Leadership in Africa and in the Old Testament: A transcendental perspective

E O Usue (Reformed Theological Seminray

Mkar-Gboko, Benue State, Nigeria)[1]
Research Associate: Department of Old Testament Studies
University of Pretoria

Abstract

This article discusses the challenges of leadership as reflected in the Old Testament and in African contexts. The author notes certain strengths and weaknesses with regard to some of the approaches to leadership both in the Old Testament and Africa. As Alternative the article proposes a transcendental perspective on leadership in response to the African situation.

1.   INTRODUCTION

A Tiv-African Christian poet (Zuzu 1995) said in one of his Christian worship songs that it is much easier for a person to take care of one thousand cattle than for someone to be given five people to lead. The reason is that he who is given the one thousand cattle will have more joy and happiness than the one who has been assigned the burden of leadership among people. The poet thus paints a picture of one of the difficulties that the African continent faces in terms of leadership at the dawn of this twenty-first century.

It is certainly not an exaggeration to claim that the African continent faces the crisis and challenge of good leadership (cf Osei-Mensah 1990:vi). Included here are leadership challenges in political, business, educational, religious and familial contexts (cf Iornem 2004:1-4; 2005:1-10; Van der Walt 1994:505-506). For the lack of good leadership in these areas is a major factor in the prevalence of the various political, economic, ethnic, family and

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[1] Dr E O Usue, lecturer at the Reformed Theological Seminary, Mkar-Gboko, Benue State (Nigeria) is a research associate of Prof Dr Dirk J Human, Department of Old Testament Studies, University of Pretoria.

religious violence, wars and conflicts that have ravaged/ransacked the continent in the last fifteen years.

Africa, however, is not an exception when it comes to the challenges of leadership. The world of the Old Testament is also reported to have faced similar difficulties in terms of leadership. For example: the impression one gets from the book of Judges is the repeated claim that the terrible events had taken place during the period of the absence of a king or leader (cf Jdg 17:6; 18:1; 19:1; 21:25). However, the problems which are alleged to have happened at the time of the Judges could be seen as a lack of good political, religious and family leadership; not just as a consequence of the absence of *a kingly* leadership as presupposed in the book of Judges (cf Jdg 17:6; 18:1; 19:1; 21:25). If it were merely as a result of the absence of a *king*, the Old Testament would not have reported the ensuing political, religious, familial and social problems that are said to have occurred during the period of the monarchy (cf 1 Sm 15:1-2 Ki 25:30).

Moreover, if the presence of a *kingly* leadership could provide the basis on which all the various segments of a society could thrive in harmony, the African continent should never have witnessed the vicious political, religious, economic and ethnic violence that have destroyed the fabric of our social cohesion in the last one-and-a-half decades (cf Adogame 2004:329-332; Sharkey 2004:416; Cookson 2003:3; Shaw 2003:212; Khadiagala 2002:463; World Bank 2002:12; Kumar 2001:1). Africa has so many kings who are leaders among various cultures, tribes, ethnic groups and nations but, unfortunately, various problems and conflicts still persist.

In other words, both the world of the Old Testament and that of Africa have in common the challenge of leadership. Hence, this article proposes a *transcendental* perspective on leadership for addressing the African situation. A *transcendental* perspective on leadership presupposes that the *origin*, *mandate, paradigm* and *goal* of leadership in general, should transcend the ordinary realm of human affairs. It is the conviction that leadership *originates* from the Trinitarian God (cf Gn 1:26-30). It is a *mandate* conferred upon human beings by this God (cf Van der Walt 1994:482), who *created* it, *rules* and *sustains* it, and has *redeemed* it (cf Jn 1:1-5; Ac 4:12; Heb 1:1-4).

God's *goal* is his *glory*. Therefore, leadership in all areas of human life with all its ramifications ought to reflect or reveal God's *rule or paradigm*, *purpose, plan* and *glory*. It should be *accountable* first, to God and second, to the people whom that leadership is directed. A *transcendental* perspective on leadership therefore, has two dimensions, namely, the *vertical* or *theocentric* and the *horizontal* or a*nthropocentric* dimensions. A leader who is operating

from a transcendental perspective will be *godly, disciplined, visionary, humble, honest, relational, empathetic, accountable, democratic* and *altruistic.*[2]

The use of the concept of God or the Trinitarian God in this article needs to be explained because of certain factors attached to its connotations. History is replete with incidences whereby the name of God has been misused variously to maim, torture, destroy, kill and annihilate other human beings who do not subscribe to similar viewpoints. For example, *Apartheid* in South Africa was partly justified by certain *Christian* traditions based upon their concept of God and their ideas about how leadership should be carried out as a result of that knowledge.[3]

In Nigeria, as it is commonly found in certain Islamic countries, the concept of God has been misused to justify the atrocities that have been done to those who do not share the same religious ideology. Frequent suicide bombing and kidnapping have been carried out in certain places by religious fanatics in the name of God.[4]

In view of the above, the use of the word "God" in this article might be met with suspicion. However, this article does not condone such abuse of the name "God", roping it in the service of violence and discrimination. Rather, the author's premise is that one concept could be used for good or ill. Therefore, the use of the concept of God employed in this article has a positive intention. It is suggested that for a proper understanding and comprehension of the proposed transcendental perspective on leadership in Africa, one is expected to understand the Christian worldview as described in this article.

In what follows, the article will discuss the following topics: 1) challenges of leadership in the Old Testament: Moses' experience of

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[2] Van der Walt (1994:499) argues that, "the purpose of authority is twofold. In the first place it should coordinate, guide and help the members of the societal relationship so that they can fulfil their specific task and calling (as determined by God) in this specific societal relationship. As a result of the sinfulness of man, authority, in the second place, should also struggle against evil and corruption and, with a view to the fulfilment of the calling of the members in that societal relation, maintain the necessary order."

[3] For example, the decision of the Dutch Reformed Church Synod in 1857 states that " Synod sees it as desirable and according to Scripture that our members from the heathen be taken up and incorporated into our existing congregations wherever it is possible: but where such measures, due to the weakness of some, will hinder the advance of the cause of Christ among the heathen, the congregations erected from the heathen or those to be erected must enjoy their Christian privileges in a separate building or establishment" (Coertzen 2001:58). This decision, in some ways, opened a Pandora box for certain members of the DRC to become disgruntled about racial integration in the church. Such people implicitly influenced the main DRC to embark on racial separation of its members. In the end there was racial segregation not only in the church but also in other areas of the South African society (see also Smith 2003:316-317).

[4] For example, the attack on World trade buildings in the USA on September 11, 2001; the attack on London subway on July 7, 2005, and other suicide attacks in Iraq, Israel/Palestine, et cetera have been motivated largely by religious lunatics in the name of God.

leadership (cf Nm 12:1-16); 2) challenges of leadership in Africa; 3) a proposed transcendental perspective on leadership in Africa; and 4) a conclusion.

2. CHALLENGES OF LEADERSHIP: MOSES' EXPERIENCE OF LEADERSHIP

This section discusses a reported case of a leadership crisis during Moses' administration and the manner in which the crisis was resolved according to Numbers 12:1-16. There is debate about the precise source tradition of this passage. The passage is attributed to the *Elohist* source tradition completely or certain verses, namely Numbers 12:1, 9a, 10, 13-16 are assigned to the *Yahwist* source tradition (cf Davies 1995:114; Budd 1984:133). My viewpoint is that Numbers 12:1-16 is a unit or a complete story with the following plots: A problem is identified (vv 1-2); the narrator justifies the accused (v 3); Yahweh defended the accused (vv 4-8); Yahweh punishes the leading accuser (vv 9-10); Moses and Aaron pleaded for the withdrawer of punishment against the leading accuser (vv 11-14) and the situation is resolved when the leading accuser is restored (vv 15-16).

2.1 Analysis of characters

There are five characters in Numbers 12:1-16. They include: *Miriam, Aaron, Moses* and his *wife* (anonymous). The fifth character is *Yahweh*, the God of Israel. What follows is a discussion of each of these five characters.

- *Miriam:* She was Moses and Aaron's eldest sister. Their father was Amram while their mother was Jochebed (cf Nm 26:59; 1 Chr 6:3). Miriam was the person who helped protect Moses from the massacre of infant boys by the Egyptian Pharaoh (cf Ex 2:4, 7; Olson 1996:69-70). She was a prophetess (cf Ex 15:20). She led Israel in worship (cf Ex 15:20, 21). She was chosen by Yahweh to help Moses and Aaron in leadership (cf Mi 6:4). She died at the desert of Zin and was buried at Kadesh (cf Nm 20:1). It could be observed that jealousy, excessive ambition, pride and craftiness were the drawbacks to her leadership ability.[5] Miriam appears to have pulled Aaron, her younger brother, into taking part in her plot against Moses (cf Nm 12:1-2).

- *Aaron:* He was three years older than Moses (cf Ex 7:7). He was Moses' spokes person in Egypt (cf Ex 4:14-16, 29-30). He was the first

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[5] Cf Fausset's Bible Dictionary from Bible Works Version 6.

high Priest (cf Ex 40:12-16). He was Moses' assistant with Miriam (cf Mi 6:4). Aaron's sibling position and his role could be described as a "Piggy in the middle" in a family of three, sandwiched between his strong-minded sister Miriam and his towering able younger brother Moses (cf Ex 6:20; 7:7). He died at mount Hor (cf Nm 20:22-29). Timidity, indecision, and lack of self-esteem were his weaknesses. His inability to make decisions based upon his true inner conviction led him to accept the un-lawful request of the Israelites to make a golden calf against his will (cf Ex 32: 1-6). His submission to the unlawful wishes of others landed him in conflict with the Law of Yahweh, the God of Israel (cf Ex 20:3-6; Dt 5:7-10). Unfortunately, that experience did not teach him a sustained lesson, rather, he submitted unthinkably to the illegitimate plot of Miriam against Moses (cf Nm 12:1-2).

- *Moses:* He was the last-born in the family. He narrowly survived the infant massacre in Egypt through his elder sister's protection (cf Ex 1:15-2:10). He grew up in King Pharaoh's palace. He became concerned about the plight of his people-the Hebrews. He eventually murdered an Egyptian in defense of a brother Israelite (cf Ex 2:11-12). When this was discovered, he escaped to Midian (cf Ex 2:15). Yahweh called him to lead the Israelites out of Egypt (cf Ex 3:10). He complained about his inefficiency (cf Ex 3:11-12). Yahweh provided Miriam and Aaron to assist him in the task of leadership (cf Ex 4:14-16; Mi 6:4). Moses was the greatest Old Testament prophet (cf Dt 34:10-12; Nm 12:7-8). Moses' anger, rage and poor communication skills were some of his drawbacks probably as a result of being a stammerer (cf Ex 4:10). As a result, he committed murder (cf Ex 2:11-12); broke the two tablets of the Law (cf Ex 32:19) and struck the rock with his staff out of his anger and rage (cf Nm 20:11-12). He also seems to do everything alone in his administration. His *do-everything-alone* attitude was questioned by his father in-law, Jethro (cf Ex 18:13-26), his two siblings (cf Nm 12:1-2) and other leaders (cf Nm 16:1-3). Due to these weaknesses, he could be described with reference to his leadership achievement as a "successful failure". He did not enter the Promised Land; rather he died at Mount Nebo (cf Dt 34:1-6).

- *Moses' wife*: Her name is not mentioned in Numbers 12:1-16. But she has been referred to as a Cushite woman (cf Nm 12:1). Moses' previous wife was Zipporah, from the land of the Midianites (cf Ex 2:15-21). But nothing is said about Moses' previous marriage with Zipporah

in the present incident. The word *Cush* is used in many instances to refer to the black race or Africa (cf Adamo 2001:11-15; Olson 1996:70-71). According to Adamo, Ethiopia is mostly identified with Cush in biblical stories (cf Gn 2:13; 2 Ki 19:9; Is 11:11; 20:3-5; 43:3; 45:14; Ezk 30:4-5; 38:5; Nah 3:9). Adamo (2001:15) therefore argues convincingly that Moses' wife was from Cush or Africa and not from Arabia or elsewhere as presupposed by others (cf Davies 1995:118119; Budd 1984:136; Baldwin s a:349).

- *Yahweh*: Yahweh is the God of Israel who brought them out of Egypt by the hands of Moses (cf Ex 20:1). He is reported to have participated in the story as an arbiter between Moses on the one side and Miriam and Aaron on the other side of the leadership tussle (cf Nm 12:4-16). He acted in defence of Moses and punishes the leading accuser Miriam.

2.2   Leadership Crises: Moses' experience at Hazeroth (cf Nm 12:1-3)

2.2.1 Moses' marriage to a Cushite woman (Nm 12:1)

Miriam and Aaron insulted Moses with regard to two issues: i) his marriage to a Cushite woman (cf Nm 12:1) and ii) his role and authority as a leader (cf Nm 12:2). Miriam and Aaron questioned Moses' marriage to a Cushite woman, probably because of her race or foreignness, though others have thought on the contrary (cf Olson 1996:70-71). Budd (1984:138) argues that Moses' marriage to a foreign woman was also a factor in this story but the writer did not want to elaborate on this; rather, he aimed at dealing with the consequence which Miriam had to face for opposing Moses. If interracial marriage was one of the subject matters for the accusation, Moses had a serious case to answer. There are Old Testament scriptural passages which suggest that Yahweh had forbidden the Israelites from getting married to other nations (cf Ex 34:16; Dt 7:3, 4). These nations were prone to worshipping other deities and therefore could influence the Israelites to doing the same if the Israelites marry from them. Therefore, Miriam might have thought much about the implications of Moses' interracial marriage, particularly given the fact that he was the number one leader. Moses' altitude could serve as a benchmark for the rest of the people of Israel. Many of them would be tempted to marry from foreign nations and thereby violate Yahweh's command as stated from the above passages. As a consequence, Miriam denounced Moses' marriage to an African woman with all veracity. She

sought the support of Aaron, her younger brother, in her charge against Moses (cf Nm 12:1).

However, Miriam was wrong on the charge she had brought against Moses concerning his interracial marriage. A close reading of the Old Testament suggests that Yahweh did not forbid interracial marriage in the way Miriam seemed to have presupposed (cf Dt 7:1-10). In this passage, as it is almost everywhere in the Old Testament, Yahweh was mostly concerned about the worship of other deities by the Israelites. He did not want the Israelites to worship other gods. Interracial marriage therefore, was one of the stepping-stones that could lead the Israelites to the worship of other gods or idolatry. But Moses, in this case, was not predisposed to worshiping other deities. Rather, he was determined to worship Yahweh, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. As a matter of fact, there is no trace in the Old Testament account where Moses is reported to have bowed down before an idol or any other foreign god(s) in worship. Therefore, Miriam and Aaron should have handled this matter in a more careful manner. It is expected that they should have approached Moses privately and discussed the matter with him. Miriam's motive for accusing Moses is therefore questionable; given the manner she had handled the matter.

2.2.2 Moses' role and authority as a leader (cf Nm 12:2)

Miriam and Aaron questioned Moses about his role and authority as a leader. It is not clear from this passage their primary concern for questioning Moses' role and authority as a leader. Do their accusations against Moses focus on his interracial marriage or on his role and authority as a leader or on both issues? It is difficult to relate the first accusation to the second. However, it could be inferred that Miriam and Aaron had two specific concerns against Moses: his interracial or foreign marriage and his leadership style.

Other incidents concerning Moses' style of leadership appeared to suggest that he was not good at consulting his assistants namely, Miriam and Aaron or other leaders concerning certain important administrative matters.[6] This lonely style of leadership was previously objected to by Jethro, Moses' father-in-law. He had already warned Moses that there is danger in doing everything alone without delegating some of his powers to his assistants or others (cf Ex 18:13-26; Osei-Mensah 1990:15). A similar charge was raised against Moses and Aaron at a later stage by Korah, Dathan, Abiram and their associates (cf Nm 16:1-3). Therefore, in Numbers 12:1-2, it can be inferred that Miriam and Aaron felt ignored by Moses' administrative and family

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[6] Cf Matthew Henry Commentary 1706 on Numbers 12:1-3 (extracted from Bible Works Version 6).

policies. As a matter of fact, Miriam and Aaron were probably right on this issue of lonely leadership adopted by Moses. It is clear from other passages that Miriam and Aaron were appointed by Yahweh to assist Moses in his leadership function (cf Ex 4:14-16; 6:30-7:2; Mi 6:4). So, Moses is expected to have involved his assistants more than he had done in his administrative decisions and functions.

However, the way or manner in which Miriam and Aaron approached Moses and presented the matter was too harsh and disrespectful. Their criticisms against Moses' leadership style appeared to have been motivated by a concern to destroy Moses rather than to help him change his style of leadership. It could also be inferred that their destructive criticisms appeared to have been motivated by pride, jealousy, craftiness and a determination to bring down Moses from his celebrated number-one position, rather than by a genuine passion to see a positive change in Moses' life, and in his administrative style. The manner in which Moses had responded to these allegations, therefore, demands our consideration in what follows.

2.2.3 Moses' handling of the leadership challenge: Absolute quietism (cf Nm 12:3)

This verse appears to report that Moses exhibited an altitude of absolute quietism when he was confronted by his assistants, Miriam and Aaron (cf Nm 12:3). The passage suggests that Moses' quiet response or non-response was motivated by his humility. He was a very humble person, more humble than anyone else on the face of the earth. Therefore, he did not utter any word in response to Miriam and Aaron's accusations; rather he was calm. Davies (1995:121) notes that Moses' meekness is mentioned in this passage to undermine the accusation raised by Miriam and Aaron concerning his role as a sole recipient of Yahweh's revelation. But Moses' character in this story did not reflect what is known about him in previous incidents, for example, Moses had murdered an Egyptian and had fled to Midian (cf Ex 2:11-15). Moses also had to handle a similar accusation in a different manner (cf Nm 16:1-35). He was extremely angry with his accusers (cf Nm 16:15). He even prayed to the Lord that he should not accept the offering of his accusers. So, what motivated Moses to take an absolutely quiet approach towards his accusers in this incident (cf Nm 12:3)? Could it be that Moses realised his fault and therefore, did not see any reason to respond to the charges? But if this was so, why did Moses fail to confess his wrong doing before his assistants so as to end the conflict? Or could it be that Moses was a hard-headed person who saw no reason to respond to any criticism directed against his family affairs or his administrative policies? This too is unlikely because Numbers 12:3 seems

to present him in a different limelight. Moses is portrayed as a humble person, more humble than anyone else. He could not be a hard-headed and a humble person at the same time.

Therefore, let us take a cue from this passage that Moses did not respond to these accusations because of his humility. It could also be inferred that since his accusers were his family siblings, Moses might not want to be in a sharp disagreement with them. Another possibility could be that Miriam and Aaron were chosen by Yahweh to assist Moses. Therefore, Moses could consider letting the matter between him and his two assistants be settled by Yahweh himself. If this was the sense of Moses' quiet response, let us consider Yahweh's approach to this leadership tussle.

2.3   Yahweh's resolution (vv 4-16)

Yahweh summoned Miriam, Aaron and Moses to the tent of meeting and speaks in defence of Moses (cf vv 4-16). Yahweh explained the nature of His relationship with Moses (cf vv 6-8). He was closer to Moses than to any of the rest of the other prophets, leaders or people. He speaks to Moses directly or face to face and Moses behoves the form of Yahweh. But Yahweh speaks to other prophets through visions and dreams, which is different from the manner in which he speaks to Moses. Moses is also noted by Yahweh as being a faithful servant in his house. As a servant of Yahweh, Moses does the will of Yahweh. If Moses was such a faithful servant, Moses might have sought the approval of Yahweh in his decision to marry an African woman. Similarly, Moses may have sought the will of Yahweh in his administrative policies. Miriam and Aaron appeared to have been ignorant about Moses' intimate relationship with Yahweh. Therefore, because of Yahweh's intimacy with Moses, an insult against Moses could be construed as an insult against Yahweh himself. Yahweh would not condone any un-lawful accusation against his closest prophet and servant. As a result, Yahweh's anger burned against Miriam and Aaron for insulting Moses. Consequently, Yahweh disappeared from the tent of meeting only to bring down leprosy upon Miriam (cf v 10). In the Deuteronomic Law respecting leprosy, Miriam's fate is mentioned as a warning to the Israelites.[7] Aaron pleaded with Moses about Miriam's leprosy, while Moses also prayed to Yahweh for her (cf vv 11-13). Later on, Miriam was restored, but she had spent seven days in confinement outside the camp (cf vv 14, 15). Aaron is not punished probably because he was co-opted ignorantly by Miriam into accusing Moses (cf Olson 1996:74).

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[7] Cf Dt 24:8-9 (extracted from ISBE Bible Dictionary from Bible Works Version 6).

# 3.	LEADERSHIP CHALLENGES IN AFRICA

Leadership in Africa appears to be faced with several challenges such as wars/armed conflict, corruption, HIV/AIDS, unemployment and poverty etcetera. In what follows, the article discusses some of these challenges in order to provide a general picture of what the African continent faces in this twenty first century.

## 3.1	Wars/armed conflict

War and armed conflict have engulfed the continent of Africa in the last two decades and have posed a serious challenge for political, religious and business leaders. For example, the war in Sudan has left an estimated death toll of at least two million people (cf Sharkey 2004:416; Cookson 2003:3). In Rwanda, the death toll is estimated at one million (cf Khadiagala 2002:463; Shaw 2003:212). While in other African countries such as Eritrea, Ethiopia, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Sierra-Leone, Liberia and Nigeria a large number of people have also died from the various wars (cf Adogame 2004:329-332; World Bank 2002:12; Kumar 2001:1). The Tiv ethnic tribe[8] of Nigeria has experienced similar armed conflict with their neighbors, and the government of Nigeria is hopelessly caught up in between these fighting according to the United Nations Integrated Regional Information Networks (October 24, 2001).[9] The above report also noted that the Tiv ethnic tribe has resolved to fight with all possible veracity because the people believe that they would never get justice from the government. The government of Nigeria appears to be strongly on the side of the Jukuns and other neighbouring tribes (cf Saror 2005:2-4). The question is, what are these people fighting for? Are they fighting for power, control, leadership, money, freedom, independence, religious faith, land, oil, or for what? The United Nations' Integrated Regional

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[8] The writer of this article comes from the Tiv ethnic tribe of Nigeria. He is an eye-witness to most of the vicious wars between the Tiv and other ethnic tribes in Nigeria.

[9] "For decades Tivs and their Jukun neighbours in Nigeria's central region have engaged in intermittent fighting, mostly over land and sometimes as political rivals. But in recent weeks, fighting between the two groups has assumed a wider, dangerous dimension, posing a challenge to President Olusegun Obasanjo's administration. At the moment, the Tivs feel that they are fighting a three-front battle. Apart from the Jukuns, they also have to contend with Fulani nomads with whom they have had bloody disputes over grazing land. In Nasarawa State, there are still bloody remnants from clashes in June involving the Tivs and the Hausa-speaking Azeri over land ownership. While camps set up outside Makurdi, the Benue State capital, for people displaced by the fighting in Nasarawa, were still not completely empty, a new influx from the fighting in Taraba has filled them up. Local officials estimate that some 30,000 people are now living in the camps, in need of urgent relief assistance.

Information Networks (October 24, 2001) provide a historical perspective from some analysts on the above question.[10]

3.2   Corruption

The cancer of corruption is no longer an obscure phenomenon in the government and public/private sectors of the African continent (cf Williams and Theobald 2000:1-543; Harrison 1993:376-380; O'Connor 1991:67-70). African political, religious and business leaders as well as their subjects have become either victims or perpetrators of corruption. For example, a report of an official commission of inquiry into bribery and corruption in Ghana (cf Harrison 1993:377-378) reveals that there are about 162 separate activities where corruption was practiced in the government departments. Some of these activities included staff appointments, promotions, staff transfers, clearance of goods from customs, grading of cocoa, issue of labour cards to the unemployed, allocation of market stalls, examination leakages and malpractices, privileges to certain prisoners and the sale of files on criminal investigations to the criminals being investigated et cetera.

In South Africa, several surveys conducted by various research organizations reveal that corruption is perceived by the respondents to have been very high in business and government sectors (cf Lodge 2000:157-158). Lodge (2000:164-181) also enumerated various reported cases of corruption in the private and public sectors during the apartheid and post-apartheid eras in South Africa. Billions of Rand had been misappropriated through corruption in various government departments, namely the Post-Office, Justice Ministry, Health Department, Department of Education and Training, cabinet ministers, the National Defence and Police force and in private businesses.

The government of Zaire (now Democratic Republic of Congo), under the leadership of president Mobuto, is reported to have corruptibly leased out a large portion of its land to a German company (OTRAG) at the greatest disadvantage of the local people of Zaire/DRC (cf Kalamiya 2000:191). According to Kalamiya, the implication of this contract is that the economic

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[10] "Many analysts link the current bloodletting in central Nigeria to political problems dating to the colonial era. During this period the British delegated powers over this vast region inhabited by many ethnic minorities to its ally, the Hausa-Fulani Muslim caliphate that held sway in many parts of northern Nigeria. The Tivs were one of non-Muslim minorities who vehemently opposed Hausa-Fulani influence, resulting in a major eruption of violence in the early 1960s that required military intervention to contain…While the Tivs preferred political alliances with southern political parties, the Jukuns teamed up with the Northern Peoples' Congress, controlled by the Muslim feudal oligarchs of the north. Violent eruptions between the two groups were recorded in 1959, 1964, 1976 and 1991-92. According to Ige: "The Tiv, Jukun conflict falls into the now familiar pattern of communal violence that has been sweeping Nigeria since the end of 15 years of military rule in 1999. They are symptoms of deep-rooted grievances and discontent that need to be addressed by the government. A military solution will not do".

and social welfare of the local people of Zaire (DRC) who are living on this land is completely jeopardized. The people have lost their rights and control over their lands, lakes, rivers and the mineral deposits on this land. This lease is therefore in complete violation of article 15 of Zaire/DRC constitution, the United Nations charter and the International Covenants on Human Rights according to Kalamiya (2000:208).

Botswana, which is often seen as the least corrupt country in Africa is also reported to have experienced its share of high-level corruption in the government and in the private sectors in the last 15 years (cf Good 2000:287-309). Three presidential commissions of inquiries on corruption exposed the practice of corruption in areas that included the supply of teaching materials for primary schools, illegal land transaction in Peri-Urban villages, operation of the Botswana Housing Corporation and the National Development Bank (cf Good 2000:288-300).

The few examples of corruption discussed above reveal the seriousness and intensity of this problem in Africa (cf Williams and Theobald 2000:3-190). It is a challenge that leaders and those who are being led will have to confront. Corruption is a stumbling block to development in the sense that the money which is supposed to be used for specific capital or social projects is diverted into private individual accounts of the privileged few. The general populace are left to scavenge from the trash bin. It is not strange to see many people in post-apartheid South Africa eating food that has been picked up from trash bins while others drive luxurious cars and eat the most expensive food from restaurants. Both the person who picks his food from the trash bin and the one who eats his food in expensive restaurants come from the same country and sometimes from the same local town. This is not to argue that every wealthy person has acquired his wealth fraudulently. But it is obvious from the few examples given from above that some people amass wealth through corrupt means thereby creating inequalities and imbalances in resource sharing.

3.3   Handling of HIV/AIDS

The challenge of HIV/AIDS in Africa and in some other parts of the world has become a reality. According to the reports of the United Nations AIDS programme and the World Health Organization in 2001, an estimated number of people living with HIV/AIDS has grown to 40 million, while three million deaths from Aids related illnesses have been reported in the same year (cf Commonwealth Secretariat 2002:2-3). According to this report, Aids is the fourth biggest killer in the world, after heart disease, stroke and respiratory disease. The same report reveals that the Sub-Saharan Africa is the worst

affected region by the pandemic. More than 28 million people have been affected by the disease, while about 17 million deaths relating to HIV/AIDS have already been recorded since the explosion of the disease.

Consequently, the report suggests that if the current death rate is not arrested, there will be more than 40 million orphans in Africa by the year 2010. A statistical report in 2001 suggests that more than 4.2 million people are living with HIV/AIDS in South Africa (cf Michael 2001:23). On January 15th, 2005, former President Nelson Mandela buried his last son from his first marriage. He died from HIV/AIDS related illness as revealed by Mandela through the E-TV television channel. Prior to this incident, Crewe (2001:9) had reported Mandela's statements on the challenge of HIV/AIDS during a conference held in Durban in 2000 on Aids as follows: "We need African resolve to fight this war. Others will not save us if we do not primarily commit ourselves. Let us not underestimate the resources required to conduct this battle. We have indeed become the keepers of our brother and sister."

HIV/AIDS knows no boundaries. Both small and great people, poor and the rich, black and white are falling victims to the HIV/AIDS pandemic in Africa. But the worse affected group of people are those who have been socially and/or economically marginalised by income, employment, ethnicity, culture and gender (cf Commonwealth Secretariat 2002:4). The report indicated further that HIV, both in poor and rich countries is linked to discrimination, poverty, and insecurity as well as a culture of silence about the disease and refusal to take preventive action. Accordingly, the biggest challenge for the governments, communities and business/organizational leaders is to develop policies and programmes that meet the needs of the entire population (cf Commonwealth Secretariat 2002:5).

3.4   Management of poverty

The word "Africa" has been linked to the word "poverty" in the hearts and minds of certain western countries that see on their television screens the images of famines, diseases, wars and political instability in the continent of Africa (cf O' Connor 1991:1). In my opinion, the above images are not cleverly invented computer images; rather, they are genuine images reflecting the true nature of poverty in Africa. These factors have contributed greatly to the material poverty of the African general populace. It is therefore, suggested that "material poverty, by International standards, is undeniably a feature of most parts of tropical Africa" (O'Connor 1991:3). According to O'Connor, the World Bank table on Gross National Product per capita reveals that African countries occupy fifteen of the twenty lowest places. Similarly, a table

produced by UNICEF based on child's mortality, indicates that African countries occupy seventeen of the lowest twenty places.

Other factors that have posed some serious challenges for leadership in Africa include unemployment; debt burden owned by African countries to Western creditors, the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank; harsh environmental conditions and high population growth (cf O'Connor 1991:167). Given this poverty level in Africa, and the impossibility for improvement in the future, it has been argued that Africa has to stay poor so that other continents namely Europe and North America – can stay rich (cf O'Connor 1991:167). This conclusion is one way of looking at reality.

My personal opinion is that there is an alternative way for African countries to respond appropriately to these challenges. This requires a fundamental shift in the manner we as Africans including our leaders perceive reality and the manner we respond to it. African leaders from the past and at present have used various leadership paradigms (cf Northouse 2004:1-329; Avery 2004:1-294) but several challenges still persist. My suspicion is that these paradigms lack the basic foundation on which leaders could draw their wisdom, strengths and skills for their task.

The following section therefore describes a transcendental perspective on leadership as the basis on which leaders could perceive and respond appropriately to the African situation.

4. A TRANCENDENTAL PERSPECTIVE ON LEADERSHIP IN AFRICA

4.1 Presuppositions of the transcendental perspective on leadership

A *transcendental* perspective on leadership is founded upon the following presuppositions: (i) That the *origin*, *mandate, paradigm* and *goal* of leadership in general, transcend the ordinary realm of human affairs. It is the conviction that the *origin, mandate, paradigm* and *goal* of leadership are derived from the Trinitarian God[11] who has revealed himself in creation, scripture and in his son Jesus Christ. (ii) This Trinitarian God *created* the universe and all other galaxies including human beings (cf Gn 1:1-31). (iii) He *rules* and *sustains* it through his providence. (iv) He has redeemed human beings and his creation through the death and resurrection of his Son Jesus Christ. (v) This God has given human beings several *mandates* including the mandate *to rule* over every creature (cf Gn 1:26-31). (vi) God has done all the above things (i to v) for his *glory* (which was, his *goal* or *purpose* for creation). (vii) The Bible, that

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[11] See excursus on "leadership as a divine mandate" at the end of this article just before bibliographical references.

is, the Old and the New Testaments, the whole created order and the person and work of Jesus Christ together form God's revelation to human beings. (viii) As a consequence, leadership in all areas of human life with all its ramifications ought to reflect or reveal God's *rule*, *paradigm, purpose, plan* and *glory*. It should be *accountable* first, to God, and second, to the people whom that leadership is directed. A *transcendental* type of leadership therefore takes its benchmark upon the above presuppositions; hence, its perspective has two dimensions, namely, the vertical or *theocentric* and the horizontal or *anthropocentric*.

4.2   The description of the transcendental perspective on leadership

4.2.1 Background

It has already been suggested that a transcendental perspective on leadership has two aspects both in its presuppositions or theoretical framework and in its practice. The first dimension is t*heocentric*, while the second is *anthropocentric*. *"Theocentric"* means it takes its benchmark from the Trinitarian God of the Bible and it is aimed at reflecting, revealing and accomplishing the *plan, purpose* and *glory* of God for his creation. *"Anthropocentric"* direction means it is specifically concerned with improving the plight of human beings. This means, it is concerned with the maintenance of orderliness, provision of an enabling environment for human and capital development, enhancement of justice, equity and fair distribution of the available resources and the preservation/improvement of human life in general. All the issues of human existence are given considerable or serious and adequate attention by this philosophy of leadership.

In order to achieve these two-dimensional goals, a leader must be indwelled by the power of the Holy Spirit and by the wisdom of the Holy Scriptures, with a good scientific knowledge in the area of leadership. Being guided by the power of the Holy Spirit and by the wisdom of the Holy Scriptures including a good command of the scientific knowledge in the area of leadership, a leader should be able to lead others with *godliness, self-discipline, vision, humility, honesty, friendliness, empathy, accountability, democratic skills* and *altruism,* et cetera.

A transcendental perspective on leadership, therefore, requires a Christian worldview as its precondition. A shift from other worldviews to a Christian worldview becomes a necessary criterion for a proper comprehension and practice of the various aspects of a transcendental perspective on leadership. Van de Walt (1994) has discussed extensively what a worldview is and particularly what a Christian worldview entails. Since

this article presupposes that a Christian worldview is a precondition for the understanding and the practice of the transcendental perspective on leadership, the following discussion will explain what a worldview is and particularly what a Christian worldview entails according to Van der Walt (1994).

4.2.2 A worldview

Van der Walt (1994:39) premises his discussion on a worldview by arguing that ideas give birth to deeds. How people think determine how they live and what they do. This means that in order to understand the deeds of people properly, it is imperative to learn about what such people think. He proceeded by defining a Worldview as "an integrated, interpretive set of confessional perspectives on reality which underlies, shapes, motivates and gives direction and meaning to human activity" (Van der Walt 1994:39).

According to Van der Walt (1994:40-40-55), a worldview has three aspects: (1) nature, (2) structure and (3) function. The nature of a worldview includes the following characteristics:

- It is all encompassing, therefore it can be regarded as a "cosmoscope";
- It is a mode of looking/seeing; it is the lens, the window, the spectacle of seeing reality;
- It guides and orients human beings in their understanding of the world;
- It reveals a unity to the individual who adheres to it;
- It is both descriptive and prescriptive; that is, it tells us what/how the world is and what we should do. It therefore provides a standard by which we could make a distinction between good and evil, right and wrong, ugly and beautiful, order and disorder;
- It requires full commitment. If a person is not fully committed to his/her worldview, it could be changed under certain circumstances;
- It is typically human;
- It is pre-scientific; worldview and science are two ways of knowing; common sense and academic knowledge are similar categories;
- It is a deeply-rooted source of action; it has transformative power; it stresses the responsibility of a human being in the cosmos;
- It is a definitive image of reality, and yet fallible.

The structure of a worldview entails its formation, position, authority, criteria and crises. Van der Walt (1994:43-52) argues that several factors occur during the formation of a worldview. Such factors include emotional life, personality type, intellectual development, sex, parental education, friends,

peers, the prevailing socio-politico-economic-cultural conditions and education et cetera.

A worldview falls in the following continuum: (1) God – (2) Revelation – (3) Faith – (4) Worldview – (5) Reality/Life experiences. A worldview is therefore a bridge between faith and human life in the universe. The direction of a worldview is therefore from faith towards life in practice. A person forms his/her worldview in keeping with his/her faith and then seeks to shape the world in accordance with his/her worldview. However, it is also possible for a person to form his/her worldview according to his/her life experiences and then shapes his/her faith according to his/her worldview.

An ideology according to Van der Walt (1994:46) "is a petrified, hardened worldview which has no interest any longer in reality or what it looks like, but only wishes to impose its preconceived ideas on reality". Therefore, the criteria for a reliable worldview include:

- Its ability to adapt or adjust to new reality;
- Its ability to understand the nature and function of God's laws, orders and structures of reality and the willingness to adapt to God's plan and purpose for his creation;
- It is positive; that means it promotes human life not suppress or destroy it;
- In the case of a Christian worldview, it rests on the Christian faith in the Revelation of the Triune God. This revelation transcends this cosmos. Its origin and subject is God. The Holy Scripture, the person and work of Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit as well as the work of creation are bound up together as the one revelation of the Triune God.[12]

Van der Walt (1994:54-55) also explained that a worldview possesses the following functions:

- It provides interpretive keys to an understanding of reality and of human being himself;

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[12] Van der Walt (1994:48) makes an important remark, which I have indicated earlier as the precondition for comprehending and practicing a transcendental perspective on leadership. He observes that one has to make a choice between a Christian worldview and other worldviews. He emphasizes that all unbiblical faiths are of necessity false; and that all other revelations are nothing but pseudo-revelations. The existence of such revelations cannot be denied nor the right of other people to trust in them. However, the authentic revelation is the revelation of the Triune God in the person and work of Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit, the Holy Scripture and the entire creation. This is the basis of a Christian Reformed worldview.

- It integrates (makes a unity or coherence of) and structures human experience;
- It gives meaning to human existence;
- As a normative framework, it enables human beings to make choices based on principle and to act according to a specific pattern;
- As active conviction, it motivates human beings toward an awareness of calling (vocation) and a responsibility to make a better place of the world;
- It helps to form a personal identity and integrity;
- It releases deep emotions in people and also offers great stability, because it supplies a sense of security, satisfaction, inner peace and joy;
- It is usually embodied in symbols which have a motivating, inspiring and cohesive force for a specific group or community;
- It has diagnostic value because it distinguishes friend from enemy;
- Should a worldview get into a crisis its proponents are shaken to the depths of their beings.

In concluding his discussion on a worldview, Van der Walt (1994:55) argues that a materialistic worldview cannot promote human dignity since it is more interested in material possessions. Similarly, an individualistic worldview is too self-centred and therefore unfit to cater for the welfare of others; while a totalitarian worldview lacks focus. He therefore suggests that the Christian worldview is better. A Christian worldview considers human beings as God's image bearers who need to be treated with honour and dignity since a human being is more than his/her body. It emphasises love and brother/sisterhood between human beings. Furthermore, a Christian worldview believes that social relationships such as marriage, family and leadership are not the inventions of human beings so that they may fashion them according to their own whims and wishes, but they are institutions from God. A Christian worldview therefore demands for a careful management of natural resources – the basis for the survival of future generations.

It is on the basis of a Christian worldview that a transcendental perspective on leadership is derived. Leadership is not only a human institution to be manipulated for selfish interests. It is a mandate from the Trinitarian God specifically designed to reveal his glory, honour, orderliness and for the protection and promotion of human life and the natural resources. Therefore, other leadership styles (cf Northouse 2004:1-329; Avery 2004:1-294) do not fully provide the necessary basis or precondition for leadership to

take its course, as the transcendental perspective does. This is to argue that for any leadership style to be effective and complete, it must take seriously the transcendental perspective as its precondition and framework. Human beings are not machines; they are living bodies with souls and spirit. Human beings are made in God's image. Therefore, their divine nature must be given adequate attention when formulating a workable leadership style. The Trinitarian God must therefore be taken into account right from the beginning, of every leadership paradigm.

5.   CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this article discussed the challenges of leadership as reflected in the Old Testament and in the African contexts. The author notices certain strengths and weaknesses concerning some of the approaches to leadership both from the Old Testament and from the context of Africa. For example, jealousy and excessive ambition were some drawbacks to Miriam's leadership ability. Aaron was drawn to the unlawful wishes of others against his own true inner conviction because of his inability to stand firm to his own beliefs. Moses' anger and rage led him to commit murder. Korah, Dathan and Abiram possessed unrelenting interest to preside at the helms of leadership in Israel. This led them to a coalition with Aaron, Moses and evidently with Yahweh; and they met their untimely death.

Some of the drawbacks to the African leaders are corruption, the insatiable desire to amass wealth at the expense of the general populace, armed conflict, poverty, HIV/AIDS, unemployment and lack of any genuine interest in the welfare of the general population as well as the debt burden owned to the international financial institutions et cetera. African leaders who have military leadership, democracy or monocracy have equal share of all the above named challenges. Given the above named leadership challenges in Africa, and the impossibility for improvement in the future, it has been argued that Africa has to stay poor so that other continents namely Europe and North America can stay rich (cf O'Connor 1991:167). This conclusion is one way of looking at reality.

The suggestion in this article is that there is an alternative way for African countries to respond appropriately to these challenges. This requires a fundamental shift in the manner we as Africans including our leaders perceive reality and the manner we respond to it. In view of this, the article proposed a *transcendental* perspective on leadership for responding to the African situation. A transcendental perspective on leadership therefore, requires a Christian worldview as its precondition. A shift from other worldviews to a Christian worldview becomes a necessary criterion for a proper

comprehension and practice of the various aspects of a transcendental perspective on leadership.

A Christian worldview considers human beings as God's image bearers who need to be treated with honour and dignity since a human being is more than his/her body. It emphasises love and brother/sisterhood between human beings. Furthermore, a Christian worldview believes that social relationships such as marriage, family and leadership are not the inventions of human beings so that they may fashion them according to their own whims and wishes, but they are institutions made by God. A Christian worldview therefore demands for a careful management of natural resources-the basis for the survival of future generations. Therefore, African leaders must be indwelled by the power of the Holy Spirit and by the wisdom of the Holy Scriptures, with a good scientific knowledge in the area of leadership. Being guided by the power of the Holy Spirit and by the wisdom of the Holy Scriptures including a good command of the scientific knowledge in the area of leadership, African leaders could lead the people. This transcendental perspective therefore, becomes imperative for African leaders to adopt in order to respond appropriately to the African situation.

Excursus: Leadership as a divine mandate

Genesis 1:26-31[26] Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them *rule*[13] over the *fish* of the sea and over the *birds* of the sky and over the *cattle* and over *all the earth*, and over *every creeping thing* that creeps on the earth."[27] God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.[28] God blessed them; and God said to them, "Be *fruitful*[14] and *multiply,*[15] and *fill*[16] the *earth*, and *subdue*[17] *it*; and *rule*[18] over the *fish* of the sea and over the *birds* of the sky and over *every living thing* that moves on the earth."[29] Then God said, "Behold, I have given you *every plant* yielding seed that is on the surface of all the earth, and *every tree* which has fruit yielding seed; it shall be *food for you*;[30] and to *every beast* of the earth and to *every bird* of the sky and to *every thing that moves* on the earth which has life, I have given *every green*

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[13] רָדָה *radah;* Meaning: *to have dominion, rule, dominate*.

[14] פָּרָה *parah;* Meaning: *to bear fruit, be fruitful*.

[15] רָבָה *rabah;* Meaning: *to be* or *become much, many* or *great*.

[16] מָלֵא *male* or מָלָא *mala;* Meaning: *to be full, to fill*.

[17] כָּבַשׁ kabash; Meaning: to subdue, bring into bondage.

[18] See footnote 2

plant for food"; and it was so.[31] *God saw all that He had made,* and behold, *it was very good.* And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.

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