

A BIBLICAL CRITIQUE OF HELAHULI CHURCH LEADERSHIP

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INTRODUCTION

Churches in Melanesia need biblical leadership. Today, our church leaders copy traditional cultural models of leadership. They use the idea of a big-man rather than that of a servant leader, thus becoming like the world. This article discusses how a specific traditional cultural leadership model, with its associated worldview, can transition to a biblical leadership model. In doing so, there are questions that we must ask. How does one become a leader in the traditional model? How does one become a leader in the biblical model? In order to address these questions, we will first look at the traditional model of leadership in the Helahuli tribe, and then look at the biblical model of leadership.

THE HELAHULI TRIBE OF PAPUA NEW GUINEA

GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATION

The Helahuli tribe lives in the three electorates of Tari/Pori, Komo/Margarima, and Koroba, in the Southern Highlands Province of Papua New Guinea. The country lies, as Glasse puts it, “on the southern flank of the central cordillera in the great basin formed by the Tagali River and its tributaries”.¹ It is about 4,500 to 6,000 feet above sea level, and there are “few ridges in the settled area more than 8,000 feet high. The

¹ R. M. Glasse, “The Huli of the Southern Highlands”, in *Gods, Ghosts, and Men in Melanesia*, Peter Lawrence, and M. J. Meggitt, eds, London UK: Oxford University Press, 1972, p. 27.

land is mostly flat or ‘gently undulating’, with dense rainforest.’² The climate is temperate, with little variation. It rains almost every month, with irregular patterns. Day temperatures are around 20°C, and, at night, it is around 15°C, all throughout the year. The population is 161,838,³ and occupies “an area of about 2,000 square miles”.⁴ Apart from Nipa, it is one of the most-populated areas in the Southern Highlands. It has a settlement pattern “of dispersed homesteads, rather than tightly-clustered villages, and the family is not a residential unit”.⁵ The economy is based on subsistence farming.

ORIGIN

The Helahuli believe that the “first inhabitants of the land were *Honabe*, a female deity, who cooked her food by the heat of her own genitals, and *Timbu*, a male deity, who seduced *Honabe*, and later gave birth to five male deities: *Korimogo*, *Helabe*, *Piandela*, *Ni*, and *Helahuli*, and one female deity, *Hana*”.⁶ Helahuli later married an unknown woman, who bore him four sons: *Huli*, *Obena*, *Duguba*, and *Duna*. They were the first human beings, and each founded the culture groups known to the Huli by these names. The four sons of *Helahuli* became tribal groups, and they established trading links with the Heladuna to the east, the Helaobena to the north, and the Heladuguba to the south. Today, the area, these four tribal groups settled, is divided into electorates: Tari/Pori, Koroba/Kobiago, Komo/Margarima, and Enga.⁷ The Helahuli speak the Huli language, and share an area of the first three electorates. The Helahuli are “one of Papua New Guinea’s best-known and colourful tribes, and are sturdy, warlike

² *Ibid.*, pp. 27-28.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 28.

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 33.

⁷ Enga is now its own province, but Helahulis believe that Engas are their brothers.

people”.⁸ The Helahuli are known as *wigmen*, for their fashion of weaving elaborate human hair wigs⁹ that men wear for special occasions.

FAMILY CUSTOMS

Helahuli custom has been that men lived apart from their wives and young children, because they believed that contact with women impaired their health, and led to premature aging. Young children resided with their mothers. However, after initiation, the older boys joined their father’s household.¹⁰ The man looked after his pigs, while the wife looked after her pigs. When the time came for killing pigs, both the man and the woman brought the pigs together to share the meat among the family.

The man made gardens for himself and his sons. The woman did likewise for herself, the girls, and the young children. Men cooked and prepared their own food (showing that women’s influence was limited), because of their belief in the supernatural order.¹¹ However, a married man would not have to work so hard if he had “no qualms about eating food grown by women”.¹²

Life for the women was strict, and quite hard. They were not free to roam. The women’s jobs were to care for the children, make gardens, and care for the pigs. Men provided protection for the family against tribal enemies, and against spiritual attacks. Men had the excitement of war, and most of the dancing (using their decorated wigs).¹³

⁸ Steven Mago, “The Magic of Ambua Lodge – Travel”, in *Post-Courier*, November 22, 2001, p. 22.

⁹ Kingsley Ridgway, *Feet Upon the Mountain*, PNG: Wesleyan Church, 1976, p. 21. Yellow and red everlasting daisies, snakeskins, bird-of-paradise plumes, and anything else that is bright, decorate the wigs.

¹⁰ Glasse, “The Huli”, pp. 28-29.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² Eva Twyman, *The Battle for the Bigwigs*, Melbourne Vic: Unevangelized Fields Mission, 1961, p. 58.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 59.

TRADITIONAL MODEL OF HELAHULI TRIBAL LEADERSHIP

Leadership is a diverse topic. There are different leadership styles used around the world. In Melanesia, tribal groupings, clans, villages, and communities have their own traditional cultural models. In these traditional models of leadership, there are three key aspects: the means of becoming a leader, the methods used in leadership, and the marks shown by a leader.

MEANS OF BECOMING A TRADITIONAL LEADER

In order to understand the Helahuli tribal model of leadership, we need to examine leadership in the context of social structure. In all parts of Melanesia, the system of social and political organisations has similar features. As Chao says, “In such societies, status and power are closely related to kinship descent, kin group membership, and seniority.”¹⁴ Just as Melanesians are kinship based, so is Helahuli tribal leadership. In order to become a leader in Helahuli tribe, one needs the correct kinship, training, and discipline.

Kinship

The Helahuli tribe is a patriarchal society. Leadership is only by men, with two or more paternal lines combining to form what is known, indigenously, as *tene* (patrician of a clan). Leadership normally comes from the *tene*, who, because of the communal ownership of land, are the ones who have the power and authority over the clan. However, if the patriarchal clan does not provide a leader, then someone from the matrilineal clan can lead.¹⁵ Chao correctly states, “the most common form of political leadership is the so called ‘big-man’ system”.¹⁶ The leaders emerge, largely through their personal success in gathering a body of followers. In Helahuli society, this is done by achievement.

¹⁴ Sr M. John Paul, Chao, “Leadership”, in Darrell L. Whiteman, ed., *Introduction to Melanesian Cultures Point 5* (1984), p. 127.

¹⁵ Minwas More, “Justification for Churches Involvement in Politics with Special Reference to the Nipa Society in the Southern Highlands”, unpublished thesis: Rabaul PNG: Rarongo Theological College.

¹⁶ Chao, “Leadership”, pp. 133-134.

Training

Historically, a Helahuli young boy left his mother at the age of six, and joined his other brothers and father in the *palamanda* (men's house). Each clan had their own *palamanda*. In the *palamanda*, the old men told stories about their brave warriors, great hunters, dancers, and rich men. During this time, the boys grew under the teaching and discipline of the older men. When the older boys left their house at four o'clock in the morning, the young boys went with them. However, if the young boys woke up late, they stayed, and made toy bows and arrows, learned to fight among themselves, and looked for wild fruits, insects, mushrooms, and birds' eggs. They also collected firewood, and fetched water for the men. Daimoi refers to this as "the discipline (and training) at the junior level. There are different ways of training the initiates in their junior stages: informal training, the art of self-defence, and the stories of the *tumbuna* (ancestors)."¹⁷

Informal Training. The training process was informal. "There were no systematic methods and theories developed and institutionalised."¹⁸ The young boys would live with the men in the *palamanda*, and learn by watching. If the men were building a house, fence, or garden, the boys watched. Later, the men got the young boys involved in the work. Piddington emphasises that, "Participation, imitation, and correction help a young boy to be a skilful craftsman."¹⁹ Until the young boys became confident, they were supervised. Less and less supervision was done, until they could actually do the job themselves. Some jobs were short-term, taking only a few weeks, or a month, to be completed, while other jobs were long-term, taking months to complete. For instance, building houses, fencing, or digging ditches were long-term jobs. The short-term jobs were cooking, making costumes, and gardening. They mastered these jobs quickly. Since it was an apprentice-type of training, they first had to

¹⁷ Joshua Daimoi, "Spiritual Formation in Bible and Theological Colleges", in Christopher Garland, ed., *Melanesian Journal of Theology* 5-2 (1989), p. 38.

¹⁸ Robin Bazzynu, "A Biblical Analysis of Education in Papua New Guinea", in Doug Hanson, ed., *Melanesian Journal of Theology* 17-1 (2001), p. 46.

¹⁹ Ralph Piddington, *An Introduction to Social Anthropology* vol 1, Edinburgh UK: Oliver & Boyd, 1952, pp. 180-181.

observe, then participate, under the watchful eye of the older men, and finally perform, without supervision.

The girls' training was similar, in many ways, to the boys. The older mothers looked after the young girls, who looked after the children, pigs, and gardens. The older women also taught them about their own bodies.

The Art of Self-Defence. The boys were taught to make bows and arrows. Bows and arrows were important tools, and had to be used properly. They would be used in fighting, to protect one's family and clan from enemies, and for hunting. The young boys were taught to make small bows and arrows to attack each other, and defend themselves, as a kind of a military exercise.

The Stories of the Tumbuna (Ancestors). The boys sat in front of the old men, who talked to them for hours about the secrets of their clan. Daimoi says, "They hear stories of *tumbuna*, 'the surface secret' – the history of their people, their tribal origins, and the names of their forefathers. They were introduced to the names of their gods and ancestral spirits, whom they will encounter in the final stage of their initiation."²⁰ These were the surface secrets, later, they learned the deep secrets. However, it was an important part of their training, and the men tested them by asking them to repeat what was told. The old men told them to be brave, work hard, protect and defend their clan.

Having completed the junior stage, they went into the final stage of training. Other societies had three stages, but the Helahuli had only two stages. "They are mainly on the ethical and religious life of the society."²¹

The initiates were introduced to the "secret men's village, where the elders kept young men in seclusion for up to two years, as they allowed their hair to grow Afro-style (*manda hare*), the final highlight of the training."²² During these two years, they learned laws associated with food taboos,

²⁰ Daimoi, "Spiritual Formation", p. 38.

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 39.

²² Steven Mago, "The Magic of Ambua Lodge", in *Post-Courier* – Travel, November 22, p. 5.

designs to be used on spears, and fully learned and memorised the laws and designs that belonged to their community. This was important for their well-being, and for future generations. At the end of this process, they were recognised as men. From that moment on, life was not the same.

With their special wig (*manda hare*) status, they graduated, and became full members of their society, and male adults. They had the privilege and responsibility of sharing in all the activities of the community, as they were recognised as leaders.

Discipline

How did young boys become disciplined? “The tests for discipline and physical endurance for a young man of Helahuli were to observe how strong, aggressive, and brave they were. It was a test for leadership, whether they gave up and ran away, or kept going, when things got tough.”²³ They ran a long way up and down the hills, and were not allowed to stop for a drink of water, or to chew sugar cane. They had to uproot young trees with their bare hands, and to split logs with axes. At night, the old men threw the boys into cold water. The stinging leaves of the *hebane*²⁴ plant were rubbed on their faces, and all over their bodies. A big fire was made, and the boys ran around until they could not run any more. When they fell down, the old men would hit the boys, to make them stand up and run again. The bodies of the boys were covered with sweat, and they shone in the bright light of the fire. Later at night, wet or green leaves were put on the fire, which made an enormous cloud of thick smoke, but the boys went on running. Their noses and mouth were full of smoke, and tears came from their red eyes. At one o’clock in the morning, they stopped running. The old men gave them bamboos, used for carrying water, but there was not any water in them, so the boys had to pretend that they enjoyed a good drink!

²³ Interview with Pastor John Mapa, Erepo village, Tari, Southern Highlands Province, Papua New Guinea, 28/12/2001.

²⁴ *Hebane* is a type of poisonous wild plant, which, when rubbed on the body, brings swelling and pain to the body.

After this, they went into the final stage of initiation, in which the elders swore at the young men for no reason. If a young man responded, “they belted him with lime sticks, and burned him with glowing tobacco”.²⁵ The boys were made to walk to the other side of a creek on one small log. In the creek were sharp sticks and stones, thorns, and leaves with sharp edges. On the other side, the place was filled with bees, red ants, beetles, and anything that bit. If the young man cried when bitten, the elders would beat him up. If he endured through that discipline, he successfully passed. He then went back to the community, and they counted him as one of their leaders.

METHODS USED BY A TRADITIONAL LEADER

Though Helahuli traditional leadership is kinship based, heredity is not a determining factor for leadership. As Chao affirms, “regardless of how much support a big-man’s son may receive, if he lacks leadership qualities, he cannot succeed as a big-man.”²⁶ Therefore, leadership may not necessarily be passed on from the big-man to his son. There were others in the clan, who went through the training and discipline, who could take the leadership. The older men in the *palamanda* evaluated a younger man according to how he spoke, how much wealth he had accumulated, and his aggressiveness.

Talker or Spokesman

One of the methods for determining a leader was how he talked, *agali bi laga* (talker). This went along with the status of a big-man (*agali haguane*). He had to be a person, who knew the genealogies of the lineage. When land disputes arose, he was to identify the correct location of their landmarks. When there were disputes in the clan, he became the peacemaker, to bring both parties to an understanding and agreement. Disputes occurred about land, pigs, and women – hard-core elements for a Helahuli. Once they touched these important elements, they went forward to put their bodies on the line, even if it meant death. If the big-man was able to sort out the disputes, peace prevailed. In his talking, he had the

²⁵ Michael Somare, *Sana*, Port Moresby PNG: Niugini Press, 1975, p. 26.

²⁶ Chao, “Leadership”, p. 139.

power to bring forth peace, or to make war. The leader who talked well was a key man.

Wealth

“Men deemed wealth in terms of their ability to produce or marshal resources such as pigs. This stresses the role of pigs in the status of wealth (*homogo*), including the pig owner (*nogo hini*), the pig killer (*nogo бага*), and rich in pigs (*nogo homogo*). This is referred to in contemporary contexts as ‘big-man’.”²⁷ Wealth, to the Helahuli, was a lot of pigs, shell money, gardens, and many wives. Once you had those things, they called you a big-man. “An aspiring leader is typically an ambitious and energetic individual, who is able to accumulate wealth, and organise large-scale activities.”²⁸ He built up his wealth by working hard, raising pigs, making many gardens, and through successful exchanges. Successful exchanges means distributing his wealth generously to his clansmen, kinsmen, and other neighbouring groups. In doing so, he attracted many followers and supporters, by putting them in his debt. Practices, such as paying bride-price for a young man, and paying compensation for other neighbouring groups, caused the young man to become his follower, and caused them to become his dependents and supporters.

In order to maintain his leadership, he had to continue to be economically successful. Therefore, the practice of polygamy helped in many ways. The wives made gardens, and looked after pigs, which made his economic base bigger. The wives also brought additional kin groups, alliances in warfare, and economic cooperation, because it was almost as if he was married to the other clans.

Aggressiveness

Since the big-man had gone through training and discipline in his earlier years, he now utilised what he had gone through, by practising his

²⁷ Chris Ballard, *The Fire for Next Time: British Petroleum: The Book of Revelation and Huli Rituals*, a paper presented at the First-European Collegium on Pacific Studies, December, 1994, p. 21.

²⁸ Chao, “Leadership”, p. 134.

leadership. Aggressiveness, one of the practices of leadership, was shown in at least three ways: physical, mental, and decisiveness.

Physical. “In the Highlands, where population density is generally higher, and tribal fighting more intense, a leader’s ability in warfare, and skills in war, is important.”²⁹ A Helahuli big-man had to be an *agali wai biaga* (a war leader), who planned for attack, and gave directions and commands. The concept of big-men was men with a reputation of initiating, and thus being able to coordinate compensation for wars. They were distinguished by the terms *pari wayali* (the ability to stay free from wounds), *bogaga* (killer), *wai taya biaga* (fight maker), and *agali bolenege* (man killer).³⁰ He maintained his aggressiveness through his emotions, and never showed his sorrow. If other clansmen saw his tears, they went wild, or committed suicide, by attacking the other clan, because they had seen the tears of their leader. To avoid this, the leader kept to himself. If he suffered pain and wounds, he couldn’t show it to others. He had to be aggressive, by physically fighting through his pain, and still keep leading.

Mental. One of the aggressive marks of a Helahuli leader was his mindset. When his mind was set, he went forward in his talking, fighting, and decisions. He controlled his emotions. He determined to accomplish his purposes, in negotiations for peace, compensation, and warfare. Another factor was fear. The leader never showed fear. When everyone was fearful, he was courageous. He fought fear within himself. If the leader was mentally fearful, then he was already defeated. The power to win in warfare was based on his mental aggressiveness.

Decisiveness. Finally, he showed aggressiveness, by his decisiveness. When the leader made a decision to go to war, he could not change his decision, unless there was a vital reason for him to change. Normally, his decision was final, whether the decision was good or bad, beneficial or not, he could not compromise. If his decision was for peace after war, it meant peace; his clansmen could not go on fighting. His aggressiveness in his

²⁹ Chao, “Leadership”, p. 134.

³⁰ Ballard, *Fire for Next Time*, p. 21.

decision-making could not be softhearted. His speeches were realistic, achievable, and aggressive.

MARKS SHOWN BY A TRADITIONAL LEADER

After graduating, with his red wig (*manda har*), the young man lived with the older men in the men's house. He eventually got married, and was considered a fully-matured man. He became involved with community life. Older men allowed him to talk, and tackle issues for the clan. After some time, the older men observed, evaluated, and assessed his life. They asked questions among themselves. "Does he have the maturity to be the leader?" "Does he have respect and influence?"

Maturity

What were signs of maturity? There were signs the elders looked for in a leader of their clan. Firstly, he came to the community with his *manda hare*, a sign of maturity, showing he had gone through the initiations. It was proof that he knew the genealogies of the clan, the laws and secrets of spiritual well-being. Secondly, the elders looked at his actions, how he reacted to situations, his honesty, his volume of work, and his time and efforts. They looked at how he killed pigs, made gardens, and his distributions of wealth. Thirdly, they observed how he communicated with his immediate family members, the young boys, the women, and children. This involved solving their problems, trying to get to know their needs, longings, and aspirations. Once he met these requirements, the elders recommended him as a potential leader.

Respect

One of the features that showed a mark of leadership was respect. The elders always looked for respect in a young leader (whether he had the respect of everyone in the community). The community respected him for who he was, what he said, and what he could do. Foremost, he needed the respect of his own family members. They followed and obeyed what he said. They followed his orders, obeyed commands and directions, and acted carefully, and accordingly, in such activities as payment of bride price, compensation, or pig killing.

Respect in the clan for their leader was very high when he led them by example, and lived by his word. How did he gain respect? He was a rich man, in terms of wealth, a war leader, and the clan's spokesman. He was their key-man. Once he received that honour as their big-man, he was given special treatment and respect. He was respected for his worth.³¹ His experience in war was another factor. He had to be a person, who fought many wars, planned many wars, had been the commander of many wars, and was a *pari wayali* (one who had not had any wounds). His experience in killing many pigs, and distributing the meat among many other *palamandas* (other clans and neighbouring communities) proved a sign of respect, and a mark of a leader in distribution of wealth.

Influence

“It needs to be reemphasised that one's ability to plan and manage economic production and exchange is significant in rising to be a big-man, everywhere in Melanesia.”³² In Helahuli traditional leadership, influence played an important role. When the leader had the ability to organise and manage his wealth, this led to much influence. When he gave his pigs for a young man's marriage, the young man became indebted to the leader. This also went with killing pigs at the time of grieving (*duguanda*), where the relatives of the deceased became indebted to the leader. The leader's contribution of compensation payments to a neighbouring clan, made the neighbouring clan indebted to him. In these cases, the leader became an influential man in and around the community, and the surrounding clans. In doing so, he had many followers and supporters. When he had such influence, he led by coercion, by control, and drove them by dominion.

³¹ Interview with Pastor Egari Paiago, Walumali Station, Tari, Southern Highlands Province, Papua New Guinea, 28/12/2001.

³² Chao, “Leadership”, p. 135.

SUMMARY

The church leaders of Helahuli have been brought up in such a pattern. Their way of understanding leadership is quite different from the biblical pattern of leadership. Their view of leadership is the big-man view, marked by aggressiveness, wealth, and being talkative.

Being a Christian, however, and having responsibilities as leaders (pastors, deacons, elders, and other responsibilities in the church), one has to have the qualities of a biblical leader. In the next section, will look at how a traditionally-trained Helahuli church leader can become a biblical leader.

BIBLICAL MODEL OF LEADERSHIP

Having seen the traditional model of Helahuli leadership, we will now look at the biblical model of leadership. It is important to understand that there are big differences between traditional leadership and biblical leadership. Barna correctly says, “A Christian leader is someone, who is called by God to lead; leads with and through Christlike character; and demonstrates the functional competencies that permit effective leadership to take place.”³³ From this definition, let’s look at the characteristics of a biblical leader.

Firstly, God calls a biblical leader to lead. It is a divine call from above, on someone whom God has appointed to lead His people (1 Sam 16:1-3; 13:14; Ps 89:20). In Acts 20:28, Paul reminded the Ephesian elders that it was the Holy Spirit who had appointed them to their ministry. As Jesus said to His disciples “You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you” (John 15:16). Sanders says, “Spiritual leadership is a thing of the Spirit, and is conferred by God alone. When His searching eye alights on a man who has qualified, He anoints him with His Spirit, and separates him to his distinctive ministry (Acts 9:17; 22:21).”³⁴

³³ George Barna, *Leaders on Leadership*, Ventura CA: Regal Books, 1997, p. 25.

³⁴ J. Oswald Sanders, *Spiritual Leadership*, London UK: Lakeland Books, 1967, pp. 17-18. He quotes from Samuel Logan Brengle’s book, *The Soul-Winner’s Secret*, “It is not won by promotion, but by many prayers and tears. It is attained by confessions of sin, and much heart-searching and humbling before God; by self-surrender, a courageous sacrifice of every idol, a bold, deathless, uncompromising, and uncomplaining embracing of the cross, and by an eternal, unflinching looking unto Jesus crucified. It is not gained

Secondly, a biblical leader must be a person of Christlike character. The greatest leader in the Bible is Jesus, whose leadership style was very different from most other leaders. His emphasis was service (Matt 20:28) to poor and hurting people (Luke 4:18-19), and, through this, He defined His leadership. His example was servanthood (Matt 20:26; Mark 10:43), and his way was humility (Phil 2:5-8). Jesus' way of leadership took people completely by surprise. Even the disciples found it difficult to come to terms with Jesus' example, and teachings about leadership. Jesus showed an outstanding example of servanthood at the end of His ministry. At the Last Supper, Jesus wrapped Himself with a towel, took a basin of water, and proceeded to wash the disciples' feet (John 13:4-5). Jesus launched and concluded His ministry as a servant.

Thirdly, a biblical leader is one who possesses the functional competencies that allow him to perform tasks and guide people toward accomplishing the God-given tasks. Biblical leaders are given great responsibility (Col 1:25; Eph 3:2). The biblical leader will give an account to God for his work, done according to the responsibilities given him (Rom 14:12; 2 Cor 5:10; Heb 13:17). Having looked at a definition of a biblical leader, we will look at the means of becoming a biblical leader, and the methods biblical leaders use.

MEANS OF BECOMING A BIBLICAL LEADER

The means of becoming a leader, in the Helahuli traditional leadership model, was based on kinship, training, and discipline. However, in the biblical model of leadership, it is spiritual leadership, and, therefore, requires a spiritual means of leadership. As Sanders says, "Christian leadership comes – often unsought – to those who, in earlier life, have proven themselves worthy of it, by spirituality, discipline, ability, and diligence . . . have sought first the kingdom of God."³⁵ There are many

by seeking great things for ourselves, but rather, like Paul, by counting those things that is gain to us as loss for Christ. That is a great price, but it must be unflinchingly paid by him who would be not merely a nominal, but a real, spiritual leader of men, a leader whose power is recognised, and felt in heaven, on earth, and in hell."

³⁵ Sanders, *Spiritual Leadership*, p. 17.

aspects of biblical leadership, including being born again, having training, and discipline.

Born Again

The Helahuli tribal leadership was based on kinship, with emphasis on acquisition, rather than the inherited status. The biblical pattern of leadership is inherited through being born again. “‘Born again’, which, in Greek is γεννάω (*gennaō*), is used, in the writings of the Apostle John, of the gracious act of God, in conferring upon those who believe, the nature and disposition of children, and imparting to them spiritual life.”³⁶ It is a total work of God.³⁷

A requirement of biblical leadership is to be born again. Jesus emphatically said to Nicodemus, “no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again” (John 3:3). It has nothing to do with patriarchal or matrilineal kinship; it is only through being born again.³⁸ Through the Holy Spirit, we can say, “Jesus is Lord” (1 Cor 12:3). Being born again “makes us tremble in His presence, and be submissive to His commands, because of the lordship of Jesus Christ in our lives.”³⁹ Nicodemus was a big-man, in the standard of the Jews and the world. However, that title could not help him, for he had to be born again, to be recognised in the kingdom of God.

³⁶ W. E. Vine, et al, *Vine's Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words*, Nashville TN: Thomas Nelson, 1985, p. 101. John 3:3; 5:7; 1 John 2:29; 3:9; 4:7; 5:1, 4, 18.

³⁷ We see that in John 1:12-13, “Yet to all who received Him, to those who believed in His name, He gave the right to become children of God – children born, not of natural descent, nor of human decision of a husband’s will, but born of God.” James 1:18; 1 Peter 1:3; John 3:3-8.

³⁸ Gottfried Osei-Mensah, in his book, *Wanted Servant Leaders*, Achimota Ghana: African Christian Press, 1990, p. 24, states, “There is nothing territorial in the expression ‘the kingdom of God’! Jesus meant the kingship reign of God is in a person’s life. Nicodemus was told that a person cannot understand or appreciate what the kingly reign of God is all about, nor his own need to submit personally to the King, until the Holy Spirit brings that person to conversion.”

³⁹ Ibid.

Many leaders in Helahuli and Melanesian churches need to be born again. They have lived a life of a skin-Christian,⁴⁰ but have never experienced the saving power of Jesus Christ. They have the form of religion, but lack the power thereof (2 Tim 3:5). There is no Christ in them. There is no Holy Spirit in them. They have not been born again.⁴¹ They are like what Jesus said, “These people honour me with their lips, but their hearts are far from Me. They worship Me in vain; their teachings are but rules, taught by men” (Matt 9:8-9). They are directed and controlled by the titles of leadership, the big-man understanding of the world, and do not know what submission to the kingship of Jesus Christ is all about.

There are certain signs of a leader in church, who is not born again: self-promoting, feeling threatened, critical in denominational leadership, and denominational empire-builders.⁴²

Firstly, self-promoting leaders in the churches seem to promote themselves, instead of promoting the Lord. They talk about their achievements during their leadership. When many new churches are planted around the area under their leadership, when new converts flood into the church, when new young leaders emerge, when the church finances are at their best, the leaders seem to exalt themselves in meetings and conferences in the church.

Secondly, unconverted leaders feel threatened by other leaders, who are more spiritual. The leaders will try their best to put the spiritual leaders down, by their talking, discussions, and actions. The unconverted leaders feel insecure in their position, because they lack what a converted spiritual leader has. This is also true for trained and upcoming young leaders. The older unconverted leaders try to depress, look down upon, and even ignore these young leaders, because they feel threatened. They do not have humbleness, in coming to the Lord to find what they lack, but, instead, criticise others, in order to hold onto power, and to lift themselves up. One example was in the year 2000, when Bible College graduates organised a Helahuli church leaders’ meeting, and some church leaders went against the

⁴⁰ They live like a Christian, externally.

⁴¹ Osei-Mensah, *Wanted Servant Leaders*, p. 24.

⁴² *Ibid.*, pp. 24-25.

idea. However, when they realised their mistake, they joined in without apology.

Thirdly, the unconverted leaders are critical of changes. They are critical of new ideas, for the betterment of the church, that are introduced by other spiritual leaders. They also put much emphasis on the ways of the older pioneer white missionaries. For instance, church laws are so strongly enforced that, if someone breaks the church laws, the leaders reprimand them, and do not allow them to receive Holy Communion. When asked why they are doing this, they call upon the name of the old missionary and say – this was what he told us, so we must follow. They also put emphasis on the ceremonial aspects, laws, and traditions of the church, rather than putting emphasis on prayer, Bible study, evangelism, and pastoral care that strengthens the body of Christ – the church.

Fourthly, the unconverted leaders tend to focus on themselves, perhaps building their own empires. They are against cooperation with other Christian churches and denominations, and want to be on their own. They need to understand that the church has different parts, including different denominations, which make up the body of Christ. Osei-Mensah says, “Cooperation threatens their power-base. If they agree on any collaboration, it is because, somewhere in their minds, they see it as an opportunity to extend their influence.”⁴³

The most important requirement to be a biblical leader in Helahuli churches is to be born again. We need to pray for leaders in our churches, who need to be born again. We need to pray that they will come to a realisation that it is Christ’s church, and not theirs, because it was Christ who loved the church, and gave Himself for the church (Gal 2:20).

Training

Another requirement for biblical leadership is training. In Greek, “training” is *παιδεύω* (*paideuō*), which means, “to teach, instruct,

⁴³ Ibid., p. 25.

train”.⁴⁴ Just as Helahuli young boys leave their mothers at the age of six, to go to the men’s house, young Christians need to go into training. Daimoi says, “Christians’ spiritual formation is the work of the Holy Spirit . . . dependent on the partnership between God and man”.⁴⁵ Through the work of the Holy Spirit, the people develop in their spiritual life. They need to read and feed on the Word of God (2 Pet 2:2; Matt 4:4; Col 3:16; 1 Thess 1:8). Young Christians need to make prayer their priority, so that they will depend on God (Rom 8:26; Eph 6:18; Phil 4:16; Col 4:2; 1 Thess 5:17; 1 Tim 4:4; Heb 4:16; James 5:16; Jude 20). They need to spend time in fellowship with others (Ps 55:13-14; 133:1; Heb 10:25; John 13:34; John 15:12; Rom 12:15; Gal 6:2; Phil 2:1; 1 Thess 4:18; 1 John 1:3).

Like the older men in the men’s house in Helahuli traditional leadership, older Christians, need to do what Sanders says, “to discipline, to instruct, and enlighten, to nurture and train one that is younger”.⁴⁶ We see this in the life of our Lord Jesus Christ, when he called his 12 disciples.⁴⁷ The great apostle Paul disciplined younger men, and brought them up for the service of God. He trained young men like Timothy, and called him “my true son in the faith” (1 Tim 1:2). He also called Titus “my true son in our common faith” (Titus 1:4).

When young Christians go under the watchful eyes of older Christians, they learn to live Christian lives, as they attend discipleship classes, lead small fellowship groups, and participate in the activities in the church. This is considered informal training. In informal training, the younger Christians will watch the older Christians (including pastors, elders, and

⁴⁴ Vine, *Expository Dictionary*, p. 594. It is translated as “instructed” in Acts 7:22, “learned” in 1 Tim 2:25, and “correcting” in Titus 2:12.

⁴⁵ Daimoi, “Spiritual Formation”, p. 42.

⁴⁶ Sanders, *Spiritual Leadership*, p.141.

⁴⁷ Jesus selected a few men, and devoted Himself primarily to those men, who would be competent enough so that, through their word or ministry, others will believe in Him (John 17:20). Their skills and abilities, which were hidden and undeveloped, were put to good use. For three years, He gave Himself to training and developing their potential. Toward the end of His life, He said, “I have revealed You to those whom You gave me out of the world. . . . Now they know that everything You have given Me comes from You. For I gave them the words You gave Me, and they accepted them. They knew with certainty that I came from You, and they believed that You sent Me” (John 17:6-8).

other older Christians) preaching, teaching, counselling, and performing other leadership roles in the church. As Paul said to Timothy, “And the things you have heard me say, in the presence of many witnesses, entrust to reliable men, who will also be qualified to teach others” (2 Tim 2:2).

The formal training starts once the older Christian recommends that the younger Christian enters the second stage of learning. This second stage can be attending a Bible school, or attending courses offered at colleges like CLTC.⁴⁸ In this way, the young leaders are taught to handle the Word of God in the activities of preaching, teaching, counselling, and many other activities done in the church. This would be similar to the Helahuli young boys learning to make bow and arrows, as an act of self-defence. In addition, in a sense, learning the Bible, the Word of God, would be like learning the stories of the *tumbuna* (ancestors).

Once they successfully complete this formal training stage, they go into the final stage. This would be attending a Bible college, such as CLTC, that offers full-time diploma or degree program in theology. However, these training programs are not confined to classroom activities; they include daily work duties, and sporting activities. Once they graduate from the formal training stage, young men and women should have the privilege of sharing in the ministry, and other activities, of the church.

One of the problems we have in the Helahuli churches is that we don't have men in the Bible colleges. Very few men have been trained. Some graduated with certificates or diplomas, but not at degree level. What is the problem? Is it money? Are there not enough men with appropriate secondary-school training in the Helahuli area? I don't think so. The problem is that the church leaders are not training, nurturing, and recommending young men to go into training. The old church leaders want to hold on to their position in the church. They don't want anyone to disturb their security in that position, so they are not too keen in training young men. They want to die with the position.

⁴⁸ CLTC stands for Christian Leaders' Training College. CLTC has a main campus in Banz, WHP, and extension campuses in Port Moresby and Lae.

Helahuli biblical leaders need to be trained informally and formally. In order to be a leader, one needs to go through informal training, by learning from others, and doing for themselves, until they become good at it. The older leaders should be available to help them. Those young leaders, who are literate, must be recommended for further training. Once in training, they must be equipped with the Word of God, so that, after graduating, they will come back to the church. The young leader would be thoroughly equipped to handle the Word of God, and take up a leadership role in the church. One of the requirements for biblical leadership must be leaders, who have gone through training.

Discipline

Discipline is one of the means of leadership, in both the traditional Helahuli and biblical patterns of leadership. It has the same purpose, in the sense of moulding and shaping of a leader, however, they are quite different in nature. For traditional leadership, it is physical, and is done by human beings. However, biblical leadership is spiritual, which God, alone, can make happen, through His power (Deut 8:5; 2 Sam 7:14; Prov 3:11; Heb 12:6-10).

“Discipline” comes from the Greek word *σωφρονισμός* (*sōphronismos*), “an admonishing or calling to soundness of mind, or to self-control” (2 Tim 1:7).⁴⁹ Another Greek word is *παιδεύω* (*paideuō*), which “is used of family discipline.”⁵⁰ Discipline can be training, especially of the kind that produces self-control, orderliness, obedience, and the capacity for cooperation with others.⁵¹ Jesus said, in Luke 9:23, “If anyone would come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me.”⁵² Discipline is to be taken as a denial of self.

⁴⁹ Vine, *Expository Dictionary*, p. 308.

⁵⁰ Vine, *Expository Dictionary*, p. 594. Heb 12:6, 7, 10; 1 Cor 11:32; 2 Cor 6:9; Rev. 3:19.

⁵¹ A. E. Norrish, *Christian Leadership*, Manila: OMF Literature, 1986, p. 39.

⁵² A. E. Norrish affirms that discipline “is pruning, strengthening, and enrichment of character, to bring mind and body under the control of the Holy Spirit and making the Spirit supreme” (Ibid., p. 39).

A form of discipline is self-control. It is not opposing the control of the Holy Spirit. On the contrary, it is one of the qualities that the Holy Spirit produces (Gal 5:22-23). Every Christian must be self-disciplined (1 Cor 9:25-27; 2 Pet 1:5-6). This must be in all the areas of our lives: thoughts (2 Cor 10:15), feelings (Lev 19:17-18; 1 Pet 2:11), speech (Ps 39:1; James 3:7-8), eating and drinking habits (Prov 23:2,20; Amos 6:4-6; Eph 5:18), and sexual behaviour (1 Cor 7:9; 1 Thess 4:4-5).⁵³ Sanders sums up the character of discipline by stating, “a young man, of leadership calibre, will work while others waste time, study while others sleep, pray while others play. There will be no place for loose or slovenly habits, in words, or thought, deeds, or dress.”⁵⁴

When God marks out a person for leadership, God disciplines him so that the person becomes effective (Deut 8:5; Heb 12:5-10; Job 5:17; 33:14-29; Ps 94:12; 119:67; Prov 3:11; 1 Cor 11:3). This discipline of God is similar to discipline in Helahuli traditional leadership. It is for the good of those young leaders.⁵⁵

A Bible college like CLTC is a place of discipline. Getting up early in the morning for devotions, doing work duties (like working in the chicken houses, where it smells), working in the gardens (and finding your hands getting blisters), and cleaning toilet blocks in the student areas, is a discipline process. Many students have been disciplined in these areas.

Jesus' 40 days spent alone in the desert was a form of discipline (Luke 4:1-13). Jesus experienced true aloneness. This desert experience illustrates a testing, during which the leader stands alone before God. “Leadership can be a very lonely thing. In one sense, leaders are seldom alone, for people are always pressing in on them, as the crowds did on Jesus. But leaders have to be prepared for aloneness, for burdens they have to carry, for

⁵³ Don Fleming, *Bridge Bible Dictionary*, Brisbane Qld: Bridgeway Publications, 1990, p. 398.

⁵⁴ Sanders, *Spiritual Leadership*, p. 45.

⁵⁵ Norrish says “if the man of sand is to become the man of rock, of established heart, settled faith, steadfast dependableness, he will need daily discipline . . . to be faithful, to strengthen his sense of duty, to be steadfast, unmovable, to have spiritual stickability, and grit” (Norrish, *Christian Leadership*, p. 39).

decisions they must make, and for issues they have to wrestle with that no one else can share.”⁵⁶ The Son of God was able to fulfil His leadership, and to identify with ours, only by going through the same testing that all leaders face (Heb 5:8). This is what discipline is all about. When you endure discipline, it serves as a sign of a leader.

A requirement for a biblical leader is someone who has gone through discipline. How can someone lead without having gone through discipline? Every biblical leader is in the process of being disciplined by God, so that He can trust us with important responsibilities. The biblical leader needs to be moulded and shaped, so that he can be effective and responsible, and become a steady leader, in the tasks and responsibilities given in leadership.

METHODS USED BY A BIBLICAL LEADER

In the biblical pattern of leadership, the way of leadership is quite different from the way of Helahuli traditional leadership. In Helahuli traditional leadership, one has to be a talker, a person of wealth, and aggressive. However, in biblical leadership, one has to be a communicator, a person of wisdom and caring.

Communicator

Greek has two words for “communication”: *κοινωνέω* (*koinōneō*) and *λόγος* (*logos*). *κοινωνέω* (*koinōneō*) is translated in Heb 13:16 as “to communicate”, and *λόγος* (*logos*) as “a word, that which is spoken”, *λέγω* (*legō*), “to speak”, is used in the plural, with reference to a conversation, “communication” (Luke 24:17). Elsewhere, with this significance, it is rendered as “speech”.⁵⁷ As we have seen, in Helahuli traditional leadership, one of the methods, used to discern a leader, was a person who talks. When he talks, he talks with threat, with force, demanding, with aggressiveness, and with hidden truths. However, a biblical leader talks and communicates with love, care, concern, gentleness, and with truth. Although there are many ways of communicating, I have

⁵⁶ Ford, Leighton, *Transforming Leadership*, Downers Grove IL: IVP, 1991, p. 43.

⁵⁷ Vine, *Expository Dictionary*, p. 61. Matt 5:37; Eph 4:29.

chosen two methods a biblical leader uses to communicate the Word of God: preaching and teaching.

Preaching. John Stott says, “Preaching is the communication of truth by man to men.”⁵⁸ In Greek, “preaching” is κηρύσσω (*kērussō*), which means “to be a herald, or to proclaim” (Matt 3:1; Mark 1:45).⁵⁹ Communication or preaching of the Word of God, in the power of God’s Spirit, is to bring the Father and the Son down from heaven to dwell with man (Is 64:1; John 14:21-23). We see, in the life of apostle Paul, the great leader, who said that Christ had sent him to preach the gospel, not to baptise (1 Cor 1:17), that he felt a compulsion to preach (1 Cor 9:16). He said preaching was God’s appointed way by which sinners were to hear of the Saviour, and call on Him for salvation, for “how are they to hear without a preacher?” (Rom 10:14-15). At the end of his life, he exhorted his coworker Timothy to continue this vital ministry, “Preach the Word” (2 Tim 4:2).

A biblical leader must be a communicator of the Word of God, so that sinners are brought to the saving grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and grow in the Lord. We know God’s people live and flourish only by believing and obeying His Word (Matt 4:4). We need to encourage every Helahuli church leader to communicate this by faithful, powerful, biblical preaching. We need to see leaders, who are fearlessly communicating the Word of God, where there is a breakdown of law and order, where there is killing in tribal fights, where there is satanic worship, and where there is violence. We can only change our communities, and the nation, with the Word of God, through our preaching. If the church is to have an impact on society, we must have good biblical preaching from every pulpit!

⁵⁸ John Stott, *I Believe in Preaching*, London UK: Hodder & Stoughton, 1982, p. 266.

⁵⁹ Additional meanings include “to preach the gospel, as a herald” (Matt 24:14; Mark 13:10; Luke 8:1; Rom 10:14), and “to preach the Word” (2 Tim 4:2). εὐαγγελίζω (*evangelidzō*), “to bring good news,” emphasises the quality of the message itself: the message proclaimed is the glad tidings of salvation. κήρυγμα (*kērugma*), “a proclamation by a herald denoting a message, a preaching” (Matt 12:41; Luke 11:32; Rom 16:25; 1 Cor 1:21; 2:4; 15:14; 2 Tim 4:17, Titus 1:3), generally denotes the preaching of the basic truth of the faith.

Teaching. Teaching is another way of communicating the Word of God. In Greek, “teaching” is διδάσκω (*didaskō*), “absolutely, to give instruction”.⁶⁰ It is the “ability to explain scripture, and apply it to people’s lives”.⁶¹ We see an example in Acts 15:35, where Paul, Barnabas, and many others are in Antioch, teaching the Word of God. To Timothy, Paul writes, “all scripture is profitable for teaching” (2 Tim 3:16), and encourages Timothy to commit to faithful men, who would be able to “teach others also” (2 Tim 2:2). This shows that teaching, in the New Testament, consisted of repeating and explaining the words of scripture, and applying them to hearers. In this way, we nurture those who are already believers, and build them up to maturity in the faith. That was the main goal for Paul, not simply to bring people to initial saving faith, but to “present every man mature in Christ” (Col 1:28), and to build up the body of Christ (Eph 4:12-13).

One of the qualifications of a biblical leader is to be able to teach (1 Tim 4:2) so one of the methods of leadership is to communicate to the people of God by teaching the Word of God. Just as a Helahuli traditional leader had to defend his people, the biblical leader has to defend his people from false doctrines, false cults, and other distractions from their faith. To defend them, we must teach and equip them thoroughly with the Word of God.

Jesus communicated with authority (Matt 7:21), and had an impact in the lives of His listeners. The gospels picture Jesus in a wide variety of situations, where He showed a striking ability to suit His words to the occasion and the audience (Mark 10:25; 12:17; Luke 9:24, 58-62). Later, John wrote about Jesus, the great communicator (1 John 1:1-3).

To be a biblical leader, one has to be a person who can preach and teach the Word of God. Yes, communication of information, in all levels of an organisation, is very important, however, biblical leaders need to be preachers of the Word of God, who preach without fear. Secondly, a biblical leader needs to communicate, by teaching the Word of God:

⁶⁰ Vine, *Expository Dictionary*, pp. 323-324. Matt 4:23; 9:35; Rom 12:7; 1 Cor 4:17; 2 Tim 2:12; 4:11.

⁶¹ Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, Grand Rapids MI: Zondervan, 1994, p. 1061.

accurately, effectively, and relevantly, and to stand firm against false teachers, cults, spirit worship, and tribal fights.

Wisdom

Another qualification of biblical leadership is being competent, which involves wisdom. “Competent”, in the Longman dictionary, means, “having the ability or skill to do what is needed”.⁶² Just like the Helahuli traditional leader, who knows the lineage and genealogies of his clan, a biblical leader needs to be someone who knows his job well. To know his job well, he needs to depend on God. Paul affirms, “not that we are competent in ourselves to claim anything for ourselves, but our competence comes from God. He has made us competent as ministers of a new covenant – not of the letter, but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life” (2 Cor 3:5-6). The leader’s confidence is founded, not on human resources, such as leadership principles, qualifications, and experience (though helpful), but it must be from above – from God alone. God gives the wisdom to lead.

“Wisdom” in Greek is σοφία (*sophia*), which means “human wisdom, in spiritual things”.⁶³ We can ask God confidently for wisdom when we need it, for He promises in his Word, “If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives to all men generously, and without reproaching, and it will be given him” (James 1:5). I believe this wisdom, or skill in living a life pleasing to God, comes primarily from reading and obeying His Word, “The testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple” (Ps 19:7; cf. Deut 4:6-8).

Today’s leaders must be competent and wise in their God-given job. For God wants competent leaders. In approaching this task, leaders will do well to follow Solomon’s example.

At Gibeon, the Lord appeared to Solomon during the night, in a dream, and God said, “Ask for whatever you want Me to give you.”

⁶² Tremper Longman III, and Peter Enns, eds, *Dictionary of the Old Testament*, Downers Grove IL: IVP, 2008, p. 220.

⁶³ Vine, *Expository Dictionary*, p. 1233. Luke 21:15; Acts 6:3; 10:7; 1 Cor 2:6.

Solomon answered, “You have shown great kindness to your servant, my Father David, because he was faithful to you and righteous and upright in heart. You have continued this great kindness to him, and have given him a son to sit on his throne this very day. Now, O Lord my God, You have made Your servant king in place of my father David. But I am only a little child, and do not know how to carry out my duties. Your servant is here among the people you have chosen, a great people, too numerous to count or number. So give your servant a discerning heart to govern your people, and to distinguish between right and wrong. For who is able to govern this great people of yours?” The Lord was pleased that Solomon had asked for this (1 King 3:5-10).

Furthermore, competence does not mean that someone has all the knowledge and skills. Eims confirms, “Good leaders will continue to learn.”⁶⁴ Some leaders today do not want to learn. They feel that, once they are leaders, there is no more learning. Eims correctly says, “good leaders are teachable, and eager to learn those things that will improve their performance of the task they have received from the Lord.”⁶⁵ The understanding is that learning never stops until death. This means that one of the qualifications of biblical leadership is never to be satisfied, but always seeking every means to become more proficient and more knowledgeable, for the betterment of the task of leadership.

Caring

One of the requirements of Helahuli traditional leadership we saw was aggressiveness. This is shown through physical aggressiveness, mental aggressiveness, and decisiveness. However, biblical leadership it is quite different. In an analogy of a shepherd, as Hodgens says, “a shepherd provided leadership, and, providing leadership, requires a certain degree of authority. The rod, which the shepherd carried in the gentlest of all Psalms, Ps 23, was used to discipline the sheep, and to guide, when necessary. Authority by itself, however, was useless. The shepherd also

⁶⁴ Leroy Eims, *Be a Motivational Leader*, Colorado Springs CO: Chariot Victor, 1984, p. 105.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 105.

had to provide care and protection for the sheep. By themselves, sheep are defenceless, and easy prey for a hungry bear or lion.”⁶⁶ Jesus identified Himself as the “Good Shepherd” (John 10:14). He is called the “Great Shepherd” (Heb 13:20), and “the Chief Shepherd” (1 Peter 5:4). The responsibility of the shepherd was given to Peter, as Jesus said, “take care of my sheep” (John 21:16). In this case, Peter represents the leaders, while the sheep represent God’s people.

What a biblical leader needs is a shepherd’s heart, and a servant’s spirit. The leaders must feed, guide, lead, and restore, as a shepherd. A leader must serve others, rather than be served by others. Eims says, “When people know someone is taking care of them, they will normally respond. Leaders, who look out for the welfare of their people, will have a group of followers, who are motivated, and eager to follow.”⁶⁷ Solomon said, “Be sure you know the condition of your flocks, give careful attention to your herds” (Prov 27:23).

Servants of God lead out of relationships, not by coercion. Biblical leaders don’t demand obedience or submission, they meet their followers at the point of need. Biblical leaders give from themselves, rather than take for themselves. They love and lift others, rather than manipulating.

The biblical leader must have a caring heart, pastoral concern, and ever be conscious that people matter most. He must not be a person who chases the sheep away. “When Jesus saw the crowds, He had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd” (Matt 9:36). For the biblical leader, this love for people must fill his heart. The mark of a biblical leader must be a person who has a tender compassionate heart, and a love to serve others.

MARKS SHOWING A BIBLICAL LEADER

In biblical leadership, certain traits should be seen as young leaders emerge from their training and discipline. After finishing his training, the young leader must get involved with the church and the community. While he is

⁶⁶ Hodgens, David, *Pastoral Theology Class Notes*, Banz PNG: CLTC, 2002, p. 13.

⁶⁷ Eims, *Be a Motivational Leader*, p. 67.

in ministry, the pastor, elder, and older Christians, must try to observe, evaluate, and assess the young leader. They must look for characteristics, such as his love for God, and love for others, his influence in the church and community, and humility.

Love for God

The most important mark of biblical leadership is love for God. You need to love God in order to serve Him and His church. “Love” comes from the Greek word φιλέω (*phileō*), which means “tender affection”.⁶⁸ As Jesus says, “Whoever has my commands and obeys them, he is the one who loves Me. He who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I, too, will love him, and show Myself to him” (John 14:21).

Love for God, with the whole person (Deut 6:5) is what God demands. Jesus said, “Love the Lord your God with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind” (Luke 10:27). It is a summons to a relationship of personal devotion, created and sustained by the work of God in the human heart (Deut 30:6). One has to be devoted to God, and obedient to Him (Deut 10:12; 22:37). Because of such devoted obedience, one will learn more of the meaning of God’s love, and so, will increasingly experience joyful fellowship with God (John 14:21-23; Ps 116:1-4; 1 Cor 2:9; 8:3; 1 Peter 1:8; 1 John 4:7, 12, 19).

As a leader, love for God will, at times, create difficulties, as conflicts arise, as one puts loyalty to God before other loyalties, desires, interests, and ambitions (Matt 6:24; 10:37-39; John 3:19; 1 John 2:15-17). Genuine love involves self-sacrifice (Eph 5:25; cf. Rom 14:15; 1 Cor 13:4-7). Faith and obedience are just as basic to a relationship with God as is love. If someone claims to love God, but does not trust in Him, or obey Him, he is deceiving himself (John 14:15, 24; Gal 5:6; James 2:25). Though he may be pressured by his tribe, clan, and family members for his loyalty, a leader’s love for God must be his number-one priority. Love for God must be a biblical leader’s passion (2 Cor 5:14-15). One thing that the leader needs to take to heart is Jesus’ words to the church at Ephesus. “Yet I hold this against you: You have forsaken your first love. Remember the height

⁶⁸ Vine, *Expository Dictionary*, p. 693. John 14:21; 16:27.

from which you have fallen! Repent, and do the things you did at first. If you do not repent, I will come to you, and remove your lampstand from its place” (Rev 2:4-5). A crucial danger for a spiritual leader is to lack a passion for God.

Love for Others

Another mark of biblical leadership is love for others. “God showed His love for us in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us” (Rom 5:8). As God loved us, we ought to love others. Our imitation of God’s love is seen in our love for others. John makes this clear, “Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another” (1 John 4:11). In fact, our love for others, within the fellowship of believers, is so evidently an imitation of Christ that, by it, the world will recognise us as His: “By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another” (John 13:35). God, Himself, gives us His love to enable us to love each other (John 17:26; Rom 5:5).

Love for others needs to be seen in our lives. As we act upon certain things, our relationship with others, our reactions to certain things, and our speech, should show we love others. Paul said “Love is patient, love is kind, it does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud, it is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, and it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil, but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, and always perseveres” (1 Cor 13:4-7). One of the marks to see whether a biblical leader has love for others is to take off the word “love” and replace it with his name. Example, John is patient, John is kind, John does not envy, John does not boast, John is not proud, . . . etc. If the leader can say, with confidence, that he does those things, then he has one of the marks of being a biblical leader.

Where there is so much tribal fighting, loving one’s enemies is quite difficult, and a demanding process. However, one’s love for their enemies especially reflects God’s love (Matt 5:43-48). As Paul says, “On the contrary, if your enemy is hungry, feed him, if he is thirsty, give him

something to drink. In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head” (Rom 12:20).⁶⁹

This is the pattern of our Master, the Lord Jesus, in His suffering at the cross. “When they hurled their insults at Him he did not retaliate, when He suffered, He made no threats. Instead, He entrusted Himself to Him who judged justly” (1 Peter 2:23). A biblical leader has to forgive. While Jesus was hanging on the cross, He said “Father forgive them for they do not know what they are doing” (Luke 23:34). Forgiveness for enemies will lead to kindness by enemies. This is what we need in Papua New Guinea, especially in the Highlands, where there are many paybacks in tribal fighting. Our enemies might have killed our father, or brother, or a relative, but we must forgive, and do good deeds, and be kind, allowing God’s justice to prevail, which will have an impact in our communities.

To love God is vertical, and to love others is horizontal. A biblical leader cannot say he loves God and hates his brothers and sisters (1 John 2:9). Love for God must be demonstrated by loving others. Love must not be just feelings, or talking, but love in action, just as God loved us, and gave His son (John 3:16). Loving others means also forgiving those, by whom you have been wronged. Biblical leaders must forgive totally.

⁶⁹ “The pain inflicted by the burning coals is a symbol of the shame and remorse experienced by an enemy who is rebuked by kindness” (John Stott, *The Message of Romans*, Leicester UK: IVP, 1994, p. 336). As humans, when we have an enemy, we want to retaliate or pay back. However, Paul says, “Do not repay anyone for evil” (Rom 12:17a). When we do good things, like feeding and giving a drink to our enemies, this will bring “burning coals”, that is, shame and remorse. The enemy thinks you’ll retaliate, but, in return, you give kindness. This is not a symbol of judgment, because to give judgment, you leave it to the Lord (1 Peter 2:23; Ps 35:5-6). God’s justice will prevail, but, for you, as a Christian, it is your duty to love, forgive, and be kind to your enemy. As John Stott puts it, “the coals of fire, this may heap on him, are intended to heal, not to hurt, to win, not to alienate, in fact, to shame him into repentance” (Stott, *Message of Romans*, pp. 336-337). However, you might be doing those good things, but the enemy might be hostile to you, or he might not repent. In this situation, Paul says that we must “overcome evil with good” (Rom 12:21b). We must continue to do good deeds to overcome the evil.

Influence

Both in traditional and biblical leadership, one of the marks is influence. Sanders says, “Leadership is influence, the ability of one person to influence others. One man can lead others, only to the extent that he can influence them.”⁷⁰ In biblical leadership, influence cannot be done by force, might, power, or with our own strength, but by the Holy Spirit. As Sanders affirms, “The spiritual leader, however, influences others, not by the power of his own personality alone, but by that personality irradiated, and interpenetrated, and empowered by the Holy Spirit. Because he permits the Holy Spirit undisputed control of his life, the Spirit’s power can flow through him to others unhindered.”⁷¹ As Paul said “When I came to you . . . my message and my preaching were not with wise and persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the Spirit’s power” (1 Cor 2:1, 4).⁷² To influence people, biblical leaders need to be empowered by the Holy Spirit.

Maxwell says, “Leadership is the ability to obtain followers.”⁷³ A bigger test for a leader is to find out whether anyone is following him. Jesus had many followers, like the 12 disciples, the sick, the blind, the crippled, the demon-possessed, the crowd, and many others because He had an influence in their lives. Some were healed of their diseases and sicknesses, demons were cast out, and powers and miracles were performed, so Jesus had influence in their lives (Matt 12:22; 15:22; 17:18; Mark 3:14; Luke 4:36; 11:14). There are three components, as John Maxwell says, “communication, recognition, and influence. When someone starts to

⁷⁰ Sanders, *Spiritual Leadership*, p. 19.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, p. 20.

⁷² We also see this in the Old Testament, the Holy Spirit frequently empowered people for special service. He empowered Joshua with leadership skills and wisdom (Num 27:18; Deut 34:9), and empowered the judges to deliver Israel from their oppressors (Judg 3:10). When David was anointed as king, “the Spirit of the Lord came mightily upon David from that day forward” (1 Sam 16:13), equipping David to fulfil the task of kingship, to which God had called him (Judg 6:34; 11:29; 13:25; 14:6, 19; 15:14). In the New Testament, we see Jesus fulfilling the prophecy of Isaiah: “the Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He has anointed Me” (Luke 4:18).

⁷³ John Maxwell, *Developing the Leader Within You*, Nashville TN: Thomas Nelson, 1993, p. 1.

communicate effectively, it leads to recognition, and recognition, in turn, leads to influence.⁷⁴ Jesus knew how to influence His disciples. This led the disciples to recognise their gifts and abilities, and to strengthening of their faith. Once that was done, Jesus had influence over them. Paul planted many churches in Asia Minor, and trained many young leaders, like Timothy and Titus, because he communicated with them, through his letters, and as a person. The churches and the people recognised his care and concern, so this led to his influence, in the churches and the people (Acts 9:22; 17:17; 18:4; 19:8; 1 Cor 5:11).

A biblical leader must have influence, not by force, nor by issuing threats, but by example. The famous saying, “Actions speak louder than words” is true. To have influence, the biblical leader must be honest in his dealings, trusted, reliable, a person of integrity and respect. When people see these qualities, they follow the leader. Followers are those one has trained, discipled, counselled, visited, and supported. This is how a biblical leader will have influence.

Humility

In Greek, “humility” is *ταπεινώω* (*tapeinoō*), which means, “signifies to make low”.⁷⁵ Another word is *ταπεινοφροσύνη* (*tapeinophrosunē*), which means “lowliness of mind”.⁷⁶ One of the marks of a biblical leader is humility. In Helahuli traditional leadership, humility is a quality not required or wanted. There the leader needs prominence and publicity. However, in God’s scale of value, humility stands very high. To put oneself down, and to put others up was Christ’s definition of leadership. In training His disciples for their coming position of authority, He told them that they must not “lord it over” and “exercise authority over them”, but be humble and lowly like their master (Matt 20:25-27). The biblical leader will choose the hidden pathway of sacrificial service, and the approval of the Lord, but not *mi tasol* (me only). The mind of the biblical leader must be the same as John Baptist, “He must increase, and I must decrease” (John 3:30). The glory, honour, and praise of achievements and success must be

⁷⁴ Ibid., p. 5.

⁷⁵ Vine, *Expository Dictionary*, pp. 568-569.

⁷⁶ Ibid., p. 569. Acts 20:19; Eph 4:2; Phil 2:3; Col 2:18, 23; 1 Peter 5:5.

given back to God. Paul acknowledged in 1 Cor 15:9, “For I am the least of the apostles, and do not deserve to be called an apostle.” In his early ministry, he said of himself, “I am less than the least of all God’s people” (Eph 3:8). At the end of his ministry, he said, “of whom I am the worst” (1 Tim 1:15). The humility of the leader should be an ever-growing quality. In today’s world, as a biblical leader, we must “express humility, by working gladly and faithfully in the second place.”⁷⁷

Biblical leaders have a responsibility to develop humility in their lives. It is part of the life, to which God has called them (Eph 4:1-2; Col 3:12). It is a characteristic of life in God’s kingdom (Matt 20:25-27), and it is the product of the Spirit’s work in the life of the individual (Gal 5:23). If they are to learn humility, they must be willing to take the lowest place and serve others (Luke 22:24-27; John 13:3-17). Such humility will produce the best servant leaders in the Helahuli churches, and in all the churches in Melanesia (Mark 9:33-37; Rom 12:16; 2 Cor 10:12; Gal 6:3; Eph 4:2; Phil 2:3). The example Jesus set for biblical leaders is to follow His humility (Phil 2:5-8).

Those who look for status, power, and praise may gain what they seek, but their reward will be short-lived (Matt 6:1-5, 16). One thing we must know is that God exalts those who humble themselves, but humbles those who exalt themselves (Prov 3:34; 1 Peter 5:6; Prov 15:33; 18:12; Is 2:11; 5:15; Matt 23:12; Luke 1:48-53; James 4:10).

CONCLUSION

Most Helahuli church leaders today have been trained through the traditional tribal process. However, Helahuli church leaders need to apply biblical leadership principles, instead of traditional leadership principles, in the church. To apply traditional leadership principles in the church leads to a hindrance of church growth, lack of maturity of the members, ineffective teaching and preaching in the pulpits, and little influence in the community.

What Helahuli churches need today are biblical leaders who are born again, have biblical training and discipline, can effectively communicate the Word

⁷⁷ Sanders, *Spiritual Leadership*, p. 58.

of God, with all wisdom and competence, care for the people, as a shepherd, by showing his love for God, and for others, and serve with humility.

The only way to provide this kind of leadership is by following the example of Jesus – who serves, is humble, and loves others. When Helahuli church leaders show these qualities, people will be shepherded, people will grow into maturity, and people will influence their communities for Christ. The law and order problems, the disunity, the troubles and killings in communities, will be a thing of the past when traditional-trained Helahuli church leaders apply the biblical pattern of leadership in the churches.

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