

# A LOOK AT CHURCH LEADERSHIP IN AFRICA

***Paul Kohls***

*The rapid growth of the church in Africa within the past one hundred years poses many serious problems for thoughtful church administrators, missiologists and theologians. If Christianity in Africa is to flourish and prosper into the next century there must be more than quantitative growth. The previous article on **The Key to the African Heart** reflects on the need to root the gospel deeper into the African heart. This article reflects on the need for leadership training which is both biblically sound and culturally relevant.*

*Paul Kohls paints a graphic picture of the leadership problems within the Christian church in Africa with the African traditional cultural context in the background. He then discusses the need to prepare servant-leaders with appropriate leadership behaviour, both from the biblical and the cultural perspective. This article is provocative for all theological educators who seek to prepare church leaders who can truly lead the church into the third millennium.*

## INTRODUCTION

In 1964 the All Africa Conference of Churches offered the following assessment of the church leadership situation in Africa:

The Christian Church in Africa is facing a major crisis. The way we deal with it will determine the part that Christians play in the Africa of

---

**Paul Kohls** earned his BA from Wilfred Laurier University in 1972, his MTS from Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary in 1977, his MA from Wheaton Graduate School in 1990 and is a candidate for the PhD from Trinity International University. He was former Lecturer and Principal of Pan Africa Christian College in Nairobi, Kenya (1979-1989) and is presently Professor and Chair of Cross-Cultural Studies at Eastern Pentecostal Bible College in Ontario, Canada. He is on Sabbatical leave for 1998/99 academic year and serving as Academic Dean of the Pentecostal Training Centre in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

tomorrow. We are not training a ministry that can meet the needs of Africa today. The church has failed to keep pace with the social revolution which it helped create (1964, 2).

Numerous writers since have continued to speak of a "crisis of leadership" in the church in Africa (Owen 1965, Adeyemo 1978, McKinney 1980, Talitwala 1987, Elliston 1988, John 1990). The felt need is widespread and persistent that the Church in Africa should produce its own leadership, and that it should have that leadership trained properly, so that such leaders may be capable of dealing adequately with the problems of a modern African society (Owens 1965, 1).

A survey of some of the discussion on this issue, and of relevant recent research, will help us to ascertain the range of concerns expressed and some of the causes which have been identified, and to arrive at suggestions for leadership evaluation and development.

### **LEADERSHIP PROBLEMS**

Elliston (1988) provides a rather comprehensive summary of the leadership problems commonly found throughout the African Church:

- *GROWTH* is placing unmet demands on leaders in some areas.
- *OVERFUNCTIONING LEADERS* who try to do everything and decide everything is frustrating the church in some areas.
- *NON FUNCTIONING LEADERS* are allowing churches to die.
- *UNDERTRAINED LEADERS* are not leading to their full potential in many churches.
- *OVERTRAINED LEADERS* are discouraged and discouraging as well as frustrated and frustrating to the churches.
- *INAPPROPRIATELY TRAINED* leaders continue to do all of the wrong things in the wrong places, at the wrong times, and in the wrong ways.
- *DROPOUT LEADERS* continue to fill the ranks of government bureaucracies, development agencies, and private business.
- *OVEREXTENDED LEADERS* try to meet all of the pastoral and sacramental functions of multiple congregations and seek to uphold the artificially high western standards of ministry but deny the priesthood of all believers.
- *SPRINGBOARD LEADERS* use church leadership training programmes to jump into suitable positions in business, government, and para-church agencies. (Elliston 1988, 204).

In the following pages we shall survey a number of these and related problems as well as examine the political model and traditional view of

leadership in Africa as it affects the church.

### **Lack of Trained Leaders**

Talitwala (1987) underscores the fact that the church in Africa is still very young, in most cases dating back to less than two hundred years – but that it has grown very rapidly in recent times. Barrett (1982) estimates that at the beginning of this century less than 9% of the population of Africa belonged to the church. However, by the end of this century he projects that over 50% of the population, some 393 million Africans, will be members of the church. The church in Africa is "rated as the fastest growing church in the world" (Talitwala 1987, 12).

While the overall growth of the church is reason for rejoicing, McKinney (1980) states that there is also cause for deep concern because as churches grow so does the need for church leaders. Today, as has been the case for the last several decades, the church in Africa simply does not have enough trained pastors to staff the churches (Talitwala 1987). The examples following illustrate what Underhill terms "a gross lack of ministers" (1975, 242).

Russell, writing in 1966, noted that in Central Uganda among the Anglicans there were approximately 45,000 members divided into 15 parishes, with 16 pastors and about 100 congregations. Thus, in this situation the average pastor had six to seven congregations and some 3000 members to care for. Underhill (1975), focusing on the Africa Inland Church in Kenya, quotes statistics estimating a membership of 130,000 Christians comprising about 1000 congregations.

Technically each congregation has its own pastor, but in that year there were only 45 men and 66 missionaries [with] few of the latter serving as pastors. The result is either an unordained or even untrained leadership, or an ordained man trying to faithfully shepherd more than 20 flocks and over 750 members at the same time (1975, 242).

From West Africa, John (1990) writing of a small denomination in Ghana, makes a similar, but current projection;

...if our present annual growth rate continues we are looking at a church attendance of 11,373 people by 1990, 50 trained full-time workers and 186 churches and preaching points, leaving 136 churches and preaching points without any trained leadership whatsoever (1990 A, 1).

Understandably, Underhill comments, "almost everywhere the flock is too large for the minister to serve adequately" (1975, 242). Meanwhile the church marches on growing by leaps and bounds. But the underside of this dynamic growth that is lacking an adequate leadership is underscored by France (1978) who characterises the church as a credulous church,

wide open to any appealing new teaching which can quote a biblical verse or a miraculous cure in its support. It needs teaching and direction, from within, not from outside. It needs theology, its own African, Christian theology. Until it has it, while it may continue to grow in numbers, it will not grow in influence on the new Africa, it will be increasingly dismissed as a hangover from the colonial past (1978, 149).

Talitwala (1987) warns that the high growth rate in church membership, accompanied by a scarcity of trained Christian leaders, will lead to problems within the church of secularism, syncretism and fragmentation of the church.

### **Professionalism**

An "inflationary professionalisation of the ministry, poses serious problems for many younger churches and older churches alike" (Elliston 1988, 204). McKinney who decries an "over-reliance of a professional clergy" (1980, 180), faults many pastors for perceiving themselves as being the ministers of the church rather than God's gifts to the church to equip the people of God. In addition, the professionalisation process

...continues to exert pressure for ever higher entrance and exit requirements for our training programmes. The requirements for accreditation and certification (ordination) move ever higher in terms of academic achievement and away from effective ministry experience. One unfortunate result is that many younger churches are left without denominationally recognised leaders. Another result may be seen in the soaring costs for theological edification. These costs are often far beyond what a community of congregations can afford (Elliston 1988, 204).

### **Elitism**

Closely related to the problem of professionalisation is the problem of elitism. Elitism, for the most part, is centred around the growing demand by some for higher standards in academics. Zokoue (1990) terms this problem as one of the traps for the servant of God in Africa. He writes:

The problem does not exist in the same measure in the developed countries, because university degrees impress practically no one, and the church is no longer the centre for the dissemination of knowledge. It is the opposite in Africa where in many countries, the literacy rate is still very low. Elitism is often a handicap to service in two ways. In the first place, Christians themselves discriminate between the poorly educated servant and the one with a higher level of education. They copy this from the world around them, where a degree is equivalent to social promotion. [Hence]... the problem that we encounter here is that some Christians 'dare not' go to see a certain servant of God because they do not consider themselves to be high enough up in the hierarchy to approach him... Let us teach our leaders to find ways to break free from this hierarchy, in order to serve God's people. (Zokoue 1990, 6).

### **Clericalism**

Yet another closely related problem is that of clericalism. Clericalism is the training of a privileged few to be a priestly class. Zokoue (1990), quoting Tite Tienou, is concerned that too commonly "...the pastor directs, and the people follow all that he says, often accepting everything uncritically" (5). Not only is this ingrained from traditional sources of authority in African society, and thus largely acceptable, but in addition from within the church "the pastor is too often conceived of as the one at whose feet all the responsibility lies, because all who work for the church have traditionally been paid for their services" (Underhill 1975, 244). Interestingly, Russell (1965) notes that in Uganda there is no concept or tradition of 'voluntary service' that could be built upon. Unfortunately, he gives no indication of how widespread across Africa this lack of tradition is. However, Underhill states that the East African Revival movement, which began as a movement within the Anglican church, was begun in reaction to "what was seen as formalism and clericalism" (244). By contrast he notes the pattern of ministry there is prominently laity centred.

However, the example cited above of the East African Revival movement's laity centred ministry, illustrates the potential for another aspect of the problem of clericalism – that the minister who invariably oversees several churches, is frequently reduced to being regarded primarily as an administrator, or as in the memorable words of Sundkler, "a commercial traveller in sacraments" (1960, 166). This is opposed to the biblical concepts of teacher and shepherd. Miller writes, "The African ordained minister... has fallen heir to the missionary's precedent. He is expected to be an itinerant administrator of both programme and sacraments" (1969, 16). The dilemma and painful frustration of this too common reality is recorded in the statement about a pastor whom Miller quotes, "What I was trained for (teaching-preaching the faith), I can

never find time to do, and for what I actually must do (administer church business and sacraments), I received no specific training" (16). Thus in areas of extensive numerical growth, instead of face-to-face pastoral ministry, the minister too often gets caught up in the centre of the administrative activity.

### **Under-Educated**

In spite of the problems within the church of professionalism and elitism, the pastor generally in African society no longer occupies that privileged place which he was once used to. Before society developed an educated elite, the pastor in those earlier days "was usually the most highly educated member of society and his salary the most lucrative" (Underhill, 242). Educationally, however, the clergy were soon surpassed, and their work was viewed by many as less important and of such that required not much education. Miller (1969) notes that the average educational level of all the ordained men in one major denomination in East Africa was six years of primary school. Though, thankfully, this trend is reversing (Welch, 1962), Wakatama in 1976 laments that "Africa, with over three times the land area and over one and one-half times the population of the United States, does not have one degree granting Christian college except Sudan Interior Mission's Igbaja Seminary in Nigeria, which gives a B.A. in theology" (1976, 64). By 1985, however, the *ACTEA Directory of Theological School in Africa* lists in Kenya alone, 7 Protestant Bible Colleges offering Bachelor degrees in Bible and Theology, and three graduate schools – two offering Master's degrees in theology and the other offering a Master's degree in Christian communication.

In spite of this development in Kenya, and the potential for change that it holds, only a small percentage of church leaders, actual or potential, can qualify and be accommodated in these schools. Underhill and Wakatama are both correct when they state that "the educated have been much in demand elsewhere and with the very poor pay relative to other jobs, even earnest young men are dissuaded from the ministry" (Underhill 1975, 243), and "Because of the lack of trained clergy, many of the young people pouring out of African high schools and universities look down upon the church" (Wakatama 1976, 55). Sundkler offers a similar view, "more and more young teachers, secondary school students and graduates refuse to consider the possibility of entering the ministry, since it is generally accepted that theological studies are only for those who have failed to achieve some other academic ambition" (1960, 41).

Thus many pastors today with their meagre educational backgrounds succumb to feelings of inferiority and usually shun any real contact with the intellectual elite. Sundkler offers the generalisation that "The African pastor is a lonely man" (1960, 75). But by way of an important clarification, Owen makes

the following statement:

Concern about education does not indicate an absence of appreciation by the Church for the work of uneducated pastors. Rather, it is the result of a realisation that the Church is seriously handicapped when it must depend for its leadership upon those who have not been properly trained for their tasks, however much dedication they may have (1965, 5).

For the church, Owen proceeds to articulate, there are three main reasons why educated pastors are needed:

1. The growing African intelligentsia is forming the destinies of African countries... If the church would have a voice in the future of Africa, it needs spokesmen and leaders capable of meeting the members of the education elite at their own level... To continue to be an influence in Africa, the church will need leaders who are capable of speaking with the new leaders of Africa.
2. African church members themselves have been greatly influenced by education. If, after having received an education, they find that their leaders are no longer capable of speaking their language or of understanding their questions, they will search elsewhere for someone who can speak to their present situation clearly and effectively... The level of education within its own membership demands that the Church have a trained and capable leadership.
3. If the church should fail to hold the confidence and respect of its educated membership, particularly its youth, this will contribute to its eventual death as a vital part of African society. It will not be able to recruit capable leadership, either for its trained clergy or among its trained laity. Neither will it be capable of further development as an indigenous African institution... The future strength of the Church in Africa depends greatly upon the Church's ability to produce for itself a highly-trained, capable leadership (Owen 1965, 7-8).

## THE AFRICAN CONTEXT

### The Chief

In his study of ministry patterns in Africa, Sundkler has concluded that there is something that can be labelled an African pattern. Drawing from society at large he points out that:

a fundamental pattern in traditional African society is the representative character of the chief over against his tribe or people. The representative idea is carried over into the Church and applied to its African office-bearer. [Thus, this] pattern or representation imposes itself on the emerging African Church. (1960, 128).

The significance of this fact is underscored by Pobee (1979) who states that in the hierarchy of traditional society "the chief is the zenith of power" (144). John (1990) reports that in Northern Ghana pastors are actually called Christian chiefs. He notes that in Africa chiefs traditionally were to be representatives of the people; a kind of 'mid-man' who stands among and for the people. John suggests that this is a good picture of a church leader who stands among his people as God's servant. In turn it gave him unmistakable authority in relation to his congregation. However, the flaw in emulating the chiefs is that they are to be strictly obeyed and feared and provided for. Thus, John points out that:

The servanthood of the traditional African leadership seems to have been lost completely. It is this understanding of the leader that is carried over to the church leadership. Instead of the leader-servant of the Bible, we have pastor chiefs. (1990, 2).

The preoccupation in this situation seems to be largely on status. Warren (1964) writes:

Can we... be surprised if in Africa the ministry tends to be preoccupied with questions of status? For status is an ever present preoccupation with a chief, and his people insist on it being so for it has to do with the sacred significance that lies behind the whole traditional understanding of chieftainship. Bearing in mind that in Africa the Church pioneered education, and that the missionary had authority over the teachers who were also often the first evangelists, and frequently the first clergy, it is readily understandable that many African clergy find it very hard to adjust themselves to the modern developments of education. In these the teacher becomes a government employee, and is no longer in any way under the direction of the parish priest, who in other respects has inherited the old position held by the missionary (52).

In spite of the impact of the image of the chief, the fact is that the status and prestige of the chief himself is no longer what it used to be. In many countries the long established institutions of chieftainship were abolished. For example, with independence, the new government in Tanzania legally 'dethroned' all chiefs in 1963. Though dethroned their influence did not end, especially in the rural areas.



However, it was the post-colonial politicians, who took over the new independent governments, who became the 'new-chiefs' – the men who now had the most power and influence became the new status quo. Though the politicians have come to dominate, little of the traditional African socio-cultural norms have changed. Like the chiefs of old, Okullu says leadership commonly today is still personalised and:

This personalisation leads to idolisation of the leader to such an extent that people are made to believe their rights come from the generosity of that leader. In Africa every ruler becomes an ungazetted king, sitting in an unimpeachable position, ruling supreme and for life (1978, 54).

This type of political system Jackson and Roseberg (1982) have termed 'personal rule'. By that they mean that personal rule is a distinctive type of political system with operative principles and practices that can be perceived by a political analyst. Personal rule they characterise as inherently authoritarian. Further, they offer the following historical analysis:

In their quest to monopolise the control of state power following independence, most of Africa's rulers-soldiers and civilians alike - adopted practices of authoritarianism, with the consequence that national public politics withered and a world of largely private power and influence emerged. Politics became a kind of "palace politics" engaged in by privileged members of a ruling oligarchy and sometimes by a wider circle of elites who at most could only tenuously and unofficially represent the broader interests of social groups and classes. In seeking to understand the character of African political systems, we must therefore set aside the preconceptions and categories of institutionalised public politics and consider the older and historically pervasive practices of palace politics that were common in societies prior to the modern democratic revolution. (Jackson and Rosberg 1982, 2).

For example, Jackson and Rosberg maintain that:

...personal rulers are seldom subject to constitutional time limits on their incumbency. Like monarchs of old, they stand above their subjects. In all save a very few states not only do they enjoy unrivalled power, privilege, wealth and honour – that is, over public rewards – but also in some cases a kind of political divinity (1982, 22).

Not surprisingly Zokoue (1990) states that African political models often attract church leaders. He notes that political life with its ceremonies and honours exerts a great attraction on church leaders. Thus it is not uncommon to

find in churches similar structures as one finds in political life. Pastors also often like to be closely associated with politicians. Within this association, however, is a startling contradiction:

...a minister in the government is not treated as a servant; he is the first to be served. Society has here accomplished a reversal of meaning so that being a "minister" has little to do with service, but implies power and authority. This being true, why does the pastor compare himself with a ministry and ask to be given the same respect? It is because the pastor himself is also hungry for power. It is not that he aspires to political power – even though that is occasionally the case – but that he is hungry to have authority and to be seen as important in society (Zokoue 1990, 5).

Nkoma (Cassidy and Osei-Mensah, 1978), a Zhusa Christian leader from South Africa, speaks of a crisis in character – "unless we can get an incorruptible type of leader who will not be bought with money, with position, with success and with the promise of other things, then Africa will be doomed" (167). Not surprisingly Zokoue (1990) calls for a re-examination of the life of Christ as a servant-leader.

### **Ethnic Identity and Urbanisation**

Ethnic groups originally were societal units whose members considered themselves to be descended from the same ancestor; there were countless numbers of these groups in traditional Africa. Africa then was essentially rural. Thus patterns of living were adapted to rural situations, as were political and social life.

Ethnic-identity has persisted into modern times. However, the ethnic unit as an ongoing social structure, capable of fulfilling the basic needs of its members is disappearing in Africa. The greatest change that has affected the socio-cultural norms of the ethnic group has been the mass migration of people from the rural to the urban areas. "Tribalism, however, in the sense of ethnic identification, psychological commitment, historical membership, or set of shared values remains important everywhere...[but] tribalism today, particularly in the cities, is different that it was in the past" (Markovitz 1970, 56). In contrast to the rural areas, tribalism in the towns is not an organised system of political and other social relations. Instead, in the towns, specific urban-type groupings and industrial associations developed, but nevertheless, ethnic linkages and hostilities do affect the struggles within these new forms of association. As Gluckman (1970) asserts, ethnic ties and attachments still dominate domestic life.

The word 'detrribalisation' is commonly used in connection with urbanisation and social change. Shorter (1973) writes, "It usually implies the naive assumption that the African who moves to the town is free from all the restraints on his conduct among which he grew up" (37). To the contrary:

The African is always tribalised, both in towns and in rural areas; but he is tribalised in two quite different ways. As we see it, in the rural area he lives and is controlled in every activity in an organised system of tribal relations, in the urban areas, tribal attachments work within a setting or urban associations. Hence the African in the rural area and in the town is two different men; for the social situation and tribal home and of urban employment determine his actions and associations, with the major politico-economic system covering both areas (Gluckman 1970, 94).

This will also necessitate a difference of response in the church's ministry to these two areas. The greatest challenge has been for the church to provide its ministry and influence in the urban areas. Migration to the city, which over much of Africa took place very rapidly due to the speed of the industrial revolution, is both a cause and a result of social disruption and change. However, the church has been slow to respond. The primary reasons are due to the leadership crisis cited earlier in this paper: the church traditionally has been rural; its pastors have been orientated to rural settings; thus it doesn't have adequate numbers of capable leaders to provide the necessary ministry to the urban areas. To provide an adequate ministry, the church's leadership needs to understand the importance of the city as the centre of political, economic, and social change, as well as, what is happening to the people in the city, including their ethnic outlook. For many there is the unsettled feeling of "living between two worlds" (Tienou 1978, 38).

Urbanisation has given the church new responsibilities and opportunities. Shorter concludes that the "Church is simply not organised to deal with the urban scene. The population of the cities is growing rapidly and the church is unable, with her present structure, to keep pace with this growth" (Shorter 1973, 41). Owen concurs, "Urbanisation has thus seriously threatened the church's future strength in Africa because the number of pastors available for the expanding ministry of the church in Africa is becoming every year increasingly inadequate" (28).

## **LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT**

In light of the leadership crises portrayed in this paper, Elliston (1988) says there are some basic questions that need to be answered that relate to the developing of indigenous leaders. Consequently, he calls for a moratorium on

"the rush to build more western training programmes" (205). Not surprisingly, theological colleges are frequently assailed for training the wrong kind of leaders (Kinsler, 1978). Cole (1982), therefore, raises the question as to who are the real leaders? And what kind of leaders does the church need?

### **Leadership Defined**

From secular literature, Hersey and Blanchard define leadership as "the process of influencing the activities of an individual or a group in efforts toward goal achievement in a given situation" (1982, 83). While this is a very useful definition, Elliston's general precaution is worth noting:

Secular descriptions of leadership are often both inadequate and inappropriate for both descriptive and prescriptive functions for Christian leadership. Christian leadership values and principles must come from a solid biblical base rather than just from a social science base. The beginning point ought to be revelation rather than management or secular leadership theory (1988, 209).

Clinton offers the following Christian definition:

A leader, as defined from a study of biblical leadership, and for whom we are interested tracing leadership development, is a person (1) with God-given capacity and (2) with God-given responsibility to influence (3) a specific group of God's people (4) toward God's purposes for the group (1988, 197).

A qualification is added when Clinton writes, "the central task of leadership is influencing God's people toward God's purposes" (1988, 203). Quoting Ward, Elliston (1981) provides a second Christian definition of leadership:

... a leader is one who ministers, a leader serves through the gifts of the Holy Spirit, not in terms of prowess, not in terms of accomplishments or acquired knowledge, but in terms of what God is doing through his or her life. Leadership is the church in servanthood (189-190).

Unquestionably, leadership models for the church in Africa and around the world must be drawn from the Scriptures and evaluated in terms of accountability to the Scriptures, and especially to the life of Christ. But coming to grips with what leadership is, and what it means in a given ethnic area is also essential. Kumah (1990) says Christian leadership must be truly Christian and culturally enlightened – "Leadership must be respected, accepted and trusted in the local communities" (1). Talitwala strengthens this point by stressing, "we

must constantly give attention to the modern African context in which we minister" (1987, 12).

Harder (1984) cites cross-cultural research that indicates that appropriate leadership is not the same in every culture. Cultural values, norms, leader's expectations, and subordinates' expectations collectively create different appropriate leadership practices. "Therefore a leader needs to be understood in the context of a group, realising that different groups demand different approaches" (26). Sogdill (1974) observes that "to a very large extent our conceptions of characteristics of leadership are culturally determined" (82). However, it must be kept in mind that biblical principles or evaluative criteria for Christian leadership are valid inter-culturally and may serve as a normative base for the training of Christian leadership, whereas not all culturally acceptable values of leadership bring desirable results.

Indigenous leadership patterns should be retained except where they come into conflict with the biblical criteria for leadership, and then changed only in culturally appropriate ways which remain culturally appropriate (Elliston, 1981). Thus biblical, cultural and educational criteria must all be used in developing educational models for the African church.

### **Planning for the Church's Needs**

McKinney (1975) offers some very practical advice regarding assessing a church's leadership needs. She builds on four important assumptions:

- (1) Trained leaders are essential to the growth of the church;
- (2) Effective planning for leaders must be systematically planned and executed;
- (3) Plans for leadership training are determined by (a) the kinds (or categories) of leaders churches need and (b) the number of leaders churches need; and
- (4) plans for leadership training must be based on accurate appraisals of present leadership needs, and realistic projections of future leadership needs (184).

Educational planners can then build on the answers to the four following basic questions:

- (1) What kind of leaders do churches need?
- (2) How many leaders do churches need?
- (3) What kinds of leaders will churches need ten years from now?
- and (4) How many leaders will churches need ten years from now?

As to the question regarding the kind of leaders needed, Elliston (1983), based on research with Maasai leaders in Kenya, developed what he has

described as a paradigmatic model for the development of a "servant-based" leadership among churches (28):

### **Leadership Paradigm**

**LEVEL 1** - Non literate, unpaid local leaders who serve within local congregations

**LEVEL 2** - Literate, unpaid local leaders who serve locally and witness outside

**LEVEL 3** - Partially paid leaders of small churches or groups of churches, Std. 7 education, often licensed

**LEVEL 4** - Paid, ordained pastors of town churches Bible School graduates

**LEVEL 5** - National international with BA

The concept of the inverted pyramid graphically suggests that each succeeding level is supportive of the other levels and is teaching each of the preceding levels. The aim quite deliberately is an attempt to move away from status, based on education or power, and move toward increased serving with increased learning.

### **Leadership Research**

Relatively little research information is available on leadership behaviour in present African societies. What is true of society at large, is true also of the church. However, significant research has been done amongst church leaders. The following is a look at the work of Cole (1982) and Harder (1984).

#### **1. Cole - What Kind of Leaders Are Desirable?**

Working within the Evangelical Churches of West Africa (ECWA) in Nigeria, Cole set out to determine what constitutes desirable pastoral leadership amongst these people. Research was carried out across three representative church types. They are as follows:

- 1) Ethno-rural churches - found in rural sectors across Nigeria, using either a major Nigerian language or a local dialect in worship. Membership in this type of church tends to be older and less acculturated.
- 2) Ethno-urban churches - found in urban sectors across Nigeria using a major Nigerian language in worship. Members are largely migrants, have a fairly balanced proportion of old and young, and both highly acculturated and less acculturated.
- 3) English-using churches - found in urban sectors across Nigeria, using only English language for worship. The members are largely migrants, but tend to be young and highly acculturated.

The major findings were as follows: the respondents with more formal schooling preferred to describe the pastor as a resource person, while those with little or no schooling preferred to describe the pastor as an authority figure. Consequently, when it came to the matter of planning church affairs, ethno-rural and ethno-urban church types tended to prefer a joint pastor-elder decision. Respondents who were younger and had more formal education wanted the generality of church members as well to be given a say in the decision-making. The English-using churches wanted a participatory form of leadership style far more than either of the other two church types.

As for the personal characteristics desired, ECWA members across all categories chose pastoral experience as the most important qualification. Next was that he should be highly educated and married. The matter of experience was so significant that many respondents indicated reluctance to seek counsel from a pastor who is young, inexperienced and unmarried. Both the ethno-rural and ethno-urban churches preferred a pastor who is over forty years of age and highly educated, though the ethno-rural churches would readily take an older man with little education. However, the English-using churches preferred a pastor who is under forty years of age, though highly educated and experienced. Cole notes "that as a matter of concern for policy makers in the church, these findings would clearly warn against treating the different church types at the same level" (1990, 9). With the push on within ECWA to establish more English-using churches, church leaders will be under increasing pressure to adopt different styles of leadership.

## **2. Harder - Appropriate Leadership Behaviour**

This study was designed to identify perceptions of appropriate and inappropriate leadership behaviour for Africa Inland Church pastors in Kenya. Four different church leader and student groups were interviewed to ascertain

their perceptions. Their perceptions were identified from the ranking of five pastoral leadership styles adapted from cross-cultural leadership studies. Each respondent ranked the five pastoral leadership styles to identify the present practice, the appropriate practice, and the appropriate leadership behaviour for seven different pastoral situations.

The major finding of this research was that "group centred" leadership was the preferred leadership style for the local pastor by all research groups. Secondly, the church leaders and students consistently identified "do-nothing" and "telling" leadership as the least appropriate leadership behaviour.

Harder notes that "the AIC-Kenya pastoral training schools have adopted a western educational approach complete with its tendencies toward individualism. [However] the church leaders' high regard for group-centred leadership calls for the re-examination of the present curricula" (1984, 133). Without close attention to leadership behaviour norms, education could easily create a leadership dysfunction. In this case AIC Bible school students need specific instruction in group-centred leadership.

In Kenya, and virtually all other African countries, there is a great tension between the inevitability of change and the need for stability. Harder maintains that the resolution of this tension is best dealt with in the training of group-centred leaders.

## CONCLUSION

Though Barrett's quantitative projections of growth for the Church of Christ in Africa excite many people, others looking through qualitative lenses are more subdued. For example, France writes,

African Christianity is going to need, indeed it already needs, more than numbers. If it is to survive... it must be truly African, speaking to actual African concerns with an authentic African voice. But, if it is to have any *raison d'être*, it must also be truly Christian, and that means that what it applies to the question of Africa must be the biblical revelation (1978, 143)

The crises facing Christianity in Africa, can be largely ameliorated by giving priority to solving the leadership crises. The patterns of ministry that need to be brought into focus in order to attain a truly biblical ministry in Africa are as follows:

- 1) While the need in Africa for trained pastors is great, the moral-spiritual standard demanded in the Scriptures (I Tim. 3:1-7 and Titus



1:6-9) cannot be relaxed for pragmatic reasons. True men of God, full of the Holy Spirit, are desperately needed; men, conscious of God's call, and acknowledged to have the requisite gifts for ministry by the people of God.

2) Pastors must recognise that their primary task is as a teacher and preacher of the Word of God and they must be educated to have a servant spirit. Where possible and as much as possible they need to relinquish administrative tasks to others. The pastor must see his ministry in terms of equipping the people of God for their ministries.

3) In terms of training for the ministry, the emphasis must be on biblical exegesis as applied to the African milieu. The need is for pastors to be able to both accurately and convictingly preach the Word, for there is need for both instruction and exhortation. When more pastor-leaders can preach like the Apostle Paul – not simply with words, but also with power, with the Holy Spirit and with deep conviction" (I Thess. 1:5) – then, by God's grace, the spiritual face of Africa, qualitatively and quantitatively, will be that much more transformed. It is for reasons like these that church leaders like Adeyemo (1978) remain hopeful about the future of the church.

## WORKS CITED

- Accrediting Council for Theological Education in Africa. 1985. *ACTEA Directory of Theological Schools in Africa*. 2d ed. Nairobi: Evangel Publishing Press.
- All Africa Conference of Churches. 1964. *The Crises in the Christian Ministry in Africa*. Kitwe, Zambia: All Africa Conference of Churches.
- Adeyemo, Tokunboh. 1978. "An African Leader Looks at the Churches' Crises." *Evangelical Missionary Quarterly* 14:151-160.
- Barrett, David B., ed. 1982. *World Christian Encyclopaedia*. Nairobi: Oxford University Press.
- Cassidy, Michel, and Gottfried Osei-Mensah, eds. 1978. *Together in One Place*. Nairobi: Evangel Publishing House.
- Clinton, J. Robert. 1988. *The Making of a Leader*. Colorado Springs, CO.. Navpress.
- Cole, Victor B. 1982. *Leadership Criteria and Their Sources Among ECWA Churches of Nigeria: Implications for Curriculum in Ministerial Training*. Ph.D. dissertation, Michigan State University.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 1990. Concepts of Pastoral Leadership in Africa: A Case Study. *Africa Journal of Evangelical Theology*. 9:3-11.
- Elliston, Edgar J. 1981. *Curriculum Foundations for Leadership Education in the Samburu Christian Community*. Ph.D. dissertation, Michigan State University.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 1983. "Maasai Leadership Development: An Emerging Process." *East Africa Journal of Evangelical Theology*. 2:20-31.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 1988. "Designing Leadership Education." *Missiology: An International Review* 16 (April): 203-215.
- France, Dick. 1978. "Critical Needs of the Fast-Growing African Churches." *Evangelical Missionary Quarterly* 14 (July): 141-149.
- Gluckman, Max. 1970. "Tribalism in Modern British Central Africa." In *African Politics and Society*. ed. Irving L. Markovitz. New York: The Free Press.

- Harder, Kenneth R. 1984. *Kenyan Church Leaders: Perceptions of Appropriate Leadership Behaviours*. Ph.D. dissertation, Michigan State University.
- Hersey, Paul, and Kenneth H. Blanchard. 1982. *Management of Organisational Behaviour*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ.: Prentice Hall.
- Jackson, Robert H., and Carl G. Rosberg. 1982. *Personal Rule in Black Africa*. Los Angeles: University of California Press.
- John, P.M. 1990. Church Leadership Training. *Intercon 90* 14b:1-4.
- Kinsler, F. Ross. 1978. *The Extension Movement In Theological Education*. Rev. ed. Pasadena: William Carey Library.
- Kumah, Jonathan. 1990. Training and Church Leadership in the Evangelical Church in Ghana, *Intercon 90* 14c:1-4.
- Markovitz, Irving L., ed. 1970. *African Politics and Society*. New York: The Free Press.
- McKinney, Lois. 1975. "Planning for the Church's Leadership Needs." *Evangelical Missionary Quarterly II* (July): 183-187.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 1980. "Leadership: Key to the Growth of the Church." In *Discipling Through Theological Education*, ed. Virgil Gerber, 179-191. Chicago: Moody Press.
- Miller, Norman N. 1970. "The Political Survival of Traditional Leadership." In *African Politics and Society* ed. Irving L. Markovitz. New York: The Free Press.
- Miller, Paul M. 1969. *Equipping for Ministry in East Africa*. Dodoma: Central Tanganyika Press.
- Okullu, Henry. 1978. "The African Context and its Issues." In *Facing the New Challenges*. eds. Michael Cassidy and Luc Verlinden, 30-33. Kisumu: Evangel Publishing House.
- Owen, Dan. 1965. *African Clergy and Protestant Church Strength*. Indianapolis: The United Christian Missionary Society.
- Reapsome, James W. 1977. "Africa's Church Growth Brings Problems." In *Evangelical Missionary Quarterly* 13 (Oct): 195-196.

- Pobee, John S. 1979. *Toward An African Theology*. Nashville: Abingdon.
- Russell, J.K. 1966. *Men Without God: A Study of the Impact of the Christian Message in the North of Uganda*. London: Highway Press.
- Shorter, Aylward. 1973. *African Culture and the Christian Church*. New York: Orbis Books.
- Sundkler, Bengt. 1962. *The Christian Ministry In Africa*. London: SCM Press.
- Talitwala, Stephen. 1987. "Theological Education in the Modern African Context." *East Africa Journal of Evangelical Theology* 6:12-16.
- Tienou, Tite. 1978. "Problems and Issues Among the Rural Population of Africa." In *Facing the New Challenges*. eds. Michael Cassidy and Luc Verlinden, 37-40. Kisumu: Evangel Publishing House.
- Underhill, Keith. 1975. "Pastoral Care Lacking in East African Churches." *Evangelical Missionary Quarterly* II (Oct): 241-247.
- Wakatama, Pius. 1976. *Independence for the Third World Church: An African's Perspective*. Downers Grove: Inter Varsity Press.
- Warren, Max. 1964. *Problems and Promises in Africa Today*. London: Hodder and Stroughton.
- Welch, F.G. 1962. *Towards an African Church*. Nairobi: Christian Council of Kenya.
- Zokoue, Isaac. 1990. "Educating for Servant Leadership in Africa." *Africa Journal of Evangelical Theology* 9:3-13.