuine challenges offered by Ezra and Nehemiah? What lessons do their strategies teach in you as God's transformational agent? What does God expect you to do? Are you prepared to take the bull by the horn in order to put God's business into shape? Apostle Paul's letter to the Colossians 3:23 say, "Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart as working for the Lord..." There is the need for adept transformers to step in and beef up the work of the leadership. The appeal should reach all progressive leaders in the church to earnestly pray along that line. It is also not beyond God to raise The Ezra's and Nehemiah's that our churches need.

Now, let all real transformational leaders accept the above challenge in order to affect the needed changes in God's business. With God, all things are possible (Matt. 19:26).

CHAPTER 16

YOU MUST PRACTICE AND PREACH HOLINESS

In a large house there are articles not only of gold and silver, but also of wood and clay; some are for noble purposes and some of ignoble. If a man cleanses himself from the latter, he will be an instrument for noble purposes, made holy, useful to the Master and prepared to do any good work (2 Tim. 2:20-21).

One of the greatest marks of transformational leaders is the kind of life they live. The above quote undergirds this fact. Holiness and purity are synonymous and satisfy an important virtue that needs to be pursued by every believer. In other words, Purity and holiness can be used interchangeably. Both have been defined and applied in various ways throughout the scriptures. Its application in the OT is quite different from the NT. Paul's first letter to the Corinthians 1:30 says that if we (believers) will have the right conscience to worship God, it would come from Christ. Believers must think like Christ thinks. Christians are called unto holiness in order that the power of God will move through them. Without holiness, it is not only impossible to see God, but according to 2 Timothy 2:20-21, one can be used for any noble purposes of God.

What is holiness (or purity)?

Holiness is the practice of keeping something in such a way that it becomes acceptable to God (2 Sam. 22:27; Ps. 19:9; 51:10; 119: 9; Matt. 5: 8; 1 Tim. 5:22; Heb. 12: 1; 1 John 3:3; 2 Cor. 7:1). To be holy means to be set apart from any defilement for godly purposes. That is, to stay away from everything sinful and not live according to the desires of the flesh. Holiness is a prerogative of God. It is He who sanctifies

and declares something holy for divine purposes. In the OT, holiness is “knowing the power of God in order to Love Him in our heart” (Jos. 3:5), or obeying the commandments (Num. 11:8). It is when something is devoted to religious use, i.e., made sacred, consecrated or separated from all impure or immoral defilement (1 Chron. 22:19; Exod. 20:8; Lev. 19:2)

In order to abide in the house of the Lord or going to worship, one needed to present the self clean before any sacrifice could be done (1 Sam. 16:5; Joel 2:12-16). Holiness could also be removing every chaff like washing clothes as in Joel 2:13, or removing every detestable thing from a person’s life (Jos. 7:13; Exod. 19:10, 11, 15). But in the NT, it is more than that. Romans 7:20-25 says we should not adhere to the deeds of the flesh but serve God through our conscience. Holiness means “not corrupted by sin” (Eph. 1:4; Titus 1:7-8). It is the washing away of any sins (or corruption) in order to make clean for divine purpose. In other words, it is putting sin down and living above it or sin on the one side and you on the other.

Again, Apostle Paul’s first letter to the Corinthians 15:57 says believers must see holiness as victory over sin and Satan through Christ. It is only when we only live a holy life that we can conquer Satan (Eph. 6:11ff). Believers have to pursue purity because it is a commandment from God. Purity is a requirement from God for his people and therefore makes believers acceptable to God. It is achieved by a conscious effort on the part of man, for example, abstinence from all forms of sins. Purity brings believers closer to God and also brings God closer to them. Purity keeps the devil, the enemy or Satan away from reaching believers or touching them, and is the key to appear or see God both on earth and in Heaven. It gives the believer confidence before the throne of God, and a continued assurance of a healthy relationship with the Holy one. The demand for purity is therefore non-negotiable.

Purity of mind and heart

Purity is a virtue that helps a person to have a right relationship with God. It covers the body or soul (as these are most often equated to the mind), or Spirit (which is most often equated to the heart). God also requires purity in the mind (soul). This can be achieved by keeping thoughts or the mind from unholy things or imaginations. The heart (spirit) can also be kept pure by the believers in many ways. Example, when they do not desire or harboring sinful thoughts. Scripture says that the believer can pursue purity and live right with God by studying the word of God always and being influenced or controlled by it. Example of how to practice this is by meditating on it or sharing it. It can also be practiced by continued prayer life and by engaging and occupying the self with the things of God. By allowing the Spirit of God to have maximum control over a person's life purity could be achieved.

As a matter of fact living right with God is a matter of choice as proposed and decided by Joshua (Jos. 24:16). It becomes a condition of the mind because determination is very paramount as was done by Daniel, (Dan 1:8). No doubt, it depends on ones' ability to appropriate the finished work of Christ on the cross for mankind. There is more than enough power in the blood that was shared on Calvary to accommodate any believer to the end of the road. Thus, the desire to live right with God depends on a person's goal(s) in life since such is enough to drive one on to a successful end, as exemplified by the Lord Jesus Christ (Heb. 12:1-3). According to one preacher, "If you choose to live for God then you can be assured that you can leave everything for Him."⁷⁶

How did the following youthful believers pursue or practice purity; Joseph (Gen. 39:7-12), Daniel (Dan. 1:8), Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego (Dan. 3:8-26)?

Purity in all forms of life appearances

Purity must be pursued or practiced in the body in many ways including the believers dressing and appearance. The area of appearance and dressing is one of the most challenging in most societies today. Appropriate and modest dressing is fast becoming a thing of the past. It is not uncommon these days to find people who are 'aware' that they have dressed half naked. Some believers are even falling for such a demonic trap. But the truth is that it is God who first provided man with a dress, and He did it for a good purpose (Gen. 3:21). It is to cover man's nakedness so that man will not be ashamed, and also to make man appear different from other animals.

But there are some reasons why some people dress badly in society. For example some people dress to attract attention to selves, or to show that they are better than other people, or to deceive people, or to entice the opposite sex (dressing to kill). Such people dress half naked by exposing sensitive parts of their bodies, or dress too tightly to show their body shape, or put on a lot of body decoration and too much cosmetic decoration. However, God is pleased with a particular kind of dressing and gave special instructions concerning dressing in 1 Timothy 2:9. It is to make people appear very humble and to create a difference between Christians and non-Christians. Modest dressing also set Christians as examples for others to follow, and helps to keep believers from condemnation by the world. It also helps to keep believers from unnecessary temptations and make them attractive for God's purposes (Ruth 3:1-3). What should be the nature of dressing of members of God's Church?

The role of sanctification

The Christian calling is unto cleanness and holiness (1 Thess. 4:7). That Christ might present to himself a glorious

church not having spot or wrinkling but holy and without blemish, our old man is crucified with Christ and we must walk in newness of life (Eph. 5:27; Rom. 6:1-6). Without holiness, no man shall see the Lord. The link between holiness and sanctification is that the former is achieved through the latter.

Sanctification is “being set apart and consecrated for sacred use in the Lord’s house and for the Lord” (2 Tim. 2:21). The need to maintain a sanctified life is a necessary factor for spiritual growth and maturity, “For this is the will of God, even your sanctification; that ye should abstain from fornication” (1 Thess. 4:3; Heb. 12:14; Matt. 5:8). A disciple must be set apart every day through prayers and meditation on the word of God. In joy, he must be in a challenging fellowship, instantly obeying the voice of the Holy Spirit through the word, and his conscience.

How is a believer sanctified?

Believers are circumcised to love God with all our heart and soul that we must live (Deut. 30:6). Christians are also sanctified through the truth (John 17:17), meaning that the sanctified one does not live but is truthful in every sense of the word. Jesus gave himself that he might redeem believers from all sin and purify unto himself people who are jealous for good works (Titus 2:14). Maintaining a sanctified life is a necessary factor for spiritual growth and maturity. A disciple must not harbor the view that the old sinful nature has power over the person. No! The old nature of a believer is crucified with Christ only that sometimes it might want to raise its ugly head. This leads to perpetual struggle which eventually renders the old man helpless as long as the believer continually returns to the cross for cleansing and renewed in times of temptation.

Thus one should examine his conscience and actions in the light of God’s word and deal with common sins this way;

forgive all those who wrong you (Matt. 5:23-24; 18:21-22), not love the world and the things therein (1 John 2:17), to mortify the deeds of the flesh and cling unto Christ (Col. 3:5; Rom. 13:14), and overcome the pride of life that comes from wealth and importance, ambition to acquire everything that appeal to you (1 Peter 3:1-6). But who sanctifies? God, the Father is involved in sanctification (John 10:10). The Word of God, which is truth, also brings sanctifies (Eph. 5:26). The Lord Jesus Christ also, sanctifies with his own blood (Heb. 13:12; 10:10; 1 John 1:17).

One born of God does not sin, i.e., not continue living in sin; (1 John 3:9-10). Thus, the Christian must bridle his tongue and not let loose foul talk, impure and dirty conversation, unnecessary jokes, etc., are not for the Christians (James 1:26; Prov. 10:19; Eph. 4:29; 5:3-4). For this reason, an account shall be giving of every idle word spoken (Matt. 12:35-36). Thus, through impure lifestyle, there can be a loss of sanctification.

Knowledge of God's word is necessary

The goal of every true Christian is to attain the full stature of Jesus Christ, i.e. to walk in His steps and be transformed to His image. This cannot be achieved by desire only, but also by determination and conscious effort. The main tool to ensure wholesome purity of the members of the body of Christ and continuous sanctification is by depending on the Word of God. The Bible holds the place of veracious authority for the Christian (2 Tim. 3:16; Ps. 119:142, 151). The Bible is the final authority for faith and practice. No church leader, miracle worker, or anybody has authority equal to the scriptures. The Bible is above any office or official in the church, whether apostle, prophet, cardinal, bishop, pastor, priest, overseer, president, director, etc. (Ps. 138:2; Phil. 2:9). The Bible is above every human authority it be religious, political or military.

Apostle Paul exhorts believers in Ephesians 4:29 when he writes: "Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers." Thus Christians need to adopt to cause people to appreciate the word of God as it teaches them. Every believer is responsible to God to search the scripture to see what is being said by the church leader is true. Example is found in Acts 17:10-11; the Berea believers. They recognized that the authority of scripture was greater than that of the Church leaders (apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, teachers, etc.). They searched the scriptures daily to see if what the church leaders (Paul and Silas) were saying had veracity (Gal. 1:8; Isa. 8:20). Moreover, what is the basis of the ability of those mentioned in the scriptures as Ezra and Priscilla who were able to teach the people to their understanding? We are never to believe or practice anything contrary to scriptures, the word of God.

For transformational leaders, daily, weekly monthly and yearly Bible study programs are very essential for their purity, proper growth, and maturity. It is incumbent on such leaders to take time to study, understand and meditate on the word of God in order to be able to teach others to their understanding. Furthermore, the leader becomes better placed to deduce what is right from what the Bible says. In fact, the knowledge of the word of God must be manifested in all aspects of a leader's life; spiritual, social, physical, academic, and so on.

CHAPTER 17

YOU CAN OVERCOME ALL FORMS OF EVIL

When Cain could not resist the temptation to commit murder, he set a bad precedent for humanity. The statement from God to him is indicative of the fact that the Lord was expecting Cain to overcome the desire of evil. According to Genesis 4:6-7: "...The LORD said to Cain, "Why are you angry? Why is your face downcast? If you do what is right, will you not be accepted? But if you do not do what is right, sin is crouching at your door; it desires to have you, but you must master it."" The issue here is whether humanity has been able to master sin or not. Obvious, we have not.

There is very small difference, if any, between the negativities in the body of Christ today and what pertained in Israel during the period of the Judges. For example, in those days, the book of Judges records that some Priests and Levites were hired by individuals to serve them instead of God's people and even engaged in idol worship (chap. 17); some of them took concubines (19:1); some were even guilty of theft from God's offerings and sacrifices and engaged in prostitution with women in the tabernacle (Eli's sons, 1 Sam. 1:12-17, 22; 2:27-36). Now all these grievous forms of evil are being perpetuated in the Church with impunity and to deeper extent. The occurrence of such negative cases appears to be ubiquitous. Like the High Priest Eli who did not do much to restrain his sons even after God had warned him (1 Sam. 3:13-14), a lot of people in responsible position who could be mouth-pieces of God against the vices in His house are doing very little making them equally guilty before God.

Biblically, many of the causes of world's problems can be grouped under three main desires of humanity; i.e., desire for

sex, money, and power. Scriptures do not only reveal but also condemn and warn believers against any tendencies towards these, “When the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was desirable to make *one* wise, she took from its fruit and ate; and she gave also to her husband with her, and he ate” (Gen. 3:6). Also, in 1 John 2:15-17, it is written:

Do not love the world, or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world... (NAS)

Clearly, one can deduce from the two passages what each vice corresponds to; “good for food” or “lust of the flesh” can be equated to desire for sex; “delight to the eyes or lust of the eyes” can be equated to desire for money; while “desirable to make *one* wise or the boastful pride of life” can be equated to desire for power. These are the major branches of the evil tree that gives rise to all others in the world: fornication and adultery, lies, greediness, selfishness, hatred, murder, idolatry and occultism, conflicts, strives, wars, and the like.

Indeed, no human being is immune to the power and lure of sin. In fact, not even the Lord Jesus Christ was exempted from the influence of sin, though He overcame all forms of its lure. The effects of evil on a person, especially a Christian and to a greater extent one who is a leader and his/her community differs. In other words, as commented by one writer:

If a jobless tramp were caught in the act of rape, that would most likely not make a hollering front page headline for a newspaper with a reputation for mighty scoops but if the tramp were called a bishop, now, that would be hot-selling news. The result...is that

pastors, prophets and bishops come a dozen for one Ghana pesewa these days...⁷⁷

Not only do all forms of evil directly damage the image of God's Church; it is even shameful to mention and discuss these in connection with it, especially when its leaders are the culprits. Indeed, that makes great information for Television news headline or newspaper front page. Little wonder, nowadays, the media has listed so called men of God who had raped, swindled, assaulted or murdered for ritual purposes and managed to throw in a tiny handful of orthodox clergy to make the media swindle appear credible.⁷⁸ One reporter commented,

I have so much reverence for the men in cassock but rather find the shameful nature in which many of them tumbled down lately rather painful. Reports of rape, fraud and many unthinkable deeds transverse the media landscape about ministers of the gospel...⁷⁹

Worse still, some of these issues contribute to conflicts and lead to break-up of churches as would be discussed here.

Major Church negativities

A lot of people who end as genuine transformational agents are usually well prepared before they are raised by God to leadership positions. Such preparations are necessary in order for them to become effective. People like Joseph, Moses, Joshua, David, Daniel, Paul, Timothy, etc., are a few that might be listed as typical examples of such transformational agents. Such a galaxy of biblical characters might have led some people to conclude that they can serve effectively only in leadership capacities.

As a result they resort to all sorts of means to rise to the top in life. Few realize, though sometimes quite late, that

pursuing foul ventures in leadership becomes a bad precedent. Typical areas that many leaders fall short are discussed briefly here:

Power-drunkenness: Power-drunk mentality usually blinds people until they face the consequences later. Jezebel, the wife of King Ahab of the Northern Kingdom of Israel, and daughter, Athaliah, who became the wife of King Jehoram of the Southern Kingdom, and a number of the Northern kings are biblical examples of power-drunk people who suffered for their actions. A Ghanaian newspaper columnist wrote, “While many of us remain vulnerable to the desires of the flesh, it is important that persons who carry society’s moral compass lead exemplary lives. Unfortunately, a section of the church, like the general society, is becoming corrupt with the leaders who are power drunk and under the pretence of the Holy Spirit. They display extravagance while many of the flock wallow in poverty...”⁸⁰ To this end quite a lot of past and present leaders of churches who are guilty have regrettable end.

Leadership insecurity: A lot of leaders create problems for organized bodies like the church because they want to make such institutions as their bona-fide property. Most of them hold on to their post because fear of exposition after leaving office, or loss of investment. Others conceive selfish reasons: “what will happen if I lose my job?” or “I have put in too much to let go.” Sometimes those entrusted with the duties of service commit themselves so much that they endear themselves to the floor members or the “veranda boys.” With time, their bosses become insecure because they realize that such servants have become influential. So they begin to device means to remove them, leading to conflicts, especially when such sensitive situations are not handled carefully.

Jealousy and hatred: Most of the damages of the Judges period were repaired when Samuel, the last judge came to power. He was able to organize the congregation of Israel so much that the nation regained its glory and defeated their arch rivals, the Philistines. Nevertheless, the United Kingdom of Israel split up with time. One of the factors which dealt the most devastating blow to Israel was created by jealousy and hatred. David's rise and King Saul's growing jealousy is a typical example of the cause of split in God's kingdom (1 Sam. 17-20). The scriptures reveal that God had plans to exhibit his choice king to the people, in spite of the problems it was going to cost his man, God's purpose was served. The growing fame of David convinced Saul that the Lord was with the former.

This led to fear of David, growing jealousy and hatred, thereafter King Saul took a number of steps aimed at destroying David. These attempts failed and increased Saul's fear and hatred on one hand and David's fame on the other. Saul's hatred was revived after another Philistine victory by David. The rest of the reign of King Saul's was spent chasing after David to destroy him such that the two families never lived in peace. For seven and half years after King Saul's death there existed in Israel two rival kingdoms; that of David's and Saul's house which led into a tribal war. But in the end David won and finally ascended the throne and reigned in triumph (2 Sam. 2:2-3:39).

Nepotism in the church: One phenomenon that is gaining strength in some churches is the issue of nepotism. This is the system whereby people, particularly those in leadership positions, grant special favors to members of their families or close relatives by appointing them to some important offices or to perform certain roles against more qualified persons. The Bible has examples of few of such a practice which usually runs

contrary to the plan and will of God. This probably is the reason that might have prompted the people of Israel to demand for a king. They saw the possibility of Prophet Samuel appointing one of His sons who were not waking in the ways of God to succeed him as a High Priest and Judge.

But a clearer example is the agenda that King Saul of the United Nation of Israel wanted to practice. Saul was bent on ensuring that his son Jonathan succeeds him as king. But this was against the will of God who had already sought for a man of His own heart, David, and had already anointed him as a king in waiting. When such conflict of interest arises definitely persecution sets in on the part of man but is opposed by providence on God's part. This is what brought about the persecution of David. But it is also what led David to emerge as the true choice of a king for Israel.

The practice of nepotism is not uncommon in most societies of the world especially, among politicians, the ruling families of some cultures or tribes. For example, among the cultures where the sitting chief, the chief elder, and the queen-mother should come from the same family, this practice is practical. In some political cycles, such a system might be seen, where cabinet ministers or members of the top hierarchy may belong to the same family. In the churches nowadays, such abuse of power through nepotism is not uncommon.

Imagine a scenario where the post of the Deputy General Overseer of a church became vacant. At their council meeting to consider a replacement, the Leader nominated his brother to fill the vacant post against other possible choices. Ironically, he opened the floor for objection from other council members in the presence of his nominee who was also comfortably seated at the meeting. The whole room was gripped with silence because of the presence of the nominee, and the members could not objectively express their rejection. When some of the

council members gathered courage and requested for more than one nominee so that they could vote on them, the boss turned their request down. Straightaway, the action of the Boss was interpreted as a deliberate attempt to ensure that his brother should by all means be endorsed by the council. As a result, some members of the council who hitherto had great respect for their leader began to doubt his integrity.

Procedure which lacks honest judgment on the part of leadership as in the scenario above is bad precedent and an obvious recipe for conflict. In the extreme situation it leads to loss of trust in both the existing and incoming leadership which might end up in a split in leadership and organizations. It is a negative leadership practice that should be avoided by transformational leaders who want to prevent conflict, and see lasting church growth that is also healthy. Is the church having some Jonathans of our day who can stop the 'madness' of any current King Saul? That person could be you.

Persecution of perceived enemies: A major cause of church conflict that can lead to possible break-up is the unnecessary persecution, or suppressive and oppressive treatments that some superiors or leaders met out to their subordinates. This might develop into a built up of anger and resentment within the subordinates which can finally explode, something that could best be described as a "bottled-up effect." A typical example is the treatment that King Solomon gave to Jeroboam and the working class of Israel. This is what developed into the war that caused the final split of the united kingdom of Israel during the reign of King Rehoboam.

It is all Israel that gathered at Shechem to make Rehoboam their king (1 Kings 12:1-9; 2 Chron. 10). Thereafter, the elders of Israel expressed concern that it was time to enjoy relief from the heavy taxation suffered at the hands of King Solomon.

The new king gave the elders three days to come for an answer. Meanwhile, Jeroboam heard of Solomon's death and the coronation preparation. He rushed down to lead the Israelites request. The king foolishly rejected the counsel of the elderly to give the people relief for the ill advice of his peers, the youth. His behavior almost led into a tribal war; the tribes of Judah and Benjamin were ready to fight with the ten northern tribes as a result of support for their kings; Rehoboam and Jeroboam, respectively. The war was only averted by God and this gave the northerners the opportunity to secede from the south and chose Jeroboam as king to lead them.

The United Kingdom was gone; now split into two. The southern one comprises Judah and Benjamin while the northern comprises the remaining 10 tribes. The nation of Israel never regained its glorious days of King David and Solomon after it split. The two sister kingdoms that emerged were finally subdued and went into captivity. Thereafter, one was able to survive and return, through weakened; the other never returned and became extinct. True to the words of Jesus Christ, "Every kingdom divided against itself cannot stand."

Power struggle: Another important reason for leadership problems usually occur in the area of internal struggle, conflict of interest, oppositions from other members of the leadership team, misunderstanding among members of the leadership, etc. Typical examples of desire for power leading to a struggle include the following:

- Aaron and Miriam against Moses (Num. 12-13).
- Korah and his followers against Moses (Num. 12:1-3).
- The disciples of Jesus (Matt. 18:1).

Since genuine leadership is an institution of God, He raises people in His own time in accordance with a divine plan. As 'those who live by the sword definitely die by it,' so also will

those who rise to power through struggle not enjoy the peace to rule. Therefore, people who see themselves as leadership materials and aspire to such positions of authority need to patiently wait on God for the right opportunity. Through adequate preparation by God, they will not become ordinary but extra-ordinary leaders whose services will bring the expected transformation to the larger society.

Desire for money

Apostle Paul enumerated some of the difficulties he suffered in the ministry as a leader (2 Cor. 6:3-10). Most of the challenges that Apostle Paul mentioned have the tendency of making most leaders give up presently. But one of the common forms of leadership problems and perhaps the most disappointing one is when some leaders create problems for the ministry because they accept leadership roles from biased motives. Succumbing to temptations involving money is one of the major causes of conflicts and major breaks of churches.

Get-rich-quick: In our churches nowadays the desire for money and the get-rich-quick disease has attacked a lot of the leaders resulting in undesirable consequences; selfishness, greed, misappropriation of funds, etc. Gehazi, the servant of Prophet Elisha is a typical example of how money could lure a person to destruction. His strong desire to pursue and collect money and other gifts which his master had refused to accept from Naaman, the Syrian army commander who was healed of leprosy, did not only cause him the ministry but he also acquired the disease of the commander (2 Kings 5:1-27).

While the move of God's Spirit to win souls from hell fire into the Kingdom of Heaven leads to the quantitative expansion of old churches and the establishment of new churches ones, people involved, particularly leaders, should be careful of any

attempt to personalize God's purpose for personal gain. The situation where mushroom ministers and overnight 'prophets' are cashing in on unsuspecting believers in the hope of providing solutions to their problems has become the order of the day. The sooner the church purges itself of these charlatans and robbers the better.

Fraudulent transactions: Currently, what is happening in the arena of a lot of Christian ministries gives major cause for concern. Hardly a day passes without news of leader 'A,' 'B,' or 'C' not being in the grips of the law for a fraudulent connection involving huge amount of money or for embezzling church funds or for another negative practice involving money. For example, there was a newspaper report that a pastor at Fete in the Central Region of Ghana was accused of defrauding some young footballer recruits to the tune of 6,060 Ghana cedis under the pretext of sending them to play with football clubs in France, and was therefore arraigned before an Accra Circuit Court.⁸¹ The case involving Ananias and his wife, Sapphira, recorded in Acts 5:1-10, should be enough reminder of how the Holy Spirit frowns on people who use deceit for financial gains and selfish interest.

Selfishness and greediness: In Acts 20:34-35, Apostle Paul boldly declared, "You yourselves know that these hands ministered to my *own* needs and to the men who were with me. "In everything I showed you that by working hard in this manner you must help the weak." This declaration by the Apostle should stimulate any leader to seek the welfare of his subordinates. But the contrast is what is true for some leaders of present day churches and ministries. A phenomenon, "let the monkey do the work while the baboon enjoys the fruit," is observed to be gaining a lot of grounds in some places nowadays. This is where some founders of ministries reach a

certain stage and then sit back to allow their subordinates alone to work while they commit themselves to spending the money being generated on selves.

One newspaper reporter wrote about some of such selfish and greedy leaders thus: "They display extravagance while many of the flock wallow in poverty and are denied their share of the wealth being amassed in the name of offerings to God."⁸² At the back of their minds, some of the selfish and greedy leaders have harbored a position that they toiled alone to establish the ministries so it was time for them to reap and enjoy. While it is not out of place for people to enjoy from their sweat, the way some of them mess up God's money while their subordinates are left to suffer leaves a lot to be desired. Sometimes the outcome of such abuse is that the grumbling subordinates begin to wise up and seek opportunities to satisfy their needs, which in some cases lead to unhealthy consequences for the church.

Uncontrolled desire for sex

Desire for the opposite sex, no doubt, is one of the most powerful drives in the body of man. God in His wisdom created mating between man and woman both for pleasure and for procreation. But He allowed this only within the context of marriage after He had created a suitable partner for man and had commissioned them to the holy institution of marriage as husband and wife (Gen. 2:20-25). However, due to the uncontrolled fleshly desires of humanity as a result of the fall (Gen. 3:1-6-7), the drive for sex has become one of the greatest Achilles' heels of Adam's race with very grievous consequences sometimes.

The Bible is full of examples of how uncontrolled appetite for sex had caused the downfall of a lot of people including leaders. The sons of Jacob murdered all men of Shechem

because their prince (also called Shechem) could not control his lust for sex and raped Dina, Jacob's daughter. Reuben, the first son of Jacob, who was entitled to a double-portion of the father's blessings by virtue of birth rather lost it because of uncontrolled sex (Gen. 49:3-4). Twenty-four thousand (24,000) strong men of Israel died of a plague from God because they could not control their lust for Moabite and Midianite women against the Sinaitic covenant stipulations (Num. 25:1-9; cf. Deut. 7:1-3; Ezra 1:1-2). One of Israel's greatest Judges, Samson, suffered serious punishment from his enemies, the Philistines, because he could not control his lust after their women and was betrayed by one of them.

In terms of the consequences of lust for sex, one of the typical examples of a leader whose position suffered a regrettable set-back is King David. The story of his illicit sex experience with Uriah's wife, Bathsheba, and the negative repercussions are told in 1 Samuel 11-15. As a King David suffered Prophet Nathan's rebuke; his son, Amnon, raped his daughter, Tamar; his son, Absalom, usurped his throne and for the king (David) to run for his life, and later engaged in sex orgies with David's own wives, not even the son born from his affair with Bathsheba was spared the trouble as he also died. All these troubles came upon David and caused major cracks to his kingdom because of illicit sex.

Though the effect of uncontrolled sex is very devastating with a lot of examples of such abounding yet a lot of leaders have still not learned any lessons and sometimes defend their actions. For example, a Ghanaian newspaper brought to its valued readers the many circulated tapes which exposed the alleged sexual escapades of a bishop, founder and leader of an international ministry, which led to his attack of an FM radio station in the capital city leading to other series of events. The

tapes include the bishop's plea to the wedded wife of his junior pastor with whom he repeatedly had extramarital sex.

During a mediation session initiated by some senior ministers of the gospel, the pastor is reported to have defended his action and protested thus, "Why are you blaming me, did I force the girl or rape her? She made advances at me and told me that she did not love her husband and her husband can even attest to that fact."⁸³ Sometimes, what engages the public to the disappointment of the larger Christian community is that the culprits assigned very queer and even blasphemous reasons for their unacceptable actions. According to one Ghanaian newspaper that reported on such a blasphemy:

The head pastor of a church was arrested for allegedly raping five sisters. The pastor who was alleged to have confessed to having affairs with five sisters said he committed the crime on the orders of some celestial powers. He was reported to have invited one of them to his bedroom where he smeared her body with anointing oil before telling her that he had been instructed by the "holy spirit" to have sex with her, which was necessary for her deliverance...⁸⁴

In some cases, the situation is aggravated with regrettable consequences when the culprits decide to take unacceptable actions to resolve their cases.⁸⁵ Not only do the culprits of such negative acts defend themselves, sometimes, very close associates who should condemn such ungodly acts use various reasons to defend the culprit. For example, in one of the cases involving a 'bishop' and the wife of one of his subordinates, it was reported that "...The wife of bishop...a popular gospel artist, sought to justify the allegation by insisting that it was the woman who lured her husband into bed..."⁸⁶

One cannot debunk the reaction of the general public to some of the negativities of people who are supposed to be role

models and therefore expected to behave appropriately. As a result, both the culprits and the leadership of the church are not spared public accusations and criticisms. For example, one columnist commented that some of the country's most respected clergymen were heard in the media casting the 'man of God' in the mould of a consecrated man of God who had erred.⁸⁷ In another instances, it is reported:

A bishop received lots of criticisms and condemnation in the media and the general public for allegedly sleeping with his pastor's wife and beating a radio presenter. Video CD's produced by the Pastor was reported to have been destroyed and thrown away by marketers and distributors. They claim that the Bishop's cup was full and that, he had proven beyond every reasonable doubt that he was not of God so they won't waste their time selling his supposed fake miracle programs to the public.⁸⁸

While some of the issues might be considered as too minor to affect the church to any greater extent others do. Thus, quite a number of problems of churches today are due to such sex factors; leaders who sexually mess up with other people, various cases of rape and defilement, married people who engage in adultery with other people's spouses or with the unmarried.

It is not just enough for issues bordering on sexual immorality to be mentioned in this book. And the interest here is not to trumpet issues that have already gained enough currency in the public domain, since the media publicity which are usually given to immoral practices of Christian leaders alone are quite traumatizing (refer endnote 83). Rather, the genuine concern here is for all believers especially those in leadership positions to brace themselves up to overcome the numerous challenges to their 'call' so as to be seen as the real

role models of society in whose hands have been entrusted the divine mandate of societal transformation.

It is expected that those caught in the tentacles of worldliness would be able to free themselves and be strengthened by the power of God's Spirit to continue their divine assignments as transformational leaders. It is also hoped that those who are strong in the faith would not just be found castigating or condemning the weak. Rather, the former should be able to offer some support to the latter in accordance with scriptures (Rom. 15:1-7; cf. Gal. 6:1-30). We all have the challenge to overcome all the negativities of the world in order to remain as the true 'salt' and 'light' mentioned by the Lord in the Sermon on the Mount (Matt. 5:13-16).

Other common church challenges

Besides the major areas mentioned above, there are others which obviously lead to very negative consequences like hatred, in-fighting, divisions, sometimes breaks, and in extreme cases murder (James 1:1-3). These include the following:

Poor or blocked communication channels: Communication is the transfer of a message from one source to another. It is the bloodline of any relationships, be they couples, family, church, organizations, or even among bigger societies. No communication has been excellent; all depends upon the source and the receiver. Nevertheless, an acceptable attempt at communication should be quite spicy, that is, containing all the necessary ingredients; clear, complete, concise, courteous, consistent, and most importantly, correct.

In any communication between two or more persons, "what the source intends to say, what the source actually says, what the receiver wants to hear, and what the receiver hears may be different." Thus any distortions in the expected

communication process might normally bring about misunderstanding that causes conflicts. The worst situation is where the person intending to communicate an issue (or some issues) does not find the means to. The resultant effect of such bottled-up situation is a potential explosion that might lead to conflict.

Undue pressure: Unnecessary pressures from within and without, i.e., from groups like parents, friends (peers), followers (congregation), etc., might cause leaders to make mistakes and bring about troubles among the congregation. Examples abound; Moses under pressure from the people acted unadvisedly, and it affected him as a leader (Ps. 106:32-33); Aaron under pressure from the people, made the golden calf (Exod. 32:1; cf. 32: 21-23); King Saul under pressure offered a sacrifice that affected his throne (1 Sam. 13:10-12); Apostle Peter, under pressure from the circumcision group, acted negatively and was rebuked by Paul (Gal. 2:11-13); etc. But every good leader should be able to resist pressure no matter the source, when the person knows that what is being done is the right thing.

Lack of leadership skills: What motivates people to accept leadership roles? The answer to the above question will help in understanding the importance and role of leadership. It has been observed that some people create problems as leaders because of factors like lack of knowledge of the job and or having undefined vision and understanding for the work. In fact, poor organizational and administrative structures, improper leadership transition, suspicion between contesting groups, unsatisfied desire (James 4), etc., are all identified cause of conflicts in the churches. In some cases, dictatorial practices, divide-and-rule tactics, loss of inner drive or zeal and yet will

not quit, becoming “Jack of all trades and being the master on none,” etc.

Evil advice and motives: Some leaders create problems because of bad advice has always had negative impact on leadership and create problem. For example, Abraham was advised by Sarah to take Haggai which later brought trouble to him (Gen. 16:1-3), King Rehoboam listened to bad advice from peers and this led to the division of his kingdom (1 Kings 11: 42-12:16). Some people become leaders because of desire for self-glory and honor or bloated self confidence and not because they are qualified for service at that level. “I only can do it.” Some accept leadership because of some benefits and privileges. Then also, there are those who become leaders because of personal ambitions, “I want people to know I am somebody.”

It is necessary that people who desire to engage in Christian ministry assess themselves thoroughly in the light of its responsibilities more than the privileges by they accept such a call. But the onus lies with all transformational leaders to put some measures in place that will ensure that those who have to be placed in leadership positions receive the requisite training that will purge them and equip them for their position and roles.

CHAPTER 18

YOU NEED TO PURSUE MEMBERSHIP-RELATED CHARACTERISTICS

The last of the three major characteristics proposed by Schwarz to be considered are Membership-related (or Congregation-based) types. Since the first and second of the three have been treated in earlier chapters the last would be treated now to complete the three-prong solution. Generally, it is very important for Church leaders to know their congregation just the same way as leaders in general their followers. One of the most promising leaders of the Church in Ghana spoke of four (4) different types of people that can be identified in any congregation:

- the **Unconscious group** made up of those who can even dose off during serious Church or other programs because of total loss of consciousness;
- the **Self-conscious group** whose senses are opened only to themselves such that their concern is on how people observe their presence only;
- the **People-conscious group** are the ones whose interest are mainly on nothing but other people' presence;
- the **God-conscious group** whose sensitivities are particularly on spiritual issues around. These are those who are able to sense the presence and ministry of the Holy Spirit.⁸⁹

But no matter which group one belongs it is important for every congregation to own their Church and develop much interest in its progress. That is, since each member of the congregation is part of the body of Christ it means that if each member performs his or her part, the whole body is built up. In

the same way if anyone fails to perform his function in the body, the whole body is affected. Therefore members need to put God's place of worship and church matters on the top of our priority list as the scriptures exhorts believers to do, "Seek ye first the kingdom and its righteousness..." (Matt. 6:33). Fact is, the body of Christ is compared with the body of man which is one but has many different parts (Rom. 12:1-10; I Cor. 12: 12-27). That is, each part is recognized. It is only when each part is functioning perfectly well that the body is said to be complete.

There is also the need for every believer to realize that pushing God from first spot of our life commitments presents a lot of blessing might rather brings problems. Thus there should be concrete plans and efforts by the leaders to involve every member of the congregation, whether unconscious or conscious. The objective of this effort is to let every member of a church acknowledge the fact that he or she forms part of the body and without him or her, the body is incomplete. It is also meant to challenge the member to determine his or her area of service and to function. This can be achieved by setting up of effective small group ministries, and encouraging active participation in evangelism (this area will be given much attention in the next chapter).

It is also important that every member be updated on the various necessities of the Church. For example, which organs are functioning correctly and what will happen when a particular part is not functioning well? This will help the membership to assess their individual roles and responsibilities in the Church. But to facilitate this latter point, both leadership and membership must come to terms with the concept of God's "Work mandate" to His people.

Encourage Christian fellowship

The next important step after prayer for any Christian is the one learning how to fellowship with other believers (1 Thess. 5:17). Pertinent questions like why we need to company with other believers, and what the Bible says about Christian meeting together, and what kind of groups one can associate with, etc, will receive answers as we concentrate on God and develop in Him (John 1:3; Heb. 10:25; 2 Cor. 6:14)

Have you ever considered fellowship with some of God's people in another place and were forbidden or told that you would be disloyal to your church if you did? That position is not wholly godly. As has been mentioned in one of the previous chapters, the believer's loyalty is first to God and His word. The rest are, all people who have been appointed as leaders by God's will and purposes, the entire body of Christ made up of all born again believers irrespective of denomination; and last but not the least, any particular church. Of course, the church leaders here include ours, if only they are not asking us to disobey God, His word, or fellowshiping to the body. The book of Acts of the Apostles 2:40ff is a good example of the importance of fellowship right from the beginning of the NT Church.

Constant fellowship with members of the body of Christ is a very important component of church growth irrespective of denomination. Churches can become healthy when the congregation becomes reconciled through fellowshiping with one another in order to promote peaceful living as body. It is the duty of leadership to instill the drive to constant fellowship in members and enlighten them to the importance and the role of fellowship in promoting peaceful co-existence as believers (Ps. 133:1-3; Acts 2:42; Heb. 10:25; 1 John 1:7). Apostle Paul stresses this point when he wrote in Philippians 2:1-2: "If you have...any fellowship with the spirit...then make my joy

complete by being likeminded, having the same love, being one in spirit and purpose.”

The word “fellowship” is literally taken as a two-lettered word, “fellows” and “ship.” When put together it is “fellowship.” The word literally means “an association or union of a people of similar, rank, believe, behavior, share something in common, with a common destiny, goals or purpose. In Christianity, fellowship means “becoming fused or joined together to be one in everything. There are seven main kinds of fellowship which people enter into. These are fellowship with:

- the Father (1 John 1:3);
- the Son, or the Lord Jesus Christ (1 Cor. 1:9; 1 John :3);
- the Holy Spirit (Philip. 2:1);
- the Scriptures or Word of God (Acts 17:11; 1 Pet. 2:2);
- Bible believers (Acts 2:42; Heb. 10:25; 1 John 1:3, 7);
- people of the world (Eph. 5:11);
- the devil and works of darkness (1 Cor. 10:20).

Out of these, only the first five have been recommended in the Bible for believers. With the remaining two, God hates them and has warned believers against them. If we can promote peaceful living, then we should consider the fellowship with believers as very important while holding the fellowship with God, Jesus or the Spirit as the ultimate.

Christian fellowship is usually achieved through group or family worship and prayer sessions, visitation of other believers, follow-up of other believers, etc. It is not a secret that God delights in our coming together as one belonging to Him. Jesus prayed that we should be one in everything. This can come about as we have fellowship with one another. Let us not see fellowship, but rather endeavor to live peacefully as a body through constant fellowship. In considering the importance of fellowship with one another the following exhortation might

help: If we have fellowship with one another, we are filling the commandment to fellowship.

God knows why He forbids us not to cease fellowship. One of the reasons behind this command is that if we have fellowship with one another, sin can never rule among us because the blood of Jesus will cleans us from all sins (2 John 1:7). Unfortunately, some believers become so convinced and stuck to a particular church that sometimes they can hardly be comfortable fellowshiping with Bible believers of another church. The extreme situation is when some leaders even forbid the members of their denomination from fellowshiping with any other believers of another for no godly reasons. These practices springing from indoctrinations are not healthy for the growth of Christianity. For a balanced spiritual growth and maturity of the Church, leaders should encourage those under them to freely fellowship with other genuine believers when and where the need arises. After all, there will be no denominations in Heaven where all believers of God will be gathered in worship of 'The Lamb who sits on the Throne.'

Scripturally, Christian fellowship makes it easier for God to build us up as one and prepare us for His Kingdom together (Acts 2:42). Since God delights in fellowship, it brings His blessings on people who engage in it (Ps. 133:3). It also makes us know ourselves and settle issues that may arise among us easily (Acts 6:1-4). Fellowship with one another can be observed in two ways: (a) as a group, (b) as singles or individuals. Group meetings of believers constitute a church or body of Christ. Thus, the more we attend church programs, the more we are promoting Christian fellowship. Single's meeting is usually initiated by extending a hand of friendliness to a fellow believer or promoted by need, sickness, sharing of

joy, being indisposed or missing from group meetings. This is usually achieved through visitation, follow-up, etc.

Fellowship should lead us to understand that members of a church should each strive to love one another because this was good in the sight of God.

Strive for unity among the brethren

The Akan proverb, *Dua koro gye mframa a ebu*, which literally means, “if a single tree stands in the wind it will be brought down,” is a common statement depicting unity. That this proverb has important meaning to life cannot be over emphasized. The book of Ecclesiastes puts it this way, “Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their work: If one falls down his friend can help him up. But pity the man who falls and has no one to help him up...A cord of three strands is not quickly broken” (4:9-11). Since it would not be easy for persons who fall into any form of trouble to redeem themselves it follows that every one definitely needs someone to make it in life.

Unity has value: The Lord Jesus Christ knows that to carry the message of the gospel to the whole world will require a united effort and not single individual type. This is why in John 17:20-23, He prayed that all the believers will be one in purpose and in belief, in order to champion a common cause and course. In 1 Corinthians 12:12-31, Paul the Apostle was mindful of the facts of unity and so cautions all the individuals in the Church to stand as one body and use the gift God has given each to build the Church. In verses 29 and 30, he brings out clear fact that each person can only play a specific role and not all roles, but all the roles of each will complement each other to make the body a single unit. Isolation is a bad practice and it should be avoided because the proponents of the proverb

being analyzed know that disunity and aloneness may lead to poverty, misery and defeat. Thus, the idea of unity by the Akan is further illustrated by the attempt to break a broom which is usually impossible while the individual sticks can easily be broken into pieces when removed singly.

Unity and togetherness are important for building any society, community or even a nation, and it is with such an intention that the founding fathers of Ghana came out with the slogan "One nation, one people, one destiny, depicting the fact that in unity lies strength, in division lies a fall. Many national states which have exploited the idea of unity to form a federal state have become stronger than before, and this is typified by the United States of America. This same idea of strength in Unity is being vigorously pursued by the current European countries in the formation of European Union, and also Africa states in the formation of Africa Union.

Unity makes impact: Unity has both individual and community impact and the two cannot be divorced from each other. As illustration, if a person decides to engage in any venture as an individual it is sometimes difficult to succeed, but two or more people with mutual understanding will make a better impact. The profit of two or more people who have teamed up into any business will be more than that of an individual. This is why cooperatives and unions are encouraged by many societies to be formed to champion a common goal is the above proverb's application. In every community also, this statement is a very good dosage to bring a sense of unity. Standing in unity and being a member of a group gives each person a sense of security since each is bound to protect the interest of all others.

Unity brings help in time of need or difficulty since everyone has someone else to comfort or support him in time of sorrow or need. For couples, unity brings warmth to each

other during cold seasons, of for the expression or affection and sensual satisfaction. Unity should be the watch-ward of believers, societies and groups (or individuals) in a community, so that each can contribute his or her quota to build the community. Our different doctrines, beliefs or aspirations or ambitions should not make us become divorced from the single unit which we can form to help each other and above all to stand and over any opposition. In unity, any purpose can be achieved (Gen. 11:1-6) but in disunity and selfishness we will be destroyed. Indeed, *dua koro gye mframa a ebu*, so it is important to strive for unity in order to stand.

Use sharing to facilitate transformation

Another important subject is “sharing.” It might be defined here as “breaking something into portion(s) for other person(s) to receive parts.” Sharing is a Christian principle which should be encouraged in present day Christianity. Through sharing, members of a church can also promote God work and live peacefully as a body of Christ. Sharing helped in uniting the early Church (Acts 4:32-35; Luke 4:10-11). Through sharing, the work of soul winning, building God Church and its growth became easier and thus challenge members to practice it. The scripture says, “Share with God’s people who are in need, practice hospitality” (Rom. 12:13).

The book of Acts 2: 40ff tell us of the role sharing played in the establishment of the early Church. Through sharing the church grew as one and the Lord did a great work through it. In some of Paul’s letters, he encouraged believers to do their parts of God’s work through sharing. Today, there are still a lot of people who are in divers needs and there are still a lot of people who help. Each individual can be satisfied when we began to practice sharing. This is because the word of God still teaches us a lot of things about sharing which are important.

One question that most people ask is what can we share with others? Take a moment and reflect on the message a sweet Christian young lady shared some time ago, “The best expression of life is the love we show for others, the best expression of love is the amount of time invested therein. And the best time to show love is now.”⁹⁰ Love for God and humanity can always be the most important stimulus to sharing.

Basically, all the things which can be shared with other people can be brought under one of the following areas:

- Spiritual things; God’s word, and prayer (Gal. 6:6)
- Physical things: material things, money and food (Luke 4:10-14; Acts 2:46ff).
- Emotional and/or psychological needs (Dan. 2:17-18; James 5:16).

In each of the above item, one can explain briefly how it can be shared. Why should we share and what are some of the benefits of sharing?

- It supports the weak and needy and lessens the burden of the members (Acts 4:34).
- It makes members feel loved and also shows how much we care for the needy.
- It prevents Satan from using need or hardship to make members backslide.
- It opens doors of blessings to the giver (Luke 6:38).

Can sharing be practiced in our church today? Yes! Sharing is as relevant to the church of God today as it was in the early church. We can give it a try and see, if the Lord through it will not wrought many miracles as it happened in the early church. Majority of the needy who find themselves in the church become more stable when they see that “someone cares.” A lot of people in the world can be won for Christ when

they see that their needs can be helped through sharing. It is a virtue that Christians can practice every time; even now.

We should identify people's need by prayer. God can lay somebody on our heart to reach out to or by observing the needs of the people around us and giving cheerfully to them.

Identify the Human Resources of the church

Bringing about transformation of God's church also requires a lot of human resources. In the book of Nehemiah, scripture tells of how some people allowed themselves to be used by the devil to oppose God's purpose. Of a truth, such people can be classified as enemies of God and should not be encouraged. People who rather need to be encouraged can be classified under three groups; initiators, personnel or labor force, and material contributors. Apart from the minister (or church workers), these constitute the human resources that every church needs.

Initiators: A very important group of human resources for transforming God's Church is the "initiators." They are the people who set the pace in dreaming of new things and introducing such to the church. Real initiators in God's house are quite uncommon though not scares. Do you see yourself as somebody who God can rely on to initiate something? Better still, are you prepared to be an initiator? Definitely, God can use anybody to initiate something, so one has to think through and avail himself/herself. Where there is the will to avail ourselves, God will by all means make a way.

Financiers: Another important group of human resources for transforming God's Church is the financial supporters and material contributors. Materials needed for the work and funds were made available through different ways by contributors.

In Old Testament biblical period, materials needed for the work and funds were made available through different ways by contributors as indicated by the following:

- The people of Israel donated personal effects during the building of the Tabernacle (Exod. 35:20).
- The people of Israel, including King David, donated personal effects during the building of the first temple (1 Chron. 22:2-5).
- The people of Israel donated money during the rehabilitation of the temple during King Josiah's time (2 Kings 22:1-7).
- There was free-will offering by the people who chose to remain in Babylon to support those who were willing to return (Ezra 1:4-6)

In applying these passages to current situation in God's Church, in what ways are you contributing materially to the building of God's house presently? Very few people regard themselves as the supporters and material contributors of God's house today. But it is not too late to decide because no contribution is too small. Transforming a church from its predicaments into a vibrant one is the responsibility of every member of the church. But all cannot do the same thing at the same time. By availing oneself in some identified areas is all God requires strengthening and using anybody to achieve something. It is not enough to be just among the group, be committed and responsible.

Labor force: A third important area worthy of discussion is the role of personnel that constitute the labor force. This group is a major requirement for God's work to progress. Who are the resource persons, experts and labor force? These were people given the charge of planning, designing, supervising,

given advice, inspiring and others providing the labor for the progress of the work. Some examples abound in the Bible; for supervising of the temple work, all the Levites (Ezra 5:9); for advising and inspiring, Prophets Zachariah and Haggai (Ezra 5:2); for planning and designing, Bezalel and Oholiab (Exod. 36:1); for voluntary labor, individual families (Neh. 3:1-32).

What is God's mandate of work?

In the book of Genesis, God instituted some mandate for man in general; government, marriage, dominion (Gen. 1:26-28). In chapter 2:15, God added the mandate of work to what He has already given. Thus the issue of seeing work as part of God's mandate is a view that I strongly uphold. The more I reflected on the issue the more I come to disagree with the general conception that only when one accepts to do the work of God as a clergy that the person is doing God's work. In fact, this position is wrong. This kind of idea has been with people as a result of wrongly classifying some work as sacred and others as secular.

But for some time now, I have been waiting for an opportunity to open deeper insights into the basis for such a view so as to use it to in my presentations in this book. The whole idea appears to me as an attempt to clear people's minds on the improper designation of any genuine work apart from presentation of scripture as being the work of man. Thus, some people only feel they are called when they are involved in the sacred. As a result, many people who want to be identified with the sacred feel quite uncomfortable with any work except those duties that fall under the role of the clergy.

Actually, the issue of God's call on a person's life for ministry is one of the areas that have occupied my thought most of past time. But it should be understood that every work is ministry for as long as God has ordained it for man (Col.

3:17). Yes, every work is ordained by God to be performed by man provided it satisfies God's purpose of using man as His steward to render service to other men. Any work is part of God's ministry to humanity provided it is done to glorify God and it to bring joy to people. For any meaningful work, three things have to be considered; the personal dimension, the religious dimension, and the societies dimension. Thus, the carpenter, driver, lawyer, nurse, teacher, etc., are doing God's ministry just as the clergy. Any attempt to twist this fact will lead to a misunderstanding.

Thus, it is not only special works like that of a pastor, evangelist, missionary, and those primarily involved with the day to day delivery of God's word that should be seen as ministry for God. This is a wrong notion and I intend to take the reader back to the Garden of Eden to fulfill what God planned for the first couple at creation. I want people to experience some special inner joy and understanding to the way God wants man to partner Him in rendering every service that mankind needs on earth to make life worth living.

At this juncture, one should be able to accept that the driver who takes care of people's journeys, the farmer who works to produce food for people, the teacher takes the trouble to handle people from the kindergarten level to the university, the accounts clerk who manages people's funds, the engineer who manufactures automobiles or produces electricity for industrial and domestic use, etc., are all instruments that God uses to meet people's needs in one way or the other. Therefore, all these groups of people should be seen as rendering ministry for God. What is left is for these groups of people to come to this level of understanding so that they can perform such duties with joy and alacrity.

What should gladden every heart the more is the insight into the two commissions of God; the commission before the

fall, and the commission at the coming of Christ, the Messiah. There should be enough bases to support the view that “every genuine work is God’s work and is part of ministry.” Once again, issues that should take centre stage are what man was really created and commissioned to do in the Garden of Eden; “to take care of it.” My mind is always drawn to the fact that if God’s purpose of bringing the Lord Jesus Christ is to bring restoration to mankind, then man should begin to take good care of the “earth” as God originally instructed the first couple.

God’s mandate to humanity is meant for mankind to use everything in the earth judiciously for the betterment of life. This is where my understanding that any prudent way by which men should involve themselves (by working) in order to help themselves to live a better life on earth is part of service rendered in accordance with God’s mandate to man. This then comes back to the same purpose of the discussion here, “to create the awareness that every prudent work of man is ministry to God,” and that, “stewardship is the wheel upon which people should perform their assigned work or duties.”

Turning attention to work now, what comes to mind is, “How does one create a congenial culture for work to progress in an atmosphere of “joy”? Factors like identifying people’s giftedness and encouraging them to use it, pushing decision taking to the floor for the ordinary co-worker to be involved in it, entrusting and delegating responsibilities to faithful and honest performers, ensuring fruitful communication, and ones’ readiness to identify with the failures of his subordinate (or co-worker) and to help him or her perform better, are some of the ingredients that come to mind as necessary to ensure a healthy culture in any organization.⁹¹ The person can conclude with the need to discuss and teach others so that together believers bring about joy of work to people everywhere.

CHAPTER 19

ENCOURAGE SMALL-GROUPS AND OUTREACH MINISTRIES

An important question for people desiring to see positive transformation in their ministries is which areas they consider themselves as resource persons and whether they are playing that role presently? If not, are such people prepared to be resource person? It is the role of transformational leaders to look out for and identify such people. Together, they constitute the God's labor force and when appropriately engaged, they can render very useful services in His kingdom.

Small groups are important

If there is one area that needs a lot of attention from the leadership, then it is encouraging membership involvement through the formation of small group ministries. It may qualify as an effective strategy for our leadership to overcome many problems that arise from within the congregation. Since the foundation of any strong relationships in the church is love, care, and support for the members, small group ministries will be encouraged for all the members to experience a sense of connectedness in the church. The absolute necessity of small-group ministry within the church is a concept that must be understood and implemented by pastors and church leaders if we are ever to effectively equip the church for ministry in these last days.⁹²

For any healthy church, the small-ministry teams are the channels to fulfill the church goals. Already, a good number of churches have small-group ministries for men, women, youth, children, music, prayer, counseling, outreach, etc., but they are not very functional. Because of the sensitive position that the

youth occupy and serious consequences of youth issues presently, much attention will be given to the youth ministry in the next chapter. For the remaining ministries what is necessary here is to reorganize and activate them effective and functional groups.

This can be done by; 1) revamping their leaders (where necessary, we will recruit fresh volunteers to lead each of them); 2) helping each of the groups to understand their goal; 3) and using the leaders of each small-group to come out with a set of objectives to fulfill their goal. Each of the groups will be giving the necessary support to organize effective programs to help their spiritual development, while at the same time performing their required commitment to the church. To enhance accountability, a pastor or an elder should be appointed to supervise each small group and to report to the senior pastor.

The role of adult ministries

Both men and women have important roles to play in the ministry of the church. In most churches as in societies the world over, the role of men are very well defined. Thus in the churches there are abundant roles for men right from the pulpit to the person at the security entrance. But just as women from time of old have been the stewards of their homes, so the Lord is calling every woman in His house to be a steward of God's properties. From creation, women are known to be the best Steward of God. This is seen in the way God appointed them to be the caretakers of an unborn being (in the womb) till birth (Gen. 4:1ff).

Culturally, they have been the caretakers of the homes in many through many centuries. In the "Parable of the Talent" (Matt. 25:14ff), the people were given some properties (or money) to take care of. In the same way God's properties

here include God's house (the church), our family house (our homes), other places like workplace, school, etc. For women to perform their roles as stewards well, they have to accept that it is their responsibility to take care of God's house, our home, etc. Then they need to identify all area(s) where they can take care of as women. They have to draw up a plan to meet their responsibilities or fulfill their services. Women also need regular assessment to find out whether we are doing the work or not.

Woman can serve as God's steward in the church and can support the church financially to meet every need. They can also pray for the ministers and members. They can visit the weak, sick, converts, etc., and also counsel the youth and new converts. Women can play leading roles such as being church ushers, and serving as chairpersons of various committees, or serve as leaders of some ministries; music, children, Bible study teachers class, etc.

Prayer ministry must be effective

Prayer is the wheel for the journey towards healthy growth. To overcome the work of Satan against the progress of the church, we should marshal the whole church to wrestle against him in prayer, in order that he does not outwit us, "...For we are not unaware of his schemes" (2 Cor. 2:11). I believe with prayer and fasting, much teaching of the word of God and encouragement for the members to practice the spiritual disciplines, we shall overcome. Once again, the leadership should arrange for an intercessors team to help to support the effort of the prayer ministry.

Additionally, a strong leadership culture where leaders lead by prayer, faith and passionate devotion and a love for God, should be inculcated in the leaders. For example, the first week of every quarter of the year can be devoted to fasting and

prayers. This will be a positive step to build a strong prayer emphasis in the leadership and the church in general. In fact, there should be a leadership policy that every third of our leadership meetings time should be spent in prayer to seek God for direction, unity of purpose, and success in the ministry and our lives.

As Ambassadors, outreach ministry is paramount

A very experienced writer on church leadership points out that a church “can hardly grow as long as its members do not learn to live their faith with contagious enthusiasm and to share it with others.”⁹³ Clearly, a major weakness of many churches is their unpreparedness to launch out in order to win people to Christ, and experience numerical growth in the process. This means that churches with effective methods of outreach are able to experience dramatic transformation in their membership. Consequently, they see enlargement and great achievements in their vision. The present need and mission of our every church should be to devise strategies that involve active evangelism in our cultural circumstances, and at the same time develop mission-focused paradigm for our world. This is the surest way to achieve the Great Commission given by the Founder of the Church, the Lord Jesus Christ.

The call to be Christ Ambassador must be seen by the believer as a direct favor from God. It is for the believer to direct focus on God and is for the believer to stand firm for God. It is also for the believer to show fecundity to God. It must therefore be seen as an opportunity to express our appreciation to God. It comes at the time of life awareness or self consciousness, e.g. Samuel, David, Daniel, etc. The reason for the call to be ambassadors is to meet the need for a servant of Jesus Christ with His message to reach the World, so that people will come to accept Jesus Christ as God’s gift to the World. Examples of

ambassadors of Christ in the OT are Joseph in Egypt, Daniel and his colleagues in Babylon, and Queen Esther in Persia. In the NT, a typical example is Apostle Paul and Timothy. The main characteristic of this good cause of Christ is to show that God extends to all Christians the call to be His ambassadors and that He expects response and results from all Christians. Thus it is a requirement from God to all (plural) but has to be answered singularly. The call to service as Christ's ambassador is "4-ever," i.e., *whoever, wherever, whatever, and whenever*. This is to mean, person, place, situation, and time respectively.

What does it mean to take a stand for Christ? As Ambassadors of Christ, all believers, especially the leaders should note that they are to pursue the wishes, plan or vision of the country and people and leader he represents, not his own ambitions or will. Thus God's will is to be done. They should also be prepared to die for their Master because the slogan of Christian ministry is, "no cross, no crown." The consequences of accepting the challenges include ministry hardships like what Paul suffered (Acts 9:16), self-imposed hardships as a result of trials and temptations (James 1:2-4), circumstantial hardships as a result of a person's engagement with issues of life such as marriage, professional duties, child caring, etc, and spirit-imposed hardships like fasting (2 Tim. 2:3).

In view of the above, the churches should make every effort to make evangelism the bedrock of our healthy church growth vision. Our target group will be people who are geographically near and of similar culture to our congregation (usually classified as E-1 evangelism).⁹⁴ However, we will also be looking for opportunity for intra-evangelism in order to reach the "notional members" in the church. To achieve this goal, the leadership should include in the yearly plan an evangelism and mission emphasis programs. According to one great teacher on Church growth, "The healthy church places high

priority on communicating the truth of Jesus and demonstrating his love to those outside the faith.”⁹⁵

Knowledge of the church’s community

To minister effectively in any culture, particularly Africa, churches would have to draw a teaching outline that will sensitize members to the kind of people in the communities. During such programs, the churches have to teach the members to understand the culture of the people. “If we do not work to understand the culture in which we minister, we are truly ministering in a vacuum.”⁹⁶ They should know about the language, rules, norms, traditions and customs, family structures and arrangements, our rituals, etc., and understand the needs and expectations of our people. The members should be taught to tolerate our present culture and devise ways and means to win it. Believers must think and act like missionaries and communicate a sense of reality. The churches must have a real sense of direction.

This approach will also enable the believers to assess and test our ‘soil’ for effective spiritual sowing. In support of this, a renowned Church leader states, “The purpose of testing the soil is to determine, as much as possible, which people groups might be the most receptive to the gospel at any given time.”⁹⁷ It will cover details like who is open to the Gospel in our present day? Who lives in our ministry area (say 5-7 mile radius of the church building)? Why would people living in your ministry area come to your church? What would attract them to come to your building? The church should also study about the key characteristics of those who are open to the gospel. Whether they are extremely interested in spiritual things, or they are centered on their families, or they are interested in choices and variety, the kind of music they are interested in and

whether they want teaching and preaching, or the things that are relevant to their daily lives, etc.

With much understanding of our community, the next essential thing will be the tools for witnessing. The essential tools are the message, which is basically, the gospel of salvation (sometimes our personal testimonies can also be a powerful tool), the leading of the Holy Spirit to direct and embolden us, and a good prayer session to water the ground. Then the church should be able to launch out in teams, spearheaded by the senior pastor and other leaders of the church. One great teacher and church revivalist shares his feeling for the church in these words: “If the church does not rise up to accept the challenge and evangelize to win the world for Christ, it will be a massive disappointment.”⁹⁸

Uniting all forces for maximum output

When all progressive forces such as the groups indicated above and others not mentioned here are well identified and perfectly in place at any particular church, transformation in many areas of the church is inevitable. Take for example, an important need like an appreciable place of worship. This is one area where a lot of the current community churches lack. Do you think our ability to put God’s house in the best shape has effect on us spiritually and physically? In fact, quite a number of church leaders might not easily identify a place of worship as a necessity for church transformation. But in actual fact, it is. The Jews who returned from the Babylonian captivity had reason for neglecting God’s house; “It was not yet time” (Haggai 1:2). It might be the same reason why believers of some churches today have not yet put God’s house in the best shape.

The book of Haggai 1:1-13 and 2:1-9 reveal how the people considered the things pertaining to God’s worship as secondary; rather they thought the time for them to build their

was ripe. But the prophet called on them to reconsider how things were getting on for them, whether it was smooth or whether their expectations were not fully met (vs. 5-6, 9-11). Straightaway, the people took the message as coming from God and reacted quickly by putting things that pertain to God first before theirs (vs. 2, 8, 14). By acting quickly on God's word, Bible says that God took pleasure in their work and blessed them more than before (2:6-9). The people of Israel probably enjoyed a long period of rest and fruitfulness until about the third generation.

Do you think there is difference between God's call for the people of Israel to put His house in order and our present need to put God's house in order? Clearly, the answer is a big NO! God can do the same with us if we will react quickly to His call to put His house in order. With such groups as have been mentioned above present in a church, they can easily come together to give immediate attention to the church's needs. There are so many projects to be initiated, financed, and completed in the house of God to make its members a growing and healthy one. Sensitive ministry areas like that of the women, the youth, the singing, the prayer team, Bible study group, children, etc., are all waiting for initiators, financiers, and others who constitute the labor force to transform. As a body, any lack at one place is likely to affect others. Therefore, all the small groups of the church should be supported and encouraged to function effectively in the church to make it a wholesome and well functioning unit.

Take advantage of every opportunity

One of the strategies of transformational leaders is the ability to seize every opportunity to their advantage. That is they are able to exploit any given situation to achieve positive results. In this discussion, some of the opportunities will be

looked at are those offered by public functions particularly occasion of ceremonies that the church engages. These include functions like marriage ceremonies, funerals, special out-door occasions like child-naming or birthday celebrations, welcome/send-off programs, and the like. Most of these are occasions which offer God's people the opportunity to interact and in the process seize the platform to share some few thoughts.

Any person that society regards with respect must therefore be adequately prepared to be engaged at such certain ceremonies at any point of time. As a transformational leader, especially, the Minister of the gospel (Pastor or Elder) the underlying objective for such ceremonial practices is the opportunity to transform lives of the audience. This is what Apostle Paul meant when he admonished Timothy, "...Be instant in season, out of season" (2 Tim. 4:2). Thus no transformational leader should under normal circumstances turn down any such invitations, be them impromptu or planned. Rather there should be a quick response with much urgency, if possible, in the company of one or few leaders. This is necessary since the Pastor can easily share ideas with other person(s), or seek assistance when necessary.

In most cultures and societies, some of the important occasions are marriage ceremonies or weddings, birthdays, send-off or retirement and other important events that call for parties and celebrations, burial ceremonies, etc. Some of the things that the leaders can seize the opportunity to do on such occasions have been discussed here.

Christian wedding ceremonies

The essence of the Christian wedding ceremony is to bind the couple together before God so that they will acknowledge that God and the body of believers who were

present at the ceremony to listen to their vows and pledge of faithfulness to each other are witnesses to their commitment to remain bound to each other in love to the end. Also, because marriage was instituted in the Garden of Eden according to Genesis 2:21-25, it is proper that every couple bring their marriage before God so that he will acknowledge it, and add his blessings of peace love, joy and fruitfulness to the marriage.

By marrying through Christian wedding ceremony, the marriage is built upon God's word which is normally preached to serve as a basis and also invoked during the prayer times of the ceremony. Additionally, a Christian wedding ceremony enables not only the Christian community but the families of both partners and the society to be a witness to the honor that God has bestowed on the marriage right from that period. The marriage thus faces the challenge of overcoming any attempt at divorce that will bring dishonor to the name of God and the church as a whole. A Christian wedding ceremony may sometimes also serve as a challenge to all who witness the program to also align their marriages before God, the Christian community, their family and friends, and everyone in their community.

As a transformational leader who wants to set a laudable precedent, all the necessary issues for a peaceful marriage program should be discussed with the couple during the period of counseling well before the program. For example, before the wedding ceremony itself, the couple should obtain marriage permit from the government's local authorities in charge of the community. This is very necessary since every marriage has to be recognized by the government of one's country of citizenship. By this, the marriage is protected legally in case of any future marital misfortune like divorce or death. Government legislations normal settles issues of sharing of properties or otherwise in such cases as mentioned above. Additionally, the

families of the couple have to consent to the marriage to make it completely acceptable and endorsed. It may be assumed that once the customary rites are performed by the man, the families of both are in perfect agreement. The stage is now set for the wedding ceremony involving the two young adult Christians to commence.

Funeral ceremonies

Officiating funerals is another major responsibility of Christian ministers and an occasion where a leader with transformational vision can explore. In most cultures, it is only this period that the officiating pastor gets the opportunity to preach or present a message to the people. Therefore, it is this period that the pastor should utilize to present the message of hope about the death and resurrection promise of the savior Lord Jesus to the whole community. During such period, it is very likely to get the whole community since it marks the end of all programs before the burial.

For the benefit of the audience at a wedding ceremony, funeral, or any societal program, the occasion should be used as an opportunity to challenge the unbeliever to accept Christ if they want to see true peace and joy in their lives in general and marriage in particular. All transformational leaders of Christian ministries have a mandate to set in motion the wheels of evangelism wherever the opportunity offers itself, and watch it grow.

CHAPTER 20

YOU HAVE TO BRIDGE THE GENERATION GAP: TRAIN THE YOUTH

Many reasons account for the cycle of sin which begun in Israel after the death of Joshua and the generation of elders who knew the Lord and taught his ways to the people. One of them is that the next generation of leaders failed in their duty to train the younger generation that followed them. This led to a generation that grew up without much information of the workings of God among the people of Israel. No wonder this new generation turned their backs to God and followed the gods of the Amorites on the land of Canaan. The situation above is likely to occur even in today's church hence the need to devote attention to the youth.

Who are the Youth?

- If the traditional saying that, "life begins at forty" is anything to go by, then the period of Youth is the period of life below 40 where real life is yet to begin.
- Philosophically, the youth is a stage in life where begins to learn from dependence to complete independence.
- But by age, the youth are people of the age 13-19 (Num. 14:29). This youthful which begins with the teenage is a period of transition from childhood to adulthood in sexual development and maturity.

Importance of Youth in Church ministry

- The youth constitute the future or hope of any church because they serve as the bridge between aged and children, and therefore fill up the generation gap, etc.

- Developing a vibrant Youth ministry is a prerequisite for transforming a weak or sick or stunted church into a growing and healthy one (Acts 16:1-5).
- It is also a positive step to ensuring a better future for any progressive church. This is because they constitute a very peculiar group of every society.
- In the church, having a vibrant youth is a big asset. The youth can be trained for various services of the church and can make a church lively when they are actively involved in certain activities. For example, a well organized and trained youth are useful in supporting or leading such important areas as praises, worship, for manual duties, etc.
- When utilized appropriately, the youth can be good wheels for church growth.

Failure to train the youth

There are various problems or challenges of failing to handle youth in the church. These include inactive youth, moral breakdown or high immorality, static or unfulfilled vision, and a youth who might not know what is right and therefore mess up, etc. The result of such a failure is a loss of an important link between the informed adult and leaders who might know what is right and might pursue and ignorant children, and the creation of generation gap in the church as it happened to Israel in the book of Judges.

During that period the scriptures say that the new generation who came after Joshua and his generation had died knew neither the Lord nor the great works He did with their fathers. As a result, this new generation turned from the Lord to other gods leading to very negative consequences. Thus any leader who plays down the importance of a youth ministry in the church is toying with the growth and healthy development of the church; he is creating a generation gap.

How to bridge the generation gap

One of the wisest men ever lived, King Solomon of Israel, almost 3,000 years ago, left mankind a legacy of written wisdom. He is believed to be the most probable author of Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Song of Songs (or Song of Solomon). In these books, the king spoke of his experiences in life; but the insights and applications of his message are relevant in our time. For example, the book of Proverbs was written to give prudence to the simple; knowledge and discretion to the youth in particular and mankind in general to make them wise. In these books, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, he gives practical insights and guidelines for life. In this book, Solomon passes on his practical advice in the form of short, concise sentences that convey moral truths. The book gives hundred of practical examples of how to live according to godly wisdom, including youth and discipline, family life, self control and resisting temptation, and so on. The frequent reference to “my son” emphasizes instructing the youth and guiding them into a happy and prosperous life.

The youthful age, with all the vigor and blessings of very active mind and purposefulness is the period when better services for God can be nurtured with strong roots. Old age is a period where the desires of life are mostly lost and most of man’s strength has slacked to the limit that active service to humanity is much reduced, let alone to God. Thus, one has to remember his Creator and serve him while he/she is young so that by old age man might have achieved God’s purpose for him in life, and man will be well placed to give accounts to his Creator.

The book of Ecclesiastes, which is King Solomon’s written sermon, is an analysis of life experiences and a critical essay about its meaning. In this profound book, King Solomon takes his readers on a mental journey through life in general,

using himself as a test case to explain how everything he tried, tested, or tasted was “meaningless”: useless, irrational, pointless, foolish and empty, an exercise in futility, after all that he had: tremendous intellect, power, and wealth. Worst of all, old age hasten life’s uselessness. After this biographical tour, the king made his triumphant conclusion, “Remember your Creator in the days of your youth...Fear God and keep His commandments...For God will bring every deed into judgment” (12:1-14). A little discussion from Solomon’s conclusion will therefore serve as his best advice and legacy to all youth.

A. The Youth must overcome youthful desires

The characteristics of the youth period include being exuberant or active, full of strength, very adventurers, daring and experimenting, quite joyful and hopeful, full of interest in selves, accommodative, etc. The youthful period of a person can also be the most changeable and moldable period, and it might equally be the period of life where a person is most susceptible to change due to exposure. The growing up of a teenager into manhood and womanhood also involves the development and maturation of the sexual features of the body.

a. Physiological and behavioral developments in Youth:

Part of the sexual development of teenagers involves a lot of changes in their behavior which may reach a certain peak level. In most cases the behavioral changes in the teenager may create within them certain characteristics which include:

- (i) Interest in the company of someone of the opposite sex.
- (ii) Paying special attention to the body in terms of appearances and outlook.
- (iii) Attraction to or feeling for the opposite sex.
- (iv) Becoming curious and desirous of sexual issues.

- (v) Becoming secretive, shy, (especially, the females), and seeks for more freedom.

When one considers the nature and development of human beings, God made the body to fully enjoy life on earth. Therefore, He provided us with wonderful body parts that can meet all our needs in life; the brain, the heart, the stomach, the hands. These are just a few of the numerous body parts we are provided with, but all of them have special functions. The human being is wonderfully made (Ps. 139:14). Quite in line with the above, God made the human being as a sexual creature and included in the body, reproductive organs for special functions like the following: to satisfy sexual behavior, to continue the process of creation (reproduction), and other functions like; to pass out urine, growth, etc.

It is interesting to know that the reproductive organs also relate with other important organs of the body to bring about the transformation of an immature person into a fully matured one. And this happens during the teenage or adolescent period.

b. Youthful (or teenage) desires: Both physiological and behavioral changes in the teenager may create some desires, especially, sensual feelings, which most of the times he or she may want to satisfy. If such desires are not controlled they may drive the person to engage in unproductive attitudes and behaviors. For purposes of discussion two of these which appear to be the most common among the youth will be treated in this book. These are sex and pornography.

- **Sex:** Of all the means by which the teenager can satisfy his or her sensual desires, sex is the commonest. Generally, the Bible speaks about sex in many passages including the following:

- (i) God made sex for a purpose (Gen. 1:27-28)
- (ii) God made sex for a marriage life (Gen. 2:24; Heb. 13:4).

However, there should never be sex outside marriage because this is sin. Sex outside marriage includes, teenage sex or premarital sex; this is known as fornication in the Bible (1 Cor. 6:18), extramarital sex, also known as adultery (Heb. 13:4). The body of the man, including the youth or teenager should never be used for sexual immorality because the body is the temple of God. If any person destroys the temple of God with sex God will destroy that person (1 Cor. 6:19-10). No sexually immoral person will go to heaven (Rev. 2:27; 22:14-15), and thus the final effect is sending the culprit to hell. This is summarized in the following passage of scripture, "...So run away from sexual sin, every other sin people do is outside their bodies, but those who sin sexually sin against their own bodies (1 Cor. 6:18).

But a good number of teenagers are drawn in sex because of lack of self-control over their feelings. However, many more are drawn into it because beside their own desires they fall for some bait. If we understand what "bait" does in a "trap," it will help us to understand what "baits" of sex traps means. Sex "baits" among others includes:

- i) Promise of money or material gifts.
- ii) Promise of a lasting relationship (i.e., marriage).
- iii) Promise of help to meet certain needs.
- iv) Peer pressure, the "all friends are doing it" deception.

It is important that each youth knows which of these "baits" is likely to attract him or her into sex and how he or she hopes to overcome it. The greatest of the "bait" of sex for which the teenager is likely to fall is the deception that "sex is an expression of one's love for another."

- **Pornography:** One of such negative practices which have gained lot of strength in the present time is pornography. It is a form of graphical or picture communication which is intended to arouse sexual desire or draw a person into sex. The most common forms are ones which appear in the form of pictures showing the following:

- i. A naked person.
- ii. Part of a naked body, mostly, the sexual parts.
- iii. Naked sexual acts or interactions.

The common sources of pornography are the books or magazines, where they appear as pictures, the internet (at certain websites), television movies or video cassette movies, etc. In most cases, these sources are intended to be kept from the eyes of uninterested persons but they end up in the hands of innocent teenagers.

The age group that is most susceptible to pornography is obviously the teenage group. This is because the teenage period is the stage where secondary sexual characteristics are developing which is associated with drives and adventures. It is also the stage where the means to exercise control over sexual behavior and desires are yet to be fully experienced. For what reasons will a youth be interested in pornography and for what reason will he or she hate same? People may take to pornography for a lot of reasons but the common ones include the following:

- i. To stimulate (or whet the appetite of) somebody for sex.
- ii. To satisfy their sexual desires in the absence of real sex.
- iii. To store in their minds sexual fantasies (sexual ideas that give them fun).

c. Negative effects of youthful (or teenage) desires: If the natural sexual drives of the youth are allowed to get out of

control over them, such can all too easily and without much warning lead us into terrible consequences. Some of the results of uncontrolled sexual desires include the following:

- (i) Teenage pregnancy
- (ii) Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STD), AIDS, gonorrhea, and so on.
- (iii) Abortion, which can lead to destruction of the womb, or in extreme cases death.
- (iv) Psychological effects on life – shame, trauma, and so on.
- (v) Interruption or destruction of life's ambitions.

How to help the youth overcome fleshly desires

One of the major areas that the church in particular have trouble with is how to help the youth to control or flee youthful evil desires. Apostle Paul exhorts Timothy concerning lust in the following words, "Flee the evil desires of youth (teenage), and pursue righteousness, faith, love, and peace, along with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart" (2 Tim. 2:22). In relation to such a call, one Ghanaian newspaper reported:

Okatakylie Dr. Amenfi VII, Omanhene of Asebu Traditional Area, has appealed to Christians to help fight anti-social activities such as homosexuality and lesbianism in the society. The Omanhene said Christians were regarded as the light of the world for which it was incumbent on them to check things which Christ abhorred.⁹⁹

Many other calls such as above on the need to practice sexual morality keep on coming from many concerned people and opinion leaders: spiritual, traditional, political, etc. What needs to be understood is that though God made us as sexual creatures, teenage sex and other negative sexual practices like pornography, homosexuality, etc., are evil. When we understand God's purpose for sex, we will not sin against our own bodies and God's.

To deal with the menace of sex and pornography there is need for a youth pastor who has an in-depth understanding of scriptures as well as youth issues in order to combine both effectively. No important advice can be given to a youth than the one that draws their attention to important life decision during the prime age of life. The pastor must aim at helping the youth to know the harmful effects of sexual sin so that they will hate it and run away from it. For example, do the scriptures talk about pornography? Some people may argue that Pornography is not mentioned in the scriptures. Of course, the word "Pornography" does not appear in the scriptures, but it is implied in some of the sins mentioned there in. Pornography is included in the sin of sexual impurity or sexual immorality for the reasons included below:

- i. It can make a person's mind become filled with sexual thoughts (or visions) which arouse sexual feelings and fantasies. This is sin before God (Matt. 5:27-30).
- ii. It creates lust and sexual desires that can lead to sin (James 1:14).
- iii. It can lead to spiritual depravity and moral weakness (2 Sam. 11:2-4).
- iv. It can arouse sexual feelings leading to masturbation, rape homosexuality, etc.

B. The youth must remember the Creator

Apart from taking steps to prevent the youth from youthful sex and contacts with pornographic material the youth must remember the Creator. The fact is mankind has a Creator to whom everyone is accountable to. It is important for everyone to remember this Creator in his or her youthful day due to the uncertainties of the future. This will make the one well prepared for the judgment to come (Eccles. 12:1-7, 13-14).

“Thy Creator” here implies that man did not create himself but was created by somebody. The author of man’s life therefore has to be remembered because of the following reasons:

- i. The creator has absolute claim over the creature.
- ii. The creature owns the Creator duty and honor, or a sense of appreciation.
- iii. The human heart is prone to forget the Creator and instead, align and praise the creatures around him, or some evil days will compel him to forget major issues of life (vs. 2-7).
- iv. It is remembering the Creator that one may come to terms with the reason he/she was even created.
- v. The creature will definitely give accounts of the life he/she enjoyed to the Creator (vs. 14).

Everyone is advised by the Preacher to remember his Creator in the days of his youth because of the reason such as found in 12:1-5). That is, youth time is:

- i. When self surrender has not become difficult as a result of fewer evil days in life.
- ii. The time when ones’ heart is less calloused to holiness; one has little to worry about, and has much zeal to work.
- iii. The period when desires of man are high; desire to do anything is not lost.
- iv. A period when man is less troubled by sorrows, affliction, bodily weaknesses, constant anticipation or fear of death, calamity, etc, which characterizes old age. Thus before old age comes, one has to remember his creator.

How does the Youth remember the Creator? It is to enable man reconcile and relate well with the Creator that Christ came, that He may lift mankind up from the clutches of sin and give the enablement by the Holy Spirit to live a righteous and holy life for God. If man is able to live for God through the strength

of God's word and Spirit, he will not fear the judgment to come. Ecclesiastes chapters 13 and 14 give us two major ways:

- i. By fearing God (vs. 13); this means that one has to abstain from evil deeds.
- ii. By keeping God's commandments (vs. 13), which means one has to know the precepts of God and walking in them.
- iii. By doing good and abstaining from evil, a man's ways are rightly set up.

King Solomon came to the conclusion that man ought to remember his creator in his youthful days because of all the above areas considered and the experience he acquired in them. Because by old age, his experience has moved his heart from following God to idols, it is worthy to build strong foundation in the period of youth so that when the evil days come, man can still stand.

a. The Youth need vision in life: Vision is very important for the youth just as it is for adults. A good vision for life is essential to every youth because it helps them to make healthy choices and avoid mistakes. Thus the youth with a vision is a youth with a future; a youth without a vision is likely to "perish." Having good visions during youthful days is also helpful because this is the period that such visions can be nurtured till maturity. The Bible is full of examples of people who had good visions for their life when they were youth; Joseph, David, Jeremiah, Daniel, Esther, Timothy, etc.

b. The youth should seek knowledge: An important appeal to youth concerns education and quality profession. One of the greatest enemies of life is ignorance. It is said that the ignorance is the worse disease to afflict man. There should therefore be conscious efforts by every youth to overcome

ignorance in a fast developing in order to live a purposeful live. This is to be armed by knowledge because “knowledge” it is said “is power.” That is, each youth member of school-going age should never drop out of school, especially now that many countries are evolving schemes that support education. Therefore, it will be prudent that some principles are pursued. For example:

- Each student should make it a vision to get a first degree in education.
- Those with first degrees should strive for higher degrees.
- Those in non-formal fields or vocations should formalize their profession.

c. The youth need to wise-up: Without proper application of knowledge, a simple understanding of the differences between love and sex might elude any youth. For example, to many shallow minded people, the simple statement “I love you,” means “I want to have sex with you.” This is rather unfortunate and many teenagers have been deceived by such expressions and have become victims of sex. Love is different from just having sex. In fact, love is a character of God that caused Him to relate to man, according to John 3:16. It is through the demonstration of love that God saved the sinful man, “For God so love the world ...”

God is love and therefore His children, Christians, are supposed to share His nature. Hence, we are commanded to demonstrate pure love, Hebrew 13:1. This pure love is *agape* love of God. This kind of love that we are commanded to show, *Agape*, has nothing to do with the practice of sex. People can love the opposite sex without falling into the lustful desire of sex. Brotherhood love is not sex. Brotherly love is from God, lustful desire for sex is from the devil (James 1:14-15).

d. The youth should be determined in life: If sensual desires are not controlled they may drive the youth to engage in some negative sexual behaviors such; sex (by consent), rape (sex without consent), homosexuality, sexual fantasies, masturbation, etc. There should therefore be conscious and a determined effort by every youth to do the following:

- I. To lead determined lives because determination is a great key to success. There is a saying that “where determination rules supreme no amount of failure can dismantle the flag of success.” Thus the youth need to be determined to keep themselves pure from sin.
- II. To keep themselves from any form of contact with pornographic materials and they should not befriend people whose sexual behaviors cannot be trusted.
- III. To love their peers and even adults with agape love without any attractions for them.
- IV. To not listen, look, think or read about things that can arouse your sexual desires
- V. To not go to places that can open them up to sexual acts or promiscuous lives.
- VI. To not make themselves too attractive to the opposite sex or draw too close to them.
- VII. To always pray against teenage sexual desires.
- VIII. To do well by filling their mind with the word of God, hymns, spiritual songs, etc. (Rom. 12:2; Eph. 4). When idle, they should do private studies by reading books.

e. The youth must be involved in godly services: Indeed, man ought to remember to serve God when there is life and strength for the day because the future is unknown. This is in accordance with Jesus’ message in John 9:4, ‘as long as it is day, we must do the works of the one who sent us’ (that is, the Creator). The whole passage is a look beyond earthly vanities

to God, who made mankind for Himself. The title “Creator” in chapter 12:1 is well chosen, reminding every person of the real responsibility to life. Such at least is what it demands of mankind, a remembrance and loyalty as intense as the Psalmist towards his homeland, expressed in Psalm 137:6.

The author of Ecclesiastes concludes that man has to enjoy what he can in life but this enjoyment can be accomplished only by fearing God. For, God is in control of life and He can be expected to reward obedience by the creature to Him. Whereas the Preacher can only say that obedience to God’s commandments is man’s hope, Apostle Paul proclaims that God has acted in Christ to bring new hope to man; a hope to stand in the judgment.

C. The youth must emulate trustworthy leaders

It is pathetic to note that some youth, by their behaviors and attitudes, still think that they have to be pampered in order to be seriously committed to God. Therefore, any leader (minister or pastor) who wants to develop a healthy youth ministry needs to have a fair idea of youth characteristics. In such a case the leader himself/herself can be of meaningful service to the youth. The youth ministry is of great importance and of huge benefit to the church such that in some churches a qualified pastor is given oversight responsibility of the youth ministry. The youth pastor should be responsible for creating in the youth the awareness that the sooner they realize that their spiritual development and service to God is a path towards a successful future, the better.

There are various roles that the youth minister or pastor can play to develop the Youth ministry. Such a person usually teams up with other leaders to have a general oversight of the youth in the following areas:

- To prepare syllabus (lessons) for the youth.
- To direct the development of the activities of youth.
- To gain and maintain interest of youth in the church.
- To help youth identify their areas of service in the church.
- To help counsel and teach the youth Christian living or ethics of society.
- To prepare the youth for evangelism, visitation, prayers, etc.
- To help instill leadership qualities in the youth.
- To help identify youth challenges and helping them to overcome them.
- To help the youth get involve in counseling and teaching others the word of God.

In dealing with the Youth, the minister should be able to find out something about the persons' age, gender, class background and educational backgrounds, what their life experiences are, what are the gaps which need filling, such as family background, their vulnerability and painful experiences, and what should be the core competencies the youth must acquire. These would help the minister to give attention to their needs and put in greater effort in the development of the youths' spiritual formation.

Generally, however, both the Preacher and the NT uphold the commandment of God for life by every person (John 14:15; cf. Eccl. 12:13). Additionally, the concluding message of judgment for all the deeds of man (vs. 14) is one of the main subjects of the NT (Matt. 5:21, 22; 12:36; John 8:26; 12:3; Rom. 2:2; Heb. 9:27; 2 Pet. 2:9). It is now advisable to follow a good line of reasoning after the thorough observation of life and to arrive at the conclusion that man has to remember his Creator in the days of his youth before the evil days come, in order for him to stand in the judgment.

CHAPTER 21

YOU MUST BE DISCIPLINED AND SUBMISSIVE

At the end of your life you will groan, when your flesh and body are spent, you will say, How I hated discipline! How my heart spurned correction. I would not obey my teachers and listen to my instructors. I have come to the brink of utter ruin in the midst of the whole assembly (Prov. 5:11-14).

The above quote talk about discipline and submission, which are very important models for the church of God. But the people of God always find it difficult to understand these subjects. Many Christians are not prepared to accept, submit to, and endure God's discipline. Discipline is one element that is so vital to an individual as well as to a community, the absence of which leads to the destruction of the moral fiber of the society. God corrects and reveals the sins of those He loves through the act of discipline.

But at what stage do people know that what they are experiencing is part of God's discipline? In fact, discipline is a necessity for Christian growth and real transformation of any church (Titus 1:1-13; Jer. 30:10-11). The book of Proverbs is one of the books of the Bible that deals with the subject of discipline in much detail. It is prudent that some references are made from the book.

What is Discipline?

Discipline is the training of the mind and character, aimed at producing self-control and obedience in a person. It includes correction and being self control, producing obedience and uprightness and restriction. The aim of discipline is to achieve orderly and controlled behavior in a group and in individuals. Basically, there are a lot of reasons for dealing with the subject

all of which are aimed at correcting the receiver. Some of the reasons include the following;

- (i) **To impart knowledge:** Scripture says: "Whoever loves discipline loves knowledge, but he who hates correction is stupid" (Prov. 12:1).
- (ii) **As a sign of love:** Scripture says: "My son, do not despise the Lord's discipline and do not resent His rebuke, because the Lord disciplines those He loves as a father the son he delights in" (Prov. 3:11,12).
- (iii) **As a means of hope of restoration:** Scripture says: "Discipline your son, for in that there is hope, do not be a willing party to his death" (Prov. 19:18).
- (iv) **As a means to achieve peace:** Scripture says: "Discipline your son and he will give you peace; he will bring delight to your soul" (Prov. 29:17).

Generally then, discipline is important to maintain sound faith (Titus 1:1-13); correct disorder (2 Thess. 3:6-12); deal with wickedness (1 Cor. 5:3-5, 13); promotion of righteousness (Heb. 12:5-11); as a demonstration of fatherly love (Prov. 3:11-12); control unnecessary exuberance and bring carefulness (Rev. 3:19-20); bring understanding (Prov. 10:13); avoid condemnation and save offenders (1 Cor. 11:32); establish restoration (Jer. 30:10-11), bring self control and serve as a deterrent, etc.

Offences that merit discipline

There are other problems which the transformational agent (whether the senior pastor or anybody concerned) should address as soon as they surface. These include the following; a staff who is not prepared to do the ministry they were called to, or an undependable staff whose life is shown through lateness to duty, casual excuses, missing deadlines, unnecessary complaints, lack of follow through, one without team spirit, an

unorganized or disorganized staff member, one with a lot of personal or family problem that can be transmitted into the ministry with negative consequences, etc.

Who disciplines who and how?

A very important issue of discipline is the person who is authorized to instill it. Scripture gives the power to church leaders when it says that whatsoever you bind on the earth is bind in heaven and whatsoever you loose on earth is loose in heaven (Matt. 18:15-18). Discipline must be done with gentleness (Gal. 6:1), in or with love (2 Cor. 2:6-12), and must be done impartially (1 Tim. 5:20-21). All discipline measures depends upon the maturity of the persons involved. Discipline is of the Lord and from Him to all His children.

Methods of discipline

The book reveals a lot of methods by which discipline is instilled in a person; “A servant cannot be corrected by mere words, though he understands, he will not respond” (Prov. 29:19); “Penalties are prepared for mockers, and beating for the back of fools” (Prov. 19:29); “Do not withhold discipline from a child, if you punish him with the rod, he will not die. Punish him with the rod and save his soul from death” (Prov. 23:12, 14).

There are many ways to institute discipline. The culprit should first be counseled, preceded by simple correction, i.e., by letting people know their fault by creating the awareness or reasoning with them (2 Tim. 4:1ff). It can also be by warning, accompanied by encouragement, and verbal (or written) warning (1 Thess. 5:14, 15). In less serious situations, it can be rebuking soberly in camera (Titus 1:13), or rebuking publicly (1 Tim. 5:20ff). God loves correction in the form of discipline through rebuke. The Hebrew word for the verb “rebuke” is

Yakah. The other derivatives of rebuke are reprove (or reproof) and correct. Rebuke is used about fifty-four times in the OT in passages. In the book of Proverbs, rebuke (or its derivatives) occurs in passages such as Proverbs 5:17; 17:10. Together with a few other words, it is usually used to mean reproach (Isa. 25:8; Jer. 15:15; Leviticus 19:17; 2 Kings 19:4; Job 5:17; 26:11; Isaiah 37:4; Hosea 5:2). In the NT, the infinitive, “to rebuke” is encountered in texts such as Matthew 8:26; 16:22; 17:18; 1 Timothy 5:20; Titus 1:13; 2:15; Rev. 3:19.

It is not without significance that Leviticus 19:17 enjoins the people of God to confront their neighbors when they sin, “...Thou shalt surely rebuke (or reprove) your neighbor, and not bring sin upon him”. To rebuke, correct, or reprove would not only imply exposure of one’s sin but also call a person to repentance, “For whom Yahweh loves He rebukes...” (Prov. 3:12). Therefore, scripture says again: “Open rebuke is better than secret love” (Prov. 27:5), and “...Rebuke a wise man and he will love you” (Prov. 9:8; 10:13; 15:10; 22:15). Thus rebuke denotes education, chastisement, and punishment. Through rebuke the conscience of a person is appealed to and left to act with discretion (Gal. 2:11).

In extreme cases a person is subjected to a period of probation, and if it persists suspended for a specific period of time (1 Cor. 5:1-5). In very extreme circumstances, if after much prayer and all other attempts to help the person (a pastor or any of our paid staff) fails, the person should be dismissed or is excommunicated completely from the church (1 Tim. 1:18-20). But in situations where the offence is very grievous like a complete moral failure; rape, adultery and related cases, the disciplinary measure can be an outright dismissal. Let me advise here that these disciplinary measures be printed by leaders so that signed copies are put in the file of every staff, and copies given to every member to study. This step will

always remind people of the commitment to discipline and help them to accept same when they are at fault and needed to be disciplined.

The values and benefits of discipline

The book of Proverbs reveals that some people value discipline and therefore receive some benefits from it. This is shown by the following texts:

- (i) “A rebuke impresses a man of discernment more than a hundred lashes of a fool” (Prov. 17:10).
- (ii) “Flog a mocker and the simple will learn prudence; rebuke a discerning man and he will gain knowledge” (Prov. 19:25)
- (iii) “The rod of correction imparts wisdom, but a child left to himself disgrace his mother” (Prov. 29:15).
- (iv) “Like and earring of gold or an ornament of fine gold is a wise man’s rebuke to a listening ear” (Prov. 13:18b; 15:32b; 21:11; 25:12; 29:17, 21).

It is important for individuals and groups to heed to the call for a disciplined life which comes through so many means. For Christians in general and leaders in particular, discipline should be understood as is a demonstration of God’s love for His children, parents love for their children, teachers love for their students, and masters (or kings) love for their servants. Discipline is good and as important to mankind today as it was in the days of the writer(s) of the book of Proverbs. It is advisable therefore for everyone to heed to the calls of discipline spelt in such a portion of scripture.

Impact of discipline

The Proverbs emphasizes the importance of discipline on both the individual and on the community or society as a whole.

On anyone who needs discipline, the book enumerates some effects that include the following:

- (i) The individual gains understanding and wisdom to live a worthy life and also saves his soul from death.
- (ii) The individual who adheres to discipline becomes an example to other of the way to a meaningful life.
- (iii) The individual is honored because he learns the way of wisdom and his way of life is improved.
- (iv) Knowledge is also acquired when one heeds to discipline because the person who is corrected learns more and adds to what he may not hither to know. Discipline helps to keep the individual on the right path, leading him to enjoy the fullness of life.

Discipline by all standards is a very important and necessary component in the life of everyone in the society; the young and old, wise and fools, kings and servants, students and teachers, man and woman, individuals and groups. It is one essential element that brings peace, knowledge, life, stability and virtues to every sphere of life. While it helps to define the course of life of those that uphold it, it spells the doom of those that despise it. On the community, discipline is very necessary for peaceful coexistence in any community, and this makes its impact on the community very measurable. Since the family is the immediate community, "A disciplined child brings peace and joy to his family" (Prov. 29:17). Discipline in the community makes the people very law abiding, very respectful and morally sound. It also brings progress and productivity to the society as a whole, since the impact of discipline cuts across all aspects of the community life; social ethical, political economical, and so on.

Lack of discipline

It is also clearly revealed in the Book of Proverbs that not everybody loves discipline and those who hate it will suffer for it as shown in the following text: "...Fools despise wisdom and discipline" (Prov. 1:7). "...A mocker does not listen to rebuke" (Prov. 13:1). "A fool spurns his father's discipline..." (Prov. 15:5). "A man who remains stiff-necked after many rebukes will suddenly be destroyed without remedy" (Prov. 29:1; 13:18; 15:10b, 32).

It is worthwhile to note that not everybody can be disciplined. Proverbs 9:7-8 say that "Whoever corrects a mocker invites insults; whoever rebukes a wicked man incurs abuse. Do not rebuke a mocker or he will hate you; rebuke a wise man and he will love you". Thus, one has to be careful of the nature of people he may try to discipline. If an individual refuses to heed to discipline, it impacts negatively on his life. The individual comes to poverty and shame, comes to a sudden destruction without remedy, his entire life is ruined and he comes to an eventual death (Prov. 5:11-14; 13:18; 15:10). When discipline is broken down in any society or community, it leads to lawlessness, moral decadence, poverty, disgrace, chaos, and final destruction of the members of the community through different regrettable ways.

Leaders must demonstrate discipline

Generally, all leaders are seen as pace-setters in every society. Thus a high sense of discipline is expected of them. Little wonder, any negative behaviors on their part receive big calls for discipline of some sort. Generally, there are some grievous sins which those in leadership positions should strive to avoid. These include falling into open sin such as fornication, adultery, smoking gambling drunkenness, misuse of church funds, conforming to worldly desires, and being used to places

of worldly amusements, embracing and or practicing church doctrines, backbiting, fighting or quarreling, insults, failure to conform to church government, continuous violation of rules of the church, etc.

There are other common mistakes transformational leaders must avoid especially in relation to how they handle church issues and settle conflicts. As a transformational leader, you should endeavor to not:

- Defend anything you do not have facts of, and do not condemn anything you do not have details about.
- Condemn somebody who is involved in a case that you are equally guilty of and do not be found doing the same act you have already condemned – yours become a double error and thus much more grievous.
- Discuss any person when doing so will tarnish or disgrace his image. Speak against (or discuss) a person only when you have made him or her aware of mistakes committed and the consequences thereof.
- Pick and trumpet few mistakes of a person and decide not to drum home the many achievements of the person.
- Condemn an act when it is done by one person and keep silent when that same act is committed by another who is favorable to you.

Submission to authority

When the word “submit” is used in the Bible, it refers not only to yielding and obeying attitude of the heart, but equally importantly, to an attitude of cooperation and support. The act of submission is a voluntary attitude of giving one’s self in the hope of sharing. It is, “Seeking not one’s own, but ever laboring for the other.” It means “mutually serving one another.”¹⁰⁰ The New Testament speaks on the issue of submission to various authorities and bodies:

Submission to God and the church: Submission to God is the ultimate of every creation of God. But to those that make deliberate decision to walk with Him there is a special covenant that is established between God and them. One of the main stipulations of God's covenant with man is the demand for total obedience and submission from the latter to the former. This is exactly what God requires of all His Transformational agents. Even Jesus demonstrated this submission as indicated by the scriptures. The book of Hebrews 5:7 says, "During the days of His life on earth, He offered up prayers and petitions with loud cries and tears to the one who could save him from death, and He was heard because of his reverent submission."

Since the church is God's institution on earth, submission to it (Church) required of all its members is not different from that which has to be given to God. In situations where a position taken by any particular church contradicts the very dictates of God as revealed by scripture care must be taken never to compromise God's word.

Submission to Governments: If believers are seeking to develop a balance biblical understanding of the state and church, then central to it will be the truth that the states authority and ministry are both given to it by God. There are a lot of passages of scripture that bind civil laws on all people, especially Christian. The first seven verses of Paul's letter to the Romans 13 establish the authority for local and federal governments and give God's endorsement for those in authority. An extensive discussion of Paul's view on submission to governments and authority is provided in Pacesetter of Divine Ministry: Let us learn from them (by same author).

Submission to one another: The last area to discuss is submission for one another. The gospel of Mark 10:45 says,

“And whosoever shall desire to become first shall be servant of all.” To achieve this type of submission there are some pertinent questions that one should consider. For example, should a Christian submit to a non-Christian authority in everything? In which areas should he and in which he should not? What areas of your life do you think the Lord still want you to submit to Him and why? Why is *submission* to authority a primary issue in the scriptures? How should the biblical command, “wives to submit to their own husbands” (Eph. 5:22; Col. 3:18) be applied.

Importance of submission to authority

It is important for believers to consider what Jesus’ example of “submission to the will of the father” helps to reveal the way they should behave before God. This is to drum home a person’s attitude and relationship with those above them. In application, therefore, believers need to understand “submission” in the context of how slaves submit to their masters because we are God’s slaves (Rom. 2:22). They should understand that when we *submit* to the will of God, the purpose of God is achieved in our lives. There is therefore the need to submit to God in order to overcome the devil (1 Pet. 5:5). Godly submission isn’t something you try to perform; it is the natural fruit of a close walk with Christ. That is, once we have truly surrendered to God, *submission* will be a natural outworking of the Holy Spirit in the life of the Christian.

Generally, then, demonstrating disciplined lifestyle and submitting to righteousness by all, especially the leaders, will help put the church on the path of God’s *will*. Every transformational leader must by all means set a pace as far as discipline and submission are concerned.

CHAPTER 22

MAKE EFFORT TO RESOLVE CONFLICTS AND PROMOTE RECONCILIATION

What is the source of quarrels and conflicts among you? Is not the source your pleasures that wage war in your members? You lust and do not have; so you commit murder. And you are envious and cannot obtain; so you fight and quarrel. You do not have because you do not ask. You ask and do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives... (James 4:1-3, NAS).

The passage above gives a very important insight into what actually happens even among people who call themselves children of God (or Christian). No positive church transformation can be achieved where effective measures to resolve or manage quarrels and conflicts are not in place. So at this juncture it is important to as a matter of great concern discuss the meaning and source of such quarrels and conflicts, especially in the Christian environment. Attempt will also be made to provide some preventive measures and also, a few approaches to resolving conflict when they arise in the church.

Definition of conflict

Conflict usually occurs whenever there is disagreement on any issue of life. In other words, whenever two opposing issues interact, conflict develops. The Cambridge International Dictionary of English also defines conflicts as an active disagreement between people with opposing opinions or principles.¹⁰¹ Conflict is synonymous with the following terms; disagreement, disorder, battle, clash, collision, combat, contest of rights, fracas, strife, war, and the like. Conflict is experienced in all aspects of human associations and interactions. People or

group's interaction with self, fellows, and the environment can never be without conflict. Whenever and wherever a person or group from opposing backgrounds interacts with self or others, it is very not uncommon that misunderstanding and disputes occur as a result of one reason or the other.

A conflict might be classified as personal, religious, social, cultural, political, international, etc. That is, issues that result in conflicts may be personal (related to a particular individual), relational or social (liability), historical (rooted in tradition or event in the past), or congregational (an issue that affects the entire church system), or otherwise. The personal type is usually due to the psychology or belief system of individuals or groups, while the others are largely due to individuals or group(s) interest in property. A conflict might be either "intra-conflict," i.e. within a person or group: intra- conflicts including intra-personal, intra church, intra party, intra-organizational, intra-national, etc., or "inter-conflict," i.e. across persons or groups: inter-personal, inter church, inter-organizational, inter-national, etc.

All the negative practices discussed in chapter 18 are recipes for conflicts, so they will not be enumerated here again. But each problem can, when not properly handled, have a disastrous effect on one aspect of a person or groups' program or the other. Thus the focus of this chapter is to deal with conflicts that affect believers whether individuals or a body. A major attempt is to provide a lead for transformational leaders to resolve conflicts and promote reconciliation in the body. Issues that cause some of these conflicts can contribute to unhealthy growth of the body or lead directly to splits.

Consequences and impacts of conflicts

One of the common results of conflicts (or disorder) in the body of Christ is the break-down of the unity fiber of an

individual or group. The Bible says God is not a God of disorder (other versions use “confusion” which I prefer to “disorder”) but of peace (1 Cor. 14:33). Yet a good number of people create confusion that causes cracks in institutions which finally lead to a split so that they can use a faction to begin their own. The modus operandi of some people, especially leaders, should not be encouraged; it should be condemned. In some of the cases, people with uncontrolled leadership ambitions create confusion over trivial issues in order to take advantage of the situation and break it apart. In the OT, David, the son of Jesse, did not tear any part of God’s kingdom under King Saul until the latter died and God himself handed the kingdom to David. Apostle Paul said that he did not go to where others have already begun to work, and condemn all confusion that begun in some of the churches, like the Corinthians.

Unless a particular split or break-up has clear evidence of being engineered by God as in the case of Israel after the death of King Solomon, people who mastermind church breaks have a case to answer before God. Unfortunately, some of such splits that occur make the church the loser. Lots of the splits also lead to hatred, and unnecessary persecution of some people perceived to be involved. Some of the splits are characterized by accusations and counter-accusations, fight over church properties, and occasions where any possible means are devised to destroy or dent the image of the other.

In extreme situations, some disgruntled leadership groups organize what is known as “operation seek and destroy.” Some people take a scan through memory lane in the hope of retrieving some cobwebs in the lives of their perceived enemies which they would use to dent or destroy them at the slightest opportunity. At some stage, such people throw all the ethics of Christian ministry to the dogs and do worst than unbelievers. They clench their fist and curse such “enemies” wishing that

God even removes the roof from the heads of their enemies and makes no provisions for them. In some cases, such people, including leaders, create the impression that they are protecting and defending the church. But little do they realize that such ungodly and faithless behaviors rather roll back the clock of church transformation and dim the light of progress over a long period of time. This practice should stop! And the sooner church leaders come to terms with such hard truth the better it will be for the church.

This is not to say that all break-ups of churches that led to the development of sprinter ones are wrong. No! Some separations which occur in ministries are fruitful and yield positive dividends. For example, stepping-out for church-planting such that lost souls are finally won for Christ (i.e., not already won souls being stolen), should be encouraged and applauded. Some could lead to the spread of the gospel, if it comes from God Himself like what happened between Paul and Barnabas after their first missionary journey (Acts 15:36-41). But even in such cases, where following the will of God demands separation (as in the case of Apostle Paul) the departures might be marked by some degrees of disagreement. Therefore, it is unfortunate that some people are hated and persecuted for insisting on following what they are convinced to be *God's supreme will and design* for their lives. Sometimes, the extent is so deep and grievous enough to create hatred leading to unethical practices, and in extreme cases, leading to division and breakage of a hitherto united body.

From the discussion so far, it is obvious that whatever the causes of conflicts might be, there are consequences and impacts. Avorgah mentions Anthony D'souza as proposing two impacts of conflicts: positively, conflicts bring long standing problems to the fore to be dealt with appropriately and, negatively, conflicts make it impossible for parties that need

to co-operate and work together to continue to do that.¹⁰² Additionally, Avogah presents a summary by Halverstadt on the two main consequences of conflicts: the positive consequences are that they provide opportunities for wholeness and reconciliation; the negative consequences are that they create dangerous conditions for division and disintegration.¹⁰³

Suggested solutions

Problems should not prevent us from service but urge us on to rely more on God to do better. Thus there should be a deliberate attempt or effort to handle leadership conflicts and church break. So, how should conflicts be resolved or managed amicably? The traditional or conventional approaches to resolution and management of conflicts include legislation, negotiation, mediation, arbitration, compromising, and Christian reconciliation. Some of these approaches are as follows:

A. Resolve conflicts through reconciliation

Prophet Isaiah gave a lot of the Messianic prophecies describing what mankind should expect in the end times. In chapter 2:64, the prophet gave this message about the people of God: "...And they shall beat their sword into plowshares, nations shall not lift up sword against nations, neither shall they learn war anymore..." This text paints a picture of the people of God taking steps to ensure a conflict-free environment to live in. The Apostolic Church recognized that conflicts are inevitable but that resolution is within the reach of the saints who have received forgiveness by grace. In Acts 6:1ff and 15:1ff, the early church met to settle issues that could best be described as conflict within the body of Christ. Their approach was to reconciliation, which no doubt is one of the biblical approaches to settle conflict among the brethren. Reconciliation is where the offender or offended party in a disagreement reaches out to the other in order to settle the difference amicably.

Living peacefully as a body through reconciliation is one of the fastest way to promote church growth. By living and working together as a body, the church can deal with issues that arise within the group (body) so that it can forge ahead to success. Reconciliation is reaching out to somebody or a group in order to settle differences or issues of separation. It is important or necessary because God first did it and commands us to reconcile to one another (2 Cor. 5:17-20). Reconciliation is the key to forgiveness from God. It is also the major means God brings people together. It is the first step by which God can achieve His plans. God was the first to practice reconciliation, because He first forgave humanity in His reconciliation process and commanded man to follow His example. The gospel of Matthew 18:32-35 tells the parable of the unmerciful servant. The virtue that catalyzes reconciliation is love. This kind of love operates despite the magnitude of sin; love covers multitude of sin (Prov. 10:12; Rom. 5:8; Col. 3:13-14). God loved us even when we were sinners.

B. Resolve conflict through Arbitration

Arbitration on the other hand is where a dispute (or conflict) is solved by a person or group that is not part of the dispute. Thus, an arbitrator is a person whose official role is to resolve a conflict between two people, groups, or institutions. Arbitration has the ultimate goal of prescribing judgment, usually because the arbitrator is asked to do so by those involved. Various personality groupings are involved in conflict resolutions and methods of arbitration. But on Church internal matters, all peace-loving believers can be involved in the process of reducing quarrels and managing conflicts in many ways.

Believers of God should be prepared to practice the Lord Jesus' settlement approach, recorded in Matthew 5:23-23; 18:16; and Luke 12:58. Thus, by combining the approaches of

direct reconciliation and the use of an arbitrator, the following have been spelt out by scripture:

- The offended party may decide out of deed sense of love to forgive the offender, or go to the offender and point his/her mistakes out.
- If the offender refuses to accept his/her mistakes, the offended should go with another person, i.e., an arbitrator.
- If the offender still refuses to accept the mistakes committed, and the offended still wants to press charges, he/she should take the matter to the church (i.e., the leadership).
- And if the offender still refuses the move of the church, he/she should be treated as an unbeliever.
- However, it is normal for the offender to take steps to settle the difference with or without the use of an arbitrator.
- Sometimes, it is possible that a third party, upon hearing the conflict, might decide out of genuine concern for peace and reconciliation to take up the issue and work at it in order to bring settlement.

All leaders and especially people with transformational objectives should be able to instill in members the need to see forgiveness and reconciliation as tools to affect peaceful living (Col. 3:13-14; Matt. 5:23-24; 18:15-17; Rom. 12:18). As the Gospel of Luke 11:4 says, "...And forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespassed against us." Additionally, leaders should handle conflict issues without any prejudices (Matt. 13:24-26). They should make every effort to establish good and reliable administrative structures that will ensure effective communication and free flow of needed information. They should avoid lording over the flock and constantly review their leadership style. But it is better for all believers to watch and pray always in order to avoid such conflicts (Matt. 26:4). We should acknowledge the oneness of believers, and be

ready to sacrifice our rights for the sake of peace and unity. Again, believers should be able to acknowledge the weakness and imperfection of one another. Member should accord the needed respect to the leadership and vice versa.

It should be realized that as long as human beings continue to live in the flesh conflicts cannot be eradicated completely from the church, our homes, workplaces, etc. But they can be resolved or make their impact minimized. It is therefore necessary to devise strategies to achieve these. At any point in time, the members of any congregation should assess themselves by asking if each is sure there is no grudge between him/her and anybody. In addition, measures like continuous leadership training, and ensuring accurate communication ideas are very helpful. Transformational leaders never give up on pursuing peace because of the blessings involve in doing so. In the beatitudes, the Lord Jesus stated in no uncertain terms the benefits we stand to derive when we pursue and maintain peace (Matt. 5:19).

C. Step out of a conflict situation when necessary

Another way to settle dispute is by applying Abraham's approach; outright separation, as recorded in Genesis 13: 8-9. Life is dynamic. As such, no individual is bound to remain at any one place for the rest of his/her life. Situational changes might necessitate appropriate changes by individuals involved. Thus separation from a person, group, or organization is part of the dynamics of life that no one can run away from. While some people do it by instincts, others take such steps by reason, i.e., as and when they are satisfied to act, and yet others follow what they believe to be divine instruction or direction.

Conflicts can result from and fueled by the continuous coexistence and interaction with of people. Such conflicts are common within families, clans or tribes, and even among

people within same group or organization. Transformational leaders as role models are very careful with decisions of whether to stay or separate from any people, group or institution. However, when the dynamics of any association is against such a person's objective, then separation might become one of the best options. As examples, Abraham and his immediate family had to separate from the family of his nephew Lot to end continuous conflicts (Gen. 13:1ff); Isaac and family had to separate from the Philistines on many occasions to avoid conflicts (Gen. 26:1ff); Paul and Barnabas had to go their separate ways to end a disagreement between them in their missionary journeys (Acts 15:36ff). Separation to avoid or resolve conflict is one of the reasons behind voluntary or principled resignations from organizations by people, though some prefer not to cite any reason.

Sometimes also, a person might be led by God to separation from a group to avoid conflict. In accordance to *the will of God*, Apostle Paul directed his attention from his own people, Israel, to preach the gospel of the Lord Jesus in the Gentile world. This occurred as a result of a conflict in the midst of a very successful ministration involving Paul and other ministers of the church that was established at Antioch in the region of Syria (Acts 15:1ff). Scriptures say that while Paul and his colleagues were busily serving God and touching lives, God, through the Holy Spirit, directed that Paul and Barnabas be separated for a special service that God has purposed for them (Acts 13:1ff). Thus God permits separations for the sake of peace or His purposes.

In absolute obedience to *the call* and *will* of God, Paul and his colleague set out into the gentile territory. The rest of the leadership did not hesitate in allowing them to set out as directed. Most, likely, they even organized a fundraising in order to support them on the journey. They had in mind

that whether these missionaries would return to them or not, their overall service was to expand God's Kingdom. This is the extent to which loyalty to God is demonstrated by both a minister who is called for a specific area of ministry and the remaining brethren. No hard feelings or schemes calculated to destroy the mission were encountered here; only full support for the called brethren. Without doubt, the greatest miracles that God did by Paul occurred during his ministry to the gentiles.

Clearly, the *will of God* in this instance was for Paul to leave though he was fruitfully serving the church in Antioch. God has plans for cooperate bodies like the church as well as individuals at any point in time. He chooses to play whichever card He *wills*. Additionally, the leaders accepted the will of God as supreme over their interest and had to give up. Finally, it is possible from the way the leaders helped to send them off that nobody harbored any hard feelings against his departure. Very likely, the leadership organized a befitting send-off for Paul as their appreciation for his hard service to them, and whole-hearted wish him well.

D. Never solve conflict by creating another conflict

Paul's letter to the Romans 12:18 exhorts believers to do their best to live in peace with all people. This injunction could be applied when dealing with individuals as well as groups. The bottom-line is that there is peace. Thus, while discussing ways to deal with conflicts, it is even better to mention how to prevent conflicts from evolving. In spite of the call for peaceful co-existence as a unit, there are situations where a person or a group is compelled by circumstances to separate from others by some reasons. So when this happens (whether to avoid or solve a conflict situation or otherwise), it should be possible to do it in an atmosphere of peace. In fact, it can and must be done without any bitterness, an unnecessary uproar, or any

undesirable action. If indeed God is the one calling on the person to step out, the person should not hesitate, but only obey His voice and step out in peace. The onus lies with the person to be sensitive to the unity of the body of Christ.

It is also proper that the intentions of the separation are made clear to the other party, where possible. It is very appropriate to specify reason(s) either than to say "it is personal." A typical example is seen in his separation of Abraham from nephew, Lot. Here, there was a clear case of a declaration of Abraham's intent, "for the sake of peace and to allow brotherly love continue." Though Lot chose what looked like the choicest land, Abraham accepted what appeared to be the unfavorable part of the land (Gen. 13:14), yet that was the juncture he received an affirmation of promise from God to give him Canaan. If possible, all due procedures of resignation should be followed to indicate that the person (or the group) has voluntarily stepped out. It is not out of place for the leadership to organize a befitting send-off for such departing member(s). It is the duty of the leaders to ensure that such a person is sent out in peace such as happened in Antioch, "...They fasted and prayed, placed their hands on them and sent them off" (Acts 13:1-3).

Unfortunately, quite a number of people that happen to separate from their institutions of work, especially churches, do so by rebellious ways. They take the law into their own hands and sometimes organize others to oppose leadership and in serious situations take over. But this could be avoided. Christians should do everything possible to avoid rebellious attitudes against their leaders (or leadership of institutions). Rebellion is a bad precedent and sometimes leads to negative consequences. The repercussions might also hunt such a person for a very long time. Rebellious people always leave in the fear that the stone they once threw against a wall will turn

back at them. Or that what is popularly referred to as “the Law of Karma” might also apply to them.

More often than not, it becomes hard for such rebels to trust other people when they assume leadership positions, because of the fear that they might be “paid back in their own coins.” Interestingly, when such people who have once rebelled later transform themselves into leaders they turn to demand loyalty from their subordinates. They soon forget how they failed to demonstrate loyalty when it mattered in their lives as a testimony for others to follow. It is inappropriate to rebel against any authority established by God. Rebels do not have any portion in the Kingdom of God.

On a positive note, God has called many people out of churches and made them begin from point zero and still become greater than those who began ahead. He is indeed the Faithful God! In the case of Abraham, there was a divine visitation designed to reassure him in view of what had happened that God is still the Great Provider. God raised a whole nation from just one couple. He is the God of Isaac who established him in the greener pasture and raised him to the greatness height when all around was famine. He is also the God of Jacob who caused his descendants to leave the land of slavery with riches. In fact, God is the God of David who can make a “nobody,” become “somebody,” and a shepherd boy to become a king of the most favored nation. The whole earth is His mission field where the called are sent every now and then; not to one particular group of people, church, or institution.

Transformational leaders must understand how to deal with issues of conflict. Such leaders should know when to hold on and pursue an agenda and also when to quit. But they are subject to *the will of God* to keep the unity of the body while at the same time ensuring its spread across the globe.

CHAPTER 23

YOU CAN OVERCOME YOUR ENEMIES WITH GOD ON YOUR SIDE

It is prudent to encourage those who are determined to carve niches as transformational leaders that no matter how challenging the efforts become, victory is assured. Of course, there cannot be any meaningful transformation without the challenge from enemies. This is because, the battle for positive transformation is not against flesh and blood, but spiritual forces of this dark world (Eph. 6:12). But since, “to foreknow,” it is said, “is to forearm,” they should never be afraid of the challenge offered by enemies. There are more than enough weapons to overcome the enemy (Eph. 6:13-18). It is also important to testify against those who have constituted themselves into both spiritual and physical forces to oppose every move to establish the purposes of God on earth. This is the testimony: “We shall overcome every foe by the blood of the Lamb and we shall not love our lives so much as to shrink from death” (Rev. 12:11).

Spiritual enemies

It is an undeniable fact that the supernatural rules the natural. There is also no doubt that the greatest difficulty and hindrance to the positive transformation of humanity is Satan, who is prepared to prevent whatever God wants to do in the life of the leadership. Just as knowledge of the role of angels in the life of believers was relevant in the days of the OT as it is today, so is that of “Fallen angels.” In fact, one of the major enemies of the believer is Satan and his host of devils with whom he has set his kingdom other world (James 4:1-4); the flesh (1 Pet. 4:1-4; Gal. 5:17); and the devil (1 Pet. 5:8). As

a result, knowledge of their characteristics and the important role they play is important to the present day believer, because we need to know how we can overcome them (Eph. 6:10-12; Luke 10:18-20).

Satan is real and has never given up one second on people who desire to engage in meaningful services for God. He has been God's arch enemy since creation, and will continue to be for as long as the present world exists. So, people who ignore or underrate Satan's opposition of their ministry do so at their own failure. The Lord Jesus Christ himself acknowledged Satan and encountered him body for body, eye to eye, and word for word. If Jesus talked about Satan as an existing spirit, how can humanity lose sight of Satan? Additionally, the Apostles, early disciples, and Church Fathers believed the existence and operation of Satan and even mentioned him in some of their writings. They openly wrote about Satan as an enemy of the church and believers. He was against the church and persecuted it. He deceived some in the church and also attacked the apostles both directly and indirectly by using leaders against them. Satan's ultimate purpose is to prevent the advancement of God's Church.*

One of Satan's major devices is to cause the Christian, particularly church leaders, to ignore their spiritual center development. As an enemy of the Christian, he will attempt to get any leader of the church into spiritual rust. His greatest tools against leaders are in the areas of money, sex, and power. The church leadership should be able to discuss in detail how Satan manages to push these traps. Beside these major areas, he also attacks leaders through ego, sluggishness, laziness, complacency, etc. If Satan fails to and

**Note: A detail discussion of the activities of Satan and evil spirits is given in Suffer to Gain: How the righteous should deal difficult times (by same author).

team fail to overcome leaders through all the above areas, he will resort to the use of criticism from people, both within and without, to bring you down. Satan sometimes attacks through tragedy or suffering, for example, death of a child, sickness of a wife, accidents, etc. Some of these demonic weapons are likely to impact negatively on the transformational leaders and the church because they can bring discouraging, division, it can send converts away, it can bring confusion, disrespect.

Physical enemies

It is God's desire that human beings do not become his enemies but rather His co-workers in order that we get His blessings. But in Christians attempt to transform God's church, the role of opposition can never be ruled out. God's works can come under various attacks by people who allow "Satan" to use them, called enemies of God (Neh. 4:1-16; 5:1-5; 6:1-11). An enemy of God or God's work is not only Satan but anybody who allows Satan to use him or her to affect God's work negatively. Such a one should be seen as an enemy to God's work. Examine your attitude towards God's church and some of the projects, and activities which are undertaken by the church. How do you react to them and to those who initiate them or lead these programs? Would you be called an enemy of God or a co-worker of God?

Like Satan and fallen angel, there are people who are "enemies" of God's by their attitude towards God's work but these always want people to believe that they have the heart to support God's work. In the book of Ezra and that of Nehemiah, some people were classified as being enemies. Examples of such people are; Bislam, Tabel, Rehum, etc. (Ezra 4:7-8); Samballat, Tobiah, Geshem, the Arab (Neh. 4:7). What are some of the activities of these people which led to their being classified as God's enemies? They engage in: mocking

or ridiculing the people (Neh. 4:1); frustration (Ezra 4:4); false accusation (Neh. 2:19; Ezra 4:6); direct attack (Neh. 4:8.11); attempts aimed at eliminating key leaders like Nehemiah (Neh. 6:1-2); creating confusion and infightings (Neh. 5:1-5); frightening and intimidation the working Judeans (Neh. 6:9-10); and so on. On rather a subtle way, the opponents can make leaders very busy in order to lose concentration of the ministry. Therefore all leaders must be on guard against the operation of both spiritual and physical opponents.

But Satan, all fallen angels, and their human instruments followers will be completely destroyed in the Lake of fire (Matt. 25:41; 1 John 2:15-16; Rev. 20:10). Therefore, it is important and necessary to sound a word of warning to all faceless persons like wolves in sheep clothing whose 'modus operandi' is specifically to undermine church leaders. It does not pay to be used by the devil as a tool to negatively affect God's work. So the sooner such persons repent and become useful weapons for God's work the better, or their end would be with Satan and the demons in the Lake of fire.

God is your guide, provider, and protector

In all life events one cannot know how God works behind the scene in His timely guidance, gracious provisions, and excellent protection. Some books of the Bible sometimes give us snap-shots of how He did that for the nation of Israel. This is because the nation of Israel was (and still is) His and so were their wars. It was He who fought all their battles for them. God indeed had a hand in the victory of all the battles of every believer, and not only the Israelites. The book of Judges is one that can be trusted for such clear manifestations. It gives vivid pictures of the roles God played in the defeat of the enemies to prove His support for His chosen and obedient Judges.

A typical example of such operations of divine hand against the enemy is seen in the battle of Israel under Barak against the Canaanites. God through the Prophetess Deborah had assured Barak that He will give him victory over the extremely large and fearsome army of the Canaanites who had 900 iron chariots, and were led by an experienced commander, Sisera (Judges 4:4-7). But it is very interesting when one decides to find out the precise stage God began to rout such massive army. Understanding of this point is crucial in the interpretation of the victory of the Israelites over the Canaanites. For, how could Israelite foot soldiers defeat an army using chariots in a battle? Obviously, knowledge of the geography of the battlefield and a historical background of the event as discussed above will help any reader better understand the story and appreciate the role of God in controlling the affairs of humanity.

Mt. Tabor, the place of gathering of Barak's army is situated at one of the few entrances or exits of this region of the heartland called Jezreel. The plain land of this region, which was the battleground, is like a vast theatre with a clearly defined stage, having proper entrances and exits. The region, though low (or deep) relative to the surrounding mountainous region is about 300 feet above sea level, and presents a wide field which is shaped like an equilateral triangle with each side of about 20 miles long. Because of its level ground and location in an area that receives a moderate amount of rainfall, the Valley is prone to flooding.

The valley is drained by two rivers, the Kishon and the Harold. But inadequate drainage usually causes the problem of flooding of the valley such that large stretches of the Jezreel were never cultivated because of stagnant water. During raining season, it is known that the valley, especially in the region of the Kishon River, would become very muddy such

that travelers who passed there sometimes had some of their animals stuck up in the oozy bottom of the mud. Thus the place, no doubt, would not be easy for the passage of chariots during rainy periods. Despite the fact that Kedesh, the hometown of Barak, and Hazor, the seat of the Canaanite king, are both in the region of Upper Galilee, the battlefield was strategically moved by God from that region to this Valley.

If indeed it is the supernatural that controls the natural, then God, who is the supreme supernatural power of life controls all His creation. The passage in the book of Judges establishes the fact that God can alter both supernatural and natural forces in order that His purposes are established. This God is ready to act anytime man honors His word and steps out in absolute obedience. But there is no doubt that knowing the geographical background or context of biblical events helps the reader better understand and integrate the total message of the scriptures. In this passage, the valley comes out as an integral part of the biblical story of God's gracious intervention in the affairs of His people and His victory over their enemies.

Biblically and historically, Jezreel, a region of Palestine, represents a place where God's power over nature is revealed to the advantage of His people in times of trouble. It is a place where God through Ehud destroyed Jezebel and the house of Ahab in an attempt to end Baal worship in Israel (2 Kings 9: 30-37; 10:1-11). This background might have influenced the mention of the Valley, also called Armageddon (in Hebrew), as the battlefield of the nations, where God would finally overcome His enemies (Rev. 16:16).

The region of the Upper Galilee, with its high mountains and rugged ground would have offered a suitable battleground for the Canaanites who had the advantage of nine hundred iron chariots. But to cancel this advantage, God chose this valley. Thus, it was from the slopes of Mt. Tabor, one of the six

key military strategic places in the Valley that Barak launched his attack on the Canaanites who had gathered at the valley floor of the Kishon River. God decided to use a place which was muddy. How did God do it? Simple! Sisera had to be “lured by God” to move down to the valley since the ground was a definite disadvantage to the use of chariots during the time of rains (Judges 5:4, 20, 21). Because of His divine control over natural occurrences like rain, He was able to manipulate these and even the timing of such events.

The forgone narration from scriptures gives indication of what might have happened during the battle. Judges 5:20-21 reads: “...From the heavens the stars fought, from their courses they fought against Sisera. The River Kishon swept them away...” The first part of the quote gives an indication of what happened in the heavens. Though it might be understood and interpreted in a lot of allegorical ways, its literal meaning is seen in the proceeding statement. It tells of the heavens pouring down its content in the form of rain, as a result of which the Kishon River flooded and became muddy. This obviously made movement of the chariots of the enemy quite impossible and the chariots-riding army of the Canaanites had to abandon their machines and tried to flee. In the end, most of the charioteers were drowned in the process, and thus the Israelites defeated the Canaanites. This indeed is how God fights the believer’s battles both spiritually and physically.

This demonstration of the hand of God in the victory of Prophetess Deborah and Barak’s against the Canaanites is a typical example of how God helps His people in time of trouble when they turn to Him. God is prepared to stand behind all of His ordained leaders in the struggles and battles to bring divine transformation to society. So transformational leaders should never be afraid of the numerous physical and demonic attacked directed against them to frustrate or destroy them or cause

them to abandon their good works. Definitely, their effort might face challenges, but they are there to toughen those who are determined to reach the end. Surely, the battle is the Lords.

This, notwithstanding, all churches and other Christian organizations can experience a healthy growth if the leaders themselves are equipped to win the battle against Satan through God's power. Apostle Paul describes in most of his writings the weapons needed to defend and offend Satan's advances. These include prayer, fasting, the word of God, and faithfulness to the practice of the spiritual disciplines, which Nehemiah, Zerubbabel, and their colleagues used to counter the attacks of the enemies. Transformational leaders should build up self encouragement (Neh. 2:20), develop extreme boldness and readiness to resist the enemy (Neh. 6:11), and engage in continuous prayer and watchfulness (Neh. 4:9, 13-14). Each leader should be encouraged to hold fast and make effective use of these weapons to overcome Satan's schemes. Additionally, the leaders should be supported to arrange for intercessors to help in prayer. Overall, it is important to develop 'thick skin' as a transformational leader in order to overcome Satan's attacks through criticisms.

CHAPTER 24

YES, YOU CAN DO ALL THINGS

When Apostle Paul said: “I can do everything through him who gives me strength” (Phillip. 4:13), he was affecting the mind of every Bible believer to positive action. He was calling on all to accept the challenge to do exploit as empowered by God. The ministry of God which was defined by the Lord Jesus, modeled by the work of the Apostles, defended by the messages of scripture, is still championing the transformation of people into Christ-likeness. The fire of this transformation has never quenched. It began with the 1st Century Church, continued with some churches over the centuries, and is happening in some churches in most of the developing community countries in many parts of the globe, including West Africa particularly Ghana. And the fire of this positive transformation should be allowed to continue burning.

God is still searching

God is looking for transformational leader like Abraham, who left his family, people and country because God called him to another destination, or Isaac who survived and multiplied greatly in the period of famine because he obeyed Gods voice, or Jacob who wrestled with both God and man and prevailed so that his destiny was changed, or Joseph who suffered for his fear of God and was lifted to an exalted position in a foreign land, or Caleb who silenced a rebellious multitude and gained the approval of God, or Joshua who remained faithful in the service of his master and led Israel to conquer the Promise Land, or Deborah who stood as a mother and a voice when even men were afraid and silent, or Gideon who stood and destroyed the household gods because he had encountered

the true God, or Samson who prayed for on more strength to complete his divine assignment of defeating the Philistines, or Ruth, who declared faith in Israel's God against the gods of her country, Moab.

Yes, the eyes of the LORD are still searching for transformational leader like Samuel who championed the prophetic school (or guild) in Israel in order to bring sanity to the priesthood and the whole nation, or David who faced Goliath when all the men of Israel including King Saul were afraid, or Elijah who stood as a lone voice against baalism and turned a whole nation back to God, or Elisha who claimed a double portion of God's anointing for service, or Jeremiah who opposed about four consecutive kings of Judah because they were rebellious to the commandment of God, or Daniel who served as a public administrator and yet defied any form of corruption, or Paul who championed Christianity not only in a jealous Jewish environment but a hostile Gentile world?

God is looking up to you

Like in the days of the Old Testament, the power of evil of this world has become like a Goliath and has conquered lots of Christians already. But scripture reveals that when all Israel was running away from the giant from Philistine, Goliath, David stepped forward in zeal and said, "...I can fight him" (1 Sam. 17: 12-16; 28-33). In the same way, somebody has to become a David to step out in the name and anointing of God to conquer and transform the world for Christ. God is not looking up to anybody but you. Take note of the following:

- God knew you before you were born (Jer. 1:7).
- God has a definite plan/destiny for you (Jer. 29:11).
- God has anointed you for divine purposes, and wants you to stand for Him (1 Sam. 17:12-16; 28-33).

- Be bold and do not be afraid (mentioned five times in Jos. 1:6, 7, 9).
- God will keep you from harm (1 Sam 23:14).
- Like David, God will help you to defeat every giant (Goliath).
- God will exalt and use you to bring glory to Him (Jos. 3:7).

Do you have zeal to God and pursue His good and acceptable and perfect will for humanity in this generation? The Lord wants you to respond and say, “Yes I can be a transformational leader and do exploits for the Lord.” If you are ready, the LORD is ready to equip you to perform. If you allow God to rekindle His anointing in you, you will be able to fulfill His purposes and plans for you in life.

Just accept the challenge and step out

It is your turn to accept the challenge as God's transformational leader and let the wave of true transformation become experienced within and around you. Yes, you have to, and indeed, you can. Leaders are also very happy to see a continuity and expansion of their vision. But nothing can be much more heart-breaking than to see that your efforts have gone waste. What happened to Israel at Kadesh-barnea when they were at the brink of stepping to the Promised Land (Num. 13-14)? Why did Israel spend 40 years before reaching the Promised Land? Why did only Joshua and Caleb inherit God's promises? The answer to these questions is simple. When the people were rescued from slavery in Egypt and led to the brink of the Promised Land, that generation could not possess the land with the exception of only Joshua and Caleb, because the majority said they cannot go to the land. They became the transformational leaders of their generation.

Is your own Christian life transformed enough? Are you satisfied with the level of transformation in your family,

acquaintances, place of work, community, etc? Is God pleased with your level of your Christian influence in such areas? Will any work you are doing for the LORD survive when you are out of the scene? If any of your answers to the preceding questions is “no,” then there is still much to be done. And you have to wise up and rise up to the challenges of transformation. Like Joshua or Caleb, you can say, “Yes I can possess God’s promises.” Indeed, the captivating slogan of your spiritual campaign should be: **Yes I can.** I believe this motivational slogan came from the scripture, and we also need to explore it. For, “If you are willing and obedient, you will eat the best of the land...” (Isa. 1:18).

Above all, you need a different spirit, “**a can do spirit**” in order to be successful as a transformational leader (Num. 13:31-33; 14:8-9, 24). This is as a result of the following:

- “A can do spirit” sees God’s promises: You can only possess what you see/dream of/visualize/think of. So you need a spirit that can see God’s promise.
- “A can do spirit” accepts God’s promises: You can only possess what you accept as a promise to you. So you need a spirit that can accept God’s promise.
- “A can do spirit” speaks God’s promises: What you want to possess is what you think and speak about. So you need a spirit that can speak God’s promise.
- “A can do spirit” ‘walks’ God’s promises: What you speak is what you should work towards. So you need a spirit that can walk God’s promise.
- “A can do spirit” never retreats but fights for God’s promises: What you cherish most, you must be prepared to fight for it. So you need a spirit that can fight for God’s promises, and not retreat from the promises because of enemies.
- God has already given you His promise that no one will be able to stand against you because God He is with you (Jos.

1:1-5). You only need to be careful to obey God's word or the promptings of the Holy Spirit (Jos. 1:8).

Indeed, everyplace that you step into, or anything that you are led by the Spirit to do, God will make you succeed (Jos. 1:3). So do not be afraid (mentioned 5 times; Jos. 1:6, 7, 9). So, what promises have God made to you? Do you really want to appropriate, experience, and fulfill all of His promises in your life? With these principles in mind, you can definitely possess God's promises as a transformational leader.

Blessing awaits anyone who responds

Like any good venture, there is eternal reward for a worthy service as God's transformational leader. There are rewards and privileges in the present life as well as the next (1 Tim. 4:8). Those who do good work for the Lord will enjoy some earthly blessings even before they reach Heaven. Scripture is replete with personalities who were blessed for their faithfulness to the course of God: Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, David, Mordecai, Queen Esther, and so on. Similarly, the investment of your life to achieve transformation will lead to growth, and you can be assured that your vision will survive and bear fruits (John 15:16). One of the many benefits that a leader may get for useful service is inner satisfaction: The greatest joy that a person can experience is to see that your labor is bearing fruits: there is inner satisfaction.

Definitely, persecution and trials are part of the benefits of faithful service so leaders and believers in general should expect them (Mark 10:29-30). But the mother of all blessings for faithful service is what the Lord Jesus Christ has promised you in Heaven when believers meet Him; Honor, eternal life and a crown of righteousness (2 Tim. 4:8). This is when the Lord Jesus Christ would say, "Well done faithful servant..." If the above is what you want to hear when you appear

before the Lord Jesus Christ then accept the challenge as a transformational leader and continue to serve Him.

People who see themselves as purpose and vision-driven transformational agents are able to seriously investigate the factors that have impeded their expected progress in the past. Subsequently, they come out with measures to overcome these stumbling blocks. In the light of God's expectation, and for the purposes of accountability, therefore, it is necessary that leaders rise above any personal interests and pursue collective goals with alacrity in order that their visions are not lost. The readiness to "take the bull by the horn," in order to ensure that victory for the Church of God is fulfilled should be a clarion call to every seriously minded leader. Any kind of inert attitude on the part of leaders will not lead anywhere.

It is in the light of the above that I am pleading with all of us never to relax or give up until a bright future for the churches and the needed transformation of most churches is fully achieved. Surely, the cost for forward march would be heavy but I can assure every leader that the result and the reward from the Lord would be great. Thus, leaders should accept and face the challenges ahead. While challenging the leadership of the churches and ministries, let me also use this opportunity to inspire all of us as individuals to press on in the pursuit of our personal visions in life.

If you and all other Christian leaders really want to move the Church and the larger society forward and experience positive transformation, then there are more issues to deal with than what just meets the eyes. I have no doubt that with God on our side success will be ours and the body of Christ will see progress. Otherwise, one may not want to be a prophet of doom, but from the premises of a heavy spiritual burden, I dare to say that if you do not become sensitive to the present

stagnation in the ministry of God and take immediate and pragmatic steps to bring the needed transformation, then only God knows the kind of “holy revolution” that may save it.

It is my prayer that wherever one has reached in life and ministry, the person will strive to ‘break camp’ and press on to move the Church to the “next level.” This calls a lot of discretion in addressing all church issues. But the time for action is now (1 Peter 1:13). The challenge is that no true transformational agent of God will ever sit unconcerned. There should be a means to resist and overcome the many temptations and vices that are eating up the Church and chart a course for godliness. But you should remember to acknowledge God’s purpose and remember to do everything to His glory, just as His word admonishes us to do (Col. 3:17). **Yes you can!**

May God bless all of us and continue to strengthen us to lives worthy of transformation. To Him alone is the glory now and forevermore.

ENDNOTES

INTRODUCTION

1. The various translations used in this presentation are; NIV- New International Version; KJV-King James Version; NAB-New American Bible; NAS- New American Standard Bible; RSV- Revised Standard Version; and NLT- New Living Translation. Unless otherwise stated, all text will be from the NIV.

CHAPTER 1

2. Thomas O. Scarborough 2010. Defining Christian Transformational Leadership *Conspectus* 10:63-64.
3. Ibid, p. 77-78.
4. Ibid, p .58.
5. Manuel Adjei, B., and Joseph Nsiah. Old Testament History I (Handout prepared by Ghana Christian University College), 2002.
6. Ibid.

CHAPTER 2

7. Adjei, and Nsiah.

CHAPTER 3

8. Robert Richardson. Memories of Alexander Campbell. (Vol. 1) (Cincinnati, Standard. Pub. Co, 1890), p. 258.
9. Charles C. Ryrie Basic Theology: A Popular Systematic Guide to Understanding Biblical Truth. (Chicago, Moody Press, 1999), p. 455.
10. Ryrie, 455
11. David Couch. "Something is better than nothing; The History of Ghana Christian College and Seminary." (A thesis presented to Graduate School, Feb. 1985), p. 9.
12. Manuel Adjei. 40 years of High Impact ministry: The story of GCUC. (Accra: GCUC, 2006), p. 6.
13. Ibid. p. 7.

CHAPTER 4

14. Finis Jennings Dake. Dake's Annotated Reference Bible. (Lawrenceville: Georgia, Dake Publishing, Inc., 2006), (NT section), p. 371.

CHAPTER 5

15. Bill Hull. 7 Steps to Transform your Church. (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Fleming H. Revell, 1997), p. 11.
16. Christian A. Schwarz. Natural Church Development: A Guide to Eight Essential Qualities of Healthy Churches. (Ohio, U.S.A.: ChurchSmart Resource, 1996.), p. 12-14.
17. Schwarz, 15-39.

18. Ofori, S. K. "How My Work Fulfills God's Purpose," A Talk during Transformational Week, Ghana Christian University College, Accra; November, 2010.

CHAPTER 6

19. Dake, p. 60.
20. Scarborough, p. 67-68.
21. "Teaching on Leadership," Thursday 5:30pm Teaching Series, Gordon Kisseih, TV3, Accra, Ghana, 28/07/2011.
22. Ibid.

CHAPTER 7

23. Roadcup.
24. Webster's New Dictionary of the American Language
25. Murphy, Jim. and Murphy Carolyn. (The Pastor and the Prophet in Today's Church. San Diego, Hundredfold Press; 1994), p. 135.
26. Ibid. p. 157.
27. Nelson Ahlijah. "Understanding and giving attention to the context." A presentation by Dean of School of Theology, Ghana Christian University College, Accra, 7/08/2009.
28. Ibid.

CHAPTER 8

29. Manuel B Adjei and Joseph Nsiah. Old Testament History: (GCUC Course Handout, 2000), p. 1.
30. Davis, John J. and Whitcomb, John C. A History of Israel: From Conquest to Exile. (Grand Rapids, Baker Books, 1980), pp.189.
31. Leon Wood. A Survey of Israel's History. (Grand Rapids, Michigan, Zondervan, 1970.), p. 231.
32. Ibid.
33. Ibid, p. 332.

CHAPTER 9

34. Stephen A. Macchia. Becoming a Healthy Church: 10 Traits of a Vital Ministry. (Grand Rapids: Michigan, 2006), p.16
35. David Roadcup. "Characteristics of a Healthy Church." [Class Lecture], Cincinnati Christian University, Cincinnati: OH, Fall, 2006.
36. Ken Blanchard and Phil Hodges. The Servant Leader: (Nashville, Tennessee: Countryman, 2003), p. 18
37. Roadcup.
38. Ibid.

CHAPTER 10

39. Maxwell, John. The Pastor's Most Valuable Partner. (Spiritual Formation Class Lecture), Audio Visual version, Date assessed: September 21, 2006.
40. Ibid.

CHAPTER 11

41. Dale Galloway. The Small Group Book. (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Fleming H. Revell, 1995), 113-114.
42. Blanchard, and Hodges, 24.
43. Wilson, 60.
44. Tidwell, 113.
45. Roadcup.
46. Rick Warren. The Purpose Driven Church: Growth without Compromising your Message & Mission. (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 1995), p. 77-83
47. Charles A. Tidwell. Church Administration: Effective Leadership for Ministry. (Nashville, Tennessee: Broadman Press, 1985), p. 58
48. Cult W. Nordhielm. "59th National Missionary Convention of Christian Churches and Churches of Christ." [President's address]. (Indianapolis, Indiana, November 16-19, 2006)
49. Marlene Wilson. How to mobilize Church Volunteers. (Minneapolis: Augsburg Pub. House, 1983), 67-83 (Note: This was prepared for volunteers but has been modified for my purpose.)
50. Roadcup.
51. Warren, 28

CHAPTER 12

52. J. D. Douglas, and Merrill C. Tenney New International Dictionary of the Bible (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1963), p. 390.
53. William McRac. Dynamics of Spiritual Gifts (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publication, 1976), p. 18.
54. R. H. Boll. Lessons from the Romans (Louisville: The Word and Work Press), p. 53.
55. R. E. Harlow. Alive and Free: Studies in Romans (Scarborough: Everyday Pub. Inc., 1972), p. 103.
56. Ryrie, p. 355.
57. Ibid, p. 417-18

CHAPTER 13

58. D. Guthrie, and J. A. Motyer. New Bible Commentary (3rd Ed) (Michigan IVP, 1970), p. 1041.
59. Guthrie and Motyer, 1041.
60. J. W. Mac-Gorman. Layman's Bible Book Commentary: Romans and I Corinthians (Nashville, Broadman Press, 1980), p. 85.
61. Mac-Gorman, p 85
62. William Barclays. The Daily Study Bible: the Letter to the Romans (Rev. Ed) (Edinburgh: The Saint Andrew Press 1976), p. 170.
63. John William. The Holy Spirit (New Jersey: Loizeaux Brothers, 1980), p. 95.
64. Keith McCalslin. What the Bible says about miracles (Jophin: College Press, 1988), p. 184.
65. W. H. Griffiths. The Holy Spirit of God (1972), p. 48.
66. B. B. Warfield. Counterfeit Miracles (1972), p. 3, 21.

67. David Lipscomb. A Commentary on the New Testament Epistles (Tennessee: Gospel Advocate Company, 1969), p. 201.
68. John MacArthur, Jnr. The Charismatic (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1978), p. 18.
69. Calvin Katter. Ye shall receive power (Minneapolis: 1978), p. 48.
70. Charles Ryrie. The Holy Spirit (Chicago: Moody Press, 1965), p. 83.
71. J. D. Douglas. New Bible Dictionary (Leicester: Inter Varsity Press, 1962), p. 1130.
72. G. W. Bromiley. The Holy Spirit: fundamentals of the faith, p. 159.
73. Reinhard Bonnke. Mighty Manifestations (Eastbourne: Kingsway Publication, 1994)
74. Charles W. Carter. The Person and Ministry of the Holy Spirit: A Wesleyan Perspective (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1974), p. 258.

CHAPTER 15

75. Manuel B Adjei and Joseph Nsiah. p. 137-140.

CHAPTER 16

76. John A. Attubiga. "Living Right with God," A Preaching at chapel, GCUC, Accra, Nov., 2009.

CHAPTER 17

77. George S. Abugri, "Letter To Jomo: The Rapper, The Priest And The Reporter." Daily Graphic, 26/08/2011, p. 7.
78. Ibid.
79. Seth J. Bokpe, "My Turn: Men Of God' On The Loose," The Mirror Saturday, 13/08/2011, p. 15.
80. Ibid.
81. Fidelia Achama, "Pastor In Court For Defrauding Footballers." Daily Guide, 19/08/2011, p. 15.
82. Bokpe. p. 15.
83. Morgan Owusu, "The Obinim Love Tape: Blow By Blow." Daily Guide, 15/08/2011, p. 1, 7; Rocklyn Antonio, "Bishop Obinim Weeps." Daily Guide, 10/08/2011, p. 1, 3; Mary Mensah, "Bishop Obinim Runs Amok. Leads Demolition Squad To Hot Fm." Daily Graphic, 10/08/2011, p. 1, 3; Kofi Yeboah, "Obinim Apologises For Behaviour At Hot FM." Daily Graphic, 11/08/2011, p. 1, 35; Blessing Nakujah, "Flex Gospel Corner With Nakujah Blessing: Kantamanto Marketers Destroys Obinim's Miraculous CD's." Flex Newspaper, 17/ 08/2011, p. 7; Bokpe, p. 15.
84. Samuel Kyei Boateng, "Pastor Rapes 5 Sisters, Claims On Orders Of "Holy Spirit." Daily Graphic, 18/08/2011, p. 1, 3.
85. Antonio, p. 1, 3.
86. Mensah, p. 1, 3.
87. Abugri, p. 7.
88. Nakujah, p. 7.

CHAPTER 18

89. Samuel Kanda. "The Character of a Christian" A Preaching at chapel, GCUC, Accra, November 17, 2009.

90. Justine Senuvie. "What is Fellowship," A Preaching at chapel, GCUC, Accra, September. 2009.
91. Dennis W Bakke, (www.DennisBakke.com).

CHAPTER 19

92. Galloway, 9
93. Schwarz, 29.
94. Peter C. Wagner. Strategies for Church Growth: Tools for Effective Missions and Evangelism, Ventura, California: Regal Books, 1987, p. 116.
95. Macchia, p. 135.
96. Roadcup.
97. Wagner, 73-74.
98. Roadcup.

CHAPTER 20

99. "Christians Urged To Fight Gay Menace." Daily Graphic, 12/08/2011, p. 29.

CHAPTER 21

100. "Christian Submission." (The life of faith; http://www.pbministries.org/book/pink/life_of_faith/faith_09.htm, assessed; October 12, 2006).

CHAPTER 22

101. Cambridge International Dictionary of English
102. John K. Avorgah. Notes on Conflicts Resolution and Management (Ghana Christian University College, Accra Ghana.), 9/24/2010, p. 7-8.
103. Ibid.

REFERENCES

- Abugri, George S. "Letter To Jomo: The Rapper, the Priest and the Reporter." Daily Graphic, 26/08/2011.
- Achama, Fidelia. "Pastor in Court for defrauding Footballers." Daily Guide, 19/08/2011.
- Adjei, Manuel. 40years of High Impact ministry: The story of GCUC. Accra: GCUC, 2006.
- _____ and Nsiah, Joseph. Old Testament History I (Handout prepared by Ghana Christian University College), 2002.
- Ahlijah, N. "Understanding and giving attention to the context," quoted from a presentation by Dr. Victor Nakah, on "The Relevance of Theological Institutions in 21st Century"; Lecture Notes - OCI Institute of Excellence: South Africa, June 2006.
- Alford, Henry. The New Testament for English Readers. Chicago Moody Press
- Antonio, Rocklyn. "Bishop Obinim Weeps." Daily Guide, 10/08/2011.
- Applebury, T. R. Studies in First and Second Corinthians. Missouri: College Press, 1963.
- Attubiga, John A. "Living Right with God:" A Preaching at chapel, Ghana Christian University College, Accra, 2009.
- Avorgah, John K. Notes on Conflicts Resolution and Management (A handout prepared by Ghana Christian University College, Accra Ghana), 2010.
- Barclay, William. The Daily Study Bible: the Letter to the Romans. (Rev. Ed) Edinburgh: The Saint Andrew Press, 1975.
- _____ The Daily Study Bible: the Letter to the Romans (Rev. Ed). Edinburgh: The Saint Andrew Press 1976.
- _____ The Daily Study Bible: the letter to the Romans. Edinburgh: The Saint Andrew Press, 1979.
- _____ The Daily study Bible: The Letter to Timothy. Edinburgh, Saint Andrew Press; 1976.
- _____ The Daily Study Bible: The Letter to Titus. Edinburgh: Saint Andrew Press; 1977.
- Barker, Kenneth. NIV Study Bible. Zondervan Pub. House, 1984.
- Beasley-Murray, G. R, "The Revelation" in the New Bible Commentary. (Rev. Ed) Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1970.
- Blanchard, Ken, and Hodges, Phil. The Servant Leader. Nashville,

- Tennessee: Countryman, 2003.
- Boer, Harry R. The Book of Revelation. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1975.
- Bokpe, Seth J. "My Turn: Men Of God' On The Loose," The Mirror Saturday, 13/08/2011.
- Boll, R. H. Lessons from the Romans. Louisville: The Word and Work Press.
- Bonnke, Reinhard. Mighty Manifestations. Eastbourne: Kingsway Publication, 1994.
- Brauer, Jerald C. The Westminster Dictionary of Church History. Philadelphia: Westminster Press.
- Bromiley, G. W. The Holy Spirit: fundamentals of the faith.
- Bruce F. F. The Epistle of John. Edinburgh: Eerdmans Publishing Company. 1980.
- Bruce, F. F. The International Bible Commentary. (rev. ed) Michigan: Zondervan Publishing. House, 1986.
- Bucke, Emory, S. The Interpreter Dictionary of the Bible. (vol. 4) Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1962.
- Butler, Paul T. Studies in Second Corinthians. Joplin, Missouri: College Press, 1988. p. 404-409.
- Carson, D. A. New Bible Commentary. (21st century ed) Leicester IVP, 1953.
- Carter, W. Charles. The Person and Ministry of the Holy Spirit: A Wesleyan Perspective. Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1974.
- Couch, David. "Something is better than nothing; The History of Ghana Christian College and Seminary." (A thesis presented to Graduate School), Feb. 1985.
- "Christian Submission." The life of faith; http://www.pbministries.org/book/pink/life_of_faith/faith_09.htm. Assessed; October 12, 2006.
- "Christians Urged To Fight Gay Menace." *Daily Graphic*, 12/08/2011, p 29.
- Dake, Finis Jennings. Dake's Annotated Reference Bible. Lawrenceville: Georgia, Dake Publishing, Inc., 2006.
- Davis, John J. and Whitcomb, John C. A History of Israel: From Conquest to Exile. Grand Rapids, Baker Books, 1980.
- "Discipline," The NIV Exhaustive Concordance. Zondervan, Corp, Harper Collins Pub, 1990.
- "Discipline," Word Biblical Commentary. Nashville, Thomas Nelson Pub, 1998.
- Dunkin, J. E. Commentary on Romans. Missouri: College Press Pub. Co.,

- 1960.
- Evans, Williams. The Great Doctrine of the Bible. Chicago: Moody Press, 1912.
- Ericson, J. Millard. Christian Theology. Michigan: Baker Book House, 1985.
- Ferguson, B. S. and Wright, D. F. New Dictionary of Theology. Leicester: IVP, 1988.
- "Galatia." New Bible Dictionary. Ed J. D. Douglas. Leicester: IVP, 1962.
- "Galatia." New International Dictionary of the Bible. Ed. J. D. Douglas and Merrill C. Tenney. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1963.
- Galloway, Dale. The Small Group Book. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Fleming H. Revell, 1995.
- Griffiths, W. H. The Holy Spirit of God. 1972
- Guthrie, D, and Motyer, J. A. New Bible Commentary. (3rd ed) Michigan IVP, 1970.
- Halley, H, Henry. Halley's Bible Handbook. Michigan: Zondervan, 1965.
- Hamilton, Floyd. The Basis of Millennial Faith. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1942.
- Hans, Jonas. The Gnostics Religion and Ethics. Beacon Press, 1963.
- Hanson, A. T. The New Century Bible Commentary: The Pastoral Epistles. London: Marshal, Morgan and Scott Publication Limited, 1982.
- Harlow, R. E. Alive and Free: Studies in Romans. Scarborough: Everyday Pub. Inc., 1972.
- Hastings, James. Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics. (vol. 3) Edinburgh: The Scholar Press, Ukley, 1981.
- Hendrickson, William. More than Conquers. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House. 1939.
- Henry, Matthew. Commentary on the Whole Bible. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 1960.
- Henry, Matthew. Matthew Henry's Commentary On The Whole Bible (vol. III). Job – Songs of Solomon, Flemming H. Revell Comp.
- Hull, Bill. 7 Steps to Transform your Church. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Fleming H. Revell, 1997.
- International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia. (vol. B) Grand Rapids, Michigan.
- "Jude." New Bible Dictionary. Ed. J. D. Douglas. Leicester: IVP, 1962.
- "Jude." New International Dictionary of the Bible. Ed. J. D. Douglas and Merrill Tenney. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1963.

- Kanda, Samuel. "The Character of a Christian." A Preaching at chapel, Ghana Christian University College, Accra, 2009.
- Katter, Calvin. Ye shall receive power. Minneapolis: 1978.
- Kelley, Robin. An Introduction to the Christian Faith. (new ed) Oxford: Lynx Co., 1992.
- Kelly, J. N. D. A Commentary on the Pastoral Epistles. Grand Rapids: Baker Books House, Michigan, 1963.
- Kelly, J. N. D. A Commentary on the Epistles of Peter and Jude. Michigan: Baker Book House, 1969.
- Kyei, Boateng, S. "Pastor rapes 5 sisters, claims on orders of "Holy Spirit." Daily Graphic, 18/08/2011.
- Laird, Harris. A., Archer, Gleason L. Jr. and Waltke, Bruce K. Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament. Chicago: Moody Press, 1980.
- Lipscomb, David. A Commentary on the New Testament Epistles. Tennessee: Gospel Advocate Company, 1969.
- Lipscomb, David. A Commentary on the New Testament Epistles. (vol. 3) Nashville: Gospel Advocate Company, 1968.
- Lane, William L. A call to Commitment.
- Macchia, Stephen A. Becoming a Healthy Church: 10 Traits of a Vital Ministry. Grand Rapids: Michigan, 2006.
- MacArthur, Jnr., John. The Charismatic. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1978.
- Mac-Gorman. J. W. Layman's Bible Book Commentary: Romans and I Corinthians. Nashville, Broadman Press, 1980.
- Mackintosh, C. H. The Mackintosh Treasury. (one vol. 1st ed) Dillenburg: Loizeaux Brothers Inc. 1976.
- Marshall, Howard. The Epistle of John. Michigan: Eerdmanns Publishing Company, 1978.
- Marshall, Howard. The New International Commentary of the New Testament: The Epistle of John. Michigan: Eerdmanns Publishing Company, 1978.
- Maxwell, John. "The Pastor's Most Valuable Partner." (Audio Visual version) Date assessed: September 21, 2006.
- McCalslin, Keith. What the Bible says about miracles. Jophin: College Press, 1988.
- McDowell, Josh. Evidence that demands a Verdict. Bucks: Scripture Press, 1972.
- McNutt, R. W. Policy and Practice in Baptist Churches. Philadelphia: Judson, 1935.
- McRac, William. Dynamics of Spiritual Gifts. Grand Rapids: Zondervan

- Publication, 1976.
- Mensah, Mary. "Bishop Obinim runs amok; leads demolition squad to Hot FM." Daily Graphic, 10/08/2011.
- Mock, Derris. Church History Survey. Atlanta: 1991.
- Morris, Leon. Tyndale New Testament Commentary: The First Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians. London: Tyndale Press, 1958.
- Mounce, Robert H. The Book of Revelation: The New International Commentary on the New Testament. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans Publishing Company; 1988.
- Murphy, Jim. and Carolyn. An International Minister's Manual. San Diego: Hundredfold Press; 2000.
- Murphy, Jim. and Carolyn. The Pastor and the Prophet in Today's Church. San Diego: Hundredfold Press; 1994.
- Murray, Gary. "Evangelical Ministries Magazines." (vol. 10 No. 120) Illinois: Chicago Publishing House; 1997.
- New International Dictionary of the Bible. Ed. J. D. Douglas, and Merrill C. Tenney. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1963.
- New Bible Dictionary. Ed. J. D. Douglas. Leicester: Inter Varsity Press, 1962.
- Nordhielm, Cult W. "59th National Missionary Convention of Christian Churches and Churches of Christ." [President's address] Indianapolis, Indiana, November 16-19, 2006.
- Nakujah, Blessing. "Flex Gospel Corner with Nakujah Blessing: Kantamanto Marketers destroys Obinim's miraculous CD's." Flex Newspaper, 17/ 08/2011.
- Ofori, S. K. "How My Work Fulfills God's Purpose:" A Talk during Transformational Week, Ghana Christian University College, Accra; November, 2010.
- Owusu, Morgan. "The Obinim Love Tape: blow by blow." Daily Guide, 15/08/2011.
- Peake, Arthur, S. A Commentary on the Bible. London: Thomas Nelson and Sons Limited, 1919.
- "Peter." New Bible Dictionary. Ed. J. D, Douglas. Leicester: IVP, 1962.
- "Peter." New International Dictionary of the Bible. Ed. J. D. Douglas, and Merrill Tenney. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1963.
- Reese, Gareth L. New Testament Epistle: A Critical and Exegetical Commentary. Missouri: 520 Meadowbrook Drive Moberly, 1962.
- "Rebuke", The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia (vol. IV) James Orr (Editor). Michigan, Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1939 2535).

- "Rebuke", The NIV Exhaustive Concordance, Goodrick, Edward W, and Kohlenberaer John R. III (Editors), Auckland, Hodder and Stoughton, 1990 (Pg 933-34).
- "Resurrection." Unger's Bible Dictionary. (3rd ed) Ed. Merrill F. Unger. Chicago: Moody Press, 1957.
- "Resurrection." The New International Dictionary of the Bible. (pictorial ed) Ed. J. D. Douglas. Rapids: Zondervan, 1963.
- Richardson, Robert. Memories of Alexander Campbell. (vol. 1) Cincinnati, Standard. Pub. Co., 1890.
- Roadcup, David. "Characteristics of a Healthy Church." [Lecture] Cincinnati Christian University, Cincinnati: OH, Fall, 2006.
- Robbins, Ray, Frank. The Revelation of Jesus Christ: The commentary on the book of Revelation. Nashville, Tennessee: Broadman Press, 1975.
- "Romans." New International Dictionary of the Bible. Ed. J.D. Douglas, and M.C. Tenney. Rapids: Zondervan, 1963.
- Ryrie, Charles C. Basic Theology: A Popular Systematic Guide to Understanding Biblical Truth. Colorado: Chariot Victor Publishing, 1981, 1986, 1999.
- Ryrie, Charles. The Holy Spirit. Chicago: Moody Press, 1965.
- Scarborough, Thomas O. Defining Christian Transformational Leadership. *Conspectus* 2010, 10:58-87.
- Schwarz, Christian A. Natural Church Development: A Guide to Eight Essential Qualities of Healthy Churches. Ohio, U.S.A.: ChurchSmart Resource, 1996.
- Senuvie, Justine. "What is Fellowship:" A Preaching at chapel, Ghana Christian University College, Accra, 2009.
- Smith, Wilber M. The New Testament and Wycliffe Bible Commentary. New York: The Wersen-Norman Associates, 1973.
- Spain, Carl. The Living Word Commentary: The Letters of Paul to Timothy and Titus. Texas: Abilene Christian University Press, 1970.
- "Spiritual Gifts." New Bible Dictionary. Ed. Marshall, et al. Leicester; IVP, 1996.
- Stott, R.W. John. The Bible Speaks today: The Message of Romans. Leicester: IVP, 1994.
- "Teaching on Leadership." Thursday 5:30pm Teaching Series. Gordon Kisseih. TV3, Accra, Ghana, 28/07/2011.
- Tidwell, Charles A. Church Administration: Effective Leadership for Ministry. Nashville, Tennessee: Broadman Press, 1985.

The Amplified Bible. Michigan: Zondervan, 1965.
The Hebrew-Greek Key Study Bible (NIV). Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers, 1996.
The Interlinear Bible: Hebrew-Greek-English. (one volume edition). Lafayette Indiana: Sovereign Grace Publishers, 1984.
The NIV Life Application Bible: Colorado, International Bible Society, 1978.
The NIV Study Bible. Michigan: (Zondervan), Grand Rapids, 1978.
The NIV Holy Bible. Colorado, International Bible Society, 1973.
The NIV Hebrew-Greek Key Study Bible. Colorado International: Bible society, 1973.
The NIV Hebrew- Greek Key Study Bible. Chattanooga: AMG Publisher, 1996.
Unger's Bible Dictionary. Ed. Merrill F. Unger. Chicago: Moody Press, 1967.
Vine, W. E. An Expository Dictionary of the New Testament. New Jersey: Fleming H. Revel Company, 1940.
Wagner, Peter C. Strategies for Church Growth: Tools for Effective Missions and Evangelism. Ventura, California: Regal Books, 1987.
Wall, Robert W. New Bible Commentary: Revelation. Massachusetts: Hendrickson Publication, 1993.
Walvoord, John F. and Zuck, Ray B. The Bible Knowledge Commentary. USA: Scripture Press Pub. Inc., 1988.
Warfield, B. B. Counterfeit miracles. 1972.
Warren, Rick. The Purpose Driven Church: Growth without Compromising your Message & Mission. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 1995.
Webster's New Dictionary of the American Language.
Wilson, Marlene. How to Mobilize Church Volunteers. Minneapolis: Augsburg Pub. House, 1983.
Wiersbe, W. W. Be Hopeful: A Bible Study on First Peter. Wheaton: Victor Books, 1982.
William, John. The Holy Spirit. New Jersey: Loizeaux Brothers, 1980.
Wilmington, H. L. Wilmington's Guide to the Bible (new ed). Katunayake, Sri Lanka: (New Life Literature) Tyndale House Pub. 1989.
Woods, Guy N. A commentary of the epistle of James.
Wood, Leon. A Survey of Israel's History. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 1970.
WTT BHS Hebrew Old Testament [copied from BibleWorks.com – [c:\program file\bibleworks 7\init\bw700.swc].
Yeboah, Kofi. "Obinim apologises for behaviour at Hot FM." Daily Graphic, 11/08/2011.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

James Yamoah is a Lecturer of Old Testament Studies and Biblical Hebrew at Ghana Christian University College (GhanaCU). He is the Dean of Students and also the Minister-in-Charge of the Campus Fellowship of the University College. He has travelled the length and breadth of Ghana as a preacher and speaker at Seminars and many Youth Conferences. He has also preached at some churches in Ohio and Maryland, in the United States.

Besides Pastoral ministry, James who is also affectionately called JY by his students and colleagues is a prolific writer. In **Can You Be God's Transformational Leader? Yes You Can!** he engages the basics of scriptures to lay a solid foundation for the transformation of individuals, and churches at any stage, into growing and healthy ones. The message of this book is not only inspiring but also informative and educative. James has also authored other books including the following:

- **Always Ready: Over 150 Messages To Help You Study, Teach, Preach, & Live The Bible Systematically**
- **Pacesetters of Divine Ministry: Let us learn from them!**
- **Amazing Grace: A Guide To Spiritual Formation & Disciplines**
- **Suffer to Gain: How the Righteous should overcome Difficult Times**
- **A Model for Hebrew - English Translation and Application: The Biblical Hebrew Student's Companion**

All classes of Church leaders, workers, and Christians in general will find a lot of fulfillment in the living message that flows from the gracious teaching ministry of James. Amen.

1. ¹ **Note:** The various translations used in this presentation are; NIV- New International Version; KJV-King James Version; NAB-New American Bible; NAS- New American Standard Bible; RSV- Revised Standard Version; and NLT- New Living Translation.
-

² Thomas O. Scarborough 2010. *Defining Christian Transformational Leadership* *Conspectus* 10:63-64.

³ Ibid, p.77-78.

⁴ Ibid, p .58.

⁵ Adjei, Manuel B., and Nsiah, Joseph. Old Testament History I (Handout prepared by Ghana Christian University College), 2002.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Adjei, Manuel B., and Nsiah, Joseph. Old Testament History I (Handout prepared by Ghana Christian University College), 2002.

⁸ Robert Richardson. (Memories of Alexander Campbell. (Vol. 1) Cincinnati, Standard. Pub. Co, 1890), p. 258.

⁹ Charles C. Ryrie (Basic Theology: A Popular Systematic Guide to Understanding Biblical Truth. Chicago, Moody Press, 1999), p. 455.

¹⁰ Ryrie 455

¹¹ David Couch. "Something is better than nothing; The History of Ghana Christian College and Seminary." (A thesis presented to Graduate School, Feb. 1985), p. 9.

¹² Manuel Adjei. (40 years of High Impact ministry: The story of GCUC. Accra: GCUC, 2006), p. 6.

¹³ Ibid. p. 7.

¹⁴ Finis Jennings Dake. (Dake's Annotated Reference Bible. Lawrenceville: Georgia, Dake Publishing Inc., 2006), p. 371

¹⁵ Bill Hull. 7 Steps to Transform your Church. (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Fleming H. Revell, 1997), p. 11.

¹⁶ Christian A. Schwarz. Natural Church Development: A Guide to Eight Essential Qualities of Healthy Churches. (Ohio, U.S.A.: ChurchSmart Resource, 1996), p. 12-14.

¹⁷ Schwarz, 15-39.

¹⁸ (S. K. Ofori. How My Work Fulfills God's Purpose: A Talk during Transformational Week of Ghana Christian University College; November 5, 2010)

¹⁹ Dake, p. 60, (NT section)

²⁰ Scarborough, p. 67-68.

²¹ Gordon Kisseih, Teaching on Leadership (TV3, Ghana: 28 July 2011 [5:30pm]).

²² Ibid

²³ Roadcup, CHC Class, Fall 2006

²⁴ Webster's New Dictionary of the American Language

²⁵ Murphy, Jim. and Murphy Carolyn. (The Pastor and the Prophet in Today's Church. San Diego, Hundredfold Press; 1994), p. 135.

-
- ²⁶ Ibid. p. 157.
- ²⁷ Nelson Ahlijah. "Understanding and giving attention to the context." (Presentation by Dean of School of Theology, Ghana Christian University College, Accra) 7TH August, 2009
- ²⁸ Nelson Ahlijah. "Understanding and giving attention to the context."
(Presentation by Dean of School of Theology, Ghana Christian University College, Accra)
7TH August, 2009
- ²⁹ Manuel B Adjei and Joseph Nsiah. (Old Testament History: GCUC Course Handout, 2000), p. 1.
- ³⁰ Davis, John J. and Whitcomb, John C., *A History of Israel: From Conquest to Exile*. (Grand Rapids, Baker Books, 1980), pp. 189.
- ³¹ Leon Wood. A Survey of Israel's History. (Grand Rapids, Michigan, Zondervan, 1970.), p. 231.
- ³² Ibid.
- ³³ Ibid, p. 332.
- ³⁴ Macchia, 16
- ³⁵ Roadcup, CHC Class, Fall 2006.
- ³⁶ Ken Blanchard and Phil Hodges. The Servant Leader: (Nashville, Tennessee: Countryman, 2003), p. 18
- ³⁷ Roadcup, CHC Class, Fall 2006.
- ³⁸ Roadcup, CHC Class, Fall 2006.
- ³⁹ Maxwell, John. ("The Pastor's Most Valuable Partner." Audio Visual version),
Date assessed: September 21, 2006.
- ⁴⁰ Ibid.
- ⁴¹ Dale Galloway. The Small Group Book. (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Fleming H. Revell, 1995), 113-114.
- ⁴² Blanchard, and Hodges, 24.
- ⁴³ Wilson, 60.
- ⁴⁴ Tidwell, 113.
- ⁴⁵ Roadcup, CHC Class, Fall 2006
- ⁴⁶ Rick Warren. The Purpose Driven Church: Growth without Compromising your Message & Mission. (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 1995), p. 77-83
- ⁴⁷ Charles A. Tidwell. Church Administration: Effective Leadership for Ministry. (Nashville, Tennessee: Broadman Press, 1985), p. 58
- ⁴⁸ Cult W. Nordhielm. "59th National Missionary Convention of Christian Churches and Churches of Christ." [President's address]. (Indianapolis, Indiana, November 16-19, 2006)
- ⁴⁹ Marlene Wilson. How to mobilize Church Volunteers. (Minneapolis: Augsburg Pub. House, 1983), 67-83 (Note: This was prepared for volunteers but has been modified for my purpose.)
- ⁵⁰ Warren, 28
- ⁵¹ David Roadcup. "Characteristics of a Healthy Church." [Class Lecture]
(Cincinnati Christian University, Cincinnati: OH, Fall, 2006).
- ⁵² J. D. Douglas, and Merrill C. Tenney New International Dictionary of the Bible
(Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1963), p. 390.

-
- ⁵³ William McRac. Dynamics of Spiritual Gifts (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publication, 1976), p. 18.
- ⁵⁴ R. H. Boll. Lessons from the Romans (Louisville: The Word and Work Press), p. 53.
- ⁵⁵ R. E. Harlow. Alive and Free: Studies in Romans (Scarborough: Everyday Pub. Inc., 1972), p. 103.
- ⁵⁶ Ryrie, p. 355.
- ⁵⁷ Ibid, p. 417-18
- ⁵⁸ D. Guthrie, and J. A. Motyer. New Bible Commentary (3rd Ed) (Michigan IVP, 1970), p. 1041.
- ⁵⁹ Guthrie and Motyer, 1041.
- ⁶⁰ J. W. Mac-Gorman. Layman's Bible Book Commentary: Romans and I Corinthians (Nashville, Broadman Press, 1980), p. 85.
- ⁶¹ Mac-Gorman, p 85
- ⁶² William Barclays. The Daily Study Bible: the Letter to the Romans (Rev. Ed) (Edinburgh: The Saint Andrew Press 1976), p. 170.
- ⁶³ John William. The Holy Spirit (New Jersey: Loizeaux Brothers, 1980), p. 95.
- ⁶⁴ Keith McCalslin. What the Bible says about miracles (Jophin: College Press, 1988), p. 184.
- ⁶⁵ W. H. Griffiths. The Holy Spirit of God (1972), p. 48.
- ⁶⁶ B. B. Warfield. Counterfeit Miracles (1972), p. 3, 21.
- ⁶⁷ David Lipscomb. A Commentary on the New Testament Epistles (Tennessee: Gospel Advocate Company, 1969), p. 201.
- ⁶⁸ John MacArthur, Jnr. The Charismatic (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1978), p. 18.
- ⁶⁹ Calvin Katter. Ye shall receive power (Minneapolis: 1978), p. 48.
- ⁷⁰ Charles Ryrie. The Holy Spirit (Chicago: Moody Press, 1965), p. 83.
- ⁷¹ J. D. Douglas. New Bible Dictionary (Leicester: Inter Varsity Press, 1962), p. 1130.
- ⁷² G. W. Bromiley. The Holy Spirit: fundamentals of the faith, p. 159.
- ⁷³ Reinhard Bonnke. Mighty Manifestations (Eastbourne: Kingsway Publication, 1994)
- ⁷⁴ Charles W. Carter. The Person and Ministry of the Holy Spirit: A Wesleyan Perspective (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1974), p. 258.
1. ⁷⁵ Manuel B Adjei and Joseph Nsiah. Old Testament History: (GCUC Course Handout, 2000), p. 137-140.
- ⁷⁶ John A. Attubiga "Living Right with God" (A Preaching at chapel, GCUC, Accra, Nov., 2009)
- ⁷⁷ George Sydney Abugri, "Letter To Jomo: The Rapper, The Priest And The Reporter." *Daily Graphic*, 26/08/2011, p. 7.
- ⁷⁸ George Sydney Abugri, "Letter To Jomo: The Rapper, The Priest And The Reporter." *Daily Graphic*, 26/08/2011, p. 7.
- ⁷⁹ Seth J. Bokpe, "My Turn: Men Of God' On The Loose," *The Mirror Saturday*, 13/08/2011, p. 15.

⁸⁰Seth J. Bokpe, "My Turn: Men Of God' On The Loose," *The Mirror Saturday*, 13/08/2011, p. 15.

⁸¹ Fidelia Achama, "Pastor In Court For Defrauding Footballers." *Daily Guide*, 19/08/2011, p. 15.

⁸²Seth J. Bokpe, "My Turn: Men Of God' On The Loose," *The Mirror Saturday*, 13/08/2011, p. 15.

⁸³ Morgan Owusu, "The Obinim Love Tape: Blow By Blow." *Daily Guide*, 15/08/2011, p. 1, 7.

Rocklyn Antonio, "Bishop Obinim Weeps." *Daily Guide*, 10/08/2011, p. 1, 3; Mary Mensah, "Bishop Obinim Runs Amok. Leads Demolition Squad To Hot Fm." *Daily Graphic*, 10/08/2011, p. 1, 3; Kofi Yeboah, "Obinim Apologises For Behaviour At Hot Fm." *Daily Graphic*, 11/08/2011, p. 1, 35; Nakujah Blessing, "Flex Gospel Corner With Nakujah Blessing: Kantamanto Marketers Destroys Obinim's Miraculous Cd's." *Flex Newspaper*, 17/ 08/2011, p. 7; Seth J. Bokpe, "My Turn: Men Of God' On The Loose," *The Mirror Saturday*, 13/08/2011, p. 15.

⁸⁴Samuel Kyei Boateng, "Pastor Rapes 5 Sisters, Claims On Orders Of "Holy Spirit." *Daily Graphic*, 18/08/2011, p. 1, 3.

⁸⁵Rocklyn Antonio, "Bishop Obinim Weeps." *Daily Guide*, 10/08/2011, p. 1, 3.

⁸⁶Mary Mensah, "Bishop Obinim Runs Amok. Leads Demolition Squad To Hot Fm." *Daily Graphic*, 10/08/2011, p. 1, 3.

⁸⁷ George Sydney Abugri, "Letter To Jomo: The Rapper, The Priest And The Reporter." *Daily Graphic*, 26/08/2011, p. 7.

⁸⁸ Nakujah Blessing, "Flex Gospel Corner With Nakujah Blessing: Kantamanto Marketers Destroys Obinim's Miraculous Cd's." *Flex Newspaper*, 17/ 08/2011, p. 7.

⁸⁹Samuel Kanda. "The Character of a Christian" (A Preaching at chapel, GCUC, Accra, 17TH Nov., 2009)

⁹⁰ Justine Senuvie. "What is Fellowship" (A Preaching at chapel, GCUC, Accra, September. 2009)

⁹¹ Dennis W Bakke, (www.DennisBakke.com)

⁹² Galloway, 9

⁹³ Schwarz, 29.

⁹⁴ C. Peter Wagner. Strategies for Church Growth: Tools for Effective Missions and Evangelism. (Ventura, California: Regal Books, 1987), p. 116.

⁹⁵ Macchia, p. 135.

⁹⁶ Roadcup, CHC Class, Fall 2006.

⁹⁷ Wagner, 73-74.

⁹⁸ Roadcup, CHC Class, Fall 2006.

⁹⁹ Christians Urged To Fight Gay Menace. *Daily Graphic*, 12/08/2011, p 29.

¹⁰⁰ "Christian Submission." (The life of faith; http://www.pbministries.org/book/pink/life_of_faith/faith_09.htm, assessed; October 12, 2006)

¹⁰¹ Cambridge International Dictionary of English

¹⁰² John K. Avorgah. Notes on Conflicts Resolution and Management (Ghana Christian University College, Accra Ghana.), 9/24/2010, p. 7-8.

¹⁰³ Ibid.