

THE LIFE OF MARTIN LUTHER AND ITS RELEVANCE TO
CONTEMPORARY CHURCH LEADERS

NBTS
M. DIV
Og-4

A THESIS SUBMITTED TO
THE FACULTY OF THEOLOGICAL STUDIES OF
THE NIGERIAN BAPTIST THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY, OGBOMOSO.

IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE
AWARD OF DEGREE OF MASTERS OF DIVINITY IN THEOLOGY

BY

OGHENEKARO, BENJAMIN ONODJOWHOYOVWE

11/0141

2014 - 0113

JUNE, 2014

ABSTRACT

The quality of growth in a church is greatly determined by the quality of the church leader. Who a leader is will determine what will become of the church. The more a church leader knows about leadership, the better, faster and farther he is able to go as a leader. Learning from others about leadership will enable the leader to become an effective church leader, and this will have a positive impact on his life, family, ministry, church members and the world. Martin Luther is one of the figures of the past about whom we are extraordinarily well informed. What he wrote for the public and put into print has been preserved virtually in its entirety. Luther was a leader whose personality, his activity, and his thought presents no difficult problems. Luther is a man of his century, who is concrete, historical moment lifted a world of hinges and shaped something new. So much we can learn from this great leader as church leaders to create positive impact in our church and the world. This research will adopt the bibliographic research method. It made use of books written on the life of Martin Luther and on leadership. The resources will be gotten from the J. C. Pool library of the Nigerian Baptist Theological Seminary, Ogbomoso, internet and other libraries of higher institutions. The study reveals what the church leader of these contemporary times can learn from the life and personality of Martin Luther, especially in the area of leadership. It also reveals that the growth of a church and the members is dependent on the leader of the church. It is recommended to pastors and church leaders to understand, learn and how to apply the leadership qualities from the life of Martin Luther for church leaders.

5.2 CONCLUSION

The personality of a church leader has a direct relationship on his leadership ability. Leadership starts from personal development which reflects on how the leader relate with people. Church leaders should be ready to go the extra mile in studying the word, prayer, taking initiatives, risk for the followers and be example in words and in conduct. The focus of the church leader is on what the bible says and how to lead the people in that path, not for personal or denominational gains. Also leadership is not a one day thing, but a gradual progress and growth from one childhood as seen in Luther and it can be learned through the exposure Luther got from the scripture.

Martin Luther was not a selfish leader seeking for position or popularity, but a leader who study God's work and seek to apply it. The church today is so divided in issues that are not based on the scripture but on culture. The church needs a leader not based on title but based on a burden, to influence and lead the people the right path. A leader that people can listen to and follow. Martin Luther was a courageous leader, who stood for what is right from the bible and brought reformation through leadership not based on violence but on leading people and influence them through teaching, exemplary lifestyle. His leadership was a committed, resonant, moral, hardworking, mentoring, growing, inspiring, responsible, selfless, spiritual and relational kind of leadership.

5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

With regards to the fore-going, the researcher makes the following recommendations.

1. Everything rise and fall on leadership, the church and church leaders must realise it and put resources into developing leaders from childhood to adulthood. There is need to develop Christian leaders from our homes to the church and to the society at large.
2. Church leaders should realise that they are leaders called by God for a specific task to be accomplish. So the leader should pray and study God's work to know that specific task and trust God to accomplish it.
3. Church leaders must realise that they are not the same; there cannot be another Martin Luther. A church leader should appreciate his uniqueness and function in that area.
4. Church leaders should learn to develop themselves and grow spiritually and intellectually, not to be stagnant and just accepting the status quo. There is need for personal leadership development to be relevant to the people and the changes in society.
5. Church leaders must realise that the bible and prayer are the most vital tool for growth and exploits in ministry. The first thing the leader should read is not books or listening to what men say, but to have a continuous fellowship with God for revelation and direction.
6. The church needs to create a leadership class or school in which the members are taught about leadership and to learn from the lives of great men like Martin

Luther in order to be inspired and influenced to become a leader.

7. The church should focus on developing leaders not just for the church but for the society to bring changes and reformation, especially in our nation. Reformation not by violence but by influence through teaching the word of God.
8. Church leaders should learn to have a journal where they write their experiences of their journey in leadership. This will help the younger generations to read and learn from their worthy of experience.
9. Every church leader should have a book of Martin Luther, especially *Luther the Leader*. There is a lot to learn from the life and ministry of Luther that will be of continuous help to church leaders.