TOWARDS A STRATEGIC TRANSCULTURAL MODEL OF LEADERSHIP THAT ENHANCES KOINONIA IN URBAN SOUTHERN AFRICA

Synthesising a Multicultural Model of Leadership that Transcends the Socio-political Barriers within the Cities of Southern Africa.

By

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PRETORIA

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KEY WORDS

SYNOPSIS

The research conducted was done on the basis of providing an initial platform or starting point for insight and discussion into what a strategic transcultural model of leadership might look like which was relevant to the early 21st Century Christian context in the cities of Southern Africa. A strategic transcultural leader is essentially a transformational leader who exhibits an ability beyond the norm in being able to cross socio-political barriers and thus inspiring the multicultural dynamic, while also honouring the individual cultures represented. In order to study strategic transcultural leadership models a strong leadership angle was taken, which employed investigating six leaders, three political and three Christian as to the structures, styles, values, transcultural abilities and Christian/political beliefs and/or philosophies they employed.

The thesis poses the problem of urban unrest in the cities of Southern Africa. The problem of an influx into the cities, of the many different ethnicities and tribes from throughout Southern Africa and the pressures this has caused is briefly alluded to. This problem has been further exacerbated in South Africa by the arrival of many peoples from throughout Africa, south of the Sahara seeking their fortune without having to leave the African Subcontinent, and in Zimbabwe by the political policies of the Zimbabwean government, over land and in clearing away her unapproved urban high-density housing, and her informal business and white farming sectors of the economy. With these issues in mind, there is a need for strategic transcultural leadership to address these and other issues of unrest. The examples of Mandela and De Klerk as transformational leaders, inspire hope, that the vacuum of strategic transcultural leadership seen in Africa at large and specifically in relation to Southern Africa can be met, as is noted by the progress made in recent years in the arena of transformational leadership which the Group of eight and the United Nations and others allude to. While this is true, there are still problems in relation to the political decision-making within South African, as seen by Mbeki’s stance in the past on HIV-AIDS, and Zimbabwe’s woes.

The stage is set from a missiological and historical perspective by looking at multicultural models of leadership in the Early Church with specific reference to Paul and the Antiochan model he used as a prototype. The Jerusalem Church is mentioned as a bi-cultural model, which has significant use outside of large urban environs. However it was the Pauline-Antiochan model that provided a platform, in the later use of a synthetic-semiotic model, to deduce or synthesis a transcultural model. Paul’s model of leadership was analysed specifically in relation to the five elements already noted (structures, styles, etc.) and is particularly useful as a model as Paul himself provides firstly an insight into a man of bi-cultural heritage yet someone who was empire-conscious. Paul was able to uphold both the cultural distinctive or uniqueness of both the Greek and Jew (noting Paul’s use of both Hebraic and Hellenistic styles of the diatribe for example) as well as the universal, in that he was empire-conscious which played into his Kingdom perspective. Secondly he provides a reasonable grounds for understanding that if the belief system of the individual is changed on one of its most fundamental levels – allegiance – then given time the macro-cultural identity of a nation, even empire can be significantly altered.

He was able to do this primarily because the Graeco-Roman Empire had a common lingua-franca in Greek, and the Christian community – as the followers of the Way became known as – had an ethos of reconciliation, enhancing the multicultural and one also of inclusivity (for example a worship style that encompasses both Jewish and local expressions) enhancing the particular. In declaring the One God of Israel and Jesus Christ – Messiah, as the only true
Kyrios, Paul replaced the Emperor and the whole Greek pantheon of the Gods with the one true God and Father of us all, and his one and only Son.

The three political leaders – Moshoeshoe, Smuts and Mandela – and the three Christian leaders – Mutendi, Cassidy and Tutu – are investigated in terms of the five elements (structures, styles, values etc.) that comprise the model of leadership. Each of these leaders in turn made a lasting contribution to national and/or tribal change. After looking at the six leadership models an initial conceptual framework for a multicultural model of leadership is outlined. However, in order to bring significant current postmodern/neo-African/tribal/multicultural paradigms of thought and the associated socio-political forces and philosophies of the day, to bear on the evolving model, these were specifically highlighted and brought into the process of synthesising a model.

Lastly once all these inputs are brought together in a tabulated framework, and the evolving multicultural model is screened against three known working scenarios, and further synthesised such that the refined model was then called a strategic transcultural model of leadership. Before this can be achieved however, various North American multicultural models posited were looked at in a literary review, which served to reinforce the understanding of the need to balance the universal and the particular aspects of culture.

In refining a strategic transcultural model, the thesis next attempted to address the problem of developing a national macro-cultural identity. A strict delineation in a postmodern era between Church and State was considered to be not only unnecessary but a modern myth, also noting that the State mirrors the Church in many of the problems of community and identity. Thus the meso-level of the Church provided key insights into the macro-level of the State. An argument all along was posed for not just orchestrating a macro-culture based on multiculturalism, nor in just upholding the micro-cultural individual identities at the expense of participation in a national framework and beyond this the global village, but an argument was made for a both/and scenario. In doing this the thesis sought to address both the macro-cultural and individual cultural identities at every level and in every element of the model of leadership. The plausibility of the argument for today was based on the prevalence of a language of choice – in most cases English – and an ethos of reconciliation and inclusivity for which Madiba and Tutu among others have set the standard.

A final picture of a community based on both was posited for reflection, a picture that John paints where the great heavenly host (mirroring the macro-level of the Kingdom) is contrasted with the micro-level of a people made up “from every tribe and language and people and nation” (Rev 5:9).
### TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ch.</th>
<th>Chapter and Section Headings</th>
<th>Page No.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>THE OUTLINE AND PARAMETERS OF THE THESIS</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>Objective Statement/ Title</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>The Problem of Racial Harmony in Urban Southern Africa</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>Proposition and Objectives</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>The Major Areas of Research</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>The Axioms and Limits of this Research</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>Methodology and Process</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>Definitions</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>THE NEED FOR STRATEGIC TRANSCULTURAL LEADERSHIP IN SOUTHERN AFRICA</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>Strategic Transcultural Leadership and Africa’s unresolved problems</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>The Strategic Transcultural Leader’s Role in Creating a New Tribe or Nation</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>EARLY CHURCH MULTICULTURAL LEADERSHIP MODELS</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>The Jerusalem Church Model</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>The Pax Romana and The Antioch Church Model</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>Paul – The Man of Two Worlds but One Empire</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>The Pauline Structures of Leadership and Training</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>Paul’s Style of Leadership and Teaching</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>Paul’s Values</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>Paul’s, His Churches’ and His Team’s Ability to Cross Socio-Political Boundaries</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>Pauline Belief Structures and His Theologies of Reconciliation and Election</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.10</td>
<td>Pauline Church Structure(s) of Community</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.11</td>
<td>Overview of the Roman, Antioch and Pauline Contribution</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>LEADERSHIP MODELS OF THREE SOUTHERN AFRICAN POLITICAL LEADERS</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>Moshoeshoe</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A brief commentary on Moshoeshoe’s life and rise to leadership</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Structures employed in Moshoeshoe’s model of leadership</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Styles of leadership used by Moshoeshoe</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Values of Moshoeshoe’s leadership</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Moshoeshoe’s traditional and Christian beliefs</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The basis for Moshoeshoe’s ability to cross socio-political boundaries</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>How Moshoeshoe’s traditional/Christian convictions effected lasting national change</td>
<td>101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>Jan Smuts</td>
<td>105</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A brief commentary on Smuts’ life and rise to leadership</td>
<td>105</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Structures employed in Smuts’ leadership model</td>
<td>110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Styles of leadership used by Smuts</td>
<td>112</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Values of Smuts’ leadership</td>
<td>116</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Smuts’ philosophy of holism, love of nature and his Christian beliefs</td>
<td>121</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The basis for Smuts’ ability to cross the white socio-political boundaries</td>
<td>127</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>How Smuts’ political convictions effected lasting national change</td>
<td>130</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>Nelson Mandela</td>
<td>134</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A brief commentary on Mandela’s life and rise to leadership</td>
<td>134</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Structures employed in Mandela’s model of leadership</td>
<td>142</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Styles of leadership used by Mandela 145
Values of Mandela’s leadership 148
Mandela’s Christian and political beliefs 155
The basis for Mandela’s ability to cross socio-political boundaries 158
How Mandela’s political/Christian convictions effected lasting national change 159

4.5 A Brief Comparison and Initial Implications of the Three Political Models for a
Multicultural Leadership Model 163
The historical context of the three political leadership models 164
A brief comparative analysis and initial application of the three political models 164

5. LEADERSHIP MODELS OF THREE SOUTHERN AFRICAN CHRISTIAN LEADERS 166
5.1 Introduction 166
5.2 Bishop Mutendi 167
A brief commentary on Mutendi’s life and rise to leadership 167
Structures employed in Mutendi’s model of leadership 173
Styles of leadership used by Mutendi 178
Values of Mutendi’s leadership 182
Mutendi’s belief system underpinning his model of leadership 184
The basis for Mutendi’s ability to cross the tribal boundaries 190
How Mutendi’s Zionist convictions affected lasting national change 191

5.3 Michael Cassidy 193
A brief commentary on Cassidy’s life and rise to leadership 193
Structures employed in Cassidy’s model of leadership 199
Styles of leadership used by Cassidy 203
Values of Cassidy’s Leadership 207
Cassidy’s Christian beliefs and philosophical framework 215
The basis for Cassidy’s ability to cross socio-political boundaries 216
How Cassidy’s Christian convictions helped to effect lasting national change 220

5.4 Desmond Tutu 223
A brief commentary on Tutu’s life and rise to leadership 223
Structures employed in Tutu’s model of leadership 231
Styles of leadership used by Tutu 233
Values of Tutu’s leadership 239
Tutu’s Christian beliefs and the bases to his multifaceted theology 243
The basis of Tutu’s ability to cross socio-political boundaries 247
How Tutu’s Christian convictions helped to effect lasting national change 250

5.5 Comparison of the Three Southern African Christian Leaders and Application Using All Six Models
The historical contexts of the three Christian models 254
A brief comparative analysis of the three Christian models of leadership 256
Initial implications from all six leadership models for a multicultural leadership model 258

6. POSTMODERN, TRIBAL, NEO-AFRICAN AND MULTICULTURAL PARADIGMS
OF LEADERSHIP 260
6.1 Introduction and the Concept of Multiple Coexisting Paradigms 260
6.2 The Postmodern Paradigm for Leadership 262
6.3 The Tribal Paradigm for Leadership 265
6.4 Ideologies and Socio-political Forces Impacting on South Africa 266
6.5 The Neo-African Paradigm for Leadership 271
6.6 The Multicultural Paradigm for Leadership 274

7. SYNTHESISING A STRATEGIC TRANSCULTURAL LEADERSHIP MODEL 282
7.1 Introduction 282
7.2 Investigating any North American Multicultural Models Posited and Their Relevance in 283
Developing a Model for the Southern African Context
7.3 A Brief Overview of the Pauline-Antiochan Model of Leadership 291
7.4 Pauline Models of Community and Belief 293
7.5 The Evolving Model Screened Against Three Working Multicultural Scenarios 294
7.6 Final Schematic and Evaluation of the Strategic Transcultural Leadership Model 297
7.7 The Application of the Strategic Transcultural Model of Leadership to Today’s Urban Southern African Christian Organisational Context 302
7.8 The Relevance of a Strategic Transcultural Model to a Macro-cultural Identity 304
7.9 The Ongoing Synthesis and Vision for a Strategic Transcultural Community 309
7.10 Concluding remarks 313

REFERENCES 318
GLOSSARY OF TERMINOLOGY 327
BIBLICAL REFERENCES 329

APPENDICIES
Appendix 1 Interviews Regarding Moshoeshoe 1
Appendix 2 Interviews regarding Smuts 5
Appendix 3 Interviews Regarding Mandela 10
Appendix 4 Interviews Regarding Mutendi 13
Appendix 5 Interviews Regarding Cassidy 24
Appendix 6 Interviews Regarding Tutu 37

FIGURES AND TABLES
Figure 1.1 The Situational Leadership Model 11
Figure 1.2 The Situational Apprenticeship Model 11
Figure 3.9.1 A Possible Hierarchical Belief Structure of a Graeco-Roman Citizen 60
Figure 3.9.2 The Pauline Hierarchical Belief Structure 63
Figure 3.10 Pauline Church-Community and the Jewish Church Structures 72
Table 4.5.1 Framework of comparison of the three Southern African political leaders 163
Figure 5.1.1 The Simplified Shona Cosmological Structure 184
Figure 5.1.2 Mutendi’s Belief System 188
Table 5.5.1 Framework of comparison of the three Southern African Christian leaders 254
Figure 6.1 Ndebele chieftaincy and related regional areas they control 265
Table 6.6 Tabulated Synthesis Showing an Initial Proposal of a Multicultural Model of Leadership for early 21st Century Christian Organisation in the Cities of Southern Africa. 281
Figure 7.2.1 The Multi-dimensional Matrix of Coexisting Paradigm Continuums 290
Figure 7.2.2 The Multi-dimensional Matrix of Cultural, Liturgical and Denominational Transfusion 291
Table 7.3.1 Tabulated synopsis of the Pauline-Antiochan multicultural model of leadership 292
Figure 3.9.2 The Pauline Hierarchical Belief Structure 293
Figure 3.10 Pauline Church-Community and the Jewish Church Structures 293
Table 7.5.1 The evolving multicultural leadership model melded with the Pauline-Antiochan Model and the contemporary North American inputs 294
Table 7.5.2 The three Christian working multicultural models of leadership 296
Table 7.6.1 The Tabulated Synthesis of a Strategic Transcultural Model of Leadership 299