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Factors that contribute to greater church performance.

There is an ongoing discomfort between church members and their Pastors in the Southeastern conference of Seventh-day Adventists in United States, Florida. The members are becoming very skeptical of their Pastors in the Southeastern Conference of Seventh-day Adventists regarding their Pastor's effectiveness, which leads quite often to the dismissal of some ministers. The discomfort has just reached a higher level, when for the first time in the executive committee meeting on September the 24th 2017, one pastor was fired and two others were given 3 months to find another job. The seriousness of the matter incumbers both nurture and outreach actions of the church and is a continual cause of member frustration. Thus, the church is not performing as it should. Preliminary observations suggest that the problem is low pastor's performance and it is perceptible, at least in part, to a lack of integrity or to a deficiency of clear understanding as to what constituted or can be regarded as keys to church performance or church health. In this study, from different perspectives, the researcher would seek to find out if variables such as: Authentic leadership, church spirituality, church culture, and financial performance are predictors to church performance or church health and what does it takes to be an efficient and successful leader?

In the 20th century, the focus for organizations was on being effective. Nevertheless, in the 21st century, the requirements have been more than effectiveness; it is required to perform well and to be successful (Scharmer, 2007). Church organizations purposefully transferred their values through their environment and work place. They are expected to take the lead on agenda related to authentic leadership, culture, financial, church performance. But what those variables entail?

Authentic leadership

Authentic leadership depicts leaders who know themselves, what they confide in and treasure, and practice those treasures and beliefs, while relating with others perspicuously (Avolio, Gardner, Walumbwa, Luthans, & May, 2004). Authentic leadership reveals leaders that are profoundly cognizant of their values and beliefs; they are self-confident, genuine, reliable and trustworthy, and they focus on building followers' strengths (Ilies, Morgeson, & Nahrgang, 2005). The tactic promoted by authentic leadership recommends that leaders build their legitimacy on ethical foundations, respect, and honest relationships with their followers (Elrehail et al., 2018). According to Gardner et al., 2011; Luthans, Norman, & Hughes, 2006; Yammarino, Dionne, Schriesheim, & Dansereau, 2008), authentic leadership is supposed to inspire followers and encourage individual, team, and organizational effectiveness. Effective ministry demands authentic leadership. But, a principle of faith, rooted and based upon the leader's worldview, is the prime mover of authentic leadership (Puls et al., 2014).

According to Puls et al (2014), interests in genuine integrity in leaders have been in recent years the driven force of leadership studies with concentration on personal

authenticity. Avolio and Gardner (2005), two well-known thinkers on this issue, assert that to know one's self is conceivably the most serious first step for any leader. For Spence et al (2012), the health of the workplace is unswervingly interrelated with quality outcomes of authentic leadership. Several scholarly studies have revealed that authenticity in the supervisor–subordinate relationship has been associated to affective commitment (Brunetto, Farr-Wharton, & Shacklock, 2012; Brunetto, Teo, Farr-Wharton & Shacklock, 2012; Brunetto et al. 2013), cooperation (Brunetto, Farr-Wharton, & Shacklock, 2011a), resolved to stay (Galletta et al., 2013), and happiness (Brunetto, Farr-Wharton, & Shacklock, 2011a; 2011b; Brunetto et al., 2013). Peus, Wesche, Streicher, Braun, and Frey (2012) asserted that exploration of authentic leadership is still in an embryonic stage and a perimeter of empirical evidence remains. Authentic leadership is a great tool in assisting clergy as they cope with the stresses of ministry; and it has also been found to improve follower performance (Wang, Sui, Luthans, Wang, & Wu, 2014).

Walumbwa, Avolio, Gardner, Wernsing, and Peterson (2008) advanced that the theory of authentic leadership was developed and expanded through the conceptualization and explanation of four dimensions of authentic leadership: the leader's personal awareness, internalized moral perspective, balanced processing, and relational transparency. And for Ilies, Morgeson, & Nahrgang, 2005; Luthans & Avolio, 2003, the same four dimensions we just mentioned are the four components which reinforce and consolidate authentic leadership. Northouse (2010) posited that authentic leadership involves both intrapersonal elements and interpersonal ones. Puls et Al. (2014), claimed that although there is a mutual interplay in way the four components of authentic leadership interact, self-awareness and internalized moral perspective incline toward

intrapersonal, while balance processing and relational transparency tend to engage people interpersonally.

Church Spirituality

According to Saleem (2017), spirituality can be viewed as that which give meaning to one's existence and entices the individual to rise above himself or herself. It is the quest for the sacred, the ultimate meaning, the higher-consciousness, and their practice thereof (Friedman & MacDonald, 2002). Spirituality has to do with qualities of the human spirit (Fry & Slocum, 2008). And for Emmons (2003), spirituality represents an acumen system as it predicts functioning and offers capabilities that empower people to solve problems and achieve valuable goals. Swinton (2001) states that spirituality is identified with experiencing a profound sense of belongingness; it calls for acceptance, incorporation, and completeness in health care. Benefiel (2005) points out that spirituality means something different to everyone. For some, it's about participating in organized religion. For others, it's more personal. Spirituality is recognized and celebrating that all is inextricably connected to each other by a power greater than all of us, and that our connection to that power and to one another is grounded in love and compassion. Practicing spirituality brings a sense of perspective, meaning and purpose to our lives.

Spirituality has amplified worldwide in popularity among the general public and has started to saturate the frontier of traditional establishments (Karakas, 2010). And because of spirituality's increasing popularity, management researchers have been curious to find out how the spirituality of an organization's employees might affect organizational outcomes, and more precisely, features of organizational and employee performance

(Garcia-Zamor, 2003; Giacalone and Jurkiewicz, 2010). Consequently, interest in spirituality has contributed to the increasing level of academic research on the topic (e.g., Afsar and Rehman, 2015; Milliman *et al*, 2017; Tzouramani and Karakas, 2016).

Pew Research Center has reported that the number of Americans who claim to undergo a deep sense of spirituality at least once per week had increased to 59% as of 2014 (Masci and Lipka, 2016). Ahmad and Omar (2015) reason that spirituality in the workplace impacts organizational citizenship conduct through its result on employee work engagement. Tischler and colleagues (2002) have posited spirituality may help to lessen stress and boost ingenuity - both of which have been linked with better-quality work performance.

Tonigan (2003) informed that spirituality predicts behavior such as honesty and responsibility which in turn encouraged alcohol abstinence. Moreover, in a comprehensive study on suicide in Netherlands, Tonigan reported that there was a decline in suicidal rate, which was concurrent with a religious revival. Spiritual values and religious practices are vital in the lives of people.

Church culture

Malphurs (2013) pointed out that, "Culture affects all churches. There are no exceptions" (p. 74).

Schein (1992) defines organizational culture as:

A pattern of shared basic traditions or expectations that the group learned as it solved its problems of external adaptation and internal integration that has worked well

enough to be considered valid and, therefore, to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think, and feel in conjunction to those problems (p. 12).

Schein further categorizes three levels of culture. They are: artifacts, espoused values, and basic assumptions. The artifacts are visible organizational structures and processes; the espoused values are strategies, goals, and philosophies; and the basic assumptions are unconscious, taken-for-granted beliefs, perceptions, thoughts, and feelings.

Chand (2012) details that the best way to understand culture is by statement: this is how things are done here.

For church culture, there are three levels of organizational culture: the observable, the conscious, and the taken for granted (Schein, 2004).

Cameron and Quinn (2006) argue that cultures, as well as people, are functioning in agreement with renowned and widely accepted categorical schemes such as archetypes of values that shape the way people think, process pertinent information and make individual priorities. Furthermore, cultures, as well as people, are designed like archetypes and have correspondingly opposite and contradictory values. This viewpoint is very helpful in trying to see the culture of church as the amalgamation of contradictory yet coexisting value systems, namely spirituality and in administration.

Darko (2013) advances that in a church environment, culture must be taken into consideration. This is because church culture may have emotional attachment, particularly when the culture has spiritual roots.

Keener (2011) declares that the sturdiest force in an organization is not vision or

strategy, but culture which holds all the other components.

Financial performance

No Margin, No Mission is a slogan that arose in the health care industry and is ascribed to Sister Irene Krause, former head of the Daughters of Charity National Health Care System (Thomas, 2010). This slogan is now also broadly used in education to help stakeholders understand that without a sound financial basis, organizations cannot fulfill their intended purpose (Thomas, 2010; Wellman, 2010).

Financial performance denotes the efficient and effective management of money in such a manner as to achieve the purposes of the organization. Financial management is the fact of planning, organizing, directing and controlling the financial activities such as obtaining and utilization of funds of the enterprise. It means applying general management ideologies and principles to financial resources of the enterprise (Adams, 2002). Therefore, effective financial management is essential to acquire a respectable financial performance.

According to Tomasi and Akumu (2018) financial performance refers to a subjective measure of how well a firm can use its assets from its principal mode of business and produce revenues. Furthermore, they advance that financial performance can be viewed as a routine function which are performed within the firm to ensure effective use of funds and is concerned with guaranteeing that funds are available when needed and can be obtained and used in the most efficient and effective way to benefit the citizens.

Church performance

Supreme to the incessant growth of the church/kingdom is the discovery of new factors that contribute to the performance of the church. Leaders who yearn to be respectful and obedient to the great commission (Matthew 28:18-20) must incessantly search for those variables that contribute to church Performance. Societal standards that affect organizational development are in constant mutability. Social and behavioral sciences continue to progress and guide organizational leaders with greater aptitude. Researchers must continue to theorize and conduct studies to determine the best practices for effective church performance for each generation (Easum, 1993; Hunter, 1992; Logan, 1989). This research assists in the discovery of factors that contribute to church performance.

Lebans and Euske (2006) postulate that unremitting performance is the focus of any organization because only through performance organizations are able to grow and improve.

Authors in the church performance discipline use terms such as church growth and evangelism. Church growth involves the growth of the Kingdom of God through moving man from the world and incorporating man into the church.

Wagner (1984) stated,

“Church growth means all that is involved in bringing men and women who do not have a personal relationship to Jesus Christ into fellowship with Him and into responsible church membership” (p. 14).

Therefore, church growth is enfolding lost sheep into the fold (Matthew 10:10-14; 28:18-20).

Salter (1996) stated,

Evangelism is the kingdom of God invading, engaging, and embracing the world and its constituency. . . . Evangelism at its best is not defined as an activity but as a force for good, invading and beating back the power of evil. . . . Evangelism is the personification of the victorious Christ in life's every deed and word. (pp. 377-378)

Church growth and evangelism authors identify multiple measurements to determine church performance but typically focus on the single measure of worship attendance growth.

Sonnentag, Volmer, and Spsychala (2008) argue performance is important for the employee; for, achievement of the tasks and good performance can be an important source of personal satisfaction.

With this in mind, in this part of our study, we will display from the Scriptures and from other sources our philosophical view of the constructs of how the research relates to the biblical worldview and how the Pastor, as the leader, ought to emulate the life of Jesus, which would promote church performance.

According to Maxwell (1995), any organizational success or failure is directly linked to a single, crucial factor—leadership. He also mentions that everything rises and falls on leadership.

To be a Christian leader, a pastor, is by itself a great privilege and an awesome

responsibility. People count on you and see you as someone to look upon; as an example, and as a pattern of what they should become. They are proud of you and they have great respect for what you do as you help them 'attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ' **(Ephesians 4:13; NIV)**. Therefore, a Pastor should always be careful of the life he or she is living. A Pastor's life success or failure will definitely have a direct impact, not just on the ones he or she is leading, but on every one who knows or who hears about that Pastor's integrity or his or her life's debacle. If a Pastor's life exhibited a positive influence on his or her congregants, this influence would be a redeeming one. Nevertheless, if the influence displayed is negative, the effect would be catastrophic for everyone else and especially for the Pastor. Jesus puts it this way,

"Things that cause people to sin are bound to come, but woe to that person through whom they come. It would be better for him to be thrown into the sea with a millstone tied around his neck than for him to cause one of these little ones to sin"
(Luke 17:1,2; NIV).

On exploring components of church performance, Gavrea, Ilies, and Stegorean (2011) posit that the leadership is a key component that confirms the linking among the success factors of the church.

To be a Christian leader of long tenure and in order to be effective in ministry, one has to cultivate the fear of God. Nowadays, we have great and intellectual preachers and Pastors. They know almost everything in the bible and can teach it impeccably. They know about the great prophecies of the bible; they know all the doctrine of the church, and very admire by the people of God. Yet, when it comes to biblical principles, ethics, standards, disciplines, sacrifice, humility, values, morals, they fall extremely short. They

have a different worldview; one that is not biblical. The bible says in Proverbs 9:10 that "The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, and knowledge of the Holy One is understanding". The fear of God is a biblical motif that incorporates an attitude of awe and reverence for the holy one. It is the suitable and fundamental response of a person to God. Simply put, to fear God is to have faith in Him, to obey, to love and to serve Him.

It is equivalent to commit suicide when one in ministry with no fear of God. Ignoring the fear of God is recipe for disaster. White (1923) admonished: "Men in responsible positions, whose influence is far-reaching, are to guard well their ways and works, keeping the fear of the Lord ever before them" p. 360

In addition to cultivating the fear of God, a Christian leader must have clear understanding of his or her call to be effective and last in ministry. Many Christian leaders have been badly wounded in ministry, some by their own hand and some by the hands of others. And the reason, sometimes, is a distorted sense of their calling into ministry. God calls everyone to the saving knowledge of His Son. But God does not call everyone to be a leader, a pastor, or ministry director. One ought to evaluate his or her call to see where God has called that person to serve. By learning essential beliefs about calling and a means for more tangibly assessing our own calling, we can be stimulated toward ministry accomplishment while being directed away from ministry jeopardy.

Besides cultivating the fear of the Lord and discerning the call of God in one's life, the Christian leader that wants to sustain long-term effectiveness in ministry should possess the character traits of Jesus. There are many character traits of Jesus, which need to be emulated by all. One can mention for example: Loving, compassionate, Prayerful, self-control, humble, Patience, committed, forgiving, servant, contentment,

integrity, etc. For this project, only the following will be considered: Humility, contentment, and integrity.

According to Elwell and Comfort (2001), “**HUMILITY** is a condition of lowliness or affliction in which one experiences a loss of power and prestige...Humility is a grateful and spontaneous awareness that life is a gift, and it is manifested as an ungrudging and unhypocritical acknowledgment of absolute dependence upon God.” The Christian leader, therefore, ought to be humble. For, one cannot cultivate the fear of the Lord without being humble. Walvoord and Zuck (1983) posited that, “A person cannot be fearing God (worshiping, trusting, obeying, and serving Him) and be filled with selfish pride at the same time” p.952. Humble persons conduct themselves Christ-likely.

The greatest sin according to White (1900) is pride and self-sufficiency. Those who are not humble tend to be prideful and self-sufficient. There is a danger to the effectiveness of Christian leader to finishing well in his ministry when he or she is devoid of humility. In the book Christ’s object lessons, she says this:

“The evil that led to Peter’s fall and that shut out the Pharisee from communion with God is proving the ruin of thousands today. There is nothing so offensive to God or so dangerous to the human soul as pride and self-sufficiency. Of all sins it is the most hopeless, the most incurable.” (p.154)

Nowadays, pastors must have the same attitude, the same characteristics. Our goal is to exalt Jesus and elevate him as the hope of the world. It means that one must humble himself or herself and self-erase so that people could see the image of Jesus in that individual.

Another trait of Jesus that need to be emulated by all and specially the Christian leader is **contentment**. Contentment is defined as a state of happiness and satisfaction. It is that disposition of mind in which one is, through grace, independent of apparent circumstances, so as not to be moved by greed or envy (James 3:16), anxiety (Matt. 6:24, 34), and discontent (1 Cor. 10:10). A Christian leader that does not learn to be content in all circumstances denies the faith he or she is professing. And this is the epitome of long-term effective pastoral ministry.

Moreover, another trait that needs to be exhibited by all Christians, specially a Pastor, is **integrity** or probity. The bible says that “The integrity of the upright guides them, but the unfaithful are destroyed by their duplicity” (Proverbs 11:3). If a Pastor wants his or her ministry to be effective, he or she must have integrity. The word can be defined as the firm adherence to a code of moral values. A Christian leader preserves lives, not destroy them or self-destroy. When one has integrity, it will be seen in sincerity, truth, pure heart, single eye, honesty, genuineness. Integrity, indeed, is fundamental to true character.

All in all, authentic leadership, church spirituality, church culture, financial performance are all great predictors of church performance. Neglecting one of these variables is recipe for disaster. But as Maxwell (1995) puts it, everything rises and falls on leadership. Therefore, the role of a Christian leader is of great importance and immeasurable value in the organization and functioning of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. In reality, the success or failure of the church as a whole depends largely on the pastor because of the unique and intimate position he occupies in the church where he is called to fulfill his priestly functions. At all times and in all circumstances, the pastor

must reflect the life and teachings of Christ in his ministry and his job. For, Leadership is not about popularity or personality or charm. It is about fulfilling God's purpose in life.

The Christian leader ought to cultivate the fear of God; without which, he or she will not endure in ministry and would threaten the performance of the church as a whole. The vocation of the pastor must come from God and his ministry must demonstrate at all times that he or she has been accredited by God himself. The Christian leader must exhibit Jesus's traits in his or her life. And the Christian leader ought to have integrity. The Pastor must be filled with the Holy Spirit and devoted himself passionately to prayer and the study of the Word of God. His attachment and consecration to God must be absolute. He must be a man of unshakeable faith, noble visions, and moreover, full of love. Thus, he will lead and direct, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, the church to greater performance.

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