Spiritual Mentorship in Nigeria for Global Leadership: A New Testament Perspective of Paul and Timothy

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Introduction

Mentoring has been used since early civilization to teach and train others for a variety of purposes. Mentoring relationships have received increasing amounts of attention from organizational leadership researchers and leadership practitioners alike (Nicole Nedd et 'al 2006:20-24). Mentoring is a relationship between two people, the mentor and the one being mentored. Long ago when the Greek warrior Odysseus went off to battle in the Trojan War, he left his young son in the hands of a man named Mentor. The father was away from his son for twenty years and when he returned home his son had grown into a man. He had been trained by Mentor. Because of this story we now say a mentor is someone who operates as a father figure in our lives. For example, Godshalk and Sosik (2003:418) defined mentoring as "a deliberate pairing of a more skilled or experienced person with a lesser skilled or experienced one, with the goal of having the lesser skilled person grow and develop specific career-related competencies." Along a similar vein, Gay (1994:4) defines mentoring as a "supportive relationship between a youth or young adult and someone who offers support, guidance and concrete assistance as the younger partner goes through a difficult period, takes on important tasks or corrects an earlier problem." In any case, it is generally agreed that mentoring is the most intense and powerful one-on-one developmental relationship, entailing the most influence, identification, and emotional involvement (Wanberg et al., 2003:41). The Bible says, "Iron sharpeneth iron; so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend" (Proverbs 27:17). It was the primary method of handing down skills and wisdom from one generation to another. Mentors not only help clarify the call of God in the mentee's lives but also develop the inner leadership character and spiritual depth in them. We must not see youth just as who they are now, but for what they can become by God's grace. It is with this attitude that we should mentor the next generation insofar as mentoring is concerned, Christian literature tends to focus on areas such as the process of mentoring including attraction, relationship, responsiveness,

accountability and empowerment (Anderson & Reese, 1999:13). The roles of a mentor includes a discipler, spiritual guide, coach, counselor, teacher and sponsor (Stanley & Clinton, 1992:47 – 130), the qualities of a mentor includes the ability to inspire, honesty and integrity, and a passion to help others (Davies,2001:234).

Methods

This paper is designed to develop an intentional spiritual mentoring model for leadership formation in the world. This paper aimed to enrich this understanding by additionally emphasizing mentorship as a communal process, an act of following behind and walking beside, and also to produce a template for intergenerational spiritual mentoring for leadership through the understudy of Paul and Timothy in The New Testament. A biblical theology of mentoring is examined, and a process developed for implementing and evaluating the effectiveness of the spiritual mentoring process for global competency in leadership.

For the purposes of this paper, spiritual mentorship is defined as the God-initiated, life-long Christian quest to comprehensive growth in Imitatio Christi, through personal knowledge of God, exercise of the spiritual disciplines, and operative response in the world and church. This is an important definition which distinguishes spiritual mentoring processes from mentoring in the business place or academy. The mentoring process discussed in this paper is limited to strategies that will aid in spiritual development for competence in global leadership. As such, the distinctiveness of this paper rests in the proven effectiveness of spiritual mentoring for the formation of leaders and therefore has considered Qualitative and African Biblical Contextual Hermeneutics as methods.

Findings and Argument

Throughout the history of the church, mentoring relationships play a crucial role in developing leadership roles. As a process for coaching/mentoring future world leaders, mentoring relationships are often neglected. This is unfortunate because mentoring relationships provide critical forums for developing the character, knowledge and skills needed to grow in one's intimacy with Christ and leadership efficiency. But almost every young leader can relate to the feeling of having something important to contribute without a window of opportunity or a platform

for influence. One of the most powerful bridges for young leaders facing a challenge of this nature is the right kind of mentor. No biblical character understood this better than the Apostle Paul. Paul was a leading apostle in the early New Testament church and the writer of multiple New Testament letters. He served as a mentor to Timothy, one of the younger early church leaders. Timothy was a young man with great potential whom Paul selected for mentoring on his second missionary journey through Derbe and Lystra The relationship between Paul and Timothy has been referred to so often by church leaders that their names have been co-opted to represent the interaction between a mentor and a mentee. When speaking to a Christian leader, it would not be uncommon or misunderstood to ask, "Who is your Timothy?" In his final epistle, Paul reaffirmed his value for developing others in an exhortation to Timothy: "And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses, entrust to reliable men who will be able to teach others." (2 Timothy 2:2) What a tremendous definition of not only discipleship, but mentoring.

In the New Testament, the apostle Paul recognized the value of developing Timothy into not just a more effective minister of the gospel, but an efficient fearless leader. Paul carefully selected Timothy to work with him in the ministry, equipped him for ministerial tasks, empowered him for success, employed him in a challenging work environment, and communicated to Timothy the value of their relationship. A deep relationship between the mentor and mentee opens the door for greater levels of empowerment.

In the New Testament, the Apostle Paul exemplifies a successful mentor relationship with Timothy. Paul's words to Timothy in 1 Timothy 4:12 (NKJV) "Let no one despise your youth, but be an example to the believers in word, in conduct, in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity. Till I come, give attention to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine. Do not neglect the gift that is in you, which was given to you by prophecy with the laying on of the hands of the eldership. Meditate on these things; give yourself entirely to them, that your progress may be evident to all. Take heed to yourself and to the doctrine. Continue in them, for in doing this you will save both yourself and those who hear you". Paul's approach to mentoring can be applied to contemporary leadership challenges as well. From a knowledge management perspective, Paul's patterns of interaction in mentoring comprise a mix of instructions, encouragements and inspirations. Paul sought to impart knowledge through instructions by using a range of linguistic strategies. The characteristics of

mentoring relationships that contribute to the mentee's development have been commonly referred to as mentoring functions. Two broad categories of mentoring functions are widely recognized, namely, career and psychosocial. Career functions are conceptualized as those mentoring functions that aid career advancement. They may include challenging assignments, coaching, exposure, protection, and sponsorship (Whitely, et al., 1992:142). Psychosocial functions help build a sense of identity, competence, and effectiveness. They may include acceptance, counseling, friendship and role modeling (Kram, 1983:614). It is therefore no surprise that research has consistently found benefits accrued to the mentee arising from these two mentoring functions. These include enhanced career advancement paths, job satisfaction, sharpened sense of purpose and self-efficacy (Mullen, 1994:259-260). In the context of Christian leadership; development mentoring "can reduce the probability of leadership failure, providing needed accountability and empowering a responsive leadership" (Stanley & Clinton, 1992:12).

The condition for healthy youth spiritual development and readiness for mentorship resides in the families, from his youth, Timothy became acquainted with the Old Testament Scriptures as a result of his mother, Lois, and grandmother, Eunice (2 Tim 1:5). Although Timothy's dad wasn't a believer, Paul knew he was the son of a godly woman, Eunice, who instilled in him a deep faith in Christ. Such confidence is essential to be steadfast in a disorienting world.

Conclusion

By implementing Paul's mentoring strategies, including finding the right people for the job, equipping them for the task, empowering them for success, employing them for effectiveness, and communicating the value of the mentor relationship, Leaders can develop followers who are committed, motivated, and personally satisfied by their work, and who are prepared to face the leadership challenges of the future and thereby change their world. By following similar strategies, today's leaders can develop mentor relationships that prepare tomorrow's leaders to handle the challenges of an ever-changing world. Effective mentoring strategies are needed for the development of spiritually growing leaders in the 21st Century era.

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