

THE LEADERSHIP STYLE OF NEHEMIAH: A CASE STUDY OF GOOD
MESSAGE BAPTIST ASSOCIATION, LAGOS

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ABSTRACT

The main purpose of this work is to examine the Leadership style of Nehemiah using Good Message Baptist Association, Lagos State as a case study. The research methodology is based mainly on the field and direct interviews, observation, participation in the Association programs, visiting of some leaders to ask about their work and the reports of the association. Other sources are from Christian commentaries, and article of journals were consulted. The writer analyzed and synthesized the good leadership qualities of Nehemiah as recorded in the Bible. Servant-leadership style was discovered to be more evident with Nehemiah. During this work, it was examined that the Good Message Baptist Association has ignored some of their leadership role in helping both the congregation and pastorate. Two examples come to mind here: firstly, was the non visitation to such members who needed care and assistance and secondly was ignoring the "save our soul" call of a pastor that was left to his congregation's mercy of maltreatment and eventually thrown out of the church's pastorium. The researcher also observed that the Association did not lead by prayer. It will be noted here that the researcher does not doubt the prayer life of the leadership of the Association on individual level but this have not been incorporated into a joint effort of leadership. Also it was noted that many in the leadership of the Good Message Baptist Association are more interested in personal and private ministry to the detriment of their primary calling to be in the pastorate of the local Baptist Church and commitment to the Association. Lastly the researcher feels the leadership of the Good Message Baptist Association needs support to maintain moral and spiritual standard. An earring pastor's preaching license was withdrawn but nothing was done for restoring him. All of these are visible as many members of the Association feels neglected and disengaged in the core activities of the Good Message Baptist Association. As this was quickly pointed out many people that the researcher interviewed in the cause of writing. The researcher, therefore, recommended that the leadership of the Association look inward and listen to her members. Secondly set up internal mechanism for a feedback from all people including the pastorates as this will help the leadership to know the needs of her members. Thirdly is the response mechanism. The Good Message Baptist Association should set up a response approach that is devoid of too many beauracracies and protocols, as to be effective in dealing with issues of concerns to the people. There are further recommendations in the closing chapter.

5.2 Conclusion

The vision seen by Nehemiah was because of his concern for his own land in general not out of selfish interest. Leaders of our association should walk sensitively enough to catch the vision being shown to them to expand the kingdom of God. Possession of “multiple divine eyes” would definitely be a good advantage. Visions from God may be introduced in any form. It could be during meetings, visitations to members, Bible study classes or the leaders can deliberately ask for it. To be visionary, a leader has to be attentive, thoughtful and be able to ruminate on the issue before him in order to turn it over to a vision. At the initial stage, vision is skeletal. But the more it is shared or sends back to God for redefinition, the more it becomes fleshy and develops features that make it real eventually. After God, like Nehemiah, it should be prayerfully shared with other people. Their reactions to the vision is weighed and considered according to the wish and directive of God. A leader should at any point in time has a vision being pursued and to be pursued with every vigor. At any level of the association, the vision should be seen as a joint effort being cooperatively taken to a successful end. A vision so convincingly and divinely given to leaders must be vigorously pursued.

Prayer has a prominent role to play in both spiritual and physical development of the association. A good percentage of the association activities must be on prayer. The leadership of the association has to be prayerful. Nehemiah's vision as good, honorable, and human-centered as they were, he did not take things for granted. He did not depend on his own knowledge. He handed over everything to God in prayer. He prayed to God at every turn of event, during the period the vision was being pursued. Association leaders should not in any way leave prayers out of any of their activities.

It is through leadership attributes that leaders can carry out leadership process successfully. Such attributes as beliefs, values, ethics, character, knowledge and skills are essentials in the lives of leaders if they want to lead successfully. They provide the leader the respect he needs to influence others to accomplish the set objectives meant for the group he leads. In addition to this, a good knowledge of leadership skills will make him as an enviable leader. His followers must be known to him in such a way that he would be able to predict their actions. Their level of obedience to him must be measurable. He must have a good knowledge of himself. This is by understanding what he is competent of doing. Effective communication styles must be employed from time to time. Leadership style needed for each situation must be seen to be employed. He should rebuke at the appropriate time with appropriate action. In an effective leadership situation, the leadership is a prophet whose leadership style has to be inspirational. His inspiration must be one that is derived from God and a light towards the next direction to be followed.

A leader has to be preoccupied with any given situation that needs to be improved and set to work on it. If such challenge could not be physically seen, he can inquire from God and the people surrounding him. Next is for him to share the vision

with the people. The language to be used in sharing such a vision must be clear and understandable. The visionary must not be seen as a lone ranger or a singular person in charge of the vision alone. While doing this, the leader must provide tools with which his followers will work with. This includes the methods to solve the problems before them by ways of directives, advice or giving samples on how to go about the work. It is a way of modeling the way for others to follow. The method makes the assignment quicker to accomplish. Even when a disappointment sets in along the way, the best thing for the leader is to keep the pains within him and keep on encouraging people to forge ahead.

5.3 Recommendations

Nehemiah's leadership style would bring progress to the Good Message Baptist Association and other related associations. Leaders of the Baptist association should strive at all cost to emulate the leadership style of Nehemiah and that will positively affect growth of the Churches. The following recommendations are, therefore, made:

1. The Good Message Baptist Association should organize retreat and quarterly leadership workshop for its leaders to brainstorm and learn more about leadership roles.
2. The association should set-up a think-tank committee that will berth new crop of leaders to begin to apply the principles and qualities of Nehemiah in the local churches.
3. Periodic in-house training sessions should be organized for both leaders and followers for them to know her roles and responsibilities in building up the church of God. Followers need to be taught what it requires to be led and follow respectively as in the case of Nehemiah.

4. The Nigerian Baptist convention should design courses on the leadership style of Nehemiah and other biblical characters' leadership styles and fashion it into its theological school curriculum.
5. The ministerial committee of the Nigerian Baptist convention should make sure that ordination candidates undergo extensive training on the leadership style of Nehemiah during ordination retreat before they are ordained into full Gospel ministry.
6. The Good Message Baptist Association should design a discipleship-training program for would-be leaders in the church and make sure that people of unquestionable characters do not lead at any level.
7. Spiritual programmes should be organized from time to time to keep the youths within the Baptist circle.
8. There is a need to have a research department which will help in our church growth strategies.
9. The leaders should harness all resources or influences in the church for the growth and expansion of God's kingdom on earth.