



NEHEMIAH - A BIBLICAL TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADER: A TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP THEORY THAT CAN BE USED AND APPLIED BY ADVENTIST PASTORS IN AFRICA:

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Abstract:

The transformational leadership theory is one of the leadership theories that can be used and applied to a given leadership setting whether public or private organizational setting. It seems to be appropriate to ecclesiastic organization, particularly to the pastoral leadership, because what pastoral ministry is all about is leading people onto God's agenda, organizational change or transforming people for a better life.

Key Words: Leadership Model, Transformational Leader, Devine Guidance, Pastoral Ministry, Biblical Model.

Definitions of transformational leadership

Various definitions have been given to transformational leadership, but in this work four of them have been retained.

From psychologist domain, the transformational leadership is “a type of leadership style that leads to positive changes in those who follow.”

The online Encyclopedia defines the Transformational Leadership as “a style that involves generating a vision for the organization and inspiring followers to meet the challenges that it sets.”(Encyclopedia.com).

By quoting the leadership expert James Burns, Pamela Spahr defines the

Transformational leaders as “those who seek to change existing thoughts, techniques and goals for better results and the greater good.” (Pamela Spahr, 2015).

“Transformational leadership is defined as a leadership approach that causes change in individuals and social systems” (from Langston.edu website).

Looking at those definitions, Nehemiah seems to be a biblical model that used transformational leadership style to change systematically his organization (Jerusalem) and his people.

The transformational leader creates valuable and positive change in his followers with the end goal of involving followers into teamwork. He “enhances the motivation, morale and performance of followers through a variety of mechanisms. These include connecting the follower's sense of identity and self to the mission and the collective identity of the organization; being a role model for followers that inspires them; challenging followers to take greater ownership for their work, and understanding the strengths and weaknesses of followers, so the leader can align followers with tasks that optimize the performance” (from Langston.edu website).

Nehemiah in his book illustrates the leadership competences and change management.

Historical Background of Nehemiah

Nehemiah was the author of the book Nehemiah written during the first half of the fifth century. “He was probably born in Persia, sometime during or soon after governorship in Jerusalem. Nehemiah had risen to a position of prominence in his pagan environment. He was probably of the tribe of Judah. “His position alone reveals much about his intellectual capabilities and emotional maturity”.

“He was in the king’s palace at Susa in the month of Chislev (which is roughly November or December on our calendar) when Hanani came with men from Judah, and Nehemiah asked him about Jerusalem and the remnant of people who had returned there. Hanani told him that the walls were “broken down and its gates are burned with fire. This was both a dangerous and embarrassing situation.

Nehemiah was the cupbearer of king Artaxerxes I. He was an ordinary person in the sense that he was not royalty or a religious leader.

However, he must have been a man of great character who proved himself trustworthy to be placed in a position such as this, although I am sure I was providential as well.

The cupbearer tasted the king’s wine to make sure it was not poisoned and assassinations were common in the Persian Empire” (Jimmy Inman, 2015).

“Nehemiah was a successful leader and builder. He is remembered as one of the Bible’s most resilient and innovative leaders. He was a gifted administrator and motivator, who was able to plan and organize both difficult people and complex projects in midst of dangerous and difficult settings. Without doubt, the Lord accomplished great things through this man. Today to work as a good leader in the midst of many challenges means it is a very difficult task. But life of Nehemiah gives

to leaders a challenge and invitation to work as a good leader” (Bible Leaders Seminar).

In this article, Nehemiah apart his capabilities to motive, innovate, the emphasis is put on his capacity to demonstrate transformational leadership style. He is a biblical model of change, inspiration and visionary that can enhance the competences of the gospel ministers and church leaders.

Real Needs of Transformational leaders:

Need in the Biblical time

After the entry of the sin in this world, the need of transformational leaders has been evident or manifest. God was seeking for leaders that can change the situation of the world, the agent of change, leaders that, like men of Issachar, which were men that “had understanding of the times, to know what Israel ought to do” (1Chronicles 12:32).

Through the prophet Ezekiel, God remarks that the people of the land have used oppression, committed robbery, and mistreated the poor and needy; and they wrongly oppressed the stranger (Ezekiel 22:29). To change this situation God decided to seek for a man among them who would make a wall, and stand in the gap before Me on behalf of the land, that I should not destroy it; but I found no one (Ezekiel 22:30).

According to the Gurus of Leadership John C. Maxwell, God looks for a single man who can relate best to people within his own culture, a man who is a builder of walls and can be a constructive and hard worker; a man who stands in the gap to bridge the gap between people and God. On behalf of the land, he carries a burden and vision for where he lives. (John C. Maxwell, 2007, p. 1013).

God needs leaders of change and rebuilders. Those who “shall build the waste places, rise up the foundations of many generations, they shall be called the repairer of the breach, the restorer of streets to dwell in.” (Isaiah 58:11).

Jesus himself by recruiting the twelve disciples was aiming to a societal change and followers’ life transformation. He sent mandated his disciples to make their followers disciples (Matthew 28: 18-20).

The need of transformational leaders is clearly expressed in the Bible and God is seeking for men and women of change and innovation, and those who restore his image in the human being.

Need in the Contemporary society

Nations, organizations, and churches need to have, as at the time of the prophet Isaiah, of the leaders of change, innovation, and transformation. Today there is a need of leaders that can stand against laissez-faire style of leadership, corruption, and deviances.

Mike Myatt a leadership advisor to Fortune 500 CEOs and their Boards of Directors, and widely regarded as America’s Top CEO Coach, observes that “our world is suffering greatly at the hands of people who have placed their desire to be right above the desire to achieve the right outcome. They confuse their need for an ego boost, their request for power, and their thirst for greed with leadership. Many of the symptoms of poor leadership we’re seeing today may seemingly resolve themselves in the near term, but the greater problem won’t go away on its own” (Mike Myatt, 2013).

He adds on the basis of the leadership in America that “we are still in a crisis of leadership. Some of the actors may have changed seats, but the cast remains the same. This is not a democratic versus republican issue or liberal versus conservative issue.

The issue is one that extends beyond parties, philosophy and geographic borders. The issue is simply this: we have forgotten what leadership looks like” (Mike Myatt, 2013). There is a great need of transformational leadership that is interested in elevating everyone on the team to make the whole work environment more successful and have everyone be successful (Robert Zeigler, 2015). Zeigler continues by saying: “The transformational leadership methods are viewed as proactive, represent change, and are often able to motivate and empower employees to achieve goals through reaching moral or personal standards (Robert Zeigler, 2015).

Nehemiah: A Biblical Model of Transformational Leader

Nehemiah is portrayed as “a man who weeps, mourns fasts, prays, and repents for his people. In Nehemiah was mixture of personal humility and professional will” (Patrick Morley, 2008).

Before doing anything, Nehemiah, as transformational leader, committed himself, aligned his personal principles and values with his people needs. He interceded on behalf of his people. He was preoccupied by the project of rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem, but he did not do it without planning.

Nehemiah confessed his sins and the sins of his people. He knew that an effective and transformational leader should have clean and pure heart. As says Dong Hee Lee, “Nehemiah sees himself as one who cannot stand before God with sin. In addition, he regards people’s sins as sins of the leader himself and his father’s house” (Dong Hee Lee, 2011, p. 32). Nehemiah understood and was convinced that “only prayer is the life of a leader. Prayer causes the performance of the work and completeness of his mission...through prayer a leader has authority of leadership, ability for the work and

power that God provides... a leader gets the power of influence of leadership and courage by prayer” (Dong Hee Lee, 2011, p. 34).

Nehemiah had a calling because God put the words in his heart. When God calls someone, He will grant to him some special skills to fulfill the mission. Nehemiah was aware of the fact that when God calls, he equips.

Nehemiah waited patiently for the right opportunity to act on the call building.

Through this Nehemiah shows that a leader who wants to succeed in his leadership, should be patient, vigilant and ready to seize the right opportunity to act on the project or to fulfill the mission. Nehemiah also knew that “one characteristic of effective leaders...is patience” (Kristin Robertson, 2004). He was probably aware of the fact that patience is needed to maintain focus even when someone faces with most difficult challenges and patience also helps to “understand other people’s feelings and how to approach different situations” (Jeannette McVoy, 2013).

He seeks divine guidance before he responds. A good leader seeks God’s direction because “the plans of the heart belong to man, but the answer of the tongue is from the Lord” (Proverbs 16:1). The wise king Solomon adds “commit your work to the Lord, and your plans will be established...the heart of man plans his way, but the Lord establishes his steps” (Proverbs 16: 3, 9).

Nehemiah thought progressively, rebuilding the grave and the city, nation. To get the favor of the king, Nehemiah thought progressively and was dreaming about to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem city and was “most results-oriented... not much happens without a dream” (Harris W. Lee, 2003, p. 125). Nehemiah seems to show that no work, no reformation can be done without a clear established strategic planning.

Nehemiah solicited the permission. He found support from his CEO, the King.

Nehemiah said: “Let him send me to the city in Judah where my fathers are buried so that I can rebuild it” (Nehemiah 2:5), and the king granted his request. Nehemiah had the sense of respect to the established authority and sense of collaboration and loyalty. “Nehemiah was a cupbearer to a king who captured Nehemiah and his people. A cupbearer is one who daily puts his life on the line in order to protect another, in this case, the king. Put plainly, Nehemiah was loyal” (Frank Damazio, 2012). That’s why Nehemiah couldn’t start a great work as rebuilding Jerusalem’s walls without the permission from the king.

Nehemiah discerned that it was the right time to make a decision because the King asked him what he wanted. God gave him the opportunity and he knew it was the right time. He made the decision promptly. The transformational leaders are apt to discern God’s providence and take the opportunity to act. The transformational leader takes over every opportunity and will use whatever works to convince others to climb on board the bandwagon (Changing Minds).

He took three days off to rest, plan and pray. He did not enter into active service immediately he got to Jerusalem. The transformational leaders set aside time to rest, to pray and to plan. It will only increase their effectiveness and efficiency. Nehemiah knew that “planning is a way of giving expression to the dreams and hopes, vision and commitment” (Harris W. Lee, 2003, p. 131.) of his people. Nehemiah has also understood that “leaders ought to pray, and ought to make their leadership responsibilities the subject of prayers” (Harris W. Lee, 2003, p.185).

As transformational leader, Nehemiah did not delegate others to inspect his task.

He did his mission by personally verifying the work that needed to be done. He evaluated it himself and developed the plans. Before sharing the vision, he touched the reality and evaluated the weight of the work to do.

Nehemiah did not waste time. He made use of the best time to achieve a right purpose. He took advantage of the time at night to do evaluation of the task. A leader should have to manage wisely his time “because leaders have much to do, they ought to make the best use of their time” (Harry W. Lee, 2003, p. 184).

He was a wise man who surrounded himself with the right people. Those he could trust, who shared his vision. Since the ancient time, “people have gotten the most done when they worked cooperatively in teams...Nehemiah realized this when he assembled teams of Hebrews to reconstruct the wall around Jerusalem: Therefore I stationed some of the people behind the lowest points of the wall at the exposed places, posting them by families, with their swords, spears and bows . . . From that day on, half of my men did the work, while the other half were equipped with spears, shields, bows and armor...So we continued the work . . . from the first light of dawn till the stars came out. (Neh. 4). Nehemiah knew the power of a team with complementary strengths (building and fighting) and an overriding purpose (the protection of their families and the building of a nation)” (Lorin Wolfe, 2002, p.133).

Nehemiah motivated the people with vision to rebuild the wall. As a leader he cast the vision in a way that people believed it. Nehemiah as transformational leader, used Inspirational motivation by providing a clear vision to his people and motivating them to be passionate to the project (Robert Zeigler, 2015). As transformational leader, Nehemiah also stimulated intellectually his people by using creativity, innovation,

creating or gaining understanding and challenging those understanding to get a stronger performance. He might also use the individualized consideration through open communication to share his vision with his team (Robert Zeigler, 2015).

Nehemiah as effective leader involves a broad-based work team in the work.

Nehemiah involved other people. “Then said I unto them..., ...let us build up the wall of Jerusalem” (Nehemiah 2:17). Nehemiah had a clear understanding of the fact that the best leaders also place a strong value on people. (Lorin Wolfe, 2002, p.131). God in the bible shows that people is important in executing work. “For the Lord’s portion is his people” (Deut. 32:9). “That’s the biblical way of saying “People are our most important asset’” (Lorin Wolfe, 2002, p. 131).

Nehemiah never wavers in the face of opposition. Nehemiah remained focused when he was despised by Sanballat, Tobia and Geshem. “Then answered I them, and said unto them, The God of heaven, he will prosper us; therefore we his servants will arise and build...” (Nehemiah 2:19-20). Nehemiah faced another kind of internal resistance. “The workers got tired, the rubble made it difficult to work (4:10), and others ran out of money (5:1-6). He also had mechanisms to identify resistance (4:11-12). When they faced opposition, Nehemiah had worked out a communication plan to deal with resistance (4:19)” (Patrick Morley, 2008). In leadership problems are unavoidable because, according to Lorin Wolfe, “Problems are one of the reasons leaders have jobs. If there were no problems, you might not be needed (or at least fewer leaders would be needed)” (Lorin Wolfe, 2002, p.198).

Nehemiah executes his plan to accomplish his goal. He was highly organized. Each house was given a portion to build. And next unto them repaired Rephaiah the son of Hur, the ruler of the half part of Jerusalem. And next unto them repaired Jedaiah the

son of Harumaph, even over against his house. And next unto him repaired Hattush” (Nehemiah 3:1-28).

Nehemiah takes emergency action when necessary. (Nehemiah 4:8-9, 22)

Nehemiah was prepared for any emergency. Leaders should expect opposition. To face the situation, Nehemiah didn’t wait to decide, as a transformational leader, he knew that “Problems, and their possible solutions, require some decisions and action” (Lorin Wolfe, 2002, p.198).

Nehemiah is very visible and approachable (Nehemiah 4:12).

Nehemiah had a network of people. Leaders should be in connection with people who give them support and information. A good leader builds relationship and teamwork.

Nehemiah has understood that without collaboration and mutual support, the work will not be effective. His presence was important for his people. “Strong working relationships are an indicator of organizational health and strength” (Lorin Wolfe, 2002, p.81). Rudi Carstens the specialist of team building adds: “To be successful a leader needs its team members to be relational and work at building healthy relationships. The more robust the relationships between team members, the more the team will operate as a unit.

Healthy relationships are the glue that keeps a team together” (Rudi Carstens, 2015).

Nehemiah is great motivator of people. Nehemiah appealed to the people for security. He motivated people to defend themselves. “Fight for your brethren, your sons, and your daughters, your wives, and your houses” (Nehemiah 4:14). Nehemiah shows the habits of motivational leadership with the understanding of the fact that, as says the Shawn Murphy co-founder of Switch and Shift, “motivational leaders inspire hope in their employees that their work has meaning, is valued and its impact is understood...Motivational leaders recognize that the art and science of inspiring is a

shared responsibility by everyone on the team, no matter the role” (Shawn Murphy, 2014).

As effective and transformational leader, **Nehemiah didn't hesitate to discipline inappropriate behavior** (Nehemiah 5:6-8). Nehemiah through wisdom heard the outcry and used right methods to resolve this problem. “Conflict is a major issue in the world, as the continuing arms race...conflict seems to happen wherever people care deeply about something” (Harry W. Lee, 2003, p. 147). Despite the fact Nehemiah and his people were focused on the project of rebuilding the walls, misconduct occurs among his people. He didn't hesitate to discipline and to disapprove the misbehavior kindly, but firmly.

Nehemiah had a great view of the value of his own work. (Nehemiah 6:1-3). He was focused to the mission and did not allow himself to be distracted. A transformational leader sets goals and follows without distraction. He also understood that “goals are the ultimate productivity enhancer: they provide focus, direction, and (we hope) meaning to our work. Goals allow us to move from a state of activity to the point of accomplishment, where our work leads to valuable results” (Kevin Eikenberry, 2007, p. 244).

Nehemiah displayed integrity before everyone (Nehemiah 6:5-8). People under ruler ship of middle Persia. Nehemiah mandate was just to build Jerusalem. Perception was that he was establishing his own kingdom. A plan to destabilize the plan. He Knew the worldview and he could not partner with them (enmity between Samaritan and Jews was evident). He denied meeting with them because he knew their motives. He had an experience with them in Nehemiah 2:19.

He did not trust the source of information. He stood on what is right because “the ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy” (Martin Luther King, Jr, www.azquotes.com). Oprah Winfrey adds: “Real integrity is doing the right thing, knowing that nobody’s going to know whether you did it or not” (Oprah Winfrey, www.azquotes.com). Nehemiah knew probably as says Craig on of the gurus in leadership, that “nothing undermines a leader’s moral authority more quickly than lack of integrity...performance suffers when trust is broken” (Craig E. Johnson, 2018, p. 78).

Nehemiah shows discernment in dealing with people (Nehemiah 6:12-13). He perceived that the teams were not sent by God. Nehemiah as spiritual leader didn’t forget that “spiritual leaders are distinguished by their commitment to discern important matters together so they can affirm a shared sense of God’s desire for them and move forward on that basis” (Ruth Haley Barton, 2012).

Nehemiah attributed his success to God (Nehemiah 6:15-16). He attributed the success to God. A good realizes that God alone makes things happen.

Nehemiah kept his promises (Nehemiah 2:6, compare 13:6). He returned as promised to the king when he asked for permission.

Practical lessons for Adventist pastors from Nehemiah transformational leadership style

Nehemiah is a real model of a transformational leadership for today spiritual leaders in their leadership settings particularly pastors who are called to lead people on God’s Agenda. Looking at the challenges in leadership of the church, Nehemiah offers

principles that may be followed by church leadership, especially pastors. From Nehemiah experience, there are some useful guidelines that can be applied to pastors to be transformational leaders or leaders of change in God's church today.

Godly pastors

As did Nehemiah pastors should be in full contact every day with God to plead and confess their sins and the sins of the church members. According to Harris, prayer, confession, and forgiveness bring hope of renewal, change and strengthen the interpersonal relationships and the organization as a whole (Harris W. Lee, 2003, pp. 178, 179). Seeking God's guidance through prayer is prior in pastoral ministry. To demonstrate the necessity of prayer in the life of a leader, John Maxwell adds that "something powerful happens when a leader prays and stands in the gap for his people. Intercession must always be a primary role for a leader...a leader's prayer accomplishes four things: 1) Prayer internalizes the burden, deepening our ownership of a need. 2) Prayer insists that we quiet our hearts and wait, slowing us down to receive from God. 3) Prayer infuses the vision, enabling us to see what God wants to do. 4) Prayer initiates the vision's fulfillment, acting as a catalyst for us to act" (John C. Maxwell, 2007, p. 592).

Awareness of the ministerial call

A good leader should be aware of the fact that pastoral ministry is a call. When God calls somebody to minister it is for a purpose. In this corrupted and deviant world, pastors should be aware that they are set apart to change and transform the situation; they don't confuse themselves with others who are not called.

Acting at the right time with patience

A transformational leader or pastor waits for God's time to act. The patience is one of the characteristic of a good leader or good pastor. Pastors' success in caring God's people depends on his patience. History tells that some great leaders like Gandhi got success thanks to the patience. "Patience has contributed to many great leadership successes... Gandhi demonstrated extraordinary patience in working for a free and independent India. For more than thirty years, Gandhi worked, never varying from his commitment to non-violence. His patience resulted in a free India...many tasks associated with leadership require patience (e.g., strategic planning, negotiations, people development, program management, etc.)" (Doug Moran, 2012). The pastoral leadership can be added to this list.

Strategic and planner minister

Like Nehemiah a good minister should plan strategically his work. As says Guy S. Saffold, "action without planning is aimless, but planning without action is fruitless... a good plan can bring focus, direction, and effectiveness to an organization's efforts" (Guy S. Saffold, 2008, pp. 11, 21). For a pastor, strategic planning emphasizes "prayer and the seeking of God's guidance as the first steps toward action. We must plan- but dependently" (Guy S. Saffold, 2008, p. 12).

Loyal minister

A transformational leadership should be loyal by showing collaboration and respect for coworkers and obedience to the superiors as did Nehemiah. Even today, pastors should show loyalty at every level of their leadership. For Disloyalty, Betrayal, Distrusting, and Unfaithful, are the opposites. As observes Dr. Richard J. Krejcir in his article, "we are to realize that God works through people, including our church and national leaders (Proverbs 21:1; Romans 13). God uses others to carry His plan to us and those around

us. Therefore, loyalty is also a demonstration of our obedience to our country, civil leaders, church, teachers, authority figures, and family (unless they give a command that goes against God's Word)” (Dr. Richard J. Krejcir, 2003).

Right decision making on the right time

A pastor as transformational leader should make decision on the right time. As says Ellen G. White, “the cause of God demands men who can see quickly and act instantaneously at the right time and with power. If you wait to measure every difficulty and balance every perplexity you meet, you will do but little... God requires promptness of action. Delays, doubting, hesitation, and indecision frequently give the enemy every advantage” Ellen G. White, 2010, p. 50). A good pastor does not hesitate.

Time Manager

“Time management is the process of organizing and planning how to divide your time between specific activities. Good time management enables you to work smarter – not harder – so that you get more done in less time, even when time is tight and pressures are high. Failing to manage your time damages your effectiveness and causes stress” (MindTools, www.mindtools.com). A good and transformational leader manages adequately the time to make. In leading people on to God’s agenda, pastors, must take in consideration the time that they use. A pastor does not waste his time.

Motivational pastor

A good pastor as motivational leader should be able to stimulate desire and energy in church members to be continually interested and committed to God’s great commission consisting to the preaching of the gospel. It is also his duty to help God’s people to be totally involved in the program of Gospel preaching. Burns quoted by Harris says: “the genius of leadership lies in the manner in which leaders see and act

on their own and their followers' values and motivations" (Harris W. Lee, 2003, p.144).

Team builder

Pastors like Nehemiah should work in team and build team. "Jesus too provides us a model of a leader who built a cohesive, loving team" (Bill Hybels, 2002, p.15). Hybels adds that by building team, a leader should seek for character first and know that if the person that may be added to the team demonstrates "evidence of honesty, teachability, humility, reliability, a healthy work, and a willingness to be entreated" (Bill Hybels, 2002, p. 81). To succeed a good pastor should build team and work with a devoted team.

Opposition facer

In the daily fulfillment of his duties a pastor like Nehemiah faces challenges or opposition, criticism, rejection, hate, jealousy, etc. Pastor should remind that conflict or opposition "any change, even change for better, is always accompanied by drawbacks and discomfort. Change is not made without inconvenience, even when it means improvement" (Jonas Arrais, 2007, p. 29.). Opposition may occur from superiors, subordinates, over role positions, etc. What he has to do is to be firm and confident in God.

Mission focused

Like Nehemiah, a good pastor should be focused on mission and committed to his duty. Being mission focused is demonstrating a sense of responsibility. Jesus urged Peter to be mission-focused by calling upon his attention three times: "Simon, son of Jonah, do you love me more than these? He said to Him, yes, Lord; you know that I love you. He said to him, Feed My Lamb..." (John 21:15-17). This helps to understand

that Peter, not only received legacy from Jesus, but received instruction to be mission focused.

Visible leader

A good leader should be visible or present, what Bill Hybels calls “The 360-Degree Leader”. According to him, an effective leader or pastor has to lead north, south, east, and west. North means leading those who are over him through relationships and influence. East and west is learning to lead in peer-group settings. South is a leader’s first instincts. (Bill Hybels, 2002, pp.181, 182). A pastor should work with his superiors, colleagues, church members, in small groups, etc.

Disciplining leader

A good leader or pastor applies discipline when is necessary. Ellen G. White advises that leaders should not keep silence when there is something wrong. She says: “When there are men in the church who love riches more than righteousness and who stand ready to take advantage of their fellow-men by unjust dealings, shall we make no protest? And when men standing in the position of leaders and teachers work under the power of spiritualistic ideas and sophistries, shall we keep silent, for fear of injuring their influence, while souls are being beguiled?” The answer is no. How to discipline? She adds: “When it becomes necessary for a minister to do a work of correction, he should be very careful to act righteously and wisely” (Ellen G. White, 2010, 62).

Acting with integrity

Integrity is central to pastoral ministry because “integrity lies at the very heart of understanding what leadership is” (Graig E. Johnson, 2018, p. 78). A good pastor or leader must make the truth a moral imperative; seek to be truthful in all situations; admit publicly his mistakes and encourage others to do the same; imagine himself as a

person of integrity and try to behave in ways that lead to this hoped-for self; and foster trust through transparency, consistency, and concern for followers (Graig E. Johnson, 2018, p. 78).

Discerning leader

Mentioning the key place of discernment from the book of John C. Maxwell entitled *The 360° Leader*, Tony denBok, pastor of Clearview Community Church in Stayner, Ontario, defines discernment as “the ability to grasp, comprehend, and evaluate clearly. It means we can see the true nature of the things; it allows us to distinguish between what is real and what is imitation” (Tony denBok, 2012). This quality is important to pastor as this world is facing some confusing teachings from fall prophets. Tony helps to understand the importance of the discernment; he says that discernment helps to see beyond the facts, to sort out the best from the rest, and to keep from making the big mistake. The Bible encourages pastors or leaders to use discernment: “And this I pray, that your love may abound still more and more in knowledge and all discernment, that you may approve the things are excellent, that you may be sincere and without offense till the day of Christ”(Philippians 1: 9, 10).

Humble leader

As transformational leader, pastor should develop a character of humility to understand his followers and listening from the voice of the Holy Spirit to lead with righteousness God’s people; because “the Holy Spirit is not the missing link in our management techniques and action plans. He is the enabling power of Christ himself working with and through our struggles to do what is right as well as what is effective, so that in the end, Christ is glorified” (Harris W. Lee, 2003, p. 173).

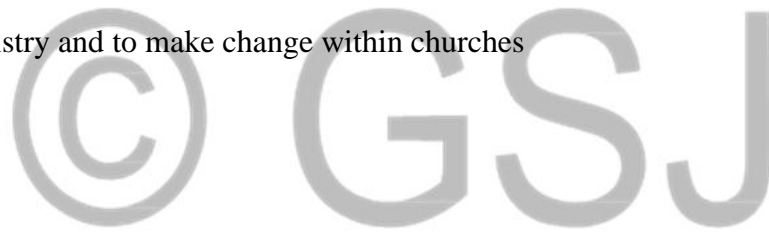
Living in humility promotes a complete self-assessment to identify one's strengths and weaknesses, acknowledgment of character, and serve a higher purpose or goal. Graig attests that "Humble leaders are less likely to be corrupted by power, claim excessive privileges, engage in fraud, abuse followers, and pursue selfish goals. They are more willing to serve others instead, putting the needs of followers first while acting as role models...humble leaders are more willing to take advice that can keep them and their organizations out of trouble" (Graig E. Johnson, 2018, p. 79).

Committed leader

A good leader or pastor is not undulating in his promises or commitment. He stands for what he has said. His "yes" dwells unchangeable. Nehemiah promised to the king that he will come back after rebuilding the walls, he did it. David Barrett talking about leadership traits says: "Commitment is all about the drive to make something work. A relationship, a business and even yourself... without commitment you are dead to the organization" (David Barrett, 2014). He adds that commitment is as to the self, to the people, to the organization, to the truth and to leadership.

Conclusion

The leadership style of Nehemiah offers a great model of transformational leadership that stimulates people, changes, develops people, builds team, and works in prayerful attitude, seeks for God guidance, seeks for humility and integrity by resistance to opposition that distracts from mission. Nehemiah stood on the solid rock of ages (God) to face Sanballat's challenges. He never deceived the king, he kept his promises and dwelt committed and loyal. From this style this work proposes lessons of transformational pastors whose qualities of godliness, loyalty, awareness, commitment, visible presence, opposition management, etc. can help to face today's trends in the Seventh-day Adventist Church. This can help also to enhance pastoral competences in their ministry and to make change within churches



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