Value-Centered Leadership: Centrality of the Biblical Concept of Love for Transformational Leadership in the Contemporary Contexts

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Abstract

This paper explores the significance of love in leadership conversations. The application of the biblical commandment of love (ἀγαπάω- agapaō, meaning "to love") to leadership matters can transform the practice of leadership. The paper highlights the role of love within biblical servant leadership by intertwining ethics and leadership. It projects the importance of value-centered leadership as a panacea for rising above negative ethnicity, capitalism, and egocentrism in Africa. Further, to address the challenges in contemporary society, the study argues for worldview reorientation and paradigm shift in the whole concept of leadership and its practicality. This shift involves equipping leaders to align their leadership understanding and practices with transformational and servant leadership that can solve contemporary society's challenges.

Keywords: Leadership, Transformational/ Servant leadership, Love, Agape, Africa

Introduction

Leadership is a field of study that has existed for a long time but was not theorized until recent times through the great effort of the leadership of Macgregor Burns. The world and its subsystems spin around leadership. A leader forms an epicenter from which followers draw inspiration, fueling their vision toward vision achievement. The age-long debate has been on whether leaders are born or they are made. Arguably, leaders are born and made. The thesis of this paper hinges on the argument that leadership should be motivated by love; that is, love for humanity and the transformation of lives, love for the environment, love to revolutionize the present, and love for posterity.

The world is grappling with enormous challenges due to the absence of love. Lost love has destroyed the environment, brought terrorism, corruption of humongous magnitudes, negative ethnicity, and many other challenges. According to Graig (2005, 132), leadership is a social influence process in which the leader seeks the voluntary participation of subordinates to reach organizational goals. It is, however, worth noting that it is not just about the corporate world but emanates from the smallest unit, the family, and permeates all societal subsystems. Leadership is critical in society; that is why the Bible asserts that where there is no vision, the people perish (Prov 29:18). Again, love as a prerequisite to make the world a better place is an assertion that does not require much unpacking. The appropriateness of love in a family, an organizational setting, or a nation holds together the elements of vision embellishment, accentuation, and realization. This paper explores love as the foundation of leadership and a means of overcoming the world's challenges. First, it is necessary to examine the concept of love based on biblical teachings.

The Centrality of the Great Commandment and Agapaō

Great leaders have existed since the times of Sun Tzu, Plato, Machiavelli, and others; however, the teachings of Jesus and how they can inform leadership on serving God and humanity remain unparalleled (Brysman et al., 2011). At the center of the teachings of Christ is the concept of love. Jesus gave his disciples the greatest commandment, "…Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength…love your neighbour as yourself" (Matthew 22:37- 39, NIV). Love lumps into one basket every good thing one can be accomplished for humanity. Leadership that has love at the center creates ripples that spread far and wide, impacting lives and nations.

Those considered great leaders by many, such as Nelson Mandela, Mother Teresa, Mahatma Gandhi, Wangari Maathai, and Billy Graham, took their first steps toward leadership out of love for humanity and other creation. Greenleaf (2002, p. 52) opined that love is an indefinable term, and its manifestations are subtle and infinite. However, it begins with one absolute condition: unlimited liability! As soon as one's liability for another is qualified to any degree, love is diminished by that much. Usually, institutions are designed to limit liability for those who serve through them. The 21st-century leader is thus indebted to redefine leadership by manifesting extravagant love to followers, which conquers the litany of challenges likely to rock any organization or group of people.

On the significance of love, Winston (2002) postulated and foregrounded the "agapaō" concept. This strand of love deviates from romance and the agape dimension but fits very well in leadership. Winston (2002, p.19) proffered that employees (followers) want to be considered for their brains, hearts, and hands. He gave an attention-grabbing juxtaposition of the nature of love in leadership. He presented insight to leaders by shifting their focus to seeing followers as hired hearts instead of hired hands. For clarity, agapaō is a moral love, meaning that the leader should do the right thing at the right time and for the right reasons. A leader ought to conversely and overtly impart confidence among followers through perpetual actions of love fuelled by the desire to attain positive change. This is the type of love that overshadows personality challenges. Regarding agapaō, Winson (2002, p.5) noted that agapaō means to love in a social or moral sense, embracing the judgment and the deliberate assent of the will as a matter of principle, duty, and propriety.

Bryman et al. (2011, p.29) brought forth three questions that immerse one into introspection regarding leadership. They proffered: "what makes leadership necessary? What makes leadership possible? and what processes characterize the emergence, maintenance, and transformation of leadership?" A keen look into these questions leads to the conclusion that once love is decentred, everything else comes tumbling down. Giving these questions the answer "love" illuminates a significant rhyming dichotomy. In an assertion that gravitates towards supporting the great commandment Winson (2002, p.1) opined that the concept of love supports the theory that leadership begins with the overarching value of love that forms the foundation for the other lesser values. Love is the embodiment of what leadership is about. Historically, the pendulum of leadership has been oscillating between scientific and normative styles (see Bryman et al. 2011, p.8 -13). Still, amid all these, the driving force defining a true leader remains love.

According to Winson (2002, p.8), agape love may be best understood in light of the Golden Rule: *"Do unto others as you would have them do unto to you,"* and even more to the Platinum Rule of *"Do unto others as they want you to do unto them."* As a moral love, agapaō, means that today's leaders must consider their followers' human and spiritual aspects. Employees (or followers) are complete people with physical, mental, and spiritual needs. In a world rocked by economic, social, and cultural challenges, the leaders who will be exemplary will engage in strategies that prove that they fully value their followers. These are the leaders who are going to sail through the rigors of leadership tides and help transform the world.

The effects of love are far-reaching; Ferch & Mitchell (2001) advocated love as a goal for leaders, whereby the leader is emotionally, physically, and spiritually present for the follower. Furthermore, they pointed out that this relationship is reciprocal and includes the premise of challenging any behavior that is inconsistent with love. Whether in political leadership, corporate, or small groups, followers have the rationality to determine who is a true leader and who isn't. For this reason, leaders should carry themselves with decorum and strive to embrace practices that motivate followers toward achieving a vision.

Leaders are beacons of hope for any organization. Winston (2002, p.10) asserted that employees and followers want honest, open leaders who keep the organization moving in a positive direction during calm and stormy seas. Employees and followers want leaders who are "others-centered." The paradox of an agapaō form of leadership, compared to an economical form of leadership, is that while the agapaō leader concentrates less on the organization and more on individuals, the organization gains more because the employees are working to uphold the organization′s needs. This symbiotic relationship creates a synergy and reduces the hurdles of goal achievement in the sense that every individual feels valued and part of the system, which works in sync like a jazz band. The best way to align followers to the vision realization spectrum is by showing that you value them.

Servant Leadership: A Priority

According to Greenleaf (1998), servant leadership is a multi-dimensional leadership theory that starts with a desire to serve followed by an intent to lead and develop others to achieve a higher purpose objective to benefit individuals, organizations, and societies. Coetzer, et al. (2017, p.1) posited that although Greenleaf coined servant leadership, its original principles are from the Bible. For example, in Mark 10: 42–45 (New International Version), Jesus said: "You know that those who are regarded as rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be a slave to all. For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many." The paradox of the greatest being a servant is what the revolution of love in leadership is all about. The greatest leaders who have ever existed and whose impact has transcended time and space demonstrated the invaluable traits of servant leadership. Servant leaders derive satisfaction from serving others. Unfortunately, the world suffers a deficiency of servant leaders, resulting in the many challenges societies still face.

Service to others is the critical component of servant leadership. The concept is based on the leader taking the servant's position in their interactions with the employees or followers. Hackman (2006, Cited in Afegbua & Adejuwon, 2012, p.144) presented four threads of conceptions that capture servant leadership:

(a) Leadership is about what you are. This definitional theme focuses on leader traits and attributes and is one of the oldest ways of conceptualizing leadership. This emphasis is on identifying the characteristics that define natural or born leaders.

(b) Leadership is about how you act. From this perspective, leadership is defined as the exercise of influence or power.

(c) Leadership is about what you do. This definitional thread focuses on the role that leaders play.

(d) Leadership is about how you work with others. This definitional theme emphasizes collaboration. Leaders and followers establish mutual purposes and work together as partners to reach their goals.

Servant leadership depicts the transformation of society through rational practices. At the core of servant leadership is love for humanity and selflessness. Servant leadership is realized through one's sacrifice of time and energy to alleviate suffering and improve people's lives. Spears (2005, p.2) observed that servant leadership emphasizes serving others as the number one priority, whether customers, employees or the community. Servant leadership emphasizes increased service to others, a holistic approach to work, promoting a sense of community, and sharing power in decision-making. The basis of servant leadership is love. Patterson (2010, p.67) defines servant leadership from a perspective of love; further, he defines love from a moral and virtuous perspective, that is, how love works from the leader's perspective. Thus, it answers why one should lead with love and how to love the unlovable; how love can transform followers' lives, and the benefits to employees, organizational life, and culture.

Servant leadership is a calling that transcends conventional leadership responsibilities. It is devoid of egocentrism, self-interest, and materialism pursuit. Instead, social responsibility driven by virtue ethics takes centre stage in servant leadership. According to Stone, Russel & Patterson (2004), servant leadership cuts across various leadership theories, but it is unique in its philanthropic characteristics, leadership intent and focus, and multi-dimensional leadership attributes. It focuses on serving people first and aims to achieve an extraordinary vision that creates value for the community.

Leaders project diverse traits but at the core of servant leadership is a zeal to see others flourish. According to Leonard (2010, p.4), leadership is typically defined by a leader's traits, qualities, and behaviors. As such, a servant leader is responsible for projecting others through lenses that magnify their self-esteem and aspirations to share in the vision attainment. Ndoria (2004) argues that servant leaders believe that power and authority are for helping others grow, not for exploiting, ruling, or taking advantage by setting groups or individuals against each other. Also, Leonard (2010, p.4) notes that servant-leadership emphasizes increased service to others, a holistic approach, promoting a sense of community, and sharing power in decision-making. It is a practical philosophy concerned with the ethical use of power and authority. Having the welfare of others at heart and involving them in decision-making is an aspect that is deficient in many developing countries' leadership landscapes. In servant leadership, fame and wealth are far pushed towards the periphery, while the love for humanity and transformation of lifestyles for the better is at the core.

Ndoria (2004, p.4) noted that servant leadership is a learned lifestyle. To be willing to take the servant role requires deliberate acts of love. He alluded to the love described in 1 Corinthians 13, which has the following characteristics:

First, true love is kind and, therefore, does not hold grudges. The servant leader must be conscious that he has been committed to representing the organization, which is an honour. That means that their dealings with the followers have to be genuine without any trace of holding grudges against any of them, whether they disagree with them or not. Second, it is patient, always hopes for the best, and thinks of the best for others. Therefore, even when the followers make mistakes, the servant leader will likely chastise them with love and patience. Third, love protects others. The servant leader knows they are a steward entrusted with leading people. Therefore, he tries as much as possible to protect the followers, and they hope that some good will come out of them. They believe in their abilities and rejoice in truth. Before believing any rumour concerning one follower, they establish the truth before taking formal action. Fourth, love is not easily angered; it is not envious, boastful, proud, rude, selfish, and not a thinker of evil; it perseveres, trusts, and hopes in others.

There is joy and satisfaction in serving others. Jesus trailblazed by washing his disciples' feet (John 13:4–15). The blessings which come with service to humanity are untold. Hossain (2015, p.5), quoting Mahatma Gandhi on this universal principle, asserted that "the best way to find "you" is to lose yourself in the service of others. The moment you

devote yourself to alleviating humanity's suffering and improving lives, God takes over and ensures you experience joy and peace, transcending human understanding. Successful political, religious, and corporate leaders, regardless of capacity, have something in common: they are dedicated to serving humanity.

It is imperative to have the people one is leading at heart. What remains etched in the minds and souls of people is the type of leader one was, the traits one possessed, and the change one brought to people's lives. Hossain (2015, p.7) posited that successful political leaders think globally and act locally. A good leader realizes that for us to live in prosperity as a powerful and blessed country, reasonable steps must be taken to ensure others achieve the same goals.

Ethics: The Flux of Love

Love is all-encompassing; it is the nucleus of the broad spectrum of what is good and acceptable. The driving force behind leadership is love: love for people, nature, and posterity. That love embodies what drives people to rationality and engage in society's expectations cannot be waved aside. Bryman et al. (2011, p.249) noted that virtue ethics emphasizes the pursuit of absolute good, and a leadership philosophy based upon this principle will be concerned with actualizing perfection.

Classical ethics perspectives are generally sorted into virtue, deontological, or teleological approaches, also known as the character, means (duty), and ends (greatest good) schools of ethical thought. Aristotle called virtue or character ethics eudemonism (Van Wart (2014, p.2). Love is all overshadowing; if people all loved one another, there would be no need for the law. Therefore, even though love is interwoven with ethics, the former supersedes the latter because it accommodates all strands of ethics. As leadership grapples with normative strategies and contemporary challenges, love should take its place because this will bring authentic change from the inner cores of sophistication in the developed world to the unknown settlements in the developing world.

Any strategy a leader dreams of and aims to actualize should be motivated by love. Love is the fountain from which charismatic and transformative leadership springs. Van Wart (2014, p.2) foregrounded the significance of the intent of individuals, no matter whether leaders or members of the organization (followers in whichever capacity). The character of individuals affects their ability to be a moral force in the organization and potentially improve

effectiveness. Any action should emanate from a genuine desire to bring about positive change.

Great leadership is associated with visionary people of high integrity and boundless love. Undoubtedly, Nelson Mandela is one of the most prolific people who inspired generations. When he was leaving prison, he confessed: "as I walked out the door toward the gate that would lead to my freedom, I knew if I didn't leave my bitterness and hatred behind, I would still be in prison." The world is reeling with desperation today because there are few likes of Mandela, Mahatma Gandhi, and Martin Luther King. Zagzebski (1996, p.137) wrote that virtue has two main elements: a motivational element and an element of reliable success in bringing about the end (internal or external) of the motivational element. These elements express the two distinct aims of the moral project in common sense moral thinking. A virtue, in this sense, is a deep and enduring acquired excellence of a person, involving a characteristic motivation to produce a desired end and reliable success in bringing about that end.

Service to humanity is central to leadership. Collins (2001) noted that leadership is a paradoxical combination of humility and professional will. These are essential aspects of leadership success. Van Wart (2014, p.2) pointed out the importance of selecting the proper means of doing good. He noted that in classical philosophy, this is the deontological approach. Being moral implies knowing and following appropriate social customs that stem from laws, and rules. As situations become more complex, the leader's role in dealing with emerging competing and conflicting values is well illuminated. For this reason, leaders ought to be unwavering, rational, resilient, and foresighted to remain focused and realize each established vision.

Ethical leaders act for their followers, society, and the environment. Ciulla (1995) argued that good intent, proper means, and appropriate ends, or, stated differently, character, duty, and greatest good must be functioning for good leadership to be robust. It is not strange that the people who reach the apex of self-actualization have unreservedly devoted themselves to serving humanity in leadership capacities that bring about change that reverberates through generations. Leadership is about positive influences on self and followers and concern for the environment and society.

Further, ethics is central to leadership. Great leaders are always radiating ethical values. Van Wart (2014, p.5) noted that integrity's five most common hallmarks are honesty, trustworthiness, fairness, prudence, and conscientiousness. All these elements are

accommodated in love. Modern leaders will be judged depending on how they project the tenets of ethics in every undertaking. According to Kodish (2006), people of good integrity are perceived as telling the truth, acting consistently, providing treatment to others that they themselves would like in the same position, acting with discernment, and aiming for excellence. Those of exceptional integrity likely exhibit remarkable candour, conscientious follow-through, and an unusual astuteness in achieving a balance in meeting the competing interests inherent in life's complex situations.

The selflessness exhibited by many great leaders is founded on ethics. Arjoon (2000) proffered that virtue theory is valuable to leadership due to the focus on the common good rather than profit-maximizing, therefore earning a place in leadership. Of great significance is the practical bit whereby leaders delve into changing the status quo in society by initiating programs that have far-reaching implications. Van Wart (2014, p.10) pointed out that one of the strengths of social responsibility leadership is that it taps directly into the need to assist and make a difference. Martin Luther King said that an individual has not started living until he can rise above the narrow confines of his individualistic concerns to the broader concerns of all humanity.

21st Century Leadership and Realities

Throughout history, leadership has been oscillating between scientific and normative styles. According to Bryman et al. (2011, 10), we live during the dispensation of distributed leadership, followership, identity, and mission command. Pinnow (2011, p.1) argued that leadership in the twenty-first century means leading under intense conditions; today's markets and people are different than their counterparts of twenty years ago. Managers and employees face new challenges, have other goals and interests, live in another environment, and define themselves and their work differently than the generation before they did. During the 21st century, the world, especially the developing world, faces monumental challenges occasioned by "lost love." Some of these problems include the COVID-19 impact, global warming due to the destruction of the environment, terrorism, unmitigated poverty, corruption, civil wars, diseases, and challenges related to information technology advancement explosion and globalization.

There is a cut-throat competition among nations and organizations, which has thrust the leaders of the 21st century to the drawing board. The consideration of humanity has taken centre stage because the trailblazers have realized that foregrounding followers' welfare is

significant in vision attainment in leadership. Pinnow (2011, p.9) pointed out that in the future, a company's success will depend on factors associated with people and not with organizational structures or capital developments. Such factors include commitment, creativity, entrepreneurship, courage, visionary thinking, and emotional intelligence.

The developing world is going through turbulent times. Right from the basic ones to multinationals, institutions have been shaken to the core due to the impact of COVID-19, the rigors of information and technological advancement, globalization, and the challenges they have brought about. Pinnow (2011, p.5) opined that the erosion of traditional social security systems and values characterizes the twenty-first century. Institutions such as the family, churches, clubs, local communities, and nations will lose their importance and role as a source of a connecting, communal meaning of life. This assertion which sounds prophetic, has already come to pass. There is a lot of social disintegration and realignment in the world.

According to Rose (2008), with the advent of globalization and the global explosion in information technology innovation, the global business environment has become dynamic and more competitive. It indicates that to be successful in terms of overall performance, firms should create and maintain sustainable competitive advantage and achieve local and international visibility. Further, for organizations to stay afloat, there must be a paradigm shift regarding the visualization of the leadership concept and process as a whole. During the 21st century, love will triumph, not just economically driven strategies. Therefore, the 21st leadership skills and the centrality of love can be conceptualized as follows:
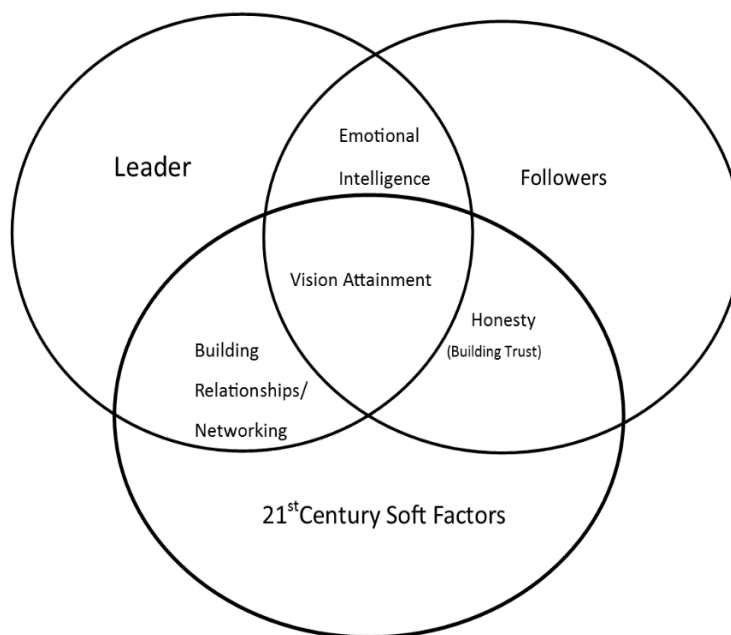
Source: A conceptualization by the author of this paper.

The concepts of emotional intelligence (EQ) and social intelligence and the broad spectrum of what they entail embody what the leaders of the 21st century should embrace. According to Bar-On (1996), emotional intelligence is an array of non-cognitive (emotional and social) capabilities, competencies, and skills that influence one's ability to cope with environmental demands and pressures. Salovey & Mayer (2002) defined emotional intelligence as the ability to perceive emotions, access and generate emotions to assist thought, understand emotions and meanings, and reflectively regulate emotions to promote emotional and intellectual growth. Emotionally intelligent people use their thinking to manage their emotions rather than allowing their emotions to control them.

Goleman (2006) presented four components of emotional intelligence which entail:

- **Self-regulation.** This consists of thinking before acting and suspending emotional judgment on occurrences. In addition, it involves controlling mood swings and impulses and thus not allowing them to disrupt one's quality of life. Self-regulation entails openness to change, integrity, reliability, and ease of accepting ambiguity.

- **Self-awareness.** A self-aware person understands what drives their behavior, as well as the effects that it has on others. The most common trademarks are self-deprecating humour, realistic assessments of one's conduct, and self-confidence. In addition, it is

the ability not to take yourself too seriously while at the same time understating your value.

- **Relationship skills.** When you possess strong social skills, you effortlessly form relationships with your followers and peers and manage them correctly. The distinct characteristics of relationship skills consist of team leadership capacities, managerial aptitudes, and persuasiveness.

- **Social awareness.** Possessing empathic traits does not necessarily involve compassion for others but understanding their emotional makeup and treating them according to subsequent reactions. The trademarks (of social awareness) consist of customer service skills, the ability to recruit talent, and sensitivity to sociocultural factors such as gender, ethnicity, etc.

Emotional intelligence is indispensable in leadership. Dealing with fellow humans is never easy; it is a balancing act, and it is in these relationships that emotional intelligence comes into play. Leaders endowed with emotional intelligence are usually successfully compared to those limited in this invaluable aspect. Robbins et al. (2014, 173) noted that Effective leaders use their emotions to convey their messages. For example, when leaders feel excited, enthusiastic, and active, they may be more likely to energize their subordinates and convey a sense of efficacy, competence, optimism, and enjoyment. Emotional intelligence is a significant player in leadership, de Vries (2002, p. 47) observed that high emotional intelligence allows us to make better decisions, to have more appropriate expectations of others, and to have fewer disappointing experiences. Soft factors, for example, emotional intelligence, networking, and honesty, are crucial in 21st-century leadership.

Leadership in Africa

The many problems that Africa faces today are due to poor leadership. Leadership which is deficient in love is a major characteristic in Africa. Despite being endowed with diverse resources, the continent continues to face a high magnitude of development challenges. For example, global warming, corruption, underdeveloped infrastructure, diseases, terrorism, civil strife and wars, poor leadership and governance, and widespread poverty impede Africa's quest for sustainable and equitable development.

The problems Africa faces, which seem to spiral to infinity, are embedded in leadership. Afegbua & Adejuwon (2012, p.142) argued that political, social, and economic

instability and the prevalence of ethnic, communal, and religious crises, which have bedeviled Africa, call our attention to the problems of leadership and governance in the continent. In other words, the staggering wave of violence, insecurity, increasing crime wave, economic recession, and breaking of law and order are the attributes of the problem of leadership and governance in Africa. These problems can be attributed to leadership devoid of consideration of the follower's needs, a leader whose leadership suffers from love deficiency syndrome. Therefore, the quest for good leadership is indispensable for governance and sustainable development in Africa.

The post-colonial Africa star illuminated high expectations, but unfortunately, the leadership triggered a wave of unending cyclic anti-climaxes. A lot of disillusionment is occasioned by bad governance, resulting in brain drain and unwarranted immigration toward the North. Mills (2011) has argued that Africa's poverty is not because of the lack of capital, access to world markets, technical experts, or the unfair global economic system. Instead, African leaders have made poor choices and decided to keep the continent impoverished. The ruling class has a way of sustaining itself and playing deaf to the cacophonies of a discontent citizenry. Afegbua & Adejuwon (2012, p.143) observed that Africa's aspirations and hopes remain largely unfulfilled despite over forty years of political independence. The leadership question has become a recurring issue in the discourse on the African project. Thus, this calls for introspection regarding the continent's future because it seems blurred as matters are now. The most significant ingredient of the future of African leadership remains to be love. If a leader is not driven by love, the ramifications are unbearable despite mitigation means. Individuals who purport to have leadership know-how but do not have the plight of the masses at heart should take a back seat. Adeola (2007.p.110) pinned it; he argued:

> Leadership in Africa is characterized by primodial parochial, personalized and selfish tendencies, political brigandage, ethnic rivalry and cleavages, clientelism and privatized state apparatuses. Indeed, respected, visionary leaders that are of proven integrity are needed to captain the ship of the nations of Africa, such a leader of the people must have a vision and mission.

Unquenchable zeal to see a better society is at the centre of transformational and servant leadership styles. Sashkin (2004) argued that transformational leadership is one of the most popular leadership theories in recent years. Generally, a hallmark of transformational leadership is the extent to which the leader influences or transforms followers. African leaders of the 21st century will be judged according to the extent to which they alleviate the suffering of their followers by transforming their lives through the provision of quality

healthcare, quality education, quality infrastructure, and enhancing a peaceful environment for production to flourish.

The paradox of independent Africa being unable to sustain itself is a matter of concern. Ideological challenges coupled with limited concern for humanity are part of this quagmire. Poncian & Mgaya (2015 p. 107) argued that for more than five decades after independence, African states have remained in a vicious cycle of conflicts, stunted development and finally characterized by all indices of destructive governance; this time not as a result of colonial invasion but by the character of its leaders: power politics, endemic corruption, clientelism and politics of patronage. For true change to be realized, the current worldviews held by leaders in different African states will need an overhaul. There has to be a paradigm shift regarding the whole concept of leadership and its practicality. Leadership devoid of or with limited concern about the besetting factors of sustainable development should soon become a thing of the past. Afegbua & Adejuwon (2012, p.147) noted that theories in this new paradigm of leadership center on the traits and behaviors of leaders, the situational context of leadership, the relationships, and the relationships between and among leaders and followers in the context.

The trouble with Africa is a failure of leadership. This landscape marred with ineffective and inefficient leadership is attributable to a lack of genuine concern for followers; capitalistic intrigues largely drive leadership in Africa. The leadership domain and consciousness remain an iceberg, the major cause of checked development. Poncian & Mgaya (2015.p.5) pointed out that the challenge of leadership and its subsequent impact on Africa's development and governance has generated concerted efforts, both from within and outside the continent, to address it. There has been a realization that much of Africa's problems and challenges emanate from leadership and governance weaknesses; therefore, addressing this is considered a prerequisite for development.

Rising Above Ethnicity

Negative ethnicity remains a major challenge in Africa**.** Many nations have had a taste of the ramifications of unmitigated negative ethnicity. Ethnicity can be termed as all those aspects associated with a culturally constructed group identity (Nyaura, 2018.p1). Ethnicity and the related cultural identity concept are essentially ambivalent; they may assume a positive and a negative connotation (Kuria, 1998). It is more than physical characteristics, language, song, dance, and other cultural practices. It is the embodiment of values, institutions, and patterns

of behavior, a composite whole representing a people's historical experience, aspirations, and worldview. Great leaders have aspirations that the boundaries of ethnicity cannot confine. According to Aluko (2003, p. 96), the manifestations and the consequences of negative ethnicity can be examined under the following sub-headings:

- Emergent culture of violence and civil wars
- Attempts at secession
- The problem of refugees, genocides, and mass killings
- Retarded developmental efforts and stagnated economic growth
- The problems of political instability
- The emergence of 'ethnic ideology,' its internalization, and its impact on national integration

In Africa, ethnicity is a major player in leadership; it impacts political leadership and cascades to different societal dimensions. Africa has witnessed perpetual civil upheavals fuelled by ethnicity. Most elections are chaotic as tribal kingpins pull towards different directions and democracy is trampled upon. (Berman,2010, p.1) argued that the paradox of efforts over the past twenty years to reinvent democracy in Africa has been that, rather than dampening the fires of ethnic conflict, they have often made them more intense and, in the past decade, have been accompanied by the explosion of violent conflicts of autochthony, confrontations of 'sons of the soil,' that threaten the very bases of social order and cohesion in multi-ethnic societies.

According to Githinji (2015), negative ethnicity or tribalism is a critical concept in the discussion of African development and politics, cited among many scholars as one of the biggest contributors to problems such as instability, inequality, slow pace or failure of development, as well as corruption. Modernist discourse has regarded tribalism as something to be defeated with development. It is, however, essential to note that development can only be steered by a new generation of leaders who put the welfare of the people first. This is the generation of leaders who embrace equality regardless of tribe, gender, and other constructs punctuating our social landscape. It is these crop of leaders who are going to ensure democracy which midwives sustainable development.

Negative ethnicity is a threat to peace and development. Defeating negative ethnicity is a significant milestone towards democracy. Speaking during his visit to Kenya in 2015, Barack Obama, the former president of America, asserted: ''Politics that's based solely on a tribe and ethnicity is politics that's doomed to tear a country apart; it's a failure, a failure of

imagination." (BBC News, 2015). Ethnic politics continue to pose a security threat to many African countries and adversely affect the prospects of promoting good governance or democracy. Today, many African countries continue to use ethnicity as a resource for political manipulation and entrepreneurship, resulting in dominant ethnic groups excluding minority groups within national policies that reflect the interests and activities of the national majority (Butale, 2015).

According to Chogugugdza (2008, p.1), many African politicians use ethnicity to promote themselves and inflict maximum political damage on their opponents. The emergence of ethnic-based political parties characterized the advent of multiparty politics. The main objective is to protect kith and kin at the expense of a genuinely inclusive democracy and political pluralism. Africa's social, economic, and political landscape is marred with unwarranted ethnic identity constructs. The demarcations of these constructs can be melted into oblivion through exemplary leadership. Aluko (2003, p. 93) alleged that one of the most sensitive areas of social life in Africa is the problem of cultural pluralism, which usually rears its ugly face in inter-ethnic relations.

Other factors held constant; ethnic diversity isn't bad. In fact, our ethnic diversity should herald a synergy in all spheres of development. Kasomo (2012) observed that ethnicity in itself does not connote a negative attitude. On the contrary, ethnicity indicates a gift of God that makes us different for our mutual enrichment. It is God who makes each of us what we are. Ethnicity gives us our social and cultural identity as well as our security. The irony is that our blessing of diversity has become one of the greatest challenges of post-independence Africa. The remedy lies in rising to a new realm of self-discovery through introspection driven by the golden rule.

Rising Above Capitalism and Egocentrism

Political, social, and economic hegemony is a characteristic of leadership in the developing world. There is a disconnect, especially between political leaders and their subjects. The African leadership landscape (especially political) suffers from megalomania. Many leaders, upon assuming power start an endless journey of aggrandizing wealth with limited consideration of the masses who wallow in untold suffering. According to Chagema (2016, p.1), the concept of capitalism may not be so simple, but the long and short of it is that it works for a handful at the expense of the majority. In general terms, capitalism is

characterized by private ownership of businesses which, in turn, are driven by the quest for profit. Some of the attributes of capitalism include exploitative wage labor and capital accumulation, a system through which, in most cases, quality becomes a casualty as profits override any other considerations.

A capitalist world economy, a term coined by Immanuel Wallerstein, an American sociologist and economic, refers to the current dominant world system of how social and economic life is organized in most of the world (Holst, 2016, p.4). In the developing world, the term depicts a characteristic of the existence of the ruling class, who are wealthy, versus the masses composed of the majority poor. The economic equilibrium tilts towards the few possessing material assets while most of the poor struggle to meet basic needs. This cycle of existence can be broken by leaders who love their followers and leaders whose conscience has not been blinded by money and whatever it can buy. Triumph of rationality should take centre stage in the leadership domain.

One of the repercussions of capitalism in low-income economies is exploitation. Chitonge (2017, p.2.) observed that some scholars think of a capitalist society as one where profit drive overrides any other motives in how people relate to each other. Others see the taking root of capitalist relations and structures of production as the definitive feature of a capitalist society. Yet, for many ordinary people, a capitalist society is simply characterized by exploiting one section of society by another. The trend needs reversal. The Bible challenges: "For what does it profit a man to gain the whole world and forfeit his soul?" (Mark 8:36). According to Chitonge (2017, p.4), there are three fundamental features of capitalism which include:(i) exploitation of the majority by a capitalist class, (ii) concentration of power and control in a few and, as a result, (iii) highly unequal distribution of resources and wealth in society. Introspection is paramount; people, whether in corporate organizations or the political arena, need to support leaders who have broken the borders of ethnicity and egocentrism. It should be understood that selflessness should manifest in micro and macro leadership spectrums.

Egocentrism is a stumbling block to good leadership. Social interactions and relations between employees, employers, leaders, and followers, are significant. Love transcends the economy of affection, which is a characteristic of the African traditional kinship lifestyle. But unfortunately, this affection has boundaries when it comes to sharing resources on a large scale. The consequences of capitalism and egocentrism include the ruling class' insatiable appetite for wealth opportunities while balkanizing and disenfranchising

others. According to a report by Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), 2016), one of the effects of capitalism is the increasing interconnectedness and, as a result, the growing vulnerability of African societies to exploitation, domination, and control. There are several examples of this in Africa, including jobless growth (which is now reaching crisis proportions in many countries.

Corruption, like a colossus, has permeated the different sectors of the economy and is a consequence of egocentric leadership. Holst (2016,19) argued that despite the faster-growing economy, poverty reduction in Kenya (and other third-world countries) is still hindered by rampant corruption on a state level and within economic structures. One of the greatest remedies for corruption is leadership that loves followers, whether at the basic units of society or largescale components.

Conclusion

The biblical commandment of love is one of the most critical components that can inform and motivate leadership practices. Moreover, value-centered leadership can answer the challenges the world currently faces, such as negative ethnicity, capitalism, and egocentrism. Love can transform relationships because it is "other-centered." Many great leaders in history were motivated by love for people and God in their undertakings. Conversely, the absence of love has caused great havoc in societies, such as exploitation, corruption, injustices, divisions, wars, and conflicts. For this to be achieved, there is a need for worldview reorientation and paradigm shift in the whole concept of leadership and its practicality. This shift involves equipping leaders to align their leadership understanding and practices with transformational and servant leadership that can solve contemporary society's challenges. Thus, the agapaō is a sine-qua-non in the 21st leadership.

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