The Challenge of Mentoring As a Tool for Leadership Development in Nigerian Christianity: A Case Study of the Redeemed Chrsitian Church of God.

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Problem and Purpose

Leadership development is important for the sustenance of the Christian faith in Nigeria and development in general. The RCCG is a fast growing church with new parishes every year, but young leaders are assuming leadership roles without proper training and mentoring. The purpose of this study was to evaluate the current practice of mentoring as a tool for leadership development for the next generation of leaders through surveying the church pastors and young leaders in the RCCG in Nigeria in order to prescribe a model for an effective mentoring program for leadership development

Research Questions

The following research questions helped to guide the research project and prescribed a better way for effective mentoring. First, what are pastors currently doing in the RCCG to mentor the next generation of church leaders, and what do the pastors believe are the effective aspects of that mentoring? Secondly, what is the perception of young leaders about the role and practice of their pastors in effectively mentoring them for leadership? Thirdly, what vital elements should be included in an effective mentoring model in the RCCG?

Design of the Study

This paper is designed in order to develop a set of recommendations for using mentoring as a tool for leadership development and training the next generation of leaders in the RCCG. The research design used here involved an exploratory mixed design, triangulation method using both quantitative and qualitative methods.

The instruments for this study were designed questionnaires and interview protocols. There were two different questionnaires—one for the pastors (PL) (see Appendix A), and one for young leaders (YL) (see Appendix B).

Questionnaires. The two questionnaires had a section to obtain demographic material such as age, gender, and other background information. The questionnaire addressed the different research questions.

The questionnaires included closed questions using a five-point Likert scale. In addition, it included a few multiple choices and yes/no questions with three open- ended questions Interviews. Two types of interview protocols were established: Interview Protocol for Pastors (IP) and Interview Protocol for Young Leaders (YL)

Defining Mentoring

In the myth, Odysseus, a great warrior, asks his old and trusted friend Mentor, to look after his household while he goes off to fight. Mentor serves as guardian and teacher of Odysseus' son, Telemachus. Mentor is therefore seen as wisdom personified as he guides young Telemachus into manhood, who became an effective and loved ruler (Peddy 24). In considering this mythical figure, the traditional understanding of mentoring "involves a relationship between a younger, less experienced person and an older who wisely guides the younger through some significant transition in life" (Cowart 16). This idea is the primary understanding of what mentoring should be. Contemporary writers in the field may refer to almost any kind of helping relationship as a mentoring relationship, even one in which a personal relationship does not exist (i.e., an author to a reader or preacher to listeners). Keith Cowart maintains that this view represents a significant departure from the traditional model of mentoring, which is described by a close, personal relationship between an older and wiser mentor and a younger and eager-to-learn protégé (11).Stanley and Clinton describe eight types of mentoring relationships involving various degrees of intensity and personal involvement (41). They categorized the eight types into three sub types. The first, the most intensive mentoring, consists of the *disciple*, *spiritual guide,* and *coach* (Stanley and Clinton 47-85). *Intensive* mentoring always involves the presence of a

personal relationship and is characterized by high levels of attraction, responsiveness, accountability, and empowerment (Cowart 34). The second category consists of the roles of *counselor*, *teacher,* and *sponsor*. This level is termed *occasional* since it may or may not involve personal relationship (Stanley and Clinton 87-130). The occasional mentoring does not usually include the dynamics of accountability. Tending to have a shorter lifespan, this style is often engaged for a very specific purpose. One benefit of an occasional mentor is their availability, but they are often invited according to their ability to empower the protégés (Cowart 46).The final category is described as *passive* mentoring because it involves using materials such as books, seminars, and conferences. Cowart asserts that Stanley and Clinton depart from the traditional understanding of the nature of mentoring. Cowart writes, "drawing from tradition, the existence of a personal relationship was determined to be essential" This personal relationship is even more relevant especially in Africa where relationship is a major part of their existence (13).Cowart's expresses that the six types of mentoring found in the *intensive* and *occasional* categories do not reflect the nature of actual mentoring relationships. Most experts see these various types as functioning in a typical mentoring relationship (Anderson and Shannon 40-41; Hendricks and Hendricks 159-60; Levinson Daniel; Charlotte Darrow; Edward Klein; Maria Levison Levinson 98).

Research Question

What is the perception of young leaders about the role and practice of their Pastors in effectively mentoring them for leadership? In answering this research question, Pastors may feel that they effectively mentor the young people while most of the young people do not feel they are mentored effectively by their pastors.

A series of dependent samples *t*-tests explored any differences in perceptions of current personal mentoring experiences between pastors and young leaders. All eleven items regarding personal mentoring experiences showed significant difference in perceptions between pastors and young leaders. For example, pastors ($M = 4.98$, $SD = .80$) perceived themselves as more effective leaders than young leaders perceived them ($M = 3.05$, $SD = 1.44$), $t (159.17) = 5.41$, $p< .001$. Young leaders ($M = 3.50$, $SD = 1.33$) also tended to see

the pastors as busier–to the point of not being able to do mentoring-than the pastors see themselves, (*M* = 2.52, *SD* = 1.00), *t* (129.71) = -5.25, *p*< .001. For an overview of all of the perceptions of current personal mentoring experiences, see Table 4.19.

Also, pastors (M = 2.87, SD = .53) perceived themselves as having more intense relationships with the young leaders than the young leaders perceived (M = 2.49, SD = .98), t (156.74) = 3.20, p> .001. Young leaders (M = 3.26, SD = 1.11) also tended to see the pastors as not empowering them by giving them leadership assignments in the church than the pastors saw (M = 3.96, SD = 1.05), t (103.24) = 3.93, p< .001. For more overview of all of the perceptions of current personal mentoring experiences, see Table 1.1.

Research Question

What are the vital elements that should be included in a model for an effective mentoring program in RCCG? In answering this research question, it was important to compare the attitudes of both pastors and young leaders about mentoring.

A series of dependent samples t-tests explored any differences in attitudes about mentoring between pastors and young leaders. Of the seven items regarding attitudes about mentoring, six were significantly different between pastors and young leaders. For example, pastors (M= 4.35, SD = .81) indicated significantly less agreement with the statement, "Mentoring involves a relationship between a younger, less experienced person and an older who wisely guides the younger through different areas of life," than young leaders did (M=4.62, SD = 55), t (72.20) = -2.19, p = .032. On the other hand, pastors (M = 3.65, SD = 1.12) expressed significantly greater agreement with the statement, "Many senior pastors like provincial, area, and zonal pastors are intentionally developing young leaders in their churches," than young leaders did (M = 2.49, SD = .96), t (170) = .92, p <.001. For means and standard deviations for all of the attitudes, see Table 1.3

Summary of Major Findings

Since exploring various findings in the previous section, it is now important to summarize the findings in a way that makes it concise and easy to articulate. We came up with five major findings in this research in relation to mentoring and the RCCG in Nigeria.

- The RCCG has begun encouraging young leaders for leadership, but no current structure exists to mentor these young leaders. From the research, many pastors do not even have a grasp of the function and role of mentoring in leadership development. Many pastors do not have the time and passion for mentoring because they have not been trained, and most of them have never been mentored.

- Many pastors in RCCG claim to be mentoring young leaders. Nonetheless, the research found out they were doing their normal pastoral work without any special time for any individual to mentor. The results show that pastors hardly meet with their young leaders outside church meetings.

- The results from the t-test show that whereas the pastors from their present experience in mentoring assert that they are mentoring the young leaders, the young leaders do not feel that they are being effectively mentored. The findings also showed that the attitude of pastors and young leaders about mentoring is significantly different.

- Many factors hinder effective mentoring in RCCG.

- Therefore, vital elements for effective mentoring are mostly missing within the RCCG for now.

From the findings in this study, the following recommendations could be made. First, the RCCG should establish a vision and mission statement for leadership development through mentoring. This vision and mission statement is important because the church's drive of planting churches close to the people became a part of the mission statement of the church. Today, RCCG is known as the denomination with the highest number of churches in Nigeria. If the general overseer and leadership of the church are interested in developing their young leaders, let there be a written policy toward that. Second, young people should be placed in places of strategic leadership such as the role of provincial pastor. It is important to know that the leaders of the church attained this position while he was thirty-nine years old. There should therefore be Provincial Pastors who are thirty-five years and

less. This choice of young provincial pastors will emphasize the message that young leaders are important to the church. The generational gap between the old and young will then begin to considerably reduce. Thirdly, promotion and assessment of pastors should include an assessment of their effectiveness in raising young leaders in their churches. This effectiveness should be followed up and appropriately rewarded. This move will encourage pastors to begin focusing on their young leaders. Fourthly, pastors' transfer should be done with a lot of caution and consideration. A minimum of six years is recommended in ideal cases unless there is a major crisis in the church. Pastors should be properly categorized in such a way that a new pastor posted to a parish should have commensurate or superior ability to perform more than his predecessor. This posting of the right pastor during transfers will help discourage the situation where young people move from parish to parish due to a less competent pastor.

There should be a conscious effort to reduce the programs and meetings of pastors done outside their parishes. Pastors should be encouraged to be involved in discipleship and mentoring of the young people they pastor.

Young leaders should have the opportunity to assess their pastors and build a relationship with them. They should also be encouraged to support them.

New churches starts need proper assessment in order to ensure competent hands adequately to pastor these churches and develop leadership. In other words, no church should be allowed to start without enough competent workers to do the work.

The next is to begin to develop young leaders called into full time ministry. The apprenticeship method could be used where young leaders will be assigned to some proven pastors in rural areas for two years and also pastors in urban areas for another two years as a part of their training. After their ordination as assistant pastors, they should be required to disciple some younger leader also. This apprenticeship program should properly be monitored and assessed through a separate office of trained personnel. If this process was allowed to continue the next seven years, we very likely would see a new breed of well

mentored leaders who would continue and multiply the good works of the present leaders. There would never a quick fix and "microwave" solutions to leadership development.

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Table 1.1. Means and Standard Deviations for Perceptions of Current Mentoring Experiences for Pastors and Young Leaders

Qs	My Mentoring Experience	Pastors (*n* = 52)		Young Leaders (*n* = 120)		*t (df)*	*P*
		M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*		
Q8	I consider myself an effective mentor. − OR- I consider my pastor an effective mentor to me.	3.98	.80	3.05	1.44	5.41 (159.17)	.000**
Q9	As a pastor, I am intentional about developing young leaders in my Church.	4.35	.76				
Q10	I consider myself a mentor to young leaders in my church.	4.21	.50				
Q11	I have personal relationship with many of my young leaders. − OR- My mentor has a personal relationship with me.	4.19	.49	3.61	1.10	4.63 (157.16)	.000**
Q12	How intense is your typical relationship with the young leaders your mentor? − OR - How intense is your relationship with your mentor?	2.87	.53	2.49	.98	3.20 (156.74)	.002**
Q13	When the young leaders I mentor need counsel, I am always available to meet with them. − OR - When I need counsel, my pastor is always available to meet with me.	3.98	.73	3.20	1.23	5.10 (152.62)	.000**
Q14	I have been too busy and have not been able to mentor well. − OR - My pastor has been too busy and has not been able to mentor me well.	2.52	1.00	3.50	1.33	-5.25 (129.71)	.000**
Q15	I spend time teaching my young leaders regularly. − OR - My pastor spends time in teaching me regularly.	3.44	.87	2.66	1.23	4.76 (134.39)	.000**

Q16	As a pastor I encouraged my young leaders in different areas of their lives. – OR - My pastor has encouraged me in different areas of my life.	4.17	.79	2.98	1.16	7.83 (139.44) .000**
Q17	My young leaders are my very good friends. – OR - My pastor is my very good friend.	4.21	.72	3.08	1.05	8.13 (137.30) .000**
Q18	I hold my young leaders accountable by disciplining them when they go wrong. – OR - My pastor holds me accountable by disciplining me when I am wrong.	3.90	.72	3.50	.86	3.14 (115.21) .002**
Q19	As a pastor, I always empower my young leaders by giving them assignments in the church. – OR - My pastor always empowers me by giving me leadership assignments in the church.	3.96	1.05	3.26	1.11	3.93 (103.24) .000**

Table 1.3. Attitudes about Mentoring

Qs	Perceptions about Mentoring	Pastors (N=52)		Young Leaders (N=120)		t (df)	P
		M	SD	M	SD		
Q1	Mentoring involves a relationship between a younger, less experienced person and an older who wisely guides the younger through different areas of life.	4.35	.81	4.62	.55	-2.19 (72.20)	.032*
Q2	Mentoring is very important in developing next generation of leaders.	4.60	.53	4.80	.42	-2.44 (79.89)	.017*
Q3	Mentoring process is currently being used to develop the next generation of leaders in RCCG.	4.10	.94	2.73	1.40	7.53 (141.40)	.000**
Q4	Many senior pastors like provincial, area, and zonal pastors are intentionally developing young leaders in their churches.	3.65	1.12	2.49	.96	6.92 (170)	.000**
Q5	Mentoring involves nurturing the person being mentored.	4.42	.57	4.29	.67	1.24 (17)	.217
Q6	I think there are some effective aspects of the mentoring as being presently practiced by pastors in the RCCG.	3.88	.94	2.03	.97	11.42 (168)	.000**
Q7	I think the RCCG is focused more on the elderly people than the development of the young generation (the young generation will mean 35 years and below)	3.13	1.22	3.55	1.18	-2.07 (169)	.040*